

Adventures in Assam

10 days | Starts/Ends: Kolkata



PRIVATE TOUR: Travel off the beaten track to the state of Assam in India's remote North East, known for its picturesque scenery, tea plantations and fascinating tribes. On this unique 10 day tour you will get the opportunity to visit tea plantations and WWII sites, explore ancient sites, encounter remote tribes, go wild at Jorhat Gibbon Sanctuary and visit Majuli – the world's largest river island. This is a slice of India not everyone gets to see!

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- The Namphake tribal village with its Thai and Buddhist influences
- Hoollongapur Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary - Home to India's only gibbon population
- Shivsagar – Silk farm, Ahom Dynasty temples, palaces and monuments
- Dibrugarh – Tea city of India
- The seemingly endless mountain ranges of nearby Burma and Tibet
- Stilwell Road, the Commonwealth War Graves of Digboi and Ledo airstrip,

the last remnants of the Burma Campaign during WWII

- Jorhat – The largest city in the Assam region, surrounded by sprawling tea gardens
- Local silk farm, historically one of India's most important industries
- Majuli Island – The world's largest river island

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 1 lunch and 1 traditional Assamese dinner
- 9 nights SUPERIOR hotels (7 of these nights are in heritage tea bungalows). STANDARD hotel options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- Touring – Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Shivsagar
- Touring – Banyan Grove tea plantation and Mancotta tea plantation and factory
- Excursion to Hoollongapur Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary
- Excursion to Majuli Island
- Services of English-speaking Indian specialist guides for all included sight-seeing
- Entrance fees for all included sightseeing
- 2 economy class flights: Kolkata to Dibrugarh and Jorhat to Kolkata

- An airport arrival transfer day 1 and a departure transfer day 10
- All relevant transfer and transportation in private modern Chauffeur driven air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping – An entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Kolkata

Once you arrive into Kolkata you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to enjoy at leisure. **Overnight – Kolkata**

Day 2 : Dibrugarh

After a good night's sleep we depart for the domestic airport to board your flight to Dibrugarh arriving early afternoon. You will be met upon arrival and transferred to your hotel, afternoon and evening free. **Overnight – Dibrugarh (B)**

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Day 3 : Tea Plantations



This morning we take a tour of the tea plantations and factory. The town of Dibrugarh, which is situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra River, is known as the Tea City of India. Situated far to the north-east, this region is influenced by its proximity to Burma and Tibet, with seemingly endless mountain ranges and a rich tribal history quite different to the rest of India. You'll meet fewer foreigners here, giving you unhindered opportunities to explore the region's lush tea estates, rice plantations and mountain ranges. Put the kettle on: Dibrugarh is the largest tea exporting town in the country.

In the afternoon we visit the Namphake tribal village, seemingly stuck back in time, with heavy Thai influences the village is also home to the Namphake Buddhist Monastery. **Overnight - Dibrugarh (B)**

Day 4 : Rural Assam

Today we take an excursion to the historic WWII famed Stilwell Road (Ledo-Burma Road) named after US General Stilwell and built as an alternative to the Japanese Burma Road to supply the Chinese during the Burma campaign. Later we travel to Jagun, a small rural village capturing the essence of country life in India. Along the way we make stops at the Commonwealth War Graves of Digboi, the Oil Museum - paying homage to India's first production oil well, Ledo airstrip - another remnant of WWII, Tipong colliery and its steam powered trains before finishing in Stilwell

Heritage Park. This evening we take part in a traditional Bihu celebration and enjoy a local Assamese dinner.

Overnight - Dibrugarh (B, D)

Day 5 : Jorhat

Driving approximately 4 hours brings us to Jorhat City, the second largest city in the Assam region. Jorhat is surrounded by sprawling tea gardens and is home to the Tocklai Research Association, the largest and oldest tea research station in the world. Today spend the afternoon at leisure. **Overnight - Jorhat (B)**

Day 6 : Gibbon Sanctuary



Situated approximately 20 kms out of Jorhat is the Hoollongapur Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. Originally established in 1881 when land was put aside for the purpose of preservation. The area is rich in biodiversity and is home to the Western Hoolock Gibbon, India's only gibbon. The area is also home to other members of the primate family such as the Stump Tailed Macaque, Rhesus Macaque, Northern Pig-tailed Macaque, Eastern Assamese Macaque and Capped Langur. The park is also home to Indian elephants, tigers, leopards, boar and 219 species of bird. **Overnight - Jorhat (B)**

Day 7 : Silk Farms

This morning we take a visit to one of the local silk farms and silk weavers' villages. Silk is historically one of the most important industries in India and still is with over 700,000 families working in the trade. This afternoon we visit Shivsagar, the once capital of the Ahom Dynasty which ruled Assam for over 600 years until the

arrival of the British. Located in the area are several ancient monuments, temples and palaces, all testament to the architectural skills of the Ahoms.

Overnight - Jorhat (B)

Day 8 : Majuli Island



Today take an excursion to Majuli Island, India's largest river island and considered the largest in the world although others claim that mantle is held by Bananal Island in Brazil. Shortlisted by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site the Majuli island is only accessible by ferry, due to this inaccessibility the culture and uniqueness of the people has been preserved and offers visitors a fantastic chance to experience old customs still intact. On the island we will visit the Vaishnovite monasteries, locally known as Satras and dating back to the 16th Century. We will also visit the agrarian Mishing tribal villages situated on the river banks before enjoying a local vegetarian lunch. **Overnight - Jorhat (B, L)**

Day 9 : Back to Kolkata

Transfer to Jorhat airport for your domestic flight to Kolkata. You will be met upon arrival and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the evening is free. **Overnight - Kolkata (B)**

Day 10 : Kolkata

Hotel check-out and included onward transfer to airport. (B)

BEFORE YOU GO

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Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD \$4-7 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.
SUPERIOR - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.
DELUXE - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.

LUXURY - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

India Country Guide

Welcome to India - Arrival transfer

If your holiday includes a complimentary airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'Inclusions' section of these Trip Notes on page 1) from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, our arrival procedure is as follows:

Arrive to Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, where after you have attended to customs and immigration formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent On The Go Tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher. Please do not leave the airport or go to the hotel on your own. Call our emergency contact number and follow the advice given by our local team.

If travelling on our other India holidays that don't arrive into Delhi Airport (with arrival via Kochi, Cochin, Goa, Mumbai, Chennai, Trivandrum, Kolkata and Dimapur Airport), the procedure for meeting you at the airport is the same as those detailed above.

Pre and post tour accommodation can be arranged upon request, please contact us for rates. If you are arriving early and book pre tour accommodation with us then you will still qualify for our complimentary airport arrival transfer.

If arriving prior to 9am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) consider purchasing a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm.

Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from India.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/India/Visas

Health requirements

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

Water

As tap water is not safe to drink in India, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Essential packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- Universal travel adaptor

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- Insect repellent to guard against mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries and memory cards
- Consider packing some pencils, pens or modest educational supplies that can be given to village schools or street children
- Buy some Indian Rupees at the airport on arrival and keep a supply of small notes for local transactions

Domestic flights - Baggage allowance

If your holiday includes a domestic flight or you have independently booked domestic flights separate to that of your international flights, please be mindful that that free baggage allowance for **Economy class travel on flights within India is near always 15kg, with 5-7kg allowance for hand luggage**. Additional weight is charged per kilo and is payable by you directly to the airline at check-in. If travelling with more than 15kg on a flight included within your holiday, please contact us so we can confirm the exact luggage allowance for your flight and give you the current per kilo cost for additional weight.

What to expect

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/India/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

Train travel in India

Travelling by train in India is an unforgettable local experience where you will get to meet Indian people and experience daily life as they do. The Indian Railway system is the world's second largest, with over 108,706 km of track, connecting more than 7000 stations. Every day, more than 7000 trains run, carrying some 14 million passengers, including us. Several our holidays include train journeys, some by day and others overnight. If your holiday does include train travel,

we have noted within the itinerary the coach/class of travel that will be booked. Below is some further information that may assist you in planning for your journey.

AC CHAIR CAR

If travelling on a daytime journey, you will travel in an air-conditioned seated carriage (called AC chair car), similar to that of a standard city trains in most western countries. When travelling to loftier destinations where the weather is cooler, air-conditioning may not be provided.

2nd AC COACH/SLEEPER

If travelling overnight, we accommodate passengers in the 2nd class sleeper air-conditioned category (unless otherwise indicated at a higher level). 2nd class sleeper air-conditioned cabins consist of 2 upper and 2 lower bunks, plus a double-decker set of bunk beds on the opposite side of the cabin shared by you and other Indian travellers. You can sit up on your bench seat during the day and simply lie down once you are ready to go to sleep.

All cabins are mixed sex. Your cabin is not self-contained as such. 'Cabins' are separated from the carriage corridor by curtains, serving as an artificial barrier that can be drawn at night. Luggage, including hand luggage should be locked (as you would do when travelling on any overnight train anywhere in the world) and can be stored underneath the lower bunks or on the floor. The carriage is manned by an attendant who will distribute linen, free of charge. Dependent upon the service, a variety of snacks and drinks or full dinner service can be ordered at an additional cost (except for the Shatabdi Express and Rajdhani Express where meals are included within your fare). Food aboard the Shatabdi Express train is most often exceptionally good, though on many other train services it is probably best to buy snacks, fresh fruit that can be

peeled or meals prior to the start of your journey. In addition, there are WC facilities (European and 'squat-style') at each end of the carriage. Cleanliness varies, so be prepared and take your own anti-bacterial hand wipes and toilet paper.

1st AC COACH/ SLEEPER

All Indian trains offer 2nd and 3rd AC coaches, but only a handful of trains offer 1st AC coaches, which can accommodate a tiny total of 18 people. 1st AC coach/ sleepers only have berths on one side of the train hence making the cabin more spacious. The cabin may have 2 berths or 4 which seat/ sleep 2 or 4 persons. You can sit up on a bench seat during the day, which is folded into bunk beds at night. The 1st AC coach also has a door making it fully closed and lockable for 2 or 4 persons. Beds are a tad wider and mattresses more cushioned. Each cabin has a 'bell' switch, which when pressed summons the attendant of the coach.

3rd AC COACH/ SLEEPER

We do not include 3rd AC coach travel within any of our tours, though if you were considering it for personal arrangements a description can be given as follows. 3rd AC coach is very similar to 2nd AC coach with the only difference being that there is a middle berth ie not just a 2 bunk bed but a triple bunk bed, hence making it possible for 6 people to be accommodated within the space. Like the 2nd AC coach there is also another set of bunk beds on the opposite side - running parallel with the length of the train. Like 2nd AC, there's no door just curtains and again you sit up on your bunk bed during the day and lie down to sleep.

Travel Operators for Tigers

Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFT), is a UK based campaign, set up to encourage sustainable wildlife tourism in tiger reserves and national parks. Funds generated through TOFT will

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be used to fund tiger conservation initiatives and local community development, through their two partner conservation organisations - Global Tiger Patrol and the Environmental Investigation Agency. On The Go Tours are members of TOFT and we happily pledge a USD\$20 contribution to TOFT for each of our clients that choose to travel on a wildlife tour to India with us.

Not like home... & begging

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries.

The people, customs, creed, food and languages of India are different from one region to the next. It is as vast as it is crowded, and as opulent as it is squalid. India is exciting, intense and diverse - an all-embracing experience, a veritable assault on the senses. Sometimes the poverty will get you down, Indian bureaucracy can test your patience and facing another traffic jam will seem almost too much to bear. Yet, it's all worthwhile! While India is far from the easiest country in the world to travel around, On The Go will try their utmost to make your holiday as seamless as possible. Our holidays combine comfortable transportation, comprehensive sightseeing and good hotels, allowing you to concentrate on getting the most out of your stay.

India is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to

demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Begging

With more than 350 million people in India living on less than USD\$2 per day, inevitably you will come across many people begging for money. Begging has a legitimate place in Indian society. Even poor people give to beggars or charities to earn religious merit. The Indian government, however, would like to regulate begging more stringently. Though begging is common, you are not under obligation to give money. If you choose to give money to beggars, we advise you to do this from the vehicle and not on the street. Alternatively, consider donating pencils, pens or modest educational supplies to village schools.

Shopping

India is a virtual Aladdin's Cave. At the many bazaars known as 'chowks', the cardinal rule is to bargain hard. State run craft emporiums that stock the best of what a state has to offer can give you a reasonable idea of what is acceptable in terms of price and quality. You'll find carpets of quality equal to those of Persian origin, Rajasthani pottery and metalwork, embellished slippers known as jootis, jewellery in breathtaking designs. Likewise, leatherwork, silks and saris in spectacularly colourful designs, paintings and clothing make excellent souvenirs.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase goods. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from

On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

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