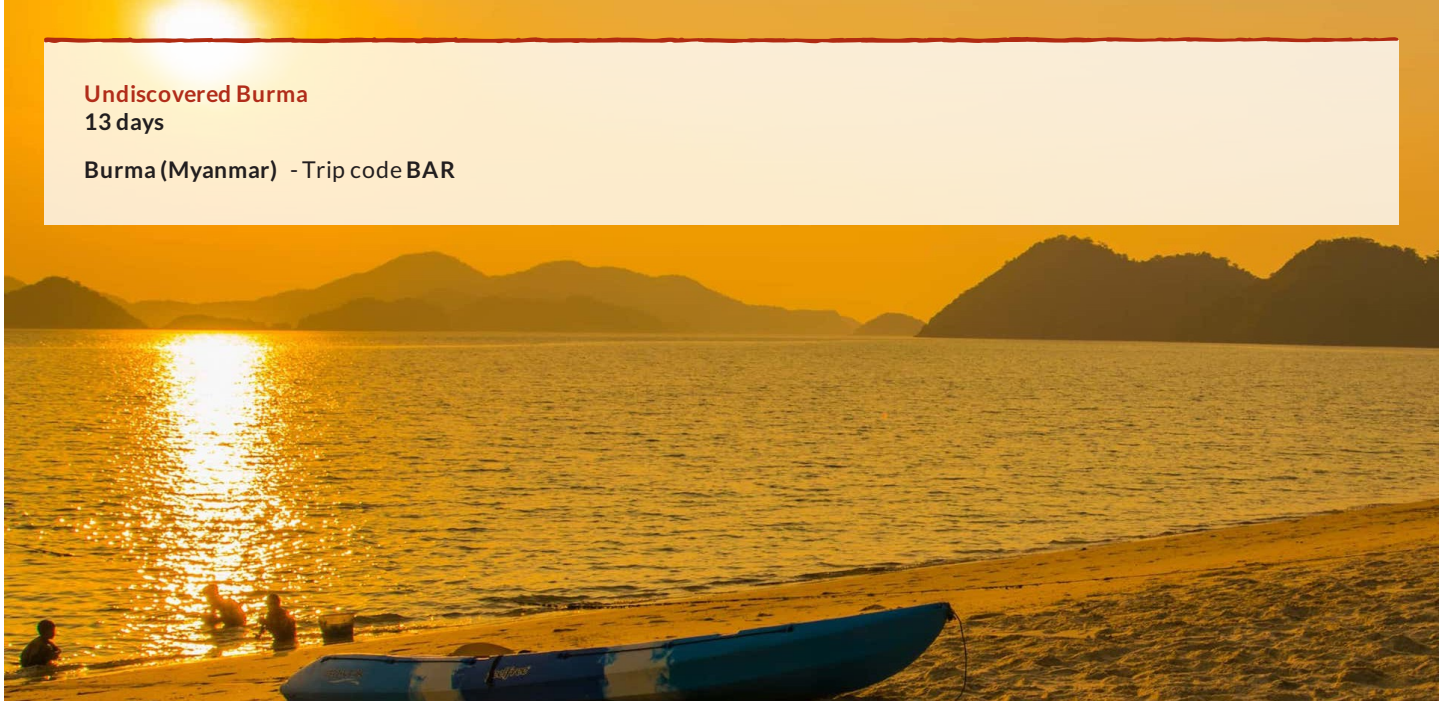


EXPLORE!

Undiscovered Burma

13 days

Burma (Myanmar) - Trip code BAR



Undiscovered Burma

Starting in the bustling metropolis of Rangoon, we soon escape the main tourist trail as we set off on an exploratory tour of the far south of Burma. Venturing into an area that few tourists have been before, we visit fading colonial towns, cruise amongst tropical islands, encounter traditional Burmese fisherman and camp overnight on pristine white sand beaches. There are opportunities to snorkel, kayak and sample fresh seafood caught straight from the ocean the very same day. It is also possible to add on a 3 day extension to the magnificent and vast temple plains of Bagan. Please see trip code BARP for more details.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Rangoon** - Marvel at the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda, perhaps the most revered temple in all of Asia.
- ★ **Kyaiktiyo** - Travel up Mount Kyaiktiyo to witness the sun set over the mystical Golden Rock.
- ★ **Myeik** - Explore local markets and visit a shipyard for the chance to witness traditional shipbuilding methods.
- ★ **Mergui Archipelago** - Camp overnight on the beach of an uninhabited island and snorkel in tropical waters

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Rangoon

Upon arrival in Rangoon, the rest of the day is free to spend at leisure and to make your first impressions of this interesting city.



Accommodation: Panda Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore the city of Rangoon; sunset at Shwedagon Pagoda

Today we take a walking tour of Rangoon. Starting with a stroll along the banks of Kandawgyi Lake in the centre of the city we continue on to Botataung Pagoda. This pagoda is unique in that it is hollow - as we walk through we can see many ancient relics and artefacts displayed in glass cases. Later on we walk along Pansodan Street through downtown Rangoon, taking in the rich colonial architecture and bustling street markets. In the afternoon we make our way to the Chaukhtatgyi Paya, home to a giant 70 metre long reclining Buddha. The highlight of the day, though, is a visit to the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda, the most revered Buddhist temple in Burma, whose golden stupa dominates the city skyline making it the ideal spot from which to watch the sunset.



Accommodation: Panda Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Drive to Kyaikhtiyo via Bago. Visit Golden Rock for sunset

Leaving Rangoon behind we drive to the town of Bago. Founded in 573AD, it is home to a number of sacred shrines and pagodas, including the Shwemawdaw Paya (the Golden God Temple) the tallest pagoda in the country. We visit the pagoda, as well as the Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha (the second largest in the world) and the Kyaik Pun Pagoda. In the afternoon we continue our drive to the foot of Mount Kyaikhtiyo, or Kin Pun 'base camp'. Upon arrival we continue in an open truck up a steep 11 kilometre track to Yathetaung. From here we walk for approximately 45 minutes to the mystical and highly revered Mount Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in time for sunset. Also known as Golden Rock, this pagoda is a large boulder precariously balanced on the edge of a cliff near the top of the mountain, supposedly held in place by a hair of the Buddha.



Accommodation: Mountain Top Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Travel overland to Mawlamyine, explore hidden caves on foot and by canoe

This morning we head for Hpa An, a town that enjoys a glorious location surrounded by limestone cliffs, lakes and mountains. Hpa An is known for its collection of caves hidden in the hillsides, the centre piece of which being Kawgon cave, or the 'Cave of ten thousand Buddhas'. We make our way on foot through the caves and past beautiful Buddha murals, before boarding a small wooden canoe where float back out into the sunshine. We then continue onto Mawlamyine, where the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.



Accommodation: Attran Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Exploring Mawlamyine, the old colonial capital.

The former capital of British Burma, Mawlamyine today is the capital of Mon State and is a mixture of wide leafy boulevards and colonial-inspired architecture. This morning we set off to explore the nearby Bilu Island, an area known for its small villages where you can watch the local craftsman at work. We then head back to the city to visit some of the Mawlamyine's most beautiful pagodas, along with its first Baptist Church. We end the day watching the sunset from the well-positioned Kyaikthanlan Pagoda, the very place which served as inspiration for one of Rudyard Kipling's most famous poems - Mandalay.



Accommodation: Attran Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Scenic drive to Dawei, visiting the Burmese end of the Death Railway en route

Today will be a long but rewarding day, with a total driving time of approximately eight hours on roads which will be bumpy and unsurfaced on occasion. We will stop at Thanbyuzayet Station, known to be the western terminus of the infamous Death Railway that was built to connect British Burma with Siam during the Second World War. Much of the railway on the Burmese side of the border has now been reclaimed by jungle, but the Thanbyuzayet terminus remains, with a well-kept Allied War Memorial containing the grave stones of 3512 POW's that tragically died during its construction. We continue south, with our road winding its way through the lush forested Southern Plateau, which acts as a natural divide between Tanintharyi State and Mon State. Stopping in the town of Ye for lunch, we try some traditional Burmese dishes at a local restaurant. After lunch, we continue our drive onto the small town of Dawei.



Accommodation: Golden Guest Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Discover the small town of Dawei on foot.

Previously known as Tavoy under colonial rule, Dawei was one of the first cities settled by the British after the first of three Anglo-Burmese wars, and as a result the town is rich in history and colonial architecture. We set off on foot to explore the downtown area where most of the grand old buildings stand, resplendent in their fading elegance. We then continue on to the busy market where locals complete their daily shop, purchasing fresh fruit, vegetables, and locally caught fish. It is a town that receives very few tourists, so we are likely to find ourselves as a local tourist attraction! The remainder of the afternoon is free to spend at leisure, soaking up the unique atmosphere of this historic town.



Accommodation: Golden Guest Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Fly to Myeik and explore the Southern-most frontier of Burma

We make our way to the airport to fly to the port town of Myeik, that is perhaps even further off the tourist trail. Known as 'Beik' by its locals, it is located in the far south of the country, on a small peninsular that juts out into the Andaman Sea. The charming town is dotted with gleaming pagodas, Buddhist temples and beautiful wooden houses from its historic days of being a significant fishing port. Myeik is also famous for the Burmese pearls harvested by the Moken people, otherwise known as the Sea Gypsies that inhabit some of the islands that lie off the coast of Myeik. Here we learn about the harvesting of bird nests to make bird nest soup, considered a delicacy in many parts of China and believed to have wonderful health benefits. The swiftlets make their nests in empty buildings, and in some buildings loudspeakers, or tweeters as they are commonly known, have been installed to try and entice the birds in to build their nests. We also plan to visit a working boatyard, where fishing vessels are brought in for repair, and new teak vessels are built. There is no modern equipment used, all of the repairs are done by hand using traditional methods passed down from generation to generation. This evening we set off to Thain Taw Gyi Lan, an area that is full of beautiful old monasteries where we hope to encounter local Buddhist monks collecting alms. Our day's end is atop Phayargyi Pagoda for sunset, where we can enjoy vast panoramic views of the surrounding islands as the sun dips into the Andaman Sea.



Accommodation: Eain Taw Phyu Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Morning speedboat to the islands of the Mergui Archipelago, visiting an inhabited island en-route. Free afternoon

The next three days will be a true adventure as we cruise into the stunningly beautiful Mergui Archipelago, an area almost entirely undiscovered by tourism. We start our journey with a three hour cruise from the port town of Myeik, through the tropical turquoise waters of the Andaman Sea and onto the Mergui Archipelago. We plan to base ourselves on Nat Thamee Yedwin Island, an uninhabited island made up from a lush jungle interior encapsulated by white sandy beaches and rocky outcrops. We will camp on the beach where we will sleep under canvas, or if it is a clear night, you may wish to sleep under the stars. The camp will have toilets and washing facilities, as well as a crew to cook our meals for the next two nights. Whilst we will aim to have exclusive use of the camp and for the majority of departures this should be the case, the camp is open and may accommodate a couple of intrepid backpackers that occasionally make it out to the Archipelago.



Accommodation: Nat Thamee Yed Win Island Beach Camping (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Full day swimming and snorkelling in the tropical waters of the Andaman Sea

We wake this morning to the sounds of the waves gently lapping against our own beach. After enjoying a freshly cooked breakfast we leave the shores of our island to explore our surroundings. The exact itinerary has not been planned in advance and will be decided on the day dependant on local conditions, and of course our local guide's knowledge and intuition. We will explore some of the colourful reefs that lie in the shallow waters of the nearby islands, and we will aim to make two or three stops today with plenty of time for snorkelling the warm tropical waters, taking in the abundantly beautiful marine life. Lunch will be taken on the deserted beach of one of the islands, a simple affair of rice, Burmese curry, vegetables and fish, prepared by the chef that morning. Snorkelling equipment including masks, snorkels and flippers are all provided, as well as life jackets should you wish for one, but you will need to bring your own towel.



Accommodation: Nat Thamee Yed Win Island Beach Camping (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Morning learning about local fishing methods, afternoon speedboat back to Myeik.

If possible, we plan to visit one of the local fishing boats this morning that frequent the area. The boats used by the fisherman here are traditional in construction and generally made from teak wood. They will fish for a variety of species, but a lot of the vessels we see will be specifically looking to catch squid. These boats are easily recognisable as they have large outrigger lined with huge

bright lightbulbs, and several boats will often congregate together. The fishing is done at night when the lights are turned on to attract the squid to the surface. We will have a chance to board and meet the fisherman, learning about some of the techniques employed with this method of fishing, along with a tour of the vessel and the chance to buy some produce which we can cook for lunch - from ocean to plate in just a few hours! After lunch we visit a small waterfall before making our way back across the Andaman Sea to the relative civilisation of Myeik.



Accommodation: Eain Taw Phyu Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 12 - Fly to Rangoon, boat to Twante and explore by Trishaw

Today we fly back to Rangoon, and after dropping our bags at the hotel, we make our way by boat the town of Twante. This historic town sits astride of Burma's two great rivers, the Irrawady and Yangon River, and a canal was built here by the British to connect the two for easy access to the Irrawady Delta. Twante is known for its handicrafts and pottery work, with many local artisans residing here. We spend time admiring the intricate works before exploring the rest of Twante by traditional Burmese 'Trishaws'. We return to Rangoon late in the afternoon, where it may be possible to catch our last glimpse of the Schwedagon Pagoda as the sun sets on our Burmese adventure.



Accommodation: Panda Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



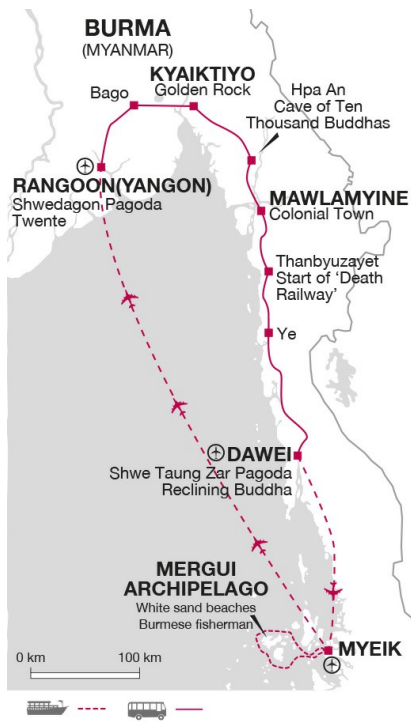
Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Rangoon

The trip ends after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

Our Undiscovered Burma tour visits some remote areas of Burma that have only recently opened up to tourism, so you will be travelling to places few other tourists have been before. This trip initially ran as a 'recce tour', where a group of our most intrepid customers visited this area for the first time in early 2016. We used their advice to hone the trip and put together this new itinerary. It is fair to say that this tour is part-designed by the very people who travel regularly on our trips.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 12
Lunch: 3
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Ferry
Flight



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

2 nights simple camping
10 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Holidays to Burma (Myanmar)

Climate

Burma is a tropical country and has three seasons. Temperature and rainfall varies across the country; Rangoon, Bagan and coastal areas tend to have higher temperatures and rainfall. Cool season = October to February with average temperatures from 18-24C; at higher altitudes (Inle Lake, Kalaw) the temperature is slightly cooler and temperatures can drop down to about zero at night. Hot season = March to mid-May 25-38C; particularly hot in Bagan and Rangoon. Rainy (Southwest Monsoon) = mid-May to September 23-33C; practically all of the country's rain falls in this period.

Time difference to GMT

+6

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Theravada Buddhism, Hinduism

Language

Burmese

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Rangoon - Scott Market and sunset visit to Shwedagon Pagoda US\$ 4 transfer plus US\$ 5 entrance fees

Clothing

You will need loose fitting, comfortable clothes for hot, humid conditions. Sunhat, sunglasses, long trousers and long sleeved shirt essential for protection from the sun. You may wish to bring swimwear for your time in the Mergui Archipelago. Please dress respectfully when visiting temples and religious sites, covering your torso, shoulders and legs to below the knee and easily removable footwear for convenience as you can only enter sacred sites barefoot. In general, as Burma is a traditional, conservative and largely Buddhist culture we recommend you do not wear revealing clothing.

Footwear

Lightweight walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, trainers and/or sandals for travelling.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Sleeping bag - mats and bedding will be provided whilst camping, but you may wish to bring your own sleeping bag/leeping sheet for your own comfort. Mobile phones: Your mobile will not work in Burma. It is possible to buy a local SIM card for \$5 in order to make/receive international calls, as long as your phone is un-locked. SMS messaging may not possible. WiFi is available in most hotels. Torch/Batteries/Bulb: A small torch is recommended for travel in Burma. Street lighting in both cities and rural areas can be very poor so a torch is useful to help light your way while out at night. Additionally power cuts can occur from time to time, particularly in rural areas. Remember to bring some spare batteries.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly you should allow approximately US \$40 for this purpose.

Local fees

Cameras and video-cameras are permitted in Thailand and Burma for which some sites charge a small fee. Restrictions on photography include military facilities and any structure considered strategic (including bridges and train stations though this last may be loosely enforced).

Country Information

Holidays to Burma (Myanmar)

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£3

Dinner price

£5

Beer price

£1.8

Water price

£0.7

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Kyat.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in U.S. Dollars cash, larger denominations tend to get better exchange rate. NB - PLEASE ONLY BRING NEW U.S. DOLLAR BILLS (BIG HEADS INSTEAD OF SMALL) AND THEY SHOULD BE NEW AND IN A PRISTINE STATE. ANY OLD, TORN OR MARKED NOTES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. U.S. Dollar bills with the series CB will not be accepted for exchange.

Where To Exchange

The official rate is far different from the market rate, we recommend you consult your tour leader for advice regarding the best place to exchange. The exchange booth at airport offers a very poor rate so we recommend you wait until getting into town (taxis accept dollars if agreed beforehand).

ATM Availability

ATMs are becoming more widely available and some hotels may have them, including the Panda Hotel in Yangon. You are more likely to find them in the larger cities, but they are now starting to appear in some of the smaller towns and villages. Please be aware that they are prone to occasional breakdowns so you would be wise to top up your cash before it runs out completely.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are becoming more widely accepted but you should not rely on them. The places where you are most likely to be able to use them are in the cities of Yangon and Mandalay and there may be a charge.

Travellers Cheques

Not accepted.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Ferry, Flight

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Burma: An e-visa is required to enter Burma and must be arranged prior to travel through the following website: <http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/>. Visas are valid for 90 days from issue and allow a 28-day, single-entry visit. \lang1033. \lang20572

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

Holidays to Burma (Myanmar)

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diptheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Following the advice given by the Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, we strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellent as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
