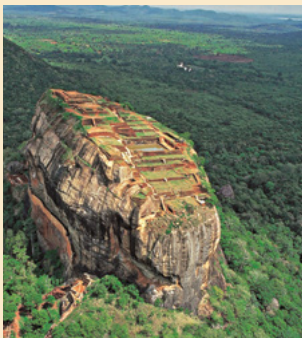





Sri Lanka and India

Farm Study Tour 2018

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Sun, Jul 1	<p>Tour leader: David Dowling 0437 000 234</p> <p>The tour departs various Australian capitals for Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. There are direct flights from Melbourne to Sri Lanka – the best connections from other capitals will vary. Most options will have you arriving in Colombo late in the evening.</p> <p>You have the option to leave a day or two earlier to break this journey with a stopover in Singapore – or you could arrive in Sri Lanka a day or two ahead of the main group. Or acclimatise with a pre-tour visit to the magnificent Maldives.</p> <p>On arrival in Colombo (probably late night), we are met by our local guide and transferred to our beachside hotel.</p>	<p>Negombo, Sri Lanka Jetwings Beach Hotel Website</p>
DAY 2 Mon, Jul 2 B,L,D	<p>A relaxed start to the day before we leave in the late morning and travel north towards the Sigiriya region. For centuries, spices have been one of Sri Lanka's most celebrated exports and are used for not only food but also medicines and cosmetics.</p> <p>Habarana is the the central point of Sri Lanka's cultural triangle - The area is awash with picturesque lakes and reservoirs providing some of the most breathtakingly beautiful scenery and habitat for Sri Lanka's incredible bio-diversity. Activities available include village and forest walks, bird and wildlife watching, elephant safaris etc</p> <p>Nearby Sigiriya is home to the magnificent 'Lion Rock' fortress which stands majestically overlooking lush tropical jungle. This awe-inspiring UNESCO World Heritage Site is studded with beautiful green gardens, ponds, fountains, promenades and pavilions. Covering the pathway to the summit, is the 'mirror wall', a highly polished wall where the musings of the old visitors who fell in love with the beauty of the rock are recorded as the world famous Sigiriya Graffiti.</p> <p>Once you reach the summit, the spectacular panoramic vista spans into the distance as far as your eyes can see. It is a steep climb but well worth the effort.</p>	<p>Habarana Cinnamon Lodge Website</p> 
DAY 3 Tue, July 3 B,L,D	<p>Our visit to a local farm this morning entails a bullock cart ride or a 15 minute canoe ride. We can walk through the farm and discuss different types of cultivation and crops with the farmer. At the farmer's house we will experience typical Sri Lankan countryside hospitality including lunch.</p> <p>In the afternoon, visit nearby Minneriya National Park with its abundant flora and native wildlife, especially the Asian elephant.</p> <p>Minneriya is home of the world famous Elephant Gathering. During the dry season (July through early November) hundreds of Asian elephants travel each year to the shores of an ancient reservoir in Minneriya built by a king more than 1700 years ago. This annual migration has been going on for centuries. As the water in the reservoir recedes, lush green grasses provide a feast for the hungry elephants.</p> <p>Between meals, the elephants head into the reservoir, spraying themselves with the shallow, muddy waters to create one of the world's biggest pool parties.</p>	<p>Habarana Cinnamon Lodge</p> 
DAY 4 Wed, Jul 4 B,L,D	<p>We leave Habarana and head south, stopping at Dambulla to visit the Buddhist cave complex with its many painted walls and ceilings. We will then visit a spice farm and make other scenic stops before arriving into the historic city of Kandy in central Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Kandy is set on a plateau surrounded by mountains, which are home to tea plantations and biodiverse rainforest. At the city's heart is scenic Kandy Lake (Bogambara Lake). The city is famed for sacred Buddhist sites, including the Temple of the Tooth shrine.</p> <p>In the evening, enjoy a traditional Sri Lankan dance and cultural show.</p>	<p>Kandy Amaya Hills hotel (or similar) Website</p>

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 5 Thu, Jul 5 B,L,D	<p>In the morning, visit the beautiful Royal Botanical gardens and a popular gem mining factory – with plenty of buying options for the blue and star sapphires for which Kandy is famous.</p> <p>We then continue through the picturesque highlands to the former hill station of Nuwara Eliya, famous for its Virgin White Tea – and one of the most expensive teas in the world. Following an ancient Chinese tea plucking ritual, the tea is plucked and made without being touched by humans.</p> <p>This evening we stay in one of Sri Lanka’s best hotels in one of its most scenic areas.</p>	Nuwara Eliya Heritance Tea factory hotel Website 
DAY 6 Fri, Jul 6 B,L,D	<p>Time for some tea plucking this morning before leaving the highlands for the southern lowlands, with visits to sugarcane and other farms on the way. Lunch at a beautiful lake before we continue on to the wonderful city of Galle.</p>	Galle Tamarind Hill (or similar) Website
DAY 7 Sat, Jul 7 B,L	<p>Galle is an historic 17th century Dutch fort city and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Galle’s natural harbour has long been a hub of trade dating back to ancient times. The accidental arrival of the Portuguese mariner Lorenzo de Almeida in 1505 – when his fleet of ships steered off course following a storm at sea – changed the history of this island nation.</p> <p>The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch and then the British in 1796. With each occupation, Galle’s landscape changed and the cultural influences remained. Galle Fort covers nearly 400 hectares and is protected by 12 bastions and connecting ramparts.</p> <p>We enjoy a guided walking tour of the fort before a free afternoon and evening.</p>	Galle Tamarind Hill (or similar) 
DAY 8 Sun, Jul 8 B,L,D	<p>This morning we drive along the coastal road to Colombo for a short city tour, lunch, then transfer to the airport for our direct (2.5 hr) flight to Mumbai (we used to know it as Bombay).</p> <p>Mumbai is an Arabian Sea port on India’s west coast. We will be met at the airport and transferred to our downtown hotel.</p>	Mumbai, India Taj Palace Mumbai Website
DAY 9 Mon, Jul 9 B,L	<p>Morning half day city sightseeing tour of Mumbai, visiting the imposing Gateway of India, hanging gardens on the slopes of Malabar hills offering great views of the marine lines and Mani bhawan (where Mahatma Gandhi used to stay) then to Dhobi Ghat, the world’s biggest outdoor laundry. The magic of Mumbai is not of any particular sights, but the unique atmosphere of the city itself.</p> <p>Our hotel is located near the waterfront, right at the ‘Gateway of India’ and close to some of the city’s famous markets.</p> <p>In the afternoon we will meet wit Austrade agribusiness specialists before a free evening.</p>	Mumbai Taj Palace Mumbai
DAY 10 Tue, Jul 10 B,L,D	<p>Transfer to Mumbai airport for our flight to Varanasi.</p> <p>Afternoon city sightseeing tour then enjoy the <i>Gange aarti</i> in the evening.</p> <p>Varanasi is an ancient sacred city located on the banks of the holy River Ganges. The spectacular ceremony <i>Gange aarti</i> is performed every evening by a group of priests at the Dashashwamedh ghat. It is a devotional ritual that uses fire as an offering to the Goddess Ganga and is performed on a stage by a group of young pandits, all draped in saffron colored robes with their puja plates spread out before them. It commences with the blowing of a conch shell, and continues with the waving of incense sticks in elaborate patterns and circling of large flaming lamps that create a bright hue against the darkened sky. The movement of the lamps, held in the pandits’ hands, is tightly synchronised with the rhythmic chants of hymns and clang of cymbals. The heady scent of sandalwood thickly permeates the air.</p> <p>Air India AI695 MUMBAI-VARANASI 10.30am-12.40pm</p>	Varanasi Gateway Hotel Ganges Website 

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 11 Wed, Jul 11 B,L,D	<p>We take an early morning boat excursion on the holy river Ganges to see the bathing ghats and cremation site. Watching people bathing and worshipping at the Ghats is one of the most extraordinary experiences of a visit to India.</p> <p>Later we return to the hotel then transfer to the airport for our flight to Agra.</p> <p>This afternoon, we will inspect pulse and other crops and meet with local agronomists and researchers. This is one of the major regions for pulse and canola production in India.</p> <p>Air India AI406 VARANASI-AGRA 12.10pm-1.20pm</p>	Agra Radisson Blu Agra Taj East Gate Website
DAY 12 Thu, Jul 12 B,L	<p>Morning visit the world famous Taj Mahal built by Moghul Emperor Shahjahan in 1630 for his queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains.</p> <p>The postcard pictures of Taj Mahal do not adequately convey the legend, the poetry and the romance of the most well preserved and architecturally beautiful tomb in the world. No-one who visits the Taj comes away disappointed.</p> <p>In the afternoon we will visit some farms in and around Agra. Free evening.</p>	Agra Radisson Blu Agra Taj East Gate
Day 13 Fri, Jul 13 B,L,D	<p>In the morning we will depart Agra for Jaipur visiting chickpea and soybean farms near Bharatpur along the way. This is a highly productive area for pulse crops.</p> <p>The Pink City, Jaipur, was founded in 1727 and painted pink during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1876. Every home is obliged by law to maintain this facade.</p> <p>Our accommodation in Jaipur is an attraction in itself, the magnificent Taj Jai Mahal Palace.</p>	Jaipur Taj Jai Mahal Palace Website 
Day 14 Sat, Jul 14 B,L	<p>Morning half day excursion to Amber Fort, the ancient capital of the state until 1728. Visit the Jagmandir or the hall of victory glittering with mirrors, Jai mahal and temple of Kali. Ascend the hill on which the fort is situated by elephant (or jeep).</p> <p>Then visit some local farms before returning to Jaipur.</p>	Jaipur Taj Jai Mahal Palace
Day 15 Sun, Jul 15 B,L,D	<p>This morning we board our charter coach and continue 2–3 hours north to Neemrana with farm and scenic stops along the way. Sited on a majestic plateau, Neemrana Fort-Palace covers 10 hectares with commanding views of the surrounding farmlands. Built in 1464, the Fort-Palace is among India's oldest heritage resorts and has been restored and furnished with a mix of traditional Indian and colonial furniture.</p>	Neemrana Neemrana Fort Palace Website 
Day 16 Mon, Jul 16 B,L,D	<p>After a leisurely start to the day, we will visit a large milk factory near Rewari, then continue to Indira Gandhi airport on the outskirts of Delhi to catch a short flight to Ludhiana in the centre of one of the main agricultural areas of the Punjab.</p>	Ludhiana Majestic Park Plaza Website
Day 17 Tue, Jul 17 B,L,D	<p>The Punjab is considered to be one of the most fertile regions on earth. Both East and West Punjab produce a relatively high proportion of India and Pakistan's food output respectively. The region has been used for extensive wheat farming, while rice, cotton, sugarcane, fruit, and vegetables are grown.</p> <p>Indian Punjab has been estimated to be the second richest state in India and is called 'the granary' or 'bread basket' of India.</p> <p>In the morning we will visit the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana and meet with researchers – some of whom having studied in Australia.</p> <p>In the afternoon, visit farms in the area including a huge family run operation, productive cereal farms and a village with a co-operative agricultural bank. This is a bank which looks after the interest of farmers, helping them keep their money in a savings account and also providing loan finance.</p>	Ludhiana Majestic Park Plaza

Date	Activity	Overnight
Day 18 Wed, Jul 18 B,L,D	We will leave this morning for Shimla via Chandigarh with more farm and scenic visits on the way. Chandigarh was designed by Le Corbusier, the famous French Architect. We will have a short tour of the city before heading into the Himalayan foothills to the mountain retreat of Shimla and check in to our magnificent hotel.	Shimla The Oberoi Cecil Website
Day 19 Thu, Jul 19 B,L	Morning walking tour of Shimla. Shimla was discovered in 1819 by the British, who were seeking respite from the baking plains. Three years later, the first British house was erected, and in 1864 Shimla became the summer capital of India. Set among cool pine-clad hills with plenty of crumbling colonial charm, Shimla is for many people the archetypal hill station. There are stunning views all the way to the Himalayas. Afternoon and evening at leisure.	Shimla The Oberoi Cecil 
Day 20 Fri, Jul 20 B,L,D	In the morning we will depart on one of the world's great train journeys – the Shimla to Kalka 'Toy Train'. Famous for its 102 tunnels, 87 bridges and 900 curves, the 96 km track was built in 1903 so members of the British Raj could take their leave of the heat and 'summer' more comfortably in Shimla. The track winds through spectacular mountain scenery and farming villages. At Kalka, we will connect with our express train to New Delhi before checking in to our central hotel. Himalayan Queen 52456 SHIMLA-KALKA 10.25am-4.10pm Shatabdi Express KALKA-DELHI 5.45pm-9.55pm	Delhi The Lalit Website
Day 21 Sat, Jul 21 B,L,D	Morning half day city sightseeing tour of Old Delhi, visiting the Red Fort built in 1648 by Mughal Emperor Shahjehan. Visit the cremation sites of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Also visit some of the sights of New Delhi including the shopping centre of Connaught Place. From the labyrinthine street bazaars of Old Delhi to New Delhi's chic art galleries and nightclubs, Delhi is a profoundly Indian city. We have some free time in the afternoon to enjoy the sights and atmosphere of Delhi before our farewell dinner this evening.	New Delhi The Lalit 
Day 22 Sun, Jul 22 B	Free time today for some last minute shopping and sightseeing before we transfer to the airport for our evening (connecting) flights home to Australia. Arrive home Monday July 23. If you are still after some more adventure, there are plenty of options available for additional travel in Asia – or Europe – before heading home.	

TOUR COST: \$12,750 pp twin share

Single supplement (room to yourself) – add \$1600

TOUR INCLUSIONS...

- All international and internal flights (economy class) including taxes and airport charges that can be included on the pre-purchased air ticket. International flights are based on departure from any east coast of Australia capital. Tour costs for Perth departures can vary slightly up or down depending on destination. We can also offer a range of premium economy and business class flight options. If you book your own international flights using FF points or other arrangements, the economy class flight cost built into the Farm Study Tour is deducted from the final tour price;
- First class, centrally located city accommodation (best available in regional areas) with full buffet breakfast;
- Farm and other technical visits;
- Most lunch and evening meals are included and are of the highest standard. Meals are designed to showcase the best of the regional food and wines. Some evenings will be left free to sample some of the great local restaurants at your leisure;
- Local, as well as our own, experienced *Greenmount Travel* guides/translators accompany the group to ensure any problems that may arise are quickly fixed;
- Private first class charter coach and experienced drivers; and,
- Park and site entries, transfers, etc mentioned on the itineraries.

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