

ESCORTED TOUR

**BENGAL, BANGLADESH &
ASSAM**

WITH

**NICK VAN GRUISEN & CHRIS
CALDICOTT**

19 SEPTEMBER – 9 OCTOBER 2025



MV Mahabaahu

Escorted Tour
Bengal, Bangladesh & Assam



BENGAL, BANGLADESH & ASSAM WITH NICK VAN GRUISEN & CHRIS CALDICOTT

19 SEPTEMBER – 9 OCTOBER 2025

CONTACT Sophie Lonsdale– Escorted Tours Consultant
DIRECT LINE 020 7386 4683
TELEPHONE 020 7386 4620
EMAIL Sophie.lonsdale@theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk

NICK VAN GRUISEN

Raised in Northumberland, in the 1970s Nick spent five years as a professional guide in Botswana and southern Africa. He then joined the Tiger Mountain group, pioneering cultural, trekking and wildlife holidays throughout the Indian subcontinent. He founded Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions in 1991, from which The Ultimate Travel Company emerged in 1998.

CHRIS CALDICOTT

Since travelling to some of the most remote parts of the world as Photographer-in-Residence to the Royal Geographical Society, Chris Caldicott has continued his globetrotting lifestyle as a freelance photographer, writer and lecturer specialising in food and travel. He has had several books published about food, travel and the spice trade and visited 118 countries on assignments to capture evocative images and write about memorable experiences for publications such as Vanity Fair, Condé Nast Traveller, The Sunday Times, Harpers Bazaar, Tatler, House and Garden and The Telegraph.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

We like to think that our success has been built on a simple formula - to deliver a high standard of service before, during and after each holiday, a duty of care and commitment to you, and value for money. We aim to be totally flexible in our approach, as this allows us to create the holiday that you want and one that is easy and enjoyable to plan.

However, if you feel that there are areas in which we could improve our service to you, please do not hesitate to contact either our Managing Director Nick Van Gruisen, or Executive Director Rowan Paterson, on 020 7386 4646.

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Escorted Tour
Bengal, Bangladesh & Assam



DETAILED ITINERARY

This 18-nights adventure charts five legendary unexplored Himalayan life forces of Brahmaputra—Jumna—Padma—Meghna—Hooghly through India and Bangladesh. These rivers offer rural and sub-urban ambiances with a colossal surge of waters in the confluence of Jamna and Ganga and further down at the convergence of Padma and Meghna and the hustle-bustle of cities of Kolkata, Narayanganj and Dhaka in the glow of beautiful sunrises and sunsets and golden hours on crystal waters.

The Cruise is rich in the wildlife of UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Manas National Park, Sundarbans in Bangladesh and Ramsar Tiger Reserve of Indian Sundarbans. Six full days of wildlife experience through Mangrove Forest walks; morning, evening and night safaris in the creeks and inlets of the alluvial mud flats of bio-diverse ecosystems; elephant safaris and four jeep safaris are a dream come true for all wildlife and bird enthusiasts.



The pottery and terracotta artisans, the cotton weavers of Pachalia, the muga-paat-eri silk weavers of Sualkuchi, the Jamdhani cotton designers, the idol makers of Kumartuli, the flower markets of Kolkata, the floating markets of Bangladesh, the vegetable and spice bazaars of Barisal, the teaestates of Assam and the fish auctions in Narayanganj, the brass work and the bell metal cottage industry are fascinating acumens in the entrepreneurship of the peoples of India and Bangladesh.

The history and cultures of the two nations through Kolkata—the old Capital of undivided India to Sonargaon—the old capital of Bengal and a walk through the ruins of Panam City along with Dhaka City make the experience extremely rich with talks, presentations, videos and orientations by our onboard naturalist and destination manager and tour guides for onshore experiences.

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Escorted Tour
Bengal, Bangladesh & Assam



DAY 1: FRIDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER

LONDON / DUBAI

Suggested flights (not included in the cost of the tour) with Emirates via Dubai departing London Heathrow at 14.20 hrs.

DAY 2: SATURDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER

DUBAI / KOLKATA

Arrive in Kolkata at 08.15 hrs. Transfer to board the MV Mahabaahu, where 18 nights are spent on a full-board basis. Lunch on board. Afternoon at leisure. Welcome drinks and dinner on board.



DAY 3: SUNDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER

KOLKATA / SAJNEKALI

Leave on a walking tour of the heart of British Kolkata, Dalhousie Square taking in the classical Post Office, site of the notorious Black Hole, past the Writers' Building built in 1780 and resurfaced in 1880 and St. Andrew's Kirk. Move on to view the exterior of Government House, seat of the Viceroys, a building based on Kedleston Hall, and past the old Town Hall. Visit St. John's Church modelled on St. Martin's in the Fields and designed by James Agg stuffed with fascinating tombs both within and without. Continue to the famous white marble Victoria Memorial, designed by Sir William Emerson in 1921. It has an excellent display on the history of the city and a gallery of pictures by British artists, such as Zoffany, who came to India. Explore Kumartuli, a potters quarter in North Kolkata famous for sculpting Indian Gods and Goddesses out of clay for different festivals in West Bengal throughout the year.

Return to the boat for lunch on board. Start sailing towards Sajnekali. Dinner on board.

DAY 4: MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER

SAJANEKHALI

Explore the waters of the Indian Sunderbans in a comfortable local ferry and enjoy tea/coffee and cookies as you look for wildlife. Return to the ship for a quick breakfast and then enjoy Purulia cultural performance

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in one of the villages and listen to the baul singers—they are the mystic minstrels of Bengal. Enjoy a walk around the Mangrove Interpretation Centre at Sajnekhali to look for wildlife.

Return to the boat for lunch on board. Afternoon boat safari in Sajnekhali to look in the narrow water inlets for some more wildlife. Dinner on board.

DAY 5: TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER

HEMNAGAR / MONGLA PORT

Optional morning yoga on deck. Enjoy a talk on “Bangladesh as a country, its monuments culture and commercial enterprises”. Full day at leisure to relax on board as the boat sails from Hemnagar to Mongla Port and getting through custom clearance formalities. It is a laid-back day but with a lot of official activity on board both for custom and immigration clearance.

Lunch on board. At Hemnagar, the Indian Border Security Force does a check and clear you to exit the Indian land border. Sail the Indian waters till you reach Angtihar where you exit the Indian waters as you reach Shekhbaria for custom clearance on the Bangladesh side. This evening, learn the art of wearing an Indian Sari. Dinner on board.



DAY 6: WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER

HARBARIA / KARAMJAL

Depart for an early morning boat safari towards the Harbaria Forest Station. Return to the boat for a quick breakfast. Enjoy a morning forest walk at the Harbaria Forest Station to study the mangrove fauna and flora. Continue by boat to the Karamjal Eco Tourism Centre and then onwards to the Karamjal Crocodile Farm.

Return to the boat for lunch on board as you sail to the Daingmari Dolphin Sanctuary. Take the tenders to sail in the Daingmari waters for not just dolphins but also to watch the techniques of otter fishing undertaken by the local fishing community. The ship sails towards Mongla Port. Drive to the UNESCO World Heritage

Site of Bagerhat—A sixty domed mosque and tomb of Khan Jahan, the architect of the mosque. Return to the ship for a cultural performance on the Sundarban. communities through ‘Poter Gaan’. Dinner on board.

DAY 7: THURSDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER

KOTKA GHAT

An early morning wake-up for an exciting boat safari. Today, sail in the tenders along the shores of Sundarbans, in the canals and creeks near the Kotka forest station for an hour and a half to catch wildlife (spotted deer, monkeys, wild boar, water monitors and birds) as it wakes up among the aerial roots of the mangrove mudflats. Return to the boat for breakfast as the ship sails through the estuary waters and reaches Jamtola Beach in the Bay of Bengal. Walk through the mangrove vegetation where the tiger plays hide and seek as it leaves behind 'fresh pugmarks'. For those who are water enthusiasts can indulge in taking a dip in the waters of Bay of Bengal.

Return to the boat for lunch and sail towards the Chandpai Dolphin Sanctuary. After dinner on board, enjoy a night safari in the Chandpai water inlets close to the mangrove shores. This is a very exciting and different experience in these water laden animal sanctuaries.



DAY 8: FRIDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER

BARISAL

Early morning departure with packed breakfast to the floating vegetable market. Enjoy the pristine beauty of the countryside and the shopping habitat of the growers—seasonal vegetables and fruits, paddy, rice saplings, timber, furniture and boats selling tea and local breakfast varieties in one of the inlet waterways of a village. This is a unique experience and one can see that everything that needs to be transported is done on the river. It is a very engrossing sight and one must be quick with cameras as the boats fly by. We snack on the local titbits for breakfast and buy the local vegetables and fruits before returning to the boat.

Lunch on board. At Barisal, walk through the thriving village market for fresh vegetables and local fruits as well as spices. Visit one of the Bangladeshi ferries to see its layout on the inside. Dinner on board.

DAY 9: SATURDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER

BARISAL / CHANDHPUR / DHAKA

Optional morning yoga on the sundeck. Sail out of Barisal and cruise into the waters of Padma (Ganga and Jamuna) and Meghna. The volume and quantity of water at the confluence is immense and one can see the locals, very skilled fishermen ride the waves in these waters. The fishermen of this area are known for Hilsa fishing which is a delicacy of Bangladesh. Arrive at a Hilsa fishing village and engage with the locals for Hilsa, prawns and shrimps.

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Return to the boat for an authentic Bangladeshi style fish curry with a fresh catch of prawns. Afternoon at leisure. This evening, sail into Dhaka and enjoy an evening walking tour. Dinner on board.

DAY 10: SUNDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER

DHAKA / SONARGAON / JAMDHANI

Early departure for Sonargaon, a 13th-century City of Panam. Visit the Galdi Mosque and walk through the ruins of Panam City to imagine its former glory. Visit the Folklore museum. Continue to Nawapara to see Jamdhani weaving and purchase beautiful saris and fabric.

Lunch at the home of a local Jamdhani entrepreneur to taste home-cooked authentic Bangla food. This afternoon, enter the hustle and bustle of Narayanganj. Experience a formal Bangladeshi welcome with folk-artists when you return to the ship for dinner on board.



DAY 11: MONDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER

DHAMRAI

Drive towards the Dhamrai Metal Craft village to meet local craftsmen and learn about the lost wax method. Stop on route at the National Martyr's Monument to pay respect to the martyrs who laid their lives during the Liberation War in 1971. Then move to the Metal Craft village. Enjoy a Bengali sari tying demonstration by a local lady and lungi by a local gentleman.

Lunch at a local Restaurant. Visit Kakran Pottery village to see the traditional potters clinging to their ancestral profession. Return to the boat stopping on the way to see the National Parliament Building from the outside. Traditional Bangladeshi themed dinner on board.

DAY 12: TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER

DHAKA

Early morning visit to the Dhakeshwari Temple and the National Language Monument. Enjoy a cycle rickshaw ride on the streets of Dhaka to reach the Dhaka University Building. See the Lal Bagh Fort and the tomb of Bibi Pari, the daughter of the Mughal General, Shahista Khan. Continue to Ahsan Manzil, also called the Pink Palace.

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Lunch at a local restaurant. Take cycle rickshaws to the bustling Shakhari Bazaar. Return to the boat to freshen up before a hosted dinner with a local family.

DAY 13: WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER

DHAKA / MAWA / ARICHA

Optional morning yoga on the sundeck. Sail from Dhaka to Mawa and onwards to Aricha. Day at leisure on board to observe life along the river at the confluence of Jamuna and Ganga where the river becomes the Padma. Observe local mosques, shipbuilding, commercial enterprises and the Bangabandhu Bridge. Country boats, sand barrages, tugs, dredgers, fisherman, colourful ferries—life on the water embraced by the Bangladeshis is intriguing to watch.

Lunch on board. Afternoon at leisure. This evening, go for a sunset walk on the banks of Padma. Dinner on board.



DAY 14: THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER

ARICHA / SIRAJGANJ

Morning orientation talk on Sirajganj. Board the tenders to visit the Sirajganj area. We visit Pachalia village for cotton weaving for colourful gamchas, lungis and saris. Drive to the Hati Kamrul Navratna Temple. Enjoy a cultural performance of the local artists in Sirajganj.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Return to the boat as it anchors at Sirajganj. This evening, wear saris and lungis bought in Bangladesh. Dinner on board.

DAY 15: FRIDAY, 3 OCTOBER

SIRAJGANJ / BAHADURABAD

Optional morning yoga on the sundeck. Full day at leisure on board as the boat sails from Sirajganj to Bahadurabad.

Lunch on board. Early evening, learn a few steps of Bollywood dancing. Dinner on board.

DAY 16: SATURDAY, 4 OCTOBER

CHILMARI / SHISHUMARA / DHUBRI

Sail away from the Bangladesh land border at Chilmari. The border security guards of Bangladesh at Shahber Agla conduct the Custom and Immigration Clearance formalities.

Lunch on board. Sail towards Shishumara where the Indian Border Security Forces do the Customs formalities. Sail to Dhubri by the evening for an Assamese themed dinner on board.

DAY 17: SUNDAY, 5 OCTOBER

ASHAREKANDI

This morning, attend the prayer ceremony (Ardas) at the Sikh temple at Dam-dama Sahib Gurudwara.

Lunch at the temple which serves lunch to all. Experience the concept of langar (community eating) here. The concept of eating together was started by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru. Visit Asharekandi to try clay pottery with the Hiras and Kumhars communities who use the Hiramati soil to shape pots and idols. See the art of terracotta of this region of Assam. Sail towards Goalpara. This evening, we have a talk on 'Wildlife in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Kaziranga and Manas National Parks and in India'. Dinner on board.



DAY 18: MONDAY, 6 OCTOBER

MANAS NATIONAL PARK

Early departure to Manas National Park with a packed breakfast for an elephant safari.

Lunch in a local restaurant. Afternoon jeep safari in Manas National Park. Return to the boat for dinner on board.

DAY 19: TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER

GOALPARA / SUALKUCHI

Enjoy a talk on the 'River Brahmaputra and Assam'. Morning at leisure as the boat sails from Goalpara to Sualkuchi.

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Lunch on board. Afternoon visit to Sualkuchi, the silk hub of Assam, to understand the detailed Muga, Eri and Paat silk production. Muga is the cherished golden silk of Assam, Paat the white wonder and Eri a warm non-violent silk. The Bodo tribes welcome you to the arena of silk with their cultural performances. Observe the Mekhela Chaadar draping for women and for Dhoti tying for gentlemen. Walk through the market of the Sualkuchi village before returning to the boat. Enjoy a special farewell dinner on a deserted island.

DAY 20: WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER

GUWAHATI / KOLKATA

Sail towards Guwahati to dock at Pandu Port. Disembark the boat and leave for the Kamakhya Temple and observe the devotees offering prayers to Kamakhya Devi, the Goddess of Desire. Transfer to Guwahati Airport for a domestic flight to Kolkata.

Lunch under own arrangements. On arrival in Kolkata, transfer to the Taj City Centre Hotel, a 5-star hotel a short drive from the airport, where one night is spent. Dinner under own arrangements.

DAY 21: THURSDAY, 9 OCTOBER

KOLKATA / DELHI / LONDON

Transfer to Kolkata Airport for suggested flight (not included) Emirates flight via Dubai departing Kolkata at 09.45 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 20.15 hrs.

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M.V MAHABAAHU FACT SHEET

The MV Mahabaahu cruise ship has been rated by the Travelinsider Magazine of Qantas Australian Airlines as being one of the Top Ten River Cruise Ships of the World and the overall cruise experience on the Brahmaputra River has been rated as one of Top Fifty Adventure Experiences of the World by the Sunday Times of UK.

It is a 23 cabin ship with four categories, a swimming pool, a boutique SPA, a passenger elevator through four of the five decks, a restaurant, lounge, bar and a small open gym. The ship is a class certified vessel, operates with three engines and is a double bottom.



Recreational facilities on board include:

- A well-stocked library.
- Various board games.
- Swimming pool on the first deck.
- Spa and Salon on the lower deck.
- Sun deck.

The ship's complement consists of 30 staff including:

- Captain/Master
- Cruise Director
- Marine Engineer
- Guide/Naturalist
- Hospitality Manager
- Navigational Crew
- Hospitality Crew

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The chefs devise local/Indian and Continental cuisine menus using locally sourced ingredients. All meals inclusive of tea and coffee served in the main indoor dining restaurant. Given advance notice, all dietary requirements can be catered for, along with the guest preferred alcoholic beverages.

Imported alcoholic beverages, laundry, massages, salon and phone calls/internet (when available): are extra and subject to additional charges.



ACCOMMODATION

All cabins incorporate satellite TV, personal safe, mini bar, in-house telephone and en-suite bathrooms. All the cabins and the restaurant/lounge are centrally air-conditioned.

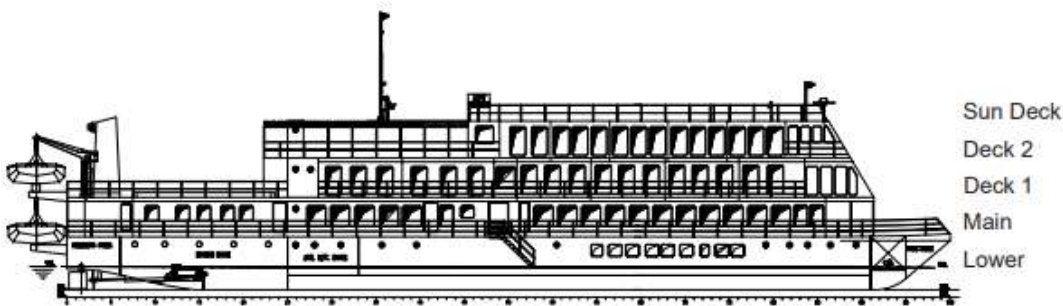
There are 23 aesthetically designed twin and double cabins as below:

- 2 Suites with balcony - 283.2 sq ft (includes the cabin, bathroom and balcony)
- Luxury cabins with balcony - 230 sq. ft (includes the cabin, bathroom and balcony)
- 7 Deluxe cabins with balcony - 206 sq. ft (includes the cabin, bathroom and balcony)
- 12 Superior cabins without balcony - 150 sq.ft. (includes the cabin and bathroom)



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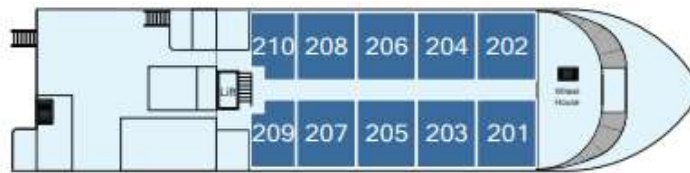
M.V. Mahabaahu Deck Plan



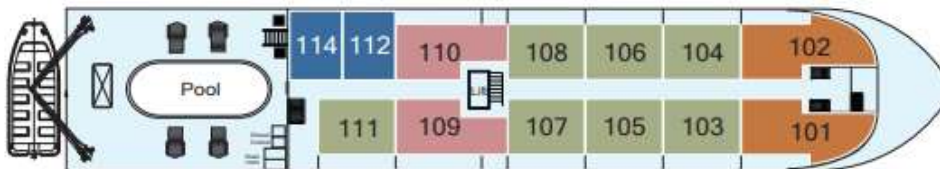
- Cabins**
- 2 Suites with private balcony
 - 2 Luxury with private balcony
 - 7 Deluxe with private balcony
 - 12 Superior without balcony



Sun Deck



Deck II



Deck I



Main Deck



Lower Deck

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TOUR PRICE

COST:

SUPERIOR WITHOUT BALCONY	£6,585 PER PERSON
DELUXE WITH BALCONY	£7,285 PER PERSON
LUXURY WITH BALCONY	£7,785 PER PERSON
SUITE WITH BALCONY	£8,895 PER PERSON
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT	£2,275 PER PERSON
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT	£3,275 PER PERSON

Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

- accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- all meals on board the MV Mahabaahu
- all entrance fees, visits and excursions as per the itinerary
- soft drinks and tea / coffee
- all transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- local English-speaking guide/s
- gratuities to driver/s; gratuities to guide/s; gratuities in restaurants; portorage
- the services of your tour leader throughout
- domestic flights as shown in the itinerary (including 10kg excess baggage per person)

PRICE EXCLUDES

- alcoholic drinks
- international flights
- travel insurance
- items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- visa fees
- government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 02/02/2024

AIRLINE TICKETS

As a tour operator we have access to special airfares. While these offer good value, they do carry certain restrictions applied by the airline. Please ask us for details.

Note: If you are thinking about using air miles to upgrade to a premium cabin on the flights, please check with us first as fare restrictions might not permit this.

AIRLINE SEATING

The rules governing the pre-booking of seats vary from airline to airline. Some allow us to pre-book seats immediately and without charge, some only once the tickets are issued but with charge, and others only when you check in either on line or at the airport.

We will clarify the rules for your specific carrier(s) with our confirmation documents. In the event that seating cannot be arranged until tickets are issued (normally six weeks prior to departure) and you prefer not to wait, we can issue your tickets earlier provided you are happy to pay in advance for the flight costs in addition to the required deposit for the holiday.

However, please be mindful that the majority of our discounted fare tickets, once issued, are non-refundable and will attract fees should you wish to make any date changes. Nor will you be allowed to change the actual flight routing.

BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE

You will probably be aware of the difficulties many travellers faced with obtaining refunds when their holidays were disrupted or cancelled as a result of such events as ash cloud and political unrest and are again facing now because of the Coronavirus pandemic. By booking your travel arrangements with us, not only are you guaranteed the peace of mind that comes with full financial protection but also all the round the clock assistance we are able to provide, should the need arise.

Should there be restrictions in place during the immediate lead up to the trip that prevent you from travelling, we will either postpone it or offer you an alternative. If neither of these two options are acceptable, we will offer you the choice of a Refund Credit Note, redeemable on a specified date and fully protected by our ABTA bond, or a cash refund of all monies paid.

CHANGES TO THE ITINERARY

Please note, that certain elements of this itinerary, and/or the order of events, may well be subject to alteration due to circumstances beyond our control

FITNESS TO TRAVEL

Whilst we do not impose any age limitations on joining a tour, participants must be reasonably fit. The very nature of the sightseeing involved in our tours (and the difficulties of direct access by coach in various places) means that a considerable amount of walking and standing is unavoidable on almost all tours. We regret that our tours are not suitable for people who have difficulty in walking, may require wheelchair

assistance at any time, or are unable to keep pace with the group. If you are in any doubt as to the suitability of a tour, please make this known to us before you book and we will advise you accordingly. The Ultimate Travel Company reserves the right to decline a reservation without necessarily giving a reason. Your tour leader may also refuse to take participants on particular excursions if they feel that the rest of the group will be held up.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotels are chosen on the basis of category, character and location. The majority will be at least 4 star, otherwise the best available. The projected size of the group will often rule out the use of luxury boutique hotels. Sometimes the style of hotel will mean that not all rooms are of the same size or have the same outlook.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

No vaccinations are required for entry into India however if you have travelled within a yellow fever infected area during the previous six days prior to arrival you will require proof of inoculation. The following inoculations are recommended: Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio. Malaria is present throughout most of India so anti-malaria prophylactics are advised.

Please check recommended practice with your GP, practice nurse or travel health clinic.

PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION

British Nationals require a visa for India. This can be obtained through the new online e-Tourist Visa service (currently the easiest and cheapest option), through CIBT (our recommended visa service provider) or directly through one of the Indian Visa Application Centres located throughout the UK.

Passengers should hold a full passport, which should be valid for six months after you return to the UK and should also have at least three empty pages for the visa. Nationals of other countries should consult their local Indian Embassy.

FCO ADVICE

We recommend that you periodically review the travel advice issued by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, which relates to all aspects of your destination, at.

OTHER

Please ensure that your travel insurance is in order. It is important that you take details of your travel insurance with you since this will contain important contacting information in the case of an emergency.

WHY CHOOSE US?

We have been organising bespoke, tailor-made holidays and escorted group tours around the world since the early 1990s. The opportunity that we identified then was for a travel company with the knowledge and enthusiasm of a smaller specialist, but with the range and buying power of a much larger organisation, and we like to think that we have maintained this balance over the years.

More importantly, we try to be an easy and friendly company to deal with, and because most of us have had the good fortune to work abroad, we are able to approach travel in a sensitive and intelligent way.

WHAT WE OFFER?

First-hand knowledge and personal service is at the core of what we offer. Our consultants travel to all the destinations that we feature on a very regular basis, so that the advice you receive is accurate and up-to-date. They will also look after you from the outset and assume full responsibility for ensuring that your travel plans are designed and delivered as requested.

Planning a holiday should be an enjoyable and effortless experience, and we will do all that we can to ensure that this is the case.

OUR REPUTATION

We have grown largely through personal recommendation and repeat business, and so we treat our reputation with care. The directors and owners of the company, led by Nick Van Gruisen, are very much 'hands on' so immediate decisions can be taken to ensure the standard of service that our clients have come to expect is maintained.

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

Equally crucial is the quality of our local associates and suppliers. It is they who look after you on holiday and it is their guides, vehicles and general support service that will determine your enjoyment of it. We therefore take great care to ensure that our ground handlers have the requisite expertise, efficiency and creativity, and also the ability to deal sensitively and swiftly with any situation that might arise. The fact that we have worked together for many years and know each other well is a further bonus.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

As a company with a passion for travel, we understand the vital support that tourism can provide to communities and fragile habitats throughout the world. At the same time, we are aware that tourism can have a negative impact and are committed to doing what we can to minimise this risk.

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In 2007, an independent body completed an Environmental Audit on all aspects of The Ultimate Travel Company. This covered not only our own practices but those of our worldwide suppliers, thereby ensuring that we all met the necessary environmental and employment criteria.

The audit also measured the carbon footprint produced by our London office and by our international travel, and we now offset this with an annual donation to Social Change and Development, a small but dynamic tree planting initiative in India.

Further initiatives include a 'charity donation' scheme, whereby we ask clients for a voluntary contribution of £10 which we then match. As a result of this initiative, a handful of small overseas charities, and the healthcare, environmental and educational projects that they run, now share an annual donation of more than \$100,000.

If you want further details of these initiatives, please ring Nick Van Gruisen on 02073864646.

EXTRA VALUE

It can be difficult at times to recognise the extra value promised by travel companies. Generally speaking, we all offer the same flight, the same hotel, the same excursion, the same excursion, the same sunset, and at similar prices....indeed in many ways, the same holiday experience!

Here, at The Ultimate Travel Company, we strive to go further. While we believe that the diversity of destination, intimate product knowledge and personal service we offer already sets us apart, we supply all our clients with detailed information on all aspects of their forthcoming journey, a 10% discount voucher at Daunt Books (described by The Daily Telegraph as 'the most beautiful bookshop in London – designed for travellers who like reading') and a welcome home 'surprise'.

Honeymooners can also look forward to a wedding gift on arrival at their chosen destination.

Moreover, we continually monitor your movements while you are away so that we can offer any assistance that might be required, effectively and without delay. And if genuine problems do arise as a result of any error on our part (few as these may be!), we will not shy away from our own responsibilities and our commitment to you.

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