



## Myanmar and The Irrawaddy

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **02-05-2025** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

**Visit:** Yangon - Mandalay - 4D Irrawaddy River Cruise - Bagan – Kalaw - Inle Lake - Yangon

### Detailed Itinerary

#### Day 01: Day 1: Arrive Yangon

On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel for checkin. Relax at the hotel or take a walk on the nearby streets and explore this historic city. The former capital of Burma, Rangoon (Yangon) is a bustling city featuring colonial architecture and ancient pagodas. Rangoon remains the commercial centre of a country steeped in mystique and rooted in tradition. Relatively unexplored by tourists, this magical country is now opening up, offering a unique opportunity to discover a culture that is a world away from our own. Overnight in Yangon

**Day 02: Day 2: Colonial-historical centre – Markets – Golden Pagodas**

After breakfast, you will be met and tour around the city centre which is filled with various historical and colonial buildings. Stop at the Sule Pagoda which is a 2200-year-old temple surrounded by government buildings. Then, head to Mahabandoola Park, where Independent Monument stands. Then visit the vibrant Little India with numerous street vendors and markets. Continue your tour to the Botahtaung Pagoda situated downtown beside the Yangon River. Next, visit the Chaukhtatgyi Pagoda, one of Myanmar's more beautiful reclining buddhas which is topped by a crown encrusted with diamonds and other precious stones. The feet of the statue is carved with traditional symbols and often many locals gather to pay homage and pray.

Afterwards, you will be taken to Kawdawgyi Lake, here you can experience the panoramic views from the lake overlooking the Shwedagon Pagoda. Complete a day with a visit to one of the world's most spectacular monuments, the Shwedagon Pagoda, a gleaming bell dome structure that dominates the city's skyline.

Legends state that the sacred hairs of the Buddha are enshrined here. The Shwedagon is an iconic symbol of the country, a sight not to be missed. The entrance is always very busy with sellers and local pilgrims. You'll learn about the daily life of the local people who reside in the immediate surroundings and gain a deeper insight into the Buddhist religion as you provide offerings to the monks. Then, walk along the pagoda platform clockwise, as is tradition, around the main Pagoda. During this interactive walking tour of the pagoda, explore walkways and hidden gems that are unknown to most visitors. 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 in Yangon.(B)

**Day 03: Day 3: Yangon to Mandalay – Sagaing**

Today, you will be met in the hotel lobby and transferred to the airport for domestic flight to Mandalay(cost not included). On your arrival in Mandalay, you will be met and transferred to Mandalay 40km/1hr. We will enjoy a morning stroll through the lively railway bazaar, a fascinating market experience where the locals ply their trade on the railway track, scattering each time a train comes along. A vibrant cacophony of sights, smells and sounds offering a host of photo opportunities, this market is a must see for anyone who wishes to witness a unique side of life in Myanmar. Next, cross the bridge over the Irrawaddy River to Sagaing.

Covered with 600 white-painted pagodas and monasteries, Sagaing Hill is widely regarded as the religious center of Myanmar. It is home to 3,000 monks and 100 meditation centers, visit pagodas such as Swan Oo Pon Nya Shin and U Min Thone Sae. Also go to Sagaing's local market, a typical Burmese market that few tourists visit. Here, find a range of items for sale including locally made pottery, silver and other handicrafts. Then, stop at a small pottery village to see the process of making the ubiquitous water pots found throughout Myanmar. Atop Mandalay Hill lie glittering glass-studded temple walls which reflect the evening glow as you watch the sunset. Overnight in Mandalay.(B)

**Day 04: Day 4: Embark The Strand Cruise (4 days/3 nights from Mandalay to Bagan/downstream) – Mingun**

Cruise day 1: Begin your tour in Mandalay with a welcome breakfast in a private area by the illustrious Royal Lake, before visiting the magnificent U-Bein Bridge, a crossing that spans the Taungthaman Lake near Amarapura. It is also believed to be the oldest and longest teak wood bridge in the world. After that, travel on wards to discover the Mahamuni Pagoda. A generous lunch of Myanmar cuisine will be served on board at the Strand restaurant. After lunch, stop in Mingun. Visit ancient pagoda named Hsinbyume Pagoda, also known as Myatheindan Pagoda, with seven concentric terraces representing seven mountain ranges around Mt. Meru. As the sun sets, admire the magnificent sights over the Ayeyarwady river from the ship's Sundeck, sipping one of the Strand Cruise's signature cocktails, before joining your fellow travellers for grill dinner. Overnight on board(B/L/D)

**Day 05: Day 5: Ava**

Cruise day 2 This morning, take a visit to Ava, the ancient imperial capital of successive Burmese kingdoms from the 14th to 19th centuries. Visit the Yadana Shemee, Bagaya and the brick monastery Me Nu Paya. Back on board, enjoy the cooking demonstration at the Sarkies Bar and Myanmar traditional demonstration of wearing "Thanakha and Longyi". Most of the Burmese ladies use Thanakha to protect from the sunburn and it has the cooling sensation. After that, Thai lunch is served on the Sundeck while enjoying the beautiful landscape passing by as the ship cruises onwards to the ancient city of Bagan. As night falls, the ship will moor on a remote and wild section of the river. Surrounded only by the soft whispering of nature, you will be invited for cocktail and Mediterranean dinner at the Strand Restaurant. Overnight on board.(B/L/D)

**Day 06: Day 6: Bagan**

Cruise day 3 Arrive in Bagan, a remarkable site for the magnificent architecture of its buildings and the contribution. Marvel at Bagan's wonders including Ananda Temple, one of the most exquisite temples of the country, and the Htilominlo Pagoda, renowned for its elaborate plaster mouldings. After a delicious international lunch on board, followed by a journey to the beautiful Shwe Gu Gyi temple and Gubyaukgyi temple. Then, discover a lacquer workshop called Bagan House. As twilight sets in, admire the sunset from the sundeck while drinking cocktail. Enjoy "Myanmar traditional cultural show" on the sundeck before a festive evening and farewell crew presentation. Signature dinner will be served at the bar. Overnight on board.(B/L/D)

**Day 07: Day 7: Disembark The Strand Cruise – Incredible Bagan Tour by E-Bike**

Cruise day 4 After a healthy breakfast on board, disembark in Bagan. Your Bagan guide will be welcoming you on arrival at the jetty. After a short safety briefing and demonstration of the bike's functions, it's time to



hit the road! The e-bikes work like scooters, there is no need to pedal, just relax and enjoy the breeze. With these e-bikes, you can travel down smaller lanes than cars and other vehicles cannot access. Today's ride is arranged to follow those lanes, avoiding the main roads, and taking you through the peaceful pagoda plains and local villages. We begin our journey into the Ancient Kingdoms of Bagan with a visit to the Nyaung U Market, the largest market in the Bagan region, that will give us a glimpse into local life. The Dhamayazeka Zedi is our first visit, providing panoramic views of the temple studded plains of Bagan. We continue to the gold gilded Swezigon Stupa, purported to contain a holy tooth relic of the Buddha. We also see how cottage industries like brick making are carried out with traditional methods. During a visit to a monastic school that provides free primary level education, we have the opportunity to interact with the school children. Next, visit Htilominlo Temple to learn how Burmese sand paintings are created and 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. For sunset, a horse cart ride around the temples offers unparalleled photo opportunities of one of the richest archeological treasures in Southeast Asia as the sun dips behind the temple ruins (weather permitting). Afterwards, settle down on one of the viewing platforms and watch as an unforgettable sunset casts its light on temples, chedis and pagodas of Bagan. The tour is flexible, and there's no definitive route. Take your time, soak up the serenity, and get lost in one of the world's greatest cultural sites. Overnight in Bagan(B)

### **Day 08: Day 8: Mandalay – Mount Popa – Mandalay**

Today, you will be met and transferred to Mt Popa, an extinct volcano. After paying respects to the Nat Shrine at the foot of Mount Popa, you will climb the 777 steps to reach the mountain top monastery where powerful spirits are said to live. Stop by the local cottage industries on the way back to Bagan. See how palm juice is collected for the making of toddy wine and palm candies and chat to the locals. Sit down for a green tea and traditional snacks, like tea leaf salad, before returning to your hotel and spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Relax, enjoy the swimming pool and other hotel facilities. Overnight in Mandalay. (B) **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY** Sunrise Hot Air Balloon Flight Operated: Daily between October & mid-April, 5.30-8.00 or 8.30 am Imagine floating over thousand year old pagodas and the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River, as the sun rises slowly from the horizon over the misty fields and temples. The magic of Bagan has inspired visitors to Myanmar for centuries. One of the most remarkable sights in Asia, where ancient temples dot the landscape as far as the eye can see. The flight duration is approx. 45min to 1hr depending on wind and air currents and other local factors. Balloons team will pick you up from the hotel and transfer to the launch site. After briefing session, set off for the spectacular flight. Upon landing enjoy glass of champagne and light snack prior transfer back to your hotel

### **Day 09: Day 9: Bagan – Heho – Pindaya – Kalaw**

After breakfast, transfer to Mandalay airport for your flight to Heho(cost not included). From Heho airport transfer to Pindaya (approximately 45 minutes), an attractive drive up into the hills and across the Shan

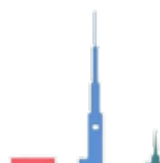
Plateau, through fields of mountain rice. Visit magnificent Pindaya Caves, set in a limestone ridge overlooking a picturesque lake, where thousands of different types of Buddha images are on display in the various cave chambers. Afterwards, continue to a local workshop where Shan paper and parasols are made. After lunch, drive to the former British hill station of Kalaw (approximately 1 hour 15 minutes) a charming town featuring British-style bungalows set in leafy surroundings. Overnight in Kalaw. (B)

**Day 10: Day 10: Kalaw – Nyaung Shwe – Red Mountain Estate Vineyards & Winery**

In the morning, visit the local market, the tiny railway station and perhaps walk up the hill to see the Catholic Church (if open). From Kalaw, drive down to Nyaung Shwe (about 2 hours) on the edge of Inle Lake, stopping on the way to visit Shwe Yan Pyay Monastery. After lunch, visit the Red Mountain Estate Vineyards & Winery for a tour and wine tasting. Afterwards we will board a long-tail boat for the transfer to your hotel on Inle Lake, along the way you are likely to see the famous leg-rowing fishermen and the floating gardens. Traveling on the lake is an exhilarating experience and a chance to observe the unique traditions of the Intha people. Overnight in Inle Lake. (B)

**Day 11: Day 11: Local market – Indein – Traditional Floating Craft Villages**

If it coincides with your visit you will explore one of the 5-day rotating markets in the area - a fascinating insight into the life-style of the ethnic Pa-O, Danu and Intha people who visit these markets to buy and sell. Next, travel by long-tailed boat across the lake to Indein, at the western end of Inle, for one of the most scenic trips on the Lake. Passing through the busy village of Ywama, the largest on the Lake, with many channels and tall teak houses on stilts; enter a long, often tree-lined canal, either side of which farmers cultivate their land against the backdrop of the Shan Hills. Disembark at the jetty and walk for 15 minutes through Indein 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. Returning to the river you continue by boat downstream past Yethar village, watching local life on the banks and birds in the trees until rejoining the Lake. Stop at Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the holiest religious site in southern Shan State. See Intha fishermen at work and stop for a closer look at their unique techniques. Observe how they use one leg to balance the boat, the other leg to support the fishing cage, one arm to aim the fishing cage and the other arm to steer. It is a technique that is unique to the region and takes years to master. Continue to Nampan village, meeting with residents to witness traditional Ikat weaving techniques firsthand. Continue to Inpawkhon village, where you interact with locals, immersing yourself in village life. Visit a boat builder's workshop, blacksmith shop and cheroot making factory, where you can try your hand at making the fabled Burmese cigar.(B)



**Day 12: Day 12: Inle Lake – Heho – Yangon – Bogyoke Market – Explore Dala by Tuk-Tuk**

Today, you will be met in your hotel lobby and transferred to the airport for your onward flight to Yangon(cost not included). On arrival, you will be met and transferred for some shopping at Scott Market, a sprawling complex built in 1926 and noted for its variety of handicrafts and other items which provides an excellent opportunity for a shopping spree (please note that the market is closed on Mondays and on public holidays). Then, transfer to Nanthida Jetty to board a ferry across the river to Dala. The 15-minute ferry ride offers great views of the waterways as well as opportunity to interact with curios locals. Upon reaching Dala, take a local tuk tuk through the town. Continue to a traditional family-run candle factory and a monastery to learn about monastic life in Myanmar. The monastery also serves as a community centre and is an important part of rural Burmese life. If time permits you will also visit The Chu Chu shop, workshop and gallery, making most beautiful recycled products. Return to Yangon by local ferry(B)

**Day 13: Day 13: Depart Yangon**

Today, you will be met in your hotel lobby and transferred to the airport for your flight home.(B)

**Inclusion**

- 9 nights shared Accommodation in twin/double room with daily breakfast at the below indicated room types (see hotel category list below) (check in and check out around noontime) - All transfers and transportation with air-con vehicles (types of vehicles depending on the number of pax): o 1-2 pax: Saloon car or similar - Local ENGLISH speaking station guides except during 4 days Irrawaddy river cruise - All entrance fees as program - Meals (B/L/D) (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) as indicated in the program (Local food):

**Exclusion**

- Airfares (international and domestic) - Meals (other than mentioned in the program) - 4D/3N The Strand Cruise - Drinks - Visa to Myanmar - Mineral water beyond that supplied - Tips - Early check in or late check out - Insurances - Optional excursions and activities - Additional transfer required due to any emergency situation - Items of a personal nature (Phone calls, laundry, beverages...) - Peak season surcharges if any - All not mentioned above

**Note**

Supplement cost for domestic airfare is available on request Supplement cost for the The Strand cruise is available on request All surcharges will be added as per applicable season THE STRAND CRUISE From Mandalay to Bagan (4 days/3 nights) High Season (1st January to 16th March 2019, 14th October 2019 to 16th March 2020) THE STRAND CRUISE From Mandalay to Bagan (4 days/3 nights) Low Season (17th March 2019 to 30th April 2019, 02nd Sep 2019 to 14th Oct 2019, 16th March 2020 to 17th April 2020) IMP - The Strand Cruise will NOT operate from 27th April 2018 and will resume on Friday 28th September 2018 with the 3 nights Mandalay to Bagan cruise Hotel List 3\* Hotels City Hotel Room Type Yangon Hotel Shwe Yee Superior Mandalay Nwe Waddy Hotel Superior Bagan Royal Aykare Lodge Superior Kalaw Dream Villa Hotel Superior Inle Lake Inle Garden Hotel Villa 4\* Hotels City Hotel Room Type Yangon Rose Garden Hotel Superior Mandalay Eastern Palace Hotel Deluxe Bagan Amata Garden Resort Bagan Amata Deluxe Kalaw Kalaw Heritage Hotel Superior Garden View Inle Lake Amata Garden Inle Resort Deluxe 5\*

Hotels City Hotel Room Type Yangon The Strand Hotel Superior Suite Mandalay Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort Superior Bagan Aureum Palace Hotel & Resort Jasmine/Orchid Villa Lake View Kalaw Kalaw Heritage Hotel Heritage Suite Mountain View Inle Lake Inle Princess Resort Lake Houses IMPORTANT No early check in or late checkout is included except those indicated in the program. Generally, the check in time is 14.00pm and check out time is 12.00pm. Visa into Myanmar is required except for countries who have signed the visa exemption contracts. Remarks: Passport must be valid 6 months ahead since the time of departing the visited country Compulsory dinners on Dec 24th (Christmas), Dec 31st (New Year) or Myanmar New Year will be advised at time of booking.

## **Tour Dates & Pricing**

