

# EXPLORE!



## Rivers, Roads and Rail to Rangoon 11 days

Burma (Myanmar), Thailand - Trip code QBU

## Rivers, Roads and Rail to Rangoon

This exciting journey takes us from relaxed northern Thailand, to the beautiful and serene Inle Lake, across the central plains of Burma to the temples of Bagan, before ending in the old capital of Rangoon. We make use of Burma's public transport network, with the chance to engage with locals on a bus ride to Bagan, and an opportunity to travel between Mandalay and Rangoon on a colonial railway line originally built by the British. Also included is a leisurely two-day river cruise along Burma's biggest waterway, the Irrawaddy. It's an adventurous trip that, in just 11 days, allows us to take in Burma's major highlights and offers us the chance to interact with its warm and welcoming inhabitants.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Chiang Mai** - Time to explore the 'Rose of the North' and the majestic Doi Suthep temple.
- ★ **Inle Lake** - Discover the unique 'one-legged' rowing style of the local fisherman on the serene waters of Inle Lake.
- ★ **Bagan** - Marvel at the thousand-year old temples that stretch across the vast plains of Bagan, as far as the eye can see.
- ★ **Irrawaddy River** - Enjoy a scenic and peaceful cruise along the Irrawaddy River en-route to Mandalay.
- ★ **Rangoon** - Stare in awe at the Shwedagon Pagoda, with the beautiful golden stupa being one of the most revered in all of Asia.

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

**TRIP PACE:****Full on**

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

**GROUP SIZE:****10 - 16**

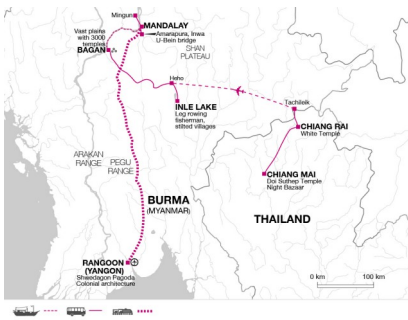
Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

## Itinerary

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

## Tourism in Burma

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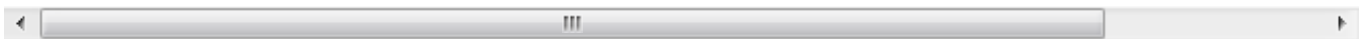
Sadly, recent events surrounding the Rohingya minority have seen Burma thrust into the international spotlight again. The areas of unrest are concentrated within the north of Rakhine state, far away from any location our itineraries visit. We actively monitor the situation on the ground and closely follow the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

We also remain acutely aware of our ethical responsibility; and in order to ensure that the local communities benefit the most from our trips, we use a privately-owned Burmese local ground agent for all of our local services. Our itineraries have been carefully planned to limit the use of services owned by, or affiliated with, the government. This ensures that the Burmese people benefit as much as possible from our tours.

We strongly believe that we contribute positively to the local economy, whilst providing our customers with the privilege of direct and genuine interaction with the local people, as well as an insight into the country's unique culture and heritage.

## Why book this trip

This is a fast paced tour with plenty of free time so you can make the most of your trip, allowing you to make the choice to either explore as much as you want, or perhaps to relax and soak up the atmosphere if you prefer. There will be some long but rewarding journeys, allowing us to see much of Burma and its main highlights in under two weeks. In order to offer the most competitive prices, this tour uses our 'simple' range of accommodation - clean and comfortable 'no frills' hotels and guesthouses that offer an authentic and often, locally-run experience.



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 10



## Transport

Boat  
Public Bus  
Train



## Trip staff

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

# Trip information

## Country information

### 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

### Thailand

#### Climate

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>.

#### Time difference to GMT

+7

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Buddhism

## Language

Thai

# Budgeting and packing

## Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Chiang Mai - Visit to Doi Suthep Temple - 800 Thai Baht

Inle Lake - Inle Village visit - 8,800 Burmese Kyat

Bagan - Afternoon Temple tour including sunset - 15,400 Burmese Kyat

Mandalay - Tour of Amarapura, Inwa and Sagaing - 53,900 Burmese Kyat

## 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.

Warm weather clothing is suitable for Rangoon, Mandalay and Bagan. The Shan highlands and Inle Lake are cooler and in the winter season and temperatures may reach near zero at night, with the mornings often remaining cold. 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

Mobile phones: Mobile coverage in Burma is improving but be aware that your mobile may not work. It is possible to buy a local SIM card for around \$4 in order to make/receive international calls, as long as your phone is un-locked. SMS messaging may not be 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.

Sleeping bag: The cabins on the overnight train can get cool at night, so a sleeping bag or cotton/linen liner is recommended for your comfort.

## 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\$ 35 for this purpose.

### Local fees

Cameras and video-cameras are permitted in 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

## 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.

## Thailand

### 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.

#### Dinner price

£4.00 - 8.00

#### Beer price

£1.5

**Water price**

£0.5

## Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Thai Baht

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US\$.

**Where To Exchange**

Most major towns and on the islands - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Major stores and restaurants.

**Travellers Cheques**

Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Boat, Public Bus, Train

## 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Thailand: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens for a stay of less than 30 days. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry to Thailand. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

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. You should select Tachliak land border as your port of entry

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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](http://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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## 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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## Burma (Myanmar)

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diphtheria. 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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## Thailand

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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