

India

BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER

Why join this Voyage?

- A chance to explore the stillness and beauty of one of the world's greatest, least-known and rarely visited rivers, which changes its course constantly ensuring each departure is unique
- Good mix of both wildlife and culture, with elephant back safaris in Orang and Kaziranga National Park's, renowned for its large populations of Asian one-horned rhino and wild elephant
- Travel through a world of calm and solitude, in total contrast to most other Indian holidays, travelling at a leisurely pace onboard a small boat (max. 24 passengers), offering comfort and style



Trip Summary

This Brahmaputra River cruise offers a relaxed and comfortable journey through the heart of rural north-eastern India. Daily land excursions by jeep, on foot and by rickshaw to parks, tribal villages, river islands and tea plantations, all accompanied by a knowledgeable naturalist guide and an English-speaking West Bengali guide. Wildlife and wilderness are the main features, along with some culture. The Brahmaputra river is often 20 to 30 km wide, creating an eerie world of sand spits and watery vistas, with impressive bird life and the occasional Gangetic Dolphin. Kaziranga is a renowned UNESCO World Heritage site boasting well over 1,000 Asian one horned rhinoceros, the world's largest population. It also has good numbers of tiger, wild elephant, sambar, swamp deer, hog deer and wild pig. This voyage would particularly suit those looking for a more leisurely and off the beaten track wilderness and wildlife orientated India experience.

Itinerary



Day 1 London/ Calcutta

Depart London on the overnight flight to Calcutta via Delhi.

Day 2 Delhi/ Calcutta

On arrival in Calcutta you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Day 3 Calcutta

Today you will be taken on a tour of Calcutta, a curious blend of old & new. Highlights include the Flower Market in the early morning and Victoria Memorial.



Day 4 Calcutta/ Guwahati/ Embarkation/ Kurua

After breakfast fly to Guwahati where you will be met and taken on a short sightseeing tour of the city. Drive up Nilachal Hill to see the holy Kamakhya temple. Visit the poignant Commonwealth War Graves cemetery and walk through a local market before embarkation. Sail and upstream to Kurua on the north bank.

Day 5 Cruising upstream

Day 6 Wilderness cruising

Leaving the hills behind, we enjoy our first taste of the wilderness experience. We may make a short stop to visit a bankside village, creating a sensation as we do. We moor for the night in a lunar landscape of sand islands, with hopefully the Himalayas in view providing a contrasting backdrop in the distance.



Day 7 Orang National Park/ Singri Hill

Rising early, we take to our country boat up a side stream, this time into the Orang National Park. Here in this rarely visited park we mount elephants or take jeeps and ride through forest and grassland looking for rhino, deer and other wildlife. Returning to our ship, to moor close to the isolated Singri Hill.



Day 8 Tezpur

We cruise on to Tezpur, visiting the 6th century Da Parbatia temple ruins, then explore the town by cycle rickshaw, stopping at Cole Park with medieval stone carvings saved from sites all over the region, and perhaps get to visit the bungalow once lived in by Alexander Bruce, pioneer of the tea industry.



Day 9 Steamer Ghat/ Kaziranga Western Range

We continue upstream to moor at Steamer Ghat, a lovely beach backed by jungle-covered hills. In the afternoon we drive to Kaziranga's Western Range for a jeep safari and to scan the wilderness from an observation tower. Kaziranga is a World Heritage site and with a population of well over 1,000 rhinoceros is the best place in the world to see them. There are also good populations of tiger, wild elephant, sambar, swamp deer, hog deer, wild pig and many other species.



Day 10 Kaziranga Central Range

Pre-dawn drive to Kaziranga's Central Range for a morning elephant ride, the best way to get really close to the rhino and other animals. After breakfast at a lodge, visit a tea factory (**except Dec-Mar). Drive to a Mising tribal village, with their distinctive houses raised on piles. After lunch either take a jeep safari in the little visited Eastern Range before returning to the boat, or if preferred return directly to Steamer Ghat, visit a delightful Assamese village nearby and walk along a path alive with butterflies to a solitary temple on the river bank.



Day 11 Disembarkation/ Guwahati/ Delhi

An early start for the 4 hour drive back to Guwahati airport for your flight to Delhi. For those not extending their trip, connect onto your overnight flight back to the UK.

The Boat



MY Charaidew
Capacity: 24 passengers

The Charaidew converted in 2003 and the Sukapha newly constructed in 2006 are traditional Indian sister ships that ply the River Brahmaputra. With their small group size allowing everyone the opportunity for elephant rides & jeep rides in the National Parks. The boats offer a relaxed and informal atmosphere of luxury and allow you to experience India in total serenity and comfort.



There are 12 generous-sized twin-bedded cabins with en-suite shower and W.C. along with comfortable chairs by the picture windows for relaxing in privacy. All cabins are located on the upper deck. The spacious saloon has French windows opening onto a front balcony deck and the dining room with full length opening glass doors on each side is on the lower deck, while a large top sundeck offers additional comfortable open-air seating in shade or sun.

All cabins and public rooms on both ships are air-conditioned. Food on board is a mixture of Assamese (milder than most Indian cuisine) and continental.

Extension Ideas



For those travellers wishing to explore further, our India specialists know the sub-continent incredibly well and would be delighted to help put together tailor-made land-based extension arrangements for you. Please find below just a few ideas to help get you started:

Rajasthan

Rajasthan is a compelling 'must see' area with the historical cities of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur making a classic golden triangle tour. This colour infused region in the North is dotted with wonderful forts and palaces, often now transformed into small heritage hotels. You could also include a visit to Ranthambore National Park to try to glimpse a tiger, as this Park is easily accessible from Delhi.



Tiger Country

The last habitat of the wild Bengal tiger and the inspiration for "The Jungle Book" visit the luxury tented camps of Pench, Kanha or Bandhavgarh in Central India. Alternatively, explore on foot in Satpura, one of India's least visited parks.

Darjeeling & Sikkim

Fly from Delhi to Bagdogra and combine the hill station of Darjeeling with remote Sikkim, experiencing the region's unique Buddhist culture. Visits to serene monasteries and villages, with an impressive Himalayan backdrop.

2012/13 Expedition Dates

All departures are 7 nights/ 8 days in duration, apart from the indicated extended 10-day departures**

1st - 8th October 2012

12th - 19th October 2012

19th - 26th October 2012

17th - 27th November**

8th - 15th December 2012

15th - 25th December 2012**

29th December 2012 - 5th January 2013

5th - 12th January 2013

9th - 19th February 2013**

9th - 19th March 2013**

23rd - 30th March 2013

30th March - 6th April 2013

6th - 16th April 2013**

**Special extended 10-day cruises

Guide Prices for 2012/13

Cabin Type (from price, per person)	Low Season	Mid Season	High Season
Twin	£2,325	£2,795	£3,280

Includes

- All flights, sightseeing and transfers
- Hotel accommodation in Calcutta on B&B
- 7 night/ 8 day voyage on full board
- Twin cabin with en suite bathroom
- All guided excursions while onboard

Excludes

- Additional pre and post cruise land-based arrangements
- Travel insurance, vaccinations and visas
- Gratuities to the crew
- Drinks & laundry while on board

Please note that there is a supplement for the extended 10-night cruises and that the above prices are a guide price only and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations.

Single Supplement

For solo travellers preferring their own cabin, typically a multiplier of 1.55 on the cost of a single berth is used to calculate the single supplement. Please contact the office for an accurate quotation.

Flight Information

Flights from London Heathrow typically with British Airways or Emirates and internal flights with either Jet Airways, Indian Airlines or Kingfisher, depending on flight timing availability.

Visa Information

Visas are required for India and must be obtained prior to departure from the appropriate local embassy or consulate. This is very much your responsibility to organise, however we are more than happy to advise.

Pre & Post Cruise Extensions

For those travellers wishing to explore further, we would be delighted to help put together tailor-made land-based extension arrangements for you. Please call to talk through possible ideas.

Want to discuss this trip?

Please call **Alex** on **01285 880981** for more details or to check availability



Fostered by a childhood in the West Indies, the travel bug bit Alex early. Propelled by his enthusiasm for diverse cultures and hot food, he's travelled to over 50 countries across 7 continents, including both poles. Some of his most memorable recent experiences include dog sledding in The Arctic, kayaking in Alaska, snorkelling with whale sharks off Mexico and piranha fishing in The Amazon.

Alex is General Manager of Steppes Voyages
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