

How to book train tickets in Sri Lanka

BY GIHAN DHANUSHKA MAY 27, 2019 UNCATEGORIZED



631
SHARES

[f](#) Share

[t](#) Tweet

Believe it or not, reserving train tickets can be a real struggle in Sri Lanka. This is especially true for the Kandy to Ella train route.

frequently get sold out within 5 to 10 minutes.

We have been asked many times if we sell train tickets by our readers. We do include them in our [Sri Lanka tour packages](#), however, we do not sell them separately.

Since we can only help so many people with our Sri Lanka tour packages, we thought of revealing a few ways that you can book your train tickets in Sri Lanka. Hope you will find this article helpful when securing your train tickets for your holiday.

3 ways that you can book train tickets in Sri Lanka

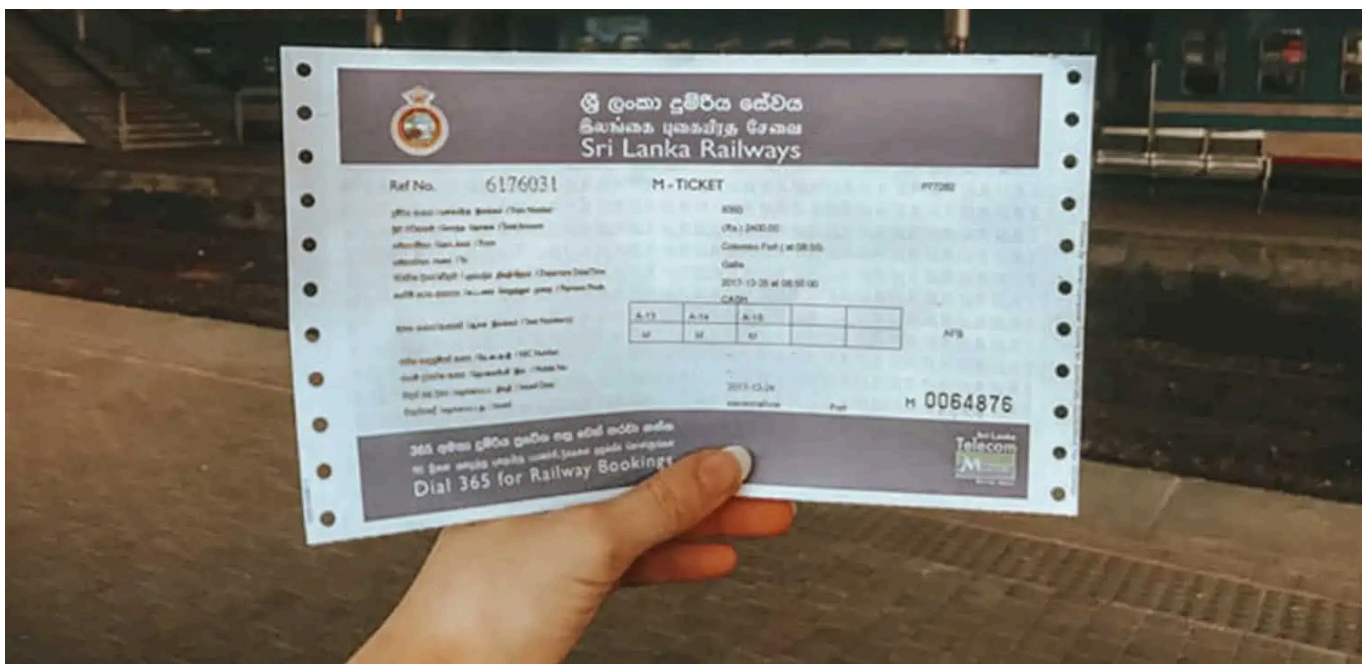
Before we get started, it is not a must to have reserved train tickets for train rides in Sri Lanka.

If you are not too bothered whether you get a seat or not, simply travel unreserved second class or unreserved third class. You can buy tickets for these seat classes showing up at the railway station about 30 minutes prior to your train journey.

Unreserved seat classes are less expensive but lack comfort. Often people travel standing shoulder to shoulder in these train carriages.

Reserved Second Class and Reserved third class train carriages are the best for scenic train rides in Sri Lanka. They have large windows that can be fully opened. If these two seat classes are fully booked, try to get seats from reserved first class or from a 1st class observation saloon.

If you do want to have confirmed seats for your train rides in Sri Lanka, use any of the methods mentioned below to buy train tickets for your train journey.



Train ticket (Photo credit goes to Jana Meerman)

How to book train tickets in Sri Lanka online

At the time of writing this article, Sri Lanka Railway Department does NOT accept reservations on their website. The only way to book train tickets online for your train journey in Sri Lanka is by using a third party like 12GoAsia or Visit Sri Lanka Holidays.

Once you place an order with any of these companies and pay for the train tickets, they try to reserve train tickets for you as soon as they are available for sale. (None of these companies guarantee train tickets in advance.)

If they were successful in securing tickets for you, you may collect them from their Colombo office or ask them to deliver them to your hotel. If they were not able to secure you train tickets for you, they will make a refund.

It is slightly more expensive to book train tickets using a third party. However, if you are a tourist, it is unlikely that you will be in Sri Lanka 30 days prior to your train journey to book th



Would you like a Sri Lanka trip like Lucy's?

We had the pleasure of assisting Lucy's family on their two-week holiday in Sri Lanka, and they absolutely loved it. Would you also like a hassle-free family holiday? Please drop us

How to reserve train tickets in Sri Lanka visiting a train station

If by any chance if you are in Sri Lanka 30 days prior to your train journey day, or if you are willing to try your luck with the train tickets, you may visit a railway station and try to reserve them.

Following are the exact steps that you need to take if you wish to book your tickets in Sri Lanka by visiting a railway station yourself.

Step 1 – Go to a railway station that has an M ticket counter.

M ticketing counters are the ticket counters dedicated for train ticket reservations. Only main railway stations have M ticketing counters. Some of the railway stations that have M ticketing counters are Colombo Fort, Kandy, Nanu Oya, and Ella.

Step 2 – Inform the person in the ticket booth of the date, starting and ending stations, required train departing time and the number of tickets desired.

Step 3 – Provide the identity cards or passports of all the passengers and pay for the tickets.

Step 4 – Once you receive the tickets, double check the details to make sure there are no mistakes.

How to book train tickets by calling Mobitel or Dialog

Mobitel and Dialog are two mobile service providers in Sri Lanka. They manage call centers which offer train ticket reservation facilities.

tickets using this service for busy train routes, such as Kandy - Ella. This makes it a little impractical for tourists. However, if you are already in Sri Lanka, this a very convenient way to book train tickets for your train journeys in Sri Lanka.

Here are the exact steps that you need to follow in order to secure train tickets using Mobitel or Dialog.

Step 1 – Recharge your Dialog or Mobitel sim card adequately (Usually not more than LKR 2000 per ticket)

Step 2 – Dial 444 if you are using a Dialog sim card. If you are using a Mobitel sim card dial 365 to contact the call center.

Step 3 – Inform the call center assistant of the date, starting and ending stations, required train departing time, and the number of tickets desired.

Step 4 – Give the identity card numbers or the passport numbers of the passengers to the assistant, so he/she can make the reservations for you.

Step 5 – When the call center assistant repeats your train journey details, listen carefully and confirm the details, as there is no way to amend the details later or get a refund by cancelling.

Step 6 – When you confirm the details, they will charge the amount from the account balance of your Dialog / Mobitel sim and send you a reference number as a text message.

Step 7 – Go to a train station that has an M ticketing counter (Colombo Fort, Kandy, Nanu Oya and Ella) and provide your ID and the reference number to get the train ticket. You may also get your train ticket by visiting a Mobitel counter at any of the Sri Lanka Telecom offices.

Keep in mind you can only book 5 train tickets (for the same train journey) from one Dialog or Mobitel SIM card. If you need to book more than 5 train tickets, you will have to use multiple SIM cards to book your train tickets.

You may either ask your travel agency to book them for you, or use a company like 12GoAsia or Visit Sri Lanka Holidays to book them.

Whichever service you use, place your order well in advance. Reserved seat classes in busy train routes, such as Kandy – Ella, get fully booked within minutes.

Be prepared for the idea that you might not be able to get reserved train tickets for the Kandy – Ella train journey. It happens more often than you think.

If you could not get reserved seats for your train journey, consider travelling in unreserved second class or third class.

Enjoyed this article? Be sure to check out our other fascinating pieces, such as our guide to [December Sri Lanka itineraries](#) and our article on [the best things to do in Galle](#).

Happy travels !

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE



[Sri Lanka with toddler itinerary](#)

[Top 10 things to do in Galle, Sri Lanka - Indepth guide](#)

[Top 10 things to do in J Lanka - Jaffna attr](#)

631
SHARES

 Share

 Tweet