Cruise Details

Name:	Colours of South India & Luxury Lower Ganges River Cruise
Reference:	SCENICICSI071227-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Aura
Regions:	Ganges
Departs On:	07 Dec 27
Departs From:	Kochi
Arrives On:	30 Dec 27
Arrives At:	Kolkata (ex Calcutta)
Cruise Nights:	23
Total Vacation Days:	24

Itinerary

Day 1: Kochi (Japan)

Welcome to Kochi, known as the ‘Queen of the Arabian Sea’. Upon arrival transfer and check into the Brunton Boatyard, your beautiful colonial-era home for the next two nights.

Arrives On: 07 Dec 27

Day 2: Kochi (Japan)

Head down to the harbour, where ships from Asia and Europe have docked since the 14th century. Watch local fishermen expertly operate the Chinese fishing nets before discovering the city’s layered colonial history on a tour of Fort Kochi, reflecting Portuguese, Dutch and British influences from the 16th to 18th centuries. Visit Mattancherry Palace, Jew Town and the Synagogue.

In the evening, witness a traditional Kathakali performance, a highly evolved classical form of dance, drama and music. Afterwards, enjoy your welcome dinner featuring

regional specialties.

Arrives On: 08 Dec 27

Day 3: Kochi (Japan)

After a relaxing morning, travel into the Kerala Backwaters to Kumarakom and check in to Coconut Lagoon, your home for the next two nights. Located on Vembanad Lake, one of India's largest lakes and a key wetland ecosystem, the resort's villas are built from the reclaimed timbers of traditional tharavad homes, some over 150 years old. Optional: Luxury houseboat
Alternatively, choose to spend your first night in Kumarakom on board a houseboat, a converted traditional rice barge known as a Kettuvallam. Cruise through the lakes and backwaters past small villages and paddy fields, witnessing daily life along the waterways. This option is included at no extra cost but must be pre-booked.

Arrives On: 09 Dec 27

Day 3: Kumarakom (India)

Arrives On: 09 Dec 27

Day 4: Kumarakom (India)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose from your Scenic Freechoice excursions. Visit Philip Kutty's Farm for a Keralan cooking class and lunch, or unwind with a traditional Ayurveda massage before lunch at the resort. Guests who overnighted on a Kettuvallam will check in to Coconut Lagoon today. Spend the afternoon at leisure before enjoying an evening sunset cruise on the backwaters from your hotel in Kumarakom.

Arrives On: 10 Dec 27

Day 5: Kumarakom (India)

Ascend into the highlands to Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady, a reserve known for its elephant population and rich biodiversity.

In the afternoon, take a 90 minute boat cruise on Lake Periyar, a stunning 26 square kilometre reservoir created in 1895. Your overnight stay is at Spice Village, a resort modelled on the dwellings of the native Mannan tribe of this region.

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

Day 5: Periyar National Park (India)

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

Day 6: Periyar National Park (India)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose your Scenic Freechoice excursion. Join an early morning guided jungle walk in the reserve or take a jeep tour through the surrounding countryside, passing spice farms and plantations, for panoramic views over Tamil Nadu. For today's lunch, visit a small family-owned spice plantation to see how spices grow before enjoying a home-cooked meal prepared by the family. Later, cross into Tamil Nadu, the 'State of Temples', and drive to Madurai, known as the 'Athens of the East'. Tonight, relax at The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai.

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

Day 6: Madurai (India)

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

Day 7: Madurai (India)

Rise early for a walk through the heritage section of town to witness the early morning rituals. Later, wander through the local flower and vegetable market and the weaver's market.

Visit one of South India's most important pilgrimage sites, the Sri Meenakshi Temple, dating from the 1500s. Dedicated to the consort of Lord Shiva, its nine towering gopurams and twelve temple towers dominate the skyline.

This evening, return by tuk tuk to the temple to witness the rituals and celebrations of the evening puja ceremony.

Arrives On: 13 Dec 27

Day 8: Madurai (India)

Drive to the village of Karaikudi in the Chettinad region, where the Chettiar merchant community once amassed great fortunes as bankers and traders.

Experience a bullock cart ride through the narrow streets, exploring the faded elegance of colonial-era bungalows and merchant mansions, and stop for a weaving demonstration en route. Stay at Visalam for two nights, a beautifully restored Art Deco mansion that reflects Chettinad's architectural heritage.

Arrives On: 14 Dec 27

Day 8: Chettinad (India)

Arrives On: 14 Dec 27

Day 9: Chettinad (India)

Witness Kolam making, the creation of intricate designs using coloured rice flour, before visiting a pottery village to see colourful Athangudi tiles crafted by hand. This afternoon, enjoy a heritage walk and visit Chettinad Palace. Scenic Enrich
As part of your Scenic Enrich experience, enjoy a traditional cooking demonstration showcasing Chettinad's unique cuisine, followed by a private Bharatanatyam classical dance performance. Afterwards, feast on a typical Chettinad wedding dinner menu.

Arrives On: 15 Dec 27

Day 10: Chettinad (India)

Journey through the "rice bowl" of Tamil Nadu to Trichy, the former capital of the Madurai Nayaks. On arrival, choose your Scenic Freechoice excursion. Scenic Freechoice:
Climb the Rock Fort Temple, a spectacular 7th-century complex perched atop an 83-metre rocky outcrop with panoramic city views, or visit the island temples of Srirangam, revered pilgrimage sites for Vaishnavite Hindus. Check in to Courtyard by Marriott for the night.

Arrives On: 16 Dec 27

Day 10: Trichy (India)

Arrives On: 16 Dec 27

Day 11: Trichy (India)

Drive to Tanjore to discover the 11th-century Brihadishvara Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed masterpiece and one of the Great Living Chola Temples.

Continue to the pretty seaside town of Puducherry, the former capital of French India, and check in to Palais de Mahe, a romantic boutique hotel that pays tribute to the town's French legacy.

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 11: Thanjavur (India)

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 11: Pondicherry (India)

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 12: Pondicherry (India)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose your Scenic Freechoice excursion. Start early with a visit to Nalavadu Coastal Fishing Village for an immersive coastal walk into the daily life of a fishing community, or visit Auroville, an experimental township where residents from around the world live in a spirit of human unity. Alternatively, join a Creole Kitchen experience to learn age-old Creole recipes passed down through generations in a local home. Later this afternoon, discover how the local Tamil population has blended French and Indian influences during a heritage walking tour. Stroll past charming Tamil and colonial fusion architecture and visit the Aurobindo Ashram.

Arrives On: 18 Dec 27

Day 13: Pondicherry (India)

Travel north to Chennai, stopping at Mamallapuram to explore the World Heritage-listed Shore Temples. On arrival in Chennai, check in to The Leela Palace for a two-night Special Stay. Scenic Freechoice Dining:
Tonight, choose your Scenic Freechoice dining experience at your hotel: enjoy international cuisine at Spectra, sample Chinese dishes at China XO or savour Indian specialities at Jamavar.

Arrives On: 19 Dec 27

Day 13: Chennai (India)

Arrives On: 19 Dec 27

Day 14: Chennai (India)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose your Scenic Freechoice excursion. Walk through Georgetown to discover its markets and colonial laneways, or explore the 8th-century Hindu temples in Kanchipuram, one of South India’s oldest temple towns. Later, learn about the history of the Basilica of San Thome, said to be the final resting place of St Thomas the Apostle. This evening, reminisce about your journey over a farewell dinner.

Arrives On: 20 Dec 27

Day 15: Chennai (India)

Fly to the vibrant city of Kolkata to continue your journey with a West Bengal river cruise. 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: 21 Dec 27

Day 15: Kolkata (ex Calcutta) (India)

Arrives On: 21 Dec 27

Day 16: 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: 22 Dec 27

Day 16: Chinsurah (India)

Arrives On: 22 Dec 27

Day 17: 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: 23 Dec 27

Day 18: 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: 24 Dec 27

Day 18: Baranagar (India)

Arrives On: 24 Dec 27

Day 18: Azimganj (India)

Arrives On: 24 Dec 27

Day 19: 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: 25 Dec 27

Day 19: Palashi (India)

Arrives On: 25 Dec 27

Day 20: 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: 26 Dec 27

Day 21: 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: 27 Dec 27

Day 21: Phulia (India)

Arrives On: 27 Dec 27

Day 22: 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: 28 Dec 27

Day 23: 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: 29 Dec 27

Day 24: 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: 30 Dec 27

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