

SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£300
PER PERSON

ASSAM & THE MIGHTY BRAHMAPUTRA

A journey through Northern India's Assam region
aboard the MV Mahabaahu

24th January to 5th February; 21st February to 4th March
& 13th to 25th November 2024



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Assam, the Indian state that lies south of Tibet and Bhutan and north of Bangladesh and the mighty Brahmaputra River which flows through it, offers a plethora of experiences and sights for the naturalist, birdwatcher and cultural traveller. Join us aboard the MV Mahabaahu as we traverse the river in comfort visiting national parks, temples, monasteries, tea plantations and tribal villages. Running for some 1800 miles from its source in the Tibetan Himalaya to its delta in the Bay of Bengal, the river scenery is quite unlike anything you will have witnessed before.

Within striking distance of the river are a number of significant national parks and amongst the many highlights of our river expedition will be the time spent exploring the World Heritage Site at Kaziranga where the world's largest population of one horned rhino resides. In addition to the large numbers of rhino, the region is home to elephants, wild buffaloes and the elusive Bengal tiger. Freshwater dolphins reside in the river and with over four hundred varieties of migratory and domestic birds, this is one of the greatest natural habitats of wildlife outside of Africa with National Geographic referring to the area as the Serengeti of India.

The history, wildlife and tribal culture of this region of India are unique and will be brought to life by our expert local guides. The roads may be poor and the tourist infrastructure very much in its infancy, but that is precisely why we find this region so exciting and this unusual journey is one for those who wish to witness this extraordinary area, its diverse cultures and marvellous wildlife but who are weary of the more well-trodden paths around the world.



Our View

"For our exploration of the Brahmaputra River we have chartered the MV Mahabaahu, whose operators have a long-established presence in Assam and a wealth of local expertise. We have designed the itinerary around a seven night cruise in order to offer the intrepid traveller a true taste of this remarkable region without having to leave home shores for a prolonged period of time. The MV Mahabaahu offers considerable comfort across all five of her decks and her size, facilities and refinement set her apart from many of the cruise ships in this region. When not ashore sightseeing or spotting some of India's finest wildlife you can take a dip in the pool, enjoy a massage treatment or simply enjoy lazing on the top deck whilst watching life unfold on the riverbank."



Rang Ghar, Sibsagar



One Horned Rhino, Kaziranga National Park



Colourful Indian Roller



Traditional dancer, Majuli Island



'Chang Ghar' houses, Mishing Village

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Kolkata, India. Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Kolkata. Arrive in the morning and transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel for a three night stay. Following lunch at the hotel, enjoy an afternoon tour of India's second largest city including the Victoria Memorial.

Day 3 Kolkata. After breakfast and a leisurely morning at our luxurious hotel, we take an enjoyable tram ride, a form of transport used in Kolkata since 1902. Following lunch, our afternoon will take in what is arguably one of the best ways to see Kolkata, sailing along the River Hooghly on a private boat. Afterwards we will have some time to explore the local markets before returning to our hotel for dinner.

Day 4 Kolkata. Following breakfast we head out to discover Kolkata's vibrant and colourful flower market and Dalhousie Square before visiting The Mother House, the former home and last resting place of Mother Teresa. After lunch choose to visit St Paul's Cathedral, noted for its stunning Gothic architecture or enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure. We will meet for dinner at the hotel this evening.

Day 5 Kolkata to Guwahati. After breakfast in the hotel we transfer to the airport for our morning flight

to Guwahati. On arrival drive up Nilachal Hill to see the holy Kamakhya temple, devoted to the Goddess of desire, where we will take blessings. Continue to the MV Mahabaahu and following embarkation and lunch on board we will set sail. Sail by Peacock Island, famous for being one of the smallest river islands in the world and home to the endangered Golden Langur monkey, whilst Gangetic dolphins may be sighted in the river. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner on board.

Day 6 Cruising the Brahmaputra. Set sail early in the morning for a day navigating the river. You may wish to start your day with some invigorating yoga, or simply sitting in one of the many public areas and enjoying the passing scenery. After breakfast, we will enjoy a talk by one of the vessel's experts before dropping anchor and visiting one of the local villages, learning much about how the nomadic people in this region spend their lives. Maybe join another talk this afternoon as we continue sailing until the early evening when the vessel will moor at a deserted sandbank.

Day 7 Sail to Silghat. After breakfast and a morning talk, we will spend our time enjoying the ship's facilities and the breathtaking scenery before arriving into Silghat at lunchtime. From our berth we will walk to a

nearby jute mill, where ecologically friendly gunny bags are produced using a system of spinning and drawing, manufactured by the most wonderful machines. We will also take in a performance of Bihu, a traditional dance of Assam performed by the villagers. Return to the ship for some time to relax before dinner.

Day 8 Kaziranga National Park. Wake early as we head out to one of the finest examples of conservation and ecology in India, Kaziranga National Park. The sighting of one horned rhino within the park is remarkably common and, during our two safaris, we will be given the very best chance of getting close to all of Kaziranga's endemic wildlife. While the rhinos themselves are reason enough to visit, the park is home to multiple mammals, reptiles and birds including wild elephants, hog deer, crested serpent eagles and of course, the Bengal tiger. Return for lunch on the ship as we spend the afternoon sailing the meandering river. As the sun sets, we will arrive at an uninhabited island where we will have a beach barbeque and bonfire under the stars.

Day 9 Bishwanath Ghat & Kaziranga National Park. Spend the morning at the tiny village of Bishwanath Ghat to meet the weavers, fishermen, farmers and boat makers that reside here. Take the chance to learn about life in

the remote community and maybe purchase some of their wares. This afternoon we arrive at the eastern side of Kaziranga National Park and taking the Mahabaahu's two tenders, we will travel along the waterfront of Kaziranga where we will be able to explore its rich and varied wildlife. Having the vessel's tenders will afford us a further perspective of the national park as lizards, otters, birds, and larger mammals, such as rhinos and elephants, congregate along its riverbanks. This evening join a cookery demonstration of some local cuisine by the Mahabaahu's accomplished head chef before dinner on board.

Day 10 Mishing Village. The Mishing people are the second largest tribal group in North East India, with a population of over a million in Assam alone. Today, we will pause by the banks of the river to explore a Mishing village with its characteristic 'Chang Ghar' houses on raised platforms. All Mishing women are expert weavers and during our time we will be provided with a demonstration of the skill used in making typical Assamese dresses and precisely how to don their tribal clothing. On returning to our vessel we will enjoy a traditional Assamese evening on board.

Day 11 Majuli Island. Majuli is the world's largest river island and possesses unique Hindu



Tea garden, Brahmaputra River Valley

monasteries famed for their dance-drama performances – the whole island is now shortlisted for future UNESCO World Heritage status. On today's excursion, we will witness a traditional cultural performance before travelling to Kamalabari monastery to witness Vaishnavite priests carrying out their ritualistic ceremonies. After lunch on board our vessel, we head by jeep to Sibsagar, the one-time capital of the kings of Assam. Shan by origin (Assam and Siam share the same derivation) but converted to Hinduism, they ruled Assam for some 700 years until the 1820s, and their culture and architecture is a strange

and delightful amalgam of Indian and South East Asian. We will see temples with stupa-like profiles, and palaces of distinctive form. For the record book, the temple tank here is believed to be the world's largest hand-excavated reservoir. We return to our vessel for a farewell dinner.

Day 12 Assam to Kolkata. Disembark after breakfast for our flight to Kolkata. On arrival transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 13 Kolkata to London. Depart this morning by scheduled indirect flight, arriving into London this evening.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
C	Superior cabin without balcony on Parshuram or Gadadhar Singha Deck	£5195	£4895
B	Superior cabin with private balcony on Gadadhar Singha Deck	£5695	£5395
A	Suite with private balcony on Gadadhar Singha Deck	£5895	£5595
C	Superior cabin without balcony on Parshuram or Gadadhar Singha Deck for sole use	£7195	£6895

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled return air travel • Four nights hotel accommodation in Kolkata on full board basis • Seven nights aboard the MV Mahabaahu on full board basis • Indian wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes • UK airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance, Indian visa.

Post-cruise Darjeeling Extension

5th to 10th February, 4th to 9th March

& 25th to 30th November 2024



Darjeeling

Join us after your cruise for an exploration of the picturesque town of Darjeeling, the "Queen of the Hills" lying amidst the slopes of the Lesser Himalayas.

The Itinerary

Day 1 Kolkata to Darjeeling, India. After breakfast transfer to Kolkata Airport for our flight to Bagdogra. On arrival we will transfer by road (approximately 3 hours) to Darjeeling. Check in this afternoon and enjoy free time before we meet for dinner tonight. (B, D)

Day 2 Darjeeling. This morning we will take a ride on the Toy Train, a narrow-gauge course which began operation in 1881 and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. The train ride combines heritage, the marvel of engineering and is one of the best ways to experience the natural beauty of Darjeeling. From the train we will see the local markets, towns and bridges as well as passing through some lush green hills, jungles and tea farms with the mesmerising view of snow-covered Himalayan peaks and the world's third highest peak, Kanchenjunga as a backdrop. After free time for lunch we will take a walk around Darjeeling, discover how the town was established as the summer capital of the British and view some of the colonial buildings and the stories connected to them. (B, D)

Day 3 Darjeeling. Early risers have the option to visit nearby Tiger Hill for a sunrise view before returning to the hotel for breakfast. Later we spend time at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute which preserves and teaches about past mountaineering expeditions, especially about the Mount Everest Expedition by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, since the early 20th century. Continue to the Zoological Park which is the only specialised zoo in India, internationally recognised for its conservation breeding programmes of Red Panda, Himalayan Newt, Snow Leopards, Tibetan Wolf and other highly endangered animal species of the Eastern Himalaya. The afternoon is free to explore at your own pace before we meet for dinner tonight. (B, D)

Day 4 Darjeeling. Today we visit one of the tea estates where we can walk through a tea garden on the gentle hill slopes of Darjeeling and see the tea processing methods before enjoying a freshly brewed cup. Our final afternoon is free to explore at your own pace. (B, D)

Day 5 Darjeeling to Kolkata. After breakfast we transfer to Bagdora Airport for our scheduled flight to Kolkata. On arrival transfer to our hotel for some free time before we meet for dinner. (B, D)

Day 6 Kolkata to London. After an early breakfast transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London. Arrive this afternoon.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£1895** Single: **£2395**

Price Includes: Return economy class scheduled air travel between Kolkata and Bagdora, four nights hotel accommodation at The Elgin Darjeeling, overnight hotel accommodation in Kolkata, meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner), Indian wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner, excursions, gratuities, Tour Manager.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

NB. Minimum numbers are required for this extension to operate. Please note that the high altitude of this tour may affect some travellers and so you are advised to seek medical advice before booking.

MV MAHABAAHU



Superior twin-bedded cabin



Superior double-bedded cabin with balcony

For our exploration of Assam and the great Brahmaputra River we have chartered the MV Mahabaahu, a stylish and elegant vessel which accommodates 46 guests. The vessel has a total of five decks and facilities include a swimming pool, spa and restaurant and an open top deck from where you can watch the busy life of the waterside villages pass by as well as watch for wildlife.

Your Cabin/Suite

All cabins and suites are furnished in traditional Assamese fineries and feature ample closet space, television, hairdryer, in-house telephone, in-room safe and a choice of bed configuration (double or twin). The en-suite bathrooms include spa-branded amenities, bathrobes and slippers. There are two suites located on the ship's Gadadhar Singha Deck which measure a generous 283 square feet and include an outside balcony with chairs. The nine superior cabins with balcony, also located on the ship's Gadadhar Singha Deck, measure 206 square feet and the 12 superior cabins without balcony, located on both the Gadadhar Singha Deck and Parshuram Deck, measure 150 square feet.

Your Space

Spread over five decks, the ship has a number of public areas and facilities to ensure that you remain comfortable and relaxed throughout your journey. These include a lounge and bar with a well-stocked library, massage and treatment room offering traditional Ayurvedic therapies, steam and sauna room, Jacuzzi, hair salon and a beauty room. There is also a swimming pool and small outside gym area and a large sun deck –

the Donyi Polo Deck – with its own seating area and bar where you may relax and observe life on the banks of the river. The restaurant seats all passengers in one sitting and is also the room where the lectures will be held. The facilities also include a hospitality bar, pool table, tea and coffee station and a lift that services all decks other than the Donyi Polo Deck.

Your Dining

Meals are taken in the vessel's single-sitting Mungri Mungram restaurant located on the vessel's Rudra Singha Deck. The restaurant seats all passengers in an open seat arrangement and the food reflects the flavours of the region, whilst also offering an extensive selection of western dishes. There is an onboard bakery and breakfasts and lunches are a full buffet with both western and Indian delicacies being offered. Vegetarian options are available and dietary requests can be catered for on request. Dinners are served and will often be themed, the restaurant team taking great pride in showcasing the many cuisines and dishes from around India. A 24 hour tea and coffee station is available.



Sun Deck



Soma Lounge



Delicacies from the onboard bakery



Mungri Mungram Restaurant



On the Brahmaputra at sunset

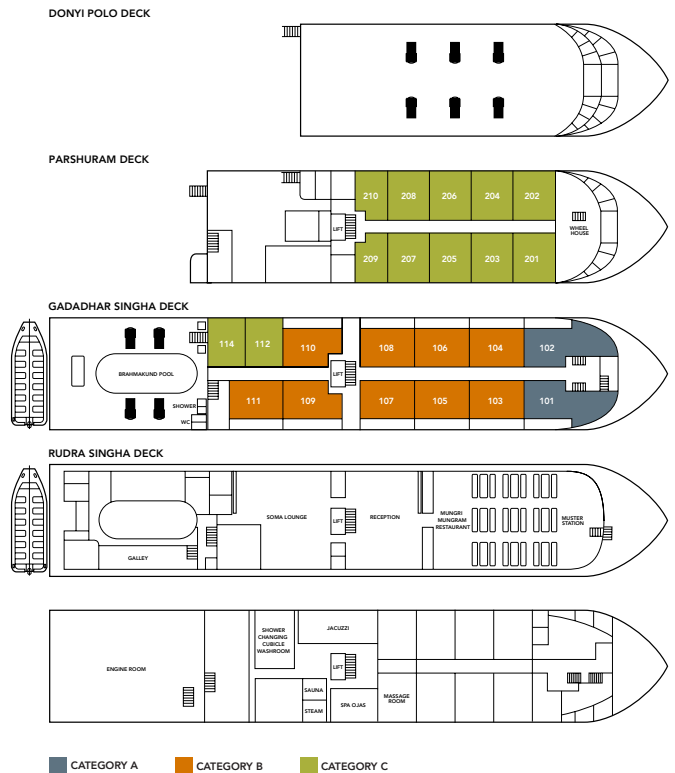
For your Comfort, Safety and Security

The MV Mahabaahu meets with health and safety measures implemented and enforced by the relevant governing bodies and a full safety briefing will be given upon embarkation of the ship. Crew members are always on hand to assist should you require and the vessel will be escorted by the local River authorities, offering additional support and assistance if at all required.



Brahmakund Pool

MV MAHABAABU DECK PLAN



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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: Elephant family, Kaziranga National Park.