



HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
2014 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL PROGRAM



TRAVELS 2014

KOLKATA TO VARANASI

India's Holy Ganges River aboard the *Bengal Ganga*
With Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies

January 1–17, 2014

INDIA'S HOLY GANGES RIVER KOLKATA TO VARANASI ABOARD THE *BENGAL GANGA*

January 1-17, 2014 • (16 nights/17 days)



FROM ITS SOURCE HIGH IN THE MIGHTY HIMALAYAS, the Ganges River (Mother Ganga to Indians) flows 1,500 miles south and east through areas western visitors have rarely seen, connecting to the Hooghly River through Kolkata (Calcutta) before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. A vibrant, complex tapestry of religious beliefs, historical sagas, diverse architectural styles, and fascinating cultural traditions spreads along its banks.

During an 800-mile riverboat journey from Kolkata to Simaria aboard the newly refurbished and luxurious

Bengal Ganga, and continuing overland to Varanasi, you will be treated to a panoply of Muslim and colonial architecture, Hindu culture, Buddhist temples, the daily rituals of village life, and the unspoiled countryside of a part of India seldom experienced by travelers.

Infused with the influences of past rulers and European settlers, rich in diverse flora and fauna, and endowed with incredibly beautiful landscapes, the Ganges represents the heart and soul of Indian civilization. An optional post-trip extension to Agra makes a compelling finale for those who have never seen the Taj Mahal.

Cruise the Ganges from Kolkata to Varanasi (cover). Marvel at the colorful displays of produce in Kolkata's markets (above); Enjoy sunrise on the Ganges (inset above); Observe prayer rituals, called pujas, in Varanasi (at left).

FEATURED STUDY LEADER



Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard, was educated at Smith College, the University of London, and Harvard; she also received a postgraduate diploma from Banaras Hindu University. Her academic work has a dual focus—India and America. Her interest in India focuses on popular religion, especially temples and places of pilgrimage, called tirthas. She is the author of *Banaras: City of Light and Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, and her most recent book, *India: A Sacred Geography*, is about pilgrimage networks in India.

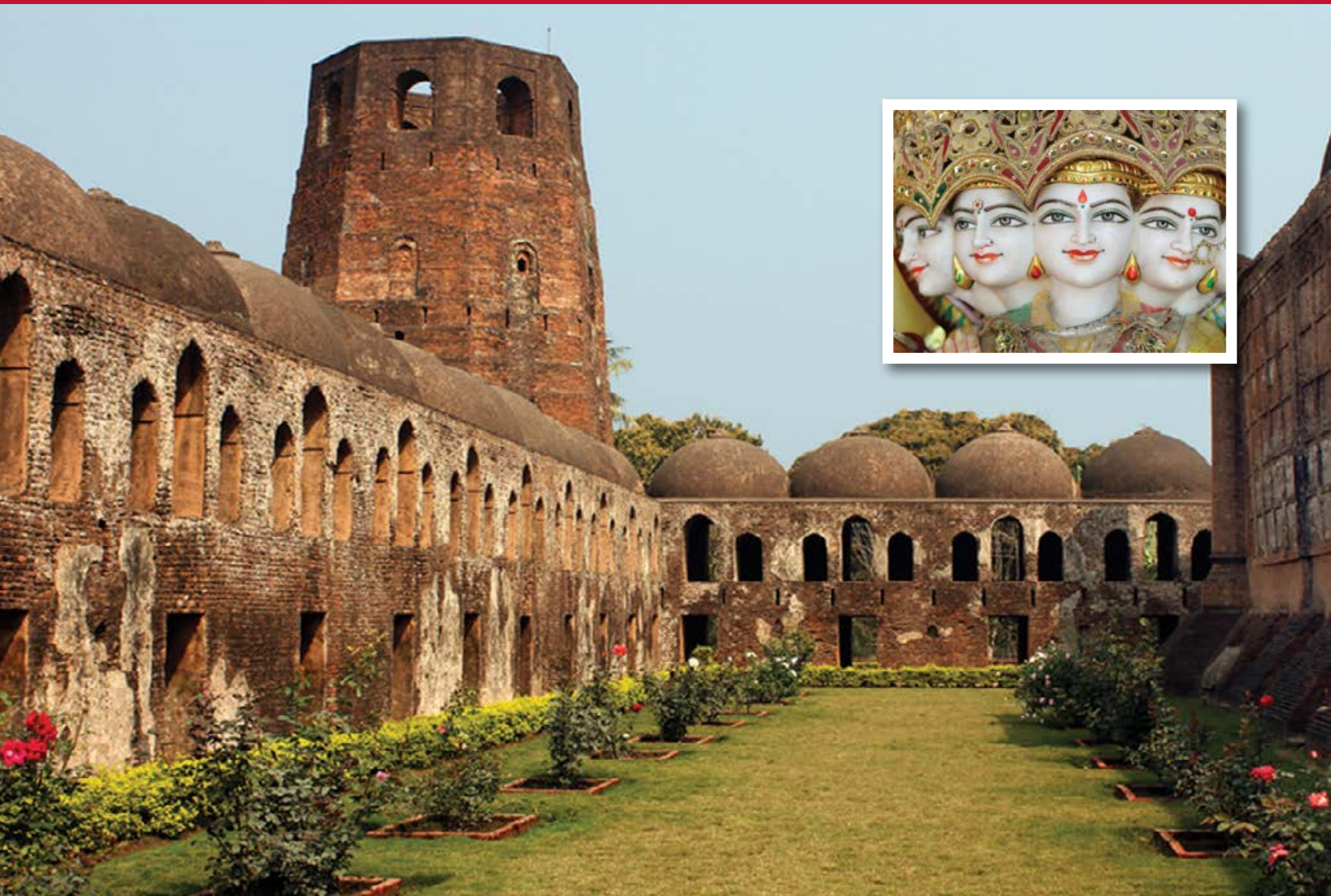
Her interest in the United States focuses especially on the challenges of religious pluralism in a multireligious society. Since 1991, she has headed the Pluralism Project, which explores and interprets the religious dimensions of America's new immigration; the growth of Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, and Zoroastrian communities in the United States; and the new issues of religious pluralism and American civil society.

Professor Eck received the National Humanities Award from President Clinton and the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1998, the Montana Governor's Humanities Award in 2003, and the Melcher Lifetime Achievement Award from the Unitarian Universalist Association in 2003. In 2005-06 she served as president of the American Academy of Religion. She is currently chair of the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches.

WHY TRAVEL WITH THE HAA?

- Expert Harvard faculty and study leaders
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Explore Katra Mosque in Murshidabad; The Hindu god Shiva (inset) is represented as eternally youthful. See Victoria Memorial (back cover), icon of British colonial architecture, in Kolkata.





In Bodhgaya, learn about the significance of Mahabodhi Temple to Buddhists; Visit the bathing ghats in Varanasi; Rickshaws are a traditional form of transportation in India.

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 & 2

Home/Kolkata (Calcutta)

Depart U.S., arriving in Kolkata on Thursday, January 2. Upon arrival, check in to the iconic Hotel Taj Bengal. Enjoy a welcome reception this evening. (R)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3

Kolkata

Explore colonial Kolkata, the capital of British India until 1912, including the Writers' Building, once the administrative offices of the British East India Company; the Raj Bhawan, seat of imperial British power; and the Reserve Bank of India. Continue to the Mother Teresa of Calcutta Center, established in memory of the Roman Catholic nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata in 1950. Welcome dinner this evening. *Hotel Taj Bengal (B,L,D)*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Kalna (Embark)

Travel to Kalna to explore the enchanting Rajbari complex, whose impressive concentration of temples includes the Pratapeshwas Temple, richly ornamented with terra cotta, and the Nabakailas Temples, 108 slope-roofed Shiva temples arranged in two concentric circles. Embark the *Bengal Ganga* to begin your journey upstream. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

Matiari

In and around the village of Matiari, the beating of metal resounds as master craftsmen make the hand-crafted brass pots and utensils for which Matiari is known. Observe the craftsmen at work, using traditional methods passed down through the generations. Return to the ship and sail past the battlefield of Plassey, where in 1757 Robert Clive of the British East India Company defeated the Mogul Nawabs and their French allies. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

MONDAY, JANUARY 6

Murshidabad

In the Hazarduari Palace, view a vast collection of antiquities, including rare books, old maps and manuscripts, and land revenue records from the 18th and 19th centuries. Also visit the Katra Mosque, built in 1723–24 by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, whose grave lies below the front staircase. Continue to the temple complex at Baranagar, considered a superior example of Bengal terra cotta art. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7

Farakka

Today the Bengal Ganga enters the Farakka lock gate and cruises through the feeder canal that connects the Hooghly River to the Ganges in West Bengal. See the Farraka Barrage, which regulates the flow of Ganges water into the delta that is shared by Bangladesh and India. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8

Raj Mahal

Enjoy a walking tour of the ruins of Raj Mahal, founded by the Mogul emperor Akbar as the capital of Bengal in 1592. Continue along the river to Karagola, an area rich in bird life, en route to Bateswarsthan. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9

Bateswarsthan

Today visit the ruins of Vikramshila University, established in the late 19th century and one of the two most important centers of Buddhist learning, along with Nalanda University, in India during the Pala Dynasty. Later cruise through the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary—where the endangered Gangetic river dolphin is protected —

accompanied by some of the sanctuary's wildlife experts. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10

Sultanganj

Sultanganj is notable for its two imposing granite bluffs, one of which is crowned by a mosque and the other by the temple of Ghabinath Siva. Nearby excavations have yielded a wealth of art and architectural remains, including ancient relics such as stupas, seals, coins, and terra cotta Hindu and Buddha images. Continue to Munger along a picturesque stretch of the Ganges. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

Munger

Explore the remnants of a Mogul fort and an 18th-century British cemetery. Also visit the Bihar School of Yoga, established in 1963 in order to preserve yogic science by combining academic and scientific methodology with a spiritual vision. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

Cruising to Simaria

Spend the day cruising toward Simaria. Enjoy a presentation by Professor Eck and discussions with fellow travelers. This evening enjoy a farewell dinner on board. *Bengal Ganga (B,L,D)*

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

Simaria/Nalanda/Bodhgaya/Rajgir

Disembark the *Bengal Ganga* and travel to Nalanda University, by some accounts the oldest seat of learning in India. It contains extraordinary ruins of structures built in the 5th century by the Gupta kings. After lunch visit Bodhgaya, one of the most important and sacred Buddhist pilgrimage centers



Gaze upon the ethereal beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra on our optional extension

DETAILS

Group size: 24 Guests
Activity Level: Moderate

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy a lecture program given by study leader Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard.
- Cruise aboard the Bengal Ganga, the first riverboat to ply the Ganges-Hooghly Waterway between Kolkata and Varanasi in more than 100 years.
- Explore Mother Teresa's Kolkata, capital of India for 200 years during the British Raj.
- Experience Varanasi (ancient Benares), India's oldest city and a religious center for Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains.
- Visit Bodhgaya, where in 500 B.C. Prince Siddhartha Gautama achieved Enlightenment to become Buddha, and the most important Buddhist pilgrimage site in the world today.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This is a moderately strenuous program that is at times physically demanding and busy. Daily activities can involve up to one mile of walking at a time, sometimes over rough terrain, and climbing stairs that may not have handrails. Traveling along the Ganges River in January, you can expect temperatures in the low to mid 60s F and little rain. Participants with medical issues and/or dietary restrictions must make them known to us well before departure, and impairments regarding mobility must be disclosed prior to booking. If you have any questions about the level of activity of this program or your ability to participate, please call HAA at 800-422-1636. India is a destination best received with an open mind, a sense of wonderment, and a willingness to embrace the unfamiliar. It is a colorful, crowded, and cacophonous country, meant to be experienced with all of your senses and to reward your intellectual curiosity.

in the world. Here, under the "Bodhi Tree," Gautama attained supreme knowledge to become Buddha, the Enlightened One. Continue to Rajgir, the first capital of the Magadha Empire, where Buddha spent many years. *Royal Residency (B,L,D)*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Varanasi

After breakfast drive to Varanasi, the holiest town for Hindus. Experience the colorful and fascinating street life during rickshaw rides through the city. Continue on foot to the riverside bathing steps known as *ghats* to witness the religious ritual *aarti*, in which light from wicks soaked in *ghee* (purified butter) is offered to one or more deities.

Gateway Hotel (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Varanasi

After an early-morning small-boat ride on the river, visit the ruins and museum at Sarnath, where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Bodhgaya. The Archaeological Museum of Sarnath contains a large collection of sculptures that bear testimony to the fervent artistic and religious activity that went on here for over one thousand years. This evening celebrate your journey at a farewell dinner.

Gateway Hotel (B,L,D)

THURSDAY & FRIDAY, JANUARY 16 & 17

Varanasi/Delhi/Home

After breakfast transfer to the airport for the flight to Delhi. Relax in day rooms before boarding flights home, arriving on January 17. *(B,L)*

EXTENSION

JANUARY 16-20

Optional Post-Extension Tour

Bharatpur & Agra

Depart Delhi for a visit to the summer palace of the Maharaja of Bharatpur in Deeg. Continue to The Bagh, the princely estate of a member of the maharaja's family that has been expanded to accommodate guests in four-star luxury bungalows. On a day trip to Agra, visit the Taj Mahal, completed in 1654 in memory of Emperor Shah Jahan's wife, Mumtaz, and often described as the most beautiful monument to love ever built. Also stop at Fatehpur Sikri, the deserted imperial capital of Emperor Akbar, and the Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Return to Delhi to see the magnificent Parliament Building; the Rashtrapati, the presidential residence; and Humayun's Tomb, one of the most beautiful buildings in this vibrant city. Relax in day rooms at the Radisson Delhi before boarding flights to the U.S. Complete details will be sent to confirmed participants.

Extension Cost:

\$975 per person double occupancy;

\$1,355 single occupancy



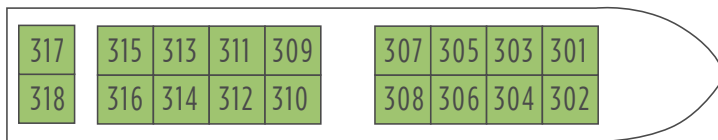
Built in Myanmar in 2004 as a replica of the colonial Clyde steamers, this thoroughly modern ship has 28 outside staterooms (each 168 square feet) on two decks. Fine dining, excellent service, and a hospitable and caring management team all help to make your Ganges River experience very special, and 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.

PLEASE NOTE: There is no elevator between decks on the *Bengal Ganga*.

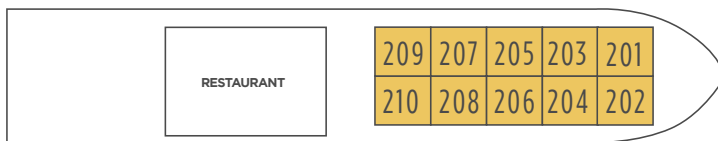
LAND/CRUISE RATES, per person

	DOUBLE	SINGLE
MAIN DECK	\$11,990	\$14,190
UPPER DECK	\$13,490	\$15,690

AIRFARE U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program cost. Economy-class airfare from New York to Kolkata (Calcutta) and return from Delhi is approximately \$1,200 per person as of March 2013 and is subject to change without notice.



UPPER DECK



MAIN DECK



Look for colorful saris on display in Kolkata.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR COST INCLUSIONS: All accommodations and meals as specified in the itinerary; Wine, beer, and soft drinks with meals; All sightseeing as specified in the itinerary; Bottled water on coaches; Full program of briefings, lectures, and presentations; Airfare from Varanasi to Delhi; Baggage handling; Gratuities to porters, waitstaff, guides, ship's crew, and drivers; Entrance fees and port charges; Welcome and farewell receptions; Professional tour manager; \$50,000 Emergency Medical and Evacuation Insurance.

TOUR COST EXCLUSIONS: U.S. domestic and international airfare; Passport or visa expenses; Medical expenses and immunizations; Transportation for those not meeting scheduled transfers; Travel and trip cancellation insurance; Optional excursions or deviations from the scheduled tour; Excess baggage charges; Meals not specified in the itinerary; Dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; Liquor; Personal items such as e-mail, telephone and fax calls, laundry, and gratuities for nongroup services.

WHAT TO EXPECT: This is a moderately strenuous program that is at times physically demanding and busy, with considerable walking at some sites. Daily activities can involve up to one mile of walking at a time, at times over rough terrain, and climbing stairs that may not have handrails. Participants should be fit and in active good health. Participants with medical issues and/or dietary restrictions must make them known to us well before departure, and impairments regarding mobility must be

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RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS, & FINAL PAYMENT: To reserve a space on this program, a \$1,000 deposit is required per person. Please either call us at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806 or fill out and mail or fax the registration form found in this brochure. Reservations are acknowledged in order of receipt until the maximum enrollment has been reached. Final payment deadline is September 3, 2013, 120 days prior to departure.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Notification of cancellation must be received in writing by HAA from the participant. Cancellations within 14 days of booking: full refund; cancellations received up to 120 days prior to departure will be assessed a cancellation fee of \$1,000 per person. Cancellations received within 120 days prior to departure are subject to 100% penalty of all deposits and payments.

ITINERARY CHANGES: The itinerary contained in this brochure is accurate at the time of printing. We reserve the right to change the program or accommodations as conditions warrant.

RESPONSIBILITY: Certain other provisions apply regarding limitations of liability and rights of HAA and the tour operator. The statement of responsibility is available at <http://alumni.harvard.edu/travel/trips/india-ganges-2014>. If you are not able to access the internet, please call HAA Travels at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806.

DISCLAIMER: Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information presented in this publication. Neither HAA nor the tour operator is responsible for errors in or damages resulting from use of the information contained herein. Information contained in this brochure is subject to change.

QUESTIONS: Please call HAA Travels at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806, email: haatravels@harvard.edu.

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A SAMPLING OF 2013-2014 HAA TRIPS

LAND & RAIL

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMANOV'S: FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF DYNASTY
MAY 2-14, 2013
KATHERINE O'CONNOR

MOROCCAN DISCOVERY
MAY 11-24, 2013
CHARLES COGAN

HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS
MAY 31-JUN 14, 2013
KEVIN CAFFREY

MONGOLIA
JUN 1-14, 2013
MARK ELLIOTT

THE BALKANS UNVEILED
JUN 4-19, 2013
DAVID ELMER

EXPLORING ICELAND
JUN 8-18, 2013
DAVID AGUILAR

TANZANIA SAFARI & RWANDA GORILLA TREKKING
JUN 11-27, 2013
DANIEL LIEBERMAN

ALASKA UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN
JUL 27-AUG 3, 2013
MICHAEL MCELROY

SRI LANKA: THE ISLAND OF SERENDIPITY
AUG 7-24, 2013
ANNE MONIUS

SCANDINAVIAN SUMMER SOJOURN: SWEDEN, DENMARK & NORWAY
AUG 11-24, 2013
STEPHEN MITCHELL

ICELAND: FIVE-DAY IMMERSION
SEP 13-17, 2013
DAVID AGUILAR

LEGENDARY TURKEY: ISTANBUL TO THE TURQUOISE COAST
OCT 5-19, 2013
MARTIN PUCHNER

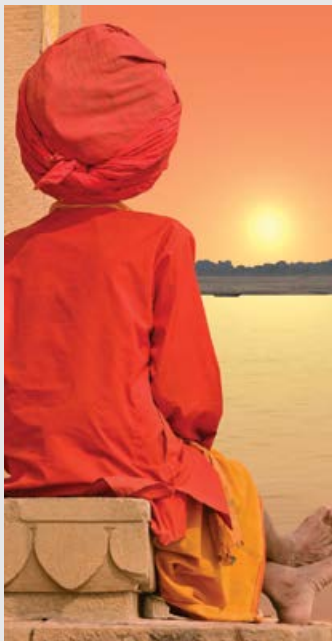
ISRAEL: EXPLORING THE HOLY LAND
OCT 13-24, 2013
CAROL SAIWETZ
TURNING POINTS OF THE CIVIL WAR: GETTYSBURG-ANTIETAM-WASHINGTON-MANASSAS-RICHMOND
OCT 14-20, 2013

AN INSIDER'S ROME
OCT 25-NOV 2, 2013
HARVEY COX

VIETNAM & CAMBODIA WITH THE MEKONG RIVER
OCT 16-NOV 1, 2013

CRUISES

ECHOES OF THE PAST: REMEMBERING THE CIVIL WAR, A VOYAGE BETWEEN SAVANNAH AND RICHMOND ON YORKTOWN
MAY 5-15, 2013
AMANDA CLAYBAUGH



A contemplative moment for a Hindu holy man.

THE BRITISH ISLES ON ISLAND SKY
MAY 11-24, 2013
DANIEL ALBRIGHT

ARTISTIC TRADITIONS OF KOREA & JAPAN ON CLIPPER ODYSSEY
MAY 13-26, 2013
THEODORE & VICTORIA BESTOR

TREASURES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA: SPAIN, FRANCE, & ITALY ON CORINTHIAN
MAY 22-JUN 2, 2013
PATRICE HIGONNET

SPAIN & PORTUGAL: SHORES OF IBERIA (MALAGA TO BILBAO) ON SEA CLOUD II
JUN 2-14, 2013
VERENA & TOM CONLEY

CROATIA'S IDYLIC ISLANDS & DALMATIAN COAST ON CORINTHIAN
JUN 19-27, 2013
PETER GALBRAITH

CHANGING TIDES OF HISTORY CRUISING THE BALTIC SEA ON LE BOREAL FEATURING GUEST SPEAKERS MIKHAIL GORBACHEV & LECH WAT SA
JUN 21-JUL 2, 2013
MICHAEL SHINAGEL

SICILY BY SEA ON SEA CLOUD II
SEP 21-29, 2013
MICHAEL MCCORMICK

COSTA RICA & PANAMA (FEATURING THE PANAMA CANAL)
JAN 19-31, 2014

TAHITI AND FRENCH POLYNESIA
FEB 20-MAR 2, 2014

RIVERS & LAKES

GREAT LAKES GRAND DISCOVERY: A VOYAGE TO THE FIVE INLAND SEAS ON YORKTOWN
JUL 29-AUG 8, 2013
THOMAS DINGMAN

PRAGUE TO PARIS WITH A MAIN & RHINE RIVERS CRUISE ON RIVER CLOUD II
OCT 9-22, 2013
JOHN STEWART

INDIA'S HOLY RIVER GANGES ON BENGAL GANGA
JAN 1-17, 2014
DIANA ECK

AMAZON RIVER EXPEDITION
JAN 17-26, 2014

FAMILY ADVENTURES

A CHINA FAMILY TOUR OF CLASSICAL HIGHLIGHTS, PANDAS, & YANGZI RIVER CRUISE
JUN 26-JUL 7, 2013
EREZ MANELA

SPORTS EVENTS

THE 139TH RUNNING OF THE KENTUCKY DERBY
MAY 2-5, 2013

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To register, fill out this form and return to HAA Travels with your deposit of \$1,000 per person.

Please return this form by mail to:

HAA Travels, Harvard Alumni Association
124 Mount Auburn Street, 6th floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
Or by FAX: 617-496-4011

Please call with any questions: 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806

I AM NOT ABLE TO MAKE THIS TRIP, BUT PLEASE ADD ME TO YOUR MAILING LIST

PROGRAM NAME START DATE

FIRST PERSON NAME ON PASSPORT DATE OF BIRTH

EMAIL ADDRESS

STREET ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP OR POSTAL CODE

HOME TELEPHONE WORK TELEPHONE

SECOND PERSON NAME ON PASSPORT DATE OF BIRTH

EMAIL ADDRESS

STREET ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP OR POSTAL CODE

HOME TELEPHONE WORK TELEPHONE

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CHECK (please enclose check) MASTERCARD VISA

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE 3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE

NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD

I/WE CONFIRM THAT WE HAVE READ AND ACCEPT THE GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THIS TOUR, INCLUDING REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY CLAUSE AT ALUMNI.HARVARD.EDU/HAA/TRAVEL.

SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE

ACCOMMODATIONS

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