



25th to 28th March 2021

## Brahmaputra River Vignettes

### A Lecturer Cruise Journey Upstream

*Assam, which literally means 'a peerless land', is the gateway to Northeast India. With its blue rivers that often resemble the sea; green mountains that are home to leopards and elephants; and swathes of aromatic tea gardens forming the world's largest tea-growing region, it's easy to understand why this state is a very special place on earth especially when experienced on the majestic river, Brahmaputra.*

*Abundant not just in flora and fauna, the Brahmaputra river valley in Assam has long been home to a multitude of ethno-cultural groups under various political-economic systems throughout history. It's believed that the source of Assamese culture developed when the Tai-Shans (traced to either the South China or Myanmar regions) established the Ahom kingdom in Assam and ruled it - unbroken - for 600 years, successfully fending off waves upon waves of Mughal invasion until the dawn of the British Raj. Present-day Assam has a hybrid culture that is largely rooted to the simple agrarian way of life that these fertile plains have bestowed on the Assamese people.*



*"A river seems like a magic thing. A magic, moving, living part of the very earth itself." - Laura Gilpin*

## **BRAHMAPUTRA UPSTREAM | 3N/4D | GUWAHATI TO SILGHAT**

This river cruise aboard the luxury vessel ABN Charaidew II, the newest vessel of the river fleet owned by Assam Bengal Navigation is the ideal way to discover the Brahmaputra river valley, while experiencing vignettes of Assam's rich culture and history. Not only is the Brahmaputra one of the greatest rivers in the Indian Subcontinent, but it's also immensely vast, often resembling the sea in certain parts of its course. Unique to this river are its shifting sand islands that pop up and down every year, changing with the currents. One of the many highlights of this cruise is a BBQ on one of these sand islands (or sand bank) under a starry night, with no one else around for miles.

Enjoy an exclusive visit to an Assam tea plantation during the tea plucking season as well as a chance to discover a traditional Assamese village, this cruise is for those who want to discover a different part of India while spending time relaxing in the luxury of the Brahmaputra river!

### **Highlights:**

- Cruising the Brahmaputra river - one of the greatest rivers in the Indian Subcontinent - on your boutique luxury ship, the ABN Charaidew II offering everchanging panoramic views of Assam's natural beauty
- Immerse yourself in Assamese culture on walks to the villages of riverside communities and temple visits
- Assam Tea Plantation visit and tea tasting session
- Treat your taste buds to an array of exciting cuisines from Assam with an introduction to indigenous tribal cuisine, seldom before tasted outside of this region
- Enjoy a BBQ on a private sandbank or sand island under a starry night, far away from urban life

### **DAY 1**

**25th March 2021**

#### **Welcome onboard your river journey**

Arrive to embark your by 10 AM. The boat will be waiting for you at Pandu Port of the Inland Waterways Authority of India

#### **Blessings from the 9th century Vishnu Temple on the north bank**

We embark on our river journey with blessings from the 9th century Aswaklanta Temple perched on top of a hill on the north bank of Guwahati. With scenic views of the south bank, the main city skyline of Guwahati, it is an ideal introduction to the gateway of north-east India. After exploring this famous temple site and the north bank Assamese town on foot, we return to the cruise vessel.

#### **Your river journey on the Brahmaputra**

India's Brahmaputra River is the 29th longest river in the world at 2,948 km long, and has a discharge of 19,200 cubic litres per second which puts northern India's great waterway in the top 10 when it comes to volume. This is a massive waterway, being the only river on Earth clearly visible from the moon during the Apollo missions. Flowing down from central Tibet through the legendary Tsangpo gorges, the Brahmaputra river opens out as it enters Assam to flow across that state and then through Bangladesh to flow out through the vast Sundarbans Delta, merging with the Ganges River as they discharge into the Bay of Bengal.

The Brahmaputra river may be little-navigated today in comparison to the colonial times - the pioneering river cruise company, 'Assam Bengal Navigation' established in 2003 is the only private family-run luxury operator besides government tie-ups. The river in places can be up to 20 miles wide and in the monsoon it floods the entire Assam plain. The river is so vast that any river cruise expedition undertaken here can be movingly wondrous, as you pass through this great emptiness of water, sand and shoal. Passengers of our Brahmaputra river cruises enjoy their river trips in peace and tranquility with very little human activity on the riverbank. That means the wild life and bird life are profuse.

### **Lecture topic today - Introduction to Assam culture, history & nature**

Abundant not just in flora and fauna, the Brahmaputra river valley in Assam has long been home to a multitude of ethno-cultural groups under various political-economic systems throughout history. It's believed that the source of Assamese culture developed when the Tai-Shans (traced to either the South China or Myanmar regions) established the Ahom kingdom in Assam and ruled it - unbroken - for 600 years, successfully fending off waves upon waves of Mughal invasion until the dawn of the British Raj. Present-day Assam has a hybrid culture that is largely rooted to the simple agrarian way of life that these fertile plains have bestowed on the Assamese people.

### **Welcome dinner under the stars**

BBQ night, a special evening of music and food under the stars on a deserted sandbank of the Brahmaputra River.

## **DAY 2**

**26th March 2021**

### **Cruising upstream of the Brahmaputra River**

The day is spent mostly cruising upstream with jungle-covered hills rising on either side, often battling against strong currents.

In Assam the Brahmaputra river is mighty, even in the dry season, and during the rains especially in the months of July and August its banks are more than 5 miles (8 km) apart. As the river follows its braided 450-mile (700-km) course through the valley in Assam, it receives several rapidly rushing Himalayan streams, including the Subansiri, Kameng, Bhareli, Dhansiri, Manas & more. With dozens of sediment-rich streams flowing south from the Himalayan highlands into the Brahmaputra Valley and an area with very high erosion rates near Namche Barwa, the Brahmaputra has one of the highest sediment loads per square kilometer of any river in the world. In some ways, the sediment is a blessing. Annual floods spread mineral-rich silt across farmland adjacent to the river, replenishing the soil. In other ways, it poses challenges as there is so much of it that large boats such as our vessels are limited to parts of the river that are navigable which is why we are constantly subject to river conditions that change yearly after the monsoons. Cruising with Assam Bengal Navigation means you are in the hands of the best river cruise operator, the pioneer with 18+ years of experience and expertise in operating long-distance river cruises in India on the Brahmaputra and the Ganges for discerning travellers from around the world.

### **Indigenous tribal cuisine demonstration and lunch**

Our chef onboard will introduce you to the indigenous cuisine of Assam with a live cooking session. The first thing that strikes a first time foodie sampling the variety of cuisine in Assam is the delicacy of the flavours and the lightness of the food itself. There is a subtlety in the taste and aroma that makes sampling Assamese cuisine an experience of a different kind. Oils and fats in general are used sparingly, while a profusion of freshly plucked herbs enhance the flavour greatly. Vegetables and greens are used profusely, while rice, whether whole or powdered is a staple.

### **Riverine village lifestyle of Assam**

There is time to pause and visit a riverside village, with its lush green fields of vegetables and corn. Your accompanying guide and accompanying naturalist will brief you as you observe the simple riverine lifestyle of locals in Assam on foot.

### **Lecture topic - Myriad of indigenous tribes of Assam**

Assam is the meeting ground of diverse cultures. The people of the enchanting state of Assam is an intermixture of various racial stocks such as Mongoloid, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Iranian and Aryan. The Assamese culture is a rich and exotic tapestry of all these races evolved through a long assimilative process. The natives of the state of Assam are known as "Asomiya" (Assamese), which is also the state language of Assam. The state has a large number of tribes, each unique in its tradition, culture, dress and exotic way of life. Diverse tribes like Bodo, Kachari, Karbi, Miri, Mishimi, Rabha, etc co-exist in Assam, most tribes have their own languages though Assamese is the principal language of the state.

### **The crew onboard your ship**

We believe that tourism should operate in partnership with local people, ultimately providing employment and economic benefits for the community as well as helping to place a value on the cultural and natural heritage of a destination. You will find that our crew onboard are all locals from the region that have been trained in-house and our managers are professionals from the hospitality trade that personally train and skill our crew members. Additionally, 5% of the proceeds from every booked cabin is contributed to ABN Foundation that supports causes in education, environment and community development along the two rivers we operate in.

### **Sandbank sundowners**

Enjoy a special sunset with music on the deserted sandbanks of the Brahmaputra

### **Dinner onboard the ship**

## **DAY 3**

**27th March 2021**

### **Lecture topic - Assam tea plantation history and tea culture**

*Nearly 200 years ago, a Scottish gentleman called Robert Bruce was wandering in the Upper Brahmaputra Valley, when he came across wild bushes that changed the world forever: Indian tea. Assam is surrounded by the foothills of the Himalayas in the north and south whilst the Brahmaputra*

River flows from east to west. This topography forms one of the world's most abundant biodiversity zones. Assam's tea industry introduced socio-economic growth, including the arrival of planters from Britain and labourers from other parts of India, and a coming together of new customs, food and dastooors (culture). Today, the world's single largest tea-growing region, Assam's tea gardens collectively produce over 700 million kgs of tea each year! Assam teas are generally harvested from March until November.

### **Assam Tea plantation visit & Assam tea tasting session**

We will be visiting a beautiful Assam tea plantation today where a special tea-tasting experience will be hosted. The Assam Tea tasting class is a knowledge session that introduces you to the subtle flavours and varieties of Assam tea led by an expert tea taster and connoisseur by profession. The beauty of Assam tea lies in its hidden notes, delicate aromas, and bold flavours.” And it is precisely such beauty that we seek to introduce to our guests over cups of exotic tea and fine blends.

### **Farewell dinner onboard the ship with cultural folk performance of Assam**

#### **DAY 4**

**28th March 2021**

#### **Disembark**

This morning, check out and drive for approx. 3 hours to Jorhat airport, or 4hours to Guwahati airport to catch your flight. Or, disembark and drive for 1 hour to Kaziranga National Park.

#### **Note:**

*All cruising mentioned in these itineraries is subject to river and weather conditions.*

*All driving times mentioned in these itineraries are approximate.*

*For private transfers in an Innova Crista, the cost is at Rs 8000/- for an approx. 4hrs drive from Silghat to Guwahati Airport.*

*For private transfers to Kaziranga, the cost is at Rs. 4000/- for an approx. 1hr drive from Silghat to the western range of Kaziranga National Park where Diphlu River Lodge is situated. Please note that driving distances between western range to eastern range of the park is around 2hrs between them.*

*For private transfer with an Innova Crista for airport pick up at arrival from Guwahati airport to Pandu Ghat, the cost is at Rs.3000/-*

#### **PRICE**

Rs. 98,500/- per person (based on twin-sharing)

**INCLUDES:**

03 nights' accommodation aboard ABN Charaidew II  
Arrival transfers from Guwahati airport on a shared basis in a tempo traveler  
Departure transfers to Kaziranga National Park on a shared basis  
All excursions and experiences as per the itinerary  
All transfers as mentioned in the itinerary on a shared basis  
All major meals (03 breakfast, 03 lunch, 03 dinner)  
Service of an English-speaking guide onboard and during excursions  
Service of an English-speaking naturalist onboard and during excursions  
Expert Guide for Lecturer River Series  
GST @ 5%

**EXCLUDES:**

Air or train fare to and from the start of your trip  
Drinks from the bar  
Laundry, telephone charges, mini bar  
Spa treatment  
Tips, camera fees  
Any Insurance  
Items of a personal nature  
Personal transfer logistics  
Anything which is not mentioned on the includes section

**For more information and bookings, please contact:**

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