

PONDERS

The truly independent cruise & travel company



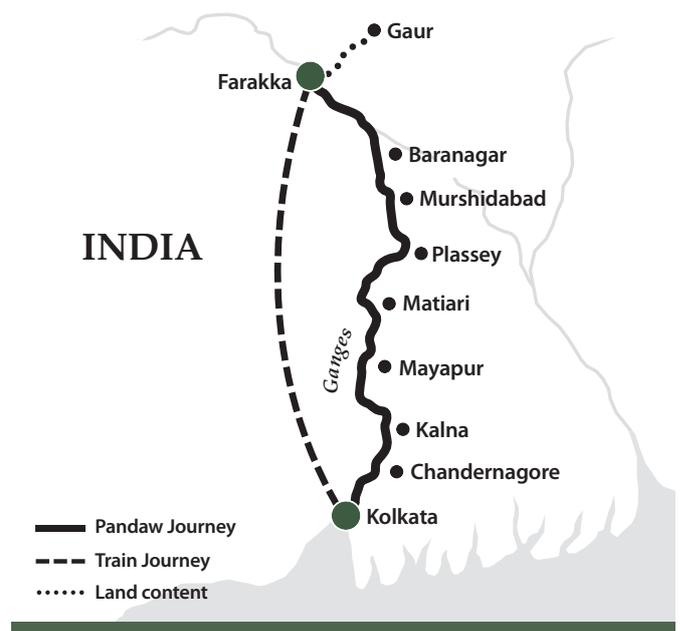
INDIA

The Lower Ganges River 7 nights

KOLKATA to FARAKKA

THE LOWER GANGES *7 nights*

There can be no river in the world as sacred as the Ganges and an expedition on the Lower Ganges or Hugli is one of the prettiest river journeys imaginable. The river wends its way through the lush countryside of West Bengal with its culturally significant towns crammed with temples and palaces. A rich and vibrant rural life abounds and there is never a dull moment as we sedately ply this pleasant waterway.





Itinerary Upstream

KOLKATA - FARRAKA



DAY 1 - KOLKATA - BARRACKPORE

Transfer from your hotel to embark and sail at noon. Sail past the old Danish colony of Serampore to Barrackpore to land and take a walk through the cantonment – past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff House.

DAY 2 - CHANDERNAGORE - HOOGHLY

Sail up to Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950. Visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's House, the erstwhile Governor-General of French India. Sail upstream past the old Dutch settlement of Chinsura before landing to visit the imposing Imambara at Hooghly. With verses from the Koran written on its walls, the Imambara is an opportunity to step back in time and relive a slice of Islamic history in Bengal. Sail into the night to a mooring near Kalna.



DAY 3 - KALNA

Sail upstream and, after breakfast, land at the country town of Kalna and take cycle rickshaws to see a group of some of Bengal's most attractive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temple with concentric rings made up of 108 lesser shrines. Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur to visit the vast new ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) temple which dominates the skyline. As the headquarters of ISKCON or the Hare Krishna movement, the temple receives over a million singing and dancing devotees a year from around the world. Sail on through the night to a mooring near Matiari.



DAY 4 - MATIARI

This morning visit the brass-working village of Matiari, a charming riverside village. Interact with the locals of Matiari and witness the whole primitive process of beating out brass water pots and other vessels. Later, cruise on and visit the battlefield of Plassey where, in 1757, Robert Clive, the Commander-in-Chief of British India, defeated Siraj-ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal, to change the course of Indian history. Moor close to Murshidabad for the night.



DAY 5 - MURSHIDABAD

This morning, walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Mughal-style garden that encloses the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah – the last independent Nawab of Bengal – and his family. Continue a little way upstream to where the great Hazarduari Palace dominates the waterfront. Built by an English architect in 1837, the palace hosts an extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects. Carry on to visit the great Katra Mosque and Nashipara Palace before driving out to see the Katgola Palace. Built in classical Georgian style by rich local merchants, Katgola Palace represents the other side of the coin of the 'White Mughal' period when English and Indian cultures came close to fusion. Moor overnight on the riverbank across from town.

DAY 6 - BARANAGAR

This morning, walk through the fields of the delightfully sleepy village of Baranagar to visit its three gorgeous miniature terracotta temples. This is rural India at its most idyllic. Continue up the lower Ganges (or the Hooghly), which transforms into a charming waterway twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards. Carry on up a long canal section to a mooring close to the Farakka Barrage.

DAY 7 - GAUR

During breakfast, we cruise to a mooring by the Farakka lock. Disembark and go on a full-day excursion by road to Gaur, near the town of Malda, or English Bazar. This quiet, deserted place was once one of India's great cities, first under the Hindus in 12th century, then as the Muslim capital of Eastern India from the 14th to the 16th century. There are plentiful remains of mosques, palaces and gateways and you visit a number of the most interesting before rejoining the ship in the evening above the Farakka lock gate to continue your cruise upstream.

DAY 8 - FARAKKA - KOLKATA

Journey approximately four hours by train from Farakka to Kolkata and transfer to Oberoi Grand Kolkata.

WHATS INCLUDED

Cruise Price Includes: Transfer between meeting point Kolkata, Ship and drop off point Kolkata, train ticket Farakka – Kolkata or v.v., entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, locally made soft drinks, local beer and local spirits, jugged coffee and selection of teas and tisanes, mineral water.

Cruise Price Excludes: Flights, port dues (if levied), laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), imported beverages, wines, premium spirits and liqueurs, fancy soft drinks like Perrier, espressos and cappuccinos at bar and tips to tour guides, local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers.



Itinerary Downstream

FARRAKA - KOLKATA

DAY 1 - KOLKATA - FARAKKA

Journey approximately four hours by train journey from Kolkata to Farakka and then a short road transfer to the ship. This quiet, deserted place was once one of India's great cities, first under the Hindus in the 12th century, then as the muslim capital of Eastern India from the 14th to the 16th century. There are plentiful remain of mosques, palaces and gateways. Later, travel on through the town of Malda, or English Bazar, to Pandua where you will visit the great 14th century Adina Mosque before returning to Farakka.



DAY 2 - BARANAGAR

This morning, set sail down the Lower Ganges, a charming waterway twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards. Moor at the delightful sleepy village of Baranagar with three gorgeous miniature terracotta temples to which you walk through the fields.



DAY 3 - MURSHIDABAD

Continue on down past Azimganj, boasting some fine riverside mansions, to Murshidabad where the Nawab's great Hazarduari Palace dominates the waterfront. Built by an English architect in 1837, the palace hosts an extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects. Carry on to visit the great Katra Mosque and Nashipara Palace before driving out to see the Katgola Palace. Built in classical Georgian style by rich local merchants, Katgola Palace represents the other side of the coin of the 'White Mughal' period when English and Indian cultures came close to fusion. Moor overnight on the riverbank across from town.



DAY 4 - KHUSHBAGH - KATWA

Sail downstream a short distance then walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Mughul-style garden enclosing the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah – the last independent Nawab of Bengal – and his family. Return to the ship and continue downstream past the old British cantonment of Berhampur to a rural mooring close to the battlefield of Plassey where, in 1757, Robert Clive, the Commander-in-Chief of British India, defeated Siraj-ud-Daulah, to change the course of Indian history. You can



walk through the fields to the commemorative obelisk. Cruise on to a mooring near Katwa, a market town with narrow bustling bazaars.

DAY 5 - MATIARI - MAYAPUR

Visit the brassworking village of Matiari where you can see the whole primitive process of beating out brass water pots and other vessels. Continue on through the countryside to Mayapur to visit the vast new ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) temple which dominates the skyline. As the headquarters of ISKCON or the Hare Krishna movement, the temple receives over a million singing and dancing devotees a year from around the world.

DAY 6 - KALNA - KOLKATA

Continue on down to the country town of Kalna. Take cycle rickshaws to see a group of some of Bengal's most attractive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temple with concentric rings made up of 108 shrinelets. Sail on, leaving fields behind and arrive at the outskirts of Kolkata. Land near Bandel to visit the imposing Imambara at Hooghly. With verses from the Koran written on its walls, the Imambara is an opportunity to step back in time and relive a slice of Islamic history in Bengal.

DAY 7 CHANDERNAGORE - BARRACKPORE

Sail downstream – past fine waterfront buildings and the old Dutch settlement at Chinsura – to land at Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950. Visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's House, the erstwhile Governor-General of French India, before continuing down to Barrackpore. Land and take a walk through the cantonment – past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame and Flagstaff House – to get a better understanding of India's journey to independence.

DAY 8 KOLKATA

Early this morning, cruise under the Howrah Bridge to central Kolkata to disembark. Transfer to Oberoi Grand Kolkata.

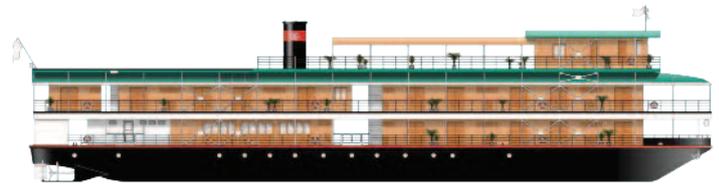
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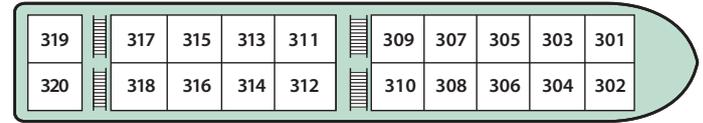
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RV Orient Pandaw

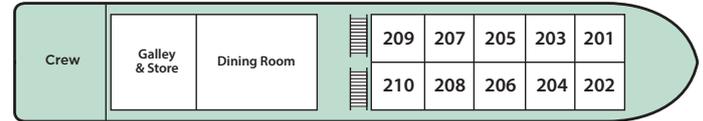
The first ship we built in Vietnam in 2008, the OP has seen service in five countries now – Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysian Borneo and now Burma. Where next? And in each of these countries she was re-commissioned according to local religious rites – Confucian, Buddhist, Animist and now she is a Buddhist again in the Golden Land. Despite a huge mileage the Orient chugs along as if fresh from the yard. Her design was based on the Tonle Pandaw, which was copied in every detail by the Vietnamese and indeed this design has been repeated three times on her three – all larger thirty cabin vessels. The ship has quality mountain bikes for your independent exploration.



ELEVATION



UPPER DECK PLAN



MAIN DECK PLAN



- Build 2008 in Saigon
- Length: 180ft / 55m
- Beam: 34ft / 10m
- Draft: 5.20ft / 1.60m
- Berths: 60 pax
- Crew: 27
- Dining: inside/AC
- Promenade deck: private seating in front of each cabin
- Bedding: all cabins are convertible into DBL, TWN, SGL
- Cabin size: 16m² / 170 sqf
- Tonnage: 837
- Average speed: upstream 5knts / downstream 11knts

ACCOMMODATION

- 20 upper deck, 10 main deck staterooms
- 170 square feet, finished in teak and brass
- Panoramic French window, leading to personal deck space
- New bathrooms with natural stone shower and branded quality fittings
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water
- Electric mini safe
- Central AC with individual control
- Imported quality linens with duvet and two kind of pillows
- Premium mattresses
- Welcome flower arrangement and welcome gift
- Mirror
- Multi-configuration plugs
- Generous closet space and under-bed storage
- Hair dryer
- Daily nightly turndown service
- 24h laundry service
- Complimentary evening canapés

WINING & DINING

- Local master chef heading an experienced international culinary team
- Semi-buffet breakfast, Semi-buffet lunch, and seated theme dinners
- Daily lean & light menu options
- Complimentary coffee, water, tea, soft drinks, local beer, local spirits, juices
- Extensive wine list with premium wines
- Series of cultural performances, educational talks, cooking classes, and ship tour
- Welcome drink on arrival
- Welcome cocktail
- Farewell reception
- Theme dinners
- Spacious, air-conditioned saloon bar with nightly entertainment
- Sundeck bar
- 24hrs hospitality bar
- Onboard bakery with daily freshly baked breads and rolls

ON EXCURSIONS

- Admissions
- Shoe cleaning after excursions
- Bottled drinking water
- Cold towel service after excursions
- Refreshing drink following excursions
- Maximum 24 guests per guide on all excursions
- Full-size motor coach on all excursions (maximum of 24 passengers per coach)
- 1st aid trained assistant guide to follow all tours and excursions

SAFETY & SECURITY

- All onboard crew is trained and certified as per international marine standards
- Fire alarm system in all cabins, public areas and back areas
- Fire fighting system in all ship areas
- Expert marine superintendant
- 24 hrs watch on duty

ONBOARD STAFF

- Captain
- River Pilot
- First Officer
- Chief Engineer
- 1st Engineer
- Electrician
- Bosun & nautical crew
- Ship manager
- Housekeeping
- Dining
- Bar keeper
- Chefs
- Spa therapist
- Local tour guides

PUBLIC SPACES

- Guest relation desk
- Fair-trade shop
- Lecture and meeting room with oversized flat screen TV, LSD projector and sound system
- Art gallery featuring local art and artists
- Library with contemporary and classic literature

Pre Tours

INDIA'S GOLDEN TRIANGLE

We are pleased to present this unique opportunity to combine a fabulous 7-night cruise exploring lower Ganges a 6-night tour of the Golden Triangle visiting most popular cultural gems in historic Delhi, Agra, the Taj Mahal and the imposing capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

This is a private tour.

DAY 1 - ARRIVAL NEW DELHI

Welcome to India! Transfer from airport to your hotel.

Rest of day at leisure

Meals: none

DAY 2 - CITY TOUR DELHI

Today's tour includes heritage rich Old and New Delhi including a Heritage Walk inside India's largest Mosque 'Jama Masjid' built in 1644 AD showcasing finest Islamic style of architecture. Explore real life of Old Delhi through maze like streets of the iconic Ancient Bazaar 'Chandni Chowk' and Asia's largest Spice Market. Experience colonial-era at 'Lutyens Delhi' including Mahatma Gandhi Museum 'Birla House', Temple 'Bangla Sahib Gurudwara' and volunteer inside its holy Community Kitchen that daily feeds over 10,000 devotees, pilgrims and homeless. Visit Ceremonial Boulevard 'Raj Path' to witness 'Sir Edwin Lutyens' finest works from 1920's British Raj Era including Colonial Government Buildings, India Gate, President and Parliament House from outside. Journey to the City Centre Market 'Connaught Place' named after the 'Duke of Connaught' and surrounds the central park of Delhi.

Transfer back to your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel

DAY 3 - AGRA

Drive to Agra, the Mughal Era city that is home to the wonder of the world 'Taj Mahal'! After check-in at the hotel, continue with a Heritage Walk inside India's finest Mughal fortress The Red Fort of Agra, an acclaimed UNESCO heritage site and the imperial residence of 16th century rulers of the 'Mughal Dynasty'. If time permits, visit marble workshops renowned for finest Mughal artwork. Enjoy traditional Indian Chai Tea prepared and served on-spot along with Indian delights.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 4 - AGRA – JAIPUR

Start the day with a Sunrise Grand Tour of the Taj Mahal, which was built in 1630 by Mughal Emperor 'Shah Jahan' in memory of his beloved wife 'Mumtaz Mahal' who died giving birth to their 14th child.

Continue the jewel of India's crown, the royal heritage state of Rajasthan, and arrive in its pink colored capital city 'Jaipur'. Enroute visit spectacular Underground Step-wells 'Chand Baori' that lie hidden deep in the village of 'Abhaneri'. This 10th century built zigzagged stepwells is a geometric wonder where Royals used to picnic, and today a popular spot through the film 'Best Exotic Marigold Hotel'. Check-in at your hotel in Jaipur.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 5 - JAIPUR

Begin the day with a morning ceremony of Indian turbans and stoles. Explore the uphill located Amber Fortress, a "must see" of Jaipur. Built in the 16th century by Rajput commander 'Raja Man Singh I', the fortress offers magnificent hilltop views with an intricate Mirror Palace and fine blends of Hindu- Rajasthani architecture. Next a photo-stop outside the Water Palace 'Jal Mahal' located in the center of 'Man Sagar Lake' housing various migratory birds. Arrive in the heart of the Old City to visit the Astronomical Observatory 'Jantar Mantar'. Visit the residence of the Royal Family locally called Jaipur City Palace and Museum. Built in 1700 AD by 'Raja Jai Singh II', this Palace is a paradise of Royal heritage history as it houses rare galleries from the British Raj and Rajput Era. Later, take a walking tour through Jaipur's most colorful bazaars. Visit Jaipur's most distinctive landmark: The Palace of Winds, 'Hawa Mahal' built in a unique pink-colored beehive design that is certainly hard to miss.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 6 - JAIPUR – DELHI – KOLKATA

Travel back to Delhi (5hrs) for your domestic flight to Kolkata.

Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 7 - DEPARTURE

Transfer to your ship.

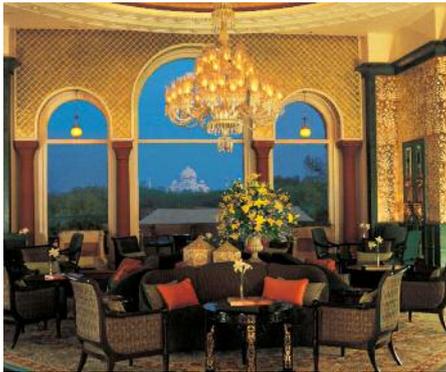
Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

Oberoi Selection



OBEROI NEW DELHI

The Oberoi, New Delhi is an iconic luxury 5 star hotel, located in the centre of India's cosmopolitan capital city. The hotel has 220 rooms and suites inspired by Lutyens' New Delhi design, with authentic furnishings and handpicked artwork. All feature large picture windows which frame unmatched views of Delhi Golf Course on one side and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Humayun's Tomb on the other.



OBEROI AMARVILAS AGRA

The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra enjoys an unrivalled position amongst luxury hotels in Agra, being located just 600 metres from the iconic Taj Mahal. Each of the rooms have uninterrupted views of this ancient monument to love, while elements of the layout and design pay homage to its Mughal splendour. The hotel is approached along a sweeping driveway, verdant with native trees and lit by flaming torches. Just inside, a Mughal style quadrant is ornamented with cascading fountains and framed by an arched passageway and gold leaf frescoes.



OBEROI RAJVILAS JAIPUR

The Oberoi Rajvilas is unique amongst hotels in Jaipur; a royal resort set in a breathtaking thirty two acre oasis of beautiful landscaped gardens, filled with beautiful trees and exotic birdlife. Built around an 18th century Shiva temple where guests can experience chanting with a Hindu priest, meditation and morning yoga, The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur is a haven of mystical peace and natural serenity.



OBEROI GRAND KOLKATA

Fondly known as The Grande Dame of Chowringhee, The Oberoi Grand is situated in a prime location, unrivalled by other luxury hotels in Kolkata, near the central business district, bustling markets and cultural landmarks of the city. Dating back to the late 1880s, The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata was frequented by the country's leading figures during colonial times.

Rates include

Six nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar), including breakfast, excursion as per itinerary, entrance fees, one domestic flight Delhi – Kolkata incl. 20kg luggage allowance.

Note:

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Apply for Indian visa before departure
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00
- Taj Mahal is closed every Friday. Our offered itinerary and visit does not fall on a Friday
- Compulsory Meals Christmas & New Year's Eve

* Please note that your hotel will be confirmed after we have received your deposit payment. Prices are subject to change. Hotel subject to availability. We will try to offer you an alternate accommodation if the requested hotel would not be available.

5 Star Selection



THE IMPERIAL DELHI

Chosen as India's best 'Luxury Historical Hotel' by World Luxury Hotel Awards 2015, The Imperial is an iconic property in Delhi in the heart of the capital, reminiscent of the halcyon days of the Raj. A luxury hotel with an iconic and awe-inspiring heritage interwoven in colonial elegance, it dwells in its modern delivery of old-style class and magnificence. Built in 1931 by Blomfield, one of Sir Edwin Lutyen's associates and inaugurated by Lord Willingdon in 1936, it is New Delhi's landmark Hotel. The Hotel is steps away from Connaught Place, the renowned shopping district and is very close to the city's major attractions.



THE RADISSON BLUE, AGRA

The Radisson Blu Agra Taj East Gate is within walking distance of the breathtaking Taj Mahal, one of the world's most iconic landmarks. You'll also be close to the red sandstone walls of Agra Fort, the exotic birds of Keoladeo National. Enjoy the refreshing rooftop infinity pool overlooking the Taj Mahal, a rejuvenating spa, a well-equipped fitness center.



TAJ JAI MAHAL PALACE, JAIPUR

Step into a 270-year-old Indo-Saracenic architectural masterpiece set amidst landscaped Mughal gardens at Taj Jai Mahal Palace in Jaipur. At this luxury heritage palace hotel, you experience unparalleled opulence with tantalizing comforts.

Perfectly located downtown in the heart of the Pink City in Civil Lines, you are close to the main shopping areas and prime historical sites such as Amber Fort, HawaMahal and City Palace.



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This is a private tour.

DAY 1 - KOLKATA - NEW DELHI

Transfer to Kolkata airport for your domestic flight to New Delhi.
After arrival, transfer to your hotel. Rest of day at leisure

Meals: none

DAY 2 - CITY TOUR DELHI

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Transfer back to your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel

DAY 3 - AGRA

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Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 6 - JAIPUR – DELHI

Travel back to Delhi (5hrs) for a last overnight near Delhi airport.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel.

DAY 7 - DEPARTURE

Transfer to Delhi airport.

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Oberoi Selection



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OBEROI GURGAON

The award winning The Oberoi, Gurgaon is conveniently located just fifteen minutes from Delhi's international and domestic airports, and thirty minutes from Central Delhi, in Gurgaon; the business and commercial centre of Delhi's National Capital Region. Spread over nine acres, The Oberoi, Gurgaon is unlike any of the other luxury hotels in Gurgaon. An urban sanctuary defined by bespoke design features, its high ceilings and open spaces are filled with natural light, and afford refreshing views of the hotel's vast, azure reflection pool and verdant green wall.

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Step into a 270-year-old Indo-Saracenic architectural masterpiece set amidst landscaped Mughal gardens at Taj Jai Mahal Palace in Jaipur. At this luxury heritage palace hotel, you experience unparalleled opulence with tantalizing comforts. Perfectly located downtown in the heart of the Pink City in Civil Lines, you are close to the main shopping areas and prime historical sites such as Amber Fort, HawaMahal and City Palace.



PULLMAN, DELHI AIRPORT

The upscale hotel is located adjacent to both international & domestic airport terminals and is well connected through the Airport Express Line which is just 5 minutes away. The Pullman New Delhi Aerocity is near the business hubs of Gurgaon, New Delhi and Cyber City. It is also located close to Delhi's shopping malls including DLF Promenade, Emporio and Worldmark. A big complex of 670 rooms, Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity is a preferred destination for both business & leisure travelers.

Rates include

Six nights accommodation at advertised hotels (or similar), including breakfast, excursion as per itinerary, entrance fees, one domestic flight Kolkata - Delhi incl. 20kg luggage allowance.

Note:

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Apply for Indian visa before departure
- Check in time 14.00 / Check out time 11.00
- Taj Mahal is closed every Friday. Our offered itinerary and visit does not fall on a Friday
- Compulsory Meals Christmas & New Year's Eve

* Please note that your hotel will be confirmed after we have received your deposit payment. Prices are subject to change. Hotel subject to availability. We will try to offer you an alternate accommodation if the requested hotel would not be available.