

BENGAL BAY

Kolkata, Sundarbans, Andaman Islands

ITINERARY

TOUR PREPARATION

PRICING & ACCOMMODATIONS



Date

October 9 - 20, 2020
Orissa Ext. to Oct. 24

Price

\$4,400

Duration

12 DAYS

Availability

Open[BOOK NOW](#)

About This Tour

India is a world unto itself. Each of its 29 states has its own unique history, culture and character. Much of East India feels very British, because the British Empire ruled the entire Indian subcontinent from Calcutta, which was once the world's most fashionable city after London. During the 18th and 19th century, East India became one of the world's greatest exporters, sending tea, textiles and spices to Europe, Asia and North America. The Europeans are no longer in control, and the Bengal Tigers that used to roam the mangrove forests here are now very rare, but much of this region retains a great deal of its past and feels very much unlike anywhere else in India.

From Kolkata we travel to the Sundarbans, a mangrove area in the delta formed by the confluence of Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers in the Bay of Bengal. The Bengali word for Sundarbans means "beautiful forest." Four protected areas in the Sundarbans are enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Finally, the tour visits the Andaman Islands, an archipelago actually closer to Myanmar than to India, but an important historical outpost during the British colonial era and now an enticing vacation spot with its crystal clear waters and sandy beaches. Enjoy an optional extension to the Orissa state after the main tour, seeing Bhubaneswar and Puri.

Tour Highlights

- Kolkata, formerly known as Calcutta
- Kolkata's Dalhousie Square *
- Sundarbans Delta *
- River cruises
- Wildlife viewing
- Andaman Islands
- Port Blair
- Beach time

EXTENSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Bhubaneswar, capital of ancient Orissa
- Konark Temple *
- Puri, a "holy abode" of India
- Gotipua, majestic folk dance of Orissa

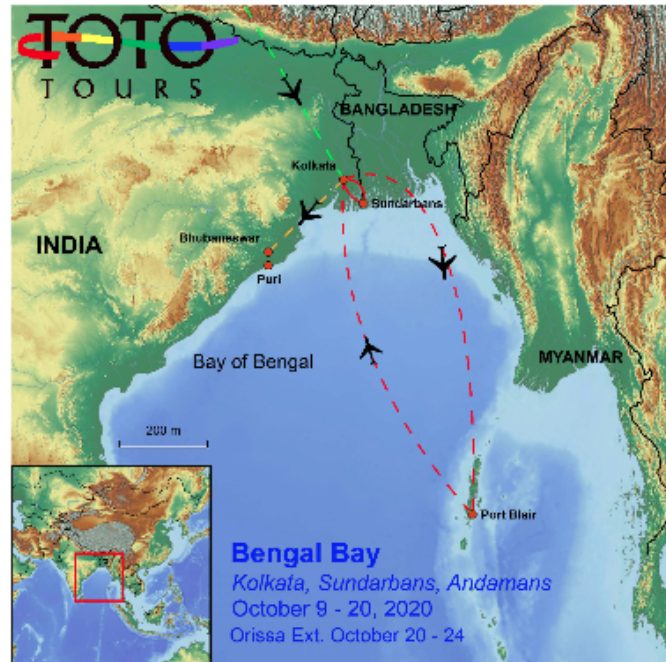
* UNESCO World Heritage Sites

MAIN TOUR ITINERARY

Friday, October 9, 2020

Arrive in Kolkata

Your flight will likely arrive late today. A driver will meet you at the airport and transfer you to our hotel for an overnight stay. The tour officially begins tomorrow. *(Meals Aloft)*



Tour Map - Click to Enlarge

Saturday, October 10, 2020

Kolkata Sightseeing

The name Kolkata was derived from the words “Kali ghat”. The British then subsequently anglicized it into Calcutta. Today the city has reverted to its original name. Kolkata is the principal commercial and cultural of East India, once the center of the British Empire mercantile trade routes. After breakfast and a leisurely morning, we depart our hotel at 10:30 am, starting our sightseeing at Victoria Memorial, another landmark in the city that marks the British reign in India. A combination of Italian renaissance and Mughal architecture, the white marble architecture was the British attempt to replicate the Taj Mahal and is a monument to Queen Victoria and a museum dedicated to the Raj.

We stop for lunch at “Oh Calcutta” - known for outstanding Bengali Cuisine. After lunch, visit The Marble Palace, made with Italian marble. The lush green lawn in front of it is clad with statues of Hindu Gods, The Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, the great explorer Christopher Columbus, Lord Buddha and some lions. Next we visit Belur Math, the international headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission, which houses several temples and shrines. This evening, Toto Tours hosts a Welcome Dinner at our hotel restaurant. *(All Meals)*



Victoria Memorial

Sunday, October 11, 2020

More Kolkata Sightseeing

We begin our day of touring very early with a two-hour walking tour from 7:00 to 9:00 am. The Heritage Walk of Dalhousie Square, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, takes place in the morning so that you can leisurely take in the architecture and history of the city's many unique and spectacular buildings without any traffic on the roads. We begin at The Flower Market on the River Hoogly and proceed to the site of the terrible "Black Hole, the famous Writer's Building, the former HQ of the infamous East India Company, the magnificent Governor's House and the almost forgotten Charnock Mausoleum. The whole experience takes you back to the 18th and 19th century when the British ruled the entire subcontinent from Calcutta - at that time the most fashionable city in the world after London.

We continue by bus to Kumartolli, the open-air workshop and home of the kumars or potters who make the life size deities that are worshipped throughout the year at festivals and pujas. Next, visit a Jain Temple (also called Parshwanath Temple), followed by College Street (one of Asia's largest book market). We visit Kalighat temple, the main Kali temple (Durga) in Calcutta, for an evening ceremony. Culminate the day at Sishu Bhavan, one of Mother Theresa's many homes for the underprivileged. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Kolkata Sightseeing

Monday, October 12, 2020

Sundarbans

This morning, we drive to Gothkhali, where the road journey ends and the cruise to the Sunderbans begins. Named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sunderbans is the world's largest delta and mangrove swamp, where the Ganges River creates the world's largest estuarine forest. The vast swampy delta of the two great Indian rivers, Brahmaputra and the Ganges stretches over areas consisting of mangrove forests, swamps and forest islands all creating a chain of small rivers and streams. The Sunderbans National Park in West Bengal is home of the Royal Bengal Tiger. After lunch we depart by private boat for Sajnekhali Tiger Project Area for viewing wildlife, and visiting Sajnekhali Museum and Mangrove Interpretation Centre. We return to our jungle camp for a relaxing evening with dinner, a panoramic view from the Watch Tower, and an evening folk dance performance. *(All Meals)*



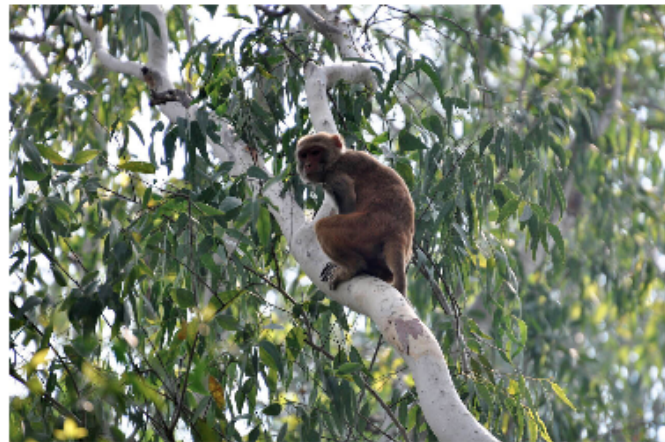
Sundarban Deer

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Sundarbans Boat Cruise

We take a thrilling private boat cruise inside creeks and dense forest (breakfast on board during cruise) through numerous rivers. We visit Dobanke Watch Tower where a canopy walk inside the forest allows you to experience the life in which wild animals live, while getting an all-around view of the forest. We also visit the Spotted Deer Rehabilitation Centre.

Afterwards cruise through Matla Sea Face (the point from where Bay of Bengal can be seen) and cruise back through the five-river junction to Pitchkhali. We will interact with the local community at a typical Sunderban settlement to understand their local art, culture and way of life (how man and tiger coexist in such a difficult terrain). We return to our camp for another relaxing evening at camp with dinner and entertainment. *(All Meals)*



Sundarban Macaque

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

River Cruise / Return to Kolkata

As you wake up to the chirping of birds and morning wake up bell, a hot cup of tea is served in your balcony. View the array of birds in the fruit trees near your cottage. Take a morning cruise into the Sunderban Tiger Reserve once again through creeks and rivers heading to the Sudhayakhali Watchtower. Walk through caged walkways after disembarking towards the watchtower, searching for the elusive tiger. There is a nearby sweet water pond where you may sight deer drinking water or a monitor lizard basking in the sun as well as monkeys and wild boars. Breakfast is served on board as we cruise back to our nature camp. After an early lunch we return to Kolkata by bus and check-in at a hotel near the airport. The evening is free. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Blue eared Kingfisher

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Fly to Andaman Islands

After an early breakfast, we check out of our hotel and transfer to airport for our morning flight to the Islands. A 90-minute flight takes us to Port Blair in the Andaman Islands. Upon arrival, we transfer to our hotel for check-in and a little rest time. In the late afternoon, we walk to the Cellular Jail, a three-story prison used to house freedom fighters working to oust Britain's colonial government in India. The day draws to a gentle close with the Sound and Light Show at the historic Cellular Jail which provides a vivid look into the struggle for India's independence. Overnight in Port Blair. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Fly to Andaman Islands

Friday, October 16, 2020

Havelock Island

We have an early morning departure by ferry to Havelock island (34 miles by sea from Port Blair). It takes approx 2 hrs to reach the island. We will enjoy our afternoon at Beach Number 7 on the western coast, better known as “The Radha Nagar beach”, named Asia’s best beach by TIME Magazine. Fine white sand, turquoise blue waters and a lot of peace and serenity are the hallmark of this beautiful area. The water at the beach is of exceptional quality as there is very little wave action. Overnight on Havelock. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Coral Reef at Havelock Island

Saturday, October 17, 2020

Neil Island

After breakfast at our resort, we transfer to Havelock Jetty to depart for Neil Island as per ship timing. Upon arrival we transfer to our resort for check-in. The afternoon is free to visit the nearby Bharatpur Beach to enjoy blue crystal water. In the evening, we will walk to a nice vantage point to watch the sun set over the sea. The evening is free and we overnight on Neil Island. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Andaman Sunset

Sunday, October 18, 2020

Return to Port Blair

After breakfast at the resort we return to Port Blair, driving about two hours. On arrival at Port Blair we transfer to our hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore the town and shop for souvenirs. Overnight in Port Blair. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Cellular Jail in Port Blair

Monday, October 19, 2020

Ross Island

After breakfast we visit Ross Island, the place from where the British governed the entire Andaman and Nicobar islands prior to India's Independence. This island is an ideal destination for nature walks amidst sylvan surroundings with deer, peacocks and exotic birds, to mention a few of the wildlife sightings we may encounter. Overnight on Ross Island. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Ross Island

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Return to Kolkata / Departure

After breakfast at hotel, transfer to the airport for our early afternoon flight UK #778, departing at 1:55 pm and arriving back in Kolkata at 4:15 pm. On arrival we transfer to a hotel near the airport for wash/change till 9:00 pm. We make a late-night transfer to the international terminal in the airport to connect with our departing flights back home. *(Breakfast)*



Return to Kolkata

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO BHUBANESWAR & PURI

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Bhubaneswar

We transfer to the airport for our flight AI #776, departing at 9:10 am and arriving at 10:20 am in Bhubaneswar, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Orissa. Traveling through the state of Orissa is a blend of art, architecture and ancient cultures. This old capital city has some stunning temples clustered around the Bindusagar Tank. At one time there were more than 7,000 temples here, but only 500 remain dating from the 7th to the 11th centuries.

On arrival transfer to our hotel for check in and immediately depart to visit the Museum of Tribal Arts and Artifacts and the three great temples of Shiva: Mukteswara, Parusurameshwara and Lingaraj. Close to the beautifully decorated 10th century Mukteswara Temple is the 11th century Lingaraja Temple representing the peak of Orissa art. The small and richly decorated Parsurameswara Temple has sculptures featuring amorous couples, animals and floral motifs. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Bhubaneswar Overlook

Thursday, October 22, 2020

Puri

Our journey today begins with a visit to Hirapur, a hypaethral (open-to-the-sky) temple dedicated to 64 yogini (female practitioners of yoga), followed by a stop at the appliqué work village Pipli and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Konark Temple, a crowning piece of Orissan architecture and sculpture dating back to the 13th century. We continue to Puri, one of the four holy abodes in India. Pre-Dravidian and pre-Aryan history relates that a tooth of Buddha was temporarily enshrined here. The evening is free. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Puri Konark Temple

Friday, October 23, 2020

Puri

Today morning we will visit Panda's Akhara in Puri. Pandas are local Priests in Puri. They have their club houses called Akharas. These priests go to their respective clubs to unwind. They are famous for their wrestling skills, though they indulge in dances, music and merry making. Next we visit Puri Temple and the artisan village Raghurajpur that specializes in pattachitrs – the art of painting vivid colors on palm leaves. You will also see the ancient art of palm leaf etching used to illustrate manuscripts in the 16th century. We will spend some time in late afternoon in Ramchandi fishing village. Thousands of fishing boats, a huge variety of fish, colorful fishermen and women, and the bustling fish market make for quite a sight.

(Breakfast / Dinner)



Panda Exercising in an Akhara

Saturday, October 24, 2020

Return to Kolkata / Departure

Enjoy a morning at leisure, followed by a two-hour drive to Bhubaneswar airport for flight AI #780 departing at 3:10 pm and arriving back in Kolkata at 3:55 pm. Upon arrival transfer to a hotel near the airport for wash/change till 9:00 pm. We have a late-night transfer to the international terminal in the airport to connect with our departing flights back home. *(Breakfast)*



Farewell to India

TOUR PREPARATION

Entry Requirements-- For U.S. citizens, a valid passport and a visa for travel to India are required. It is easy to obtain your visa through a simple online registration process. [Click here](#) to visit the visa portal.

Immunizations & Health— No immunizations are required, but the U.S. Center for Disease Control strongly recommends the following inoculations: tetanus, hepatitis A & B, typhoid, and Japanese encephalitis. You should only drink boiled or bottled water in India. Avoid cut salads, raw vegetables and fruits without skin everywhere except in hotel restaurants. [Please click here](#) to visit the CDC website.

Exit Requirements -- No airport tax is currently charged upon departure from India, nor is one anticipated. However, any such taxes or fees instituted after publication of this itinerary will be the responsibility of the clients to pay directly to the appropriate airport authorities.

Making Travel Arrangements to Kolkata

On this tour, international airfare is NOT included. You will need to get a round-trip flight between your city and Kolkata, India (airport code: CCU). We encourage you to contact Steven Goldberg at Frosch Travel in Chicago, who can work with you to find the best flights to get you there and back.

Steven Goldberg / Frosch Travel

Toll-Free in USA: 1-800-323-1276

International guests, please call +1-312-371-9686

Email: steven.goldberg@frosch.com

When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. If you leave a message on Steven's voice mail, he will return your call promptly. He will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate.

Included in the cost of this tour is a round-trip internal flight within India: from Kolkata to Port Blair in the Andaman Islands, and back again.

On the optional extension, there is an included round-trip internal flight from Kolkata to Bhubaneswar, and back again.

Hotel services begin in Kolkata on 09 October 2020 at 3pm. You can plan your arrival for any time this day, but be aware that your room might not be ready if you arrive before 3pm. Please do not schedule any departing flight from Kolkata before 9pm on 20 October. Most flights depart late at night. If you are participating in the Bhubaneswar and Puri extension, book your flight departing late at night on 24 October. We can help you extend your stay at the beginning and end of the tour if you wish.

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible we often must turn away last-minute registrants because we relinquish hotel space and air reservations 8 – 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.