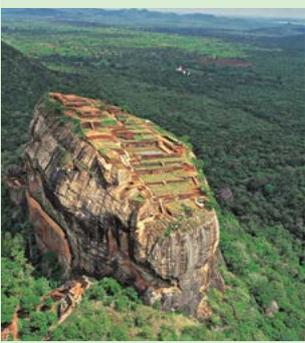


Sri Lanka and India

Draft Farm Study Tour 2018

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Sun, Jul 1	<p>Tour leader: David Dowling 0437 000234</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</p> <p>Jetwings Beach Hotel http://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingbeach/</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 Sigirya 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>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</p> <p>Cinnamon Lodge http://www.cinnamonhotels.com/en/cinnamonlodggehabarana/</p> 
DAY 3 Tue, July 3 B,L,D	<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. 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>Habarana</p> <p>Cinnamon Lodge</p> 
DAY 4 Wed, Jul 4 B,L,D	<p>We leave Habarana and head south, stopping at Dambulla where we will visit the regional wholesale produce market. 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>After lunch, we will receive a presentation on Sri Lankan farming from Professor Buddhi Marambe from the Department of Crop Science at the nearby University of Peradeniya.</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). In the evening, enjoy a traditional Sri Lankan dance and cultural show and visit the Temple of the Tooth shrine.</p>	<p>Kandy</p> <p>Cinnamon Citadel (or similar) http://www.cinnamonhotels.com/en/cinnamoncitadelkandy/</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>	<p>Ella The Secret Ella http://www.thesecrethotels.com/ella/</p> 
DAY 6 Fri, Jul 6 B,L,D	<p>Time for some tea plucking this morning before leaving the highlands for the southern lowlands and continue on to the wonderful city of Galle.</p> <p>We enjoy a guided walking tour of the fort before a free afternoon and evening.</p>	<p>Galle Amari Galle (or similar) https://www.amari.com/galle-srilanka/</p>
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>Galle Amari Galle (or similar)</p> 
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 flight to Hyderabad via Bangalore.</p> <p>We will be met at the airport and transferred to the ICRISAT centre at nearby Patancheru.</p> <p>Indigo 6E 1206 COLOMBO-BANGALORE 2.25pm-3.45pm Indigo 6E 855 BANGALORE-HYDERABAD 6.45pm-8.00pm</p>	<p>Hyderabad, India ICRISAT Guestel</p>
DAY 9 Mon, Jul 9 B,L,D	<p>We will have a full day to visit the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) at nearby Patancheru. ICRISAT spearheads the international research effort on crops which are suited to semi-arid environments, especially in the developing countries of Africa and India. The focus is on crops such as chickpeas, pigeon peas, groundnuts, sorghum, pearl millet and finger millet. The current Deputy Director of Research at the Institute is Dr Peter Carberry who has had a distinguished career in crop modelling with CSIRO in Australia and a long history in agricultural research in the developing world. It is sure to be a fascinating day.</p>	<p>Hyderabad ICRISAT Guestel</p>
DAY 10 Tue, Jul 10 B,L,D	<p>A very early start today for our flight to Varanasi.</p> <p>Afternoon city sightseeing tour then enjoy the Gange aarti in the evening.</p> <p>Varanasi is an ancient sacred city located on the banks of the holy River Ganges. The spectacular ceremony Gange aarti 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.</p> <p>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>Indigo 6E 915 HYDERABAD-VARANASI 6.15am-8.15am</p>	<p>Varanasi Suryaudai Haveli http://suryaudayhaveli.com</p> 

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 https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-agra
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 visit Agra Fort and other attractions in the city.</p> <p>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 https://taj.tajhotels.com/en-in/taj-jai-mahal-palace-jaipur/
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>In the afternoon, visit the City Palace or spend some time in the markets.</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 the farming village of Samode where there should be some cotton and corn crops emerging. We will visit a local farming family and there will be time to explore the village before lunch in the nearby Samode Palace, nestled in the Aravalli Hills.</p> <p>After lunch, we will continue to another Palace where we will stay the night. 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 http://www.neemranahotels.com/fort-palace-neemrana/ 
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 https://www.parkplaza.com/ludhiana-hotel-in-141001/indludhi
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 have studied in Australia.</p> <p>In the afternoon, visit farms in the area including a large 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 with more farm and scenic visits on the way. We will bypass the traffic congestion of Chandigarh as we head into the foothills of the Himalayas. We will stop for lunch at Kandaghat then board the 'Toy Train' for the final, and most scenic, section of its journey to Shimla. 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.	Shimla The Oberoi Cecil https://www.oberoihotels.com/hotels-in-shimla-cecil/
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	After breakfast, we will head back down the mountain to Chandigarh to catch our flight to Delhi. In the afternoon, we will visit the Austrade office for a briefing on Indian agriculture, with particular reference to the political aspects and special reference to the recently introduced tariffs on chickpeas. Jet Airways 857 CHANDIGARH-DELHI 11.25am-12.50pm	Delhi The Lalit https://www.thelalit.com/the-lalit-delhi/
Day 21 Sat, Jul 21 B,L,D	In the morning, we will visit a chickpea processor producing snack food from Australian chickpeas – a visit organised by the very helpful people at Austrade. In the afternoon, we will have a 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.	

TOUR COST: \$12750 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.

Visit the website (www.greenmounttravel.com.au) for terms and conditions and for other Greenmount Travel tours.