

The Man in Seat 61... beginner's guide to Train travel in Sri Lanka

<https://www.seat61.com/SriLanka.htm#Colombo%20-%20Kandy%20-%20Badulla>

Visit Sri Lanka and take the train...

Sri Lanka is a fabulous place – safe, friendly and remarkably hassle-free. Taking the train is a great & inexpensive way to get around, the train journeys are real cultural experiences and the most scenic routes will be highlights of your visit – in particular the wonderful journey from Colombo to Kandy and up into Tea Country and the coastal train ride from Colombo to Dutch colonial Galle. British visitors will find the stations, signal boxes and old red semaphore signals very familiar! On this page you'll find a beginner's guide to taking the train around Sri Lanka.

Train times & fares for key routes...

- [Colombo – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya – Elle – Badulla](#)
- [Colombo – Galle – Matara: *The Coast Line*](#)
- [Colombo – Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa, Trincomalee](#)
- [Colombo – Anuradhapura – Talaimannar/Jaffna](#)
- [Colombo commuter: Negombo, Mount Lavinia, Kalutara, Puttalam, Avissawella](#)

Train travel guide & how to buy tickets...

- [How to check train times & prices](#)
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- [How to buy tickets](#)
- [Colombo Fort station & how to find your train](#)
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- [What are Sri Lankan trains like?](#)
- [A journey in pictures from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya](#)
- [Watch the video: Colombo to Tea Country by train](#)

Other Sri Lanka travel information

- [Useful country information](#) – visas, currency, time zone, etc
 - [Suggested hotels in Colombo, Kandy, Galle...](#)
 - [Travel to or from Sri Lanka by sea from India](#)
 - [Flights to Sri Lanka](#)
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Train operator: Sri Lanka Government Railways. www.railway.gov.lk. Also try <http://slr.malindaprasad.com>

Time zone: GMT + 5½ all year.

Dialling code: +94.

Currency: £1 = approx 230 rupees, \$1 = 175 rupees [Currency converter](#)

Tourist information: www.srilanka.travel [Find hotels in Colombo, Kandy & Sri Lanka](#)
[Recommended guidebooks](#) [Tripadvisor Sri Lanka page](#)

Hotels: [Hotel search & suggested hotels in Sri Lanka](#)

Visas: UK and most other western nationalities require a visa to visit Sri Lanka. The easiest option is to get an e-visa online at www.eta.gov.lk.

Alternatively, UK residents can get a visa from the Sri Lanka High Commission in London, www.srilankahighcommission.co.uk.

IMPORTANT: Check current travel advice at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sri-lanka

Page last updated: 28 May 2019



How to check train times & fares...

- On this page you'll find timetables & fares for the most popular trains, stations & routes:

[Colombo - Kandy - Hatton - Nuwara](#)

[Eliya - Elle - Badulla](#)

[Colombo - Galle - Matara](#)

[Colombo - Galoya - Polonnaruwa,](#)

[Batticaloa, Trincomalee](#)

[Colombo - Anuradhapura -](#)

[Talaimannar/Vavuniya - Jaffna](#)

[Colombo commuter: Negombo, Mt](#)

[Laviniya, Kalutara, Puttalam,](#)

[Avissawella](#)

- You can check train times between any two stations at

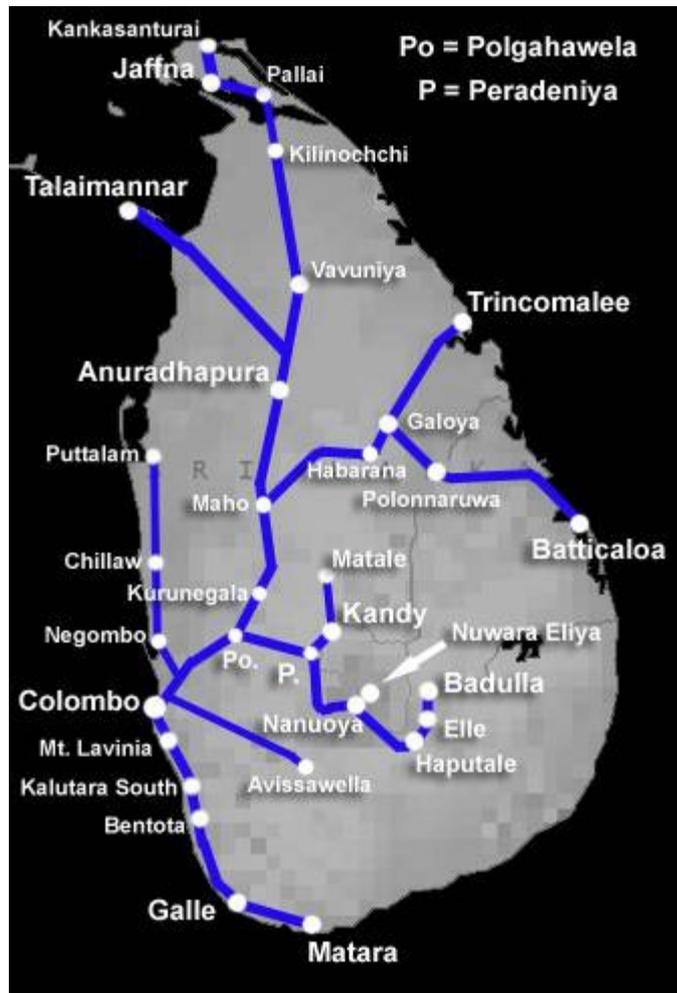
www.railway.gov.lk, the official Sri

Lanka Railways website. Click *English*, then click the pink *Train schedule* button and use the journey planner.

- You can also check train times & prices between specific stations using the journey planner at <http://slr.malindaprasad.com>. This site is mobile friendly, so you can add it to your smartphone's home screen and take it with you to Sri Lanka.
- These sites only handle direct trains, so don't expect them to tell you how to get from (say) Kandy to Galle except on the once a day direct train. And they *may* only show trains as having 2nd & 3rd class even if they also have 1st – although relatively few trains offer 1st class. And the two sites sometimes disagree, so always double-check times locally.

Interactive route map...

Click a route for train times & fares



How to buy tickets...

...for unreserved cars

- Sri Lanka Railways 2nd & 3rd class *unreserved* cars cannot be booked in advance.

Tickets are only sold on the day at the ticket office, sometimes from only an hour before departure. Turn up, buy a ticket and hop on, it's easy. Tickets cannot sell out.

Virtually all trains have unreserved cars. The unreserved cars are often crowded, whether you get a seat depends on whether you're joining at the starting station or en route, and how busy that day or time is. If all seats are taken you stand, ideally wedged in an open doorway with a breeze wafting in and great views...

- *At Colombo Fort station*, specific ticket windows are designated for specific routes:
 - Counter 1 for Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Talaimannar & Jaffna.
 - Counters 2 or 8 for Kandy, Hatton, Nanuoya, Haputale, Elle, Badulla.
 - Counter 3 for Batticaloa or Trincomalee.
 - Counter 4 for any station, 1st & 2nd class tickets only.
 - Counters 13 or 14 for Galle & Matara.
- On the Colombo–Galle–Matara route, virtually all seats are unreserved so pre–booking is neither necessary nor possible. The same goes for all [Colombo Commuter trains](#) including the Puttalam & Avissawella lines.

Tip: Many trains to Galle & Matara start at Colombo Maradana station before calling at the main Colombo Fort station. Rather than board at Colombo Fort when most of the seats will already be taken, if you board at Colombo Maradana you stand a good chance of getting a good seat on the coastal (right hand) side of the train.

...for reserved cars

- Many important longer–distance trains have a designated 2nd class *reserved* car and sometimes a 3rd class *reserved* car, in addition to the many unreserved cars. Some trains have a 1st class car and 1st class seats are always *reserved*.

Seats in these *reserved* cars can be booked up to 30 days in advance – increased from 10 to 45 days in 2013, then reduced to 30 in 2016.

If you buy a ticket for a reserved car you are guaranteed a seat, and a specific seat number will be printed on your ticket. The reserved cars are jealously guarded by an attendant, indeed he may lock off some exterior & gangway doors to control access, and there are no standees allowed – so reserved cars aren't crowded.

- *At Colombo Fort station*, you can book tickets for 1st, 2nd or 3rd class reserved seats cars at the [Berth/Intercity Reservations Office](#), marked as counter 17, accessed from the front of the station towards the left hand end of the station facade. Inside the office there are separate counters for specific routes. According to the Sri Lanka Railways website it's open 05:00–14:00, closed for lunch 12:30–13:30, but I have found it open as late as 17:00. Go figure, as the Americans say...

The Railway Tourist Information Office at the front of the station sells expensive tours, but not train tickets, so don't bother with this.

At Kandy station, you make reservations at ticket office counters 1 & 2, marked as the *Intercity counter*.

- Tickets for the reserved cars often sell out soon after booking opens, so it's a good idea to book tickets in advance before you get to Sri Lanka as explained in the next section. The 1st class observation car & air-con 1st class car on the blue trains from Colombo to Kandy & Badulla often get fully-booked well in advance and so do 1st class berths on all the Night Mail trains. 2nd class reserved cars often get full on the Hill Country trains, too.
- *If you are told that a train is full*, all this means is that the reserved seats have sold out. You can still buy a ticket at the station on the day for the 2nd & 3rd class unreserved cars, these cannot sell out. So you can still travel on that train, just without a reserved seat.

How to buy tickets online...

- Sri Lankan Railways don't offer online booking, so to buy tickets for a [reserved car](#) before you get to Sri Lanka you'll need to use an agency.
- **Option 1, buy online at [12go.asia](#).**

You can order Sri Lanka train tickets from 12go.asia, a reliable agency specialising in rail & bus booking throughout Southeast Asia and already popular for train bookings Thailand and Vietnam.

You must order tickets more than 32 days before travel – this allows 12go.asia to process your order and buy the tickets for you as soon as Sri Lanka Railways opens booking, which gives you the best chance of getting the date, train & class that you want. Even so, tickets are in high demand, so I recommend selecting the *Flexible* option when you book, so that if your first choice of train or class is unavailable, they'll get you the next best class or next best departure on the same day.

You collect tickets from an office in Colombo or for a small extra fee tickets can be delivered to your hotel.

Note that 12go.asia have programmed their site with all the most popular station to station journeys including Colombo to or from the main tourist destinations of Kandy, Nanuoya & Ella, but not every possible station to station pair. Also remember that only *reserved* seat tickets can be ordered, *unreserved* tickets must be bought at the station on the day.

[Feedback would be appreciated](#) if you use them.

- **Option 2, VisitSriLankaTours.** Another recommended agency is visitsrilankatours.co.uk/train-tickets-1.html. I have had numerous positive reports from people who have used them, and I have used them myself.

On some popular routes – for example Colombo to Kandy or Colombo to Tea Country – they sometimes book your tickets through the Mobitel system which allows Sri Lankans to pre-book trains if they have a Mobitel mobile phone. If so, all you have to do is collect your tickets from any Mobitel counter by showing the reference email and each traveller's passport. There's a Mobitel counter in the Colombo Bandaranaike airport arrivals hall open 24 hours – it was simplicity itself to collect all my VisitSriLankaTours train tickets there on arrival at 5am, and there wasn't even a queue. They may or may not use this system for *your* tickets, they may arrange ticket collection at the station ticket office which is also pretty straightforward.

- **Option 3, Tourmastertravelservices.** Another agency with an easy-to-use website with a page for ordering train tickets is tourmastertravelservices.com. I have had at least two very positive reports about Tourmatser so far, more feedback would be appreciated.
- **The privately-run ExpoRail & Rajadhani carriages** Colombo-Kandy/Hatton-Nanuoya-Elle-Badulla& Colombo-Galle-Matara can be booked online at www.exporail.lk & www.rajadhani.lk. *But currently, Exporail have ceased operation and their website is down. Rajadhani's website says they are temporarily suspended too.*
- **Remember these agencies only make bookings for the 'reserved' cars.** *Even if you're told the train is 'fully booked', you can always buy a ticket on the day and travel 'unreserved', [see the explanation above](#).*

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Colombo Fort station... [See map of Colombo](#)

Opened in 1917, Colombo Fort is Colombo's main station, right in the heart of the historic Fort area, walking distance from all the sights. All mainline & commuter trains go from here. Colombo has a second main station one stop (2 km) to the east called [Maradana](#), most but not all trains stop here, but Colombo Fort is the best-located station to use.





Ticket counters... To buy tickets for unreserved cars, go to the relevant counter on the day of departure. A board which counter sells tickets for which route. The counters are all accessed directly from the roadway in front of the



Berth/intercity reservations office... To buy tickets for reserved seats cars, sleeping-cars or sleeperetts, go to the reservations office, labelled as counter 17 & accessed from the roadway in front of the station towards the left hand the station facade. Inside the office there are different counters for different routes. Allegedly open 06:00-14:00 possibly until 17:00, closed for lunch 12:30-13:00.



Inside Colombo Fort station... That's the station building on the left of this photo. From the front of the station, you walk through one of several passageways past a ticket barrier onto platform 3, which is the platform visible on the left of the photo. The train on the right is on platform 4. The central footbridge – from which this photo was taken – connects the mainline platforms 3–6. The eastern and western footbridges connect platforms, 3–10. Platforms 1 & 2 are bay platforms located at the east end of platform 3, top left of this photo. The [electronic departures & arrivals board](#) is just out of view at the extreme left of the photo.

How to find your train...

- Sri Lankan Railways don't excel at customer information, they don't have platform departure indicators nor do the trains themselves carry any destination boards. So always check which platform your train leaves from as you enter the station.
- *At Colombo Fort* there's one main electronic departures & arrivals board, pictured below left, it's very easy to miss as it's directly above and behind your head when you walk onto platform 3 through the main ticket barrier next to ticket counters 7, 8 & 9. This will tell you which platform to go to, but remember if you're going to Galle your train may be shown as going to its final destination, Matara, and if you're going to Hatton, Nanuoya, Haputale or Elle your train will probably be shown as going to Badulla.
- *At most other stations* there's a more low-tech solution to tell you the platform to go to, like the board at Nanuoya station below right.



Departures board at Colombo Fort.



Departures board at Nanuoya...

Luggage, food & other tips...

- You simply take your luggage with you onto the train and put it on the overhead racks above your seat. The overhead racks will take anything up to a large backpack or hefty roll-along size. A huge suitcase – if you insisted on travelling around Sri Lanka with such a thing – would just go on the floor. Luggage isn't usually an issue, nobody weighs it or worries about what you take.
- A handful of trains including the Chinese-built blue trains and most Night Mails have a small buffet counter with limited stock – crisps, fizzy drinks, and hot sweet tea. However, if you are in a reserved car the gangway doors to the rest of the train may be locked, so don't assume you'll be able to get to the buffet. It's best to bring your own food & drink. It's hot and humid in Sri Lanka, so always travel with plenty of bottled water. You may find vendors wandering down the train, but don't rely on this – though if you see the tea wallah, flag him down for a cup of lovely hot sweet tea, 40 rupees (20p) or so per cup.



Luggage on overhead racks on a [blue train](#).



Luggage stack in 2nd class car on a [blue](#)

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- [2nd & 3rd class on classic trains](#)
- [1st class observation cars, Colombo to Tea Country](#)
- [Chinese-built blue train, Colombo to Kandy & Tea Country](#)
- [S11 diesel trains from Colombo to Galle & Matara](#)

- [2nd & 3rd class in newer cars on the northern lines](#)
- [Night Mail 1st class berths](#)
- [Night Mail 2nd & 3rd class sleeperetts](#)
- [Privately-run Exporail car](#)
- [Privately-run Rajadhani car](#)

Classic trains with 2nd & 3rd class seats...

The typical Sri Lankan mainline train has 2nd & 3rd class unreserved seats in elderly brown coaches like this... Doors and windows usually remain wide open, the trains seldom exceed 50mph...



A classic Sri Lankan express train on platform 4 at Colombo Fort...



3rd class seats: 3+2 across car width.



2nd class seats: 2+2 across car width.

1st class observation car...

A 1st class observation car is attached to the rear of train 1007/1008 on the amazingly scenic route from Colombo to Hatton, Nanuoya, Elle, Haputale & Badulla, and to several other trains on that route,

[see the timetable here](#). It has comfortable (if old) reserved seats facing large rear windows looking back along the track. It's very popular & usually gets fully-booked, so book ahead. Some of these observation cars are not air-conditioned so the side windows open, ideal for viewing & photography. However, some cars now have air-conditioning, yours may or may not have. Don't expect any catering, so bring your own food & drink. Luggage goes on overhead racks above your seat, or on the floor.



Pictured above, the 1st class observation car at rear of the 09:45 to Badulla, on platform 3 at Colombo Fort.

The Man in Seat 61 says "If you can get tickets for it, the 1st class observation car is the best way to experience and photograph the journey from Colombo up into Tea Country. The excellent view back along the track gives an unrivalled picture of how this wonderful railway is constructed, often hugging the hillside with overhanging rocks..."

The Chinese-built blue trains...

Introduced in 2012, these modern Chinese-built class S12 trains operate the daily *Podi Menike* and *Udatara Menike* trains between Colombo, Kandy, Tea Country and Badulla, [see the timetable here](#). There's a power car and driving cab at each end of the train, between which there's one 1st class air-conditioned reserved seats car, one 2nd class reserved car, two 2nd class unreserved cars, three 3rd class unreserved cars (one with a small buffet counter) and one 3rd class reserved car. 2nd & 3rd class cars are not air-conditioned and come with large opening windows. Luggage up to back-pack sized fits on the overhead racks, or in the 2nd class cars there's also a floor to ceiling luggage rack for larger items.



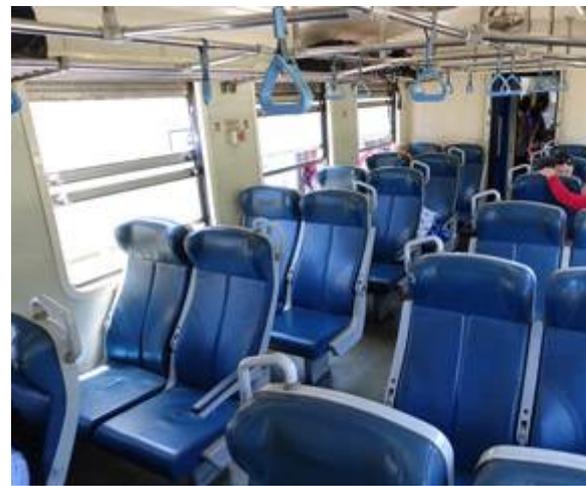
A blue train at Kandy...



2nd class car.



3rd class: 3 unreserved cars, 1 reserved car.



2nd class: 2 unreserved cars, 1 reserved car.



1st & 2nd class cars. Note the smaller windows in 1st!



Air-conditioned 1st class (AFC), 1 car, all reserved.

The Man in Seat 61 says: "These blue trains are way ahead of other Sri Lankan trains in comfort – although if you can get a seat in it, a [1st class observation car](#) on a classic train would still be my first

choice for a journey into the hills. But a seat in the 2nd class reserved car on a blue train would be my next choice."

Tip 1: The air-conditioned first class car (AFC) is almost up to western standards, with fabric reclining seats, seat-back tables & ceiling-hung video screens, fortunately with no sound. So if you absolutely insist on air-conditioned western-style comfort, this is the way to go. But before you make a knee-jerk decision to go first class, think it through. In the AFC car you are sealed in behind small and slightly grubby windows and you won't experience the journey fully. You can't take decent scenery photos unless you nip to one of the inward-opening entrance doors. You will experience the scenery far better in 2nd class reserved seats with their large open windows.

Tip 2: The second class reserved car (SCR) is great option, with comfy seats, armrests & drop-down seatback tables, and a breeze wafting in through open windows. If you find the SCR car fully-booked, a seat in the 3rd class reserved car (TCR) is a good alternative, so don't knock it – you are better off with a guaranteed seat in the uncrowded 3rd class reserved car with no standees allowed than without a seat in a full-and-standing 2nd class unreserved car.

Tip 3: Avoid waiting at the wrong end of the platform, especially at an intermediate station such as Nanuoya or Elle! The AFC & SCR cars on these trains are usually at the Colombo (West) end of the train between Colombo and Kandy, and at the Badulla (East) end of the train between Kandy & Badulla – these trains have a driving cab at both ends and change direction at Kandy, which is a terminus. So at Colombo Fort when you walk off the forecourt onto the platform, look to your right and the AFC & SCR cars will be towards that end of the platform. When you board at Kandy, the AFC & SCR cars will usually be furthest from the buffer stops.

Tip 4: You usually board the AFC or SCR cars through the AFC doorway next to the SCR – the attendant may have locked other exterior doors to control access to the reserved cars. Similarly, the internal gangway door between the the AFC/SCR cars and the rest of the train will probably be locked, so don't expect to visit the buffet. Bring your own food & drink, although the tea wallah has been known to make it into the 2nd reserved car – that hot sweet tea is lovely, do try it!

S11 diesel trains...

Introduced in 2011, these trains operate key departures on the Colombo–Galle–Matara route – other departures are [classic trains](#). They have 2nd & 3rd class unreserved seats, with a power car at one end and a driving cab at both ends. Like most Sri Lankan trains, the doors normally remain wide open while the train is moving. The 2nd class seats are comfortable and have drop down tables and armrests.



A class S11 at Kalutara South, en route to Galle...



2nd class unreserved seats...

Newer 2nd & 3rd class trains...

Sri Lankan Railways has some newer Chinese-built cars like this, which you'll usually find on the northern routes, for example certain trains from Colombo to Jaffna, Talaimannar & Batticaloa. A big improvement on the [classic trains](#).



A train at Colombo Fort...



3rd class unreserved seats...



2nd class seats, reserved or unreserved.

Night Mail 1st class berths...

A 1st class sleeping-car is attached to a handful of Night Mail trains. The cars have lockable 2-berth compartments with separate toilet & washbasin. The cars are old, fairly basic and a tad grubby, so manage expectations accordingly, but they are comfortable enough with clean bedding provided. There's only one sleeping-car per train, they are very popular and usually get fully-booked soon after bookings open. So book ahead, and have a plan B if you can't get a sleeper. Pictured below is the distinctly-Indian design of sleeper on the Night Mail from Colombo to Badulla.



Sleeper corridor...



A distinctly Indian-designed sleeper on the Night Mail to Badulla, at Colombo F



Night Mail 2nd & 3rd class sleeperetts...

Sleeperetts are reserved seats which recline to about 30–40 degrees. Night Mail trains typically have one 2nd class reserved sleeperett car, one 3rd class reserved sleeperett car, and several unreserved 2nd & 3rd class regular seats cars.



Sleeperett cars on the Night Mail from Colombo Fort to Batticaloa...



2nd class reserved sleeperetts...



3rd class reserved sleeperetts...

Privately-run *Exporail* car...

A couple of trains a day on the route from Colombo to Kandy & Tea Country carry a privately-run 1st class air-conditioned ExpoRail car with special fares, WiFi, power sockets & inclusive meals, see www.exporail.lk and [the timetable here](#). The Exporail carriages on the Colombo–Kandy & Colombo–Nanu Oya–Badulla routes normally have a small open-air viewing platform at one end, ideal for photography.

Update: The Exporail car is no longer running – Exporail have ceased operation.



The Man in Seat 61 says, "The Exporail car is very comfy, easy to book online and popular with tourists. The open air viewing platform makes it a great option on the Tea Country route – but bear in mind that they often allocate a somewhat tatty older car without a viewing platform, in which case you'll be sealed in and would be far better off in a regular Sri Lanka Railways car with opening windows."

Privately-run *Rajadhani* car...

A privately-run air-conditioned 1st class car is attached to one Colombo–Kandy train, one Colombo–Tea Country train ([timetable here](#)) and one Colombo–Galle–Matara train ([timetable here](#)). It has leather seats & free WiFi, see www.rajadhani.lk.

The Rajadhani carriage is cancelled at the moment due to contractual issues, check their website for any updates. It's now been cancelled for some time.



The Man in Seat 61 says, "The Rajadhani car dates from 1970, so externally it's older and grubbier than their website suggests. But it's easy to book online, it's very comfy, well air-conditioned, has effective WiFi – if you correctly enter the world's longest WiFi password, that is – and is very popular with

tourists. On the downside you are sealed in behind small and very grubby windows, making it a poor way to experience the journey. Taking photographs of the scenery is almost impossible, so you are better off in regular 2nd class. I also got absolutely no food or drink service when I used Rajadhani on the Galle route. I'd say Exporail is a cut above Rajadhani, although they are broadly similar concepts"

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The wonderful train ride to Tea Country. [See the journey in pictures & watch the video!](#)

The train ride from Colombo to Kandy and up into the tea plantations of Sri Lanka's hill country is truly wonderful, not just transportation but a classic journey that's easily the best train ride in Sri Lanka. I recommend a reserved seat in the 1st class observation car if you can get one, failing that a seat in the 2nd or 3rd class reserved cars on one of the excellent new Chinese-built blue trains. [See the journey from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya in pictures & watch the video!](#)

Sri Lanka Railways regularly tweaks its timetable, [so check current times as shown here](#)

Colombo ► Kandy ► Nuwara Eliya, Haputale, Elle, Badulla													
	Days of running:	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Sat,Su n	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Fri, Sun	Daily	Daily
	Reserved seat classes:	0	1,2,3	0,2, 3	1,2,3	0	0	1	-	0	1	-	Sleep er
	Unreserved seat classes:	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	-	2,3	2,3
	Train number:	112 6	1005 *	100 9	1015 **	1031	100 7	101 9	102 3	102 9	1033	103 9	1045
Km													
0	Colombo Fort depart:	-	05:5 5	07:0 0	08:30	09:00	09:4 5	10:3 5	12:4 0	15:3 5	17:20	17:4 5	20:00

11 5	Peradeniya Junction	-	08:3 2	09:2 1	10:55	11:22	12:3 1	13:4 0	15:4 6	17:5 6	19:54	20:4 6	23:06
12 1	Kandy arrive:	-	08:4 2	09:3 1	11:03	11:31		13:5 2	16:0 1	18:0 6	20:03	20:5 8	
12 1	Kandy depart:	03:3 0	08:4 7	-	11:10	-		-	17:0 0	-	-	-	
17 3	Hatton (for Adam's peak)	07:0 7	11:1 4	-	13:28	-	14:3 0	-	19:5 1	-	-	-	01:38
20 7	Nanuoya (for Nuwara Eliya)	09:3 0	12:4 5	-	15:01	-	15:5 5	-	-	-	-	-	03:11
24 6	Haputale	12:0 5	14:1 7	-	16:32	-	17:2 7	-	-	-	-	-	04:57
27 1	Elle	13:2 6	15:1 5	-	17:28	-	18:2 3	-	-	-	-	-	06:06
29 2	Badulla arrive:	14:3 0	16:0 6	-	18:22	-	19:1 7	-	-	-	-	-	07:10

* Train 1005/1006 is the PODI MENIKE, [modern Chinese-built blue train](#), recommended.

** Train 1015/1016 is the UDARATA MENIKE, [modern Chinese-built blue train](#), recommended.

O = [1st class observation car with reserved seats](#), may or may not be air-conditioned, recommended.

1 = [1st class air-conditioned car with reserved seats](#).

2 = 2nd class seats.

3 = 3rd class seats.

Sleeper = NIGHT MAIL with [1st class sleepers](#) (2-berth compartments), [2nd & 3rd class reserved sleeperetts](#) (reclining seats), [2nd & 3rd unreserved seats](#).

Always check train times for your date of travel [as shown here](#), and check all times locally.

[How to buy tickets, reserved & unreserved explained](#) [Luggage & other tips](#) [Suggested hotels in Colombo, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya](#)

Peradeniya Junction is 6 km (3½ miles) from Kandy. Take a tuk-tuk or bus here to board trains for Hatton, Nanuoya, Elle & Badulla if they don't call at Kandy.

Several trains a day link **Kandy & Matale**, [check times as shown here](#). Kandy is essentially a terminus, but platform 1 is a through platform used by Matale trains.

Badulla, Elle, Haputale, Nuwara Eliya ► Kandy ► Colombo															
Days of running:	Dail y	Sat, Mon	Dail y	Dail y	Dail y	Dail y	Dail y	Daily 1,2,3	Dail y	Dail y	Dail y	Dail y	Sat,S un	Dail y	Daily Daily
Reserved seat classes:	-	1	0,2 ,3	-	-	-	-	1,2,3	0,2, 3	1	1,2, 3	0	0,2	0	Slee per
Unreserved seat classes:	2,3	-	2,3	2,3	3	2,3	3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3
Train number:	104 0	1034	103 0	103 6	152 0	102 4	154 1	1016 **	101 0	102 0	100 6*	100 8	1032	159 6	104 6
Badulla depart:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	05:4 5	-	-	08: 30	10: 00	-	11: 00	17:5 0
Elle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	06:4 0	-	-	09: 24	10: 57	-	12: 06	18:5 5
Haputale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	07:4 5	-	-	10: 25	12: 00	-	14: 25	20:1 6
Nanuoya (for Nuwara Eliya)	-	-	-	-	-	-	05: 30	09:2 5	-	-	12: 02	13: 50	-	17: 30	22:1 7
Hatton (for Adam's Peak)	-	-	-	-	05: 10	07: 10	08: 45	10:3 9	-	-	13: 20	15: 12	-	19: 15	23:4 3
Kandy arrive:	-	-	-	-	07: 59	09: 56	12: 13	12:3 8	-	-	15: 49		-	22: 45	

Kandy depart:	05:00	05:50	06:15	06:30	-	10:30	-	12:50	15:00	15:30	16:05	16:55	-	
Peradeniya Junction	05:12	06:05	06:25	06:43	-	10:56	-	13:00	15:10	15:48	16:16	17:05	-	02:20
Colombo Fort arrive:	08:23	08:42	08:52	09:45	-	14:03	-	15:27	17:36	18:50	18:57	20:53	19:30	05:17

Fares

One-way adult fares in rupees	3rd class seat (reserved)	2nd class seat (reserved)	1st class observation car	1st class air-con car	1st class sleeper berth
Colombo-Kandy	180 (£1/\$2)	280 (£1/\$2)	500 (£3/\$5)	500 (£2/\$4)	-
Colombo-Nanuoya, Elle, Badulla	400 (£2/\$3)	600 (£3/\$5)	1000 (£5/\$7)	1250 (£7/\$10)	1250 (£7/\$10)

Children under 12 pay half fare with Sri Lanka Railways, children under 3 travel free. Sleeperetts on the Night Mail train costs the same as a reserved seat.

Nuwara Eliya...

Nuwara Eliya (the City of lights) is a colonial hill station 2,000 metres above sea level, surrounded by tea plantations. It's easy to reach, just take a train to Nanuoya station, 6 km from central Nuwara

Eliya. You'll find plenty of taxis and tuk tuks available at the station.

The journey: [See a train ride from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya in pictures & watch the video!](#)



Train 1007 from Colombo to Badulla heads through the tea plantations between Hatton & Nanuoya.

Kandy station...



Kandy station.



Reservations are made at counters 1 & 2...



Inside Kandy station...

Visiting Kandy...



St Paul's Church...



Kandy Lake, across the road from the excellent old [Queen's](#)



Kandy's top attraction, the Temple of the Tooth...



The old Garrison Cemetery

Traveller's reports...

Traveller Antony Smith reports "All the windows in the 1st observation car opened fully so, though it was a baking hot day, the carriage was wonderfully breezy and naturally cooled. And yes there are only two pairs of seats with uninterrupted views through the rear observation window, but to be honest the best views are to the sides anyway rather than back down the track. And there's a great child-like pleasure to be had from sticking your head out of an open side window, which you can't do in the seats directly in front of the rear observation window. I do agree about not wanting to be locked into a 'tour bus' environment with only other tourists for company, but passengers in the 1st observation car on the day we travelled were a real mix of Westerners and Sri Lankans. We took a peek at the ExpoRail 'luxury' carriage (which now also does the train we were on, the 05.55 *Podi Menike* from Colombo). It is

undoubtedly comfortable, though not luxurious in my opinion, and has the advantage of online booking and on-board catering. But it lacked the old-fashioned charm of the 1st observation car and looked to be a 100% tourist only experience, mostly tour groups."

Traveller Graeme Thorley reports "I thought the observation car to Kandy was okay although it requires you to travel backwards (in my case at least) which is not to everyone's taste. It also got incredibly hot (36°C at one point) due to the large window and there were only a limited number of seats that had a really good view. Rather irritatingly on my outbound trip two of these were occupied by people who slept for most of the trip..! The other point is that the carriage was occupied almost entirely by Westerners – this might be considered a good thing but personally I felt it left me more remote from the travelling experience. On the train to Anuradhapura several locals stopped to chat, practise their English, exchange complaints about the delays etc. I also bumped into one of the families I had met on the train whilst sightseeing (they recognised me) and we had another chat. I find that sort of thing an important part of travelling."

Traveller Paul White reports "Don't panic if you can't get a ticket for the 1st class air conditioned trains to Kandy. 2nd class is more than adequate, but do try & get a window seat. The best side to sit on for scenery is the right hand side as you face forward from Colombo to Kandy, as this will give you the best views once you get past Rambukkana. Do be brave and try the food on the trains! Many vendors will wander up and down selling cold drinks, fruit, spicy snacks and so on at reasonable prices."