



Pandaw Cruises

EXPEDITION No 5

THE GANGES & KERALA BACKWATERS

22 NIGHTS

Embark on an unforgettable 22-night journey that seamlessly blends the spiritual and scenic wonders of India. Begin your adventure cruising along the sacred Ganges River, where you'll witness the vibrant life along its banks. As you transition to the serene Kerala Backwaters with our included flight and hotel, you'll glide through lush landscapes, coconut groves, and tranquil canals, immersing yourself in the natural beauty and traditional lifestyle of this enchanting region. This unique combination cruise offers a perfect blend of history, culture, and breathtaking scenery, promising an experience of a lifetime.

YOUR SHIP - [RV KALAW PANDAW](#) / [RV KOCHI PANDAW](#)

[MORE IMAGES OF THE RV KALAW PANDAW](#)

Cruise Price Includes: Transfer between meeting point, Ship and drop off point, entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes plus our India complimentary drinks package. 1 domestic flight between cruises, 1 night hotel between cruises and transfers.

Cruise Price Excludes: International flights, port dues (if levied), laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes and tips to tour guides,

local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers.

UPSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

KOLKATA - BARRACKPORE

Transfer from your hotel or airport in Kolkata to embark and sail at noon. Sail past the old Danish colony of Serampore to Barrackpore to land and take a walk through the cantonment - past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff House.

[MORE ABOUT KOLKATA](#)

DAY 2

CHANDENAGORE

Continue sailing upstream to Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950. Visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's House, erstwhile Governor-General of French India.

DAY 3

KALNA

After breakfast sail upstream and land at the country town of Kalna and take rickshaws to see a group of some of Bengal's most attractive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temple with concentric rings made up of 108 lesser shrines. Sail on through the night to a mooring near Matiari.

[MORE ABOUT KALNA](#)

DAY 4**MAYAPUR**

Explore the village of Mayapur, the headquarters of the ISKCON movement with a new temple comparable in size to the Vatican and largely funded by Alfred B. Ford, the great grandson of car maker Henry Ford. Meet Krishna followers and walk through the pilgrims' bazaar.

[MORE ABOUT MAYAPUR](#)

DAY 5**MATIARI**

Visit the brass-working village of Matiari, a charming riverside village. Interact with the locals of Matiari and witness the whole primitive process of beating out brass water pots and other vessels. Continue cruising upstream and time permitting visit the battlefield of Plassey where, in 1757, Robert Clive, the Commander-in-Chief of British India, defeated Siraj-ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal, to change the course of Indian history. Moor close to Murshidabad for the night.

DAY 6**MURSHIDABAD**

This morning, walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Mughal-style garden that encloses the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah – the last independent Nawab of Bengal – and his family. Continue a little way upstream to where the great Hazarduari Palace dominates the waterfront. Built by an English architect in 1837, the palace hosts an extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects. Carry on to visit the great Katra Mosque and Nashipara Palace before driving out to see the Katgola Palace. Built in classical Georgian style by rich local merchants, Katgola Palace represents the other side of the coin of the 'White Mughal' period when English and Indian cultures came close to fusion. Moor overnight on the riverbank across from town.

[MORE ABOUT MURSHIDABAD](#)

DAY 7**AJIMGANJ - FARAKKA**

Continue up the Hoogly which transforms into a charming waterway twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards. Morning walk through the fields of the delightfully sleepy village of Baranagar to visit its three gorgeous miniature terracotta temples. This is rural India at its most idyllic. Visit the Jain temples at Azimganj before continuing on to the Farakka Barrage.

DAY 8**FARAKKA - RAJMAHAL**

Today pass through the Farraka Barrage onto the Ganges proper. In the afternoon we explore the quaint town of Rajmahal.

[MORE ABOUT THE RAJMAHAL HILLS](#)

DAY 9**SAILING**

We sail up the mighty Ganges river toward the confluence with the Koshi river. Stop along the way for a short village walk and enjoy our onboard entertainment.

DAY 10**BHAGLAPUR – SULTANGANJ**

We sail early morning toward Bhaglapur, a hub of silk production. We witness the silk weaving and explore this small town before returning to the ship for lunch. In the afternoon we visit Sultanganj with its pair of great granite rocks, one crowned with a mosque and the other a small temple dating from the 16th century.

DAY 11**MUNGER**

Munger is now a large and industrialised city but has an interesting history. In 1762, Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal, shifted his capital from Murshidabad to Munger, and established a firearms manufacturing centre here. Explore the Mughal fort, East India Company cemetery and step inside the Bihar School of Yoga founded in 1964 by Satyananda Saraswati. One of the leading yoga schools in the country. The institution has developed yogic techniques through a synthesis of traditional yogic, vedantic and tantric practices and contemporary health science.

DAY 12**MOKAMA**

Stop at Mokama, once home to Jim Corbett the naturalist and protector of the Indian tigers. Surrounded by farmlands, Mokama has the second highest production of lentils in the country. Learn about the freedom fighters from Mokama such as Lalldin Saheb, whose during the freedom struggle was sentenced to jail during the British rule.

DAY 13**BARH**

Explore Barh, a town famous for Hindu ritual cremation at Urmanath and the Alakhnath Temple.

DAY 14**PATNA**

Enjoy a city tour of Patna, capital of Bihar state including a visit to The Golghar, a large stupa styled granary built in 1786. Farewell dinner with your crew.

[MORE ABOUT PATNA](#)

DAY 15**PATNA TO KOCHI**

Disembark your Pandaw vessel and transfer to the airport for your flight to Kochi. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure with overnight in a hotel in Kochi.

[MORE ABOUT VARANASI](#)

DAY 16**ARRIVE KOCHI**

Transfer to Maradu port and board RV Kochi Pandaw. After lunch set off for an orientation tour of Kochi, the exotic capital of Kerala state on the Malabar Coast.

DAY 17**KOCHI**

Visit Fort Kochi, St Louis's church and Jew Town with its old Paradesi synagogue, museums, the Shiva temple, markets and much else. Afternoon sail to a village of coir weavers/shell harvesters and see many indigenous techniques of local fishing by small scale Chinese nets and fish traps.

DAY 18**THE THANNERMEKKOM BUND**

The Syrian Village in Kerala showcases a unique blend of traditional Syrian Christian culture and heritage. Explore its distinctive architecture, historic churches, and local customs. This village offers a glimpse into the rich, diverse cultural tapestry of Kerala's Syrian Christian community.

In the afternoon visit Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary followed by the Craft Museum, showcasing Kerala's rich artisanal heritage. Explore traditional crafts, including intricate wood carvings, handwoven textiles, and vibrant pottery. This museum offers a unique glimpse into the region's cultural craftsmanship and artistic traditions.

DAY 19**NATTAKAM**

The Munroe lighthouse for panoramic views of the Kerala coastline. This historic lighthouse, built in 1885, guides ships with its striking beacon. Explore its rich maritime history and enjoy breathtaking vistas of the Arabian Sea and surrounding landscapes.

DAY 20**KAVALAM**

At this fishing village canals meet and here experience traditional Kerala life. Explore the picturesque waterways, bustling fishing activities, and authentic village charm

On to Kettuvalom to visit a boat yard where traditional methods of wooden boat building by joining wooden planks using coir, cotton and natural resin.

After lunch, explore Allapphuza (Alleppey) Harbour on foot, a bustling hub of Kerala's backwater network with traditional houseboats and vibrant fishing activities. This lively port offers a glimpse into the local maritime culture and the scenic beauty of the region's interconnected waterways.

DAY 21**ALLAPUZHA - THOTTAPALLI**

Sail the Pampa River and visit ancestral home of Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the birthplace of this revered saint and social reformer, and gain insights into his life, contributions, and Kerala's Christian heritage.

Sail on to Champakulam, and the Kalluorkad St. Mary's Basilica founded in AD427 and is one of the oldest churches in India. Renowned for its impressive Gothic architecture, the basilica features intricate stained-glass windows, soaring spires, and detailed frescoes. The basilica is a major pilgrimage site, drawing visitors for its annual feast of the Virgin Mary. Nearby, is the Karumadi Kuttan, a monumental black stone Buddha that dates to the 9th century, reflecting the region's ancient Buddhist influences.

Evening moor in Thottapalli where it is a short stroll to the glistening white beaches.

DAY 22**PERUMPALAM**

After a morning walk on the beach at Thottapalli return up the Pampa River to re-enter the Venband Lake and on to Perumpalam Bhagavathy Temple, a notable temple with female priests it is renowned for its unique practice of women priests. Then visit the ancient village of Mannar, known for its metal work. Watch the casting of traditional lamps, ornate locks, bells, cauldrons, and various vessels used in temples.

DAY 23**RETURN - KOCHI FOR DISEMBARKATION**

Dissembarkation and transfers to the Cochi International Airport.

STATEROOM

The Pandaw stateroom is the most celebrated feature of our ships.

Finished in brass and teak, the main and upper deck rooms are very spacious at 168 square feet (15.6 sqm). Much loved by all our passengers we have ensured that with each ship we build the stateroom remains the same. Our cabins do not have mini-bars, satellite TV's, internet or phones. Pandaw passengers usually want to escape from the tiresome features found in international business hotels.

Many passengers describe life on board a Pandaw more like being a guest on a private motor yacht than a cruise ship. Where we go and what we see is intrepid in extreme. What you come back to is a floating base of discreet comfort, caring service and all the good things one looks for in life. All our cabins have the same size and Pandaw signature amenities. Choose from Main Deck, Upper Deck or Premium Upper Deck (Mekong only).

Special to Your Stateroom

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

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

DISEMBARK - MARARIKULAM'S MARARI BEACH

After disembarkation you will be driven 40 kms south to Mararikulam's Marari Beach. On arrival, check in, make yourself at home, and enjoy the rest of the day at your leisure.

Relax and enjoy your time at this wonderful corner of the world. Stroll through the village to meet the welcoming locals. Mingle with the fishermen as they bring in their daily catch. Or simply relax at the resort - explore the lush tropical grounds, relax by the pool, or experience an authentic Ayurvedic treatment or massage. There is also the option to join a cooking class at the Farm Kitchen.

DAY 2

MARARIKULAM'S MARARI BEACH

Enjoy time at your leisure.

DAY 3

MARARIKULAM'S MARARI BEACH

Enjoy time at your leisure.

DAY 4

DEPARTURE

After breakfast transfer to Kochi airport for travel to your next destination.



DISCOVER

Mararikulam Fishing Village Beach Break Post Tour

Located just 40 km from the city of Cochin, Mararikulam is a charming little coastal village that has managed to avoid mass development. It is known for its pristine sand beaches, swinging coconut palms, and quiet, laidback atmosphere. The star attraction here is the exquisite Marari beach where you will find fishermen heading out daily to work the Malabar coast, much as their ancestors have done for generations.

Rates include:

Three nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar based on availability), including breakfast and meals as advertised, transfers, excursion and entrance fees as per itinerary, Transportation by Toyota Innova Crysta or equivalent.

Rates exclude:

International flights, visa, travel insurance, not mentioned beverages and meal.

- Please advice arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00

Please note: your hotel will be confirmed after we have received your deposit payment. Prices are subject to change. Hotel subject to availability. We will try to offer you an alternate accommodation if the requested hotel would not be available.

Passport Information

Please ensure you send Pandaw a copy of your passport at least 50 days prior to your travel date. Your passport must be:

- The passport validity can't be less than six months
- All passport will require at least 2 blank pages

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!

Useful Links

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[General Information & Life on Board](#)

[Visa Information](#)