

Darjeeling Mail: Mumbai to Kolkata by Luxury Deccan Odyssey Train

<https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/darjeeling-mail/>



Overview

The Highlights

- Three days exploring Mumbai, including the [UNESCO site of Elephanta Caves](#)
- Take in the majesty of some of India's most famous landmarks, such as the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Jaipur's Amber Fort
- A ride on the "Toy Train" - Darjeeling Mail Himalayan Railway
- Explore Udaipur, known as the "City of Lakes"

- Memorable dinner with traditional performers at the Rambagh Palace Hotel in Jaipur
- Luxurious accommodations: Seven nights aboard the [Deccan Odyssey](#), two nights at Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, three nights in Darjeeling's Hotel Mayfair, and two nights at Kolkata's Taj Bengal Hotel
- Transfers, most meals, and all gratuities included
- Option to join the 9-day Splendours of Northern India tour on Day 7 of the reversed itinerary.

The Tour

Darjeeling Mail on the [Deccan Odyssey](#) luxury train is one of the best ways to travel through India. Experience the breathtaking views of the Himalayas from the hill plantations, explore the vibrant bazaars of Delhi, watch the sunrise on the sacred Ganges at Varanasi, and visit the amazing sights of Agra, including, of course, the incomparable Taj Mahal. A trip to India will change the way you view the world forever.

Itinerary

Day 1: Mumbai

Your voyage of discovery begins at Mumbai airport, where you will be met and transferred to the iconic five-star [Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Hotel](#) for a luxurious two-night stay.

This flagship Taj hotel offers splendid views of the Arabian Sea and Gateway of India, alongside refined century-old hospitality. This legendary luxury hotel has played host to kings, dignitaries and eminent personalities from across the globe. Deluxe Class guests will stay in the contemporary Tower Wing, Presidential Suite guests reside in the Palace Wing. (All meals today are at your own arrangements.)

Day 2: Mumbai

This morning we take a short cruise, weather permitting, to Elephanta Island, a lush island densely wooded with palm, mango, and tamarind trees. The fascinating cave complex, which dates back to the 3rd – 5th century, was designed to honor the life of Lord Shiva, one of the most auspicious Hindu gods, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We return to the city for lunch at the famous seafood restaurant, Trishna. In the afternoon, you are free to explore Mumbai independently or visit one of the colorful local markets.

In the evening, a welcome reception is followed by dinner at your hotel, where you can get to

know your fellow travelers.

Day 3: Mumbai

The compelling city of Mumbai is rich in culture and history. Today we visit the 'Dhobi Ghats', an intriguing outdoor laundry complex. Our tour then takes in Fort Bombay and Gandhi's House, now converted into a museum depicting his inspirational life. Lunch is served in a local restaurant.

Mid-afternoon sees us boarding our private train, the *Deccan Odyssey*, a perfect way to experience the color, character, and amazing diversity of India. Settle into your beautiful, private en-suite cabin and enjoy the hospitable atmosphere of the stylish Bar and Lounge cars before experiencing a fine dinner of Indian or western cuisine.

Day 4: Udaipur

We spend a leisurely morning on board as the landscape and spirit of India unfolds before us. We then have the opportunity to listen to a lecture on Indian culture before arriving at Udaipur, known as the 'City of Lakes' or 'Venice of the East.'

The afternoon we admire the awe-inspiring beauty of the Lake Palace, constructed entirely of marble, which sits on its own island in the shimmering waters of Pichola Lake. Later, we visit the medieval grandeur of City Palace.

Day 5: Jaipur

With a breakfast arrival into the capital of Rajasthan, the 'Pink City' of Jaipur overwhelms the senses as we embrace its rich and colorful past. This morning we visit the Amber Fort and explore its breathtaking and ornate majesty, including the magnificent Hall of Mirrors.

After lunch in a local restaurant, we continue our exploration with a tour of the Jantar Mantar Observatory, the imposing and vast City Palace, and the beautiful Hawa Mahal, or Palace of Winds. This stunning yet enduring monument is constructed entirely of pink sandstone and was built in 1799 to allow royal ladies to discreetly observe everyday life. Finally, if time permits, we explore a famous fabric market before returning to our train to refresh ourselves.

This evening, we dine in the elegant Rambagh Palace Hotel, originally built in 1835 and once the residence of the Maharaja of Jaipur. The palace retains its elaborate splendor, decorated with hand-carved marble 'jalis' or latticework, sandstone railings, and elaborate Mughal Gardens.

Ladies in Rajasthani costumes perform the traditional garlanding 'aarti' and 'tikka' ceremonies while the music of the 'Shenai' welcomes you. A delightful fireworks display is followed by an outdoor barbeque, with the illuminated Palace as a stunning backdrop.

Day 6: Delhi

One of the oldest cities in the world, Delhi is a bustling and vibrant city, famous for its traditional bazaars and street markets.

Our fascinating city tour in this pulsating metropolis takes in the Raj Ghat memorial to Mahatma Gandhi; the World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb, the first example of Mughal architecture in India; and the towering Indo-Islamic Qutab Minar, the tallest brick minaret in the world at 238ft (73m), which dates from 1368.

Tonight, we enjoy a sumptuous dinner on board our private train.

Day 7: Fatehpur Sikri

After breakfast, we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Fatehpur Sikri. Known as a 'ghost city,' this red sandstone town was abandoned only shortly after being built due to lack of water in 1585.

This afternoon, we'll explore Agra Fort, a magnificent structure that dominates the skyline and acted as the main residence for emperors of the Mughal Dynasty until 1638. Its red sandstone walls run for 1.5 miles (2.5 km) and contain many fairy-tale palaces and two beautifully preserved mosques.

Day 8: Taj Mahal (Agra)

Today is devoted to visiting the beautiful Taj Mahal, built entirely of white marble on the south bank of the Yamuna River.

Completed in 1648 by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, the Taj Mahal is a mausoleum for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, and took 22 years and 20,000 artisan workers to complete. Nowhere else on the planet will you experience such a poignant architectural statement dedicated to the enduring nature of human love and inspirational artistry.

Day 9: Varanasi

Varanasi simply must be experienced to be understood. It is one of India's most sacred and spiritual places, and is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited city in the world.

Situated on the banks of the River Ganges, this cultural and religious center, known as the 'City of Light' and established between 3,000–5,000 years ago, is a focus for Hindu pilgrims who bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges and perform funeral rites.

We are privileged to witness these time-honored ceremonies on a private river cruise. Our exploration of Varanasi is completed with a guided walk through the winding ancient streets of this remarkable city, home to some 2,000 temples.

Day 10: Darjeeling

Today we leave the *Deccan Odyssey* and embark on a spectacular journey to the hill station of Darjeeling. You have the choice to travel either by bus (3-4 hours) or the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which takes about 6 hours from Tindharia. Also known as the 'Toy Train,' it is a 2ft (610mm) narrow-gauge railway.

Travelling through awe-inspiring scenery, our locomotive zigzags and loops, gaining height to reach the cooler air of India's most famous hill station. We climb to Ghum, which at 7,407 feet (2,258 meters) is the highest railway station in India. Enjoy a packed lunch on board the train as we take in views of the snow-covered Mount Kanchenchunga (third highest in the world) and cross the graceful loop at Batasia before we arrive in Darjeeling.

This evening, we have dinner in the Hotel Mayfair (or similar), where we will stay for three nights. Perched on a picturesque hill with beautiful views of the valley, the Mayfair is a heritage hotel that exudes old-world charm and quiet elegance.

Day 11: Darjeeling

We awaken to the breathtaking scenery of Mount Kanchenchunga this morning before we ride the DHR up to Batasia Loop and Ghum, climbing over 600 feet during its 5 mile (8 km) journey. The senses reel as we experience the chaotic nature of roadside life, passing within inches of colorful shops, houses, and enthralling monasteries.

Our afternoon tour of Darjeeling provides an opportunity to experience the delicate nature of colonial life, as well as the contrasting culture of a Tibetan refugee center and an absorbing visit to the Himalayan Institute, where we learn about some of the most famous mountaineering expeditions.

Day 12: Darjeeling

Early this morning, weather permitting, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit Tiger Hill and watch the sun rise over the snow-capped Himalayas, with Mount Everest rising majestically 200 miles away on the horizon.

This afternoon, we visit a local tea plantation and sample the freshest cup of tea most of us are ever likely to taste!

Day 13: Darjeeling to Kolkata

After an English breakfast, we leave this tranquil haven to embark on a private transfer from Darjeeling to Bagdogra airport for a short commercial flight to Kolkata. On the way, you will enjoy panoramic views of the extensive tea plantations that unfurl around us.

On arrival, we transfer to the five-star Taj Bengal hotel, a landmark building in downtown Kolkata, for a two-night stay. Prominent landmarks - Victoria Memorial, Royal Calcutta Race Course, Horticultural Gardens, National Library, Eden Gardens, and the Alipore Zoological Gardens - are all within walking distance.

Day 14: Kolkata

Kolkata is a sensory delight and cultural extravaganza that is constantly evolving. After breakfast, we spend the day exploring and absorbing the many sights that comprise this enthralling city that was once India's capital.

Our tour includes a visit to the Victoria Memorial, one of the finest and most prominent buildings in Kolkata, which houses a museum dedicated to the history of India.

We then move on to Dalhousie Square, the bustling hub of English colonial power and trade during the two centuries of British rule. Our final stop is South Park Cemetery, a sanctuary of stillness within the clamor of modern-day Kolkata.

In the evening, we say goodbye to our fellow traveling companions who have shared this remarkable journey with us at our farewell dinner.

Day 15: Kolkata

You will be transferred to Kolkata airport to begin your journey home.

Reverse itinerary

Day 1: Kolkata

Arrival day at Kolkata Airport, where you will be met and transferred to the iconic five-star Taj Bengal, Kolkata for a two-night stay, a landmark five-star hotel in the exclusive neighborhood of Alipore.

All meals today are at your own arrangements.

Day 2: Kolkata

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In the evening a drinks reception is followed by a Welcome Dinner at your hotel, where you can get to know your fellow travelers who will share this remarkable Indian rail odyssey.

Day 3: Kolkata to Darjeeling

Today we embark on a spectacular journey to the hill station of Darjeeling. You have the choice to travel either by bus (3-4 hours) or the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which takes about 6 hours from Tindharia. Also known as the 'Toy Train,' it is a 2ft (610mm) narrow-gauge railway.

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Day 4: Darjeeling

We awaken to the stunning scenery of Mount Kanchenchunga and this morning we can ride the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway up to Batasia Loop and Ghum, climbing 600 feet during its 7km journey. The senses reel as we experience the chaotic nature of roadside life, passing within inches of colourful shops, houses and enthralling monasteries.

Our afternoon tour of Darjeeling provides a wonderful opportunity to experience the elegant grandeur of colonial life as well as the contrasting culture of a Tibetan refugee centre. Finally, there is an absorbing visit to the Himalayan Institute where we learn about some of the famous mountaineering expeditions.

Day 5: Darjeeling

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We are privileged to witness these time-honored ceremonies on a private river cruise. Our exploration of Varanasi is completed with a guided walk through the winding ancient streets of this remarkable city, home to some 2,000 temples.

**For travelers booked on the 9-day Splendours of Northern India tour, your journey begins today with a stay at the luxurious Taj Palace Hotel in Delhi before boarding the Deccan Odyssey tomorrow.*

Day 8: Delhi

One of the oldest cities in the world, Delhi is a bustling and vibrant city, famous for its traditional bazaars and street markets.

Our fascinating city tour in this pulsating metropolis takes in the Raj Ghat memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, the World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb, the first example of Mughal architecture in India, and the towering Indo-Islamic Qutab Minar, the tallest brick minaret in the world at 238ft (73m) which dates from 1368.

Tonight, enjoy a luxurious dinner on board our private train as we continue our journey across India.

Day 9: Fatehpur Sikri & Agra Fort

After breakfast, we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Fatehpur Sikri. Known as a 'ghost city,' this red sandstone town was abandoned only shortly after being built due to lack of water in 1585.

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We return to the city for lunch at the famous seafood restaurant, Trishna. In the afternoon, you are free to explore Mumbai independently or visit one of the colorful local markets.

Day 15: Mumbai

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Dates & Prices

2027 Dates

March 18 - April 1
March 22 - April 5

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Cabin	On request	On request	25%
Presidential Suite	On request	On request	25%

Prices are per person.
2027 dates are preliminary and are subject to change.

More

Medical/evacuation insurance is required for this journey. We highly recommend full tour cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your travel investment.

An Indian visa is required for U.S. citizens.