



*India*

# WONDERS OF THE HIMALAYAS

PARO TO BAGDOGRA - 16 NIGHTS

Explore the mystical Eastern Himalayas on this new cruise and land tour with Pandaw. Discover the Kingdom of Bhutan including the famous cliff-top monasteries and the unique way of life that remains largely unchanged and un-influenced by the modern world. From Bhutan, travel to North Eastern India and Assam for a 7-night river expedition along the Brahmaputra River, including jeep safari at Kaziranga National Park. The newest Land & Cruise Tour from Pandaw is a true expeditionary adventure that is not to be missed.

**Note:** Medium fitness is required for a soft hike in Bhutan. The weather in Bhutan and Assam can be very cold during winter months. Please check the average temperatures for your departure date and pack accordingly.



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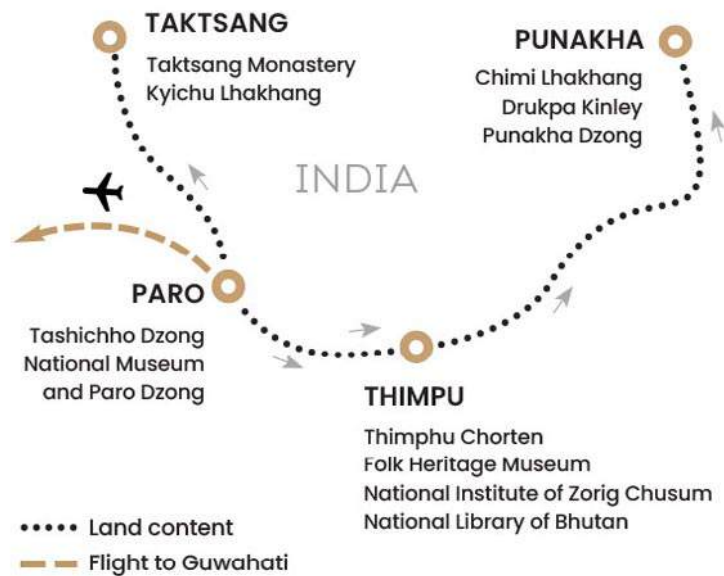
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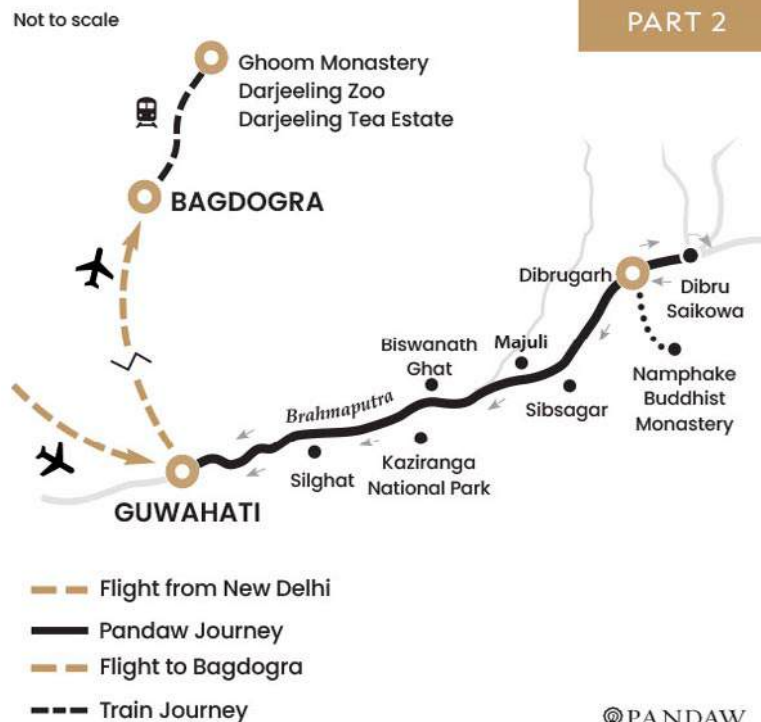
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# ROUTE MAP

## PART 1



## PART 2





# ITINERARY

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## DAY 1 ARRIVAL PARO

Welcome to Bhutan! Upon arrival you will be met by your local guide and offered a Tashi Khaddar – a traditional way to greet guests to Bhutan. We then drive to Thimpu, the capital city of Bhutan through the scenic Paro Valley, around 4 hours total. Upon arrival to Thimpu, check into your hotel before beginning your Bhutan adventure with a visit to the National Memorial Chorten. This prominent landmark serves as an ideal spot for engaging with locals who flock here to circumambulate the chorten, spin the large red prayer wheels, and offer their prayers at a small shrine within the complex. Before heading back to your hotel, take a leisurely stroll around Thimpu's main street and markets soaking in the vibrant atmosphere.

## DAY 2 THIMPU

Following breakfast, make a brief drive north of the town to reach Buddha Dordenma, situated atop a hill within the serene Kuenselphodrang Nature Park. This remarkable statue brings to life an ancient prophecy originating from the 8th century A.D., which was unearthed by Terton Pema Lingpa, a discoverer of religious treasures. It is believed that this statue emits an aura of tranquillity and joy, extending its influence to the entire world. Afterwards we take a short hike to Changangkha Lhakhang, an easy walk of around 1.5 hours where you will be greeted by a magnificent sight of hundreds of prayer flags waving in the breeze, creating a colourful and spiritual welcome. After visiting the temple at the end of the hike, we head towards The Postal Museum to see Bhutan's collection of rare and unique stamps. After lunch we continue on the highlights tour of Thimpu with visits to the Textile Museum, Centenary Farmers Market and Zilkha Nunnery before ending the day at Trashichhoedzong, often referred to as the 'fortress of the glorious religion.' This remarkable edifice serves as the heart of both government and religion in Bhutan, housing the monarch's throne room and serving as the seat of the Je Khenpo, or Chief Abbot. Return to your hotel to unwind for the evening.

## DAY 3 THIMPU - PUNAKHA

Following breakfast, we will journey up to the picturesque Dochu-la pass, standing at an elevation of 3,088 meters. Here, we'll pause briefly to relish the panoramic views and appreciate the adorned chorten, mani wall, and fluttering prayer flags that adorn this high-altitude vantage point. We will witness a traditional prayer flag hoisting ceremony at Dochula before continuing our journey towards Punakha.

After a delightful lunch, we will visit the majestic Punakha Dzong, often referred to as the 'Palace of Great Happiness.' Following the dzong visit, we'll embark on a short excursion to Chimi Lhakhang, perched on a hillock in the heart of the valley and widely known as the "temple of

# ITINERARY

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fertility." It's believed that couples seeking to conceive a child can receive blessings here, often resulting in the fulfilment of their wish. The trail takes you across rice fields to the charming settlement of Pana, which translates to 'field.' Exploring the village near the temple offers unique glimpses into the daily life and traditions of the local villagers.

In the evening, enjoy a leisurely stroll in and around Punakha town.

## DAY 4 PHUNAKA – PARO

After breakfast drive along the scenic highway to Paro before checking into your hotel. In the afternoon we will visit Ta Dzong, initially constructed as a watchtower and now housing the National Museum. The museum boasts an extensive collection that includes antique thangka paintings, textiles, weaponry and armor, household artifacts, and a diverse assortment of natural and historical treasures. The Ta Dzong visit will be immediately followed by a short walk along the trail leading to Rinpung Dzong, also known as Paro Dzong, which translates to the "fortress of the heap of jewels." This dzong boasts a long and captivating history. Along the wooden galleries that line the inner courtyard, you'll find exquisite wall paintings depicting Buddhist tales, such as the four friends, the old man of long life, the wheel of life, scenes from the life of Milarepa, Mount Sumeru, and cosmic mandalas.

In the evening, we'll head to Dema Farmhouse for a delightful dinner. At the farmhouse, you'll have the opportunity to experience Bhutan's national sport, archery, and immerse yourself in the local rural culture. Bhutanese farmhouses are renowned for their vibrant colors, intricate decorations, and their traditional construction methods, which eschew the use of a single nail. The majority of Bhutan's population still maintains a way of life that has endured for centuries, residing in modest, secluded farms and hamlets, enveloped by terraced fields of rice, maize, and buckwheat.

## DAY 5 TAKTSANG MONESTARY

Drive to Satsam Chorten for a soft hike to Taktsang Monastery, also known as Tiger's Nest. The monastery is perched on a rocky ledge with a sheer drop of nearly 800m, overlooking the Paro Valley and the river. Recognized as one of the most hallowed places, it was visited by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646 and is a must-visit for all Bhutanese at least once in their lifetime. The hike takes 4-5 hours round trip. While en route back to Paro town, make a stop at the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the 108 temples constructed in the Himalayas by Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. The establishment of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan.

This evening, take part in a traditional blessing & butter lamp ceremony at a village monastery. This is a sacred and deeply spiritual practice that holds significant importance in the country's Buddhist



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culture. Such ceremonies are often conducted in monasteries, temples, and sacred sites, attracting devotees seeking blessings, protection, and spiritual guidance. During the blessing ceremony, Buddhist monks, adorned in their vibrant robes, recite powerful prayers and mantras, invoking the blessings of Buddha and other enlightened beings. While lighting of butter lamps is a symbolic act representing the illumination of wisdom and dispelling darkness or ignorance.

## DAY 6 PARO - GUWAHATI

After breakfast transfer Paro International Airport for your flight to Guwahati. Free time in the evening to relax.

## DAY 7 GUWAHATI

After breakfast, transfer to your ship.

Transfer to ship from airport and explore this pleasant Assami city visiting the Nilachai Hill temple and Commonwealth Graves. Late afternoon cast off upriver.

Transfer to ship from airport and explore this pleasant Assami city visiting the Nilachai Hill temple and Commonwealth Graves. Late afternoon cast off upriver.

## DAY 8 SAILING

Sail all day making headway against strong currents through the lush Assami countryside. Get acquainted with your crew and guide with onboard activities such as lectures and food demonstrations.

## DAY 9 TEZPUR

Afternoon exploration of Tezpur by trishaw we visit the De Parbatia temple with its richly carved portals and Cole Park with its collection of medieval carvings collected from across the region.

## DAY 10 NAMERI NATIONAL PARK

After an early breakfast, drive for some two hours to the Nameri National Park at the foot of the blue hills of Arunachal Pradesh, the old North East Frontier Agency. Here, we take a float trip of around two hours down the Jia-Bhoreli River through the park. Enjoy the breath-taking scenery and bring your binoculars for a chance to spot some birdlife. After lunch, take a village walk before returning to the ship. We are treated to a traditional Assamese folk dance before dinner and moor at Silghat for the night.

## DAY 11 KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Jeep safari to Kaziranga, with an area of approximately 430 sq kms, this UNESCO World Heritage site is home to the world's largest population of the Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros as well as the Indian Wild Water Buffalo. It also has the highest density of Royal Bengal Tigers with one every five sq. km however these remain extremely illusive and are unlikely

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to be spotted. The park is an incredibly rich biodiversity hotspot with its marshy swamps and thickets of elephant grass which supports large populations of Indian elephants, Indian bison, swamp deer, and capped langurs.

Besides wildlife, Kaziranga National Park is also a birding paradise. A few of the bird species found here are the oriental honey buzzard, black-shouldered kite, white-tailed eagle, Himalayan griffon to mention a few. In the afternoon we set sail again downstream.

## DAY 12 VILLAGE LIFE

As we sail along the vast Brahmaputra River downstream, riding the strong currents, we stop for a walk through a typical Assamese village and learn more about their simple lives.

## DAY 13 TEA GARDEN & SILK VILLAGE

Early morning visit to Noonmati Tea Garden on the outskirts of Guwahati to witness the tea producing process. After lunch sail down past Guwahati to moor at Sualkuchi, a major centre for weaving in Assam. We learn about the entire silk making production from the cocoon, to spinning and weaving to make the typical saree worn by Assami women.

## DAY 14 ARRIVAL BAGDOGRA

Dock at Guwahati.

Following breakfast transfer privately for your flight to Bagdogra. Receive a warm Pandaw welcome on arrival into Bagdogra Airport, and journey by road to your accommodation. Spend the rest of the day easing into your magical surroundings or step outside and stroll the main square and mingle with Nepalese, Bhutanese, Tibetan people and domestic Indian tourists.

## DAY 15 DARJEELING

Darjeeling's rich tapestry of cultures is yours to explore today. Hop aboard the UNESCO World Heritage-listed small-gauge Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, or "Toy Train", for a breathtaking ride to Ghoom, the world's second highest railway station. The toy train is a marvel of engineering passing through many small towns and is India's oldest mountain railway route. Explore Ghoom Monastery, with its colourful prayer flags fluttering in the wind before returning to town.

Continue to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, founded in 1954, just after Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay first scaled Everest. Visit the Darjeeling Zoo, home of the Snow Leopard Breeding Centre. Then see locals making handicrafts and carpets at the Tibetan Refugee Centre.

# ITINERARY

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## DAY 16 AT LEISURE

Today unwind at your hotel and enjoy the breath-taking scenery on offer or partake in the variety of experiences available from your accommodation.

## DAY 17 DEPART BAGDOGRA

Following a leisurely breakfast, leave the snow-tipped peaks and terraced tea plantations of Darjeeling behind and transfer privately to Bagdogra Airport for your onward journey.



# WHATS INCLUDED & TRANSFERS

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**Cruise Price Includes:** 1 flight Paro to Guwahati and Bhutan Visa fee. Transfers, hotels and meals off ship as noted. Meals onboard your ship from lunch on embarkation to breakfast before disembarkation, transfer to/from Ship, entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes plus our India complimentary drinks package

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner is included on your Pandaw cruise. Land tour includes meals as follows; Day 1: Dinner at your hotel, Day 2: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Day 3: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Day 4: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Day 5: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Day 6: Breakfast at hotel, Day 15: Breakfast & Dinner, Day 16: Breakfast & Dinner, Day 17: Breakfast.

**Cruise Price Excludes:** International flights to Bhutan / out of India, laundry, Indian visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes, tipping for guide and drivers.

**Note:** We suggest to change money at a bank at the international airport before exiting (currently there is shortage of new money bills in India).

Please send a copy of your passport page to our reservations team immediately after you make a booking for this tour so that your Bhutan visa and flight to Guwahati can be arranged accordingly.

From September 2024, Pandaw is happy to announce that our India expeditions will be all-inclusive, with complimentary local beers, spirits, mixers and soft drinks for all guests. Also included free of charge is select house wines during lunch and dinner only. Subject to availability.

## Transfers & Joining

### DAY 1 ARRIVAL PARO

Arrival to Paro on your own arrangements and transfer to your hotel. Flight arrival is best before midday.

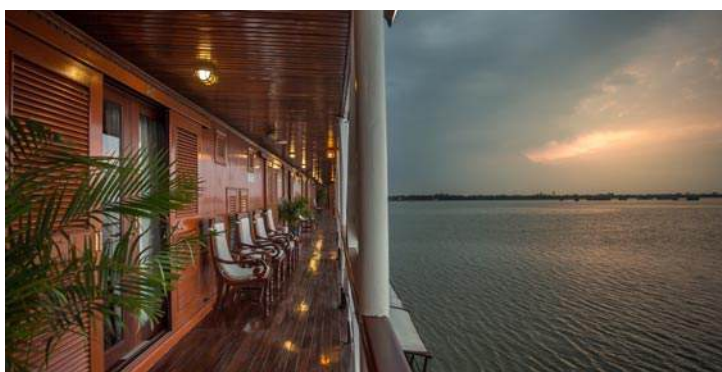
### DAY 17 DEPART BAGDOGRA

After breakfast transfer privately to Bagdogra Airport for your onward journey.

# PANDAW STATEROOMS

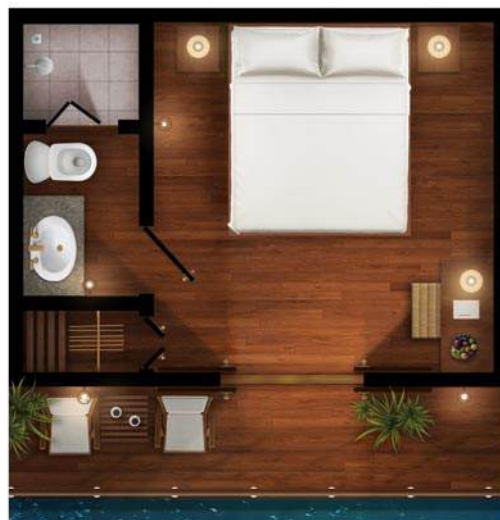
The Pandaw stateroom is the most celebrated feature of our ships, combining splendid colonial-era character with exquisite contemporary comfort.

Finished in brass and teak, the main and upper deck rooms are a spacious 168 square feet (15.6 sqm), with the exception of the Zawgyi Pandaw which is 150 square feet (14 sqm). As the space is much loved by all our passengers, we have ensured that with each ship we build, the stateroom remains essentially the same. Be advised: our cabins do not have satellite TV's, internet access or telephones. Passengers tend to choose Pandaw in order to escape from the tiresome features found in international business hotels.

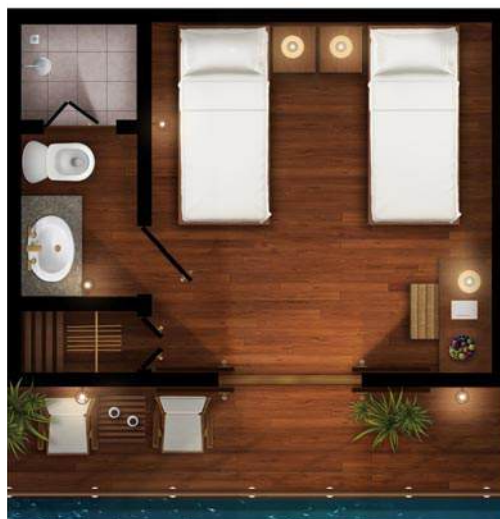


- Fruit and flowers on arrival
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water

Bedroom	12' x 10'
Bathroom	6' x 4'
Showeroom	2' 8" x 3' 4"
Single Bed	6' 7" x 3' 3"



DOUBLE CONFIGURATION



TWIN CONFIGURATION



# PANDAW SHIPS

## RV Kindat Pandaw

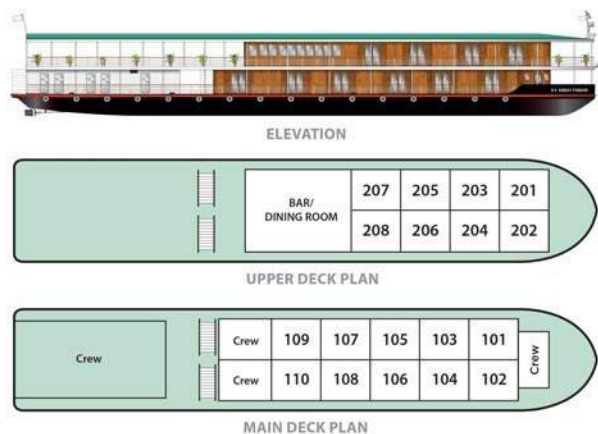
The original Kindat was built in 1886 by Yarrows in London and sank in 1920. She was named after a small Upper Chindwin town. Following experiments with the Katha and Angkor Pandaws, in this build we perfected this concept of a two deck shallow draft vessel and repeated the formula again with her sister the Kalaw.

What we managed to produce in 2014 was a very shallow draft vessel that could go just about anywhere anytime that was big enough to carry 30-40 passengers with lots of outdoor deck space. We did this by reducing weight and stripping both hull and superstructure down to the bare essentials.

We had found with the experimental Katha that about half our passengers want to eat outside and the other half inside so we created a flexible bistro space offering passenger indoor or outdoor dining depending on inclination, often prompted by the season. This makes for a very happy ship!

The ship has quality mountain bikes for your independent exploration.

[View images of RV Kindat Pandaw](#)



- **Build:** Built in 2014 in Yangon
- **Length:** 187ft / 57m
- **Beam:** 29ft / 8.8m
- **Draft:** 3ft / 90cm
- **Berths:** 36 pax

## ACCOMMODATION

- 8 upper deck staterooms and 10 main deck staterooms
- 170 square feet, finished in teak and brass
- Panoramic French window
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water
- Electric mini safe
- AC with individual control
- Imported quality linens with duvet and two kind of pillows
- Premium mattresses
- Welcome flower arrangement and welcome gift
- Mirror
- Multi-configuration plugs
- Generous closet space and under-bed storage
- Hair dryer
- Nightly turndown service
- 24h laundry service
- Complimentary evening canapés
- Yoga mats in all cabins

## WINING & DINING

- Bistro style dining room with outside seating and air-conditioning inside
- Local master chef heading an experienced international culinary team
- Semi-buffet breakfast, semi-buffet lunch, and seated theme dinners
- Daily lean & light menu options
- Complimentary local mineral water, juggled coffee, teas & tisanes
- Extensive wine list with premium wines
- Series of cultural performances, educational talks, cooking classes, and ship tour
- Welcome drink on arrival
- Welcome cocktail
- Farewell reception
- Theme dinners
- 24hrs hospitality bar
- Onboard bakery with daily freshly baked breads and rolls

## ON EXCURSIONS

- Admissions
- Shoe cleaning after excursions
- Bottled drinking water
- We give away aluminium water bottles
- Cold towel service after excursions
- Refreshing drink following excursions
- 1st aid trained assistant guide to follow all tours and excursions
- Quality mountain bikes available for independent exploration

## SAFETY & SECURITY

- All onboard crew is trained and certified as per international marine standards
- Fire alarm system in all cabins, public areas and back areas
- Firefighting system in all ship areas
- Expert marine superintendant
- 24 hrs watch on duty

## ONBOARD STAFF

- Captain
- River Pilot
- First Officer
- Chief Engineer
- 1st Engineer
- Electrician
- Bosun & nautical crew
- Ship manager
- Housekeeping
- Dining
- Bar keeper
- Chefs
- Local tour guides

## PUBLIC SPACES

- Guest relation desk
- Library with contemporary and classic literature



# PRE CRUISE HOTELS

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Le Meridien, Thimpu

[Visit Hotel Website](#)



Dhensa Resort, Punakha

[Visit Hotel Website](#)



Zhiwaling Heritage, Paro

[Visit Hotel Website](#)



Vivanta Guwahati

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

# POST CRUISE HOTELS

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The Elgin Darjeeling

[Visit Hotel Website](#)



Glenburn Tea Estate

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

# OPTIONAL PACKAGE ADDONS & OTHER INFORMATION

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**Optional cruise add ons** NOTE: Only available on the cruise section

**PRE-BOOKABLE HOUSE WINE PACKAGE INDIA** CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE

**FREE FLOW DRINKS INDIA** CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE

**FREE FLOW DRINKS & WINE PACKAGE INDIA** CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE

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## River Conditions Warning!

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any Pandaw expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience - not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

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## Useful Links

**BOOKING TERMS & CONDITIONS** CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE

**GENERAL INFORMATION & LIFE ON BOARD** CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE

**VISA INFORMATION** CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND OUT MORE



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