



Burma Explorer

Classic Tour | 11 Days | Moderate

Yangon – Bagan – Mandalay – Inle Lake

Burma emanates the exotic glamour of a relatively undiscovered destination. This unique country is dripping with cultural riches which make for an immensely rewarding adventure.

- Discover the historical sights of Yangon
- Tour the temples of astounding Bagan
- Watch the sun set over the U Bein Bridge
- Explore the floating gardens of Inle Lake



Burma Explorer tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Visa fees for UK and EU passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of South East Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Moderate Tours:

'Burma Explorer' is a **moderate** tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time.
- At some of the sights visited there are a large number of steps to climb
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats often without assistance.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Burma Explorer

Days 1-2: Yangon

Fly to Burma and together with those arriving at a similar time you will be met by your guide or driver in the arrivals hall at Yangon airport to travel to your hotel for check in.



Destination Information

Yangon - With a population of over 5 million, Burma's former capital possesses a peaceful atmosphere with colonial boulevards and tranquil lakes. This charming city thrives by night with bustling streets filled with stalls selling everything from locally made handicrafts to fruit and cigars.

Day 3: Yangon

After breakfast, you will start your walking tour of Yangon at the Central Post Office, and then stroll down Strand Road and observe the locals going about their daily lives. Continue walking up Pansodan Street famous for some of Yangon's most impressive colonial architecture, before visiting City Hall and the High Court. Later explore Maha bandoola Garden and visit the National Museum, home to priceless ancient artefacts and Karaweik Hall before watching the sunset at the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda located on top of Singuttara Hill, where many locals and Buddhists come to worship.



Destination Information

Strand Road and Pansodan Street – Many fine examples of British colonial architecture dating from the mid 1800's are located downtown. Pansodan Street intersects Strand Road, which runs parallel to Rangoon River and where Pansodan Jetty is located. This is a great opportunity to witness a hive of activity along the riverfront.

National Museum – Housing works of art and historic memorabilia. Here you will learn the history and tradition of Burma.

Shwedagon Pagoda - Located on top of Singuttara Hill, where many locals and Buddhists come to worship. Shwedagon Pagoda is thought to have been built between the 6th and 10th centuries; however it has been rebuilt many times. It is here that eight strands of Buddha's hair are said to be kept. The pagoda is covered in gold and contains diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

Day 4: Yangon – Bagan

This morning fly 1 hour and 10 minutes to Bagan where upon arrival you will start your sightseeing tour with a visit to the colourful Nyaung U Markets before exploring the pagodas of Htilominlo and Shwezigon and the Ananda Temple. Visit a Lacquer ware craftsmen's workshop and travel through the town of Phwar Saw Village to climb the 400 steps of Aureum Watchtower for a view of the setting sun.



Destination Information

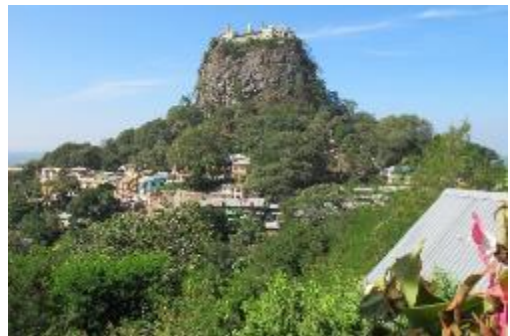
Bagan - It is believed as many as 13,000 temples and stupas once stood in the area around Bagan; however, invasions, war and natural disasters have reduced most of these to rubble. Despite this, Bagan is home to more than 2,200 standing ancient temples and is Burma's greatest architectural site.

Shwezigon Pagoda - This beautiful pagoda was built by King Anawrahta in the 11th century to enshrine one of the four replicas of the Buddha's tooth found in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Today it is considered Bagan's main religious site rising from the earth in three separate terraces.

Htilominlo Pagoda –This pagoda built in 1218, marks the spot where King Nantaungmya was chosen to be the crown prince. Today it still has some of the original plaster and carved reliefs on display.

Day 5: Bagan

Today drive 2 hours to Mt. Popa and climb more than 750 steps to the nearby temple of Taung Kalat, set atop an extinct volcano and said to contain 37 spirits, also known as 'nats'.



Destination Information

Mt Popa - Formed by a volcano almost 250,000 years ago and a revered spiritual residence of the 37 'nats,' worshipped in Burma in unison with Buddhism. There are a number of statues and shrines that represent these spirits located along the mountain. Once you reach the top, the temple of Taung Kalat affords sweeping views of Myingyan Plain below.

Day 6: Bagan to Mandalay

Leave Bagan and fly 30 minutes to Mandalay this morning. Considered the epicentre of Burma culture, Mandalay's sites reflect this. Visit the Mahamuni Pagoda, Shwenandaw Monastery and Kuthodaw Pagoda. Transfer to the jetty after lunch for a boat ride across the Irrawaddy to Mingun on board a local boat. Return to the mainland and visit a traditional handloom silk workshop and Kalaga tapestries craftsmen's shop. Finish the day with a drive up Mandalay Hill in an open top vehicle for magnificent views from the 230m-high summit.



Destination Information

Mandalay - Is the second largest city and the last royal capital of the Burmese Kingdom. Located along the Irrawaddy River and centred around the Royal Palace, Mandalay is within easy distance to former colonial hill stations and ancient cities.

Mahamuni Pagoda - Enshrining the Mahamuni Buddha - a highly revered image in Burma. It is covered in thick layers of gold leaf applied by male devotees. As a result, this has started to distort its shape.

Shwenandaw Monastery - Once part of the royal complex of King Mindon, this building was dismantled and reassembled outside the palace walls in 1880. As luck would have this move ensured that it survived the WWII bombing campaign in Mandalay, where many other royal buildings perished.

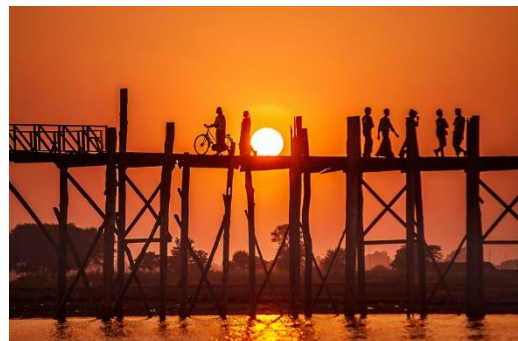
Kuthodaw Pagoda - Famous for housing the world's largest book; Separated into 15 volumes each page is inscribed in marble and housed in its own stupa.

Mingun - A riverside village home to many unique pagodas and the world's largest ringing bell, weighing over 87 tonnes.

Mandalay Hill - The highest point in Mandalay and an optimal spot to enjoy the panoramic views of the river, Shan hills and the city sprawl below

Day 7: Mandalay

This morning, visit Amarapura with its working monastery dating back to 1783. Travel to Sagaing this afternoon, a former Shan capital in the 14th century with many impressive stupas scattered on its hill, and the Tha Kya Di Kya nunnery. At sunset take a boat ride at the U Bein Bridge, the longest teakwood bridge in the world.



Destination Information

Tha Kya Di Kya – this nunnery is less well-known than the Mahagandyon monastery and therefore has fewer tourists and is an authentic insight into daily life for the nuns here.

U Bein Bridge - This teak wood bridge built 200 years ago spans 1.2km across the Taung Thaman Lake and is the longest teak bridge in the world.

Day 8: Mandalay – Inle Lake

This morning board your 30-minute flight to Heho, continue to Inle Lake where you will visit Shwe Yan Pyae Monastery. Begin your visit on the lake by long tail boat, seeing the floating gardens and Intha fisherman. Later visit Phaungdaw Oo Pagoda, one of Burma's most sacred shrines before admiring the collections of ancient Buddhas at Nga Phe Monastery. Finally visit the weaving village of Inpawkhon.



Destination Information

Inle Lake - Located 900m above sea level and approximately 22km long and 11km wide, this water paradise is inhabited by over 200 villages constructed on stilts. The lake is most famous for the extraordinary lives of the people who live on and around it, known as the 'Intha'.

Shwe Yan Pyae Monastery - Built in the 19th Century, this red painted teak monastery provides education and boarding for novice monks.

Phaungdaw Oo Pagoda – One of the most sacred shrines in Burma dating back to the 18th Century. Inside the tiered pagoda, devotees await an opportunity to place gold leaf on one of four ancient Buddha statues housed here.

Nga Phe Monastery - A beautiful collection of Buddha images depicted in the Shan, Tibetan, Bagan and Inwa styles are displayed inside the expansive wooden meditation hall.

Day 9: Inle Lake

Sightseeing today on the western shore of the lake at the Indein Pagoda complex. Take a leisurely walk along one of the many creeks, passing through rice fields to the village of Saema. Visit the village primary school.



Destination Information

Indein Pagoda Complex – One of the amazing historical sites in Inle Lake, where hundreds of small stupas decorated in sculptures of mythological animals and beings lay overgrown by moss and vegetation.

Day 10: Inle Lake - Yangon

This morning transfer to Heho airport for your flight to Yangon. Upon arrival transfer to the famous Bogyoke (Scott) Market (closed on Mondays and public holidays) which is great for shopping with hundreds of food, clothes, handicrafts and gems stores. Continue to Botataung Pagoda and Nanthida jetty to observe the daily life of the local people. In the evening, visit the busy area of Chinatown including a Chinese Temple and enjoy a farewell dinner.



Destination Information

Botataung Pagoda – Close to Rangoon River, this restored Pagoda is unique as it is hollow inside allowing visitors the opportunity to walk through and admire different relics and artefacts on display. =

Chinatown – Located in downtown Rangoon since the 1850's, stroll through the myriad of street vendors and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of this bustling market.

Day 11: Depart Yangon

Any time before your flight is free at your leisure today. You will be transferred from the hotel to Yangon Airport for your onwards flight.

Burma Explorer Travel Information

Visas

A visa is required for entry into Burma. A standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. We will require your passport, 2 completed visa application forms per person and 2 passport photos taken within the last 6 months, to process your visa. We will require all this information 8 weeks prior to departure. As per our standard visa processing service, passports will usually be returned within 4 weeks of your tours scheduled departure. Any passports and visa applications that require an express 2 week service, or that are received in our office less than 6 weeks prior to departure will incur a £60 per passport express fee. In rare cases, you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the embassy. If this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in South East Asia

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in most local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your groups' arrival until breakfast on your day of departure. When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. In Thailand and some other countries in Southeast Asia, fork and spoon are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Southeast Asian cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and South East Asia. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in South East Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Development in South East Asia

Although South East Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Burma public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Burmese Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. Water Festival is celebrated between 14th – 16th April. Burmese New Year Holiday is between 17th – 20th April 2017.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 20 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Last updated: July 2017