

MYSTIC MYANMAR

8 DAYS/7 NIGHTS



ITINERARY IN BRIEF

7 Night's accommodation based on twin share

Meals as per itinerary

Transfers

English speaking guide

Entrance fees

Domestic Flights as per itinerary



ITINERARY

Day 1: Yangon Arrival – Colonial-historical centre – Markets – Golden Pagoda

Min ga la ba! Welcome to Yangon, Myanmar. You are greeted by your guide and driver at the International airport for your transfer to the hotel.

In the afternoon, start your introductory half-day tour which takes you to the colonial-historical centre of Yangon, a photo stop to the Karaweik Hall royal floating barge; and the gilded Sule Pagoda, dating back over 2,000 years. Next stop will be at the Bogyoke (Scott) Market, where hundreds of gemstone, handicrafts, art, clothes and food stores are tucked in a maze of color. **(Bogyoke Market is closed on Mondays and public holidays).**

Our last visit for today will be the Shwedagon Pagoda, one of the world's most spectacular religious monuments in the world rises majestically over Singuttara Hill to the city Yangon, casting its golden gleam over the low-lying capital. This 2,500-years old structure, which contains the relics of four Buddhas, is the guardian temple of Yangon and the most sacred site for the people of Myanmar. Start from the Eastern entrance of Shwedagon pagoda and walk through the small shops where monk accessories, Buddha statues, flowers etc. are sold. The entrance is always very busy with sellers and local pilgrims. Then, walk along the pagoda platform clockwise, as is tradition, around the main Pagoda. Stopping in one of the pavilions to prayer, you might get a chance to meet a Buddhist monk and talk about Buddhism and meditation or simply contemplate. Continue through the back door of Shwedagon Pagoda and discover its fascinating history. As you walk the magnificent grounds and interior and even you can visit a local fortune-teller (if time permits) and learn about the ancient spiritual beliefs.



Overnight at the Rose Garden Hotel in a Superior room

Day 2: Yangon – Bagan (B)

After breakfast transfer to Yangon Airport for domestic flight to Bagan. Upon arrival in Bagan, proceed on a sightseeing tour, starting with the busy local market and continuing with visits to a diverse selection of the most important pagodas and temples. The Dhamayazeka Zedi is our first visit, providing panoramic views of the temple studded plains of Bagan. We continue to the Archeological Museum and the gold gilded Swezigon Stupa, purported to contain a holy tooth relic of the Buddha. Not far from the stupa, the Myingaba Gu Byaukgyi Temple is a sight to behold, housing Bagan's best preserved mural paintings of the Buddha's Jataka re-incarnations. Next, we learn how Bagan's famous lacquerware crafts are produced in Myingaba Village, and then visit Htilominlo Temple to learn how Burmese sand paintings are created. The day's temple tour ends with a visit to the beautifully symmetric and majestic Ananda Temple with its four standing Buddha images that seem to gaze at the viewer with fixed serenity wherever the viewer stands.



Overnight at the Thande Hotel River View Hotel

Day 3: Bagan – Mandalay (B)

Transfer to Bagan Airport for domestic flight to Mandalay. Your local guide will welcome you at Mandalay airport and transfer to Mandalay 40km/1hr. We will enjoy a morning stroll through the lively Zegyo Market in the heart of the city to experience more authentic local life in Mandalay. We continue to the Artisan Quarters, where some of the oldest craftsmanship is showcased dating back to last kingdom of Myanmar. We observe the process of pounding gold leaf, detailing teakwood carvings and embroidering Myanmar tapestry. We also see how bronze and marble Buddha statues are carved, cast and molded.

Next, we proceed to the highlights of Mandalay: the sacred Mahamuni Pagoda, housing one of the most significant Buddha images in the country, covered in several tons of gold leaf and the crown prize in long past wars between competing Myanmar kingdoms. Near the Mahamuni we visit the Jade Market for an insight to this trade, the Golden Palace Monastery, the only surviving Royal Palace building in Mandalay, offering a glimpse of the original style and architecture of the Myanmar royals; and lastly, the Kuthodaw Pagoda, a compound housing Buddha's teachings carved in the sacred Pali script on stone slabs and regarded as the world's largest book in terms of surface area. We end our day with sunset panoramic views over city skyline on Mandalay Hill, the highest point of the city.



Overnight at the Eastern Palace Hotel

Day 4: Ava (Inwa) – Sagaing – Amarapura – Ubein Bridge (B)

After breakfast at the hotel, we embark on a journey to the Ancient Kingdoms of Myanmar near Mandalay. We transfer 15km to Ava (Inwa), the ancient capital of Shan and Burmese Kingdoms for over four centuries. Crossing the Myint Nge River by ferry, the small roads of Ava are explored by horse cart. We visit the Bagaya Teak Monastery; the Nanmyin Watch Tower, the last standing structure of the Ava dynasty palace compound also known as the "Leaning Tower of Ava"; and the Maha Aungmye Bonzan Monastery, a 300-year old architectural wonder with graceful archways. We continue to the Ancient Kingdom of Sagaing, located across the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River. From the Sagaing Hills, we enjoy views of the hillside dotted with countless pagodas and pay a special visit to a monastery to learn about the life of Buddhist devotees. We continue to another beautiful ancient capital, Amarapura, famous for its textile industries. There, we visit a cottage industry workshop to learn how Myanmar longyis and traditional fabrics are woven. Continuing to the Ubein Bridge, a simple yet remarkable teak structure that spans 1,2km above Taungtaman Lake. Ubein Bridge, silhouetted by the setting sun, is a magical experience and a photographer's dream.



Overnight at the Eastern Palace Hotel

Day 5: Mandalay – Heho – Inle Lake – Indaing (B)

Enjoy breakfast transfer to the Mandalay airport for domestic flight to Heho, a quiet transit town with one of the few airport links in the beautiful hills of Shan State. Transfer from Heho airport by private vehicle down into the valley to Nyaung Shwe on the edge of Inle Lake, and board your private local boat to take you to your hotel. Inle Lake is simply magical. At 1000 metres elevation, the temperatures are pleasant, and the calm waters are dotted with Intha stilt house villages, floating vegetable gardens and fishing canoes, set against the back drop of the beautiful Shan hills. Motorised boats are the means of transport across the lake, although the Intha people get around in traditional flat bottomed boats using a unique and skilful form of leg rowing.



In the afternoon, we enjoy a boat tour to Indaing, at the western end of the lake. Pass through the busy village of Ywama, the largest, with many channels and tall teak houses on stilts; and enter a long, often tree-lined canal, either side of which farmers cultivate their land. Disembark at the jetty and walk for 15 minutes through Indaing village to reach the 14th - 18th century pagoda ruins of Nyaung Ohak. Many pagodas here remain charmingly unrenovated, with plants and even small trees growing out of them, making the area very atmospheric. A covered walkway popular with souvenir stallholders leads up to Shwe Inn Thein Paya, a complex of weather-beaten 17th - 18th century zedi; some newly reconstructed. Return to the boat jetty with a leisurely 'nature walk' through the trees, and travel back across the lake to your hotel.



Overnight at the Pristine Lotus Resort

Day 6: Markets – Leg Rowers – Traditional workshops (B)

Today you will explore one of the 5 rotating markets in the area; a fascinating insight into the lifestyle of the Pa-O, Danu and Intha people. During today's excursion by boat on Inle Lake we see the famous leg rowers and the typical floating gardens where fruits and vegetables are grown, and learn about local methods of fishing and village life. A highlight may be a visit to the traditional village of Paukpar, with neat rows of bamboo houses. If possible we will stop and visit a family for Shan tea.



In the afternoon we visit Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the holiest religious site in southern Shan State. We also visit the boat construction workshop at Nampan village and stop to see some traditional handicrafts - silk weaving on wooden handlooms in Inpawkhon village, a cheroot-maker's workshop and a blacksmith's forge. Continue by boat to visit Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery, one of the oldest monasteries on the lake, where you can see exquisite Buddha statues which are more than 200 years old. Return to your hotel by boat as the sun lowers and the light softens over the lake.

Overnight at the Pristine Lotus Resort

Day 7: Red Mountain Estate Vineyard – Yangon (B)

This morning we transfer by boat to Nyauang Shwe town and visit nearby Red Mountain Estate, here we tour the lush vineyard situated on the side of mountain. Taste some of Myanmar's premiere wines, and observe the different aging methods completed in their cellar cave. After lunch in Nyaung Shwe we drive 1hr to Heho airport for afternoon flight to Yangon. Upon arrival to Yangon we transfer to your hotel. Rest of the evening is free for relaxing & own Yangon explorations.



Overnight at the Rose Garden Hotel in a Superior room

Day 8: Depart Yangon (B)

After breakfast & check out, transfer to Yangon International Airport for departure flight.

******All touring schedules and activities are flexible and will be adjusted to guests' wishes******