

Planning your Hike

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What are the best stages of the trail?

It is a very hard question to answer. Each stage has its own uniqueness and very hard to narrow it down.

On the Pekoe Trail App, each stage has a comprehensive description of the stage with user ratings, points of interests and audio stories along reviews and images uploaded by users.

Best is to check the App for each stage.

[**Learn how to access Stage Profiles from the Pekoe Trail App**](#)

The Pekoe Trail Membership & Passes (How it works: Step?by? Step)

Memberships & Passes, all you need to know!

1. What you need

- A valid email address and mobile number.
- A visa/mastercard for online payments or supported payment method for the membership fee.
- [The Pekoe Trail mobile app](#) and access to the [Web portal](#)
- Stable internet connection for sign-up and checkout.

2. Plan overview

All memberships activates immediately on confirmed registrations and remains active for the relevant time period.

- You must book your trail passes during the membership period to benefit the free trail pass option
- All plans include the ability to **book trail passes at LKR 0.00** during your membership validity when logged in to your member account.
- **7-Day Membership:** valid for **7 consecutive days**.
- **3-Month Membership:** Valid for **90 days** from activation.
- **Annual/Student Memberships:** valid for 1 year
- **Founding/Lifetime memberships:** valid unless requested for deletion

Note: Memberships are **per person**, non-transferable, and must be used with your own account.

3. How to get the Membership

1. Open the portal: <https://portal.thepekoetrail.org/>
2. Navigate to **Memberships**.
3. Choose **7-Day** or **3-Month Membership**.
4. Please ensure you give the user email address of The Pekoe Trail App that you use.
 - if you don't have one: [create your account](#).
5. Enter payment details and **Complete Purchase**.
6. You'll receive an **email confirmation** and your membership.

4. How to book the trail pass

1. Go to app, Select the Stage
2. Click Buy your Pass
3. Select the date and number of passes and Click Continue
4. Select Conform booking (Note your pass totals should be Zero when you have an active membership under the same email address you logged in with
 - Update your billing details (if necessary)
 - Note Red Asterisk * marked field are required to continue
5. Agree with the terms and conditions and click Agree and Pay Now
 - When you have an active membership you will not be redirected to the payment gateway but straight away you will get the booking confirmation.
6. View passes should show your active (same day) and reserved (futures dated) passes

Why the app still says “Buy Pass”

If you have an **active The Pekoe Trail Membership**, you **do not pay again** for trail passes during the membership period.

The app button says “**Buy Pass**”, but for members this simply means **confirming and issuing your pass**, not paying again.

If you see a price instead of LKR 0.00

Please check the following before proceeding

- You are logged into the correct account
- The selected date falls within your membership period
- Your app is updated to the latest version

If the issue persists, contact our team before purchasing.

Key clarification

Membership holders need to get trail passes separately - but won't be charged.

The "Buy Pass" button is a system label and does not mean you are paying again.

5. How to start the trail on app

1. on the day of hike when you open the stage on the app, you would see the option to download the offline maps and start trail button.
2. Recommend downloading offline maps prior to the hike
3. Click start trail and Happy Hiking!
 - Realtime navigation with off track alerts are available once you start the hike
 - You can record your hike and earn stage completion badge when you complete the hike

6. Receipts & Emails

- **Membership receipt:** Sent to your registered email after purchase.
- **Pass confirmation:** For each booked pass, a separate email + in-app QR code is issued.
- Can't find them? Search your inbox for "**The Pekoe Trail**" and check spam/junk.

7. FAQs & Troubleshooting

My payment transaction failed or card type doesn't support the payment gateway?

Your transaction failure could be due to many reasons; from incorrect billing details to insufficient funds.

You can find details on payment errors based on [reason codes here](#).

Sometimes payment failure would prompt **Your aggregator or acquirer is not accepting this transaction.**

The Pekoe Trail payment gateway is protected by 3DS security and some foreign Visa/Mastercard issuing banks may not support that feature.

In this case you will have to use a different card or you can pay the **membership fee with a bank transfer and share the transfer confirmation to info@thepekeotrailsrilanka.com with your Name and the email address** you use for your The Pekoe Trail account.

I bought a membership, but my pass isn't free.

- Check that the **pass date** is within your membership **validity window**.
- Ensure you're logged into the **same email** used to buy the membership.

- Update to the **latest app version** and try again.
- If it still shows a charge, contact **info@thepekoetrailsrilanka.com** with your membership ID and screenshots.

Can I share my membership with a friend/family member?

- No. Memberships are **personal** and tied to your account.

Do I need a pass for every hiking day?

- Yes, you need a valid **trail pass** for each day you hike. Members can book eligible passes at **LKR 0.00** while the membership is active.

Why do I need a trail pass and where to get it?

Trail passes are required for every stage of the trail. The passes can be obtained through The Pekoe Trail App.

Trail passes provide important data on trail usage so that we can best manage each stage. We use this information to plan maintenance and facilities and to encourage local services. We also have an obligation to report trail usage to our various stakeholders, like the tea plantations and Forest Department.

Plus, by getting a trail pass and using the app, you can track your progress, learn about points of interest along the way, and get a badge for completion of each stage!

Please note that some stages do have additional charges from other entities (i.e. Horton Plains, Lookandura Estate, etc.)

[Learn how to get the Pass](#)

7-Day and 3-Month Pekoe Trail Membership

We're excited to introduce two new ways to experience The Pekoe Trail: the **7-Day Membership** and the **3-Month Membership**.

These memberships are designed for hikers who want more flexibility and more time on the trail. Whether you're here for a week of adventure or spending a season exploring Sri Lanka's central highlands, you can now enjoy multiple hikes during your chosen period.

How it works

- When you purchase a **7-Day** or **3-Month Membership**, it becomes active **from the day you buy it**.
- The membership is valid for the full period (7 days or 3 months), but please note: at the moment, you cannot select a future start date.
- Just like any other membership, you'll still need to get your **trail pass** for the relevant stage on the relevant day through the **official Pekoe Trail App** or the **online portal**.
- **On the day of your hike**, your pass also unlocks access to the **offline map** for that stage (only available on that day).

Free passes are not available through authorized resellers, but you can still enjoy special offers and discounts at our partner locations

Next : [Buy a 7-Day or 3-Month Pekoe Trail Membership \(Step-by-Step\)](#)

What to wear for The Pekoe Trail Hike

Footwear

We strongly recommend proper hiking shoes or light walking boots with good grip and ankle support. While some estate roads and village sections are easy underfoot, many stages include steep descents, muddy tracks, rocky sections, stream crossings, and narrow footpaths through tea and forest. After rain, surfaces can become slippery very quickly. Trail-running style hiking shoes are usually sufficient for experienced hikers, but standard city walking shoes or trainers are not recommended.

Trousers vs shorts

We recommend lightweight long trousers rather than shorts for most stages. Long trousers protect you from leeches, thorny vegetation, stinging plants, sun exposure, and insects, especially in forested and overgrown sections. Quick-dry hiking trousers are ideal. Shorts can be comfortable on open estate roads, but most hikers prefer long trousers for overall comfort and protection.

Additional tips for hiking The Pekoe Trail

- **Leech protection** – Leeches are common in forested and damp sections. We strongly recommend wearing leech socks and carrying leech repellent. Official Pekoe Trail leech repellent and leech socks are available from our store and at selected trail partner locations.
- **Cold weather at higher elevations** – Stages such as 10 and 11 around Horton Plains are at the highest elevations on the trail and can feel cold even during the day, especially with wind or cloud cover. Early mornings and late evenings can be particularly chilly. We recommend carrying a light fleece or warm layer, even if the day starts sunny.
- **Socks and gaiters** – Wear good quality hiking socks and consider lightweight gaiters to keep mud, stones, and insects out of your shoes.
- **Rain protection** – Weather can change quickly in the hills. Carry a light rain jacket or poncho even on clear mornings.
- **Trekking poles** – Highly recommended for steep ascents, long descents, and slippery sections. They reduce strain on knees and improve balance.
- **Hydration and sun protection** – Carry sufficient water, use sunscreen, and wear a hat. Some stages are very exposed with limited shade.
- **Clothing choice** – Lightweight, breathable, quick-dry clothing works best. Avoid cotton, which stays wet and uncomfortable.

- **Pack light but smart** – Bring basic first aid, blister care, insect repellent, snacks, and a fully charged phone with the Pekoe Trail app downloaded for offline use.
- **Trail conditions** – Always check the latest stage status and advisories before starting, and do not hesitate to hike with a certified trail host or guide if you are unfamiliar with the terrain.

Is there any general weather advisory for hiking the Pekoe Trail?

Weather conditions can change quickly along the Pekoe Trail, especially in the Central Highlands. It is strongly recommended to:

- Check the local weather forecast and any advisories issued by the Sri Lanka Meteorology Department before starting your hike
- Review stage-specific updates and on-ground warnings via trailwatch.thepekoetrail.org
- Avoid hiking during heavy rain or immediately after prolonged rainfall, as this increases the risk of landslides, slippery terrain, and fallen trees

Each stage page on the Pekoe Trail website also includes difficulty levels and important notes relevant to weather and terrain.

Which Pekoe Trail stages are recommended for beginners?

For those new to the Pekoe Trail or hiking in Sri Lanka, the following stage 1 & 22 are generally recommended as beginner-friendly, depending on current conditions. Please refer the thepekoetrail.org/pekoe-stages for each stage difficulty and details

These stages typically have better access, clearer paths, and more moderate terrain. Always review the latest stage status and difficulty level before planning your hike, as conditions can change due to weather or maintenance issues.

Can the Pekoe Trail be done as a day trip?

Yes, several stages of the Pekoe Trail can be completed as day hikes. When planning a day trip:

- Choose a stage with good road access at both start and end points
- Allow sufficient time to complete the stage comfortably in daylight
- Factor in travel time to and from the trailhead
- Avoid starting late in the day

Stage details, estimated hiking times, and access information are available on the official stage pages.

Why is it important to purchase a Pekoe Trail pass?

A Pekoe Trail pass is required to hike any stage of the trail. Purchasing a pass helps to:

- Support trail maintenance, community initiatives, and local livelihoods
- Ensure that hikers on the trail can be accounted for in case of emergencies
- Improve overall trail safety and management
- Landowners may check for the trail pass

The Pekoe Trail is a community-driven initiative, and trail passes play a key role in keeping the trail sustainable.

How can hikers contribute to maintaining the Pekoe Trail?

Hikers are encouraged to actively contribute to the trail by:

- Reporting fallen trees, landslides, damaged signage, or unsafe sections via trailwatch.thepekoetrail.org
- Sharing responsible trail practices and updates with the hiking community
- Respecting local communities, estates, and private land along the route
- [Buying the trail pass](#) or by [making a donation](#)

Community feedback and on-ground reporting are essential to keeping the Pekoe Trail safe and accessible.

Where can I find detailed information about each Pekoe Trail stage?

Detailed, stage-wise information including difficulty levels, distances, elevation profiles, access points, and current notes can be found at:

thepekoetrail.org/pekoe-stages

It is recommended to review the relevant stage page shortly before your hike to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.

Planning a trip to the Ella and Nuwara Eliya areas and combine hiking with waterfalls and tea plantations, away from the main tourist spots.

Question

We are planning a trip to the Ella and Nuwara Eliya areas and would love to combine hiking with waterfalls and tea plantations, ideally away from the main tourist spots. Which parts of the Pekoe Trail would you recommend?

Answer

That sounds like a wonderful plan and very much in line with the experience offered by **The Pekoe Trail**.

For a trip that combines hiking, waterfalls, tea plantations, and quieter landscapes around Ella and Nuwara Eliya, we recommend focusing on the following sections:

Ella / Haputale region

- **Stages 12 & 13:** These stages offer stunning views, access to lesser-visited waterfalls, tea estates, forested paths, and estate communities slightly away from the main tourist areas, while still being conveniently close to Ella.
- **Stage 14** can also be added if you have more time, extending your walk through scenic tea country and quieter rural sections.

Bogawantalawa / Maskeliya region (en route to Nuwara Eliya)

- **Stages 10 & 11:** Ideal if you are travelling towards Nuwara Eliya, these stages showcase expansive tea-country scenery, rolling hills, and a more immersive rural experience with fewer crowds. The higher elevation also brings cooler temperatures, especially in the mornings.

Nuwara Eliya area

- **Stage 22:** Easily accessible from Nuwara Eliya town and can be combined with a visit to **Lover's Leap Waterfall**, offering classic up-country landscapes, tea estates, and

panoramic views.

These stages can be easily combined with visits to tea factories, scenic viewpoints, and waterfall stops, depending on your pace and interests. We recommend checking current stage conditions before you hike and obtaining a trail pass, which supports local communities and helps us manage and maintain the trail.