

# ANTARA



## Artisans of Bengal

Kolkata – Bandel – Kalna – Mayapur – Guptipara – Fulia – Chandernagore – Kolkata  
7 nights / 8 days Cruise

### Day 1: Kolkata Embarkation (L/D)

Embarkation: 12:00 PM

Arrive Kolkata in the morning and transfer to the jetty to embark the ship. Lunch onboard.

Post lunch, proceed for a **Panoramic Tour of Kolkata**, featuring a view of the well preserved British colonial buildings in Kolkata: Writer's Building, General Post Office, High Court, Raj Bhawan (Governor's House), Town Hall, Council House, Treasury Building, Reserve Bank of India and Dalhousie Square. We proceed to visit St. John's Church, the oldest Anglican Church in Kolkata, built in 1756. The tour features the oldest functioning pipe organ in India, a painting of the Last Supper by German artist, Johann Zoffany, and several tombs of British Generals who died during the Siege of Kolkata by Nawab Shriaj Ud Daula in 1756. Then we visit the grand Victoria Memorial Museum, which houses the largest collection of British colonial historical artefacts.



*Victoria Memorial, Kolkata*

**Highlight of the Day:** Welcome to the Big City of Kolkata, often regarded as the Cultural Capital of India and the gateway to our journey along the world's holiest river, the sacred Ganges, known in this region as the Hooghly.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager

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## Day 2: Kolkata Tour – Bally Bridge (B/L/D)

Morning after breakfast, visit Kolkata's **Flower Market**, a feast for the eyes. Located below and adjacent to the cantilevered Howrah Bridge that spans the sacred river Ganges, the market is bustling from the wee hours of the morning. Countless vendors and buyers exchange money for flowers and countless locals carry bales of flowers that are at least twice their weight. There are several stalls where you can see artists creating a variety of garlands, ornaments and other items made of flowers and leaves for temples, weddings and other usage.



*Flower Market, Kolkata*

Thereafter visit **Kumartuli**, a traditional potters' quarter in northern Kolkata, renowned for its sculpting prowess, which not only manufactures clay idols for various festivals but also regularly exports them. The potters here fashioned the clay from the river beside their home into pots to be sold at the local market. Gradually they took to making the images of gods and goddesses, worshipped in large numbers in the mansions all around and later at community pujas in the city and beyond.

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*Clay idol making at Kumartulli, Kolkata*

Return to the ship for lunch and start sail upstream passing below the **Howrah Bridge** and seeing various colonial buildings along the Ganges River.



*Howrah Bridge*

We moor for the night on the outskirts of Kolkata city near the Bally Bridge.

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**Highlight of the Day:** The hustle-bustle of the Flower Market and the creativity of the Potters of Kumartulli. Be entertained onboard by **Baul musicians**, whose music represents a long heritage of preaching mysticism through songs in Bengal. The Baul tradition has been included in the list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager

### **Day 3: Bally Bridge – Bandel (B/L/D)**

This morning we set sail upstream to Bandel, meaning port in Bengali was founded by Portuguese settlers who built the Church and a Monastery around 1660. We visit the **Hooghly Imambara**, one of the famous Shiya pilgrimage centres in West Bengal, built in 1841 by Haji Mohammad Mahasin. The two-story building and surrounding rooms provide housing for pilgrims as well as classrooms, or Madrasa that teach the Koran. The structure contains a Victorian-era clock with a winding key weighing 20kg. Large Persian chandeliers and lamps light the Imambara's stunning hallways and passages.



*Hooghly Imambara at Bandel*

**Highlight of the Day:** The impressive architecture of the Imambara with excellent views of the river and countryside from the Clock Tower.

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### **Day 4: Bandel – Kalna (B/L/D)**

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Today we sail further upstream to the temple town of Kalna. Ride electric rickshaws to the enchanting **Rajbari Temple Complex**, which has the highest concentration of temples in the region. Visit the Nabakailas Temple, built in 1809 by the Bardhaman Maharaja, which contains 108 eight slope-roofed shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva. Other temples in the complex feature diverse architecture and terra cotta plaques depict themes of Hindu epics, mythical life of Sree Chaitanya, images of Durga, and various aspects of day-to-day life in the region.



*Terracotta Plaque, Rajbari Temple Complex, Kalna*

We also visit a local **Weaver's home** to see the traditional Weaving of Muslin Cloth. Muslin or “malmal” is a cotton fabric of plain weave made in a wide range of weights from delicate sheers to coarse sheeting. Early muslin was handwoven of uncommonly delicate handspun yarn.



*Muslin Yarn*

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Return to the ship walking through the local vegetable market.

**Highlight of the Day:** Admire the mesmerizing art of the terracotta temples, interaction with a weaver to get an insight into the weaving heritage of Bengal and walk through the local market witnessing the bargains between shoppers and vendors of fruit and vegetables.

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## **Day 5: Kalna – Nabadwip – Mayapur (B/L/D)**

Early morning, we sail towards **Nabadwip**. Literally meaning New (Nab) Island (Dwip), it is the birthplace and abode of Saint Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the founder of the Hindu Vaishnav religion and a great social reformer. Once the capital of the Sena Dynasty under King Lakshman Sena who ruled during the 12th century, the town was an important center of education, religion and culture. Post breakfast we will explore the riverbank village by walk to see the local people engaged in **Handloom Weaving** of Cotton fabric, mainly saris and stole/scarves and other activities.



*Nabadwip Ghat*

Ride the country boat across the river to visit **Mayapur**, the headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Guests can experience the fascinating culture of these followers and their ornate, colourful decorated statues of Krishna. The new temple built to commemorate the Jubilee year of ISKCON in 2016 and largely funded by Alfred B. Ford, the great grandson of car-maker Henry Ford, can be compared to the Vatican. It also contains a 75- foot domed planetarium. Meet Krishna followers and walk through the pilgrim's bazaar.

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*ISKCON Temple, Mayapur*

**Highlight of the Day:** Witness the handloom weaving in the village with a chance to shop for saris and scarves and let your soul mingle in the chants of *Hare Rama Hare Krishna!*

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## **Day 6: Mayapur – Guptipara – Fulia (B/L/D)**

This morning a short sail brings us to **Guptipara**, a rural town, renowned for its paddy fields and the Himsagar mango. Explore the town visiting the Vaishnav temples that contain some fantastic terracotta works. All the structures bear characteristics of the Bengal school of architecture, with carvings depicting scenes from the Hindu epics. Visit a **Potter's home** to see and interact with the artisans creating various clay items

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In the afternoon, we sail across to the opposite riverbank and visit the weaving village of **Fulia**. After the partition of India and the division of Bengal into West Bengal (in India) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), many skilled weavers from Bangladesh, came and settled here and the region become a renowned centre for hand-woven fabrics. With government encouragement and support, the talented weavers soon revived their ancestral occupation and the art of exquisite weaving once again flourished.



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*Saree weaving, Phulia*

Fulia specializes in a combination of **Jacquard and Jamdani Saree Weaving**. Jamdani is typically handloom woven fabric using a mixture of cotton and gold thread. It is one of the most time and labor-intensive forms of handloom weaving, and the most artistic textile rich in motifs.

**Highlight of the Day:** The splendour of Vaishnavite temples with their Chariot and interaction with a potter family in Guptipara. The village of Fulia where weavers create mesmerizing patterns on saris and other fabrics.

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## **Day 7: Fulia – Chandernagore – Serampore – Kolkata (B/L/D)**

This morning we sail further downstream to **Chandernagore**, which was established as a French colony in 1673. The French obtained permission from Ibrahim Khan, the Nawab of Bengal to establish a trading post on the riverbanks of this city, which became a permanent French settlement. Explore the French colonial buildings walking along the promenade, including the former French governor's residence, now converted to a museum (*closed on Thursdays & Saturdays*) that features an exhibition of items that depict life during this period.



*Governor's Palace (Dupleix Museum), Chandernagore*

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Also visit the Sacred Heart Church, designed by French Architect Jacques Duchatz. The church was inaugurated in 1884 and stands for over two centuries to mark the beauty of the architecture during the French period.

Return to the ship and continue our journey back to Kolkata en route we halt to visit **Serampore**, an erstwhile Danish colony. Enjoy a walk in the old quarters to see the Danish Tavern, St. Olav's Church and other Danish heritage monuments. With Serampore being a popular pit-stop for Danish and English traders in 1786 a British innkeeper called James Parr opened the Denmark Tavern & Hotel, popularly called the Danish Tavern, which became a favourite among Europeans. You'll also visit St. Olav's Church, locally known as the Danish Church, that was constructed by the Danish Management between 1755 and 1845. The church is not particularly Scandinavian, but reflects the designs of contemporary churches in British India.

Continue sail to Kolkata and moor for the night. Evening farewell dinner.

**Highlight of the Day:** An insight into French & Dutch colonial heritage, feels like "Europe on the Ganges" !



Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager

## **Day 8: Kolkata Disembarkation (B)**

Following breakfast guests will disembark and transfer for their onward journey.

Disembarkation Time: 09:00 AM

### **Important Note:**

- The itinerary maybe readjusted due to local conditions and days of the week, in order to avoid closure

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of monuments/museums. Last minute sailing adjustments may also occur. The schedule may shift due to the weather or to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. The exact time for each activity will be announced or posted by the onboard tour staff.

- The letters in parentheses indicate the included meal of the day B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner

# FOR BOOKING YOUR CRUISE

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