



Seasons & Vacations Travel

CRUISES IN INDIA



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INTRODUCTION

India's Cruises – Sailing through Splendour and Heritage

India's cruise tourism is redefining luxury and adventure, inviting travellers to embark on extraordinary journeys across vibrant coastlines and majestic rivers. These cruises are more than a mode of transport—they are floating resorts and cultural expeditions, offering a unique blend of comfort, heritage, and scenic beauty.

India's ocean cruises glide along the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, connecting iconic ports like Mumbai, Goa, Kochi, and the pristine islands of Lakshadweep and Andaman. Guests experience world-class hospitality, gourmet cuisine, entertainment, and wellness—all while waking up to breathtaking sunrises at sea. Each voyage is crafted to highlight India's coastal treasures, historic cities, and sun-kissed beaches.

River cruises, on the other hand, reveal the soul of India. Meandering down the Ganges, Brahmaputra, or Kerala's tranquil backwaters, these journeys bring travellers up close to timeless landscapes, ancient temples, wildlife sanctuaries, and vibrant local cultures. Elegant vessels like MV Ganga Vilas and Antara Cruises recreate the charm of classic river travel, with curated excursions, regional cuisine, and intimate onboard experiences.

Whether you seek the thrill of the open ocean or the serenity of riverbanks, cruising in India promises a seamless blend of exploration, relaxation, and cultural immersion. It's not just about where you go, but how you get there—each cruise is designed to make the journey as unforgettable as the destination.



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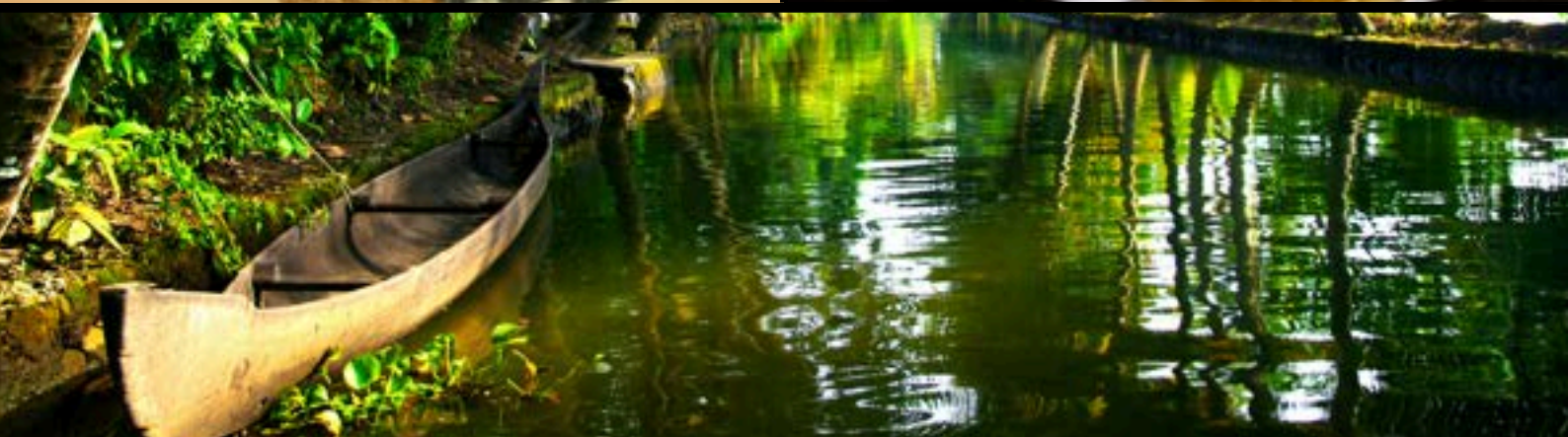
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How Easy is it to Visit India?

India is a welcoming destination for travelers, offering convenient services and facilities to ensure a smooth and enjoyable visit. Here's a breakdown of key aspects that make visiting India easy for tourists:

Visa Process

- **E-Visa Facility:** India offers a hassle-free e-visa system for citizens of over 160 countries. Tourists can apply online for tourist, business, or medical visas.
- **Multiple Entry Options:** E-visas allow multiple entries with stays of up to 60 days.

Connectivity & Transport

- **International Airports:** Major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai have well-connected international airports with global flight options.
- **Domestic Flights:** A robust domestic flight network connects all major tourist destinations.
- **Efficient Rail Network:** India has one of the largest railway networks in the world, offering affordable and scenic travel options.
- **Road Transport:** Well-developed highways and affordable public transport, including buses and taxis, make getting around convenient.

Safety & Security

- **Tourist Police:** Major tourist destinations have dedicated tourist police to ensure visitor safety.
- **Hotel & Transport Security:** Most hotels and transport services have adequate safety protocols.
- **Emergency Services:** Helplines like **112** for emergencies and **1363** for tourist helplines offer 24/7 assistance.

Currency Exchange & Payments

- **Easy Currency Exchange:** Currency exchange services are available at airports, banks, and hotels.
- **Digital Payments:** Widespread acceptance of digital payments (UPI, credit/debit cards) makes transactions hassle-free.
- **ATMs Everywhere:** Tourists can easily withdraw cash from numerous ATMs across the country.

With its strong infrastructure, rich culture, and visitor-friendly policies, India provides a seamless and memorable experience for tourists from around the world.





RIVER CRUISES

The banks of the majestic Brahmaputra are brimming with treasures—ranging from lush tea gardens and vibrant wildlife to tranquil village paths and charming cycle rickshaw rides through rustic towns. Since much of this region is difficult to explore on foot, a river cruise offers a relaxed and enjoyable way to discover the authentic spirit of India in this often-overlooked part of the country.

Brahmaputra cruises present these unforgettable experiences from October to April each year. Inspired by the historic Assam Despatch service—the daily mail and passenger route that once linked Kolkata to Dibrugarh along the Brahmaputra—we offer a range of cruises lasting 4 to 10 nights, with the option to combine voyages for extended itineraries of up to 14 nights.

ASSAM BENGAL NAVIGATION

ACTIVITY 1: BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER CRUISES

Assam Despatch 2: Rhinos & More

(7 Nights)

Post breakfast, drive to Thekkady; continuous and unending chains of hills with spices scented plantations. Here you would find, Periyar wild life reserve one of the best reserves in South India famous for elephants, Bison, tiger and many more animals. This place offers many opportunities for treks and mountain walks. On arrival, check in to the hotel and after fresh up visit spice market and spice plantations. Here you can feel the aroma of finest spices such as Pepper, Cardamom, Vanilla, Cinnamon and other spices. Also enjoy a short elephant ride. Overnight at Thekkady hotel.

Assam Despatch 2A: Silk & Rhinos

(4 Nights)

This 4-night cruise sets sail from Guwahati and ends at Silghat near Kaziranga. Along the way, immerse yourself in Assam's renowned silk-weaving traditions by visiting local village homes and learning about sericulture. Enjoy leisurely cruising on the Brahmaputra as you make your way to the UNESCO-listed Kaziranga National Park, home to the famous one-horned rhino and elusive tigers.

Assam Despatch 3: River Island Cruise

(7 Nights)

Journey to the uppermost navigable stretches of the Brahmaputra and discover the area's rich and distinctive culture. This itinerary includes visits to Sibsagar—the historic capital of the Ahom dynasty—and Majuli Island, renowned for its unique Hindu monasteries and vibrant dance-drama traditions. The adventure continues in Kaziranga National Park, where you'll have an excellent chance to spot the iconic Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros.

Assam Despatch 4: Brahmaputra

Maximum (10 Nights)

Embark on a 10-night voyage beginning from the river ghat at Jorhat and ending in Guwahati. This comprehensive journey weaves through Assam's rich heritage, featuring the former Ahom capital of Sibsagar, the unique monastic culture of Majuli Island, the wildlife haven of Kaziranga National Park, the historic sites of Tezpur, the natural beauty of Nameri National Park, and the silk-weaving traditions of Sualkuchi. It's a diverse exploration into the vibrant heart of Assam.

Assam Despatch 7: Brahmaputra

Taster (3 Nights)

This 3-night round-trip cruise is the perfect introduction to Assam, the gateway to Northeast India. Explore remote villages on guided walks and embark on jeep safaris through the untouched jungles of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, in search of the iconic Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros. This short journey offers a captivating glimpse into the unique culture, wildlife, and landscapes of this lesser-explored region.



ACTIVITY 2: GANGES RIVER CRUISES

Cruising along the Ganges and Lower Ganges (the Hooghly) invites you to experience daily life in riverside villages and towns, and discover the splendour of intricately carved temples and historic monuments. This region, often overlooked by mainstream tourism, reveals its cultural richness and hidden treasures most vividly from the water—providing access to places rarely reached by road.

Lower Ganges cruises are available throughout the year, while main Ganges journeys are offered during the winter season. You can choose from standalone itineraries or combine them for trips ranging from three to fifteen nights

Bengal Despatch 1 & 5: Historic Hooghly (Lower Ganges) – 7 Nights

These cruises, which travel either upstream or downstream, include a return train journey for an authentic Indian rail experience, with the ABN crew on hand to assist. Sailing the scenic Hooghly River from Farakka to Kolkata, the itinerary features highlights such as vibrant Kolkata, the former Nawabi capital of Murshidabad, and the impressive monuments of medieval Gaur. Along the way, you'll discover traditional riverside life with visits to silk-weaving villages, a hamlet famed for brass artisans, and enjoy immersive experiences like village walks and e-rickshaw rides. On many dates, these cruises can be combined with longer Ganges voyages.

Bengal Despatch 2 & 4: The Holy Ganges (6 to 8 Nights)

These cruises follow the main channel of the Ganges between Farakka and Patna, offering an immersive journey into India's heartland. Explore the Mughal-era ruins at Rajmahal, trace the legacy of the East India Company in Patna and Monghyr, and visit sacred sites from Buddha's homeland, including Bodhi Gaya. With its abundance of cultural, historical, and religious landmarks, this route provides a fascinating window into India's diverse heritage and takes you through territories that remain largely untouched by mainstream tourism.

Bengal Despatch 8: Bengal Memories (3 Nights)

This brief cruise is perfect for those seeking an introduction to Bengal's vibrant heritage. Highlights include the grand riverside Imambara, the expansive ISKCON temple complex at Mayapur—visited by over a million Krishna devotees each year—the beautifully carved terracotta temples of Kalna, and the picturesque riverside town of Chandernagore, which remained a French enclave until 1950.



NAGALAND'S – BRAHMAPUTRA – ASSAM – GANGES RIVER – KERALA

PANDAW CRUISE





Activity 1. Nagaland's Hornbill Festival & Brahmaputra Expedition (13 Nights)

Experience the vibrant spirit of Nagaland during the renowned Hornbill Festival in Kohima, where diverse Naga tribes gather each December to celebrate their rich traditions. For the first time, Pandaw offers a guided tour of this extraordinary cultural event, paired with a 7-night voyage on the Brahmaputra River.

Join one of two special departures (22nd or 29th November 2025) for a once-in-a-lifetime journey through Northeast India. Enjoy multiple days exploring the festival, group transportation and excursions, with flexibility to tailor your experience based on the festival schedule and group preferences.

Rivers: Brahmaputra River

Ship: RV Kindat Pandaw



Activity 2. All Assam on the Brahmaputra (10 Nights)

Sail for 10 nights along the mighty Brahmaputra, flowing from the Himalayas through the picturesque Assam Valley. This journey explores UNESCO-listed national parks and remote Assamese communities, offering a world apart from the rest of India.

Your downstream adventure from Guwahati to Goalpara features stops at little-visited historical sites and three national parks. Spot rare birds in Nameri, embark on a full-day jeep safari in Kaziranga to see rhinos and—if you're lucky—Bengal tigers, and immerse yourself in Assam's vibrant culture through onboard performances and expert guides.

Rivers: Brahmaputra River

Ship: RV Kindat Pandaw

Activity 3. The Hooghly (9 Nights)

This 9-night circular voyage reveals some of the most scenic, off-the-beaten-path landscapes of India, starting in Kolkata and winding through West Bengal's lush countryside.

Discover cultural towns, ornate temples, grand palaces, and charming villages set amidst mustard fields and mango orchards. This journey offers a unique perspective on the region's rich heritage, far beyond the usual tourist trail.

River: Ganges River

Ships: RV Kalaw Pandaw, RV Katha Pandaw

Activity 4. The Kerala Backwaters (7 Nights)

Embark on an eight-day circular cruise from Kochi, exploring Kerala's legendary backwaters—a vast network of 900 km of waterways connecting rivers and lakes.

Each week, the Kochi Pandaw calls at historic churches, Hindu temples, artisan villages, and the beautiful beaches along the Malabar Coast. Cochin International Airport offers excellent connections, making access easy for international and domestic travellers.

Rivers: Kerala Backwaters

Ship: RV Kochi Pandaw

Activity 5. The Brahmaputra (7 Nights)

Cruise the scenic Brahmaputra with Pandaw, where you'll marvel at dramatic wildlife and the everyday life of riverside villages.

Begin in Guwahati, sail past Peacock Island, and keep watch for endangered Golden Langur monkeys, river dolphins, and birds of prey. In Kaziranga, enjoy a thrilling safari for rhinos and tigers. Venture by small boat to visit local craftswomen, and savour an alfresco dinner on a secluded river island.

River: Brahmaputra River

Ship: RV Kindat Pandaw



VARANASI - KOLKATA

ANTARA CRUISES





Varanasi to Kolkata Downstream – MV Ganga Vilas

Day 1:

Arrive in Kolkata, board the ship, enjoy a welcome lunch, and explore Dalhousie Square's colonial-era sites including St. John's Church and Victoria Memorial.
Overnight onboard.

Day 2:

Visit Kolkata's lively flower market and Kumartuli potters' district. Return for lunch and start your upstream journey, sailing under the Howrah Bridge.
Overnight onboard.

Day 3:

Take an e-rickshaw tour through Kalna, marvel at the Rajbari Temple complex and vibrant local markets, then set sail for Matuari.
Overnight onboard.

Day 4:

Reach Ghazipur; embark/disembark as scheduled.
Dinner & overnight onboard.

Day 5:

Explore countryside villages by e-rickshaw, see the Katra Mosque, and tour the grand Hazarduari Palace. Sail onward to Jangipur.
Overnight onboard.

Day 6:

Cruise across the historic Farakka Lock Gate and Feeder Canal, spotting local birdlife. Continue towards Samtaghat.
Overnight onboard.

Day 7:

Enjoy a day cruising towards Bateswarsthan, soaking in river views and village life.
Overnight onboard.

Day 8:

Excursion to Vikramshila University's ancient ruins. Sail onwards to Sultanganj.
Overnight onboard.

Day 9:

Visit Sultanganj's granite islands and Ajgaibinath Temple. Continue towards Munger.
Overnight onboard.

Day 10:

Tour the Chandika Sthan Temple and Munger Fort, then explore the vibrant local markets.
Overnight onboard.

Day 11:

Sail past Mokameh Ghat, with afternoon village walk in Simaria.
Overnight onboard.

Day 12:

Full day cruise through the countryside to Patna, one of India's oldest cities.
Overnight onboard.

Day 13:

Visit Golghar and Patna Museum. Sail to the confluence at Ghaghra Mod.
Overnight onboard.

Day 14:

Morning Walk in a riverside village. Sail to Buxar.
Overnight onboard.

Day 15:

Arrive Buxar; visit Ram Rekha Ghat and Sita Ram Upadhyay Museum.
Overnight onboard.

Day 16:

Full-day sail to Ghazipur. After lunch, visit the Tomb of Lord Cornwallis.
Overnight onboard.

Day 17:

Continue sailing upstream toward Varanasi, mooring overnight near the city.
Overnight onboard.

Day 18:

Arrive in Varanasi. Explore the city's ghats, religious sites, and handicraft centres.
Overnight onboard

Day 19:

Disembark in Kolkata after breakfast. Tour Sarnath, witness the Ganga Aarti, and conclude your journey.



Treading the Buddha's Trail – MV Ganga Vilas

Day 1:

Train journey from Kolkata to Farakka, then embark the ship.
Lunch and overnight onboard.

Day 2:

Sail towards Sahibganj, enjoying the river landscapes.
Overnight onboard.

Day 3:

Morning village walk; sail to Bateshwarsthan.
Evening ghat stroll, overnight onboard.

Day 4:

Excursion to the Vikramshila University archaeological site.
Overnight onboard.

Day 5:

Sail to Sultanganj, visit the islands and Ajgaibinath Temple, then cruise on to Munger.
Overnight onboard.

Day 6:

Tour Chandika Sthan Temple, Munger Fort, and the market.
Overnight onboard.

Day 7:

Sail to Barh, explore the riverside village in the evening.
Overnight onboard.



Day 8:

Full-day excursion to the World Heritage Site of Nalanda and Rajgir.
Overnight onboard.

Day 9:

Cruise through scenic countryside to Patna.
Overnight onboard.

Day 10:

Disembark and drive to Bodhgaya. Visit Mahabodhi Temple and international monasteries.
Overnight at hotel.

Day 11:

Drive to Varanasi, enjoy a walk along the ghats and attend the Ganga Aarti.
Overnight at hotel.

Day 12:

Sunrise boat ride on the Ganges, visit Sarnath, then transfer to the airport for departure.

Suggestion for Trip

OUR PARTNER BRANDS





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Accreditations and Affiliations

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