

# **BIHAR SAGA & BENGAL HERITAGE CRUISE**

## **14 NUITS – 16 JOURS**

### **Day 01: Arrive at Delhi**

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Arrive Delhi. On arrival, you will be greeted and assisted by our representative and transferred to the hotel.

**(Rooms will be available from 1400 hrs)**

**DELHI** - It is a city that bridges two different worlds. Old Delhi, once the capital of Islamic India, is a labyrinth of narrow lanes lined with crumbling havelis and formidable mosques. In contrast, the imperial city of New Delhi created by the British Raj is composed of spacious, tree-lined avenues and imposing government buildings. Delhi has been the seat of power for several rulers and many empires for about a millennium. Many a times the city was built, destroyed and then rebuilt here. Interestingly, a number of Delhi's rulers played a dual role, first as destroyers and then as creators.

On arrival in Delhi, transfer to hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight at the hotel.

### **Day 02: Delhi / Varanasi (Flight – AI 406: 1015 / 1140 hrs)**

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After early breakfast, transfer to the Airport to connect flight to Varanasi.

**VARANASI** - Situated between the rivers Varuna and Assi as they join the Ganges, Varanasi takes its name from its location. It is often referred to as the oldest living city in the world. It is also known as Kashi, the city of light, but the British, in an endeavor to simplify matters, had coined their own name for the place- Benaras. Varanasi is the city of a thousand temples. Its Prominence in Hindu mythology is virtually unrivalled. According to Hindu belief, Varanasi is the cosmic centre of the Universe. The renowned American novelist Mark Twain once wrote "Benaras is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend and looks twice as old as all of them put together."

On arrival in Varanasi, transfer to hotel.

Later enjoy visit of Varanasi including following:

#### **Sarnath**

A major Buddhist centre, Sarnath lies 10 kilometres north east of Varanasi. It was here that Buddha preached his message of the 'middle way' to nirvana after achieving enlightenment at Bodhgaya. In around 234 BC, Emperor Ashoka, a great follower of Buddhism, erected a stupa here. Between the 3rd

century BC and the 11th century AD, several Buddhist structures were built here in Sarnath. Most of the Sarnath's monuments are set in large gardens making it quite pleasant for a visitor to spend some time here.

### **In the Evening enjoy Aarti Ceremony on River Ganges**

Aarti" is a very auspicious Hindu ritual in which we offer our prayers (traditional Hindi song) to God. The Guru or the Master with his devotees, sing the prayers along with the lighting of the small lamps. The experience, the view and the positive vibrations are so inspirational that it is difficult to put into words.

Overnight at the hotel.

Meals : Breakfast/--/--

### **Day 03: Varanasi / Bodhgaya (255 Kms / 6 ½ hrs)**

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Early Morning enjoy boat ride at the Ganges

#### **Boat ride**

Early morning you experience the life of this ancient city. See the beauty of the rising sun on the Ganges. Enjoy the boat ride, experience the early morning rituals of the Hindus being performed, thousands of people taking a bath in the holy river believing they will be free from the circle of rebirth. It is interesting to see the pilgrims offering sweets, flowers and holy water to the Sun God.

Return to the hotel and enjoy the breakfast

After breakfast drive to Bodhgaya.

**Bodh Gaya** – "Bodh Gaya is the place where Gautama Buddha attained unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment. It is a place which should be visited or seen by a person of devotion and which would cause awareness and apprehension of the nature of impermanence"

On arrival in Bodhgaya, transfer to hotel.

Later enjoy visit of Bodhgaya including following:

#### **Mahabodhi Temple Complex**

The Mahabodhi Temple Complex is one of the four holy sites related to the life of the Lord Buddha, and particularly to the attainment of Enlightenment. The first temple was built by Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century B.C., and the present temple dates from the 5th or 6th centuries. It is one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely in brick, still standing in India, from the late Gupta period.

Overnight at the hotel.

Meals : Breakfast/--/--

#### **Day 04: Bodhgaya / Nalanda (105 Kms / 03 hrs) Nalanda / Rajgir (40 Kms / 1 ½ hrs)**

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After early breakfast drive to Nalanda.

Enjoy visit of Nalanda

##### **Nalanda**

A great Buddhist centre for more than 1000 years until the monastery, school and library were sacked and burnt by Muslims. The Chinese scholar Hiuen Tsan stayed here for 5 years in the early 7th century A.D. There were 10000 monks and students in residence. The remains are still extensive and include the "Great Stupa" with steps, terraces and a few still intact stupas around it.

After sightseeing drive back to Rajgir and transfer to hotel.

Later enjoy sightseeing of Rajgir including the following.

**Rajgir or Rajagriha.** It was the capital of Magadhan empire before Pataliputra occupied from 1800 BC. Visit Gridhkuta, the "Hill of Vultures". It was one of Buddha's favorite places where he delivered many important sermons. Also visit Saptaparni Cave on Vaibhara Hill. The first Buddhist council was held here and Buddha's teachings were written down for the first time.

Also visit **Vishwa Shanti stupa & Venuvana**, the bamboo grove where Buddha spent some time.

Overnight at the hotel.

Meals : Breakfast/--/--

#### **Day 05: Rajgir / Bakhtiyarpur (Train No. 13236, Intercity)**

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Early Morning (Apprx 0430 hrs), drive to Bakhtiyarpur railway station to connect train for onwards journey. Train No. 13236, Intercity Exp 6.37 am from Bakhtiyarpur railway (BKP) to Kahalgaon railway station (CLG) at 12.00 noon.

Transfer from Kahalgaon railway station to the jetty to board the cruiser **M.V.Paramhamsa**.

Guests are given time to relax the rest of the day at the vessel.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 06: Bihar Saga -Heritage Tour

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After breakfast visit to **Vikramashila ( Buddhist Univercity)**

**Vikramshila** - It is built by Bengal King Dharmapala in 8th Century. The Monastery gradually gained importance and became a centre for Tantric Buddhism.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 07: Bihar Saga -Heritage Tour

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We cruise slowly, the beautiful country side of Bihar and Jharkhand unfolds, we reach Rajmahal passing through Manihari.

After breakfast visit to **Jama Masjid** (Manghal Haat)

**Jama Masjid** - This location is situated 10 km from Rajmahal, the major attraction here is the Jama Masjid which was built by one of the great ruler Akbar

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 08: Bihar Saga -Heritage Tour

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Finally we reach Farakka. Visit Gaur at Malda.

**Gaur** also known as **Lakhnauti**, is a ruined city on the India-Bangladesh border, located 16 km from Malda town, has major historical significance, as it was the capital of Bengal for several centuries. Gaur gathered prominence during the Sena dynasty, with the name of the city, often attributed to the Sena king Lakshman Sena. Prior to the accession of the Sena dynasty, Gauda region was under the control of the Pala dynasty.

Visit Spot of Gaur:

- **Bara Darwaza**

Baro Shona Masjid of Gour, its ruins can be found in Malda, very close to the India-Bangladesh border. A gigantic rectangular structure of brick and stone, this mosque is the largest monument in Gour. Though the name means Twelve Doors, this monument actually has eleven.

The mosque is composed of eleven entrances, two buttresses, four corner towers and a spacious courtyard which is almost seventy meters in diameter. The building is faced in plain stone and the doors would originally have been framed by mosaics of glazed colored tiles in floral patterns. The roof was strewn with 44 hemispherical domes, of which 11 on the corridor still remain. These domes were originally gilded, and, hence, gave the mosque its name. From the interior, these domes are arcaded, half in brick and half in stone.

It is the largest building still standing in Gaur. This very ancient mosque is also known as Qutub Shahi Mosque. It was built in the honour of saint Nur Qutub-e-Alam, son of Saint Makhdoom Alaul Haque Pandvi, by Makhdum Shaikh, the

descendant and fellow of the saint. The mosque was known as Sona Masjid due to its earlier gilded wall surface and crowns of the turrets.

The eleven arched entrances of the east façade open into a long domed verandah formed by wide piers on the east and west sides. The verandah in turn, opens onto a prayer chamber composed of three aisles with eleven bays each.

Like the verandah, the prayer chambers, now in ruins was entirely covered with pen dentives. In the northwestern corner of the mosque. Traces remain on a large takht, the mosque is stoned faced

- **Dakhil Darwaza:**

The gateway or the Dakhil Darwaja was constructed in 1425 AD. The structure is made with red bricks and admired with terracotta work. This gate measuring 34.5 m wide and 21 m in height was once the main gate of a fort that no longer exists. The fort has four corners, which feature five-storey towers. In the south-eastern corner of the fort, there is a 20 m high wall encircling the remnants of an age-old palace.

- **Firoz Minar:**

Firoz Minar (Tower) is situated in the old ruined city of Gaur about 40 kms. from Malda. It is almost similar to the Kutb Minar in Delhi. It was probably built in 1486-1489 A.D. by Saifuddin Firoz Shah and Abyssinian who became the Sultan of the area during that period. The tower or Minar is built by using red bricks and terracotta work is visible in the entry door to the Minar. The height of the tower is about 26 mtrs. and has spiral staircase leading to the top. A beautiful garden is maintained in the surrounding area and one very old tree stands near to the Firoz Minar.

- **Kadam Rasut Mosque**

Kadam Rasul Mosque is situated in Gour, Malda and is very near to Firoz Minar. It is a single domed structure made of bricks which still carry traces of the ornamented brick work. The four corners have towers built of black stone with the spires having intricate designs. It was built by Sultan Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah in 1530 A.D. The mosque contains the footprints of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad on stone.

- **Gour:**

Gour, located 16 km from Malda town, has major historical significance, as it was the capital of Bengal for several centuries. Tourists can explore the remnants of the historical sites dotting the region. Gour has a number of monuments like Small Golden Mosque, Bara Darwaza, Dakhil Darwaza, Firoz Minar, Kadam Rasut Mosque, and the Tomb of Saint Makhdum Shaikh Ached Siraj.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## **Day 09: Bihar Saga -Heritage Tour**

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**The Farakka Barrage** - is the longest barrage in the world and has recently been entered into the Guinness Book of World Records. It has 101 gates and it is from here the water is shared between India and Bangladesh.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 10: Bengal Heritage Tour

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Reach Azimganj in the morning.

Breakfast at 7.30 am.

After breakfast the vessel will drop anchor at Jiaganj and Azimganj is a twin town and a municipality in Murshidabad district in the Indian state of West Bengal. There are several historic temples which shows Bengal architecture.

Return to Vessel for lunch . Lunch on board at 1.30 pm .

After Lunch visit to Jiaganj, which we see small Biri factories.

Evening scanks on board by 6.30 pm.

Dinner on board 7.30 pm.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 11: Bengal Heritage Tour

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**Murshidabad**, the historic town, the earliest evidences of history perhaps as early as circa 1500 B.C. The Nawab Murshid Quli Khan made Murshidabad the capital city of Sube Bangla, comprising of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The East India Company reigned from here for many years after the Battle of Plassey.

Visit Spot of Murshidabad:

- **The Hazarduari Palace**

The Hazarduari Palace, or the palace with a thousand doors is the chief tourist attraction of Murshidabad. This three-storey palace was built in 1837 by Duncan McLeod for the Nawab Najim Humaun Jah, descendent of Mir Zafar. It has thousand doors (among which only 100 are real) and 114 rooms and 8 galleries, built in European architectural style. The total area of Hazarduari Palace is 41 acres (170,000 m<sup>2</sup>). It is now a museum and has a collection of armoury, splendid paintings, exhaustive portraits of the Nawabs, various works of art including beautiful works of ivory (Murshidabad school) of China (European) and many other valuables.

- **The Nizamat Imambara**

The **Nizamat Imambara** is a Shia Muslim congregation hall in Murshidabad, India. The present Nizamat Imambara was built in 1847 AD by Nawab Nazim Mansur Ali Khan. It was built after the old Imambara built by Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah was destroyed by the fires of 1842 and 1846. This Imambara is the largest one in India.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 12: Bengal Heritage Tour

- **Matiari, a village in Katwa**

where every house makes tablewares and artifacts out of Kansha ( Bell metal wares) was a poor man substitute to the rich silverware used in Bengali homes for prayers, table wares and also for cooking. The traditional Kansari artisans make from scrap metals handcrafted wares and artifacts.

- **Mayapur:** Headquarters of ISKCON.

Visit is to the ISKCON temple.

ISKCON was founded in 1966 in New York City by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who is worshipped by followers as Guru and spiritual master. Its core beliefs are based on select traditional Hindu scriptures, particularly the Bhagavad-gita and the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Preaching the power of prayer to attain salvation.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 13: Bengal Heritage Tour

**Kalna** - The town is more popularly known as Ambika Kalna, named after a very popular deity, Goddess Kali, Maa Ambika. It has numerous historical monuments such as the Rajbari (the palace) and the 108 Shiva temples.

Visit Spot of Kalna :

- **Nava Kailash or 108 Shiv Mandirs**

A major attraction is the **Nava Kailash or 108 Shiv Mandirs**. Built in 1809, the temples are constructed in two circles. One consists of 74 temples while the other circle has 34. The former has white marble and black stone shivlingas, while the latter has only white marble ones. Due to its ingenious planning, all the shivlingas can be seen from the centre of the temple complex. Maharajas of Bardhaman built several magnificent temples with intricate terracotta ornamentation, the main one being 108 Shiv Mandir built in 1809 in traditional AAT chala architecture and the Rajbari which house most of the temples.

- The **Krishna Chandra Mandir** (A.D. 1751-1752)
- **Lalji Mandir** (A.D.1739)
- **Pratapeshvara Mandir** (A.D.1849)

with 25 steeples and terracotta walls and the style depicting the rekha style are few other important spots.

- **Visit Spot of Shantipur / Fulia :**

The weavers of fine Bengal cotton, the village rich in handloom weaving, is the second largest occupation in the state of West Bengal. The weavers here blend the traditional art with the modern life style needs, offering rich variety of textiles. sarees, stoles, fabrics etc.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

## Day 14: Bengal Heritage Tour

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**Bandel** - meaning the Port in Bengali, the place appears to the port during the time of Portuguese. Earlier, there was a Portuguese settlement at Bandel. The Church and the Monastery were built around 1660 by the Portuguese. Bandel word derived from Portuguese word mast of ship. Bandel Church is one of the oldest Christian churches in West Bengal and a nice Tourism attraction.

Visit Spot of Bandel :

- **Bandel Church**

The Basilica of the Holy Rosary commonly known as Bandel Church is one of the oldest Christian churches in West Bengal, India. Situated in Bandel, it stands as a memorial to the Portuguese settlement in Bengal. Founded in 1599, it is dedicated to Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Our Lady of the Rosary. It is also a parish church, part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Calcutta. It is one of the most prominent historical churches in West Bengal as well as in India.

There are 5 European reminiscence within 40 km north of Kolkata and were trading post. The vessel will drop anchor at Chandannagar, which is a former French colony located 35 kilometers (22 mi) north of Kolkata, in West Bengal, India. The name Chandannagar is possibly derived from the shape of the bank of the river Ganges which is bent like a half moon. Chandannagar was established as a French colony in 1673, when the French obtained permission from Ibrahim Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, to establish a trading post on the right bank of the Hughli River. Bengal was then a province of the Mughal Empire. It became a permanent French settlement in 1688, and in 1730 Joseph François Dupleix was appointed governor of the city.

Visit Spots of Chandannagar :

- **Chandannagore Strand**

The tree-shaded promenade along the river is about 1 km (0.62 mi) in length and 7 meters (23 ft) in width, and there are many buildings of historical importance along the way. It is a popular spot for local people and tourists alike, who love to stroll along enjoying the breeze and watching the small boats sail by.

- **Chandannagore Museum and Institute**

One of the oldest museums of the region. It boasts a collection of French antiques (such as cannons used in Anglo-French war, wooden furniture of 18th century, etc.) which are difficult to find anywhere else in the world. The institute still teaches French through regular classes. Jogendra Nath Sen, resident of Chandannagar who died in France fighting in the World War I. His personal items were sent to his brother in India who later donated them to the Intitut de Chandernagore in Chandannagar.

- **The Sacred Heart Church of Chandannagar**

The church is situated near the Strand. It was designed by French Architect Jacques Duchatz. The church was inaugurated by Paul Goethals 27 Jan. 1884. The church stands for over two centuries to mark the beauty of the architecture during the French period — a good place to visit for the historians and tourists alike. The remains of the **Church of St. Louis** are also an attractive tourist spot.

Meals : Breakfast/Lunch/Dinne

## Day 15 : Bengal Heritage Tour

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Arrive Kolkata. Check out.

Transfer to Kolkata Airport.

**End of Services**

<b>Cost Includes</b>	<b>Cost does not include</b>
* Double / Twin room on sharing basis	X Any airfares.
* Daily Breakfast.	X Any airport taxes.
* TRANSPORTATION: All ground transportation, as detailed in the itinerary using air conditioned Indian made Coach .	X Any expenditure of personal nature such as drinks, tips, laundry, telephone charges etc.
* Services of Accompanying English speaking Tour guide from arrival in Delhi till drop at Bakhtiyarpur Railway Station	X Any new tax imposed by the Govt.
* Train Fare from Bakhtiyarpur to Kahalgaon in Ac Chair Car	
* Monument entrance fee.	
* Currently applicable taxes	

<b>Cost Includes</b>	<b>Cost does not include</b>
* Double / Twin room on sharing basis	X Any airfares.
* Daily Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	X Any airport taxes.
* TRANSPORTATION: All ground transportation, as detailed in the itinerary.	X Any expenditure of personal nature such as hard drinks, tips, laundry, telephone charges etc.
* Services of Accompanying English speaking Tour guide.	X Any new tax imposed by the Govt.
* Monument entrance fee.	
* Currently applicable taxes	

A PARTIR DE 4254,00 Euros