

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



TREASURES OF INDIA & SRI LANKA: COLOMBO TO MUMBAI ON *LE LAPÉROUSE* FEB 27–MAR 13, 2025 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

From Colombo to Mumbai, visit a variety of UNESCO World Heritage sites and encounter a mosaic of peoples and cultures amidst luxuriant landscapes.

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS: Colombo, Sri Lanka / Trincomalee / Hambantota / Galle / Cochin, India / Goa / Mumbai

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

THUR, FEB 27–FRI, FEB 28 INDEPENDENT FLIGHTS TO COLOMBO.

The program begins on Saturday, March 1 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Most flight options from both the US East and West coasts will require two calendar days to travel to Colombo. Consequently, guests should plan to depart on **February 27** to ensure arrival on March 1.

There are some options out of Boston, NYC, and Los Angeles that will get guests to Colombo in one day, but travel from other major cities in the US will require two days.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1 ARRIVE COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Arrive in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where you will be met and transferred to the Galle Face Hotel (or similar).

Gather this evening with your Harvard Alumni Study Leader and fellow alumni and friends for a welcome cocktail reception.

Overnight: *Galle Face Hotel* (R)

SUNDAY, MARCH 2 COLOMBO / EMBARK

After breakfast at the hotel, join an excursion to two of Colombo's most important Buddhist temples—the Kelaniya Temple, built on a site believed to have been visited by the Buddha himself some 2,000 years ago; and the 19th-century Gangaramaya Temple, the most important Buddhist shrine in the city.

After lunch at a local restaurant, take a panoramic tour of Colombo's highlights, ending at the pier, where you embark *Le Lapérouse*.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, MARCH 3 AT SEA

Today is devoted to relaxing, attending lectures, and sampling the many amenities available aboard *Le Lapérouse*, as you begin your circumnavigation of the island.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

TRINCOMALEE

Trincomalee, a large port in the northeastern of Sri Lanka, is your gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Sigiriya, the ruins of a palace built atop an enormous rock outcropping, surrounded by a network of gardens and reservoirs.

Your guided tour of this stunning monument includes an opportunity to view the 21 rock paintings of singers and dancers that decorate the walls—frescoes that remind many visitors of the Ajanta Caves of India.

Following a relaxing lunch at a nearby restaurant, return to the ship to continue your voyage around the island.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

HAMBANTOTA

From Hambantota on Sri Lanka's southeastern coast, travel to the Elephant Transit Home, a facility supported by the Born Free Foundation that rescues and rehabilitates orphaned elephants with the aim of returning them to the wild.

Continue to Udawalawe National Park, where more than 400 wild elephants are protected in their natural habitat. Experience these majestic creatures from 6-seater off-road vehicles on a safari through the park.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

GALLE

Colonized by both the Portuguese and the Dutch, Galle was long a center of the spice trade and the country's most important port.

During your time here, explore the old town and its fortifications, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, and travel to nearby Koggala, a region of rich biodiversity where you will see local fishermen standing atop stilts to ply their trade. Also, visit a working tea plantation.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

AT SEA

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

SAT, MAR 8–SUN, MAR 9

COCHIN, INDIA

Spend two full days on the Malabar coast, exploring the history and culture of Cochin, the oldest European settlement in India. Vasco da Gama established a trading station here in 1502, making the city a crucial port for the export of pepper, cardamom, clove, and cinnamon. When the Dutch seized control in the late 17th century, Cochin's prosperity only grew. The results of the wealth produced by the spice trade are evident throughout the old town of Fort Cochin—the Portuguese Church of St. Francis, the Dutch Mattancherry Palace, and the Paradesi Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in India.

In addition to the colonial legacy, you will enjoy a boat ride along canals lined with Chinese fishing nets, a visit to Greenix Village for a private performance of traditional Kathakali dance, and the opportunity to sample local cuisine.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, MARCH 10

AT SEA

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

MORMUGAO (GOA)

Goa is known around the world for its pleasant climate and for the natural beauty of its beaches, waterfalls, and rice paddies. It is also home to a remarkable number of 16th- and 17th-century churches that have been collectively designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Visit Basilica Bom Jesus, housing the tomb of St. Francis Xavier. St. Catherine Cathedral, larger than any church in the Portuguese homeland; the Church of St. Cajetan, modeled

on Renaissance St. Peter's in Rome, but with an exuberantly Baroque interior; and St. Augustin Tower, one of the three great Augustinian churches in the Iberian diaspora.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

MUMBAI

A morning at sea brings *Le Lapérouse* to Mumbai, where an afternoon excursion takes you first to Crawford Market, an enormous collection of vendors selling cloth of all colors and fabrics, and then on to Churchgate Railway station, where you are likely to see swarms of *dabbawalas* on their way to deliver home-cooked meals to offices downtown.

Visit the temples of Banganga, where believers purify themselves in a pool of water that is said to come underground from the Ganges, followed by a drive through the city and its landmarks, including the University, Flora Fountain, and the Victoria Terminus rail station.

Overnight on *Le Lapérouse* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

MUMBAI / DEPART FOR U.S.

Disembark after breakfast for a tour of some of Mumbai's highlights, including the iconic Gateway of India, an arch built in 1911 to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary; Mani Bhavan, Mahatma Gandhi's base in Mumbai from 1917 to 1934; and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum), with a superb collection of Indian paintings, illustrated manuscripts, and exquisite miniatures.

Your tour ends at a hotel, where day rooms are available, and where you will have dinner before transferring to the airport for evening flights homeward.

(B, L, D)