Assam Despatch 2A: Silk & Rhinos

BRAHMAPUTRA UPSTREAM | 4 NIGHTS/5 DAYS | GUWAHATI TO KAZIRANGA

DAY 1
Meet at Guwahati airport and transfer to our cruise at Pandu port. Enjoy lunch while cruising downstream to Sualkuchi. An afternoon walk through Sualkuchi, a bustling little town that is the centre of Assamese silk production, offers a chance to visit weaving workshops. Witness the whole process of silk manufacture, from cocoon and spinning, then dyeing to hand-weaving into exquisite mekhela chadars (a two-piece sari, the traditional attire of an Assamese woman). We then sail up to dock close to the great Saraighat bridge.

DAY 2
This morning you'll drive up Nilachal Hill to see the holy Kamakhya temple, one of the most revered centres of tantric practices in India. Dedicated to the goddess Kamakhya (the goddess of desire, granter of desires), the temple symbolises the fusion of faiths and practices of Aryan and non-Aryan elements in Assam. We shall walk around the exteriors of the temple, among numerous pilgrims from around the country, taking in the sights, sounds and vibrant energy of the temple before returning to the vessel. Later, cruise up towards Mayong.

DAY 3
This morning, cruise upstream and visit a riverside village with its lush green fields of vegetables. The day is spent mostly cruising upstream and presents an opportunity to catch up on reading, writing about your experiences so far, or simply watching life unfold on the riverbanks and jungle-covered hills that rise on either side. Enjoy an Indian cooking demonstration onboard.

DAY 4
This morning you cruise on to reach Silghat where, after lunch, you'll drive to Kaziranga National Park for a jeep safari in the Western range of the park.

Covering an area of approximately 430 sq kms, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kaziranga National Park is home to the world's largest population of the Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros as well as the Indian Wild Water Buffalo. It has also earned the distinction of having the highest density of Royal Bengal Tigers (one every five sq. km.), making this park an incredibly rich biodiversity hotspot. With its marshy swamps and thickets of elephant grass, the park supports large populations of Indian elephants, Indian bison, swamp deer, and Capped Langurs.

Kaziranga National Park frequently draws comparisons to the Serengeti in Africa due to the park's abundance of wildlife and birds and is considered a birding paradise. Bird species found here include the Oriental Honey Buzzard, Black-shouldered Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Himalayan Griffon and many more.

DAY 5
This morning, bid farewell to the crew and new friends as you set off for the 4-hour drive to Guwahati airport. Alternatively, we can arrange a 40-minute transfer to Kaziranga or a 2 ½ hr transfer to Jorhat airport.

This itinerary, including the cruise and approximate driving durations, is subject to river and weather conditions. Kaziranga National Park comprises low-lying grassland, which may not be approachable when the river is at or near flood level.