EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Burma in Depth (BUI 2016)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TRIPDURATI
21
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: BUI

Trip Highlights - Burma in Depth

- ✓ Rangoon (Yangon) - British colonial heritage and the golden Shwedagon Pagoda
- ✓ Inle Lake - Floating gardens, stilted villages and leg-rowing fishermen
- ✓ Mandalay - Cruise on Irrawaddy River and visit nearby U-Bein Bridge
- ✓ Bagan - Vast plain studded with thousands of ancient temples

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	20 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	20 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Rangoon (Yangon)
End Point:	Trip ends: Rangoon (Yangon)
Transport:	Bus, Train, Boat, Flight
Countries:	Burma

Burma In Depth

This adventurous trip around Burma (Myanmar) takes us to fascinating sights beyond the classic highlights. We travel deep into the Mon State to Ogre Island and join local pilgrims as they admire the sunset from the sacred Golden Rock at Mount Kyaikhtiyo. We marvel at the grandeur of Bagan, discover authentic rural life in and around Hsipaw and witness the fascinating world of Inle Lake. We also cross the dramatic Gokteik Viaduct by train and explore the cities of Mandalay and Rangoon.
Should I go?
Signalling the end of a fifteen-year tourism boycott, Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader, gave her blessing for the return of tourism to Burma in November 2010. National League for Democracy (NLD) leader U Win Tin said, "We want people to come to Burma, not to help the junta, but to help the people by understanding the situation: political, economic, moral - everything." The return of small groups and individuals to Burma has been endorsed by Burma Campaign UK and the Free Burma campaign. We are delighted to have returned to the country, having respected the boycott, we remain acutely aware of our ethical responsibility. We use a privately-owned Burmese agent for all of our local services, and our itineraries have been carefully planned to limit the use of services owned by, or affiliated with, the former military junta. This ensures that the Burmese people benefit as much as possible from our tours. We strongly believe that we contribute positively to the local economy, whilst providing our customers with the privilege of direct interaction with the local people, as well as an insight into the country's unique culture and heritage. On the 8th November 2015, 50 years of military rule came to an end when the NLD won a land-slide victory in Burma's first national vote. The country is embracing an unprecedented period of change, but with the military junta still retaining 25% of its seats. Visiting Burma now offers a fascinating insight into the politics of a country grappling with, and slowly embracing democracy and the 21st Century.

Why Book this trip

This three week adventure is perfect for travellers with more time to spare and who want to really get under the skin of the destination. The tour features all the main sights of our Burma Highlights (BUH) holiday, but also takes you deeper into less visited areas such as Mawlamyine in the south east and Hsipaw in the north. You will have the chance to take a journey by local train over a viaduct and walk up to the iconic Golden Rock as well as discover Burma's classic sights.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

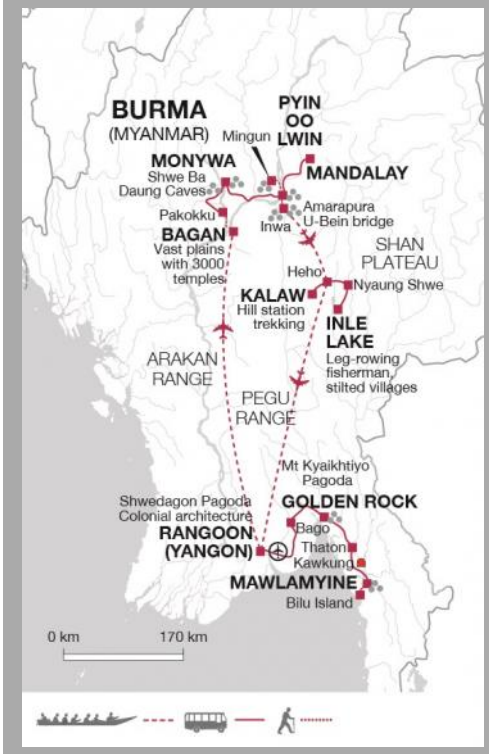
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.



Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

DAY 1 Join tour Rangoon (Yangon)

Arrive in Rangoon and check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is free. You may wish to venture out and take in your first impressions of the city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Sightseeing in Rangoon

Today we take a walking tour of Rangoon. Starting with a stroll along the banks of Kandawgyi Lake in the centre of the city we continue on to Botataung Pagoda. This pagoda is unique in that it is hollow - as we walk through we can see many ancient relics and artefacts displayed in glass cases. Later on we walk along Pansodan Street though downtown Rangoon, taking in the rich colonial architecture and bustling street markets. In the afternoon we make our way to the Chaukhtatgyi Paya, home to a giant 70 metre long reclining Buddha. The highlight of the day, though, is a visit to the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda, the most revered Buddhist temple in Burma, whose golden stupa dominates the city skyline making it the ideal spot from which to watch the sunset.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Drive to Golden Rock via Bago

Leaving Rangoon behind we drive to the town of Bago. Founded in 573AD, it is home to a number of sacred shrines and pagodas, including the Shwemawdaw Paya (the Golden God Temple) the tallest pagoda in the country. We visit the pagoda, as well as the Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha (the second largest in the world) and the Kyaik Pun Pagoda. In the afternoon we continue our drive to the foot of Mount Kyaikhtiyo, or Kin Pun 'base camp'. Upon arrival we continue in an open truck up a steep 11 kilometre track to Yathetaung. From here we walk for approximately 45 minutes to the mystical and highly revered Mount Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in time for sunset. Also known as Golden Rock, this pagoda is a large boulder precariously balanced on the edge of a cliff near the top of the mountain, supposedly held in place by a hair of the Buddha.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Drive to Mawlamyine

If our hotel is at the top of mountain we have a chance to view the sunrise before continuing on our way to Mawlamyine via the town of Tathon, where we will stop for lunch. If road conditions allow, we travel by way of Kawtgoon Cave, which has many intricate Buddha images carved into the walls, before proceeding on to Mawlamyine. The former capital of British Burma, Mawlamyine today is the capital of Mon State and the gateway to Burma's little visited south-eastern region. In the early evening we make visit to the 9th century Kyaikthanlan Phayar (Pagoda), the highest structure in the city, to enjoy the sunset.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Morning ferry to Bilu Island; Free afternoon

After breakfast we take a ferry across to Bilu Gyun (Ogre Island) to visit some of the local communities that lie along the Thanlwin River. After a chance to explore some of the villages and watch traditional craftsmen at work, we head back to Mawlamyine for an afternoon tour of the city. The afternoon is left free perhaps to visit the 100-year old monastery of Seindon Minbaya Kyaung or a walk along the Strand Road to take in every day scenes.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Drive back to Rangoon

Today we spend the day returning to Rangoon by road stopping off along the way for photo opportunities, including a visit to the Allied War Memorial Cemetery in Taukkyan which commemorates over 30,000 British Commonwealth soldiers who died in Burma during World War II. There are over 6000 beautifully well-kept graves in all (along with 52 graves of WWI soldiers). Furthermore 27,000 names of fallen soldiers with no known graves are engraved on the Rangoon Memorial, an imposing and sombre memorial pillar.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Fly to Bagan; Half day sightseeing

We take an early morning flight to Bagan. Without doubt one of the most impressive religious sites anywhere in Asia, Bagan is an ancient city dating from the 9th to the 13th centuries with thousands of temples, stupas and monasteries covering an area of 140 square kilometres. A half-day tour of some of its most distinctive pagodas include visits to the Shwezigon Pagoda, the 13th century frescoes and cave temple of Wetkyi-in-Gubyaukgyi and the Ananda Pagoda, one of the best preserved monuments in the entire city. Late in the day we watch the sunset from a panoramic viewpoint on one of the upper terraces overlooking the temple site.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Half day sightseeing in Bagan; Optional visit to Mt Popa

After breakfast we continue our exploration of Bagan with visits to the Sulamani Temple of King Narapatisithu and the finely crafted brickwork of the Dhammayangyi Temple, the largest shrine on the site. This afternoon has then been left free to enjoy as you wish. There is a chance to take an optional trip out to Mount Popa, Burma's sacred abode of the Nats (spirit gods). A volcanic plug that rises some 1,500 metres above the surrounding landscape, the summit provides some fine panoramic views of the surrounding hills. The journey also travels via a local farm producing traditional 'toddy' palm juice.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Irrawaddy Cruise to Pakkou; Afternoon drive to Monywa

This morning we enjoy a two to three hour boat ride along the Irrawaddy River to Pakkou, a bustling tobacco trading centre. From here we continue by road for about 3 hours to Monywa in the Chindwin Valley. This afternoon offers us the chance to visit the colourful Thanbuddhay Pagoda (home to more than 500,000 images of Buddha) and the Hiaungdawmu Buddha, the second largest reclining Buddha in Burma.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Morning visit to Po Win Daung Caves. Afternoon drive to Mandalay

Crossing the Chindwin River this morning we visit the cave chambers of Po Win Daung and Shwe Ba Daung. A system of nearly 500 sandstone caves that honeycomb the Po Win Hills, these extraordinary caverns contain around 450,000 paintings, statues and carvings, representing what many experts believe to be the most comprehensive collection of Buddhist art anywhere in South East Asia. After our visit we continue by road to Mandalay, Burma's last royal capital and, for many, the centre of its most historic and culturally rich region. En route we plan to stop in Monywee Kayemon village to visit a blacksmith and a local cottage industry where they make slippers.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Visit to Inwa and Amarapura

A short distance to the south of Mandalay lies Inwa (Ava). Here we take a horse cart ride around the old city (which can be a little bumpy), visiting the monasteries of Manu Ok Kaung and Bagaya Kyaung and the 'Leaning Tower of Inwa'. In the afternoon we head on to the former royal capital of Amarapura, perhaps best known for the 19th century, 1.2 kilometre giant teak footbridge of U Bein that spans Lake Taungthaman. We also visit some local cotton and silk weavers, before driving back to Mandalay.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Irrawaddy River cruise to Mingun; Afternoon sightseeing in Mandalay

This morning we take a short cruise to Mingun village and the ruins of the unfinished Mingun Pahtodawgyi (pagoda) which, had it been completed, would have been the world's largest pagoda. Begun by King Bodawpaya in 1790, the pagoda work on the monument ceased with the king's death in 1890. Nearby we also visit the giant 90 tonnes bronze Mingun Bell - considered to be the largest uncracked bell on the planet. Returning to Mandalay we then spend this afternoon exploring some of the city's major highlights, including the world's largest book at the Kuthodaw Pagoda and the intricate wooden majesty of the Shwenanda (Golden Palace) Monastery. We also plan to include visits to craft shops where you can observe traditional and skilled gold-leaf making, tapestry making and wood carving as well as the fascinating jade market. If time allows we then head up Mandalay Hill for sunset and views across the river and over the city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Drive to Pyin Oo Lwin (Maymyo)

After breakfast we take a short walk from our hotel to Tey Yar Zay market. This is a local market selling fresh produce and street food and we will have time to explore the stalls and perhaps sample a few treats before driving to Kyaukse. In Kyaukse we visit the Tamote Shwegugyi Temple, estimated to have been built in the 11th century the one-storey temple was well hidden until fairly recently. The masonary work and carvings depicting mythical creatures are similar to those found in Bagan. We continue driving north to the former British Hillstation of Pyin Oo Lwin in the Shan Hills. Formerly known as Maymyo, after Colonel May of the 5th Bengal Infantry, it was the perfect retreat to escape the heat of Mandalay.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 14 Explore Pyin Oo Lyin. Drive to Mandalay

We explore this Colonial town to see the Purcell Tower, a clock tower that was a gift from Queen Victoria; the morning vegetable market; the 100 year old Church of the Immaculate Conception and the National Kandawgyi Botanical Gardens, built by Turkish prisoners of war during WWI. We also stop at Naung Kan Gyi Paya, a hilltop pagoda, from where we can enjoy panoramic views of town. In the late afternoon we will drive back to Mandalay.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 Fly to Heho: Drive to Kalaw via Pindaya

This morning we fly to Heho. From here we drive through villages and endless fields of dry cultivated mountain rice and potato. We make a stop at Pindaya noted for its extensive limestone caves filled with nearly 8,000 Buddha images of different sizes and made of various materials. Nearby we have the opportunity to visit a local family to see how they make paper umbrellas from the bark of a mulberry tree. In the afternoon we continue on to Kalaw. Set in the edge of the Shan Plateau this charming Colonial town was popular with the British during their time in Burma. The remainder of the day is free for you to Explore Kalaw.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16 Walk in Shan Highlands. Free afternoon in Kalaw

Today we can look forward to a gentle four-hour trek through the Kalaw tribal heartlands. Starting in the village of Say Wingabar, we ascend through pine forest to Lu Pyi village. Our trail passes through rural countryside and provides us with views of the valley - a picturesque patchwork of rice and vegetable fields. We might see tribal villagers working on their farms, or en route to the market with their produce. At the end of our walk we make a stop at Myinmathi Cave to see its many Buddha images and small stupas. After a lunch stop, we have a short transfer back to the hotel where we can relax for the rest of the day. For those who would prefer not to take part in the trek, there is the option to relax at the hotel for the day.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 17 Sightseeing in Kalaw; Drive to Lake Inle

This morning sees an opportunity to explore this engaging hill town, whose attractions include the gold lacquered bamboo Buddha of Nee Paya and the Catholic church of Christ the King. We then continue on by road for two hours to the beautiful setting of Lake Inle, high up on the Shan Plateau. Surrounded by hills and populated predominantly by the Intha people, Lake Inle is one of the highest lakes in the country. Devout Buddhists, the local population of self-sufficient farmers and fishermen live in simple stilted houses of wood and bamboo, growing their food on floating gardens of grass and seaweed. We plan to make a tour of some of the local villages by boat and pay a visit to the famous monastery of Nga Phae. Time permitting we will make a short visit to Leshae Village where you can see the making of Buddha images from dried flower powder.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 18 Sightseeing around Lake Inle

Our boat takes us to the western part of the lake this morning, to a local Indein village, where we visit a hilltop complex of 1,000 stupas (places of worship). From up here we can enjoy some great views across the lake and on to the valley beyond. Continuing by boat on to the villages of Nanpan and Innpawkhone, we also get a chance later in the day to see some traditional boat making and silk weaving, and hopefully some local fishermen practicing their uniquely distinctive rowing technique.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 19 Morning cooking class; free afternoon

After breakfast we will join a local family for a cooking class. We'll start by visiting their local market to gether ingredients before cooking up some traditional recipes and sharing the food together. The exact dishes will be decided on the day, only the freshest ingredients are used so it will depend on what the market stalls have that day! The afternoon is left free to relax and enjoy the final few hours at Lake Inle.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 20 Fly to Rangoon; Free afternoon

We take a morning flight to Rangoon. The remainder of the day is free for further sightseeing. You may like to visit the immense Bogyoke Market, formerly known as Scott's Market, to search for some last minute souvenirs (closed on Mondays, full moons and public holidays).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 21 Tour ends Rangoon

Tour ends after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 20 breakfasts, 1 lunch,0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Burma

Lunch £: 3.00

Dinner £: 5.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Burma

Bottle of Beer £: 1.80

Water £: 0.70

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Bagan - Traditional massage US$ 10; Optional sunrise US$ 8; Mount Popa Excursion US$ 42 (based on group size of 3-4 person;
Rangoon - Scott Market and sunset visit to Shwedagon Pagoda US$4 transfer plus US$ 5 entrance fees
Inle Lake - Traditional massage US$ 8
Mandalay - Moustache Brothers Alternative Comedy show US$ 12; Traditional dance performance US$ 12
Pyin Oo Lwin - Horse and carriage hire approx. US$ 11-14 per carriage (half day)

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly please allow US$ 60 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

Burma

ATM Availability: ATMs are becoming more widely available and some hotels may have them, including the Panda Hotel in Yangon. You are more likely to find them in the larger cities, but they are now starting to appear in some of the smaller towns and villages. Please be aware that they are prone to occasional breakdowns so you would be wise to top up your cash before it runs out completely.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are becoming more widely accepted but you should not rely on them. The places where you are most likely to be able to use them are in the cities of Yangon and Mandalay and there may be a charge.

Travellers Cheques: Not accepted.

Local Currency: Kyat.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in U.S. Dollars cash, larger denominations tend to get better exchange rate. NB - PLEASE ONLY BRING NEW U.S. DOLLAR BILLS (BIG HEADS INSTEAD OF SMALL) AND THEY SHOULD BE NEW AND IN A PRISTINE STATE. ANY OLD, TORN OR MARKED NOTES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. U.S. Dollar bills with the series CB will not be accepted for exchange.

Where to Exchange: The official rate is far different from the market rate, we recommend you consult your tour leader for advice regarding the best place to exchange. The exchange booth at airport offers a very poor rate so we recommend you wait until getting into town (taxis accept dollars if agreed beforehand).

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a ‘flight inclusive’ package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific ‘Joining Instructions’ prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

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Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Burma: An e-visa is required to enter Burma and must be arranged prior to travel through the following website: http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/. Visas are valid for 90 days from issue and allow a 28-day, single-entry visit.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Burma

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diptheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Following the advice given by the Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, we strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellent as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Burma

Burma is a tropical country and has three seasons. Temperature and rainfall varies across the country; Rangoon, Bagan and coastal areas tend to have higher temperatures and rainfall. Cool season = October to February with average temperatures from 18-24C; at higher altitudes (Inle Lake, Kalaw) the temperature is slightly cooler and temperatures can drop down to about zero at night. Hot season = March to mid-May 25-38C; particularly hot in Bagan and Rangoon. Rainy (Southwest Monsoon) = mid-May to September 23-33C; practically all of the country's rain falls in this period.

Clothing

You will need loose fitting, comfortable clothes for hot, humid conditions. Sunhat, sunglasses, long trousers and long sleeved shirt essential for protection from the sun. Warm weather clothing is suitable for Rangoon, Mandalay and Bagan. The Shan highlands, Inle Lake and Kalaw are cooler and in the winter season and temperatures may reach near zero at night, with the mornings often remaining cold. Please dress respectfully when visiting temples and religious sites, covering your torso, shoulders and legs to below the knee and easily removable footwear for convenience as you can only enter sacred sites barefoot. In general, as Burma is a traditional, conservative and largely Buddhist culture we recommend you do not wear revealing clothing.

Equipment

Mobile phones: Your mobile will not work in Burma. It is possible to buy a local SIM card for US$ 20 in order to make/receive international calls, as long as your phone is un-locked. SMS messaging is not possible. WiFi is available in most hotels.

Footwear

Lightweight walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, trainers and/or sandals for travelling.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage, a daypack and an overnight bag for your visit to Golden Rock. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Burma

Population: 60,282,000

Size of Country: 676,568 sq km

Major Language: Burmese

Religion: Theravada Buddhism, Hinduism

Time Difference to GMT: +6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Burma

3 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk

- For further information on responsible travel go to www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is ‘Available’ or ‘Guaranteed’ we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2016 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2016. 2017/18 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2017.

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