

NOBLE CALEDONIA

SPLENDOURS OF
SRI LANKA

An escorted journey exploring the culture,
history & amazing wildlife of Sri Lanka

November 2018 to March 2019

Sigiriya Rock Fortress



Join us for a comprehensive tour through Sri Lanka, a truly remarkable country with a diverse landscape of beautiful beaches, lush tea plantations, rolling hills and forests which are scattered with intricately carved stone monuments.

Marco Polo described Sri Lanka as the finest island of its size in the world when he arrived there in 1265, while successive waves of Indian, Arab and European traders were seduced by reports of rare spices, precious stones and magnificent elephants. Although tiny in size compared to its neighbour India, Sri Lanka has a wealth of both ancient and natural sites which we will explore during this escorted tour including no less than five UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Galle, Kandy, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, and Dambulla.

During our exploration we will learn about the country's cultural, colonial and religious history and visit some of its holiest temples and most scenic regions, most notably the verdant rolling hills of Nuwara Eliya. Sri Lanka is a paradise for wildlife lovers and we have included a full day and a jeep safari in Yala National Park, which offers the greatest diversity of animal and birdlife in the country and is a popular place to try and spot the elusive leopard. In addition to the guided tours there will be some time at leisure to explore independently and our final two days will be spent in Galle, a wonderfully atmospheric city in which to unwind at the end of the tour.



THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Colombo, Sri Lanka. Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

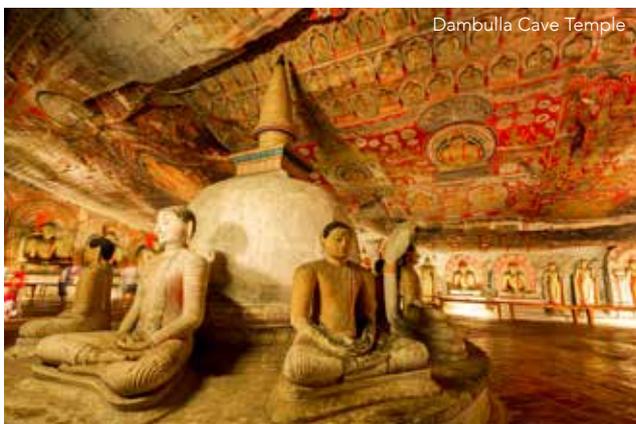
Day 2 Colombo. Arrive and transfer to the Cinnamon Grand Hotel for a two night stay. The remainder of the day is at leisure. (D)

Day 3 Colombo. After a morning at leisure enjoy a city tour of Colombo, the largest city in Sri Lanka and known in the past as the gateway to the Orient. Our tour will showcase some of Colombo's most famous landmarks and

buildings including the Gangaramaya Buddhist Temple, situated close to the Beira Lake, which demonstrates an eclectic mix of Sri Lankan, Thai, Indian and Chinese architecture. Continue on to the Pettah Bazaar area, the Wolfendhal Dutch Church, the Old Parliament complex, the Independence Square and the National Museum before returning to the hotel for dinner and an evening at leisure. (D)

Day 4 Dambulla Cave Temples & Habarana. After breakfast we make our way towards

Habarana, stopping en-route in Dambulla to visit the Dambulla Cave Temples. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a vast cave complex that dates back to the 1st century BC when it was converted into a temple and it is still regarded as one of the most important Buddhist monasteries. The caves are said to have first been used as a refuge by an ancient king who, on regaining his throne, commissioned magnificent carved images within the living rock. Later kings made further improvements, making the evolution of ancient Sri Lankan art evident



Dambulla Cave Temple



Tea pickers, Nuwara Eliya



Painted stork



The lighthouse, Galle Fort



Temple of the Tooth, Kandy

throughout this historical site. As we explore the complex of five caves, admire the intricate patterns of religious images painted to follow the contours of the rock ceiling and wander between over 150 statues of Buddha that stand so well preserved within the cave walls. After our visit, continue to Habarana and check in to the Cinnamon Lodge, our base for the next three nights. (D)

Day 5 Hiriwadunna & Polonnaruwa. After breakfast we visit a typical Sri Lankan village and family house in Hiriwadunna. During our walking tour of the village we will visit the family's land, where a variety of fruits and vegetables grow, and see how they live in traditional mud houses. Following a cooking demonstration by the locals, enjoy a typical village style lunch of local delicacies and authentic curries. In the afternoon we visit the ancient city of Polonnaruwa. This 5th century ancient city was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982 and is considered to be one of the best planned archaeological sites in the country. The entire landscape of the region is punctuated by huge man-made reservoirs, the most famous of which is Parakrama Samudra or the Sea of Parakrama, built during King Parakramabahu's reign in 1164-1196 AD. The monuments in the ancient city are relatively well preserved and give clear evidence of the glory of Sri Lanka's past. Highlights are the Royal Palace complex, including the King's Palace and Audience Hall, the Quadrangle, with its concentration of ancient heritage and the spectacular Gal Vihare complex of four massive

images of the Buddha, cut from a single slab of granite, a highlight of ancient Sri Lankan rock carving. (L, D)

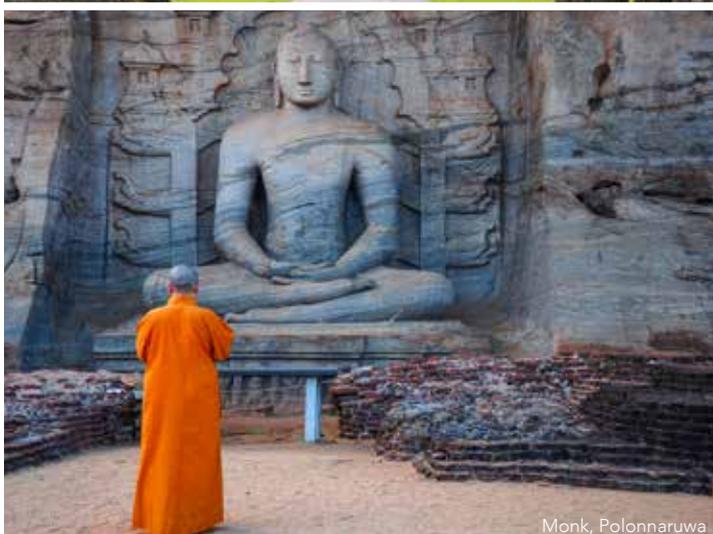
Day 6 Sigiriya Rock Fortress. Easily the most iconic UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka, Sigiriya Rock dramatically rises up out of the surrounding jungle, standing at nearly 200 metres tall. This incredible rock fortress was built by King Kashyapa I in the 5th century AD and served as a royal citadel whilst he ruled from above. Accompanied by a harem of women, King Kashyapa I spent his days in various sections of the citadel including a large bath pool which impressively lies atop this epic stone. We will arrive at the fortress in the morning and with every step we climb, marvel at its beauty in the sun. Pause occasionally during your ascent to admire the mirror wall, the great lion paws, and the famous Sigiriya frescoes. Legend states that King Kashyapa's harem threw themselves off the rock when he fell, but live forever in the form of frescoes found in the inner cave walls. Once there were as many as 500 but now only 19 remain. Once at the top, marvel at the impressive ruins and admire what an accomplishment and struggle it would have been to build this palace. Enjoy the unparalleled views of natural jungle that surrounds you. Return to the hotel and enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at leisure. (D)

Day 7 Matale Spice Gardens & Kandy. Depart after breakfast to the hill capital of Kandy, the last kingdom of Sri Lanka. En-route we visit a Spice Garden in Matale, where you can smell,

touch and taste many spices Sri Lanka is famous for. We will be introduced to different spices and shown how they are grown and prepared for use. A cooking demonstration will show us how Sri Lankans use these spices for day to day cooking. Continue to Kandy and check in to the Cinnamon Citadel for a two night stay. Marked as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Kandy is home to the famous Temple of the Tooth. This iconic monument was built during the 16th century AD and is one of the most important temples for Buddhists as it houses the Sacred Tooth Relic of Buddha and is one of the most revered sites in this cultural capital. Visit the Temple this evening. (D)

Day 8 Kandy. This morning we visit Udawattakele, a sanctuary, home to an extensive collection of animals including birds, insects and creepers. Enjoy a walk before we head out for our city tour of Kandy. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure before our exclusive cultural show this evening. (D)

Day 9 Royal Botanical Gardens & Nuwara Eliya. This morning we visit the Royal Botanical Gardens. With 147 acres and over 4000 species of plants, it is the largest and most impressive botanical gardens in Sri Lanka. As we take a leisurely walk, admire the beautiful giant trees, many of which are over a century old, and the fine collection of orchids, for which the garden is famous. Afterwards we will make our way towards Nuwara Eliya where we stay for two nights at the Grand Hotel. Nuwara Eliya is in the heart of Sri Lankan hill country with acres of



tea estates merged with beautiful old English architecture. It is the home of the famous Ceylon tea and the rolling mountains are a carpet of velvety green tea plantations, interspersed with gushing streams and tumbling waterfalls. The salubrious climate, misty glens and the decidedly British character make Nuwara Eliya a must on any Sri Lankan travel itinerary. As an alternative to our journey by road, we may board the train at Peradeniya Station and take a scenic train journey to Nanuoya and then transfer by road to our hotel in Nuwara Eliya. This ride by local train to 'Little England' is one of the most picturesque railway journeys in the world. We pass through lush green tea estates and mist covered mountains as we journey along the winding tracks. (L, D)

Please note that the Railway Authority will only issue tickets 10 days prior to our travel and we are only able to purchase them at that time. Due to limited seating there is a possibility we may not be able to obtain tickets. Should this be the case we will travel by road. It is important to note that the train is air-conditioned but basic, however the scenery en-route is magnificent.

Day 10 Nuwara Eliya. After breakfast we take a tour of Nuwara Eliya, passing the renowned hill station, a former retreat for British Civil Servants away from the heat of the plains. Many of the buildings retain features from the colonial period. We will visit a tea plantation and watch a demonstration of the process of making the finest Ceylon tea before sampling the different blends with a tea sommelier. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon at leisure. (D)

Day 11 Yala. After breakfast we head towards Yala, an ideal base for exploring the Yala National Park. Also known as Ruhunu, Yala National Park was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1900 and is now home to 44 varieties of mammal and 215 bird species. This vast region of arid scrub interspersed with pockets of dense forest and open patches of grassland hosts one of the highest densities of leopard in the world. We will check in to Cinnamon Wild, our base for the next two nights. (D)

Day 12 Yala National Park. We depart early morning for a Jeep Safari in Yala National Park which is renowned for the variety of its wildlife. We hope to see sloth bears, sambars, jackals, crocodiles, peacocks in their finest frocks, majestic elephants ambling about and the cunning Sri Lankan leopard. Return to the hotel to enjoy some time at leisure before our second safari in the late afternoon. The best time to enter the park is in the early morning or late afternoon when the animals wake or resurface after taking cover from the midday sun. (D)

Day 13 Galle. This morning we head towards Galle, visiting a tea plantation en-route. See the production process of virgin white tea, the only tea untouched by hand and considered to be the purest tea in the world. In Galle, see the impressive Galle Fortress during our walking tour. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the port where the Portuguese first landed in Sri Lanka in the 16th century and was then extensively fortified by the Dutch during the 17th century. The city still retains the air of old Holland and is to this day maintained by the Dutch. Littered with high end hotel properties, as well as bustling cafes, Galle Fort is a world of its own. Check in to the Amari Hotel for a three night stay. (D)

Days 14 & 15 Galle. We have two days at leisure to enjoy the hotel's facilities, relax on the beach or independently explore the historic city of Galle which is only a short drive away. (D)

Day 16 Colombo to London. Transfer to the airport for the return scheduled indirect flight to London.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Dates	Prices
14 th to 29 th November 2018	Twin: £3695 Single: £4995
16 th to 31 st January; 20 th February to 7 th March & 13 th to 28 th March 2019	Twin: £3875 Single: £5295

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • 14 nights hotel accommodation with breakfast daily • Lunch and dinner as indicated (L-Lunch, D-Dinner) • Two Jeep Safaris at Yala National Park • English-speaking local guide • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Entrance fees • Transfers • Airport taxes • Gratuities.

Not Included: Travel insurance, visa.

YOUR ACCOMMODATION



Cinnamon Grand, Colombo - Two nights

Situated in the heart of Colombo lies the five star Cinnamon Grand which offers many facilities and a multitude of restaurants serving a range of cuisines. The air-conditioned deluxe rooms emphasise understated luxury and provide all you require for a comfortable and leisurely stay. Each room provides a minibar, tea and coffee making facilities, flat screen television, writing desk, full length mirror and a separate seating area. The bathrooms feature a bath tub with a shower, bath amenities, marble vanity tops and a large wall-mounted magnifying mirror. The ground floor pool at the hotel is possibly the largest outdoor pool in the city. Naturally heated by the warm rays of the sun, it overlooks four of the signature restaurants. The covered rooftop pool, part of the Angsana City Club & Spa Complex, has a protective screen to keep out harmful UV rays.



Cinnamon Lodge, Habarana - Three nights

Located in the centre of Sri Lanka's cultural triangle and sprawled over 27 acres of lush forested land, Cinnamon Lodge is an exclusive hideaway. Rooting over 1700 trees, time stands still enabling guests to experience serenity and tranquillity while walking along the paths that lead up to the chalet-type rooms. All 137 chalets are carefully prepared to provide absolute intimacy and comfort, and the large rooms provide the luxury of space and indulgence. The 68 superior rooms overlook the lush vegetation and all rooms feature a bedroom with living area, bathrooms with a large shower, well-stocked mini bar, tea and coffee making facilities and cable television. The country's finest foods are offered at the three restaurants that are renowned for delectable dishes ranging from local delicacies to international favourites. Guests may also enjoy the Azmaara spa or swim in the large uniquely designed swimming pool.



Cinnamon Citadel, Kandy - Two nights

Influenced by the old and inspired by the new, Cinnamon Citadel has fused retro chic design with the rich heritage of this ancient kingdom to breathe new life into the most stylish hotel in the hills of Sri Lanka. The Cinnamon Citadel is an ideal retreat for those seeking the treasures of this ancient city and for those seeking rest and relaxation in a peaceful setting. The 93 superior rooms, which measure 423 square feet are equipped with four star amenities. The interiors take on a mix and match of heritage red, with mustards and crimson to highlight royalty and majesty for which Kandy is renowned. There is a restaurant, bar and café on site and an outdoor swimming pool from where you can enjoy the breathtaking view of the Mahaweli River that flows along the periphery of the resort.



Cinnamon Wild, Yala - Two nights

Nestled up a windy track and living in perfect harmony with the resident crocodile and deer, this hotel is perfectly located on the border of Yala National Park. Offering great safari options during the day and night, immerse yourself in the local wildlife that call this national park home. The rustic and luxurious chalet accommodation is integrated into the surrounds and contains all you require for a comfortable stay. Each chalet provides a mini bar, tea and coffee making facilities, free Wi-Fi, air conditioning, private bathroom facilities and porch. Hear the native calls of a wild boar or leopard as you reflect on the days discoveries. The main restaurants outdoor dining allows you to dine by trees and feel immersed with nature. The hotels rooftop bar and viewing deck offers panoramic views of the wilderness, ocean and lagoon that surround you.



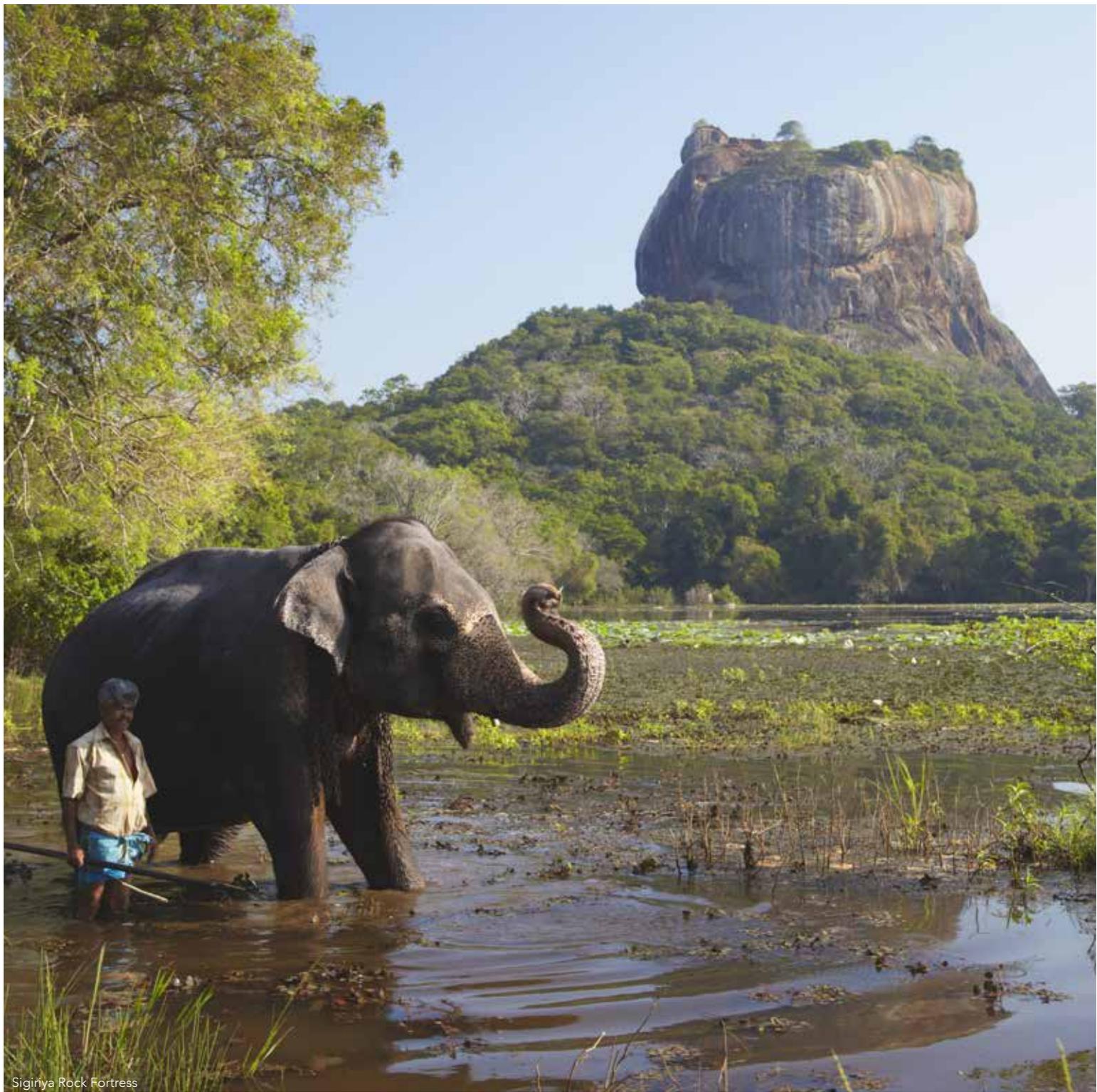
Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya – Two nights

Built in the late 1800s, the Grand Hotel is a charming hotel that offers you the grandeur of yester years with the comfort of modern facilities. It is an excellent architectural structure of the Elizabethan era and is also the former mansion of Sir Edward Barnes who was the Governor of Sri Lanka during 1830-1850. The hotel offers comfortable and charming guestrooms which resonate the ambience of a bygone era and there are 154 deluxe rooms with stunning views of the surroundings. Overlooking the beautifully manicured gardens the main restaurant offers a vast spread for breakfast, lunch and dinner and the bar is a popular place where you can enjoy local and international spirits while mingling with friends. The coffee shop is located closer to the main restaurant and serves light meals and snacks. For your relaxation, the hotel also offers a sauna and massage treatments.



Amari Hotel, Galle - Three nights

Amari Galle Hotel is a luxurious getaway, set on the south coast of Sri Lanka near the beautiful historic town of Galle. The area is blessed with paradise beaches and Dutch-colonial architecture, Galle Fort being the crown jewel that was built by the Dutch in 1663 and still stands strong today. The unique location of the newly built hotel means you are only 15 minutes drive from this historic town whilst having the blissful beach of southern Sri Lanka at your feet. Every room has an ocean view with private balcony, free Wi-Fi, air conditioning, tea and coffee making facilities, flat screen TV and a range of complimentary toiletries. Enjoy delicious Asian and international dishes at the gourmet restaurant or watch the sunset with a cocktail from the rooftop bar with its panoramic views.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request. Cover image: Peacock.