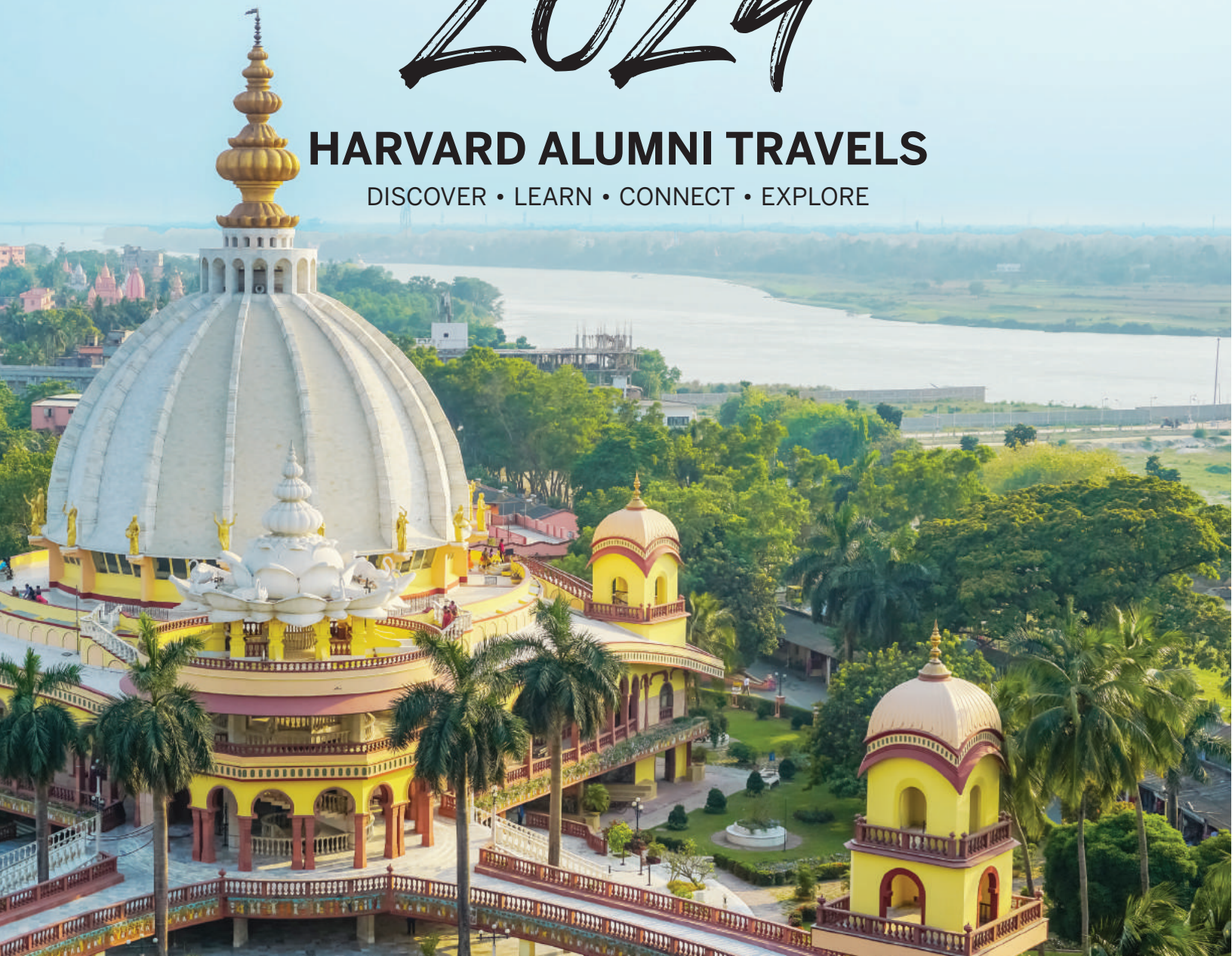


# 2024

## HARVARD ALUMNI TRAVELS

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### SAILING THE RIVER GANGES

Round-Trip Kolkata Aboard *Ganges Voyager*  
January 22–31, 2024

with Richard Delacy, Preceptor in Hindi and Urdu



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Alumni Travels



Hooghly River view from clock tower of Imambara (above); Cover: ISKCON, Mayapur.

## Sailing the River Ganges

The holiest river of Hinduism, the Ganges is the lifeblood of Indian civilization. Sail this sacred waterway through West Bengal aboard the luxurious *Ganges Voyager*. On a week-long expedition, discover awe-inspiring monuments, timeless art, ornate terra-cotta temples, colonial architecture, and the extraordinary energy of village life along the Ganges.

Begin in Kolkata, India's cultural capital. Enjoy exclusive access to the Indian Museum's collection of Mughal and Rajput paintings. Explore the architectural highlights of 18th- and 19th-century Kolkata, including opulent Neoclassical palaces built by wealthy Hindu merchants. Take an inside look at Mother Teresa's private room in the Missionaries of Charity headquarters.

As you sail the Ganges, stop at the Hooghly Imambara, an opulent 19th-century Shia pilgrimage center. Stroll around the coastal village of Matiari, known for its handcrafted brass items. In the villages of Kalna and Barangar, admire a variety of magnificent, intricately carved terra-cotta temples.

In Murshidabad, a former Bengali capital, visit Hazarduari Palace, with its 1,000 doors. Roam the vast Hare Krishna temple complex in Mayapur. Finally, explore 17th-century French colonial architecture in Chandannagar before returning to Kolkata for disembarkation. Cruise in the company of members from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. An optional Kolkata prelude is available. An optional five-night postlude in Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur—featuring a spectacular visit to the Taj Mahal—is also offered.

### Activity Level 3:

#### A LITTLE MORE TO IT

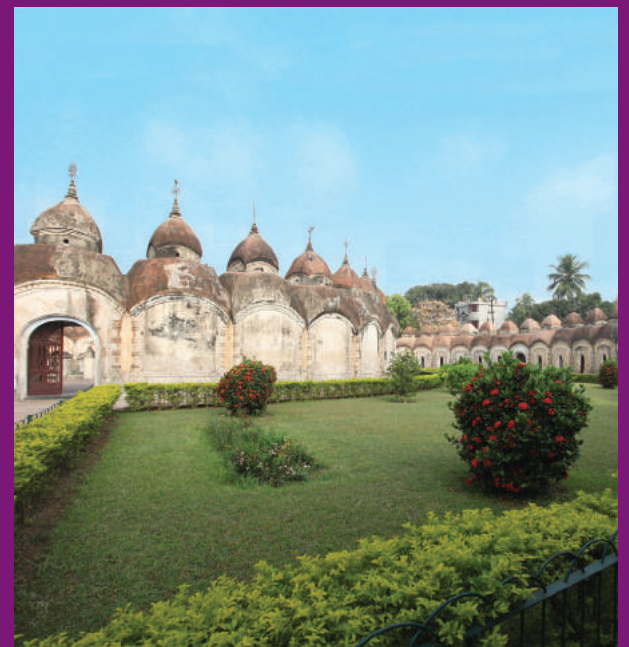
Visiting India is rewarding yet can be overwhelming for first-timers, as the crowds and noise may take some getting used to. The offshore excursions involve walking and often through heritage buildings and roads. *Ganges Voyager* does not have an elevator. At certain ports of call, the ship may not be able to dock at a jetty for disembarkation. In such cases, a tender boat will take you to the shore. Ship staff will be there to assist at all points of the excursion and onboard. We will visit West Bengal during the most pleasant dry season, and temperatures should range from 50 to 77 degrees F (10 to 25 degrees C). However, it's important to be aware that during this time, the air quality across the region, including Kolkata, can be significantly affected by the practice of burning fields by farmers to prepare for the next crop. We recommend packing a hat, sunblock, and insect repellent. Casual and comfortable clothing is appropriate most of the time with emphasis on layered clothing. Comfortable walking shoes are essential.

## Study Leader



**Richard Delacy** teaches Hindi-Urdu in the Department of South Asian Studies at Harvard University. He writes about contemporary South Asian culture and society focusing on literary fiction and Bollywood cinema.

Richard completed a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in South Asian Languages and Civilizations. Before this, he earned a Masters in Indian History in Australia, where he was born and raised before settling in the U.S. He has authored several books related to the teaching of Hindi and Urdu, including a Hindi-English/English-Hindi dictionary, and is currently working on a book on commercial Hindi cinema (Bollywood), as well as one on the contemporary Hindi literary novel. He has been traveling to India for almost 30 years and has spent an aggregate of almost eight years there over more than 30 visits.



Nabakailas Temple, Kalna (above)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[ALUMNI.HARVARD.EDU/TRAVEL](https://ALUMNI.HARVARD.EDU/TRAVEL)



Regional map (left) and Nizam Imambara, Murshidabad (right)

## Schedule by Day

B=Breakfast, L= Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

An optional prelude in Kolkata is offered from January 20–23, 2024.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22

### Departure

Depart on an overnight flight to Kolkata, India.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

### Kolkata, India

Arrive in Kolkata and transfer to the Oberoi Grand Hotel. Subject to your flight arrival, you are invited to join the prelude group for dinner tonight at the hotel. D

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

### Kolkata / Embark Ganges Voyager

Begin the day with a lecture at the hotel. Continue to the Indian Museum, arguably the best in the country. See the remains of the Buddhist *stupa* of Bharhut, as well as sculptures from almost every Indian school of art. The museum's collection of Mughal and Rajput paintings will be opened especially for us (*pending confirmation*). Then visit a potters' village in Kumartuli. After lunch, you may opt to learn about the life of Mother Teresa at her home in the Missionaries of Charity headquarters with a tour of her personal room. Visit Nirmala Shishu Bhawan, the orphanage that she founded. Transfer to the port to embark *Ganges Voyager*. This evening, attend a festive welcome reception, dinner, and performance aboard the ship. B,L,R,D

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

### Kolkata / Bandel / Kalna

This morning, visit Kalighat Kali Temple, dedicated to Kali, patron goddess of Kolkata. Continue with an exploration of the architectural highlights of 18th- and 19th-century Kolkata and the Victoria Memorial. Return to the ship for lunch. After lunch, begin the journey upstream as *Ganges Voyager* sails through areas where European settlers established various East India companies. Step ashore in Bandel and take an excursion to Hooghly Imambara, one of the famous Shia pilgrimage centers in West Bengal, with its Victorian-era clock and large Persian chandeliers. B,L,D

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

### Kalna / Matiari

After breakfast on board, take a full-day excursion starting with a rickshaw ride to Kalna, once a prosperous port town. Visit the Rajbari, a temple complex featuring a unique mixture of Bengali architecture. Noteworthy are the Nabakailas, Pratapeshwar, Lalji, and Krishnachandra Temples. B,L,D

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

### Matiari / Khushbagh

Enjoy a morning walk to the coastal village of Matiari, known for its handcrafted brass items. Return to the ship and journey upstream while having lunch on board. Cruise past the battlefield of Plassey, where Robert Clive of the British East India Company defeated the Mughal Nawabs in 1757. In the early evening, visit the charming village of Khushbagh, passing through scenic

fields to arrive at the peaceful Mughal-style garden built by Alivardi Khan, an 18th-century Nawab of Bengal, where we will find his family's private mosque. B,L,D

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

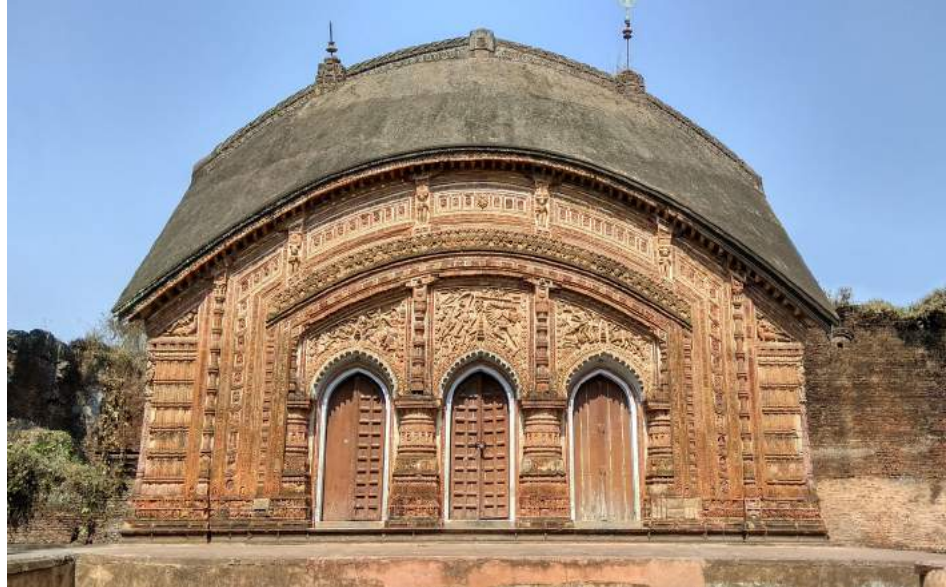
### Khushbagh / Baranagar / Murshidabad

Continue to the peaceful village of Baranagar, which has a storied colonial history. Enjoy a walk in the village and discover several temples dating from the 18th century, including the exquisite Char Bangla Temple. Later, return to the ship and sail downstream, passing mustard fields and mango orchards to arrive at Murshidabad, a former Bengali capital with dramatic whitewashed colonial-era structures. Visit Hazarduari Palace, a 19th-century royal complex famous for its 1,000 doors. The palace houses an astonishing collection of Bengali and European antiquities. Opposite the building is the vast Nizam Imambara, built by the Nawab for worship. Enjoy a scenic ride by local buggy to the Katra Mosque, known for its distinctive minarets. B,L,D

MONDAY, JANUARY 29

### Murshidabad / Mayapur

Observe life along the banks of the river this morning as we journey on *Ganges Voyager*. After lunch on board, visit the sacred village of Mayapur, where we will find the headquarters of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), which is the formal name of the Hare Krishna movement. The temple complex has been largely funded by Henry Ford's great-grandson, Alfred B. Ford. B,L,D



Indian Museum, Kolkata, photo by UPD der Reisende (left) and Char Bangla Temple, Baranagar (right)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

### Mayapur / Chandannagar / Kolkata

Cruise to Chandannagar, which was established as a French colony in 1673. In the afternoon, explore the French colonial buildings along the promenade, including the

former French governor's residence, now a museum. Continue with a visit to the Sacred Heart Church of Chandannagar, an exceptional example of French colonial architecture. Return to the ship and attend a festive farewell dinner as we continue the journey downstream to Kolkata. B,L,D

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

### Kolkata / Disembark / Return

Arrive in Kolkata while enjoying breakfast on board. Later, transfer to the airport for flights home. B

An optional postlude in Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur is offered from January 31–February 5, 2024.

#### Optional Prelude in Kolkata

JANUARY 20–23, 2024

On this in-depth exploration of Kolkata's treasures, begin with a morning visit to one of Asia's largest flower markets, the Mallick Ghat Flower Market, and savor marvelous views of Howrah Bridge and Dalhousie Square. Take a guided tour of Parshwanath Jain Temple, a beautiful 19th-century complex whose interiors are adorned with mirrors and colorful mosaics. Join a privately guided tour of the Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), one of India's most renowned contemporary art galleries. Later, join the founder of one of Kolkata's most celebrated textile studios for an exclusive look at the archives. You will also explore a museum devoted to Rabindranath Tagore, India's greatest modern poet, housed in his stately mansion built in 1784. Conclude with an exclusive visit to the home of a private art collector before joining the main program.

#### Prelude rate per person:

**\$1,199 double rate / \$1,499 single rate**

Prelude rate includes: Two nights accommodations at the Oberoi Grand, Kolkata, with two breakfasts, two lunches, and one dinner. Sightseeing as noted.

#### Optional Postlude in Delhi, Agra & Jaipur

JANUARY 31–FEBRUARY 5, 2024

Embark on an exciting adventure through India's fascinating history and culture. Begin in Delhi, where you will be greeted with the vibrant markets surrounding Jama Mosque and take a cycle rickshaw ride to Asia's largest spice market. Drive past the historic Red Fort and pay your respects at Gandhi's final resting place, Rajghat. Discover India's rich artistic heritage at the National Museum and admire two stunning UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Qutub Minar and Humayun's Tomb. Head to Agra to visit the iconic Taj Mahal at sunset and Agra Fort, one of the most important Mughal strongholds. Drive to Jaipur and marvel at the architectural beauty of Chand Baori, one of the largest and oldest stepwells. Explore Jaipur's Rambagh Palace, Hawa Mahal, Amber Fort, City Palace Museum, and the Jantar Mantar Observatory.

#### Postlude rate per person:

**\$5,559 double rate / \$7,559 single rate**

Postlude rate includes: Two nights accommodations at the Imperial New Delhi; one night accommodations at the Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra; two nights accommodations at the Rambagh Palace Jaipur; day rooms on the final day at the Oberoi, Gurgaon; with breakfast daily, five lunches, and four dinners. Sightseeing as noted.

## Accommodations

### The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata

Fondly referred to as the Grand Dame of Chowringhee, this hotel has been an icon on the landscape of Kolkata for more than a century. A sense of calm pervades the outdoor space and is carried into the classically appointed rooms and suites that encircle the courtyard. Fine dining spaces, grand banqueting venues, a business center, and a spa ensure that guests' needs are covered.



Oberoi Grand Hotel, Kolkata

## Rates Per Person

| CATEGORY/DECK  | DOUBLE RATES    | SINGLE RATES    |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>201-210</b>   | <b>\$9,999</b>  | <b>\$13,499</b> |
| Main Deck. Signature Suites, 260 sq.ft. with French balconies.   |                 |                 |
| <b>303, 305-312 &amp; 315-318</b>                                | <b>\$10,499</b> | <b>\$16,499</b> |
| Upper Deck. Colonial Suites, 260 sq.ft. with French balconies.   |                 |                 |
| <b>301 &amp; 302</b>   | <b>\$11,999</b> | <b>Inquire</b>  |
| Upper Deck. Heritage Suites, 280 sq.ft. with Juliette balconies. |                 |                 |
| <b>313 &amp; 314</b>   | <b>\$13,999</b> | <b>Inquire</b>  |
| Upper Deck. Viceroy Suites, 360 sq.ft. with French balconies.    |                 |                 |
| <b>304</b>   | <b>\$15,999</b> | <b>Inquire</b>  |
| Upper Deck. Maharaja Suite, 400 sq.ft. with French balconies.    |                 |                 |

## Ganges Voyager

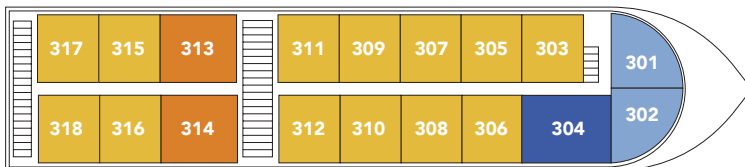
Our elegant riverboat's spacious suites are serene sanctuaries, with high ceilings and beautiful hand-painted murals, and include all the comforts of a five-star hotel. All suites have a cozy sitting area and a French balcony with floor-to-ceiling glass doors. *Ganges Voyager* features enticing public areas and luxurious amenities, including a lounge with a full-service bar, fitness center, restaurant, spa, and three decks including a sun deck, where you can relax and take in the ever-changing views.



### SUN DECK

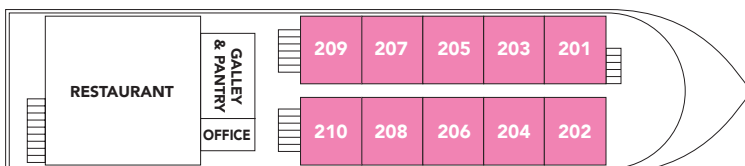


### UPPER DECK



ALL SUITES ON THIS DECK HAVE FRENCH BALCONIES. SUITES 301 & 302 HAVE JULIETTE BALCONIES.

### MAIN DECK



ALL SUITES ON THIS DECK HAVE FRENCH BALCONIES.



Ganges Voyager (top) and Heritage Suite (above)



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**Step 2:** Fill out the online form with your contact information and payment details.

**Step 3:** Look for an email confirmation from HAA.

To review this program's terms and conditions, visit

[alumni.harvard.edu/travel/trips/Ganges\\_2024](https://alumni.harvard.edu/travel/trips/Ganges_2024).

*Krishna Chandra Temple, Kalna (top) and Hooghly Imambara, Bandel Mosque, Nawab of Bengal, Khushbagh, photo by Mirza Ferdous Alam (bottom).*

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