



**FILM
ISLAND**

SRI LANKA SHOOTING GUIDE

www.filmisland.net

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British director Sir Carol Reed

1 | Why Film in Sri Lanka?

Because we hold many universes within our shores.

Renowned British director Sir Carol Reed called Sri Lanka “the most natural and complete outdoor set” during his time shooting *Outcast of the Islands* in 1951. Since then, many filmmakers from the famed to the avant-garde have chosen Sri Lanka as their location of choice.

Over the years, many other iconic and award winning movies have been shot in Sri Lanka; David Lean’s *Bridge on the River Kwai*, Steven Spielberg’s *Indiana Jones & the Temple of Doom*, Deepa Mehta’s *Water and Midnight’s Children*, Q’s *Tasher Desh* and Disney Nature’s 2015 release *Monkey Kingdom* are just a handful.

Other films shot in Sri Lanka like Anurag Kashyap’s *Bombay Velvet* and Uberto Pasolini’s *Machan* were perfect showcases for the island’s technical competency, professionalism and creativity of set designers and art directors who masterfully brought period landscapes and slum dwellings to life.

From arid landscapes to forgotten corridors, misty mountains to golden beaches, one tiny island can create new worlds for the world of filmmaking. We really do have it all on our miracle of a little island and we deliver quality work with a smile.



2 | The Incentives

A quick list of the best reasons to film in Sri Lanka

- **Diverse Natural Environments**

a stone's throw away

Cut across myriad landscapes and diverse natural environments, each a few hours away from the other. The resplendent island houses many easy to access locations, terrains, and natural beauty.

- **A World of Architecture**

within your reach

The island's significant location made it the playground of many colonizers and a strategic port of call along ancient trade routes and up to the 2nd World War. Destinations such as the Galle Fort, Sigiriya and Kandy for example, offer historic, religious and culturally significant features and associations.

- **Ease of Access**

for complete convenience

Unlike many other countries in the region, we are high on the accessibility factor. With no travel embargoes and the benefit of visa-on-arrival make it easy to come here and travel within the island. We are open for business and for visitors.

- **Hospitality**

with a smile

Sri Lanka is easily one of the most hospitable places to work. We have few prohibitions and just about anyone will be ready and willing to offer a lending hand, with a smile. We are friendly, welcoming and really easy to work with.



- **Ease of Business**

- for peace of mind*

- Sri Lanka welcomes potential collaborators with flexible working arrangements, no language barriers, and a stable, supportive private and state system to work with. We are geared to make things possible for you.

- **Infrastructural Set-Up**

- for smooth operations*

- The overall infrastructure of the country is well set to enable and facilitate a smooth operation for the film production process from start to finish. What's more the film industry in Sri Lanka is not unionized making operations that much more convenient.

- **Tax Exemptions**

- and other incentives*

- Special tax reductions and allowances for a minimum investment in the country are negotiable for large scale productions. Furthermore, we can negotiate tax exemptions for filming equipment brought into the country.

- **Qualified Personnel**

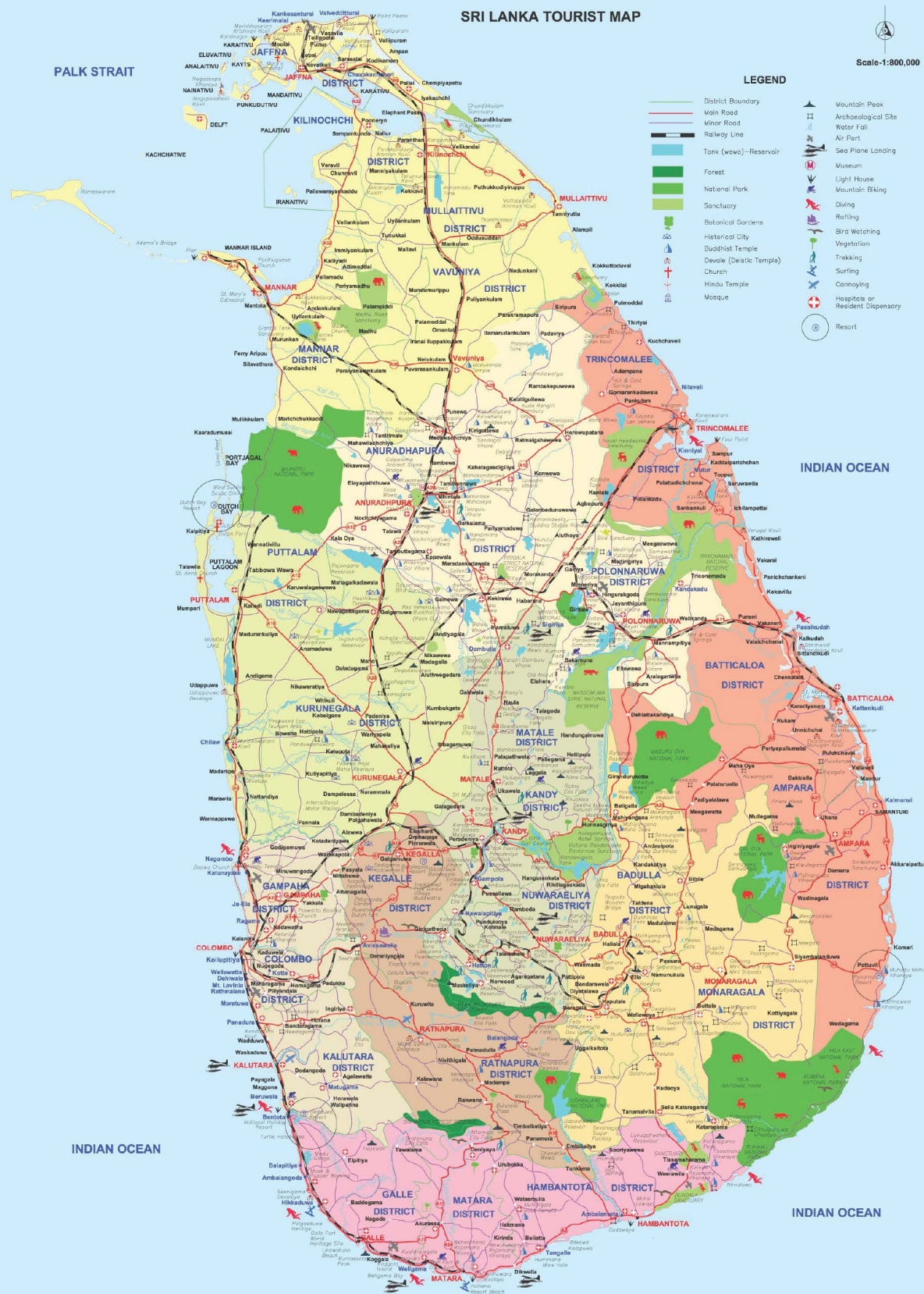
- with the right expertise*

- Sri Lanka has the know-how, with qualified, experienced and passionate personnel, to help manage and flawlessly execute work that meets global standards and technological requirements. Our people come with decades of experience working across diverse film productions and practically everyone speaks English, making it easy to communicate ideas and watch them come to life.

- **Cost Effective Solutions**

- for filming at a fraction of the cost!*

- Sri Lanka offers all this for a fraction of what it would cost to produce a film in most other international destinations and is one of the most competitive locations within the South East Asian region.



3 | About Sri Lanka

1 Island, 9 Provinces, 105 Rivers, 34,000 years of history and a million worlds within reach – Sri Lanka is the perfect place for a world of ideas to come to life. Just about anything a film shoot requires is within reach here on our island.

a. Location & Time Zone

Sri Lanka is a South Asian island located in the Indian Ocean, just south of India. Local time is 5½ hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) compared to 6 hours+ GMT in the past decade. Sri Lankan time is the same as Indian Standard Time.

b. Geography & Climate

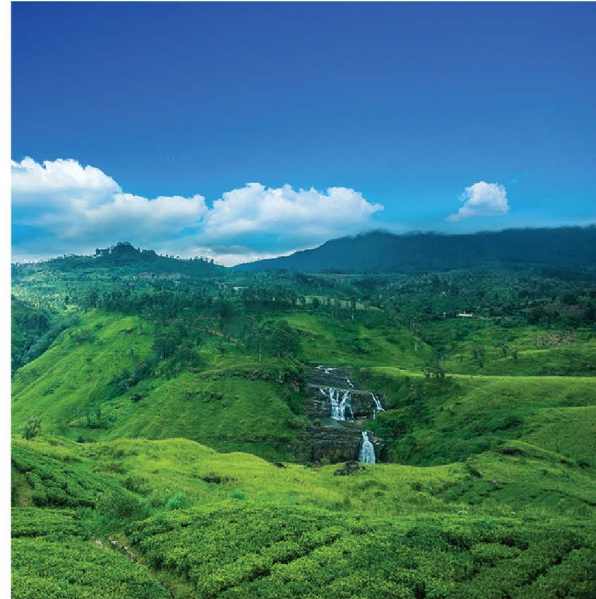
Sri Lanka lies southwest of the Bay of Bengal between latitudes 5°N and 10°N, and longitudes 79°E and 82° E. The island consists flat to rolling coastal plains and mountains rising in the south-central regions. The highest point reaches 2,524 metres (8,281 ft) above sea level.

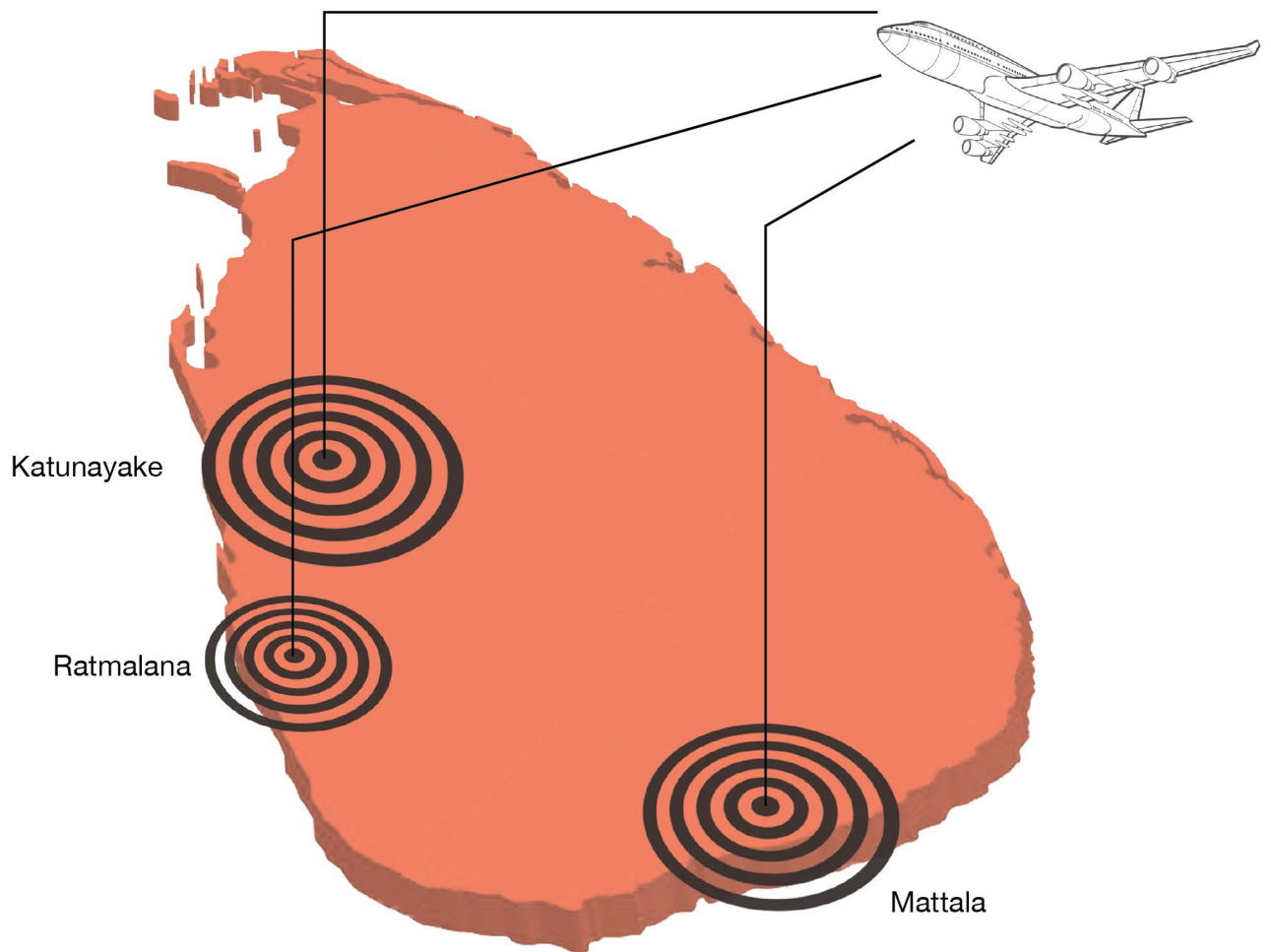
The tropical location and the moderating effects of ocean winds keep the island's climate primarily warm. The Central Highlands record a temperature range from 17 °C (62.6 °F) with the possibility of frost occurring for several days in the winter. The lower altitude areas record an average temperature ranging from 28 °C (82.4 °F) to nearly 31 °C (87.8 °F). Day and night temperatures may vary by 14 °C (25.2 °F) to 18 °C (32.4 °F).

Sri Lanka has 105 rivers, with the longest extending 335 kilometres (208 mi). We are also home to 51 natural waterfalls of 10 meters or higher. Additionally the coastline and adjacent waters support highly productive marine ecosystems. The island also has 45 estuaries and 40 lagoons which play home to a mangrove ecosystem that spans over 7,000 hectares.

c. Accommodation

Staying in Sri Lanka for the long haul comes with varied accommodation choices. Five star hotels, luxury villas, spas, resorts, private bungalows, private houses, dormitories and other short and long-term rentals are available for large crews and the executive team based on your requirements. Being able to book accommodation in close proximity to the film location is very possible.





d. Transportation

AVIATION

Sri Lanka has 3 international airports, Katunayake, Ratmalana and Mattala and two international carriers, Sri Lankan Airlines and Mihin Air, flying to over 100 destinations across the world. Book your tickets return via www.srilankan.com or www.mihinlanka.com. Many international carriers also fly into Sri Lanka for passenger and cargo purposes.

The island has an additional 14 domestic airports and 20 water-dromes making for easy access across the island. Five domestic carriers operate across these landing areas with varied cost and cargo load options.

RAIL

Train travel in Sri Lanka is a unique experience, primarily running across a legendary 19th century route. The network stretching across scenic hill country, untouched countryside and paradise beaches includes 1,450 km (901 mi) of track. Colombo is the main node of the network with train routes connecting the main cities of all nine provinces in the country. You can also charter your own train or observation carriage with a personal butler service.

ROAD

With 299 paved roads of over 100,000 km, Sri Lanka has one of the highest road densities in the world (1.5 km of paved roads per every 1sq.km. of land). Private car, van and lorry hires are available in addition to an excellent public transport system to get you to any corner of the country.

e. F&B

Sri Lanka houses many restaurants with global cuisine in addition to local fare. Rice is the staple Sri Lankan meal accompanied by vegetables and meat prepared with various spices with the taste varying regionally. Rice is also cooked in coconut milk for celebratory purposes and served with either a ground onion and chilli paste or jaggery for a sweeter taste. International cuisine available includes Indian, Chinese, Thai, Japanese, European and Mediterranean among others. Wayside eateries, coffee shops and street food are aplenty, and it's not uncommon to experience a local inviting you for a home-cooked meal. Supermarkets and grocery stores stock fresh produce should you prefer to cook your own meals.

f. Communications (Telecom + IT)

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

Foreigners can either rent a mobile handset or subscribe to the mobile service with their own cell phone. The main service providers are Dialog, Mobitel, AirTel, Hutch and Etisalat. All mobile operators support the GSM technology on GSM 900/ 1800 bands. WAP & GPRS is widely supported. 3G, 4G and wireless broadband are available in metropolitan areas. Wifi zones are also widely available in major towns and tourist destinations.

IDD FACILITIES

International calling cards, direct-dial services and call-centres are all available for your convenience. Simply dial the overseas switchboard number + Country Code + Area Code + the telephone number. Most hotels also provide IDD facilities in-room.

INTERNET

Sri Lanka is one of the most connected countries in the world with high speed broadband and wireless internet services available anywhere in the country. Internet cafes are also widely available in every city, town or village, providing connectivity at low cost. Data packages can be purchased from all mobile service providers for mobile and other device connectivity.

g. Healthcare Services

There are many public and private hospitals; nursing homes and other institutions providing medical services in the city of Colombo and in all other cities throughout the country. Doctors, surgeons and other medical professionals are trained to international standards, working with modern equipment and facilities. As such, Sri Lanka has one of the most effective healthcare systems among developing nations and has one of the best hygiene records in South Asia. Treatments are free at government hospitals and dispensaries, and free 24-hour treatments are available at the Colombo National Hospital. Emergency road and air ambulance services are also available, should they be required.

h. Postage and Delivery

Major courier services from FedEx to DHL are all operational in Sri Lanka in addition to the state-run postal service with nearly 5000 post offices around the country.

i. Banks

Sri Lanka has a number of private and state owned banks in addition to international banking conglomerates such as HSBC, Citi-Bank and Standard Chartered. Banking hours are usually 9:00 am to 2:30 pm from Monday to Friday but some banks operate weekend banking facilities at select outlets. ATMs are widely accessible across the country. All leading credit and debit cards are also accepted at numerous establishments.

j. Power

The voltage in Sri Lanka is 220/ 240 volts. Adaptors are widely available at local supermarkets, hardware stores etc. and accommodation establishments provide them on a complimentary basis should you request for it.

k. Useful Numbers

Government Information Centre 1919

Police Emergency Hotline 118/119

Ambulance/Fire Department 110

Accident Service (General Hospital Colombo) 011-269 1111

Tourist Police 011 242 1052



4 Exemplary Production Capabilities

Sri Lanka has been the location of some of the finest international film productions over the years, and with each new film produced here the capabilities and technical competencies of our teams have grown to boundless strengths. At Film Island we bring the best of them together to help you create just about any film you can imagine.

Our turnkey services encompass location scouting, production coordination, costumes, make-up and hair, art direction, lighting, set design and construction, providing professional film and TV crews and equipment, handling of all ground needs such as accommodation, catering and transportation, as well as co-ordinating visas and approvals expeditiously, to provide a hassle free production experience. We can also negotiate a tax exemption on equipment brought into the country.



Our Production Facilities

- Line Production
- Production Management
- Unit management
- Production coordination
- First and Second Assistant directors
- Production Finance
- Location Management
- Script Supervision
- Casting
- Costume Design & Production
- Make up, styling and SFX
- Art Direction
- Set Design and Construction
- Prop Masters and Set Dressers
- Construction and Management
- Technical Assistance (Gaffer, Best Boy, Lighting Technicians, Jimmy Operators, Steady Cam and Drone Operators)



Imaginative Set Construction

We also have access to a series of existing film sets and facilities for many types of indoor and outdoor set construction from period sets to science fiction epics. Our set designers and construction teams have proved time and again that any dream can be made a reality.

We have a dedicated cinema city, Ranminitenna, housing many existing rural and urban film sets for television and film production, and set construction facilities. The series of period sets created for Bombay Velvet is a fine example of the lengths the facility can go to, bringing many worlds to life not only with our many natural environments but also with our ability to create them.



Key International Films Shot in Sri Lanka

BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI (1957)

A British-American, World War II epic directed by David Lean, starring William Holden, Jack Hawkins, Sir Alec Guinness, and Sessue Hayakawa. The film is based on the novel *Le Pont de la Rivière Kwai* (1952) by Pierre Boulle.



ELEPHANT WALK (1954)

A Paramount Pictures film, directed by William Dieterle, and starring Elizabeth Taylor, Dana Andrews, Peter Finch and Abraham Sofaer. It is based upon the novel *Elephant Walk* by Robert Standish.



TARZAN THE APE MAN (1981)

An adventure film directed by John Derek and starring his wife Bo Derek, Miles O'Keeffe, Richard Harris, and John Phillip Law. The screenplay was loosely based on Edgar Rice Burroughs' books, but is told from the point of view of Jane Parker.



INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM (1984)

An American action-adventure film directed by Steven Spielberg. The second instalment in the Indiana Jones franchise and prequel to the 1981 film Raiders of the Lost Ark, featuring Harrison Ford reprising his role as the title character.



MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN (2012)

A Canadian-British film adaptation of Salman Rushdie's 1981 novel of the same name. Directed by Deepa Mehta, with principal photography in Colombo, Sri Lanka in February 2011.



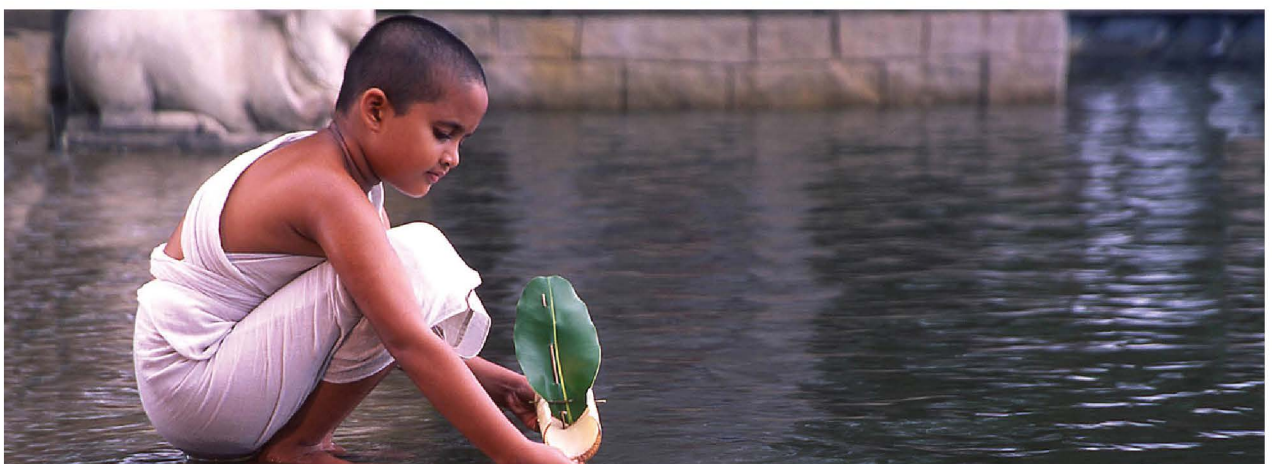
THE MONKEY KINGDOM (2015)

A film by award-winning Disney Nature, set among ancient ruins in the jungles of Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, following a troupe of Macaques over two years.



BOMBAY VELVET (2015)

An Indian, period crime-drama directed and co-produced by Anurag Kashyap, based on historian Gyan Prakash's book Mumbai Fables. Bombay Velvet is influenced by Classic Hollywood cinema including Film Noir.



WATER (2005)

An Indo-Canadian film written and directed by Deepa Mehta and set in 1938 exploring the lives of widows at an ashram in Varanasi, India. The film is also the third and final instalment of Mehta's Elements trilogy.



DIE MÄNNER DER EMDEN (2012)

A German film directed and co-written by Berengar Pfahl created as an account of crew members of the SMS Emden making their way back to Germany after the Battle of Cocos in 1914.



MACHAN (2008)

A dark Sri Lankan comedy directed and produced by Uberto Pasolini as his directorial debut. Under the working title of Handball, the film was produced and financed by Redgrave Films (UK), RAI Cinema (Italy), Babelsberg Films (Germany), and Shakthi Films (Sri Lanka)



JEKYLL & HYDE (2015)

A 10-part drama series set in 1930s London, following the story of Robert Jekyll, the grandson of the original doctor. The show was commissioned by ITV in the UK and was written by Charlie Higson.



TASHER DESH (2012)

Loosely translated as The Land of Cards, Tasher Desh is a Bengali fantasy film directed by Q. The film has been described as a "trippy adaptation" of the Rabindranath Tagore play and was praised for its vivid experimental cinematography and interesting style by international critics. It features Soumyak Kanti DeBiswas, Anubrata Basu, Tillotama Shome, Rii, Joyraj Bhattacharjee, Tinu Verghese, and Immaduddin Shah in the lead roles.



5 | The Island's Many Worlds

Unlike many of our other South Asian counterparts, we are an island of garden cities and vibrant landscapes; 21st century Sri Lanka is in the throngs of a creative renaissance. And we really have a little bit of everything here from the beaches of Bali to the deserts across the Sahara, and from the amazon to ancient kingdoms. This is why many worlds of possibility await you should you chose to film in Sri Lanka. Here's just a tiny peek into what we have to offer:

a. Urban Legends

Nowhere else will you find a bustling metropolis with modern malls and manicured parks sitting next door to dark alley-ways and a gritty underbelly with a million stories to tell – our cities are the stuff of legend.

b. Paradise

From glorious sunsets to golden beaches coated in coconut palm silhouettes and sunrises that change the face of the horizon – creating tropical paradise comes naturally on our island.

c. Wilderness

Thick forests, lush with branches, laden with monkeys, a hidden python and a leopard on the prowl. On our island, a feral world of undergrowth comes alive for the wilder side of filmmaking.

d. Countryside

Picturesque out-of-town locations ripe with yellow-gold paddy fields, wattle and daub huts, and smiles as wide as the horizon; the Sri Lankan countryside is truly out of this world.

e. Virgin Land

The North and East of Sri Lanka opens us up fresh landscapes and an older way of life that has hitherto been untapped, providing you with ancient sites, and miles and miles of virgin land to explore.

f. Arid Landscapes

Endless, stark landscapes, punctuated with natural vegetation and the random peacock that may cross your path. In Sri Lanka's dry zones, things are anything but dry.

g. Global Architecture

English bungalows, Dutch forts and Portuguese ramparts blend harmoniously with traditional Sri Lankan architecture making it possible to shoot international storylines in one place.

h. Ancient Kingdoms

The island boasts hundreds of historical sites from temples to palaces and ancient paths walked by holy men. Many millennia of history combine to help create a world of adventure.

i. Misty Highlands

Sri Lanka maybe a tropical island, but we are also home to pointy mountain peaks, cascading waterfalls and perfectly aligned tea bushes as far as the eye can see. Early morning mist and afternoon gloom come naturally to us.

6 | Filming Guidelines & Regulations in Sri Lanka

The national film corporation of Sri Lanka is the sole authority to grant approvals for production of films by foreign producers, as per Act.No.47 of 1971 and Act.No.45 of 1980 (Amendment).

Our excellent rapport with the NFC makes us your ideal partner as we can assist with regulatory and procedural matters, mediating and negotiating with the NFC on your behalf.

Here are the particulars of the Act:

- The foreign producer must submit a synopsis and the complete script of the film. The film corporation will then scrutinize it prior to the approval.
- The foreign producer must submit a list of local skills required and clearance should be obtained from the corporation for all such recruitment and any engagements outside such a declaration the corporation shall not hold responsible and the producer shall be held responsible for any adverse developments created by such unauthorized personnel shall be covered by Insurance as may be applicable and for a sum not less than Rs.100,000/
- The producer shall apply for provision of local crews other than the Producer, Director and Cameraman
- All recruited personnel shall be covered by insurance as may be a applicable and for a sum not less than Rs.1,000,000/=
- For expatriate recruitment of Technicians and Artistes (other than the Producer, Director and Cameramen) approximately Rs.2,000/= per person
- An officer shall be appointed by the National Film Corporation for the duration of the arrangements and all the relevant costs related to the food, lodging and other necessities shall be the responsibility of the producer. If it is a joint production, the arrangements by the local party shall be adequate. The fee per day is Rs.625/=
- No shooting of a foreign film or a Co-production shall commence without prior approval of the corporation which shall coordinate with all the relevant authorities and the clients.
- The corporation shall charge levy to cover the services that shall include the necessary Sri Lanka customs approvals related to all the material brought in on the re-export basis.
- The producer of the foreign film shall declare the items and the value of inputs brought in for the production and the funding brought in for the purpose.
- The producer shall furnish a projected financial programme for the project and a comprehensive report must be filed at the time of Application for the Re-Export of material and equipment brought in and the balances of material after the completion of the project. (This is connected to the duty free facility offered at the time of entry.)
- A programme of location shooting must be submitted initially and such will be studied together with the appointed Corporation officials for finalization. Actual prevailing charges shall have to be paid to the corporation for arranging all the necessary permits from the relevant authorities, where necessary.
- The covering approval from the relevant Deputy Inspector General of Police shall provide the producers with a hassle free shooting program. Department of Archaeology, Central Cultural fund, Director of Wild Life, Director of Zoological Gardens are some of the main frequent authorities and depending on the storyline, relevant authorities may have to be approached.
- The Producer or the local Agent shall provide the corporation with the anticipated budget and proof regarding its availability.
- In the cases of complete filming of film in Sri Lanka, the producer shall provide the opportunity for the corporation to view what has been shot in Sri Lanka and in the cases of completing a film elsewhere, the Producer has to provide a DVD of the completed story for previewing and no approval shall be processed unless this condition is met before its release anywhere in the world
- The producer shall offer the completed film to be screened in Sri Lanka through National Film Corporation based on mutually agreed terms and conditions and reserves the right to select what may be suitable to Sri Lanka only.
- At least 50% of the crews should be of Sri Lanka origin.
- Only Co-productions shall be allowed to be dubbed into local languages for screening in Sri Lanka
- The proceeds of the joint productions shall be shared according to the agreements between the parties and according to the percentages agreed between the corporations in case of a contribution by the corporation.
- This facility is promoted under part.1 Section 4(d) and (e) of the National film Corporation Act No.47 of 1971
- The expatriate producers of all the films shot in Sri Lanka are expected to give credit for such work by indicating "FILMED IN SRI LANKA" in the film & promotional material to acknowledge utilization of Sri Lanka Locations.



7 Why Film Island?

We are an expert team providing turnkey solutions for filmmaking; a new company with experienced hands on board.

We offer a professionalism that is unrivalled in the country. The expertise of the team includes internationally renowned multiple award winning directors and Sri Lanka's most sought after producer - line producer combination, together with best in class creative and strategic thinkers and managers. This highly experienced team has worked with distinguished film directors and film crews from around the world.

Film Island has the know-how to manage and flawlessly execute any production as line producers, from feature films, TV shows, documentary and commercial productions, meeting global standards and the latest technology requirements.

Film Island is a team of Sri Lanka's most sought after industry experts, offering end-to-end professional production solutions for any filming requirement.

Talk to us and we'll show you how dreams become reality on our island.

Visit Us:

www.filmisland.net

Call Us:

+94 77 742 1123

Email Us:

shootinsrilanka@filmisland.net

Find Us:

**41/6 D S Fonseka Mawatha,
Colombo 5
Sri Lanka**