

Sri Lanka: ISLAND OF SERENDIPITY

An island of magical proportions, Sri Lanka is a travel destination that will leave you spellbound!

A As the saying goes 'seeing is believing' and Sri Lanka truly is one country where words can do no justice. One has to experience this place firsthand in order to fully comprehend its stunning beauty. Lying at the foot of India, in the balmy, blue-green waters of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka - which means 'resplendent* island' - has palm-fringed white sandy beaches, picturesque mountainous regions, fifteen national parks showcasing an astonishing abundance of exotic animals (including elephants, leopards and sloth bears), 350 waterfalls, 250 acres of botanical gardens, and 500,000 acres of lush tea estates.

B But there is much more to Sri Lanka than just unspoilt natural beauty. Sri Lanka's history stretches back 2,500 years. Great civilisations flourished on the island from the 3rd century BC, leaving behind some of the most impressive archaeological monuments in Asia. Walk around the ruins of once powerful and magnificent cities, and admire ancient temples, fortresses and even the world's first hospital! A significant proportion of these ancient cities are still covered by jungle so it is not unusual for travellers to stumble across the ruins of ancient palaces whilst trekking.

C Being strategically located at the crossroads of sea routes that connect the West and the East, Sri Lanka has felt the impact of other cultures for millennia, including the Chinese, Arabs, Dutch, English and Greeks. Perhaps this is part of the reason why Sri Lankans are amongst the friendliest people in the world - always ready to greet travellers with a smile and do whatever they can to make their stay a memorable one.

D And then there is Sri Lanka's incredible food. Few would argue that part of the thrill of travelling is experiencing new flavour sensations and Sri Lankan cuisine never fails to impress travellers - it literally explodes with flavour! Get ready to enjoy spicy curries, seafood flavoured with fragrant spices and sweet coconut chutneys. And try copying the locals who eat with their fingers rather than cutlery - many say it makes food taste better!

E The ancient Arab traders who visited Sri Lanka called it Serendip, 'the island of jewels'. This is where the English word 'serendipity' comes from. Serendipity means the accident of discovering something wonderful without looking for it. Visit Sri Lanka and you will discover incredible things waiting for you around every corner!

*having great beauty

Reading

1 Read the text and for questions 1-5 choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

- What is the purpose of the text?
 A to outline the history of the country
 B to describe the flora and fauna of the country
 C to provide travel advice
 D to encourage people to go to the island
- In the second sentence of the first paragraph, what does **one** refer to?
 A anybody B the writer C the saying D the country
- According to the text, why did so many cultures inhabit the island in the past?
 A It had powerful cities.
 B It was rich in natural resources.
 C It is in a convenient geographical location.
 D Because of its diversity of food.
- What suggestion does the writer make to potential visitors?
 A not to argue with locals C avoid the spicy food
 B always smile at the locals D not to use knives and forks
- Based on the text, what is Sri Lanka's main attraction?
 A its ancient palaces C its jewels
 B its natural beauty D its food

STUDY SKILLS

In this task the last question is about the author's intention or the main idea of the text. For questions on the author's intention, read the text and underline words that refer to the purpose of the text. They will help you answer the question.