

Program and Itinerary

Validity: From July to December 2018

Day 1 MANDALAY (B)

On arrival, welcome by **your local English speaking guide** and transfer to the hotel (approximately 1 hour drive) passing through the city centre, in order to have a first glance of the former Royal Capital of Burma. Visit **Shwenandaw teak wood** monastery which was part of the Royal Palace. Then head to the **Kyauktawgyi Pagoda** and its sitting marble Buddha and the **Kuthodaw Pagoda**, considered as the biggest book in the world.

In the afternoon, transfer to **Amarapura**, an ancient capital 12 km south of Mandalay. Meet with craftsmen renowned for weaving traditional silk.

Then, visit the **Ubein bridge for sunset**.

Overnight in Mandalay

MANDALAY

Mandalay, the country's second largest city and a key centre of Buddhist learning, has plenty to keep visitors occupied for a couple of days. Its key attractions include Maha Myat Muni Pagoda, Myanmar's second largest pilgrimage site after Shwedagon Pagoda, the former royal palace and Mandalay Hill. Visitors can also enjoy relaxing strolls along the banks of the Irrawaddy River, itself a hive of activity. Sagaing Hill, a few kilometres from the main town, is covered with numerous monasteries, pagodas and meditation centres, and well worth a visit.

Day 2 MANDALAY (MINGUN, SAGAING, AVA) (B,D)



After breakfast, pick up by your local English speaking guide at the hotel then, transfer by a local boat to **Mingun**.

Its unfinished pagoda would have been the tallest in the world if the unbelievable project had not been abandoned at king **Bodawpaya's death**. Discover **Pondawphaya** and **Settawya Pagodas** as well as the 101-ton bell of Mingun which is considered as the biggest and

heaviest bell in the world.

Then, reach **Ava Island** by boat and tour the surroundings on a **horse-driven cart**. Visit the **Maha Aungmyay Bonzan** and **Bagaya monasteries**.

In the afternoon, drive to the sacred hill of **Sagaing**, dotted with temples and pagodas with white and gold domes among century-old tamarind trees.

Return to hotel in the afternoon and free time at leisure.

Overnight in Mandalay.

AVA

Ava, also known as Inwa, is located about 20 kilometres from Mandalay and served as the capital of Burma four times between 1364 and 1839, the year in which a series of earthquakes devastated the city causing so much damage that it was effectively abandoned. Located at the convergence of the Irrawaddy and Myintge rivers, Ava is also home to a fascinating group of fortifications, monasteries and temple ruins. A 27-metre high watchtower serves as the last vestige of its royal palace. Bicycles and horse-drawn carts provide a perfect way for exploring the local area.

Day 3 MANDALAY – POPA – BAGAN

(B)

After breakfast, depart by road for an excursion to **Mount Popa** (about 3-4hrs). This ancient sanctuary, center of the Burmese pilgrimage, perched on a rocky peak, is considered the home of the 37 guardian spirits of the country, the “nats”. There are 777 steps to climb before arriving at the monastery on the top, in the company of curious monkeys. Mount Popa is actually the nearby volcano that has created this rocky peak, which exact name is Taung Kalat.

By midday lunch at the Popa Mountain Resort with a beautiful view on the rocky peak and Bagan’s countryside. In the afternoon, continue drive to Bagan ±1hr and transfer to your hotel.

Overnight in Bagan.

Day 4 BAGAN

(B)

After breakfast, stroll through the colourful market of Nyaung-U.



Visit the **Shwezigon Pagoda** and its magnificent Burmese golden stupa, an elegant bell-shaped stupa which became the model of all the stupas built later in Myanmar. The afternoon will be dedicated to the visit of the most significant monuments of the Old Bagan: the ruins of the Royal Palace and the Tharabar Gate of Ananda Temple, a masterpiece of the Burmese architecture with its 4 huge statues of Buddha and finally the **Ananda Okkyaung**, one of the remaining brick monasteries.

Then enjoy a ride on a **local horse-drawn carriage** (about 1hr) until late in the afternoon and admire the sunset from the Buphaya Pagoda.

Overnight in Bagan.

BAGAN

Bagan, the former capital of the Bagan kingdom which ruled over the Irrawaddy valley and its environs from the 9th to the 13th century, is home to more than 2,000 Buddhist pagodas and temples, some of which have been fully restored. Hot air balloon flights offer a unique view of this sacred site and the people who live in the surrounding area. A visit to Bagan is an unforgettable experience and one can best enjoy the local sites by bicycle or from a horse-drawn cart.

Day 5 BAGAN – NYAUNG U / HEHO – INLE LAKE

(B)



After breakfast, transfer to airport **Nyaung U** for the flight to **Heho** with the Morning flight.

On arrival, pick up by your **local English speaking guide**, drive approximately 1 hour to **Nyaung Shwe Village** and visit the village of Nyaung Shwe. Embark on a private motorboat for a first discovery on the lake. Visit **Ngaphe Chaung monastery**.

Finally head to the **Phaung Daw Oo pagoda** and transfer to the hotel for your check in.

In the afternoon, excursions to **Indein village** where you will explore hundreds of ancient temples on hillock then return to the hotel.

Overnight at Inle Lake.

INLE LAKE

Inle Lake, one of Myanmar's most popular destinations, resides at an altitude of 900 metres in the Shan State hills. The lake is renowned for its Intha fishermen, stilt villages and floating tomato gardens. However, its fragile ecology is under threat from regular droughts and erosion in the surrounding hills.

Day 6 INLE LAKE – HEHO / THANDWE – NGAPALI

(B)

Transfer to airport and flight to Thandwe.

Note: Rooms are available from 2 pm.

Welcome by a representative of the hotel and transfer to Ngapali (arranged by the hotel, non-privatized).

Upon arrival, check-in and free time to enjoy the beach.

Overnight in Ngapali.

Day 7 & 8 NGAPALI (B)

Free day in Ngapali. Accommodation with breakfast.

Overnight in Ngapali. (Total 3 nights)



About Ngapali in the bay of Bengal, the spectacular beach of Ngapali stretches over 6 km of fine sand. The still untouched postcard decor of tourist attractions invites to idleness with a sense of exclusivity. Ngapali offers genuine scenes of life: a buffalo trolley pacing the beach at sunset or fishermen setting to dry the catch of the day. A visit to a fishing village or a boat trip to try out fishing and enjoy a grill on an island will make your stay more enjoyable.

Day 9 NGAPALI – THANDWE / YANGON (B)

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight to Yangon in the morning. Upon arrival in Yangon, you will be welcomed by your local English speaking guide and transferred to your hotel.

YANGON

Yangon may have lost its status as the capital of Myanmar in 2005, when it was transferred to Naypyidaw, however, it still remains the country's first city and a core economic and cultural centre. Its streets are lined with charming colonial buildings (many of which are being restored) and scintillating golden pagodas including Shwedagon and Botataung. There are numerous parks and two impressive lakes are connected by wide tree-lined avenues. Anyone with an interest in local life will feel compelled to stay at least a couple of days in this exotic city, taking in the various sights, exploring markets, wandering along bustling streets and through the commercial districts and communities along the Yangon River. While the city has a distinct heritage, it is also rapidly modernising with trendy bars and restaurants popping up all over the place.