



BARI KOTHI
AZIMGANJ, MURSHIDABAD

THE EXPERIENCE

MURSHIDABAD

The Forgotten Capital of Bengal

Situated on the banks of the Bhagirathi, Murshidabad once served as the last seat of independent Bengal's power. This was a city that governed, traded, and shaped destinies long before history took a different course. Under the Nawabs of Bengal, Murshidabad rose as one of the most prosperous regions of the eighteenth century. Merchants arrived from across India and beyond, bringing with them wealth, ideas, and influence. At its height, this region accounted for over five per cent of the world's GDP, an almost unimaginable measure of relevance today. What survives now is quieter, but no less commanding. The past has settled into courtyards, riverbanks, rituals, and ruins that do not seek attention. Murshidabad does not preserve its history. It allows you to step into it.

Some places are visited.

Murshidabad is entered.



SHEHERWALI

A community shaped by cultural adaptation

Several centuries ago, a community of enterprising businessmen from Rajasthan migrated to Murshidabad, a land of opportunity at the time. Known as the Sheherwalis, they built influential empires in textiles, banking, and trade, eventually rising to the status of Zamindars. Over generations, the Sheherwalis adapted to the prevailing Mughal, British, Bengali, and European influences of the region, shaping a distinctive cultural identity formed through assimilation rather than origin. The community settled largely in Azimganj and Jiaganj, towns that became renowned for their immense wealth, said to exceed that of the British aristocracy of the time. Among the most notable Sheherwalis was Jagat Seth, a title meaning "universal banker," bestowed by the Mughal Empire, and regarded as one of the wealthiest individuals of his era.



MURSHIDABAD: THE DOWNFALL

All the Palaces, temples and mosques were abandoned

After the Battle of Plassey, Murshidabad began to lose its wealth and prominence. The capital of Bengal shifted from Murshidabad to Calcutta, and with it moved the region's economic and political centre, leading to gradual decline and eventual abandonment. Once known for its immense prosperity, Murshidabad came to be referred to as the "Unknown Wealth Capital of the World" and the "Forgotten Capital of Bengal." Many Sheherwalis relocated to Calcutta, leaving behind their ancestral homes. Palaces were closed, and temples and mosques, once vibrant with life, were abandoned and left to time.



THE RESURRECTION

Bari Kothi becomes the First Palace to be restored to its former glory!

Bari Kothi became the first palace in Murshidabad to be restored to its former glory. The restoration was led by Canadian restoration specialist Architect Samar Chandra over a period of five years. Speaking about the process, Dr Chandra notes that the greatest challenge lies in the region's limited access to skilled masons, artisans, plumbers, and engineers. The family's commitment to reviving the local ecosystem further shaped the project, making it both demanding and distinctive. From the careful restoration of teakwood beams to the revival of vintage furniture, every aspect of Bari Kothi was approached with close attention to detail. The primary objective of the restoration was not merely renewal, but the preservation and presentation of the stories that define Bari Kothi.



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Bari Kothi became the first palace in Murshidabad to be restored to its former glory. The objective of the restoration was not merely to revive the structure, but to restore the soul of Bari Kothi. To achieve this, it was essential to create a self-sustaining ecosystem that would allow the property to endure for generations to come. This vision led to the creation of Murshidabad's first Rustic Luxury Heritage Hotel, where preservation, continuity, and lived experience come together.



You are undertaking a labour of love in re-opening Bari Kothi and bringing it to life again. It is a fascinating process to witness and to be in. - Edward Hollis (UK)



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The First Heritage Hotel of Murshidabad

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Built in 1774, Bari Kothi was the erstwhile residence of the Dudhuria Raj family and today stands as Murshidabad's first heritage hotel. The property offers thoughtfully curated itineraries that explore both the tangible and intangible heritage of the region. Located on the banks of the river Ganga, Bari Kothi features 15 distinctive suites, complemented by immersive guest experiences that reflect the history, culture, and spirit of Murshidabad.



I am really pleased that I came to Bari Kothi. It was an oasis by the great river at the end of a hectic trip. - Malcolm Hewitt (UK)

BADA AANGAN

The central courtyard of Bari Kothi, where the house comes together.



GADDI GHAR

*A space of governance and exchange, defined by
Rajasthani architectural influences.*



*A wonderful introduction to the history and culture of the house
and family. - Maurice Robson (Australia)*

KAHAANI GHAR

*A room of stories, conversation,
and quiet reflection.*



*The most interesting time I have spent in India.
The personal storytelling made the experience very special.
- Sabeeka Gangjee Well (Germany)*

AMTALA

*The courtyard that animates
the spirit of Bari Kothi.*



BARI KOTHI GHAT

*A rare private riverfront, extending a hundred
feet into the Ganga.*





SUITES

More than a place to stay, each suite offers an experience shaped by history and lived stories.

HERITAGE SUITES

Our base category suites, thoughtfully designed with traditional interiors and antique furnishings, are complemented by modern amenities for contemporary comfort.



Rooms are very well decorated and bed was very comfortable. - De Montferrand (France)

ROYAL HERITAGE SUITE

*Opening to views of the Sheesh Mahal,
the Royal Heritage Suites feature 250-year-old
antique furniture, high ceilings, and richly
layered fabrics.*



MAHARAJA HERITAGE SUITE

The highest category at Bari Kothi, the Maharaja Heritage Suites draw from the architectural and cultural legacy of Murshidabad. Featuring carved archways, traditional furniture, and sunken baths, each suite is distinct in character and composition.



*It feels as though we are sharing your heritage.
- Amanda Richmond (UK)*



DINING

The cuisine at Bari Kothi draws from Sheherwali culinary traditions and the refined flavours of Bengal, shaped by generations of household and courtly practice. Dining unfolds across the property, with breakfast by the Ganga, lunch in the Naubat Khana, dinner at Zareen Mahal, and a Gala dinner in the Darbar Hall, each space offering a distinct setting and rhythm.



GUEST EXPERIENCES & ITINERARIES

Thoughtfully curated itineraries, designed around each guest's interests, pace, and curiosity.

HERITAGE ITINERARY

A thoughtfully curated sightseeing experience designed exclusively for guests staying at Bari Kothi, offering an immersive introduction to Murshidabad's architectural, cultural, and historical legacy.

The itinerary includes:

- Visits to 250-year-old terracotta temples
- An exploration of Murshidabad's Nawabi past, including
 1. Hazarduari Palace Complex o Katra Mosque
 2. Kathgola Palace
 3. Nasipur Rajbari
 4. The House of Jagat Seth
 5. Khoshbagh
 6. Roshnibagh
- A visit to the revered Kiriteswari Temple

This itinerary presents Murshidabad through its landmarks, stories, and enduring heritage, experienced at a considered pace.



We have been very spoilt! It has been the most impressive to see your hard work and dream coming true! - Martin Atcherley (Germany)

TEXTILE ITINERARY

An encounter with Murshidabad's enduring silk legacy, experienced through its historic weaving centres.

The itinerary includes:

- Tantipara, known for its tradition of silk weaving
- Islampur, associated with sericulture and the weaving of Murshidabad silk



CULTURAL ITINERARY

- Participation in Raibeshe, Murshidabad's traditional folk martial dance, experienced through live performance and interaction
- An intimate Fakiri and Baul music session, engaging with musicians and their living traditions
- Guided interaction with members of the local community, offering insight into everyday cultural practices and shared histories





A SIGNATURE BARI KOTHI EXPERIENCE

Designed for the first-time, exploratory traveller to Murshidabad, this signature itinerary offers a comprehensive introduction to the region's layered history, living traditions, and cultural landscapes. Offered over a three-night stay, the experience brings together the highlights of Bari Kothi's Heritage, Textile, and Cultural itineraries, allowing guests to encounter Murshidabad in its entirety—at an unhurried and considered pace.

ITINERARIES

- **Guest Experiences**
*At Bari Kothi, we do not sell rooms.
We curate experiences.*
- **The 'I Want to See It All' Itinerary**
*A thoughtfully designed journey that
captures the essence of Murshidabad
through its architecture, craft, culture,
and everyday life.*



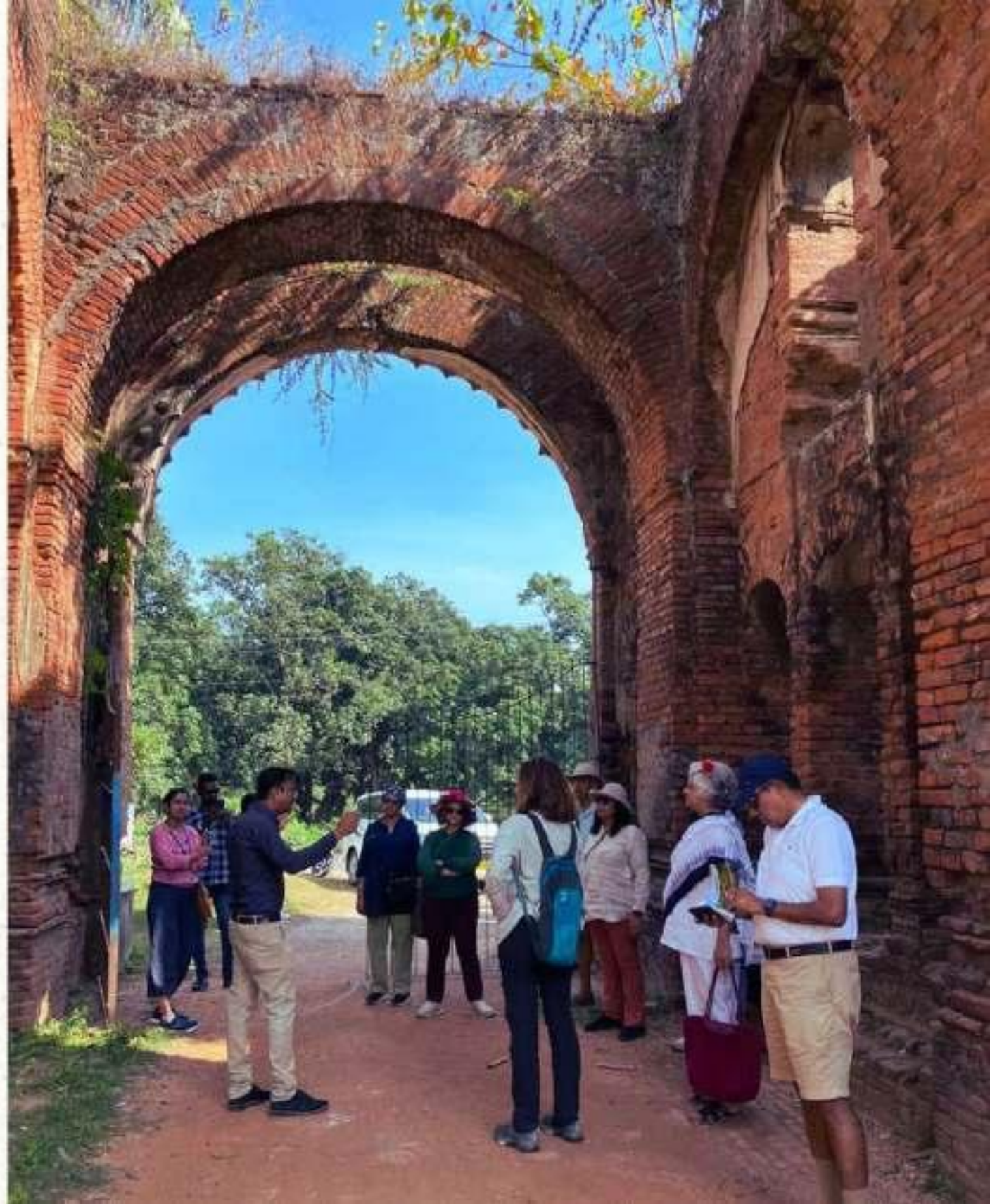
ITINERARIES

- **Storytelling**

At Bari Kothi, stories are as central as spaces. Enjoy the unique Wall Conversations.

- **Heritage Walk**

Curated walks through Azimganj, exploring over 300-year-old palaces, temples, mosques, and the rhythms of village life that continue alongside them.



ITINERARIES

- **Tea on the Ganges**

A signature Bari Kothi experience, featuring a quiet river journey on traditional bamboo country boats, accompanied by masala chai and intimate storytelling along the Ganga.

- **Cultural Evenings**

Evenings dedicated to local artistic traditions, featuring Fakiri, Raibeshe, and Baul performances, celebrate the region's living cultural heritage.



SUGGESTED TRAVEL PATHWAYS

Where Murshidabad fits into a larger journey

- **Rural Bengal**

Kolkata – Bishnupur – Shantiniketan – Murshidabad

- **Colonial India**

Kolkata – Chandannagar / Serampore
– Murshidabad – Darjeeling

- **Spiritual Bengal**

Kolkata – Tarapith – Murshidabad – Mayapur

- **The Story of Bengal**

Kolkata – Murshidabad – Bawali

- **Textile Trail**

Kolkata – Phulia – Murshidabad
– Shantiniketan / Bishnupur

- **Further Extensions**

Varanasi

Odisha

North East India



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

At the heart of Bari Kothi

At Bari Kothi, community is a commitment, not an initiative. From the outset, the revival of the palace has been inseparable from the revival of the people around it. Our team is drawn largely from the local community, carefully trained and empowered to grow and pass on their skills. This creates a living, self-sustaining ecosystem where hospitality is genuine, and heritage is lived, not performed. By nurturing the community, Bari Kothi preserves not only a historic house, but a way of life.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

Location: Azimganj lies 220 km north of Kolkata, where the river slows, and history settles.

By Rail

Well-connected from Howrah Station

Balughat Express (07:50 hrs)

Intercity Express (15:15 hrs)

Several weekly services operate on this route

By Air

Kolkata – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport

Durgapur – Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport (RDP)

By Road

Approximately a six-hour drive from Kolkata

Best Time to Visit

October to March



LOCATE US



Locate Kolkata



Find Azamganj From Kolkata



BARI KOTHI

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