



## Hidden Treasures of Burma

Classic Tour | 17 Days | Moderate

Yangon - Pyay - Mandalay - Monywa - Bagan - Kalaw - Inle Lake

Take a fascinating journey through enigmatic Burma, from gleaming golden temples in Yangon to the ancient pagodas of Bagan. Walk along the longest teak bridge in the world in Amarapura, and experience rural traditions around Inle Lake. This truly is a country a world apart from any other.

- Explore the Buddhist architecture of Yangon
- Cruise on the idyllic Irrawaddy River
- Tour the temples of astounding Bagan
- Discover mysterious Mt Popa
- Explore the Floating gardens of Inle Lake



#### Hidden Treasures of Burma 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:

'Hidden treasures of Burma' is a **moderate** tour. This is the most demanding tour Wendy Wu Tours offers. As a whole, this itinerary requires a high level of fitness.

- There will be long periods of walking whilst sightseeing, often on steep or uneven ground.
- At Mt Popa there are more than 750 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 – Hidden Treasures of Burma

### 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 arriving at Mahaboandoola Park. Next visit City Hall and the High Court. Later explore Maha Bandoola Garden. 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 – Pyay

Drive 6 hours to Pyay with a stop for lunch. After a visit to the local museum, travel by ox cart around the old city wall for approximately 2 hours. Visit Hmawzar village for around 30 minutes on foot to observe the life of the Burmese people and continue to the hotel.



#### Destination Information

**Pyay** - Situated near the ancient capital of Sri Ksetra (Thayekhittaya), the town of Pyay flourished between 5th and 9th century, more recently extensive archaeological excavations have taken place.

#### Day 5: Pyay – Yangon

Visit Pyay central market, home to several ethnic minority populations. Then continue your visit to Shwe San Taw Pagoda and enjoy the great views of the town and river from the viewing platform of the pagoda. Drive back to Yangon stopping at a local restaurant for lunch.



#### Destination Information

**Shwe San Taw Pagoda** – Situated on the banks of the Irrawaddy river, the Shwe San Taw pagoda is Pyay's most prominent landmark at 88 metres tall.

#### Day 6: Yangon – Mandalay

Transfer to airport for your 1 hour and 20 minute flight to Mandalay. This morning, visit Amarapura with its working monastery dating back to 1783 and walk along the U Bein Bridge, the longest teakwood bridge in the world. Later travel to Sagaing, a former Shan capital in the 14th century with many impressive stupas scattered on its Hill, and on to Inwa with highlights such as the 'leaning tower of Ava' and the Maha Aungmye Bonzan, which is a beautiful brick-and-stucco monastery. Return to Mandalay for your overnight stay.

### 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.

**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 7: Mandalay

After breakfast experience the sights and sounds of Mandalay including one of the most revered religious monuments in Myanmar, the Mahamuni Pagoda. Visit the Shwe Inbin Monastery and the Golden Palace Monastery, which is a superb example of a traditional wooden building. Stop at Kuthodaw Pagoda, the world's largest book consisting of 729 marble slabs on which the entire Buddhist Canon is inscribed. Visit a traditional handloom silk workshop as well as a Kalaga tapestries craftsmen's shop and continue on to Mandalay Hill.



### Destination Information

**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.

**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.

### Day 8: Mandalay

Take a short drive to the nearby jetty and board your boat trip on the Irrawaddy River; cruise approximately 1 hour to Mingun where the world's largest hanging bell is still on display. Return to Mandalay for an afternoon at leisure.



### Destination Information

**Mingun** – It is in Mingun that a former king started construction on the greatest Stupa in the world in the 18th century, however, when an astrologer predicted the king would die upon completion, construction was promptly stopped.

### Day 9: Mandalay – Monywa

Drive approximately 2 hours to Monywa, stopping at the Thaboddhay Pagoda en route. Take a walk through the nearby banyan tree grove Bodhi Taung and enjoy the panoramic view from Aung Setkya Pagoda, standing 130 meters high on the Po Khaung hills. Continue to Monywa to check into your hotel.



#### Destination Information

**Thaboddhay Pagoda** – A Buddhist temple home to 845 small stupas surrounding and rising up to the richly decorated central stupa.

### Day 10: Monywa – Bagan

This morning cross the Chindwin river with a short boat ride, and drive to the fascinating Po Win Daung Caves, a large complex of small sandstone caves containing many Buddha images and with decorative wall paintings. Drive 3 hours to Pakokku, a port city set south of the Chindwin confluence, and visit a lively local market by traditional trishaw bicycle taxis. Continue approximately 2 hours by boat on the Irrawaddy River to Bagan arriving in time for sunset.



#### 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.

### Day 11: Bagan

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. This afternoon explore some of the last of the remaining temples and visit a Lacquer workshop in the village of Myinkaba. Watch the sunset over this wondrous landscape from one of the many viewing points.



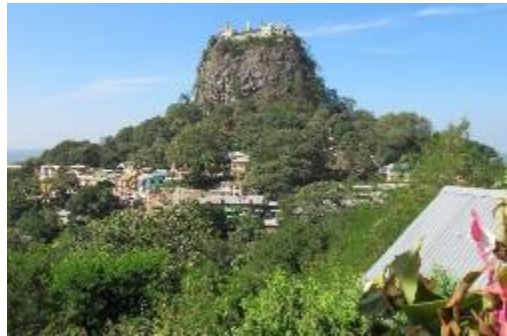
### Destination Information

**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.

**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.

### Day 12: 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'. Return to Bagan and take a horse cart, the local method of transport, to visit some villages, monasteries and temples further afield.



### 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 13: Bagan - Kalaw

Transfer to the airport for your 50 minute flight to Heho. On arrival, travel a further 2 hours by road to Pindaya and visit Shwe U Min Caves, a unique site housing thousands of Buddha images placed there by pilgrims over the centuries. Continue the journey by visiting a Shan umbrella and mulberry paper production home before driving 2 hours to Kalaw for your overnight stay.



### Destination Information

**Shwe U Min Caves** – Is a unique site housing thousands of Buddha images placed there by pilgrims over the centuries.

**Kalaw** - A hilltop town in the Shan State of Burma, Kalaw offers a refreshing climate and scenic views.

### Day 14: Kalaw – Inle Lake

Drive 1 and a half hours to Inle Lake and transfer by boat to your hotel to check in. 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'.

**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 15: Inle Lake

Sightseeing today will be on the western shore of the lake at the Indein Pagoda complex. Take a leisurely walk along a creek, passing through rice fields to the village of Saema and 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 16: Inle Lake - Yangon

This morning transfer to Heho airport for your 1 hour and 10 minute flight to Yangon. On arrival visit the Bogyoke Markets, then continue to Botataung Pagoda to observe the daily life of the local people. In the evening, visit the busy area of Chinatown including a Chinese Temple.



### Destination Information

**Botataung Pagoda** – A famous pagoda in downtown Yangon which was destroyed in World War II. Rebuilding of the pagoda began the day the country gained independence.

**Bogyoke Markets** – A vast covered marketplace selling an array of handicrafts, food, jewellery and clothing.

## Day 17: 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 onward flight.

## Hidden Treasures of Burma 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 Holiday 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 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April.

## 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 is 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**