

CRUISE & RAIL: THE SACRED GANGES & THE MAHARAJAS' EXPRESS

16 Days | Kolkata to New Delhi



16 days



1 country



UNESCO

This adventure by land, river and train will touch all of your senses.

Start your journey onboard the luxurious riverboat, the *Ganges Voyager II*. Travel to villages lining the Ganges River that only a few people get to see each year and experience our **Wellness Program**, centered around the destination's ancient tradition and practice of yoga. From the awe-inspiring Hindu temple complexes of Kalna to the colorful flower markets of Kolkata, your Ganges voyage delves deeply into the myriad charms of India's culture.

Then your travels continue onshore to explore India's star cities by the *Maharajas' Express*. This glamorous train will take you to Agra for the Taj Mahal, the Pink City of Jaipur and the Blue City of Jodhpur, the romantic "Venice of the East", New Delhi, and Mumbai, home to India's famous Bollywood film industry. All this and more await on a once-in-a-lifetime voyage through India.

**Note: Due to cultural differences and other factors, the beverage policy for our India program differs from our European programs. Please see our [Terms and Conditions](#) for more details.*

KOLKATA TO NEW DELHI

Note: The itineraries presented are subject to modification due to water levels, closures because of public holidays or other uncontrollable factors. Every effort will be made to operate programs as planned, but changes may still be necessary throughout the cruise. This day-to-day schedule is subject to change. Your final day-to-day schedule will be provided onboard on the first day of your cruise.

DAY 1 KOLKATA (EMBARK)

Arrive at Kolkata Airport. If your cruise package includes a group arrival transfer or if you have purchased a private arrival transfer, you will be greeted by a Uniworld representative and transferred to the *Ganges Voyager II*.

Note: For Arrival, Departure and Transfer details, please visit [Uniworld.com/transfers](https://uniworld.com/transfers). For Port Location details, please visit [Uniworld.com/ports](https://uniworld.com/ports).



DAY 2 KALNA

Kalna, once an important trade port on the river, is best known today for the magnificent Hindu temples built by the maharajas of Bardhaman— which you'll experience today. After marveling at the astonishing Rajbari temple complex, you may opt to walk with your guide through the colorful local market.

Featured Excursion

INDIA'S "TEMPLE CITY"

You've seen them jostling through the busy streets of New Delhi; today's your chance to try riding in one yourself. Board a trishaw—a pedal-powered three-wheeled rickshaw—for a view of the streets of Kalna as you head to the Rajbari temple complex. The Pratapeshwar Temple, built in 1849, is embellished with exceptional terra-cotta carvings depicting myths and rituals, as well as scenes of everyday life (see if you can spot the girl in typical Victorian dress with a violin among the hundreds of figures). Lalji, the oldest temple in the complex, dates to 1739; the three-storied structure is topped with 25 distinctive pinnacles. Next to it is Krishna Chandra, built in a similar style. Across the street you'll find the amazing Naba Kailash, two concentric circles of intricately carved temples dedicated to Shiva. The inner circle is made up of 34 white temples symbolizing pure thought; the outer circle contains 74 temples symbolizing the everyday world.

Our MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experiences support sustainable tourism, offering our guests opportunities to directly impact the communities we explore in a positive way.

 **MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experiences**

DAY 3 MATIARI

Your ship serves as a time machine today, transporting you hundreds of years into the past, as we travel to the authentic artisan village of Matiari.

Featured Excursion

MATIARI MASTER CRAFTSMEN WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO BRASS

Artisans have been making ornamental brass objects— vases, lamps, figurines, platters—in Matiari for more than a century, so it's no wonder that production is so well-organized and the craftsmen so skillful. Scrap metal is melted in the village foundry and pressed into new sheets of brass, which are then turned into various objects. Each craftsman specializes in a different step of the process, so one artisan might cut the metal, while another shapes it into a wide

tray, and yet another etches an intricate pattern onto the surface. The sound of hammer on brass will fill the air as you stroll from workshop to workshop to see each step of the fascinating process.

Back onboard, watch as a skilled practitioner of mehndi demonstrates how the intricate henna patterns are created, and discover the meanings of the traditional motifs.

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DAY 4 MURSHIDABAD, BARANAGAR

Today's adventures take you to a duo of Bengali towns—Murshidabad and Baranagar—each one boasting surprising and beautiful architectural monuments closely linked to the ruling families of the area.

This evening, following dinner onboard, take in a lively Bollywood-style show, complete with music and dancing.

Featured Excursion

VISIT TO MURSHIDABAD CITY, RIDE BY BUGGY TO KATRA MOSQUE, AND VISIT TO BARANAGAR VILLAGE

Your day begins in Murshidabad, long ago the capital of Bengal and an important administrative center during the Raj—a fact that comes clear as the ship rounds a bend in the river and you behold Hazarduari Palace. This massive neoclassical building was erected in the mid-19th century for British officials, who lived and had their offices in its 114 rooms. One might wonder why the architect, Colonel Duncan Macleod of the Bengal Corps, thought the building needed a thousand doors, but that's how many it has—900 of them are real doors, and the remaining 100 are false. It is now a museum, which you will visit. Climb aboard a horse-drawn buggy for a ride to Katra Mosque, built in 1723 by the first nawab, Murshid Quli Khan, who gave his name to the town. The huge mosque was damaged by an earthquake in 1897, losing two of its four great towers, but it is still a remarkable sight.

Return to the ship for lunch and cruise to the town of Baranagar, where Rani Bhabani built beautiful brick temples in the 18th century. Goats frolic among them now and vines attempt to take them over, but the terra-cotta carvings are considered among the best in Bengal and the temples are well-tended.

After your tour, if time and weather allow, you can learn a bit about one of the Raj's enduring legacies in India: a passion for that most British of all games, cricket. It remains India's favorite sport, and the national team, nicknamed the "Men in Blue," has won the Cricket World Cup more than once. The game is played in schools, in fields, even on village streets; watch it in action and discover the meaning of terms like "long leg," "fast bowler," and "run-out."

DAY 5 CRUISING THE GANGES, KHUSBAGH

One of the world's most sacred bodies of water, the Ganges River flows through a myriad of small villages and highly populated cities throughout India and Bangladesh. Take in the remarkable scenery as you sail and be on the lookout for a rare sighting of the endangered Ganges river dolphin.

Wellness: You may choose to relax and unwind with a body massage or treatment onboard at the soothing Voyager Spa.

Featured Excursion

KHUSBAGH WALK

Khusbagh, which literally translates to “Garden of Happiness,” is the garden-graveyard of the Nawabs of Bengal. Several historic rulers of this region, including Siraj ud-Daulah and Alivardi Khan, were laid to rest here. Take a walk through the village here, with a visit to see the mausoleum and the arcade verandah that surrounds it.

DAY 6 MAYAPUR, CHANDANNAGAR

Few places of worship exist on such a head-spinning scale as what you will witness today in Mayapur, the center of the international Hare Krishna movement and home to the new Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, still under construction. Most students of history know a thing or two about the British colonial powers in India, but few are aware that the French had colonies here as well. You'll visit this former French outpost today.

Featured Excursions

HARE KRISHNA COMPLEX AND TEMPLE OF THE VEDIC PLANETARIUM

As the ship comes into sight of Mayapur, look for the new Vedic temple currently under construction. Funded in part by Alfred Ford, great-grandson of Henry Ford, the temple is designed to be larger than St. Paul's Cathedral in London once completed. The new temple construction coincides with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Hare Krishna movement, whose founder was born in Mayapur. Millions of Hare Krishna devotees come from all over the world to this pilgrimage site; as you walk through Mayapur's bazaar to the temple complex, you may well spot expatriates from America, Canada, and Europe. Colorful parades of followers often weave through the streets, adding to the hustle and bustle of the lively, vivid scene. You'll tour the existing temple complex, get a look at the new Vedic Planetarium, and learn something about the beliefs of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness.

INDIA'S FRENCH COLONIAL HERITAGE

Bandel, founded by Portuguese traders in the 16th century, offers a typically Indian mix of religious monuments: It's the site of the oldest Christian church in India, the location of Hindu festivals (including one devoted to the goddess Muthumariamman), and home to a famous Shia pilgrimage center, the Hooghly Imambara. You'll board a country boat—a small boat fitted with benches that ferries passengers to and from your luxurious ship, which cannot always moor on the banks of the river—to reach the shore and the imambara. Completed in 1861 to honor Muhammad Mohsin, a revered Bengali philanthropist, the stately *imambara* offers shelter for pilgrims, a mosque, and a school. Step into the long colonnaded courtyard for a view of the twin towers and the 19th-century clock, and climb the stairs of the clock tower for a fabulous view of the river and surrounding countryside. Visitors are sometimes allowed into the mosque, but all guests must leave before the faithful are called to evening prayers. “Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité.” These words, the famous slogan of the French Revolution, are inscribed on the gateposts of Chandannagar, a memento of the centuries the town was a French outpost in West Bengal. In fact, Chandannagar did not officially become part of India

until 1952, so when you step ashore here you will find a mixture of French Colonial and Indian architecture. A broad, tree-lined riverfront promenade known as the Strand shows off the handsomest remaining French buildings, including the Duplex Palace, now a museum, and the 19th-century Church of the Sacred Heart that replaced the 17th-century original.

DAY 7 KOLKATA

The city of Kolkata is synonymous with the enduring legacies of Mother Teresa and the colonial-era British Raj, both of which you will get better acquainted with today.

Featured Excursions

KOLKATA CITY TOUR WITH VISIT TO THE FLOWER MARKET

Continue this morning with a panoramic tour of Kolkata's city center. The first stop? A visit to the captivatingly colorful Flower Market. Located adjacent to the Howrah Bridge, this vibrant and bustling market is filled with vendors and buyers exchanging money for flowers to be used in festivals, rituals, weddings, and more. Next, you can choose to visit the NGO Calcutta Rescue or you can see Mother Teresa's home and tomb.

KUMARTULI VISIT (POTTER'S COLONY) AND COLONIAL SITES

After lunch, you'll venture to Kumartuli, a traditional potters' neighborhood that specializes in making intricate clay idols, for a look at this complex and fascinating time-honored tradition. Next, on your way back to the ship, you'll see the many remnants of Kolkata's colonial past. Though teeming Kolkata is home to palaces and tenements, new developments and modern office buildings, grand hotels and parks, its historic architecture reflects its status as the longtime administrative heart of the British Raj. The colonial buildings still standing—and still in use—offer a blend of baroque and neoclassical styles that say much about British colonial taste. Perhaps the most surprising is the red-and-white façade of the Calcutta High Court building—a replica of the city hall in Ypres, Belgium. You'll see it as well as the stately Palladian dome of Government House, the classical white columns of Town Hall, the red-brick Writers' Building, and the enormous General Post Office. Visit St. John's, the oldest Anglican church in the city, then stop for a photo op outside the Victoria Memorial Museum—which was partly inspired by the Taj Mahal. Built as a tribute to Queen Victoria after her death, this huge white-marble structure houses an illuminating exhibition on the colonial era.

Choose between...

NGO "CALCUTTA RESCUE" VISIT

This morning, you'll visit the local NGO Calcutta Rescue, which serves the area's underprivileged children. They provide much-needed services at no cost to the neediest people of Kolkata and West Bengal—regardless of gender, age, caste, or religion—through health clinics, schools, vocational training, and preventative health programs. You'll hear about the impact Calcutta Rescue has made over the last 30 years and get some insight on some of their current projects.

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MOTHER TERESA'S HOME AND TOMB

She came to India in 1929, after growing up in Macedonia and joining a Loreto nunnery in Ireland, and two decades later she founded her own order, the Missionaries of Charity, devoted to the “salvation and sanctification of the poorest of the poor.” Visit the Mother House, where she lived and worked for decades; see her simply furnished room and the tiny museum devoted to her—her Nobel Peace Prize medal is on display, along with informative newspaper clippings and photos—and her tomb. It’s a modest and serene spot devoted to one of the most influential women ever to live in the city.

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DAY 8 KOLKATA (DISEMBARK), FLY TO MUMBAI

Disembark the ship for your flight to Mumbai. Take the afternoon at leisure to rest at your hotel, The Oberoi Mumbai, which is situated right on the coast of the Arabian sea.



DAY 9 MUMBAI (EMBARK)

Settle into your cabin onboard *The Maharajas' Express* as your journey by rail begins.



DAY 10 UDAIPUR

Sprawling across seven lakes and a range of hillsides, Udaipur has earned itself the moniker “the Venice of the East.” It is certainly amongst the most scenic locales in all of India, and a highlight of our adventures in this many splendored country. During your explorations of Udaipur today, sit for lunch at a local spot in town.

Featured Excursions

LAKE PICHOLA BOAT RIDE

CITY PALACE

DAY 11 JODHPUR

Having seen India’s “Pink City” already, now it’s time for you to visit the “Blue City” of Jodhpur. Swaths of brightly painted blue houses can be found throughout the city’s streets. Once an indication that a *Brahmin*—a member of India’s priestly class—inhabited a dwelling, the blue color later became emblematic of the city itself and a popular choice amongst its residents. *Later this evening, enjoy dinner off the train at an exclusive venue.*

Featured Excursion

MEHRANGARH FORT AND WALKING TOUR OF THE OLD CLOCK TOWER MARKET

DAY 12 BIKANER

Gaze out at the countryside while you enjoy breakfast onboard. In the 15th century, what was once a barren desert gave rise to a princely city carved of red sandstone. This city, Bikaner, is the site of your explorations today. Enjoy some free time in the morning to explore on your own or relax onboard before our afternoon explorations. Tonight, a special dinner experience awaits in the deserts outside the city.

Featured Excursions

JUNAGARH FORT

EXCLUSIVE BARBEQUE EVENING ON THE SAND DUNES

DAY 13 JAIPUR

Pink is the color of hospitality in northwestern India, which gives you an idea of what to expect in the "Pink City" of Jaipur. Spend the morning visiting the city's famous Amber Fort, and the evening enjoying dinner out at an exclusive venue.



Featured Excursion

AMBER FORT VISIT



DAY 14 RANTHAMBORE, FATEHPUR SIKRI

Today you will visit stunning Ranthambore, home to a national park known for its large population of Bengal tigers.

Featured Excursions

SAFARI AT RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK

FATEHPUR SIKRI

DAY 15 AGRA, NEW DELHI (DISEMBARK)

Start the day early with a visit to the majestic Taj Mahal, then return to the train as you head towards New Delhi where you will disembark the train and transfer to your luxury hotel, The Oberoi New Delhi.



Featured Excursion

THE TAJ MAHAL AT SUNRISE



It's easily the most famous building in India, and one of the most famous in the world, with its white domes and minarets floating serenely above the reflecting pools. It's a monument to a love story between a great ruler, Shah Jahan, and a learned and powerful woman, his third wife, Mumtaz Mahal. After she died giving birth to their 14th child, he gathered some 20,000 craftsmen to build her mausoleum, who endowed it with dazzling translucent marble carvings inlaid with precious and semiprecious stones. Step through the gate and into the symmetrical gardens, and experience one of the most beautiful places on earth.

DAY 16 NEW DELHI

Check out of your hotel. If your cruise package includes a group departure transfer or if you purchased a private departure transfer, you will be transferred to the airport in New Delhi for your flight home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED



DINING

All meals onboard cruise and train prepared using the finest and freshest ingredients

15 breakfasts, 14 lunches, 15 dinners

Welcome and Farewell Gala Dinners

Complimentary house wine, local spirits and beer, soft drinks, tea and coffee will be served onboard the ship and train. Onshore lunches include complimentary coffee and tea. Onshore dinners include complimentary house wine, local beer, soft drinks, coffee, and tea.



EXCURSIONS

13 days of excursions, all fully hosted by English-speaking local experts



ACCOMMODATIONS

7-night cruise on the elegant *Ganges Voyager II*

Lavishly appointed riverview suites with private French balconies

6 nights onboard the luxury train, *The Maharajas' Express*

1 night in New Delhi at The Oberoi New Delhi (or similar)

1 night in Mumbai at The Oberoi Mumbai (or similar)



EXPERIENCES

1 country: India

3 UNESCO World Heritage sites

Services of an experienced Uniworld Tour Manager during the cruise portion of your journey

Complimentary Wellness Program on every sailing

Cultural enrichment activities onboard

Group Transfers are included on arrival and departure days (please see terms and conditions for transfer guidelines)

Flight included between Kolkata and Mumbai

Gratuities for onboard and onshore personnel (ship staff, crew, Cruise/Tour Manager, local experts, drivers) are included both during the cruise/tour as well as on any pre- or post-cruise land extensions