



Journey to Golden Burma (Myanmar) Pre Tour: Laos for Thanksgiving Post Tour: Inle Lake Extension

Book Main Tour with Pre Tour Post Tour for \$100 discount

Main Tour - Departure date – November 29-December 8, 2020

Contact: maryb@sitatours.com 1 800 421 543 x 1518 OR phyllisnycity@gmail.com

Myanmar was closed to most tourists until recently. This isolation left the country unspoiled by outsiders, construction, and Western media. In this special trip we combine two of the most 'original' SE Asian countries: Myanmar and Laos. This is the real SE Asia: golden temples, candle lit monasteries, untouched villages with handmade crafts. Whether you walk with monks, merchants, or mothers, you find friendly locals excited you are here. Both are set against green tropical foothills lakes and rivers. Laos is less visited. A French legacy is food and colonial buildings but not in remote villages. We promise a thrilling trip.

LAOS PRE-TOUR VIEN- TIANE – LUANG PRABANG DEPARTURE – NOVEMBER 23 – November 29, 2020

Pre Day 1 - November 23, Monday: Depart your Hometown

Board planes bound for Asia. Cross the International Date Line en route.

Pre Day 2 - November 24, Tuesday: Arrive Vientiane, Laos

Most flights arrive late PM. We are met at the airport and escorted to our hotel. Should you require a private transfer there will be an additional charge.

SALANA Boutique Hotel Deluxe room *Probably the most centrally located hotel in Vientiane, the SALANA Boutique Hotel home is a wonderful authentic hotel inspired by leading boutique hotels around the world. The hotel offers world class accommodation sure to impress the most discerning traveler with its 12 superior, 24 deluxe, 2 suites, 3 Salana suites. The central location together with various facilities will ensure that the perfect base to explore this city.*

Pre Day 3 - November 25, Wednesday: Vientiane

We awaken early AM due to time difference. After breakfast we start our Vientiane adventure. First, we visit the morning market Talat Sao. Visit the House of the Emerald Buddha, Haw Phra, named as it housed the Emerald Buddha (Thailand's revered Buddha image.) Wat Si Saket was built in the 19th century' as the oldest monastery in original form. It has 10,000 Buddha images. Continue to Great Sacred Stupa (Pha That Luang), a national symbol. *A stupa is a rounded dome usually containing Buddhist nuns and monks relics on a shrine or beside a prayer hall.* Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch drive south to visit Cultural Park and Friendship Bridge. Return to rest before our Welcome dinner. (BLD)

Pre Day 4 – November 26, Thursday: Vientiane / Luang Prabang

Our 50 min. flight departs 09:10/arrives Luang Prabang 10:00 am. We are met by our local Eng-

lish-speaking guide and taken to our hotel for check-in. We're out for lunch and a walking tour of the town. Later we visit Wat Xieng Thong, the Royal Temple. We have much to be thankful for as we celebrate Thanksgiving. Tonight's dinner features a ceremony, Laotian dance and delicious food! The *Baci* Ceremony involves the tying of cotton strings around wrists to balance spirits, bring harmony, good luck, and prosperity. (BLD)

Victoria Xiengthong Palace

Located in the heart of Luang Prabang, surrounded by the golden spires of the town's famous temples is Victoria Xiengthong Palace, last residence of the Laos Royal Family. This beautiful boutique property has been lovingly restored to former glory, and sits on the Mekong River. The 26 elegantly appointed rooms and suites capture the essence of Laos' style, with local materials. Look upon the majestic Wat Xiengthong – the famous temple, or sit and soak up the ambience of this UNESCO protected palace, a perfect place to discover the wonders of Luang Prabang.

Pre Day 5 – November 27, Friday: Luang Prabang

Join locals in the ritual of almsgiving. Saffron-robed monks with black bowls come to collect the morning's offerings. We provide bowls of hot sticky rice. You can also give local currency, but it must be new. Later visit a museum to review ethnic groups in Laos, before continuing to a Hmong hill village. Our walk here allows us to meet local families. Our visit is also a means of income for residents. We visit a family for lunch, which gives us insight into Hmong life. (BLD)

Day 6 – November 29, Saturday: Luang Prabang

Full-day boat trip on the Mekong to the Pak Ou Caves, housing thousands of gilded wooden Buddha statues. After lunch, we visit the riverside village of Ban Phanom, where rice wine is distilled. Traditional textiles are woven on ancient looms. Dinner in a local restaurant. (BLD)

Day 7 – Nov 30, Sunday: Luang Prabang / Yangon, Burma (Myanmar)

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

MAIN TOUR 9 Nights: Yangon - Bagan - Mandalay -

Day 1 November 29, Sunday: Depart from Home

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

Day 2 November 30, Monday: Arrive Yangon

On arrival in Yangon we are met and transferred to our hotel. If own flight, plan to arrive mid afternoon. *Subject to final flight schedules we meet tonight for a light dinner with our guide. (D)* *Pullman Yangon Centrepont is in the beautiful downtown Colonial Quarter overlooking Maha Bandoola Park and the unique Sule Pagoda. Bogyoke and the night market are at walking distance. The hotel's 289 contemporary, spacious rooms offer a mix of home comfort and stylish amenities, including separate shower and bathtub, work desk with connectivity panel and free Wi-Fi. Our hotel impressive dining options. The Junction lobby lounge and Gustave bar offer a relaxed atmosphere, while The Merchant all-day dining boasts an international buffet.*

Day 3 December 1, Tuesday: Yangon

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 meters and is covered in gold leaf and rubies, topped with a diamond. A stupa is a dome usually containing relics of Buddhist nuns and monks, found on a shrine or beside a prayer hall. This sacred stupa is at its most beautiful at sunset, as the gold reflects the twilight. Sitting in the center of the city, it has been the focal point for revolutions, rallies, and religious events. 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 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 2,500 years, built to house eight sacred hairs of the Buddha. Its bell-shaped superstructure, resting on a terraced base, is covered in 60 tons of gold-leaf. Welcome dinner: Sule Shangri-La Hotel with a glass of wine/ soft drinks. Overnight Yangon. (B Welcome Dinner)

Day 4 December 2, Wednesday: Yangon – Bagan

Yangon, former capital of Myanmar, lies in the fertile delta of southern Myanmar, on the wide Yangon River. The city has tree-shaded boulevards, with shimmering stupas above treetops. The city became the capital in 1885, when the British conquered Upper Myanmar. It was the capital until 2006. We visit Bogyoke Aung San (Scott) Market. Explore the Bogyoke Aung San Market, known as Scott Market, with 2000 stalls. It is the best place for the complete range of local handicrafts. Visit Ma Cho Le Aung (Tree Food) expert. An aspiring young entrepreneur who taught art in an orphanage before founding the 'Tree Food Company'. With a passion for food, this young woman produces sweets from jaggery made with palm juice.

Afternoon flight from Yangon to Bagan (1 1h 20 min) Transfer to Yangon Airport, and fly with our guide to Bagan. We are met and escorted to our Bagan hotel. Bagan Thiripyitsaya Sanctuary Resort or similar (B) *Bagan Thiripyitsaya Sanctuary Resort is on the banks of the Irrawaddy River. The Resort sprawls over 24 acres of landscaped gardens, with tropical trees, flowering plants, native birds and small tame animals. Every morning gorgeous peacocks, the national bird, walk in the garden. Oriented West, the Resort has panoramic river views, glorious sunsets and silver moon glow, in a pervading atmosphere of peace, warmth and comfort.*

Day 5 December 3, Thursday: 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 11th-12th centuries. Words don't do the landscape justice. We visit renowned temples, some lesser known, but equally impressive pagodas. Each temple has a story. Tonight, watch the sunset over pagodas. Today's highlights: Shwezigon Paya, Gubyaukhyi Temple at Wetkyi-Inn, Ananda Pahto, Gubyaukhyi Temple at Myinkaba, Manuha Temple, Shwesandaw Paya. Spend the night in Bagan (BD)

Day 6 December 4, Friday: Bagan

Watch out for monkeys at Mount Popa! An iconic sight, Mount Popa is an extinct sheer-sided volcano rising out of the plain. Topped by golden stupas, it is a famous pilgrimage site for locals who worship at the Nat temples. We stop at a Mountain Resort for lunch and views. Return to Bagan and continue sightseeing. We visit a lacquerware workshop to learn about the intricate process of lacquerware. Spend the night in Bagan. (B L)

Day 7 December 5, Saturday: Bagan -Mandalay

Flight from Bagan to Mandalay (30 Min.) Our guide accompanies us on the flight to ancient Mandalay. Transfer to our hotel: **Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort - Deluxe room** Balance of the day is at leisure (BD) *The 12-acre Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort is set at the foot of Mandalay Hill. It offers panoramas of pagodas and the Royal Palace and its beautiful moat.*

Day 8 December 6, Sunday: Mandalay

Mandalay - the name evokes the romance of colonial Burma. To be enjoyed here, are ornate temples (Paya) and wooden monasteries plus spectacular views. We visit: 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.

Shwenandaw Kyaung is a fine example of a traditional Burmese wooden monastery. At one time this building was part of the palace complex and was used as an apartment by King Mindon and his chief queen. After Mindon's death, King Thibaw Min had the building dismantled and reassembled on its present site in 1880 as a monastery.

Kuthodaw Paya was modelled on the Shwezigon Paya near Bagan. The paya is dubbed 'the world's biggest book'. Around the central stupa are 729 marble slabs on which are inscribed the entire Tripitaka. (Sanskrit word meaning 'Three Baskets' or sermons/scriptures of the Buddha)

We also stop at Mandalay Hill and take an easy climb up the sheltered steps to see panoramic views over the palace, Mandalay, and the stupa-studded countryside.

Spend the night in Mandalay (BL)

Day 9 December 7, Monday: Mandalay

Just outside Mandalay, are not one, but three ancient royal capitals! Sagaing is said to be the spiritual center. 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, we see devout monks lining up for daily alms. **At sunset we walk alongside the monks across the picturesque U Bein Bridge, the longest teak bridge in the world.**

Visit to **Aye Yeik Mon Orphanage Girls' School in Mandalay**. The Mandalay Project is an Australia based NGO dedicated to preventing child trafficking by partnering locally. Our Farewell dinner is at Kinsana Restaurant with a cultural show Spend the night in Mandalay. (BD)

Day 10 December 8, Tuesday: Mandalay / Home or continue to Inle Lake

We're off to the airport today. Continue with our Inle Lake extension (B)

INLE LAKE EXTENSION

Day 10 December 8, Tuesday: Mandalay . Heho . Inle Lake

After breakfast, flight Mandalay to Heho. Upon arrival drive (50 min) to Nyaung Shwe boat jetty. From here a pleasant 50 min boat to **Amata Garden Resort**. (B)

Amata Garden Resort is on the banks of Inle Lake, a stretch of backwaters and emerald Shan Hills. The place is wrapped in a quiet charm. Since the Resort is the only 3 story hotel in the area, guests enjoy unbroken views. Sprawling across 18 acres of greenery, Amata offers deluxe rooms & 2 deluxe Suites with new age amenities; Lotus Spa Shan, traditionally styled houseboats; multi-cuisine restaurant; sunset lake view bar and countless other attractions.

Day 11-December 9, Wednesday: Inle Lake. Today see the famous one-legged rowers on Inle Lake!. Inle is an enchanting world of villages on stilts and gardens floating on the surface. A most photographed sight is the skilled Intha fishermen who balance on one leg, using the other to row. We take a relaxing boat ride across the Lake, stopping for sights and villages. Highlights: Boat trip on Inle Lake, local market, villages, Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery Spend the night in Inle Lake. (B)

Day 12, December 10, Thursday: Inle Lake . Heho . Yangon

Thousands of mysterious temples await at the end of the ride. The Indein complex is a collection of 1,000 densely packed Shan- style stupas. This is scheduled to be Market Day. Later drive to Heho Airport for flights to Yangon. Flight envisioned: Heho-Yangon 7Y151 (17:30-18:40)Spend the night in Yangoon **Pullman Yangon Centrepoint (B)**

Day 13, December 11, Friday: Yangon – Home

Today head for the airport. Cross the International Date Line and gain a day. (B)

Main Tour double occupancy Based on minimum 6 persons traveling

\$2,650.00 per person Single room supplement \$925.00 per person

Included:

- All accommodations & Breakfasts (including meals where mentioned)
- Transportation on tours
- Entrance fees & boat trips
- Included domestic flights mentioned in the itinerary
- English Speaking Guide

- Multi-lingual 24-hour customer support hotline
- Portage at airports and hotels
- All applicable local taxes
- Drinking water and cold towels during sightseeing

Not included:

- Visa to fees
- Gratuities to drivers Guide, Hotel and other staff
- Any beverages with the meals
- Any additional personal expenses

PRE TOUR : Laos- Vientiane and Luang Prabang:

Land Arrangements not including internal air

Based on minimum 2 persons traveling	\$1,875.00 per person(twin occupancy)
Based on minimum 6 persons traveling	\$1,760.00 per person(twin occupancy)
Single room supplement Add	\$ 685.00 per person

Included:

- Transportation on tours
- Entrance fees & boat trips
- Local English-speaking guides
- Domestic flight: Vientiane / Luang Prabang
- International ticket reconfirmation

Not included:

- Laos Visa
- Gratuities to drivers Guide, Hotel and other staff
- Any beverages with the meals
- Camera and video fees (if any)
- Any additional personal expenses

POST TOUR Extension to Inle Lake

Land Arrangements including internal air

Based on minimum 4 persons traveling	\$1,028.00 per person(twin occupancy)
Based on minimum 6 persons traveling	\$1,035.00 per person(twin occupancy)
Single room supplement Add	\$ 310.00 per person

Included:

- Ground transportation in private air-conditioned vehicle
- Entrance fees & boat trips
- Any included internal flights
- English-speaking guide
- Drinking water and cold tells while sightseeing
- Portage at airports and hotels
- All applicable local taxes

Not included:

- Gratuities to drivers Guide, Hotel and other staff
- Any beverages with the meals
- Any additional personal expenses
- **VISA** To enter **Burma**, you must have a valid passport with at least 6 months remaining validity and a valid visa. You may apply for your visa at a Burmese embassy or consulate abroad before you arrive in Burma. In Burma, you will be required to show your passport with a valid visa at all airports, train stations, and hotels. The [eVisa program](#) allows tourists and business travelers to apply for a visa online rather than at an embassy or consulate **LAOS:** Your passport must have at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of entry and at least 2 blank visa pages. Tourist Visas are required. Tourist visas on arrival are available at certain ports of entry, and generally permit a stay of 30 days.