

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different



Nagaland & India's North East

Departs 17 November 2025





NAGALAND & INDIA'S NORTH EAST

India's culture, like its people, is a rich mosaic whose myriad elements have been born of its ancient roots and foreign influences. It is vibrant and chaotic, a land of incredible contrasts and paradoxes.

The eastern and north-eastern parts of India offer an escape from the hustle and bustle of mainstream travel and allow travellers to immerse in authentic experiences shaped by centuries of history and geographical diversity. As the gateway to the region, Kolkata blends urban vibrancy with a nostalgic nod to its storied past. Venturing further eastward, the coastal state of Odisha emerges as a hidden gem steeped in a 3000-year-old history. Its ancient temples and cultural landmarks are testaments to a rich legacy waiting to be explored.

In the northeast, Assam's lush landscapes and pristine forests provide sanctuary to many wildlife species, while the Brahmaputra River winds its way through the region, shaping both its geography and cultural identity. Meanwhile, Nagaland's rugged terrain is home to some of India's most colourful ethnic communities, each preserving its unique customs and traditions, all coming together every year in early December to showcase their once-forgotten cultural heritage at the curated Hornbill Festival.





Day 1, Monday 17th November
DEPARTURE TO KOLKATA

Depart Australia (flight TBA) and arrive at Kolkata's Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport late evening. We will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel for a three-night stay at the Oberoi Grand (or similar). *Meals TBA based on arrival time*



Day 2, Tuesday 18th November
KOLKATA

After a late breakfast, we'll embark on a walk tracing the colonial history of Kolkata. In the bygone era,

Kolkata's strategic location as a port city had attracted traders worldwide who left an imprint of their cultures on the city. It was both the capital of the British era and a hotbed of revolution and freedom movements against colonial rule. On this historical journey through the city's streets, markets, and heritage buildings, you will pass by Armenian and Portuguese churches and Jewish synagogues. The Dalhousie

Square, named in memory of Lord Dalhousie, who served as the Governor General of India from 1847 to 1856, is surrounded by some of Kolkata's most enduring Raj-era monuments. Each landmark tells a unique story from the colonial majesty of the Writers' Building to the opulent regency-style Governor's House and the graceful Indo-Saracenic design of the Charnock Mausoleum. Then, in the late afternoon, the group will take a boat cruise up the River Hooghly. We'll discover a hitherto unseen side of Kolkata, with a ring-side view of the myriad happenings on the river's Ghats. Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure. *B/D*

Day 3, Wednesday 19th November
KOLKATA

Today, we'll discover some of Kolkata's most iconic quarters, with a visit to the flower market beneath the east end of Howrah Bridge. It



is one of India's largest flower markets, with hundreds of stalls and vendors. Over 2,000 flower cultivators from the surrounding areas come to sell their flowers

and garlands throughout the year. Continue to Kumartuli or the Potters' Market, where giant life-like religious idols are created from river clay, bamboo, and straw and then adorned with elaborate jewellery and clothes with beautifully painted features. This 400-year-old artisan village is perhaps the oldest in the world. Visit the Jain Temple Complex of four ornate temples, each unique with shimmering mirrors, ceramic tiles and chandeliers brought over to India by rich merchants from lands as far away as Persia, Japan, and Europe. We'll also explore College Street book market. Kolkatans are known for their passion for reading, and College Street is a treasure trove for book lovers. You can find a wide range of crisp new or second-hand books on every subject imaginable. Then, to Motherhouse, Mother Theresa's home and the centre of her Missionaries of Charity. Her modest tomb and the spartan room where she lived and died embody her life's work, with its simplicity and dedication to only helping the poor and needy. Time permitting, we'll visit Jorasanko Thakur Bari, the ancestral home of Nobel-laureate Rabindranath Tagore. **B/D**



**Day 4, Thursday
20th November
KOLKATA –
BHUBANESHWAR
– PURI**

After an early breakfast, we'll be transferred to the Kolkata airport for the flight to

Bhubaneswar and then drive to the coastal town of Puri. Considered one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Hindus, Puri has been long since known for its 12th-century Jagannath temple, with shrines to an unusual crowd of gods among the Hindu pantheons. With golden beaches stretching along the Bay of Bengal, Puri was a flourishing port of ancient Kalinga's maritime trade network encompassing the Southeast Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and even as far as the Roman Empire. Today, Puri also serves as a gateway to discovering the diverse legacy of art and architecture, music and dance, handloom and handicrafts that the region upholds. Later, we'll visit the Jagannath Temple, dedicated to The Lord of the Universe. The extraordinary form that Jagannath assumes, according to the legend, is the unfinished work of the craftsman god Viswakarma, who in anger left this portrayal of Lord Vishnu incomplete. You will view the temple from the outside, as non-Hindus aren't allowed inside the sanctum sanctorum. After the visit, explore the heritage Grand Road on local cycle rickshaws. You'll ride through the narrow lanes of the old Puri roads, interact with the local temple priest to learn about the religious fervour of this holy city, and discover the local market on the famous Grand. We stay in Puri for two nights at the Hotel Mayfair Waves (or similar). **B/D**

**Day 5, Friday 21st November
PURI**

After breakfast, we'll drive to the Konark temple dedicated to the sun god, Surya – unquestionably one of India's finest UNESCO World Heritage monuments. Most ancient civilisations have been sun-worshippers, and in India, a 13th-century dynasty has left behind a beautiful temple shaped like a chariot with intricately carved stone wheels and pillars—the Konark Sun temple. The temple is a remarkable example of Kalinga architecture. It features intricately carved wheels that function as sundials and erotic sculptures that are an ode to spiritualism and the life cycle. Poet-author Rabindranath Tagore wrote of the monument - "Here the language of stone surpasses the language of man." You will also visit a fisherman's village and interact with the local community. From there, we will drive to visit Raghurajpur Heritage Village, situated amidst groves of coconut, palm, mango, and jack fruit. The main village has two streets with over 120 houses, most decorated with mural paintings, where the painters reside and practice their Pattachitra craft. Pattachitra paintings are drawn on special, hand-made tamarind seed paper. The paints are derived from extracts of flowers and fruits, mixed with powdered seashells for an unusual effect. Learn the craftsmanship that goes into every painting, with scenes inspired by Hindu mythology, for a deeper understanding of the Pattachitra art form. The village folk practice various arts and crafts, including traditional masks, stone idols, papier mache, sculptures, and wooden toys - all of which can be seen on our walk. We'll also experience a Gotipua dance performance in the village. This traditional dance has been performed for centuries by young boys, who dress as young women to praise Lord Jagannath and Lord Krishna. The dance is performed by an acrobatic troupe whose movements represent the life of Radha and Krishna. We'll also be able to interact with the 'Chitrakars' or performers. **B/D**

**Day 6, Saturday
22nd November
PURI –
BHUBANESHWAR**

After breakfast, we will drive to Bhubaneswar. On the way, we will delve into Odisha's craft traditions with a



visit to the Pipli crafts village, which is best known for its appliqué work. Applique is a needlework technique where smaller, colourful fabric is sewn onto larger pieces to create patterns and scenes, which finds its way onto colourful awnings, umbrellas, bags, and other artefacts. Our next stop will be at Dhauli known for its rock edicts inscribed by Emperor Ashoka, a 3rd-Century BC ruler, after he embraced Buddhism following the Kalinga War. These rock edicts are

among the earliest examples of Ashoka's proclamations promoting peace, tolerance, and compassion. The Shanti Stupa marks this event as a significant symbol of love and peace. We'll drive to Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha, famous for its superb Hindu temples dating from the 7th to 13th centuries. With over a thousand temples, Bhubaneswar has earned the epithet 'city of temples', many of which depict the ancient dance form, Odissi. Later in the day, we'll visit Kala Bhoomi Odisha Crafts Museum, which celebrates the craftsmanship of Odisha's artisans. The museum exhibits an array of masterpieces in its two blocks, the display area and the live section. Within its galleries, the display section showcases traditional handloom weaving, pottery, terracotta art, metalwork, and Dhokra art. We'll have a two-night stay in Bhubaneswar at Hotel Mayfair Lagoon (or similar).

B/D



**Day 7, Sunday
23rd November
BHUBANESWAR**

Today, we will explore the temple city of Bhubaneswar with visits to some of the city's most remarkable

structures. Bhubaneswar has an astonishing 600 documented temples, and the Temple Trail will showcase a few, each with a distinct style of architecture. Of the many temples, the finest is the 11th century Lingaraj Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva; the destroyer in Indian mythology. The temple trail will continue to Mukteshwar Temple, the Rajarani Temple of red-gold sandstone, Parashurameswar Temple, built in 650 AD, is one of the oldest temples existing in Bhubaneswar – offering a glimpse of the pantheon of gods worshipped across the country. We will then drive to the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, to visit the partly natural, partly man-made Khandagiri and Udayagiri caves that once served as residences for Jain monks. The double-storeyed dwellings, perhaps commissioned by Orissa's first ruler, King Kharavela were undertaken in the 1st Century BC. His queen, a patron of the arts, was perhaps responsible for the impressive sculptural decoration of the caves. The honeycomb caves, with numerous inscriptions and sculptures, offer an insight into the lives of the monks and the patronage of rulers – and the secular traditions of ancient India. **B/D**

**Day 8, Monday 24th November
BARIPADA**

Today includes a fascinating train journey. We'll depart Bhubaneswar at 9.30 am and arrive at Balasore Railway Station at 12.15 pm. The group will then drive to Baripada in the quaint rural setting of Mayurbhanj in Odisha. Baripada is a mélange of rich

cultural heritage and natural beauty with distinct charm and historical significance. Late in the afternoon, we'll stroll around the property with a family member to discover its hidden treasures and secret stories, history and architecture, focusing on the way of life in a bygone era. After dinner, grab a drink in the bar room while old clips of the 1920s play in the background on the projector and the vinyl recorder play the family's old collection of jazz classics. Our two-night stay is at The Belgadia Palace Hotel (or similar). **B/L/D**

**Day 9, Tuesday
25th November
KOHIMA**

Today, we'll explore Baripada town, its communities, unique traditions, art forms, and

handicrafts. After breakfast, embark on a walk with a guide accompanying you. The walk offers a slice of the town, the history of the royal family, and an insightful understanding of the local culture and way of life. You'll begin with the local Haat (tribal bazaar), Council Hall, former Mayurbhanj State Palace, Jagannath Temple, old steam engine and the Rani Dharamshala. Driving to the outskirts of the town, we'll visit a village to see Sabai grass crafts made by the local artisans. These clusters are formed by all women artisans who weave different crafts like bowls, trays, table mats, and wall hangings. Engage with the artisans to learn how the intricate handicrafts are made. Return to the hotel, then later in the afternoon, we'll meet a Dhokra artist at the property. An ancient Indian metalworking technique, Dhokra is a unique blend of skill and tradition, carrying a distinct and fascinating legacy. Originating from around 4,000 years, this craft is celebrated for its rustic charm and intricate detailing. Enjoy a cultural performance called Mayurbhanj Chhau in the evening, a semi-classical Indian dance with martial, tribal, and folk elements intertwined in one. The performance is followed by dinner. Overnight at The Belgadia Palace. **B/L/D**



**Day 10,
Wednesday 26th
November
BARIPADA –
KOLKATA**

After breakfast, we'll commence the drive to Kolkata for a transit night. The journey will take a

about 5.5 hours. Enjoy the scenery and watch the locals go about their day. Check-in on arrival. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure. We'll stay in Kolkata at The Oberoi Grand or similar). **B/L/D**



Day 11, Thursday 27th November
KOLKATA – GUWAHATI

After breakfast, we'll be transferred to the airport for the one-hour flight to Guwahati, the gateway to the relatively unexplored North-East India. IndiGo Airline 6E 207 – Dep. Kolkata: 11.00 AM /Arr. Guwahati: 12.10 PM. We'll be transferred to Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre upon arrival at Guwahati airport. Straddled between the Brahmaputra River and a plateau to its south, Guwahati has long been a commercial and education capital for the northeastern states. The river has been a mainstay of local traditions and beliefs for centuries. Overlooking the river, the heritage centre is situated on a hillock that served as a 17th-century military base for the Ahom rulers and played a crucial role in the kingdom's defence against the Mughals. After this, you'll drive to your hotel – the Vivanta Guwahati for just one night. *B/L/D*



Day 12, Friday 28th November
GUWAHATI – KAZIRANGA

It's a 4-hour drive to Kaziranga National Park this morning, a World Heritage Site and a Tiger reserve and home to more

than 80% of the world's population of the One-Horned Rhinoceros. The national park orchestrated one of the greatest success stories for the endangered Indian One-horned rhinoceros with a militant attitude towards wildlife protection. We'll embark on a jeep safari after lunch. While most national parks across India are predominantly located in forest habitats, Kaziranga offers a grassland experience. The annual inundation of the Brahmaputra River, which snakes its way through National Park, offers fertile soils for grasses, which in turn supports a thriving population of herbivores. Kaziranga is also a haven for mammals like Hog Deer, Asiatic buffaloes, Asian Elephants, and Royal Bengal Tiger. It has a wide variety of flora and avifauna in a unique habitat of mainly grasslands, close tangled and thorny rattan cane, elephant grass and tall trees of evergreen forest and numerous water bodies. More than 400 species of birds, both resident and migratory, are found here. Your hotel is the Iora Resort (or similar) for two nights. *B/L/D*

Day 13, Saturday 29th November
KAZIRANGA

Today we will explore Kaziranga National Park on morning and afternoon jeep safaris. Between safaris, there is an opportunity to visit a nearby local village or take a short trip to a nearby tea garden. *B/L/D*

Day 14, Sunday 30th November
KAZIRANGA – JORHAT

After breakfast, the group will drive to Jorhat – about a 2.5-hour drive. From the last capital of the 600 years reign of Ahom Kingdom in Assam to housing the first commercially grown tea garden of India, Jorhat has many "feathers in its hat". Besides being a tea haven in its modern-day facet, Jorhat has always served as a cultural inspiration to many citizens of Assam. Jorhat is one of the nearest accesses to the state's cultural quintessence stowed in the river Island of Majuli. The closely located Gibbon Sanctuary is a rare habitat home to seven out of thirteen primates in the Indian subcontinent. On arrival, check-in at the hotel, and later in the evening, enjoy a cultural programme performed by a troupe of the tea community of the region. We'll stay in Jorhat at the colonial-style Kaziranga Golf Resort (or similar) for three nights. *B/L/D*

Day 15, Monday
1st December
DAY TRIP TO SIVASAGAR

Today, an excursion to Sivasagar, located along a distributary of the Brahmaputra River.



It was the old capital of the Ahom kingdom, which ruled Assam for 600 years before the arrival of the British into these parts. The area still has many old monuments built by the Ahoms, the most significant being the huge manmade tank 'Sivasagar' from which the town got its name. Siva Dol, a temple dedicated to Shiva; Rang Ghar, said to be the first amphitheatre in Asia, along with Talatal Ghar and Kareng Ghar, showcase the architecture of the time. A little to the north lies the Ahom Palace in Garhgaon - a stone-and-wood structure first built in 1540. The palace was later destroyed, and in 1752, a new seven-storeyed palace took its place - which can still be seen in much of its former glory today. They built several old monuments, the most significant being the huge manmade tank 'Sivasagar' from which the town got its name, Siva Dol. Drive back to Jorhat after lunch at a local restaurant. *B/L/D*

Day 16, Tuesday
2nd December
DAY TRIP TO MAJULI

Commence our drive to Neamati Ghat. From here, we will take a ferry across the Brahmaputra to the heart of the



Assamese culture—Majuli. The river island is an impressive 352 square kilometres landmass in the

middle of the Brahmaputra River. Subject to severe erosion over the years, Majuli has shrunk to a quarter of its size, yet it is one of the world's biggest river islands. With a culture distinct from the mainland and a population that practices agriculture, Majuli is an interesting detour on any north-east India itinerary. From its Vaishnavite temples and satras (monasteries) to its indigenous puppetry workshops, from its rich birdlife and its silk-weaving populace, Majuli offers a fascinating insight into how island cultures evolve in isolation. Visit 'satras' and witness the life of monks and other locales. The resident monks will perform a cultural program. We will also visit a Satra known for ancient mask-making traditions. Later, visit a village of the indigenous Mishing community. The Mishing tribes migrated all the way down from the hills of Arunachal Pradesh. They are found settled on the outer rim of this island or near rivers and water bodies in general. They were very good fisherman and were well known for their navigation skill on the Brahmaputra's ever-changing sand banks. We'll take the ferry back to Neamati Ghat and drive to Jorhat, staying at the Kaziranga Golf Resort hotel. **B/L/D**



**Day 17,
Wednesday 3rd
December
JORHAT –
KOHIMA**

After breakfast, the group will take the 5.5-hour drive to Kohima, a hill station perched at

1444.12 m above sea level. Enjoy the amazing panoramic views of the rugged and unspoiled Naga Hills. In a state that shares its border with Burma, Kohima's population comprises the Angami Naga warrior tribes. The anglicised name, Kohima derived from 'Kewhima' means the 'land where the kewhi flower grows'. After decades of resistance, the Angami Naga folk were overpowered by the British Empire, who established Kohima as their administrative capital. Kohima still witnessed the fiercest fighting of the Second World War with a fifty-day and night non-stop slogging match, and it still bears witness to a scarred history—its war memorials and cemeteries tell a grim tale. With its mixed religious practices of animism and Christianity and forest game and insect-based cuisine, Kohima lends an unusual flavour (literally!). We'll stay at the Hotel Vivor (or similar) for three nights. **B/L/D**

**Day 18, Thursday
4th December
KOHIMA**

After breakfast, a visit to the State Museum. Later, we will visit the Kisama Heritage Ground and then attend the Hornbill Festival.

Every year, Nagaland hosts people from far and wide, flocking to watch the colours and cultural spectacle of the Hornbill Festival. A curated event, the Hornbill Festival has become the poster child for the state's rich diversity of dances, music, martial arts, sports, handicrafts, religious ceremonies, and cuisine. With performers from all corners of Nagaland, as well as from other north-east Indian states – the festival offers a glimpse into the cultural heritage of a once-forgotten people. Spend the day at the Hornbill Festival grounds, attending performances, bargaining at the vibrant wayside markets, and gorging on ethnic specialties. We will also visit Kigwema – a local Angami village if time permits. **B/L/D**



**Day 19, Friday 5th
December
KOHIMA**

Today, we will visit the war cemetery and then drive to the lovely Khonoma village. After lunch, head out to the festival ground for another session of vibrant cultural experiences. **B/D**



**Day 20, Saturday 6th December
KOHIMA – DIMAPUR – KOLKATA**

After an early breakfast, we will be transferred to Dimapur airport for the flight to Kolkata on IndiGo Airlines 6E 6257: Dep. Dimapur: noon – arriving Kolkata: 1.15 pm. On arrival at Kolkata, we will be greeted at the airport then driven to the hotel. Check-in and spend the day at leisure before celebrating with a farewell dinner. Overnight at Hotel Oberoi Grand (or similar). **B/L**

**Day 21, Sunday 7th December
DEPARTURE**

Today, we'll be transferred to Kolkata International Airport for the homeward flight. Flights to be advised. **B**