



From the MixCache.com library

SAMPLE COPY

Cities of Sri Lanka

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Colombo - The Commercial Pulse of Sri Lanka
- Chapter 2: Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte - Heart of Governance
- Chapter 3: Kandy - Last Royal Capital of the Sinhalese
- Chapter 4: Galle - Where East Meets West
- Chapter 5: Jaffna - Cultural Capital of the North
- Chapter 6: Anuradhapura - Ancient Spiritual Citadel
- Chapter 7: Polonnaruwa - The Medieval Marvel
- Chapter 8: Trincomalee - Harbour of History and Faith
- Chapter 9: Batticaloa - Lagoons and Legends
- Chapter 10: Negombo - Gateway to the Island
- Chapter 11: Matara - Southern Coastal Gem
- Chapter 12: Nuwara Eliya - City of Light and Tea
- Chapter 13: Kurunegala - City of Rock and Kings
- Chapter 14: Ratnapura - The City of Gems
- Chapter 15: Badulla - Heart of the Uva Province
- Chapter 16: Kalutara - Between River and Sea
- Chapter 17: Hambantota - From Fishing Port to New Frontier
- Chapter 18: Puttalam - Land of Salt and Lagoon
- Chapter 19: Chilaw - Faith, Fish, and Festivals
- Chapter 20: Mannar - Island at the Edge
- Chapter 21: Vavuniya - Crossroads to the North
- Chapter 22: Ampara - Eastern Agricultural Haven
- Chapter 23: Dambulla - Cave Temples and Golden Legacy
- Chapter 24: Avissawella - Gateway to the Highlands
- Chapter 25: Kataragama - Sacred City of Pilgrimage

Introduction

Sri Lanka, the resplendent island at the edge of the Indian Ocean, is as much a tapestry of cities as it is a land of natural beauty. From ancient citadels cradle by time to bustling modern metropolises, each city in Sri Lanka forms a living, breathing chronicle of the island's multifaceted past and vibrant present. This book, *Cities of Sri Lanka*, is both an exploration of their distinctive histories and a practical guide for all those who wish to experience the heart and soul of this remarkable nation.

The cities of Sri Lanka are not mere backdrops to history; they are its very protagonists. Over centuries, waves of rulers, traders, missionaries, and migrants have transformed these urban centers—leaving imprints in architecture, cuisine, language, and daily rhythms. Ancient capitals like Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa evoke the splendor of Sinhalese kingdoms with their awe-inspiring stupas, reservoirs, and palatial ruins. The likes of Galle and Trincomalee, shaped by both Asian and European powers, stand as open-air museums of cross-cultural exchange.

Yet, modern Sri Lankan cities reveal a different but equally compelling face. Colombo, with its iconic skyscrapers mere steps from colonial-era buildings and vibrant street markets, demonstrates a metropolis perpetually in motion. Cities such as Jaffna and Batticaloa, having weathered periods of conflict and renewal, stand as testaments to the resilience and cultural richness of their communities. Tea cities high in the misty hills, fishing towns along turquoise coasts, and bustling commercial hubs all contribute to the island's singular urban patchwork.

For the visitor, understanding these cities means more than checking off a list of tourist sites. It is about delving into the layers of faith, festivity, art, and enterprise that define urban life on the island. Whether tracing the sacred path of Buddhists in Kandy, wandering the colonial fortifications of Galle, or savoring seafood at Negombo's lively fish markets, each experience contributes to a deeper appreciation of Sri Lanka's diversity.

This book invites you on a journey—structured city by city—through Sri Lanka's dramatic past and dynamic present. For each chapter, you will discover not only key historical events and architectural marvels, but also contemporary perspectives, cultural nuances, and practical tips for making the most of your visit. With twenty-five chapters spanning the breadth and variety of the island, *Cities of Sri Lanka* aims to be an indispensable companion and a source of inspiration for both planned trips and armchair travels.

Whether you are a history enthusiast, a cultural explorer, or a curious traveler, may

these pages help you unlock the treasures of Sri Lanka's cities—each one a distinct jewel in the island's radiant crown.

SAMPLE COPY

CHAPTER ONE: Colombo - The Commercial Pulse of Sri Lanka

Colombo, a name that resonates with the hustle and bustle of modern Sri Lanka, is more than just a city; it is the vibrant, beating heart of the nation's commerce and a captivating blend of old-world charm and contemporary dynamism. As Sri Lanka's largest city by population, it stands proudly on the west coast, a sprawling metropolis that serves as the executive and judicial capital, while its legislative counterpart, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, nestles comfortably within its greater urban embrace. To step into Colombo is to experience a fascinating juxtaposition: towering skyscrapers reflecting the tropical sun, ancient colonial structures whispering tales of a bygone era, and vibrant street markets brimming with an energy that is uniquely Sri Lankan.

This city's strategic location, blessed with a large natural harbor, has cemented its status as a significant port for over two millennia. For more than 2,000 years, traders from across the globe have been drawn to its shores, leaving their indelible marks and contributing to the rich tapestry of cultures that define Colombo today. It was this undeniable importance that led the British Empire to declare Colombo the island's capital in 1815, a designation it proudly held even after Sri Lanka gained its independence in 1948. However, a shift occurred in 1978 when administrative functions transitioned to Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, and Colombo was formally recognized as the commercial capital, a role it continues to embrace with vigor and success.

Colombo is a microcosm of Sri Lanka's diverse populace, a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multicultural melting pot. The city's inhabitants are predominantly Sinhalese, with significant communities of Sri Lankan Moors and Sri Lankan Tamils. Beyond these larger groups, one can find smaller yet vibrant communities of Chinese, Portuguese Burgher, Dutch Burgher, Malay, and Indian origins, alongside a sprinkling of European expatriates, all contributing to the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere. This cultural mosaic is evident in every corner, from the aromatic spices wafting from local eateries to the diverse architectural styles that adorn its streets.

A journey through Colombo inevitably begins in **Colombo Fort**, the historical epicenter of the city, often referred to as Colombo 1. This district is not merely a historical relic; it remains a hub of intense government and commercial activity. Here, the Presidential Secretariat, housed in the magnificent Old Parliament Building, stands as a testament to the nation's governance, while the gleaming twin towers of the World Trade Center symbolize its economic ambitions. Walking through the Fort area, one can almost hear the echoes of past negotiations and the murmurs of

contemporary trade deals, a true convergence of history and progress.

Just a short distance from the organized grandeur of the Fort lies **Pettah Market**, or Colombo 11, a sensory explosion that is an absolute must-experience for any visitor. This bustling bazaar is a chaotic yet captivating labyrinth of stalls and shops, offering an astonishing array of goods. From mountains of aromatic spices that tantalize the senses to vibrant textiles that catch the eye, and from modern electronics to traditional handicrafts, Pettah has it all. It's a place where bargaining is an art form, and every turn reveals a new discovery, reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit of the city.

For a refreshing escape from the urban thrum, the iconic **Galle Face Green** offers a vast expanse of open space along the sparkling Indian Ocean. This scenic promenade is a favorite haunt for locals and visitors alike, particularly in the late afternoon and early evening. Here, families fly kites, couples stroll hand-in-hand, and vendors hawk delicious street food, all against the breathtaking backdrop of a tropical sunset. It's a place where the city collectively exhales, a communal living room that perfectly encapsulates Colombo's relaxed coastal vibe.

Colombo also boasts numerous green spaces that offer respite from its urban pace, with **Viharamahadevi Park** standing out as one of the city's most cherished. Named after the mother of King Dutugamunu, this expansive park is adorned with statues, lush foliage, and tranquil pathways, providing a peaceful oasis for picnics, leisurely walks, or simply a moment of quiet contemplation amidst the city's ceaseless energy. It's a reminder that even in a bustling metropolis, nature finds a way to thrive and offer solace.

Spirituality forms an integral part of Colombo's identity, and the **Gangaramaya Temple** is an iconic testament to this. This prominent Buddhist temple is a fascinating architectural marvel, seamlessly blending Sri Lankan, Thai, Indian, and Chinese architectural styles. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, Gangaramaya serves as a vibrant center for learning and worship, housing a museum, a library, and a multitude of intricately carved statues and religious artifacts. It's a living temple, perpetually abuzz with devotees and curious visitors, offering a profound insight into Buddhist traditions.

To truly understand Sri Lanka's rich past, a visit to the **National Museum of Sri Lanka** is indispensable. Housed in a grand colonial-era building, the museum showcases the country's vast history and vibrant culture through an impressive collection of artifacts, ranging from ancient royal regalia and intricately carved masks to archaeological finds and colonial-era paintings. Each exhibit tells a story, collectively weaving a narrative of the island's journey from antiquity to the present day, allowing visitors to connect with the deep roots of Sri Lankan heritage.

The architectural landscape of Colombo is a fascinating testament to its layered history, prominently displaying the influences of its colonial past. The Portuguese,

Dutch, and British each left their distinctive imprints on the city's buildings, creating a captivating blend of styles. Grand colonial mansions with intricate facades stand alongside Dutch-era warehouses and British-built government structures, all contributing to a unique urban aesthetic that speaks volumes about the city's multicultural evolution. These buildings are not just structures; they are tangible links to a bygone era, silent witnesses to centuries of change and adaptation.

Beyond its historical and cultural attractions, Colombo serves as a crucial transportation hub, connecting the capital to the rest of the island and the world. An extensive network of train and bus services radiates from the city, allowing travelers to venture into the scenic highlands, explore ancient cities, or relax on pristine beaches elsewhere in Sri Lanka. For international travelers, the Bandaranaike International Airport, conveniently located nearby in Katunayake, acts as the primary aerial gateway, ensuring Colombo remains easily accessible to global visitors. This robust infrastructure underscores Colombo's role not just as a destination but as a vital starting point for any Sri Lankan adventure.

SAMPLE COPY

This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.

Visit MixCache.com to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY