

SENSE OF ADVENTURE REQUIRED

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

WHERE COMFORT MEETS CURIOSITY, AND TRAVEL IS DESIGNED TO FEEL AS GOOD AS IT LOOKS.

Welcome to Sense of Adventure Required

The Soft Adventure Edit

This is where I share destinations I know deeply, journeys I'd confidently send my own clients on, and the thoughtful details that turn a trip into something that stays with you. Expect considered advice, personal perspective, and travel ideas for those who want a sense of adventure, without rushing, roughing it, or ticking boxes.

THE FIRST-TIME FEELING

REDISCOVERING THAT QUIET THRILL OF SOMEWHERE NEW.

There are moments in travel that quietly reset you, not because they're loud or dramatic, but because they remind you how extraordinary the world still is. For me, one of those moments came in Sri Lanka, watching elephants move through their natural environment for the very first time.

We were in Minneriya National Park, there was no rush, no sense of spectacle, just a slow unfolding of the day. Then out of nowhere, they appeared. A small group at first, moving through the landscape, completely unbothered by our presence.

What struck me most wasn't the size of the elephants, although that alone is humbling, but their calm. Calves stayed close, adults moved with confidence, and the entire scene felt



deeply grounded. It wasn't a moment to photograph quickly and move on from. It was one to sit with, to observe, and to absorb. It was one of those moments I've tried to articulate the feeling but there are no words, it is something you need to experience yourself.

That's the kind of first-time feeling I talk about often. Not the adrenaline rush of chasing experiences, but the awe that comes from being present in the right place, at the right time, with the right guidance. Soft adventure, at its best, doesn't ask you to push yourself, it invites you to slow down and notice more.

Even now, I can still feel that quiet sense of privilege that comes from witnessing something so completely as it is meant to be. It's a reminder that some of the most powerful travel moments aren't about doing more, they're about feeling more. To read more about my journey through Sri Lanka [**CLICK HERE.**](#)



TRAVEL HACK

HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR ANNUAL LEAVE IN 2026 – 60 DAYS OFF FOR 24 DAYS' LEAVE

Hack your work calendar next year and take strategic advantage of public holidays to maximise your annual leave in 2026, turning 20 days into 60 days away from the office. Here's your cheat sheet on how to achieve maximum holidays using less leave.

Christmas–New Year: 16 days off with just 7 days' annual leave

With public holidays on Thursday 25 December 2025, Friday 26 December 2025 and 1 January 2026, employees who lock in seven days of annual leave (22–24 December, 29–31 December, and 2 January) can enjoy a 16-day break from Saturday 20 December 2025 through Sunday 4 January 2026.

Australia Day: 9 days off with just 4 days' annual leave

With the public holiday on Monday 26 January, employees who take four annual leave days from Tuesday 27 January to Friday 30 January will gain nine uninterrupted days off from Saturday 24 January to Sunday 1 February.

Easter: 10 days off with just 4 days' annual leave

Good Friday is 3 April and Easter Monday is 6 April, enabling workers to use four leave days from Tuesday 7 April to Friday 10 April and enjoy a 10-day break from 3–12 April. Tasmanian public-service employees also have Easter Tuesday as a public holiday, so they only need three annual leave days.

Mid-year long weekend hacks

King's Birthday on Monday 8 June. Four leave days either side of those Mondays convert each long weekend into nine consecutive days off. Labour Day holidays allow us to repeat the hack: 9 March in Victoria.

Holiday period	Public holiday dates	Annual leave days to take	Total days off	Period covered
Christmas-New Year	Thu 25 Dec 2025, Fri 26 Dec 2025, Thu 1 Jan 2026	7 days (Mon 22-Wed 24 Dec, Mon 29-Wed 31 Dec, Fri 2 Jan)	16 days	Sat 20 Dec 2025 - Sun 4 Jan 2026
Australia Day	Mon 26 Jan 2026	4 days (Tue 27-Fri 30 Jan)	9 days	Sat 24 Jan - Sun 1 Feb
Easter	Fri 3 Apr & Mon 6 Apr 2026	4 days (Tue 7-Fri 10 Apr)	10 days	Fri 3 Apr - Sat 12 Apr
King's Birthday	Mon 8 Jun 2026*	4 days (either side of Monday)	9 days	Extended long weekend
Labour Day	Various dates*	4 days (either side of Monday)	9 days	Extended long weekend

Add AFL Grand Final Eve (Friday 25th September) and Melbourne Cup Day (Tuesday 3 November) and Victorians can lock in up to 60 days off.

One extra leave day (Monday 2 November) builds a four-day Cup mini-break, taking the total annual leave tally to 24 days.

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT

LUXURY ESCAPES DELUXE TOURS



LUXURYESCAPES

When it comes to experiencing a destination like Sri Lanka well, the difference is always in the detail, pacing, guides, and the balance between immersion and comfort. That's why I often look to thoughtfully curated itineraries like those offered through Luxury Escapes.

Two journeys that particularly stand out are the Deluxe 12-Day Best of Sri Lanka 2026, which weaves together highlights such as Dambulla, Kandy, and a five-star stay in Galle, and the Deluxe 12-Day Discover Northern Sri Lanka, featuring Wilpattu National Park, Anuradhapura, and Jaffna.

What I appreciate about these itineraries is how they combine meaningful cultural experiences with space to breathe. Early starts are purposeful rather than rushed, wildlife encounters are guided by local experts, and accommodation is chosen to ensure you're well rested between experiences. This is soft adventure done properly, immersive, enriching, and never exhausting.

For travellers who want to see Sri Lanka in depth, without sacrificing comfort or thoughtful planning, these journeys offer an excellent foundation.

For a limited time only, discover two dream destinations in one unforgettable escape. Begin a Sri Lanka, where lush tea country, sacred temples, wildlife-rich parks and golden coastlines reveal the island's extraordinary diversity. From Negombo's beaches to Kandy's Sacred Tooth Temple, scenic train rides to leopard safaris, this itinerary captures the very best of the island.

Your adventure continues with five nights at the all-new Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives. Perched on a private island in the North Malé Atoll, this newly opened retreat pairs barefoot relaxation with Thai-inspired hospitality. Stay in an indulgent overwater villa with daily dining across three restaurants, free-flow drinks a minibar refreshed daily and more. Spend your days snorkelling straight off the beach, unwinding at the spa, or enjoying the whimsical water playground and aqua park.

There's no better way to cap off a tour of a lifetime than with uninterrupted relaxation amid the beauty of the Maldives. Don't wait – **this limited-time offer ends 20 January 2026 or until sold out.**

If you would like more information or discuss booking one of these incredible tours message or call me. To read more about my experience in Sri Lanka [Click Here](#). To read my story about the Maldives - "Is it all it's cracked up to be," [Click Here](#)

LUXURYESCAPES
TRAVELREIMAGINED

Starts and ends in Colombo

Deluxe 12-Day Best of Sri Lanka 2026 with Dambulla, Kandy & Five-Star Galle Stay

12 DAYS FROM
A\$2,999
/person

*Terms and conditions apply. For more information, speak to one of our agents.

Highlights included

- Go on a jeep safari in Yala National Park to seek out the elusive Sri Lankan leopard.
- Enjoy a scenic train journey through Sri Lanka's tea country from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya
- Take a tuk-tuk ride over the iconic Nine Arch Bridge in Ella – a colonial-era stone railway structure spanning the verdant valley
- Climb Sigiriya Rock Fortress for sweeping jungle views
- On guided tours discover the UNESCO-listed Galle's 16th-century fort, Kandy historical highlights with lake views and experience Colombo's charm with iconic sights
- Experience tea plucking, production and tasting at a local tea plantation in Nuwara Eliya
- See Polonnaruwa's well-preserved ruins, showcasing Sri Lanka's ancient history
- Rejuvenate with a 60-minute whole body spa treatment at Amaya Lake
- 23 meals included – Daily breakfast, two lunches and 10 dinners

LUXURYESCAPES
TRAVELREIMAGINED

Starts in Negombo, ends in Colombo

Deluxe 12-Day Discover Northern Sri Lanka with Wilpattu, Anuradhapura & Jaffna

12 DAYS FROM
A\$3,499
/person

*Terms and conditions apply. For more information, speak to one of our agents.

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Highlights included

- Spot wildlife on safari in Wilpattu National Park, home to leopards, elephants and sloth bears
- Explore the UNESCO-listed ancient city of Anuradhapura and the sacred site of Mihintale
- Discover the colonial forts and ancient Hindu temples of Jaffna
- Enjoy a traditional Sri Lankan lunch and Habarana cooking demonstration
- Bask in the beauty of Trincomalee's natural harbour, teeming with marine life
- See the iconic Sigiriya Rock Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed ancient royal citadel
- Uncover Kandy's rich spiritual heritage and visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic
- Visit the Golden Cave Temple of Dambulla's extensive cave paintings and statues
- 22 meals included – 11 breakfasts, one lunch and 10 dinners

LUXURYESCAPES
TRAVELREIMAGINED

Starts in Colombo, ends in North Male Atoll

Limited Time Offer: 12-Day Best of Sri Lanka Tour + 5-Night All-Inclusive Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives Overwater Villa Stay

17 DAYS FROM
A\$6,299
/person

Valued up to A\$9,294

*Terms and conditions apply. For more information, speak to one of our agents.

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LIMITED TIME OFFER: 12-DAY BEST OF SRI LANKA TOUR + 5-NIGHT ALL-INCLUSIVE

Stay five nights in a brand-new overwater villa at Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives, with all-inclusive dining, unlimited free-flow drinks, a minibar refreshed daily and roundtrip speedboat transfers

- Discover the UNESCO-listed Sigiriya Rock Fortress, rising dramatically above the jungle
- Journey through tea-carpeted hills aboard a scenic train from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya
- Embark on a wildlife safari in Yala National Park, home to leopards, elephants and sloth bears
- Explore Galle Fort's cobbled streets and colonial-era ramparts, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Stay in a curated mix of four- and five-star hotels across Sri Lanka

CONNECTED TIDES

A SOFTER WAY INTO THE WILD

One of the things I love most about cruising is how seamlessly it can be paired with land-based wilderness experiences. A perfect example is a journey through the Canadian Rockies, followed by a cruise into Glacier Bay with Holland America, a combination that feels adventurous without ever feeling demanding.

Travelling through the Rockies by rail or road allows you to ease into the landscape: alpine lakes, vast forests, and mountain views that invite you to slow down and take it all in. By the time you step onboard, the pace naturally soft. There's no chasing the experience; it unfolds around you.

This is soft adventure at its best: wilderness that feels immersive but comfortable, dramatic yet unhurried. Pairing a land journey through the Rockies with a Glacier Bay cruise allows travellers to experience scale, solitude, and wonder.

Thinking About a Journey Like This?

If a land-and-sea wilderness journey, like pairing the Canadian Rockies with a Glacier Bay cruise, has been quietly calling your name, I'd love to help you explore whether it's the right fit. These itineraries work best when they're thoughtfully paced and carefully connected, and that's where my role really comes into play.

Whether you're just starting to imagine it or already thinking about timing, feel free to get in touch, we can shape a journey that feels adventurous, comfortable, and entirely your own.



WILDERNESS FROM ROCKIES TO GLACIERS (HAL126)

VALID UNTIL: 15 JAN 2026 | HOLIDAY DEPARTS ON: 25 JUN 2026 | CRUISE DEPARTS ON: 4 JUL 2026



Wilderness from Rockies to Glaciers

Calgary to Vancouver

- Includes International Flights
- 9 Night Rockies Trail Tour
- 7 Night Cruise, *Koningsdam*
- Main meals & entertainment onboard

16 NIGHTS FROM
\$11,099pp*

Departs: 25 Jun 2026

Valid until: 15 Jan 2026

Bonus: SAVE up to \$1,400*

Inclusions

- Full-service economy flights† return from Australia
- Rockies Trail - Escorted Tour‡
- 9 nights, 4-star accommodation+, including breakfast
- Calgary city tour
- Banff and Lake Louise region tour
- Columbia Icefield Ice Explorer ride
- Visit Capilano Suspension Bridge
- Ferry cruise through the Gulf Islands to Vancouver Island
- Victoria city tour
- Visit the Butchart Gardens
- Vancouver city tour
- Farewell group dinner in Vancouver
- Transportation by modern tour coach
- Services of a Jonview tour director and experienced tour driver
- 7 night cruise aboard *Koningsdam* from Vancouver Return
- Main meals~ and entertainment onboard
- Port charges, government fees and air taxes



Amex Travel shares the top 10 trending destinations everyone will have on their 2026 list

While not one Australasian city or region made its top 10 trending destinations for 2026, American Express Travel reckons these hotspots will be on everyone's travel wish lists next year.

Using American Express card member bookings in 2025 and insights from its global advisor network, Amex Travel has highlighted 10 trending destinations to know in 2026.

In Asia, these include off-the-beaten-path locations, such as the Indian Himalayas, India and the Okinawa Islands, Japan, while Africa's only entrant was Marrakech, Morocco.

Europe-bound travellers should add Killarney, Ireland; Marbella, Spain; and St Julian's, Malta to their lists, according to Amex Travel.

In the Americas, Amex travellers are keen on bright lights and natural sights from Las Vegas, Nevada and Panama City, Panama to the San Juan Mountains; Colorado and Papagayo Peninsula, Costa Rica.



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A Travel Blog Igniting Your Passion for Travel because the world is full of wonders waiting to be explored, my blog here to inspire, guide, and spark your wanderlust. From hidden gems to unforgettable journeys, let's uncover the beauty of travel together.



Missed Something Recently?

If you've missed any of my recent blog posts, you can catch up via the links below. I share longer-form stories, destination insights, and thoughtful travel reflections there.

Chasing the First-Time Feeling Again

Soft Adventure Is About How You Feel, Not How Far You Go

If you'd prefer, you can also subscribe to have them delivered straight to your inbox so you never miss what's next.

[Click Here To Subscribe](#)



Timing over Intensity

When planning wildlife experiences, prioritise timing over intensity. Early mornings and late afternoons often offer the most meaningful encounters, not because there's more happening, but because everything feels calmer, quieter, and more natural.

Soft adventure is about choosing moments when the world hasn't fully woken up yet: cooler air, fewer people, and wildlife moving as it's meant to. Whether it's elephants in Sri Lanka, animals along a riverbank, or snow monkeys in Japan, these quieter windows tend to create the kind of first-time feeling that stays with you long after the trip ends.

If this newsletter stirred something, a memory, a curiosity, or the sense that it might be time to plan a journey of your own, I'm always happy to help shape it. Thoughtfully planned, well connected, and designed around how you want to experience the world.

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