

Pioneers of Indian River Cruising & the World's Longest River Cruise





The Antara Story

Antara believes the best way to see South Asia is from the river.

What began in 2003 as a dream for travel industry pioneer and naturalist Raj Singh has today turned into Antara's thoughtfully designed, well-appointed fleet of ships that sail South Asia's most iconic rivers. Antara offers its guests beautiful perches on moving water from which to enjoy vibrant and meditative landscapes, people, crafts and wildlife. Our philosophy is to bring the region's indigenous environments and cultures to the world, sustainably, and with its renowned hospitality, in ships that are designed with thought, luxury and care.

Antara cruises encompass the Ganga, the Padma and the Brahmaputra River systems to make the world's longest river cruise. In 2023, Antara will start sailing the four rivers that inundate Bhitarkanika National Park, India's second largest mangrove forest.

For you, from India, *on the river.*





Rivers & Places

MAPS AND DESTINATIONS

The Ganga nourishes wildlife, vegetation, livelihoods, agriculture and history. At its delta, the Sundarbans, mangrove forests home to the Asiatic Bengal Tiger, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.





BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK

Crisscrossed by four rivers: Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra and Patasala, the Bhitarkanika National Park has the single largest population of estuarial crocodiles in the world, 8 species of kingfishers and over 300 varieties of birds. The landscape comprising the delta and mangrove clusters is complex and beautiful, a real draw for nature and wildlife lovers.

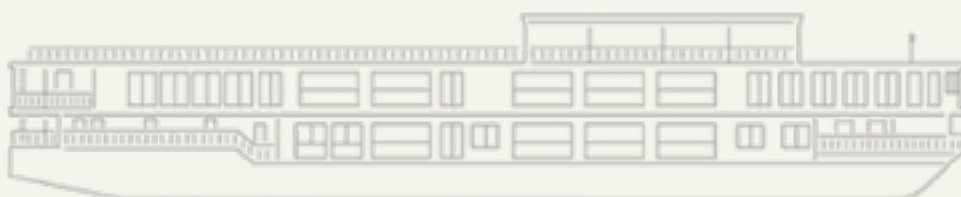
- MANGROVES
- CREEKS
- - - - - DRIVING ROUTE



Our Ships



MV GANGES VOYAGER I & II



MV GANGA VILAS



MV BENGAL GANGA

Our Boats and Catamarans



MV NAUKA VILAS



MV BHITARKANIKA & MV MAHANADI



Sustaining *life*

Rivers provide, sustain and nourish. Our cruises and our teams have a deep, abiding love and gratitude for our rivers and we want them to flow eternally.

- ~~~~ ACs, fans, lights, and the kitchen run with solar power wherever possible
- ~~~~ Shore electricity is used to reduce consumption of fuel
- ~~~~ Xtra green fuel is used to reduce carbon emissions and particulate matter, and increase fuel efficiency
- ~~~~ Eliminating single-use plastic wherever possible
- ~~~~ Sewage and water treatment plants on board
- ~~~~ Sailing designed mindfully to protect the river's inhabitants
- ~~~~ Focus on world and regional cuisine with local produce
- ~~~~ Local crafts and products to promote the cultures and livelihoods along the river
- ~~~~ Local forms of transport, hiring local people and skill development







MV Ganges Voyager & MV Ganges Voyager II



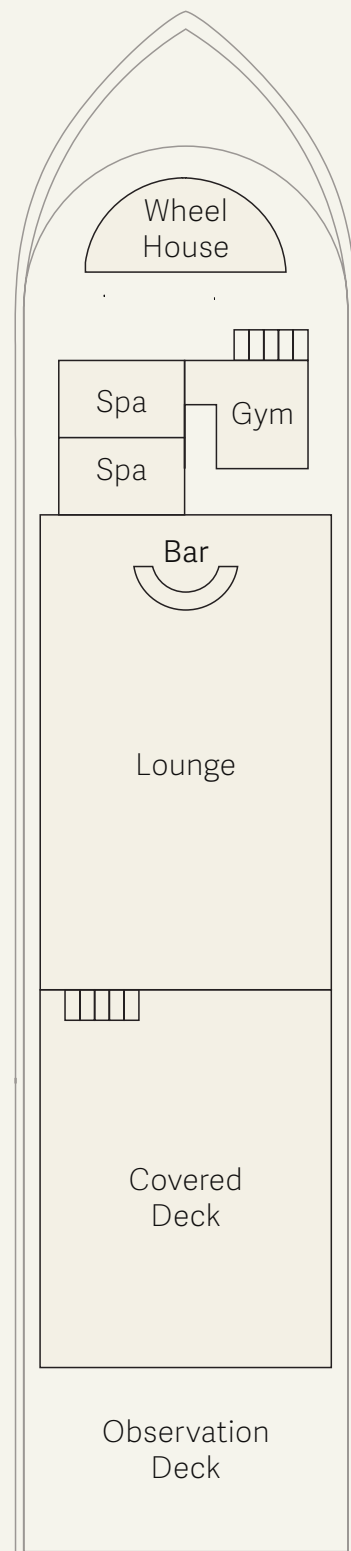
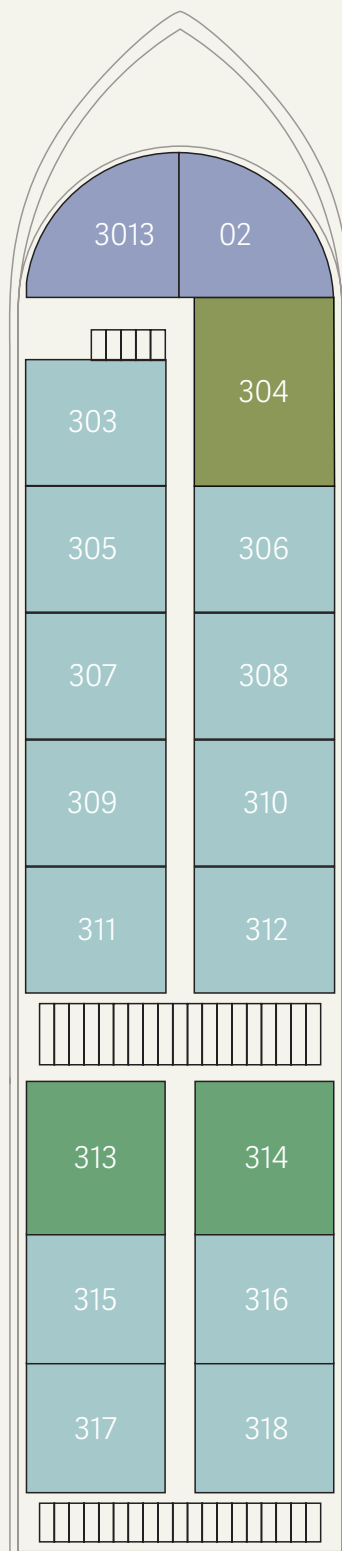
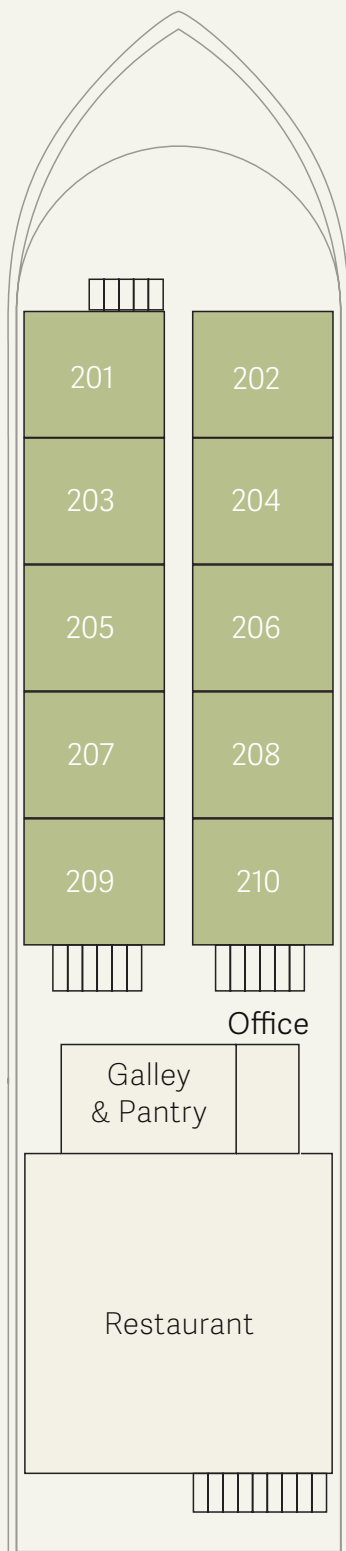
Our twin ships with 28 suites each are built in a colonial style of architecture with Burmese teak flooring, cane furniture, hand painted murals and expansive views of the river. They are designed to travel upstream from the colonial city of Kolkata to the late Mughal princely capital of Murshidabad and downstream to the Indian Sunderbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world.



MAIN DECK

UPPER DECK

SUN DECK



- Maharaja Suite
- Heritage Suite

- Viceroy Suite
- Colonial Suite

- Signature Suite

















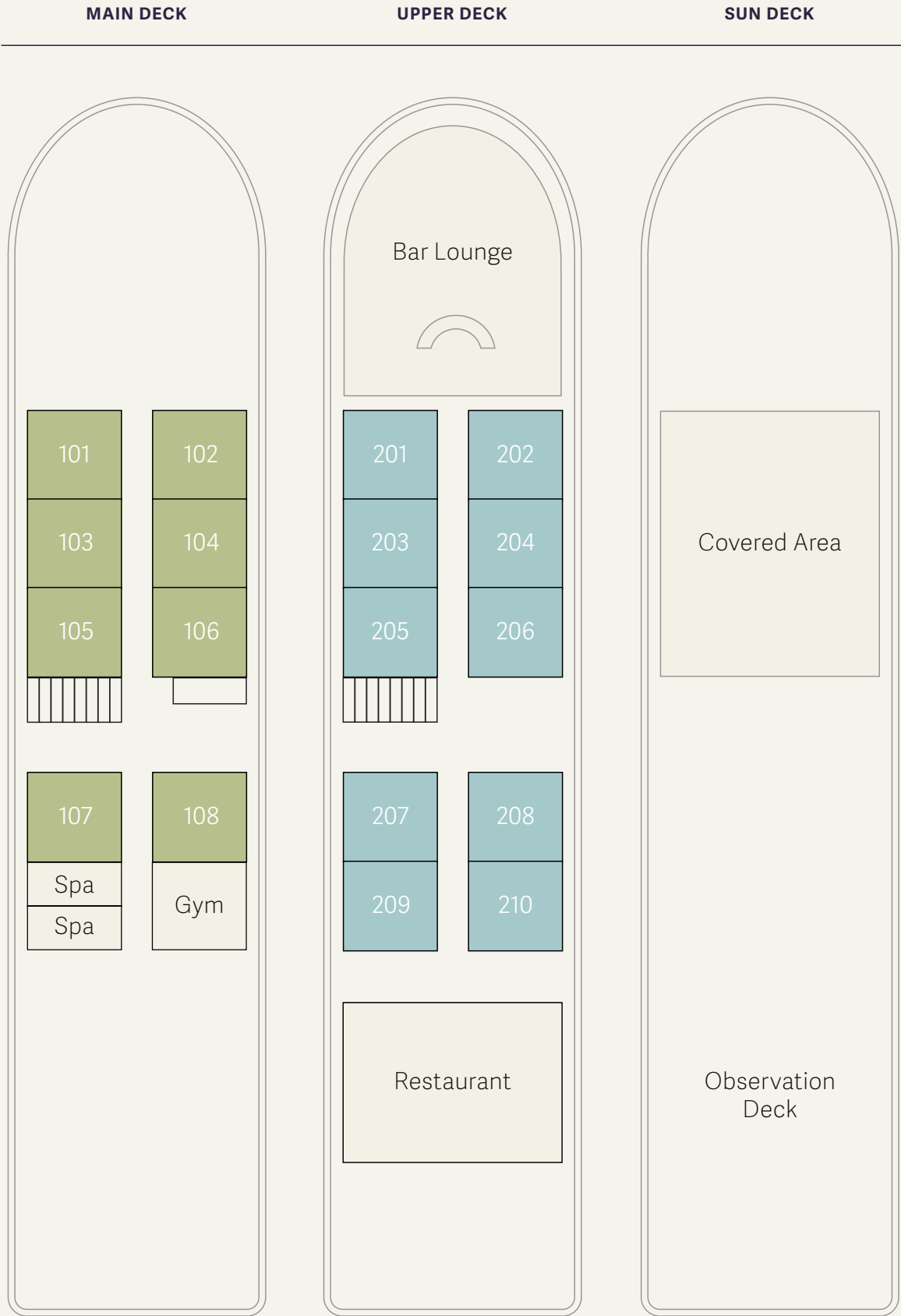
MV Ganga Vilas



The newest member of the Antara fleet is an 18-suite ship that sets sail on the longest river cruise in the world, covering in 51 days 2 countries, 5 states and 27 river systems.

Antara Ganga Vilas is a celebration of India's post-Independence design and a tribute to its innovations.





● Main Deck Suites ● Upper Deck Suites













MV Nauka Vilas



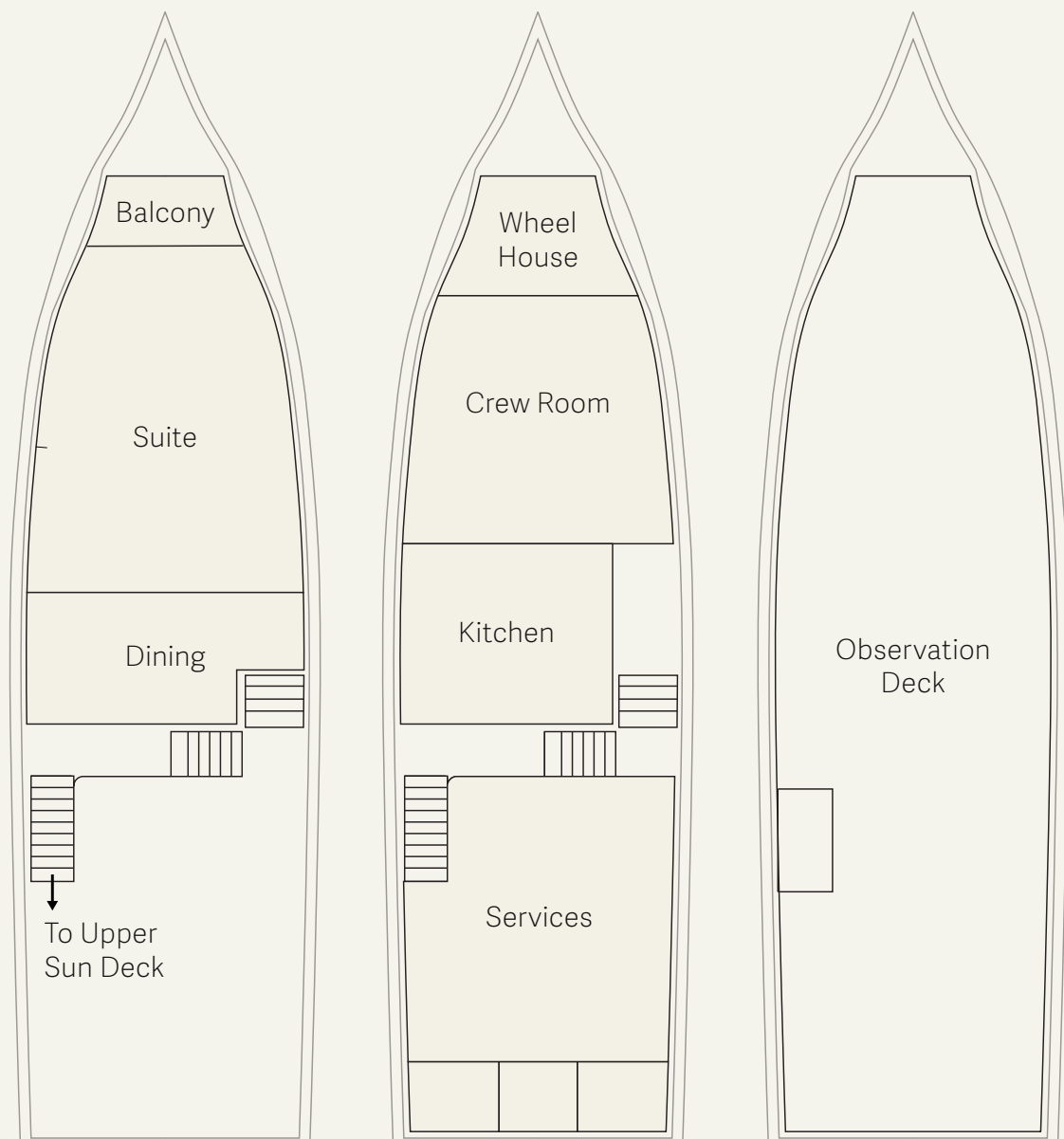
Nauka Vilas is a one of a kind, private houseboat perfect for personally tailored travel itineraries. With one spacious suite and a sun deck, Nauka Vilas is available for individual charter to curate the most intimate and memorable experiences in and around Varanasi.

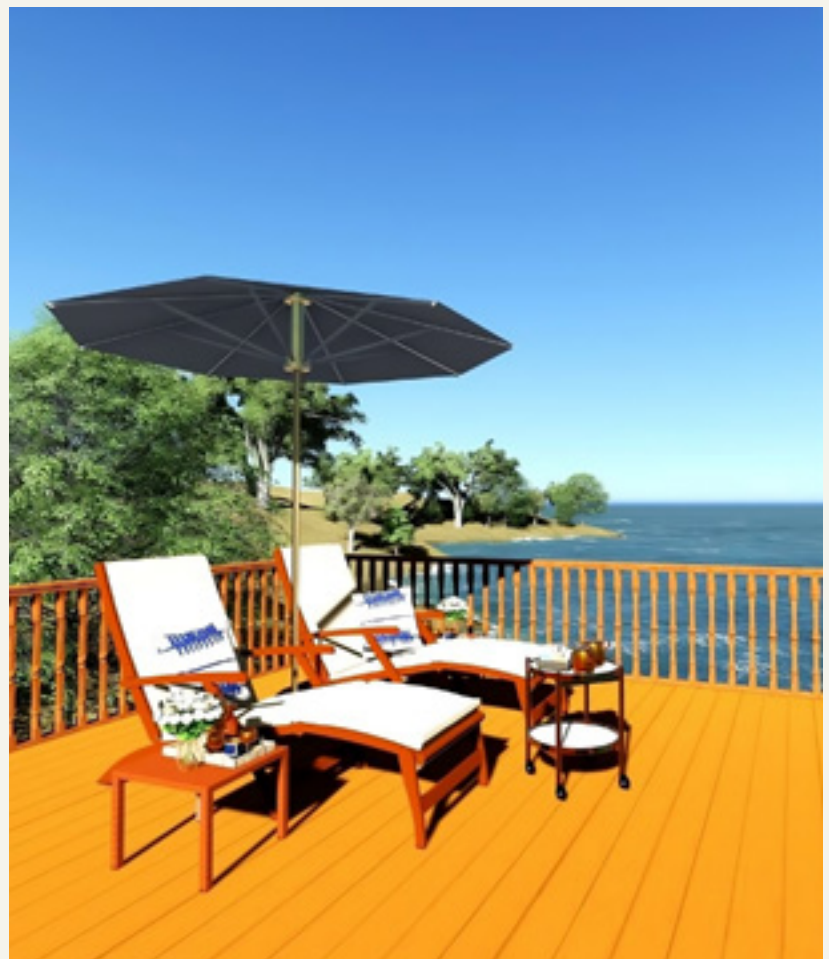


MAIN DECK

LOWER DECK

SUN DECK









MV Bengal Ganga



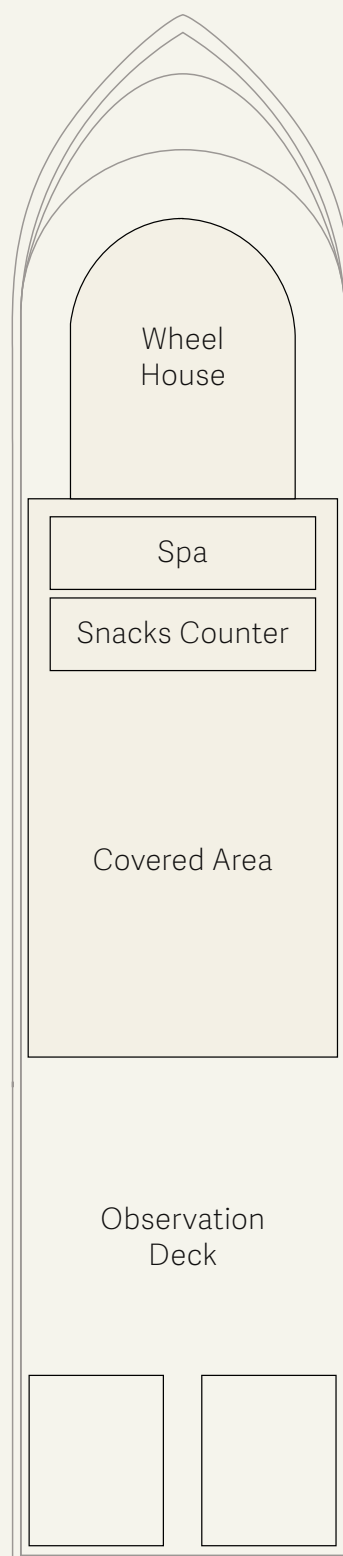
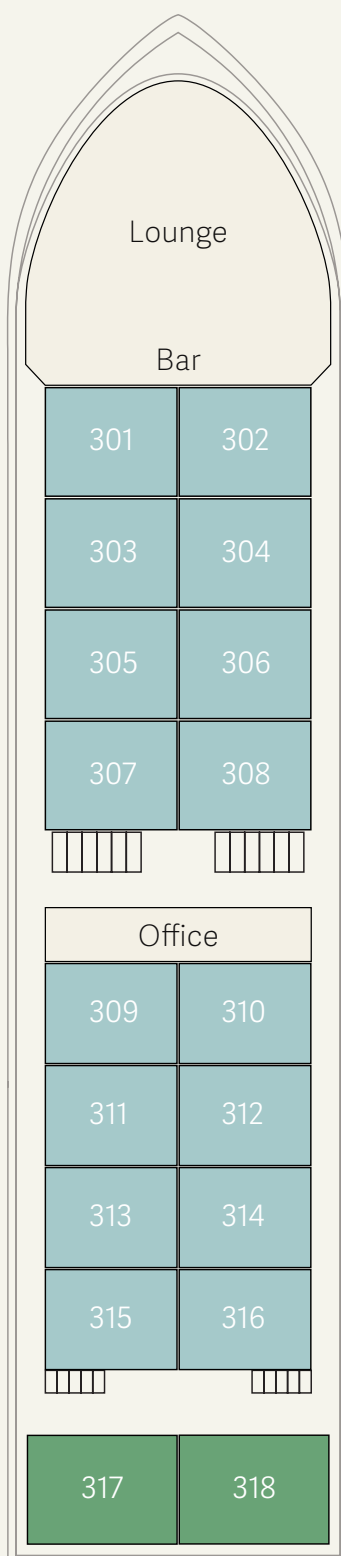
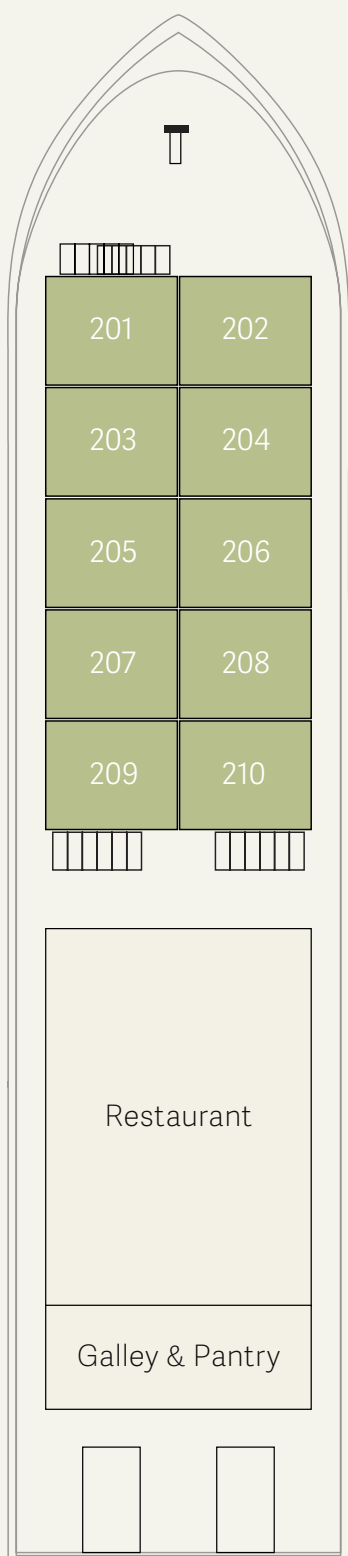
With 20 suites, this ship is inspired by colonial riverships in Myanmar. Shining with well-polished Burmese teak and artful décor, the ship's old-world charm takes you back in time. Docked in Varanasi, the ship sails downstream taking in the ancient Buddhist centre of Sarnath, the 14th century Sultanate capital of Jaunpur, and Ghazipur with a history stretching from Emperor Ashoka's time to the British empire.



MAIN DECK

UPPER DECK

SUN DECK



● Main Deck Suite

● Upper Deck Suite

● Premiere Suite











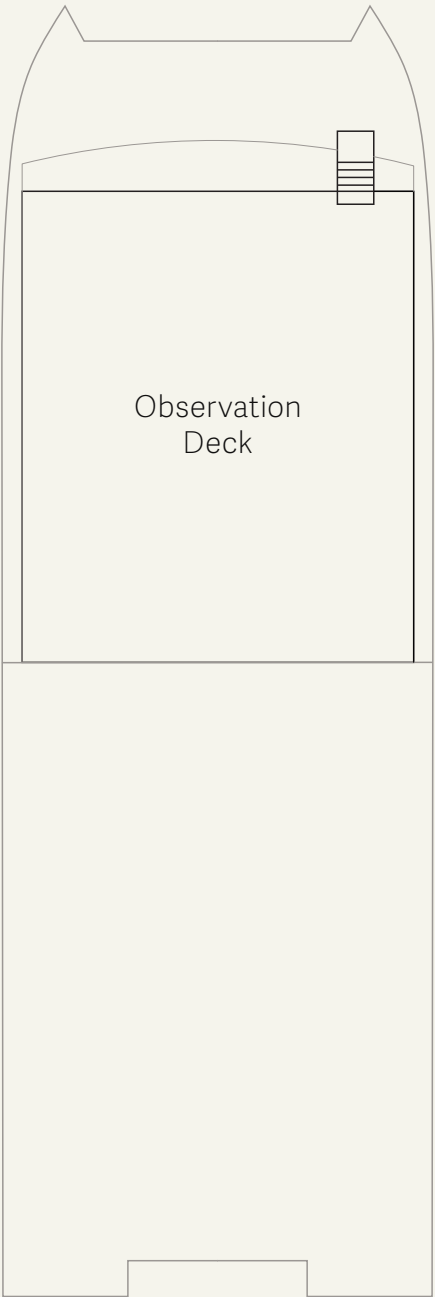
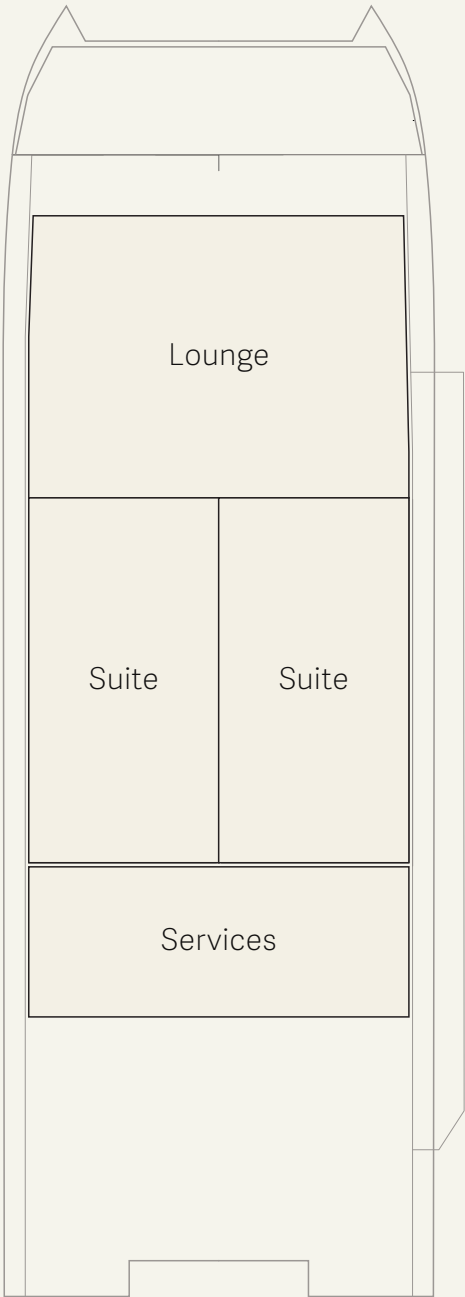
MV Bhitarkanika & MV Mahanadi

This November we will launch two catamarans, each with two luxuriously appointed, streamlined suites, a lounge-dining area, a sundeck and a scratch kitchen. For the first time, luxury cruising comes to Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park and its rivers, home to India's second largest mangrove system.



MAIN DECK

SUN DECK









Itineraries

Allow Antara to show you India in a new light. It's ancient culture. The astonishing wildlife. Its people and places. On a slow float past bustling settlements and through the deep, mysterious bends of the river, you begin to understand how it connects history, faith, craft, trade and the people that are nurtured by it. Our itineraries take a deep dive into philosophies of life. On Antara's luxury river cruises, both long and short, you'll explore colonial architecture and ancient temples, photograph sleepy fishing villages amid mustard fields, and shop at artisan settlements.





GANGES VOYAGER

Threads and Makers

Textiles on the Riverbank



DURATION: 7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

Kolkata – Fulia – Kalna – Jiaganj – Murshidabad –
Nabadwip – Chandernagore – Kolkata

22 – 29 NOVEMBER 2023

Antara's new textile cruise itinerary celebrates the fruit of the river's fertile embrace. Silk and fine cotton grown and spun on its banks and woven to a softness from its moisture-soaked air – to make a living, but also as artistry inspired by its currents and hues. Highly refined textiles like *baluchari*, *garid*, *muslin* and common ones like *gamocha* have been produced and shipped along the river's course, for the use of local people and delighted foreigners. Sailing on this fabled waterway, we take you to mulberry farms in Murshidabad producing the finest silks, and to meet the people who create unique textiles. You can buy directly from them, and thereby become part of their stories, inextricably entwined with and nourished by the Ganges.

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2023

Kolkata Embarkation (L/D)

EMBARKATION TIME — 12:00 HRS

Embark on the ship at the jetty in Kolkata and enjoy lunch on board. The afternoon excursion includes a visit to the **Weavers Studio**, a textile study and resource centre for an introduction to some of the fabulous fabrics and weaves we will encounter on our travels. Weavers Studio's creations are inspired by historical textiles, Indian trade cloths, seasons, ethnic tribes, across the border cultures and contemporary techniques. Their collection comprises of specialized fabrics, stoles, scarves, shawls, patch scrolls, art textiles, sarees and garments.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 2 THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2023

Kolkata – Fulia (B/L/D)

Morning visit to the Flower Market, located under the east end of Howrah Bridge. **Mullick Ghat Kolkata Flower Market** is eastern India's largest flower market with hundreds of stalls and people sitting on the ground. Around 2,000 flower growers from the surrounding areas come to sell their flowers and garlands, and during the wedding/festive season, it's probably double that number!

We then have a **panoramic tour** of the Heritage Buildings in **Dalhousie Square**. The Square was named in memory of Lord Dalhousie who was the Governor General of India from 1847 to 1856. Dalhousie Square is surrounded by some of Kolkata's most enduring Raj-era monuments like the magnificent GPO (General Post Office), the regal Raj Bhawan, St. John's Church and the Gothic style Writer's Building.

Return to the ship for lunch and begin sail upstream to Fulia passing below the cantilevered Howrah Bridge and seeing various colonial buildings along the Ganges River.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 3 FRIDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2023

Fulia – Kalna (B/L/D)

Morning excursion of **Fulia**, a textile town located beside the river Ganges. After the partition of India and the division of Bengal into West Bengal (in India) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), many skilled weavers from Bangladesh came and settled here and the region become a renowned centre for hand-woven fabrics. With government encouragement and support, the talented weavers soon revived their ancestral occupation and the art of exquisite weaving once again flourished.





Fulia specializes in a combination of **jacquard and Jamdani sari weaving**. Jamdani is typically handloom woven fabric using a mixture of cotton and gold thread. It is one of the most time and labor-intensive forms of handloom weaving, and the most artistic textile rich in motifs.

Return to the ship and sail to Kalna. In the late afternoon, visit a local **weaver's home** to see the traditional weaving of **muslin cloth**. Muslin or *malma* is a cotton fabric of plain weave made in a wide range of weights from delicate sheers to coarse sheeting. Early muslin was handwoven of uncommonly delicate handspun yarn.

Also visit the **Nabakailas temple**, built in 1809 by the Bardhaman Maharaja, which contains 108 *aat chala* (eight slope-roofed) shrines arranged in two concentric circles separated by a well-maintained lawn with beautiful flowerbeds. The outer circle consists of 74 shrines consisting of alternate black and white *shivalingas* while the 34 temples of the inner circle have only white *shivalingas*.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 4 SATURDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2023

Kalna – Jiaganj (B/L/D)

We sail all morning viewing the serene countryside to arrive at **Jiaganj**. Baluchar is the original ancestral name of Jiaganj. The name was changed to Jiaganj after the Mughals conquered Bengal.

Post lunch, ride the electric rickshaws to see **Baluchari sari weaving**, famous for its elaborate *palloo* (border or *anchal*). It has been eulogized as the “*loveliest and most charming of all silks of India*”. It is a highly decorative silk fabric, known for its pictorial themes showcasing both social life and traditions. They are not just beautiful pieces of art, they are also canvases through which various themes are reflected. Normally plain in the body, the *palloo* is resplendent with elaborate woven motifs that often depict stories from mythology, folk tales, social and religious customs, animals, and lifestyles of people. For instance, *lady with flower*, *man riding horse*, *chariots*, *marriage procession*, *vignettes from the epic Ramayana* are some of the motifs generally used and organized in a narrative style. And the important feature of the technique is the white outlining of the motifs.

Time permitting, we visit the **Jain Temples** and a **heritage mansion** in **Azimganj** town located on the opposite bank of the river.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 5 SUNDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2023

Jiaganj – Murshidabad (B/L/D)

In the morning, after breakfast, visit the **Hazarduari Palace Museum**, built in the Greek Doric style. The palace has more than a thousand real and false doors in its vast corridors, and is filled with colonial era antiques, artwork and manuscripts.

Ride the *Toto* (electric-rickshaw) to the **Katra Mosque** passing through turmeric plantations. Built by the first Nawab of Murshidabad, this mosque has distinctive minarets but the dome was damaged during an earthquake. En route we stopover to see the **process of making raw silk** – the drying, peeling and making of threads from silkworm cocoons, which are done in the cottages where these skilled workers live.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 6 MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2023

Murshidabad – Nabadwip (B/L/D)

After a restful morning observing the local life along the riverbanks, we arrive at **Nabadwip**. Literally meaning

New (*Nab*) Island (*Dwip*), it is the birthplace and abode of Saint Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the founder of the Hindu Vaishnav religion and a great social reformer. Once the capital of the Sena Dynasty under King Lakshman Sena who ruled during the 12th century, the town was an important centre of education, religion and culture. Nabadwip can be easily referred as a temple town as it is blessed with numerous old and new temples belonging to different Hindu sects.

Explore the riverbank village by walk to see the local people engaged in **handloom weaving** of cotton fabric, mainly saris and stoles/scarves, and other activities.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 7 TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2023

Nabadwip – Chandernagore – Kolkata (B/L/D)

Today we sail towards **Chandernagore**, established as a French colony in 1673 and emerged as a trading post on the bank of the Hooghly River. It still retains a Francophone flavour.

Explore the **French colonial buildings** along the promenade, including the former French governor's residence, now converted into the **Dupleix Museum** (closed on Thursdays & Saturdays) that features an exhibition of items that depict life during this period.

Also visit the **Sacred Heart Church**, designed by French Architect Jacques Duchatz. The church was inaugurated in 1884 and stands for over two centuries to mark the beauty of the architecture during the French period.

Return to the ship and sail back to **Kolkata**.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 8 WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2023

Kolkata Disembarkation (B)

DISEMBARKATION TIME — 09:00 HRS

Following breakfast disembark from the ship and transfer for your onward journey.





GANGES VOYAGER

Princely Murshidabad & Secrets of Sundarbans *Special Vegan Cruise*



DURATION: 10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS

Kolkata – Bandel – Kalna – Matari – Khushbagh –
Baranagar – Murshidabad – Mayapur –
Chandernagore – Sundarbans – Kolkata

6 – 16 SEPTEMBER 2023

A boutique vegan adventure that is mindfully customised to your choices. A fully vegan kitchen, wines, personal products, and even housekeeping products aboard the Ganges Voyager cater to guests' preferences. And looking out, it's the finest way to see the historic temples, battlefields, mango orchards and colonial palaces that line the banks of the sacred river. To experience the lives of the rural folk and admire their handicrafts, and revel in the wonders of the Sunderbans, which include sailing through mangroves, spotting alligators, and if fortune is your friend, the Royal Bengal tiger, too. Also includes exploring the architectural curiosities of Kolkata's older streets.



DAY 1 WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

Kolkata Embarkation – Kalna (L/D)

EMBARKATION TIME — 12:00 HRS

Embark on the ship at the jetty in Kolkata and enjoy lunch on board before we begin our journey upstream. The river ship sails through areas where various European settlers had established East Indian Companies, leaving many remnants of their settlements from the 17th through 19th Centuries.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 2 THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

Kalna – Matiari (B/L/D)

This morning we enjoy an electric rickshaw ride through the city center of **Kalna** en route to the enchanting **Rajbari Complex**, with the highest concentration of temples in the region. Bengal's mixture of temple architecture includes the **Nabakailas Temples**. Another complex features diverse architecture, including the **Pratapeshwar Temple**, built in 1849. Other temples on the site include **Lalji Temple**, the oldest in the complex (1739), and **Krishnachandra Temple** (1751).

Sail onward to Matiari.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 3 FRIDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2023

Matiari – Khushbagh (B/L/D)

Enjoy an early morning walk to the shore-side village of **Matiari**, which is known for manufacturing beautiful handcrafted brass items.

We then continue our journey upstream, sailing past the **battlefield of Plassey**. Early in the evening, we visit the charming village of **Khushbagh**, passing through scenic fields to arrive at the peaceful **Moghul-style garden** built by Nawab Ali-Wardi-Khan, housing his family's private mosque.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 4 SATURDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2023

Khushbagh – Baranagar – Murshidabad (B/L/D)

Post breakfast, cruise to the sleepy village of **Baranagar** where you'll take a walk to experience rural India at its most idyllic.

Once you're back onboard, enjoy the afternoon to unwind as the ship glides along the Lower Ganges, twisting and turning between banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchards to arrive at **Murshidabad**, a hidden

architectural gem with dramatic whitewashed colonial era structures. We visit the **Hazarduari Palace** (closed on Fridays). We travel by electric rickshaws to the **Katra mosque**, built by the first Nawab of Murshidabad, Murshid Quli Khan in 1724–25.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 5 SUNDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2023

Murshidabad – Mayapur (B/L/D)

After a restful morning, observing the local life along the riverbanks, we stop in the village of **Mayapur**, the headquarters of the **International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)**. Meet Krishna followers and walk through the pilgrim's bazaar.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 6 MONDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

Mayapur – Chandernagore – Kolkata (B/L/D)

Morning sail to **Chandernagore**, established as a French colony in 1673. In the afternoon, walking along the promenade we will explore the French colonial buildings, including the former **French Governor's residence** now converted to a **museum** (closed on Thursdays & Saturdays). We will then visit the **Sacred Heart Church of Chandernagore**.

Return to the ship and continue our journey downstream to Kolkata.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 7 TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

Sailing to Sundarbans (B/L/D)

Sail to **Namkhana**, the gateway of the **Sundarbans National Park**, a World Heritage Site, and the world's largest delta mangrove forest.

Post breakfast enjoy a talk and interaction with a naturalist on the unique ecosystem of the Sundarbans.

Overnight onboard Ganga Voyager.

DAY 8 WEDNESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

Namkhana – Bony Camp – Bali Island (B/L/D)

Scale the **Bony Camp Watchtower** on an excursion to spot endangered crocodiles, terrapins and many species of migratory birds. Sailing along the **Matla river**, keep a keen eye out for **Irrawaddy dolphins** and other marine life. Disembark in a country boat after lunch to visit the serene **Nethidopani Watchtower** and experience the spectacular nature of the surroundings.

Sail onward to **Bali Island**, a typical village whose inhabitants are engaged in farming, paddy husking, honey packing and fishing. Enjoy a village walk and interact with the villagers engaged in creating handicrafts, visit a local home, and witness a tribal dance.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 9 THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

Bali – Sudhanyakhali – Do Banki – Namkhana (B/L/D)

You'll scale the **Sudhanyakhali Watchtower**, the most popular locale to spot the elusive **Royal Bengal Tiger**; this vast habitat allows invigorating possibilities of crocodiles, wild boars, axis deer and a wide range of migratory and local birds.

Thereafter take a small country boat through the narrow creeks to climb the **Dobanki Watchtower** and enjoy a canopy walk at an elevation of 20 feet from the ground and about half a kilometer in length, to reveal the riveting flora and fauna.

Return to the ship for late lunch and sail to **Namkhana**.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 10 FRIDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2023

Namkhana – Kolkata (B/L)

Early this morning we sail back to **Kolkata** enjoying breakfast and lunch on board, arriving late in the afternoon.

Enjoy a **Tea Tasting session** while reminiscing about the wondrous experience of the Sundarbans.

Overnight onboard Ganges Voyager.

DAY 11 SATURDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2023

Kolkata Sightseeing & Disembark (B/L)

DISEMBARKATION TIME — 15:00 HRS

Embark on an early-morning city tour, featuring a **Panoramic Tour** of the well-preserved British colonial buildings in Kolkata: **Writer's Building, General Post Office, High Court, Raj Bhawan (Governor's House), Town Hall, Council House, Treasury Building, Reserve Bank of India** and **Dalhousie Square**. The day continues with a visit to **St. John's Church**, and the **Victoria Memorial Museum**, which houses the largest collection of British colonial historical artifacts in India.

Depart after lunch for onward journey.





GANGA VILAS

Varanasi

Special Cruise



CRUISE DATES

OCTOBER 2023 — OCT 20 | OCT 27

NOVEMBER 2023 — NOV 3 | NOV 10 | NOV 17

DURATION: **3 NIGHTS / 4 DAYS**

Also available for
2 NIGHTS / 3 DAYS

Varanasi, known variously as *Banaras* and *Kashi*, is considered the holiest city in Hinduism and Jainism. It also played an important role in the development of Buddhism. Hindus believe that death in this city will bring salvation, making it a major centre for pilgrimage.

The city is known worldwide for its many Ghats, which are embankments made in steps of stone slabs along the river bank where pilgrims perform ritual ablutions.

This 3 nights and 4 day program gives an insight into the cultural heritage of Varanasi.

DAY 1

Arrive Varanasi — Embarkation (L/D)

EMBARKATION TIME — 13:30 HRS

Arrival in Varanasi and transfer to the **Ravidas Ghat** for embarkation. Be welcomed onboard and enjoy lunch, followed by Safety Briefing.

In the evening ride the country boat to the **Dashashwamedh Ghat** to see the *Ganga Aarti* ritual, performed by a group of priests lined up on the riverbank chanting mantras and performing the prayer ritual with lamps, incense, bells and traditional Hindu instruments to honor the river. Thousands of devotees throng the riverbank to participate in the ceremony every evening.

Welcome Dinner.

Overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 2

Varanasi — Cruising downstream (B/L/D)

Early morning sail to the ghat near the Kashi Vishwanath temple. Stroll in the **Vishwanath Gali** (street), and experience the hustle and bustle of devotees and road side vendors. Visit the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** for *Darshan* and offering prayers to Lord Shiva, the presiding deity of the city.

Return to the ship for breakfast and begin cruising downstream towards **Ghazipur**, viewing the countryside. Lunch and dinner onboard.

Overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.



DAY 3

Cruising upstream to Varanasi (B/L/D)

This morning we sail upstream towards **Varanasi**, arriving at **Rajghat/Namo Ghat**, enjoying breakfast and lunch onboard.

Post lunch disembark and drive to visit **Sarnath** the seat where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Bodhgaya. The Archaeological Museum here contains a large collection of sculptures that stand testimony to the fervent artistic and religious activity for more than a thousand years. Visit the local bazaar for shopping the famous *banarasi* silk, muslin, perfumes and other handicrafts that Varanasi is famous for.

Return to the ship for a Farewell Dinner.

Overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 4

Varanasi — Disembarkation (B)

DISSEMBARKATION TIME — 08:00 HRS

Disembark from the ship after breakfast and transfer for your onward journey.



Catamaran Cruise in Odisha

Cruising in Bhitarkanika

DURATION: 3 NIGHTS / 4 DAYS

Gupti – Dangamal – Gupti

Our newest offering, small boutique ships sailing a unique itinerary through 4 river systems in Odisha. Learn about the secrets of the forests through close encounters. Explore Brahmani and Baitarani river deltas. Lush mangroves, incredible flora and aquatic and bird life – including the saltwater crocodile, monitors and pythons, herons, and turtles. Introduced by the expert guides and knowledge we have on board.

DAY 1

Embarkation at Gupti (D)

EMBARKATION TIME — 16:00–18:00 HRS

Arrive at the village of Gupti, which is approx. 3½ hours drive from Bhubaneswar and a short distance from the nearby town of Rajnagar.

You are welcomed on board with a refreshing beverage followed by a safety briefing.

Enjoy a sundowner as you gently traverse the Pathsala River enjoying a curated high tea. The sight of distant Bay of Bengal has breathtaking views. A multi course traditional meal awaits you in the evening giving you the flavours of the region.

Overnight onboard Catamaran.

DAY 2

Gupti – Dangamal: Exploring Bhitarkanika (B/L/D)

Sail into the rich and unique mangrove ecosystem with creeks, mudflats and estuaries to arrive in Dangamal. Disembark and visit the Orientation Centre. Then explore the park on foot to observe and learn about the mangrove forest on trails. Bhitarkanika was declared a sanctuary in 1975, in order to protect the estuarine crocodile and the turtles in their rare mangrove habitat. Other residents of the sanctuary include water monitor lizards, king cobras, and migrating birds. About 62 different kinds of mangroves are found here. The virgin stretched beaches, meandering water courses, and tranquil surroundings intercepted by the chirping of birds, will surely enchant you.

Enjoy a sundowner from the top deck of your cruise ship while cruising back to Gupti where the views of the forest and the setting sun are simply mesmerizing. Dinner at leisure followed by a relaxed evening.

Overnight onboard Catamaran.

DAY 3

Gupti – Dangamal: Exploring the Bhitarkanika (B/L/D)

After breakfast, set sail again to Dangamal. Ride the country boat in the narrow channel to Khola for birdwatching and viewing other animals along the river.

Return to the Catamaran for lunch. Thereafter explore the park on foot on a different trail to observe and learn about the forest with birding watching opportunities.

Cruise back to Gupti Jetty.

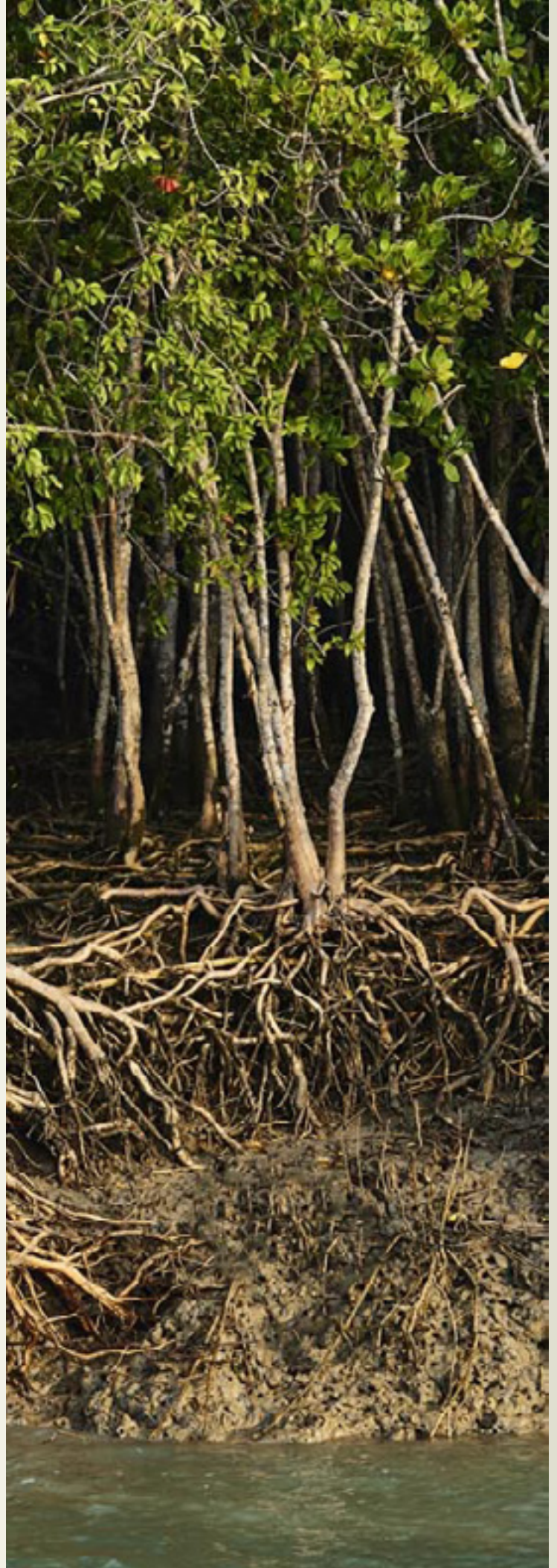
Overnight onboard Catamaran.

DAY 4

Gupti, Disembark (B)

DISEMBARKATION TIME — 09:00 HRS

Enjoy the sunrise and feel the fresh clear crisp air that is so invigorating. Relish the landscapes and beauty of the river and the life alongside. Disembark from the cruise at Gupti Jetty. early morning post breakfast.





GANGA VILAS



Treading *the Buddha's Trail*

DURATION: 10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS

Kolkata / Farakka – Samtaghat – Bateshwarsthan
– Sultanganj – Munger – Simaria – Patna –
Nalanda – Bodhgaya – Varanasi

30 OCTOBER – 9 NOVEMBER 2024

**Rediscover the life journey of the
Enlightened One with Antara to find
the Buddha within.**

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2024

Train Kolkata/Farakka, Embark – Samtaghat (L/D)

Board an early morning train from **Kolkata** to **Farakka**. Upon arrival at the Farakka train station, transfer to the ship for embarkation. Enjoy a leisurely lunch en route to **Samtaghat** against a moving panoramic backdrop.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 2 THURSDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2024

River day Samtaghat – Bateshwarsthan (B/L/D)

Full day sailing to **Bateshwarsthan**. You will be fascinated by the passing landscape and the lively life on the river.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 3 FRIDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2024

Bateshwarsthan – Sultanganj (B/L/D)

Morning drive (approx. 15 mins) to the excavation site of the **Vikramshila University** which flourished between the 8th and 9th century CE and walk around the ruins.

Vikramshila University was one of the three most important Buddhist monasteries in India during the Pala Empire, along with Nalanda and Odantapuri. It was one of the largest Buddhist universities, with more than a thousand students and over one hundred teachers. Its location is now the site of **Antichak** village near Kahalgaon, in Bihar. Vikramshila is known mainly through Tibetan sources, especially the writings of Taranatha, the Tibetan monk historian of the 16th to 17th centuries CE.

We return to the ship and sail towards **Sultanganj**.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 4 SATURDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2024

Sultanganj – Munger (B/L/D)

After breakfast, we go on excursion to **Sultanganj**, where there are two prominent granite rock-islands in the river

connected to the mainland by a causeway. On one island is a mosque and on the other larger one is the 16th century **Ajgaibinath Temple**. We will visit shrines to various deities dating from 5th century onwards on an ancient jetty which today has become part of a Shiva temple. Thereafter we sail towards **Munger**.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 5 SUNDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2024

Munger Sightseeing (B/L/D)

Munger is known for its manufacturing of iron articles such as firearms and swords. It is the ancient city from which Mahabharata legend Karna, the eldest son of Kunti and the Sun Lord hailed.

In the morning visit the **Chandika Sthan Temple**.

Dedicated to Goddess Shakti, it is one of the fifty-one Shakti Pithas, associated with the legend of Lord Vishnu who, to save the world from Lord Shiva's wrath, cut into pieces the corpse of Devi Sati that Shiva was carrying.

Return to the ship for lunch and thereafter, walk through the Fort ruins and visit the nearby market.



Munger's Fort houses several religious and historic monuments such as tombs of saints, a palace and a British cemetery. The market is a very popular fruit and vegetable market with other shops of textiles and readymade garments.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 6 MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2024

Munger – Simaria (B/L/D)

We continue our journey further upstream sailing to arrive in **Simaria** by late afternoon. Walk in the riverside village to see the daily activities of the local people. It has a famous bridge which provides both rail and road connectivity to the local residents.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.

DAY 7 TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024

Riverday Simaria – Patna (B/L/D)

Today we sail a full day through wonderful countryside to **Patna**, the capital of the state of Bihar.

Patna is one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world, and was founded in 490 BCE as Pataliputra.

Dinner & overnight onboard Ganga Vilas.



DAY 8 WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2024

Patna Disembark / Nalanda – Bodhgaya (B/L/D)

Disembark from the ship after breakfast and proceed for a sightseeing tour of **Patna**. Visit the **Golghar** and **Patna Museum**.

After sightseeing, transfer to the airport for your onward journey.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

Disembark by 07:00 hrs after breakfast or with a packed breakfast for the drive to the archaeological ruins of **Nalanda**, a World Heritage Site (approx. 2 hrs). Nalanda was a renowned Mahavihara (Buddhist monastic university) in ancient Magadha. It is considered by historians to be the world's first residential university and among the greatest centers of learning in the ancient world. Operating from 427 until 1197 CE, Nalanda played a vital role in promoting the patronage of arts and academics during the 5th and 6th century CE. It was supported by numerous Indian and Javanese patrons, both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Over some 750 years, its faculty included some of the most revered scholars of Mahayana Buddhism. It taught six major Buddhist schools and philosophies as well as subjects such as Vedas, grammar, medicine, logic and mathematics. It was perhaps the oldest seat of learning in India and treasures a glorious past, rich spiritual heritage and some extraordinary ruins.

Continue to nearby **Rajgir** where lunch can be enjoyed at a local restaurant. Rajgir is a historic town that holds a place of prominence in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain scriptures owing to it being the seat and capital of several dynasties and the dwelling ground of such historical figures as The Buddha and Mahavira. Both Mahavira and Buddha taught in Rajgir during the 6th and 5th century BCE. The Buddha was offered a forest monastery in Rajgir by the king Bimbisara, and became one of the Buddha's most important preaching locations, where he delivered some of his famous sermons. He spent several months meditating here and initiated king Bimbisara and others to Buddhism here, too. It was here, on one of these hills, that the First Buddhist Council was held after Buddha's death.

Continue the journey to **Bodhgaya** (approx. 2 hrs), which for Buddhists is the most important of the main four pilgrimage sites related to the life of Gautama Buddha (the other three are Kushinagar, Lumbini and Sarnath).

Dinner and overnight stay at a local hotel.

DAY 9 THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024

Bodhgaya Sightseeing (B/L/D)

Begin the day with a visit to the **Mahabodhi Temple**.

Declared a World Heritage Site, it is said to be the place where Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment under a banyan tree that became known as the Bodhi Tree. Since antiquity, Bodh Gaya has been the object of pilgrimage and veneration both for Hindus and Buddhists. Buddhist chanting and prayers can be witnessed in the temple premises.

The day can be spent exploring the several Buddhist temples and monasteries that have been built by the people of various countries like Bhutan, Mongolia, China, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet and Vietnam in a wide area around the Mahabodhi Temple. These buildings reflect the architectural style, exterior and interior decoration of their respective countries. The statue of The Buddha in the **Chinese temple** is 200 years old and was brought from China. The **Japanese Nippon temple** is shaped like a pagoda. The **Myanmar (Burmese) temple** is also pagoda shaped and is reminiscent of Bagan. The **Thai temple** has a typical sloping, curved roof covered with golden tiles. Inside, the temple holds a massive bronze statue of Buddha. Next to the Thai temple is a 25 metre statue of The Buddha, located within a garden which has existed there for over 100 years.

Lunch, dinner and overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 10 FRIDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2024

Drive Bodhgaya – Varanasi (B/L/D)

After an early breakfast, drive to **Varanasi** (248 kms, approx. 5hrs), the holiest town for the Hindus.

Upon arrival, check in to the hotel and have lunch. Varanasi, also known as Banaras and Kashi, is a major religious hub in India, and is considered the holiest city in Hinduism and Jainism. It also played an important role in the development of Buddhism. Hindus believe that death in this city will bring salvation, making it a major centre for pilgrimage. The city is known worldwide for its many Ghats, which are stone embankments made in steps along the riverbank where pilgrims perform ritual ablutions.

Enjoy a walk on these ghats and arrive at the **Dashashwamedh Ghat** to see the spectacular **Ganga Aarti** ritual, performed by a group of priests lined up on the riverbank chanting mantras and performing the prayer ritual with lamps, incense, bells and traditional Hindu instruments to honour the river.



Thousands of devotees throng the riverbank to participate in the ceremony every evening.

Dinner and overnight at hotel.

DAY 11 SATURDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2024

Varanasi – Sarnath / Departure (B)

At early dawn enjoy a **Sunrise Boat Tour** to witness the incredible scenes along the Holy River.

Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Thereafter, visit **Sarnath** where in 528 BCE, at 35 years of age, Gautama Buddha taught his first sermon after attaining enlightenment at Bodhgaya. The **Dhamek Stupa** here marks the precise location where Buddha delivered his first discourse to his first five disciples, and where all five eventually became fully liberated. It is also where the Buddhist Sangha first came into existence as a result of the enlightenment of his first five disciples. It is also one of the eight stupas where Buddha's ashes after his cremation were divided and buried.

The **Archaeological Museum** at Sarnath contains a large collection of sculptures that stand testimony to the fervent artistic and religious activity for more than a thousand years.

Thereafter transfer to the airport for onward journey.



Farm to Table

The ingredients that go into the food on board Antara's ships are locally sourced, seasonal, and farm fresh. The excellent regional and world cuisine we serve is enhanced by the variety of fruits, vegetables, dairy, fish, poultry and more that are grown and cultivated in the nurturing lap of the river.







As we curate journeys down the Ganges and through the Brahmani–Baitarni–Dhamra–Pathshala river system in Bhitarkanika, we celebrate the fertile riches of the land. We bring you to human-made creations such as gorgeous textiles, delicious food, and other hand-crafted products and to the region’s fascinating flora and fauna.

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