

Essential Myanmar - 9 Days

Brief Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival Mandalay

Day 2: Mandalay and Evening Chants at Yankin Hill (B)

Day 3: Mandalay – Bagan (5 hours) (B)

Day 4: Bagan (B)

Day 5: Bagan – Kalaw (7 hours) (B)

Day 6: Kalaw – Inle Lake (B)

Day 7: Inle Lake – Indein (B)

Day 8: Inle Lake – Yangon (B)

Day 9: Yangon Departure (B)

Remark:

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

Tour includes:

- Accommodation with daily breakfast at selected hotels
- Private tours and all services as mentioned in the itinerary
- Boat trip as mentioned in the itinerary
- Private transportation with air-conditioning
- 01 Domestic flights: Inle Lake (Heho) – 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 Inle Lake
- Water and cold towel on sightseeing

Tour excludes:

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

Detail itinerary:

Day 1: Mandalay arrival

Welcome to Mandalay! 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.

The afternoon's activities will kick off with a visit to Amarapura, Myanmar's penultimate royal capital. Amarapura means "City of Immortality", though its period as capital was relatively brief. First you'll stop at a silk weaving workshop known for their exquisite merchandise. Once the sun starts to set, you'll want to stroll along 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. As a stunning day comes to an end head back to Mandalay for the night.

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

Day 2: Mandalay – evening chants at Yankin Hill (B)

After a leisurely breakfast, you will start with a visit to the Mahamuni Pagoda. This pagoda houses one of the country's most honored Buddha images, completely covered in gold leaves that are every day applied to the statue by male devotees. Proceed to Kuthodaw Pagoda, frequently dubbed as "The World's Biggest Book" for its collection of 729 marble slabs inscribed with Buddhist teachings. 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. 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.

Approximately 3 km to the east of Mandalay fort is the Yankin Hill surrounded by numerous temples and monasteries. A stunning atmosphere, away from the tourist crowds. When visiting a monastery you will gain insight into the monastic life and practice with the monks a little English. Afterwards, enjoy a unique view from the summit of the hill (about 45 minutes climb). Once back on solid ground you are the evening prayer of the monks (also called evening chant) listen and end the day peacefully. Return to Mandalay.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight in Mandalay.

Day 3: Mandalay – drive to Bagan (B)

In the morning you will explore the life at the river during a nice walk along the majestic Irrawaddy River. You will visit a local market where all kinds of exotic fruit and vegetables are sold. There are barely any tourists coming here and it is a great opportunity to gather some unique impressions off the beaten track. From there, a short 45 minute transfer (30 km) will bring you to Paleik, which is known locally as the home of the snake temple. With a little luck you may be able to witness a snake washing which is supposed to bring fortune. Do not miss to take some time to explore the ancient Ava temples that can around Paleik. Afterwards, you will be taken to Bagan on the new, scenic road. During the 5 hour drive (304 km) you can enjoy the beautiful landscape and will arrive in Bagan in the late afternoon.

Lunch and dinner on own account. Overnight in Bagan.

Day 4: Bagan – sightseeing (B)

Your first port of call is a high temple with its panoramic views over the plains of Bagan. This view will give you a taste of the impressive number of temples and their different styles. From here you can explore the Ananda Temple, one of the highest in Bagan. We'll make sure you get there before the majority of tourists, so you can enjoy the splendor of the temple in peace.

Traveling on dirt roads lined by trees, temples and monasteries to a small village. In one of the monasteries, you will participate in a traditional Buddhist ceremony. Around 10:30 you will make food offerings to the monks. Then you will receive a special blessing of the monks to ensure good luck, and, happiness. Then visit the village of Myinkaba and the Temple of Gubyaukgyi. You will be struck by the beauty of the murals and sculptures. You will also have the chance to discover the two small temples Manuha and Nan Paya - both known for their Buddha statues. You will then have the opportunity to learn more about the local culture with the visit of two workshops that produce the most famous Bagan products: lacquer and wood crafts. Amazement, you will see that the craftsmen still use traditional techniques passed down from generation to generation, to create masterpieces. From there, drive to a carriage ride at sunset through the temples Thatbyinnyu - the highest of Bagan, the gigantic Dhammayangyi known for its fine brick building, and the impressive Sulamani. Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight in Bagan.

Day 5: Bagan – drive to Kalaw (B)

Today it is time to leave Bagan and start off your day with an overland trip (ca. 6 hours) to Kalaw. While passing through the Shan hills on a winding road, you will gather amazing impressions of the rural Myanmar. At last you will reach Kalaw, which was founded as an upper station by British officials who wanted to escape the plain's heat. Nowadays, this town is still a holiday resort where you can find pure air, a pleasant atmosphere, green trees and great trekking paths. You will reach Kalaw in the afternoon and there will be enough time to explore the town and breathe in the local charm while recovering from the journey. The rest of the day is at your own disposal.

Lunch and dinner on own account. Overnight in Kalaw.

Day 6: Kalaw – Inle Lake (B)

After a short visit to the local market, you will be brought to Kalaw train station for a train ride to Aung Ban train station through magnificent mountain scenery. Arrive Aung Ban and take the drive to Inle Lake. Upon reaching the edge of the lake, 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. You will also visit Nga Hpe Chaung Monastery, which houses loads of early Shan Buddha Images. In the past this temple was known for its 'jumping cats' but these days there are only a few

felines roaming around and none are jumping any more. Yet the Buddha images are still worth the visit. Proceed to the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the lake's main haven, which contains five sacred images of Buddha decorated in gold leaf. There are also many traditional crafts originating on Inle Lake and, should you wish, we can stop for a visit to one making incredible woven items from lotus silk, boat builders (depending on the time of year), a cigar making workshop, blacksmiths or even silver smiths. The tour will come to a close with a return trip by boat back to your hotel.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight on 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 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 Indein 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 on Inle Lake.

Day 8: Inle Lake – fly to Yangon (B)

Enjoy your last boat ride from your hotel on the lake to Nyaung Shwe. From Nyaung Shwe you'll be transferred Heho Airport (1 hour) for your domestic flight to Yangon.

Visit Kyaukhtatgyi Pagoda to see a 70 meter long reclining Buddha statue around the size of a blue whale. Afterwards, 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 you 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. After sunset 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.

Lunch and Dinner on own account. Overnight stay in Yangon

Day 9: Yangon departure (B)

Unfortunately, it is now called to say goodbye to one of the most secretive countries in the world. Transfer from hotel to Yangon International Airport.

Meals on own account.

End of tour services.