

Earthbound Expeditions

Myanmar Tour

10 days, from US$987 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
10 days	**15 people**	**Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos**

Myanmar Tour Overview

A ten-day tour of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, with nine nights spent exploring the country.

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Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Kalaw, Inle Lake, Yangon

Myanmar has a great deal to explore.

Myanmar is a new and emerging tourist destination in South East Asia. Known to many travellers as the Golden Land, it is rich in culture and natural attractions. There are many pagodas and temples, areas of natural beauty, archaeological sites, snow-capped mountains, dense forests with abundant plant and animal life, rivers and natural lakes, unspoilt beaches and archipelagos. Its 135 national ethnic groups, with their own colourful dress, customs and traditional arts and crafts, make it one of the most distinctive destinations in Asia. Visitors find Myanmar a beautiful and peaceful place, and its people very hospitable.

Our representative welcomes you on arrival in Yangon. You spend the trip exploring Myanmar: you get to know Yangon, see the pagodas and temples of Bagan, explore Mandalay, the last royal capital of Burma, and spend time at Inle Lake.

At the end of the 10-day tour, you return to Yangon for your flight home or to your next destination.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Yangon, Myanmar

On arrival in Yangon, your local tour guide meets you and takes you to your hotel to leave your luggage. You then start exploring Yangon's colonial city centre, including Maha Bandula Park and the Town Hall near the Sule Pagoda, which dates back over 2,000 years. Next, visit the Bogyoke Aung San Market (Scott Market) for souvenir shopping (it is closed on Mondays) and Chaukhtatgyi, a large reclining Buddha image. In the afternoon, visit the Shwedagon Pagoda, made famous by Rudyard Kipling and one of Myanmar's most sacred places. The large bell-shaped stupa is plated with gold, and its tip is set with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. After a photo stop at Karaweik Hall, a floating barge shaped like a hamsa bird on Kandawgyi Lake, you see the reflection of the Shwedagon Pagoda across the lake. We drive back to the hotel at sunset. Overnight at the hotel.

Altitude: 30 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Yangon Meals: None

Day 2

Fly from Yangon to Bagan

After an early breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the airport for your flight to Bagan. On arrival, begin your Bagan tour with a visit to the busy Nyaung U Market. You then visit some of Bagan's important archaeological sites, including the Shwezigon Pagoda with its bell-shaped stupa and the Htilominlo Temple with its delicate plaster carvings and glazed sandstone decoration. Continue to a lacquerware workshop to see a demonstration of this traditional craft by a skilled artisan. See the mural paintings, protected by UNESCO, at the Myinkaba Gubyaukgyi Temple, and watch the sunset from the Shwesandaw Pagoda. Overnight in Bagan.

Altitude: 50 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Bagan Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

Bagan sightseeing

Breakfast at the hotel. We visit the Nanpaya Temple, which is known for its fine masonry and interior design. It shows the strong Brahman influence on the Theravada Mon kings. Look out for the relief of the god Brahma: three of its faces can be seen, each with typical Mon features. These are said to represent King Manuha. The temple is sometimes called the Ganesh or Mahapeine Temple, after the elephant-headed Hindu god whose image once stood at the corners of its five diminishing rectangular terraces. In the afternoon, sightseeing continues at temples where many old murals and friezes can still be seen, as well as several old horoscopes painted to protect the building from damage. We then visit the Ananda Temple, built in 1091 and considered the masterpiece of Mon architecture. We board a local boat for a slow sunset cruise on the Irrawaddy River. From the boat you see the daily life of fishermen and riverside villagers and a different view of Bagan's temples. Overnight in Bagan.

Altitude: 50 m On foot: Easy walking, 3–4 hrs Night: Hotel, Bagan Meals: Breakfast

Day 4

Fly from Bagan to Mandalay

Breakfast at the hotel, then transfer to the airport for the flight to Mandalay. Mandalay was the last capital of the Myanmar kingdom before the British annexation in 1885. The kingdom lasted only a short time, but the name Mandalay became widely known through Rudyard Kipling. The royal palace walls, surrounded by a moat, are one of the main sights; the palace was rebuilt after 1945, following the Second World War. From Mandalay Airport, we drive for an hour straight to the city through countryside with varied vegetation. The first stop is the Mahamuni Buddha, which is covered in a thick layer of gold leaf. We continue to a craft workshop to see puppets, tapestries and gold leaf being made, then drive to the hotel to check in. After a short break in the afternoon, the sightseeing tour of Mandalay includes Shwenandaw Kyaung (Golden Palace Monastery), a wooden building built by the royal family, and the Kuthodaw Pagoda (known as the world's largest book), a golden stupa surrounded by 729 marble slabs engraved with Buddhist scriptures. Overnight in Mandalay.

Altitude: 80 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Mandalay Meals: Breakfast

Day 5

Mandalay, Ava, Amarapura and Sagaing

After breakfast at the hotel, we set off for Ava. We drive to the former capital of Amarapura and visit Mahagandayon Monastery, where more than a thousand monks live and study the Buddhist scriptures. If time allows, you can watch the monks take their last meal of the day in complete silence. We continue to Ava, the capital from the 14th to the 18th centuries, and visit by horse and carriage the old wooden Bagaya Monastery, the remains of the Royal Palace and fort, the Maha Aungmye Bonzan and the Htihlaing Shin Paya. Back in Mandalay, we end the day with a sunset boat trip around U Bein Bridge, the world's longest teak bridge. Overnight in Mandalay.

Altitude: 80 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Mandalay Meals: Breakfast

Day 6

Fly from Mandalay to Heho and drive to Kalaw

After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to Heho on the Shan plateau. On arrival, drive to Kalaw (39 km), which takes about an hour. Kalaw was a popular hill station during British rule and sits high on the western edge of the Shan Plateau. It is still a quiet place with an atmosphere of the colonial era. The small population is a mix of Shan, Indian Muslim, Bamar and Nepali people. We visit Thein Taung Paya, a temple on a hill overlooking the Thazi-Taunggyi Road; Aung Chan Tha Zedi, a stupa (Buddhist religious monument) covered in gold-coloured mosaics; and Nee Paya, west of the town, which has a gold-lacquered bamboo Buddha. Overnight at the hotel in Kalaw.

Altitude: 1,320 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kalaw Meals: Breakfast

Day 7

Drive from Kalaw to Inle Lake and boat across the lake

After breakfast at the hotel, we drive to Inle Lake. We have a relaxed morning as we descend into the Inle basin and then take a long-tail boat across the lake to our hotel on the water. In the afternoon, we visit villages and see a wide range of traditional handicrafts. You see the distinctive way local people row their boats, the fishermen's own style of fishing, floating farms and gardens, and a handloom weaving workshop with its own showroom. You also visit the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, which houses the five most revered Buddha images in southern Shan State. Overnight at the hotel at Inle Lake.

Altitude: 880 m On foot: Easy walking, 1–2 hrs Night: Hotel, Inle Lake Meals: Breakfast

Day 8

Inle Lake and Indein

After breakfast at the hotel, visit the floating market, which rotates between locations over a 5-day cycle and is a good place to see the daily life and activities of the local ethnic minorities. We continue by motorboat to the Indein pagoda complex in the south-west of the lake. The boat leaves the lake and follows a narrow canal through natural surroundings to a small Pa-O village. From the village, we follow an old covered walkway to a 13th-century monastery and the ruins of hundreds of ancient pagodas, some hidden in the vegetation. The main stupa area on the hilltop has views over the surrounding mountains and down to the valley and the lake in the distance. Overnight at the hotel at Inle Lake.

Altitude: 880 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Inle Lake Meals: Breakfast

Day 9

Fly from Inle Lake to Yangon

Breakfast at the hotel, then transfer to the airport for the domestic flight to Yangon. Visit the Botahtaung Pagoda on the bank of the Yangon River. It has a typical gilded dome that tapers to the top and is capped by a symbolic fan-shaped spire. Unlike many pagodas (known as zedi in Myanmar), Botahtaung is hollow inside, so visitors can walk through to see its most important feature: a glass case containing a sacred hair relic of the Buddha. Finish the day with a walk through Chinatown and a visit to Yangon's oldest Chinese temple, Kheng Hock Keong. Overnight at the hotel.

Altitude: 30 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Yangon Meals: Breakfast

Day 10

Departure from Yangon

Breakfast at the hotel, then transfer to Yangon International Airport for your international departure flight. End of our services.

Altitude: 30 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- 9 nights' accommodation in twin-share rooms with daily breakfast
- English-speaking local guides, with a different guide at each site
- Porter fees at the airport
- All transfers and excursions in private air-conditioned vehicles with drivers
- Sunset boat trip in Bagan
- Horse cart in Ava
- Sunset boat trip at U Bein Bridge
- Private motorboat for excursions on Inle Lake

- Entrance fees for the visits mentioned in the programme

Not included

- International flights to and from Yangon
- Domestic flights: Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Heho and Yangon
- Meals not mentioned (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner)
- Visa arrangements for Myanmar
- Visits not mentioned in the programme
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Tips and porters at hotels
- Any other items not mentioned
- International departure airport tax in Yangon (currently USD 10 per person)

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/10-days-myanmar-tour