

Arunachal Pradesh: Reh & Boori Boot Festival – 14 days

Visit two festivals, tribal villages and Majuli Island

Tour JTT-ASAP03: Dibrugarh - Mon - Longwa/Langmeang - Roing - Pashigat - Ziro - Majuli - Sibsagar -Jorhat

Fixed dates: Jan. 28 – Feb. 11, 2016

Reh Festival: Reh is one of the most important festivals of the Idu Mishmis. It is celebrated on the first 3 days of February. The Idus believe that they are the sons and daughters of the divine mother 'Nanyi Inyitaya'. But none can get her blessings and keep alive bonds of brotherhood and keep social feelings strong, unless one performs the Reh festival.



Unfortunately, the festival requires that a number of Mithuns (a cross-breed between buffalo and gaur only found in A.P.) and pigs are sacrificed as offering to the great mother 'Nanyi Inyitaya'. Rice beer is brewed in large vessels, locally called 'yunyiphri', three to four months before the actual celebration. The guests are entertained with rice, meat and rice beer. The 'naya' dance is performed during the festival.

Boori Boot Festival: The Boori Boot festival is performed by the Hill-Miris. The festival falls between 4 and 6 February. Boori Boot means to get together to hail the spring and successful harvest. The festival also invokes the spirit of Boori Boot to bless them with prosperity and free them from diseases of any kind. The festival is performed collectively. The young members do all the work under the elders' guidance. The Nibu (priest) performs rituals as well as conducts sacrifice.



Reh is best seen in and around Roing. Boori boot is celebrated in Daporijo, Raga areas. Our itinerary takes you to the Idu Mishmi inhabited areas of

Roing in Arunachal Pradesh and also to Daporijo and Raga for the Boori Boot festival.

Itinerary

Day 01 (28 January): Arrive Dibrugarh

After arriving at Dibrugarh your guide will meet you and escort you to Mancotta Tea bungalow, just outside Dibrugarh. The Mancotta Tea Bungalow is a so-called *chang*-bungalow, a stately, impressive building of massive wooden bars and cottage-style masonry on stilts. Its well-kept appearance belies an impressive 160 years of age. In the afternoon, we take a walk through the lush surrounding tea gardens of Mancotta. Dinner and overnight stay is quite a luxurious affair at Mancotta.

Day 02 (29 Jan): Dibrugarh – Mon (180 km/ 5-6 hrs)

After breakfast, we drive through lush green valleys and tea estates to Mon in northern Nagaland. The journey will take about 5-6 hours. On the way, we visit Shangnyu village. This district is inhabited by the Konyak tribe. In the past, the Konyaks, like most tribes of Nagaland, used to practice head-hunting. The practice has stopped after most of Apatani's have converted to Christianity. After we reach Mon, we check into the basic but comfortable Hotel Paramount for dinner and overnight stay.

Day 03 (30 Jan): Mon - Longwa – Langmean - Mon

We drive to Longwa near the India-Myanmar border. The rural atmosphere with long palm-roofed Konyak houses, old village folk with tattoos on their faces and bodies will charm and take you back in time into the tribal era. After a delicious packed lunch, we drive 40 km south of Mon to the village of Langmeang. Though this village belongs to the same 'Konyak' tribe, the architecture is different. We return to the Hotel Paramount in Mon for dinner and overnight stay.

Day 04 (31 Jan): Mon – Roing, 270 km/8 hr; 45 min ferry

We drive to Namsai, the ferry crossing point over the Lohit river. This is an area of a particularly well preserved wet, tropical evergreen forest. We visit the interesting Buddhist village of Chokham before boarding the ferry. In the afternoon, we drive over to Roing. Overnight stay is at Mishmi Hill Camp.

REH FESTIVAL

Day 05 (01 Feb): Roing

After breakfast, we proceed to the local festiground to see the inauguration of Reh



festival. In the afternoon, we visit the Idu Mishmi villages. Overnight stay is at Mishmi Hill Camp (tented accommodation).

Day 06 (02 Feb): Roing

At Roing, we attend the Reh festival, which entails both community gatherings, singing and dancing, as well as small-scale celebrations in private houses. The latter we'll see in a small Idu Mishmi village that we'll visit. Overnight stay is at Mishmi Hills Camp.

Day 07 (03 Feb): Roing – Pasighat (85 km /7 hrs)

We drive to Pasighat today. The drive is beautiful, skirting the edges of the Brahmaputra floodplain with occasional good views of the mighty river, as well as the Himalayas (on clear days only). The road is rough, over long stretches unpaved, sandy, and on two occasions, we drive through shallow waters, also crossing a river by ferry. Though the distance is not long, much time is taken going over the rough patches. Overnight stay is at Hotel Aane or similar.

Day 08 (04 Feb): Pasighat – Along (140 km/5 hrs)

We drive to Along over a narrow, winding road through densely forested valleys. We follow the Brahmaputra upstream, which is a wild raging mountain torrent here. After reaching Along, we do an afternoon walk from the village of Kabu to Paya, which has an interesting temple dedicated to Donyi Polo, going through agricultural fields and walking along the beautiful Siyom river. We cross over a hanging bridge and board waiting vehicles to return to Along.

BOORI BOOT FESTIVAL

Day 09 (05 Feb): Along – Daporijo (160 km /5 hrs)

We drive to Daporijo, on the way stop at the Tagin and Hill Miri tribal villages. Today, the Hill Miris celebrate the Boori Boot festival. We check into a home-stay near the town of Daporijo.



Day 10 (06 Feb): Daporijo – Ziro (130 km/4 hrs)

The drive from daporijo to Ziro again traverses lush green hill sides dotted with endemic villages of houses made entirely out of bamboo. On the way, we stop at Raga, the main centre for the Boori Boot festival of the Hill Miris. We'll spend time with the village folk experiencing the festival before continuing to Ziro.

Day 11 (07 Feb): Ziro

Ziro is home to the Apatani people. The Apatanis are settled agriculturists inhabiting the valley around Ziro-the headquarters of lower Subansiri district. The older men tie their hair in top-knots and tattoo their faces. Wearing of circular nose plugs and tattooing of faces is the most characteristic aspect of ornamentation of the Apatani women. The new generation of Apatani men and women have stopped this practice of tying hair knots, nose plugs and face tattooing since early 1970s. The Apatanis are good cultivators and practice both wet and terrace cultivation. Paddy cum fish culture is very popular among them. Unlike other tribes of Arunachal, their economy is stable.



Today we'll visit villages of Apatani and Nishi tribes, the museum and handicrafts centre. We'll also witness an Apatani traditional dance.

Day 12 (08 Feb): Ziro – North Lakhimpur (80 km/8-9 hrs; 30 mins ferry ride)

We drive to the plains in Assam. After passing North-Lakhimpur, we cross a tributary to the Brahmaputra by ferry to Majuli Island. Here we check into the Kalambari guesthouse.

Day 13 (11 Feb): Majuli Island

Majuli Island is one of the largest river islands in the world. It used to be the largest, until the Brahmaputra started to eat away at its shores. It has been short-listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for its unique culture, more specifically the 'satras' or Hindu Vaishnavite monasteries. Unlike elsewhere in India, Hindu monks live here together in monasteries that resemble an ashram or kibbutz in the sense that all members work together in the fields, doing daily chores and of course worshipping. Most peculiar about this monastic culture are the monk dances that just as the concept of Satraya itself, were designed by the great Assamese saint Sankardev.



Today we'll visit the *satras* (monasteries) and *akats* or monks, and take a close look at their way of living, and we'll be mesmerized by a 'satriya' or monastic dance performed by the monks in one of the satras. We'll also visit a Mising indigenous peoples village, look at their weaving and experience their customs. If time permits, we'll ride bikes through the northern part of the island, riding over little dikes among the fields and wetlands that in some ways resemble Holland.

Day 14 (10 Feb): Majuli – Jorhat (2 hrs by ferry & 155 km/ 3 1/2 hrs drive)

After early breakfast, we set off for Jorhat. We cross the mighty Brahmaputra on a ferry. On the way we have a good chance of spotting the heavily endangered Ganges dolphins. After lunch, we'll drive eastwards to visit the famous temples of Sibsagar (Sivasagar). This was the capital of the Ahom kings who ruled Assam for 600 years (1228 – 1826 AD). We'll visit some of the ruins from this period – the Rang Ghar or the Amphitheater, the Talatal/ Kareng Ghar or the multi-storeyed palace, and the Shiva *idol* (temple) said to be the tallest Shiva temple in the country. We return to Jorhat, where we stay overnight at Hotel Earl Grey.



Day 15 (11 Feb): Jorhat - Delhi

From Jorhat, we fly to Delhi, via Kolkata.

TOUR PRICE

2, 3 persons: INR 111,750 per person, using 1 Mahindra Scorpio (luxury SUV)
4, 5 persons: INR 110,250 per person, using 2 Mahindra Scorpios (luxury SUV)
6, 7 persons: INR 109,250 per person, using 2 Mahindra Scorpios (luxury SUV)

1. Single supplement: INR 33,750

Prices quoted are net and non-commissionable.

Inclusions: Accommodation on twin share at the indicated places on full board; all transfers and sightseeing as per itinerary by vehicle specified; visit to festival sites; one English speaking escort throughout the tour; one traditional dance at Ziro and monastic dance at Majuli; local guides where necessary; one bottled water per person per day; all entrance and monument fees, fresh fruits everyday; candies/ chocolates/ wafers on drives/ transfers.

Exclusions: Airfare both international and domestic; RAP; camera charges; tips; drinks; laundry; telephone calls; insurance; expenses of personal nature.

Restricted Area Permit (RAP) fee of USD 50 per person for Arunachal Pradesh.