

Sinhagala Nature Trail from Kudawa Conservation Centre (KCC) – Sinharaja Rain Forest.

Trail Difficulty: Easy | Moderate | Strenuous | Tough

Trail Head: Entrance to the protected area, Kudawa Conservation Centre, Weddagala, Kalawana

Nearest Town: Weddagala (south)

Nearest City: Kalawana

Access to Trail head:

Route to Kudawa Conservation Centre (KCC)

Route1: Colombo -> Kalutara -> Nagoda -> Mathugama -> Agalawatta -> Baduraliya -> Kalwana(Manana) -> Weddagala(South) -> KCC (approximately 125KM)

Route2: Colombo -> Avissawella -> Ratnapura -> Nivitigala -> Karawita -> Kalwana(Manana) -> Weddagala(South) -> KCC

KCC is accessible by any kind of a vehicle except extremely low profiled cars (The road from Weddagala to KCC (6km) can be rough).

From KCC, there are two jeep tracks to the trail head (Entrance to protected area, **waypoint: S01**). Distance from KCC to the entrance is 2.5km and 3.2km on respective jeep tracks. You need a 4WD / SUV with good ground clearance to tackle this or you will have to walk up to the trail head from KCC.

Trail End: Sinhagala Peak

Total Length: 8.5 km

Elevation Gain: 300m (Elevation at Trail Head: 473m | Elevation at Trail End: 743m)

Approximate time: 5-7 hours

Hiking Season: Best months are December to April. July, August is also fairly dry. Avoid monsoon months.

Permit Required: YES. Permit can be obtained from the Kudawa Conservation Center (KCC).

“Sinhagal” means “The Lion rock”. Legends say that a mighty lion inhabited this rock located deep inside the Sinharaja rain forest.

Trail to Sinhagala peak will take you deep in to the magnificent Sinharaja rain forest and you will get an opportunity to walk along tracks only visited by few. It's one of the most rewarding hikes in terms of the diversity of scenery, landscape and the view from the summit. Since it is a lengthy walk and involves an extremely steep

climb to reach the summit, it is arguably the most challenging hikes you can do in Sinharaja.

0 to 1.9km: The trail starts from the gate at the entrance to the protected area (**waypoint: S01**). You will be asked to produce your permits before you enter the protected area. From this point onwards walk along the jeep track leading to Kudawa Research Centre.

This part of the trail is the best area to observe birds of Sinharaja. Early morning and late evening there is a very high chance of coming across mixed species flocks which will provide you an opportunity to observe some of the rarest birds of Sri Lanka such as the red faced mal-koha.

Since the jeep track is fairly broad, unlike the rest of the trail, it is easy to spot birds and butterflies.

On your way to the research centre (**Waypoint: S07**) note the two entry points to the Mulawella nature trail on your left hand side climbing up into the forest, first one at 600m from the gate (**Waypoint:S03**) and the second at 1.5 km from the gate. (**Waypoint: S06**).

Passing the research centre, cross a large stream and continue along the trail.

1.9km to 7.2km: Once you pass the research centre, it's a long walk along an easy trail. The Jeep track ends at the research centre and the trail now is a narrow foot path. You have to walk along this foot path for more than 5km from the research centre. Trail has occasional irregular sections but it is more or less a flat, easy walk.

Passing the research centre, at about 2.9 km from trail head there is a trail on to your left climbing into the forest (**Waypoint: S09**). This is the trail to a large complex of caves known as "Gallen yaya".

4.7 km from the trail head, you will cross a large stream with a concrete slab laid over it as a bridge (**Waypoint: S13**). As you cross this stream, you will find a trail branching off to your right. This trail leads to "Lanka Gama" village, located in the southern border of Sinharaja.

At 6.4 km from the trail head, there is another branch off to your left which is the trail to the "Koskulana Peak" (**Waypoint: S18**).

Passing S18 and crossing two tiny streams reach another large stream with huge logs put across as a bridge. (**Waypoint: S21**). At this point you have completed 7.2 km from the trail head.

7.2km to 8.0km: Once you cross the large stream, the trail will become more irregular. There will be brief climb ups, climb downs along with broad flat sections.

At about 7.4 Km from the trail head you will reach a small marsh/bog (**Waypoint: S23**). As you walk about 200m passing the marshy area, you will hear the sound of a flowing stream (**Waypoint: S24**). The trail now winds through the bank of a stream.

From about 7.7 km, you have to pass a series of streams. Two streams (**Waypoint: S25**) & (**Waypoint: S26**) with in first 200m and three more streams almost adjacent to each other (small-large-small) there after. These three streams together have very little water flow and full of large rocks (**Waypoint: S28**). After this point onwards you will feel that you have started climbing up. The trail climbs up to another rocky stream (With better water flow) flowing from the mountain located 8.00 km from the trail head (**Waypoint: S29**).

8.0km to 8.5km: After you reach the rocky stream, you will NOT see the continuation of the trail. You have to climb up, along this stream for 20m-30m and you will then find the continuation of the trail on to your right. After you come out of the rocky stream, you have to cross one smaller stream few meters from the point you get out from the rocky stream (**Waypoint: S30**). These are the last water sources. After this point onwards you will have to tackle an extremely hard climb of about 500m to the summit. This section is by far the most difficult of the entire hike.

About 200m before the summit the trail goes through a small cave (**Waypoint: S31**) which is an ideal spot to take a rest. The summit point is 8.5 km from the trail head (**Waypoint: S32**).

Tips, Notes & special remarks:

- This area of the rain forest is heavily infected with leaches. Take necessary precautions such as wearing leach proof socks or carry a repellent such as soap or Detol.
- Make sure that you take the full timing advantage in the first 7km. Once going gets tough it takes much longer than you think to reach the summit.
- Water from streams flowing in the forest is safe to drink without treatment.
- Even during the dry months occasional heavy showers can be experienced. It is always a good idea to carry rain coats and a plastic bag to protect electronics.

Way Points

	N: dd° mm.mmm'	E: dd° mm.mmm'	Elevation
S01 (Gate)	6° 25.762'	80° 24.839'	473 m
S02	6° 25.610'	80° 24.926'	480 m
S03	6° 25.437'	80° 25.003'	485 m
S04	6° 25.302'	80° 25.015'	494 m
S05	6° 25.138'	80° 25.217'	516 m
S06	6° 25.109'	80° 25.296'	499 m
S07	6° 24.967'	80° 25.423'	513 m
S08	6° 24.716'	80° 25.593'	529 m
S09	6° 24.545'	80° 25.800'	529 m
S10	6° 24.371'	80° 25.978'	535 m

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	N: dd° mm.mmm'	E: dd° mm.mmm'	Elevation
S11	6° 24.193'	80° 26.173'	529 m
S12	6° 24.116'	80° 26.369'	528 m
S13	6° 23.979'	80° 26.419'	530 m
S14	6° 23.928'	80° 26.511'	529 m
S15	6° 23.754'	80° 26.724'	533 m
S16	6° 23.647'	80° 26.769'	523 m
S17	6° 23.583'	80° 26.881'	541 m
S18	6° 23.660'	80° 27.132'	532 m
S19	6° 23.549'	80° 27.285'	527 m
S20	6° 23.439'	80° 27.414'	530 m
S21	6° 23.346'	80° 27.475'	533 m
S22	6° 23.289'	80° 27.557'	547 m
S23	6° 23.282'	80° 27.577'	551 m
S24	6° 23.390'	80° 27.640'	557 m
S25	6° 23.382'	80° 27.718'	571 m
S26	6° 23.381'	80° 27.769'	580 m
S27	6° 23.359'	80° 27.837'	583 m
S28	6° 23.374'	80° 27.878'	609 m
S29	6° 23.349'	80° 27.933'	595 m
S30	6° 23.354'	80° 27.961'	593 m
S31	6° 23.287'	80° 28.035'	716 m
S32 (Summit)	6° 23.293'	80° 28.102'	743 m

Email your comments on the accuracy of this trail guide to lakdasun@gmail.com