



## Destination Myanmar Trip Itinerary 13 Days

### **Day 1** - Arrive Yangon

Arrive in Yangon and transfer to hotel. Yangon, formerly known as Rangoon, is still a relatively quiet and charming city. Its impressive colonial and spiritual heritage makes Yangon one of the most fascinating and authentic capitals of South-East Asia. After a group welcome lunch, a city tour includes the National Museum, Kyaukhtatgyi Pagoda's 70m long reclining Buddha and Myanmar's holiest monument, the Shwedagon Pagoda with its iconic gold covered stupa.

### **Day 2** - Yangon – Kyaiktiyo

Leaving Yangon in the morning, enjoy a scenic journey by road to Kyaiktiyo, 190km to the east. One of Myanmar's great pilgrimage sites is the Golden Rock at Kyaiktiyo, a huge boulder covered by gold leaf and delicately balanced on the edge of a cliff. The pagoda at the Golden Rock is said to hold a hair of the Buddha. Late morning, arrive at Kyaiktiyo base camp and transfer to the transit junction with one of the small open trucks in a one hour ride. After lunch start an easy walk up to the Golden Rock and enjoy sunset from this unforgettable site.

### **Day 3** - Kyaiktiyo - Bago – Yangon

After breakfast, return to the base-camp before travelling by open truck to Bago, an ancient capital dating back to the 6th century. Sightseeing in Bago includes the beautiful 55m long reclining Buddha called Shwethalyaung and the Mon style Shwemawdaw Pagoda, one of the most venerated in Myanmar. Its spire stands 114m high and is taller even than the Shwedagon Pagoda. Also visit the old Palace of Kambozathadi and the huge four sitting Buddhas. Visit to the Allied War Cemetery and a local woven bamboo factory.

#### **Day 4 - Yangon - Heho - Inle Lake**

This morning we transfer to the airport for the short flight to Heho. From Heho, enjoy a scenic drive to Inle Lake, one of Myanmar's best-known sights. The Intha people, a tribe of Mon descent, mostly inhabit the lakeshores and floating villages. On arrival at Nyaung Shwe village, transfer by boat for a tour of Inle Lake including a chance to see the leg-rowing fishermen. Continue to see the floating gardens, built up from strips of water hyacinth and mud and anchored to the bottom with bamboo poles. There are also floating villages and where we may, dependant on day be able to enjoy the floating market which is held every five days. In the afternoon continue to Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the weaving village of Inpawkhon and the Jumping Cat monastery.

#### **Day 5 - Inle Lake - In Dein - Inle Lake**

After breakfast, transfer by motorboat to In Dein, an off-the-beaten track site in the south of the lake. From Ywama, the boat leaves the lake and enters a narrow canal leading to a small Pa O tribe village. From the market place of the village, follow an old covered path to a 13th century monastery and the very impressive ruins of hundreds of ancient pagodas, some hidden in the vegetation. The main stupa area on the top of the hill offers breathtaking views over the surrounding mountains, and down to the valley and to the lake in the far distance. Return to the lake and transfer back to hotel in the afternoon.

#### **Day 6 - Inle Lake - Pindaya - Heho – Mandalay**

This morning we leave by boat and then car for an enjoyably scenic drive to Pindaya through the picturesque countryside of Shan State. Visit Pindaya's limestone cave with its maze of chambers displaying more than 8,000 Buddha statues and local handicraft workshops producing Shan paper made from mulberry bark, and traditional umbrellas that are used by monks all around the country. Then transfer to Heho Airport for the short flight to Mandalay.

#### **Day 7 - Mandalay - Amarapura - Ava - Sagaing – Mandalay**

Today, a full day trip to the former capitals of Amarapura, Ava and Sagaing, starting with a visit to the 18<sup>th</sup> century capital, Amarapura. Attend the daily meal of over a thousand monks at the country's largest monastery, Mahagandayon. Visit a silk weaving workshop, before proceeding to Ava, the capital from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. There, visit by horse and carriage the old wooden Bagaya Monastery and the remains of the Royal Palace and fort. In the afternoon cross the bridge over the Ayeyarwady River and continue to Sagaing. Covered with 600 white-painted pagodas and monasteries, Sagaing Hill is widely regarded as the religious centre of Myanmar and is home to 3,000 monks and 100 meditation centres. Finish the day with a walk at sunset over the 200 year-old U Bein Bridge, constructed entirely from teak.

### **Day 8** - Mandalay - Mingun – Mandalay.

Board our boat for an excursion over the Ayeyarwady River towards the former capital of Mingun. After a 45 minute cruise, arrive in Mingun, famous for its huge unfinished pagoda and also home to the Mingun Bell, considered as the world's largest uncracked ringing bell. Also visit the beautiful white Hsinbyume Pagoda and return by boat to Mandalay. In the afternoon visit the Kuthodaw Pagoda with its 729 marble stone slabs of Buddhist scriptures (known as the world's biggest book), Shwenandaw Monastery, noted for its exquisite woodcarving and the impressive Kyauktawgyi Pagoda with its huge sitting Buddha. Enjoy the sunset from Mandalay Hill.

### **Day 9** - Mandalay - Moniwa - Po Win Daung – Moniwa

Leave Mandalay for Moniwa, a typical Burmese town on the banks of the Chindwin River. On the way, visit Thanboddhay Pagoda, where more than 500,000 Buddha images cover every wall and archway of this huge Buddhist temple. Also visit Bodihtataung Pagoda and the largest reclining Buddha image in Myanmar, 100m long and 27m high. Cross the Chindwin River by ferry and proceed to Po Win Daung by local open jeep. This extraordinary complex consists of 947 sandstone caves dug out of the hills and contains what is considered by archaeologists to be the richest collection of mural paintings and Buddhist statues in South-East Asia. Recently opened to foreigners, Po Win Daung's unique, precious frescoes date from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Near the caves is Shwe Ba Daung, another very interesting site where monasteries and temples are carved out of narrow cliffs, before travelling back to Moniwa for the night.

### **Day 10** - Moniwa - Pakkoku – Bagan

We leave Moniwa along the rarely visited east bank of the river passing traditional villages where farmers climb the palm trees to extract the juice from which they produce palm tree sugar. Stop in Pakkangyi to visit one of the oldest surviving wooden monasteries in Myanmar. On the way we visit Pakokku, a lively, typical Burmese city with a strong craftwork tradition producing colourful woven blankets, papier-mâché toys and traditional sandals. A boat across the river brings us to our next stop, Bagan.

## **Day 11** – Bagan

Bagan features the colourful Nyaung Oo Market, the Shwezigon Pagoda and its magnificent golden stupa, Wetkyi-In Gubyaukgyi, a cave temple with exquisite murals paintings and the elegant Htilominlo Temple noted for its fine plaster carvings and glazed sandstone decorations. In the afternoon, visit Ananda, an architectural masterpiece of the early-style temple with two original standing Buddha images whose facial expressions change depending on the distance the statue is viewed from. The Ananda Okkyaung is one of the few surviving brick monasteries from the early Bagan period and the next temple to be visited, Thatbyinnyu, is the highest in Bagan, rising to 61m. End the day with a horse and carriage tour among the temples passing by the traditional village of Taungbi, the Sulamani Temple and the massive Dhammayangyi Temple noted for its remarkable brickwork. Enjoy the sunset over the site from the upper terrace of Myauk Guni Temple.

## **Day 12** - Bagan – Yangon

We visit Myinkaba village to see the process of creating traditional lacquer-ware, one of the best-known Myanmar handicrafts and a speciality of Bagan. Visit the monuments of Myinkaba village, Gubyaukkhi, an early period Pyu-style temple of Hindu influence with some of the oldest mural paintings in Bagan, Manuha and Nanpaya temples. In the afternoon, enjoy an excursion to the countryside village of Minnanthu, the least visited temple area in Bagan. Observe the local farmers' way of life together with a visit to some of the most interesting temples such as Payathonzu, with its unusual architecture and Tantric Buddhism influence, Lemyethna and Nandamannya temples. In the late afternoon transfer to Nyaung Oo Airport for the flight back to Yangon.

## **Day 13** - Depart Yangon

Finish your tour with a visit to downtown Yangon with its faded colonial atmosphere, Sule Pagoda, Mahabandoola Park, India town and bustling Chinatown. In the afternoon there is free time for shopping at Bogyoke Market, formerly Scott's Market before transferring to Mingaladon Airport for onward flight.