

Darjeeling Mail

4 - 19 November 2024

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! With Vintage Trams of Kolkata, visit to the Howrah Railway Museum across the Hooghly River commuting like the locals. Off the beaten boat ride to the Sundarban Reserve Forest on the Bangladeshi side, the largest mangrove forest in the world, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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.
- 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 Sundarban
- Cross the Indian/Bangladeshi border twice by rail, including the new Chilhati/Haldibari crossing
- Sightseeing highlights: Kolkata's Victoria Memorial, Dhaka's old town, Darjeeling Tea Gardens, the Himalayas at Darjeeling, not to mention all the colourful bazaars and busy cities.

Please note all times are based on current timetables at February 2024 and are subject to change.



Monday 4 November 2024

We'll check in mid-day flight at London Heathrow (*please refer to other airport options below*) for our overnight flight connection via middle-east / direct to Delhi for....

Tuesday 5 November 2024

....Kolkata where we are due to arrive in the morning, 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. (B)

We will have the day at leisure with a conducted walk with your tour manager in the city centre.

Wednesday 6 November 2024

We'll take a ride on one of Kolkata's remaining **Trams** – it's an excellent way of seeing the city in relative peace whilst still being close to the action.

Followed by an exciting, guided walking tour of Kolkata through the City's major sights, including **St John's Church**, the '**Black Hole of Calcutta**', **The Writers Building**, **G.P.O.**, the famous **Howrah Bridge** and **Howrah station**.



Just down the road is Kolkata's wonderful **Railway Museum**, well worth a visit (B).



We will take a short **cruise on Kolkata's River Hooghly**, one of the branches of the great Ganges River. (B)

Thursday 7 November 2024

Early morning transfer to Howrah railway station to board the newest **Vande Bharat Express** at 0555 hrs to arrive at New Jalpaiguri (NJP) at 1325 hrs. A popular semi-high-speed train service being launched across country with a target of 75 such trains marking 75 years of India's independence! Designed & developed by Integral Coach Factory India (ICF) in Chennai & offering the best hospitality and comfort with food served on board. A truly Indian experience in comfort!

Our coach will meet you at New Jalpaiguri railway station and transfer to the Cindrella Hotel in Siliguri, where we stay for two nights and from where the Indian arm of the Darjeeling Railway Society is run. The hotel's restaurant is pure vegetarian, but the food is delicious! .

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By early evening ready for an exciting **Steam dining charter** from Siliguri to Sukna/Rangtong and back (B,D)

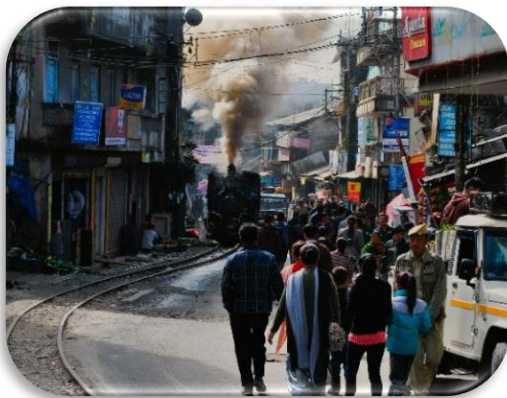
Friday 8 November 2024

We'll start the day with a steam charter over **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. We'll then return by road to our hotel in Siliguri for the night (B,D).



We will have the option of riding from New Jalpaiguri, bottom of the section to Siliguri (*subject to operating schedule & railway permissions*) but on a regular diesel hauled service train and then connect on to our steam charter waiting for us....

Saturday 9 November 2024



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 we can enjoy the station cafeteria for a proper cup of chai (or coffee) and a sandwich.

We then, continue our chartered steam hauled ride to Darjeeling. Don't miss the famous photo shots of the train making it's way out of the narrow **Kurseong Bazaar**. Our hotel for the next three nights is the iconic **Windamere**, Darjeeling's premier hotel for the last 200 years! (B,D)

Sunday 10 November 2024

We'll have a relaxed guided tour of Darjeeling to visit the popular **Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI)**, which houses the memorabilia of the local legendary Sherpa Tenzing Norgay who along with his Kiwi partner Sir Edmund Hillary Mt Everest in

Darjeeling Tours

1953. Further visit the adjoining **Zoo** to witness some the rarest Leopards such as clouded and snow leopards amongst The Royal Bengal Tiger, Red Panda & Sloth Bear!

Gently stroll back on **The Darjeeling Mall Road** through to Observatory Hill for your hotel. There is also the Planters Club, Das Studio's albums of historic photos, fancy cakes at Glenary's, and buy some tea from Keventers to take home.

In the evening, the 'Railway Club', with its library of DHR items will be open, with service from the bar (B,D)



Monday 11 November 2024

We'll have a photographer's delight this morning chasing the **Joy ride** from Darjeeling up to Ghum in our vehicles. Whilst in Ghum, visit the Railway's excellent museum, and share a cup of 'chai' with the train crew. If we're lucky with the weather, there will be stunning views of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, and we'll have the opportunity to photograph the train with the mountain in the background on the **Batasia Loop**. Fabulous!

By noon, we will also aim at visiting a local **Tea Estate** where you will be shown the process that takes place to produce the tea that we drink. Subject to weather!



Enjoy time in your lovely hotel terrace overlooking the mountains and the valley (B,D).

Tuesday 12 November 2024

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 (B,D).

Wednesday 13 November 2024

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. We will have packed light lunch and some dinner arranged to be delivered on board. (B,L,D).

Thursday 14 November 2024

After a late last night arrival, today is a rest day for those who would like it. For the more energetic, there is the whole city to explore!

By 1100 hrs, we will arrange a tour of the city for you, one aspect of which, regrettably, is the experience of the horrendous Dhaka traffic! Also visit **Old Dhaka** with a rickshaw ride. The tour should include the chance to photograph the preserved steam locomotive at the Railways Ministry, and a visit to the diesel locomotive shed near Dhaka's main station (B,D).

Friday 15 November 2024

Having sampled the 'luxury' train from New Jalpaiguri to Dhaka, we'll try one of their ordinary trains from **Dhaka to Khulna** on the Sundarban Express departing at 0815/1715 hrs.

Overnight in a hotel in Khulna hotel (B,D).



Saturday 16 November 2024



An 0800 hrs departure sees us move to the jetty, where we will board a houseboat to enjoy the Bangladesh side of the **Sundarban**, 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 will have lunch on board and then after a long cruise return back to our disembarkation in Mongla, head back to our hotel in Khulna (B,D).

Sunday 17 November 2024

After breakfast we will be transferred to Khulna railway station to board 13130 Bandhan Express @ 1330 hrs to arrive Kolkata at 1810 hrs.

We will be met and taken back to our city center hotel for overnight stay (B).

Monday 18 November 2024

0800 hrs, we will visit the famous **Flower Market** under the Howrah Bridge. Worth a visit!

The Victoria Memorial lawns, Kolkata's answer to the Taj Mahal, set in beautiful grounds on the Maidan. Return to hotel for wash & change before we transfer to Kolkata international terminal for your return flight to UK... (B).



Tuesday 19 November 2024

....Arrive UK in the morning.

What's included?

- Economy class flights to/from India in fully inclusive price.
- Accommodation in 4-star hotels
- Buffet breakfast and dinner daily except in Kolkata where you have plenty of options (*).
- All transport by deluxe vehicles with experienced drivers
- Charter trains and excursions as set out in the itinerary.
- 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.
- A lot more fun & authentic insight into India & Bangladesh!
- Personal and incidental expenses are not included.
- Optionals not Included as may be suggested or mentioned in the programme above.

(*). 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. On a daily basis, meals provided are shown with the following key: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner.

The tour

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 three hours.

Prices

Per Person on twin/double sharing basis.

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|---|----------------|
| Fully inclusive price from London: | £ 4,790 |
| Ground only price (international flights excluded): | £ 3,995 |
| Single supplement: | £ 615 |

Flights

If you would prefer to travel to India from a regional UK airport, we will do our best to find you something suitable. It usually works well from Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh, and can sometimes work from other airports too. Please let us know if you require a Premium Economy or Business and we will be happy to quote the supplement.



Please note that all carriers, train times and flight times are subject to change at any time.