



Even today Kotiyagala is at the end of the road!

Almost 188 years ago a few brave Singhalese rebelled against their colonial rulers, the British. Contrary to their peaceful intentions the British met the rebellious with guns & swords. While many perished, a few escaped death by plunging into some of most dense forests of the South Eastern jungles of the Island. The rebellion was later called the Uva rebellion & the escapees made some these inhospitable jungle surroundings their home. This was the birth of Kotiyagala, which means Leopard rock in English. The entire village is inter-related where today, some 125 families exist. Carrying their highland names, they are a proud band of unconquered warriors who exist amidst a host of difficulties. These are some of the true outlands of Sri Lanka.

## Archaeological sites



Unknown to the settlers nor to the dept of Archaeology, their settlement & its adjoining forests contain an array of ruins, ranging from monasteries, stupas, caves with prehistoric paintings, images of lord Buddha & palaces. Todate during some of our deep jungle treks we discover various artifacts of a bygone civilization, wrapped up by the jungle canopy. Some of the paintings are of crushed gemstone, so the color would never dull with time!

## Nature



Sandwiched between the famed national parks of Yala & Lahugala, these parts offer unrestricted observation of fauna & flora. Crocodile & man co-exist in harmony within the lakes of kotiyagala. It is said that the Right bank is for the villagers & their livestock while the Left bank is Crocodile territory, a fine example of eco-based lifestyle. Reptiles & smaller varieties of animals dart in & out of the village with seemingly indifference. Some of the last ebony, satin & other hardwood forests remain in these parts where all of the Islands wildlife



take refuge....

## Mountain biking



All areas mentioned above & below have 2 avenues of access. They are by foot or by bike! Mountain biking into some of these areas give you a sheer exhilarating experience. Where could one ride into lush forests & emerge into a grass plain where Peacock & large migratory birds scatter as you pass & on the horizon a herd of Elephants slowly feed!

Sand, mud, a dry riverbed, rock & rubble, an edge of a waterway all provide their own charm & challenge when one rides past. You also get as surprised as the animals, when a bend in the road finds you face-to-face with one! Quality English mountain bikes & accessories are provided for every trip. We even have a midnight mountain biking trip into the jungles complete with biking headlights & a midnight snack.



## Lifestyle holidays



This is a kind of area where you can easily blend with all that goes around. Time is of no meaning as in these parts you begin to realize that what is to be must be. Unspoilt by the world outside the villagers lead an easy lifestyle that revolves around farming. Their peak hours are before & after the monsoon rains, as water is life in these parts.

As long as you do not obstruct anyone whilst you're here you may join them in their farming, help them in their cooking, jointly clean house, wash-up & swim with them after the day is done, stay up with them in their tree platforms chasing away elephants that destroy their crops. Or you could simply stay put on a rocky outcrop within a jungle canopy besides the lake & dream of life's inconsistencies!



## Rock & mountain climbing / Caving



Many contoured rocks & caves lie strewn in the jungle. Some have artifacts within, while some are for the exhilaration of exploring! In 2002 we had to abandon an exploration due to the fact that the ropes were insufficient! No matter if you're a novice or cliffhanger, a granite face will challenge you to the limit!

**Program:**

**Day 1.**

Arrive mid morning & visit ancient village monastery complex. After lunch & afternoon at leisure besides the village lake where one gets to react a part of 'crocodile Dundee' swimming in a lake with crocodiles. After dinner walk for an hour or so through the jungles of Ruhuna to a tree house chena, where you get to spend a night guarding the crop with the farmer against wild animals. Overnight atop a tree house.

**Day 2.**

Trek back for breakfast then ride on mountain bikes across the forests to visit a colossal cave complex complete with a reclining Buddha & paintings. Wilderness lunch within the caves. Join the villagers in the evening besides the lake. Night at a village headman's house with dinner.

**Day 3.**

After breakfast leave on a vertical journey, following a trail of a king in hiding. Caves, cave systems & underground passes have to be negotiated. We leave after a late lunch.

--- End of tour ---



**Total distance:** Varied.

**Temperature:** Between 29 to 40 degrees.

**Conditions:** Rocky, muddy & damp with the occasional river/stream/lake to cross. At times dry & dusty. Thorny, humid with lots of wildlife.

**Elevation:** Between 400 to 1100 feet.

**Difficulty level:** Moderately difficult on occasion.

**Included -**

[As per above itinerary]

- [x] Board & lodging on full board basis
- [x] Portage & cook with fresh hot cooked meals
- [x] English speaking guide
- [x] Camera & video photography
- [x] Permissions
- [x] 2 - 4man tents & alternate stay with villagers
- [x] 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit [we are qualified in wilderness 1<sup>st</sup> aid]
- [x] Professional & safety equipment
- [x] Limited Sri Lankan spirits
- [x] Sleeping bag/camping pillow
- [x] Driver board & lodging

This is a community assisted tourism project where we donate 10% of the trip for the restoration & maintenance of these ancient ruins. The local temple as well as the Department of Archaeology are aware of our work.



Another conquest - Veddha painting of a victory over elephant.