



Myanmar: Into the Golden Lands

Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay and Inle Lake (8 days and 7 nights)

Starts: Feb 15, 2016 Ends: Feb 22, 2016



WILDCHINA TRAVEL

Travel Itinerary

You are one step closer to *Experiencing Myanmar Differently*. In planning your journey, this booklet will provide everything you need to know about Myanmar and our services. Please get in touch with your travel consultant with any questions.

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EXPERIENCE MYANMAR DIFFERENTLY

Introduction

Discover a country teetering between two worlds - still barely touched by the 21st century, yet set to become South East Asia's hottest new tourist destination. The influences of ancient India, classical China, and colonial Britain intertwine with the deep and gentle presence of Buddhism in a destination that is one of the last frontiers of by-gone times.

What we love:

- Mixing with the locals on a walking tour of lively downtown Yangon
- Embarking on an unforgettable sunset cruise down the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River
- Encountering local hill tribes at the morning market by Inle Lake
- Being captivated by the hundreds of thousands of Monks and Nuns going about their daily rituals

Trip highlights:

- Watching the sun set behind thousands of pagodas in Bagan, Myanmar's Buddhist center
- Looking on as the 1000 red-robed monks living in Mahagandhayon Monastery line the streets for alms giving
- Drifting past floating farms and amazingly balanced fishermen as you relax on a Private Longtail boat around Inle Lake

About this trip:

Now is the time to visit rapidly emerging Myanmar. Dive straight into the heart of a country where the tourist buses are yet to swarm and a religious, gentle population is excited to share their culture. Adventure through the 'four million' pagodas of Bagan all the way to the serene mirrored waters of Inle Lake, discovering curious beauty customs and unexpected temple residents along the way.

When to go: October to March

Best for: First timers and those interested in cultural immersion

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A VISUAL OVERVIEW

Your Journey Map



1. Yangon - Bagan
2. Bagan - Mandalay
3. Mandalay – Inle Lake
4. Inle Lake – Yangon

(OR) Inle Lake – Ngapali – Yangon

DAY-BY-DAY

Your Itinerary

Meals provided are indicated as Breakfast (B), Lunch (L) and Dinner (D)

DAY	LOCATION	ACTIVITIES
Feb 15, 2016 THURSDAY DAY 1	Yangon <i>The Belmond Residence</i> (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Arrive in Yangon where you will be greeted by your private WildChina guides and drivers who will be ready to transfer you to your hotel for check in- Drive through Yangon's colonial downtown area for the start of our walking tour. Get a feel of Yangon from the ground as we wander through lush parks, past picturesque lakes and encounter the gentle, local people- Visit Chaukhtatgyi Temple which houses the largest reclining Buddha in Southeast Asia- Explore The National Museum and fawn over the jewel-encrusted throne that belonged to the last king of Myanmar- Revel in the beauty of Shwedagon Pagoda as we watch the sunset behind this giant, golden torch in the center of the city.

Feb 16, 2016

FRIDAY

DAY 2

Yangon – Bagan

Aureum Palace

(B)

- Transfer to the airport for your flight to **Bagan**, The City of ‘Four Million Pagodas’
- Visit some the most famous sites in this archaeological zone including, **Shwezigon Pagoda**, the first gold pagoda built in Myanmar and **Ananda temple**, one of the best-preserved temples in Bagan
- Explore the large, Indian style shrine room in **Gubyaukgyi temple**, known for its well-preserved paintings that line the walls
- Drop by the last Myanmar style temple in Bagan, **Htilominlo**; built under the command of King Nantaungmya on the spot he was chosen, from five brothers, to be crowned king.
- Stop at **Sulamani Temple**, which translates to English as ‘Crowning Jewel’ and is a prime example of a later, more sophisticated style of temple structure
- Embark on an unforgettable cruise down the mighty **Ayeyarwaddy River** at sunset. Sip Burmese tea as the shadows of pagodas rise up along the horizon

Feb 17, 2016

SATURDAY

DAY 3

Bagan

Aureum Palace

(B)

- Spend the day at your leisure in Bagan. Pony cart rides, bicycles, and hot air balloons are just a few of the different forms of transport available to aid your exploration
- View the sunset from one of the highest temples in the area and watch the dusk mist settle over the red and gold stupas adorning the lush green valley

Feb 18, 2016

MONDAY

DAY 4

Bagan – Mandalay

Hotel by the Red Canal

(B)

- Get up early for a morning flight to **Mandalay**, the second largest city in Myanmar
- Check out the **World's largest book** – Buddhist teachings inscribed on 729 marble slabs that stand upright in the grounds of Kuthodaw Pagoda
- 19km south of Mandalay, visit the small town of **Paleik**, home to 3 giant pythons who claimed residence at a local pagoda and ‘mini Bagan’, a collection of beautiful pagodas
- See the 1000 monks living at **Mahagandayon Monastery** line the streets to receive alms.
- Play spinning tops with the young Monks at **Golden Palace Monastery**, known for its intricate wood carvings
- Watch the sunset from **Mandalay Hill**, the mythical hill from which the city took its name
- Catch a performance from the ‘**Moustache Brothers**’, a comic duo famous in the region for their political satire, screwball comedy and Classic Burmese Dance

Feb 19, 2016

TUESDAY

DAY 5

Mandalay

Hotel by the Red Canal

(B)

- Haggle for fabric at **Zegyo Market**, and become part of the bustling activity
- Kneel before one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Myanmar, **Mahamuni Temple**, where a senior monk washes the face and brushes the teeth of the famous Buddha Image here every morning
- Learn the process of **Gold leaf** making at the largest Gold leaf factory in Myanmar
- Watch master **Marble Carvers** at work creating Buddha statues in all shapes and sizes
- Listen to Burmese folk tales during a traditional puppet show and learn how Kalaga tapestries are made
- Visit traditional **cotton and silk weavers** where the pieces created are so complex that only one inch is completed each day
- Walk across **U Bein Bridge** which spans Taungthaman Lake. It is widely regarded as the world's oldest and longest Teak bridge at 1.2km in length. Wander along the bridge and take advantage of the opportunity for some stunning photography

Feb 20, 2016

WEDNESDAY
DAY 6

Mandalay – Inle Lake

Aureum Palace at Inle Lake
(B)

- Rise early for our transfer to **Heho**, the gateway to the Southern Shan State that sits 880meters/2900feet above sea level
- Look out for precious gems as we wind our way from Heho to Inle Lake (1hr) through the lush countryside of the **Shan hills**, Myanmar’s primary source of rubies and sapphires.
- We will stretch our legs at a family owned **Shan paper umbrella workshop** where we will hopefully catch a glimpse of young women making patterned, handmade paper using fresh flower petals
- Situated a few kilometers north of Inle Lake, we will visit the red teak monastery of **Shwe Yan Pyay**, renowned for its oval windows and richly Feborated walls
- On arrival to Inle Lake we will cross by boat to check into our hotel and enjoy the evening watching passenger boats carry locals across the mirrored waters

Feb 21, 2016

THURSDAY
DAY 7

Inle Lake

Aureum Palace at Inle Lake
(B)

- Rub shoulders with farmers, fishermen and minority communities as they squat next to their produce, ready to trade at the **morning market**
- Marvel at the dexterous balancing act of the **leg-rowing Inthas** as they use traditional methods to catch fish
- Slip off your shoes and enter **Phaungdawoo Pagoda**, the most famous pagoda in the lake region. The five small images of Buddha here have been completely covered in gold foil by pilgrims so the original form is completely unrecognizable
- Breathe in the fresh, crisp air as we enjoy the sunset surrounded by serene mountain scenery

- Feb 22, 2016** Inle Lake – Yangon – Depart
 FRIDAY for Home
 DAY 8 (B)
- Take an early morning flight back to Yangon
 - If time permits we will visit **Bogyoke Market**, famous for its colonial architecture and a great place to buy those last-minute souvenirs. If markets aren't your cup of tea then we can take a stroll through **Chinatown** where the main streets come alive with vendors selling a variety of unusual Chinese snacks and a Yangon favorite - BBQ food and beer
 - Take a private transfer to the airport for your departure flight

Optional Extension to Ngapali Beach

- Feb 22, 2016** Inle lake – Ngapali
 FRIDAY *Jade Marine Spa and Resort,*
 DAY 8 (B)
- Early morning flight from Heho airport to **Ngapali beach**
 - Your time in Ngapali will be spent entirely at your leisure. Forget the world as you relax on the palm-fringed white sands of Ngapali beach and reflect on your incredible Burmese adventure. Watch the glittering waters spill into the Bay of Bengal as the local fishermen bring in their daily catch before taking a dip in the hotel pool

- Feb 23-24,** Ngapali
2016 *Jade Marine Spa and Resort,*
 SAT-SUN (B)
 DAY 9 and 10
- Gaze up at the giant golden Buddha that sits atop a hilltop on the south end of the beach
 - Take a trip out on a fishing boat and help the locals reel in their daily catch
 - Indulge in spa treatments and read a book by the pool, shaded by palm trees

Feb 25, 2016

Depart for home

MONDAY

(B)

DAY 11

- From Ngapali your private driver will transfer you to the airport for your departure flight and your WildChina journey will draw to an end

Note: All information in this itinerary is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please note that changes to our trips can and do occur. This may be due to our effort to improve our program or logistical reasons such as changes in train/flight schedules, traffic conditions, weather conditions, or government policies. WildChina will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes but cannot be held liable for any alterations made to the published itinerary.

WHERE YOU'RE STAYING

Your Accommodation



Belmond Governor's Residence, Yangon

Once the official home of each governor in the British Crown Colony of Burma, Belmond Governor's Residence is a romantic, colonial-style mansion, elegantly nestled in the Embassy quarter of Yangon. The hotel features traditional teak furnishings and 3 elegant dining options set amidst landscape gardens. The bedrooms are luxuriously spacious and each bathroom is fitted with a large, sunken bathtub. Guests are free to relax in the library or indulge in treatments at The Governor's Oasis, an onsite spa.



Aureum Palace, Bagan

Set among the ancient temples of the Kingdom of Bagan, this domestic luxury chain offers lavish, pond-side rooms with views of beautiful lotus flowers just outside your window and towering pagodas on the horizon. This sprawling resort offers spacious villas and an extensive list of dining options from a poolside BBQ restaurant to a sophisticated cocktail bar. Cool off in the large outdoor pool and enjoy the cool breezes from the lakes as you stroll around in the balmy evenings.



Hotel by the Red Canal, Mandalay

This boutique, colonial style hotel is just a few minutes' walk from the famous Mandalay palace and is a peaceful sanctuary from the bustling city streets. The hotel offers 25 suites named after the 4 major ethnic groups in Myanmar: Chin, Kachin, Rakhine and Shan. The interior of each suite is decorated accordingly and feature design and decoration

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typical of that group's culture and customs. The hotel's restaurant offers a fine array of Northern and Southern Indian cuisine and there is an onsite spa and outdoor pool.



Aureum Palace at Inle Lake

Arrive by long-tail boat to this luxury resort on stilts by the shores of Inle Lake. Aureum Palace is part of a domestic hotel brand offering lavish style and comfort throughout Myanmar. The beautiful location is key to the success of this resort, with guests able to look out across the lake from the intimate and secluded comfort of their own room. Expect flower petals on your bed and smiling staff ready to assist you. The resort features a swimming pool, a relaxing spa, a restaurant and bar.



Jade Marine Spa and Resort, Ngapali

The Jade Marina Spa and Resort sits on the shoreline of palm-fringed Ngapali beach. The white sands stretch 3km along the beautiful Bay of Bengal and your room will be stepping distance from the beach loungers. This 5* resort is well equipped with outdoor pools and several bars and restaurants. Most of the spacious rooms have a balcony and many look out onto the water. Lie in bed and watch the fishermen reel in their daily catch or lounge by the pool with a sophisticated cocktail and a good book.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

Your Journey Highlights



Destination:

Myanmar

Myanmar – known formally as Burma – is Southeast Asia’s second largest country. Bordering both China and India and home to over 100 ethnic minority groups, the country is truly a melting pot of culture and religion. Crumbling colonial buildings line Yangon’s bustling streets and reminders of a glorious Kingdom, rich with natural minerals and precious stones, fill the central plains of Bagan.

During the 20th century, colonial rule and Japanese occupation was quickly followed by a military coup that led to years of oppressive rule and international isolation. Until very recently, Myanmar was a romantic depiction in the literature of Orwell and Kipling but a land visited by very few. Now the Government is making tentative steps towards stability, it is the perfect time to visit.

Day 1, Thursday, Feb 15: Arrive in Yangon

The city of **Yangon**, which means ‘end of strife’, was established by King Alaungpaya when he conquered lower Myanmar in 1755. The skyline is dominated by the golden stupas of Shwedagon Paya, a sprawling Buddhist temple that attracts pilgrims from around the world, and the city is well known for its colonial architecture – grand yet often crumbling reminders of its time as the capital of British Burma. Although it is no longer the country’s capital, Yangon is still Myanmar’s largest and most commercially important city. It acts as a gateway for the increasing number of tourists and with cool climates, tropical plants and glimmering lakes, Yangon has earned its title as ‘The Garden City of the East’.



We will get a feel for Yangon on a **walking tour** around the colonial quarter. We will pass by photogenic buildings, serene lakes, bustling market streets and vibrantly sacred temples. We can stop by one of the city’s many street-side tea rooms for a cup of *Lapae Yea* (milky black tea with sugar) and watch the locals chatter and smoke cigars as crimson robed monks silently parade the lively side-walks.

After our stroll we will kneel before one of Southeast Asia’s largest reclining Buddha statues at **Chaukhatatgyi Temple**. Relatively unknown in comparison to its Thai counterparts the 66 meter long image is housed inside a open-sided corrugated iron structure. Although its house is humble and its features are freshly painted and somewhat lacking in ancient charm, it would be challenging not to be amazed by the sheer size of the statue. The glittering Buddha gazes down on the quiet worshippers and provides a sanctuary from the busy city streets.

Founded in 1952, the five-story **National Museum** in Yangon has an extensive collection of hidden treasures including works of art, ornamental artifacts and historic and cultural memorabilia. We will spend time looking at the different exhibitions and fawn over the jewel-encrusted ‘Lion’ throne that belonged to the last king of Myanmar.

Somerset Maugham wrote in 1930 that the golden torch, visible from almost anywhere in the city was “like a sudden hope in the dark night of the soul.” For the Burmese, **Shwedagon Pagoda**, which stands at 105 meters tall, is often referred to as ‘The Crown of Burma’ – the most revered temple in the country that is said to contain eight of Buddha’s hairs. No matter where in the country you live, it is customary to make a Pilgrimage to Shwedegan Pagoda at least once in your lifetime. For the people of Yangon, an often lavish ceremony is held here before any important event.

We will head to Shwedagon Pagoda for sunset. The cone-shaped Buddhist monument sits proudly on a hill in the center of the city and the pagoda itself is completely covered in gold. 7,000 diamonds, rubies and other precious stones are centered round one giant emerald that is positioned to reflect the last rays of the setting sun. Remember to look up your day of birth before our visit because the place you kneel is determined by which day of the week you were born.

Day 2, Friday, Feb 16: Yangon - Bagan

We will rise early for our flight to **Bagan**, Myanmar's Buddhist center and the country's most popular tourist destination.



Situated on the banks of the Ayeyawaddy River 690km north of Yangon, Bagan was the glorious capital of the first Myanmar Empire. Currently there are over 2000 ancient constructions in the area and according to historical scriptures over 4 million pagodas were originally built in the plains. Bagan offers some of the most highly diverse archaeological sites in South-East Asia. Temples, shrines, monasteries and pagodas fill the horizon and a peaceful atmosphere offers a view of a traditional cultural identity, closely connected to Buddhism.

We will visit some of Bagan's most famous sites starting with **Schwezigon Pagoda**, the most renowned temple in the area. Built in 1057 under King Anawrahta, it was the first gold pagoda built in Burma. Its structure features a golden stupa seated on a number of terraces that is believed to enshrine sacred teeth and bones of Gautama Buddha.

Ananda Temple is one of the largest and most well-preserved Buddha edifices of Bagan. According to legend, 8 monks visited the king and used their meditative powers to show him the mythical landscape surrounding Nandamula cave. The king was so overwhelmed by the peaceful atmosphere he built a beautiful temple at the site and executed the architects after completion to ensure that the temple would remain unique. Ananda Temple houses four standing statues of Buddha. Each faces one of the four directions: North, East, South and West to represent Buddha's infinite wisdom.

We will take time to look around the Indian style temple of **Gubyaukgyi Myinkaba**. The paintings that line the walls are thought to be the oldest remaining in Bagan, dating back to when the temple was first constructed in 1113. The interior is dimly lit by perforated rather than open windows.

You can't miss **Htilominlo**, a double story structure that stands around 50 meters high. The temple was built under the instruction of King Nantaungmya in 1218 on the spot where he was chosen, out of 5 brothers, to become the next King. The heir was selected in a traditional manner - a white umbrella was erected in front of the Princes and the future ruler was chosen when the umbrella tilted in his direction. Traces of ancient murals are still visible inside and include old horoscopes that were painted to protect the building from damage.

Last on the list for our first day in Bagan is **Sulamani temple**, whose name means 'Crowning Jewel'. The temple is located in the center of Bagan and like Htilominlo it is an example of a later style of temple. The brickwork is considered to be some of the best in Bagan.

We will relax at day's end by embarking on an unforgettable cruise down the mighty **Ayeyarwaddy River**. The river runs through the entire country and is still an important commercial waterway connecting Mandalay and Bagan with Yangon. We will sip sweet Burmese tea and eat snacks as we float along and watch the shadows of pagodas rise up along the horizon.

Day 3, Saturday, Feb 17: Bagan

Today will be spent at your leisure, exploring the archaeological plains of Bagan. There are many different forms of transport that you can choose to take including bicycles, horse and cart and **hot air balloon** rides.



Take your time to discover some of the lesser-known temples. Enjoy the serenity of walking bare-foot across a brick-paved courtyard with no one to disturb your thoughts but the occasional temple squirrel. Look closely at the time-worn structures and marvel at how wind and sand washed away the intricately patterned stucco that once covered the temples, to create this iconic red valley.

As the sun starts to set we will make our way to one of the highest temples in the area to watch the sky fill with hot air balloons and the sun sink behind the golden plains.

Day 4, Sunday, Feb 18: Bagan - Mandalay

We will say *Thwa dau mal* (Goodbye) to Bagan and rise early to catch a morning flight to **Mandalay**, the second largest city in Myanmar.



Mandalay is a relatively new city, established by King Mindon in 1857. Taking materials from previous royal capital of Amarapura, the King built the city on a grand scale, at the foot of a mythical hill. According to legend, Buddha prophesized that a great religious city would emerge at the base of Mandalay hill and the king desperately sought to regain prestige for his country after the defeat of the second Anglo-Burmese war. Today the city is thriving as the commercial center of Northern Myanmar. The busy streets are filled with people and mopeds and there is a strong Chinese influence, both economically and culturally. In recent years there has been a steady influx of Chinese moving into the area due to Mandalay's close proximity to the border.

We will start the day by checking out the **World's largest book** – Buddhist teachings inscribed on 729 marble slabs that stand upright in the grounds of **Kuthodaw Pagoda**. The pagoda was built by King Mindon as part of the foundations to the city as he worried the teachings would be lost when the British began taking power. The works took 8 years to complete, each letter chiseled out of stone and inlaid with gold leaf.

We will drive a short distance out of the city to the small town of **Paleik**, located 19km south of Mandalay. The town is home to 3 giant pythons who crawled out of the woods and claimed residence at a local pagoda and 'mini Bagan', a collection of over 300 beautiful pagodas in varying states of repair. We might be lucky enough to catch the strange snake washing ritual that takes place at the temple daily.

In the former Burmese capital of Amarapura is **Mahagandayon Monastery**, one of the largest teaching monasteries in Myanmar and home to several thousand young, red-robed monks. This is a perfect place to see the discipline and focus of the monks. At meal times they line up and then eat silently and systematically, in a manner often described as balletic. Amarapura itself means 'City of Immortality' and although its time as a Royal Capital lasted less than 70 years, the area is now pleasant leafy suburb to the busy city of Mandalay.

In the afternoon your guide will be happy to translate as we chat and play spinning tops with the young Monks at **Golden Palace Monastery**. The

monastery itself is known for its intricate wood carvings of Buddhist myths that line the walls, roofs and pillars. The building was initially part of the Royal palace in Amarpura but King Mindon moved the teak structure to Mandalay shortly before the end of the Burmese monarchy. The monastery is not the most beautiful building in Myanmar but attracts visitors due to its ancient, mythical history. Some people believe that the soul of King Mindon still haunts the rooms. The Golden Palace Monastery was once entirely covered in thick gold, but only the interior gold remains due to harshness of the tropical weather.

At sunset we will climb the mythical, natural watch-tower of **Mandalay Hill**. Two large stone lions guard the sacred hill and it is said that climbing to the top on foot will lead to you living a long and healthy life. Make sure to pay homage (and make a wish) at the Su Taung Pyi Pagoda, also known as the wish-granting Pagoda on the way up. At the top of the hill a huge Buddha image awaits. It was built on the spot where Buddha proficized a prosperous city, his hand pointing towards the Royal Palace.

Fans of comedy can have a giggle in the evening as we have the option to see a '**Moustache Brothers**' performance. The family group are famous in the region for their political satire, screwball comedy and classic Burmese Dances. The members have all spent time in prison for their criticism of the country's military regime.

Day 5, Monday, Feb 19: Mandalay

After watching the seated locals prepare morning alms for the silent monks we will head to **Zegyo Market** and become part of the bustling activity. The market is located in the center of Mandalay and was built during the reign of King Mindon. Zegyo in Burmese means 'Cheap Cost' and at Zegyo market we can have fun bartering for fruits, fabrics and handicrafts.



Built in 1785 by King Bodawpaya, **Mahamuni Temple** is home to the most highly revered Buddha image in Myanmar and is one of the country's most important pilgrimage sites. As a form of respect to the Buddha image, male devotees apply gold leaf to the statue. A thick layer of gold leaf has built up and has distorted the image. Luckily, the beautiful crown that the statue wears is still visible and is set with various precious stones. Every morning at 4am a ritual is

performed where a senior monk washes the face of the image and brushes its teeth. The ritual is watched by many worshippers, is done in great detail and takes a great deal of time. There is a museum on the temple grounds and many small shops surrounding the temple selling offerings and gold leaf.

After seeing the cultural importance and great demand for **Gold Leaf**, we will learn the process of making it at a large Gold leaf factory in Mandalay. The men spend several hours beating the gold until it is the right thickness and the women sit next door ready to cut and pack the gold leaf.

We will continue to watch artisans at work on the specialized Marble carving street, where master carvers create Buddha statues in all shapes and sizes. We will listen to Burmese folk tales during a traditional puppet show and get a closer look at some of the traditional industries in the area. The art of Kalaga (heavily embroidered wall tapestry) became popular in the 19th century. We will visit a store and watch the process of creating this highly decorative artwork that often feature scenes from classical Burmese plays. We will also spend time at a traditional **cotton and silk weavers**, where the pieces created are so complex that only one inch is completed each day

As the sun sets we will walk across **U Bein Bridge** (The Bridge of Love) which spans Taungthaman Lake. It is widely regarded as the world's oldest and longest Teak bridge at 1.2km in length. The 'left-over' teak from the building of Mandalay city was used in the bridge's construction. As we wander along be sure to take full advantage of this opportunity for some stunning photography.

Day 6, Tuesday, Feb 20: Mandalay – Inle Lake



After our morning flight to **Heho**, the gateway to the Southern Shan State, we will drive through the lush countryside of the Shan Hills to **Inle Lake** (1hr). The **Shan Hills** extend from Yunnan province in China through Myanmar to Thailand. Look out for precious stones on our journey as the area is Myanmar's primary source of rubies and sapphires.

On the way, we will stretch our legs at a family owned **Shan paper umbrella workshop**. The umbrellas here are designed and made entirely by hand. Traditional methods are employed to create unique, vibrantly colored, Burmese

paper umbrellas and we will try to catch a glimpse of young women making patterned paper by delicately dropping flower petals into the drying paper solution.

Situated a few kilometers north of Inle Lake, **Shwe Yan Pyay Monastery** is an entirely wooden monastery built in the early 19th century. The walls of this interesting monastery are red painted teak and the building is unusual due to its oval shaped windows. The interior is richly decorated with mosaics and we can talk with the young residents who are mostly monks in training.

We will arrive at **Inle Lake** early in the evening and transfer to our hotel by long-tail boat. The evening can then be spent at your leisure, watching the passenger boats transfer locals across the water or looking out for some of the rare animals and birds.

Fresh water Inle Lake spans 22km, high in the Shan hills. The Lake is a nature lover's haven and has been protected by the Government as an official bird sanctuary since 1985. Rare birds inhabit the lake's shores and species of fish and snails are found here that are not seen anywhere else in the world. A number of ethnic minority communities live in the surrounding hills and one group that make their livelihood from the lake are the **leg-rowing Intha**. We will feel exhausted just watching their wondrous balancing act as they use traditional methods to catch fish. In recent years, the lake has become a popular tourist destination but its vast size makes it easy to find a secluded spot.

Day 7, Wednesday, Feb 21: Inle Lake

We will rub shoulders with farmers, fishermen and **minority communities** as they squat next to their produce ready to trade at the **morning market**. Kayan minority women, who wear neck rings to extend the length of their necks in the name of beauty, often attend.



After trying local delicacies at the market we will slip off our shoes and enter **Phaungdawoo Pagoda**, the most famous pagoda in the lake region. The five small images of Buddha here have been completely covered in gold foil by pilgrims so the original form is completely unrecognizable. The images are believed to have been brought to the Inle Lake region by Alaungsithu, King of the Bagan empire in the 12th century. If you happen to be at Inle Lake during the Phaung Daw Oo

festival, four of the Buddha statues from Phuangdewoo Pagoda are taken around the lake on a replica of the grand, Royal Barge.

In the evening we will breathe in the fresh, crisp air and enjoy the sunset surrounded by serene mountain scenery.

Day 8, Thursday, Feb 22: Depart for Home

Today we will head back to Yangon for your departure flight. If there is time we can visit **Bogyoke Market** - sometimes referred to by its British name Scott Market – which is famous for the colonial building it sits in. With over 1000 small shops the market is a great place to pick up those last-minute gifts and souvenirs.



If Bogyoke market doesn't take your fancy we could take a stroll through **Chinatown**. In the evenings, the main streets come alive with vendors selling a variety of unusual snacks and a Yangon favorite – Chinese BBQ and Beer.

Your private driver will take you to the airport and your guide will help you check in for your departure flight.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO NGAPALI BEACH

Day 8, 9 & 10 Feb 22-24: Yangon – Ngapali

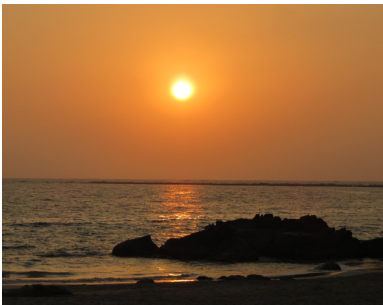


Your guide and chauffeur will transport you to the airport for your departing flight to **Ngapali**. Upon your arrival in Ngapali, you will be met by your private chauffeur, who will be ready to drive you to your hotel for check in.

Your time in Ngapali can be spent entirely at your leisure. Forget the world as you relax on the palm-fringed white sands of Ngapali beach and reflect on your incredible Burmese adventure. During these 3 days, the schedule will be entirely up to you – eat, drink and sleep exactly when you want. Watch the glittering waters spill into the Bay of Bengal as the local fishermen bring in their daily catch before reading a good book or taking a dip in the hotel pool.

If you want to explore then there are many activities that you can arrange by yourself or with the help of your hotel. You can visit the **giant golden Buddha** that sits atop a hilltop on the south end of the beach or take a trip out on a **fishing boat** and help the locals reel in their daily catch.

Day 11, Saturday, Feb 24: Depart for Home



Your private driver will take you to the airport and your guide will help you check in for your departure flight.

GETTING PREPARED

Before Your Trip

We have provided the information below to answer some of the journey-specific questions that are most frequently asked by our clients. Please feel free to contact us with any additional questions.

Visas

Most foreigners will require a visa to enter Myanmar but there are some nationalities that are exempt and can enter Myanmar 'visa free'. Please be sure to check the requirements for your nationality before your trip commences.

A tourist visa can be obtained from your local consulate or Embassy. Visit their official website to see specific requirements.

Myanmar Visa on arrival is available for those arriving in Myanmar by flight to Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Daw international airports. Visa on arrival allows you to apply online and you can expect the visa approval letter to arrive between 3 to 9 days. The cost is 40USD.

Health & Safety

It's recommended that you visit your physician for a pre-trip check-up. If you have a pre-existing condition, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart/lung disease or a nervous disorder, it is advisable to

check with your physician that it's possible to participate in all activities during your journey. All travelers should bring a sufficient supply of any necessary prescription medicines, in their original containers and with clear labels; refills can be difficult to obtain, or even unavailable in the areas we visit.

In case of emergency

All guests traveling with WildChina for longer than 24 hours are required to provide a copy of their medical insurance card prior to trip departure. Please scan and email the copy to the WildChina staff assisting you.

More comprehensive travel insurance, including coverage of lost luggage and trip cancellation, is optional though highly encouraged. WildChina can recommend the insurance packages provided by Travel Guard and the emergency evacuation policy offered by International SOS.

Private Journey

This journey is a private experience that includes your party, as well as a WildChina guide and/or tour leader. Upon arrival at the airport you will be greeted by your private WildChina guide or tour leader. Since this is such an intimate method of travel, guides are flexible about the itinerary and can more easily cater to your preferences.

Trip Difficulty

Easy Adventure

Your journey is considered an easy adventure. Easy adventure includes half to full days outside the hotel with possible visits to sites no more than 2 hours away. We drive on paved city roads and stay in 5-star or boutique hotels. We may spend up to 2 hours walking per day.

Moderate Adventure

Your journey is considered a moderate adventure. Moderate adventure includes full days outside the hotel, with drives up to 3 or 3 1/2 hours on mainly well-maintained, paved roads. We may spend up to 4-5 hours walking, hiking and/or biking, and stay in 5-star or boutique hotels—or the best available accommodation.

Vehicles and Road Conditions

Vehicle Standards

We travel in well-maintained, air-conditioned vehicles, driven by experienced local drivers. All our vehicles are licensed for foreign passenger travel and insured. Vehicle size depends on group size. In more extreme conditions, travel may require 4WD vehicles.

Road Conditions

In general, road conditions in Myanmar are of reasonable standard. However, driving customs here may differ greatly from what you are used to: cars, bikes and pedestrians often come within inches of each other and honking is frequent. In large cities, it is common to encounter traffic jams, while in small towns and rural areas, road conditions may be compromised, but they are always safe. Your WildChina driver is very capable of assessing the situation and taking necessary precautions.

In extreme rural or mountainous areas roads may be unpaved, narrow and winding. Your WildChina driver is very comfortable and experienced on these roads.

Your Guides

The true face and heroes of WildChina, our guides have been rigorously selected for their combination of client servicing, local knowledge and likeable personalities. Most of our guides are natives of the regions they cover and have worked with WildChina for years, appreciating the difference in our service standards, responsible tourism approach and the exceptional clients we bring.

Your WildChina guide will arrange the logistics of your trip, including meals, hotel reservations, sites and activities, as well as providing you with information about the local culture. Your WildChina guide is specific to each local region but will assist you as you transfer from city to city. Your WildChina guide will be confirmed during booking.

Meals & Water

Meals are included, as listed in your itinerary. We strive to arrange meals that highlight authentic local cuisine in clean, local establishments.

It is safe to drink bottled mineral water, but tap water, even in 5-star hotels, is not safe for drinking. WildChina will provide bottled water, tea and snacks throughout your journey.

We request guests with severe allergies to consult their physicians prior to traveling and to bring all necessary medicines with them. Guests are highly encouraged to inform WildChina ahead of time of specific allergies, such as to peanuts, fish, etc., or sensitivities to MSG, so that we can do our best to ensure these items are not used in restaurant meals.

JOURNEY PRICING

Your Quotation Estimate

Your journey starts in Yangon and ends in Yangon. Your quotation has been prepared for 40-60 travelers, for 8 days and 7 nights. Gratuities for guides are not included.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	CHARGES
Land Cost	<i>Double occupancy</i>	USD /person
	Single supplement	USD /person
Excursion in Ngapali		USD /person

What's Included:

- Accommodation including breakfast at hotels as specified
- Domestic flight tickets (Yangon/Bagan, Bagan/Mandalay, Mandalay/Heho and Heho/Yangon)
- Domestic airport tax
- All sightseeing tour and transfer services with private air conditioned car/coach
- Private boat for Inle Lake sightseeing
- Sunset boat ride in Bagan
- All entrance fees for the places mentioned in the itinerary
- English speaking stationed guides throughout the trip
- Service charges, room tax and baggage handling at the airports
- 1 complimentary bottle of drinking water per person per half day excursion & 2 complimentary bottles of drinking water per person per full day excursion

What's Not Included:

- International flight tickets to/from Myanmar and relevant taxes
- Myanmar tourist visas, which is required for most foreign passport holders
- Services not mentioned in our itinerary
- Expenditure of personal nature such as drinks, tips, souvenirs, laundry, etc.
- Meals not included in the itinerary and alcohol
- Expenses of a personal nature (e.g. mini bar, personal telecommunications, laundry, etc.)
- Excursions and activities not included in the itinerary
- Discretionary gratuities for guides and drivers
- Personal Medical and Travel insurances

Exchange Rate

This quotation is listed in U.S. dollars and Chinese *renminbi* based on the present exchange rate of RMB 6.8 to USD 1. In the event of change in exchange rate of 2% or more, WildChina reserves the right to adjust this quotation in a fair and reasonable manner.

Validity of Quotation

The above quotations are based on the costs and exchange rates current at the time of enquiry. Prices and availability are not guaranteed until final booking. Prices of domestic airfare are not applicable for public holidays

Medical and Travel Insurances

All guests traveling with WildChina for longer than 24 hours are required to provide a copy of their medical insurance card prior to trip departure. Please scan and email the copy to the WildChina staff assisting you.

More comprehensive travel insurance, including coverage of lost luggage and trip cancellation, is optional though highly encouraged. WildChina can recommend the insurance packages provided by Travel Guard and the emergency evacuation policy offered by International SOS.

GETTING ON THE ROAD

Your Booking

To book this journey, please contact your WildChina travel consultant, Owen Morris, at owen.morris@wildchina.com. Alternatively, you may contact us by email at info@wildchina.com, or via these phone/fax numbers:

Beijing Office

T: (86) 10 6465 6602

F: (86) 10 6465 1793

United States Office

T: (1) 202 803 8813

F: (1) 202 785 8905

Booking Steps

1. **Deposit:** A deposit of USD 500/person is required to secure your reservation. Once your deposit has been received, we will send your confirmation along with a detailed itinerary, materials for your visa application, packing list, and general information on the destination you visit.
2. **Full payment:** Full trip payment should be made 60 days prior to departure. Once full payment has been made, your trip tour guides will be confirmed and you will receive guide information. We will check your visa and prep you for the trip.

Note: All payments by credit cards are subject to an extra 5% surcharge.

Cancellation & Refunds

In the case of trip cancellation, please refer to the schedule below:

- 60 days or more prior to trip departure - Loss of deposit

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INFO@WILDCHINA.COM

www.wildchina.com 30

- Between 45 - 60 days prior to trip departure - 30% of total tour price will be forfeited
- Between 20 - 45 days prior to trip departure - 50% of total tour price will be forfeited
- Less than 20 days prior to trip departure - no refund

No refund will be given if clients voluntarily leave a trip for any reason after the trip has begun. Refunds will be at the discretion of WildChina if clients are involuntarily forced to leave a trip for any reason.

We reserve the right to cancel any trip departure before it is guaranteed to run. A trip is guaranteed to run once it has one fully paid traveler, unless minimum numbers state otherwise.

WildChina reserves the right to cancel any trip prior to departure, including a previously booked trip, due to reasons outside its control (i.e. natural disasters or political instability). In the unlikely event of unforeseen circumstances caused by civil unrest, terrorism, natural disaster or other unexpected events, either party may cancel the trip. If such cases occur 45 days before trip departure, we will refund clients in full, less the deposit. If such cases occur within 45 days of departure, we will refund clients in full, less the deposit and any expenses incurred to date that are directly related to the preparation of the trip. Such expenses may include survey trips conducted specifically for the trip, as well as a service charge of 10% of the total trip cost to cover general overhead expenses incurred in relation to the trip.



WHO WE ARE

About WildChina

Our story began on the slopes of Tibet's Mount Kailash. The company founder and Yunnan native, Mei Zhang, found herself braving high altitudes and a harsh landscape without a guide. After completing the kora (pilgrimage route) and spending the night in an abandoned guesthouse, she awoke to beautiful snowcapped mountains alight with the sunrise.

The breathtaking view brought Mei a deep sense of fulfillment – yet she stood alone and exhausted from her journey. Disappointed by how little support was available for travelers looking to get off the beaten path in China, Mei was inspired to start her own business dedicated to offering high-end, stress-free and responsible travel to China's most remote and unique destinations. Her prescient insight became the company motto:

Experience China Differently

2011
Condé Nast
Traveler
TOP TRAVEL
SPECIALIST

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
TRAVELER
50 Tours
of a
Lifetime
2012

TRAVEL+
LEISURE
A-LIST
TRAVEL AGENT
2011