



# Epic Irrawaddy Private tour

## Epic Irrawaddy Private Tour 18 Days Inclusive from the UK

Sail over 1,000 miles from cultured Rangoon to the teak forests around Prome, through the desert of Middle Burma, and into the mountains of Upper Burma.

### Inclusive price includes:

- International flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation
- Accommodation
- Meals as stated
- Touring with Guides and entrance fees
- Visa fees for UK passport holders



## Your Tour Dossier

This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the other pre-departure information provided by Wendy Wu Tours including the tour itinerary as described in our brochure and/or website. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour.

If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation; they will be explained here.

All passengers must read this document to ensure the itinerary is suitable for their interests and physical capabilities. This is not your final itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

## Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours

Burma (Myanmar) is the hidden gem of Southeast Asia and has been relatively unexplored by tourists. This tour will fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in Burma (Myanmar) requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken throughout Burma (Myanmar), so your local guides or National Escort will be indispensable during your trip.

Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding. It is essential that all passengers recognize the demands of factors such as basic facilities and cultural differences they may encounter in some areas.

### Epic Irrawaddy Private Tour – Comfortable Paced Tour

Our private tours are accessible to everyone. This tour will involve sightseeing on foot, some climbing of stairs and getting on and off boats throughout the tour. Please note that the cruise ship and all shore excursions arranged by the Pandaw Cruise are on a shared basis.

This tour is not strenuous, and can be taken at the pace, and according to the abilities of passengers travelling in your party. If any member of your party has mobility difficulties, please advise Wendy Wu Tours, so that our operators can be made aware, and may rearrange the itinerary to suit your needs. If at any point during the tour you feel you are being rushed, or not moving fast enough, please let your Local Guide know, so that they may adjust the touring accordingly and provide you with the best experience possible. Similarly, as you are travelling on a private basis, if you would like to change the touring, dates, timings, please speak to your reservations consultant, prior to travelling, or speak to your Local Guide whilst on tour.

NB: Please note that times and distances listed in the tour dossier are approximate.

#### Days 1-2: UK/Rangoon (Yangon)

Fly overnight from the UK. On day 2, you will be met at Rangoon Airport in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours. Transfer to your hotel and check-in.

*No Meals*

#### Day 3: Rangoon

**The below cruise schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the cruise company. See *itinerary changes* section below.**

Embarkation between 10.30am and 11.00am at Rangoon (Yangon) "BOTAHTAUNG" Jetty.

Please note that the ship will leave the pier at 11.00am to sail up the Rangoon River and enter the Twante Canal, which connects the Yangon River with the Irrawaddy Delta. Make a stop to explore the town of Twante en route for approx. 1.5 hours. Sail into the Rangoon river port.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### Day 4: Maubin and Nyaung Don

This morning visit the bustling market of Maubin and the surrounding city. Enjoy some leisurely sightseeing through the Delta village of Nyaung Don.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### Day 5: Danupyu

Explore some of the creeks of the verdant Irrawaddy Delta before stopping at the town of Donabyu with its bustling markets and busy port. There will be a 2 hour trishaw tour. In the First Anglo Burmese War of 1825 the Burmese General Maha-Bandoola was defeated here following a long and disastrous campaign by the British. Moor overnight at Henzada. passengers.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### Day 6: Myanaung

Sail all day and you stop to visit the markets and see old colonial buildings in the sleepy Delta town of Manaung. You enter the Irrawaddy River.

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*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 7: Prome (Pyay)**

Visit the 5th-8th century archaeological site of Thiri-yakittiya, former centre of the Pyu civilization with a fascinating museum of early Buddhist artifacts and sculpture. Touring here will include 3 hours by bus.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 8: Thayetmyo**

This pleasant colonial town once guarded the border between Royal Myanmar and British Myanmar following the 2nd Anglo Myanmar War of 1855. Many of the buildings including the covered market date from this period. Thayet also boasts the oldest golf course in Myanmar (1885). You visit the market, see the colonial houses and ride out by horse cart to the golf course, passing through the former British botanical garden.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 9: Magwe**

Minhla - You visit the two Italian built forts constructed to keep the British at bay from Royal Myanmar, spending approx. 1 hour 30 minutes on foot. The fight for the Minhla redoubt was the only serious action in the war and the death of a young subaltern inspired Kipling to write a poem. Disembark the ship, climb the river bank and wind through a labyrinth of paths and passages to reach the magnificent Myat-thalon Pagoda, constructed of solid gold bricks. Take a 2 hour walk through the village of Magwe.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 10: Sale**

Here you visit the Yout-saun-kyauing monastery with its spectacular wood carvings; you also explore an area of splendid colonial-style houses and continue sailing upstream.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 11: Bagan**

In the morning, moor at the Tan-Chi-Taung mountain and ascend by WWII jeep. In the afternoon, you tour a selection of the 3,000 listed monuments at this World Heritage Site by bicycle or coach for approx 3.5 hours.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 12: Bagan**

Further exploration by coach of the monuments follow by a lacquerware workshop and visit to the local markets. Sail

upstream in the afternoon. Evening walk at Oh Ne Kyaung village to see the local life in this typical river side community.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 13: Yandabo**

Arrive at Yandabo, a small rural village that specializes in pot making. Visit the Pandaw School built with past donations from Pandaw passengers. Walk around the village for approx. 1 hour.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 14: Mandalay**

Arrive Mandalay early for a morning excursion to Ava and Amarapura (approx. 3.5 hours) and an evening walk in the picturesque Sagaing Hills with its many hermitages and nunneries. During your time here, you will walk over the U-Bein Bridge.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 15: Sagaing**

Walk through the Sagaing Hills; this will involve some light walking. Enjoy some sightseeing in Mingun this afternoon.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 16: Kyauk Myoung**

Sail upstream and visit the spectacular potteries near Kyauk Myoung where the famous 50 gallon water pots are handmade. Sail back to Mandalay this afternoon.

*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

**Day 17: Mandalay to Rangoon**

Disembark in Mandalay at 8am and transfer for our flight to Rangoon. Transfer to the hotel. In the late afternoon visit the Shwedagon Pagoda to enjoy the sunset over the city.

*Breakfast*

**Day 18: Rangoon/UK**

Transfer from your hotel to Rangoon (Yangon) International Airport for your flight to the UK. Depending on your chosen airline, some flights will arrive the same day, whereas others will arrive the following day.

*Breakfast*

**Land Only**

If you are travelling on a land only basis, then you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel in Rangoon

(Yangon) on Day 2. On Day 18, you will checkout from your Rangoon (Yangon) hotel, and continue as per your own arrangements.

Please refer to the Wendy Wu Tours brochure and/or website for details on departure dates, prices, itineraries, inclusions and tour extensions available as well as full booking conditions.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Before You Leave

**Itinerary Changes** - The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any Pandaw expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Roads in Burma (Myanmar) have generally been improved over recent years, but some road construction and/or weather conditions may still lengthen the driving times.

**Visas** - A visa is required for entry into Burma (Myanmar). A standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. We will require your passport, completed visa application form, and 1 passport photo, 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, we will have your passport for at least 4 weeks. 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 £50 per passport express fee. In rare cases, you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the embassy and or be required to attend an interview at the embassy in London. If this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

**Vaccinations and Your Health** - We recommend that you contact either your local GP or a travel doctor for advice on vaccinations and travel health. [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) is a comprehensive website that you may also find useful.

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

**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. 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.

**Suggested Packing List** - A complete list will be provided with deposit documentation.

**Luggage** - All clients are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### What to Expect on Tour

**Development** - Although Burma is developing quickly, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade; 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. However, 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 as well as refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

**Seatbelts** - Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Burma and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort or Local Guide.

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**Vehicles** - Please be advised that the vehicles in Burma are very basic and old as no new vehicles have been brought into the country since a trade embargo was implemented on the country. You may find the seats to be smaller and have less leg room as the vehicles are designed for the smaller build of the Burmese. Wendy Wu Tours sources the best available vehicles, however these may vary from city to city.

**Tipping** - As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in Burma. For our passengers' convenience we ask for a compulsory amount to be paid at the beginning of our group tours to cover tipping for guides, drivers, restaurant staff etc. Approximate tipping amounts can be found in our brochure and/or website; however exact tipping amounts will be stated on your invoice.

**Exchanging Cash** - US dollars are the preferred currency to be used in Burma. There are few ATMs in Burma so you must bring enough US Dollars in cash to last the duration of your stay. It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Burma. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Myanmar, provided notes are new and undamaged. US Dollars should be from the new series from the year 2003 onwards. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series and are in good condition to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

**Personal Expenses**- You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of £150 per week should be sufficient; however for those that can't resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

#### **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, help sheet, and a Burma fact sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approx. 2 weeks prior to departure, and will include a travel wallet, badge, lanyard, suggested packing list and a Travel guide, along with your final itinerary and international etickets.

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