

Visions of the Golden Land

Secrets of Burma

Burma (Myanmar), said Somerset Maugham, “is a beauty that batters you and stuns you and leaves you breathless.” This is undoubtedly the most opportune time to visit, a tantalising country slowly emerging from isolation, its people genuinely glad to welcome visitors to their homeland. Experience the daily life of rural folk, and learn about their spirituality that blends Buddhism, nat worship and astrology. Explore Burma’s extraordinary array of ancient monuments that are virtually untouched, their golden roofs glittering up to the heavens. Contemplate the gently crumbling grandeur of the British Empire in Rangoon (Yangon), the evocative ruins of the once-fabled kingdom of the Lion Throne, and ponder the future for the Golden Land.

Hotels selected are a combination of first-class traditional and colonial-style, modern Burmese, and simple characterful properties, many with a unique and charming setting.



14 days

- Rangoon (2 nights)
- Inle Lake (2 nights)
- Mandalay (3 nights)
- Pagan (3 nights)
- Rangoon (1 night)



Day 1 London (Tuesday) Fly from London Heathrow to Rangoon (Yangon), Burma’s largest city and former capital.

Day 2 Rangoon Arrival in Rangoon. Drive through the once-splendid colonial centre for your first glimpse of this fascinating city. The architecture that remains is a curious, evocative blend of faded Victorian grandeur, Art Deco ritzy and exotic orientalism. Transfer to your hotel for two nights, the lakeside Kandawgyi Palace Hotel, originally the Rangoon Rowing

Club in the heyday of the British Empire. Afternoon visit to the Sule Pagoda, and watch the sunset from the dazzling Shwedagon Pagoda, encrusted with gold, topped by a 76 carat diamond, the spiritual symbol of the nation. This evening enjoy a welcome dinner at the iconic Strand Hotel. (BD)

Day 3 Twante Depart Rangoon driving through rice fields, pausing at the Shwesandaw Pagoda. Visit the port of Twante to observe the lifestyle of the inhabitants of the Delta. Stroll through the local market and continue to a small pottery village. After lunch visit Mingalar Lake before returning to Rangoon. (BL)

Day 4 Inle Lake Fly north to Heho and drive to Nyaung Shwe, the gateway to Inle Lake in the Shan Hills, and the View Point Lodge for a two-night stay. The lake is fringed by villages inhabited by the Intha people, mostly farmers and fishermen who have adapted their way of life perfectly to their unique environment. Explore the area by boat, stopping to see how Cheerots, Burmese cigars, are made, from the locally-grown codia leaf. Later admire the Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery. (BD)

Day 5 Inle Lake Inle Lake is long, narrow and shallow, covering around 45 square miles, its banks lined with floating gardens that produce a huge proportion of Burma’s fruit and vegetables. Reeds from the lake are woven into anchored floating mats, mud from the lake bed and hyacinth weed is piled onto them, slowly creating fertile reclaimed land. Watch the fishermen and their ingenious way of rowing their boats with one leg. Visit the boat-makers of Nanpun village, the traditional workshops of Ywama, the silk and lotus fabric weavers of

Innpawkhone. Afternoon excursion to Indeivillage to explore the 16th century temples. Also see the five revered 12th century statues of Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda. (BD)

Day 6 Mandalay Visit a five day market before driving to Taunggyi and a pioneering vineyard in the hills for a guided walk and wine tasting – they produce many classic western varieties – and lunch nearby. Fly to Mandalay, a former capital and the country’s cultural centre, renowned for its skilled artisans producing tapestries, fine stone carvings and gold leaf. Visit a craft centre to witness the production of some of these items. Stay 3 nights at the elegant and comfortable Mandalay Hill Resort. (BL)

Day 7 Mandalay Visit the deeply venerated Mahamuni Buddha whose face is washed every morning and body covered in fresh gold leaf by worshippers. Admire the traditional construction methods of Shwe In Bin Monastery, then visit the Kyauktawgyi Pagoda to admire its statue of Buddha carved from a single block of marble that took 12,000 men 13 days to move. Take a boat 7 miles upstream to Mingun where you can find the largest ringing bell in the world, 90 tonnes and cast in 1170. Return to Mandalay visiting Kuthodaw Pagoda and Mandalay Hill. (BL)

Day 8 Ava, Amarapura, Mandalay Visit Shwenandaw Kyaung Monastery with its golden teak sculptures. Drive to nearby Ava (Inwa), another former capital on an island where you ride through the ruins on a horse-cart, passing the precariously leaning goft-high watchtower which is all that remains of the palace. Visit Maha Aungmyay Bonzan Monastery of Bagaya.

Continue to Sagaing whose hill is dotted with temples and pagodas with white and gold domes among century old tamerind trees. Drive on to picturesque Amarapura, the ‘city of immortals’ and again a former royal capital of Burma whose buildings were dismantled and taken to Mandalay – a thousand unwanted teak columns from the palace were reused in the construction of the famous U Bein bridge which you visit at sunset. (BL)

Day 9 Mount Popa, Pagan Enjoy an interesting journey by road to Pagan (around 5 and a half hours), admiring the scenery en-route and pausing at local villages. Stop for lunch at the Mount Popa Resort and enjoy fantastic views of Mount Popa, an extinct volcano 2,417ft high with a monastery, Taungkalet, perched at the top. Arrive Pagan and transfer to the Areind mar Hotel for 3 nights. (BLD)

Day 10 Pagan Optional morning hot air balloon ride at sunrise (at additional cost). Pagan lies on a vast, dusty plain and is one of the richest archaeological sites in Asia, along with Angkor in Cambodia, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In its golden age of the First Burmese Empire between the 11th and 13th centuries over 13,000 temples, pagodas and stupas were built, no two the same, but Pagan was ravaged by Kublai Khan, looters, earthquakes, floods and time, now only 2,200 out of 13,000 buildings remain, most are ruins. First visit the lively Nyaung U market and the Shwezigon Pagoda with its graceful bell-shaped stupa that became the prototype for all stupas in Burma, and which houses bones and hairs of Buddha. Continue to the temple

of Shwesandaw, then on to the 150ft high Htilominto Temple with its elaborate plaster mouldings, the beautifully proportioned Ananda Temple, an early masterpiece, and the enormous Thatbyinnyu, known as the Omniscient. In the afternoon see artisans at work producing traditional lacquerware, enjoy a horse-cart tour on the Pagoda Plain, and then watch the sunset from the terrace of one of Pagan’s splendid stupas. (BL)

Day 11 Sale Depart by boat on the Irrawaddy River to the village of Sale where more than forty monuments dating from the 13th century are scattered in the countryside. Visit Kyaung Yokesoe Monastery. Return to Pagan by road. Afternoon at leisure. (BL)

Day 12 Rangoon This morning fly back to Rangoon. Drive to Danygone to explore a small local market selling fruit, spices and local Burmese specialities. From there take a fascinating train ride on the circular train back to the city passing through rice fields and residential areas to give a glimpse into the daily life of the locals. Explore this ramshackle, chaotic and utterly captivating city, once the wealthiest in South East Asia with its valuable exports of teak, rubies and rice. Admire Chaukhtatgyi Buddha, the longest reclining Buddha in the world and with beautifully decorated feet. Visit Botataung Pagoda at the harbour, built to commemorate the thousand soldiers who escorted the Buddha’s relics from India. Visit Bogyoke market where you can find excellent lacquer ware, wood carvings, silverware and tapestries. Enjoy a farewell dinner at specially selected restaurant. Stay overnight at the Kandawgyi Palace Hotel. (BD)

Day 13 Rangoon Transfer to the airport for your flight to London, arriving the following morning, Day 14. (B)

Ngapali Beach extension

Stay 3 nights at the charming Sandoway Resort after your tour. Price from £595 per person, including flights from Pagan. Further details on request.

Angkor Wat extension

This 3-night extension offers a chance to explore the ruined temples of Angkor Wat, one of the world’s greatest architectural and archaeological treasures. Prices from £725 per person twin shared.

Tour code BURMA		
Departures 2016	Twin share	Single supp
Feb 9, Mar 8	£3195	£955
Oct 11, Nov 8	3295	£995
Business Class upgrade from £1325 one way, £1795 return.		
Private journey price from £3490 per person twin shared (minimum 2 passengers).		
Price includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy class flights • Twin-shared accommodation, transfers, transportation and sightseeing as listed (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner) • Services of English-speaking local Tour Guides 		
Not included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel insurance • Gratuities • Burma visa • Burma International departure tax • Any government taxes or compulsory charges introduced after brochure publication 		