

Explore Myanmar with me.

Scarlet Jones Travels

This sample itinerary can be shortened lengthened or altered to suit you.

Day 1: You will fly into the city of Yangon, formerly known as Rangoon.

This city cannot fail to stimulate all of your senses and it's a great introduction to the variety and diversity of Myanmar. This is probably the most chaotic place that you will encounter on this trip so if you can cope with this you can cope with anything!

Depending on your arrival time we will set off and explore the local area on foot; maybe trying some of the street food and checking out the decaying colonial buildings.

This is also your opportunity to pick up anything that you may have forgotten to bring with you as there are state of the art shopping malls here as well as traditional night markets.

Day 2: We can either take the circle line train around the city where you can get a glimpse into the backyards of the locals and see the vendors selling noodles and snacks on board or you can walk around the large lake with its replica palace that houses a restaurant. Whatever we do, we will explore the Shwedagon Pagoda, timing our visit to end at sunset when its gold dazzles.

Day 3: Maybe today we will take a walking tour of the city and see some more of its hidden gems or you may prefer to relax with a Burmese foot massage. We will certainly try the speciality Myanmar cuisine, and you will hopefully get the chance to dine at a not for profit restaurant that helps disadvantaged people get a leg up into the hospitality trade. We will then take the night bus to Inle Lake.

Day 4: You will have the option to rest if you need to do so today after your night bus ride or if you are feeling bright and breezy we can ride bicycles around the small town of Nyaungshwe.

We can see the teak pagoda with the little alcoves that contain hundreds of small dolls and we can cycle or take a tuk tuk up to the winery on the hill for a wine tasting session. If it's quiet we can walk out along the teak bridge and hire a local canoe to paddle us around one of the floating villages. We will end the day watching a traditional puppet show by a true enthusiast who makes all of his own puppets.

Day 5: It's an early start today as we rise before dawn to take a boat ride out onto Inle Lake with breakfast in a restaurant or onboard. We will see the iconic fishermen who paddle using one leg and you will have the opportunity to visit a lotus weaving centre, a silversmith, wood carvers and a local market as well as many other small tourist hubs. There may even be some Padaung women who wear metal coils around their necks weaving. You can spend the afternoon relaxing or cycling around because later there is another night bus – this time to Bagan

Day 6: Arriving in Bagan at dawn we will hire ebikes and get out and explore the historical area. For a good explanation of the history behind the pagodas and the culture we may take a tour or we can simply ride and lose ourselves down the little sandy paths among the 2000 plus structures. You may choose to end the day with a sunset boat trip or you can watch the sun go down from the roof of a pagoda.

Day 7: Today rise early for the dawn, setting out in the dark to find a good spot to watch the sun rise and see the hot air balloons float over the plain; or you may even opt to take your own hot air balloon flight. You can explore some more pagodas by ebikes, simply catch your breath and chill at the hostel or try some of the excellent restaurants in Bagan, finishing with another sunset.

Day 8: You might like to get up for a final dawn over the Bagan plains and then we will then take the bus to Mandalay – this time travelling during the day so you will get the chance to see some of the surrounding countryside.

Day 9: It's a long one today – exploring the Palace and some of the best pagodas in Mandalay, including a wonderful teak pagoda and we will also wander around the world's biggest 'book'. After lunch we head off to the jade market which is like stepping back in time with traders buying and selling gems over coffee and craftsmen cutting and polishing them with ancient tools, followed up by a visit to the gold leaf making centre where you can learn how this ancient craft continues and see how the gold leaf is beaten out by hand.

Day 10: We might take a day tour of some of the historic sites and the old cities which surround Mandalay such as Sagain and Inwa but, weather permitting, we will end the day with a trip to the U Bein teak bridge at sunset.

Day 11: A shared car will whisk us up the mountains and over to the charming mountain town of Hsipaw. Here the weather is a little cooler and more comfortable. Provided we arrive in time we will go straight out and see the Shan Palace where we will hopefully get the chance to meet and chat to a real life Shan Princess and learn a little about the history of Myanmar from her.

Day 12 & 13: If you want to take a trek you can hike with a guide, staying overnight in a home-stay in a rural village in the mountains. Meals will all be traditionally made and you will get the chance to interact with local people. Your trek could end with a swim to a waterfall or better still, visit the non-touristy hot springs and bathe with the inquisitive locals. If hiking is not your thing we should be able to arrange a motorbike tour instead.

Day 14: You may choose to relax in the morning or take a bicycle followed by a clamber up a hill to a waterfall and in the afternoon, if you didn't already get to the Shan Palace, today is the day. We will round up by exploring Little Bagan on bicycles and looking at the teak pagoda.

Day 15: Today you will do the iconic railway ride from Hsipaw to Pyin Oo Lwin crossing the jaw-dropping Goteik viaduct. We can take a picnic to eat on the train or even better, buy noodles from the ladies who jump onboard with their baskets on their heads at one of the stations that we pass. After settling into our hotel at Pyin Oo Lwin we'll head off to the traditional food night market where we can buy dinner on the go.

Day 16: Today we will cycle to the huge Botanical Gardens or you may prefer to take a motor taxi to one of the two waterfalls that are in this area. One waterfall is a hike away, the other has a market next to it where local strawberry jam, damson wine and hand knitted clothes are sold. Then it's either a long night bus back to Yangon or a shared car to Mandalay and the end of this part of the trip.

Note: The above itinerary has been tried and tested by myself but it may be subject to change depending on the weather, the political situation or other elements outside of my control.

This is not an official tour and we will use local tour guides where possible. We will travel together staying mainly in hostels – the aim of the trip is to introduce you to Myanmar and also to the concept of backpacking and travelling on a budget.

If you would like to increase your self confidence or if you have issues with anxiety then travelling with me will also give you an insight into how I changed my mindset and how I learnt how to believe in myself again.

What is included:

Accommodation, breakfasts, transport within Myanmar plus all daily excursions, activities and visits that are listed above

Not included: Flights to and from Myanmar, travel insurance, visa, food and drink (breakfast is included), pre-trip vaccinations, activities not listed above i.e. hot air balloon flight

After exploring the north of Myanmar with you as above I plan to extend my own trip and take in the sights in the south of the country. As this is uncharted waters for me, no agenda is available, however you are also welcome to extend and accompany me if you would like to visit Hpa-An, Myeik or any of the other places open to us and within the time constraints of our visa.