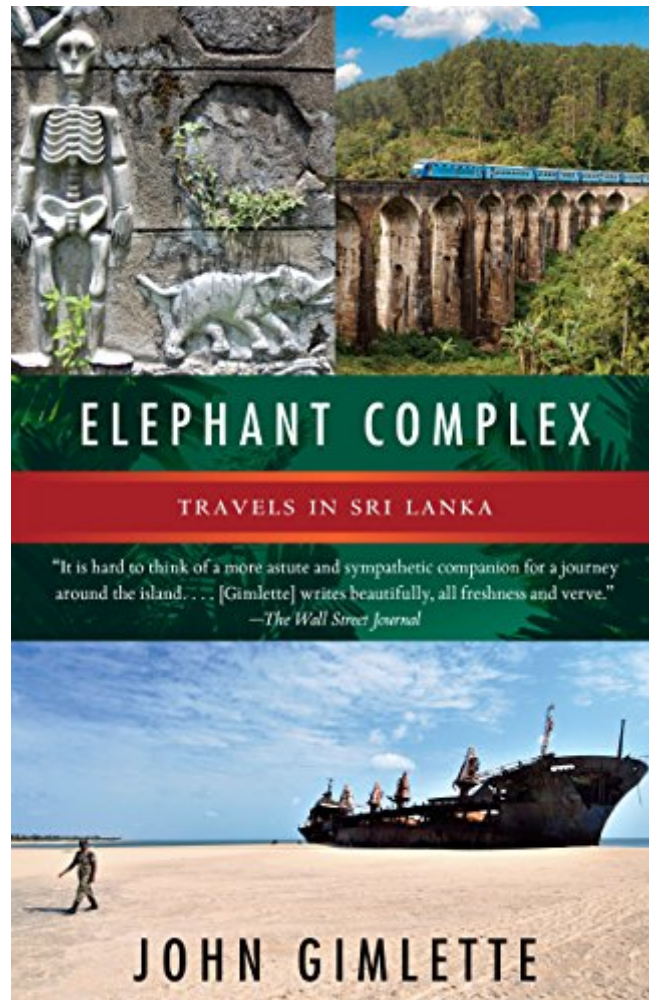




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Elephant Complex: Travels In Sri Lanka



Synopsis

No one sees the world quite like John Gimlette. As *The New York Times* once noted, "he writes with enormous wit, indignation, and a heightened sense of the absurd." Writing for both the adventurer and the armchair traveler, he has an eye for unusually telling detail, a sense of wonder, and compelling curiosity for the inside story. This time, he travels to Sri Lanka, a country only now emerging from twenty-six years of civil war. Delving deep into the nation's story, Gimlette provides us with an astonishing, multifaceted portrait of the island today. His travels reveal the country as never before. Beginning in the exuberant capital, Colombo ("a hint of anarchy everywhere"), he ventures out in all directions: to the dry zones where the island's 5,800 wild elephants congregate around ancient reservoirs; through cinnamon country with its Portuguese forts; to the "Bible Belt" of Buddhism • the tsunami-ravaged southeast coast; then up into the great green highlands ("the garden in the sky") and Kandy, the country's eccentric, aristocratic Shangri-la. Along the way, a wild and often desperate history takes shape, a tale of great colonies (Arab, Portuguese, British, and Dutch) and of the cultural divisions that still divide this society. Before long, we're in Jaffna and the Vanni, crucibles of the recent conflict. These areas • the hottest, driest, and least hospitable • have been utterly devastated by war and are only now struggling to their feet. But this is also a story of friendship and remarkable encounters. In the course of his journey, Gimlette meets farmers, war heroes, ancient tribesmen, world-class cricketers, terrorists, a former president, old planters, survivors of great massacres • and perhaps some of their perpetrators. That's to say nothing of the island's beguiling fauna: elephants, crocodiles, snakes, storks, and the greatest concentration of leopards on Earth.

Here is a land of extravagant beauty and profound devastation, of ingenuity and catastrophe, possessed of both a volatile past and an uncertain future • a place capable of being at once heavenly and hellish • all brought to vibrant, fascinating life here on the page. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

I've always thought the country "Ceylon" had such a romantic name I just had to find out more about it and how it came to change its name to Sri Lanka. This book was a great tutorial on the history of the country and its continuing complexities. With the help of Google Maps and the internet I could almost travel as a button on the shirt of the author as he traversed the country. The only downside was my inordinate curiosity. I quickly discovered I could not read the book without my iPad next to me so I could track his steps and see what he saw therefore it took a long time to finish the book. My own fault but certainly an answer to my curiosity.

TRAVEL BOOKS ARE THE BEST WAY TO KNOW IN DETAIL A COUNTRY, ELEPHANT COMPLEX IS ABOUT SRI LANKA(FORMERLY CEYLON) IS ONE OF THESE BOOKS; SRI LANKA IS AN INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND LOCATED SE OF INDIA;THE BOOK IS A THOROUGHLY DESCRIPTION OF SRI LANKA ITS HISTORY, CULTURE,LANDSCAPE, FLORA AND FAUNACOVERING THE WHOLE ISLAND FROM SOUTH TO NORTH ENDING IN THE JAFFNA PENINSULA AND THE DELFT ISLAND.SRI LANKA IS ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT CIVILIZATION OF THE WORLD ,IS A MIXTURE OF SINHALESEBUDDHISM AND TAMIL HINDUISM WITH LATER INFLUENCES FROM ARABS IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES ANDTHE EUROPEAN COLONIZATION, THE PORTUGUESE (16TH-EARLY 17TH CENTURY), THE DUTCH (LATE 17TH-18TH)AND FINALLY THE BRITISH (19TH-MIDDLE 20TH), THE COUNTRY ACHIEVED INDEPENDENCE IN 1948 AND AFTERA PERIOD OF RELATIVE STABILITY THE COUNTRY WAS ENGULFED IN A BLOODY CIVIL WAR THE LONGEST IN ASIA(1983-2009)

BETWEEN THE SINHALESE GOVERNMENT IN COLOMBO AND THE LTTE (LIBERATION TIGER TAMIL EELAM) WHICH WAS FOUGHT MOSTLY IN THE NORTHEAST ENDING WITH THE VICTORY OF THE SRI LANKAN ARMY. THE BOOK STARTS WITH THE CAPITAL COLOMBO CONTINUING WITH THE GREEN JUNGLES A PARADISE IN THE EARTH TO KANDY THE EPICENTER OF SRI LANKAN BUDDHISM; IN THE LAST CHAPTERS THE AUTHOR GIVES A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE EASTERN AND NORTHERN PART OF THE ISLAND, WHERE THE BLOODY LTTE INSURGENCY WAS TAKEN PLACE, I STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THAT THE AUTHOR PORTRAYS THE CONFLICT BECAUSE HE TOES THE LIBERAL LINE PREVALENT IN THE WEST AND THE INTERNATIONAL BODIES LIKE THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE HOLLOW RETHORIC OF " HUMAN RIGHTS", "DEMOCRACY" AND " CIVIL SOCIETY" THIS LINE HAS FAVOURED THE LEFTISTS INSURGENCIES THROUGH THE WORLD ; I CONSIDER THE SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT MAHINDA RAJAPAKSAA GREAT LEADER AND ALONGSIDE RODRIGO DUTERTE AND VLADIMIR PUTIN ARE THE ROLE MODELS TO FOLLOW IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (ESPECIALLY IN CUBA AND VENEZUELA). AFTER READING THIS BOOK I CAN SAY THAT SRI LANKA IS AN INTERESTING AND FASCINATING COUNTRY AND I REALLY WANT TO VISIT IT ONE DAY.

A very, very verbose story. English prose, I guess if you can slug through it. Some interesting history and stories. Not much good as a travel guidebook.

Divided in 13 chapters, the book covers hundreds of years of colonial and modern history and society and all parts of Sri Lanka. Very balanced and well written.

Informative.

This book captures the history and culture of Sri Lanka's people, and is written with such sympathy and good humor. It is superb if you want to know about Ceylon and Sri Lanka.

I was reading the book while travelling through Sri Lanka. It gave me great insight into this beautiful country's history and culture. The book is written in a very interesting manner. Must-read for all travellers!

Like all John Gimlette's earlier books, Elephant Complex is brilliant. Fantastic research combined

with an incredible skill at interacting with people make this a wonderful book and like his previous books, this is one I will read many more times.

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