



Pandaw Cruises

EXPEDITION No 8

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.

DOWNSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

VARANASI TO PATNA

Depart Varanasi in the morning and head to the train station for your journey to Patna where we meet your Pandaw vessel. Relax onboard and meet your crew and fellow passengers for the next 14 nights.

[MORE ABOUT VARANASI](#)

DAY 2

BARH

Morning city tour of Patna including a visit to The Golghar, a large stupa styled granary built in 1786. Sail downstream during lunch before arriving to Barh, a town famous for Hindu ritual cremation at Urmanath and the Alakhnath Temple.

DAY 3

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 4

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 5

SULTANGANJ

Continue to Jahanigra Island, a place of pilgrimage with many rock carvings in high relief dating from the eighth century depicting aspects of Siva and Vishnu. In the evening moor off Sultanganj, with its pair of great granite rocks, one crowned with a mosque and the other a small temple dating from the 16th century. In the afternoon land at Bhaglapur, a centre of silk production, and visit the 18th century mansion of the Collector, Augustus Cleveland.

DAY 6**BATESHWARSTAN**

Passing the confluence of the Kosi river that flows down from Nepal, moor at the pretty town of Bateshwarsthan to uncover the 8th century Buddhist site of Vikramshila, one of the two most important centres of learning in India during the Pala Empire, along with Nalanda.

DAY 7**FARAKKA**

Continue sailing along the Ganges before stopping at Rajmahal, a quaint town on the banks of the Ganges for an afternoon walk.

DAY 8**FARAKKA BARRAGE**

Depart Rajmahal and sail down to cross the Farakka barrage, entering the Hooghly River. In the afternoon take a gentle walk through a local village.

DAY 9

MURSHIDABAD

After breakfast, take a 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 our voyage downstream. In the afternoon we enjoy a city tour of Murshidabad, visiting 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.

[MORE ABOUT MURSHIDABAD](#)

DAY 10

KUSHBAGH

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. Continue sailing downstream in the afternoon with onboard activities and wildlife watching on the sun deck.

DAY 11**MATIARI**

In the morning we 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. After lunch we continue downstream to 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.

DAY 12**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 13**KALNA**

After breakfast visit the country town of Kalna. 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.

[MORE ABOUT KALNA](#)

DAY 14

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. In the afternoon we sail toward Barrackpore and take a walk through the cantonment - past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff House. Enjoy a farewell dinner with your crew as we moor in Kolkata for the night.

DAY 15

DISEMBARK KOLKATA

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 KOLKATA](#)

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 Kalloorkad 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

POST-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

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

DRIVE TO MUNNAR

After disembarkation, leave the tropical waterways behind and make your way up into Kerala's Western Ghats driving through rural scenes of everyday life to Munnar. At an elevation of around 5000ft, this is one of South India's eminent hill stations. The fresh air offers a welcome relief to that of the steamy backwaters below, and we find ourselves in a land of lush hills surrounded by tall peaks and scattered with tea plantations, waterfalls, and quaint dwellings.

On arrival at Windemere Estate, meet your hosts and enjoy a home cooked lunch. Then get settled into your room at this renovated plantation nestled among cardamom plantations on the slopes overlooking the Western Ghats.

In the late afternoon, enjoy a 2 hour walk around the private grounds taking in the endless views and the listening to the songs of the birds as the light begins to fade.

DAY 2

MUNNAR

After breakfast, explore Munnar and its surrounds. You will visit a living tea plantation and factory to learn the history of this industry that started in 1879. Your journey takes you past the Matupeety Dam, a local tourism attraction. The man-made lake is surrounded by stunning natural beauty and is quite a sight to behold.

Returning to your heritage accommodation. After a leisurely lunch, the afternoon is left free to enjoy walks or birdwatching around the estate. There are many viewpoints close to the lodgings and the pool is always available to cool off.

DAY 3

MUNNAR TO PERIWAR

After breakfast you will make your way to the Cardamom Hills, close to the state border with Tamil Nadu, to Periyar National Park known for its rolling forested hills, montane grasslands, temperate climate, and array of flora and fauna. The park is home to nearly 2000 species of flowering plants, including 140 orchids. Periyar's forests of teak, sandalwood, banyan, and bamboo are also home to an array of wildlife. Elephants and tigers head a list of mammals including sloth bears, bison, flying squirrels, jungle cats, wild dogs along with around 270 species of birds.

Arrive at the ecologically minded Spice Village in time for lunch (on your own account). This is, essentially, a tribal village, reborn for the modern traveller. The rest of the day is free for you to soak up your surroundings, enjoy the pool, or an Ayurvedic treatment.

DAY 4

PERIWAR

In the early morning light, accompanied by a trained tribal guide, you will explore different nature trails traversing diverse habitats generally 4 to 5 km. in length and lasting about 3 hours. This is an interpretive program offering an excellent opportunity to watch birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The trails often pass through evergreen and moist deciduous forests interspersed with marshy grasslands. This Nature walk allows you to feel nature, hear her whispers and smell her flowers.

In the afternoon, discover the vast array of herbs and spices grown in the surrounding areas such as pepper, vanilla, clove, cinnamon, nutmeg and ayurvedic herbs. Meeting the locals working among these spices is rewarding experience in itself.

This evening you have the rare opportunity to witness a Kalaripayattu (Traditional Martial art) show. This is said to be the oldest of all the martial arts, dating back some 3000 years.

DAY 5

PERIWAR TO KOCHI

After breakfast, make your way down from the Ghats and return to Kochi.

Arriving in town around mid-day, check into your hotel which has the perfect location for exploring the sights of Kochi by foot, soaking up the atmosphere of the promenade busy with local families enjoying the sea breezes, or simply relax with a drink watching the boats come and go.

DAY 6

DEPARTURE

After breakfast you will be transferred to Kochi airport for your onwards flight.



DISCOVER

From the Backwaters to the Cardamon Hills Post Tour

Discover Kerala away from the backwaters and waterways featured during your cruise on this 5 - night journey into the hills and plains to experience a very different side of India's southernmost state. This is the perfect pre or post adventure to complement your Keralan cruise.

Rates include:

Five nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar based on availability), including breakfast on days 2,3,4 and 5, lunch and dinner on days 1 and 2, excursion and entrance fees as per itinerary, entrance fees and taxes. Transportation by Toyota Innova Crysta or equivalent.

Rates exclude:

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

meal.

- Please advise 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

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN KOCHI

Following disembarkation, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Kochi. The rest of the day is for you to enjoy at your leisure.

DAY 2

DEPARTURE

After breakfast you will be collected for your transfer to the airport or next destination for your onwards travel.



DISCOVER

Kochi 1 Night Post Tour

Kochi is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, vibrant history, and diverse culture and is often referred to as the "Queen of the Arabian Sea." The city features a unique blend of influences from Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial eras, evident in its stunning architecture, atmospheric spice markets, and a lively seaside promenade. The perfect place to prepare for your cruise.

Rates include:

Transfer to the airport, 1 night accommodation with breakfast included.

Rates exclude:

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

- Please advise 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

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

KOCHI - MUMBAI

After debarkation, you will be transferred to Kochi airport for your flight to Mumbai.

On arrival you will be met our representative who will show you to your car and transfer you to your hotel. The rest of the day is for you to enjoy at your leisure.

DAY 2

DISCOVER MUMBAI

Today you will explore Mumbai's streets filled with the aroma of street food, in the shadow of glittering skyscrapers towering over architectural gems from the colonial past. Today's tour also includes lunch at a local restaurant.

Your tour begins at the unmissable Gateway of India, a stunning 26-meter Indo-Saracenic monument bustling with local visitors—perfect for people-watching. Nearby, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum) showcases art and archaeology in another architectural gem.

A visit to Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987, is one of India's busiest railway station and captures the frenetic energy of the city. You will also visit Mani Bhavan, the house where Gandhi lived for almost 20 years of his remarkable life. Malabar Hill offers contrasting views offering a glimpse of the city's affluent side. A drive along Marine Drive to Dhobi Ghat, an open-air laundry established in 1890, where thousands of colourful garments are washed daily, brings you back to a more common reality.

Returning to your hotel, the rest of the day is free for you to enjoy at your leisure.

DAY 3

DEPARTURE

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your onward journey.



DISCOVER

Mumbai 2 Night Post Tour

Welcome to Mumbai, India's second city where tradition and modernity intertwine! This introduction takes in the main highlights while also discovering local life in the markets and bazaars, maybe stopping for a cup of chai and a chat about daily life along the way.

Rates include:

Two nights accommodation at advertised hotel including breakfast and meals as advertised, transfers, excursions, and entrance fees as per itinerary, one flight Mumbai – Kochi including check-in luggage of 20kg, entrance fees and taxes. Transportation by Toyota Innova Crysta or equivalent.

Rates exclude:

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

- Please advise 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

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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!

Useful Links

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[General Information & Life on Board](#)

[Visa Information](#)

