



Pandaw River Expeditions

EXPEDITION No 0

THE UPPER GANGES RIVER

14 NIGHTS

In late 2019 we will inaugurate an 'all Ganges' voyage of one thousand miles from Kolkata to Varanasi. Though in the days of the British Raj paddle steamers plied this route on a regular basis, with the advent of the railways in India river navigation was abandoned and the rivers were allowed to silt up. Now thanks to a multi-million dollar investment from the Indian Government channels have been dredged and buoyed and hi tech GPS based aids installed enabling seasonal navigation.

Varanasi, said to be the oldest inhabited city on the planet is the most sacred city of Hinduism and a place of overwhelming beauty at the same time poignantly moving with its cremation ghats. Varanasi is surely the goal of any 'passage to India' and at the other end of the holy river stands Kolkata, in all its Raj-like magnificence. Between lies several of the most important Buddhist sites including Sarnath, Nalanda and Bodh Gaya and cities great and small and between urban centres and great pilgrim sites are expanses of empty river teeming with bird life, not to mention the Gangeatic dolphin.

No vessel could be more appropriate for a voyage on 'All the Ganges' than the much-loved Katha Pandaw, constructed originally in Vietnam in 2008 that has seen service there, in Cambodia and in recent years in Burma. Refitted for expedition sailings in India, we have reduced the number of staterooms from sixteen to fourteen to create an enlarged indoor saloon / dining area as winter cruising in India can be chilly first thing.

Important Notice:

The cruise schedule includes the latest information regarding your program, but last minute adjustments may occur. The schedule may shift due to the weather or to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. The exact time for each activity will be announced or posted by the onboard tour staff.

Please Note:

This itinerary passes through the state of Bihar. In this state it is illegal to serve any drinks containing alcohol. For this reason we will not be able to serve alcohol onboard the ship while in the state of Bihar. This will affect the Upstream itinerary from day 6 until the afternoon of day 12 and for the Downstream itinerary from day 3 until the afternoon of day 9.

YOUR SHIP - [RV KATHA PANDAW](#) / [RV KINDAT PANDAW](#)

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

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

Cruise Price Includes: Transfer to/from Ship, entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes.

Price Excludes: International flights, laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes, tipping for guide and drivers.

Please 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).

UPSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

KOLKATA

Embark and sail to Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950. Visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's House, the erstwhile Governor-General of French India. Sail upstream past the old Dutch settlement of Chinsura before landing to visit the imposing Imambara at Hooghli with verses from the Koran written on its walls.

DAY 2

KALA

Land at the country town of Kalna and take cycle 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. Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur to visit the vast new ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) temple which dominates the skyline. As the headquarters of ISKCON or the Hare Krishna movement, the temple receives over a million singing and dancing devotees a year from around the world.

DAY 3**MATIARI**

Morning visit 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. Later, cruise on and 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.

DAY 4**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. Continue to visit the great Katra Mosque and Nashipara and Katgola palaces.

DAY 5**FARAKKA**

Cross from the Lower Ganges or Hoogly River to the Ganges itself through the Farraka canal and lock, that was constructed 1963-75. Passing into the great river the great Farraka barrage will be visible just downstream. This effectively dams the Ganges and strategically controls the flow of water into neighbouring Bangladesh. We enter a section of river rich in bird life. Overnight at Samtaghat, otherwise known as Raj Mahal.

DAY 6**BATESHWARSTHAN**

Passing the confluence of the Kosi river that flows down from Nepal, moor at the pretty town of Bateswarsthan to visit the 8th century Buddhist site of Vikramshila.

DAY 7**SULTANGANJ**

On this stretch we hope to see Gangeatic dolphins and land at Bhaglapur, a centre of silk production, and visit the 18th century mansion of the Collector, Augustus Cleveland. Continue to Jahanigra Island, a place of pilgrimage with rock carvings. In the evening we moor off Sultanganj, with its pair of great granite rocks, one with a mosque and the other a temple dating from the 16th century.

DAY 8**MUNGER AND MOKAMA**

Munger is now a large and industrialised city but has an interesting history with a Mughal fort and an East India Company cemetery. Visit the famous Bihar School of Yoga founded in 1964 by Satyananda Saraswati. Stop at Mokama, once home to Jim Corbett the naturalist and protector of the Indian tigers.

DAY 9**NALANDA AND BODHGAYA**

Disembark at Barh and drive 60km to the archaeological site of Nalanda, the great 5th century Buddhist university. Continue to Bodh Gaya for lunch and a rest in a hotel. Afternoon exploring this UNESCO world heritage site arranged around the Maha Bodhi temple where the Lord Buddha attained enlightenment in the 5th century BC. This is a global centre of pilgrimage for Buddhists of all denominations and it is fascinating to tour the many monasteries around all built in various national styles – Tibetan, Burmese, Thai, Japanese, etc. Return to the hotel for dinner and then take the Janshatbabdi Express train to Patna to meet the ship around 11pm that has moved up through the day.

DAY 10**DORIGANJ**

If open, visit the famous Patna museums with their collections of early Buddhist artifacts and cast off to stop to see the small yet splendid Moghul tomb at Maner. Sail to the confluence with the Manek to moor at the busy river port of Doriganj. Visit the nearby archaeological site of Chirand and on to the confluence with the Gaghra.

DAY 11**BUXAR**

We visit the battlefield, remembered for the 1764 battle between the British and the Moghuls. Then on, time permitting, to Madhubani which is a great centre of Mithila painting, the wonderfully vivid and colourful folk art of this part of Bihar.

DAY 12**GHAZIPUR**

Stop at Ghjazipur, home to the world's largest opium factory, and visit the imposing tomb of Lord Cornwallis (who lost Yorktown) and latterly governor of India, where he was to pass away in 1805.

DAY 13**VARANASI**

The oldest and holiest city of India established in the 11th century BC and today with over 2,000 living temples. We visit Sarnath and the Deer Park where the Lord Buddha gave his first sermon with its archaeological museum.

DAY 14**VARANASI**

Take rowing boats for sunrise over the bathing ghats and after breakfast explore the old city by cycle rickshaw. Evening walk along the ghats and witness the 'Aarati' rituals.

DAY 15**DISEMBARKATION**

Morning coach transfer to Taj Hotel "The Gateway on the Ganges".

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

ARRIVAL KOLKATA

Welcome to Kolkata! Transfer from the airport to your hotel. Rest of day at leisure.

Meals: none.

DAY 2

CITY TOUR OF KOLKATA

In the morning, join the Heritage Tram Ride across the Old Town to witness the bygone era of charming Bengali colonies, chic cafes and traditional houses. Visit the sacred Hooghly Riverside to witness WWII built Howrah Bridge, 1906 Howrah Junction Railway Station still housing St John Church, Old Court House, and Colonial Secretariat Buildings. Next stop, the riverside located Mullik Ghat to explore some of India's most colourful Flower Bazaar Markets. Continue to Victoria Memorial, a landmark of Kolkata dedicated to UK's Queen Victoria and now serves as a royal museum of British Rule in India. Next, arrive at the country's iconic Eden Garden Cricket Stadium.

Visit Mother Teresa's Mission and House. Later, discover the curious lanes of Kumartuli. The tour ends at Kolkata's New Market area to enjoy novelty of street shopping and bargaining with the locals.

Transfer back to your hotel.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 3

DEPARTURE

After breakfast transfer to the ship.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.



DISCOVER

Exploring Kolkata 2 Nights Pre Tour

Kolkata is locally regarded as India's cultural capital and where India and British Raj collide. Visit the city's highlights before or after the cruise.

This is a private tour.

Rates include:

One way transfer (airport to hotel or hotel to airport), two nights accommodation at Oberoi Grand Kolkata (or similar), deluxe room including breakfast, excursion including entrance fees as per itinerary.

Note

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Apply for Indian visa before departure
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00

* Please note that 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.

OBEROI GRAND KOLKATA

15

Jawaharlal Nehru Road

Kolkata - 700 013

India

Tel: +91 33 2249 2323

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL NEW DELHI

Welcome to India! Transfer from airport to your hotel. Rest of day at leisure.

Rest of day at leisure.

Meals: none.

DAY 2

CITY TOUR OF DELHI

Today's tour includes heritage rich Old and New Delhi including a Heritage Walk inside India's largest Mosque 'Jama Masjid' built in 1644 AD showcasing finest Islamic style of architecture. Explore real life of Old Delhi through maze like streets of the iconic Ancient Bazaar 'Chandni Chowk' and Asia's largest Spice Market. Experience colonial-era at 'Lutyens Delhi' including Mahatma Gandhi Museum 'Birla House', Temple 'Bangla Sahib Gurudwara' and volunteer inside its holy Community Kitchen that daily feeds over 10,000 devotees, pilgrims and homeless. Visit Ceremonial Boulevard 'Raj Path' to witness 'Sir Edwin Lutyens' finest works from 1920's British Raj Era including Colonial Government Buildings, India Gate, President and Parliament House from outside. Journey to the City Centre Market 'Connaught Place' named after the 'Duke of Connaught' and surrounds the central park of Delhi.

Transfer back to your hotel.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 3

AGRA

Drive to Agra, the Mughal Era city that is home to the wonder of the world 'Taj Mahal'! After check-in at the hotel, continue with a Heritage Walk inside India's finest Mughal fortress The Red Fort of Agra, an acclaimed UNESCO heritage site and the imperial residence of 16th century rulers of the 'Mughal Dynasty'. If time permits, visit marble workshops renowned for finest Mughal artwork. Enjoy traditional Indian Chai Tea prepared and served on-spot along with Indian delights.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 4

AGRA - JAIPUR

Start the day with a Sunrise Grand Tour of the Taj Mahal, which was built in 1630 by Mughal Emperor 'Shah Jahan' in memory of his beloved wife 'Mumtaz Mahal' who died giving birth to their 14th child.

Continue the jewel of India's crown, the royal heritage state of Rajasthan, and arrive in its pink colored capital city 'Jaipur'. Enroute visit spectacular Underground Step-wells 'Chand Baori' that lie hidden deep in the village of 'Abhaneri'. This 10th century built zigzagged stepwells is a geometric wonder where Royals used to picnic, and today a popular spot through the film 'Best Exotic Marigold Hotel'. Check-in at your hotel in Jaipur.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 5

JAIPUR

Begin the day with a morning ceremony of Indian turbans and stoles. Explore the uphill located Amber Fortress, a “must see” of Jaipur. Built in the 16th century by Rajput commander ‘Raja Man Singh I’, the fortress offers magnificent hilltop views with an intricate Mirror Palace and fine blends of Hindu- Rajasthani architecture. Next a photo-stop outside the Water Palace ‘Jal Mahal’ located in the center of ‘Man Sagar Lake’ housing various migratory birds. Arrive in the heart of the Old City to visit the Astronomical Observatory ‘Jantar Mantar’. Visit the residence of the Royal Family locally called Jaipur City Palace and Museum. Built in 1700 AD by ‘Raja Jai Singh II’, this Palace is a paradise of Royal heritage history as it houses rare galleries from the British Raj and Rajput Era. Later, take a walking tour through Jaipur’s most colorful bazaars. Visit Jaipur’s most distinctive landmark: The Palace of Winds, ‘Hawa Mahal’ built in a unique pink-colored beehive design that is certainly hard to miss.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 6

JAIPUR - DELHI - KOLKATA

Travel back to Delhi (5 hrs) for your domestic flight to Kolkata. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 7

KOLKATA DEPARTURE

Transfer to your ship.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.



DISCOVER

India's Golden Triangle 6 Nights Pre Tour

We are pleased to present this unique opportunity to combine a fabulous 7-night cruise exploring lower Ganges and a 6-night tour of the Golden Triangle visiting most popular cultural gems in historic Delhi, Agra, the Taj Mahal and the imposing capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

This is a private tour.

Rates include:

Six nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar), including breakfast, excursion and entrance fees as per itinerary, one domestic flight Delhi – Kolkata including 20kg check-in luggage.

Note

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Apply for Indian visa before departure
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00
- Radisson Blue Agra Compulsory meals: Christmas Eve Gala Dinner (24DEC) USD 68 per person and New Year's Eve Dinner (31DEC) USD 156 per person
- Radisson Blue Agra, peak surcharge 20DEC-05JAN per room per night USD 99
- Taj Jai Mahal Palace, Jaipur Compulsory meals: Christmas Eve Gala Dinner (24DEC) USD 212 per person and New Year's Eve Dinner (31DEC) USD 283 per person
- Taj Jai Mahal Palace Jaipur, peak surcharge 20DEC-05JAN per room per night USD 216
- Oberoi Amarvilas Agra, peak surcharge 20DEC-05JAN per room per night USD 332
- Oberoi Rajvilas Jaipur, peak surcharge 20DEC-05JAN per room per night USD 903

* Please note that 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.

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL NEW DELHI

Welcome to India! Transfer from airport to your hotel. Rest of day at leisure.

Meals: none.

DAY 2

CITY TOUR OF DELHI

Today's tour includes heritage rich Old and New Delhi including a Heritage Walk inside India's largest Mosque 'Jama Masjid' built in 1644 AD showcasing finest Islamic style of architecture. Explore real life of Old Delhi through maze like streets of the iconic Ancient Bazaar 'Chandni Chowk' and Asia's largest Spice Market. Experience colonial-era at 'Lutyens Delhi' including Mahatma Gandhi Museum 'Birla House', Temple 'Bangla Sahib Gurudwara' and volunteer inside its holy Community Kitchen that daily feeds over 10,000 devotees, pilgrims and homeless. Visit Ceremonial Boulevard 'Raj Path' to witness 'Sir Edwin Lutyens' finest works from 1920's British Raj Era including Colonial Government Buildings, India Gate, President and Parliament House from outside. Journey to the City Centre Market 'Connaught Place' named after the 'Duke of Connaught' and surrounds the central park of Delhi.

Transfer back to your hotel.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 3

AGRA

Drive to Agra, the Mughal Era city that is home to the wonder of the world 'Taj Mahal'! After check-in at the hotel, continue with a Heritage Walk inside India's finest Mughal fortress The Red Fort of Agra, an acclaimed UNESCO heritage site and the imperial residence of 16th century rulers of the 'Mughal Dynasty'. If time permits, visit marble workshops renowned for finest Mughal artwork. Enjoy traditional Indian Chai Tea prepared and served on-spot along with Indian delights.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 4

AGRA - NEW DELHI - KOLKATA

Start the day with a Sunrise Grand Tour of the Taj Mahal, which was built in 1630 by Mughal Emperor 'Shah Jahan' in memory of his beloved wife 'Mumtaz Mahal' who died giving birth to their 14th child.

Transfer back to Delhi airport for your flight to Kolkata. At arrival, transfer to your hotel for the final night before your cruise.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 5

KOLKATA DEPARTURE

After breakfast transfer to ship.

Meals: breakfast at your hotel.



DISCOVER

Delhi & Taj Mahal & Kolkata 4 Nights Pre Tour

Visit historic Delhi influenced by 1850's British Raj and 1630's Mughal Empire. Continue to Agra to marvel at one of the World's greatest monuments: the Taj Mahal. This tour ends in Kolkata before joining your Pandaw vessel.

This is a private tour.

Rates include:

Four nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar), including breakfast, excursion and entrance fees as per itinerary, one domestic flight Delhi – Kolkata including check-in luggage of 20kg.

Note

- Please advice arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Apply for Indian visa before departure
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00
- Radisson Blue Compulsory meals: Christmas Eve Gala Dinner (24DEC) USD 68 per person and New Year's Eve Dinner (31DEC) USD 156 per

person

- Radisson Blue, peak surcharge 20DEC-05JAN per room per night USD 99
- Oberoi Amarvilas Agra, peak surcharge 20DEC-05JAN per room per night USD 332

* Please note that 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.

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL PARO

Welcome to Bhutan! Pick up at Paro international airport. After Lunch in the city, drive on a winding road to Thimphu (one hour), the capital of Bhutan.

Visit Tashichho Dzong, Bhutan's most impressive building. It has traditionally been the seat of the Druk desi or 'Dharma Raja', the head of Bhutan's civil government, an office which has been combined with the kingship since the creation of the monarchy in 1907. It houses the throne room of His Majesty the King of Bhutan and is the summer residence of the venerated monastic community. The current Dzong is the impressive result of a redesign of the original medieval structure sanctioned by the Third King, His Majesty King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, when he moved the capital to Thimphu from Punakha.

Meals: lunch depending on arrival time.

DAY 2

THIMPU

After breakfast visit the Memorial Chorten, also known as the Thimphu Chorten, a large Tibetan-style Buddhist Monastery with golden spires and bells. It was built in 1974 to honor the memory of the third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck.

Continue to the Folk Heritage Museum: A three storied traditional building houses this museum. Established in 2001, the museum provides a glimpse into the traditional Bhutanese material culture and way of life. The artifacts remind the visitors about how the rural Bhutanese live today.

Visit National Institute of Zorig Chusum and the National Library of Bhutan which was first established in 1967 under the patronage of HM Queen Ashi Phuntso Choden (1911–2003), with a small collection of precious texts. Learn about how handmade paper from plants at the Junghi Paper Factory. The traditional handmade papers are widely used for religious scripts, packing materials, hand-carry bags, lampshades, envelopes and calendars.

The National Institute of Traditional Medicine strives to merge the allopathic and traditional systems of healing. A large laboratory and a production facility inside the institute monitor and ensure the quality of the components like the plants, minerals, precious metals etc. The institution also produces Bhutanese medicines and they have a plot inside their premise where they grow different herbs and plants.

Visit the Bhutan Postal Museum which was established in November 2015 to celebrate the 60th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The main objective of the museum is to tell the story of Bhutan's progress and development through the lens of the evolution of communications and postal system in the country.

Meals: breakfast at hotel.

DAY 3

THIMPU - PUNAKHA

After breakfast, we take the Dochula pass, located 30 km from the capital, on the way to Punakha which offers a 360-degree of beautiful panoramic view of the Himalaya mountain range, . The 108 chortens that adorn the beauty of this place were built by Queen Mother to commemorate the Bhutanese soldiers who were killed when fighting the Indian rebels in 2003. The pass is also popular spiritual place for both locals and tourists because of an important temple that is located on the crest of Dochula pass.

Visit Chimi Lhakhang: located near Lobesa, Punakha stands on a round hillock and is flanked by hundreds of prayer flags. Built in 1499, this monastery is dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kinley or 'the Divine Madman'. An accomplished master of Mahamudra Buddhist Tradition, he is also known as the 'Mad Saint' for his unorthodox ways of teaching Buddhism by singing, humor and outrageous behavior.

Continue to Drukpa Kinley, also a cultural icon in Bhutan around whom countless yarns, fictions, stories and legends have been spun. In founding the site, it is said that Lama Kunley subdued a demon of Dochu La with his "magic thunderbolt of wisdom" and trapped it in a rock at the location close to where the chorten now stands.

Meals: breakfast at hotel and lunch box.

DAY 4

PHUNAKA – PARO

After breakfast, visit the Punakha Dzong, also known as Pungtang Dechen Photrang Dzong (meaning 'the palace of great happiness or bliss'), the administrative centre of Punakha dzongkhag. Constructed in 1673, it is the second oldest and second largest dzong in Bhutan and one of its most

majestic structures. Punakha Dzong was the administrative centre and the seat of the Government of Bhutan until 1955, when the capital was moved to Thimphu.

Drive to Paro then and visit the National Museum and Paro Dzong. The National Museum of Bhutan is housed inside the revamped circular Ta-dzong building, an ancient watchtower above the Paro Dzong. This unusual round building is said to be in the shape of a conch shell. The original building was constructed in 1656 and then converted into a museum in 1968, housing some of the finest specimens of Bhutanese art, including masterpieces of bronze statues and paintings gathered from different parts of the country.

Some of the handicrafts items cover the history and cultural heritage of more than 1500 years. The National Museum has in its possession over 3,000 works of Bhutanese art, rich holdings of various creative traditions and disciplines that represent a remarkable blend of the past with the present. Paro Dzong is one of the most impressive and well-known dzongs in Bhutan. One of the finest examples of Bhutanese architecture, it is also known as the Ringpung Dzong, which means 'fortress on a heap of jewels'. It is the administrative seat of the district of Paro. The dzong was built in the 16th century and was used on numerous occasions to defend the Paro Valley from invasions by Tibet. Unlike most of the other dzongs in Bhutan, it survived the massive 1897 earthquake mostly unscathed, though it was almost burnt to the ground by a fire in 1907. All-important relics were lost to the fire and nothing could be salvaged except for the Thongdrol, a 20x20 meter-wide Thangka. The Thangka is displayed annually during a ceremony called Paro Tshechu. The Dzong was however rebuilt the following year.

Meals: breakfast at hotel and dinner with local family.

DAY 5

PARO TAKTSANG SOFT HIKE

Drive to Satsam Chorten for a soft hike to Taktsang Monastery. The name Taktsang means "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. It is said that in the second half of the 8th century, Guru Padma Sambhava known as the second Buddha in Bhutan, meditated at the spot where the monastery is situated having alighted there on the back of a flying tigress.

The hike takes about 4 hours back and forth. Once you reach the view point of the monastery you have the option to visit the monastery which takes another hour hike.

The first monastery was constructed 1694, but in 1998 a tragic fire destroyed most of the original buildings - which have since been painstakingly restored to their former glory. Later visit Kyichu Lhakhang, a Buddhist temple in Paro. It is one of the oldest monasteries in the country built in the 7th century by the Tibetan King Songsten Gampo. After visit a Farm House where your dinner will be arranged with the local family.

Meals: breakfast at hotel.

DAY 6

PARO - KOLKATA

After breakfast transfer Paro International Airport for your flight to Kolkata, followed by a city tour.

Join the Heritage Tram Ride across the Old Town to witness the bygone era of charming Bengali colonies, chic cafes and traditional houses. Visit the sacred Hooghly Riverside to witness WWII built Howrah Bridge, 1906 Howrah Junction Railway Station still housing St John Church, Old Court House, and Colonial Secretariat Buildings. Next stop, the riverside located Mullik Ghat to explore some of India's most colourful Flower Bazaar Markets. Continue to Victoria Memorial, a landmark of Kolkata dedicated to UK's Queen Victoria and now serves as a royal museum of British Rule in India. Next, arrive at the country's iconic Eden Garden Cricket Stadium.

Visit Mother Teresa's Mission and House. Later, discover the curious lanes of Kumartuli. The tour ends at Kolkata's New Market area to enjoy novelty of street shopping and bargaining with the locals.

Meals: breakfast at hotel.

DAY 7

DEPARTURE

After breakfast, transfer to your ship.

Meals: breakfast at hotel.



DISCOVER

Ancient Kingdom of Bhutan & Kolkata Pre Tour 6 Nights

Direct flights between Kolkata and Paro make it now possible to combine a Pandaw river expedition with a visit to the ancient Kingdom of Bhutan, one of the world's most intriguing countries. Discover Bhutan's famous cliff-top monasteries, soaring mountain peaks and unique way of life.

This is a private tour.

Medium fitness is required for a soft hike on day 5.

Rates include:

Six nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar), including breakfast and meals as advertised, excursion and entrance fees as per itinerary, one flight Paro – Kolkata including check-in luggage of 20kg, Bhutan visa and permit fees.

Note

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- The Bhutan visa is included in the price, please send us your passport scan for the application

- If you are staying in India before and after Bhutan then a multiple entry visa is required for India
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00

* Please note that 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:

- Ensure that it is the same passport that was used for the Bhutan visa application
- The passport validity can't be less than six months
- All passport will require at least 2 blank pages in their passport for Bhutan entry and exit stamp

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION



DISCOVER

Maharajas' Express - Luxury Train Journeys (on selected Ganges dates)

Pandaw has selected three Maharajas Express Train Journeys which line up with a Pandaw departures on the Lower Ganges River including pre/post hotel stays. Each journey offers a peek into a unique aspect of the Kaleidoscope that is India.

Explore the lands of Maharajas, the mighty fortresses and exquisite palaces, the tales of valor and chivalry. Discover the mystique of India as you partake in evening Aarti ritual at bathing ghats of Ganges and witness the local artists performing at sundowner cocktails among the undulating sand dunes.

The Winner of the World's Leading Luxury Train Award 2012, 2013, 2014 & 2015 Maharajas' Express is considered to be one of the finest luxury trains of India. Well-laden with every modern facility and often compared to the Orient Express. The Maharajas' Express has a décor of oozes out opulence. You get a chance to explore some of the best and world-renowned architectural gems of India.



Journey 1: Indian Splendour 9 nights

01-10 FEB 2019 for Pandaw's [The Lower Ganges River Cruise](#) 10-17 FEB 2019 departure.

Dehli - Agra - Ranthambore - Jaipur - Bikaner - Jodhpur - Udaipur - Balsinor - Mumbai - flight to Kolkata

[read more about the Indian Splendour 9 night rail tour](#)



Journey 2: Gems of India 5 nights

19-24 FEB 2019 for Pandaw's [The Lower Ganges River Cruise](#) 24 FEB – 03 MAR 2019 departure.

Delhi - Agra - Ranthambore - Jaipur - Delhi - flight to Kolkata

[read more about the Gems of India 5 night rail tour](#)



Journey 3: Indian Panorama 9 nights

22 FEB – 03 MAR 2019 for Pandaw's [The Lower Ganges River Cruise](#) 03 – 10 MAR 2019 departure.

and 22-31 MAR 2019 for Pandaw's [The Lower Ganges River Cruise](#) 31 MAR – 07 APR 2019 departure.

Delhi - Jaipur - Ranthambore - Fatehpur Sikri - Agra - Gwalior - Khajuraho - Varanasi - Lucknow - Delhi - flight to Kolkata

[read more about the Indian Panorama 9 night rail tour](#)

Tel: +91-11-4242 3100

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVE KOLKATA

Namaste! Welcome to India. You will be met at Kolkata International Airport and transferred to your Kolkata Hotel for check-in and trip briefing. Enjoy your trip.

(Time permitting) Kolkata is locally regarded as India's cultural capital and where India and British Raj collide. We begin tour in this colonial rich city with a Heritage Tram Ride across the Old Town to witness the bygone era of charming Bengali colonies, chic cafes and traditional houses. We visit the sacred Hooghly Riverside to witness WWII built Howrah Bridge, 1906 Howrah Junction Railway Station still renowned as the largest railway complex in India, British East India Company built Dalhousie Square housing St John Church, Old Court House, and Colonial Secretariat Buildings. Next stop, the riverside located Mullik Ghat to explore some of India's most colourful Flower Bazaar Markets. Then, we visit Victoria Memorial, a landmark of Kolkata dedicated to UK's Queen Victoria and now serves as a royal museum of British Rule in India. Next, we arrive at the country's iconic Eden Garden Cricket Stadium. Then, we visit Mother Teresa's Mission and House. Later, discover the curious lanes of Kumartuli where we visit inside sculptor's traditional art homes and watch goddesses come to life. Tour ends at Kolkata's New Market area to enjoy novelty of street shopping and bargaining with the locals. After tour you will be transferred to your hotel.

DAY 2

DEPART KOLKATA

You will be met at meeting point of The Oberoi Grand Hotel to join your cruise group and begin your river cruise itinerary.



DISCOVER

Exploring Kolkata 1 Night Pre Tour

Kolkata is locally regarded as India's cultural capital and where India and British Raj collide. Visit the city's highlights before your the cruise.

This is a private tour.

Rates include:

Transfer from airport to hotel, transfer from hotel to ship, one night accommodation at The Oberoi Grand in Kolkata including breakfast, excursion including entrance fees as per itinerary.

Note

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the

transfer accordingly

- Apply for Indian visa before departure
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00

* Please note that 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.

OBEROI GRAND KOLKATA

15

Jawaharlal Nehru Road

Kolkata - 700 013

India

Tel: +91 33 2249 2323

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVE VARANASI (BY SHIP)

You will be met upon arrival at the disembarkation point and transferred to your Hotel, followed by tour briefing and welcome ceremony. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 2

CITY TOUR OF VARANASI

Breakfast at the hotel. Pick up at the hotel for the city tour. Varanasi is believed to offer its visitors 'Moksha', liberation from cycle of rebirth. Our sacred journey in this holy city begins with Sunrise Boat Cruise on 'The Ganges River'. Capture picturesque views riverfront steps 'Ghats' filled with ancient temples, classic houses and hundreds of pilgrims who come to wash-away their sins in this sacred river. Witness crematory rituals at Burning Ghats of 'Manikarnika' and understand the meaning of Karma, Salvation and Afterlife. Return to Hotel for breakfast and rest. The best way to get an eye opening insight to this magical city is by foot, and later we begin a Heritage Walk Tour through maze-like streets of Varanasi. First stop, we visit a traditional Indian wrestling Joint 'Akhada' and watch wrestlers perform using traditional exercise tools or doing 'Kushti' – an Indian wrestling on fresh mud pits. Pure Varanasi Silk is world-renowned, and next we visit a Traditional Silk Weaving Unit to experience this rare art. Explore 1776 built Vishwananth Gold Temple covered in 800 Kg of Gold dedicated to 'Lord Shiva', the principle deity of Hinduism. Outside temple enjoy a session of Indian Palm Reading by Hindu Astrologers locally called 'Jyotish'. Later you will be driven to the buried Buddhist City of 'Sarnath', where 'Lord Buddha' began his preaching and gave birth to Buddhism. Here we visit inside Archaeological Museum housing rare excavations from 3rd century AD. Our day tour ends at the riverfront of The Ganges to participate with the locals in a Sunset Ceremony 'Aarti', a Sanskrit prayer performed to worship 'Ganges River' by several priests, accompanied by bells, drums, cymbals and flower petals. After tour we return back to your Hotel.

DAY 3

VARANASI AIRPORT

Breakfast at the hotel. You will be transferred to the airport of Varanasi.



DISCOVER

Tour The Sacred & Soulful City - Varanasi 2 Night Post Tour

Rates include:

2 nights accommodation Double/Single inclusive of breakfast & taxes. (Check in time is 14.00 and checkout time is 11.00), transfers, tours, excursion with air-conditioned vehicle, service of local English speaking Guide during all sightseeing tours as per itinerary, all Entrance fees at monuments as per itinerary, government of India GST tax.

Note

- Please advice arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Apply for Indian visa before departure

- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00

* Please note that 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.

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**](#)