

# Brahmaputra River Cruise with Darjeeling, India

Train rides, tea gardens and the mighty Brahmaputra River.



## Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

## Holiday overview

Style	Adventure Cruising
Accommodation	Hotels, Luxury Cruise Boat
Grade	Tour
Duration	17 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	2 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 2
Trip Leader	Local Station & River Cruise Guides
Land only	Joining in Kolkata (Calcutta), India
Max altitude	2,590m/8,497ft, Tiger Hill, Darjeeling, Day 5



**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**

Watch related videos online: [Brahmaputra River Cruise](#)

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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2024 Dates:

Sat 02 Mar - Mon 18 Mar

Sat 12 Oct - Mon 28 Oct

### 2025 Dates:

Sat 01 Mar - Mon 17 Mar

Sat 11 Oct - Mon 27 Oct

## Deposit and payments

A higher deposit is required to secure your booking on this holiday and your final balance is due 95 days before departure. For full details please contact the office or refer to our terms and conditions on our website <http://www.mountainkingdoms.com/essential-information>.

## Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

Single cabins: If you are travelling on your own and are willing to share, we will attempt to pair you up with another solo, same sex traveller. Where this is not possible a resulting single cabin has to be paid for. Please contact us for prices, or visit our website.

Cabin upgrades: Dependant upon availability you can choose to upgrade your cabin on the cruise to a superior cabin with a balcony. Contact us for prices and availability.

## No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

## Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 2 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

## Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

## Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

## Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your guide

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Your local tour guides in Darjeeling will be knowledgeable, fluent English speaking Indian guides. During the river cruise, a crew of 21 hospitality staff will attend to your every need. An English-speaking guide will accompany your shore excursions, along with an experienced naturalist.

## Your trip highlights

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- Explore Darjeeling, including a ride on the 'Toy train'
- Stay in a superior cabin on a luxurious cruise boat
- Visit a tea plantation and Majuli Island
- Take a jeep safari in Kaziranga National Park to view rhinos

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Overnight flight to Kolkata (Calcutta). Transfer to hotel. Afternoon visit to Victoria Museum.
Day 3	Sightseeing in Kolkata followed by train to New Jalpaiguri.
Days 4-5	Transfer to Darjeeling. Morning visit to Tiger Hill. Toy Train ride to Ghoom and sightseeing in Darjeeling.
Days 6-7	Drive to Kalimpong. Sightseeing.
Day 8	Drive to Bagdogra. Fly to Guwahati.
Day 9	Sightseeing. Board river cruise boat - the MV Mahabaahu.
Days 10-11	Sail towards Silghat and visit tea gardens.
Days 12-13	Jeep safari at Kaziranga National Park. Jeep safari at Kaziranga National Park and sail towards Bishwanath and Majuli Island.
Day 14	Explore Mishing village.
Day 15	Visit Majuli island.
Days 16-17	Disembark at Sibsagar and fly to Kolkata. Fly back to London.

## Trip summary

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The source of the timeless Brahmaputra River sits high in the Tibetan Himalaya on the slopes of Mount Kailash. During the spring when the snows of the Himalaya melt, icy waters spill and tumble through gorges, channels and sandbanks then slow upon reaching the tranquil plains of Assam. There, the river becomes the lifeblood of the region. Colourful, tribal communities make their living along its banks, growing rice in flooded paddy fields and tea on the higher ground. The lush green forests and sandy beaches that pepper the Brahmaputra's peaceful landscape are home to countless species of bird and endangered mammals, including Bengal tigers and the one-horned rhinoceros. Our Brahmaputra River Cruise & Darjeeling tour offers the chance to visit these regions in style.

Your first week in India will be spent exploring the renowned hill stations of Darjeeling and Kalimpong with their faded colonial-era grandeur. You ride the famous toy train, visit Buddhist monasteries, enjoy stunning sunrise views of Kangchenjunga and stroll through the fragrant flower nurseries of Kalimpong.

From Bagdogra, you'll fly east to Guwahati for a week-long river cruise along the Brahmaputra River in the shadow of the eastern Himalaya. This cruise featured in The Times and CNN's 'Top Adventure Cruise' list. You'll stay aboard one of the most luxurious and up-to-date cruise boats on the Brahmaputra River - the MV Mahabaahu, and make regular shore visits to the key sights of this culturally rich area including the Kaziranga National Park. Every spring, the national parks flood, the waters enriching the habitat for the rare one-horned rhino and attracting many of the birds that migrate to the area. Each visit will be in the company of an experienced guide and naturalist so you'll be able to make the most of every minute in the Parks. On Majuli Island, known to be the world's largest river island, you'll spend time ashore to uncover the mysteries and treasures of Assamese culture and meet the people of the Mishing tribe in their local villages. In essence, a wonderful journey - the sights and sounds of the landscape and peoples will stay in your memory for a long time.

### Special notes

#### Elephant Safaris

After much careful consideration, and as part of our commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will no longer be offering elephant-back safaris in any of our destinations.

This is because it is not possible to train an elephant to accept a human onto its back without inhumane treatment. Also, elephants' spines are not designed to carry heavy loads, and the houdah (chair) that they are fitted with is uncomfortable and leads to sores.

An elephant-back safari in Kaziranga is part of the cruise package our agent provides on this trip. However, we would discourage any of our clients from taking part in this, and it is at the clients' discretion as to whether or not they do participate. Our agent is aware of our stance on this issue and will offer a jeep safari for Mountain Kingdoms clients instead whilst others (who have not booked with Mountain Kingdoms) join the elephant safari.

We hope that the practice of laundering new elephants and training them for any form of human entertainment will eventually cease, but this will not happen whilst there is still a demand.

We will be actively supporting venues like Tiger Tops in Chitwan National Park in Nepal, who have transitioned away from elephant safaris into more elephant friendly activities. These activities allow people to observe elephants in a sanctuary environment.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Kolkata (Calcutta)

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Fly London to Kolkata overnight.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Kolkata. Group transfer to hotel. Visit Victoria Museum.

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On arrival in Kolkata, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. If time allows there will be a visit to the Victoria Museum in the afternoon. You will then head back to your hotel with time to relax and acclimatise to your surroundings.

**Overnight: Oberoi Grand Hotel, Kolkata**

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## Day 3: Day sightseeing in Kolkata followed by train journey to New Jalpaiguri.

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This morning you will have breakfast and will then join your guide as he takes you on a guided tour of the main sights in Kolkata, including the colourful flower market and the old colonial buildings. In the afternoon you will board your train for an exciting journey to New Jalpaiguri. You will be given a picnic style dinner to take with you on the train. You will arrive late in the evening and will then be driven the short distance to your hotel, this should take around 30 minutes.

**Overnight: Courtyard by Marriott, Siliguri (Meals: B D)**

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## Day 4: Transfer to Darjeeling - 2½-3 hours. Visit to tea gardens.

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This morning you will be transferred to Darjeeling a drive of about 2½-3 hours, where there will be time to visit the beautiful tea gardens of this region, When you arrive at the tea plantation there will be time to relax and take in your surroundings, you will also have the opportunity to look around the tea plantations and have the process explained to you. You will then be transferred to your hotel.

You will be staying the next two nights at the beautiful Hotel Windermere.

### Darjeeling

Straddling a ridge in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalaya and surrounded by tea plantations on all sides, Darjeeling has been a popular hill station since the British established it as an R&R centre for their troops in the mid-1800s. The industrious British, not averse to mixing a little business with pleasure, recognised that the quality of the soil and the mild climate were ideal for tea cultivation, and the forested hill slopes were soon denuded of their cover and planted with this most lucrative revenue earner. These days, people still come here to escape from the heat and humidity of the north Indian plain. You get an indication of how popular Darjeeling is from the 70 or so hotels recognised by the tourist office and the scores of others which don't come up to their requirements. Here you will find yourself surrounded by mountain people from all over the eastern Himalaya who have come to work, to trade or - in the case of the Tibetans - as refugees. Mother Teresa spent her early years as a nun here with the sisters at Loreto Convent and Lawrence Durrell was educated at the prestigious St Joseph's College.

**Overnight: Windamere Hotel, Darjeeling (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 5: Visit to Tiger Hill. Toy Train to Ghoom. Drive back to Darjeeling. Sightseeing.

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This morning you will get up early for a visit to Tiger hill to see the sun rise over this beautiful region, awakening all the colours and sights and sounds that Darjeeling has to offer. You will then head back for a welcome breakfast and freshen up before you board the famous Darjeeling toy train. The train chugs its way out of Darjeeling, stopping on the way to take on water, and then stops for a further 10 minutes at the famous Batasia Loop for passengers to get down to take photos of the train and mountains, it then carries on to Ghoom to visit this beautiful region. After you have had time to look around you will head back to the hotel to relax.



Later you will visit the Himalayan Zoological Park and the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. You then continue to the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre where you can see carpet making and other handicrafts and perhaps visit the centre's shop for some souvenir shopping. Just a 10 minute walk from the hotel is Roseberry School, a primary school for disadvantaged children. The teachers and children would be very happy to receive English speaking visitors, and if you are interested in making a visit, please talk to your leader and he will arrange this for you. Small cash donations to the school would be appropriate and extremely welcome.

**Overnight: Windamere Hotel, Darjeeling (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Drive to Kalimpong - approximately 5 hours.**

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After breakfast you will start the drive to Kalimpong which will take around 5 hours. This journey is a great opportunity to take in all the great scenery and day to day life of the area. Upon arrival in Kalimpong you will have the afternoon free to relax at your hotel.

**Kalimpong**

Kalimpong, a town of about 50,000 people, is located on a ridge overlooking River Teesta with fantastic mountain views. The town is a real cultural melting pot and is home to many ethnic groups including many ethnic Nepalese. Formerly part of Sikkim, the town was a gateway for trade between India and Tibet and was also a jumping off spot for much of the 19th and 20th century exploration of the eastern Himalayas and Tibet. The town is also known for its educational institutions, many of which were established by Scottish missionaries during the British colonial period. Nowadays Kalimpong is a centre of ginger growing and is well known for its horticulture. Its flower market is famous for its orchids.



**Overnight: Mayfair Himalayan Spa Resort or Similar, Kalimpong (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Sightseeing tour in Kalimpong.**

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Today you will visit the local markets around the 'Tenth Mile' where silk, incense and silverware are just some of the delightful items for sale. From here you will continue onto Zang Dog Palri Fo-Brang Monastery (also known as the 'Telescope Monastery'), this monastery was built to house the three copper statues and was consecrated by the Dali Lama himself. Dr. Graham's Homes school and the orchid/cactus nurseries provide interesting visits for this afternoon as well as the opportunity to stroll around and enjoy this laid back, idyllic town.

**Overnight: Mayfair Himalayan Spa Resort or Similar, Kalimpong (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Morning sightseeing. Drive to Bagdogra - 3 hours. Fly To Guwahati.**

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The day starts with a visit to the beautiful flower nurseries of Kalimpong, you will then board your vehicle for the drive to Bagdogra airport. From here you will fly to Guwahati ready to board your cruise boat the next day.

**Overnight: Vivanta by Taj, Guwahati (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Sightseeing. Board river cruise boat.**

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This morning you will be driven through the busy streets to 'Kamakhya Temple'. This Temple is devoted to the eternal feminine, the goddess of desire whose name is Kama Khya, granter of desires. The Kamakhya Temple in Assam symbolizes the "fusion of faiths and practices" of Aryan and non-Aryan elements in Assam. Walking up to the temple complex, you will see many colourful idols of gods and goddesses in the local market shops.

From here, you drive to 'Pandu Port' where you will be welcomed on board M.V. Mahabaahu in the Assamese tradition. You then check into your cabins and immediately gather in the restaurant for the essential safety briefing and drill followed by a familiarisation tour of MV Mahabaahu.

Safety briefing complete, you then set sail and raise a traditional toast to Goddess Kamakhya to give you safe passage on the River Brahmaputra that carves the valley of Assam where you will be spending the next 7 nights

and 7 days. You can then relax sipping Assam tea/coffee or Indian 'masala chai', whichever you prefer and enjoy some snacks. You pass by the smallest river island called the Peacock Island where the Umananda temple is located. Peacock Island is famous for the highly endangered Golden Langur. It would be a good idea to have your binoculars and camera at hand.

Soon MV Mahabaahu drops anchor and in the evening there will be a 'Kamrup Swaagat Bhoj' or welcome dinner in the Mungri Mungram Restaurant with the chef's lavish spread of Asian, continental and oriental cuisine. There will also be a talk on 'Kamakhya and the occult in Assam'.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 10: Day to relax on board.**

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You can start this morning with yoga on an island or on the deck for an hour. Others can scan the river for a fleeting sight of gangetic dolphins and the birders inspect the skies for winged species. You then move on to breakfast while M.V. Mahabaahu heads on for a full day sail passing by inhabited and deserted islands that may or may not survive the flood season. It is the non-permanency of these islands and the strength of the people to re-establish themselves that catches ones attention.

This is a day for sunbathing on the Donyi Polo Deck or having a dip in the pool or indulging in a massage or sitting in the warm waters of the Jacuzzi or enjoying a steam/sauna and getting rid of one's tiredness from the journey. You make yourselves comfortable for the week to follow and observe the beauty of this pristine river. You indulge in a relaxed lunch and then after tea there will be a talk on 'The River Brahmaputra and the tribal life that exists alongside'. The rest of the day is spent relaxing on board with an introduction to the crew in the evening.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 11: Sail towards Silghat. Visit tea estate.**

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This morning there is another opportunity to indulge in some yoga as the M.V. Mahabaahu sails towards Silghat. You pass by the famous town of Tezpur and under a famous 3 Km long arched bridge called Kolia Bhomora Setu. After breakfast there will be a talk on 'Kaziranga and wild life in India'. You then sail on for the next couple of hours and enjoy a relaxed lunch.

After reaching Silghat you will drop anchor and take a short drive to a tea estate where you can stretch your legs and enjoy a leisurely walk through the tea estate watching the tribal women picking tea leaves. Here you stop for a talk with the manager of the tea estate who familiarises you with the essentials of running a tea-estate, the lay of the land and the climate. You proceed to the tea factory to see the process of finally producing Assam Tea and coming to terms with all that goes into preparing a cup-of-tea.

By sunset you are ready to drive back to MV Mahabaahu to enjoy a cultural evening on board, dinner and an early night to be ready for the next morning's jeep safari.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 12: Kaziranga National Park and Bishwanath.**

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Designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, Kaziranga National Park is located in the flood plains on both sides of the Brahmaputra. The most prized inhabitant of Kaziranga is the Greater One-Horned Indian Rhinoceros, but the park is home to as many as 180 different mammals including wild elephants, tiger, deer, bison, and a rich variety of birds. Kaziranga means the "Land of red goats (Deer)", as the word Kazi in the Karbi language means "goat", and Rangai means "red". After breakfast at a resort in Kaziranga, you drive on to Bagori, the Western Range of Kaziranga and get into the open jeeps that are lined up to take you for some more wildlife adventures and an extensive coverage of this magnificent park dotted with large water bodies called 'beels' in the local language. You return to the ship for lunch and set sail towards Bishwanath Ghat. You can then snatch a couple of hours of sleep to make up for those that were lost in the wee hours of this morning.



On arrival at Bishwanath Ghat (also called 'Gupta Kashi'), you take the smaller boats to visit this charming village. You visit the Shiva Dol in reverence of Lord Shiva and there is no way that you can avoid the women with their weavings enjoy an excellent bargaining hour for the home-spun fabric as you watch the ladies busy at their handlooms. (You can carry cash to the village to buy the handicrafts made by the villagers to encourage local craft). You walk through the streets near this ghat and move towards a quaint little pretty rocky inlet of the Brahmaputra. You return to M.V. Mahabaahu and get ready to spend the evening in the Soma Lounge and then to Mungri Mungram for dinner. You can then choose to watch a documentary or retire for the evening.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**

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### **Day 13: Sail towards Majuli. Boat Safari.**

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Early morning yoga is again available as M.V. Mahabaahu sails on. Breakfast is followed by a talk on 'Sibsagar and the culture of the Ahoms'. After lunch, you are ready for a boat safari on the eastern range of Kaziranga where the two waters of River Dhansiri and River Brahmaputra meet. Here, the presence of hovering pied kingfishers is an indication of fish life & the fallen branches of trees into the river support roof turtles. Monitor lizards as well as otters are very much a part of this area. Asiatic water buffaloes are known to swim over from the park to the sand banks on the other side of Dhansiri. Endangered vultures and eagles too can be spotted. Several migratory birds depending on the time of the year feature in this area.

In the evening you will return to the boat where the chef awaits your return to involve you in his cooking demonstration. The chef talks of the ingredients while you pour yourselves a cup of tea. You can then enjoy these freshly prepared dishes.

This evening you can enjoy a relaxed quiet walk on a deserted island or a game of cricket or volley ball etc. You can then enjoy a comfortable evening under the stars with cocktails to order on the sandy island (expect sand between your toes and the breeze could be comfortable to chilly, a light jacket would be advisable) and of course a bonfire may be possible.

Please note that the bonfire will be dependent on finding a suitable sandbank and on weather conditions.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**

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### **Day 14: Explore Mishing Village. Continue sailing towards Majuli.**

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This morning you will arrive at a 'Mishing' village and disembark in smaller boats to reach the river bank. The 'Mishing' are an ethnic group inhabiting a number of districts in Assam. It is popularly believed that they were dwellers of the hills of present day Arunachal Pradesh and migrated to the plains of Assam in search of fertile land as well as in search of civilizational progress. Almost all 'Mishing' women are expert weavers on handlooms. A 'Mishing' man will give you a 'Dhoti' tying demonstration and a woman will show you the 'Mekhela Chaddor' tying demonstration. (Dhoti & Chaddor are the traditional dresses of the Mishing).



After climbing up the house platform and exploring Mishing homes, purchasing some of their weaves/fresh vegetables etc., you return to the comfort of MV Mahabaahu for a fine leisurely lunch and a relaxed afternoon while the vessel brings you closer to your destination.

This evening you can get together in the restaurant for a cup of chai and a talk on 'Majuli and Vaishnavism' and get acquainted with one of the largest river island systems of the world. After some time at leisure there will be a fashion show of the beautiful dresses you saw being prepared earlier today. You will then be spoilt rotten with a lavish dinner by the Chef.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**



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**Day 15: Visit Majuli Island, sail to Nimati. Drive to Sibsagar. Return to boat for a farewell dinner.**

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You sail on towards Majuli Island while enjoying an early morning yoga or a bird watching session. Majuli which literally means land between water is a microcosm of Assamese culture where various philosophies co-exist and thrive; ancient monasteries dedicated to preservation and development of culture and art have existed here since the 15th Century. The treasures of Majuli are undoubtedly its monasteries or satras that promulgate a form of Hinduism that is called Vaishnavism. These Satras are the hub of culture, art, religion and lifestyle. The satras preserve antiques like weapons, utensils, jewellery and other articles of cultural importance.



After breakfast, you take a short boat ride to the mainland where a drive takes you to a scenic corner of 'Garamur Satra' for an interesting cultural performance by Satriya singers and dancers. The art of relating mythical tales through dramas and masks is an important part of Majuli culture. After soaking in the untouched beauty of the area and a tête-à-tête with the performers, you move to 'Kamlabari Satra' to witness another performance by the Vaishnavite priests in the temple premise. You walk through the humble dwellings of the monks and talk about their daily chores and experience an insight into their chosen path. You then take the short boat ride back to M.V. Mahabaahu and sail to Nimati Ghat where you will disembark and drive to Sibsagar, the ancient city of the Ahom Kings; a town that literally means 'the ocean of Lord Shiva'. The district is strewn with the tell-tale ruins of a powerful empire of the Ahoms. Sibsagar was the capital of the Tai-speaking Ahoms who came to the area from Yunan and China in the 13th Century AD. You go on to visit the Talatal or Karen Ghar which was the palace of the Ahom Kings and after a leisurely stroll in and around the monument you continue to Rang Ghar which was a place for hosting wrestling bouts and buffalo fights and other entertainment for the royals and their guests.

You proceed to Sibsagar town that is built around a huge manmade water tank ordered by the queen and dug over 200 years ago. On its banks are located some of the famous temples of Sibsagar. The Shiva Dol, constructed in the year 1734 is believed to be the highest Shiva temple in India. You then drive on to a tea estate for an evening with the estate family to get a peek into the lifestyle of the families that have been involved in the tea business for generations. As you sip your beverages and explore the gardens the cultural performances begin followed by a talk by the professionals on 'Different types of Tea' especially the ones produced in Assam, along with a tea-tasting session. Thereafter, return to M.V. Mahabaahu for your farewell dinner where you again raise a traditional toast to the journey completed and the one ahead.

**Overnight: Cruise Boat (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 16: Disembark. Fly to Kolkata.**

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There is time for one last session of on-board yoga, or maybe an early morning indulgence in the spa or a hair do before breakfast. You then place your suitcases in the corridor before a relaxed breakfast before disembarking and driving, with a packed lunch, to the Rowrah Airport in Jorhat to board your onward flight to Kolkata. Arrive Kolkata and check-in to your hotel.

**Overnight: Oberoi Grand, Kolkata (Meals: B L)**

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**Day 17: Group transfer to airport and fly to London.**

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After breakfast you'll transfer to Kolkata airport for your flight to London. **(Meals: B)**

## Our grading system

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Brahmaputra River Cruise with Darjeeling is graded as a Tour, as described below.

### Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

## Trip altitude

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**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.

## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ Local English-speaking guides in Darjeeling and Kalimpong
- ✓ High standard hotel accommodation (twin share)
- ✓ Superior cabin on board cruise boat (twin share)
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Train rides as stated in the itinerary
- ✓ 15 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 13 dinners
- ✓ Special welcome and farewell dinners on-board
- ✓ On board programme of activities, including use of the pool and jacuzzi
- ✓ Shore excursions including a guide and naturalist
- ✓ Sightseeing as specified
- ✓ Internal flights and domestic transfers
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (Flight Inclusive option)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfer for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project for clients taking our Flight Inclusive option
- ✓ A free Water-to-Go bottle

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- × Travel insurance
- × Visa fees
- × Tips
- × Beverages except mineral water
- × Salon & massage services will be payable in country
- × Lunch & dinner in Kolkata

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **Oberoi Grand Hotel, Kolkata**

The Oberoi Grand is a famous colonial era hotel located in the heart of the city. This 5\* hotel has all the comfort and facilities you would expect in a property of this quality including a pool, several dining options, a spa and well-appointed rooms. It is one of the foremost heritage hotels of northeast India.



### **Courtyard by Marriott, Siliguri**

The Courtyard by Marriott in Siliguri is a modern, 5\* hotel offering a high level of comfort and excellent amenities. Situated in the centre of the city, with views out to the Himalaya, the hotel has an inviting outdoor pool and several dining options including a bake house and contemporary restaurant with a rooftop, alfresco area. Rooms are light and airy with all conveniences including tea/coffee making facilities, minibars and free Wi-Fi.



### **Windamere Hotel, Darjeeling**

We have been using the world-famous Windamere Hotel for 27 years and our clients unfailingly sing its praises. It is a step back 80 years to the Raj, with cucumber sandwiches for tea, coal fires in the bedrooms and a fascinating collection of historic photographs on the walls.



### **Mayfair Himalayan Spa Resort or Similar, Kalimpong**

This is a heritage property set on a hill in a beautiful location, surrounded by gardens, and with panoramic views of the mountains. The Mayfair has a rich history having welcomed all manner of famous guests from world leaders to Hollywood actors to mountaineering legends. Rooms are large and comfortable and the hotel has an outdoor pool, spa facilities, library and restaurant.



### **Vivanta by Taj, Guwahati**

The Vivanta by Taj is a high end hotel located in the centre of Guwahati. It is set in five acres of landscaped gardens with views of the Assamese Hills making it an attractive urban retreat. Rooms are warm and inviting with views of the city or surrounding hills. They offer a full range of conveniences including tea/coffee makers, minibars, quality toiletries and Wi-Fi. The hotel has a pool, spa and fitness centre and boasts several dining options.



### **Cruise Boat**

Aboard the MV Mahabaahu, accommodation will be in a superior cabin without a balcony and you have the option of upgrading to a superior cabin with a balcony or suite (please contact us for costs and details). Each cabin has satellite TV, personal safe, mini bar and a spacious bathroom. All are air conditioned for your comfort. Facilities on board include a library, swimming pool and spa, and sun deck. There will be no night cruising; most cruising takes place between 6.00am and 7.00pm to take full advantage of the spectacular views the river has to offer. Please note that all single cabins on the river cruises must be paid for.

## Meal arrangements

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Bed and Breakfast in Kolkata, all meals included elsewhere.

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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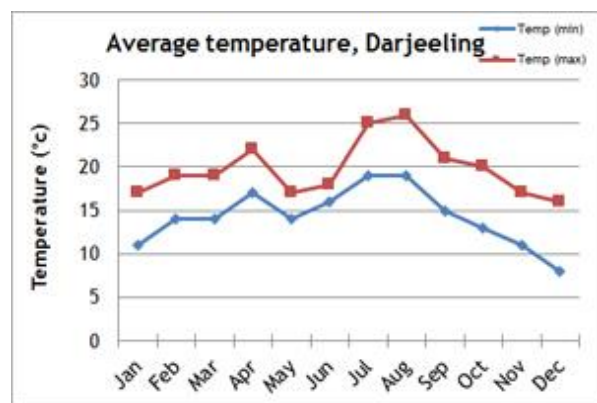
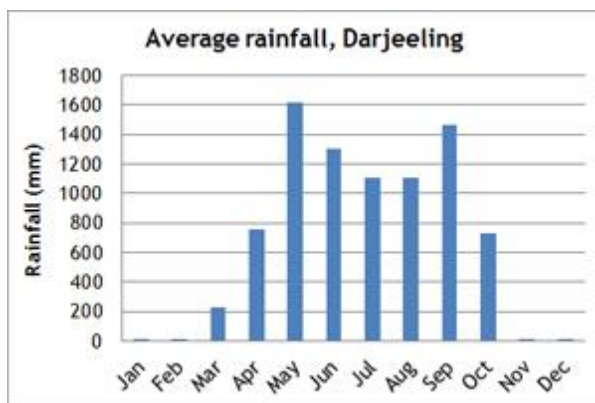
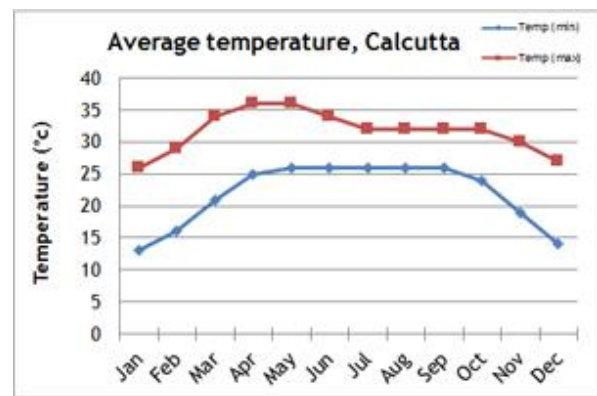
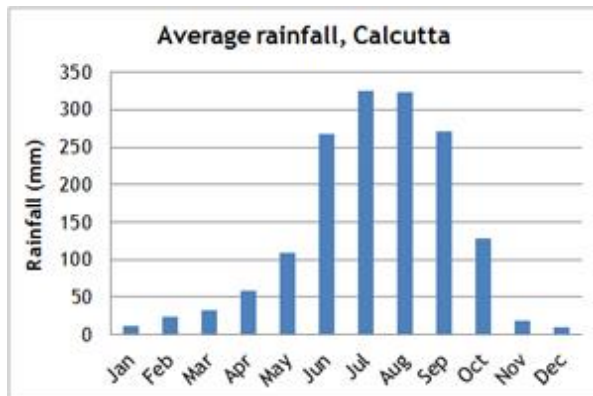
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information



# Extensions

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## Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



## Extra nights

If you would like to extend your time in India we can arrange additional hotel nights in Kolkata, Delhi and other cities, together with any travel between. We can upgrade your accommodation and also organise personal sightseeing tours.

## Agra, Taj Mahal & Jaipur

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This is a unique tour, taking you to a part of India rich with culture and diverse attractions and offering the opportunity to see parts of Assam rarely visited by tourists.
- We use the newest and most luxurious river cruise boat on the Brahmaputra River, with excellent recreational facilities and the highest standards of service.
- We use the best hotel in Kolkata, the Oberoi Grand; a colonial relic of great character.
- Local English-speaking guides at each location for your tour in Darjeeling, plus local guides accompanying you on all shore excursions.
- As our minimum group size for this holiday is only 2 this trip is extremely likely to get “up and running”.
- We have a wealth of Indian travel experience in the company and several members of the Mountain Kingdoms team have travelled extensively there. So if you have any questions about any aspect of this holiday please don't hesitate to give us a call, on 01453 844400.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What our clients say

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*A little off the beaten track but West Bengal and Assam were wonderful varied destinations, Kolkata was vibrant and steeped in colonial history and the Grand Oberoi a superb hotel to return to at the end of the day, we had 2 extra days there, I'd recommend at least one extra, it's a big city with lots to see. Darjeeling and Kalimpong a different world of tea plantations, toy trains and spectacular views of the Himalayas. The Windamere is an attraction on its own, coal fires in the bedroom and hot water bottles at night and a 1930's dining room serving excellent Indian food. By contrast the Brahmaputra wound languidly across the plains of Assam, some would describe the landscape as featureless but the scale and light made it hypnotically beautiful from the top deck of the lovely MV Mahabaahu. The riverboat was spacious and comfortable with lovely cabins and a crew who literally could not do enough. The daytrips were excellent with the highlight being the magnificent rhino at Kaziranga, an unforgettable experience. All in all a really excellent varied trip to a little visited part of India.*

*-Mr S A, Hertfordshire*



*This was a wonderful trip and an experience we will never forget. The whole voyage was made especially wonderful because of the staff, their helpfulness, concern, charm and efficiency. Thank you to all the wonderful people, seen and unseen, who have contributed to this unique experience. We will never forget this week. May MV Mahabaahu achieve the recognition and success it so richly deserves.*

*- Mr & Mrs M, Australia*



*Beautiful, all of it. We were amazed by the surroundings and people! We would recommend this trip to anyone. The boat, the people, the staff, the naturalist, all of them made it worthwhile. I forgot - THE FOOD - delicious! Thank you again for everything.*

*-Mr PB, Spain*

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### **Carbon Offsetting**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

