

# Textile Tour of West Bengal

Crucible of artistic and literary thought

February 2 – 8, 2018

Optional add-on to Northeast India and Bhutan, please enquire

*"We live in the world when we love it."— Rabindranath Tagore*





## Textile Heaven Awaits . . .

Arguably, some of the finest textiles known to civilization come from West Bengal. An ancient sericulture industry, centuries-old royal patronage, and outstanding diversity in design and processes sustained exquisite handloom textiles for generations. Artisans, carrying on the legacy of their ancestors, produce incredible work in finest cottons and silk.

On this textile tour, marvel at the gauziest of weaves – **Jamdani** - a double weft “embroidery on the loom” technique; try your hand at **kantha** embroidery in a village; learn about **Tangail** jacquard looms that mimic Jamdani; be amazed by mathematical wizardry that produces a single **Baluchari** sari with richly woven “pallu”. Immerse yourself in India’s Nobel laureate, Rabindranath Tagore’s university town of **Shantiniketan**. Experience a place that defines the very soul of India—through its contemporary thought, literature, and exquisite textiles.

Extensively dry-run by Shila Desai, who will also lead this tour.

7 Days

- 3 nights Kolkata
- 2 nights Maheshganj
- 1 night Shantiniketan

with day visits to Phulia and Bishnupur

### Highlights

- Kantha workshop
- Block-printing workshop
- Jamdani, tangail, and baluchari demo
- Batik demo
- Visit with Craft Council head
- Kolkata’s buzzing bazaars

### Costs

**USD 1760 pp double occupancy/ USD 720 pp single supplement**

#### Includes

- Led by Shila Desai, and co-led by expert guides
- Boutique and heritage 3-4\* accommodations with daily breakfast
- All transportation in private air-conditioned cars
- All excursions and entrance fees
- All taxes and fees

#### Excludes

- International flights, gratuities, and travel insurance



Day 1- Fri Feb 2

## Kolkata

Arrive Kolkata, transfer to your hotel.  
*Note: Arrivals before noon will require an extra night*

Embark on a guided tour of Kolkata. Take in a late afternoon visit to Panchla and marvel at the gold thread embroidery with gold zari, seed pearls, sequins and beads that traditionally adorns a bride's finery. In evening, visit Gariahat Market. Overnight Kolkata.

Meals: B

Day 2 – Sat Feb 3

## Kalna

Transfer three hours to the former indigo estate of French planters. Walk the extensive grounds and learn the fascinating history of indigo from the present owners.

In the afternoon, visit Kalna for a demonstration of the finest jamdani weaving. Jamdani, also called "woven air", is the gauziest of cottons with embroidery on the loom. This commendable NGO is set up on the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. Learn about weaving the finest cotton known to mankind.

Overnight Maheshganj Estate.

Meals: B

Day 3 – Sun Feb 4

## Phulia

More Jamdani! In Phulia, visit a traditional sari shop owned by a national Jamdani award winner and marvel at different techniques. Next, walk through the weavers' village and take in weaving workshops of colourful and complex Tangail saris where experienced weavers display amazing technical skill on how jacquard looms are adapted to create complicated patterns. Take in everyday life of a weaver colony.

Overnight Maheshgani Estate.

Meals: B



Day 4 – Mon Feb 5

### Shantiniketan

Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore established the university town of Shantiniketan. After a three hour transfer, walk through the town to enjoy its unique cultural vibe. Take in a kantha embroidery workshop with women in self-help village. Kantha traces its roots back to 1<sup>st</sup> C. when old clothes and materials were repurposed with a simple running stitch tracery of folk patterns. Kantha is now at the heart of Indian trends in urban clothing and furnishings.

Overnight in Shantiniketan.

Meals: B



Day 5 – Tues Feb 6

### Shantiniketan – Bishnupur - Kolkata

Take in a batik demo - essentially “writing in wax” - with multiple dyeing and application processes.

In Bishnupur, marvel at rich Baluchar heirloom saris’ carding, calibrating, and weaving processes. Baluchari sarees are coveted for their intricate designs and handwork, including depiction of mythological characters from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Visit weavers’ homes. Time permitting, stop at beautiful 15<sup>th</sup> century terracotta temples and Dokra aboriginal iron sculpting village. Transfer to Kolkata in the late evening. Overnight in Kolkata.

Meals: B



Day 6 – Wed Feb 7

### Kolkata

Visit with the head of the West Bengal Crafts Council, who has singlehandedly revived and showcased handloom textile crafts. Shop their non-profit fair trade collection for exquisite handloom product from all over India.

Visit Dakshinapan Market followed by block printing and dyeing workshop.

Overnight Kolkata.

Meals: B

### Enquiries

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Visit

<http://www.eyhotours.com>

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Day 7 – Thur Feb 8

### Departure from Kolkata

Today we bid you farewell as you depart for your onward travels.

Thank you for travelling with us!

If you are joining us for more spectacular adventures in N.E. India, you will be transferred to the airport for onward flight to Dimapur. Interested? Write us today!

Meals: B



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