Cruise aboard the 28-cabin **Bengal Ganga**, the first riverboat to ply the Ganges-Hooghly Waterway between Kolkata and Varanasi in more than 100 years.

Explore the heritage buildings of colonial **Kolkata**, capital of India for 200 years during the British Raj.

Relax and enjoy village life, the rural scene, and wildlife preserves as you cruise through a part of India rarely seen by visitors.

Visit **Bodhgaya**, where in 500 B.C. Prince Siddhartha Gautama achieved Enlightenment to become Buddha, and which today is the most important Buddhist pilgrimage site in the world.

Experience **Varanasi** (ancient Benares), India's oldest city and a religious center for Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains.
DEAR PRINCETONIAN,

From its source high in the mighty Himalayas, the Ganges River (Mother Ganga to Indians) flows 1,500 miles south and east through areas Western visitors have rarely seen, connecting to the Hooghly River through Kolkata (Calcutta) before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. A vibrant, complex tapestry of religious beliefs, historical sagas, diverse architectural styles, and fascinating cultural traditions spreads along its banks.

During a 9-day riverboat journey from Kolkata (Calcutta) to Simaria aboard the newly refurbished and luxurious Bengal Ganga, and continuing overland to Varanasi, you will be treated to a tapestry of Muslim and colonial architecture, Hindu culture, Buddhist temples, the daily rituals of village life, and the unspoiled countryside of a part of India seldom experienced by travelers. An optional post-trip extension to Agra makes a compelling finale for those who have never seen the Taj Mahal.

Princeton travelers will have the special opportunity to meet participants in Princeton’s Bridge Year program. Contact the Princeton Journeys team today at (609) 258-8686 or journeys@princeton.edu to reserve your space on this special river voyage.

Sincerely,

Leslie J. Rowley ’95
Executive Director, Princeton Journeys
Office of the Alumni Association
Princeton University

PRINCETON BRIDGE YEAR PROGRAM

The Bridge Year Program allows a select number of Princeton students to delay the start of their freshman year in order to engage in nine months of University-sponsored service at one of four international locations. In addition to supporting community-based initiatives at each program site, Bridge Year aims to provide participants with greater international perspective and intercultural skills, an opportunity for personal growth and reflection, and a deeper appreciation of service in both a local and international context.

The Bridge Year Program in India introduces students to the diversity, complexity, and intrigue that characterize modern Indian society. Based in Varanasi, students live with homestay families and volunteer alongside community members at local schools and nongovernmental organizations working to address a wide array of social issues, including illiteracy, inadequate access to education, and human trafficking. Through daily life in Varanasi, two short-term group service projects in rural areas, and various excursions and enrichment activities, students explore India’s diverse cultural and religious traditions along with its immense poverty and some of its most pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges.
Tuesday–Thursday, January 8–10

Home & Kolkata (Calcutta)
Depart U.S., arriving in Kolkata on Friday, January 10. Upon arrival, check in to the iconic Hotel Taj Bengal. Enjoy a welcome reception with fellow travelers this evening. HOTEL TAJ BENGAAL (R)

Friday, January 11
Kolkata & Embark
Spend today exploring colonial Kolkata, the capital of British India until 1912, including the Writers’ Building, once the administrative offices of the British East India Company; the Raj Bhawan, seat of imperial British power; and the Reserve Bank of India. Also visit the BBD Bagh (Dalhousie Square), a historic area replete with Raj-era buildings, and drive past St. John’s Church. In the afternoon board the Bengal Ganga and begin the upstream journey. This evening enjoy a festive welcome dinner on board. BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)

Saturday, January 12
Kalna & Matiari
This morning call at Kalna, known as the Temple City for its unique mixture of Bengal temple architecture. Ride rickshaws to the enchanting Rajbari complex, an impressive concentration of temples that includes the Pratapeshwara Temple richly ornamented with terra cotta, and the Nabakailas Temples, 108 slope-roofed Shiva temples arranged in two concentric circles. Later sail past the town of Mayapur, headquarters of the Krishna Consciousness Movement. Dock in Matiari for the night. BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)

Sunday, January 13
Matiari
As you approach the village of Matiari on foot, you can hear the beating of metal as master craftsmen make the handcrafted brass pots and utensils for which Matiari is known. Observe the craftsmen at work, using traditional methods passed down through the generations. Return to the ship and sail past the battlefield of Plassey, where in 1757 Robert Clive of the British East India Company defeated the Mogul Nawabs and their French allies. BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)

Monday, January 14
Murshidabad
In the Hazarduari Palace, view a vast collection of antiques, including rare books, old maps and manuscripts, and land revenue records from the 18th and 19th centuries. Also visit the Katra Mosque, built in 1723–24 by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, whose grave lies below the front staircase. Continue to the temple complex at Baranagar, considered a superior example of Bengal terra cotta art. BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)

Tuesday, January 15
Farakka
Today the Bengal Ganga enters the Farakka lock gate and cruises through the feeder canal that connects the Hooghly River to the Ganges in West Bengal. See the Farraka Barrage, which regulates the flow of Ganges water into the delta shared by Bangladesh and India. BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)
Wednesday, January 16

Raj Mahal
Enjoy a walking tour of the ruins of Raj Mahal, founded by the Mogul emperor Akbar as the capital of Bengal in 1592. Shah Jahan, who commissioned the Taj Mahal, spent part of his youth here. Continue along the river to Karagola, an area rich in bird life, en route to Bateswarthan. BENGAL GANGA (B,L,D)

Thursday, January 17

Bateswarthan
Today visit the ruins of Vikramshila University, established in the late 19th century and one of the two most important centers of Buddhist learning in India, along with Nalanda University, during the Pala Dynasty. Later cruise through the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary—where the endangered Gangetic river dolphin is protected—accompanied by some of the sanctuary’s wildlife experts. BENGAL GANGA (B,L,D)

Friday, January 18

Sultanganj
Sultanganj is notable for its two imposing granite bluffs, one of which is crowned by a mosque and the other by the temple of Ghabinath Siva. Nearby excavations have yielded a wealth of art and architectural remains, including ancient relics such as stupas, seals, coins, and terra cotta Hindu and Buddha images. Continue to Munger along a picturesque stretch of the Ganges. BENGAL GANGA (B,L,D)

Saturday, January 19

Munger
Explore the remnants of a Mogul fort and an 18th-century British cemetery. Also visit the Bihar School of Yoga inside the fort and learn about the yagic tradition. Enjoy your farewell dinner on board as the Bengal Ganga cruises to Simaria. BENGAL GANGA (B,L,D)

Sunday, January 20

Simaria + Nalanda + Bodhgaya + Rajgir
Disembark from the Bengal Ganga and travel to Nalanda University, by some accounts the oldest seat of learning in India. It contains extraordinary ruins of structures built in the 5th century by the Gupta kings. After lunch visit Bodhgaya, one of the most important and sacred Buddhist pilgrimage centers in the world. Here, under the “Bodhi Tree,” Gautama attained supreme knowledge to become Buddha, the Enlightened One. Continue to Rajgir, the first capital of the Magadha Empire, where Buddha spent many years. ROYAL RESIDENCY (B,L,D)

Monday, January 21

Varanasi
After breakfast drive to Varanasi, the holiest town for Hindus, and check in at the hotel. In the afternoon, experience the colorful and fascinating street life during rickshaw rides through the city. Continue on foot to the riverside bathing steps known as ghats to observe the religious ritual called aarti, in which light from wicks soaked in ghee (purified butter) is offered to one or more deities. TAJ GATEWAY GANGES (B,L,D)

Tuesday–Wednesday, January 22–23

Varanasi
After an early-morning small-boat ride on the river, visit the ruins and museum at Sarnath, where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Bodhgaya. The Archaeological Museum of Sarnath contains a large collection of sculptures that bear testimony to the fervent artistic and religious activity that went on here for more than a thousand years. The following day spend time with participants in Princeton’s Bridge Year program, learning about their year’s experiences and joining them on the site of their service projects. On Thursday, celebrate your journey at a farewell dinner. TAJ GATEWAY GANGES (2B,2L,2D)

Thursday–Friday, January 24–25

Varanasi

Delhi + Home
After breakfast transfer to the airport for the flight to Delhi. Relax in day rooms before boarding flights for home, arriving on January 25. (B,L)
OPTIONAL EXTENSION
to Bharatpur, Agra, and Delhi
January 24–28
Depart Delhi for a visit to the summer palace of the Maharaja of Bharatpur in Deeg. Continue to The Bagh, the princely estate of a member of the maharaja’s family that has been expanded to accommodate guests in four-star luxury bungalows. On a day trip to Agra, visit the Taj Mahal, completed in 1654 in memory of Emperor Shah Jahan’s wife, Mumtaz, and often described as the most beautiful monument to love ever built. Also stop at Fatehpur Sikri, the deserted imperial capital of Emperor Akbar, and the Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Return to Delhi to see the magnificent Parliament Building; the Rashtrapati, the presidential residence; and Humayun’s Tomb, one of the most beautiful buildings in this vibrant city. Relax in day rooms at the Radisson Delhi before boarding flights to the U.S. Complete details will be sent to confirmed participants.

EXTENSION COST:
$975 per person double occupancy
$380 single supplement

BUILT IN MYANMAR IN 2004 AS A REPLICA OF THE COLONIAL CYLDE STEAMERS, this thoroughly modern ship has 28 outside staterooms (each 168 square feet) on two decks. Fine dining, excellent service, and a hospitable and caring management team all help to make your Ganges River experience very special, and passengers often describe feeling as if they were guests on a private motor yacht rather than passengers on a cruise ship. Although all staterooms are very comfortable and roomy, most passengers prefer to spend their time outside on the deck, observing the fascinating scenes and scenery along the Ganges River. Please note: There is no elevator between decks on the Bengal Ganga.

Program Rates Include
Comprehensive educational program by Princeton faculty and local guides • All accommodations and meals as indicated in the itinerary • Wine, beer, and soft drinks with meals • All on-tour coach transportation and flight from Varanasi to Delhi • Welcome and farewell receptions • Bottled water on coaches • Comprehensive program of shore excursions • Gratuities to porters, guides, drivers, wait staff, and shipboard personnel for all group activities • Port fees and embarkation taxes • Complete packet of pre-departure information including education materials • Professional tour management throughout.

Airfare
U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program cost. In order to give you as much flexibility as possible with the variety of air travel options, you are free to make your own air arrangements for this program. You may work with your travel agent, call airlines directly, or look on airline websites for flight options. Economy-class airfare from New York to Kolkata (Calcutta) and return from Delhi to New York is approximately $1,300 per person as of April 2012 and is subject to change without notice.

Fuel Costs
In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of today, it is difficult to predict fuel costs over the long term and, more specifically, at the time of operation of this voyage. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of brochure printing. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge. Details and costs will be advised prior to your departure.

What to Expect
This is a moderately strenuous program that is at times physically demanding and busy, with considerable walking at some sites. Daily activities can involve up to one mile of walking at a time, at times over rough terrain, and climbing stairs that may not have handrails. Participants should be fit and in active good health. Traveling along the Ganges River in January, you can expect temperatures in the low to mid 60s F and little rain. India is a destination best received with an open mind, a sense of wonderment, and a willingness to embrace the unfamiliar. It is a colorful, crowded, and cacophonous country, meant to be experienced with all of your senses and to reward your intellectual curiosity.

Program Rates per person:

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<th>Description</th>
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<th>SINGLE OCCUPANCY</th>
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Above: Gaze upon the ethereal beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra.
Terms & Conditions

Reservations & Payments: To reserve space, return the completed reservation form with your $1,000 per person deposit to: Princeton Journeys, John Maclean House, P.O. Box 291, Princeton, NJ 08542-0291 or fax to (609) 258-1281. Balance of payment is due September 11, 2012. We accept personal checks, payable to Criterion Travel, as well as VISA, MasterCard, and American Express. Reservations will be processed in order of receipt.

Cancellations & Refunds: Upon payment of a deposit, all reservations are subject to the cancellation provisions set forth below and by which the passenger agrees to be bound. Cancellations shall not be effective until they are received in writing and confirmed by Princeton Journeys. Deposits are refundable (less a $250 per person administration fee) if written notice of cancellation is received within 30 days of reservation; after that, deposits are 100% non-refundable. Cancellations within 120 days of departure are 100% non-refundable. For this reason we strongly urge participants to purchase trip cancellation insurance. If the program is cancelled by Princeton Journeys or our tour operator, you will receive a full refund, without further obligation on our part. No refunds will be made for any part of this program on which you choose not to participate. NOTE: Neither the Office of the Alumni Association of Princeton University nor Criterion Travel, the tour operator, accepts liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable ticket in conjunction with this tour. Due to fluctuations in oil prices, a fuel surcharge may be added to your tour fee. Details and costs will be advised prior to your departure.

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For more information, contact the Princeton Journeys staff at: journeys@princeton.edu or (609) 258-8686.