Cruise Details

Name:	Jewels of North India & Luxury Lower Ganges River Cruise
Reference:	SCENICICNI271227-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Aura
Regions:	Ganges
Departs On:	27 Dec 27
Departs From:	Delhi
Arrives On:	17 Jan 28
Arrives At:	Kolkata (ex Calcutta)
Cruise Nights:	21
Total Vacation Days:	22

Itinerary

Day 1: Delhi (India)

Be welcomed to North India with a traditional floral garland and red tikka before arriving at your hotel for the next two nights, the luxurious The Imperial New Delhi. A Grand Dame of the East, this iconic heritage hotel, opened in 1936, evokes the opulence of a 19th-century palatial estate with its blend of Victorian, Art Deco and Lutyens' architecture.

Arrives On: 27 Dec 27

Day 2: Delhi (India)

Explore Old Delhi, beginning with India's largest mosque, Jama Masjid. Savour the sights, sounds and aromas on a rickshaw ride past the Red Fort and through Khari Baoli, Asia's largest wholesale spice bazaar within the bustling Chandni Chowk market and some of Delhi's oldest streets.

Later, visit Humayun's Tomb, built in 1570 as the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent and an architectural inspiration for the Taj Mahal. Then drive along New

Delhi’s ceremonial boulevard past India Gate and Presidential Avenue on your way back to the hotel. This evening, enjoy a special Welcome Dinner.

Arrives On: 28 Dec 27

Day 3: Delhi (India)

Fly to Varanasi, North India’s holiest Hindu city on the banks of the Ganges and check in for two nights at the Taj Ganges Varanasi Hotel. Scenic Enrich
For your Scenic Enrich event, enjoy a rickshaw ride to the riverfront ghats. Cruise the Ganges at dusk to the sounds of traditional Indian music, release sacred offerings into the water and witness the magical evening Aarti ceremony.

Arrives On: 29 Dec 27

Day 4: Varanasi (India)

At sunrise, drift slowly along the Ganges and watch the ghats come to life with pilgrims, priests and daily rituals. Afterwards, stroll along the ghats and through the laneways of Varanasi’s Old City.

This afternoon, journey to nearby Sarnath, where Gautama Buddha began his teaching. Spend time at Deer Park, one of Buddhism’s most important sites, where Lord Buddha first expounded the Dharma.

Arrives On: 30 Dec 27

Day 5: Varanasi (India)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose between two Scenic Freechoice excursions. Take a yoga lesson or visit a Shiva Temple to observe Rudrabhishek, a ritual to appease the God Shiva. Fly to Khajuraho, famous for its magnificent UNESCO World Heritage-listed temples, and enjoy a two-night stay at The Oberoi Rajgarh Palace, a lovingly restored 350-year-old palace overlooking Panna National Park.

Arrives On: 31 Dec 27

Day 6: Khajuraho (India)

Begin the day with a curated tiger safari in Panna National Park, renowned for its dramatic landscapes and diverse wildlife. Return to the hotel for lunch before visiting the exquisitely sculpted sandstone temples of Khajuraho, built between the 9th and 10th centuries by the Chandela dynasty. Marvel at carvings depicting deities, warriors, dancers, musicians, animals and exotic Kama Sutra scenes.

This evening, watch a sound and light show at the Western Group of Temples, a 45-minute spectacle using projection and 3D effects to bring

Khajuraho’s history and legends to life.

Arrives On: 01 Jan 28

Day 7: Khajuraho (India)

Drive to the heritage town of Orchha for a walking tour through its historic streets, lined with 16th-century temples, forts and palaces. Continue to Jhansi and board a train to Agra, arriving in the late afternoon at your luxurious Scenic Special Stay, The Oberoi Amarvilas, located just 600 meters from the Taj Mahal.

Arrives On: 02 Jan 28

Day 7: Orchha (India)

Arrives On: 02 Jan 28

Day 7: Jhansi (India)

Arrives On: 02 Jan 28

Day 7: Agra (India)

Arrives On: 02 Jan 28

Day 8: Agra (India)

Rise early to witness the breathtaking Taj Mahal at sunrise, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and enduring symbol of love built by Emperor Shah Jahan for his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Return to the hotel for breakfast before visiting Agra Fort, built in the 16th century primarily by Emperor Akbar. Once the main residence of the Mughal emperors, it showcases remarkable Islamic architecture and includes the balcony where Shah Jahan was later imprisoned, gazing towards the Taj Mahal. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure at your hotel before your evening function. Scenic Sunset Drinks
Gather for evening drinks to admire the Taj Mahal at sunset from the close proximity of your hotel. Scenic Freechoice Dining:
This evening choose your Scenic Free dining experience from the following options, Indian BBQ at Bon Barbeque Restaurant, Chinese at C’est Chine at the Hotel Jaypee Palace or enjoy a buffet meal of Asian and Western cuisine at the Bellevue Restaurant at your hotel.

Arrives On: 03 Jan 28

Day 9: Agra (India)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose from two Scenic Freechoice experiences exploring Agra by bicycle or tuk tuk, either through the surrounding countryside or the city’s vibrant streets. Afterwards, drive to Bharatpur for lunch and then board a train to Ranthambore National Park, one of North India’s most renowned tiger reserves. Settle into your two-night stay at Taj Sawai Ranthambore.

Arrives On: 04 Jan 28

Day 9: Ranthambore National Park (India)

Arrives On: 04 Jan 28

Day 10: Ranthambore National Park (India)

Once the private hunting grounds of the Maharajas of Jaipur, Ranthambore National Park is now one of India’s key tiger conservation areas.

Accompanied by an expert wildlife naturalist, set out on private morning and afternoon game drives in search of the elusive Bengal tiger and other wildlife that inhabit this rugged landscape.

Arrives On: 05 Jan 28

Day 11: Ranthambore National Park (India)

Travel to the Pink City of Jaipur, stopping en route at Abhaneri village to visit the remarkable Chand Baori stepwell, one of the largest and oldest in the world, dating back over 1,000 years.

Continue to Castle Kanota for lunch, the filming location of the Viceroy Club in The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. On arrival in Jaipur, discover the iconic Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds), famed for its intricate honeycomb façade of 953 windows designed to capture cooling breezes.

Stay for two nights at Jai Mahal Palace, an authentic luxury palace built in 1745 and now a lovingly restored Rajasthani landmark set amid 18 acres of landscaped gardens. This evening, enjoy a cultural show at the hotel.

Arrives On: 06 Jan 28

Day 11: Jaipur (India)

Arrives On: 06 Jan 28

Day 12: Jaipur (India)

This morning, visit the Jantar Mantar, an 18th-century astronomical observatory and UNESCO World Heritage Site. From here take a short walk to the City Palace, home to the rulers of Jaipur and its museum. Enjoy lunch in a restaurant attached to the City Palace before returning to your hotel.

Later in the afternoon, visit the magnificent Amber Fort, a UNESCO World

Heritage-listed hilltop fortress located just outside Jaipur. Explore its opulent palaces, richly decorated with intricate carvings, mirrored halls and exquisite artwork, before dining at the Restaurant 1136 at Amer fort, located at the top of the complex with commanding views over the fort and countryside.

Arrives On: 07 Jan 28

Day 13: Jaipur (India)

Fly to the vibrant city of Kolkata to continue your West Bengal river journey. You will be warmly welcomed at the airport and transferred to the wharf to board Scenic Aura. Settle into your luxurious surroundings before joining your fellow guests for an elegant Welcome Dinner.

Arrives On: 08 Jan 28

Day 13: Kokatam (India)

Arrives On: 08 Jan 28

Day 14: Serampore (India)

After an early morning visit to Kolkata’s flower market, one of the largest in India, step ashore at Serampore to explore one of Bengal’s most intriguing Danish colonial settlements, once described as the best-kept European town in India. A Danish enclave from 1755 until 1845, when it was sold to the British East India Company, the town still retains many buildings recently restored through the combined efforts of the National Museum of Denmark and the Government of West Bengal.

Visit the historic St. Olav’s Church, built in 1806, along with the Governor’s House and the Denmark Tavern, where you can pause for a morning refreshment. Each site offers a fascinating window into Bengal’s European past.

This afternoon, Scenic Aura calls at Chinsura, where you will visit the iconic Hooghly Imambara, one of West Bengal’s most revered Shia pilgrimage centres. Constructed in 1861, it features a sundial and an imposing clock tower acquired in 1852 from the London-based manufacturer who created ‘Big Ben’.

Arrives On: 09 Jan 28

Day 14: Chinsurah (India)

Arrives On: 09 Jan 28

Day 15: Mayapur (India)

Today, Scenic Aura arrives at Mayapur, the global spiritual headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and one of the 20 most visited and

sacred places in the world.

Admire the nearly completed Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, part funded by Alfred Ford and due for completion in November 2027, with opening celebrations planned through to March 2028. Engage with the welcoming Hare Krishna community and stroll through the vibrant pilgrims' bazaar, a sensory celebration of colour, fragrance and devotion.

Arrives On: 10 Jan 28

Day 16: Murshidabad (India)

This morning, arrive in Murshidabad, once the powerful seat of the Nawabs of Bengal and the region where the British East India Company began its expansion in India. It remained the capital of Bengal until it was moved to Calcutta (Kolkata) in 1773.

Marvel at Hazarduari Palace, known as the Palace of a Thousand Doors, of which 100 are false. Built in 1837 and designed by Duncan Macleod, it is now one of the largest site museums under the Archaeological Survey of India.

Travel in timeless style by toto (electric rickshaw) to the grand Katra Masjid. Built between 1723 and 1724 by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, Katra Masjid is a significant religious site showcasing a unique blend of Indo-Islamic architecture. Scenic Enrich
Visit the exquisite Kathgola Palace, where a signature Scenic Enrich High Tea awaits within its storied walls. Surrounded by lush gardens and water features, this elegant palace showcases the influence of Greek, Roman, and Indian architectural styles. A walk through its corridors will transport you back to the days of opulence and grandeur. This afternoon, the ship will move to Azimganj and Baranagar, smaller cities in the municipality in Murshidabad district. In Azimganj visit the serene Jain temples, offering a captivating introduction to the influence of the wealthy merchant families of the region and the intricate temples of the Jainism, an ancient Indian religion centred on spiritual purity, self-discipline, and disciplined nonviolence (ahimsa) to all living creatures. In Baranagar visit the 260-year-old ornate terracotta Char Bangla Temples, a unique complex of four terracotta temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Arrives On: 11 Jan 28

Day 16: Baranagar (India)

Arrives On: 11 Jan 28

Day 16: Azimganj (India)

Arrives On: 11 Jan 28

Day 17: Port information not found

Step ashore to explore the tranquil village of Khushbagh, known as the “Gardens of Happiness” where history and rural life intertwine. A serene early morning journey past farmland leads to a beautifully preserved mosque complex built by Nawab Ali-Wardi-Khan, where the Nawab, his family and his grandson Siraj-ud-Daulah are laid to rest.

Nearby lies the historic site of the Battle of Plassey (1757), fought on the banks of the Hooghly River. This victory by the British East India Company under Robert Clive marked a turning point, leading to British control of Bengal.

Arrives On: 12 Jan 28

Day 17: Palashi (India)

Arrives On: 12 Jan 28

Day 18: Matiari (India)

Today’s destination is the village of Matiari, renowned for its long-standing tradition of copper and brass craftsmanship. Watch master artisans transform recycled metals into beautifully handcrafted pots, platters and decorative pieces using techniques passed down through generations. This visit offers an authentic glimpse into a living cultural tradition.

Arrives On: 13 Jan 28

Day 19: Kalna (India)

Arrive this morning in the ‘City of Temples’, Kalna, which flourished in the late 18th century under the patronage of the Maharajas of Bardhaman.

Explore the Rajbari complex, home to several remarkable temples, including the Lalji Temple built around 1739, the Krishna Chandra Temple with its 25 decorated spires, the Vijay Vaidyanath Temple dedicated to Shiva, and the intricately detailed Pratapeswar Temple. These temples are the magnificent Rajbari complex.

Nearby is the Naba Kailash Complex, built in 1809, featuring 108 Shiva temples arranged in two concentric circles, with alternating black and white lingas in the outer ring and white lingas in the inner circle.

Spend the afternoon at Phulia (Fulia) weaving village where artisans craft hand-woven cotton and silk saris. The weaving history of the town is inextricably linked to the settlement of skilled refugees from Bangladesh who came down here after India’s Partition. It is famous for its Phulia Tangail saris, similar to the Dhakai Jamdani in technique with the motifs spaced out, but softer in feel. The Fulia Tangail incorporates vibrant colours and large, intricate designs woven in double jacquard. Apart from cotton, these saris are also woven in mulberry and tussar silk.

Arrives On: 14 Jan 28

Day 19: Phulia (India)

Arrives On: 14 Jan 28

Day 20: Chandannagar (India)

Today’s call at Chandernagore transports you to a beautifully preserved corner of French colonial India. It was first established as a French colony in 1673 on the bank of the Hooghly River, when the French obtained permission from Ibrahim Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, to establish a trading post. Since that time the town has changed hands with Britain in 1757, 1794 and then given back to the French control in 1815. There it remained until 1950 after the French Government recognised the right to determination of the Indian people of the French Settlements in India.

Stroll the elegant riverside promenade, lined with French colonial buildings. Visit the Dupleix Palace, the former French Governor’s residence and now a museum, and the Sacred Heart Church, a fine example of French Gothic design built in 1691. Visit the former Hotel de Paris built in 1878, now the sub–Divisional Court and a reminder of the town’s colonial past.

Arrives On: 15 Jan 28

Day 21: Kolkata (ex Calcutta) (India)

Your final full day returns you to the captivating streets of Kolkata. Visit Mother Teresa’s Mother House of The Missionaries of Charity before embarking on a private heritage tram tour, a nostalgic way to glide through the city. Continue to Tipu Sultan Masjid and the Victoria Memorial and Gardens before returning to the ship for lunch. Scenic Freechoice:
The afternoon is yours to enjoy with a selection of Scenic Freechoice excursions. Choose from a visit to Kumartoli, the traditional potter's quarter and the Parshwanath Jain Temple, or undertake a tour of ‘Colonial Kolkata’ including Dalhousie Square, the Writers’ Building, College Street (Boi Para and Indian Coffee House). Alternatively visit the Indian Museum and South Park Cemetery. This evening, enjoy your farewell on board with your fellow guests and crew.

Arrives On: 16 Jan 28

Day 22: Kolkata (ex Calcutta) (India)

This morning, disembark Scenic Aura in Kolkata and transfer to the airport or hotel for your onward journey. This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for changes in river conditions, ad hoc local government regulations or festivities. Please refer to Scenic’s terms and conditions for further information. Hotels are indicative and subject to change. Please note: Preview itinerary subject to change.

Arrives On: 17 Jan 28

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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