



Burma Beckons



A visit to Burma allows you to step back in time and soak up the refreshingly unspoilt delights this country has to offer. Closed for many years, Burma is waiting to be discovered with its plethora of temples, stunning landscapes and overwhelmingly friendly and hospitable people. Silk Steps has been offering tailor-made travel to Burma since 1995 and as a result has built up a strong relationship with our partners on the ground who truly welcome visitors from the UK.

Flights to and from Burma

There are no direct flights to Burma. However, the country can be accessed from various cities around Asia. Thai Airways, Malaysian and Singapore Airlines all have good connections in and out of Rangoon. In addition you can connect easily into Rangoon from Bangkok using airlines such as British Airways, Eva Air, Emirates or Qatar on the longhaul sectors. To review the airlines, please visit www.airlinequality.com

Best time to go

The ideal time to visit Burma is during the dry season which tends to be between November and May. During our summer months certain regions of the country can be very wet but this can be avoided as Burma is a vast country.

Should you go?

In her recent BBC Reith Lectures, the country's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi suggests people should visit Burma but that they should avoid hotels owned by the military junta and its 'cronies'. With this in mind, Silk Steps does not use government establishments, airlines and companies and instead works with organisations that support the local communities wherever possible.

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Highlights of Burma tour (8 days)

Rangoon – Pagan – Mandalay – Inle Lake - Rangoon



Burma is an enigmatic land filled with glittering pagodas, colonial architecture, scenic natural landscapes and welcoming people. With this suggested itinerary we have combined the best sites, excursions and journeys into an eight-day tour to offer an introduction to a country that is sure to leave a lasting memory and entice you to return. Rangoon is your introduction to Burma, a city where the past and present is clearly on display. The sparkling Shwedagon Pagoda cannot be missed. And to really “feel” Rangoon, you will visit the teashops that are integral to the life of the Burmese. Also

included are less-visited temples and oriental bazaars.

Your next destination is historic Pagan, a rural village area in central Burma that is home to the most concentrated landscape of temples anywhere in the world. Stare in awe at the sheer majesty with the thousands of pagodas and stupas sprawled across the wide expanse of plains. Enjoy the glorious view of hues of gold reflecting off the gilded domes as you ride on horse-driven carriages or coast through the air in a hot-air balloon.

More iconic sights and culture await in the romantically named Mandalay, another destination with historical significance. Visiting the city and the surrounding towns of Ava, Sagaing and Amarapura you will be engulfed in the rich history of the former royal capitals. Interact with local monks and nuns, walk across the world's longest teak bridge and witness the incredible skills of Mandalay's craftsmen.

After your historical immersion in Myanmar, relax and soak up Burma's natural beauty with a visit to Inle Lake. Spend your days cruising the placid waters, visiting craft villages and watching the unique leg-rowing fishermen as they cast their nets.

Cost per person based on a minimum of 2 people travelling:

Standard hotels £798.00

Superior hotels £896.00

Deluxe hotels £1224.00

Cruise between Mandalay and Pagan

Cruise between two of Burma's most historic cities on a relaxing two-day journey aboard the RV Paukan, a boutique hotel on the river. Departing from Mandalay en route to the ancient capital of Pagan, the boat drifts along the majestic Irrawaddy River affording unforgettable views and providing chances to visit small villages untouched by the modern world. This cruise is sure to be a highlight of any tour of Burma. Your cruise begins in the cultural capital, Mandalay. As soon as you step foot aboard the elegant RV Paukan you will be greeted with a sense of serenity and relaxation. Sip a refreshing cocktail as the boat casts off along the mighty Irrawaddy River.

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EXPLORE AND EXPERIENCE



The first day of this Myanmar tour is spent cruising downstream on one of the greatest rivers on earth. The ever-changing scenery is filled with views of distant mountains, temple-dotted riverbanks and small fishing boats. A stop will be made at Yandabo where you will meet the friendly locals and watch them create traditional pottery using age-old methods handed down through generations. As night falls, the boat will moor near the river bank. Under the evening sky, the Irrawaddy is illuminated by the moon and stars for a mystical atmosphere unlike any other you will experience on your tour of

Burma.

Awaken in the morning to witness the villages coming to life as the boat casts off for the cruise down river. Arriving in Pagan late morning, you will be greeted and transferred to your hotel for the continuation of your tour.

While on board, you will be treated to unparalleled service. The ship's crew exude Burmese warmth and hospitality, a team of professional chefs cooks fantastic meals and well-appointed cabins are a welcoming retreat at the end of the day.

As part of a longer package tour or as a quick add-on to a Rangoon city break, the RV Pauken cruise from Mandalay to Bagan is one experience that should not be missed.

The Lost City of Mrauk U (5 days)

Mrauk U was once an important trading post with links to Portugal, Holland, Arabia, Persia and India. Almost forgotten, you'll have the chance to rediscover this town and see these multi-national influences. Head out from Yangon to Sittwe, capital of Rakhine State. It is more than just a convenient stop to Mrauk U, it is a lively town in itself and will reward you with visions of a colourful hinterland seaport with an abundance of fish and crops. A visit to the Cultural Museum will bring the town's proud heritage to life. From here, cruise upstream along the Kaladan River on a private boat, through stunning landscapes and rustic farmland. You will arrive at Mrauk U by midday. Witness the former grandeur of this ancient town, famed as Myanmar's second eminent temple site after Pagan. The ancient city is now deserted but the ruined temples form an impressive and extensive stone record of a kingdom once one of the most important and powerful in the Indian Ocean. Unleash the explorer in you as you head out and explore the labyrinth of maze-like tunnels at Shitthaung Temple.

Further your understanding of Mrauk U's history even more by exploring the unique stone carvings in the multi-spire Andawthein Ordination Hall, the circular Ratanabon Pagoda, vaulted passages with impressive stone sculptures in the huge fortress-like temple of Dukkhanthein and the first erected pagoda at Laymyetnha.

Cost per person based on a minimum of 2 people travelling:

Standard hotels £1024.00

Deluxe hotels £1150.00

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Extend your stay at Ngapali Beach



South East Asia has no shortage of exotic beaches but it is in Burma that you will find some of the region's most idyllic. Situated near Thandwe in Rakhine (Arakan) State, Ngapali is one of Burma's best-known beaches yet it is also one of Asia's least visited. Fringed by the cobalt blue waters of the Bay of Bengal, Ngapali is made up of a series of pristine beaches interspersed with quaint fishing villages and tall palm trees. With only a handful of resorts and dining establishments, Ngapali exudes a laid back, unassuming charm quite unlike the frenetic buzz that often characterises other well-known beaches in the region.

Ngapali Beach is highly recommended for those seeking a break in a peaceful beach location surrounded by welcoming Burmese hospitality and unspoiled coastal scenery.

THANDE BEACH RESORT

Set in a beautifully landscaped setting of plants trees and flowers, each of the 38 deluxe bungalows is guaranteed a view of the peaceful gardens and of the Bay of Bengal. Blending Burmese hospitality with the area's natural and peaceful environment, guests will find Thande Beach Hotel a haven of relaxation and beach side delights.

AMAZING NGAPALI RESORT

The Amazing Ngapali Resort and Spa is a bungalow style resort located directly on the beach and features 24 deluxe rooms, 10 studio suites and three stunning suites, which are located on the beachfront. All the rooms are elegantly decorated in a modern Oriental style.

SANDOWAY RESORT

The Sandoway offers several different room types spread amid expansive grounds and with some boasting beachfront views. The villas and cottages are designed in a traditional South East Asian style incorporating elements such as various kinds of wood, stone carving and marble while also featuring modern amenities. The atmosphere is such that guests truly feel nestled away from the outside world.

We are not limited to what is featured in our newsletter, so please do contact us if you want a unique tailor-made itinerary to this extraordinary country.