

CRUISE OF 15 DAYS / 14 NIGHTS - REF. 1G7_PP

Cruise on the Ganges between Kolkata and Varanasi & the splendors of Rajasthan (port-to-port cruise)

INDIA

Take a cruise on the Ganges River and plunge into fascinating, enticing, surprising, and astonishing India. The river is not only sacred to the Hindus, it is also the lifeline for the millions of inhabitants that depend on it for their daily needs. Discover the cultural heartbeat of the nation: Bustling Kolkata and its memorials and Varanasi, a sacred city that attracts millions of pilgrims a year. Visit Rajasthan, also called “Land of Kings”, this astonishing region is packed with things to discover. Men and women with shimmering turbans and saris, magnificent palaces, impressive forts and citadels and intoxicating aromas of spices are some of the unique features of this surprising corner of India.





HIGHLIGHTS

- Cruise on board a magnificent, colonial-style ship
- Cruise the Ganges through one of the most fertile and densely populated regions in the world
- Discover :
- Visit fascinating Kolkata
- Varanasi, the sacred city where pilgrims come to find enlightenment
- Wander through small traditional villages
- The fabulous terra-cotta temples in Kalna
- EXTENDED STAY INCLUDED:
- Visit the 3 major attractions in Rajasthan: the Palace of the Winds, Amer Fort and the lost city of Fatehpur Sikri
- The dazzling Taj Mahal

THE CROISIEUROPE DIFFERENCE

- All meals included - DRINKS INCLUDED with meals
- Refined local cuisine
- Headsets are included for excursions
- Official welcome from the captain and crew
- Tour leader or cruise director on board
- Onboard activities and/or lectures
- Travel assistance and repatriation insurance
- All port fees included

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

KOLKATA

Your program will begin according to your time of arrival in Kolkata. If your flight arrives before 6:00 a.m., your program will be: Enjoy a panoramic tour to discover the architectural richness of the city. Kolkata contains numerous colonial-era sites: Raj Bhavan—the official residence of the regional governor—and Council House Street. Afterwards, you will board our ship and have lunch on board. In the afternoon, we will visit the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity, where Mother Theresa lived, prayed, and worked, and where her body was laid to rest in 1997. After we return on board, we'll introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail. We'll have dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 2

KOLKATA - BANDEL - KALNA

Kolkata is a modern, cosmopolitan city with great cultural influence in the country. We'll enjoy a panoramic tour of the city and visit St. John's Church, the third oldest church in the city. After, we'll head to the Victoria Memorial, an impressive white marble building that houses a museum maintained by the Ministry of Culture. We'll have lunch on board and begin our cruise along the landscapes once dominated by European colonialism. We'll set out on small local boats for Bandel to visit the imposing Hooghly Imambara. It's a chance to step back in time and relive a slice of Bengal's Islamic history. We'll have dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 3

KALNA - MATIARI

You'll discover this out-of-the-way village from the seat of a rickshaw. Kalna is home to two circles of 108, small Hindu temples, each of which is dedicated to Lord Shiva. We'll have lunch on board as we continue to cruise the river in the afternoon. Take some time to enjoy the onboard activities or attend a lecture on the region of Bengal. We'll have dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 4

MATIARI - KHUSHBAGH

Join us for a stroll through the charming market town of Matiari, where coppersmiths still work the metal using the techniques passed down from generation to generation. After lunch, departure for an afternoon of navigation and passage along the site of the battlefields in Plassey, thought to be one of the most important battles that took place in the 18th century for the control of the Indian subcontinent by the colonial powers. We'll have dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 5

KHUSHBAGH - BARANAGAR - MURSHIDABAD

We'll walk to Khushbagh, the Garden of Happiness, packed with history and beauty. We'll then visit Baranagar Village to get a good feeling of rural life in the area and explore a bit of authentic India off the beaten path. The village contains hauntingly beautiful clay temples. After lunch, sit back and enjoy the scenery as we pass by tiny villages that dot the banks of the river. We'll then visit Murshidabad, known for its impressive colonial-style architecture. We'll tour Hazar Duari Palace, known as the Palace of 1000 doors—real and fake. It is now a museum containing fascinating artifacts, including various weapons, oil paintings by Dutch, French, and Italian artists, and marble statues. The vast, brick Katra Masjid, built in just one year in the 18th century, is regarded as the top tourist attraction in the city for its beauty and history. We'll have dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 6

MURSHIDABAD - MAYAPUR

Our cruise continues as the wide river transforms progressively into a band of water that glides between mustard plantations, jute shrubs, and mango orchards. While the scenery floats by, your guide will explain the many customs during an onboard lecture on the region. Enjoy lunch on board. Mayapur is the city where the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (known informally around the world as the Hare Krishnas) was founded and has its headquarters. Opened in 1978, the main complex includes a spacious marble temple and a guest house where members can stay and participate in the daily spiritual programs. We'll have dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 7

MAYAPUR - CHANDERNAGORE - KOLKATA

Chandernagore is a former French colony that has been able to preserve its unique identity over the years. We'll visit the house that once belonged to the governor for the French East India Company in the 18th century. We'll then visit Sacred Heart Church, one of the most beautiful examples of architecture during the French period. Tonight we'll have our farewell cocktail and dinner and spend the night on board.

DAY 8

KOLKATA - VARANASI

You'll disembark this morning before visiting Kolkata. Enjoy a stroll through the splendid flower market under the Howrah Bridge, where Indians buy flowers for worship. Our trek will continue to the ghats along the banks of the Ganges. These are the steps leading to the water where people come to participate in a number of rituals. We'll spend some time visiting the Pareshnath Jain Temple, one of the most important in the city. We'll pass through the picturesque quarter of Kumortuli, where street potters hone their craft. After lunch, you'll be transferred to the airport for the flight to Varanasi. On arrival, you'll check into a 4-star hotel and have dinner.

DAY 9

VARANASI

As the sun rises, set out on a cruise to discover the unique rituals the river encounters each day. Then walk in the footsteps of devoted Hindus from one small street to the other before reaching the Alamgir Mosque and Kashi Vishvanath Temple. After our excursion, we'll return to the hotel for breakfast. In the afternoon, enjoy a tour of the grand Ramnagar Fort, the home of the Maharaja of Varanasi. The museum in the complex exhibits jewel-encrusted chairs, religious manuscripts, and royal costumes, among many other national treasures. After lunch, we'll set out on an excursion to Sarnath, where Siddhartha Gautama first taught the Dharma, and visit the museum which contains a magnificent collection of Buddhist writings. Hop on a cycle rickshaw for a spin through the bazaar and witness an Aarti ceremony with songs and offerings of light. We'll have dinner and spend the night at the hotel.

DAY 10

VARANASI

Visit the Bharat Mata Mandir (Mother India Temple) which was built in the 1930s and inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. At the end of the morning, you'll be transferred to the airport in Varanasi for a flight to Jaipur. After lunch, you'll check into a 4-star hotel LS. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

DAY 11

JAIPUR - AMER

Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan, and there is no better place to discover its charms than at its famous Palace of the Winds. We'll also visit Amer Fort, known for its artistic style of elements and architecture. Located high on a hill, it is surrounded by over five miles of walls (9 km). After lunch, we'll set out for a stroll through the bustling city. The Jantar Mantar monument is a fascinating collection of astronomical instruments built in the 18th century, and features to world's largest sundial. We'll have dinner and spend the night at the hotel.

DAY 12

JAIPUR

Our day will begin at the white marble Birla Temple, which was built in 1988. The temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the preserver, and his consort Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth. After, we'll enjoy a moment of cultural sharing during a visit to one of the city's schools. After lunch, we'll visit the Nahargarh Fort, which stands on the edge of the Aravalli Hills and once helped form a strong line of defense for the city. We'll then enjoy a rickshaw ride through one of the busy markets in the area. Take in dinner and a show in a traditional haveli this evening. You'll spend the night at the hotel.

DAY 13

JAIPUR - FATEHPUR SIKRI - AGRA

We'll leave for Agra by bus, traveling through village after village where you'll be able to glimpse the everyday life of the inhabitants. After lunch, we'll visit the gated city of Fatehpur Sikri. Founded in 1571, it was completely abandoned by its inhabitants within 40 years. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After our tour, you'll check into a 4-star hotel LS and have dinner.

DAY 14

AGRA - DELHI

At daybreak, we'll leave by pedi-cab for the Taj Mahal, the gorgeous white marble mausoleum built by Shah Jahan to hold the tomb of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Today, it attracts millions of visitors per year and is considered one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Breakfast will be served at the hotel. We'll then visit the fort, the main residence of the emperors of the Mughal Dynasty until 1638. After lunch, we'll discover the Tomb of Mirza Giyas Beg, as known as the "Baby Taj." At the end of our tour, we'll take a train to New Delhi. On arrival, you'll check into a 4-star hotel LS and have dinner.

DAY 15

DELHI

Enjoy a panoramic tour of New Delhi, the bustling capital of the country. We'll see the India Gate, Humayun's Tomb, and the Red Fort, among other sites, and we'll stop to visit the Gurudwara Bangla Sahib house of worship. The grounds include the Gurudwara, a kitchen, a large pond, a school, and an art gallery. We'll then visit the Gandhi Smriti and the museum dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. You'll enjoy lunch before we say goodbye. End of our services.

Our price includes

>> CORE PROGRAM

Domestic flight from Kolkata to Varanasi and airport taxes - your cruise in the cabin category of your choice - your stay in a 4* Hotel LS in a double room - your cruise with all meals from lunch on the first day to lunch on the final day - drinks at all meals (mineral water + 1 soft drink or 1 beer* or 1 glass of wine* + 1 tea or coffee per person at each meal) - all visits and excursions mentioned in the program - the assistance of English-speaking local guides - the services of our CroisiEurope cruise director on board - travel assistance and repatriation insurance - tips.

Tips: To ensure our customers a more pleasant stay, we've included €45 (including tax and VAT) for tips which will be entirely paid to the personnel from the countries to be visited. This amount was determined while taking into consideration the local customs and etiquette.

>> EXTENDED STAY

Domestic flight from Varanasi to Jaipur and airport taxes - all meals - drinks at all meals (1 mineral water or 1 soft drink + 1 tea or coffee per person at each meal) - all visits and excursions mentioned in the program - the assistance of English-speaking local guides - your stay in a 4* Hotel LS in a double room - the services of our CroisiEurope cruise director on board (starting from 15 passengers) - travel assistance and repatriation insurance – tips.

Tips: To ensure our customers a more pleasant stay, we've included €95 (including tax and VAT) for tips which will be entirely paid to the personnel from the countries to be visited. This amount was determined while taking into consideration the local customs and etiquette.

*This cruise and tour are not recommended for PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY or those who have difficulty walking. There is no elevator on the ship. You must be in good physical condition to participate. THE GANGES RIVER - The banks of the river we will set foot on can be steep and slippery depending on the water level. - The itinerary, stopovers, and visits can be modified by the cruise company and our local representatives if needed. - The captain of the ship is the sole authority who can modify the ship itinerary for safety or navigational reasons. *Alcohol can be harmful to your health. Please drink in moderation.*

Our price does not include

>> CORE PROGRAM

Transfers to/from departure/arrival points - transfers - cancellation and baggage insurance - Indian visa.

>> EXTENDED STAY

Transfers to/from departure/arrival points - cancellation and baggage insurance.

Useful information

EXCURSIONS

- Excursions will alternate between air-conditioned buses, small local boats, or rickshaws. Certain visits in villages will be tours on foot.
- The excursions will be narrated by an English-speaking tour guide, and you will have earphones for easier listening.
- Frequent traffic jams in Kolkata, Varanasi, and New Delhi, caused by intense traffic or religious events, can disturb the sequence of certain excursions.

FLIGHT

- Domestic flights are on Spice Jet, IndiGo and/or Air India, in economy class.
- On the flights Calcutta/Benares and Benares/Jaipur, the free baggage allowance is 20Kg per person. Beyond this weight, a supplement will be requested by the airline at the check-in counter.

PRECAUTIONS

Vaccines are not mandatory for this trip. It is nevertheless advisable to be up to date with the following vaccinations: tetanus, polio, hepatitis A and B, diphtheria and typhoid fever. The use of mosquito repellent is highly recommended.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

The Indian rupee: please consult websites such as www.xe.com or www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

Payment using credit or debit cards is not current practice, but you will be able to withdraw money easily. The currency accepted on board is the rupee. There is no currency exchange service on board.

WEATHER

- In West Bengal: the best months are January to March and October to November. The temperature is about 77° to 95° F (25° to 35° C) and the dry season begins in October.
- In Rajasthan: the best months are January to March and September to December when the average temperature is about 86° F (30° C).

TIME DIFFERENCE

You can consult www.worldtimezone.com to see the time difference between your home and your destination.

FORMALITIES

Please consult the competent authorities (consulate/embassy) before your trip.