



beSrilankan Survival Guide

✦ 1. VACCINATIONS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE TRAVELLING

Based on CDC, UK-FCDO, NaTHNaC, and Sri Lanka-specific health guidance, the following are recommended:

Essential / Routine Vaccines

MMR, DTP (Diphtheria–Tetanus–Pertussis), Polio, Influenza [wwwnc.cdc.gov], [srilankatravelguide.com]

Strongly Recommended for Sri Lanka

Hepatitis A (common food-/water-borne risk) [wwwnc.cdc.gov]

Hepatitis B (recommended for most travelers) [wwwnc.cdc.gov]

Typhoid (contaminated food/water risk) [srilankatravelguide.com], [passporthealthusa.com]

Chikungunya vaccine [wwwnc.cdc.gov]

Japanese Encephalitis (if visiting rural areas, long stays) [srilankatravelguide.com]

Rabies (street dogs & monkeys present; recommended for rural travel) [passporthealthusa.com]

COVID-19 (stay up to date) [wwwnc.cdc.gov]

Not Required Unless Transiting Through A Risk Country

Yellow Fever certificate only if arriving from a yellow-fever country. [srilankatravelguide.com]

✦ 2. WATER SAFETY & FOOD HYGIENE

Sri Lanka's tap water is NOT safe for travelers.

Water Rules

Do NOT drink tap water, even in cities. Risks: bacteria, parasites, viruses such as Giardia, E. coli. [tapwaterworldwide.com]

Avoid ice unless you are sure it's purified. [tapwaterworldwide.com]

Filtered/bottled water only. (Use LifeStraw or similar.) [tapwaterworldwide.com]

Wash fruits/vegetables with water. [tapwaterworldwide.com]

Food Safety

Prefer reputable restaurants and avoid questionable street vendors (variable hygiene standards). [travelsafeabroad.com]

Always check cleanliness of utensils and avoid raw salads unless at trusted venues.



✦ 3. SURVIVING THE TROPICAL HEAT & HUMIDITY

Sri Lanka is consistently hot and humid, and even locals acknowledge how intense it can be. [lonelyplanet.com]

Heat Survival Practices

Hydrate constantly (2–3 L/day minimum).

Wear lightweight, breathable clothing (linen/cotton).

Avoid midday sun (11:00–15:00) especially in coastal or lowland areas.

Use SPF 30–50 sunscreen and reapply often.

Take electrolyte packets with you—heat + humidity drains salts fast.

If you're hiking in hill country (Ella, Nuwara Eliya), expect sudden rain bursts during monsoon seasons. [lonelyplanet.com]

✦ 4. TRAIN-RIDE SURVIVAL & SAFETY TIPS

Sri Lanka's trains are beautiful but can be crowded, slow, and unpredictable.

Booking Tips

Book 2nd-class seats in advance for routes like Kandy–Ella (up to 30 days ahead). [friendlysrilanka.com]

2nd class = best experience with open windows, local interaction. [friendlysrilanka.com]

1st class = AC + comfort but less atmosphere.

On-Board Safety

Keep valuables secured and bags close; petty theft can occur in crowded areas. [friendlysrilanka.com]

Carry your own water and snacks. Vendors exist but are variable in hygiene. [friendlysrilanka.com]

Toilets vary—some surprisingly clean, some not. Bring tissues + sanitizer. [members.ja...htclub.com]

If riding with open doors/windows, do NOT lean out—curves and tunnels are dangerous.

During Monsoons / Flooding

Train routes, especially Hill Country, may stop due to landslides or debris on tracks. [wellcometo...ilanka.com]

Always check service status before boarding.

Emergency rail hotline: 1971. [wellcometo...ilanka.com]



✦ 5. MOSQUITO PROTECTION (VERY IMPORTANT)

Mosquito-borne diseases include dengue, chikungunya, JE, Zika.

Use 50% DEET or Picardin repellents.

Wear long sleeves at sunrise/sunset.

Choose accommodation with screens or mosquito nets.

During chikungunya outbreak → high caution advised. [wwwnc.cdc.gov]

✦ 6. GENERAL SAFETY & SURVIVAL TIPS

Weather Risks & Flooding

Sri Lanka recently experienced severe monsoon flooding and landslides, especially in:

Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Ella, Hill Country routes, Batticaloa, Colombo, Galle, Matara [smartraveller.gov.au], [metro.co.uk]

Follow:

Avoid floodwaters (disease risk, hidden debris). [smartraveller.gov.au]

Follow authorities' evacuation or warning instructions.

Personal Safety

Crime exists (pickpocketing, harassment). Stay aware in busy transit areas. [smartraveller.gov.au]

Avoid political demonstrations and respect the religious norms (can turn violent). [smartraveller.gov.au]

Scams common (gems, taxis, credit-card fraud). Check bills and watch belongings. [smartraveller.gov.au]

Transportation Tips

For tuk-tuks: ensure driver is sober; some drive under influence. [travelsafe...abroad.com]

Use PickMe or Uber for safer rides.



✦ 7. WHAT TO PACK FOR SURVIVAL

Electrolyte tablets

DEET/Picardin mosquito repellent

ORS (oral rehydration salts)

Light clothing, rain jacket

Portable water filter (LifeStraw)

First-aid kit (antihistamines, ibuprofen, antiseptic wipes, Imodium)

Sunscreen

Power bank (frequent outages during storms)

✦ 8. EMERGENCY NUMBERS (VERY USEFUL)

From Sri Lankan disaster & safety authorities:

Ambulance (Suwa Seriya)	1990
Tourist Police	1912
Police Emergency	119
Fire Brigade	110
Disaster Management Centre	117