

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

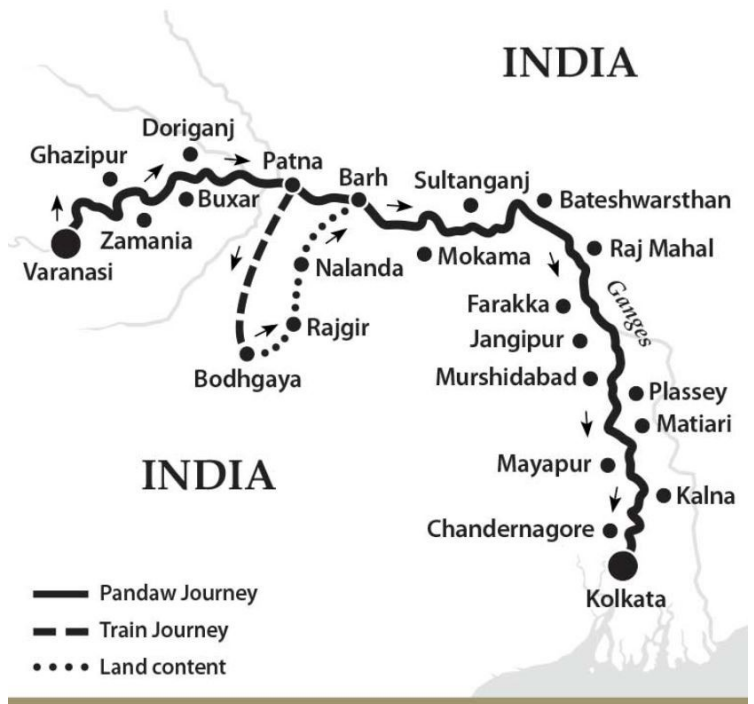
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THE UPPER GANGES RIVER (DOWNSTREAM)

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.



ITINERARY

DAY 1 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 2 VARANASI

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

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along the ghats and witness the 'Aarati' rituals.

DAY 3 GAHZIPUR

Stop at Ghazipur, 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 4 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 5 PATNA

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

DAY 6 NALANDA AND BODHGAYA

Travel by early morning train to Bodh Gaya and on arrival visit a hotel for breakfast then all morning explore 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. After lunch at the hotel we go by coach to the archaeological site of Nalanda, the great 5th century Buddhist university. Return by coach to meet the ship

that has moved downstream to Barh.

DAY 7 MUNGER AND MOKAMA

Stop at Mokama, once home to Jim Corbett the naturalist and protector of the Indian tigers. 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.

DAY 8 SULTANGANJ

Morning moor off Sultanganj, with its pair of great granite rocks, one with a mosque and the other a temple dating from the 16th century. 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.

DAY 9 BATESHWARSTHAN

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

DAY 10 FARAKKA

Cross from the Ganges to the Lower Ganges or Hoogly River through the lock and canal at Farraka, constructed 1963-75. Before passing into the lock 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 11 MURSHIDABAD

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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 12 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 13 KALNA

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.

DAY 14 KOLKATA

Visit the imposing Imambara at Hooghly. With verses from the Koran written on its walls, the Imambara is an opportunity to step back in time and relive a slice of Islamic history in Bengal. Downstream past the old Dutch settlement of Chinsura to Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950. Visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's House, the erstwhile Governor-General of French India. Moor overnight in Kolkata.

DAY 15 DISEMBARKATION

Transfers to the airport, railway station or city hotels.

Please Note:

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.

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YOUR SHIP:

YOUR SHIP:

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:



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PRICING

ADDITIONAL CHARGES:

Port Charges. From 125 USD pp