

# Spiritual Varanasi

POST-ADVENTURE VACATION STRETCHER

OCTOBER 2022



olivia™

USA & CANADA: 800-631-6277 x1 | INTERNATIONAL: 415-962-5700 x1



Steeped in history and legend, Varanasi is India's most sacred city. At over 2,500 years old, it is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. As Mark Twain said, Varanasi "is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend." Varanasi is also the beating heart of the Hindu universe, a 'thin place' where the spiritual realm and physical realm meet. The magical city on the banks of the Ganges is where the most intimate rituals of life and death take place, and a rare place where an ancient yet still thriving religious tradition is so incredibly accessible.

## YOUR ITINERARY

**Sunday, October 23, 2022** – Overnight in Dehli from main program (included)

**Monday, October 24, 2022** – Fly to Varanasi—Diwali begins!

**Tuesday, October 25, 2022** – Varanasi

**Wednesday, October 26, 2022** – Fly to Dehli / Depart

## 2-NIGHT VARANASI ADVENTURE (OCTOBER 24-26, 2022)

**\$1,999 PP DOUBLE OCCUPANCY**

**\$2,798 PP SINGLE OCCUPANCY**

### INCLUDED

- Included overnight in Delhi on October 23, 2022 (Day room turned into overnight room from main program)
- Accommodations as outlined in itinerary
- Scheduled flights in economy between Delhi to Varanasi and Varanasi to Delhi (including excess luggage fees)
- All transfers and touring as outlined in the itinerary.
- All meals as outlined including bottled water, tea and coffee.
- Deluxe air-conditioned coaches equipped with ice chests of complimentary beverages
- All porterage throughout the tour
- All current taxes (subject to increase) and applicable fees including still camera fees, entrances to monuments, hotel taxes
- All gratuities to Micato Tour Manager, local Micato staff, meal service staff and hotel staff

### NOT INCLUDED

- Meals and drinks not mentioned and all items of a personal nature including visas

## DETAILED ITINERARY



### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2022 – DELHI TO VARANASI; DIWALI!**

Breakfast at the Delhi hotel

Morning transfer to the airport

Fly to Varanasi by Jet Airways

Arrive Varanasi and transfer to the hotel

Lunch at the hotel

Evening aarti ceremony on the river Ganges

Dinner at the hotel

Overnight at Gateway Ganges in Deluxe Rooms

We wing our way to Varanasi this morning. Colorful. Charismatic. Varanasi is India's most sacred city and the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. And today is Diwali, the festival of lights! It is a spiritual festival that is used to not only offer prayers to Lakshmi—the goddess of prosperity—but also to ritually observe the idea of knowledge over ignorance and good over evil.

A haven of peace and tranquility amidst the bustling Temple City of Varanasi - the Gateway Ganges is set amidst 40 acres of lush green gardens. All rooms and suites are rich in color and textures decorated in luxurious Indian style.

Thousands of pilgrims visit Varanasi daily to take a dip in the holy waters of the Ganges, which in the Hindu religion is believed to wash away sins. We visit the ghat at sunset, when the setting sun casts mystical shadows upon the darkening water, and the tiny sacred lamps that line the banks are ceremoniously lit.

### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2022 – VARANASI**

Sunrise boat ride on the river Ganges

Return to the hotel for breakfast

Morning specialist walk - Southern Temples and Sacred Ponds

Lunch at the hotel

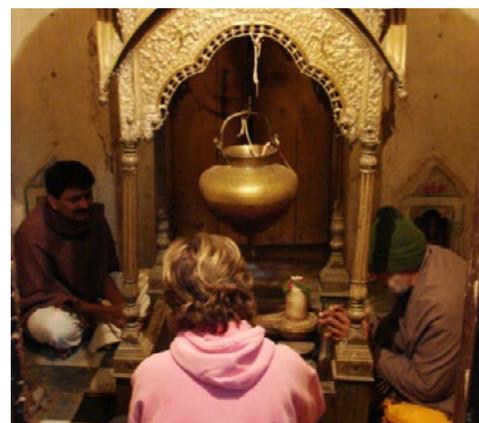
Afternoon at leisure with an option available to visit a local temple and silk weaving unit

Dinner at the hotel

Overnight at Gateway Ganges in Deluxe Rooms

We observe the holy rites on a boat ride at dawn on the river, as devotees perform ritual sunrise baths and religious ceremonies in the pink and gold light—an ancient tradition that has remained throughout the centuries. The chanting of mantras, singing of hymns and the sweet fragrance of incense fill the morning air with mystery. Afterwards, we return to the hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast, embark on a special walk through the ancient city. As you walk through the mystical landscape of ancient poets, sacred temples and holy ponds, your guide tells you about the history and unique culture of this fascinating place. Retrace the steps of the renowned 16<sup>th</sup> century poet and mystic, Tulsidas, translator of the ancient Hindu epic, the Ramayana. The walk ends with a visit to a hidden sun temple, located behind his home. Later this afternoon, if you wish, visit an interesting temple dedicated to the Hindu deity, Hanuman. Hanuman—one of Hinduism’s central figures—is known by many names to his devotees, of which the most compelling is ‘*Sankat Mochan*’, the remover of obstacles. Visit the temple complex to get a fascinating insight into local life, beliefs and customs. Later, we can even get an insider’s view on how world- renowned crafts are made with a visit to an artisanal silk weaving workshop, as silk weaving originated in Varanasi, and the fabrics made on these looms are still second-to-none.



### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2022 – VARANASI TO DELHI; DEPART**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning visit to Sarnath
- Early lunch at the hotel
- Transfer to the airport
- Fly to Delhi by Jet Airways
- Arrive Delhi and transfer to the hotel
- Day rooms available at The Leela Gurgaon
- Dinner at the hotel
- Late night international departure

Continuing on our exploration, we visit Sarnath this morning—the religious center where Buddha delivered his first speech after gaining enlightenment—and the Dharmekh Stupa—where Buddha delivered his first sermon. We also stop by the museum, which has a small but renowned collection of Buddhist and Brahmanist antiquities.

This afternoon, your journey through this fascinating land draws to a close as you fly to Delhi. Upon arrival, you will be escorted to a hotel where a room has been reserved for you until departure. Later tonight, you return to the airport for your departure flight. As you leave, you’re already reminiscing about your journey through India, and your close encounters with entrancing palaces and fascinating cultures. It has been the journey of a lifetime...even before you land at your next destination, you’ll find yourself missing Olivia’s India.

## ABOUT YOUR HOTEL



### **The Gateway Ganges, Varanasi**

The Gateway Hotel, Ganges is surrounded by vast acres of lush green gardens making this an oasis of peace in this bustling and vibrant temple city. A sojourn at this hotel offers chic and spacious guest rooms with a choice of views ranging from the lush green gardens or the swimming pool.

The all-day dining restaurant, Chowk, offers a wide range of cuisine catering to a variety of palates. Varuna, the Indian restaurant is famous for its version of the famous Benarasi thali, an Indian style meal made up of different dishes served on a round platter. Princep Bar, the colonial themed lounge bar is the perfect place to unwind after a busy day sightseeing.

## NEED MORE INFO? READY TO BOOK?

**Our Travel Consultants can be reached from the US at 800-631-6277 x1 or from outside the US at 415-962-5700 x1. Due to high demand, our vacation stretchers sell out very quickly!**

*Cancellation Policy: Olivia Companies, LLC is required to honor their contractual agreements with hotels, ground operators, and other outside vendors; therefore, the following cancellation fees apply: All Vacation Stretcher packages are nonrefundable. A handling fee of \$75 will be charged for any name changes to hotel and tour packages. Your booking/payment for Vacation Stretchers with Olivia Companies, LLC indicates your compliance with the above policies.*

*While we do our best to confirm hotels and itineraries in advance, they are always subject to change.*

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