

PANORAMIC JOURNEYS

BURMA - THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Cultural highlights, village walks & day treks













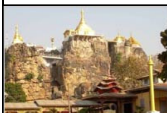
ITINERARY OVERVIEW

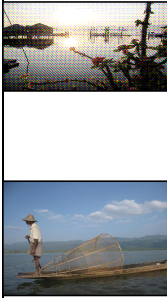



Burma is one of the most beautiful and untouched countries in Asia. Its amazingly varied and fascinating countryside ranges from high rising snow peaks the north, to the rolling hills and colourful fields of the Shan state. Experience the unique biosphere of Inle lake with its villages on stilts; explore historic hill stations; trek through remote landscapes; marvel at the breathtaking vast plains of Bagan with its thousands of temples. No country is complete without its people: Burma is a multi-ethnic country with over 200 different tribes and dialects, but one thing is universal - wherever you travel in this magic country you will be greeted with a smile!





On this specially designed tour we will see villages and meet various ethnic groups that not many other travellers have come across. We visit the villages around Loikaw where the long-necked women of the Kayan hill tribe dwell, explore the only recently opened Pa-O area of Kekku and trek to remote villages in the Golden Triangle around Kengtung near the borders of Laos and Thailand. No other itinerary will give you so much insight in local lifestyle and nature whilst still being an unhurried tour. After the main programme you can have the option of extending your trip - either relaxing at the beautiful tranquil beaches at the west coast or if you still would like to see and experience more, why not join the two-day expedition to climb the famous Golden Rock in southern Mon-State.

Fri	21 Oct	Depart UK
Sat	22 Oct	Arr. Yangon (Rangoon); City Walk
Sun	23 Nov	Yangon highlights - Shwedagon Pagoda; Kyautakgyi Reclining Buddha; Museums
Mon	24 Oct	Fly to Bagan (Pagan)
Tue	25 Oct	Bagan (Pagan); Balloon Ride; Shwezigon Pagoda; Ancient Temple Complex
Wed	26 Oct	Irrawaddy Boat Trip to Sale; Bagan
Thu	27 Oct	Fly to Heho; Kalaw; Village walks
Fri	28 Oct	Pin Laung Haw; Myin-ma-hati Cave; Ethnic Village walks/stop-offs; Loikaw
Sat	29 Oct	Kayan Hill Tribe Visits; Sun-bon Village; Taung-gwe Pagoda
Sun	30 Oct	Pekong; Long-tail boat trip; Sa-ka Village; Pa-O; Inle Lake
Mon	31 Oct	Inle lake; Explore local stilt villages by boat; In Their stupas; River and Bamboo Forest Walk
Tue	1 Nov	Inle; Trek to Kekku; Taunggyi
Wed	2 Nov	Taunggyi; Heho; Fly to Kyaing Tong (Kengtung)
Thu	3 Nov	Kyaing Tong (Kengtung) Village Trek
Fri	4 Nov	Kyaing Tong (Kengtung) Hill Station Walk
Sat	5 Nov	Kyaing Tong (Kengtung) - Yangon
Sun	6 Nov	Depart

DATE	DETAILED ITINERARY	Incl.
Fri 21 Oct 	<p>1 DEPART UK</p> <p><i>There are various flight options involving Malaysia Airlines, Singapore Air and Thai Airways, but the latter offers the best connection times, and although they are more expensive it is probably worth paying the extra £200 or so to avoid long layovers and/or longer diversions. Prices start around £870 for the following flights. The itinerary is based around Option 1, but can easily accommodate those preferring Option 2.</i></p> <p>Travel Details Option 1 - Thai Airways Flight 911 Dep. London Heathrow 12:30/Arr. Bangkok 06:05 (Sat) Travel Details Option 2 - Thai Airways Flight 917 Dep. London Heathrow 21:35/Arr. Bangkok 15:55 (Sat)</p>	-
Sat 22 Oct 	<p>2 ARR. YANGON - CITY WALK</p> <p>Yangon, also known as Rangoon, is the former capital of Burma (Myanmar). Although the military government has officially relocated the capital to Naypyidaw since March 2006, Yangon, with a population of over four million, continues to be the country's largest city and the most important commercial centre. Downtown Yangon is known for its leafy avenues and fin-de-siècle architecture. The former British colonial capital has the highest number of colonial period buildings in Southeast Asia.</p> <p><i>Morning arrival in Yangon (if on the earlier Thai Air Flight from London via Bangkok) and transfer to your hotel for a rest or a swim at the pool. In the afternoon we shall take a short stroll around the old city centre with its lively street markets and old colonial buildings and cross the Yangon river by local ferry. Yangon is a very multi-cultural city and you will see Chinese, Indians, Malay and other nationalities. No wonder the national hero Aung San had such a hard time trying to unify this country. Enjoy a sundowner at the world renowned Strand Hotel or at a pub near the river. Buffet dinner in a colonial setting.</i></p> <p>Travel Details Option 1 - Thai Airways Flight 303 Dep. Bangkok 08:00/Arr. Yangon 08:45 Travel Details Option 2 - Thai Airways Flight 305 Dep. Bangkok 17:55/Arr. Yangon 18:40 Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Kandawgyi Palace Hotel</p>	Hotel L, D
Sun 23 Oct 	<p>3 YANGON - SHWEDAGON PAGODA - KYAUTAKGYI RECLINING BUDDHA - MUSEUMS</p> <p>The Shwedagon Pagoda, also known as the Golden Pagoda, is a 98-metre gilded stupa which lies to the west of Kandawgyi Lake, on Singuttara Hill, thus dominating the skyline of the city. It is the most sacred Buddhist pagoda for the Burmese, with relics of the past four Buddhas enshrined within - namely the staff of Kakusandha, the water filter of Koāgamana, a piece of the robe of Kassapa and eight hairs of Gautama, the historical Buddha. According to legend, the Shwedagon Pagoda is 2,500 years old. Archaeologists believe the stupa was actually built sometime between the 6th and 10th centuries by the Mon, but this is a very controversial issue because according to the records by Buddhist monks it was built before Lord Buddha died in 486 BC.</p> <p><i>Today we shall visit the famous Shwedagon Pagoda, the holiest stupa in the country. With its hundreds of small temples and prayer niches and people from all over the country coming to pay their respect here, a wander around the Shwedagon is an unforgettable experience. Marvel at the huge dimensions of the Kyautakgyi reclining Buddha. How about a walk around the botanical gardens right opposite of our hotel? Or just sit down in any of the local beer gardens and watch local life around you? Interested in Art? Why not explore the History and Art Museum!</i></p> <p>Travel Details - No long drives today Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Kandawgyi Palace Hotel</p>	Hotel B, L, D
Mon 24 Oct 	<p>4 YANGON - BAGAN</p> <p>Bagan, formerly Pagan, was the ancient capital of several kingdoms in Burma. It is located in the dry central plains of the country, on the eastern bank of the Irrawaddy River, 90 miles southwest of Mandalay. The ruins of Bagan cover an area of 16 square miles (41 km²). The majority of its buildings were built in the 11th century to 13th century, during the time Bagan was the capital of the First Burmese Empire.</p> <p><i>Early start for a short flight into the cultural heart of the Burma: Bagan! We check in at our hotel near the Irrawaddy river. Wandering around the traditional market in Nyaung U is a fascinating experience. At the Shwezigon pagoda we will hear the story of King Anwaratha and his conversion to Buddhism. Later in the afternoon we hike around some of the most beautiful temples and enjoy a sunset from a stupa. Taste traditional Myanmar food in a romantic restaurant by the river.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - Flight W9-009 Dep. 06:30/Arr. 07:25 Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Bagan Thande Hotel</p>	Hotel B, L, D

<p>Tue 25 Oct</p> 	<p>5 BAGAN - BALLOONING - TEMPLE TOUR</p> <p>Marco Polo described Bagan as "one of the finest sights in the world", and now visitors can view the unique and enchanting 11th century ruins as they have never been seen before. Float over ancient pagodas and the mighty Irrawaddy River, as the sun rises or sinks slowly behind distant mountains. Balloons over Bagan provide visitors a unique opportunity to see this ancient kingdom, as it never has been before. The sunrise and sunset champagne flights last just under one hour and take off daily from October through to the end of March.</p> <p><i>Why not see all 2000 temples from the air? This is certainly one of the most stunning places on earth to fly in a hot-air balloon! (pre-booking in Yangon necessary). How do the Burmese make their beautiful lacquer-ware? Mo Mo The and her highly skilled workers will show us the ancient secret! No visit to Bagan is complete without a walk around the golden Ananda temple built in early 12th century around the time Marco Polo is said to have visited Bagan – it is one of the best and earliest examples of 'gothic' art in Myanmar. Dinner at a stunning restaurant overlooking the Irrawaddy river.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - No long drives today, just local outings around the area Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Bangan Thande Hotel</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Wed 26 Oct</p> 	<p>6 BAGAN - IRRAWADDY BOAT TRIP - SALE</p> <p>The Irrawaddy River (or Ayeyarwady River) flows from north to south through Burma. It is the country's largest river and most important commercial waterway. Originating from the confluence of the N'mai and Mali rivers, it flows relatively straight before emptying through the Irrawaddy Delta into the Andaman Sea. Its drainage area of about 413,000 km² covers a large part of Burma. After Rudyard Kipling's poem, it is sometimes referred to as 'The Road to Mandalay'.</p> <p><i>Watch the early morning light illuminate Taunggyi Taun pagoda on the hills beyond the river. After breakfast we board our small private boat and cruise down the Irrawaddy river. Enjoy the scenery and relax with a cup of tea or coffee. After a couple of hours we arrive in the historic town of Sale and walk through the sleepy town dotted with rustic temples often missed by tourists. Lunch in a local restaurant and an afternoon walk before heading back to Bagan by vehicle, stopping on the way, and perhaps a visit to a local school.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - 2hr boat ride; 2.5hr drive back to Bagan Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Bangan Thande Hotel</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Thu 27 Oct</p> 	<p>7 BAGAN - HEHO - KALAW</p> <p><i>Transfer to airport for flight to Heho. Drive to Kalaw and in the afternoon take a walk around the local villages. Kalaw is the gateway to the wonderful hills and mountains around Inle lake and the little-visited ethnic villages which we will explore over the next few days.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - W9-141 Dep. 07:50/Arr.08:30; 2 hr drive Heho-Kalaw Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Hill Top Villa</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Fri 28 Oct</p>  	<p>8 KALAW - LOIKAW</p> <p><i>After breakfast we head south, snaking along the local tracks that wind their way through the picturesque countryside. We will pass through Myin-ma-hti, Tie-kyit, Sae-taung, Ye-oo, Bam-mouk, Pin-laung, Phae-khon, Moe-byae, and onto Loikaw. Stop en route at Myin-ma-hti Cave, and hopefully a local market, and visit some villages to see the ethnic tribes, such as Intha, PaO, and Taungyoe. Lunch at local restaurant in Phae-khon. Then continue to Loikaw, and check-in at the hotel. Stroll up in the town for a wander, and dinner.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - 6-7 hrs drive, stopping en route at ethnic villages Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Nawaday Motel or Min-ma-haw Guesthouse (tbc)</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Sat 29 Oct</p>  	<p>9 LOIKAW</p> <p><i>Visit Thi-ri-min-ga-lar local market and watch the activities, then visit a local Buddhist monastery where orphans are under the care of the monks. Afterwards we'll go to a Kayah weaving workshop and also the local museum. After lunch visit Man khut Kayah village, to meet the traditional Kayah woman and walk onto Sun-bon village, about 3 km away where the long-necked women dwell. There are about 20 to 25 houses in that village, and the ladies wear distinctive bronze coils to elongate their necks. Visit from house to house and taste the local wine (called Khaung-ye), and enjoy sunset from the Taung-gwe Pagoda, built on two separated rock mountains.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - Local drives and walks around the area Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Nawaday Motel or Min-ma-haw Guesthouse (tbc)</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>

<p>Sun 30 Oct</p> 	<p>10 LOIKAW - PEKONG - INLE LAKE</p> <p>Inle Lake is a freshwater lake located in the Shan Hills. It is the second largest lake in the country with an estimated surface area of 44.9 square miles. During the dry season, the average water depth is 7 feet, but during the rainy season this can increase by 5 feet. The local population of c.70,000 live in four cities bordering the lake, in numerous small villages along the lake's shores, and on the lake itself. The population consists predominantly of the Intha ethnic group. Most are devout Buddhists, and live in simple houses of wood and woven bamboo on stilts; they are largely self-sufficient farmers. Local fishermen are known for practicing a distinctive rowing style which involves standing at the stern on one leg and wrapping the other leg around the oar. This unique style evolved for the reason that the lake is covered by reeds and floating plants, making it difficult to see above them while sitting. Standing provides the rower with a view beyond the reeds. However, the leg rowing style is only practiced by the men. Women row in the customary style, using the oar with their hands, sitting cross legged at the stern.</p> <p><i>After breakfast, drive to Phae-khon (Pekong), and board our long-tail boats to travel up Inle Lake from the southern tip. Stop at Sa-ka village, and walk from house to house to learn about the people's daily life and visit the semi-submerged 12th century pagodas whilst lunch is being prepared. After lunch continue to Nampan Inle passing by many villages and then check into our lovely hotel built on stilts in the middle of the lake. Enjoy the very tasty Shan food which resembles a mix between Chinese and Burmese/Thai cuisine. Need a massage? The hotel offers very good Burmese traditional massage.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - 5hrs on the boat with stops along the way Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Paradise Inle Resort or Golden Island Cottages (tbc)</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Mon 31 Oct</p> 	<p>11 INLE LAKE</p> <p><i>We spend the whole day on our comfortable boats and explore the villages and temples on the lake. Pay respect to four golden ball-shaped Buddha statues that are taken out on the royal barge for their annual procession. Have you ever heard of jumping cats? Here in one of the monasteries you will see their extraordinary acrobatics. Enjoy the beautiful scenery of In Thein with its hundreds of Shan stupas where we'll take a short walk along a river and lush bamboo forest. Marvel at the amazing skilful architecture of houses, shops and temples all built on stilts and the way the Intha people grow vegetables on their floating gardens.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - Local outings by boat and on foot Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Paradise Inle Resort or Golden Island Cottages (tbc)</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Tue 01 Nov</p> 	<p>12 INLE - KEKKU - TAUNGGYI</p> <p>Kekku is located in a landscape dotted with clusters of villages and fields of red soil. This place has been the center of worship for the Pa O living in the region for centuries. On a small plot of elevated land and overlooking the Hopong Valley, ancient pagodas, many in ruins, stand. Some pagodas are choked by the roots of banyan trees and other by creeper vines but one thing in common is that the stucco sculptures remain in relatively good condition under the ravages of time and weather.</p> <p><i>After an early breakfast we leave for the small village Magi Zeik - the starting point of our days trek up to the stupa area of Kekku. Our walk takes us through various Pa-O villages and beautiful rice and garlic paddies. Then it's a steep climb up to a mountain top (1500ft) where we can rest overlooking the lake and its surrounding mountains. We stop in a small village for our picnic lunch before we descend to another village. From Naung Kae we can relax our feet as we jump on a truck which will take us to our final destination: the 2,500 stupas of Kekku. Kekku has only recently been opened to foreign tourists as it lies within Pa-O territory who were for many years in conflict with the government.</i></p> <p><i>This amazing stupa complex has undergone recent renovation and is one of the finest examples of Shan Buddhist architecture. After our visit we board our bus to drive to the Hill station of Taunggyi situated overlooking Inle lake at 4000ft. If you still feel up for it there is an interesting night market in this large town, the capital of Shan state.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - 4hr trek; 2 hr drive Kekku - Taunggyi Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, KBZ FC</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>
<p>Wed 02 Nov</p> 	<p>13 TAUNGGYI - HEHO - KYAING TONG (KENG TUNG)</p> <p>Kengtung is the largest, most mountainous, most easterly, and culturally the farthest from the Burmese, of all the Shan States. The geography makes it difficult to get to from the rest of Burma for it lies beyond the Salween - across which no bridge has been built and whose eastern tributaries have cut no easy routes through the serried north-south ranges.</p> <p><i>Did you know that you can drink quite reasonable tasting Burmese wine? Let's find out more about how it is produced here at the foothills of Taunggyi at the Ayethar vineyard run by a German expat. As we listen to his stories let's try the various wines! No worries: you don't have to hike any more today. We drive to the airport in Heho for our lunch time flight to the most eastern part of Shan State, the town of Kyaing Tong, right in the heart of the Golden Triangle. Kyaing Tong is close to the borders with Laos and Thailand and you will instantly feel the different atmosphere in this town with its Laotian and Thai influences. Many tribes live around this town and if time permits we might pay a first visit to Wan-Pauk, the village of the red clothed Palaung with their silver and lacquered waist-bands. Dinner at a lake-side restaurant.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - W9-119 Dep. 12:25/Arr.15:00 Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Princess Hotel</p>	<p>Hotel B, L, D</p>

Thu 03 Nov	14 KENG TUNG - TREKKING TO LOCAL VILLAGES	Hotel B, L, D
	<p><i>Kyaing Tong is known for its great trekking area to villages of many colourful ethnic tribes such as the Li, Wa, Thai Nay, Li Shaw, Li Su, Palaung and Akha.</i></p> <p><i>This morning we head out North towards the village of Pin Tauk-Wan Pin from where we start our trek to the Akhas with their silver headdresses. Why do the Ann tribes have such black teeth? Enjoy a picnic lunch at Pin Tauk Waterfall. Let's see how the Wan Kan villagers are making rice wine in their own traditional process before we explore the hand-making saa-pulp at the Shan Paper Works. After a long day's trek, we deserve a good sundowner! Dinner at the Golden Banyan Tree Restaurant.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - 5-6hrs walking Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Princess Hotel</p>	
Fri 04 Nov	15 KENG TUNG - COLONIAL HILL STATION	Hotel B, L, D
	<p><i>In the early morning hours the local market in Kyaing Tong is at its liveliest. All the tribes come to sell their vegetables and products – a truly colourful sight. Retreating from the heat of the plains the British in the late 19th century certainly knew how to live a comfortable life in their colonial bungalows. On our drive up the 5542ft high Loi-Mwe mountain we can immediately feel the fresher air. Enjoy the peaceful scenery with a walk around the old British governor's house and have a chat with the nuns at the Catholic nunnery. Taste the delicious cherry and peach wine specially produced here. On our trek we pass a scenic lake and various villages before we head back down the mountain to our hotel. Let's try some Cantonese food tonight.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - tbc Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Princess Hotel</p>	
Sat 05 Nov	16 KENG TUNG - YANGON	Hotel B, L, D
	<p><i>This morning we drive out towards the east to visit the ancient Dhat Zoam Doi pagoda. On the way we stop to pay a visit to the Wan Sai Akhe-tribe village (a different tribe from the Akha). Have you ever heard of a 'boat shaped monastery'? Let's find out what the story is, before we finally bid farewell to this region with some delicious Thai food before boarding our flight back to Yangon. Transfer to our hotel and enjoy a farewell dinner.</i></p> <p>Travel Details - Flight W9-120 Dep. 15:15/Arr. 18:35 Accommodation - Standard Twin Room, Kandawgyi Palace Hotel</p>	
Sun 06 Nov	17 DEPART	B, L
	<p><i>Unless you are on the early flight, relax at your hotel in Yangon or enjoy some last minute shopping at the buzzing Scott market. Evening flight via Bangkok back home.</i></p> <p>Travel Details Option 1 - Thai Airways Flight 306 Dep. Yangon 19:40/Arr. Bangkok 21:35; Flight 910 Dep. Bangkok 01:10/Arr. London Heathrow 07:15 (Tuesday 8th) Travel Details Option 2 - Thai Airways Flight 304 Dep. Yangon 09:50/Arr. Bangkok 11:45; Flight 916 Dep. Bangkok 13:30/Arr. London Heathrow 19:35 (same day) Accommodation - None</p>	

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE – BURMA

Departs	Days	Price pp*
21 Oct	17	\$3,960

International Flights from c.£900 (not incl. in trip price)

Prices are in US\$. We accept payment in £, \$ or €. Conversions will be made at the exchange rate on the day of payment

Group Size - Max. 12 People

Prices Include: Domestic flights (if applicable/as specified above) · Accommodation (based on shared twin rooms – see single supplement prices below) · Meals as specified in right-hand column above (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner) · Activities as specified above · English speaking local guide · Surface transportation · Park & museum entrance Fees · Airport transfers

Prices exclude: International flights · Travel insurance · Passport · Visa & vaccination charges · Private excursions · Alcoholic drinks · Laundry · Telephone calls & items of a personal nature

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*Deposit \$1000pp · Single Supplement: \$560

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