

BENGAL, BANGLADESH & ASSAM CRUISE

26 SEPTEMBER - 16 OCTOBER 2028



FROM
£7,845
PER PERSON

Tour Leaders: Nick Van Gruisen & Chris Caldicott


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY

This 18-nights adventure charts five legendary unexplored Himalayan life forces of Brahmaputra—Jumna—Padma—Meghna—Hooghly through India and Bangladesh. These rivers offer rural and sub-urban ambiances with a colossal surge of waters in the confluence of Jamna and Ganga and further down at the convergence of Padma and Meghna and the hustle-bustle of cities of Kolkata, Narayanganj and Dhaka in the glow of beautiful sunrises and sunsets and golden hours on crystal waters.

The Cruise is rich in the wildlife of UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Manas National Park, Sundarbans in Bangladesh and Ramsar Tiger Reserve of Indian Sundarbans. Six full days of wildlife experience through Mangrove Forest walks; morning, evening and night safaris in the creeks and inlets of the alluvial mud flats of bio-diverse ecosystems; elephant safaris and four jeep safaris are a dream come true for all wildlife and bird enthusiasts.

The pottery and terracotta artisans, the cotton weavers of Pachalia, the muga-paat-eri silk weavers of Sualkuchi, the Jamdhani cotton designers, the idol makers of Kumartuli, the flower markets of Kolkata, the floating markets of Bangladesh, the vegetable and spice bazaars of Barisal, the tea estates of Assam and the fish auctions in Narayanganj, the brass work and the bell metal cottage industry are fascinating acumens in the entrepreneurship of the peoples of India and Bangladesh.

The history and cultures of the two nations through Kolkata—the old Capital of undivided India to Sonargaon—the old capital of Bengal and a walk through the ruins of Panam City along with Dhaka City make the experience extremely rich with talks, presentations, videos and orientations by our onboard naturalist and destination manager and tour guides for onshore experiences.





21-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 26 SEPTEMBER 2028

26 September London / Dubai

Suggested flights (not included in the cost of the tour) with Emirates via Dubai departing London Heathrow at 14.20 hrs.

27 September Dubai / Kolkata

Arrive in Kolkata at 08.15 hrs.

Lunch under own arrangements. Transfer to board the MV Mahabaahu, where 18 nights are spent on a full-board basis. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.

28 September Kolkata / Sajnekhali

Leave on a walking tour of the heart of British Kolkata, Dalhousie Square taking in the classical Post Office, site of the notorious Black Hole, past the Writers' Building built in 1780 and resurfaced in 1880 and St. Andrew's Kirk. Move on to view the exterior of Government House, seat of the Viceroy, a building based on Kedleston Hall, and past the old Town Hall. Visit St. John's Church modelled on St. Martin's in the Fields and designed by James Agg stuffed with fascinating tombs both within and without. Continue to the famous white marble Victoria Memorial, designed by Sir William Emerson in 1921. It has an excellent display on the history of the city and a gallery of pictures by British artists, such as

Zoffany, who came to India. Explore Kumartuli, a potters quarter in North Kolkata famous for sculpting Indian Gods and Goddesses out of clay for different festivals in West Bengal throughout the year.

Return to the boat for lunch on board. Start sailing towards Sajnekhali. Dinner on board.

29 September Sajnekhali

Explore the waters of the Indian Sunderbans in a comfortable local ferry and enjoy tea/coffee and cookies as you look for wildlife. Return to the ship for a quick breakfast and then enjoy a Purulia cultural performance in one of the villages and listen to the baul singers—they are the mystic minstrels of Bengal. Enjoy a walk around the Mangrove Interpretation Centre at Sajnekhali to look for wildlife.

Return to the boat for lunch on board. Afternoon boat safari in Sajnekhali to look in the narrow water inlets for some more wildlife. Dinner on board.

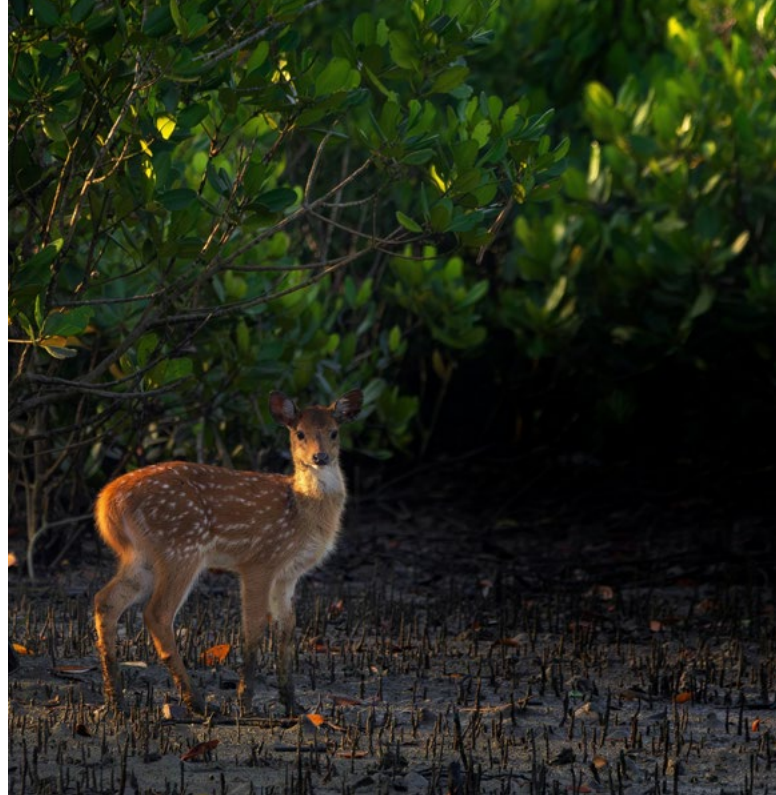
30 September Hemnagar / Mongla Port

Optional morning yoga on deck. Enjoy a talk on 'Bangladesh as a country, its monuments culture and commercial enterprises'. Full day at leisure to relax on board as the boat sails from

Hemnagar to Mongla Port and getting through custom clearance formalities. It is a laid-back day but with a lot of official activity on board both for custom and immigration clearance.

Lunch on board. At Hemnagar, the Indian Border Security Force does a check and clears you to exit the Indian land border. Sail the Indian waters until you reach Angtiara where you exit the Indian waters as you reach Shekhbaria for custom clearance on the Bangladesh side. This evening, learn the art of wearing an Indian Sari. Dinner on board.





1 October Hemnagar / Mongla Port

Depart for an early morning boat safari towards the Harbaria Forest Station. Return to the boat for a quick breakfast. Enjoy a morning forest walk at the Harbaria Forest Station to study the mangrove fauna and flora. Continue by boat to the Karamjal Eco Tourism Centre and then onwards to the Karamjal Crocodile Farm.

Return to the boat for lunch on board as you sail to the Daingmari Dolphin Sanctuary. Take the tenders to sail in the Daingmari waters for not just dolphins but also to watch the techniques of otter fishing undertaken by the local fishing community. The ship sails towards Mongla Port. Drive to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bagerhat—A sixty domed mosque and tomb of Khan Jahan, the architect of the mosque. Return to the ship for a cultural performance on the Sundarban communities through 'Poter Gaan'. Dinner on board.

2 October Kotka Ghat

An early morning wake-up for an exciting boat safari. Today, sail in the tenders along the shores of Sundarbans, in the canals and creeks near the Kotka forest station for an hour and a half to catch wildlife (spotted deer, monkeys, wild boar, water monitors and birds) as it wakes up among the aerial roots of the mangrove mudflats. Return to the boat for breakfast as the ship sails through the estuary waters and reaches Jamtola Beach in the Bay of Bengal. Walk through the mangrove

vegetation where the tiger plays hide and seek as it leaves behind 'fresh pugmarks'. For those who are water enthusiasts can indulge in taking a dip in the waters of Bay of Bengal.

Return to the boat for lunch and sail towards the Chandpai Dolphin Sanctuary. After dinner on board, enjoy a night safari in the Chandpai water inlets close to the mangrove shores. This is a very exciting and different experience in these water laden animal sanctuaries.

3 October Barisal

Early morning departure with packed breakfast to the floating vegetable market. Enjoy the pristine beauty of the countryside and the shopping habitat of the growers—seasonal vegetables and fruits, paddy, rice saplings, timber, furniture and boats selling tea and local breakfast varieties in one of the inlet waterways of a village. This is a unique experience and one can see that everything that needs to be transported is done on the river. It is a very engrossing sight and one must be quick with cameras as the boats fly by. We snack on the local titbits for breakfast and buy the local vegetables and fruits before returning to the boat.

Lunch on board. At Barisal, walk through the thriving village market for fresh vegetables and local fruits as well as spices. Visit one of the Bangladeshi ferries to see it's layout on the inside. Dinner on board.

4 October Barisal / Chandhpur / Dhaka

Optional morning yoga on the sundeck. Sail out of Barisal and cruise into the waters of Padma (Ganga and Jamuna) and Meghna. The volume and quantity of water at the confluence is immense and one can see the locals, very skilled fishermen ride the waves in these waters. The fishermen of this area are known for Hilsa fishing which is a delicacy of Bangladesh. Arrive at a Hilsa fishing village and engage with the locals for Hilsa, prawns and shrimps.

Return to the boat for an authentic Bangladeshi style fish curry with a fresh catch of prawns. Afternoon at leisure. This evening, sail into Dhaka and enjoy an evening walking tour. Dinner on board.

5 October Dhaka / Sonargaon / Jamdhani

Early departure for Sonargaon, a 13th-century City of Panam. Visit the Galdi Mosque and walk through the ruins of Panam City to imagine its former glory. Visit the Folklore museum. Continue to Nawapara to see Jamdhani weaving and purchase beautiful saris and fabric.

Lunch at the home of a local Jamdhani entrepreneur to taste home-cooked authentic Bangla food. This afternoon, enter the hustle and bustle of Narayanganj. Experience a formal Bangladeshi welcome with folk-artists when you return to the ship for dinner on board.



6 October Dhamrai

Drive towards the Dhamrai Metal Craft village to meet local craftsmen and learn about the lost wax method. Stop on route at the National Martyr's Monument to pay respect to the martyrs who laid their lives during the Liberation War in 1971. Then move to the Metal Craft village. Enjoy a Bengali sari tying demonstration by a local lady and lungi by a local gentleman.

Lunch at a local Restaurant. Visit Kakran Pottery village to see the traditional potters clinging to their ancestral profession. Return to the boat stopping on the way to see the National Parliament Building from the outside. Traditional Bangladeshi themed dinner on board.

7 October Dhaka

Early morning visit to the Dhakeshwari Temple and the National Language Monument. Enjoy a cycle rickshaw ride on the streets of Dhaka to reach the Dhaka University Building. See the Lal Bagh Fort and the tomb of Bibi Pari, the daughter of the Mughal General, Shahista Khan. Continue to Ahsan Manzil, also called the Pink Palace.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Take cycle rickshaws to the bustling Shakhari Bazaar. Return to the boat to freshen up before a hosted dinner with a local family.

8 October Dhaka / Mawa / Aricha

Optional morning yoga on the sundeck. Sail from Dhaka to Mawa and onwards to Aricha. Day at leisure on board to observe life along the river at the confluence of

Jamuna and Ganga where the river becomes the Padma. Observe local mosques, shipbuilding, commercial enterprises and the Bangabandhu Bridge. Country boats, sand barrages, tugs, dredgers, fisherman, colourful ferries—life on the water embraced by the Bangladeshis is intriguing to watch.

Lunch on board. Afternoon at leisure. This evening, go for a sunset walk on the banks of Padma. Dinner on board.

9 October Aricha / Sirajganj

Morning orientation talk on Sirajganj. Board the tenders to visit the Sirajganj area. We visit Pachalia village for cotton weaving for colourful gamchas, lungis and saris. Drive to the Hati Kamrul Navratna Temple. Enjoy a cultural performance of the local artists in Sirajganj.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Return to the boat as it anchors at Sirajganj. This evening, wear saris and lungis bought in Bangladesh. Dinner on board.

10 October Sirajganj / Bahadurabad

Optional morning yoga on the sundeck. Full day at leisure on board as the boat sails from Sirajganj to Bahadurabad.

Lunch on board. Early evening, learn a few steps of Bollywood dancing. Dinner on board.

11 October Chilmari / Shishumara / Dhubri

Sail away from the Bangladesh land border at Chilmari. The border security guards of Bangladesh at Shahber Agla conduct the Custom and Immigration Clearance

formalities.

Lunch on board. Sail towards Shishumara where the Indian Border Security Forces do the Customs formalities. Sail to Dhubri by the evening for an Assamese themed dinner on board.

12 October Asharekandi

This morning, attend the prayer ceremony (Ardas) at the Sikh temple at Dam-dama Sahib Gurudwara.

Lunch at the temple which serves lunch to all. Experience the concept of langar (community eating) here. The concept of eating together was started by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru. Visit Asharekandi to try clay pottery with the Hiras and Kumhars communities who use the Hiramati soil to shape pots and idols. See the art of terracotta of this region of Assam. Sail towards Goalpara. This evening, we have a talk on 'Wildlife in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Kaziranga and Manas National Parks and in India'. Dinner on board.





13 October Manas National Park

Early departure to Manas National Park with a packed breakfast for an elephant safari.

Lunch in a local restaurant. Afternoon jeep safari in Manas National Park. Return to the boat for dinner on board.

14 October Goalpara / Sualkuchi

Enjoy a talk on the 'River Brahmaputra and Assam'. Morning at leisure as the boat sails from Goalpara to Sualkuchi.

Lunch on board. Afternoon visit to Sualkuchi, the silk hub of Assam, to understand the detailed Muga, Eri and Paat silk production. Muga is the cherished golden silk of Assam, Paat the white wonder and Eri a warm non-violent silk. The Bodo tribes welcome you to the arena of silk with their cultural performances. Observe the Mekhela Chaadar draping for women and for Dhoti tying for gentlemen.

Walk through the market of the Sualkuchi village before returning to the boat. Enjoy a special farewell dinner on a deserted island.

15 October Guwahati / Kolkata

Sail towards Guwahati to dock at Pandu Port. Disembark the boat and leave for the Kamakhya Temple and observe the devotees offering prayers to Kamakhya Devi, the Goddess of Desire. Transfer to Guwahati Airport for a domestic flight to Kolkata.

Lunch under own arrangements. On arrival in Kolkata, transfer to the Taj City Centre New Town Hotel, a 5-star hotel a short drive from the airport, where one night is spent. Dinner under own arrangements.

16 October Kolkata / Delhi / London

Transfer to Kolkata Airport for suggested flight (not included) Emirates flight via Dubai departing Kolkata at 09.50 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 20.15 hrs.

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Superior without balcony	£7,845
Deluxe with balcony	£8,545
Luxury with balcony	£9,045
Suite with balcony	£10,245

Superior single supplement	£2,375
Deluxe single supplement	£3,375

Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- All meals on board the MV Mahabaahu
- All entrance fees, visits and excursions as per the itinerary
- Soft drinks and tea / coffee
- All transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- Gratuities to driver/s; gratuities to guide/s; gratuities in restaurants; portage
- The services of your tour leaders throughout
- Domestic flights as shown in the itinerary (including 10kg excess baggage per person)

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Alcoholic drinks
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Visa fees
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 19/06/2026



M.V MAHABAAHU FACT SHEET



The MV Mahabaahu cruise ship has been rated by the Travelinsider Magazine of Qantas Australian Airlines as being one of the Top Ten River Cruise Ships of the World and the overall cruise experience on the Brahmaputra River has been rated as one of Top Fifty Adventure Experiences of the World by the Sunday Times of UK.

It is a 23 cabin ship with four categories, a swimming pool, a boutique SPA, a passenger elevator through four of the five decks, a restaurant, lounge, bar and a small open gym. The ship is a class certified vessel, operates with three engines and is a double bottom.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ON BOARD INCLUDE:

- A well-stocked library
- Various board games
- Swimming pool on the first deck
- Spa and salon on the lower deck
- Sun deck

THE SHIP'S COMPLEMENT CONSISTS OF 30 STAFF INCLUDING:

- Captain/Master
- Cruise Director
- Marine Engineer
- Guide/Naturalist
- Hospitality Manager
- Navigational Crew
- Hospitality Crew

The chefs devise local/Indian and Continental cuisine menus using locally sourced ingredients. All meals inclusive of tea and coffee served in the main indoor dining restaurant. Given advance notice, all dietary requirements can be catered for, along with the guest preferred alcoholic beverages.

Imported alcoholic beverages, laundry, massages, salon and phone calls/internet (when available): are extra and subject to additional charges.

ACCOMMODATION

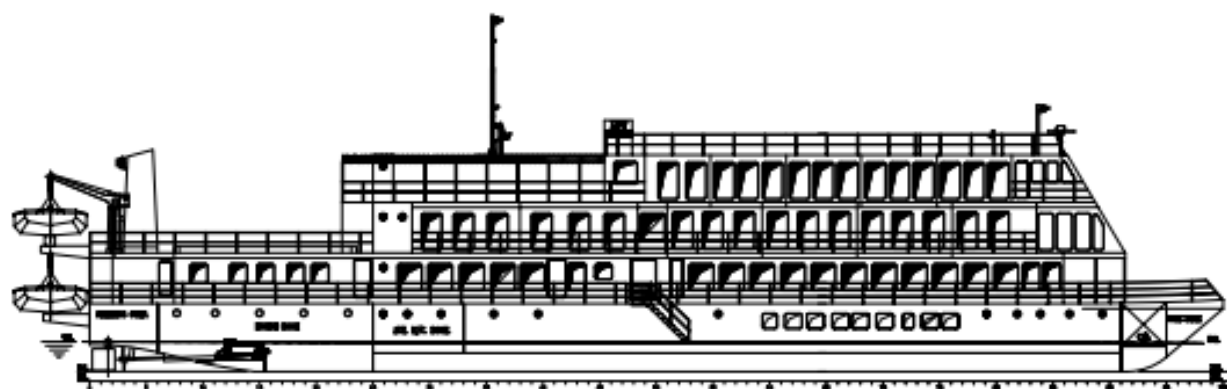
All cabins incorporate satellite TV, personal safe, mini bar, in-house telephone and en-suite bathrooms. All the cabins and the restaurant/lounge are centrally air-conditioned.

There are 23 aesthetically designed twin and double cabins as below:

- 2 Suites with balcony - 283.2 sq ft (includes the cabin, bathroom and balcony)
- 2 Luxury cabins with Juliet balcony - 230 sq. ft (includes the cabin, bathroom and balcony)
- 7 Deluxe cabins with Juliet balcony - 206 sq. ft (includes the cabin, bathroom and balcony)
- 12 Superior cabins without balcony - 150 sq.ft. (includes the cabin and bathroom)



M.V. Mahabaahu Deck Plan



Sun Deck
Deck 2
Deck 1
Main
Lower

Cabins

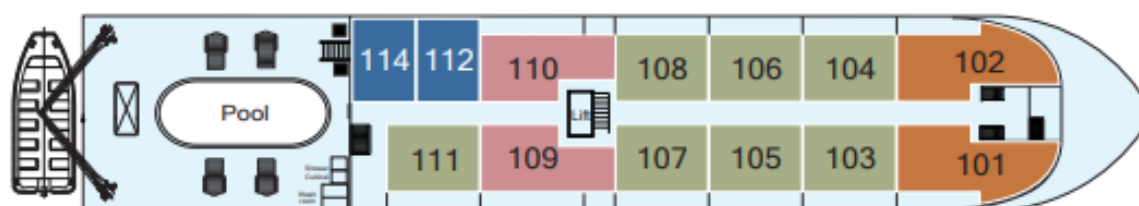
2 Suites	with private balcony
2 Luxury	with private balcony
7 Deluxe	with private balcony
12 Superior	without balcony



Sun Deck



Deck II



Deck I



Main Deck



Lower Deck



YOUR TOUR LEADERS

Nick Van Gruisen

Raised in Northumberland, in the 1970s Nick spent five years as a professional guide in Botswana and southern Africa. He then joined the Tiger Mountain group, pioneering cultural, trekking and wildlife holidays throughout the Indian subcontinent. He founded Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions in 1991, from which The Ultimate Travel Company emerged in 1998.

Chris Caldicott

Since travelling to some of the most remote parts of the world as Photographer-in-Residence to the Royal Geographical Society, Chris Caldicott has continued his globetrotting lifestyle as a freelance photographer, writer and lecturer specialising in food and travel. He has had several books published about food, travel and the spice trade and visited 118 countries on assignments to capture evocative images and write about memorable experiences for publications such as *Vanity Fair*, *Condé Nast Traveller*, *The Sunday Times*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *Tatler*, *House and Garden* and *The Telegraph*.

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