Bengal Despatch 10: City of Light - A Varanasi Summer

DOWNSTREAM ITINERARY | 7 NIGHTS/8 DAYS | VARANASI TO PATNA

DAY 1

Arrive at Varanasi by road, rail or air and be transferred from the airport or railway station. The City of Light is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world, dating back 3,000 years. Mark Twain once wrote: "Benaras is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together". An accurate description, Varanasi is arresting to your every sense yet beautifully spiritual for those willing to let go and just be. It is the most important religious site for Hindus and visited by people from all walks of life who come here in the hope of attaining moksha or salvation. Enjoy cultural performance & welcome dinner onboard.

DAY 2

This morning, sail past the ghats of Varanasi to visit Chunar, the great Mughal Fort, the old British cemetery and the Mughal tombs nearby and Carpet weaving offer a taste of the traditional industries that still thrive in the region. Later cruise down to visit Ramnagar to see the Ramnager Maharaja's Palace and museum.

DAY 3

An early start this morning as you take rowing boats at dawn past the busy and colourful bathing ghats of Varanasi. After a reviving breakfast, you'll be driven to visit the Buddhist site at Sarnath, the Deer Park where the Buddha preached his first sermon and the archaeological museum. This evening, disembark and take a walk through the busy alleyways of Varanasi to experience the beating heart of the city. Join the Ganga Aarti ceremony, where young priests perform their daily rituals with brass lamps and spiritual mantras in front of large crowds from all over India and the world. A truly mesmerising experience, this aarti is the essence of Varanasi. Return to the ship anchored at Rajghat.

DAY 4

After breakfast on board, disembark and drive to the city of Jaunpur to see the Mughal Bridge, visit its ancient fort and walk to the splendid Atala mosque. Return to the ship for lunch and sail downstream towards Ghazipur. Alternatively, some may prefer to stay back and explore Varanasi's tempting shopping possibilities.

DAY 5

This morning you continue your journey downstream, disembarking at Ghazipur after breakfast. Visit the imposing tomb of Lord Cornwallis, the General defeated by George Washington in 1781 at Yorktown, so arguably responsible for the loss of the American colonies. If time permits you can take a stroll through the busy Ghazipur bazaar, which offers a quintessential Indian experience. Later, cruise past Buxar to anchor for the night.

DAY 6

Today brings another opportunity to watch life unfold on the riverbanks as you cruise downstream. The languid pace of life on-board the boat offers a rare opportunity to sit and watch the world slip by, chat with fellow guests, or catch up on your reading. You'll have time to stretch your legs with a walk through a river side village. Sail down to anchor near the confluence of the Ghagra.

DAY 7

Cruise past the busy river port of Doriganj and the confluence with the Sone River to a ghat from which you'll visit the small yet spectacular Mughal tomb at Maner. Sail on to anchor at Patna and visit the great Sikh Gurdwara.

DAY 8

After breakfast, disembark and transfer to Patna airport or railway station.

This itinerary, including the cruise and approximate driving durations, is subject to river and weather conditions.