

# alumni UBC

## Slowly Down the Ganges

March 6 - 19, 2018

### OVERVIEW

The name Ganges conjures notions of India's exoticism and mystery. Considered a living goddess in the Hindu religion, the Ganges is also the daily lifeblood that provides food, water, and transportation to millions who live along its banks. While small boats have plied the Ganges for millennia, new technologies and improvements to the river's navigation mean it is now also possible to travel the length of this extraordinary river in considerable comfort.

We have exclusively chartered the *RV Bengal Ganga* for this very special voyage. Based on a traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century British design, our ship blends beautifully with the timeless landscape. Over eight leisurely days and 650 kilometres, we will experience the vibrant, complex tapestry of diverse architectural expressions, historical narratives, religious beliefs, and fascinating cultural traditions that thrive along the banks of the Ganges. Daily presentations by our expert study leaders will add to our understanding of the soul of Indian civilization.

We begin our journey in colourful Varanasi for a first look at the Ganges at one of its holiest places. And then by ship we explore the ancient Bengali temples, splendid garden-tombs, and vestiges of India's rich colonial past and experience the enduring rituals of daily life along 'Mother Ganga'. Our river journey concludes in Kolkatta (formerly Calcutta) to view the poignant reminders of past glories of the Raj. Conclude your trip with an immersion into the lush tropical landscapes of Tamil Nadu to visit grand temples, testaments to the great cultural opulence left behind by vanished ancient dynasties and take in the French colonial vibe of Pondicherry.

This is an experience for the culturally curious that immerses you in India's mesmerizing heritage, for photographers of unforgettable landscapes, and for adventurous travellers who relish authentic moments. The experience of the Ganges River is beguiling, complex, infinite and profound.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY:

**WorldwideQuest**  
*Alumni Expeditions*

## STUDY LEADER

Adrienne Fast holds a PhD in South Asian art history from the University of British Columbia. She has taught university courses on South Asian art and currently works as a curator. Her research focuses on the establishment of a visual code of 'authentic', modern expression in early twentieth-century India, particularly Bengal.



"The Ganges River has shaped so much of Indian history and culture, travelling its length will be a wonderful opportunity to see and appreciate aspects of India that few travellers get to experience.

Much of this tour will explore the northeastern state of Bengal, which is the region of India I'm most familiar with; my PhD thesis was about artists in Bengal during the British colonial period and I lived in Kolkata (Calcutta) for one year, learning the Bengali language and conducting archival research.

Bengal was an important administrative unit and the wealthiest state in India during the glory days of the Mughal Empire, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it was also the centre of the British colonial administration from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; our tour will bring us face to face with fascinating remnants of both eras. Often called "Golden Bengal" by Bengalis, the region is characterised by lush rice fields and expansive waterways. Bengal is also renowned for its many craft traditions, including intricate hand-stitched embroidery and sculpture and decoration in terracotta.

I'm excited to share my knowledge of Bengal with UBC alumni!"



## SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Explore Kolkata, centre of Bengali culture

Observe Buddhist pilgrims at Bodhgaya

Experience village life along the Ganges

Delve into colourful Varanasi

Enjoy traditional style on board the Bengal Ganga

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### DAILY ITINERARY

#### Tuesday, March 6: Arrive Delhi

Arrive in vibrant, exotic Delhi late this evening; you'll be met by our representative at the airport and taken straight to our hotel for check in. If this is your first trip to India or you would like to spend a little more time in Delhi, please enquire about pre-tour program which includes Delhi and the Taj Mahal.

*Overnight: Trident Hotel, Gurgaon*

#### Wednesday, March 7: Fly to Varanasi

This morning, transfer to Delhi airport for the short flight to Varanasi. Experience the colourful and fascinating street life as we walk through the oldest winding lanes of the city to arrive at the ghats at the Ganges. Here witness the Aarti Ceremony, part of the evening prayers. During the ceremony *deepas* (oil lamps) are offered to Mother Ganges with thanks and devotion for the light of the sun and for her divine light. As the Aarti fire ceremonies take place, bells are rung and chanting and singing provide a fascinating, magical and spiritual end to the day.

*Overnight: Taj Gateway, Varanasi*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



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#### **Thursday, March 8: Varanasi**

Take an early morning small-boat ride on the Ganges to the two-kilometre stretch of bathing ghats that lead into the river. The ghats are full of pilgrims who flock to the place to take a dip in the holy river, cleansing them physically, mentally and spiritually. Later, we visit the ruins and museum at Sarnath where Buddha delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment.

*Overnight: Taj Gateway, Varanasi*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Friday, March 9: Drive to Bodhgaya**

Travel overland to Bodhgaya, one of the most important and sacred Buddhist pilgrimage centres. Visit the Mahabodhi temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that marks the location where Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, is said to have attained enlightenment under a banyan tree, the "Bodhi Tree". Many monasteries and temples dot the bucolic landscape and the ambience is a pleasant mix of tranquility and bustle.

*Overnight: Taj Darbar, Bodhgaya*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Saturday, March 10: Drive to Munger and embark**

Drive to Rajgir, the first capital of the Magadha Empire dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Buddha not only spent many years in Rajgir, but also delivered important sermons here. Continue to Nalanda, perhaps the oldest seat of learning in India. The ruins here consist of nine monasteries and four main temples. We arrive in Munger to view the remnants of a Mogul Fort and then embark our ship at the Jetty. We remain moored at Mungar this evening as we settle in.

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Box Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Sunday, March 11: Sultanganj**

Start the day with a visit to the Bihar School of Yoga, which has developed techniques founded on traditional vedantic, tantric, and yogic teachings. A great way to get in shape for our voyage! Set sail for Sultanganj, conspicuous for its two great granite bluffs, crowned by a temple and a mosque. Nearby excavations have revealed architectural remains and relics. Visit the 16<sup>th</sup> century temple of Ajgaibinath Shiva and the long causeway connecting the mainland with the island of Jahngira on which the cluster of shrines is entwined along with the seemingly floating rock. Moor further down at Narayanpur for the night.

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Monday, March 12: Bateswarsthan, Samtaghat**

Cruise through the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary where the endangered Gangetic river dolphin is protected. From Bateswarsthan, take jeeps for a short ride to the excavation site of the Vikramshila University. Established in the late 8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. this was one of the two most important centers of Buddhist learning in India during the reign of the Pala dynasty. Moor at Samtaghat for the night.

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Tuesday, March 13: Samtaghat - Farakka - Jangipur**

Enjoy a relaxing full day sail today, observing life along the river. Around midday see the Farakka Barrage, an amazing feat of engineering over 2kms long with 109 water gates regulating the river flow. Cross the Farakka lock that connects the Hooghly River to the Ganges. Moor overnight at Jangipur.

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Wednesday, March 14: Murshidabad**

Explore the historic town of Murshidabad where rural Bengali life and 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture meet. Visit the Hazarduari Palace Museum with more than a thousand real and false doors in its vast corridors. Other beautiful structures in the complex include the Nizamat Imambara, the clock tower, the Wasef Manzil, a former regal residence, and the elegant Madina Mosque. We walk back to the ship through the local bazaar enjoying its incredible sound and colour - fabulous photo opportunities!

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Thursday, March 15: Matiari**

Early morning visit to the Katra Mosque built by the first Nawab of Murshidabad, Nawab Murshid Quli Khan in the year 1724-25. Sail past the battlefield of Plassey where in 1757 Robert Clive of the British East India Company defeated the Mogul Nawab and his French Allies establishing the company rule in India. Moor overnight at Matiari.

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

#### **Friday, March 16: Kalna**

Early morning visit the village of Matiari, observing master craftsmen at work making hand crafted brass and copper pots and utensils. This afternoon arrive in Kalna. Experience the 'city of temples' by cycle rickshaw. Visit the enchanting Rajbari Temple Complex including the Nabakailas Temples, 108 'aat-chala' or "eight slope-roofed" Shiva temples arranged in two concentric circles and the Pratapeshwar Temple richly ornamented with terra cotta friezes. The town is famous as a production centre for textiles and saris. Moor at Bandel for the night.

*Overnight: On board RV Bengal Ganga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



### **Saturday, March 17: Disembark in Kolkata**

Arrive in Kolkata, sailing under the huge span of the iconic Howrah Bridge right into the city's heart. It was from here that the British ruled a large part of South East Asia for two centuries. Following in their footsteps, the Bengali aristocracy and middle class came to settle here, together with Armenians, Jews, and Chinese. All left their imprint and legacy, which in turn contribute to Kolkata's thrilling cultural blend. Disembark this afternoon and transfer to our hotel.

*Overnight: Lalit Hotel, Kolkata*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Sunday, March 18: Kolkata**

Experience the energy of the city as we explore today. Visit the Jain Temple, known as the "Jewel Box Temple of Calcutta" for its exquisite and ornate mass of mirrors, colored stones and glass mosaics. See the Victoria Memorial Hall a monument to colonialism and a perfect example of Indo-gothic architecture.

At Kumartolli, see the craftsmen making idols and decorations for the city's grand festivals. In College Street, peruse Asia's largest book market and enjoy a cup of coffee at the famous 'Coffee Shop', meeting place for Bengali intellectuals. Visit the Missionaries of Charity where Mother Teresa lies in peace; there is a photo gallery on the works and life of Mother. End the day at the Kali Temple, a great pilgrimage center of the Hindus to fling hibiscus flowers at a crowned, three-eyed Kali image.

*Overnight: Lalit Hotel, Kolkata*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Monday, March 19: Depart Kolkata**

The morning is at leisure before transferring to the airport for homeward bound flights.

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this tour brochure are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*



Victoria Memorial Hall

## OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS



### **Delhi & the Taj Mahal (pre-trip)**

A four day extension exploring the dynamic city of Delhi in a full day guided tour and the splendours of Agra with visits to the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

**Extension Cost:** Approx. US\$995 per person  
Single supplement: US\$350

Tour cost includes: accommodation based on double occupancy (two nights at the Trident Hotel, Delhi and one night at the Radisson Hotel, Agra), breakfast and dinner daily, transportation by private vehicle, entrance fees, full sightseeing program with private expert guides.



### **Rajasthan (post-trip)**

Discover the grand forts, extravagant palaces, and spectacular colours of Rajasthan on this fully guided extension to Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur.

**Extension Cost:** Approx. US\$2195 per person  
(based on six participants)  
Single supplement: US\$795

Tour cost includes: Airfare (Kolkata to Jaipur and Udaipur to Delhi), accommodation based on double occupancy (two nights at the ITC Rajputana, Jaipur, two nights at the Ajit Bhawan, Jodhpur, two nights at the Lalit Hotel, Udaipur), breakfast and dinner daily, transportation by private vehicle, entrance fees, full sightseeing program with private expert guides.



### **Hyderabad & Mumbai (post-trip)**

Explore two ancient cities. Hyderabad boasts a legacy of magnificent palaces, mosques, and tombs – a whirl of colour in the narrow lanes filled with markets and wandering animals. Mumbai is India's front door, with grand colonial-era architecture, and a dynamic energy.

**Extension Cost:** Approx. US\$2095 per person  
(based on six participants)  
Single supplement: US\$795

Tour cost includes: Airfare (Kolkata to Hyderabad and Hyderabad to Mumbai), accommodation based on double occupancy (three nights at the Taj Krishna, Hyderabad, two nights at the Trident Nariman Point, Mumbai), breakfast and dinner daily, transportation by private vehicle, entrance fees, full sightseeing program with private expert guides.



## TOUR DETAILS

### Tour Cost (per person):

**Main Deck:** US\$4995

**Upper Deck:** US\$5495

Port charges: US\$100

Single Supplement: 1.5x tour cost

*If you are travelling on your own and would like to share accommodation, we would be happy to try to match you with a suitable roommate. If we are unable to do so, the single cost applies.*

### Group Size:

Limited to 50 participants. Daily excursions will be in small groups of 16 - 18 participants.

### What's Included:

- Airport transfers for passengers arriving and departing as per the group itinerary
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels listed or similar
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in selected cabin on board the *Bengal Ganga*
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Flight Delhi to Varanasi
- All internal transportation by private coach
- Sightseeing with qualified English-speaking guides
- All activities and entrance fees
- Taxes and gratuities (for shipboard staff, guides, drivers, hotels, restaurants)
- Port Charges as indicated above

### Not Included:

- Airfare from your home to join the tour
- Visa fee (Approx. US\$50)
- Fuel surcharges, if applicable
- Travel insurance
- Excess baggage charges
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation

### Payment Details:

A deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve your space on this tour. A payment of US\$1000 is due six months prior to departure. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure.

## HOW TO BOOK

Please contact Amanda  
at the Worldwide  
Quest Office.

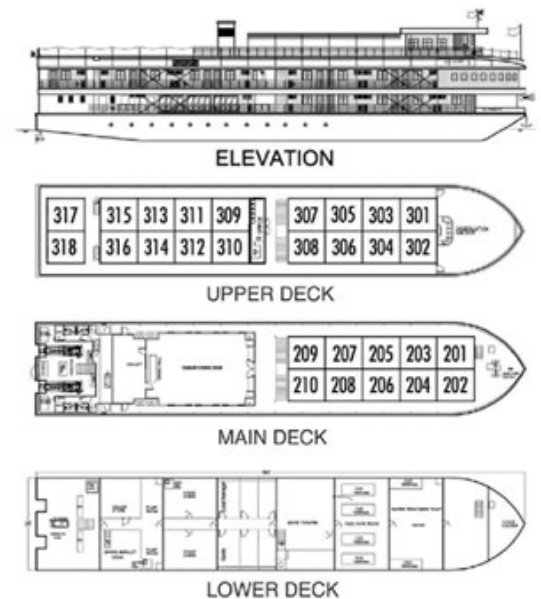
1-800-387-1483



## ON BOARD THE R/V BENGAL GANGA

**Built in Myanmar in 2004 as a replica of the colonial Clyde steamers, this modern vessel has 28 outside staterooms.** Brass and teak feature prominently in the décor. Staterooms are approximately 15m<sup>2</sup> large, have air conditioning and are equipped with twin beds, safe, hair dryers, and bath robes but do not have mini-bars, TVs or phones. Internet access is provided on two computers.

Fine Indian and European cuisine, excellent service, and a hospitable and caring on board team contribute to making this a very special experience. Passengers often describe feeling as if they were guests on a private motor yacht rather than passengers on a cruise ship. Although all staterooms are very comfortable and roomy, most passengers prefer to spend their time outside on the deck, observing the fascinating scenes and scenery along the Ganges River.





# WHAT TO EXPECT

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## Level of Activity: Moderate

This tour involves walking on uneven terrain. You should be comfortable walking up to two hours unassisted. You may always choose to remain on board ship instead of joining excursions. Should you have any questions about your ability to take part in this tour, please give us a call.

## Transportation

We will travel by private coach driven by a professional driver. We will be travelling by bullet train from Kyoto to Hiroshima and by ferry from Fukuoka to Busan.

## Weather

Expect temperatures around 28°C during the day and 16°C overnight. This is the dry season with little rain expected.

## Travel Documents

You will require a passport for this trip. Please ensure it is valid for at least 6 months beyond your scheduled return home. You will require a visa for India (US\$50). We will provide instructions for obtaining your visas.

# ADDITIONAL INFO

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## Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946).

## Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

## Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.

## Travel with *alumni UBC*

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### It's your travel experience.

Indulge your curiosity as we take you to unique places you've always dreamed about.

UBC experts and knowledgeable local hosts provide context. That allows you to develop a deep connection to the people you meet and the cultures, cuisines and landscapes you're exploring.

- Best value in educational travel
- Meaningful local experiences
- Thoughtful itineraries

See our complete list of tours at:  
[WorldwideQuest.com/alumniUBC](http://WorldwideQuest.com/alumniUBC)



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