



EXPLORE NORTH EAST INDIA BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER CRUISE

TRAVEL DATES	DATES AVAILABLE FOR THE MONTHS OCTOBER- APRIL
TOUR PRICE	TOUR PRICE: £3127 PER PERSON ON TWIN SHARING BASIS (EX. FLIGHT)
FLIGHTS	WE CAN ARRANGE TO BOOK FLIGHTS FOR YOU THROUGH OUR PARTNER TRAVEL AGENT OR YOU CAN ARRANGE YOUR OWN FLIGHTS AND WE WILL ARRANGE FOR YOUR TRANSFER FROM THE PLACE WHERE THE TOUR STARTS

Overview

This is an expedition style cruise that gives an ideal introduction to the Brahmaputra, one of the major rivers of Asia, that cuts through China, India and Bangladesh. The cruise begins in Guwahati, the gateway to North East India and ends in Neamatighat, Upper Assam. As you cruise along, experience the wilderness and witness the dramatic landscapes along the sandbanks, the little known villages and the people who live here. During the journey, you will also visit some of the interesting places of Assam; Kamakhya temple, one of the most important Hindu temples in the country known in the past for tantric sacrifices, an ancient temple, with pagan looking gods and goddesses and the dark interiors of the temple look other worldly; Majuli, which used to be the world's largest river island, is the seat of Neo Vaishnavism, a Hindu cult. The island, today, is much threatened by climatic changes resulting in massive land erosion every year; the great monuments and ruins of the Ahom Kings in Sivasagar. Travel to Assam is incomplete without visiting Kaziranga, home to the endangered One Horned Rhino and many other exotic animals and birds. Here you will embark on elephant and jeep ride and explore the park. After the cruise, visit Meghalaya, dubbed as 'the abode of clouds' and the most scenic North Eastern state with magnificent views of rolling hills, lakes and waterfalls. You will also visit the living root bridges built by the local War Khasi tribes.

Day 1. You will be received at Guwahati airport and then drive to Kamakhya temple, one of the Shakti peeths and powerful temple of the goddess Sati. Highly revered as an important Hindu pilgrimage, the temple is known for its tantric practices. Thereafter, head to the port and board the ship MV Mahabaahu, where you will receive an Assamese welcome. As you set sail to Peacock island, catch a glimpse of a fleeting endangered river Dolphin. The evening will be dotted by presentation on the Peacock island and its most important inhabitant, the endangered Golden Langur and enjoy a talk on 'Kamakhya and the Occult of Assam', followed by the 'Kamrup Swaagat Bhoj'—a sit down welcome dinner that completes the day.

Day 2. As the ship sets sail early in the morning, enjoy yoga on the deck for an hour and move on to breakfast, while cruising upstream with jungle-covered hills rising on either side, often battling against strong currents and stopping at an island that is occupied predominantly by Bangla speaking Muslim community who are involved in extensive farming. Thereafter, anchor at a deserted island for the evening and enjoy sitting around a bonfire and barbecue.

Day 3. Today sail on for the next couple of hours and enjoy a relaxed lunch and reach Silghat. After a talk on 'Tea and Jute in Assam', take a short drive to Kaliabor Tea Estate which is a vast expanse of undulating estate with tea bushes and witness tea plucking. Thereafter, proceed to the tea factory to see the production process of Assam Tea. (The tea factory is not operational from mid-December to mid-February as the tea is at its dormant stage during this time of the year). Visit a nearby co-operative Jute Mill, an interesting place to understand how the Jute fibre takes the form of very eco friendly gunny bags. By sunset, enjoy a cultural evening on the ship.

Day 4. Rise very early in the morning and drive to Kaziranga National Park, home to 70% of the world's endangered One Horned Rhino and a varied density of other large mammals, apes and birds. The park is also distinguished for a high density of cats including the elusive tiger. The park has three ranges- Central, Eastern and Western and the vegetation ranges from woodlands, tall grasslands to swamps. After reaching the Central range of the park, embark on an elephant ride, which lasts for an hour and look for rhinos, tigers, swamp deer, hog deer and a large number of interesting birds. The park will not cease to surprise you one bit. After breakfast at a resort in the park, drive to the Western range and go on open jeep safaris, which takes you into the further depths of the jungle and wildlife adventure. Return to the ship for lunch and a leisurely afternoon. After the leisurely pace of the day and having recovered the lost sleep, get together for a talk on 'Silk in Assam', as the ship reaches the shores of Bishwanath Ghat. Here, visit the Shiva Dol in reverence of Lord Shiva and enjoy a walk through the village and see how this suburban village thrives. Return to the ship to enjoy an evening on a deserted island and then proceed to a scrumptious dinner.

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Day 5. This morning, the ship sails early towards the Eastern Range of Kaziranga for boat Safari. Proceed for the safari in tenders for about two hours. The shores are high but one can see roof turtles on protruding drift wood, water lizards, otters, elephants, wild buffaloes, rhinos, darters, herons, pied kingfishers, white throated kingfishers, serpent eagles and many more. The sightings though are determined by the weather conditions. Return for lunch and in the evening enjoy the Chef's cooking demonstration followed by a talk on 'Majuli', the river island and the seat of neo vaishnav culture. The rest of the evening on a deserted island with bonfire and then return to the ship for the night.

Day 6. After Yoga, as you have your breakfast, sail towards the Mishing Village and further on to Majuli, a cosmos of Assamese culture where various philosophies co-exist and thrive. The island was once the largest river island in the world but it has lost a third of its mass to floods and erosion that happen each year, Set off in our tenders to a Mishing village in the island. The Mishings are the local tribespeople here, who are excellent weavers and witness the rural way of life here, their bamboo stilt huts or just how they go about their lives in the paddy fields or fishing and the womenfolk busy weaving. Return to the ship for lunch and then set off to Kamalabari Sattrra, one of the oldest Assamese monastery and witness a performance of Sattriya dance, a classical dance where the Vaishnavite priests dance to the rhythm of cymbals, drums, and chanting. Return to the ship and enjoy a traditional Assamese evening.

Day 7: After an early breakfast, start for a day-excursion to Sibsagar, the ancient city and capital of the Tai-speaking Ahoms who came in the 13th Century AD to the area from the north-east and were essentially of Tibeto-Burman origin. Sibsagar town literally means 'the ocean of Lord Shiva' as it is built around a huge man made water tank ordered by the Ahom Queen. The Shiva Dol, constructed in the year 1734 is believed to be the tallest Shiva temple in India. Also visit the Talatal or Kareng Ghar, palace of the Ahom Kings and the Rang Ghar, an amphitheater, a place of entertainment or important meetings for the Royals and their guests. Thereafter, drive to a Tea Estate for a relaxed afternoon and enjoy a traditional Assamese lunch with the family of estate owners, who have been involved in the tea business for over a century. Return to the ship by sunset and enjoy a relaxed evening in the Soma lounge before proceeding for dinner. Your last night on the cruise.

Day 8: An early start for a 6-hour drive to Shillong, the capital city of the state of Meghalaya and home to the Khasi tribe. Shillong has rightly earned the sobriquet of "Scotland of the East" owing to the rolling hills, beautiful scenery and climate. Here stay at a resort overlooking the picturesque Umiyam lake and rest of the day at leisure.

Day 9: In the morning after breakfast you will visit the Don Bosco museum, which showcases the entire of North East under one roof. You will then visit Shillong peak and get a bird's eye view of the entire city of Shillong. After lunch visit local Khasi marketplace and then go see a game of 'Tir' or archery gambling involving archers to shoot over a thousand colourful arrows to get the lucky number and learn about the mythical story behind this game. Evening at the hotel/lodge. Elephant falls.

Day 10: In the morning, drive to Cherrapunjee, the erstwhile rainiest place in the world. On the way, experience the beautiful rolling hills, the flora and the waterfalls, most importantly the Nohkalikai or Seven Sisters Falls, a seven segmented waterfall which falls from a height of over a 1000 ft. Upon reaching Cherrapunjee you will check in at Cherrapunjee resort, located amidst clouds, green hills and overlooking the Bangladesh plains at a distance. After lunch go for a short trek around the village and meet the local people. Overnight in hotel at Cherrapunjee.

Day 11: In the morning after breakfast visit the Living Root Bridges, the War Khasis, the local tribe of the place discovered an indigenous form of making bridges by intertwining the roots of rubber tree and use trunks of bet net tree as root guidance systems. The Double Decker Root bridge is one stacked over the other and is one of its kind in the world. start your exciting hike through meandering paths and thick tropical woods and little villages on the way down to the Double Decker Living Root Bridge. The place provides a perfect setting for a picnic lunch, after which you will start your uphill hike back and return to the resort and relax. You can choose to go for the day long trek or go for a shorter trek and relax in the hotel for the day with magnificent views of waterfalls, gorges and the distant plains of Bangladesh.

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Day 12: Check out of the hotel and drive to Guwahati Airport for your onward journey home.

Inclusions

All meals
All accommodation on tour
MV Mahabaahu cruise
Transport by Toyota Innova or similar (Toyota Innova is a MUV)
Tour Guide including local guides in various location.
Services of Naturalists while visiting National Park
Elephant ride and jeep safari in Kaziranga NP
All entrance fees
All transfers
Bottled water

Exclusions

Camera fees
Visa
Travel/medical Insurance
Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, snacks between meals
Tips for local staff

Accommodation

Ri Kynjai resort, Umiam,
Polo Orchid, Cherrapunjee

Passport and Visa Requirements

A passport (with at least six months remaining validity) and a current Indian visa are required for this trip. Please note that you are required to have a passport with a machine-readable bar code. You will need to apply for your Indian visa in advance from the relevant issuing authority in your home country. British Passport holders can apply for an e-Tourist Visa, a single entry visa valid for 30 days. Please visit the website <https://www.hcilondon.in/pages.php?id=28>

Travel Insurance

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation, loss of baggage and holiday cancellation.

Vaccinations

Please visit your GP for guidance for vaccinations while travelling to India. Please also visit this website for more details [http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/destinations/asia-\(east\)/india.aspx](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/destinations/asia-(east)/india.aspx)

Currency

The currency used is Indian Rupee. It is recommended to get your money exchanged on arrival at Delhi airport.

River cruise itinerary subject to river conditions. Elephant rides subject to availability. Kaziranga National Park contains low-lying grassland which may not be visitable when the river is at or near flood level.