

Meet Me in Myanmar

8 days | Starts/Ends: Yangon



As Rudyard Kipling wrote 'this is Burma and it is quite unlike any land you know about'. Experience the cultural delights of this extraordinary country across eight days, visiting the many religious buildings of Yangon, cruising down Irrawaddy River and exploring the many ancient stupas which fill Bagan's incredible landscape.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Yangon – Embark on a guided tour of the highlights of the city including the reclining Buddha of Chaukhtagy and the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda
- Mingun – See the colossal Mingun Bell and the abandoned project to build the world's largest pagoda
- Sagaing Hill – Enjoy spectacular views over rolling hills and visit the impressive Thirty Caves Pagoda
- Irrawaddy River – Cruise along the river to Bagan taking in the picturesque scenery and rural village life on the river banks
- Mandalay – Explore the highlights including the Royal Palace and enjoy a beautiful sunset at Mandalay Hill

- Amarapura - Discover the iconic U Bein Bridge at sunset and visit the Mahagandayon Monastery
- Bagan – Marvel at the historic Dhammayangyi Temple and the incredible Mingalazedi Pagoda on a guided city tour
- Nyaung-U – Browse the bustling local market, visit the glittering Shwezigon Pagoda and explore the Kyansittha Cave Temple

What's Included

- Breakfast daily and 2 lunches
- 7 nights 3-4 star hotels
- Riverboat cruise from Mandalay to Bagan. Or flight from Mandalay to Bagan for travel 01 Apr - 31 Jul (dates can vary dependent on the weather conditions)
- 2 economy class flights: Yangon to Mandalay and Bagan to Yangon
- Escorted by an English speaking tour guide (for groups of 6 or more) and specialist guides at some sights
- Guided sightseeing - Yangon, Mandalay, Amarapura, Inwa and Bagan
- Airport arrival and departure transfers on days 1 and 8
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$35-45pp, paid in USD

- Entrance Fees: USD\$55-65pp, paid in USD
- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour guide. We recommend you allow USD\$3-6 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Yangon

Saturday. Welcome to Myanmar and Yangon, the commercial and spiritual centre of the country. After your airport transfer to our hotel, the day is free to spend as you wish. Acquaint yourself with the bustling streets of downtown Yangon or adjust to the time difference before the activities of the next day. In the evening there will be a welcome meeting from your tour guide. **Overnight - Yangon**

Day 2 : Yangon pagodas, tea rooms & markets



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Today we explore the fascinating city of Yangon and its famous religious monuments. In the heart of downtown we begin with a photo stop in front of Yangon City Hall, before visiting the Sule Pagoda, which is a peaceful place to retreat from the bustle of the city. The pagoda is near Maha Bandoola Park which is encircled by a host of colonial buildings and heritage sites, including Independence Monument and the High Court. We also see the hollow, golden Botahtaung Pagoda before lunch at the Yangon Tea House, which is reminiscent of the grand tea houses of colonial times and serves a delicious cup of traditional tea.

After lunch we take a stroll around the colourful Bogyoke (Scott) Market, which sells an array of goods, including gemstones, handicrafts and clothes. After some retail therapy we visit the giant 70 metre-long reclining Buddha of Chaukhtagyī Paya at Chaukhtagyī Pagoda, which has a crown encrusted in diamonds and other precious stones.

Later this evening we enjoy an excursion to the most revered Buddhist temple in Myanmar, the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda. Standing at 90 metres tall, the gold leaf central stupa dominates the city's skyline and turns vivid hues of yellow, orange and red when the sun begins to set. **Overnight - Yangon (B, L)**

Day 3 : Mandalay & Mahagandayon Monastery



Yangon – Mandalay. This morning we fly to Mandalay, Myanmar's last royal capital. On the outskirts of Mandalay is the ancient city of Amarapura, a former capital of Myanmar which is rich in sights. Here we visit the largest teaching monastery in the country: the Mahagandayon Monastery. Hundreds of

monks from the monastery queue to receive their daily alms from the people.

Travelling into the city we explore the Royal Palace and see the teak carvings on the historic Shwenandaw Monastery. We also have the opportunity to visit a local handicraft workshop to see bronze sculpting, gold leaf marking and wood carving, before spending the afternoon at leisure. This evening we visit the world's largest book at the Kuthodaw Pagoda and our day concludes at Mandalay Hill, where we hope to enjoy a spectacular sunset, with vistas across the city. **Overnight - Mandalay (B)**

Day 4 : Mingun & U-bein bridge



This morning we enjoy a cruise up the Irrawaddy River to Mingun where we visit the remains of what could have been the world's largest pagoda and the mighty Mingun Bell. Intended to reach a staggering height of 152 metres, work on the pagoda stopped after the death of King Bodawpaya in 1819. Dramatically split by an earthquake in 1838, the monumental structure is still incredibly impressive.

Travelling on to Sagaing Hill we take in the spectacular views over the river and the rolling hills, which are studded with pagodas and stupas. On top of the hill is the ancient Swan Oo Pon Nya Shin pagoda and we see the remarkable Thirty Caves Pagoda and the Kaungmudaw Pagoda.

Returning to ancient Amarapura, which is famous for its textile industry, we see how traditional fabrics are woven at a cottage industry workshop, before our final stop of the day at the famous U Bein Bridge. U Bein is the longest teak bridge in the world, set over the enchanting Taungthaman Lake. Here

we have the wonderful opportunity to see the bridge in all its glory at sunset, which is a photographer's dream. **Overnight - Mandalay (B)**

Day 5 : Irrawaddy River Cruise to Bagan



Mandalay - Bagan. Transferring to the jetty this morning we board the MGRG express riverboat that plies the Irrawaddy from Mandalay to Bagan. The journey takes approx 9 hours where you'll be treated to breathtaking views interrupted only by scenes of everyday life as family fishing boats pass and children wave from the shore. Upon arrival to Bagan hotel check in and free time this evening.

Please be sure to pack something warm for the boat trip, hat and sunscreen. Seating is provided on the main deck, outdoors though fully shaded. You'll be sitting in a relaxed style cane chair for the trip and you may wish to consider packing a chair cushion for extra comfort. You can also get up and walk around the boat whenever you choose.

Please note: Between 01 Apr and 31 July each year the water level of the river is at its lowest which prevents cruises from operating. These dates do vary depending upon rainfall and the amount of water coming down the river. If travelling with us during this time a flight between Mandalay - Bagan replaces the cruise. Day 5 arrangements during this period are morning at leisure in Mandalay before transferring to Mandalay Airport to board the 30 minute flight to Nyaung Oo Airport and transfer to Bagan where we spend the night. Please also note that only breakfast is included when we fly to Bagan, lunch and dinner is excluded. **Overnight - Bagan (B, L)**

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Day 6 : Bagan's famed Stupas



Early this morning those that have pre-booked hot air ballooning over Bagan will depart for their excursion at approximately 5.30am and enjoy a wonderful flight. Returning to the hotel at approximately 7.30am.

Nothing can quite prepare you for the spectacular sight of stupa-upon-stupa that fill the dusty plains of Bagan. Over 2,000 temples and pagodas dating back some 800 years creates one of the world's most impressive skylines.

Our sightseeing begins with a visit to the town of Nyaung-U to see the local market and Bagan's most important reliquary shrine, the Shwezigon Pagoda. We'll also visit the simple Kyansittha Cave Temple and enjoy its interesting 12th century frescoes.

Continuing our sightseeing we visit the Manuha Temple with its gigantic Buddhas, the sandstone carvings of the nearby Nanpaya Temple, and the Ananda Temple, a whitewashed masterpiece of Mon architecture with four standing gold-leaf Buddhas. We stop for a photo opportunity at the towering Thatbyinnyu Temple before visiting the gigantic Dhammayangyi Temple and the Mingalarzedi Pagoda, the last of the large pagodas built in the 13th century, representing the pinnacle of Bagan's architectural skills. The final stop of the day is at a local lacquer workshop where we see how local craftsmen skillfully prepare Bagan's most famous handicraft. **Overnight - Bagan (B)**

Day 7 : Fly Bagan to Yangon, free time

Bagan - Yangon. Enjoy the morning at leisure before flying to Yangon. The remainder of the day offers free time, whether relaxing in the

hotel or further exploring the city. **Overnight - Yangon (B)**

Day 8 : Yangon

Saturday. Today is the end of our Myanmar adventure, with an airport departure transfer once you have checked out of your hotel.

Overnight - Yangon (B)

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Rose Garden Hotel

Located just a mile from the Shwedagon Pagoda and other attractions, the Rose Garden is an elegant hotel for your stay in Yangon. Enjoy the spacious superior rooms with locally-influenced decor, free Wi-Fi and a range of four-star amenities. The hotel's two restaurants and bar offer delicacies ranging from Burmese to Italian cuisine. Perhaps the highlight of this 7-floor hotel is its 60 ft outdoor pool, perfect for a sunny swim. A gift shop & gallery and 24-hour gym also feature among the hotel's services.



Eastern Palace Hotel

The Eastern Palace is an elegant hotel situated 10 minutes' drive from central Mandalay. Its all-day restaurant and rooftop bar, large pool, and fitness centre are available for guests to relax in after seeing the sights of the former royal capital. The bright and modern rooms are equipped with flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi, and en-suite facilities. The hotel is also near the elaborate Shwenandaw Monastery, once part of the Burmese Royal Palace.



Thande Hotel

Built in 1922 to facilitate the arrival of the British Prince of Wales, the Bagan Thande Hotel is the only colonial era building in the city. Rooms are furnished to a high standard with beautiful teakwood, fine fabrics and traditional handicrafts. An Al-fresco dinner overlooking the Ayeyawaddy River facing numerous pagodas is a great way to spend evenings at this wonderful Burmese retreat. The hotel is perfectly situated by the river in Old Bagan and is surrounded by beautiful gardens and temples as far as the eye can see.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Entrance Fees

Entrance fees to most sites are not included, although reasonably priced. The entrance fee amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document and a breakdown of the entrance fees is provided upon arrival in your Welcome Letter.

For tours starting in Vietnam and Myanmar we collect from all tour participants the entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour. All funds collected in Vietnam are payable in either US dollars (USD) or Vietnamese dong (VND).

Multi-country tours starting in Laos: Please note if you are travelling on our Laos to Vietnam, Inside Indochina or Indochina Discovery tour your entrance fees will be split into two separate payments. Entrance fees for Laos will be collected on day 2 of the tour in Vientiane and entrance fees for Vietnam/

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Cambodia/Thailand will be collected on day 8 in Hanoi.

Tipping Kitty

At the start of your tour, we collect from all tour participants a small tipping kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document). This kitty covers tips throughout your holiday and saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, bus drivers, train conductors and other support staff throughout the tour.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour guide/s. For a job well done, we would suggest USD \$3-6 per traveller, per day. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Multi country tours starting in Laos: Please note if you are travelling on our Laos to Vietnam, Inside Indochina or Indochina Discovery tour your tipping kitty will be split into two separate payments. The tipping kitty for the Laos section of your tour will be collected on day 2 of the tour in Vientiane. Then, on day 8 in Hanoi the Vietnam/Cambodia/Thailand tipping kitty will be collected for these onward touring arrangements.

Groups & guides

The longest *Signature Range* tour we offer in Southeast Asia is our *Indochina Discovery 23 day tour*. All other *Signature Range* tours we offer (with the exception of the family tours) are sectors of this larger tour.

The longest *Essentials Range* tour we offer in Southeast Asia is our *Hanoi to Bangkok 19 day tour*, all other *Essentials Range* tours are sectors of this longer tour.

As our tours are modular, travellers may join you part way through your holiday, for example in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City or Phnom Penh on our *Signature Range* tours, or in Ho Chi Minh City our *Essentials Range* tours. There will also be travellers who end their tour when you continue on.

Myanmar:

Our longest tour in Myanmar is *Best of Myanmar & Beach - 14 day tour*. All other tours in Myanmar are sectors of this longer tour. All our Myanmar trips operate together from day 1 - day 7, then from day 7 some in your tour group may leave and others continue on. Our *Yangon City Stay* travellers will also join our tour arrangements of day 1 and day 2.

Guides:

In Laos, a Lao national guide escorts our tours from Vientiane through to Luang Prabang.

In Vietnam a Vietnamese national guide escorts our tours from Hanoi through to Ho Chi Minh City.

In Cambodia, our tours have two guides, a Cambodian national guide in Phnom Penh and a specialist regional guide in Siem Reap.

Our tours that end in Bangkok are not fully escorted for the Thailand sector. On our *Signature Range* tours there is a local Thai guide for the Bangkok city tour. If you are travelling on one of our *Essentials Range* tours, a local guide will meet you at the Cambodia border and escort you to the hotel, the remainder of your Bangkok stay is unescorted with free time to independently explore.

What to pack

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- Lightweight cotton garments. Ladies may need to have their shoulders and legs (to below the knee) covered when visiting certain sites, so please pack accordingly
- Comfortable walking shoes in addition to flip flogs/thongs
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Universal travel adaptor
- Lightweight, fold up raincoat/poncho/umbrella
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swimming costume and torch

- Sleep sheet if taking an overnight sleeper train in Vietnam. These also can be easily purchased in Hanoi at an approx. cost of USD \$5

- An overnight bag, if your tour includes a night aboard a Junk boat in Halong Bay. As we will be returning to Hanoi, it is not essential that you take your big bag/suitcase with you

It's not like home

Travel to far-flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events, as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

Shopping experiences on your tour

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase goods. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

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Meet Me in Myanmar

Myanmar (burma) Country Guide

Welcome to Myanmar - Arrival transfer

If your tour or short stay includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the Inclusions section on page one of this document) the arrival procedure is as follows:

Arrive to Yangon International Airport - proceed through immigration then collect your luggage and proceed to the arrivals hall.

As you enter the arrivals hall, look for our On The Go representative. He/she will be holding a prominent on the go tours logo signboard. After meeting you will be escorted to our awaiting transportation and transferred to our tour start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes) or your flight is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

If arriving on day 1 of a holiday, that includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the Inclusions section of these Trip Notes) we will be at the airport, ready to transfer you to your hotel. Further if you are booking pre-tour accommodation with us an airport arrival transfer will also be provided. If arriving prior to 9am on day 1 you should consider purchasing a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until standard hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm. If booking pre-tour accommodation with us an airport to hotel arrival transfer will be provided.

Visa & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Myanmar.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to

book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/Burma/Visas

What to expect in Myanmar

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Burma/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

Health requirements

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

Malaria in Myanmar

Areas with Malaria: Present in rural areas throughout the country with altitudes of 1000m or more. None in the cities of Mandalay and Yangon. Estimated relative risk of malaria for travellers is moderate.

Water

As tap water is not safe to drink in Myanmar, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Ballooning over Bagan Add-on

This Add-on can be added to our Meet Me in Myanmar, Best of Myanmar, and Best of Myanmar & Beach tours between 1 Oct - 31 Mar.

Take to the skies for a spectacular aerial view of Bagan's remarkable landscape, as you soar over hundreds of ancient stupas and temples on a majestic hot air ballooning adventure.

Rising early, you will be transferred from your hotel to the launch area, where some freshly brewed tea and coffee awaits, while you receive a safety briefing from your licensed pilot. After your balloon is inflated, you'll climb into the wicker basket and take off, as the sun rises. No two journeys are the same, floating where ever the wind may take you, on an unforgettable journey that

will take your breath away. Dependent upon wind conditions, the pilot can 'turn' the balloon using 'rotation venting' to achieve magical aerial views which are sure to provide memories for a lifetime. After disembarking, in aeronautical tradition, enjoy a chilled flute of sparkling wine before being transferred back to your hotel to continue on with your day's sightseeing.

PAYABLE UPON ARRIVAL - USD\$300 in cash only. Offered early morning (approx 5.30am) of either day 6 or 7 on our Meet Me in Myanmar, Best of Myanmar and Best of Myanmar & Beach tours.

Operational from 1 Oct - 31 Mar each year, subject to weather conditions.

IMPORTANT: Availability for the excursion is highly sort and it's very rare that positions are still available upon your arrival to Myanmar. The cost of the excursion is USD\$300 when paid locally. We are unable to take payment for this excursion prior to departure but are happy to confirm the booking on your behalf, then upon arrival (day 2) payment will need to be made in USD CASH. Please be sure you will undertake the excursion before booking with us, as once we've confirmed your booking this activity is 100% non-refundable. You are also most welcome to book this excursion independently online, though the cost is slightly higher and you would be subject to credit card fees.

Flight duration approximately 45 minutes.

Includes: Transfers to and from the hotel to the balloon take-off area. Light refreshments before take off and after landing, and flight certificate upon arrival.

Licensed balloon pilot and experienced balloon ground crew - your safety is paramount! Our balloon operators have satisfied our strict safety guidelines and provided copies of public passenger liability insurance and balloon pilot licenses.

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