

Naga Vibes: A Journey To The Hornbill Festival

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Day 1

DAY 01 || ARRIVE KOLKATA || INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

Welcome to “The City of Joy” Kolkata, West Bengal. Upon arrival you will be met and assisted by our company representative and after traditional meet and greet you will be transferred to your hotel. Kolkata, India's second biggest city, is a perpetually ongoing festival of human existence, concurrently luxurious and squalid, refined and frantic, pointedly futuristic, while beautifully in decay. A vibrant 350-year-old metropolis located on India's Eastern Coast, the capital of West Bengal thrives on contradictions and imposing spectacles; nothing is commonplace in this city. Famously known as the City of Joy, Kolkata is, in every sense, the artistic, cultural and intellectual capital of the country. Kolkata's streets are vivid, hectic, chaotic, and yet, brimming with life and creativity. Driven by the indomitable spirit of the self-made middle class, the city has created a beautiful juxtaposition of the old colonial-era charm with the nascent upcoming hipster culture that thrives amongst the city's millennial residents. Rest of the day is free at leisure. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 2

DAY 02 || KOLKATA

Get ready to explore the city visiting Victoria Memorial (Closed on Mondays & National holidays), was laid back in 1906 by the Prince of Wales. The Victoria memorial hall was built in the memory of Queen Victoria. Today, Victoria memorial hall is considered one of the finest art museums in Kolkata. Mother House (Closed on Thursdays) - was home to the Nobel Peace Prize awardee-Mother Teresa (For visitors, only Mother Teresa's Tomb, the museum and her room are open). Flower Market - Near the southeast end of Howrah Bridge, this flower market is fascinatingly colorful virtually 24 hours a day. Howrah Bridge - is an iconic landmark of the city of Kolkata. On River Hooghly, the bridge plays the role of the gateway to Kolkata, Dalhousie Square (Covering Raj Bhawan, St. John's church, High Court, GPO, Town Hall, Writer's Building and other important colonial buildings). St. Paul's Cathedral Church - acknowledged as the first Episcopal Church of the eastern world. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 3

DAY 03 || KOLKATA - GUWAHATI || FLIGHT

After breakfast, check out and transfer to Kolkata airport to board flight 6E-212 (Dep: 08:55/Arr: 10:15 hrs) to Guwahati Upon arrival you will be met and assisted by our company representative and after traditional meet and greet you will be transferred to your hotel. Situated on the southern bank of the River Brahmaputra in the Kamrup District of Assam, Guwahati is the gate way to the North Eastern States of India and a principal center of socio cultural, political, industrial and trade and commerce of the entire region. Dispur, the capital of Assam is a part of Guwahati. In earlier years, this city was full of areca nut trees rapped by pan creepers. Hence this city subsequently got the name Guwahati. The word ‘Guwa’ in Assamese means areca nut and Hat means market. Upon arrival, check-in at the hotel. Later visit the Kamakhya Temple, perched

atop the Nilachal Hill in Guwahati, Assam, is one of the most revered Shakti Peethas in India. Dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya, it symbolizes feminine power and fertility. Known for its unique architecture and the annual Ambubachi Mela, the temple attracts thousands of devotees and pilgrims each year. Also visit Assam State Museum (closed on Mondays and government holidays): Situated in the heart of the city, the Assam State Museum is a well laid out complex displaying various aspects of Assam's culture, history and craft. In the evening visit Mahabahu Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre, or The iconic old D.C. Bungalow in Panbazar, Guwahati has been renovated and named Bahniman Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre. The Scottish styled bungalow was built in mid 1850s during the administration of British officer Captain Bogle. Located atop 'Borphukanar Tilla', a small hillock named after the famous Ahom general Lachit Borphukan, it is the site from where the Ahom forces planned and launched attacks on the Mughal army during the 'Battle of Saraighat' in 1671. The heritage centre is open for public. Do visit if you are a lover of art, culture and history. You will like the displays and installations. Return to hotel. Overnight at the hotel. Note: Suggested flight is as per the current schedule which may vary at the time of actual travel dates.

Day 4

DAY 04 || GUWAHATI - KAZIRANGA || 165 KMS / 3 HRS

Post breakfast visit to Sualkuchi- the silk village and Hajo, enroute we take a Dolphin safari. Later we drive to Kaziranga (200kms/04hrs). Upon arrival, check-in at the hotel. Overnight at the hotel. Sualkuchi: Located on the banks of the Brahmaputra, 35 kms north of Guwahati, Sualkuchi is a weaving village that produces some of the best silk in the state. This sleepy little village exudes a charm like no other. Almost every house has an adjacent shed (karkhana) that houses the traditional bamboo loom- the gentle click-clacking of which can be heard from the streets. You can walk into any of the numerous karkhanas and observe the talented weavers weaving intricate patterns on the golden Muga silk. In the early years of the 20th century, Sualkuchi was developed as a "crafts village". Most of the funds for this development work came from eminent Gandhians across the country who responded to the "back to the villages" slogan of Gandhi's swadeshi drive. Although the weaving industry of Sualkuchi remained almost confined to the tanti community till the 1930's, with encouragement from the government, people from other communities also took up silk weaving. There are about 17000 silk looms in Sualkuchi producing an eclectic range of silk products. Most of Sualkuchi's silk is woven into mekhela-chadars and gamosas. Owing to the increasing demand, the weavers of Sualkuchi have diversified to saris, shawls and dress material. The silk weaving of Sualkuchi provides direct and indirect employment to more than 25,000 people throughout the year. Hajo: the meeting point of Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu faiths on the northern bank of river Brahmaputra, has a number of temples The chief among them being the Hayagrib Madhab Temple – a place of pilgrimage both for the Hindus and the Buddhists. Hajo's bell-metal work is renowned for the interesting artifacts made by local craftsmen. Dolphin safari: Visit Kukurmara from Guwahati (1 ½ hrs drive) and then head towards the beautiful and serene lake of Chandubi. The lake is enthrallingly beautiful and abounds with dolphins. One can enjoy a ride on a country boat and spend a full morning here. Kaziranga National Park: It is a World Heritage Site, where more than 75% of the world's total population of the great Indian One Horned Rhinoceros can be found. It lies on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River and is one of the oldest parks of Assam. Besides rhinos, the Asiatic Water Buffalo, Elephants, Royal Bengal Tigers, Swamp deer, Barking deer and Hog deer can be seen. About 400 species of birds are found in Kaziranga National Park. To name a few- Swamp Francolin, Great Hornbill, Pallas Fish Eagle, Pied Falconets, Greater Adjutant Stork, Long Billed Vulture. There is no telling what one might find in Kaziranga but it is always a great experience. The specialty here is the Blue naped pitta among a host of Raptors and Waterfowl. The adjoining buffer areas are worth a try too, as numerous rare sightings are reported regularly. Kaziranga National Park achieves global rank with the third highest tiger density of 18 per 100 sq.km. Note: Kaziranga National Park is open to tourists from 01st October to 31st May every year. However, entry in May will be limited, as full access to all zones is often restricted due to weather and road conditions. Final confirmation on access during May is typically provided closer to the date. For the best experience and full access, visiting between October and April is

recommended. Please note that Elephant Safaris (Subject to availability) are only available until April 30th, even if the park remains open in May.

Day 5

DAY 05 || KAZIRANGA

Today enjoy full day game drive with morning and afternoon Jeep Safari's in Kaziranga National Park. Later in the evening visit the Kaziranga Orchid Park cum Biodiversity Conservation Centre. Overnight at the hotel. The Kaziranga Orchid Park cum Biodiversity Conservation Centre is spread across 16 bighas of land. It also has a photo gallery of 500 orchids, a greenhouse, lakes with boating and angling facilities and small tree-houses, among other attractions. The basic purpose of opening this park was to conserve local varieties of orchids, flowers, fruits, fish and also to spread cultural awareness knowledge. Those visiting the park will also be able to taste juices of local fruits, pithas (local cakes) and enjoy Borgeet and Xattriya dance performances as well. Experts have been involved to give shape to the park. Khonjit Gogoi, a teacher who has been preserving orchids for the past 20 years pitched in to shape the park. Note: JEEP SAFARI- Forenoon: Entry time between 0700 to 1000 Hours. No entry after 1000 Hrs. Return back latest by 1130 hrs. Afternoon: Entry time between 1330 to 1500 Hours. No entry after 1500 Hrs. Return back before sunset.

Day 6

DAY 06 || KAZIRANGA - KOHIMA || 265 KMS / 6 HRS

After an early breakfast, check out and depart for Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, which is situated atop ridges and hilltops amidst lush forests. Nagaland is home to 16 distinct tribes, each with its own dialect, customs, and traditional attire, all of which share a deep appreciation for music, dance, and cultural celebrations. A Naga's social status is often indicated by the number of bone necklaces they wear. The Naga people are primarily of Indo-Mongoloid descent, with their presence in the region documented as far back as ten centuries before Christ. Predominantly Christian, they are also fluent in English. Upon arrival in Kohima, check in at your hotel. After some time to rest, explore the town center, where you can enjoy local food stalls and immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere. In the evening, your guide will provide an overview of the Hornbill Festival and outline the itinerary for the upcoming days. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 7

DAY 07 || KOHIMA (HORNBILL FESTIVAL) DAY 01

Post breakfast we drive to the Kisama Heritage Complex (12 kms / 30 mins), for the full day, to observe the different tribal performances and to soak in the atmosphere of the rather colourful and vibrant Hornbill Festival. Enjoy Cultural Dances (All 16 major tribes), War Dances (All 16 major tribes), Folk Songs, Indigenous Games, Music (Rock Beat contest in the evening), Fashion Show (Cultural & Modern), Handloom & Handicrafts, Local Cuisines, Local drinks (Zutho, Thutshe) etc. In the afternoon, have the option to explore the village of the Angami tribe, Jakhama or Kigwema. In the evening, enjoy the Night Bazaar. Overnight at the hotel. Zakhama & Kigwema Village: These two adjacent villages are situated on the southern Angami belt and are predominantly inhabited by the Angami tribe which is further divided into several clans. The villages are about 20 kms south of Kohima and lie on the top of the mountain with an astonishing natural view of the nearby villages. They are encircled by terraced paddy fields and have a traditional entrance gate. Within the village one can see customary Angami houses, some of which are elegant and reveal the prosperity of the villagers who live traditionally. One also gets an opportunity to

explore the villages and interact with the local tribesmen and see firsthand the local life style. "SEKRENYI" is the main festival here, which is held in the month of February. Kisema Heritage Village: The Hornbill Festival is a major event that takes place within the confines of this heritage village that is about 12 km from Kohima. It is an annual feature held from 1 to 7 December, where the visitor gets an opportunity to get a ring side view of the richness and uniqueness of the Naga heritage, its people and culture. Hornbill and Kisama are gradually transcending to be a showcase of the rich culture of the entire north-eastern region of India and a cultural bridge with the rest of Southeast Asia.

Day 8

DAY 08 || KOHIMA (HORNBILL FESTIVAL) DAY 02

We enjoy the Hornbill festival and also visit Khonoma Village, State Museum etc. In the evening, enjoy the Night Bazaar. Overnight at the hotel. State Museum: Located at Bayavü Hill, about 1½ km from the main town, it houses a rare collection of artifacts of each Naga tribe. The State Museum also has authentic Naga precious stones on display. Here one can see the most valued and expensive necklaces used by the Nagas. They are an assortment of precious stones which include cornelian, tourmaline, coral, core of xancus, ivory and other beads, brass and silver bells. Another interesting displays are the Naga Morung/hut models. From these models one can discern that the villages were located on hilltops-perhaps to survey/watch the valley below for approaching friends or foes. The variations in architecture among the different tribes is just amazing. Musical instruments are also displayed. The various instruments give an insight into how music formed an integral part of Naga life. Log drum, Tati, a single stringed instrument, and other instruments made of bamboo and buffalo horns are used during festivals and other social gatherings. For the art lovers, the state museum has an art gallery which houses collections of paintings by different local artists. The themes vary from traditional to modern. Khonoma Village: Located 20 kms West of Kohima is Khonoma village. The village referred to as "Khawünoria" by the residents is estimated to be around 700 years old and is surrounded by hills that are as high as 9000 ft. It was here that the Naga warriors made their last stand against the British in 1879. The village is named after a plant locally known as "Khüno" that grows in the area. The alder tree (*Alnus Nepalensis*) is found in abundance in this region. Khonoma is famous for its management of jhum (shifting agriculture) fields with alder trees, which fixes nitrogen in the soil and checks soil erosion. With its mission "Green Khonoma", it has become the Model Village for eco-tourism. The Village Council has made it mandatory for every household to have dustbins. Once a month, sanitation drives are carried out and the community's garbage is burnt. The ashes and residue are then used as manure. The combination of rich bio-diversity and stunning landscape makes Khonoma an excellent candidate for eco-tourism.

Day 9

DAY 09 || KOHIMA - TUOPHEMA - MKOKCHUNG (AO NAGA REGION) || 150 KMS / 4 HRS

Today we drive to Mokokchung. This picturesque town is the cultural centre of the Ao tribes who are famous for their colourful dances. Enroute we also see Tuophema Village. On arrival check in at the hotel. Overnight at the hotel. Tuophema Village, located approximately 40 km from Kohima, Nagaland, offers visitors a tranquil retreat into the heart of Angami Naga culture. Established in 2001 through a community initiative, the village features 12 uniquely crafted cottages, each representing one of the village's 12 khels (clans), providing an immersive experience into traditional Naga life. The village's scenic beauty is characterized by terraced fields, rolling hills, and traditional Naga huts lining narrow lanes, creating a picturesque and serene atmosphere. For those seeking a peaceful retreat that offers a blend of natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, Tuophema Village provides an authentic and enriching experience. Mokokchung, one of the districts in Nagaland, is the home of the Ao Naga tribe. It is bounded by Assam to its North, Wokha to its West,

Tuensang to its East, and Zunheboto to its South. Longkhum, a vanguard village of the Ao's in the days of head hunting, Longkhum is strategically situated at an altitude of 1,846m. The people of the village are hardworking and its exquisite handcraft and handloom items are renowned for miles around. On a clear day it is possible to see the eastern Himalayas of Arunachal and beyond. The Ao's have a belief that Longkhum is the resting place of the spirits of the dead on their onward journey to paradise. Local legend goes that a single visit to Longkhum is not enough and that the dead have to return to the village again to collect their souls. Ungma, one of the oldest and the largest of all the Ao villages and the second largest village in Nagaland, next only to Bara Basti of Kohima. It occupies a unique position in the history of the Ao Nagas, for it is said that the whole Ao tribe founded this village when they first entered the land from their ancestral home at Chungliyiinti (now within the Sangtam Naga Territory). The rich Ao culture and tradition is zealously guarded and practiced by the villagers even today, and the place is considered to be a living museum of the traditions of the tribe.

Day 10

DAY 10 || MKOKCHUNG (AO NAGA REGION) - MON || 160 KMS / 4 HRS 30 MINS

Post breakfast you will drive to MON. Upon arrival, check in at the hotel and visit the LONGWA village. Overnight at the hotel. Mon, situated at an altitude of 897 metres above sea level, is the home of the Konyak Nagas. Hereditary chiefs known as Anghs (Chief) rule the Konyaks and the institutions of Anghship prevail only in the Konyak Naga tribe. It is interesting to see their tattooed faces, head gear and traditional war dresses. They are known for their excellent wood carving, handicrafts and blacksmithery. Longwa village, 46 kms from Mon town is one of the biggest villages in Mon district. It is an interesting sight to behold- the village straddles the international boundary line (Myanmar), one half of the Anghs house falls within the Indian Territory, whereas the other half lies in the Myanmar. However, the whole village is controlled by the Angh (Chief). There are four rivers running from the village, two rivers run into the Indian side called Tegi and Tapi and the other two to Myanmar called Tejak and Shumnyu.

Day 11

DAY 11 || MON VILLAGE

Today we visit the Chui and Tang villages in Mon. Overnight at the hotel. Chui Village: Chui is an ethnic village located 8 kms from the heart of Mon town. It boasts of a museum which exhibits the rich Konyak culture and traditions as well as the old tradition of hunting – proof of which can be found in the array of skulls of different stags arranged inside the Morung. Tang is a Village in Phomching Tehsil in Mon District of Nagaland State, India. It is located 12 KM towards East from District headquarters Mon. This village is famous for its unique history and connection to the Konyak Naga tribe. It's a Konyak village known for its Angh (chief) and its rich culture, which includes traditional wood carving and the display of skulls, hornbill beaks, and other artifacts, reflecting the tribe's past.

Day 12

DAY 12 || MON - DIBRUGARH || 120 KMS / 3 HRS

Post breakfast we drive to MON. Enroute visit Hemaprabha Chutia – The Weaving Lady at Moran. Later continue drive to Dibrugarh. Overnight at Mancotta / Chowkidinghee Chang bungalow. Dibrugarh is the gateway to the “hidden land” of Eastern Arunachal Pradesh and Northern Myanmar. The Ahoms from Thailand came through Northern Myanmar to this area in the 13th century to establish their empire which

thrived in the ancient land of Assam. It is the “Camellia” town of Upper Assam, an undisturbed, unspoiled and undistributed paradise on earth with breath-taking scenic beauty surrounded by a lush green expanse of tea plantations. Tea incidentally is a variety of the camellia plant. Experience and enjoy the richness of these tea gardens while staying at the Heritage Chang Bungalows. These are constructed on stilts and are situated in a serene atmosphere free from pollution. Chang Bungalows constructed on stilts, Chowkidinghee Chang Bungalow is one such heritage bungalow which welcomes you to Dibrugarh- the “camellia” country! It is ideally suited for a private family holiday allowing you to experience the luxurious raj period hospitality that the British manager and his memsahib enjoyed. When the British established tea plantations in the mid-19th century, they built comfortable bungalows designed to make life as pleasant as possible in what, was to them, a hostile and strange land. Mancotta Chang Bungalow is another heritage property located on the outskirts of Dibrugarh town. Hemprabha Chutia- The Weaving Woman Hemprabha Chutia (The weaving woman) lives in Moran (Dibrugarh district of Assam), India. She is known as the weaving woman because she has taken the art of weaving to new heights by weaving several epics in silk. She initially wove Sankardev's 'Gunamala' and Madhavdev's 'Naam Ghosa'. Later, progressed to weaving the entire Bhagavad Gita, which measured 150 ft., in Sanskrit using muga silk.

Day 13

DAY 13 || DIBRUGRAH - MAJULI - DIBRUGARH || 120 KMS/3 HRS

Today morning drive to Majuli - the largest inhabited river island in the world. Visit the monasteries and interact with the tribes. Overnight at Mancotta / Chowkidinghee Chang bungalow. Majuli Island-A World Heritage Site, is located in the Brahmaputra River and is the largest inhabited riverine island in the world. The island has long served as a monastic retreat to the Vaishnavite community and is known for its beautiful rural setting and traditional Assamese and Mishing architecture. Majuli, is the largest freshwater river island (1250 sq. km) in the world and is contesting for a position in the "World Heritage" list. It is located 20 kilometers from the city of Jorhat, Assam. Since water bodies cover most of the island, it attracts a number of local and migratory birds. About twenty six Satras or cultural houses of power are located in Majuli- of which the Kamalapati, Juniata and Grammar are worth a mention. These Satras propagate the religious ideology of medieval Assam's Vaisnavite saints like Sankardev and Madhavdev. Shamaguri Satra is famous worldwide for its Mask-making tradition. Hangeul Hiatal Painting: The masks and boats are painted with a special coloring matter called Hangeul Hiatal. This painting process is called Hangeul Hiatal painting. Hangeul means vermilion and Hiatal means the yellow orpiment. Hangeul Hiatal is a mixture of minerals, vermilion and yellow orpiment, indigo and pale soil. At the early stage the ash of the skull of bottle gourd is used for black coloring. After this, charcoal is used in this process. A type of gum mixed in Hengul Haithal, which is found in the seeds of the wood-apple. It is a long process, where red color found from vermilion, yellow from orpiment, blue from indigo and white from pale soil are sourced. One week to a month is required to process the required colours. All the ingredients of Hengul Haithal paints are ground in a stone slab. The Sattra Institute of Majuli is famous for this painting. It is used in making masks and wall paintings. Auniati Satra, founded by Niranjana Pathakdeva, the Satra is famous for "Paalnaam" and Apsara dances. Also remarkable is its extensive assortment of ancient artefacts, Assamese old utensils, jewellery and handicrafts. Kamalabari Satra, founded by Bedulapadma Ata, it is a centre of art, culture, literature and classical studies. The finest boats on the island are made here. Its branch, Uttar Kamalabari Satra, has showcased the Satria Art in several states of India and abroad. The Mishings belong to the Tibeto-Burman clan of the Mongoloid race. It's not known exactly where they migrated from, but it is believed that they were dwellers of the hills of present day Arunachal Pradesh. This explains the cultural and linguistic similarities they have with the people of the Adi (erstwhile Abor) tribe, and to some extent of the Hill Miri and Dafla tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Somewhere around the 13th century, they started migrating towards the plains of Assam, most probably in search of fertile land. This exodus continued for at least 2-3 centuries. Most Mishings follow both the Donyi-Polo and Hindu religions, but some Mishings also follow the Catholic or Baptist faith. The language of the Mishings is known as Mishing language.

Day 14

DAY 14 || DIBRUGRAH - KOLKATA|| FLIGHT

Post breakfast take a tea tour and visit the tea factory (closed on Mondays) before leaving for Dibrugarh Airport to board flight for onward destination. A Tea tour through a 160 years old heritage tea garden will give you an insight into the different activities that vary from season to season. It will teach you all about tea- its origin, how it is grown, tea tasting and its quality. The estates come alive with teams of colorfully dressed tea pluckers, predominantly ladies, who pluck the delicate buds and leaves. The harvest is taken every day to the factory where it undergoes an age old process of being turned into the finished product. All stages of the process are carefully controlled to ensure that the product which leaves the factory is only of the highest quality, a quality that has made Assam tea world famous. CTC (Crush, Tear and Curl) tea is a method of processing tea. In this process the leaves instead of being rolled, are passed through a series of cylindrical rollers with hundreds of small sharp "teeth" that Crush, Tear, and Curl. This style of manufacture has the advantage that the finished product brews quickly, gives a dark infusion rapidly, is well suited for tea bags, and yields more cups per kg. In the Indian domestic market, this product has virtually taken over - over 80% of the tea produced is of the CTC type. It produces a rich red-brown color when the tea leaves are boiled and so is best suited for tea made in the Indian style. This is done by boiling leaves in a mixture of milk, water and sugar and some spices (producing Masala Chai). Later transfer to Dibrugarh airport to board flight 6E-6102 (Dep: 16:50/Arr: 18:05 hrs) to Kolkata. Upon arrival, check-in at the hotel. Rest of the day free at leisure. Overnight at the hotel. Note: Visit to a tea factory is subject to it being operational on the day of the visit. There is no tea plucking between December till mid-March and hence the actual manufacturing process of tea cannot be demonstrated when one visits the factory during this period. Note: Suggested flight is as per the current schedule which may vary at the time of actual travel dates.

Day 15

DAY 15 || KOLKATA DEPARTURE || INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

After breakfast, check-out and transfer to Kolkata airport for your flight to onward destination.
