



Dakshineswar Kali Temple on the banks of the Hooghly River

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

28 February – 11 March 2022

*“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



Katgola Palace

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 - the 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 leader Toby Sinclair will share his personal experiences and in-depth knowledge of one of his favourite parts of India.

Tour Leader

A London-born Scot, **Toby Sinclair** first drove out to India in 1974 and by late 1975 he joined the Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park. In April 1977 he moved to Delhi and helped establish both Mountain Travel India and an office for Tiger Tops. Toby has trekked extensively in the western Himalayas. He helped establish the Kipling Camp in Kanha National Park and Bandhavgarh Jungle Camp. He has been on the Advisory Committee of the Bombay Natural History Society and is today on the Government of India Steering Committee on Protected Area Management. He is also the Co-Founder and Vice President of the EcoTourism Society of India. He was the recipient of the 2007 Zeiss Award for Conservation and is a trustee of Global Tiger Patrol.

For the last 20 years his main work has been handling the Field Production of BBC Natural History Unit filming in the wilderness areas and parks of India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and



Bhutan. These films get broadcast on Discovery, Animal Planet and National Geographic in addition to the BBC.

Toby has edited and contributed to a series of books on different parts of South Asia including a series of Insight Guides to India; Indian Wildlife; India's Western Himalaya, South India, Calcutta, Delhi, Jaipur & Agra; and Rajasthan.



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



Day 1: Kolkata (Mon, 28 Feb) **D**

Am: Arrive and transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel and at leisure.

Pm: Optional stroll along the Colonnade to visit the Park Street Oxford Bookstore. Later in the afternoon board a boat at Prinsep's Steps for a river trip through the city. Toby Sinclair will talk on the early history of Kolkata and the geography of the Hooghly River. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 2: Kolkata (Tues, 1 Mar) **B D**

Am: Optional early morning sightseeing walk through old Kolkata, including the Writer's Building. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then visit the Victoria Memorial, the Maidan and St John's Church.

Pm: Visit the Anglican Cathedral, Park Street Cemetery, the office of Warren Hastings.

Eve: Welcome dinner

Day 3: Kolkata (Wed, 2 Mar) **B D**

Am: Optional early morning visit to the flower market. After breakfast visit Kutamali, the pottery village. See Bazar Rajabari Tagore House and museum, the Marble Palace, and the double courtyarded palace on both sides of the road of Raja Nabakrishna Deb (1733-97) in Shobabazar.

Pm: Visit The India Museum. At leisure at the hotel and pool.

Eve: Dinner at Zaranj local restaurant.

Day 4: Kolkata / Cruising (Thur, 3 Mar) **B D**

Am: Morning at leisure.

Pm: Transfer to Kolkata train station for a scenic four hour train journey to Farakka. Transfer to the river and board the ABN Rajmahal to commence your cruise on the Hooghly. Short talk: "*Gaur, The Course of the Ganges and the Bengal Sultanate*" – Toby Sinclair.

Day 5: Cruising (Fri, 4 Mar) **B L D**

Am: Disembark 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

The Victoria Memorial, Kolkata (photo by Susi Richardson)



century. Visit the remains of mosques, palaces and gateways.

Pm: Set sail down the Lower Ganges, a charming waterway twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards. Moor at Baranagar for the night.

Day 6: Cruising (Sat, 5 Mar) B L D

Am: Visit the sleepy village of Baranagar, rural India at its most idyllic. Walk through fields to visit three beautiful miniature terracotta temples. Continue on down past Azimganj, boasting some fine riverside mansions, to Murshidabad where the Nawab's great Hazarduari Palace dominates the waterfront. The palace hosts an extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects.

Pm: Visit the great Katra Mosque before driving out to see the Katgola Palace, built in classical Georgian style by rich local merchants in the eighteenth century. Moor overnight on the riverbank across from town. Hear Toby Sinclair talk on the regional kingdoms after the breakup of the Mughal Empire, or the Jagat Seths and 18th century finance.

Day 7: Cruising (Sun, 6 Mar) B L D

Am: Sail downstream a short distance then walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Mughul-style garden enclosing the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah – the last independent Nawab of Bengal – and his family. Continue downstream to a mooring close to the battlefield of Plassey where, in 1757 Clive's defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah changed the course of Indian history.

Pm: You can walk through the fields to the commemorative obelisk. Cruise on to a mooring near Katwa, a market town with narrow bustling bazaars. Discussion about William Dalrymple's book, *Anarchy*.

Day 8: Cruising (Mon, 7 Mar) B L D

Am: Disembark at the brassworking village of

Matiari, where you can watch the traditional process of beating out brass water pots and other vessels.

Pm: Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur, its skyline dominated by the vast new ISKCON temple, the headquarters of the Hare Krishna movement. This afternoon's talk by Toby Sinclair is on "*Europe on the Ganga - the European trading companies and their settlements*".

Day 9: Cruising (Tues, 8 Mar) B L D

Am: Disembark 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.

Pm: Sail on, leaving fields behind and arrive at the outskirts of Kolkata. Land at Hooghly to visit the imposing Imambara. Sail downstream past fine waterfront buildings and the old Dutch settlement at Chinsura to moor at Chandernagore.

Day 10: Cruising (Wed, 9 Mar) B L D

Am: At Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950, visit the eighteenth century church and Duplex's house and museum.

Pm: Continue down to Barrackpore. Land and take a walk through the cantonment – past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff. Cruise under the Howrah Bridge to central Kolkata.

Day 11: Cruising / Kolkata (Thur, 10 Mar) B L D

Am: Disembark and transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel.

Pm: At leisure.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 12: Kolkata (Fri, 11 Mar) B

Am: Transfer to the airport or extend at the Oberoi Grand Hotel or a palace hotel.



ABN Rajmahal on the Hooghly

The ABN Rajmahal

The ABN Rajmahal contains 22 air-conditioned cabins, all of which have French balconies and en suite bathrooms. There is a spa, a saloon with a library and a spacious sundeck at the very top. The décor is stylish and fresh with touches of colonial elegance, brought to life by traditional Indian-inspired designs on hand-blocked cotton fabrics. 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

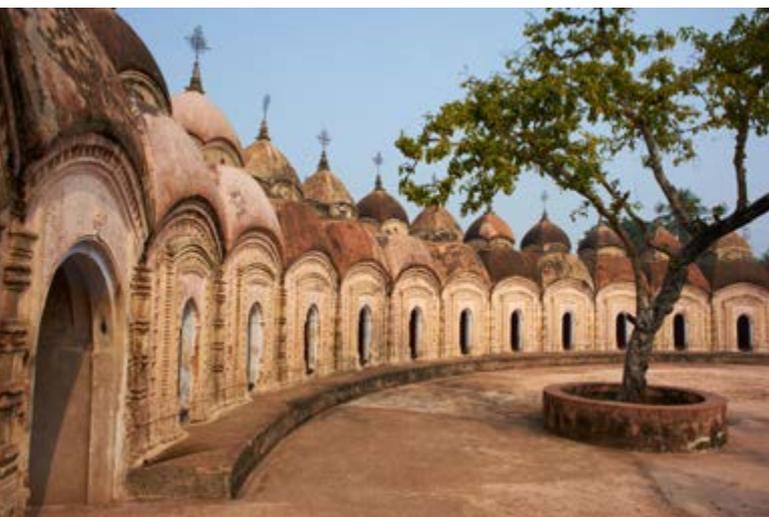


The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata

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 Rajmahal lounge (top); A double cabin;
The Oberoi Hotel (above)



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

The cost includes:

- Tour leader (Toby Sinclair)
- 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

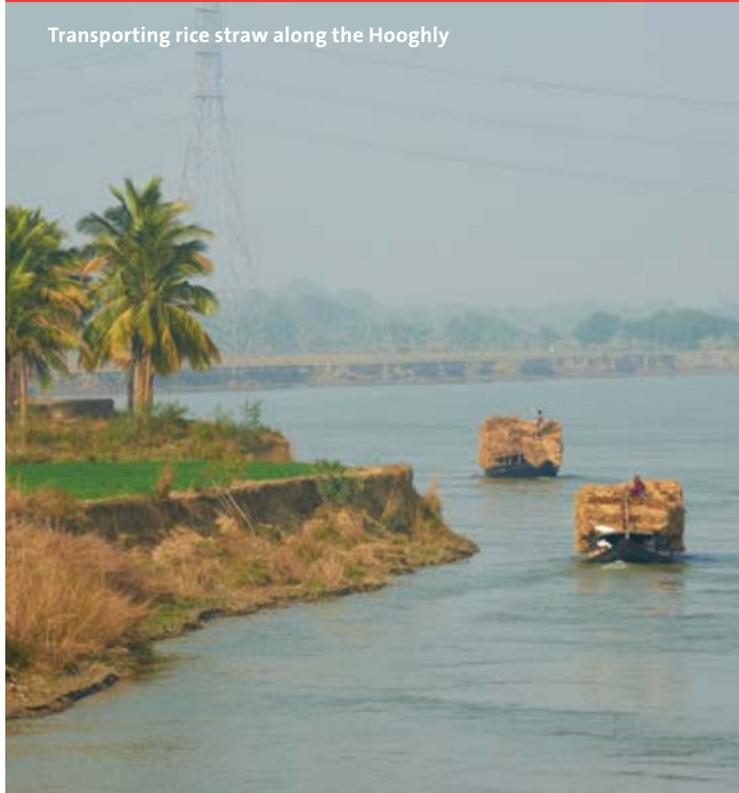
* Please note there are limited numbers of single cabins available.

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

Transporting rice straw along the Hooghly



A ferry on the way to market in Kalna (top); The terracotta Shiva temples at Kalna; A brassworker in Matiari; Sunset on the Hooghly (photo by Susi Richardson) (above)

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.

All the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this brochure are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to:
www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate

Jon Baines Tours (London)
Hyde Park House, 5 Manfred Road,
London, SW15 2RS
Tel: +44 (0) 207 223 9485 / 5618
Email: info@jonbainestours.co.uk
www.jonbainestours.co.uk

Jon Baines Tours (Melbourne)
PO Box 68, South Brunswick,
Victoria 3055
Tel: +61 (0) 3 9343 6367
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9012 4228
Email: info@jonbainestours.com.au
www.jonbainestours.com

USA and Canada:
(Toll Free) 1-8777-398-764



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



Jon Baines
tours

