Cruise Details

Name:	Luxury Lower Ganges River Cruise & Ultimate Sri Lanka
Reference:	SCENICICSL211227-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Aura
Regions:	Ganges
Departs On:	21 Dec 27
Departs From:	Kolkata (ex Calcutta)
Arrives On:	12 Jan 28
Arrives At:	Colombo
Cruise Nights:	22
Total Vacation Days:	23

Itinerary

Day 1: Kolkata (ex Calcutta) (India)

Your West Bengal river journey begins in the vibrant city of Kolkata, where you are 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 2: 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 2: Chinsurah (India)

Arrives On: 22 Dec 27

Day 3: 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 4: 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 4: Baranagar (India)

Arrives On: 24 Dec 27

Day 4: Azimganj (India)

Arrives On: 24 Dec 27

Day 5: 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 5: Palashi (India)

Arrives On: 25 Dec 27

Day 6: 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 7: 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 7: Phulia (India)

Arrives On: 27 Dec 27

Day 8: 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 9: 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 10: Kolkata (ex Calcutta) (India)

This morning, disembark Scenic Aura in Kolkata and transfer to the airport for your flight to Colombo.

Be welcomed to Sri Lanka before transferring to Negombo, a vibrant coastal town known for its rich fishing heritage and colonial influences. Check into your luxury boutique hotel for the next two nights, Wattura Resort & Spa, with mesmerising views over the water.

Arrives On: 30 Dec 27

Day 10: Colombo (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 30 Dec 27

Day 10: Negombo (Sri Lanka) (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 30 Dec 27

Day 11: Negombo (Sri Lanka) (Sri Lanka)

Travel to Muthurajawela Wetlands Sanctuary to explore one of Sri Lanka’s important ecological reserves at the southern end of the Negombo Lagoon. Enjoy a relaxing boat ride through mangroves and waterways while observing a variety of bird species, butterflies, reptiles and other wildlife in their natural habitat.

Return to the historic beach town of Negombo to visit the bustling fish market, where you can witness the daily rhythm of local fishermen, explore churches reflecting the town’s strong Catholic heritage and see the Dutch canals built during the colonial era.

This evening, join an in-depth walking tour exclusively designed by a local expert. Visit the remains of the town’s former fort, which saw fierce battles between the Dutch and Portuguese in the 17th century before being converted into a prison by the British in the late 1800s.

Your welcome dinner tonight is set on the beaches of Negombo.

Arrives On: 31 Dec 27

Day 12: Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 01 Jan 28

Day 12: Negombo (Sri Lanka) (Sri Lanka)

This morning, journey towards Sri Lanka’s Cultural Triangle. En route, visit the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, established in 1975, and learn about its captive elephant care and breeding program.

Continue to the sacred city of Anuradhapura, widely acknowledged as Sri Lanka’s first ancient kingdom and now a UNESCO World Heritage site. Once a flourishing religious and political capital for over 1,300 years, the city was eventually reclaimed by the jungle. Explore its well-preserved ruins, towering stupas and sacred Bodhi tree while learning about the kings, civilisations and spiritual traditions that shaped this remarkable destination.

Visit the majestic Aukana Buddha Statue, a 12-metre-high rock-carved figure dating back to the 5th century, admired as one of Sri Lanka’s finest examples of Buddhist art.

Afterwards, check in to Uga Ulagalla, a resort hidden amidst acres of greenery and centred around a historic 150-year-old mansion, and relax in your Pool Villa for a two-night stay.

Arrives On: 01 Jan 28

Day 12: Pinnawala (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 01 Jan 28

Day 13: Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka)

Spend a relaxing day at Uga Ulagalla, enjoying the luxurious property and its serene surroundings. Unwind in the comfort of your villa, take in the beautiful landscapes, and experience the exceptional amenities the resort has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to rest, rejuvenate, and soak in the peaceful atmosphere of this exquisite retreat.

Later this afternoon, enjoy a scenic excursion to Nachchaduwa, a tranquil lake fringed by natural beauty. Take in the peaceful ambiance before your Scenic Sundowners event with free-flow drinks at sunset, a perfect moment to pause, reflect and capture unforgettable memories.

Arrives On: 02 Jan 28

Day 14: Polonnaruwa (Sri Lanka) (Sri Lanka)

Check out and drive to the World Heritage-listed historical city of Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka’s second ancient capital after the fall of Anuradhapura. Set beside a vast man-made lake, its remaining city walls, temples and dagobas reveal the grandeur of this once-opulent garden city.

After lunch, embark on an exciting safari in Minneriya National Park, renowned for its large gatherings of wild elephants. Explore the park’s dry forests and open grasslands while spotting elephants, deer, monkeys and a variety of birdlife for an unforgettable wildlife experience.

Check in to Water Garden Sigiriya for the night. Set within a meticulously designed landscape of

winding streams and lush greenery, the chic villas feature spacious interiors, private plunge pools and secret gardens, seamlessly blending elegance with nature.

Arrives On: 03 Jan 28

Day 14: Minneriya National Park (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 03 Jan 28

Day 14: Port information not found

Arrives On: 03 Jan 28

Day 15: Port information not found

Scenic Freechoice:
This early morning, choose your Scenic Freechoice activity. Climb the famous ‘Lion’s Rock’ at Sigiriya, a UNESCO-listed rock fortress and ancient city dating back to the 5th century and admire its frescoes and panoramic views over the Cultural Triangle. Alternatively, spend a relaxing morning at your hotel. After check-out, continue to Dambulla Cave Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its rock-cut caves, statues and richly painted Buddhist murals preserved over centuries.

Enjoy lunch at a traditional spice garden to learn about the cultivation and uses of cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, pepper, and other aromatic herbs in Sri Lankan cuisine. Then travel to the sacred city of Kandy, the last capital of the Sinhala kings before British rule, now part of Sri Lanka’s UNESCO-listed cultural heartland.

Check in to TheTrees Kandy for two nights, a luxury boutique sanctuary nestled among century-old trees with elevated views over Kandy Lake and the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic.

Arrives On: 04 Jan 28

Day 15: Dambulla (Sri Lanka) (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 04 Jan 28

Day 15: Kandy (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 04 Jan 28

Day 16: Kandy (Sri Lanka)

Explore this cultural city by tuk tuk visiting the lush Peradeniya Botanical Gardens and the revered Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic.

At Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, wander through expansive lawns and themed sections showcasing orchids, palms, medicinal plants and

towering tropical trees, all in a tranquil riverside setting. Then visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, one of Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites, and learn about the history and rituals surrounding this sacred relic. Scenic Enrich
This evening, enjoy a Scenic Enrich experience with a captivating Kandyan cultural show. Traditional dancers in vibrant costumes perform to rhythmic drumming and ancient melodies. Afterwards, savour dinner at your hotel, reflecting on the day's cultural encounters. After the show, enjoy a delightful dinner at the hotel, experiencing the flavours and hospitality of this charming venue.

Arrives On: 05 Jan 28

Day 17: Kandy (Sri Lanka)

Tea is synonymous with Sri Lanka, and today you journey into its misty highlands. Board a train for a scenic ride through emerald hills and tea estates to Hatton in the Nuwara Eliya District, one of the country's most celebrated tea-growing regions.

Continue to your Scenic Special Stay at Ceylon Tea Trails, a collection of restored planters' bungalows set amid working tea gardens. Spend two nights here in the high country, where elegant bedrooms, cosy lounges, libraries and dining rooms are designed for slow, indulgent living, framed by sweeping valley and lake views. This afternoon, enjoy high tea overlooking green blankets of tea plantations and the Castlereagh Reservoir.

Arrives On: 06 Jan 28

Day 17: Hatton (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 06 Jan 28

Day 18: Hatton (Sri Lanka)

Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose your Scenic Freechoice excursion. Join the resident tea planter for a visit to a working tea factory and learn about the journey of Ceylon tea from leaf to cup, finishing with a tasting of different grades. Alternatively, enjoy a guided kayak on Castlereagh Lake or take a guided bike ride through the surrounding trails. The rest of the day is yours to relax. Follow marked walking trails around the estate, play a game of croquet or tennis, or simply unwind before your included afternoon high tea.

Arrives On: 07 Jan 28

Day 19: Hatton (Sri Lanka)

Today journey to Geoffrey Bawa’s Lunuganga Estate, the former country home of Sri Lanka’s renowned architect. Explore the beautifully landscaped gardens, art-filled spaces and tranquil corners that showcase his pioneering vision of tropical modernism.

After lunch in the estate gardens, continue to the Madu River for a relaxing cruise through one of Sri Lanka’s most picturesque wetland ecosystems. Glide past mangrove islets, glimpse local village life, observe cinnamon cultivation and traditional fishing practices on this peaceful journey through nature.

Arrive in Balapitiya and check in to Aavya Cove Villas, a boutique retreat overlooking a stunning palm-fringed stretch of coastline.

Arrives On: 08 Jan 28

Day 19: Balapitiya (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 08 Jan 28

Day 20: Balapitiya (Sri Lanka)

Head to the colonial and heritage rich World Heritage-listed city of Galle, first settled by the Portuguese in the early 16th century.

En route, stop at a sea turtle hatchery operated by the Wildlife Protection Society of Sri Lanka. Learn about conservation initiatives, observe different turtle species at various stages of life and understand how hatchlings are protected before being released into the ocean.

After lunch in Bentota, arrive in Galle and explore Galle Fort with a local expert. Walk along the ramparts overlooking the Indian Ocean, discover boutique shops, cafés and museums, and absorb the unique blend of Dutch, Portuguese and British heritage within this iconic coastal fortress.

Check in for two nights at The Fort Bazaar, a beautifully restored 17th-century merchant’s house in the heart of Galle Fort. This evening, enjoy dinner at Pedlar’s Inn, the former British post office now transformed into a charming café in the old quarter.

Arrives On: 09 Jan 28

Day 20: Galle (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 09 Jan 28

Day 21: Galle (Sri Lanka)

Scenic Freechoice:
Enjoy a leisurely morning before choosing your Scenic Freechoice dining experience for lunch. Join a ‘Cooking with Mama’ experience inside Galle Fort, learning to prepare authentic Sri Lankan dishes in a welcoming, home-style setting. Alternatively, opt for a Cinnamon Influence lunch that includes a guided experience tracing Sri Lanka’s famed cinnamon from plantation to plate, followed by a menu infused with its distinctive

flavours. The remainder of the afternoon is at your leisure to further explore Galle Fort or relax at your hotel. Tonight, dine at The Fort Printers, a former printing house turned characterful boutique restaurant in the heart of the fort.

Arrives On: 10 Jan 28

Day 22: Galle (Sri Lanka)

This morning, travel to Colombo and visit the Natural History Museum, Sri Lanka’s largest museum, showcasing the island’s rich cultural and historical heritage. Explore ancient artefacts, royal regalia, traditional art and archaeological treasures that trace Sri Lanka’s long and layered past.

Enjoy lunch at Ministry of Crab, one of Asia’s most acclaimed restaurants, before checking in for your Scenic Special Stay at the iconic Galle Face Hotel, a colonial-era landmark set along the seafront and facing the famous Galle Face Green.

Later, enjoy dinner at the Cricket Club Café, a characterful venue celebrating Sri Lanka’s passion for cricket, filled with memorabilia from legendary players dating back to the 1940s.

Arrives On: 11 Jan 28

Day 22: Colombo (Sri Lanka)

Arrives On: 11 Jan 28

Day 23: Colombo (Sri Lanka)

Scenic Enrich
Begin your final day with a Scenic Enrich guided walk through Colombo led by local expert Mark Forbes. Discover colonial buildings, colourful streets and hidden corners as he shares stories that bring the city’s past and present to life. After a late check-out (until 6.00pm) and a farewell dinner at your hotel, transfer to the airport for your onward flight. Please book your flight to depart out of Colombo after 10:00 PM. The itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons. As such Scenic cannot guarantee the journey will operate unaltered from the itinerary stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions for further information. Hotels are indicative and subject to change.

Arrives On: 12 Jan 28

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