

KIPLING ASSAM BENGAL CRUISE
PRICE 2010 - 11 - SEASON BRHMAPUTRA
(01st OCT2010 - 30th APRIL'2011)



DISPATCH 01 (07 NIGHTS/08 DAYS)

Day 1, Sat

Upon arrival in Guwahati airport meet and assist and then take a short sightseeing tour of the city. Drive up Nilachal Hill to see the holy Kamakhya temple. With its tantric rites and animal sacrifice, the more squeamish may prefer to content themselves with the exterior. Visit the poignant Commonwealth War Graves cemetery. Finally walk through a local market before embarking on your cruise vessel. We set sail and cruise for about an hour and a half upstream to Kurua on the north bank.

Day 2, Sun

The day is spent cruising upstream, with hills rising on either side. Battling against strong currents, we reach an idyllic stop at Ganesh Pahar, where we can explore a delightfully serene hinterland lying under jungle-covered slopes.

Day 3, Mon

Leaving the hills behind, we enjoy our first taste of the wilderness experience, sand banks like icebergs on either side. We may make a short stop to visit a bankside village, creating a sensation as we do. We moor for the night in a lunar landscape of sand islands, with hopefully the Himalayas in view and providing a contrasting backdrop in the distance.

Day 4, Tue

Rising early, we take to our country boat for another cruise up a side stream, this time into the Orang National Park. Here in this rarely visited park we mount elephants or take jeeps and ride through forest and grassland looking for rhino, deer and other wildlife. Returning to our ship, we cruise upstream to moor close to the isolated Singri Hill.

Day 5, Wed

We cruise on to Tezpur, where we visit the 6 th century Da Parbatia temple ruins with a beautifully carved portal, then explore the town by cycle rickshaw, stopping at Cole Park with medieval stone carvings saved from sites all over the region, and perhaps get to penetrate the bungalow once lived in by Alexander Bruce, pioneer of the tea industry. Our ship will be waiting at the town's waterfront for us to reboard.

Day 6, Thu

We continue upstream, passing below a seemingly endless new bridge across the vast width of the river bed, to moor at Steemer Ghat (sic), a lovely beach backed by jungle-covered hills. In the afternoon we drive to Kaziranga's Western Range for a jeep safari and to scan the wilderness from an observation tower. Kaziranga is a World Heritage site and with a population of well over 1000 rhinoceros is the best place in the world to see these beasts. There are also good populations of tiger, wild elephant, sambar, swamp deer, hog deer, wild pig and many other species.

Day 7, Fri

Disembark pre-dawn and drive to Kaziranga's Central Range for an early morning elephant ride, the best way to get really close to the rhino and other animals. After breakfast at a lodge, we visit a tea factory to see all the processes involved from picking to pot (not operating Dec-Mar), walk through terraced tea gardens and past a Karbi tribal village, then drive to a Mising tribal village, with their distinctive houses raised on piles. After lunch either take a jeep safari in the little visited Eastern Range before returning to the boat, or if preferred return directly to Steemer Ghat, visit a delightful Assamese village nearby and walk along a path alive with butterflies to a solitary temple on the river bank.

Day 8, Sat

An early start for the 4 hour drive back to Guwahati airport to board your flight for onward journey.

PRICE: USD 2515 PER PERSON

SGL ROOM SUPPLEMENT : USD 1475

Price Includes:

- Meals on Full board.
- All excursions
- All transfers.
- Service tax

Price Excludes:

- Airfare and taxes.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Drinks from the bar, laundry, tips etc

FIXED DEPARTURE DATES FOR THE ABOVE TOUR

1. 04 - 11 Dec'10
2. 01 - 08 Jan'11
3. 29 Jan - 05 Feb'11
4. 26 Feb - 05 March'11
5. 26 March - 02 April'11

DISPATCH 02 (07 NIGHTS/08 DAYS)

Day 1

Midday arrival at Tezpur airport and transfer 30 mins to Steemer Ghat, a lovely beach below jungle-covered hills. Alternatively arrive Jorhat airport and driven 2 ½ hrs to Steemer Ghat or arrive Guwahati airport and driven 4 hrs to Steemer Ghat.

Day 2

Disembark pre-dawn and drive to Kaziranga National Park's Central Range for an early morning elephant ride, the best way to get really close to the rhino and other animals. Return to breakfast on board cruising upstream with Kaziranga National Park on the right bank. Around midday we reach Vishnath, with an Ahom-period Shiva temple. There are other later temples too, and we walk through the town before reboarding and setting off again, with Kaziranga still on the far bank. Wild elephant may sometimes be spotted, and once, memorably, a tiger..

Day 3

The day is spent on the river, and we have a good chance of spotting Gangetic dolphin, as well as creating a sensation in bankside villages as we pass. We should arrive in the evening at lonely Dhansiri Mukh.

Day 4

This morning we land and take a jeep safari in Kaziranga's little-visited Eastern Range, with grasslands much favoured by rhino, where you might spot the rare Bengal Florican. Returning to the boat, we continue our cruise upstream (if water levels do not permit a landing at Dhansiri Mukh, Kaziranga will be visited from Steemer Ghat at the beginning of the cruise).

Day 5

Another day spent cruising upstream. We shall take time to pause and walk through Jamuguri village, getting an insight into the life of rural India.

Day 6

Around breakfast time, we should reach Majuli Island, supposedly the world's largest river island, and possessing unique Hindu monasteries famed for their dance-drama performances - the whole island is now shortlisted for future UNESCO World Heritage status. We visit a monastery at Auniati with an eclectic museum, enjoy a typical Mising tribal lunch in a stilted bamboo hut, then attend a dance performance at Kamalbari monastery, before cruising across to Neamati Ghat on the opposite bank.

Day 7

We visit Gatoonga tea estate this morning and see all the processes of tea production (factory inoperative between December and mid-March) then drive for about an hour to Sibsagar, the one-time capital of the kings of Assam. Shan by origin (Assam and Siam share the same derivation) but converted to Hinduism they ruled Assam for some 700 years until the 1820s, and their culture and architecture is a strange and delightful amalgam of Indian and S.E. Asian. We shall see temples with stupa-like profiles, and palaces of distinctive form - note the crocodiles and rather sexy caryatids that adorn the roof of the Rang Mahal. For the record book, the temple tank here is believed to be the world's largest hand-excavated reservoir. We return to the ship which will have cruised up to Dikhou Mukh close to Sibsagar, and spend our last night on board. (Dependent on river conditions the last night may be spent at Neamati, close to Jorhat).

Day 8

AM drive c.2 ½ hrs to Dibrugarh airport, passing through this typical colonial town and major base for American flights over "The Hump" to China in WWII. Alternatively transferred 1 ½ hrs to Jorhat airport.

PRICE: USD 2515 PER PERSON

SGL ROOM SUPPLEMENT : USD 1475

Price Includes:

- Meals on Full board.
- All excursions
- All transfers.

- Service tax

Price Excludes:

- Airfare and taxes.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Drinks from the bar, laundry, tips etc

FIXED DEPARTURE DATES FOR THE ABOVE TOUR

01. 13 - 20 Nov'10
02. 11 - 18 Dec'10
03. 08 - 15 Jan'11
04. 05 - 12 Feb'11
05. 05 - 12 March'11
06. 02 - 09 April'11

DISPATCH 03 (10 NIGHTS/11 DAYS)

Day 1

Arrive Dibrugarh, a typical colonial town and major American base in WWII, then drive 2 ½ hrs to Dikhou Mukh and embark on our ship. Alternatively arrive Jorhat airport and drive 1 ½ hrs to Dikhou Mukh. (Dependent on river conditions it may be necessary to board at Neamati, closer to Jorhat).

Day 2

Excursion by road to Sibsagar, the one-time capital of the Ahom kings of Assam. Shan by origin (Assam and Siam share the same derivation) but converted to Hinduism, they ruled Assam for some 700 years until the 1820s, and their culture and architecture is a strange and delightful amalgam of Indian and S.E. Asian. See temples with stupa-like profiles, and palaces of distinctive form - note the crocodiles and rather sexy caryatids that adorn the roof of the Rang Mahal. For the record book, the temple tank here is claimed to be the world's largest hand-excavated reservoir. Return to the ship for lunch and cruise for 3 hours down river to Majuli island, supposedly the world's largest river island.

Day 3

Majuli Island possesses unique hindu monasteries famous for their dance drama performances - the whole island is now shortlisted for future UNESCO World Heritage status. You will visit Auniati monastery with an eclectic museum, enjoy a typical Mising tribal lunch in a stilted bamboo hut and in the afternoon will attend a dance performance at Kamalabari monastery. Returning to the ship we cruise downstream for an hour or two.

Day 4, Tue

A day spent mostly on the river, though we shall stop and make a short visit to the tribal village of Jamuguri. By afternoon, Kaziranga National Park will be on our left - wild elephants are sometimes visible from the boat, and once, memorably, a tiger.

Day 5

This morning you will arrive at the little temple town of Vishnath, with a fine Ahom-period temple. Take a walk ashore before continuing the voyage down to a delightful mooring at Silghat, with butterflies abounding in the surrounding jungle. We disembark, and those taking Assam Despatch 4a are transferred to the Kaziranga lodge of their choice (Cruise 4a terminates). Those remaining on board make a first safari through Kaziranga National Park, taking a jeep ride through its Western Range, with good woodland as well as grassland and wetlands which can be viewed from look-out towers.

Day 6

Disembark pre-dawn and drive to Kaziranga's Central Range for an early morning elephant ride, the best way to get really close to the rhino. Kaziranga is a World Heritage site, and with a population of over 1000 rhinoceros is the best place in the world to see these beasts. There are also good populations of tiger, wild elephant, sambar, swamp deer, hog deer, wild pig and many other species. After breakfast, walk through terraced tea gardens and visit a village of the Mising tribe. In the afternoon drive to Kaziranga's little-visited Eastern Range for a further jeep safari before returning to the boat.

(Cruise 4b commences) Those taking Cruise 4b are transferred in the afternoon from a Kaziranga lodge to board the ship at Silghat

Day 7

Cruise downstream under the seemingly endless new bridge to dock at Tezpur. From here we travel on by road to visit a working tea garden at Dhekiajuli, seeing all the stages of growing and processing tea (factory not in operation between December and mid-March).

(Cruise 4b commences) Those taking Cruise 4b are transferred this morning from a Kaziranga lodge to board the ship at Tezpur in time for lunch.

After lunch on board, we visit the remains of the the 6th century Da Parbatia temple, with exquisite carved portal, then board cycle rickshaws to take us through the bazaars to Cole Park with its collection of medieval stone carving. Reboarding our ship we cruise down to moor for the night near the isolated Singri Hill.

Day 8

The day is spent on the river, traversing a lunar landscape of sand islands then closing on the range of hills beyond which lies Guwahati. In the evening we should reach the idyllic isolated village of Ganesh Pahar.

Day 9

This morning's voyage is particularly pretty, with jungle-covered hills on the south bank. Reaching Guwahati at midday, we moor opposite the city and climb up to the pretty Aswaklanta temple on the hill above before driving out to the beautifully sited temple ruins of Madan Kamdev, their erotic carving an indicator of the strong tantric traditions in the area.

Day 10

We cross to the main waterfront for a tour of Guwahati, driving up Nilachal Hill to the Kamakhya temple. With its tantric rites and animal sacrifices, the more squeamish may prefer to content themselves with the exterior. Visit the poignant Commonwealth War Graves, the museum and the bazaars before cruising down during lunch to the silkweaving village of Sualkuchi. In the afternoon drive out to Hajo, a place sacred to Hindus, Moslems and Buddhists. Visit a Moslem shrine with extensive hilltop views over the surrounding rural landscape, as well as the simple Hindu temple with its frieze of elephants and its sacred tank full of great carp, catfish and turtles.

Day 11

Walk through Sualkuchi to visit weaving workshops and see the whole process of silk manufacture, from cocoon to spinning to dyeing and finally to handweaving into exquisite saris and dress lengths before transferring to the airport for final departure.

PRICE: USD 3590 PER PERSON

SGL ROOM SUPPLEMENT : USD 2105

Price Includes:

- Meals on Full board.
- All excursions
- All transfers.
- Service tax

Price Excludes:

- Airfare and taxes.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Drinks from the bar, laundry, tips etc

FIXED DEPARTURE DATES FOR THE ABOVE TOUR

01. 18 - 28 Dec'10
02. 12 - 22 March'11
03. 09 - 19 April'11

DISPATCH 04 (04 NIGHTS/05 DAYS)

Day 1

Met at Guwahati airport and taken on a short sightseeing tour of the city. Drive up Nilachal Hill to see the holy Kamakhya temple. With its tantric rites and animal sacrifice, the more squeamish may prefer to content themselves with the exterior. Visit the poignant Commonwealth War Graves cemetery. Finally walk through a local market before embarking on your cruise vessel. We set sail and cruise for about an hour and a half upstream to Kurua on the north bank.

Day 2

The day is spent cruising upstream, with hills rising on either side. Battling against strong currents, we reach an idyllic stop at Ganesh Pahar, where we can explore a delightfully serene hinterland lying under jungle-covered slopes.

Day 3

Leaving the hills behind, we enjoy our first taste of the wilderness experience, sand banks like icebergs on either side. We may make a short stop to visit a bankside village, creating a sensation as we do. We moor for the night in a lunar landscape of sand islands, with hopefully the Himalayas in view and providing a contrasting backdrop in the distance.

Day 4

Rising early, we take to our country boat for another cruise up a side stream, this time into the Orang National Park. Here in this rarely visited park we mount elephants or take jeeps and ride through forest and grassland looking for rhino, deer and other wildlife. Those departing today are picked up from the park and driven on to Kaziranga. The rest return to the ship, head downstream again, and moor for the night close to Ganesh Pahar.

Day 5

We make the scenic approach to Guwahati, with jungle-covered hills rising to either side. We dock at around 1000 hrs, and are transferred to the airport for an afternoon onward flight.

PRICE: USD 1440 PER PERSON

SGL ROOM SUPPLEMENT : USD 845

Price Includes:

- Meals on Full board.
- All excursions
- All transfers.
- Service tax

Price Excludes:

- Airfare and taxes.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Drinks from the bar, laundry, tips etc

FIXED DEPARTURE DATES FOR THE ABOVE TOUR

01. 05 - 09 Oct'10
02. 02 - 06 Nov'10
03. 28 Dec - 01 Jan'11
04. 25 - 29 Jan'11
05. 22 - 26 Feb'11
06. 22 - 26 March'11
07. 19 - 23 April'11

NOTE :

01. Itinerary subject to river conditions.
02. Elephant rides subject to availability.
03. In total there are only 12 cabins hence the availability to get rooms are quite tough during season times.