

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Cycle Burma (CBUR 2017 18)



TRIPDURATION
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: CBUR

Trip Highlights - Cycle Burma

- ✓ The road less travelled - Discover untouched Burma 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'

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 13 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Yangon

End Point: Trip ends: Yangon

Included Bike: 21 gear Cannondale Trail 8 mountain bike with front suspension.

Transport: Bus, Boat, Bicycle

Countries: Burma

Cycle Burma

Burma (Myanmar) reopened its doors to visitors in 2012, 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 Kalaw and stilt villages of Inle Lake. We also cruise the mighty Irrawaddy River and admire jewel-encrusted pagodas in 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

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 388 km over nine days (an average of 43 km per day). We mostly follow provincial roads with less car traffic (80% on tarmac roads and 20% 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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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 Ride around Inle Lake to Shwe Indein pagoda complex; optional wine tasting

After checking out our bikes this morning we begin our ride around the side of Inle Lake to the Shwe Indein pagoda complex on the western shores. Sitting above Indein village there are around one thousand stupas of varying sizes, built in the 17th and 18th centuries. After some free time to explore these overgrown ruins with fine views of the lake itself, we make our way back to Nyaung Shwe and the hotel by long tail boats. The rest of the afternoon is left free to either relax, explore Nyaung Shwe or there is even to option to do some local wine tasting. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4 Cycle Inle Lake to Kalaw

We start today's cycle 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 5 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 55 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6 Cycle backroads to Myaing then drive to Mandalay

We start the day with a drive through a patchwork of green countryside and mountain scenery to Kyone where we commence our ride. We plan to cycle along quiet back roads for around three hours today, on a road rarely used by travellers. We make our way towards the village of Myaing where we end today's beautiful ride through the Shan highlands. There is a 1 hour drive to Saim Yaung 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 37 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7 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 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 - 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 57 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 17 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

DAY 14 Tour ends Rangoon

The tour ends in Rangoon this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

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 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

Inle Lake - Traditional massage - USD 8

Bagan - Traditional massage USD 10; Optional sunrise USD 8.

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 USD 50 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 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

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection










Burma

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diphtheria. 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

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 3		30km
Day 4		60km
Day 5		55km
Day 6		37km
Day 7		38km
Day 8		
Day 9		40km
Day 10		57km
Day 11		17km
Day 12		54/110km

 Optional Rides

Bike Details

Your included bike is a 21 gear Cannondale Trail 8 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.

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, plus easily removable footwear for convenience as you can only enter sacred sites barefoot. Leggings are not suitable for visiting temples (as tight fitting). However sarongs or 3/4 crop trousers are acceptable. In general, as Burma is a traditional, conservative and largely Buddhist culture we recommend you do not wear revealing clothing.clothing.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to 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. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Mobile phones: Mobile coverage in Burma is improving but be aware that your mobile may not work. It is possible to buy a local SIM card for around USD 4 in order to make/receive international calls, as long as your phone is un-locked. SMS messaging may not be possible. Internet is available in Rangoon and Mandalay though should not be relied upon.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD

cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On Tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. 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 & 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, 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.

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

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) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

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 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: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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