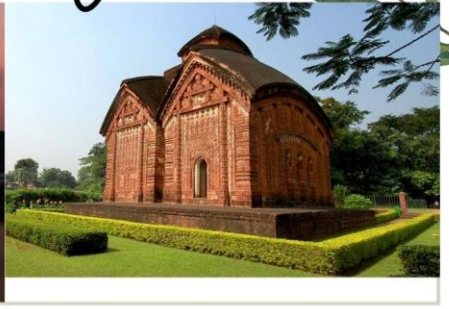




# Stories of Bengal



## Highlights

- Art walk & Bengali Dinner
- A visit to see the Jamdani Muslin weavers
- Boat cruise sightseeing on the Ganges in Murshidabad
- A special 5 – course Sheherwali Dinner
- Baul Singing performance
- Terracotta Temples in Bishnupur
- Heritage walk of Kolkatta



*Bengal was the hotbed of India's independence movement but its place in the annals of history was established long before the British came to India. There was a time when Bengal (undivided) contributed to 12% of the world's GDP. Her soil produced yards of silk, muslin, jute, tea & spice and traders from across the world sailed to her shores. Over the centuries, Bengal's rich history, heritage & architecture, vibrant festivals and celebrations, and of course the delicious cuisines, have made it a hub of colour and creativity. In addition, it has been an intellectual hub for many visionaries from poets, artists, film-makers, scientists, academicians and thinkers.*

*On this journey, we will experience the regal splendour of Bengal and experience her stories through rich art & architecture, incredible textiles, delectable cuisine and much more as we weave our way from Kolkatta to Murshidabad, Shantiniketan and Bishnupur.*

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1- 7 March (Sun): Kolkatta Arrival (D)**

Arrival in Kolkatta.

On arrival, the transfer to the airport will be arranged for you.

*(Please arrive by latest 2.30pm at the airport)*

Tonight, you will be booked at the **Hotel Oberoi Grand** or similar for 1 night.

This evening, be ready as we take you for an art walk to the Experimenter Gallery in Kolkatta. View the two shows-

*Nestled* brings together the works of sculptor and painter Adip Dutta and the revered artist late Meera Mukherjee, revisiting a layered and nuanced relationship between them.

*Bare Bones* is Ayesha Sultana's solo, bringing together an intensely personal yet acutely revealing body of work, that deals with the body and stillness, its relationship with space and movement, breaking down the act of painting to express an intimate moment, where physical and emotional limitations are stretched, tested and broken.

An interactive walk through with the experts at the gallery. Enjoy wine on their terrace before we walk down to have a wonderful Bengali dinner.

Overnight at the hotel.

### **Day 2 – 8 March (Mon): Drive to Murshidabad (B,L,D)**

*(Today will be a long day)*

This morning, after an early breakfast, we set off for Kalna. (approx. 3 hours)

On arrival, we will cross over the Ganges to go meet Mr Rajib Debnath, a textile developer and designer. He will show us the process of the Jamdani Muslin, how its process is almost magical and the importance of the Jamdani in the world of weaving. He, and his father, can be credited with the development of Jamdani in India.

Lunch will be enroute

From here, we will continue on the highlight of our trip, Murshidabad. (approx. 4 hours)

On arrival in Murshidabad, we will be booked at the heritage **Bari Kothi** hotel.

#### **Check in to the hotel**

Pre-dinner, enjoy an enthralling storytelling session on the intangible significance of the place and its architecture to enable visitors to connect both emotionally and intellectually. You will also enjoy a Bari Kothi by night tour.

#### **Dinner & overnight.**

### **Day 3 – 9 March (Tue): Murshidabad (B,L,D)**

Murshidabad sightseeing

Today you will enjoy a unique sightseeing experience by boat. You will visit the site of the Nawab's burial, Katra Mosque, which was built in 1724 and was modelled after the great mosque at Mecca. We will also visit Hazarduari, or "A Thousand Doors," the nawabs' massive Italian Baroque palace, which features an enormous chandelier presented by Queen Victoria and a library of over 10,000

books. We will also visit the Nizamat Imambara which is located quite close to the royal Hazarduari Palace. In 1847 AD, Nawab Nazim Mansoor Ali Khan Feradun Jah built the Imambara after the Siraj-ud-Daulla's Imambara was destroyed by a fire. This is the largest Imambara in West Bengal. We will visit the Kathgola Palace an ancient and ornate mansion surrounded by beautiful gardens. From here we will visit Nasipur Palace. The miniature of the Hazarduari, the Nasipur Royal Palace is situated a little to the north of Akhra, very close to Jagat Seth's house. It was built in the 2nd half of the 19th century by Raja Kirtichand Bahadur who came from Panipath to do business.

Enjoy a unique lunch on the boat.

We will also visit Tantipara – a weavers village. While visiting this village you can experience the age old techniques and highly skilled weavers preparing the finest of silk sarees which are now being recognized in both national and international markets. The weaver's community prepare the famous Bengal sarees (Garad, Baluchari, Silk Handloom, etc).

### **Evening return to the hotel.**

Pre-dinner, enjoy a wonderful Baul performance, minstrels' singing songs & poems about love and devotion

Tonights dinner will be very special Royal Sheherwali Dinner. Sheherwali cuisine is the finest vegetarian spread one can find, even in modern times, and is a wonderful melange of the cuisines of the west and the east of India.

Overnight at the hotel.

### **Day 4 – 10 March (Wed): Murshidabad to Shantiniketan (B, L, D)**

#### **Morning: Optional Village walk**

Post breakfast, we will leave for Shantiniketan post breakfast (approx. 4 hours)  
*Shantiniketan literally translates to "abode of peace". Originally it was a small village inhabited by Santhal Tribes. Later with the development of a world class university with the vision of the Rabindranath Tagore, the education system developed and led to the establishment of Vishwa Bharati University attracting people from all parts of the world to congregate here.*

**In Shantiniketan, you will be booked at Mitali Homestay / The Garden Bungalow or similar for 2 nights.**

#### **Lunch will be in Shantiniketan**

This afternoon, we will visit Lipi's Ceramic studio. Lipi Biswas, a potter, is a fine arts graduate and a self trained ceramic artist. The pottery shapes and designs are inspired by nature.

Dinner (restaurant or hotel)

**Overnight at the hotel.**

### **Day 5- 11 March (Thu): Shantiniketan Sightseeing (B,L,D)**

Shantiniketan sightseeing: *(please note that part of the sightseeing will be on foot or in a toto)*

Highlights include the Uttaryan Complex of five houses from the time of Rabindranath Tagore, named Punascha, Shyamali, Konarka, Udichi, and Udayan. A house called Bichitra is now a museum that houses several of Rabindranath's personal belongings. (if open)

Also see the Visva Bharati University Campus, and the fine arts faculty of Kala Bhavana, The Rabindra-Bhavana museum, and the Chhatimtala meditation site. (all, if open)

We will then visit the Amar Kutir Society for Rural Development, established to sustain the livelihood of traditional West Bengali arts and crafts and its artisans.

Lunch will be at the lunch at the Amar Kutir Hensel Ghar or similar.

**EVENING** – The Saturday afternoon “Haat” market is a colourful and vibrant event where the locals meet to sell their handicrafts.

Dinner (restaurant or hotel)

**Overnight at the hotel.**

**Day 6- 12 March (Fri): Shantiniketan to Kolkatta via Bishnupur (B,L,D)**

*(Today will be a long day)*

Leave early morning for **Bishnupur** to see the wonderful terracotta temples. (apprx 3 1/2 hours)

In Bishnupur proceed for a tour of the town. Bishnupur was which was a part of the Malla dynasty for almost a thousand years. Bishnupur is now renowned for its temples with exclusive terracotta craftsmanship. Is a seat of crafts and culture. “Terracotta” or “Baked Earth” is synonymous of Bishnupur.

Apart from the temples, terracotta pottery, artefacts and even jewellery made of terracotta are widely available and makes Bishnupur all the more famous. The potters here derive their inspiration from the glorious history of kings, soldiers and wars.

*Bishnupur is also known for its silk (tussar), particularly the Baluchari Sarees. Woven on unusual punch-card looms, these sarees have episodes from the Mahabharata woven into the border and pallu. Bellmetal ware and conch-shell jewellery is also available here. Another exquisite craft found here are Dashavatar Cards – a special type of playing card named as the “DASHAVATAR TAS”, which represents the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu.*

Lunch in Bishnupur and continue back to Kolkatta arriving in the evening. (apprx 4 hours)

You will be booked at the **Hotel Oberoi Grand** or similar for tonight.

Early Dinner at the hotel and overnight.

**Day 7 – 13 March (Sat): Depart from Kolkatta (B)**

**Morning: optional Calcutta Heritage walk: In the footsteps of the Raj**

The British had sought to build 'the second city of the Empire' right here and it is this 'building' that we'll show you in the course of our walk through the 'European' areas of what was once the capital of the British Empire in India. There are major plans on to beautify and restore this heritage site with its rich and varied architectural styles. One of our most popular walks this serves as the perfect introduction to British Calcutta and gives you a sneak peek into what went into the making of the Colonial Capital of India. So prepare to whet your appetite for all things Raj.

Return to the hotel.

The transfer to the airport will be arranged for you.

**\*\* Return home with wonderful memories of your holiday \*\***

**Price per person on a twin-sharing basis:Rs 73,900**

**Single supplement: Rs. 18,500**

## **Inclusions**

- 6 nights accommodation in the hotels mentioned or similar
- Daily Breakfast
- All meals from Dinner on Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 7
- Services of a tour escort
- Local guides for all tours
- Sightseeing tours as mentioned
- All entrance fees

## **Exclusions**

- Airfare to Kolkatta & back
- Tips to the driver / guide
- Drinks with meals
- Items of a personal nature
- Anything not specifically mentioned under “Inclusions”
- 5% GST

## **Please note:**

- Accommodation in Shantiniketan is very basic and the services and facilities are different from typical hotels.
- Due to Covid restrictions, some monuments and places may not permit us to enter and we may need to re-plan the itinerary.
- As a precautionary measure, we will require all guests to get a Covid Test done and sent to us within 72 to 24 hours prior to departure.

## **BOOKINGS AND PAYMENTS**

1. Full payment will be required at the time of booking.

## **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS**

1. Payment of the booking deposit constitutes acceptance of our terms and conditions.
2. Cancellation of any reservations are subject to the following conditions:
  - a. Cancellation effected between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 will attract a cancellation fee of Rs 30000 pp
  - b. Cancellation effected between 23<sup>rd</sup> February and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 and will attract a cancellation charge of 50% of the tour cost.
  - c. Cancellation effected after 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 will attract a cancellation charge of 100% of the tour cost.
  - d. No refund will be due after commencement of travel.
3. Refunds due can take upto 4 weeks to process.

**[For bookings, please contact us on](#)**

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**T: 020 66442929**