

EV EXOTIC VOYAGES

# TIMELESS JOURNEY TO MYANMAR



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## HERE'S A DAY BY DAY BREAKDOWN OF THE ITINERARY:

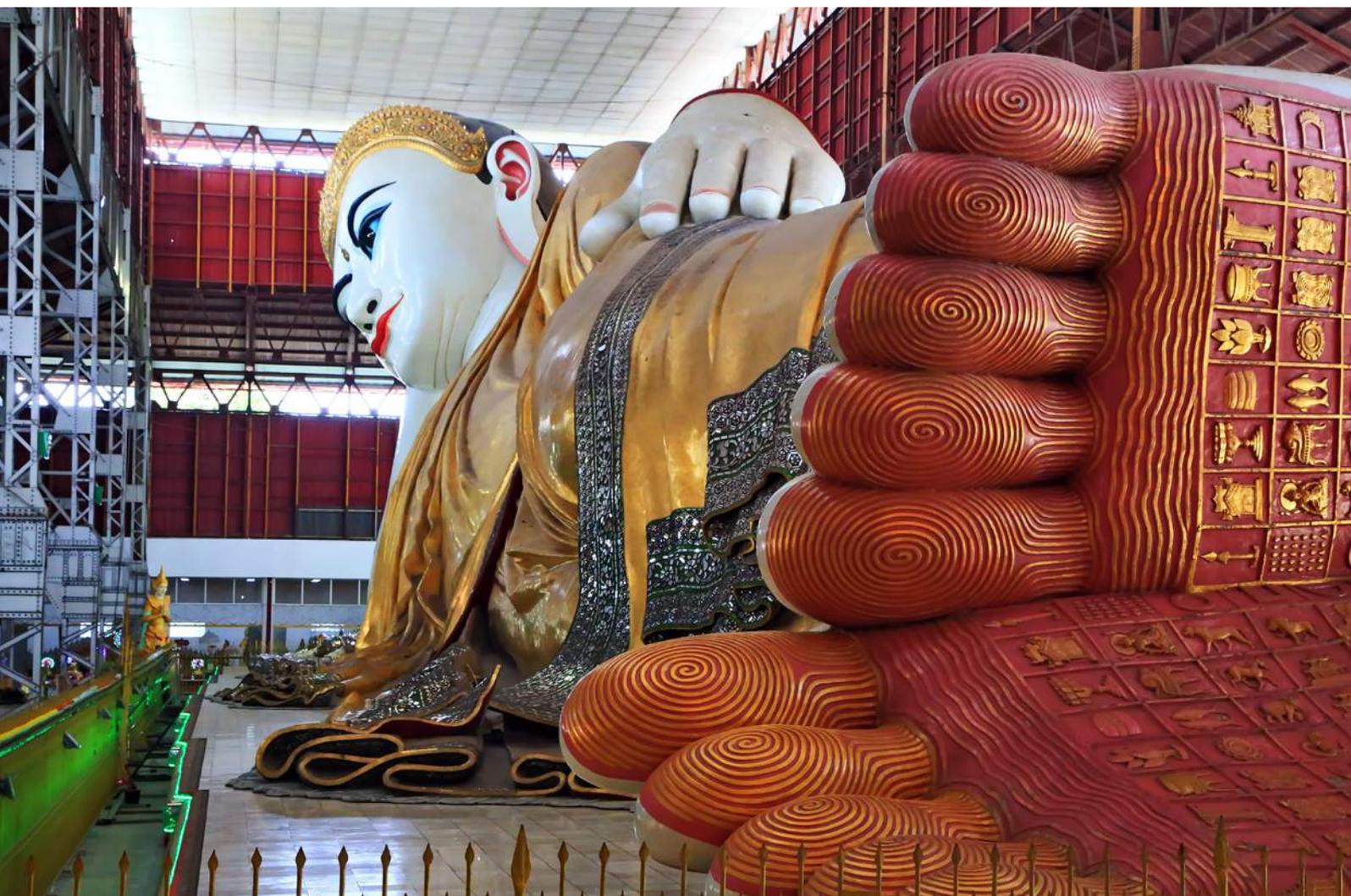


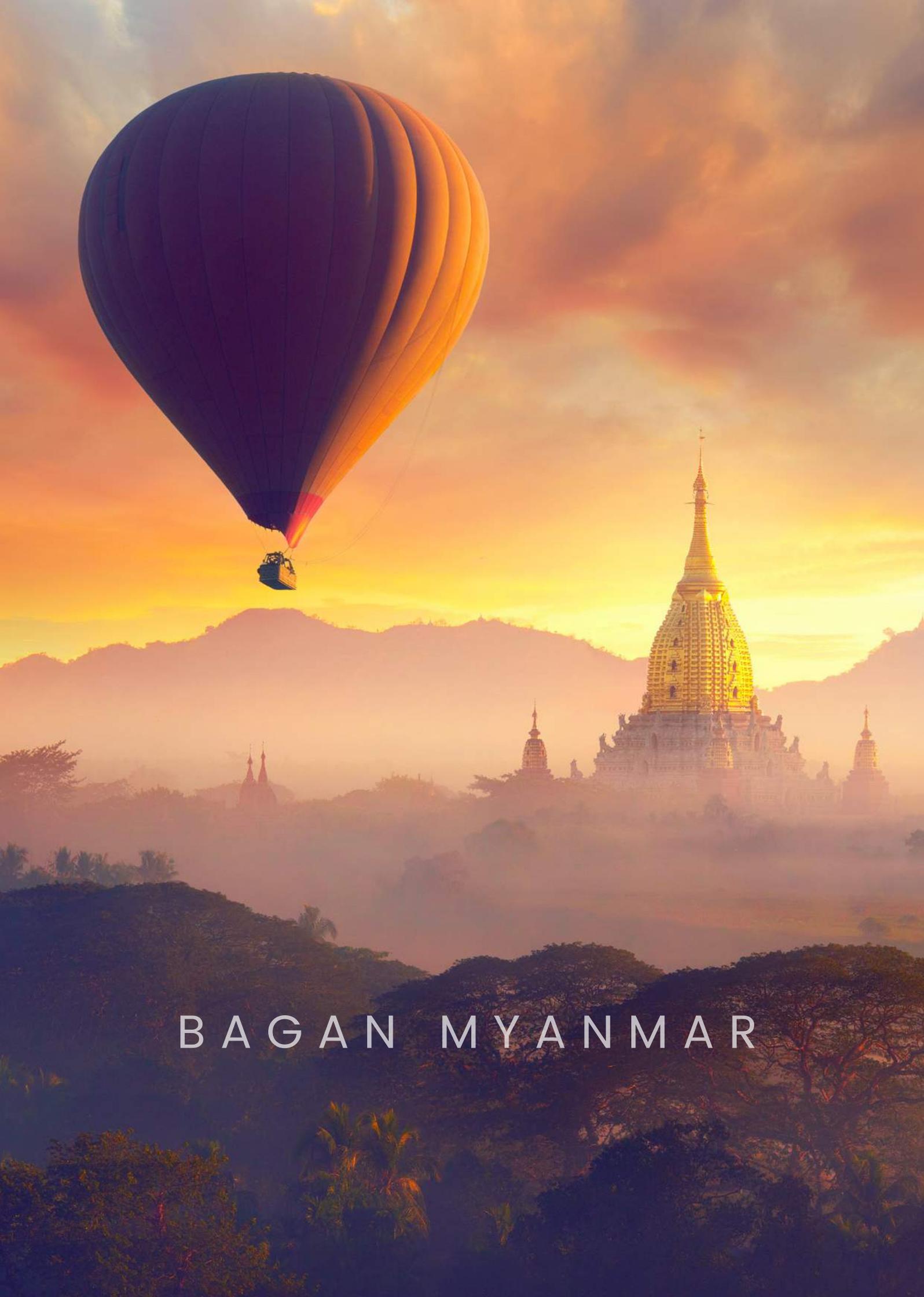
SAY GOODBYE TO MYANMAR.

**DAY 1:**  
**ARRIVAL TO YANGON.**  
**FIRST TIME EXPLORING THE CITY**

Mingalabar and welcome to Myanmar! The former capital Yangon is the country's most important trading center. Great colonial architecture and religious legacy make it one of the most fascinating and unique cities in Southeast Asia.

There are many things to do in Yangon but first, take time to relax at the hotel after your long-haul flight and wait until afternoon to kick-start the adventure. We suggest you to visit famous Kyaukhtatgyi Pagoda to see the 72-meter reclining Buddha image wearing a golden robe. Then head towards the center to Shwedagon Pagoda - the holiest Buddhist shrine of Burma. It is one of the most spectacular golden pagodas in the world, containing strands of the Buddha hair inside the shrine. The Shwedagon Pagoda is actually covered with gold plates, and the stupa's top is encrusted with over 4,500 diamonds to make it like the Enchanted Kingdom!





BAGAN MYANMAR

## DAY 2:

### BAGAN. TEMPLE VISIT

### AND IRRAWADDY RIVER SUNSET CRUISE.

Today, you'll take a morning flight from Yangon to Bagan – home to more than 4,000 red brick temples. This ancient city, roughly the size of Manhattan, was founded in the mid-to-late 9th century by the Burmese. From the 9th to 13th century, Bagan was the capital of the Pagan Kingdom which would later constitute modern Myanmar. The Bagan Archaeological Zone is the main attraction that is equally well-known to Angkor Wat in Cambodia for architecture and history. Walk bare-foot slowly to embrace the feeling of the thousands of years passing by ancient royal capital on the eastern bank of the river.



After temple visit, immerse yourself in Bagan's rich culture by joining a lacquer workshop in West Phwa Saw village or Min Nan Thu village. From lacquering to drying and polishing, this craftwork will transform a simple piece of wood into beautiful artwork that you will bring back home.

In the late afternoon, embark on a wooden boat to enjoy the wonderful view of the Irrawaddy River while the sun is slowly setting and covering thousands of ancient architecture in its red-gold light.

#### **Shwezigon Pagoda**

A symbol of the old Bagan is the Shwezigon Pagoda that was built in the early 11th century. As the pagoda enshrines a lot of sacred Buddhist relics, it is an important pilgrimage site for Buddhists. If you come here in December, you will see the annual Shwezigon festival attracting thousands of devotees.

#### **Ananda Temple**

The Ananda Pagoda is a single-storey structure built in 1105 – the end of the early Bagan period. Apart from showing Mon and North Indian influence in its architectural style, the gilded sikhara like a spire on top is visible from miles away over the Bagan plains. Thus, Ananda Pagoda is lit up by spotlights that create a mystical atmosphere when the darkness falls.

#### **Gubyaukgyi Temple**

Located in the village of Myinkaba, this temple was completed more than 900 years ago. Thousands of colorful and well preserved Frescoes inside the temple will leave you in awe. Bring a flashlight because it's very dark inside.

## **DAY 3: BAGAN. FLOATING IN AIR AND LOCAL MARKET**

Make this day an unforgettable memory. Nothing compares to drifting over ancient temples and the mighty Irrawaddy River, where you have a bird's eye view of exotic structures which are over a thousand years old. The journey is extremely peaceful and serene, like you are floating in the air without turbulence. As the sunrise peeks over the horizon, the Angkor Wat of Burma looks like a fairytale kingdom. Hot-air balloons are available from mid-October to mid-March only, so arrange your visit accordingly.

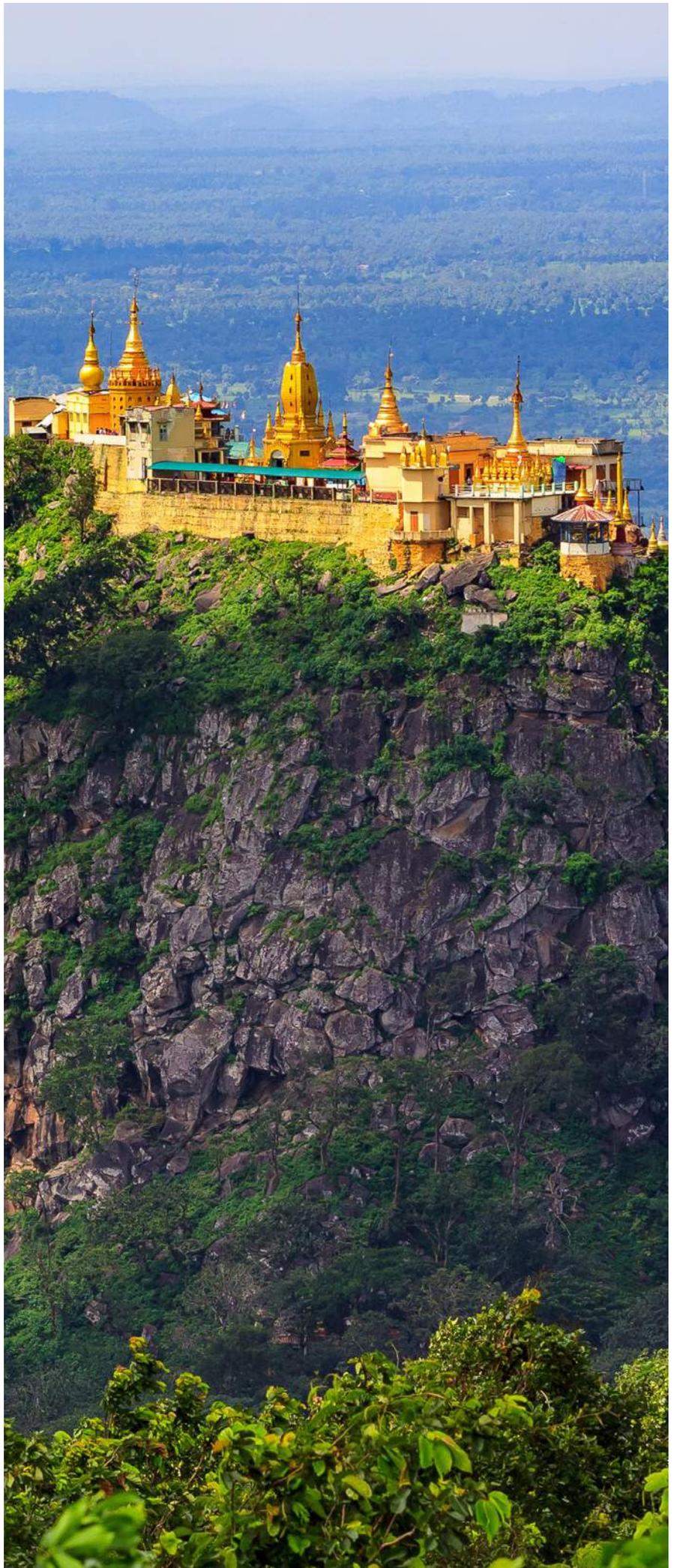
Go to Nyaung Oo Market to have an insight into the local life and culture. The market offers everything from fresh vegetables, fish, handicrafts to Burmese sarong at a very cheap price, but of course, you need to practice bargains first. As you walk in the market, you will realise, women and children are covered with Thanaka, a yellowish-white cosmetic paste made from ground bark. They apply it to the face, and sometimes the arms to protect the skin from sunlight and to help remove the acne.

A short drive from Nyaung Oo Market will take you to Minnanthu village. It seems as if time has stopped and forgotten about this village as the world out there is progressing into bullet trains, hybrid cars, and drones. Farmers are still plowing their fields with oxes. Children are playing on the sandy road. You can't help but notice no matter how simple and pure their lives are, they are genuinely happy.



## DAY 4: MOUNT POPA EXCURSION

Travel south of Bagan today to Salay, a colorful old town with monasteries that are the same age as Bagan's shrines. Make your journey more special with a peaceful boat ride on the Irrawaddy River to witness a real Myanmar countryside from the water way. There are many old pagodas in the town but don't miss the most beautiful teak Yoke Sone Kyaung that is known for its incredible wood carvings. Set in a shady, quiet location, it's an island of calm and serenity. From here, head east to Mt. Popa - one of the most popular pilgrimage spots for the Burmese. Rest in the afternoon for your next adventure the day after.





MANDALAY MYANMAR

## DAY 5:

### MANDALAY - THE LAST ROYAL CAPITAL

In the morning, you'll get a short flight to Mandalay - the second largest and the last royal capital of Myanmar.

Your first exploring in the cultural heart of Myanmar is Sagaing Hill - home to 3,000 monks and 100 meditation shrines. You won't want to miss Swan Oo Pon Nya which was established in the early-mid 14th century and U Min Thone Sae, aka the 30 cave pagoda.

Cross a small river and drive to the glorious 200-year old Bagaya Kyaung Monastery, a living monastery, decorated with splendid Burmese architecture works and lotus motifs. Walk through 2 white guardian lions at the entrance gate to enter the Maha Aungmye Bonzan monastery - one of the finest surviving examples of 19th century Konbaung-era architecture. Seriously damaged in 1839 by an earthquake, the monastery was restored in 1873 to its awesome structure today.

See Amarapura, the city of immortality and Myanmar's penultimate royal capital, in the afternoon. Amarapura is home to a number of pagodas and the U Bein Bridge - the world's longest teak footbridge. Mahagandayon Monastery is famous as a teaching center for more than a thousand young monks. It's a pleasantly meditative place for most of the day but you might want to avoid visiting it from 10.30AM to noon when the monks are queuing for their lunch and hundreds of visitors break the silence with curiosity. Seek out to the legendary U Bein Bridge in the late afternoon to admire the sunset illuminating 1.2-kilometer bridge with its magnificent light.



**DAY 6:**  
**MANDALAY.**  
**EXPLORE CULTURE TREASURES.**



Set off to Mingun in the morning by boat from Mandalay jetty. Upon arrival, you will want to see Mingun Pahtodawgyi ruin. This massive brick construction was left unfinished when a prophet predicted "as soon as the pagoda is completed, the King would die". Leave the world's largest pile of brick behind to continue your cultural exploration to stunning white structure of Hsinbyume pagoda. This Buddhist shrine offers incredible photo opportunities for your Instagram. Drive one and a half hours to Kuthodaw Pagoda which is called 'the world's largest book thanks to its 729 marble slabs. A short drive from here, you'll see Shwenandaw Monastery, or the "Golden Monastery". The monastery's wood carvings, that adorn its walls and roofs, are simply beautiful.

Located southwest of Mandalay is the Mahamuni Pagoda. It contains a sacred Buddha image that is covered in gold leaves. Here, you'll see how important Buddhism is in people's life. They can live frugally, but will spare no effort to save money to buy a gold leaf to gild the Buddha.

When it comes to craft in Mandalay, gold leaves, silk weaving, marionettes, and richly embroidered tapestries are worth mentioning. There are dozens of cottage workshops throughout this city. You can come to any to see how to make amazing artisan products without pressure to buy anything.





INLE LAKE

**DAY 7:**  
**INLE LAKE. A**  
**HIGHLAND LAKET**



Take a flight to Heho today, then another hour drive to Nyaung Shwe, the gateway to the picturesque Inle Lake - a highland lake in the heart of Shan Plateau. Just stone away from Nyaung Shwe is the elegant Shwe Yan Pyay monastery, a gem of Burmese architecture, with extraordinarily large oval windows. The monastery was built to give home to poor boys who can become novice monks when they grow up. There are many traditional workshops, such as Shan paper workshops and handmade umbrellas workshops that you can stop to visit if you want to.

Cruising on the Inle Lake is a must. You'll see floating houses that are constructed on wooden piles, some of the teak buildings can be huge, up to 2 - 3 stories standing on the water with floating gardens that you can harvest by hand from your boat.

What might impress you most is Burmese fishermen who have mastered an unusual technique of fishing - carefully balancing on one leg, wrapping their second leg around the oar while keeping both hands free to handle the cumbersome nets to hunt carps.

If you want to learn about Burmese cuisine, join a cooking class at an Intha family on a floating house for a truly authentic experience. Have lunch with your creators and take a rest before getting back to the water way. It's time to see Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda - the most revered monastery in the area with five 800-year-old images of Buddha covered in gold leaf. Located on the western side of the lake, Nga Hpe Chaung Monastery is another wooden attraction that was built at the end of the 1850s. Not only being known as the biggest and oldest monastery in the Inle Lake, it contains a collection of ancient Buddha images.

## DAY 8:

### INLE LAKE. FLOATING VILLAGES, FLOATING GARDENS, AND FLOATING MARKET.

Get back to the lake today, early in the morning, to see it from a new perspective. You will be amazed by the calm and clear water of Inle Lake with more than 80,000 Intha people of 14 villages living here for fishing and farming. In the morning, the huge fresh lake is so quiet that the only sound you can hear is the tapping of the waves on your boat. Again, passing sleeping floating houses of Intha people, tomato gardens that are anchored on the water by thin bamboo poles, and fishermen having their morning catch. All of these images create slow and peaceful movements of life in Myanmar.

Visit a morning market where locals living in the surrounding hills come to sell their crops. Cruise through a long narrow canal to Pa-Oh village that is located on the western shore of the lake. From here, you can trek to the top of the hill to see hundreds of ancient stupas ruins in many shapes and sizes. Some are well preserved, some are still in their crumbling state.



## DAY 9: YANGON. COLONIAL BUILDINGS AND A LIVELY MARKET

Drive back to Nyaung Shwe and take a flight to Yangon from Heho Airport. Spend a day to visit impressive colonial buildings in the city such as Emmanuel Baptismal Church built in 1830, the Supreme Court, Myanmar Port Authority, Customs House and the Court of Justice before getting to the Sule Pagoda that was built over 2600 years ago. If you are curious about your future, there are fortune-tellers on Sule Pagoda Road who can reveal your future by reading your palm. If you want to grab something to eat while walking around the city, you can find food stalls at the sides of the roads, selling local dishes. Buy souvenirs for friends and family? Head to Bogyoke Aung San Market (Scott's Market) which is a major tourist destination dominated by antique, Burmese handicraft and jewellery shops, and clothing stores. By the way, the market is closed on Monday and public holidays, so make sure you choose the right time to visit.



**DAY 10:**

## **SAY GOODBYE TO MYANMAR**



It's time to say goodbye to this mysterious land with ancient culture that you might not find elsewhere in the world.

Although undergoing economic development, Myanmar still maintains its old-world charm with traditional culture, preserved customs, and thousand year old relics. It's how a Southeast Asian country was 30 to 40 years ago. Our itinerary gives you a chance to discover the beauty and experience the authentic local vibes. It also slows down your pace for a while to see the other side of the country and feel how life, somewhere else in the world, can be different compared to our life. But surprisingly, although people in Burma have to work hard to put meals on the table, they are still smiling and children are still running around happily. They give us a different perspective in life to learn to appreciate what we have already.

Go, and see it for yourself.

## **CUSTOMIZE YOUR TRIP**

As locals, we know the very best of Southeast Asia has to offer, and what might change every year that no blogger writes about. Your experience will be more interesting once you have a trip that matches your own interests, expectation, and travel style. This is how you travel in your preference, with utmost privacy flexibility, and see Myanmar at its purest

Contact our free travel designer to get an individual day-by-day itinerary for your vacation.

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