

## The Women's Travel Group

### Journey to Golden Burma (Myanmar)

#### Laos – Pre Tour -- Inle Lake Extension

Main Tour - Departure date - December 1, 2020

#### LAOS PRE-TOUR

##### VIENTIANE – LUANG PRABANG

##### DEPARTURE – NOVEMBER 25, 2020

Myanmar was closed to most tourists until recently. This isolation left the country unspoiled by outsiders, construction, and Western media. In this trip we combine two of the most 'original' SE Asian countries: Myanmar and Laos. It is a perfect region to experience the real SE Asia: its golden temples, candle lit monasteries, and untouched villages with hand made crafts. Whether you walk with monks, merchants or mothers, you will find friendly locals excited that you are visiting. Both are set against green tropical foothills feeding lakes and rivers. Laos is also less visited; Laos was a French colony. A legacy is left in food and colonial buildings but not in its many remote villages.

We can promise you an experience and into ancient cultures and out of your bubble.

#### **Pre Day 1 - November 25, Wednesday: Depart your Hometown**

Board your jet bound for Asia. Cross the International Date Line Enroute.

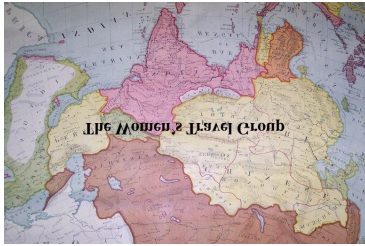
#### **Day 2 - November 26, Thursday: Arrive Vientiane**

Most flights will arrive late this evening. You will be met at the airport and escorted to your hotel. Should you require a private transfer there will be an additional charge.

#### **Day 3 - November 27, Friday: Vientiane**

We'll awaken early this morning due to the time difference. After breakfast we'll start our Vientiane adventure. First, we'll visit the morning market Talat Sao, which give us a taste of daily life. Visit the House of the Emerald Buddha, Haw Phra, so named because for 200 years it housed the Emerald Buddha that is Thailand's most revered Buddha image. Wat Si Saket, built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the oldest monastery still in its original form.

It has over 10,000 Buddha images. Continue to the Great Sacred Stupa (Pha That Luang), a national symbol of Laos. We'll enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.



After lunch we'll drive a short distance south of the city to visit Cultural Park and Friendship Bridge. Return to the hotel to rest before our Welcome dinner.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Welcome Dinner**

#### **Day 4 – November 28, Saturday: Vientiane / Luang Prabang**

Our 50 min. flight departs at 09:10 and arrives Luang Prabang at 10:00 am.

We will be met on arrival by our local English-speaking guide and taken to our hotel for check-in. Then we're out for lunch and a walking tour of the town. Later this afternoon we visit Wat Xieng Thong, the Royal Temple. Both lunch and dinner are in local restaurants

#### **Victoria Xiengthong Palace**

*Located in the heart of Luang Prabang, surrounded by the golden spires of the town's famous Buddhist temples is Victoria Xiengthong Palace, the last residence of the Laos Royal Family. This beautiful boutique property has been lovingly restored to its former glory, and once more sits proudly on the banks of the Mekong River. The 26 elegantly appointed rooms and suites capture the essence of Laos' unique culture and style, with local materials and fabrics used throughout. Look out upon the majestic Wat Xiengthong – the town's most famous temple, or simply sit back and soak up the ambience of this UNESCO protected palace, the perfect place to discover the wonder and charm of Luang Prabang – the Jewel of Indochina.*

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

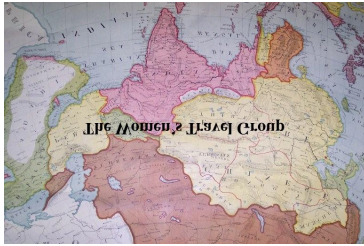
#### **Day 5 – November 29, Sunday: Luang Prabang**

Do you wish to join local people in the daily morning ritual of alms-giving? The saffron-robed monks with their black bowls come by in lines to collect the morning's offerings. It is an unforgettable experience. Remember not to touch the monk as you place your gift in the bowl. And do not look straight into his face. We'll provide bowls of hot sticky rice and you can also give local currency, but it must be new.

Later we'll visit a museum to get an idea of the ethnic groups found in Laos, before continuing to a Hmong hill village. Our walk through the village gives us a chance to stop and meet local families. Our visit is also a means of income for the residents.

We'll visit a local family for lunch, which gives us insight into Hmong life.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



**Day 6 – November 30, Monday: Luang Prabang**

Full-day boat trip on the mighty Mekong River to visit the Pak Ou Caves, housing thousands of gilded and wooden Buddha statues of varying sizes. After lunch in a local restaurant, we drive back and visit the riverside village of Ban Phanom, where rice wine is locally distilled and traditional Laotian textiles are woven on ancient wooden looms. Tonight's dinner features a Baci ceremony, Laotian dance and delicious food!

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Farewell Dinner**

**Day 7 – December 01, Tuesday: Luang Prabang / Yangon, Burma (Myanmar)**

Transfer to the airport for our flight to Yangon, Burma (Myanmar)

**Meals included: Breakfast**

## Journey to Golden Burma (Myanmar)

**MAIN TOUR 9 Nights:** Yangon - Bagan - Mandalay -

**Day 1 December 1, Tuesday: Depart your Home**

Depart from North America for Asia. Cross the International Date Line. We do all possible to arrange flights with other tour members. Please call us for flight information, we do it all for your ease and comfort.

**Day 2 December 2, Wednesday: Arrive Yangon**

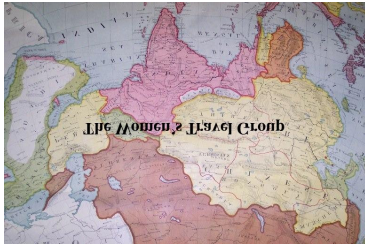
On arrival in Yangon we will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel.

*For mid afternoon arrivals --- meet tonight for a light dinner with our guide.*

**Sule Shangri-La Yangon**

*Elegant piano music fills the air as you step into the lobby of Sule Shangri-La, Yangon, which lies at the heart of one of Southeast Asia's exciting cities. Sule Shangri-La, Yangon is conveniently located in downtown Yangon near major tourist attractions, such as the Bogyoke Market (Scott Market), Sule Pagoda, China Town and colonial buildings. Sule Shangri-La, Yangon, is only 10-minute drive from Shwedagon Pagoda, People's Park, the National Museum and Kandawgyi Lake. All the hotel's rooms and public areas feature Wi-Fi.*

*The Fitness & Recreation Centre provides guests with a full range of state-of-the-art*



*cardiovascular equipment, a swimming pool, sauna, steam room, massage, and reflexology treatments. Also offered on-site are manicures, pedicures and facial treatments.*

### **Day 3 December 3, Thursday: Yangon (BD)**

Our guide will give us a full tour briefing following breakfast this morning

***The Shwedagon Pagoda is Yangon's show stealer! The golden stupa rises 100-metres into the sky and is covered in gold leaf and rubies and topped with a diamond. This sacred stupa is at its most beautiful during sunset, as the golden stupa reflects the changing colors of twilight.***

***If walls could talk, the gleaming octagonal exterior of the Sule Pagoda could write a bestseller. Sitting proudly in the center of the city, it has been the focal point for revolutions and rallies, as well as religious events. We'll visit both these pagodas plus more.***

Start the day in the colonial heart of Yangon which features an interesting selection of monuments and colonial buildings. We'll see the Independent Monument, the High Court, the City Hall and the Sule Pagoda Jet lag sets in during the first afternoon. We'll return to the hotel to rest and relax before visiting Shwedagon

#### **Visit Shwedagon Pagoda at sunset (2 – 3 hours)**

The highlight of any trip to Yangon is a visit to the spectacular Shwedagon Pagoda, which dates back about 2,500 years and was built to house eight sacred hairs of the Buddha. Its bell-shaped superstructure, resting on a terraced base, is covered in about 60 tons of gold-leaf, which is constantly being replaced. Welcome dinner at Sule Shangri-La Hotel with a glass of wine and soft drinks. Overnight in Yangon.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Welcome Dinner at Sule Shangri-La Hotel / Restaurant**

### **Day 4 December 4, Friday: Yangon – Bagan**

Explore the Bogyoke Aung San Market, also known as Scott Market, which contains over 2,000 stalls and is the best place in Yangon to browse through the complete range of local handicrafts. (1 hour)

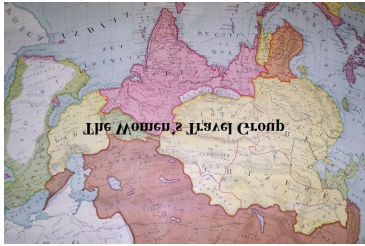
Visit Shoemaker U Bo Took. He lives in a small house and is the only producer of handmade shoes for the disabled in Yangon

#### **Afternoon flight from Yangon to Bagan (1h 20 min)**

You will be taken to the airport in Yangon and escorted to your Bagan hotel for check-in.

#### **Bagan Thiripyitsaya Sanctuary Resort or similar**

*Bagan Thiripyistaya Sanctuary Resort is situated on the banks of the Irrawaddy, Myanmar's river of history and legend. The Resort sprawls over 24 acres of landscaped gardens, which is*



*home to mature tropical trees and flowering plants, as well as native birds and a number of small tame animals. Every morning our gorgeous peacocks, Myanmar's national bird, go for a walk in our garden. Oriented towards the west, the Resort revels in panoramic river views, glorious sunsets and silver moonlight, and a pervading atmosphere of profound peace, warmth and comfort.*

**Meals included: Breakfast**

#### **Day 5 December 5, Saturday: Bagan**

##### **Bagan is a true bucket-list destination!**

Thousands of crumbling temples, pagodas and stupas rise from the ancient desert plain. These beautiful, other-worldly structures were built by the kings of Bagan in the 11th and 12th centuries.

Words don't do this incredible landscape justice so let's get out there and see them for ourselves. We'll visit renowned temples, and discover some of the lesser known, but equally impressive pagodas. Each temple has its own story to tell so we'll never tire of seeing more.

And in the evening - we'll watch the sun setting over this land of pagodas.

Today's Highlights: Shwezigon Paya, Gubyaukhyi Temple at Wetkyi-Inn, Ananda Pahto, Gubyaukhyi Temple at Myinkaba, Manuha Temple, Shwesandaw Paya, sunset

Watch the sunset over Bagan

Enjoy a panoramic view of the sun setting over the plain of Bagan from one of the sunset view hills. Spend the night in Bagan

**Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner**

#### **Day 6 December 6, Sunday: Bagan**

Watch out for the monkeys at Mount Popa!

An iconic sight, Mount Popa is an extinct sheer-sided volcano that rises out of the plain. Topped by golden stupas, it is a famous pilgrimage site for locals who come to worship at the Nat temples.

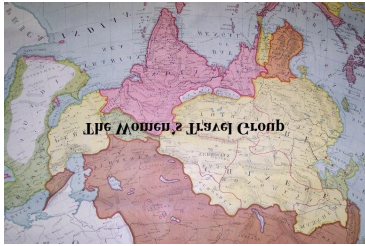
Proceed to Popa Mountain Resort by passing Popa Mountain and enjoy lunch and the view from the resort. Return to Bagan and continue sightseeing. We'll visit a lacquerware workshop to learn about the intricate process of lacquerware making and decoration.

Spend the night in Bagan.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch at Popa Mountain Resort Restaurant**

#### **Day 7 December 7, Monday: Bagan - Mandalay**

**Flight from Bagan to Mandalay (30 Min.)**



Our guide accompanies us on the flight to ancient Bagan.

Transfer to your hotel: **Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort - Deluxe room**

Balance of the day at leisure

*The 12-acre Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort is set at the foot of Mandalay Hill. It offers panoramic views of pagodas as well as the distinctive architecture of the Royal Palace and its beautiful moat.*

**Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner**

**Day 8 December 8, Tuesday: Mandalay**

**Mandalay - the name alone evokes the romance of old colonial Burma.**

It's home to the Mahamuni Paya, famous for its seated Buddha covered in gold leaf. Every morning at 4am its gleaming face is washed by the monks in a unique ceremony. There's a lot more to be enjoyed here, including other ornate temples and wooden monasteries as well as panoramic views from Mandalay Hill.

Visit Mahamuni Paya

Mahamuni Paya was originally built by King Bodawpaya in 1784 when a road paved with bricks was constructed from his palace to the paya's eastern gate. The centerpiece of the shrine is the highly venerated Mahamuni image that was transported to Myanmar from Mrauk U in Rakhaing in 1784.

Visit Shwenandaw Kyaung

Shwenandaw Kyaung is a monastery of great interest, not only as a fine example of a traditional Burmese wooden monastery, but as a fragile reminder of the old Mandalay Fort. At one time this building was part of the palace complex and was used as an apartment by King Mindon and his chief queen, and it was here that he died. After Mindon's death, King Thibaw Min had the building dismantled and reassembled on its present site in 1880 as a monastery.

Visit Kuthodaw Paya

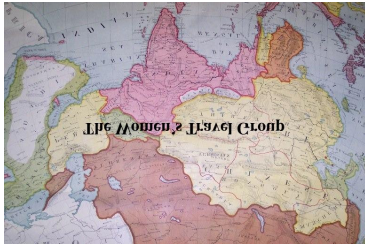
The central stupa of the Kuthodaw Paya was modelled on the Shwezigon Paya at Nyaung U near Bagan. The paya has been dubbed 'the world's biggest book', for standing around the central stupa are 729 marble slabs on which are inscribed the entire Tripitaka.

Visit Mandalay Hill

Visit Mandalay Hill and take an easy climb up the sheltered steps to see panoramic views over the palace, Mandalay and the paya-studded countryside.

Spend the night in Mandalay

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch**



### **Day 9 December 9, Wednesday: Mandalay**

Just outside Mandalay, are not one, but three ancient royal capitals!

Sagaing is said to be the spiritual center of Myanmar. Also known as a 'living Bagan', it is home to hundreds of stupas, monasteries, temples and nunneries.

Inwa (Ava) is a rural riverside oasis of crumbling monasteries and artisan workshops and is best explored by horse and cart.

And then there's Amarapura, where, every morning, you can see devout monks lining up for their daily alms. **At sunset we'll take a walk alongside the monks across the picturesque U Bein Bridge, the longest teak bridge in the world.**

We'll see loads of incredible sights and learn tons of history about the old kings of Myanmar.

Visit to **Aye Yeik Mon Orphanage Girls' School in Mandalay. The Mandalay Projects is an Australia based NGO dedicated to preventing child trafficking by partnering locally to provide training.** Spend the night in Mandalay

**Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner at Kinsana Restaurant with cultural show  
Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort**

### **Day 10 December 10, Thursday: Mandalay / Home or continue to Inle Lake**

We're off to the airport today. Where will you go? Continue the adventure with our Inle Lake extension.

## **INLE LAKE EXTENSION**

### **Day 10 December 10, Thursday: Mandalay . Heho . Inle Lake**

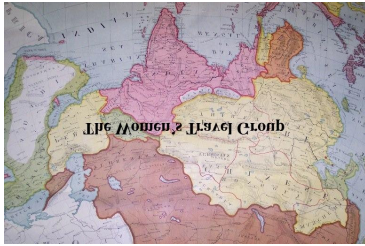
After breakfast, we take a flight from Mandalay to Heho. Upon arrival we drive (50 min ) to Nyaung Shwe boat jetty. From here it's a pleasant 50 min boat ride to **Amata Garden Resort**

*Amata Garden Resort is surrounded on the eastern banks of the Inle Lake by the vast stretch of tranquil and soothing backwaters and the emerald green Shan Hills. The place itself is wrapped in a quiet charms of its own. Since Amata Garden Resort is the only high rise 3 story hotel in this area, guests can enjoy an unbroken view of Inle Lake and the mountains.*

*Sprawling across 18 acres of lush greenery, Amata Garden Resort offers a comfortably 60 deluxe rooms & 2 deluxe Suites with a complete range of a new age amenities; the Lotus Spa; Shan traditionally styled houseboats; multi-cuisine restaurant; indoor & outdoor sunset lake view bar and countless other attractions around the resort in Inle Lake. Spend the night in Inle Lake*

**Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Day 11 December 11, Friday: Inle Lake**



Today we get to see the famous one-legged rowers on Inle Lake!

This is no ordinary lake though. Inle is an enchanting world of villages on stilts and gardens that float on the surface of the lake (seriously!). One of the most photographed sights is the skilled Intha fishermen who balance on one leg, while using the other to maneuver the oar. We'll take a relaxing boat ride across Inle Lake, stopping to see these sights along with some pagodas and lakeside villages.

Today's Highlights: Boat trip on Inle Lake, local market, villages, Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery Spend the night in Inle Lake

**Meals included: Breakfast**

**Day 12, December 12, Saturday: Inle Lake . Heho . Yangon**

Thousands of mysterious temples and stupas await at the end of a boat ride along a narrow creek cloaked in foliage. The Indein complex is a collection of over 1,000 densely packed Shan-style stupas in varying states of decay. Part of its charm is that it has escaped restoration and the air of neglect just adds to the ethereal atmosphere. This is also scheduled to be Market Day. Don't forget your camera as this place is otherworldly.

Later we will drive from Inle Lake to Heho Airport to board our flight to Yangon.

Flight envisioned: Heho - Yangon by 7Y151 (17:30-18:40)

Spend the night in Yangon at **Sule Shangri-la Yangon**

**Meals included: Breakfast**

**Day 13, December 13, Sunday: Yangon – Home**

Today we're headed for the airport. Pack up your bags and treasure your memories as we head home. Cross the International Date Line Enroute and gain a day..

**Meals included: Breakfast**

**Laos Pre-tour:**

**Land arrangements not including internal air (quoted separately)**

**Based on minimum 2 \$1,785 (twin occupancy)**

**Based on minimum 6 \$1,650 (twin occupancy)**

**Single Supplement \$ 685**

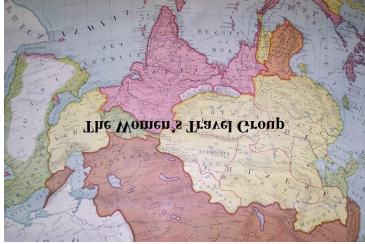
**Airfare Vientiane – Luang Prabang \$150 (subject to change by the airline)**

**Main tour:**

**Land arrangements including internal Myanmar air**

**Based on minimum 6 \$2,650 (twin occupancy)**





**Single Supplement: Add \$925**

**Inle Lake Extension**

**Land arrangements including internal Myanmar air**

**Based on minimum 4 \$1,028 (twin occupancy)**

**Based on minimum 6 \$ 935 (twin occupancy)**

**Single Supplement: Add \$ 310**

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**We include...**

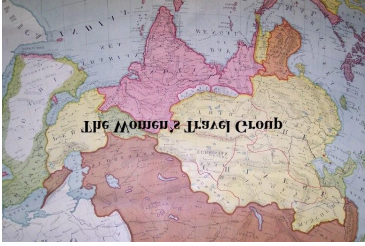
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- All services as mentioned in your itinerary.
- Current fuel surcharges are included, however, these are subject to change prior to tour start date.
- English-speaking Tour guide services provided
- Ground transportation in private, air-conditioned vehicle.
- Drinking water and cold towels during sightseeing.
- Multi-lingual 24-hour customer support hotline in all destinations.
- All applicable local taxes.

**We don't include...**

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- Visa fees
- Personal expenses such as laundry, telephone, beverages not specified at meals.
- Tips and gratuities



**S** **85<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
**SITA**  
**WORLD TOURS**  
Established 1933