

Not just a railway tour – a historic run. This recreates the Darjeeling Mail from the 1940's! The cross-border train between India and Bangladesh, utilising the border crossing near Siliguri between Haldibari (India) and Chilhati (Bangladesh) is now open!

Tour highlights

- Tour Kolkata by private vintage tram, and see India's busiest station at Howrah
- The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway needs no introduction – our usual unrivalled programme including a three-course dinner as steam blasts its way through the forests, plus steam-hauled charters over the whole of the available length.
- Ride through the length of Bangladesh, including the new luxury international Mitali Express
- Time to see the city of Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh
- A day on a houseboat to explore the waterways of southern Bangladesh
- A visit to see the amazing wildlife in the Sunderbans
- Cross the Indian/Bangladeshi border twice by rail, including the new Chilhati/Haldibari crossing



Please note all times are based on current timetables at May 2023, and are subject to change.

Friday 10 November 2023

We'll check in around 1000 at Heathrow's Terminal 2 for our 1300 flight to...

Saturday 11 November 2023

....Delhi. After clearing immigration, we'll catch the ongoing flight to Kolkata, where we are due to arrive at 0905, and you will meet your Tour Manager and board the coach for the transfer through the city suburbs to our hotel in the centre of Kolkata for two nights. After a rest, in the afternoon, we will take a short cruise on Kolkata's River Hooghly, one of the branches of the great Ganges River.

Sunday 12 November 2023

As today is the holiday of Diwali, we will pay an early (8 a.m.) visit to the famous Flower Market under Howrah Bridge when the activity is at its best. Later, we will take a ride on one of Kolkata's vintage trams: it's an excellent way to see the city in relative peace whilst still being close to the action. In the evening, we will join in some of the Diwali celebrations – always good fun!

Monday 13 November 2023

We'll take a short lunchtime flight from Kolkata to Bagdogra airport, where a coach will meet us and transfer us to our hotel. This evening, we will have our highly-regarded dinner train on the Darjeeling line, with a quality three-course dinner served as the train blasts up through the forests between Siliguri and Rangtong

Tuesday 14 November 2023

We'll start the day with a steam charter over the rarely-travelled bottom section of line, from New Jalpaiguri to Siliguri Junction. After a short break, we will continue from Siliguri Junction to Tindharia and pay a visit to the railway's workshops there, where the whole of the railway's fleet of rolling stock is maintained. As road and rail run together, a coach will accompany the train for those who wish to take photographs, and there are regular opportunities to change between coach and train.



Wednesday 15 November 2023

We will have a second steam charter running between Tindharia and Darjeeling. Again, a coach will run alongside for the photographers. There will be a short break at Kurseong, where Bengal's best samosas are made. Our hotel for the next three nights is the iconic Windamere, Darjeeling's premier hotel for the last 200 years!

Thursday 16 November 2023

We'll have a relaxing start to the day with a visit to a tea Estate and the Tibetan Refugee Self-Help Centre, where you will experience the handicrafts being produced by this establishment of Tibetans in exile. The rest of the day is free to explore Darjeeling – there's plenty to do. Don't miss Das Studio's albums of historic photos, fancy cakes at Glenary's, and buy some tea from Keventers to take home. There is also the Planters Club, the Mountaineering Institute and the Zoo. Or just chase trains.... In the evening, the 'Railway Club', with its library of DHR items will be open, with service from the bar.



Friday 17 November 2023

If you can stand being up for six-thirty and the weather is kind, the view of Kanchenjunga and the Himalayas from Observation Point (200 yards from the Hotel's back door) is nothing short of stunning, and not to be missed. For the photographers, we will chase the Joy Train ride from Darjeeling up to Ghum in our vehicles. In Ghum, we will visit the Railway's excellent museum, and share a cup of chai with the train's crew. If we are lucky, there will be amazing views of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, and we'll have the opportunity to photograph the train at the famous Batasia Loop with the mountain in the background. Fabulous! In the afternoon, we have an optional ride on the Joy Train, or enjoy walks on the Mall or just spend time on the hotel's lovely terrace overlooking the mountains and the valley

Saturday 18 November 2023

We will start our journey of the southbound Darjeeling Mail with the 0900 departure from Darjeeling, due into New Jalpaiguri at 1615. We'll spend the night with our friends at the Cindrella Hotel.

Sunday 19 November 2023

Time to move on. We'll take the new luxury Mitali Express train from New Jalpaiguri at 1145 crossing the Bangladeshi border between Haldibari and Chilhati and then heading south through fertile country and amazing river crossings to Dhaka. It's a late arrival at 2230, but we will be taken straight to our hotel for a good night's rest. (Catering is a problem on this train: we will arrange a packed lunch and dinner)



Monday 20 November 2023

After a late night, today is a rest day for those who would like it. For the more energetic, there is the whole city to explore! We will arrange a tour of the city for you, one aspect of which is, regrettably, the horrendous Dhaka traffic, but we will have a rickshaw ride round part of Old Dhaka. There will be the opportunity to photograph the plinthed steam locomotive outside the Ministry of Railways, and a visit to the diesel locomotive shed near Dhaka's main station.

Tuesday 21 November 2023

Having sampled the 'luxury' train from New Jalpaiguri to Dhaka, we'll try one of their ordinary trains for the nine-hour journey from Dhaka to Khulna on the Sundarbans Express leaving at 0815 (with a packed lunch on the train. A coach will take us to our Khulna hotel for the night.

Wednesday 22 November 2023

An 8 a.m. departure sees us move to the jetty, where we will board a houseboat to enjoy the Bangladesh side of the Sunderbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world. We'll visit two sites, Harbaria and Mongla, where we will get down into the forest and follow a wooden trail for 30 to 40 minutes in Harbaria. In Mongla, we will visit a wildlife breeding centre, where they specialise in crocodiles and turtles. We'll dine and spend the night on the houseboat

Thursday 23 November 2023

After breakfast on the boat, it returns us to Khulna, and we'll go to the station for our second international train, leaving at 1330 for Kolkata, due to arrive at 1810. We will have packed meal on the train.



Friday 24 November 2023

We will pay a visit to the Indian Museum on Chowringhee and the beautiful Victoria Memorial, Kolkata's answer to the Taj Mahal, set in the beautiful grounds of the Maidan. Further, we will learn a bit about Kolkata with a leisurely walking tour through the City's major sights, including St John's Church, the 'Black Hole of Calcutta', the Writers' Building, Howrah Bridge and a visit 'behind the scenes' at Howrah Station, Kolkata's main link with the rest of India

Saturday 25 November 2023

We will need an early start to head back to the airport for the 0945 flight to Mumbai, where we connect into a late lunchtime flight back to the UK with arrival due in London in the early evening

What's included?

Economy class flights to/from India, breakfast and dinner (*) daily, accommodation in 3-4 star hotels (or best available locally), all transport, charter trains and excursions as set out in the itinerary and the services of a Darjeeling Tours Limited Tour Manager. All tips throughout the tour (except for the Tour Manager) are included and will be dealt with on your behalf. Personal and incidental expenses are not included.

(*) Dinner is not included in Kolkata, where there is plenty of choice, both in and out of the hotel. Food is not expensive, and this allows considerable individual flexibility.

Please note that you will need a full Indian visa (not an e-visa) for this tour, plus a Bangladeshi visa. We will circulate full details of how this works with booking confirmations.

The walking tour of Kolkata

This tour involves a walking tour of Kolkata, the only practical way of seeing the city's highlights, and covers about 3km (2 miles) at a reasonably gentle pace, taking around most of the day, but with opportunities for rest along the way

Guide prices

Fully inclusive price from London:	£ 4,595 based on two people sharing
Ground only price (international flights excluded)	£ 3,795
Single supplement:	£ 595



Please note that carriers, flights times and train times are subject to change.
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