

The Hill Country

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Sharon Inn (p154)
- ➔ Grand Indian (p172)
- ➔ High Tea at the Grand (p171)
- ➔ Olde Empire Cafe (p154)

Best Places to Stay

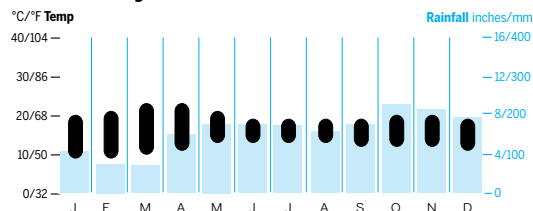
- ➔ Baramba House (p160)
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Why Go?

Picture Sri Lanka and visions of golden beaches probably dance before your eyes. But there's another side to this island. It's a side where mists slowly part to reveal emerald carpets of tea plantations and montane forests clinging to serrated ranges bookended by waterfalls. This is Sri Lanka's Hill Country; a place where you can wear a fleece in the daytime and cuddle up beside a log fire in the evening. A region where you can walk to the end of the world, stand in the footsteps of the Buddha, paddle a raft down a raging river, enjoy the drumbeat of traditional dance and be surrounded by a hundred wild elephants.

With a hit list like that it's perhaps hardly a surprise that when many visitors look back on their Sri Lankan adventures it's not the beaches that make them smile fondly, but rather it's the surging, rolling highlands.

When to Go Nuwara Eliya



Jan Perfect for clear days, crisp nights and the pilgrimage up Adam's Peak.

Apr The Sinhalese New Year means horse racing and a hectic social calendar in Nuwara Eliya.

Jul–Aug Elephants put on their best frocks for the spectacular Kandy Esala Perahera festival.



The Hill Country Highlights

1 Experiencing the excitement of elephants, drummers and dancers at the **Kandy Esala Perahera** (p149)

2 Getting away from Sri Lanka's energetic buzz by hiking the montane forests of the **Knuckles Range** (p161)

3 Joining devout pilgrims and following flickering torchlight

to ascend the sacred heights of **Adam's Peak** (p163)

4 Rattling and rolling with Tamil tea-pickers on a slow, slow train journey from **Haputale to Ella** (p184)

5 Winding down in **Ella** (p179), combining excellent home-cooked food and spectacular walks

6 Discovering your inner birdwatcher amid the tangled perfection of the **Sinharaja Forest Reserve** (p189)

7 Rising before dawn for a view from the stunning heights of **World's End** (p174)

8 Counting elephants by the dozen in the **Uda Walawe National Park** (p188)