

# Ella Travel Guide: The Very Best Things to Do in Ella, Sri Lanka

*Source: Stoked to Travel*

## Introduction

This is a comprehensive Ella Travel Guide having recently been to this magical town in Hill Country, Sri Lanka. Ella was the final destination following an amazing two weeks exploring the island along beach towns of the South Coast. Ella ended up being a real highlight of the two week itinerary in Sri Lanka. The beautiful town offered such a wonderful variety of things to do. From amazing hiking routes and waterfalls, to exploring the tea plantations, and learning first-hand about Ella's rich cultural history.

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## Essential Things to Know Before Visiting Ella

### About Ella

Ella itself is a small, chilled-out town nestled into the hills in Sri Lanka. It has become famous for its chilled-out vibe, as well as its exciting outdoor activities. Ella has also become rather well known for certain Instagram spots, such as Nine Arch Bridge.

It has a backpacker vibe, not dissimilar to the small traveller towns in South East Asia for example. Ella is the perfect rural complement to the beaches of Sri Lanka. In fact, both the hills and beaches can easily be done in a two week Sri Lanka itinerary.

### When to Visit Ella

The best time of year to visit Ella is from **January to May**, as with the South Coast beach towns. Ella will have hot but comfortable days, with cool, pleasant evenings. There is least rain in Ella from April onwards. The weather was perfect during an early May visit - warm in the days and not too cold in the evening. Unlike other areas in Sri Lanka however, Ella can be visited year-round.

### How to Get to Ella

#### By Train:

- Ella is at one end of the most famous train rides in the world, the Kandy to Ella route
- This stunning train ride can be done in either direction and is one of the best things to do in Ella
- The entire route between Ella and Kandy can take around 8 hours
- While it's the most stunning way to arrive in Ella, it is quite lengthy

#### By Air:

- There is no airport in Ella and no quick way to get there
- If Ella is your first destination in Sri Lanka, you would still land in Colombo at the international airport
- From Colombo airport to Ella, the drive is around 6 hours
- Cost: around 16,000 rupees (£71) in a comfortable private taxi

### **By Road:**

- Sri Lanka is really well connected by road
  - Easy to find a local taxi company from any of the beach towns in Sri Lanka to drive you to Ella
  - It's also a slow way to travel, but still faster than the train
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## **Best Places to Stay in Ella**

### **Chill Ville View Point Hotel** ★★☆☆☆

#### **Highly Recommended**

This amazing hotel is run by the same team behind the extremely popular Chill Ville restaurant in the centre of town. Initially, the 15-minute tuk-tuk ride to the hotel might seem long, but the drive ended up being one of the favorite things about this hotel. The scenery en-route was absolutely stunning and it was a wonderful opportunity to pass by tiny local villages.

## **Other Accommodation Options**

### **Luxury Options:**

- **98 Acres Resort & Spa** - One of the best established and most well known places to stay in Ella. Famous for its stunning elevated rooms, with gorgeous views across the tea plantations. Located conveniently close to the start of the hike to Little Adam's Peak.
- **Ella Jungle Resort** - Beautiful luxury option
- **EKHO Ella** - Another luxury choice

### **Mid-Range:**

- **The Bamboo** - Great mid-range option

## **Choosing Your Location**

- **Closer to town centre:** Located close to all of the best cafes and restaurants in Ella, with quick and safe journey home if you enjoy the nightlife

- **Further from town:** Some of the best hotels in Ella are located along roads leading out of town. These roads can be steep and have very steep drops off the side, but offer stunning views of the valley
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## Where to Eat in Ella

### Top Restaurants

- **Cafe Chill** - The most well-known place to eat in Ella. Renowned for great food and a lively bar in the evening. This beautiful cool cafe is huge, with an abundance of helpful and fun waiting staff around.
  - **Matey Hut** - Great option, also offers cooking classes
  - **AK Ristoro** - Excellent choice
  - **Udayanga Restaurant** - Local favorite
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## Best Things to Do in Ella, Sri Lanka

### 1. Visit Nine Arch Bridge

This iconic bridge in Sri Lanka has become famous for striking arches and its sudden presence in the midst of the dense jungle surrounding Ella.

#### How to Get There:

- **Option 1:** Walk along the train tracks from the Ella train station. The tracks are really wide on either side and not that dangerous. Trains aren't very frequent and you can hear them coming.
- **Option 2:** Take the path that meanders away from the start of the Little Adam's Peak hike. It isn't really signposted, but locals will direct you.

#### What to Expect:

- The views at the Nine Arch Bridge are stunning from every viewpoint
- You can walk underneath the arches by exploring the tea plantations below
- You can walk across the top of the bridge
- Small cafes serve tea and snacks at both ends of the bridge
- For the famous Sri Lankan blue and red trains crossing the bridge, check train times in advance on Sri Lankan National Railways website

## 2. Hike Little Adam's Peak

Little Adam's Peak is a stunning hike, and is definitely the easiest and most accessible hike to do in Ella town.

### Trail Details:

- **Starting Point:** Just outside of the town centre, by the 98 Acres Resort entrance
- **Duration:** 30-40 minutes to reach the top
- **Difficulty:** Not too challenging
- **Route:** Well-marked and easy to follow
- **Summit Features:** Buddha statue and mini temple
- **Best Photo Spots:** Continue along the trail ahead for picture-perfect ledges

### Best Times:

- 9am for hot and clear morning hike with views stretching across the rolling hills
- Sunrise for stunning photos (based on visitor reports)

## 3. Hike Ella Rock

If you're up for a bit more of a challenge, then definitely consider hiking Ella Rock whilst in town.

### Trail Details:

- **Difficulty:** Tougher hike
- **Duration:** 3-4 hours from Ella town centre/train station
- **Rewards:** Stunning scenery and magical vistas across the tea plantations
- **Best Times:** Early morning or early afternoon (avoid hiking in the dark)

## 4. Explore Ella and Surrounding Area by Train

One of the most popular activities to do in Sri Lanka is travel on its world-famous trains. Ella is an excellent starting point for some of the island's best train rides.

### Popular Routes:

#### Ella to Kandy (or vice versa):

- **Duration:** Around 8 hours
- Often considered one of the most beautiful train journeys in the world
- Can be broken with stops in towns such as Nuwara Eliya

## **Ella to Badulla:**

- Shorter route, great choice if you have less time
- Goes directly over Nine Arch Bridge for unique vantage point
- Perfect opportunity to experience a train ride with locals
- Considered one of the most beautiful stretches
- From Badulla, easy 45-minute bus ride directly back to Ella town

## **5. Visit a Tea Plantation in Ella**

Ella is lined with rows and rows of tea leaves on every hill. Tea is one of the biggest exports from Sri Lanka and Ella is one of the main towns in the country where it originates.

### **Halpewatte Tea Factory** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

#### **Highly Recommended**

**Location:** About 20 minutes tuk-tuk ride from Ella town centre **Entry Cost:** 350 rupees per person **Best**

**Time:** Before 10am to see more equipment in action

#### **What You'll Experience:**

- Learn about the entire process of making different types of tea leaves
- Fully explore the working factory
- Fascinating tour of various rooms and equipment areas
- Learn how machinery has transformed the tea factory
- Delicious tasting session sampling teas at different stages
- Discover which teas suit your particular tastes
- Browse the store (not pushy) for loose teas and teabags as gifts

## **6. Visit Lipton's Seat in Haputale**

Visit nearby Haputale to visit Lipton's Seat. This is the famous location where Sir Thomas Lipton first laid eyes on the land that would later become the tea for his world-famous Lipton Tea!

## **7. Soak Up the Views from a Beautiful Hotel**

There are two main options for accommodation in Ella:

- More centrally located hotels (less expensive, less scenic)
- Hotels further out with some of the best Hill Country scenery on the island

Many of the scenic hotels offer stunning views over the hills where you can spend full afternoons enjoying drinks by the pool and marveling at some of the best views in Sri Lanka.

## 8. Enjoy a Local Cooking Class

If learning to prepare and cook Sri Lankan food is on your list during a visit to Sri Lanka, then doing a cooking class in Ella is an excellent idea.

### Benefits:

- Adds to your Hill Country experience
- Prepare dishes using local ingredients in Ella
- Learn to make Sri Lankan curry to your own taste

### Best Cooking Classes:

- **Matey Hut** - In the heart of town
- **Ella Spice Garden** - Another excellent option

## 9. Try Local Food in Ella

Ella is known for its excellent places to eat, and the town is a good place to explore your palette with Sri Lankan food. You'll find more cafes and restaurants serving up local food in Ella than in other towns.

### Top Recommendation:

- **Chill Cafe** - A vast chill out bar offering a great atmosphere and delicious food from day to night

## 10. Go on a Safari Day Trip from Ella

If you're short on time, it's possible to go on a safari directly from Ella, rather than driving all the way to Yala National Park.

### Udawalawe National Park:

- **Distance:** Around 2 hours drive from Ella
  - **Ranking:** Second most-visited safari park in Sri Lanka
  - **Wildlife:** Impressive number of animals on a game drive
  - **Note:** For leopard sightings, Yala National Park offers better chances
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## Additional Tips and Information

### General Advice

- Ella town centre is tiny, but there are plenty of roads leading off that are pretty steep
- The further you head out of town, the more dangerous the drives become
- Many roads are not well-paved and have very steep drops off the side (but stunning valley views)
- You'll often see local tea pluckers collecting leaves in their brightly colored outfits

### Planning Your Visit

- An impressive number of activities can be done in two days in Ella
  - With more time in Hill Country, you could visit even more must-see attractions
  - Ella is totally unmissable on any Sri Lanka itinerary
  - Perfect destination for exploring the outdoors, from dense jungle to tea plantations
  - Ideal place to immerse yourself in the heart of Sri Lanka and learn about its fascinating culture and history
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## Conclusion

Ella is the most beautiful town in Sri Lanka's Hill Country. This is the perfect destination for exploring the outdoors, from the dense jungle to the tea plantations. Ella is the ideal place to immerse yourself in the heart of Sri Lanka, and to learn about its fascinating culture and history first-hand.

The town offers such a wonderful variety of activities - from amazing hiking routes and waterfalls, to exploring tea plantations, train journeys, cultural experiences, and delicious local cuisine. Whether you're interested in adventure activities, cultural immersion, or simply relaxing in stunning natural surroundings, Ella has something special to offer every type of traveler.

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*This guide is based on an independent visit to Ella, Sri Lanka, with no involvement from tourism boards or local companies.*

**Source:** Stoked to Travel - Ella Travel Guide: The Very Best Things to Do in Ella, Sri Lanka **Website:**

<https://www.stokedtotravel.com/ella-travel-guide-sri-lanka/>