



# The Golden Land

## Myanmar



### DAY 1 Yangon

You will be met by a representative of Goddard & Howse and transferred to your hotel. Yangon is a bustling city with a garden atmosphere and a rich history. Tonight you will meet your fellow travellers. There will be a welcome dinner and tour briefing this evening with your journey leader. **Accommodation: The Chatrium Hotel**

### DAY 2 Yangon

This morning we will talk a walk through Yangon's colonial past and see some of the colonial buildings constructed by the British. Later we will visit the famous Shwedagon Pagoda for an extended stay. This magnificent pagoda is reputed to be the largest in the world and holds special significance for the people of Myanmar, and indeed all followers of the Buddhist teachings. The atmosphere is relaxed and inviting, a perfect start to our journey. After lunch at a local restaurant we will continue to Chauk Htat Gyi, one of Myanmar's most revered reclining Buddha images. Later in the day we will pay a visit to Scotts Market, a bustling trading centre named after former British civil servant Sir George Scott. **Accommodation: The Chatrium Hotel**

### DAY 3 Yangon to Bagan

This morning we transfer to the airport. Please note flight times are changeable. Schedules will be advised the day before departure allowing adequate time to prepare. On arrival we will be met by our local guide and taken to our hotel. Bagan is truly one of the great wonders of the world; a sprawling river plain covered with over 4000 stupas, pagodas and temples. Built from the 11th to the 13th centuries in a flurry of activity, Bagan is an ancient religious haven, a monument to belief and faith almost a thousand years old. This morning we will commence our sightseeing with a panoramic view from the terrace of Shwe San Daw Pagoda then onto the 11th century Gu Pyauk Temple with its splendid murals and restoration work by UNESCO. Nearby is the Manhua Temple built by the captive Mon King (Manuha) with huge Buddha images expressing his feelings of confinement after he endured capture by the Burmese Kings in 1010. After lunch at a local restaurant we continue to see a lacquer ware gallery (Maung Aung Myin), Bagan is famous for its lacquer ware craft, an ancient skill beautifully presented from woven bamboo, worked into many forms and decorated with etched depictions of early Bagan life. **Accommodation: Bagan Lodge Hotel**



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## DAY 4 Bagan

After breakfast at our hotel we will visit a Primary School (Tha Htay Kan village). Goddard & Howse have been dropping in to see the kids since 2006, donating school books, posters and teaching aids on behalf of our guests. Here we have an opportunity to meet the kids and learn about Myanmar's education system. We walk through the local village and see how the rural people of Bagan earn their living by farming sesame and pigeon beans. Bagan is a vast area best covered by vehicular transport so we board our bus and visit Phaya Thine Zu Temple with its untouched murals from the 13th century and onto the man made caves at Kat Kan where we can learn about meditation. After a break for lunch we visit Ananda temple. Known for its extraordinary beauty and four standing Buddha images Ananda temple is commonly referred to as the highlight of any visit to Bagan. Nearby on the banks of the Irrawaddy River is the Shwe Gu Gyi temple famous for its viewing panorama across the Bagan plain, an inspiring view it is. Dinner is included this evening at a local restaurant. **Accommodation: Bagan Lodge Hotel**



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## DAY 5 Riverboat Cruise to Mandalay

After breakfast we have morning sightseeing in Bagan. Bagan is not only the site of thousand-year-old temples and pagodas, but also of many quaint villages scattered throughout the temple plain. This morning we visit the local town of Nyoung U, a bustling and colourful market where traders and merchants come together to exchange goods and information. We transfer to the jetty and begin a river journey to Mandalay on board the riverboat, RV Pandaw II, setting course first to Pakokku, a port city south of the Chindwin River confluence, and observing the diverse river life and the magnificent scenery as we sail. In the late afternoon we will dock near Pakokku. Lunch, dinner and overnight stay on board the RV Pandaw II. *Note: Itinerary and stops during the cruise are subject to changes depending on river conditions and local circumstances.* **Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise.**

## DAY 6 Riverboat Cruise to Mandalay

Breakfast on board. The cruise continues down the Irrawaddy. We take a walk through this delightful village, home to a thriving pottery-making community. The people lead a simple life making a variety of clay products which they barter and trade for other commodities. We visit the village school and a monastery that has existed on the same site for more than 400 years. Lunch, dinner and overnight stay on board. **Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise**

## DAY 7 Arrive Mandalay & drive to Pyin Oo Lwin

After breakfast onboard we set course to Mandalay. On arrival (around 0830) we will be met by our guide and board our bus for the scenic drive to Pyin Oo Lwin. This delightful town was established as a hill station by the British after they occupied Mandalay in 1885. Here we will see many fine colonial homes and administrative buildings and the stunning Kandawgyi botanical gardens established in 1911. The drive takes around two hours and we will reach over 1100 meters above sea level. On arrival we will visit the bustling central market then after lunch enjoy an extended visit to the gardens. **Accommodation: Aureum Palace Hotel**

## DAY 8 Mandalay

We leave the leafy surrounds of Pyin Oo Lwin and head down the mountain range to the broad Irrawaddy plain and the former royal capital of Mandalay. Mandalay is a city that most of us have heard something about. Made famous by Rudyard Kipling with his classic prose 'Where the flying fishes play', Mandalay is a city that reveals itself slowly to the unsuspecting traveller. There are dusty roads and all manner of street stalls. This afternoon we take a sightseeing tour including the Golden Palace Monastery. Here we find a magnificent example of royal architecture that miraculously survived the devastation of war in 1945 when the British forced the occupying Japanese from within the royal place walls. This building is the only remaining example of the last

dynasty's architecture. We continue by foot to Kuthodaw Pagoda. Known as the worlds biggest book it is here that a 17th century king (Mindon), tired of Buddhist manuscripts being destroyed by all too frequent fires in Mandalay decided to have the teachings of Buddha carved in stone. A visit to Mandalay would not be complete unless we took in the view from the top of Mandalay Hill. It is a short drive with spectacular results.

**Accommodation: Hotel by the Red Canal**

## DAY 9 Heho and Longboat to Inle Lake

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our domestic flight to Heho and access to the beautiful Inle Lake. The flight is just 30 minutes and takes us to the southeast into the edge of Shan State (flight time to be advised the previous day with plenty of time to prepare for departure). The Shan people are just one of the 154 ethnic minority groups in Myanmar. We will be met by our guide who will be with us for the next two days. Our destination is tranquil Inle lake, a broad catchment of water nestled in a picturesque valley. On our way to the lake we will stop at the town of Nyaung Shwe and enjoy some local Shan food for lunch. From here we board our longboats, five to each vessel, travelling on the Nyaung Shwe river to Inle lake. There is a five day market system around the lake and if possible we will visit to see how the Shan people go about their business. There will be an optional village walk for those who are feeling energetic.

**Accommodation: Villa Inle Resort & Spa Inle Lake**

## DAY 10 Inle Lake

A fascinating morning is in store as we board our longboats for the western shore of the lake and a visit to the Inn Thien Pagoda complex. Once at the edge of the lake we cruise through small channels that dissect the marshy shoreline, past small villages, farmers and children playing in the water. There are many pagodas and monasteries in this area so expect to see crimson-robed monks everywhere going about their daily lives. The inn Thien pagoda has a dramatic covered stairway over three hundred meters long leading to a pagoda surrounded by stupas at the top of a hill. As we walk along the stairway we see magnificent ruins of stupas that were built in the 15th century the carving and sculpture is stunning. Little is known of these structures and archeological research has been limited since 1948. We travel by boat to a local weaving village where the inhabitants specialize in weaving lotus stems into exquisite garments. After lunch at a local restaurant overlooking the water we will cruise through villages and see how the locals grow tomatoes, beans and gourd on floating islands that are constructed and towed onto the lake. **Accommodation: Villa Inle Resort & Spa**

## DAY 11 Inle Lake, Yangon

After breakfast we transfer by longboat back to the river town of Nyaung Shwe then through picturesque rice fields to Heho airport. Flight times will be advised the previous day with plenty of time to prepare for departure. On arrival we will be met and transferred to our hotel for some free time in Yangon before our farewell dinner.

**Accommodation: The Chatrium Hotel**

## DAY 12 Departure

Some free time this morning before farewell to Yangon and Myanmar. We will be met and transferred to Yangon International Airport for onward flights.



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