



Dakshineswar Kali Temple on the banks of the Hooghly River

## A Cruise through History along the Hooghly Kolkata and Bengal, Northeast India

17 – 28 March 2020

*“Splendid hotel, fascinating boat trip and some  
interesting off-beat visits.”*

David Forsyth, A Cruise Through History Along the Hooghly River, March 2017



Jon Baines  
tours



Transporting rice straw along the Hooghly

**The Hooghly River is the main artery running through the history of Bengal. Kolkata was founded on the banks of the river in 1690 as a British trading outpost of the Mughal Empire. Not only was Kolkata the centre of the Raj until 1911 - when the capital moved to Delhi, in a move that shocked Bengal at the time - but it has long been a hub of Bengali literature, music and philosophy. Bengal was the richest province in India for a time, its lush soil producing indigo, opium and rice crops, among others, and its exquisite textiles were known as 'woven wind'.**

**This progressive, wealthy and cultured land drew people from all over the world - Portuguese, Dutch, Danish and French all settled on the banks of the Hooghly and Islam, Hinduism, Jainism and Christianity all flourished here. The long history of this province leaves a legacy of magnificent temples, buildings and parks, often of astonishing size. A visit to Kolkata combined with a cruise along the mighty Hooghly offers an unparalleled vision of the rich history and culture of the great province of Bengal. Tour leaders John and Susi Richardson will share their wide knowledge and personal family connections with India.**

Arrive in Kolkata and settle into the Oberoi Hotel. Take an optional stroll along the Colonnade to the Oxford Bookstore in Park Street or the Museum of India.

Spend the next morning at leisure or take an optional early morning sightseeing walk through old Kolkata, including a visit to see the Writer's Building. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then visit the Victoria Memorial and the Maidan. In the afternoon visit the Anglican Cathedral, Park Street Cemetery, the office of Warren Hastings and St John's Church, where Susi Richardson's family have held four weddings.



The Victoria Memorial, Kolkata (photo by Susi Richardson)



The flower market, Kolkata (photo by Jan & Gavin Fabinyi) (top);  
Barrackpore (photo by Susi Richardson) (above)

Susi will give a talk on her family's early history in Kolkata that afternoon.

The following morning drive to Prinsep's Steps to take a boat trip on the river. While cruising Susi will talk on later generations of her family in India. In the afternoon learn of two industries that alongside cloth and opium established Kolkatta as a manufacturing and trading entrepot. Visit Kolkata's 'pottery city' – a thriving hub for potters - and then continue to a jute factory.

Make a late morning transfer to the river and board the ABN Sukapha to commence your cruise on the Hooghly. Sail past the old Danish colony of Serampore to Barrackpore and disembark. Take a walk through the cantonment past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff House and its garden. John Richardson will give a talk on 'The Great Uprising' before dinner.

Sail onto Chandernagore, which was a French possession until 1950, and visit the eighteenth century church and Dupleix's house and museum. Sail on past the old Dutch settlement of Chinsura. Disembark to visit the imposing Imambara at Hooghly then reboard your ship and cruise upstream, leaving Kolkata's urban sprawl behind, while John Richardson gives a talk on HMS Shannon.

Disembark next morning at Kalna and take cycle rickshaws to see some of Bengal's most attractive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temple with concentric rings made up of 108 shrinelets. Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur, its skyline dominated by the vast new ISKCON temple, before sailing on through the night. This afternoon's talk is on the Battle of Plassey.

Next morning disembark at the brassworking village of Matiari, where you can watch the traditional process of beating out brass water



The terracotta Shiva temples at Kalna (top);  
A ferry on the way to market in Kalna (above)



century. Visit the remains of mosques, palaces and gateways before rejoining the ship in the evening.

Next day transfer to Farraka Station for a four hour train journey back to Kolkata. Spend the rest of the day at leisure before a farewell dinner in the evening. Transfer to the airport the next day or extend your stay in Kolkata.

pots and other vessels. Afterwards cruise to the battlefield of Plassey, where in 1757 Clive's defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah changed the course of Indian history. Moor for the night close to Murshidabad.

Disembark the following morning and walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Moghul-style garden enclosing the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah and his family. Continue a little way upstream to where the great Hazarduari Palace dominates the waterfront. Inside is an extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects. Visit the great Katra Mosque and drive out to two classic Georgian merchant buildings of the late 18th century, the Nashipara Palace and the Katgola Palace. Back onboard hear John Richardson talk about 'The Wolf Boys'.

Next stop, the sleepy village of Baranagar, rural India at its most idyllic. Walk through fields to visit three beautiful miniature terracotta temples. Return to the ship and continue up the Hooghly, here a charming waterway twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards. Carry on up a long canal section to a mooring close to the Farakka Barrage and overnight.

Disembark the next day and take a full day excursion by road to Gaur, near the town of Malda. This quiet, deserted place was once one of India's great cities, first under the Hindus in 12th century, then as the Muslim capital of Eastern India from the 14th to the 16th



A brassworker in Matuari (top); The magnificent Katra Mosque; Sunset on the Hooghly (photo by Susi Richardson) (above)

# Itinerary 17 – 28 March 2020

**B** = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

## 3 nights Kolkata – 7 nights cruising on Hooghly River – 1 night Kolkata

<b>17 Mar (Tue) Kolkata</b> <b>D</b>	<b>22 Mar (Sun) Cruising</b> <b>B L D</b>
<b>Am</b> Arrive and transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel and at leisure	<b>Am</b> Disembark at Kalna and take cycle rickshaws to see some of Bengal's distinctive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temples
<b>Pm</b> Optional stroll along the Colonnade to visit the Park Street Oxford Bookstore and the Museum of India	<b>Pm</b> Talk: <i>"The Battle of Plassey"</i> JR. Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur, its skyline dominated by the vast ISKCON temple. Sail on through the night to a mooring near Matiari
<b>18 Mar (Wed) Kolkata</b> <b>B D</b>	<b>23 Mar (Mon) Cruising</b> <b>B L D</b>
<b>Am</b> Optional early morning sightseeing walk through old Kolkata, including the Writer's Building. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Visit the Victoria Memorial and the Maidan	<b>Am</b> Visit the brassworking village of Matiari
<b>Pm</b> Visit the Anglican Cathedral, Park Street Cemetery, the office of Warren Hastings and St John's Church, where Susi Richardson's family held four weddings. Susi Richardson will talk on the early history of Kolkata and on the Thackeray and Shakespear families	<b>Pm</b> Cruise to the battlefield of Plassey where in 1757 Clive's victory changed the course of Indian history
<b>Eve</b> Welcome dinner	<b>Eve</b> Discussion about William Dalrymple's book, <i>"The White Moghuls"</i> - JR
<b>19 Mar (Thur) Kolkata</b> <b>B D</b>	<b>24 Mar (Tue) Cruising</b> <b>B L D</b>
<b>Am</b> Drive to Prinsep's Steps to board boat for river trip through the city. Susi Richardson will talk on later generations of Thackerays & Shakespears in India	<b>Am</b> Disembark and walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Moghul-style garden. Continue to the great Hazarduari Palace and view its extensive collections
<b>Pm</b> Visit the pottery village and the jute factory* (if operational). Optional behind the scenes at the Kolkata Oberoi Hotel	<b>Pm</b> Visit the great Katra Mosque and visit 18th century Nashipara Palace and the Katgola Palace. Talk: <i>"The Wolf Boys"</i> JR
<b>Eve</b> Dinner at Zaranj	<b>25 Mar (Wed) Cruising</b> <b>B L D</b>
<b>20 Mar (Fri) Kolkata / Cruising</b> <b>B D</b>	<b>Am</b> Moor at Baranagar and walk through fields to three elegant miniature terracotta temples
<b>Am</b> At leisure with late morning transfer to the river	<b>Pm</b> Continue up a scenic stretch of the Hooghly to a mooring close to the Farakka Barrage
<b>Pm</b> Embark on the ABN Sukapha and sail up past the old Danish colony of Serampore to Barrackpore. Take a walk through the cantonment Talk: <i>"The Great Uprising"</i> - John Richardson (JR)	<b>26 Mar (Thur) Cruising</b> <b>B L D</b>
<b>21 Mar (Sat) Cruising</b> <b>B L D</b>	<b>Am</b> Disembark for full day excursion to Gaur, near the town of Malda, once one of India's great cities with many remains of mosques, palaces and gateways. Rejoin the ship in the evening
<b>Am</b> Sail up to Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950, and visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's house	<b>27 Mar (Fri) Cruising / Kolkata</b> <b>B D</b>
<b>Pm</b> Talk: <i>"HMS Shannon and the Great Uprising"</i> JR. Sail on past the old Dutch settlement of Chinsura and visit the imposing Imambara.	<b>Am</b> Take the train to Kolkata and check into the Oberoi Grand Hotel
<b>28 Mar (Sat) Kolkata</b> <b>B</b>	<b>Pm</b> At leisure
<b>Am</b> Transfer to the airport or extend your stay	<b>Eve</b> Farewell dinner

*"Well planned and interesting visits. Little visited by foreign tourists. Unspoilt India!"*

Sarah Orr, A Cruise Through History Along the Hooghly River, March 2017

\* Please note the jute factory may not be still operating at this time.



ABN Sukapha on the Hooghly

## The ABN Sukapha

The ABN Sukapha has been chartered exclusively for our group. It contains 12 air-conditioned cabins, all of which have French balconies and ensuite bathrooms. There is a spa, a saloon with a library and a spacious sundeck at the very top. Fabrics on board have been handwoven by Bodo tribal villagers; the comfortable rattan chairs are locally sourced and made. Food on board is a mixture of Assamese (milder than most Indian cuisine) and continental. Wines, beer and spirits are available.

*“Food on cruise excellent, chef took a pride in the food and came to talk to us at each meal.”*

Daniel and Barbara Hawgood, A Cruise Through History Along the Hooghly River, March 2017



## The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata

Fondly known as the Grand Dame of Kolkata, the luxury Oberoi Grand is centrally located, near bustling markets and cultural landmarks. Dating back to the late 1880s, The Oberoi Grand was frequented by the country’s leading figures during colonial times and even today hosts grand functions for Heads of State in the city’s largest pillarless Grand Ballroom.



The Sukapha lounge (top); A Twin Cabin; The Oberoi Pool Area (above)

## Tour Leaders

**Professor John Richardson** is Emeritus Defence Professor of Primary Care and General Practice. He has led study tours worldwide and was a medical escort to parties of veterans on journeys of remembrance for the Royal British Legion. He has also run many history of medicine battlefield tours. He has visited 80 countries and worked in 41 of them as a doctor. John has previously led tours for Jon Baines to China, Central Asia, India, Turkey, Central America, Ecuador and the Galapagos, Namibia, Ethiopia, Indo-China and Burma. He has also led as well as given lectures on cruises.

**Susi Richardson** has travelled widely across the world either as an expedition nurse, or as a nurse on war grave pilgrimages for the Royal British Legion, co-tour leader for Jon Baines Tours, or accompanying her husband on his British Army medical officer postings. Five generations of her Shakespear family served in India on her grandmother's side, and three generations of Cooke family on her grandfather's side, covering almost continuously two hundred years of the history of British India in a variety of roles and occupations.

John and Susi have led and lectured on previous cruises up the Hooghly and the Brahmaputra Rivers and are frequent visitors to Kolkata.

*“The Richardsons – excellent, helpful, with a lot of local knowledge.”*

Dr Bernard Lamb, A Cruise Through History Along the Hooghly River, March 2017

**The cost for the tour is  
USD \$4,855 per person sharing**

### The cost includes:

- UK tour leaders (Professor John and Susi Richardson)
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- 4 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in a first class hotel (Oberoi Kolkata)
- 7 nights' accommodation in twin or double bedded cabin on the cruise ship

### The single room supplement is USD \$1,036\*

- Meals as per the itinerary (half board Kolkata, full board cruising)
- Water
- All transport and transfers
- A full programme of visits and talks as per the itinerary
- Admission fees and tips

\* Please note there are limited numbers of single cabins available.

### The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned
- Alcoholic drinks and drinks from the bar on the cruise
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, portage
- International flights\* and airport transfers

\* Please contact us for assistance in organising international flights, transfers and additional accommodation if required

Katgola Palace



# About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.



Kolkata flower market (photo by Jan Fabinyi) (top); Hazarduari Palace; Boy washing water buffalo on the river; Howrah Bridge on the Hooghly (above)

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[www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate](http://www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate)

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Jon Baines  
tours



# A Cruise through History along the Hooghly: Extension to the Rajbari Bawali

28 – 30 March 2020



## Continue exploring Northern India with an extension to the historic Rajbari Bawali Hotel.

Drive from the Oberoi Grand Hotel in Kolkata to the Rajbari Bawali, a beautiful heritage hotel set in the outskirts of Kolkata. Teeming with old world charm and dating back 250 years, this chic Indian hotel has been lovingly restored by the new owner and boasts an eclectic mix of traditional antique with all things modern.

Each room has been beautifully decorated and has a spacious ensuite bathroom. The main feature of each room is the hand-crafted four-poster bed. Like much of the furnishings found in the hotel, rooms are crafted in a traditional Bengali style.

There are many wonderful experiences to be had at the Rajbari Bawali. Enjoy a culinary demonstration with one of the inhouse chefs and learn how cuisine has been influenced by passing cultures. You can also experience the

spectacle of the evening prayers, an everyday ritual that fuses Sanskrit chants, smoke from incense and drumbeats to provide a surreal experience.

This is a place to take it easy. Spend your days moving from the pool to the spa, set in a pretty terracotta building, to the waterside gazebo from whose ancient swing seat it is possible to watch the fish rising at dusk while long-legged egrets snap at them. Take long walks along brick paths that meander between palm-tree-shaded ponds.

The Rajbari Bawali is a historical neo-classical palace, formerly the resplendent headquarters of a kingdom ruled by the Mondal family. It has seen over 170 years of grand living, parties and eminent guests. This Mondal mansion was once home to the Zaminders of Bengal, and over the years has been used as a backdrop for the silver screen.

This is an ideal place to end a trip through Kolkata and northeast India. Relax at the hotel and enjoy its grounds.

**B** = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

## Itinerary 28 – 30 March 2020

### 28 Mar (Sat) Kolkata / Rajbari Bawali **B L D**

**Am** Continue the tour and drive from the Oberoi, Kolkata to the Rajbari Bawali  
**Pm** Take a tour of hotel and its grounds  
**Eve** Dinner

### 29 Mar (Sun) Rajbari Bawali **B L D**

**Am** At leisure  
**Pm** Dinner

### 30 Mar (Mon) Rajbari Bawali **B**

**Am** Depart Rajbari Bawali for the airport

### The cost of the extension is USD \$552 per person sharing\* and includes:

- Two nights' accommodation per person sharing at the Rajbari Bawali

### The single supplement is USD \$364

- Transfers (approx. 90 minutes each way)
- Breakfast lunch and dinner at Rajbari Bawali

\* Prices based on a classic room

