

Trip Itinerary: varanasi (From lucknow)

1 TRIP OVERVIEW

Welcome to Varanasi, the spiritual heart of India! This 2-day itinerary is crafted for four travelers on a budget of \$200, focusing on rich cultural immersion, authentic local food, and unforgettable experiences in this ancient city.

- **Destination:** Varanasi (Kashi), Uttar Pradesh, India
- **Duration:** 2 Days (with travel on either side)
- **Dates:** January 24, 2026 - January 26, 2026
- **Travelers:** 4 Adults
- **Interests:** Culture, Food, Local Experiences
- **Weather:** Expect pleasant, sunny days around 24°C (75°F) with cooler mornings and evenings, ideal for sightseeing.
- **Total Estimated Cost:** \$187 USD (approx. ₹15,500 INR), leaving a small buffer within your \$200 budget.

2 TRAVEL & ARRIVAL (Lucknow to Varanasi)

Considering your budget of \$200 for 4 travelers for the entire trip, choosing the most economical and efficient mode of transport from Lucknow to Varanasi is crucial.

- **Flights (Lucknow - Varanasi):** While available, flights are significantly more expensive and would consume a large portion of your \$200 budget. The stated duration of 5h 40m also suggests it's not significantly faster door-to-door once airport transfers are factored in. **Not recommended for this budget.**
- **Buses (UPSRTC, RedBus etc.):** Buses are a budget-friendly option. However, specific prices and durations were not provided. They can be comfortable, but for a 4-hour journey, trains often offer more space and better facilities.
- **Trains:** Trains are highly recommended for this route. They are cost-effective, offer a comfortable journey, and connect Lucknow and Varanasi efficiently. The estimated journey time is **4 hours 14 minutes**.

Recommendation: Train is the best and most budget-friendly option for your group.

- **Estimated Cost:** For 4 travelers, a **Sleeper Class (SL)** ticket (non-AC, but comfortable for a day journey) would typically range from ₹250-400 per person one-way.
 - **Budget for Train Travel:** ₹300 per person x 4 people x 2 ways = ₹2,400 (approx. \$29 USD).
 - **Tip:** Book your train tickets well in advance (30-60 days prior) via the IRCTC website or app to secure seats, especially for popular routes.

3 ACCOMMODATION

The provided hotel options (Suryauday Haveli, BrijRama Palace) are likely premium properties and would exceed your budget of approximately \$100 per night for 4 people.

Recommendation: To stay within budget, focus on **budget-friendly guesthouses, hostels with private rooms, or small hotels** offering family rooms or two double rooms. Look for options in central areas like Godowlia, Assi Ghat, or near Dashashwamedh Ghat for easy access to attractions.

- **Estimated Cost:** Aim for ₹2500-3500 per night for a clean, basic, and well-located room for 4.
 - **Budget for 2 Nights:** ₹6,000 (approx. \$72 USD) (averaging ₹3000 per night).
 - **Booking:** Utilize platforms like Booking.com or Agoda, filtering by price and checking recent reviews. Contact guesthouses directly for potential group discounts.
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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Get ready for an immersive journey into the heart of Varanasi!

DAY 1: Arrival & Ganga Aarti Spectacle (January 24, 2026)

- **Morning (6:00 AM - 1:00 PM): Travel from Lucknow to Varanasi**
 - **Activity:** Depart from Lucknow Charbagh Railway Station (LKO) on an early morning train. Enjoy the journey through the Uttar Pradesh landscape. Have breakfast packed from Lucknow or grab simple snacks at the station.
 - **Local Transport:** Auto-rickshaw or taxi to Lucknow station (cost depends on your origin in Lucknow).
 - **Local Costs:** Train tickets (already budgeted in travel), Breakfast on the train (approx. ₹100-150 per person for snacks/tea).
 - **Arrival:** Arrive at Varanasi Junction (BSB) or Manduadih (MV) station by late morning/early afternoon.
- **Afternoon (1:00 PM - 5:00 PM): Check-in & Ghat Exploration**
 - **Activity:** Take an auto-rickshaw to your pre-booked accommodation. Check-in, freshen up, and head straight to **Dasaswamedh Ghat**, the most vibrant and central ghat. Spend time observing the daily rituals, the myriad of sadhus (holy men), and the lively atmosphere.
 - **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Auto-rickshaw from Varanasi station to your hotel/ghat area: approx. ₹150-250 (negotiate for 4 people). Walking extensively around the ghats.
 - **LOCAL COSTS:** Lunch: Indulge in local street food like *Kachori Sabzi*, *Chole Bhature*, or a simple thali at a local eatery. Approx. ₹100-150 per person.
- **Evening (5:00 PM - 8:00 PM): Ganga Aarti at Dasaswamedh Ghat**
 - **Activity:** Find a good spot at Dasaswamedh Ghat to witness the mesmerizing **Ganga Aarti ceremony**. Arrive early (by 5:00-5:30 PM) to secure a good view. This is a profound cultural and spiritual experience with chanting, lamps, and incense.
 - **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Walk from your accommodation if nearby, or a short auto-rickshaw ride (approx. ₹50-100).
 - **LOCAL COSTS:** Free to watch the Aarti. Consider a small voluntary donation if you wish.

- **Dinner (8:00 PM onwards): Local Delights**

- **Activity:** Explore the narrow lanes (galis) around the ghats for dinner. Try local Varanasi specialties like the tangy *Tamar Chaat*, crispy *Pani Puri*, and finish with a famous *Banarasi Paan* (betel leaf preparation).
- **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Walking.
- **LOCAL COSTS:** Dinner: Approx. ₹100-200 per person for street food/local restaurant.

DAY 2: Sunrise, Spiritual Journey & Foodie Trail (January 25, 2026)

- **Morning (5:30 AM - 9:00 AM): Sunrise Boat Ride & Ghat Hopping**

- **Activity:** Wake up before dawn and head to Assi Ghat or Dasaswamedh Ghat for a magical **sunrise boat ride on the Ganges**. Witness the city come alive with devotees performing rituals, bathing, and offering prayers. Your boatman will take you past various important ghats like Manikarnika (the sacred burning ghat) and Harishchandra Ghat.
- **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Auto-rickshaw to the ghat (approx. ₹50-100). Boat ride.
- **LOCAL COSTS:** Shared boat ride: Approx. ₹100-250 per person. Total for 4: ₹400-1000 (approx. \$4.80 - \$12 USD). Negotiate the price before boarding.

- **Late Morning (9:00 AM - 1:00 PM): Assi Ghat & Temple Visit**

- **Activity:** After the boat ride, spend some time at **Assi Ghat**, known for its serene atmosphere and cultural activities. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast. You can then visit a prominent temple like **Sankat Mochan Hanuman Temple** or the **Durga Temple**, or simply explore the vibrant lanes leading to the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** (view from outside if not entering due to potential queues/restrictions for non-Hindus).
- **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Walking, or auto-rickshaw between locations (approx. ₹50-100 per ride).
- **LOCAL COSTS:** Breakfast: Try the famous *Malaiyo* (a seasonal winter dessert) or a hearty breakfast at a cafe near Assi Ghat. Approx. ₹100-150 per person. Temple entry is mostly free.

- **Afternoon (1:00 PM - 5:00 PM): Local Markets & Food Exploration**

- **Activity:** Wander through the bustling local markets (e.g., Godowlia market) for souvenirs, local crafts, silk sarees, and religious items. This is also an excellent time for a dedicated food tour, trying different local snacks and sweets.
- **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Walking, or auto-rickshaw (approx. ₹50-100).
- **LOCAL COSTS:** Lunch: More street food or a simple meal at a local restaurant. Try *Litti Chokha* or a *thali*. Approx. ₹100-150 per person. Shopping costs depend on individual purchases.

- **Evening (5:00 PM onwards): Leisure & Departure Prep**

- **Activity:** Enjoy a final sunset view from a ghat, relax at a rooftop café overlooking the Ganges, or revisit a favorite spot. Pack and prepare for your departure the next morning.
- **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Walking.
- **LOCAL COSTS:** Dinner: Try *Thandai* (a local milk-based drink) and more street food or a sit-down meal. Approx. ₹150-250 per person.

DAY 3: Farewell Varanasi & Departure (January 26, 2026)

- Morning (7:00 AM - 12:00 PM): Final Moments & Travel Back

- **Activity:** Enjoy a relaxed breakfast. Depending on your train schedule, you might have time for some last-minute souvenir shopping or a quick visit to a nearby spot you missed. Check out from your hotel.
- **LOCAL TRANSPORT:** Auto-rickshaw to Varanasi station (approx. ₹150-250).
- **LOCAL COSTS:** Breakfast: Approx. ₹100-150 per person. Train tickets (already budgeted).
- **Departure:** Board your train back to Lucknow, carrying memories of ancient Kashi.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN (for 4 travelers, 2 Days/2 Nights)

Total Budget: \$200 USD (approx. ₹16,600 INR)

Category	Estimated Cost (INR)	Estimated Cost (USD)	Notes
Travel (Lucknow-Varanasi-Lucknow)	₹3,000	\$36	Train (Sleeper Class, round trip for 4 travelers). Book in advance.
Accommodation (2 Nights)	₹6,000	\$72	Budget guesthouse/hotel (₹3000 per night for 4 people). Search for family rooms or two double rooms.
Activities & Local Transport	₹2,000	\$24	Auto-rickshaws (station transfers, inter-city rides), Shared Sunrise Boat Ride on Ganges (approx. ₹800 for 4 people). This includes a buffer for additional rides.
Food (2.5 Days)	₹4,500	\$54	Budget for street food, local eateries, Lassi, Thandai, and snacks. Approx. ₹400-500 per person per day, adjusting for meals on travel days. This is achievable with local street food.
Contingency/Buffer	₹1,100	\$13	For unexpected expenses, small souvenirs, or if some costs are slightly higher.
Grand Total	₹16,600	\$187	<i>This budget is tight but achievable with careful spending, prioritizing local experiences, and opting for street food and budget accommodation. Costs are approximate and can vary based on negotiation and specific choices.</i>

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Safety & Scams:

- **Be Aware:** Varanasi is generally safe, but be mindful of your belongings,

especially in crowded areas like ghats and markets.

- **Beggars:** You will encounter many. It's up to your discretion if you wish to give.
- **Pundits/Guides:** Many self-proclaimed guides or pundits might approach you at the ghats for rituals or tours. Politely decline if you're not interested, or agree on a price *before* starting any service.
- **Photography:** Be respectful, especially around temples and cremation ghats. Always ask for permission before photographing individuals.
- **Dress Code:** Dress modestly, especially when visiting religious sites. Shoulders and knees should be covered.
- **Water:** Drink only bottled water.

- **Local Apps:**

- **IRCTC Rail Connect:** Essential for checking train status and bookings.
- **redBus:** Useful if you consider bus travel as an alternative.
- **Google Maps:** Indispensable for navigating the labyrinthine streets and locating ghats and eateries.
- **Ola/Uber:** While present, auto-rickshaws are often more convenient and prevalent in the inner city. Negotiate fares with auto-rickshaw drivers.

- **General Tips:**

- **Bargain:** For auto-rickshaws, local market purchases, and sometimes even private boat rides, bargaining is common and expected.
- **Footwear:** You'll be doing a lot of walking, especially around the ghats and old city. Wear comfortable, easy-to-remove footwear as you'll often need to take them off for temples.
- **Embrace Early Mornings:** Varanasi truly comes alive at dawn. Embrace the early mornings for the most authentic experiences, especially the sunrise boat ride.
- **Respect Local Customs:** Varanasi is a deeply religious city. Be respectful of local traditions, rituals, and practices.