

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



Cycle Burma (CBUR 2015)



TOURDURAT
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate

tour Code: CBUR

Tour Highlights - Cycle Burma

- ✓ The road less travelled - Discover untouched Burma along quiet backroads by bike
- ✓ Rangoon (Yangon) - Colonial grandeur, golden temples and street markets
- ✓ Bagan - Explore one of South East Asia's most spectacular archaeological sites by bicycle
- ✓ Inle Lake - Longtail boat trips and cycle rides across the Shan Plateau
- ✓ Shan Highlands - Hilltribe villages and former British hill station of Kalaw
- ✓ Mandalay - Ancient capitals, river cruises and sunset from Mandalay Hill
- ✓ Mount Popa - Burma's sacred 'Abode of the Spirit Gods'

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 13 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join tour: Yangon

End Point: Tour ends: Yangon

Included Bike: 24 or 27 gear Specialized HardRock Sport or Trek 3900 mountain bikes with front suspension

Transport: Bus, Boat, Bicycle

Countries: Burma

Cycle Burma

Burma (Myanmar) has only recently reopened its doors to visitors which makes it an exciting and rewarding place to visit. On this trip we get closer to the wonderfully friendly local people with bike rides between the major highlights. Cycle the ancient capital of Mandalay, temple-studded plains of ancient Bagan, colonial hill station of Maymyo and stilt villages of Inle Lake. We also cruise the mighty Irrawaddy River and admire jewel-encrusted pagodas in Rangoon.

Should I go?

Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader, gave her blessing to 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." This marked the end of the tourism boycott started in 1995 and the return of small groups and individuals to Burma has been endorsed by Burma Campaign UK and the Free Burma campaign. Explore are delighted to return to Burma after pulling out in 1995 in response to the call for boycott. We use a privately-owned Burmese agent for all of our services, and whilst each itinerary has been carefully planned to try and avoid using any service owned by or affiliated with the government or former military junta, we accept that some money will make its way into their hands. We strongly believe that by operating tours in Burma we contribute to the local economy in a positive way, whilst providing our customers with an insight into the culture, through direct interaction with Burmese people.

Why Book this tour

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 473 km over nine days (an average of 53 km per day). We mostly follow provincial roads with less car traffic (90% on tarmac roads and 10% on earth/ gravel roads). The terrain is generally flat except for the sections around Kalaw, Maymyo, Pindaya and Inle Lake which are in the hills. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We have graded the route as moderate.

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.

Tour Comfort: Standard

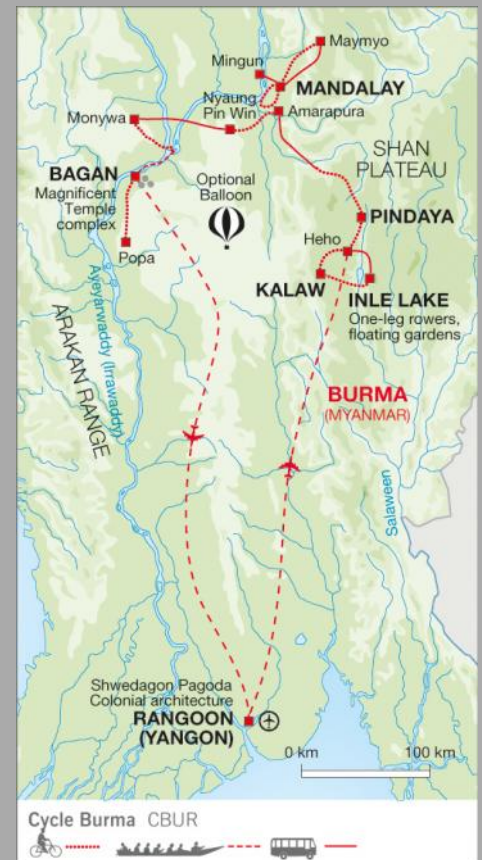
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

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.

Cycling Grade: Moderate

Medium length rides are suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. You'll be cycling mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.



Your tour 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.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Rangoon (Yangon)

Arriving in Rangoon today we have a chance to relax and freshen up before enjoying a late afternoon visit to the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda, the most revered Buddhist temple in Burma. Towering some 99 metres over the city, the pagoda's impressive golden stupa dominates the city skyline to the west of Kandawgyi Lake, making it the ideal spot from which to watch the sunset. Originally believed to be over 2,500 years old, this is the oldest pagoda in Burma and certainly one of the most beautiful in the whole of Asia. This visit will be postponed to day 13 should the group flight arrive too late. The Shwedagon Pagoda Trustee has announced that a new layer of gold leaf will be applied to the main pagoda between September 2014 and February 2015. During the process the main pagoda will be clad in bamboo scaffolding and enshrouded in canvas with parts of the pagoda possibly visible depending on the timing of your visit. The Shwedagon complex is large with a number of surrounding statues and temples and locals will still visit and contribute to its special ambience as the holiest of Buddhist shrines.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Fly to Heho and explore Inle Lake by boat

A morning flight to Heho, followed by a drive to Nyaung Shwe, brings us to the beautiful setting of Inle Lake, one of the highest lakes in the country. Devout Buddhists, the local population live in simple stilted houses, fishing in the lake and growing their food on floating gardens of grass and seaweed. Heading out in a boat later today, we have a chance to witness some of the lake's famous 'one-legged' fishermen at work, as well as paying a visit to Phaungdaw U Pagoda. No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Cycle Inle Lake to Kalaw

After checking out our bikes this morning we begin our ride with an uphill climb from Nyaung Shwe to Kalaw, set high on the western edge of the Shan Plateau. Popular with the British during their time in Burma, Kalaw still retains a little something of its colonial charm. We plan lunch either in Heho enroute or in Kalaw upon arrival. This afternoon, time permitting, we then have a chance to continue exploring the town by bike. Attractions include the gold lacquered bamboo Buddha of Nee Paya and the Catholic church of Christ the King. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4 Ride north to Pindaya; Visit Pindaya Caves

Following breakfast this morning we head north, leaving the main road to take a vehicle-less track, cycling off road through a lovely rural landscape of farmland and pretty villages. This first section is challenging but the views are stunning. After rejoining the road we cycle through a rolling countryside of rice fields and vegetable gardens, accompanied by ox carts full of cabbages and open top vehicles being taken to market by Pao and Danu villagers. After lunch we approach Pindaya, a small pretty lakeside town, which sits beneath a limestone landscape dotted with cave shrines and stupas. Before checking in to our hotel we plan to visit the famed Pindaya Caves, a revered pilgrimage site that is home to some 8,000 images of the Lord Buddha. Extending into the limestone hills above the town, the chambers are filled with a rich assortment of iconography that dates back to the middle years of the 18th century. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 59 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5 Cycle backroads to Ywar Ngan then drive to Mandalay

We begin cycling from Kyone village early this morning, through a patchwork of green countryside, rich in mountain scenery along quiet back roads towards Mandalay. We plan to cycle for around five hours today, on a road rarely used by travellers. En route we will pass huge Banyan trees, and cycle through bamboo and eucalyptus forests, as we make our way towards the village of Ywar Ngan where we stop for lunch. Continuing on this afternoon we complete the remaining 130km by bus arriving into Mandalay in the early evening. Our route passes through spectacular mountain scenery alongside the Zawgwi River, and amongst the variety of produce along the way we will see cotton, turmeric, mangos and teak. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 55 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6 Morning ride then Irrawaddy Boat back to Mandalay

Mandalay was Burma's last royal capital and, for many, the centre of its most historic and culturally rich region. Today we explore the countryside around the city, starting first with a ride out to Sagaing, some 20 kilometres away. Overlooking the waters of the Ayeywaddy River, Sagaing is considered one of Burma's most important religious centres and its hillside is covered in pagodas and temples. From the Soon U Ponya Shin Paya atop of Sagaing Hill we will enjoy spectacular views of the river and more than 500 pagodas dotted around the countryside. From here we continue along the river to the ruins of the Mingun Pahtodawgyi which, had it been completed, would have been the world's largest pagoda. We will have time to take a look around the site, before taking a scenic Irrawaddy river boat ride back to Mandalay. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 38 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7 Bus to Maymyo hill station; visit and return by bike

This morning we drive by charter bus to the town of Pyin Oo win (Maymo), a former British colonial hill station that is set in the cool, lush hills to the east of Mandalay. Lying at the head of a valley, amidst a landscape blanketed in coffee plantations and wild flowers, Maymyo provides a wonderful slice of colonial eccentricity. We will visit the main attractions in town which include features of British architecture around the bustling market, and enjoy the tranquility amid the rich landscapes of the National Kandawgyi Gardens. The well-kept gardens boast nearly 500 species of plants trees and shrubs. We return back down to Mandalay by bike, through a series of hairpin bends with spectacular views over the surrounding hills. As the road flattens we take the back roads alongside a canal, enjoying beautiful rural rice fields before the city comes into view and we transfer by bus back to our hotel. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 65 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 8 Visit Ubein Bridge followed by a tour of Mandalay city

The former royal capital of Amarapura is a short drive south from Mandalay and is perhaps best known for Ubein Bridge - the 1.2 kilometres footbridge that spans Lake Taungthaman. We will have the opportunity to see the bridge from the lake on an optional short boat ride. Returning to Mandalay via the jade market, we then spend this afternoon exploring some of the city's major highlights, including the world's largest book at the Kuthodaw Pagoda, the intricate wooden majesty of the Shwenanda (Golden Palace) Monastery and Mandalay Hill. No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Mandalay to Chaung U village, cycle to Monywa via Thanbudday complex

Our morning starts with a visit to the 17th Century Kuang Madaw Pagoda, which houses the biggest dome in Burma - modelled on the Mahaceti in Sri Lanka. We continue by bus to Chaung U village where we begin the day's cycling. Taking the quiet backroads towards the bustling river hub of Monywa allows us to visit some of the most unique Buddhist structures in Burma. A giant 128-metre tall standing Buddha and a 95-metre long reclining Buddha look out over Bodhi Tataung, a garden of over 1000 sitting Buddhas -

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all facing the same direction. A little further through the villages we arrive at the bizarre Thanboddhay Paya complex, the result of a monk's dreams and visions which resulted in him designing a stupendous pagoda containing 582,363 Buddha images. We continue our journey by bicycle arriving at our hotel mid-afternoon, in time to relax beside the lake. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 40 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 10 Morning on the bikes; afternoon cruise to Bagan

Heading out of Monywa on the bikes, we leave the main road to cycle the back roads towards Pakkoku. Our route takes us along a dusty path through traditional wooden villages, bisecting fields of rice, sesame and peanuts and giving a unique close-up of rural life. Ox carts amble through the villages, some of which conceal impressive frescos inside small temple complexes. Later we rejoin the main road, cross the impressive Chindwin River and cycle to Aung Moe junction, where we end our cycling for today. Later this afternoon we drive to Pakkoku, where we take a local ferry down the Irrawaddy River to the once imperial capital of Bagan, one of the most impressive religious archaeological sites anywhere in Asia. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 62 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 11 Bagan sightseeing by bike

Bagan rose to prominence during the 11th to 13th centuries. At its height it presented a sea of colour and spectacle, with over 13,000 temples and pagodas spread across its expansive plains. Today just over 2,000 remain and we visit some of the most important ones today. We begin our day with the option of enjoying sunrise from the terraces of the stunning 12th century Dhammayazika Temple, which puts the enormity and majesty of this ancient capital into perfect perspective. We will then cycle along sandy tracks between the temples visiting the distinctive Shwezigon and Ananda Pagodas, as well as the 13th century Wetkyi-in-Gubyaukgyi cave temple. After enjoying the wonders of Bagan, the rest of the afternoon is left free for you to relax or explore further, maybe enjoying the sunset from one of the temples or taking an optional late afternoon boat ride on the Irrawaddy River. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 12 Return cycle ride to Mount Popa

This morning we take a ride across the Bagan plateau out to Mount Popa, Burma's sacred abode of the Nats (spirit gods). A volcanic plug that rises to a height of 1,500 metres above the surrounding landscape. The summit is covered by rare flora and fauna and is designated a national park as well as boasting some fine panoramic views of the surroundings. The small temple on the summit is also home to troops of wild monkeys. Depending on time available and your energy levels there may be the opportunity to climb on foot the 777 steps that lead to the summit and temple or even cycle the distance. After taking lunch we return to Bagan on bike by way of a local farm producing traditional 'toddy' palm juice. The remainder of the day is free in Bagan with the option to see the sun set from a temple. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 54 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 13 Fly to Rangoon (Yangon); afternoon city tour

After flying back to Rangoon this morning we enjoy a tour of the city, taking in the ancient relics housed in the unusual (and hollow) Botataung Pagoda before exploring a little of the city's downtown area. A stroll along Pansodan Street takes in the rich colonial architecture and bustling street markets, whilst the immense Bogyoke Market, formerly known as Scott's Market, is filled with handicrafts from all over the country (closed on Mondays, full moons and public holidays). No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

The tour ends in Rangoon this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

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.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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

Inle Lake - Traditional massage - \$8

Mandalay - Moustache Brothers Alternative Comedy show - \$12, Traditional dance performance - \$12

Bagan - Hot Air Balloon US\$300-350 depending on Premium or Regular service and time of the year. Due to high demand, if you are planning on taking the optional hot air balloon excursion you may wish to consider booking this in advance to secure your place on the flight. Please refer to your tour notes to check which days you will be in Bagan and therefore able to do the excursion. We do not recommend booking on the day you are due to leave Bagan in case an early departure is planned. The balloon excursion does not form part of your included Explore holiday package. You can book and pay with the balloon operator directly: http://www.easternsafaris.com/balloonsoverbagan_home.html

Bagan - Traditional massage US\$10; Optional sunrise US\$8; Mount Popa Excursion US\$42 (based on group size of 3-4 person)

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 recognized 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. 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. Accordingly you should allow approximately US\$40 for this purpose.

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 Tour

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.

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>.

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

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 joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit

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www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

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, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A and B. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. If travelling from a country in the yellow-fever zone within 6 days prior to entering Burma you will be required to produce a yellow fever vaccine certificate.

Preparing for your Tour

DAILY DISTANCES	
Day 3	60km
Day 4	59km
Day 5	70km
Day 6	38km
Day 7	65km
Day 8	
Day 9	40km
Day 10	62km
Day 11	25km
Day 12	54km

Bike Details

Your included bike is a 24 or 27 gear Specialized Hardrock or Trek 3900 mountain bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

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. Monsoon period means that the beach extension is only possible from October to April.

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 temperatures may reach near zero at night. 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. Internet is available in Rangoon and Mandalay though should not be relied upon. Bring sunscreen, sunhat, sunglasses and insect repellent. Ear plugs often come in handy when travelling and you may wish to bring a small torch in case of power cuts.

On all Explore cycle holidays we recommend you bring along a cycle helmet, cycle glasses to protect against dust, sun etc, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (eg camelback or platypus). You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. We suggest that you bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling, alternatively you can leave things in the support bus and will be able to access sporadically throughout each day.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes/sandals for sightseeing, trainers for cycling.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Total allowance: 44lb/20kg. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 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 & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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, elephant, 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 and traditions, 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

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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 <http://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 <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/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 Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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