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## SRI LANKA'S RICH HISTORY UNVEILED - THE TALE OF SIGIRIYA ROCK FORTRESS

October 2015

Rich in history, [Sri Lanka](#) reveals layer upon layer of her past to curious visitors, from the grand ruins of ancient kingdoms to the visible influence of colonial times. There are clear traces of the country's Portuguese, Dutch and British past in the architecture and forts of the cities, while the ancient capitals of the Lankan civilisation are filled with crumbling temples and magnificent Buddhist statues.

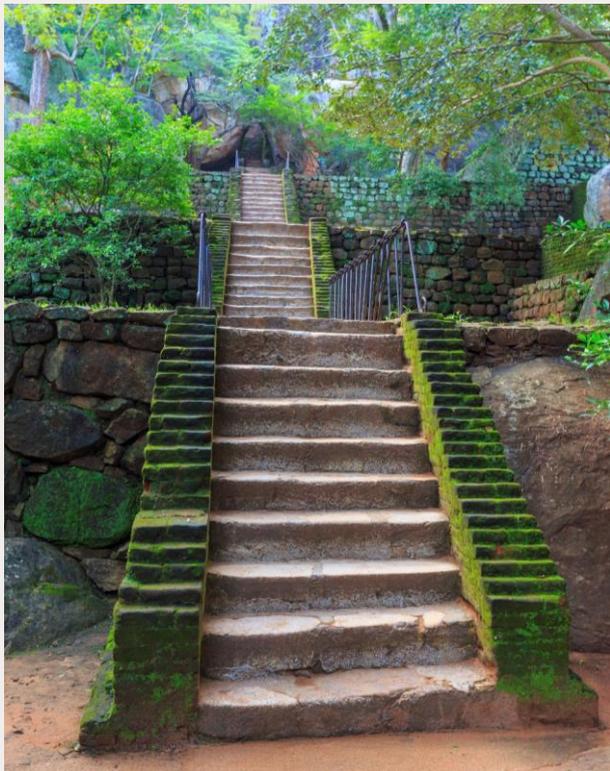
With [Sri Lanka](#) a rich and vibrant melting point of cultures and religions, an experienced and reputable travel company like [&Beyond](#) is essential for bringing the history of this truly remarkable country alive.

One of the most visited historic sites in Sri Lanka, the ancient citadel of Sigiriya is an example of a location best explored in the company of a professional guide who can explain its fascinating history. While stories differ on the finer details, it is generally accepted that the fortress was built by King Kashyapa around 477 CE. The illegitimate son of King Dhatusena, Kashyapa usurped the throne by killing his father and driving away his brother Mugalan, the legitimate heir. Knowing that his brother had fled to India with the intention of raising an army and returning to claim what was rightfully his, Kashyapa built a sumptuous fortress and palace in the most inaccessible location possible, on the rocky outcrop of Sigiriya.

Kashyapa's efforts were ultimately all in vain, as he was deserted by his armies on Mugalan's return and is rumoured to have committed suicide by falling on his sword.

While the citadel was subsequently deserted, the site was rediscovered in the 1830s and became the object of archaeological attention. Today Sigiriya is a thriving tourist attraction, known for a number of exceptional features, including its beautiful landscaped grounds. Among the oldest in the world, these elegant water gardens and terraces sprawl at the foot of the rocky column, protected by the remains of the old town's moats and ramparts.

Climbing up towards the summit, visitors encounter the Mirror Wall, decorated with writings and verse that dates back to the 8th century. Sheltered by a craggy cave halfway up the lofty boulder are the famous fresco paintings of female figures believed to be over 1 500 years old. Once at the top of the 220-metre (660-foot) high outcrop, visitors can explore the ruins of the upper palace, as well as the meticulously landscaped gardens and the immense rock cisterns required to keep them watered.





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While the views from the summit of the gigantic boulder are truly breathtaking and there is plenty to draw the attention of even the most casual tourist, the full significance of this magnificent site is best appreciated in the company of an experienced guide and tour operator who can explain its rich historical background.

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