

TOP 10 MYANMAR TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

MYANMAR

Explore the **TOP 10** best tourist destinations, tourist spots, attractions in Myanmar (Burma) for your holiday! Myanmar is one of the mysterious country in South East Asia and because of its cultural and geographical diversity has retained much of its historic and unique character. Discover the great attractions in Myanmar and the country's wonderful uniqueness.

YANGON



Yangon is a big and yet not modernized city, with Victorian buildings, tree-lined avenues, lakes and parks and a bustling city center of friendly vendors, colorful stalls and people going about in their daily chores dressed traditionally in their Longyi and flip-flap sandals. The Bogyoke Aung San market (also called Scott's Market) is a must for every visitor and so is the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda – the prominent landmark of Myanmar. The first fundament of the Shwedagon is believed to have been built more than 2000 years ago, and the pagoda is revered by Buddhist and non-Buddhists alike. Yangon is the gateway to Myanmar and has direct air links with Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Seoul, Doha, Beijing, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Chiang Mai, Hong Kong, Taipei, Guangzhou, Kunming, Nanning, Gaya and Dhaka.

MANDALAY



Mandalay was the last Royal Capital of Myanmar and is located nearly 700 km north of Yangon between the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River and the Shan plateau. Mandalay is considered the centre of Burmese culture, a city of artisans and a trading centre of goods in all directions. The geometric laid out streets, the many bicycles riders, the 8 km long moat and wall around the former Royal Palace, the pagodas and monasteries abound and the sacred Mandalay Hill towering over it all, are some of its most visible features. In the vicinity of Mandalay are the former royal capitals and religious centers of Amarapura, Mingun, Inwa (Ava) and Sagaing, each worth visiting. Mandalay is another gateway to Myanmar and has direct air links with Bangkok, Singapore, Kunming and Chiang Mai.



Myanmar (mja:n,mar / Myan mar) is a delightful country, where eternal landscapes and ancient civilizations fill its vast land. Over half of the country is covered by thick tropical forests, beautifully golden pagodas and preserved temples fill the countryside. The temples are 2000 years old and covered in gold. Local people wear skirt-like "longyi" and women decorate with Thanaka (a yellowish-white cosmetic paste having fragrant scent made from ground bark.). Running north to south, the huge Irrawaddy River dissects the country in two. For those on the lookout for adventurous travels in an extraordinary land, look no further than Myanmar. No-one argues Myanmar isn't one of the world's most exciting destinations.



LOCATION

Myanmar is located in Southeast Asia. It is bordered by China to the north and northeast; Laos and Thailand to the east and southeast, the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to the south, Bangladesh and India to the west.

BAGAN



BAGAN



Bagan, the capital of Myanmar's first dynasty, was built by King Anawrahta in 1044. It is located about 193 km south of Mandalay. There are over 2000 temples and stupas spreading in 42 square kilometers of desert like plain on the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River. All those red bricks and stucco religious monuments were built during 11th to 13th century. The magnificent temple architecture, incredibly fine mural or frescos paintings, brilliant stucco carvings, and the most elegant Buddha images, all are telling motifs of the sublime culture of the ancient Bagan dynasties.





AREA

The area of Myanmar is 678,500 sq km, is the second largest country by geographical area in Southeast Asia.

THE CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO?

The climate of Myanmar is normally humid. Myanmar has 3 major types of seasons. The hot season is generally from March to April. The rainy season is from May to October, the temperatures would then cool off. The southwest tropical monsoon starts between mid-May and mid-June, making the frequent rain falls till October. The cold season is most beautiful starts from November to February and it is the peak season for travelling because temperatures remain relatively pleasant, cool breezes from north blow across the country. However, the climate tends to vary considerably from place to place because of differences in latitude and the marked variety of topographical relief. For example, in hot season, the daily temperatures in Yangon (Rangoon) often reach around 40 degree Celsius, Bagan and Mandalay normally go a few degrees higher, although the hill towns in Shan State offer relief from heat.

ECONOMY

Myanmar is rich in natural resources such as natural gas, petroleum, timber, jade, gems and jewelries and so the economy mainly relies on agricultural products, oil and gas, gemstones and tourism.

HISTORY

The most prehistoric primates is Pondaung Man who may have lived 40 million years ago, discovered in Pondaung, northern Myanmar. After those eras, many cities and states came out, and then emerged 3 big empires. The First Myanmar Empire (AD 1044) is founded by King

Anawrahtar. He organized the little states and villages into a single empire. The Second Myanmar Empire (also known as Hantharwaddy Dynasty) was founded by King Bayint Naung in AD 1287 at Bago. The last Empire was Kongbaung Dynasty (AD 1752) founded by King King Bodaw Paya. Although several years has passed, the culture still remains unspoiled unlike any destination you have ever been.



ETHNIC GROUPS

There are 135 distinct ethnic groups in Myanmar. The 8 major national races are Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. The country's population is estimated to be over 60 million and most of the people live in Yangon, the old capital of Myanmar, with a population of over four million. Yangon continues to be the country's largest city and the most important commercial hub.

BUSINESS HOURS

Business Hours is usually from 9am to 5pm for private companies and 9:30-4:30 for government offices.

TRANSPORTATION

Taxis are available everywhere in Yangon (Rangoon). Local countrywide transportation is available by Airways, Roadways, Railways and Waterways. Three domestic airlines suitable for visitors are Air Bagan, Air Mandalay and Yangon Airways. There are many express buses in Myanmar and bus fare is normally cheaper than other transportations. You may want to visit by River cruise if you got plenty of time.

INLE LAKE



A five kilometer long canal suddenly opens up to a wide lake with numerous villages on stilts and floating gardens against the hazy mountain ranges. Fishermen in their shallow boats cast their cone shaped bamboo down in the lake to trap the fish, and the lake dwelling framers tend to their floating gardens from their canoes. The gardens are anchored to the lake beds with long bamboo poles and host flowers or tomatoes, chilies, cauliflowers and other vegetables. The lake is situated in the Shan State, 1000 meter above sea level and is the home of the Intha people and many other ethnic minorities. Sailing among the villages you can hear the silk looms clanking and the tapping of the ironsmiths and get a glimpse of girls chatting while wrapping cigars and wave to the smiling kids looking out through the open shutters of the wooden or bamboo houses built above the water.

In the countries the air is a bit cooler and drier. The unique culture which visitors can find in Inle Lake is, fishermen have tendency to row boats using their legs and it is also a part of the Inle tradition itself.

Other significant scenery that one can expect to see in the Inle Lake such as: floating tomatoes fields around the lake, gardens of flowers properly anchored to the lake bed with bamboo poles. The friendliness of the local people and their unique daily life activities spice things up a little bit better for visitors that they can enjoy a pleasant trip alongside the lake yet enjoy the sincere of the local community.

The best time of the year to visit is during September and October. The ceremonial Hpaung Daw U Festival, which lasts for almost three weeks, is closely followed by the Thadingyut festival of lights. Moreover, the market day of the villages located near Inle Lake offers extremely colorful with freshly grow hill foods and other local products which is another major attractions for all visitors to have a look at.

MRAUK U



The 15th century ancient city of Rakhine Kingdom is located in the north-western corner of the country. It was the centre of a mighty kingdom and one of the richest cities in Asia trading with the Middle East, Asia and Europe. Today little remains of the original city except for the many interesting temples and stupas, partly in ruins, dotting the small hills around the new town of Mrauk-U. It is famous for its old temples with wall paintings and religious statues showing the Indian cultural influence.

PYIN O LWIN



PYIN O LWIN (Maymyo). Just 2-3 hours by car away from Mandalay, but climate and scenery is quite different. Pine trees and other subtropical vegetation dot the landscape ... [Read More](#)

KALAW

KALAW in the Shan State is another cool place to be during the hottest months of the year. Many ethnic minority villages around and interesting market in town. Good trekking down to Inle Lake or to Pindaya.

KALAW IN THE SHAN STATE IS ANOTHER COOL PLACE TO BE DURING THE HOTTEST MONTHS OF THE YEAR. MANY ETHNIC MINORITY VILLAGES AROUND AND INTERESTING MARKET IN TOWN. GOOD TREKKING ... [READ MORE](#) KALAW



PINDAYA



PINDAYA, famous for its caves housing more than 8000 Buddha images. No one seems to know how they all got there. Most of them are at least hundreds of years old while others are recent additions. They have been placed in such a way that they form a passage through the caves. Pindaya is surrounded by some very beautiful scenery.

KYAING TONG (KENG TUNG)

Kyaing Tong, is a town in eastern Shan State, Myanmar and it is also the principle Town of Keng Tung Township. The weather in this area is particular cooler than compare to the tropical area of Myanmar which is a suitable place for those visitors who would like to enjoy plenty memorable sceneries in the chilling weather. Kyaing Tong is geographically located in an easily accessible location to the golden triangle area.

There are plenty of shifting fields and most local community maintains their unique culture where visitors can see traditionally built huts on the mountain slopes. As it is interconnected to the golden triangle, and where diverse ethnics group inhabitant, therefore; visitors can expect to see other cultures and traditions but not just only the traditions of Kyaing Tong itself are the main attraction of Kyaing Tong has to offer.

Kyaing Tong has plenty of hiking, mountain climbing trips in a trekking pilgrimage to nearby mountains to visit the villages of different Shan ethnic tribes, enjoy the breath-taking sceneries along the way while admiring the pagodas along the way.

Kyaing Tong, is a town in eastern Shan State, Myanmar and it is also the principle town of Keng Tung Township. The weather in this area is particular cooler than compare to the tropical area of Myanmar ... [Read More](#)

KYAIKTIYO (GOLDEN ROCK)

Golden Rock, in Myanmar language known as KyiteHteeYoe Pagoda is one of the breath-taking and also a sacred place for Myanmar people. It is located in Mon State and perched on the highest mountain of Paunglaung mountain range. To travel to KyiteHteeYoe pagoda, it will take a 4-hour drive from Yangon, where it will proceed in an open truck uphill to hermit hill. The rock and the pagoda are at the top of Mt. Kyaiktiyo.

It is the third most important Buddhist pilgrimage site in Burma after the Shwedagon Pagoda and the Mahamuni Pagoda. A glimpse of the "gravity defying" Golden Rock is believed to be enough of an inspiration for any person to turn to Buddhism.

It is the best place for those who would like to have a legendary pilgrimage because the Golden Rock itself is placed on top of the mountain and visitors can choose whether to take a bus to go to the top of the mountain or trekking up to the mountain which will take around 5 hours while being able to en

MAWLAMYINE

MAWLAMYINE, capital of Mon State and Myanmar's third largest city. In colonial times known as Moulmein and trading port of teak logs. "By the old Moulmein pagoda lookin' eastward to the sea. There's a Burma girl a-sittin', and I know she thinks o' me....." South of Mawlamyine was the end of line of the Thai-Burma 415 km railway built under Japanese occupation during WWII ("Bridge of River Kwai"). Near the site is a cemetery for some of many allied prisoners of war who died while building it.

THE IRRAWADDY

THE IRRAWADDY, one of the mightiest rivers of Asia in league with the Mekong and the Ganges. Weeklong cruises in high water season August-November from Bhamo to Bagan, from Bagan to Pyay and on the Chindwin River as well as one and two nights cruises from Mandalay to Bagan from July to April. Individually arranged tours for smaller groups.

MYEIK/MERGUI

The mergui Archipelago which is located on the most southern part of Myanmar which comprised of over 800 islands. Kawthaung (formally known as Victoria Point) is the beginning of our Nature Safaris which is near to the border town Ranong in Thailand, and the distance is about 300km north of Phuket. You are likely to witness the unique significant view which you are unlikely to witness in other part of the world and you will be feeling in the same way as other explorers have felt 2 centuries ago. Majority of the Islands around the area are not inhabiting by people and you can see plenty of lush tropical rainforest down to the extraordinary white sandy beaches and on a few of them, you can also find ancient Mangrove Rivers and caves, which is a very ideal place for sea kayaks and rubber dinghy.

NGAPALI BEACH

Ngapali is located in Rakhine State and stretches along the Bay of Bengal and it lies in Rakhine State of Myanmar. Ngapali is said to be one of the best beaches in Myanmar where most natural are untouched where visitors can enjoy the true nature of the beach itself. It is famous for its natural and unspotted beauty up to this day. The beach stretches about 3 km with soft white sand fringed by coconut palms.

It is the best place for those leading a modern life in urban areas and looking for a place to enjoy the nature beauty of the beach itself. The beach is unlike like other beaches around the world where it is very crowded along the beach and hawkers persuading visitors to buy their products.

There are other organized recreational activities where visitors can participate such as: beach strolling, cycling and many more. It has also the perfect sunbathing ground. The sea cobalt blue, without any dangerous marine animals and clean as well. There are a few fishermen villages nearby and it can be arranged to visit to those villages on bicycle tour. Most local people believe that the best time to visit the beach is in during October and May of every year.

Thandwe which is situated near to Ngapali beach is one of the most suitable place for those who would like to enjoy a modern yet but not too modern town near the beach for many other relaxation activities. Ngapali Beach is one of the loveliest places in Myanmar; it is also one of the most unspoiled beaches in the world, with miles of pure white sands skirting the crystal clear waters of the Indian Ocean. Actually, Ngapali is not one single beach but

it is a series of beaches interconnected with small fishing villages stretching from Mazin where the airport is located, to Lontha on Mayo Bay where coastal steamers dock in a sheltered anchorage.

After resting on the beach under the clear blue skies, those who expect for some more activities has the option of exploring the range of hills behind the Strand Beach Hotel. Once you are on the small hills you will find a peaceful lake, which is actually a reservoir with blue waters visitors can fish but not swim. Moreover, fishing boat can be hired for trips to go around some of the island off the coast or to fish along the beaches. There is no doubt the Ngapali is the perfect place for those who would like to enjoy the beauty of mother earth in one place where all the natural and marine animals like to inhabitant.

NGWE SAUNG BEACH

Ngwe Saung beach is situated near Yangon city and it can be reached within a 6-hour drive from Yangon. The beach itself is approximately 9 miles long and one of the longest beach in South East Asia and newly opened beach in Ayeyarwaddy delta region interconnected with the Andaman Sea. Moreover, Ngwe Saung is located a bit south of Ngapali which is also another popular beach resorts in Myanmar.

Though, the beach itself was recently opened, due to the incredible quality of the beach, water and sand, it is getting more and more attention from tourists and becoming more popular. It is not just that the beach is good in quality but it also has incredible vistas and breathtaking view of the Bay of Bengal especially during the evening when the sun goes set.

That is not the end of it, as a few villages located around the area of the beach; visitors can expect to see the traditions of the people living around the village. People living in those villages mainly make a living as fishermen and it is obviously that fresh seafood are available in almost every outlet and restaurants located along the beach.

MONYWA

Monywa, is located in Sagaing Division, in Myanmar, and geographically 136km northwest of Mandalay along the eastern bank of River Chindwin. It will take 3 hours' drive from Mandalay via Sagaing ... [Read More](#)

FESTIVALS / EVENTS

JANUARY

INDEPENDENCE DAY

- When: 4th January

- Place: All over the country
- To commemorate the Independence in 1948

KACHIN MANAW FESTIVAL

- When: 10th January
- Place: Myitkyina, Kachin State
- The Manaw festival is the celebration of the New Year, victory in battles, reunion of the Kachin tribes etc.

KAYIN (KAREN) NEW YEAR

- When: 1st day of the month of Pyatho (last week of December or first week of January)
- Place: Across Kayin State, in Yangon and at townships where Kayin are the majority.

NAGA NEW YEAR

- When: 14th – 16th January
- Place: In the Naga Hills, on the border with India and Myanmar. The festival rotates between three major townships in the Naga Hills.
- The festival is meant to celebrate the successful completion of the harvest, with participants sharing their experiences from the previous year and planning for the next one. Participants wish for good health, wealth, happiness, good climate and good crops for the coming year.

ANANDA PAGODA FESTIVAL

- When: First week of January (Dates to be confirmed)
- Place: Ananda Pagoda, Bagan

A typical Buddhist pagoda festival which takes place one week preceding the full moon of Pyatho to full moon day (January). The villagers from around Bagan come to the festival with bullock carts, horse carts and camp there as long as the festival goes on. Many visitors are attracted to this yearly event.

FEBRUARY

SHAN STATE DAY

- When: 7th February

- Place: Across Shan State, in Yangon and among Shan ethnics who stay on Thailand's northwestern border.
- The holiday commemorates the unification of several Shan principalities into a single Shan State on February 7, 1947.

UNION DAY

- When: 12th February
- Place: All over the country
- To commemorate the signing of the Pinlon Agreement between the various ethnic groups of Myanmar to demand Independence in 1947

KYAIKKAUK PAGODA FESTIVAL

- When: Full Moon day of Tabodwe (February)
- Place: Thanlyin (Syriam)
- ?

CHIN NATIONAL DAY

- When: 20th February
- Place: Mindat (Southern Chin State) and Haka (Northern Chin State)
- To commemorate the National Day, to preserve and maintain Chin culture, language, literature and identity among the family of nations.

LAHU NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

- When: Normally coincides with the Chinese New Year
- Place: Kyaing Tong, Eastern Shan State
- Typical Lahu ethnic New Year Festival

MARCH

KAKKU PAGODA FESTIVAL

When: Full Moon Day of Tabaung (March)
Place: Kakku Pagoda near Taunggyi, Southern Shan State

The best time to visit this place is to get there before dawn of the full moon day of Tabaung where the Pa-O people in all their finery come with gaily decorated trays bearing morning food offerings.

•

SHWE U MIN PAGODA FESTIVAL

- When: Full Moon day of Tabaung (March)
- Place: Pindaya Township, Southern Shan State
- Pindaya Shwe Oo Min cave Pagoda festival is held on and around full moon day of Tabaung, starting seven days before the full moon day. During the festival time, thousands of devotees come from villages around Pindaya.

SHWEDAGON PAGODA TABAUNG FESTIVAL

- When: Full Moon day of Tabaung (March)
- Place: Yangon

This is a significant Festival of Shwedagon Pagoda because it was on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung that King Okkalapa and the two brothers enshrined the sacred hair relics of Buddha in the Shwedagon. On the days of festival, the stairways and platform of Shwedagon are thronged by endless streams of devotees from dawn till midnight.

APRIL

THINGYAN FESTIVAL & MYANMAR NEW YEAR

- When: 13th – 17th April
- Place: All over the country

A Myanmar New Year Festival where water is thrown on everyone. It is believed that water symbolizes the washing away of the previous year's bad luck and sins. On New Year's Day, 17th of April, people celebrate by freeing captive fish, birds and cows as acts of merit, by cleaning the floors of the pagodas and monasteries, and paying obeisance to parents, aged peoples and teachers.

GON SHAN NEW YEAR

- When: Coincides with Myanmar New Year
- Place: Kyaing Tong, Eastern Shan State

Unique festival of Gon Shan ethnics. On the Second day of the eve of the New Year the auspicious drum is taken from its place. Then a representative of the Zar people who by traditions is allowed to wear the clothes of Sankarm (Sakra) will follow on a horse behind the drum. The people lining the procession route will sprinkle scented water on the procession for good luck.

START FROM: YANGON

TRIP ROUTE: YANGON – MANDALAY – MONywa - BAGAN – PINDAYA - INLE LAKE - YANGON

DURATION: 14 DAYS / 13 NIGHTS

DAY 1 : ARRIVE YANGON

Arrive Yangon airport in the morning. Your English speaking tour guide will welcome you at the airport. Transfer to your hotel and check in. Program for the day depending on flight arrival time.

DAY 2 : YANGON

Yangon is a city of 5 million people, but the downtown area is relatively small and can easily be covered on foot. A morning stroll with your guide through Yangon's colonial architecture to the **Strand Hotel**, once one of the most renowned hotels in Asia in line with the Oriental in Bangkok, Raffels in Singapore and the Peninsula in Hong Kong and during the last fifteen years restored to some of its former glory. At the **Bogyoke Aung San market** you will find everything of locally produced items, from Mandalay silk, ethnic minority products, silver and wood carvings to precious stones, garments and cheroots. In the heart of the city is the **Sule Pagoda**, the nucleus from where the city centre where were laid out in its Victorian grid pattern by the British about 150 years ago. Even if it is a predominantly Buddhist community, Yangon is still home to many other faiths, and strolling about you will see Hindu and Chinese temples, Islamic mosques, Anglican cathedrals and various Christian churches. There is even a small Jewish synagogue.

While Yangon until the 18th century was still an insignificant fishing village, its prominent and famous landmark, the **Shwedagon Pagoda** has stood there for more than 1000 years, mesmerizing visitors and residents alike with its glistening gold covered stupa where it is said that eight hairs of the last (Gautama) Buddha are enshrined at the base. The tip of the stupa is covered with 1800 carats gold and studded with thousands of diamonds, rubies, sapphires and topaz. A huge emerald sits in the middle to catch the first and last rays of the sun. You should go there in the late afternoon before sunset, remove your shoes and slowly wander the lower terraces together with the friendly local population of very devout Buddhists.

DAY 3

Morning flight to **Mandalay**. Met by your local guide at the airport and transfer to your hotel (the city center is about one hour's drive from the airport). Mandalay had been the royal capital for only 25 years when the British invaded Upper Burma in 1885 and exiled King Thibaw and his queen Supyalat to India. But for thousands of years it had already been considered a sacred place for the Buddhist faith. It was King Mindon who moved the capital from neighbouring Amarapura and built the Royal Palace as the center of the new city, forming a perfect square. Surrounded by a moat, it had 12 gates – 3 on each side, marked with the signs of the zodiac. It was built entirely of teak. Today only the outer walls and the moat remain of the old structures, the old palace itself burned down in 1945 when used as military compound by Japanese occupation forces during World War II it was shelled by British troops. The buildings we can see now are very good replicas of the old palace.

Today, Mandalay is a bustling commercial city among all the golden temples and pagodas; with its location in the middle of the country it acts as a crossroad for goods coming from the outlying areas and from as far away as China, Thailand and India. On the way from the airport the guide will take you to visit the **Maha Muni** pagoda, which in addition to housing the golden image of the same name with its very colourful history, have many small stalls and shops. From there it is on to the artisans who produce some of the gold leaves which the devoted Buddhists bestow in large quantities on Buddha images and stupas in order for them to gain merits for their next life. Gold leaf production is a handicraft that has been in the same families for generations.

Later in the afternoon, the guide will take you to the former **Royal Palace**, before proceeding to the **Shwe Kyaung** (Golden Monastery). This monastery is the only wooden structure left over from the old palace. It was moved here by King Thibaw and therefore it escaped the fate of the other palace buildings. From there it is on to the **Kuthodaw**

Pagoda, also called “the world’s largest book”, referring to the 729 marble tablets which together contain the script of the whole Buddhist canon (Tripitaka) and the 729 small pagodas housing them.

DAY 4

Amarapura, about 10 km out of Mandalay has also been a royal capital during brief spells of Burmese history, but these days not much remains of the old palaces. It is, however, a very spiritual place with many monasteries and several thousand monks. There is the beautiful **U Bein’s Bridge**, a 1.2 km long footbridge across the **Taungthaman Lake**, built entirely in teak with material salvaged from the royal castle of Innwa when the capital moved from there to Amarapura two hundred years ago. The bridge still stands after all this time and is considered the longest teak span in the world. You will also be able to watch hundreds of monks coming together for their last daily meal at around 10.30 am. Apart from its history, Amarapura is particularly known for its silk- and cotton weaving and all around you can hear the clackety-clack of the looms. Bronze casting is also a trade famous for this town.

DAY 5

By car to **Monywa** 136 km northwest of Mandalay along the eastern bank of the Chindwin River. One of its many attractions is the **Poewindaung** mountain caves where visitors can observe incredible stone carving and mural paintings. **Thanboday** pagoda is another major attraction, - according to the myth the solid section of the monument contain 7350 relics and other holy items. Further away is a giant **Standing Boddhi-tataung Buddha**, 129 meter high and inside built as a museum. Boddhi Tataung means 1000 Buddhas and is a group of Banyan trees with a Buddha image at the feet of each of the thousand trees. Overnight at hotel in **Monywa**.

DAY 6

From Monywa to **Pakkoku** which known as a education centre for Buddhist monks and is situated at the west bank of the mighty Ayeyarwady River. The bridge crossing the mighty Ayeyarwady river from Pakkoku to the other side north of **Bagan** was completed just a few years ago and is the longest in Myanmar. Check in a hotel and later enjoy a spectacular sunset view from one of the pagodas.

DAY 7 AND 8

In its heydays, in the two centuries from 1057 and until the Mongol forces of Kublai Khan overran and destroyed most of it in 1287, more than 13,000 temples and other religious structures had been built around Bagan. You will not be able to cover even a small percentage of what is left, but during your stay you will be able to visit some of the best and most famous ones. Among pagodas and temples worth visiting are **Shwezigon Pagoda**, a prototype of later Myanmar stupas, **Wetkyi-in Gubyaukkyi Temple** with fine mural paintings of Jataka scenes, **Ananda Temple**, **Dhammayangyi**, a massive temple with the finest brickwork, **Manuha Temple** with gigantic Buddha images, a captive king’s impression of life in prison, **Nanpaya**, with the finest stone carvings, **Thatbyinnyu**, the highest of Bagan temples, and **Bupaya Pagoda** on the brink of majestic Ayeyarwaddy River, **Lawkahteikpan** temple with mural paintings and ink inscriptions.

DAY 9

Bagan on your own, by bicycle or horse cart. Or just a time to relax.

DAY 10

Morning flight to Heho in southern **Shan state**. Met by guide and care and drive (about 2 hours) via Aung Ban and through a beautiful landscape to **Pindaya**. After lunch, visit to **Pindaya Cave**, unique for the thousands of Buddha images placed there by pilgrims over many centuries. Overnight in Pindaya.

DAY 11

After breakfast there is a few hours drive to **Nyaung Shwe** at the bank of **Inle Lake** where your hotel is situated. Sightseeing is by boat and includes visit to the **Phaungdawoo Pagoda** – famous for its richly gilded five small Buddha images and the **Ngaphechaung monastery** with its collection of ancient Buddha images. But most of the time will be spent touring the villages on stilts and observe daily life with leg-rowing fishermen, floating vegetable gardens and visit to traditional handicraft workshops.

DAY 12

After breakfast a visit by boat to a local market and from there to the western shore of Inle Lake, where you will find the beginning of a stair path leading to the well hidden **Indein Pagoda complex**, famous for its ruined clusters of more than 1000 pagodas dating back to 15th century. Enjoy the tranquility and peaceful ambience around the weathered ruins, as well as a short walk through the bamboo forest along the creek. Rest of the day on the lake.

DAY 12

Morning on your own. Nyaung Shwe is a pleasant provincial town with a laid back atmosphere, with a central market and many small eating places. You can rent a bicycle or let a tuk-tuk take you to some of the villages nearby and to the Red Mountain Estate where they produce various types of wine of very acceptable quality. In the afternoon, transfer to Heho and flight to Yangon. Car to your hotel.

DAY 14

Transfer to airport and departure.

YANGON – BAGAN - MOUNT POPA - MANADALAY

DAY 1

Arrive Yangon airport in the morning. Your English speaking tour guide will welcome you at the airport. Transfer to your hotel and check in.

Yangon is a city of 5 million people, but the downtown area is relatively small and can easily be covered on foot. A morning stroll with your guide through Yangon's colonial architecture to the **Strand Hotel**, once one of the most renowned hotels in Asia in line with the Oriental in Bangkok, Raffles in Singapore and the Peninsula in Hong Kong and during the last fifteen years restored to some of its former glory. At the **Bogyoke Aung San market** you will find everything of locally produced items, from Mandalay silk, ethnic minority products, silver and wood carvings to precious stones, garments and cheroots. In the heart of the city is the **Sule Pagoda**, the nucleus from where the city

centre where were laid out in its Victorian grid pattern by the British about 150 years ago. Even if it is a predominantly Buddhist community, Yangon is still home to many other faiths, and strolling about you will see Hindu and Chinese temples, Islamic mosques, Anglican cathedrals and various Christian churches. There is even a small Jewish synagogue.

While Yangon until the 18th century was still an insignificant fishing village, its prominent and famous landmark, the **Shwedagon Pagoda** has stood there for more than 1000 years, mesmerizing visitors and residents alike with its glistening gold covered stupa where it is said that eight hairs of the last (Gautama) Buddha are enshrined at the base. The tip of the stupa is covered with 1800 carats gold and studded with thousands of diamonds, rubies, sapphires and topaz. A huge emerald sits in the middle to catch the first and last rays of the sun. You should go there in the late afternoon before sunset, remove your shoes and slowly wander the lower terraces together with the friendly local population of very devout Buddhists.

DAY 2

Morning flight to **Bagan**. Met by guide and transfer to your hotel.

In its heydays, in the two centuries from 1057 and until the Mongol forces of Kublai Khan overran and destroyed most of it in 1287, more than 13,000 temples and other religious structures had been built around Bagan. You will not be able to cover even a small percentage of what is left, but during your stay you will be able to visit some of the best and most famous ones. Among pagodas and temples worth visiting are **Shwezigon Pagoda**, a prototype of later Myanmar stupas, **Wetkyi-in Gubyaukkyi Temple** with fine mural paintings of Jataka scenes, **Ananda Temple**, **Dhammayangyi**, a massive temple with the finest brickwork, **Manuha Temple** with gigantic Buddha images, a captive king's impression of life in prison, **Nanpaya**, with the finest stone carvings, **Thatbyinnyu**, the highest of Bagan temples, and **Bupaya Pagoda** on the brink of majestic Ayeyarwaddy River, **Lawkahteikpan** temple with mural paintings and ink inscriptions.

DAY 3

Further exploration of Bagan. In the morning visit to the local market in Nyaung U and one of the many workshop that make the famous Bagan laquerware and if time permits before lunch, a few pagodas and temples left over from the day before.

DAY 4

After breakfast drive to **Mount Popa** – an extinct volcano 65 km south east of Bagan and believed to be the home of the **NATS**, the spirits playing big parts in the life of the average Burman. On top of the mountain, there are monasteries, pagodas and shrines in different styles.

DAY 5

Morning flight to **Mandalay**. Met by your local guide at the airport and transfer to your hotel (the city center is about one hour's drive from the airport). Mandalay had been the royal capital for only 25 years when the British invaded Upper Burma in 1885 and exiled King Thibaw and his queen Supyalat to India. But for thousands of years it had already been considered a sacred place for the Buddhist faith. It was King Mindon who moved the capital from neighbouring Amarapura and built the Royal Palace as the center of the new city, forming a perfect square. Surrounded by a moat, it had 12 gates – 3 on each side, marked with the signs of the zodiac. It was built entirely of teak. Today only the outer walls and the moat remain of the old structures, the old palace itself burned down in 1945 when used as military compound by Japanese occupation forces during World War II it was shelled by British troops. The buildings we can see now are very good replicas of the old palace.

Today, Mandalay is a bustling commercial city among all the golden temples and pagodas; with its location in the middle of the country it acts as a crossroad for goods coming from the outlying areas and from as far away as China, Thailand and India. On the way from the airport the guide will take you to visit the **Maha Muni** pagoda, which in addition to housing the golden image of the same name with its very colourful history, have many small stalls and shops. From there it is on to the artisans who produce some of the gold leaves which the devoted Buddhists bestow in large quantities on Buddha images and stupas in order for them to gain merits for their next life. Gold leaf production is a handicraft that has been in the same families for generations.

Later in the afternoon, the guide will take you to the former **Royal Palace**, before proceeding to the **Shwe Kyaung** (Golden Monastery). This monastery is the only wooden structure left over from the old palace. It was moved here by King Thibaw and therefore it escaped the faith of the other palace buildings. From there it is on to the **Kuthodaw** Pagoda, also called “the world’s largest book”, referring to the 729 marble tablets which together contain the script of the whole Buddhist canon (Tripitaka) and the 729 small pagodas housing them.

DAY 6

Amarapura, about 10 km out of Mandalay has also been a royal capital during brief spells of Burmese history, but these days not much remains of the old palaces. It is, however, a very spiritual place with many monasteries and several thousand monks. There is the beautiful **U Bein’s Bridge**, a 1.2 km long footbridge across the **Taungthaman Lake**, built entirely in teak with material salvaged from the royal castle of Innwa when the capital moved from there to Amarapura two hundred years ago. The bridge still stands after all this time and is considered the longest teak span in the world. You will also be able to watch hundreds of monks coming together for their last daily meal at around 10.30 am. Apart from its history, Amarapura is particularly known for its silk- and cotton weaving and all around you can hear the clackety-clack of the looms. Bronze casting is also a trade famous for this town.

DAY 7

Morning flight to Yangon for international departure or any extension program.

Start From: Kawthaung

TRIP ROUTE: KAWTHAUNG - THE THREE ISLETS - NYAUNG WEE ISLAND - BO CHO ISLAND - LAMPI ISLAND TAR YAR ISLAND - KO PHAWT ISLAND - PILAR ISLAND - HIGH ROCK(HLAING GU ISLAND) - ZAR DET NGE ISLAND - SALON ISLAND - KAWTHAUNG

DURATION: 5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS CRUISE TRIP

DAY 1: KAWTHAUNG – THE THREE ISLETS (115 ISLAND)

Your guide will meet you at the airport/ pier in Kawthaung and transfer you to your boat for check in. Along the way, observe the bustling border town. If you are interested and if time permits, you may take part in a short sightseeing tour (optional tour, extra expense will be applied). Stroll through the lively market near the Jetty, visit the famous Victoria Point, the most southern tip of Myanmar’s mainland, photo stop at the King Bayint Naung statue. Visit the Pyi Daw Aye Pagoda with scenic views across the river to Ranong and finish the tour with a short drive through the fishermen settlements on the out skirts of the town. Overnight cruise to The Three Islets (115 Island).

DAY 2: THE THREE ISLETS (115 ISLAND) – NYAUNG WEE ISLAND – BO CHO ISLAND – LAMPI ISLAND

Wake up with a stunning view at The Three Islets (115 Island). After breakfast, swim and snorkel with tons of fishes through the crystal-clear water. Later follow our guide through the lush tropical jungle to a small beach, where you

can find a lot of beautiful shells swapped in from the ocean. Before Lunch cruise to Nyaung Wee Island and visit the Moken Village. During lunchtime we will cruise to the largest sea gypsy settlement in the area on Bo Cho Island. Be prepared to get surrounded by curious kids. Bring some small gifts and be even more overwhelmed by their warm welcome. Walk through the village and take scenic pictures from the Pagoda located on the hill overlooking the entire village. Chill-out onboard and observe the daily life of the almost extinct sea-gypsies. Cruising to Lampi Island (if time and tide okay visit the mangrove forest). Do some night fishing. Overnight onboard nearby Lampi Island.

DAY 3: LAMPI ISLAND – TAR YAR ISLAND – KO PHAWT ISLAND – PILAR ISLAND

Early morning kayaking along the mangrove forest or snorkeling

- View From Lampi Island



Kalaw Village And Sunset



Wheat Field In Kalaw



Little Akha Girl



Akha Woman



Famous Golden Triangle



Ancient Pagoda In Hsipaw, Shan State



Remote Village In Putao



Trekking Kyaing Tong

SHAN STATES

Trekking with local guides is possible in several of the mountainous regions of Myanmar. The most accessible trekking routes are in the Shan States of Myanmar.

SOUTHERN SHAN STATES

- Kalaw to Inle Lake (2-4 days)
- Kalaw to Pindaya (2 to 4 days)
- West of Inle Lake (1-2 days)

EASTERN SHAN STATE

- “Golden Triangle”/ around Kyaing Tong (3-4 days)

NORTHERN SHAN STATE

- Kyaukme
- Hsipaw

KACHIN STATE - PUTAO

Also possible to trek in more remote areas. Usually, special permissions are needed and thus, such tours need to be planned at least some months ahead. In very north, of Kachin State, in the Eastern Himalayas. Putao is the jumping-off point for trekkers who forests, wildlife sanctuaries and snow-capped mountains. The richness in biodiversity of this region presents unparalleled opportunities in the field of tribal, zoology, botany, forestry, ecology as well as for hardy eco-tourists who prefer the challenge of a testing back-packing trip in the mountain fastness of Myanmar. In the foothills of the Himalayas in northern Putao is Mt. Hkakabo Razi, the highest snow-capped mountain in South East Asia. It is 5889 meter high and a very important watershed area for the eastern Ayeyarwady river. The flagship trek of the area lies more than 440 kilometers away from nearest airstrip and may take nearly 6 weeks to complete.

CHIN HILLS & MOUNT VICTORIA

Minimum time frame of 5 days is needed to conduct an organized tour of the Chin Hills and their vicinity. The journey will usually start from Bagan and will return the same way after a long journey through the Chin Hills. As all travel through the Chin Hills is pretty rough mountain roads, it can only be made by a four-wheel-drive vehicle (or) locally available mountain jeep.

v

Home: <http://www.myanmartravel.cc/tour-itineraries>

CONTACT US - FREE CONSULTATION & ASK QUESTIONS

CONTACT

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions regarding your trip to Myanmar and also our services. Please contact us by any of the means below:

Moby Dick Tours Co., Ltd.

Yangon Head Office:

89 – 91, Room No. 2, Ground Floor

32nd Street (between MahaBandoola Road and Merchant Road)

Pabedan Township

Yangon 11141

Myanmar

Tel : (+95 1) 380382

Mobile: +95 9 7955 82 544, +95 9 7955 82 533

TRAVEL ADVICE

VISA

A Tourist visa, valid for 28 days, is needed to enter the country. Visas are issued by one of Myanmar's embassies abroad, however, since the 1st September 2014 citizens of several countries can now apply online for a pre-approved Tourist Visa, please see <http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/index.aspx>. It is a very straightforward process and works well on arrival, but is at the moment only possible when arriving by plane to Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyitaw international airports.

MONEY

There are now ATM machines in Yangon and Mandalay where you can draw local currency with VISA and/or Master card. However, payment with VISA or other credit cards is only possible in

some hotels and tourist shops, and then only at an extra charge. Therefore, it is still advisable to bring most of your travel budget in cash to cover your expenses while in Myanmar. The US Dollar is the most convenient currency to bring, as prices for tourist related services are usually quoted in dollars and it is also the most widely accepted currency to exchange into the local currency Kyat. **It is important that the dollar notes you bring do not look "old" and worn out, have scratches and marks on them or have serial numbers that start with the letters CB or AB** (apparently there have at one time been fake dollar bills in circulation with these letter combinations). A crisp 100 dollar note usually carries a little higher exchange rate than two 50 dollar notes. Money can be changed at some banks and in private shops at the Bogyoke Aung San market in Yangon and otherwise where your guide directs you. You should not change money with people approaching you on the street.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

It is always difficult to give advice on malaria prophylaxis. The usual places where tourists go are not considered malaria infested areas, but it is best to follow the medical advice of your doctor. The other recommended vaccines for Southeast Asia should be kept up to date. Please bring along your necessary medications in your hand luggage. There are some qualified medical doctors, but hospital care is far below Western standards, with medical equipment either in poor condition or completely missing. There is a SOS clinic in Yangon with a Western physician in charge. You should ensure that you have a good travel insurance, and that you have the policy number and the emergency number of the insurance company among your travel documents. The transition to a new bacterial flora and a warm climate offers an increased risk of stomach upset and diarrhea. It will usually go away in a day or two. Drink a lot of water while you are here, but never directly from the tap. Bottled water is inexpensive and can be bought everywhere. In most hotels bottled water is offered complementary in your room.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Most Myanmar people, both women and men wear a blouse / shirt and a sarong-like piece of cloth that goes down to the ankles and is called longyi. On their feet they wear simple sandals which are very practical when you constantly have to remove your footwear before entering private homes as well as temples, pagodas, monasteries and other sacred grounds. It is appreciated that tourists follow a dress code at and near religious sites: T-shirts, blouses and shirts should have (short) sleeves and trousers and skirts should go below the knees. Adults should in general avoid walking around in public in very short or singlet. Otherwise, the need for clothing is as usual in the tropics: Pants and Tops in cotton, a sweater for cool mornings and evenings in the highlands (in December and January even maybe a jacket), and good shoes. Comfortable and inexpensive sandals can be bought at every market. A hat or cap is good to wear against the midday sun, and you should also bring sunscreen, insect repellent and a flashlight.

SECURITY

When it comes to crime, Myanmar is one of the safest countries in the world to travel in. There are very few stories about tourists being robbed or otherwise assaulted while here. On the contrary, you will more often learn that no efforts are spared to return lost wallets and valuables to the

rightful owners. You should still exercise normal caution though, lock your suitcase or bag before you check it in at the airport and if you leave money in your room at least put it in your locked suitcase. There are no restrictions when it comes to contact between foreigners and locals, but tourists are not allowed to stay overnight in private homes or guesthouses that do not have a tourist license.

ETIQUETTE

Burmese people generally treat each other in a friendly, polite and respectful manner. It is “loss of face” to show irritation or anger and to talk loudly to someone. Sarcasm and irony are not understood. You should avoid putting your feet up, point with your feet or pat anyone on the head, and a woman should avoid touching a Buddhist monk or his robe. Apart from this foreigners are granted wide tolerance. Any time of the day you will be greeted with a smile and "Min-ga-la-ba" which stands for good morning, good evening, hello, hi and you can safely answer in the same manner. “Thank you” is "che-zu-be" or a little less casual "che-zu tin-ba-deh".

COMMUNICATION HOME

Your cell phone will probably only work with a local SIM card, but roaming service with international providers are slowly being introduced. Local and inexpensive SIM cards are now available in the major cities, but may not yet be working in all parts of the country. Hotels have IDD, but it is expensive to call abroad. The easiest method of communication at the moment is via internet and email. Many hotels have WiFi or other kind of internet access (though maybe slow) and there are private internet cafes also in remote locations.

YANGON HEAD OFFICE

89 – 91, Room No. 2, Ground Floor
32nd Street (between MahaBandoola Road and Merchant Road)
Pabedan Township Yangon 11141 Myanmar
Tel : +95 1 380382
Mobile: +95 9 7955 82 544,
+95 9 7955 82 533