

# Essentials of Myanmar

## Highlights

- ✚ Boat excursions on the Ayeyarwaddy River and Inle Lake
- ✚ Pagodas, markets, ethnic minority villages, monasteries, Mt. Popa, Sagaing Hill and much, much more

## Itinerary

### Day 1

Depart from North America today on an overnight connecting flight to Thailand.

### Day 2 **Bangkok**

Welcome to Bangkok arriving late evening or early on day three. Upon arrival at Suvarnabhumi Airport, you will transfer to Don Muang Airport for your next morning flight to Myanmar.

### Day 3 **Yangon**

Depart Bangkok for your flight to Yangon International Airport. Welcome to Myanmar! After you clear customs and immigration your guide will welcome you and transfer you to your hotel for check in.

You will start your sightseeing tour this afternoon with a drive through the Colonial Style Buildings downtown. Next is a visit to Botathaung Pagoda close to the Yangon Wharves and Chauk Htat Kyi reclining Buddha.

Enjoy sunset at Shwedagon Pagoda, the 'heart' of Buddhist Myanmar. The Pagoda is believed to be 2,500 years old and is always full with many people praying and making offerings, especially on full moon and religious days.

Best Western Green Hill Hotel

### Day 4 **Yangon - Bagan**

After breakfast you will take an early morning flight to Bagan. After check in at the hotel you will visit the colorful morning market. You will see the glory of Bagan. the golden stupa at Shwezigon Pagoda. Next is Gubyaukgyi Temple which has the best mural paintings of 11th century and Htilominlo Temple, noted for its pilaster carving. Next is Nathtaukyaung Monastery, an ancient wooden monastery, Ananda Temple, an architectural masterpiece resembling a Greek cross, Manuha Temple with gigantic Buddha images and finally Nan Payar, the best stone carving and lacquer ware workshop in Bagan. In the late afternoon is a visit to Pwar Saw village to observe the village life.

Ariendmar Hotel (Breakfast Included)

### Day 5 **Bagan**

Today you will go to Mt. Popa, an extinct volcano which is known as "Home of the Spirits". You will observe the life of the rural area and the cottage industries such as producing palm sweets. You will stop at several places taking photos and observing the countryside. Climb up 777 steps to reach the top of Mt. Popa cliff temple to enjoy the landscapes and the panoramic view of the extinct volcano and plains to Bagan. This evening, you will take a boat ride on mighty Ayeyarwaddy River to observe the sunset.

Ariendmar Hotel (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 6 Bagan - Mandalay**

Today you will fly to Mandalay. Upon arrival enjoy an excursion to Amarapura , an ancient capital of Myanmar, where you can observe the life of over 1000 monks at Mahagandaryon Monastery & silk weaving factory. Next is a drive to Sagaing, where you can observe the fascinating landscapes of the Ayeyarwaddy River from serene Sagaing Hill.

Continuing to Ava you be taken by horse cart to Maenu Okkyaung Monastery. This was built by the chief queen in 1818. You will see Nan Myint Tower, 27 meters high and Bargayar Monastery, well known for its wood carving with 267 teak pillars. You will return via Amarpaura and enjoy the sunset as you cross over U Bein bridge.

Mandalay Hill Resort (Superior) (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 7 Mandalay**

Enjoy a boat excursion to Mingun (1 hour) along the Ayeyarwaddy River, this morning. During the river cruise, you will observe the fascinating landscapes of the river as well as the daily life of the people living along the Ayeyarwaddy. You will visit the unfinished Mingun pagoda which houses the largest ringing bell at 90 tons and the unusual Myatheindan pagoda.

After lunch you head back to Mandalay to visit traditional handicraft workshops such as gold leaf beating. You will see Kuthodaw Pagoda and the world biggest book and Shwenandaw (Golden Palace) Monastery. Finally enjoy the sunset on top of Mandalay Hill where you can admire the beauty of Mandalay City and Shan Plateau.

Mandalay Hill Resort (Superior) (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 8 Mandalay - Inle Lake**

(Flight to Heho. Drive to Pindaya, 63km, 2 hours. Proceed to Inle, 97km, 3 hours.) After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the airport for a flight to Heho. Upon arrival at Heho airport, drive to Pindaya enjoying the marvellous landscapes of the hill region with vegetable plantations and terrace landing cultivation. You will visit Pindaya Caves which houses countless Buddha images and visit an umbrella workshop at the village. After arrival in Inle Lake you will transfer to the hotel for check in.

Inle Palace Hotel (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 9 Inle Lake**

After breakfast at the hotel, enjoy a boat excursion on the lake and a visit to the local tribe market at Inn Dein village. You will see Phaungdaw Oo Pagoda the most revered pagoda on the lake and Ng a Phe Chaung monastery, the floating garden and a floating farm.  
Inle Palace Hotel (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 10 Inle Lake - Yangon**

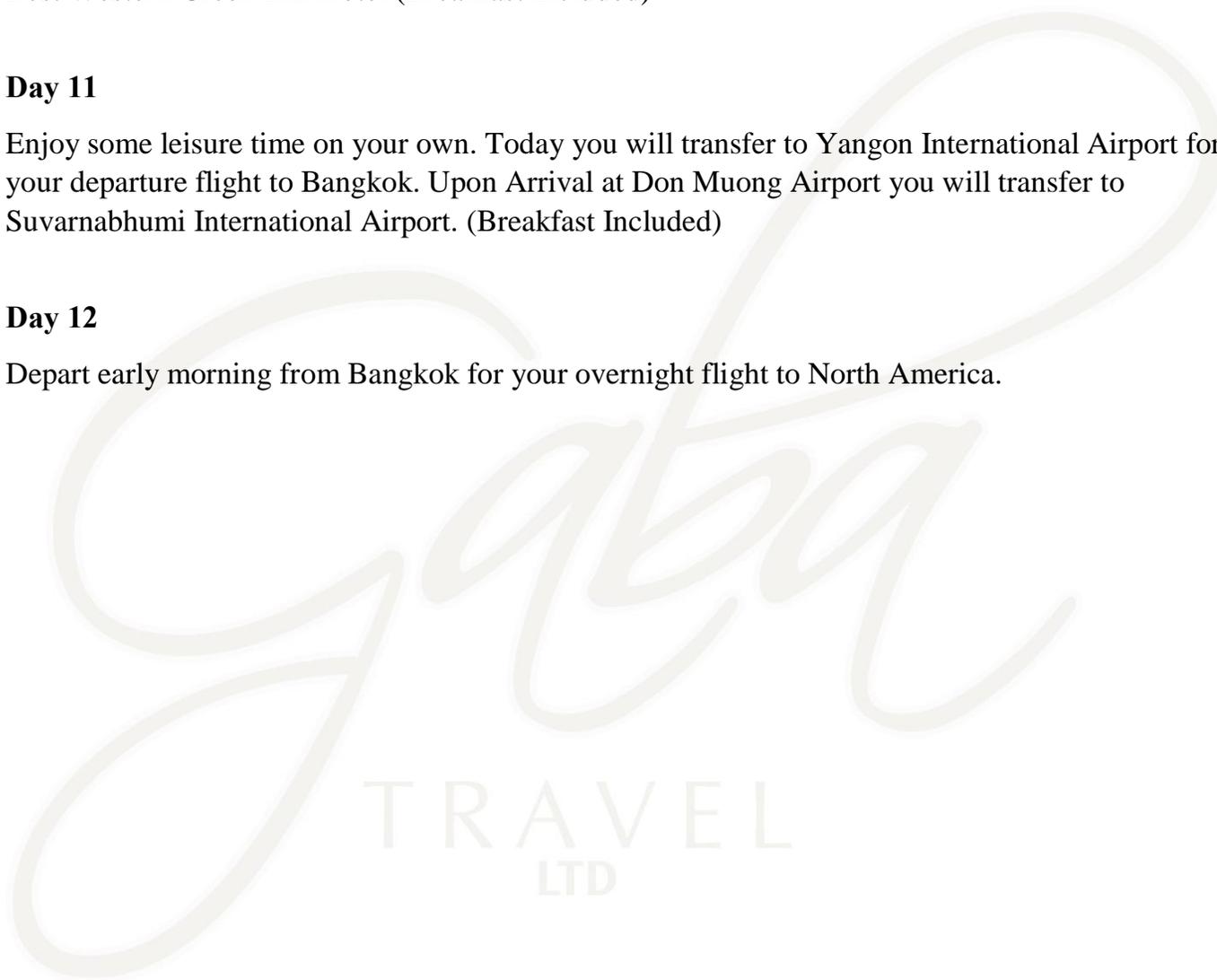
This morning you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Yangon. In the afternoon visit Bogyoke market and wander around China town and area.  
Best Western Green Hill Hotel (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 11**

Enjoy some leisure time on your own. Today you will transfer to Yangon International Airport for your departure flight to Bangkok. Upon Arrival at Don Muong Airport you will transfer to Suvarnabhumi International Airport. (Breakfast Included)

### **Day 12**

Depart early morning from Bangkok for your overnight flight to North America.

The logo for GABA TRAVEL LTD features the word "GABA" in a large, elegant, cursive script. Below it, the words "TRAVEL" and "LTD" are written in a clean, sans-serif, uppercase font, stacked vertically. The entire logo is rendered in a light gray color.

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# Price

\$3595.00 CAD (land only) \$3270.00 USD

- \$275.00 CAD for 3 star \$250.00 USD

+ \$440.00 CAD for 5 star \$400.00 USD

Price includes \$660.00 CAD tour flights \$600.00 USD

Pricing is an estimate only and is subject to change based on availability and other factors. You can use this tour as the basis for a custom tour if you would like but pricing for custom tours may differ depending on changes made. Please note below what is included and not included below:

## Included:

- ✓ All hotel accommodation
- ✓ All meals as per itinerary
- ✓ All sightseeing tours as specified by the itinerary
- ✓ Entrance fees as per the itinerary
- ✓ Private, knowledgeable English speaking guides
- ✓ Private air-conditioned transportation with licensed drivers
- ✓ All domestic flights: Bangkok - Yangon, Yangon - Heho, Heho - Mandalay, Mandalay - Yangon, Yangon - Bangkok including airport taxes
- ✓ All hotel and airport transfers
- ✓ Mineral water 1 bottle/person/day
- ✓ Welcome gift (Traditional bag with Myanmar Map)

## Not included:

- ⊗ Travel insurance
- ⊗ Excess baggage charges
- ⊗ Visa fees (\$40.00 USD)
- ⊗ International airport departure tax (\$10.00 USD)
- ⊗ Meals and beverages not specified on itinerary
- ⊗ Items of a personal nature such as laundry and gratuities
- ⊗ International Flight

# Map



Bangkok

Yangon

Bagan

Mandalay

Inle Lake

# Travel Guide

Myanmar (Republic of the Union of Myanmar)



Location: Asia

Status: UN Member Country

Capital City: Yangon

Main Cities: Yangon, Mandalay, Naypyidaw, Mawlamyaing,

Taunggyi, Patheingyi, Bago, Pyaw, Monywa, Sittwe

Population: 61, 120, 000

Area: 676, 578 km<sup>2</sup>

Currency: Kyat

Languages: National: Burmese

Religions: Buddhism 80%

Calling code: +95

Drive on the right side of the road

## Traveling to Myanmar – What You Need To Know

The pure and untainted air, an environment that is free of pollution, a hospitable people and miles and miles of green lands. A romantic getaway on Inle Lake, amazing, mouthwatering cuisine and so many other things ... there is something for every sort of traveler to Myanmar. A land of many names, a land of many intrigues and a land that has been the target of so many conquerors for many years, a land of many religions and many people, there are more than 1001 reasons to travel to Myanmar. Be warned however that one, two or even three visits will not be enough.

Myanmar is unique and interesting. Rare red diamonds, Golden beaches of Ngapali, Shan States Hills, Bagan ruins, Resorts at Inle Lake and Pindaya caves are just some of the points of interests that would arouse your eyebrows. Yangon is one city you must not miss to visit it hosts some of the best attractions in Myanmar. This country sizzles in history.

## Best Time to Travel to Myanmar

There is no set time for one to visit this country. During the rainy season, showers are brief, vegetation is lush and a great time to visit. The dry season is November to May. It is the peak period for tourism in Myanmar. High temperatures are experienced across the land as governed by altitude. Light showers intercept the sunny durations occasionally. In March and April, the temperature range goes all the way to 40°C. Although, some sites can be wet during summer but the country is vast and you can choose to visit other places instead. Winter is the coldest season around, particularly in the hills.

## **General Travel Information**

### **Climate**

Myanmar's climate is not even. Different areas feature varying climatic conditions. They vary depending on the altitude of the areas above sea level. The country is sandwiched between the Tropic of Cancer and Equator. Hence, the climate is a blend of the two regions. Coastal areas experience high rainfall with maximum temperature of 32<sup>0</sup>C whereas dry zones located at the heart of the country receive minimal rainfall and a characteristic hot-dry climate. Northern regions are the coolest with an average temperature of 21<sup>0</sup>C.

### **Entry Regulations**

The government of Myanmar monitors foreigners who come to this country for business or vacation. Therefore, you will require a valid passport and visa to gain entry in this country. You must carry them with you, to every place such as in airports, hotels and train terminals. Roadblocks are placed on roads, domestic air flights and immigration checkpoints. Make a few copies of the two documents, as you might need them while crossing some of the areas. Tourist visa is valid for 28 days, which can be applied at Myanmar Embassies in your homeland before travel.

Citizens from select countries are not required to apply for visas when they visit Myanmar. For example, Vietnamese and Filipinos do not require visas to enter the country as of October and December 2013 respectively.

### **Baggage Allowance**

For domestic flights, always limit your luggage as much as it would be tempting to carry all your paraphernalia to a week trip in the coastal side. You are restricted to 20kg regardless of the travel package you use for checked baggage while for carryon luggage the plane staff will not raise eyebrows if it does not exceed 7kgs.

### **Official Currency in Myanmar**

Myanmar kyat denoted by MMK is the official currency of Myanmar. One dollar can fetch you 7 Kyats. If you are traveling to this country, you may have to come with enough dollars to take you through the stay since ATM machines are sparsely distributed. Accepted logos are mainly Visa and Master Card. You will have to change a few of the dollars into Kyat for making payments in for your transport system and for shopping. Be sure not to fall into the hands of unscrupulous moneychangers, instead use the accredited banks found in the airports. Also, make sure you bring dollar notes that are in good condition since old notes are unacceptable.

### **Moving around when in Myanmar**

Getting around in Myanmar mostly involve a ride on a bus or a flight in a plane. However, other modes of transport are used too, depending on the journey that you are taking and your budget. Buses are the cheapest means of transport but some areas are only accessible by air. When you want to enjoy the scenic sites of Myanmar, a boat ride and a trip by train, will be more convenient. In addition, there are taxis, which are relatively cheap and are found at every corner of the city. If you are looking for comfort, rental cars are also available for hire. For short distances, you can walk or cycle to the site as long as you know your way around.

### **Posts and Telecommunications**

Most main hotels in Myanmar will permit you to send postcards and mail back home in the course of your vacation. You can easily share your encounters using lovely photo shots. You can buy the post cards from Burmese children who intelligently design them at \$1. You can take the card to Yangon General Post Office, which is located on Strand Road. In addition, the desk personnel at your hotel will not mind to post the mail for you.

### **Culture and Customs**

The utmost importance of Myanmar lies in its people. Its distinct history and culture have been shielded from the influences of the rest of world. This is one of the reasons why you will need to be careful while traveling around, especially in the conservative upcountry regions. The locals are charming but only if you can speak to them in Burmese. Just learn a few words and you will strike a great relationship with them.

In addition, try sporting their custom lingerie such as Longyi for women and Pasu for men. These are worn just as skirts and pants in the western world but they are more ventilated. You will get a few smiles along the way if you feature thanaka makeup and when you chew betel nut. The Burmese culture will surprise you. For instance, do not touch a woman's body in public, as that could lead you to a police station. It is also rude to touch people's hair, cheek or head. That is considered rude by the locals. Also, remember to dress modestly when traveling to areas that are yet to open up.

### **Food and Drinks**

Rice is the main staple dish in Burma. This cereal takes 75% of all their meals. It is served with soup, meat, fish, vegetables and salads. If you just enter in any restaurant, the aroma of their dishes will welcome you. Nevertheless, you can still order other cuisines too from French, German to Chinese. However, why don't you try to go the Burmese way? You will certainly like it.

Burma people do not drink wine or water during meals. Therefore, they regard soup as a very important accompaniment. Enjoy spicy meat and vegetable soups, which will really work magic on your appetite. Where soups are lacking a cup of green tea is served instead. Their salads are anything to go by. They are prepared from raw, preserved or boiled vegetables, cooked beef or fish, slices of onions and tamarind juice among other ingredients. You will not miss something to munch while in Myanmar and the prices are very friendly.

## **Health and Safety**

You will need to carry a roll of tissue paper in your travel bag since not all toilets will have one in place. Remember to carry purified bottled water, which will not cost you much. Tap water might look clean but you might be taking in cholera and typhoid causing bacteria. Avoid it. Vaccinations are not mandatory while traveling to Burma. However, it is good to take preventive measures prior to your travel. Try to get a vaccination for hepatitis, diphtheria, tetanus, polio and typhoid fever. Your health consultant can administer this four weeks before you board a flight to Burma.

An insect repellent and sunscreen cream will come in handy too, to prevent you from insect bites and sunburns especially in summer. If you are planning to tour some of the remote areas, you will have no option but to take Malaria preventive medicine before traveling.

## **Travel insurance (compulsory)**

We do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. However, travel inevitably involves some risk and this should be recognised by holidaymakers. Travel insurance is a cost effective way of protecting yourself and your equipment should any problems occur such as cancelled trips, delays, medical emergencies, baggage loss or damage. It also gives you peace of mind. Please make sure your travel insurance covers all activities planned on your trip.

## **Public Holidays in Burma**

Many public holidays are celebrated in Burma. Here is a list of the main ones:

Independence Day celebrated on 4<sup>th</sup> January

Union Day 12<sup>th</sup> February in remembrance of Panglong Agreement of 1947

Full Moon of Tabaung on 27<sup>th</sup> March

Peasants Day - 2<sup>nd</sup> March

Armed Forces Day - 27<sup>th</sup> March

Thingyan Festival – Celebrated on 13-16<sup>th</sup> April to usher in the New Year

Burmese New Year- 17<sup>th</sup> April marks the start of a new year of Burmese calendar

Labour day-1<sup>st</sup> May

Full Moon of Kason – 24<sup>th</sup> May

Martyr's Day- 19<sup>th</sup> July

Start of Buddhist Lent- 22<sup>nd</sup> July

End of Buddhist Lent - 19<sup>th</sup> October

Start of Ramadhan- Lasts for 30 days and date depends upon the Islamic calendar

Full Moon of Tazaungmon - 17<sup>th</sup> November Tazaungdaing festival is held on this day

National Day- 27<sup>th</sup> November held to commemorate first university students strike, which took place in 1920

Christmas Day - 25<sup>th</sup> December; Christian holiday to celebrate the birth of Jesus

## **Comprehensive Travel Preparation List**

Visa

Passport

Photocopies of visa and passports

Travel insurance

Immunization Certificates

Right gear depending on the season; heavy clothing for winter and relatively lighter garments for summer

Appropriate footwear and other related wear for hiking, cycling and suchlike

Insect repellants and sun screen creams

Water bottle

A substantial amount of US dollars and ATM access card

Necessary medication

Tickets

International Driving License if you consider a car rental



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