



# Colombo

📞 011 / POP 2.4 MILLION

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## Best Places to Eat

- » AVP Restaurant (p64)
- » Hotel De Pilawoos (p65)
- » Gallery Cafe (p65)
- » Bu Ba (p67)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Lake Lodge (p60)
- » Cinnamon Grand Hotel (p60)
- » Havelock Place Bungalow (p62)
- » Casa Colombo (p62)

## Why Go?

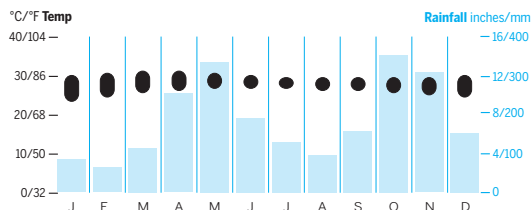
Colombo is rapidly emerging from the bad rap it has carried for decades. No longer just the sprawling city you have to endure on your way to the southern beaches, it has become a worthy destination in its own right. New restaurants, designer shops and other attractions open constantly.

The legacies of colonial Colombo are still very much intact along its often shady boulevards. Fort is in the midst of widespread historic restoration while Pettah brims with markets and rampant commerce.

Even traffic-clogged Galle Rd is getting spiffier, while the seafront benefits from new roads that are spurring hotel construction. Colombo's cosmopolitan side supports stylish cafes, interesting stores, galleries and museums. Surprises abound in its old quarters. You can easily spend a couple of days exploring this vibrant city and a visit here is an excellent start – or finish – to your Sri Lankan adventures.

## When to Go

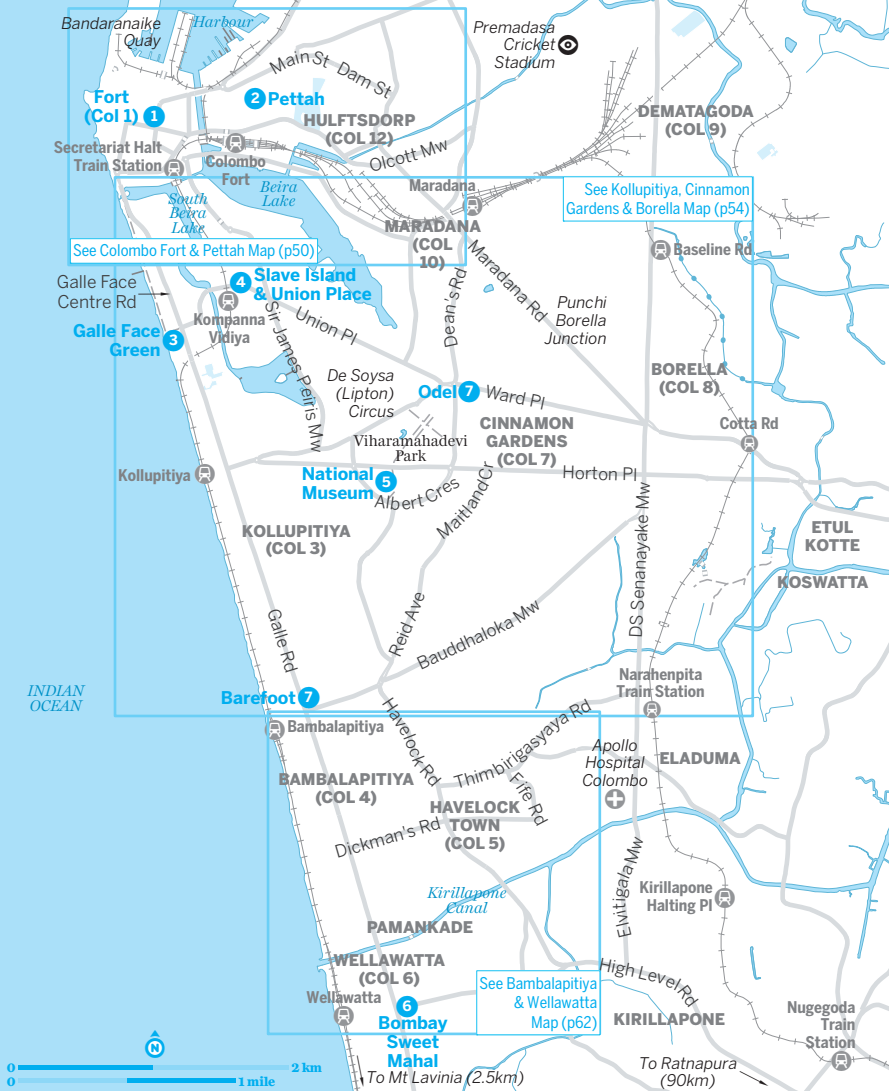
### Colombo



**Jan–Mar** The driest season, with night-time cool breezes. More tourists, so book hotels in advance.

**Apr** Colombo feels empty around the Sinhalese New Year as people return to their home villages.

**Dec** Although Christians are a minority, Christmas is popular and decorations are everywhere.



## Colombo Highlights

- 1 Revelling in the restoration of the historic **Fort** area (p49)
- 2 Plunging into the commercial madness of the shops, stalls and markets of ages-old **Pettah** (p49)
- 3 Catching a sunset amid families and courting couples on Colombo's front lawn, **Galle Face Green** (p51)
- 4 Strolling the ancient quarters of **Slave Island** and **Union Place** (p52) before they fall to new glitzy developments
- 5 Walking through Sri Lanka's history in the remarkable **National Museum** (p53), which is right in the city's heart near Viharamahadevi Park
- 6 Enjoying a traditional Indian sweet at **Bombay Sweet Mahal** (p66), one of many locally beloved candy shops along Galle Rd
- 7 Shopping at creative local stores such as **Odel** and **Barefoot** (p69), where you can browse some of Sri Lanka's most interesting merchandise