



Tour Dossier

Upper Irrawaddy
Explorer

Private Tour

11 Days

Comfortable Pace



The Tour Dossier 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.

The itinerary of the tour dossier has three distinct sections. The first section is to give you a day outline, giving an overview of each day's activities. The second section provides an overview of any physical activity which may be faced on a day of touring and provide approximate durations of transfers, air travel etc. For moderate and active paced tours, please pay special attention to this. The third section provides a more in depth description of destinations and sights you will visit on each day, including any shopping experiences.

Private Tours

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures on a more personal fully-inclusive tour.

Upper Irrawaddy Explorer tour highlights:

- ❖ Get lost in the mysterious Temples of Bagan
- ❖ Cruise up the Irrawaddy River, the lifeline of Burma
- ❖ Visit the imposing Mingun Pagoda and the Mingun Bell, the largest working bell in the world
- ❖ Watch red robed monks as they stroll across legendary U Bein Bridge
- ❖ Climb Pagoda Hill for stunning views of the Upper Irrawaddy
- ❖ Cruise through the dramatic Gorges of the Upper Irrawaddy

Upper Irrawaddy Explorer tour inclusions:

- ❖ Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges
- ❖ All accommodation
- ❖ Meals as stated
- ❖ All sightseeing and entrance fees
- ❖ All transportation and transfers
- ❖ English speaking 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
- ❖ Local drinks on board your Pandaw cruise ship

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

Destination profile – Burma

Burma (Myanmar) – Is a spiritual country, largely unexplored by tourists until recently. It is known as the ‘Golden Land’ because of the countless number of pagodas and temples that dominate the landscape. In Burma, 89% of the population is devoutly Buddhist, which is reflected in their gentle and welcoming nature.

Development in Burma (Myanmar) - Although Burma 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 you National Escort or Local Guide

Cuisine in Burma (Myanmar) - Most meals (excluding drinks) are included as indicated from the groups’ arrival until the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Burma.

Tour Profile – Upper Irrawaddy Explorer

Upper Irrawaddy Explorer is a **comfortable paced** tour. This is the easiest pace of tour, which Wendy Wu Tours offers. Anyone with a reasonable level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary.

Our Local Guides always endeavor to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

The river cruise section of your itinerary will be on a Pandaw River Cruise ship.

Upper Irrawaddy Explorer itinerary

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.

On arrival at the airport you will be met in the arrivals hall by your local guide.

Rangoon – 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.

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.

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Bagan (approx. 1 hour). Transfer from airport to ship around midday for lunch followed by exploration of a selection of the 3000 plus Bagan monuments by bicycle or coach for approx 3.5 hours.

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.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4: Yandabo

Cruise past the confluence of the Chindwin river to 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 is approx. 1 hour.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5: Amarapura

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.

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.

Book now on **0844 499 3899** visit www.wendywutours.co.uk or see your preferred travel agent.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6: Kyauk-myong

Visit the spectacular potteries near Kyauk-myong where the famous 50-gallon water pots are handmade. We see all stages of manufacture from the throwing of the pots to the weeklong firing in huge kilns. We return to the ship and enter the third gorge of the Irrawaddy.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 7: Khan-nyat

Stop at Khan-nyat village with its many Buddhist monasteries and visit the former head teacher's house, which also includes his small museum collections. We go ashore and climb the Pagoda Hill at Tigyang with its stunning views of the Upper Irrawaddy River

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8: Katha

We reach the enchanting colonial town of Katha, setting for George Orwell's Burmese Days. Little has changed since then. Of interest are the fire station's collections of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's ship's bells taken from sunken ships in the Second War. Katha was the final resting place of the old flotilla and here over a hundred ships were scuppered in 1942 in an Act of Denial before the advancing Japanese. We also visit an elephant logging camp at Katha in the hardwood forests of the hills that surround the town and further upstream.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9: Kyunt-Daw

Transfer by Local boat and visit Kyun Daw village where we will visit a few of the countless small Pagodas.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10: Second Gorge

Cruise through the 2nd gorge, the most dramatic of the three gorges with cliffs towering over the narrow channel. Sail downstream.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11: Tagaung Ancient City

Walking tour of the ancient city of Tagaung viewing the fortifications, a famous nat or spirit shrine and the archaeological area.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12: Mingun

Slip our moorings early in the morning and stop at Mingun to see the largest working bell in the world and the unfinished pagoda that is the largest single mass of brick building in the world. We also visit the Mingun Old People's Home originally established with the assistance of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company in the 1930s. Drive through the beautiful Sagaing hills to the hilltop to enjoy an amazing view over the region and Irrawaddy River.

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

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included

Day 13: Disembark at Mandalay

Disembark at Mandalay after breakfast and transfer to the airport. Fly Mandalay to Rangoon (apprx 1 hour 20 minutes). Time permitting you'll be transferred to your hotel before visiting Schwedagon Pagoda for sunset.

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.

Shwedagon 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.

Breakfast

Day 14: 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 on Day 2. On Day 14, you will checkout from your Rangoon 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.

Upper Irrawaddy Explorer Travel Info

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, completed visa application form, 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, 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. If this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

Insurance - We strongly encourage all travellers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Accommodation - All 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 remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local 3-3½star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Burma.

Exchanging Cash – The Central Bank of Burma has withdrawn all foreign currency exchange license for businesses including Hotels, Restaurants, Airlines and Souvenir Shops. Starting from 01 November 2015, institutions such as the ones named will not be allowed to accept payments in US dollars. Tourist can bring US-Dollars and change it into local Kyats or withdraw local currency at any ATM with their credit card.

US Dollars are the preferred currency in Burma. ATM's are limited in Burma, so we suggest that you 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. For your convenience, please ensure that US Dollars should be from the new series from the year 2003 onwards and in good condition to avoid any difficulties exchange money during your trip. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange.

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 £120 should be sufficient; *(Please note US dollars are the preferred currency to be used in Burma)*; however for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Consider Cultural Differences – Burma is predominantly Buddhist; however, it is a nation with many cultures and histories. Please be considerate of this, the local beliefs and customs and dress with consideration.

Pandaw River Cruise – Please note before and after your Pandaw River Cruise, you will be touring privately. On the Pandaw River Cruise ship, you will be sharing the boat with other passengers and you will enjoy shore excursions with other members of the boat.

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, and will include a travel wallet, badge, lanyard, a travel guide (which includes a suggested packing list) and phrase book, along with your final itinerary and international e-tickets.

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.

Updated: 15 March 2016