



# Old Burma Road

## Myanmar and China



### DAY 1 Arrive Yangon

On arrival you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. Yangon is a bustling city with wide streets and a garden atmosphere in the outer suburbs.

**Accommodation: The Chatrium**

### DAY 2 Yangon

Today we will visit the 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 Buddhist teachings. The atmosphere is relaxed and inviting, a perfect start to our journey. Tonight is our welcome dinner at the Stand Hotel.

**Accommodation: The Chatrium**

### DAY 3 Heho and Longboat to Inle Lake

After breakfast we will be transferred to the airport for a domestic flight to Heho. Upon arrival, we transfer to Nyaung Shwe (25km – one hour). An excursion by boat on Inle Lake will include sights of the famous leg-rowers, typical floating gardens, local methods of fishing, village life and magnificent scenery. Lunch will be served at a local restaurant on the lake itself (to own account). Visits are made to Phaungdaw Oo Pagoda, the weaving village of Inpawkhon, and to one of the local markets in the Inle Lake region (on market days only).

**Accommodation: Villa Inle**

### DAY 4 Inle Lake

After breakfast, depending on the water level, we board a boat to the western shore of Inle Lake, where there is the beginning of a stair path leading to the hidden and unknown Inn Thein Pagoda complex. After lunch, we continue sightseeing on Inle Lake by boat and visit the orphanage.

**Accommodation: Ville Inle**

### Day 5 Inle Lake 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



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GODDARD & HOWSE | Ph: +61 407 990 707  
ross@goddardandhowse.com.au  
40 Allara Street, Canberra City ACT 2601 Australia  
Mail: PO Box 121 Civic Square ACT 2608 Australia

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**

## Day 6 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**

## Day 7 Bagan to Mandalay

This morning we will take the scenic drive from Bagan to Mandalay , a journey of approximately four hours depending on the road conditions. The countryside is vibrant with agriculture and we will stop to chat with the locals along the way before arriving at our hotel Later in the afternoon we will experience the sights and sounds of Mandalay, including one of the most revered religious monuments in Myanmar, the Mahamuni Pagoda. We will also visit the Shwe Inbin Monastery, the Golden Palace Monastery – a superb example of a traditional wooden building, and Kuthodaw Pagoda – the world's largest book, made of marble. **Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Mandalay**

## DAY 8 Pyin Oo Lwin

After breakfast we take an excursion to Amarapura, the former capital some 15 kilometres from Mandalay, to visit the Mahagandayon Monastery where more than a thousand monks live and study. Our morning visit coincides with the second meal of the day as the monks line up with their bowls to accept offerings of rice, vegetables and soup. From here we visit the 200-year-old teak bridge that links a small island in a backwater of the Ayayarwaddy; the island was home to the former Royal Palace before it was moved to Mandalay. We take a leisurely stroll on the bridge, made from solid teak and over 500 metres long. We head back to the hotel to freshen up before lunch then take the two hour drive into the hills to the north of Mandalay and the former British hill station of Pyin Oo Lwin. Pyin Oo Lwin is situated just 100 kilometres from Mandalay at an elevation of 1,150 metres. The town has a delightful mix of colonial houses and state buildings and was a favourite haunt for the British during their occupation. Here the weather is pleasantly cool most of the year. The meandering streets have overhanging trees, hedgerows and the odd tall Karri eucalypt. We head for our hotel and check in. **Accommodation: Aureum Palace Hotel**

## DAY 9 Pyin Oo Lwin

Close to our hotel are the National Kandawgyi Gardens. In 1915, Lady Cuffe, a botanist from Kew Gardens in England, enlisted forest researcher Mr Alex Rodger, to establish a botanical garden on a 240 acre site, turning the land into tiers of lakes, garden beds and lawns. This noted botanical garden is still in fine shape after many years and you will see seasonal flowers, orchid gardens (over 178 species), rock gardens, dahlia and rose gardens. We will take an extended stroll around the area. The township itself is a fine collection of colonial and contemporary Burmese architecture. Many fine houses remain from the British time and we will take some time to visit these houses as well as the local market. **Accommodation: Aureum Palace Hotel**



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## DAY 10 Train to Lashio

This morning we leave the comfortable surrounds of the Kandawgyi Hill Resort and head for the train station, continuing north to Lashio along the Old Burma Road. Our train will wobble and shuffle at a stumbling pace stopping at numerous stations to pick up and drop off passengers. The trains have timber floors and seats that are bearable, open windows with shutters in case it rains, and antiquated electrical systems that have light bulbs hanging from the roof. Expect the scenes at each station to be a little like a carnival – usually each train is greeted by swarms of tanaka-painted women, with pineapples, fried chicken wings and jackfruit, all displayed on trays on top of their heads. Hands will reach out from carriages, grabbing food and exchanging handfuls of grubby notes. The railway track cuts through open farmland of corn and rice fields, and we will see local people in the fields tending their crops. We cross the fabulous Gokteik Bridge, built in 1900 by the Pennsylvania Steel Company. It is a grand sight as we edge onto the bridge and over a spectacular gorge – a towering waterfall at one end, and exposed cliffs on the other side. We spend about four hours on the train then meet our driver and continue to Lashio. Lashio is a quiet town set at 900 metres above sea level. It was the furthest point of the British-built railway and is located deep into Shan State. The town itself is a dusty combination of some public buildings and numerous street-sellers. The market is vibrant and colourful, and trade is high on the agenda being so close to the Chinese border. **Accommodation: Lashio Guest House**

## DAY 11 The Chinese Border

After breakfast we will visit a typical village of Shan minority, the Palaung. We will need to walk for about an hour on a track, slightly uphill, to Nam Kyan village where we will meet some of the locals and exchange greetings. We continue on towards the border, passing fields of peanuts and corn – opium poppies grew here in abundance until only recently. We will pass through a number of military checkpoints where we will need to be patient with the local administrators. It is actually an entertaining spot with all types of goods and food available for sale, truck drivers waiting for their approval to move on, and officials chewing beetlenut. We will reach the border late in the afternoon at Muse on the Burmese side, and clear customs, stepping into China and the border town of Ruli. **Accommodation: Jingcheng Dihai Hot Spring Hotel**

## DAY 12 Lianghe and Tengchong

Ruli is an old trading post that has a nice feel about it. Change is evident everywhere – a striking comparison to Burma. The buildings here are numerous and modern. The streets are wide with gutters and curbs, broad footpaths, and a bizarre column of palm trees make the city look like some lost oasis. There will be time this morning to look around the town before heading on towards Tengchong via Munschwe. Along the way we will visit the Dai Chieftan's House from the Qing dynasty, at Lianghe. Most area administration was left in the control of the local chief until 1949 who became the magistrate, lawmaker and sheriff. This chief was most generous to his guests with a well-appointed opium smoking room adjoining the main greeting hall. We push on for Tengchong, into the mountains and river valleys of southwest Yunnan. **Accommodation: Airport Sightseeing Hotel**

## DAY 13 Tengchong

Tengchong is one of the last outposts in south-west China. Close to the border with Burma, it has a reputation as a frontier town, a place for traders, merchants and, I suspect, the odd vagabond! Tengchong also saw a major battle between Nationalist Chinese troops and the Japanese invaders, resulting in the deaths of thousands and the complete destruction of the original town. The Chinese prevailed and we will visit the war cemetery and attached museum during our stay. Today we visit the walled village of Herschwin, which miraculously survived the carnage in 1945. The village is a wonderful collection of narrow alleyways, adjoining roves and cobblestone streets still relatively untouched by mass tourism. We will visit the library, built by overseas Chinese in early colonial style, and take an extended walk through the old village visiting various local houses. **Accommodation: Airport Sightseeing Hotel**



## DAY 14 Dali

We set off today along the Old Burma Road, winding up and down mountain passes and through forests of pine trees, rhododendrons and azaleas. As we head north-east for Dali we cross the Nujang River (the Salween in Burma) in the Goligo Valley and stop for lunch at a local restaurant. The drive is spectacular with soaring mountains either side of us and the valley floor busy with all sorts of agriculture, including, mangoes, bananas, sugar and lychees. The drive will take around seven hours but we will have plenty of time to stop for photographs or, hopefully, to chat with the local Dai and Lisu people. The women dress in their traditional clothes – very similar to the longyi we have seen in Burma. Here the farmhouses look prosperous and well-kept, with neat gardens and hedgerows. We arrive at Dali. **Accommodation: Landscape Hotel**

## DAY 15 Dali

Dali is home to the Bai people (over 1.3 million) and has a long history of civilisation dating back some 1,500 years. The Tang and Song dynasties made Dali the centre of politics, culture and economy for Yunnan before these responsibilities gradually moved to Kunming. The weather is spring-like most of the year and the city itself is set in a valley by the shores of Lake Erhai. This morning we will visit the ancient village of Xizhou, a collection of stone houses once owned by wealthy merchants. We will walk through the streets visiting various homes and the local market. We will continue to the Three Pillar Pagoda, the main tower standing ten stories high and built during the Tang dynasty some 1,500 years ago. Later, two more towers of lesser size were added. The architecture is unusual (it's called Dali style) and there is a museum with a fine collection of Buddha statues and carvings. This afternoon we will have an extended time in the old town of Dali, where ancient Chinese houses have been turned into shops, cafes and restaurants. The atmosphere is engaging and relaxed, the mountains soaring in the background. **Accommodation: Landscape Hotel**

## DAY 16 Lijiang

We depart Dali for the four hour drive to Lijiang over mountains and through river valleys, before arriving into Lijiang by lunchtime. Lijiang is an enchanting spot, set at the foot of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, an ancient village and a world heritage cultural site. On arrival we will take a walk through the old town visiting the Mu Chieftan's House, a lavish series of buildings hidden by a large gate and encompassing courtyards, gardens, reception halls and living quarters. The last chief made it to 1949 before the Maoist revolution swept through. It is more like a palace than a house, and a winding stone path leads to the top of a hill where a Taoist temple sits. The view is commanding, the rooftops of the old town spreading out below, mountains in the distance.

**Accommodation: Jin Fu Hotel**

## DAY 17 Lijiang

A full day of sightseeing around Lijiang as we head for the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, an enormous peak that reaches over 5,000 metres above sea level. The drive takes around 40 minutes past local villages of Yi and Naxi people. We continue to the small village of Yuhe where there is a magnificent temple to the Goddess of Mercy, dating back some 500 years. The temple is constructed from wood in a series of joints and angles with no nails used, and its walls are decorated with well-preserved frescos of the Goddess of Mercy. After lunch we will visit the Black Dragon Pond at the foot of Elephant Mountain. This natural spring was the original water supply of the old town of Lijiang and is known for its purity. The water from this spring still gushes through the old town in a series of open culverts and drains. This evening we will attend a performance of traditional songs and dance by the local Naxi Orchestra. **Accommodation: Jin Fu Hotel**

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## DAY 18 Tiger Leaping Gorge

We depart this morning from southern Yunnan for the road journey to Zhong Zien, Tibet. The drive will take around five hours and along the way we will see Yi people with their magnificent "kite" headdresses. We climb in altitude and the countryside is spectacular as we cut into river gorges and mountain peaks. We reach Tiger Leaping Gorge by lunchtime and take an extended walk along the side of the Yangtze River. The cliffs rise sheer from the riverbank as our path cuts its way along the side leading to Tiger Leaping Rock. Legend has it that a tiger, being chased by a hunter, traversed the river in two mighty leaps using the rock as a springboard. Further on from the gorge we notice the houses change to a more Tibetan style, with thick mud-brick walls, and three levels for livestock, people and storage. We reach Zhong Zien and our hotel for the evening at the foot of the Songstam Lama Temple. **Accommodation: Arro Khampa Hotel**



## DAY 19 Zhong Dien

The landscape of Zhong Zien has an immediate impact – broad, green fields interspersed with the yellow of rapeseed, and soaring mountain peaks once again. Here we are at 3,500 metres so the air is cool and clean. We start our touring with a visit to the Songstam Lama Monastery located on top of a small hill with panoramic views to the valley. The monastery was originally built in 1679 and is one of the largest Lama temples in Diqing Prefecture. There are over 700 Buddhist monks in the temple. We will spend as much time as we need to discover the nooks and crannies of the temple, chat with monks and enjoy the views. Later today we will visit a local Tibetan house and try some yak milk tea, fired tofu and barley powder. **Accommodation: Arro Khampa Hotel**

## DAY 20 Kunming

Fly to Kunming. FREE day to explore! **Accommodation: Grand Park Hotel**

## DAY 21 Departure

Farewell to Kunming and the Old Burma Road. Continue your travels or return home.

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