

STORIES OF BENGAL



Bengal is a fertile, remarkable sliver of land. 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. Through the annals of its history, it has so many stories to tell – from being the beating heart of our independence movement to its rich textiles. This is a journey during which we will hear innumerable, fascinating stories from Bengal.

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- 17 September - Kolkatta Arrival (D)

Arrival in Kolkatta.

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

Tonight, you will be booked at the **Taj Bengal** or similar for 1 night.

The afternoon will be at leisure for you to explore Kolkata on your own.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 2 – 18 September - Drive to Murshidabad (B,L,D)

(Today will be a long day)

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

On arrival, we will meet and interact with weavers of the famed Jamdani saris. 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.

Lunch will be enroute

From here, we will continue on the highlight of our trip, Murshidabad. (approx. 3 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 – 19 September - 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.

Late afternoon, return to the hotel to relax and enjoy 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 – 20 September - Murshidabad to Shantiniketan (B, L, D)

Post breakfast, we will leave for Shantiniketan post breakfast (approx. 4 hours)

Enroute to Shantiniketan, we will stop and meet an entire village of Kantha weavers.

We then continue on to Shantiniketan.

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

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

This afternoon, we will visit 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. 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. If not, from the outside)

Dinner (restaurant or hotel)

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 5- 21 September: Shantiniketan Sightseeing (B,L,D)

This morning, we will head out to visit the village chief of a Santhal tribe and see how they make tribal jewellery from grass.

We will also 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 a restaurant.

This afternoon, we will have the opportunity to visit the local “Haat” – this market is a colourful and vibrant event where the locals meet to sell their handicrafts. In addition, we will meet and interact with an artisan who is a master of vegetable dyes, showing us what sustainable clothing is all about.

Dinner (restaurant or hotel)

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 6- 22 September - Shantiniketan to Bishnupur (B,L,D)

Leave early morning for **Bishnupur** to see the wonderful terracotta temples. (apprx 3 ½ 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

We will also meet and interact with the artisans to make the famed Baluchari saris.

Dinner and overnight at the **Hotel Annapurna**.

Day 7 – 23 September – Bishnupur to Kolkatta (B,L,D)

This morning, post breakfast, we will make our way back to Kolkatta (3 ½ hours) to reach by lunchtime.

Lunch this afternoon will be at a local restaurant.

Early this evening, be ready as we take you for an interactive art walk through one of Bengal’s art galleries.

Later, dinner and overnight at the **Hotel Glenburn Penthouse** or similar for 1 night.

Day 8 – 24 September - Depart from Kolkatta (B)

Morning: 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. *(Your flight should be booked for 2pm or later)*

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

Price per person on a twin-sharing basis: Rs 89,500

Single supplement: Rs. 26,500

Inclusions

- 7 nights accommodation in the hotels mentioned or similar
- Daily Breakfast
- All meals from Dinner on Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 8
- Services of a tour escort
- Local guides for all tours
- Sightseeing tours as mentioned
- All entrance fees

Exclusions

- Airfare to Kolkata & 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.





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