

Charms Of Myanmar - 8 Days

Brief Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival Yangon

Day 2: Yangon – Fly to Bagan (B)

Day 3: Bagan (B)

Day 4: Bagan – Mandalay (B)

Day 5: Mandalay – Mingun – Mandalay (B)

Day 6: Mandalay – Heho – Inle (B)

Day 7: Inle Lake – Indein (B)

Day 8: Inle Lake – Heho – Yangon Departure (B)

Remark:

B = Breakfast, **L** = Lunch, **D** = Dinner

Tour includes:

- Accommodation with daily breakfast at selected hotels.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Private tours and all services as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Private transportation with air-conditioning.
- 04 Domestic flights: Yangon - Bagan, Bagan - Mandalay, Mandalay - Inle Lake, Inle Lake - Yangon.
- Local English speaking guides (Note: Supplement for a through-out Russian/French/Spanish/etc speaking guide please contact our consultant for further detail).
- Entrance fees for all mentioned sights visited.

- Private boat to visit Mingun and Inle.
- Water and tissues.

Tour excludes:

- International flights.
- Other meals which do not mention in the itinerary.
- Early check-in and late check-out at hotels.
- Optional Ballooning in Bagan.
- Personal expenses (such as laundry, telephone, drinks, etc.).
- Tipping for guides and drivers.
- Compulsory personal travel insurance.
- Compulsory Christmas and New Year Eva Dinner at hotels if required.
- Myanmar Visa fees (contact our travel consultant for further information).

Detail itinerary:

Day 1: Yangon arrival

Mingalabar and welcome to Myanmar! Upon arrival at the airport you will be warmly welcomed by your guide who will take you to your hotel for check in (note: check in time is 14.00. Early check in is subject to availability).

Visit Kyaukhtatgyi Pagoda to see a 70 meter long reclining Buddha statue around the size of a blue whale. Afterwards, head on to Chinatown for a change of scenery and check out the dragons and incense of the colorful Khen Hock Keong Chinese temple. Explore the vibrant street stalls where vendors sell all kinds of

fruit, vegetable and other goods or simply just walk around and soak in the atmosphere of this little China in Yangon. You continue uptown in order to make a quick stop by the Royal Lake located in Kandawgyi Park which is very popular with local residents, especially in the early morning and around sunset. Catch a view of Karaweik Hall, a reproduction of a royal barge and enjoy a spectacular view of the Golden Shwedagon Pagoda. No Myanmar expedition can be considered truly great if it's lacking a visit to the legendary Shwedagon Pagoda. Ready for an amazing experience? The visual delights present there alone, are worth the trip. Witness the colors transform on the 100-meter chedi which is literally enclosed in over 40 tons of gold leaf. You will start at the eastern staircase where you will find a row of shops at the base of the temple selling various religious items. Here you will find monks robes, alms bowls, offerings, incense and other unique Buddhist objects. As your browse the stalls your guide will explain the use and rituals of Myanmar's Buddhist people. Shwedagon is largely considered to be the most important religious site for the Burmese; most visitors report that the trip is extremely memorable and still etched into their minds.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Yangon.

Day 2: Yangon – fly to Bagan (B)

After enjoying your breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your domestic flight to Bagan. Welcome to Bagan, known to be one of the greatest architectural sites in Asia. When Bagan was the centre of Myanmar from the 11th to 13th centuries the monarchs built multitudes of massive stupas and pagodas, scores of which are still present on the shores of the Irrawaddy River.

The majesty of Bagan with more than 4000 red brick temples on a plain of the size of Manhattan Island is one of the highlights of a Myanmar holiday that will soothe the eye of every traveler.

Discover the best of Bagan today! Not simply a chance to see the splendid Bagan temples, this excursion also introduces you to the Burmese culture, allows you to see traditional craftsmen at work and takes you up the mighty Irrawaddy River to a decidedly unusual 'cave' temple! Your first port of call is an elevated temple with its panoramic views of the Bagan plains. This viewpoint will give you a taste of the sheer number of temples as well as some of their distinctive styles. From here you will have a look around the Ananda Temple – one of the most exalted of Bagan's temples. We will ensure that our tour reaches this point before the majority of tourists arrive, enabling you to enjoy the splendor of the temple in relative tranquility. Continue to various other temples dotted around the temple plains to experience a variety of architectural styles in the area as well as the artistic wonder of the 9-14th centuries. Traveling amid the temples you will get a taste of rural Bagan life in this 'living museum' setting where farmers and families work amongst the monuments.

Next on the agenda is your chance to learn more about the local culture with a visit to two workshops producing Bagan's most famous products - lacquer ware and wood crafts. Watch in amazement as the skilled craftsmen use traditional techniques passed down through generations to create beautiful items.

OPTIONAL: USD12/PAX FOR SUNSET CRUISE

You will be driven late in the afternoon to the jetty where a private wooden river boat awaits you. Sitting either under the shade or on the open-deck you'll be treated to fabulous views as you cruise down the Irrawaddy River. You'll cruise past several small villages, fishermen, local boats and of course many of the

ubiquitous Myanmar Buddhist temples. The views of Bagan from the river are particularly spectacular and offer a different perspective from the land based tours. As the sun begins to sink slowly from view, you will prepare to disembark before being driven back, greatly relaxed, to your hotel for the evening. The perfect end to a busy day of sightseeing in Bagan!

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Bagan.

Day 3: Bagan – sightseeing (B)

OPTION: HOT AIR BALLOON RIDE OVER BAGAN – US\$ 285/PAX

The morning will start off with an exciting hot-air balloon ride above the Bagan countryside. You will observe one-of-a-kind views when the sun begins to rise over the Irrawaddy River and various stupas in the region. You're simply not going to find many other opportunities like this on Earth. (Only available from October/November through March)

After breakfast at your hotel, your guide and driver will pick you up to start your Bagan excursion. It's off to the vibrant NyaungOo Market, where the locals come to trade fresh produce and other goods daily. From here you will have a look around the Old Bagan starting with a visit of the renowned Shwezigon Pagoda, constructed by King Anawrahta in the early 11th century as a religious memorial. Travel over dusty lanes and tree shaded roads past temples and monasteries to a small village. At one of the monasteries you will participate in a special traditional Buddhist ceremony.

From here you will journey on by horse cart for an excursion that passes Thatbyinnyu, the tallest temple in Bagan, gigantic Dhammayangyi Temple noted for its remarkable brickwork, and of course, Sulamani Temple. Take pleasure in

an extraordinary sunset from the upper terrace of one of the surrounding temples.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Bagan.

Day 4: Bagan – fly to Mandalay (B)

A short flight takes you from Bagan to Mandalay this morning! Mandalay, the second largest city of Myanmar and one of the ancient royal capitals is often perceived and described in literature as Asia at its most traditional, timeless and alluring but those who go meet a booming and vibrant city located on the banks of the Irrawaddy River. However, despite the energy and thriving business it's where the cultural heart of Myanmar lies and tradition of music, dance and drama are still alive. Upon arrival in you'll be transferred (1 hour) to Mandalay city. You will cross the Irrawaddy River in to Sagaing. With 600 ivory colored pagodas and monasteries, Sagaing Hill is generally seen as the spiritual hub of Myanmar and claims residence to around 3,000 monks and nearly 100 meditation shrines. You'll visit pagodas such as Swan OoPonNya Shin, U Min ThoneSae and Shin Pin Nan Gyaing. Continue to Sagaing's local market, a less visited tourist site. We'll head over to a small pottery village which is recognized for manufacturing ubiquitous water pots to observe the tradesmen here applying their traditional methods for producing their goods.

Next it's on to Ava which was the standing capital from the 14th through the 18th centuries. Cross the small river by ferry and travel in a traditional horse and carriage to the wooden Bagaya Monastery renowned for its extraordinarily elaborate woodcarvings. Be sure to check out the Nanmyint Watch Tower - also called "the leaning tower of Ava" - which is what's left from the remnants of the

ancient palace and MahaAungmyeBonzanMonastery. Return back across the river and drive to Amarapura, Myanmar's penultimate royal capital. Amarapura means "City of Immortality", though its period as capital was relatively brief. You will start Mahagandayon monastery, home to more than a thousand young monks and renowned as a centre for monastic study and strict religious discipline. Continue on foot or by bus a short distance to the legendary U Bein Bridge, which was built in 1782 when Amarapura was the Royal center of attention. It spans 1.2 km across the shallow Taungthaman Lake and is said to be the longest teakwood bridge worldwide. Enjoy this very special atmosphere as the late afternoon sun casts long shadows and illuminates the local people heading home. Sunset in U Bien Bridge.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Mandalay.

Day 5: Mandalay – Mingun – Mandalay (B)

Head off to Mandalay jetty and embark on a private boat for a relaxed 1 hour journey on the Irrawaddy River to Mingun. Experience the sights and sounds of Mingun, starting with the celebrated MingunPaya, which would have been the world's largest (if King Bodawpaya hadn't died before it was finished). The construction of this enormous brick building was halted after a fortune-teller predicted the King's death upon completion. An earthquake that hit in the 1800's, split the monument and reduced it to partial rubble – it's possibly the world's largest pile of bricks. From the flat top you have a fine view of the HsinbyumePaya, Mingun village and the river. Carry on to the gorgeous alabaster Hsinbyume Pagoda, an unusual stupa with a couple of stories behind it. It's supposedly a representation of the SulamaniPaya which according to the

Buddhist plan of the cosmos, stands atop Mount Meru (the mountain that stands at the centre of the universe). Afterwards hop on over to the Mingun Bell that weighs 90 tons and is claimed to be the world's largest hung, uncracked bell still capable of ringing. Before returning to Mandalay by boat there'll be enough time to explore the small neighbourhoods throughout Mingun crafting traditional basketry and mingle with the friendly craftsmen and vendors.

Your orientation tour of Mandalay will kick off with a walk up to Mandalay Hill, rising 240 meter above the city. At the top the reward is a full panoramic view, the hazy blue outline of the Shan Hills to the east, the Mandalay Palace (and the city sprawl) to the south and the Irrawaddy River to the west. Directly south of Mandalay Hill stands the Kyauktawgyi Pagoda, known as the pagoda of the Great Marble Image. Admire the huge Buddha, carved from a single block of marble. It's said that the colossal marble block took 10,000 men almost two weeks to transport it from the riverside to its current location. Proceed to Kuthodaw Pagoda, frequently dubbed as "The World's Biggest Book" for its collection of 729 marble slabs inscribed with Buddhist teachings. Then it's off to the Shwenandaw Monastery, the Golden Monastery which is the only enduring structure from the Royal Palace of the 19th century. This impressive structure is celebrated for its remarkable woodcarvings.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Mandalay

Day 6: Mandalay – fly to Heho – Inle (B)

This morning return to the Mandalay airport for the flight to Heho, in the heart of the Shan State. Upon arrival at the Heho airport, you will proceed to NyaungShwe village. Along the way, you will have an opportunity to visit rural

workshops that specialize in traditional Shan paper and unique handcrafted umbrellas. Also, be sure to stop in at the teak monastery of Shweyanpyay to witness the intricate wood carving artwork and craftsmanship of the monks there.

Then you will board a private motorboat and begin heading out onto Inle Lake, one of Myanmar's most spectacular and breathtaking sights. Its calm waters are dotted with floating vegetation and fishing canoes, to which scenic hills provide the perfect backdrop. Along the way you will pass several villages that are built on stilts over the lake, which are inhabited by the local Intha people. Observe the daily activities of the local leg-rowing fishermen and see their 'floating gardens', which are built up from strips of water hyacinth, earth and anchored to the bottom of the lake with bamboo poles. Drive to your hotel.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Inle Lake.

Day 7: Inle Lake – Indein (B)

After breakfast you'll pay a visit to the lake's morning market (the market is open every day apart from dark moon and full moon calendar days). The market's location rotates between the lake's villages in a 5 day schedule and is also visited daily by the lake's inhabitants as well as the surrounding natives who also come to sell and trade their wares. A 1-hour boat ride down a small canal will take you to the Pa-Oh village of Indein, positioned on the western shores of Inle Lake.

Take a leisurely stroll around the village before ascending the moss-covered stairway to the top of a hill. Once you've arrived at the summit, you will be greeted by an iconic Buddha image which sits enshrined among hundreds of stupa ruins and overgrown shrubbery. Here, from the peak, you will also be

rewarded with mesmerizing views of the placid surroundings. The Insein Pagoda complex is undoubtedly one of the most amazing sites around the shore of the lake and it consists of hundreds of small stupas which are overrun by moss and greenery. Then it's time to embark on a 45 minutes trek to Sae Ma village. Along the way, you'll enjoy the natural beauty and panoramic vistas of the area while basking under the shade of the bamboo grooves in the area. Upon arrival at the village, observe the daily lifestyles of the rural inhabitants. On your boat ride back, should time allow, you'll stop at the Inthar Heritage House to learn more about the history and culture of the lake's indigenous people and enjoy a delicious coffee and cake (snack break not included). As an exciting day comes to close transfer back to your hotel for some well deserved relaxation.

Lunch and dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Inle Lake.

Day 8: Inle lake – Heho – fly to Yangon – Departure (B)

Breakfast will be served at your hotel before driving by a combination of boat and car to the Heho Airport (1-1.5 hour) for a short flight back to Yangon.

A private car will be waiting to greet you and the remainder of the day is at your leisure to do as you please until your international flight. (In Yangon, the car and guide will be at disposal until departure flight time).