

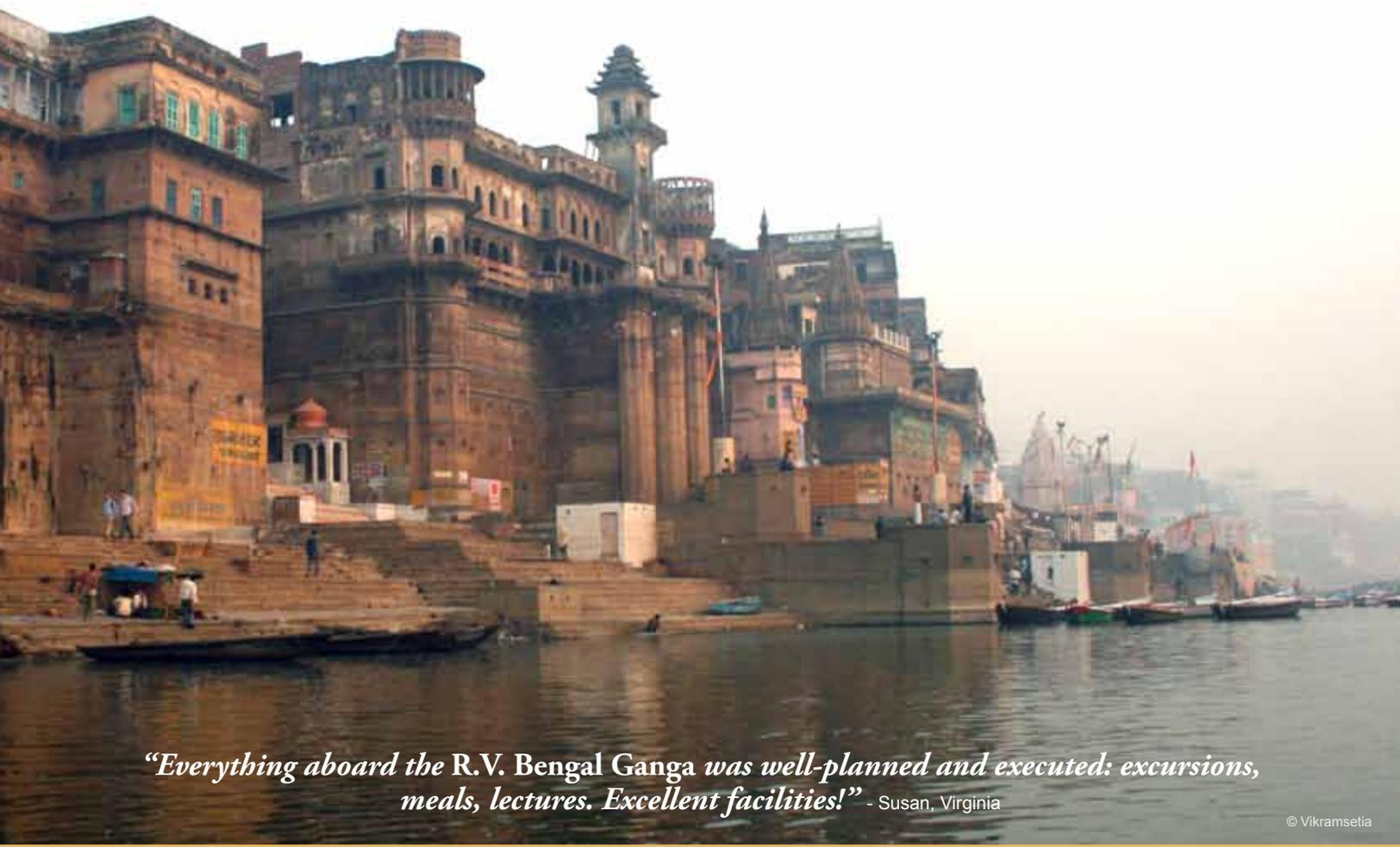


ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF AMERICA TOURS

JOURNEY DOWN THE GANGES: INDIA'S HOLIEST RIVER

January 1 - 14, 2018

with archaeologist Nancy Wilkie and eight nights aboard the 28-stateroom *RV Bengal Ganga*



"Everything aboard the R.V. Bengal Ganga was well-planned and executed: excursions, meals, lectures. Excellent facilities!" - Susan, Virginia

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© Operator



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Enjoy the most relaxing, in-depth means of discovering life along the Ganges, the holiest river in India: seven unforgettable days, cruising 800 miles downriver, aboard a classic riverboat with only 28 staterooms. Relax on a comfy lounge chair right outside your cabin or on the top deck; view and photograph a panoply of everyday village and town life, as well as freshwater dolphins, water buffalo, and exotic birds. Learn about the extraordinary cultural diversity and history of India, spanning millennia, as you visit famous Buddhist sites, Hindu temples, Mughal mosques, fortresses, palaces, and much more. Take daily excursions that reveal a variety of ancient, medieval, and modern sites, several of which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

ITINERARY

(B)= Breakfast, (L)= Lunch, (D)= Dinner

Monday, January 1, 2018: Arrive DELHI, India

Upon arrival in Delhi today, you are met and transferred to our hotel. *Overnight at the Taj Mahal Hotel, or similar, for two nights.* (D)

Tuesday, January 2: DELHI

Our first full day focuses on three major sites in Delhi: the National Museum of India, which contains over 200,000 works of art spanning thousands of years; the World Heritage site of Humayun's tomb (known as "the predecessor of the Taj Mahal"), the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent; and the Qutub Complex, a World Heritage site with a 236-foot high minaret, a 1,500-year old iron pillar that does not rust, and a large mosque that was constructed from reused temple pillars. We will also slowly drive by and admire many other famous monuments, such as Jama Mosque, Red Fort, Raj Ghat (where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated), the ruined fortress at Feroze Shah Kotla, the Ashok Pillar, and Safdarjung's tomb. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, January 3: DELHI | VARANASI

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight to Varanasi, the holiest town for Hindus. On arrival we check in to our hotel and enjoy lunch, followed by some time at leisure. In late afternoon, experience Varanasi's enchanting street life, take a boat ride to see the ghats (broad steps down to the water, along the riverbank) lining the Ganges River, and witness the beautiful Ganga Aarti ritual after sunset, when hundreds of small lamps are set afloat on the river. Enjoy a festive dinner at the Peshwa Haveli (mansion) at Raja Ghat. *Overnight at the Taj Gateway Hotel Ganges Varanasi, or similar, for two nights.* (B,L,D)

Thursday, January 4: VARANASI | SARNATH | VARANASI

Enjoy a sunrise boat ride on the Ganges River to witness early morning rituals. In the afternoon we visit Sarnath, where Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Bodhgaya. Explore the ruins of its monasteries, built more than 2,000 years ago; as well as its Archaeological Museum, which displays antiquities from Sarnath dating from the 3rd century B.C. to 12th century A.D. (B,L,D)

Friday, January 5: VARANASI | BODHGAYA

After breakfast we drive to Bodhgaya, arriving in time for lunch. Bodhgaya is one of Buddhism's most important and sacred pilgrimage centers and it was here, under a banyan tree, that Gautama attained supreme knowledge to become "Buddha," the Enlightened One. Explore the Maha Bodhi Temple Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site whose courtyard is dotted with many stupas built over the past 2,500 years. Inside the main sanctum is the immense black stone statue of the sitting Buddha touching the Earth with his right hand—the posture in which he is said to have attained supreme enlightenment. Also drive by the Thai Temple and two Japanese temples. *Overnight at The Royal Residency Hotel, or similar.* (B,L,D)

Saturday, January 6: BODHGAYA | NALANDA | MUNGER | EMBARKATION

After breakfast we drive to the ancient university of Nalanda, perhaps the oldest seat of learning in India, thought to have been established in the 5th century B.C. Nalanda is on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List, and was excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1915-37 and 1974-82. Its extensive remains include six brick temples and eleven monasteries, with many sculptures and images in stone, bronze, and stucco. Enjoy a boxed lunch today and continue on to Munger, where we embark our classic riverboat to begin our cruise down the sacred Ganges River. *Overnight aboard the RV Bengal Ganga for eight nights.* (B,L,D)



Witness the famous Ganga Aarti ritual (above) along Varanasi's ancient ghats (below) lining the Ganges River.



Sunday, January 7: MUNGER | BHAGALPUR

This morning we visit the Bihar School of Yoga, established in 1964 by Swami Niranjanananda to preserve and regenerate the total scope of yogic science by combining academic and scientific methodology with a spiritual vision. The School is located within the walls of Munger Fort, on the south bank of the Ganges River, which is thought to date from approximately the 12th/13th centuries. Several religious and historic monuments are also located within the Fort, including the Palace of Shah Suja, the ancient Chandisthana temple, and an 18th-century British cemetery. En route to Bhagalpur, cruise past Sultanganj, whose two great granite rocks on the riverbank are crowned by a mosque and a temple of Ghaibinath Siva. Excavations near Sultanganj have yielded ancient stupas, seals, coins, and terracotta Hindu and Buddha images. (B,L,D)

Monday, January 8: BHAGALPUR | BATESHWARSTHAN | ANTICHAK | SAMTAGHAT

Cruise from Bhagalpur to Bateshwarsthan this morning. After breakfast, we drive to the village of Antichak, where we visit the ruins of Vikramshila University, established in the late 8th or early 9th century A.D. Along with Nalanda University, Vikramshila was one of the two most important centers of Buddhist learning in India during the Pala dynasty. Return to the ship and continue cruising to Samtaghat. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, January 9: SAMTAGHAT | FARAKKA | JANGIPUR

Today we cruise through the Farakka Lock Gate and the connecting feeder canal to the Lower Ganges, revealing vast panoramas. Visible at a distance is the Farakka barrage, which regulates the Ganges water into Bangladesh and India. Continue cruising the waters of West Bengal toward Jangipur. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, January 10: JANGIPUR | MURSHIDABAD

Cruise from Jangipur toward Murshidabad. Time permitting, visit the early 18th-century Temples of Baranagar, considered to be among the best examples of Bengal terracotta art. Arrive at Murshidabad Jetty, opposite the New Palace. We visit the Hazarduari Palace, built in the early 19th century by an English architect, Duncan McLeod, in the Greek "Doric" style. The palace has more than a thousand real and false doors in its vast corridors. Opposite the Palace is the 19th-century Nizamat Imambara (B,L,D)

Thursday, January 11: MURSHIDABAD | MATIARI

This morning we take local horse-drawn carts (*tongas*) to the early 18th-century Katra Mosque, the oldest mosque in Murshidabad. Returning to the jetty by *tongas*, we continue cruising to Matiari, past the well-known battlefield of Plassey, site of a 1757 battle that changed India's history when the British East India Company established its rule that would last (and expand) over the next 190 years. (B,L,D)

Friday, January 12: MATIARI | KALNA

Make a morning visit to Matiari, a unique brass- and copper-working village (where the metals are still worked manually). Take a stroll through the village and visit some metalworkers' homes to view their work. Returning to the riverboat, we continue cruising to Kalna, where we disembark after lunch. Take cycle rickshaws to visit the enchanting Rajbari temple complex, with its great concentration and mixture of temples. On one side of the road, the early 19th-century Nabakailas temple complex contains 108 "eight slope-roofed" Shiva temples arranged in two concentric circles. On the other side of the road is a walled complex with Bengal's most diversified collection of temple architecture, including the 19th-century Pratapeshwar Temple, Lalji temple (built in 1739, and the oldest in the complex), Krishnachandra Temple, and the flat-roofed temple of Giri Govardhan. (B,L,D)

Saturday, January 13: KALNA | KOLKATA (Calcutta)

Cast off early this morning from Kalna and cruise toward Kolkata, through the vast countryside of golden Bengal. Relax aboard our riverboat and watch the passing scenery of the areas where various European settlers established their respective East Indian Companies in the 17th to 19th centuries. This afternoon, take an orientation tour of Kolkata's colonial areas, including the Writer's Building, General Post Office, High Court, Raj Bhawan, Town Hall, Council House, Treasury Building, and Reserve Bank of India. Also visit Dalhousie Square and drive past St. John's Church and Victoria Memorial, stopping for photos. (B,L,D)

Sunday, January 14: KOLKATA | DISEMBARKATION | FLY HOME

After breakfast aboard ship, disembark and transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)



(Above and below) Two views of Bodhgaya's Maha Bodhi Temple Complex, where it is said Buddha attained enlightenment.



(Below) The extensive ruins of Nalanda, one of two ancient Buddhist universities you will visit.



Archaeological Institute of America Lecturer and Host



Nancy Wilkie is a distinguished archaeologist and professor who has led numerous study tours throughout Asia and the Mediterranean. Nancy is William H. Laird Professor of Classics, Anthropology, and the Liberal Arts, Emerita, and served as co-coordinator of the Archaeology Concentration at Carleton College (Northfield, MN). From 1998-2002 she served as President of the Archaeological Institute of America, and in 2009-10 she was the AIA's Charles Eliot Norton lecturer, one of the highest honors that the Institute bestows. In April 2003 the President appointed Nancy to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee of the U.S. State Department on which she continues to serve. The Committee reviews requests from foreign governments for the protection of their cultural property and recommends a course of action to the U.S. State Department. In April 2013 she was elected President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, an organization dedicated to the protection of cultural property in times of armed conflict. Nancy has directed archaeological projects in Greece, Egypt, and Nepal; led study programs in Nepal and Sri Lanka; and has lectured on several travel programs to India and Sri Lanka since 2001, including this *Journey Down the Ganges* program in 2015. Nancy's most recent research project is focused on the depiction of Hell in the Buddhist temples of Sri Lanka.

"Nancy Wilkie was outstanding, as usual." - Michael, Illinois

Optional Pre-Tour Extension: AGRA & JAIPUR - December 27, 2017 - January 1, 2018

Wednesday, December 27, 2017: Arrive DELHI, India

Upon arrival in Delhi you are met and transferred to our hotel, conveniently located near the airport. Since most flights will arrive very early this morning, we have also reserved hotel space for the night of December 26th so that you may check in when you arrive. *Overnight at the Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi.*

Thursday, December 28: DELHI | MATHURA | AGRA

After an early breakfast we depart for Agra. En route we stop to explore Mathura, one of India's most ancient towns as well as a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists, Jains, and especially Hindus. The Mathura Museum has one of the finest collections of stone and terracotta sculptures. End the day in Agra with a sunset visit to the World Heritage site of the Taj Mahal, a beautiful tomb complex in pure white marble and red sandstone, unique in its size and exquisite proportions. *Overnight at the Trident Agra for two nights.* (B,L,D)

Friday, December 29: AGRA

This morning we visit the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah, the first Mughal structure totally constructed of marble. Continue to Agra Fort, a World Heritage site comprising a maze of lovely courtyards, mosques, and private chambers. This afternoon we explore Sikandra, the splendid tomb of Akbar, greatest of all Mughal emperors. (B,L,D)

Saturday, December 30: AGRA | FATEHPUR SIKRI | JAIPUR

Wake early this morning for a return visit to the Taj Mahal, to see the sun rise. After breakfast we depart for Jaipur, stopping along the way to visit the World Heritage site of Fatehpur Sikri, the abandoned city of Emperor Akbar the Great. The audience halls, palaces, and mosques are perfectly preserved, as are the tomb of Sufi saint Sheikh Salim Chisti, Panchmahal (a five-story palace), and the Buland Darwaza (a 174-foot-high victory gate). After a stop for lunch in Bharatpur, continue on to Jaipur. *Overnight at the Trident Jaipur for two nights.* (B,L,D)

Sunday, December 31: JAIPUR

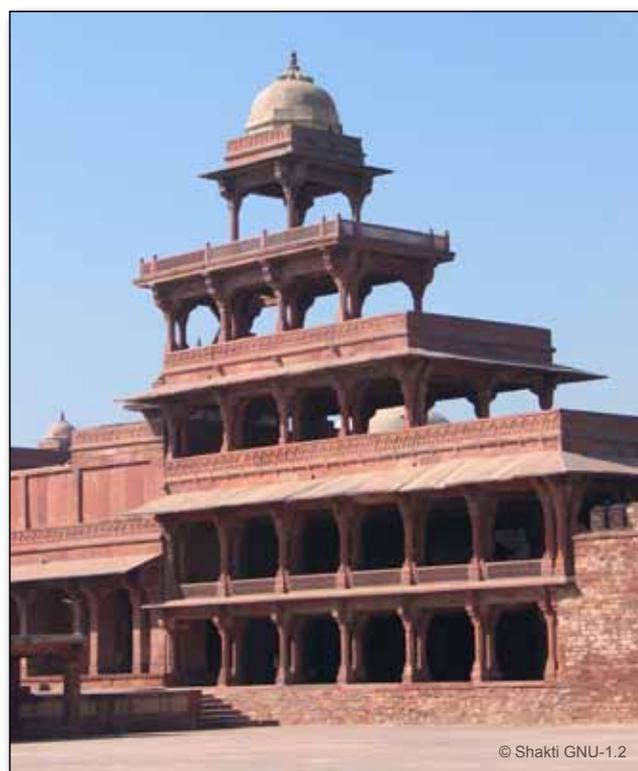
Begin the day by exploring Jaipur's City Palace, a complex divided into a series of courtyards, gardens, and palatial buildings, including the City Palace Museum. Continue on to the World Heritage site of Jantar Mantar, an extraordinary and vast astronomical observatory complex built in the early 18th century; and the splendid Amber Fort, site of a 17th-century palace overlooking a lake at the entrance to a rocky mountain grove. Tonight we have a special dinner at our hotel to celebrate New Year's Eve. (B,L,D)

Monday, January 1, 2018: JAIPUR | DELHI

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to Delhi where, upon arrival, we transfer to the group hotel to commence the main tour. (B,L)



(Above) The tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah, Agra. (Below) The five-story palace of Panchmahal at Fatehpur Sikri.



What to Expect

The itinerary involves a significant amount of walking, with many streets of packed dirt, and some attractions are only accessible via steep staircases with tall, uneven steps. All participants are expected to be physically active and not be an impediment to others on excursions, to enjoy traveling as part of a group, and to be ready to experience cultural differences. Participants who are not able to walk unassisted for extended periods (at least two miles a day) are kindly advised not to join this tour unless accompanied by a companion who will be available to assist you at all times. If you have any questions about your ability to participate, we suggest that you visit your personal physician with this brochure in hand and discuss whether or not this program is appropriate for you. Alcohol is not permitted in the Indian state of Bihar, so the bar aboard ship will be closed between Munger and Farakka. In eastern India, average January daytime temperatures (°F) are in the mid-70s, dropping to the lower-50s at night. **Complete pre-departure details and what to pack will be sent to participants.**

Air Arrangements & Transfers

Airfare to/from India is not included. Complimentary transfers in India on arrival and departure are included. Several carriers offer flights to India. Included flights within India are indicated in the inclusions lists to the right and will be booked for the entire group. **Once you have received your final payment invoice, you should book your flights from/to home. If you are considering booking your flights before this time, please contact our office first. We do not accept liability for cancellation penalties related to domestic or international airline tickets.**

Passenger Cancellation Fees: All requests by passengers for cancellations must be received in writing. Cancellations received at least ninety (90) days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of three hundred dollars (\$300) per person. Cancellations received between eighty nine (89) and sixty (60) days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per person. Cancellations received within sixty (60) days of departure are subject to 100% of the tour cost. For this and other reasons, participants are strongly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance. An application will be sent with confirmation of receipt of your deposit.

Prices, itinerary, and leader are subject to change.

Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for whatever reason.

The Archaeological Institute of America & the AIA Tours Program

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) is the largest and most archaeological organization in North America. The AIA seeks to educate people of all ages about the significance of archaeological discovery. For more than a century the AIA has been dedicated to the encouragement and support of archaeological research and publication, and to the protection of the world's archaeological resources and cultural heritage. By traveling on an AIA Tour you directly support the AIA while personally gaining the benefit of the AIA's network of scholars and worldwide contacts.



For questions and reservations, please contact us:



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Main Tour Pricing (Per Person)

Main Deck

Double Occupancy (10-20 participants) \$8,945
Single Supplement..... \$2,945

Upper Deck

Double Occupancy (10-20 participants) \$10,445
Single Supplement..... \$3,345

Single room supplement will be charged when requested or required (limited availability).

Pre-Tour Extension Pricing (per person)

Double Occupancy (6-14 participants) \$3,595
Single Supplement..... \$945

Main Tour Prices Include:

- Leadership of lecturer and host Nancy Wilkie;
- One flight within India (Delhi/Varanasi);
- Five (5) nights' accommodations in deluxe or finest available hotels;
- Eight (8) nights' accommodations aboard the *RV Bengal Ganga*;
- All meals as indicated in the itinerary, including mineral water;
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard ship;
- Arrival and departure transfers and portage at the airports in India;
- Surface transportation by deluxe, air-conditioned motorcoach;
- All excursions and entrance fees as per the itinerary, with bottled water provided;
- Services of local, English-speaking guides;
- Services of a Professional Tour Manager;
- Still camera fees;
- Tips to porters, guides, drivers, and ship's crew;
- Local taxes and service charges;
- Current Indian Government taxes and VAT;
- Comprehensive pre-departure information, including what to pack and a suggested reading guide

Extension Prices Include: Leadership of Nancy Wilkie with a minimum of 8 participants; five (5) nights' accommodations; one flight within India (Jaipur/Delhi); services of a professional tour manager; surface transportation by deluxe, air-conditioned motorcoach; local taxes and service charges; current Indian government taxes and VAT; all meals, including mineral water; tips to porters, guide and drivers; all excursions and entrance fees as per the itinerary, with bottled water provided; airport transfers for included flights and departure; local, English-speaking guide on excursions.

Prices Do Not Include: Airfare to/from India; passport and visa fees; all airport fees and departure taxes; cost of personal, trip cancellation, and baggage insurance; transportation of excess baggage; meals other than those listed in the itinerary; personal tips; tips for tour manager; items of a personal nature, such as laundry; alcoholic or other beverages (except as noted above); taxi, telephone, and fax charges; optional excursions or deviations from scheduled tour.

Payments: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour and is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or check made payable to EOS-Passenger Account-AIA Ganges1/18. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure and must be by personal check only; credit cards are not accepted for final payment. By submitting your deposit you are bound by the terms and conditions delineated throughout this brochure or elsewhere published. **Due to space limitations, this is abbreviated information. Complete terms and conditions will be sent upon confirmation or upon request, and can be viewed online at www.aiatours.org.**