



# GREAT CITIES BY THE RIVER

By Nidhi Misra

## LONDON

London is the UK's largest and most populous metropolitan area and the largest urban zone in the European Union by most measures.

A major settlement for two millennia, its history goes back to its founding by the Romans, who called it Londinium. London's core, the ancient City of London, the 'square mile' financial district, retains its mediaeval boundaries. Since at least the nineteenth century, the name "London" has also referred to the metropolis developed around it.

London contains four World Heritage Sites: the Tower of London; the historic settlement of Greenwich; the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; and the site comprising the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church. The river Thames gives its name to several administrative / political names:

London Bridge is a bridge between the City of London and Southwark in London, U.K., over the River Thames. The current bridge opened on 17 March 1973 and is the latest in a succession of bridges to occupy the spot and claim the name.

On the London stretch alone - from Teddinton to Thamesmead - there are 29 bridges that cross it. Of these, London Bridge was the original crossing but Tower Bridge is arguably the most iconic - with its hydraulically operated bascule action splitting the

bridge in two, allowing tall ships to pass.

The river has long been used for sporting events with annual rowing races like the Oxford and Cambridge Boat



Race and Henley Regatta carried out along its stretch. In Henley, the River & Rowing

Museum explores the history of the city's water ways while the Museum of London Docklands in the East End the focus is on the old working docks.

# PARIS

From the Louvre to the Eiffel Tower, from the Place de la Concorde to the Grand and Petit Palais, the evolution of Paris and its history can be seen from the River Seine. The Cathedral of Notre-Dame and the Sainte Chapelle are architectural masterpieces while Haussmann's wide squares and boulevards influenced late 19th- and 20th-century town planning the world over.

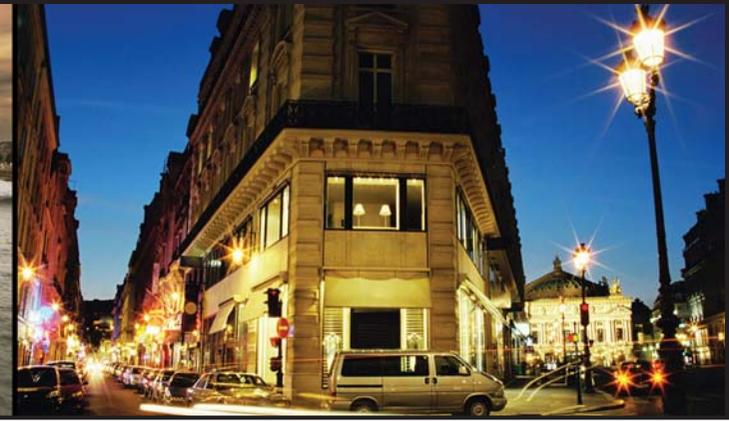
The waters of the River Seine have always been the heart and soul of

Paris, dating back to the days when the Parisii tribe first established a fishing village on the island now known as Île de la Cité — between 250 and 200 B.C. The Seine has been a great commercial artery, linked by canals to the Loire, Rhine, and Rhône rivers.

Officially established as the capital city by Clovis, king of the Franks, Paris evolved into a cultural center and a showcase of glorious architecture. It is appropriate that the center of Paris — particularly that section gracing the Seine around Île de la Cité and Île Saint-Louis — features some of the city's oldest and most majestic historic

monuments. For the past half-century, perhaps one of the most relaxing and expedient ways to view these sights in all their grandeur has been from the glass-covered decks of the bateaux-mouches, those unique long-boats leisurely plying the Seine, from whose vantage point millions of tourists have acquired their considerable appreciation for all that Paris has to offer.

The Eiffel Tower a 19th century iron lattice tower located on the Champ de Mars in Paris and a global icon of France provides a panoramic view of the city and river.



# ROME

The city of Rome is located in the central-western portion of the Italian Peninsula, on the Tiber river within the Lazio region of Italy. The city has been one of history's most powerful and important centres, being the home of the emperor during the Roman Empire and the modern seat of the Italian government. The city also has a significant place in Christianity and is the present day home of the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope, and the site of the Vatican City, an independent city-state run by the Catholic Church. A special event took place on June 27, 2005 on the banks of the river Tiber -- which winds its

way through the Eternal City. The river banks were spruced up and on the night of the summer solstice were lit with 2,758 torches, equal to the number of years since the city was founded.

The event was part of a series of efforts to bring people back to the river. Art from Rome's mythic past had been etched into the Tiber's flood walls and a beach was installed not far from the Vatican. A walk towards the river Tiber and next to the Pantheon one will find Piazza Navona, an oblong rectangle with three fountains. The Pantheon is a classic Roman temple from 27 BC, with a round dome. The center fountain is the infamous Four Rivers by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, where each four rivers (Nile, Ganges, Danube and Rio del Platas) make distinct ges-

tures to the church in front of them. The rectangle shape of Piazza Navona has its own history. It takes its shape from the Stadium of Domitian, 86 AD—a racetrack whose remains are under the piazza.

One can take in the sights and splendour of Rome as one cruise along the Tiber River through the heart of this ancient city. Wonderful views of famous landmarks such as St Paul's Basilica and the almost three thousand years of amazing Roman history can put your life's perspective on to a different level. Saint Peter's Cathedral is the largest Catholic church in the world. Well over one hundred years of design and building went into the structure, along with thousands of works of art.



# CAIRO

Most people tend to be familiar with the lower Nile as it runs through Cairo and the rest of Egypt. Without question this is the most wonderful part of the river, particularly from a historic perspective. Cairo the capital of Egypt is largest city in the Middle East and in Africa, Cairo knew settlements as long ago as 6,000 years. The roots of the modern city, however, date from A.D. 969, when Muslim invaders from Tunisia secured and enlarged the site. Major growth came in the 19th century with the opening of the Suez Canal, extending Cairo's dominant status as a hub of trade with Europe, Asia, and Africa. Cairo literally translates to 'the

victorious' and it also called Misr, meaning 'Egypt'. Agriculture is the country's economic mainstay due to its proximity to the Nile. Revenue flows from mining, industry, trade, finance, and tourism, which, despite concerns over political unrest, has substantially rebounded. In recent decades Cairo has seen extreme growth. Cairo remains a great city for its size, traditions, learning, and culture.

If you thought that a trip to Egypt meant only a visit to the Pyramids, then think again, as going to Egypt and missing out on the Nile River Cruises is indeed regrettable! This beautiful African nation has a lot to offer.

The Nile River Cruise will let you peek into the Egyptian village life. The countryside, still very ancient in the way that people live in clay huts, plough fields manually and use animal pulled carts as vehicles, can be viewed first hand.



# SÃO PAULO

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# KOLKATA

Kolkata was founded 1686–90 by Job Charnock of the East India Company as a trading post. The Hooghly River provided access to the economic and political heartland of India; Fort William was built in 1696 to protect this trading position, and the settlement expanded rapidly by trading in opium, indigo, textiles, and fine cotton. Bengal is a land criss-crossed by

rivers and rivulets and the city of Kolkata has the holy river Ganges which flows right through the heart of this stupendous city. Bengal still occupies the numero uno position as far as country made boats are concerned, which is a popular medium of transport for many. Historically, the boatmen of Bengal are a unique lot. Their slow, uncluttered and philosophical outlook on life

has been the subject of rich Bengali folklore. A lot of films too have been made depicting the strange lifestyle of Bengal's boatmen. The film "Padma Nadir Majhi", directed by renowned film maker - Goutam Ghosh is a case in point. In Kolkata, on the banks of river Hooghly, you will come across many jetties or Ghats (as they are referred to in the local parlance)

like Princep Ghat, Outram Ghat, Armenian Ghat etc. from where you can embark on short trips. A boat trip down the perennial Hooghly river can be a very rewarding experience, providing you with panoramic views of the Kolkata metropolis.

On a trip down the Hooghly river from Kolkata to Murshidabad you will come across places like Bandel, Pallesy, Chandannagore and a whole lot of former European colonial towns, all of which exude a rich sense of history.

As you bask in the glory of Bengal's rich virile past, the sight of distant boats with their colorful sails fluttering across the gentle breeze, truly makes for a kaleidoscopic vignette.

