

THE BANSBARI LODGE

MANAS NATIONAL PARK

**A PROJECT TIGER RESERVE
A WORLD HERITAGE SITE**



The Bansbari Lodge

At Manas ASSAM BENGAL NAVIGATION now has its own jungle accommodation, The Bansbari Lodge, situated in prime position right at the entrance to the national park, with tea gardens on one side, jungle and views of the Himalayan foothills on the other. The 16 large twin-bedded rooms all have attached bathrooms and the Lodge is simply but comfortably furnished. The Lodge also has electricity.

There is a welcoming atmosphere to the Lodge, which includes an attractive dining room and a lobby where you can relax on sofas, browsing through books from our library. In fine weather tables and chairs are set outside for breakfast in the spacious garden. Each bedroom has comfortable twin beds, a writing-cum-dressing table, cane chairs to relax in, and good hanging cupboard space, while the bathrooms have excellent hot and cold showers with basin and w.c. Our policy at ABN is to provide employment as much as possible within the area and most of our furniture has been beautifully made by local craftsmen to our specification.

Vegetation and Topography

The vegetation that covers most of the park is of the mixed deciduous variety. This forest is interspersed with small grassy glades where large numbers of deer can be seen grazing. The topography of the park is mainly small meadows among thickly forested foothills with many rivulets, streams and natural drainage channels. The park is mainly drained by the river Manas which also forms the international boundary between India and Bhutan. In the lower reaches there are many smooth sandy stretches with clumps of trees growing in and around them.

Fauna at Manas

Three unique residents of Manas are the rare Pygmy Hog, the Hispid Hare and the Golden Langur, and the park is a haven for no less than 20 highly endangered species. The diverse animal population of Manas includes some fierce or potentially aggressive creatures such as Tigers, Elephants, Golden Cat, Fishing Cat, Wild Buffaloes, Leopards, Clouded Leopards, Civet Cat, Wild Dog, Indian Fox, Gaur and Himalayan Black



Although simpler in style than ABN's Brahmaputra river cruises or Diphlu River Lodge, our renowned standards of service prevail at The Bansbari Lodge as well. Our smiling staff includes an excellent chef who produces delicious home-cooked meals, be they of local Assamese cuisine, north Indian, Chinese or Continental origin.

MANAS NATIONAL PARK

2005 was the Centenary Year for Manas, elevated to National Park status in 1990. It was declared a Project Tiger Reserve in 1973, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, and because of its beauty and importance to the environment was made a Biosphere Reserve in 1989. It is indeed breathtakingly beautiful, situated between the Sankos river in the west and the Dhansiri river in the east. Bounded by Himalayan foothills, the dense jungle forest alternates with grasslands, savannah woodland and semi-evergreen forests, providing a rich wilderness for a great variety of wildlife, including many endangered species. The Tiger Project reserve extends over an area of 2837 square kilometres with a core area of 519 sq. kms.

Bear, as well as less assertive creatures such as many varieties of deer, Capped Langurs, Assamese Macaques, Slow Loris, and Hoolock Gibbons. A translocation programme is currently reintroducing rhino to the park.

Birds at Manas

Due to its climatic conditions and topography, Manas is home to many bird species, both resident and migratory. Amongst these are the Bengal Florican, Giant Hornbill, Jungle Fowls, Bulbul, Brahminy Duck, Khaleej Pheasant, Egret, Pelican, Fishing Eagle, Serpent Eagle, Falcon, Scarlet Minivet, Bee-eater, Kingfisher, Magpie Robin, Pied Hornbill, Gray Hornbill, Merganser, Harrier, Osprey, Heron, Buzzard, Lapwing, Plover, Sandpiper, Snipe, River Tern, Woodpecker, Warbler, Chat, Thrush, Tit, etc.

Elephant and Jeep Jungle Safaris

Manas spans a huge and varied area and there is much to see. We offer game-viewing excursions on elephant back and open jeep, both



booked in advance through us. The elephant ride in the early morning through the grasslands is a unique experience. It is subject to availability on the day, as first priority is given to patrolling by the park authorities.

JEEP DRIVES For the jeep ride we offer 60 or 90 kilometre drives. The shorter route through grassland and forest is from The Bansbari Lodge-Lotajhar-Mothanguri-Gyati-Uchilla-Kuribheel-Buraburi and return; the 90 kilometre itinerary is of especial interest to the birdwatcher, takes in the area around the village of Koklabari, which is now being developed as a bird-watching area, then through jungle to Alabari and Namlang. There are a number of watch towers built by the forest department on both these routes. In addition ABN is endeavouring to open up new routes to combine with these, working in conjunction with the jungle authorities.

River Rafting

Some of the animals that come out on the banks of the river Manas,

you can see Bodo women weaving their traditional fabrics and observe village life at close quarters.

Tribal Dance

At The Bansbari Lodge we arrange traditional dance performances of the local Bodo and tea tribes, where our guests greatly enjoy sitting round a camp fire watching age-old stories of rural life unfold through dance. These performances are a regular feature for residents, particularly for groups.

Best time to visit

The tourist season runs from October through to the end of April, and ABN's Lodge is open throughout this time. Peak time to visit the park is between November and early March.

Climate

Days can be quite warm in October, March and April with cooler evenings. During these months, particularly in April, a few showers



such as wild buffalo, deer and herds of elephants, can best be seen from the safety and serenity of a rubber boat which commences its ride from Mothanguri and ends about 35km away at Bispani, from where you will be picked up by pre-arranged transport. The boat men are very experienced.

Jungle Walk

The walk starts near the Mothanguri Forest Lodge and initially follows the bank of the Manas river, where there is the best chance of seeing several species of birds. Later the route turns from the river to follow an animal trail through dense jungle foliage underneath the high forest canopy where Capped Langur and even the rare Golden Langur may be seen. This walk is accompanied by forest guards and a naturalist.

A gentle walk on your own through the Tea Estate opposite the Lodge in the cool of the evening is also an enchanting experience.

Visits to Bodo villages

The Bodo tribe, indigenous to Assam, have a rich culture of textile, handloom and music. We organize walks through the villages where

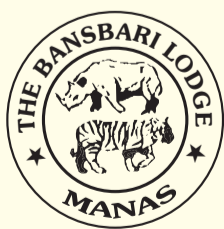
are to be expected. From December to the end of February it can be quite cold, particularly at night when the temperature can drop to a single digit and jackets or pullovers are needed after sunset.

During the day in these months the temperature hovers around a very pleasant 18° C.

Getting to The Bansbari Lodge

The Lodge is 176 km from Guwahati and takes 4 hours by road. Guwahati is the nearest airport, well-served both by direct flights from Kolkata, Delhi and Mumbai and by international flights from Bangkok. The nearest railhead is at Barpeta Road, 20 kms away. Taxis are available at Barpeta Road and from Guwahati and we can organize to pick up from either place with prior notice.

Our Diphlu River Lodge at Kaziranga National Park is some 7 hrs. drive away. The Bhutan land border at Phuntsoling/Jaldapara is approx. 10 hrs. driving time, while the exit point from Bhutan at Samdrup Jongkhar is just 3 hrs. away.



The Bansbari Lodge
3B, Dirang Arcade, G.N.B. Road
Chandmari, Guwahati - 781003, Assam, India
Tel: +91 9207042330 -31, +91 3612667871 / 72 / 73
E-Mail: assambengal@rediffmail.com OR sales@assambengal.in
UK representative office
Assam Bengal Navigation
1 Main St., Lyddington Oakham, Rutland, LE 15 9LR, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1572 821121, Fax: +44 (0) 1572 821072
E-mail: assambengal@aol.com

In association with :



Photo courtesy: Servin Warden, Andrew Brock, Jan Knaapen & Ashish Phookan



www.assambengalnavigation.com