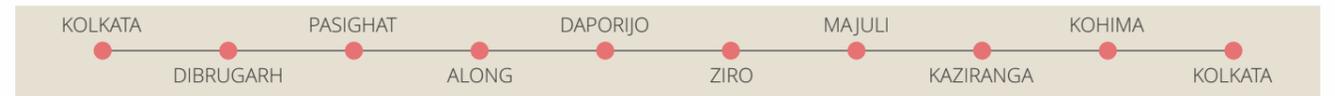




EST3 > 15 DAY TOUR

## INDIGENOUS NORTHEAST

India has one of the largest indigenous populations in the world with 7.5 % of its 1.2 billion population classified as tribal. That makes the tribal population of India more than the entire population of the United Kingdom. The maximum tribal population in India is found in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and the eight north eastern states (Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim). The highlight of this itinerary is the remote state of Arunachal Pradesh in northeast India. It is also home to 26 major tribes and 100 sub tribes, each with their own distinct identity. Much of this landlocked state is out of bounds for foreigners due to its proximity with China, but new areas are now being opened up slowly. The terrain is hard but there are rewards too – dense forests, deep valleys, winding rivers, roaring cascades, tranquil lakes and tiny villages sitting pretty on mountain tops. Welcome to the final frontier of Indian tourism that very few tread.



### Insider Tips:

- In the east and north-eastern part of India, it starts getting dark by 16:30 hours. Day break is at 04:30 hours. Plan the day accordingly.
- Best time for this itinerary: 15 November to 30 April.
- For the past 200 years, Majuli has been celebrating the Raas Festival every November, where the life and times of the Hindu God Krishna are celebrated in all-night live performances that last for three days. It is a great time to be in Majuli. Stay here for two nights. Accommodation options in Majuli are basic, but neat and clean.
- The Assamese New Year falls during mid-April. Great time to be around to participate in the festivities, music and dance.
- Mopin Festival of the Galo Tribe is celebrated at Along during March-April every year when they worship Mopin Ane – the Goddess of Wealth and rub rice flour on their faces as a part of the celebrations.
- Sekrenyi Festival of the Angami Nagas is celebrated over 10-days with its many ceremonies and rituals during the month of February every year near Kohima. It is a purification festival where the 'body and soul' of the village are cleansed. It also marks the initiation of young Angami Nagas to adulthood. It harks back to the Angami Nagas' pre-Christian beliefs and traditions in Nagaland which now has the world's largest Baptist Christian population.
- Best time for a Tea Experience: April to November when both the plantation and factory are humming with activities. December, January, February and March are quiet, though one can still enjoy the verdant plantation. Watch pruning and other activities, and while the workers prepare for season, you can still visit the factory and get in some tea-tasting sessions.
- The Kaziranga and Dibru Saikhowa National Park open on November 01 and close on 30 April every year.



## TOUR ITINERARY | EST 3

### DAY 01 ARRIVAL KOLKATA

Warm welcome at the airport by our representative and transfer to the hotel.

### DAY 02 IN KOLKATA

Start the day by having breakfast at Flurys. Founded in the year 1927, and modelled on an English Tea-house, Flurys is an institution in Kolkata. Spend the day exploring this city of amiable contrasts, taking in sites such as the Victoria Memorial, Dalhousie Square, the Writer's Building etc., and getting to know its colonial history.

### DAY 03 KOLKATA – DIBRUGARH

Fly to Dibrugarh and stay in a 160-year-old tea bungalow. In the evening, enjoy a traditional dance performance by a local group on the bungalow lawns.

### DAY 04 DIBRUGARH – TINSUKIA

Take a tour of a tea estate to learn about the tea industry of Assam which produces over half of India's tea and accounts for over 12% of the annual global tea yield. This will be followed by a tea tasting session with an expert. Later, drive to Tinsukia. Spend two nights in a 90-year-old tea bungalow near the Dibru Saikhowa National Park.

### DAY 05 IN TINSUKIA

Explore the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Maguri Beel – both fantastic places for birding.

### DAY 06 TINSUKIA – DIBRUGARH – PASIGHAT

Take the ferry from Dibrugarh to cross over to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh – the home of the Adi Tribe – by the river Siang. Visit the village with their thatched-roof houses tightly clustered along the slopes or on hilltops. Most of them still follow the animistic religion of Donyi-Polo – worshipping the sun and moon. The Adi people are subsistence farmers, which makes them largely self-sufficient with all their rice fields, orange orchards and hunting.

### DAY 07 PASIGHAT – ALONG

Drive to picturesque Along – the home of the Galo Tribe who follow a unique tradition of naming their children. The last syllable of the father's name is used as the first syllable of the child's name. This method, practised since time immemorial, has helped them in remembering their ancestors.

### DAY 08 ALONG – DAPORIJO

Drive to Daporijo – the home of the Tagin Tribe – where marriages are patrilineal and polygamy is well-practiced in the society. They have

their own legal institution and are also known for their traditional medicines.

### DAY 09 DAPORIJO – ZIRO

Drive to Ziro, the home of the Apatani Tribe, who grow rice and rear fish together in their paddy fields. The uneven valley of Ziro is also the venue for the Ziro Music Festival which brings together music lovers from all over India to this mesmerising landscape.

### DAY 10 IN ZIRO

Explore the Apatani villages of Ziro Valley. There are options of day hikes for those who may be interested. An additional night at Ziro is required for this.

### DAY 11 ZIRO – MAJULI

Wake up early today to immerse in the splendid isolation of Majuli, Asia's largest freshwater island accessible only by a ferry ride on the Brahmaputra river. Considered the hub of Assamese culture, it is home to the medieval Xatras (monasteries) where monks lead an austere life mastering religious scripts, art, music, dance and handicraft.

### DAY 12 MAJULI – KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Cross over to Neemati Ghat in a

## KEBANG

The Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has its own republican system of administration called the Kebang. All adult villagers are its members. Cases of both civil and criminal nature are put up before the Kebang by the contending parties backed by their fellow clansmen and supporters. The Abus guide the speakers and interpret the laws. The aim of Kebang is to make all parties agree to a compromise and not to enforce any judgment. Once a decision is taken in a Kebang its implementation is automatic.



ferry and drive to the Kaziranga National Park, home of the one-horned Rhino. Afternoon: Game Drive on Jeeps.

### DAY 13 KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK – KOHIMA

Early morning elephant ride. Later, drive to Kohima, famous for the Battle of the Tennis Court between the Allied Forces and the Japanese during World War II. Time permitting, visit the Kohima Cathedral, unique for incorporating many elements of traditional Naga houses.

### DAY 14 IN KOHIMA

Visit the World War II cemetery and the museum. Also visit the 700-year-old Khonoma Village of the Angami tribe that never cuts trees or allows hunting. There are also options for day hikes for those who may be interested. An additional night at Kohima is required for this.

### DAY 15 KOHIMA – DIMAPUR – KOLKATA – DEPARTURE

Drive to Dimapur and fly to Kolkata. Day-use rooms are provided until it is time for the onward flight.

## THE HORNBILL FESTIVAL, KOHIMA, NAGALAND

Nagaland celebrates the Hornbill Festival every year from December 01-10 in Kohima. It is a very colourful and fascinating festival which showcases all the major ethnic tribes of Nagaland – their customs, traditions, heritage, food, costumes, handicraft et al.

Dimapur, the nearest airport to Kohima, has daily non-stop flights to and from Kolkata. Three nights is good enough to enjoy the festival.

Accommodation options in Kohima during Hornbill Festival are basic, neat and clean starting at USD 60 per room per night or uber luxurious glamping option starting at USD 1500 per person, per night. There are no mid-range options. Remember to book your accommodation way in advance because of the limited inventory of hotels in Kohima.



Arunachal is a cold and humid state.



There are 26 major tribes, more than 100 sub tribes, and 90 tribal dialects spoken in Arunachal Pradesh