



**The Crafts and Textiles of  
Kolkata and West Bengal with  
Diane Kempler and Ann VanSlyke  
Featuring Maha Shivaratri –  
The Great Night of Shiva  
16 Days/15 Nights  
January 30<sup>th</sup> to February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Intimate group tour for eight women only**

**Activities**

**Overnight**

**Day 1**

Fly U.S. to Kolkata, arriving on Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. Upon arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel by private car. Your home for the next four nights is the Oberoi Grand, known as the Grand Dame of Kolkata. This property, built in the late 1880s, is one of the few Oberoi hotels still located in a heritage building. It is in walking distance of many popular shops and restaurants.

Kolkata  
*Oberoi Grand*

**Day 2  
(Wed, Jan 31<sup>st</sup>)**

Morning visit to the bustling Malik Ghat flower market along the banks of the Hoogly River. We will next drive through BBD Bagh, the heart of old Kolkata. This area contains a number of British colonial buildings dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, including St. John's Church, the General Post Office, the High Court, the Government House and the Writers' Building. Afternoon walk through Kumartuli, Area of the Potters, where dynamic figures of Hindu gods and goddesses are made for the city's major religious festivals. We will also visit the Pareshnath Jain Temple, a mosaic garden built in 1867 featuring extensive stone and mirror inlay work, stained glass, and European-style sculptures and fountains. Tonight we will enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Kolkata  
*Oberoi Grand*  
(B, L, D)

**Day 3  
(Thurs, Feb 1<sup>st</sup>)**

Morning visit to the Gurusaday Museum, which contains a superb collection of folk art from West Bengal, including traditional *kantha* embroidery and vintage *Kalighat* paintings. *Kantha* embroidery blends floral, animal and geometric thread designs with images of the day-to-day life and culture of the rural women of West Bengal.

Kolkata  
*Oberoi Grand*  
(B, L)

Historically kantha utilized scrap cloth to create embroidered quilts, shawls, saris and bags, while today it can be found on a wide variety of apparel and decorative items. The Kalighat school of painting originated with the *patuas*, or wandering scroll painters of Bengal. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of these painters migrated to Kolkata, where they were exposed to European art. Setting up shop outside of the city's famous Kali temple, they began selling compelling images painted in an Indo-European style of religious and social life in colonial Bengal.

Afternoon visit to Belur Math, headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, founded in the late 1800's by Swami Vivekananda, the chief disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Belur Math was built in 1938 and embodies Ramakrishna's philosophy of the unity of all faiths. The ground plan is in the shape of a cross, and the architectural elements borrow from Mughal, Buddhist and Hindu aesthetics. En route we will visit the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, a popular pilgrimage site where Ramakrishna Paramhansa once served as the temple priest. Conditions permitting, we will travel from Dakshineswar to Belur Math by local country boat on the Hoogly River.

**Day 4**  
**(Fri, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

This morning we will visit a womens' cooperative in Panchannagram where they execute kantha embroidery designs for high-end fashion boutiques. After this, we will meet with the founders of Weavers Studio, which creates private-label fashion items for domestic and international designers. Weavers Studio also operates a textile research center and maintains an impressive on-site textile archive. Their nearby boutique sells superb woven, block-printed and embroidered textiles and apparel. Afternoon stroll down College Street, the intellectual heart of the city, to visit Kolkata's traditional booksellers and tiny publishing houses. Here we will join local university students in one of their favorite haunts, the Indian Coffee House. We will also stop at Bhim Chandra Nag, a famous shop for Bengali sweets such as sandesh and roshogolla.

Kolkata  
*Oberoi Grand*  
(B, L)

**Day 5**  
**(Sat, Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

Today we begin our exploration of the crafts and textiles of rural West Bengal. After the partition of India, a number of skilled weavers from Bangladesh settled in villages in the eastern part of the state. In Kalna (3 hours from Kolkata), we will see artisans weaving hand-spun *muslin jamdani*. Ultra-fine cotton muslin has been woven in Bengal for thousands of years. It derives its name from the ancient port town of Maisolos (Masulipatnam in current day

Krishnanagar  
*Hotel Haveli*  
(B, L, D)

Andhra Pradesh) and was popular with the fashionable ladies of ancient Greece and Rome. Jamdani, which also originated in Bengal, can be made of cotton or silk; geometric and floral patterns are created in the textile by the addition of supplementary weft threads (in Persian *jam* means flower and *dani* means vase). High thread-count muslin jamdani is woven in Kalna for museums and fashion designers such as Sabyasachi Mukerjee, while lower thread-count pieces are sold to the public. In nearby Phulia, we will see the weaving of cotton saris on both pit and jacquard looms.

**Day 6**  
**(Sun, Feb 4<sup>th</sup>)**

Leisurely drive to Murshidabad (3 to 4 hours), arriving in time for lunch. Murshidabad is a center for *shola pith* (Indian cork) carving, the same plant used in the *sola topi*, or European pith helmet. This afternoon we will visit a master artisan who creates beautiful decorative objects and bridal headwear from this unique, lightweight material.

Baharampur  
*Hotel Sunshine*  
(B, L, D)

**Day 7**  
**(Mon, Feb 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Morning visit to one of the largest silk thread cooperatives in India, where you will watch silk being extracted from silkworm cocoons and spun into fine thread for weaving. Afternoon tour of Murshidabad, former capital of the nawabs of Bengal. The city was founded in 1704 by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, governor of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. You will visit the site of the Nawab's burial, Katra Mosque, which was built in 1724 and was modeled after the great mosque at Mecca. You will also visit Hazarduari, or "A Thousand Doors," the nawabs' massive Italian Baroque palace, which features an enormous chandelier presented by Queen Victoria and a library of over 10,000 books.

Baharampur  
*Hotel Sunshine*  
(B, L, D)

**Day 8**  
**(Tues, Feb 6<sup>th</sup>)**

Morning departure for Shantiniketan (3 to 4 hours), founded in 1921 by Rabindrinath Tagore, a revered poet, writer, musician and playwright. In 1913, Tagore became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and he is the author of the national anthem of both India and Bangladesh. Tagore founded Shantiniketan (now Visva Bharati University) with the goal of creating a traditional Indian system of education in which gurus teach their disciples in open air, with an emphasis on the arts, humanities and Bengali culture. Afternoon visit to the Uttarayan Complex at Shantiniketan, where Tagore lived and worked. Here you will take a guided tour by university personnel to view outdoor artwork by contemporary masters such as Nandalal Bose, Ram Kinkar Baij and Binod Bihari Mukherjee. You will also visit the Vichitra Museum, which

Shantiniketan  
*Mark and Meadows*  
(B, L, D)

houses a collection of artifacts from Tagore's life, including his many sketches and paintings.

**Day 9**  
**(Wed, Feb 7<sup>th</sup>)**

Morning excursion to Tantipara (1 hour each way), a center for tussar silk weaving (Indian tussar or tropical tussar). Return to the hotel for lunch. This afternoon we will meet several award-winning kantha embroidery artists based in Shantiniketan. Their varied work includes pieces featuring intricate geometric and floral motifs, portraits of traditional village life, and images from Hindu epics such as the *Ramayana*. Today we will also visit a workshop for dyed and embossed leather goods and a local jeweler who utilizes organic plant material in his fanciful designs.

Shantiniketan  
*Mark and Meadows*  
(B, L, D)

**Day 10**  
**(Thurs, Feb 8<sup>th</sup>)**

Early morning departure for Bishnupur (3 to 4 hours), stopping en route at the village of Bikna, where they create primitive metal sculpture using the *dhokra* technique, a form of lost-wax casting. Afternoon visit to local Baluchari sari weavers, whose magnificent silk-on-silk embroidered textiles and garments are sought after by women all over India. You will next meet several artisans that carve intricate blowing shells and bracelets out of conch shell. The bracelets, which are often inlaid with red lac or gold, symbolize in West Bengal that the wearer is married. Pre-dinner visit to Bishnupur's jewel-box terracotta temples, which are illuminated every evening.

Bishnupur  
*Bishnupur Tourist Lodge*  
(B, L, D)

**Day 11**  
**(Fri, Feb 9<sup>th</sup>)**

Morning visit to Panchmura, where potters create the region's famed Bankura horse votives out of red terracotta. Afternoon exploration of the temples of Bishnupur. The Shyama Raya temple was built in 1643 and is completely covered with terracotta friezes depicting scenes from the *Ramayana* and the life of Lord Krishna. The Rasa Mancha temple resembles a flattened pyramid and features 108 symmetric pillars around its base. Other beautiful temples include Jor Bangla, Madan Mohan and Shridhara.

Bishnupur  
*Bishnupur Tourist Lodge*  
(B, L, D)

**Day 12**  
**(Sat, Feb 10<sup>th</sup>)**

Morning departure for the Midnapur district of West Bengal (3 to 4 hours). Midnapur is a center for *maslund* grass mat weaving. These mats feature subtle patterns created using the natural pigments of the grass and can be as soft as woven cotton. You will also meet a group of *patuas*, artists who create *patachitra* scroll paintings on cloth or palm leaf. This ancient art form uses natural vegetable and mineral colors to create detailed paintings depicting scenes from Hindu mythology and everyday village life. Some of the *patuas* also create reproductions of their famous Kalighat paintings (see Day 3).

Kolaghat  
*Hotel Sonar Bangla*  
(B, L, D)

<b>Day 13</b> (Sun, Feb 11 <sup>th</sup> )	This morning you are free to relax at your hotel. Afternoon drive to Kolkata (4 to 5 hours), arriving in time for dinner.	Kolkata <i>Oberoi Grand</i> (B, L)
<b>Day 14</b> (Mon, Feb 12 <sup>th</sup> )	Today you are free to relax at your hotel or to explore Kolkata on your own. Walk over to New Market to explore its myriad of tiny shops selling everything from vegetables and meat to china, DVDs, perfume, jewelry and flowers. Nearby you will find craftsmen practicing <i>zari</i> embroidery, where intricate designs on silk and satin are made using gold and silver thread. Optional afternoon excursion to the Dakshinapan shopping complex, which contains textile and craft emporiums from all over India, as well as Dolly's The Tea Shop, which carries exquisite Darjeeling and Assam teas. Tonight we will enjoy a multi-course dinner at a local Bengali specialty restaurant.	Kolkata <i>Oberoi Grand</i> (B, D)
<b>Day 15</b> (Tues, Feb 13 <sup>th</sup> )	Optional morning visit to Kalighat, a crowded and chaotic Kali Temple that is also Kolkata's oldest pilgrimage site. This afternoon and evening, we will experience the annual Hindu festival of Maha Shivaratri, or the <i>Great Night of Shiva</i> . In contrast to many Indian festivals that are boisterous and full of activity, Maha Shivaratri is a time of personal introspection where devotees seek to overcome the darkness and ignorance within. Methods include the intense worship of Shiva and Shiva icons such as the lingam, chanting and the recitation of prayers, fasting, and meditating on positive virtues such as honesty and forgiveness. Many devotees stay awake all evening, finishing their rituals at dawn. Maha Shivaratri likely has its origins in the 5 <sup>th</sup> century A.D., and many legends surround the festival. Some say it commemorates the night Shiva performed his cosmic dance symbolizing the unending evolution of matter; that is, the cycle of creation-preservation-destruction. Others say it is the night that Shiva married his consort Parvati. This evening we will visit several important Shiva worship sites, including the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, Bhutnath Mandir and the Nimtala crematorium. Shiva is often depicted sitting in a crematorium, as it is the place where all humans begin what will be the most significant journey of their existence.	Kolkata <i>Oberoi Grand</i> (B, D)
<b>Day 16</b> (Wed, Feb 14 <sup>th</sup> )	Today you will be transferred to the airport by private car for your return flight to the U.S.	Flight to U.S. (B)

**Trip cost: \$4,790.00**

**Deposit required: \$940.00**

**Single supplement: \$1,210.00**

**Deposit due: August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Balance due: October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

Trip cost includes:

- Hotel accommodation for fifteen (15) nights as outlined above, including all required taxes and fees (based on double occupancy/taxes based on the current hotel tariff schedule in India, which is subject to change);
- Breakfast daily, twelve (12) lunches and eleven (11) dinners as outlined above (including bottled water but excluding soft drinks and alcoholic beverages);
- Private car transportation for all sightseeing and all airport transfers as outlined above;
- The services of an English-speaking guide throughout the tour;
- All monument/museum/site entry/activity fees outlined in the itinerary;
- Bottled water in all vehicles; and,
- All required local taxes and fees.

Trip cost does not include:

- International flights from the U.S. to the Indian subcontinent;
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, Internet/business center expenses, spa services and room service;
- Meals and beverages other than those specified above;
- Monument/museum/site entry/activity fees other than those outlined in the itinerary;
- Gratuities for drivers, guides and hotel porters – **guidelines will be given to all travelers;**
- Excess baggage charges;
- Trip cancellation/interruption, baggage delay/loss, medical/security evacuation and supplemental medical expense insurance – **highly recommended;**
- Visa/passport processing costs; and,
- Immunizations and prescription medications required for travel.

## Important Trip Notes

- **Accommodation** - We have made every effort to utilize the best accommodation possible in all of our destinations. The Oberoi Grand in Kolkata is a 5\* luxury hotel. Hotels in the villages of West Bengal are very basic (2\* to 3\*) but will be clean and safe, with en suite bathrooms and air conditioning.
- **Single rooms** - Please let us know when you send in your trip deposit if you would like a single or shared room. While we don't expect to have any issues securing single rooms for everyone, the more advance notice we have, the more likely we will be able to accommodate everyone's room preference.
- **Shared rooms** - Twin-bedded room configurations will be a mixture of Western style (two twin beds of the same size), Hollywood style (two separate mattresses with separate bedding on a King-size bed frame) or Family style (two separate beds of different size).
- **Physical capabilities** – Our itinerary includes a moderate amount of walking and the use of stairs and sloped pathways. Travelers must be able to walk at least a mile on uneven or unpaved ground at a moderate pace, board and exit a van, and manage stairs without assistance. We encourage travelers of all ages to join us!
- **Price modifications** - The trip cost shown above is based on current travel supplier tariffs, travel supplier and government tax rates, regional fuel costs, and exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and foreign currencies. Please note that the Indian government recently instituted a new system of Goods and Services (GST) taxes and it is not yet known how this will impact travel supplier tariffs; however, 5\* hotels could be taxed at a higher rate than they are today which could require a small revision in the total trip cost.
- **Questions?** Please feel free to email Diane Kempler ([dkemple@emory.edu](mailto:dkemple@emory.edu)) or Ann VanSlyke ([avanslyke@comcast.net](mailto:avanslyke@comcast.net)) with any questions that you have about the itinerary.
- **Where to send your trip deposit?** Deposit checks should be made out to “From Lost to Found Travel, LLC” and sent along with your completed and signed trip deposit form to:

Allison Rulon-Miller  
From Lost to Found Travel  
2105 Pine Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-731-9553  
[info@fromlosttofoundtravel.com](mailto:info@fromlosttofoundtravel.com)

**We are taking eight travelers maximum, so don't wait to send your deposit!**

**Please enjoy Diane's YouTube Video, Exploring Pottery Villages in India (West Bengal) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mWYrIKOpqE>**



## Trip Deposit Form

**Please complete and sign this form and include it with your trip deposit.**

Traveler(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Trip dates \_\_\_\_\_ Deposit enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing below I/We hereby confirm that I/We have read, understand and consent to the below terms and conditions:**

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Cancellations and Refunds – *All or a portion of your trip deposit is non-refundable.* If you cancel: a) prior to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, you forfeit \$500 plus any cancellation fees, surcharges or non-refundable deposits charged to us by individual hotels, airlines or other third-parties; b) between October 31<sup>st</sup> and December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, you forfeit 50% of the land cost; and c) after December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, you forfeit 100% of the land cost.**

Since we will not waive our stated cancellation and refund policies regardless of cause, **we highly encourage travelers to purchase trip cancellation/interruption, baggage delay/loss and supplemental medical expense insurance.** Upon receipt of your trip deposit, you will receive a comprehensive sign-up package that will include our full Payment Terms and Conditions, as well as instructions for purchasing trip cancellation/interruption, baggage delay/loss and supplemental medical expense insurance. It is important to note that, in order to have a *pre-existing medical conditions* waiver and a *cancel-for-any-reason* waiver included in your plan, you must purchase your supplemental travel insurance within 5 to 21 days (depending upon the policy chosen) of making your initial trip deposit.

**Price Modifications** - The cost of our trips is based on prevailing travel supplier tariffs, travel supplier and government tax rates, regional fuel costs, and exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and foreign currencies at the time of booking. These costs are unlikely to change unless there are unexpected surcharges by airlines, ground operators or hotels, the implementation of new travel taxes by suppliers or government entities, or extreme fluctuations in fuel costs or exchange rates. Travelers who have paid in full will not be affected by these increased costs, should they occur; however, travelers who have not paid in full may be subject to a surcharge in the event unexpected price increases such as those described above were to occur.

**Baggage Allowances** - Domestic flights within India typically have weight restrictions for checked baggage of 15 kg (33 lbs) per person, with charges for extra weight ranging from approximately \$2 to \$3 per pound. Carry-on baggage for domestic flights is typically limited to two pieces; however, on certain flights within India, passengers are not allowed to carry any hand baggage. Your trip departure memo will tell you how to access the checked and carry-on baggage allowances for your specific flights within India.

**Disinsection Disclosure Notice** - Certain flights to India may require insecticide spraying of aircraft prior to flight or while you are on the aircraft. Federal law requires that I refer you to the U.S. Department of Transportation's disinsection website for further information:

<https://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/aviation-policy/aircraft-disinsection-requirements>.

**Hazardous Materials Disclosure Notice** – U.S. federal law forbids the carriage of certain hazardous materials, such as aerosols, fireworks and flammable liquids, aboard aircraft traveling to and from the U.S. If you do not understand these restrictions, contact your airline or read the FAA's Pack Safe primer: [http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/hazmat\\_safety/](http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/hazmat_safety/). Your trip departure memo will tell you how to access a list of hazardous and restricted items for your specific flights within India.

**Payment of your trip deposit will constitute your acknowledgement that you have read and agree to our full Payment Terms and Conditions, which can be found at:**

<http://www.fromlosttofoundtravel.com/pricingandpaymentterms/paymentterms.html>

