

Tour Itinerary: Assam Plains

Feb - Jun 2016, Oct 2016 - June 17, 11 days, various dates available

Price: Assam Plains £2495 per person, single supp £495

Various extensions options, including parks and monuments. Please enquire for further details.

This 16-day tour covers some of Assam's key sites for observing the wildlife of its rich plains and forests. Assam's parks are India's answer to the Serengeti, with vast numbers of ungulates present at some sites. Aside from water buffalo, bison, elephant, one-horned rhino, hog deer and soft-ground barasingha, there are good chances of tiger sightings in mid February as burning of vegetation greatly improves visibility. Asian short-clawed otters are seen relatively easily here and almost 500 bird species have been recorded in Kaziranga alone.

Manas Biosphere reserve offers the peace and tranquility that few other Indian parks can match and in addition to the species found in Kaziranga, it is home to the critically endangered bengal florican, pygmy hog, hispid hare and golden langur. The tour can be extended to include a visit to Bandhavgarh National Park, easily the best place in the world to observe and photograph wild tigers.

At some point during the tour, a presentation will be given on tips and techniques to improve your photography and get the most out of your time in the field.

Detailed Itinerary

Assam Plains

Day 1 *Depart from home country*

Day 2 *Arrive Kolkata, transfer to Guwahati and onwards to Kaziranga National Park*

Arrive Kolkata International Airport. Internal connection to Guwahati. Road transfer to Kaziranga National Park and check-in to Jupuri Ghar Lodge. Dinner at Lodge.

Day 3 *Kaziranga National Park*

Full day exploring Kaziranga with morning and evening safaris. Meals and overnight at Jupuri Ghar. There will be a short talk after lunch about how to get the most from your time in the parks and some tips on photographing Indian wildlife. After dinner, we will briefly discuss what has been seen during the day and this will be compiled into a trip sightings list.

Day 4 *Kaziranga National Park*

Morning and evening safaris. Elephant rides of around 1 hour duration are offered in the mornings and these are optional for guests. Meals and overnight at Jupuri Ghar.

Day 5 *Kaziranga National Park*

Morning and evening safaris. Meals and overnight at Jupuri Ghar.

Day 6 *Transfer to Manas Biosphere Reserve*

After breakfast, we will make the road transfer to Guwahati where we will stop for lunch. Time permitting, we may visit the Guwahati rubbish dump which is home to 1/3 of the world's population of greater adjutant storks. It is also a good place to spot a number of Guwahati's raptors and other avifauna. After lunch, continue by road to Manas East and check in to MMES jungle camp. We will attempt to locate the critically endangered hispid hare. Overnight at MMES.

Day 7 *Manas Biosphere Reserve (eastern range)*

Full day exploring Manas East. We will start with a visit to the seed farm where there are excellent chances of sighting the bengal florican, the world's rarest bustard, listed by IUCN as critically endangered. All meals and overnight at MMES.

Day 8 *Manas - transfer from eastern to central range*

After a morning safari, we will have lunch and then transfer to Manas Central Range at Bansbari, via the park (providing this is permitted by park authorities). Weather permitting, we hope to make the transfer to Maathan Guri forest rest house for dusk. This is deep inside Manas and from here we can see across the Manas river to Royal Manas in Bhutan. After dark we make the journey out of the park to Bansbari, spotlighting for nocturnal mammals along the

way. Nightjars are a frequent sight. Water buffalo, elephant, muntjac, hog deer, sambar and indian porcupine are frequently encountered here. Tiger, leopard, jungle cat, leopard cat and pygmy hog could be lucky finds. Dinner and overnight at Birina lodge.

Day 9 *Manas Biosphere Reserve (central range)*

Full day exploring Manas central range, night drive in the evening. All meals and overnight at Birina Lodge.

Day 10 *Manas to Guwahati, flight to Delhi. 'Assam Plains' tour ends.*

Breakfast at Birina Lodge followed by road transfer to Guwahati. Lunch in Guwahati followed by flight to Delhi.

Day 11 *Overnight in Delhi at city hotel followed by onward flight home.*

Accommodation:

Kaziranga - Jupuri Garh or Wildgrass

Manas Central Range - Birina Lodge

Manas Eastern Range - MMES jungle camp

Delhi - to be confirmed - a mid range hotel of a good standard will be provided.

Please note that this tour does not include flights, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks, tips/gratuities, camera fees, entrance fees for monuments or meals in cities (which are ordered on an al a carte basis). Use of elephants is also not included and will be optional (if they are made available by park rangers). You also need to make your own arrangements for visas, travel insurance and vaccinations/malaria prophylaxis.

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