



Hidden Myanmar

February 17, 2016 - February 28, 2016

See Final Bulletin for details on this trip's accommodations.

Day 1 ~ February 17 ~ Arrive in Yangon, Myanmar

Arrive in Yangon, the capital of Myanmar and a popular gateway to this fascinating country. An MTS representative will meet you at the airport and help you transfer to a nearby hotel, where there will be a trip briefing in the evening.

Please note that this entire trip is below 6,100 feet elevation.

Day 2 ~ February 18 ~ Fly from Yangon to the heart of Kengtung

This morning we'll depart from Yangon and fly to Kengtung. Kengtung is a beautiful area with great trekking and an intriguing variety of temples, thanks to the diverse population of ethnic tribes in the region. Upon arrival, enjoy lunch. In the afternoon we'll walk to some nearby hot springs (possibly taking a dip ourselves!) and visit a few of the more easily accessible hill tribe villages: Wan Pauk, Palaung, and Kong Ma Wa. We'll experience the distinct culture, traditions, and language of each village as they welcome us into their homes—a fascinating introduction to the ethnic diversity that is so typical of Myanmar. We'll check into our hotel and enjoy a welcome dinner.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3 ~ February 19 ~ Hike forest trails and encounter remote hill tribes

Shortly after breakfast, we'll take a 1½-hour drive to the starting point of today's trek, which will lead us along steep, forested tracks that link villages of the Pin Tauk Lahu, Eng, and Akha hill tribes. The Eng are particularly unique, and are found only here. Striking in appearance, they're known for their black clothes and their custom of blackening their teeth with tree bark and betel nut. We'll enjoy a hearty picnic lunch along the way, and finish our hike in the late afternoon, when we'll return to our hotel in Keng Tung.

Please note that today's hike is strenuous, so good walking shoes and a high level of fitness are essential.



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Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 ~ February 20 ~ The Cottage Industries of Kengtung

After enjoying breakfast at the hotel, we'll visit several local cottage industries, including a rice noodle factory, a lacquerware-making facility and a facility which produces rice wine. We'll then depart Keng Tung and drive 4-1/2 hours to Tachileik for our evening flight to Heho. Upon arrival, we'll then transfer to our picturesque hotel situated on Inle Lake.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 ~ February 21 ~ Picturesque Inle Lake

Today we'll explore picturesque Inle Lake, famous for its floating villages and traditional leg-rower fishermen. These fishermen perform the acrobatic task of standing on one leg while rowing with the other, leaving a hand free to maneuver their large, conical fishing baskets. The lake's edge is dotted with villages, monasteries, and beautiful hotels, all perched gracefully atop wooden stilts. Tonight, we'll enjoy dinner at our resort.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 ~ February 22 ~ Visit the villages and pagodas of Inle Lake

We'll depart the hotel shortly after breakfast to enjoy a full day of exploring Inle Lake. We'll visit the lively Indein village market, then stroll among the hundreds of stupas that adorn the hillsides above the village. Some of these towers are centuries old, while others are more recent additions, but collectively they're an impressive sight.

Next, we'll visit Phaung Daw Oo, a lovely Buddhist pagoda known for its Buddhas covered in gold leaf, and Nga Phe Chaung monastery, a wooden building perched on stilts over the lake. We'll also see the floating gardens of the local leg-rower fishermen's village, blacksmiths and cigar makers at work in Nampan village, and silk weavers in Inn Paw Khong. Plus, we'll have the option to explore the lake's peaceful villages further by canoe. We'll enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant, and have the opportunity to sit down with locals for a cup of green tea and a friendly chat before returning to our hotel in the afternoon.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7 ~ February 23 ~ Take a scenic drive to the Pindaya Buddhist Caves

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll take a two-hour drive to Pindaya, passing through the Pa-O tribal farmland of the scenic Shan Plateau. We'll stop and take advantage of photo opps along the way, as the area offers spectacular views of fall foliage, enchanting pagodas, and pastoral scenes of villagers and their buffaloes working the fields.



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Once in Pindaya, we'll walk to the nearby village of the Htutni Da-Nu tribe, then continue on to the Pindaya Buddhist Caves. These are the largest such caves in Myanmar, and a popular meditation site for local Burmese. Here, we'll discover a dazzling assortment of over 7,000 Buddha statues, as our guides share local myths and legends with us. Then we'll walk among hundred year-old banyan trees to Singaung village, where we'll learn about the villagers' cottage industry: making bamboo umbrellas.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 ~ February 24 ~ Fly from Pindaya to the temple-studded plains of Bagan

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel and the remainder of the morning at your leisure. In the afternoon, we'll transfer to the airport in Heho for our flight to the temple-studded plains of Bagan. Upon arrival, we'll transfer to the stunning Thande Hotel, perched on the eastern bank of the Irrawaddy River. You'll have plenty of time to enjoy this beautiful hotel's amenities during our two-night stay, whether it's unwinding at the nature spa, enjoying a drink at the poolside bar, or strolling through the bird sanctuary gardens.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 ~ February 25 ~ Discover Bagan's spectacular temples

Gracefully lining the shores of the muddy Irrawaddy River, thousands of peaceful, scenic Buddhist temples make up the spectacular and ancient city of Bagan. Covering an area of about 25 square miles, the temples range from grand structures to simple places of worship. Though the oldest date back some 2,000 years, Bagan's brief period of grandeur lasted a mere 200 years before its destruction at the hands of Mogul hordes in 1287 A.D.

We'll take to bikes to explore Bagan's highlights, including Htilominlo Temple, the finest example of late 12th century stucco carving; Tharabar Gate, a 9th century city wall; Myingaba Gubyaukgyi, with its fine early 12th century murals; Minanthu Village; Phayar Thonesu Temple; and stunning Ananda Temple, built by King Kyansit around 1105 A.D., during Bagan's heyday.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10 ~ February 26 ~ Marvel at Bagan's astounding Shwezigon Pagoda

This morning, we'll visit a vibrant local vegetable market then continue on to the astounding gold-gilt temple of Shwezigon Pagoda. Completed in 1102 A.D., Shwezigon is considered the prototype for all Burmese stupas and believed by some to enshrine holy relics of the Gautama Buddha. We'll then continue on to the Kyaukgu Umin, an elaborate three-tiered cave temple built into sandstone cliffs. The temple contains beautiful stone devotional sculptures, and we'll likely find locals meditating among the ruins. After visiting the temple, we'll stroll down to the



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banks of the Irrawaddy and board longtail boats for our return trip to Bagan. We'll enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and then visit a toddy palm farm before transferring to the airport for our short flight back to Yangon.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11 ~ February 27 ~ Explore the wonders of Yangon

Today we trade the laid-back feeling of the past several days for the bustling energy of Yangon, the former capital of Myanmar and the largest city in the country. We'll spend the day exploring Yangon's large metropolitan area, taking in the striking contrast of modern skyscrapers and coliseums, Victorian-era structures that hearken back to colonial Burma, and ancient pagodas. We'll also witness the ethnic diversity of Yangon, as we pass churches, mosques, synagogues, Burmese pagodas, and Hindu and Chinese temples.

In the afternoon, we'll visit Bogyoke Market, where we'll see locals shopping. In mid-afternoon, we'll take tea at the elegant and romantic Strand Hotel, a Victorian mansion that was once the haunt of Rudyard Kipling and Somerset Maugham. After tea, we'll visit one of Buddhism's most sacred sites, the majestic Shwedagon Pagoda, which is believed to enshrine relics from four different Buddhas. We'll linger to witness the awesome beauty of the temple at sunset, when the evening light glints off the gold-plated dome, which is encrusted with over thousands of diamonds, rubies, topaz and sapphires. We'll then finish the evening with a festive farewell dinner at Le Planteur Restaurant.

Breakfast, Dinner

Day 12 ~ February 28 ~ Depart from Yangon

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for departure flights.

Breakfast

Payment & Cancellation Policy

Payment

At time of reservation	\$400
120 days prior to departure	\$800
65 days prior to departure	Balance

Cancellation



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If written cancellation is received:	Cancellation fee will be:
90 days prior to departure	\$150
89 to 61 days prior to departure	\$400
60 to 46 days prior to departure	50% of Land Cost
45 days or fewer prior to departure	100% of Land Cost

Tier Pricing

Adventure travel works best with a small group of people. In order to operate these small groups, our trips are priced according to the number of full-price passengers on the trip. (Mountain Travel Sobek staff, trip doctors, and other discounted travelers are excluded from the count for this purpose.) We initially invoice you at the highest tier level price (the smallest group size we can operate). If the price drops due to an increase in group size, you will be refunded the difference.

What's Included

- expert leadership
- accommodations as noted in itinerary (or similar)
- meals as noted in the itinerary
- airport transfers
- sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ground transportation
- tips for drivers, hotel and restaurant staff
- entrance fees and permits, unless noted separately in costs
- basic medical and evacuation insurance

What's Not

International airfare; meals not noted on itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, excess baggage charges; airport taxes (international—varies by location); cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.



Activity Level

Mountain Travel Sobek trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. We rate this trip as easy to moderate in nature. There are a few long drives of two to three hours, and although there is no real sustained hiking on this trip, there is quite a bit of walking and day hikes while sightseeing. You should be in reasonable good physical condition so you can enjoy them to the fullest.

If you want to undertake a pre-trip fitness program, we suggest some moderate aerobic activities (hiking, jogging, bicycling) for at least 30 minutes a session at least three times a week for about a month before you go. Check with your doctor before undertaking any new fitness program.

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.mtsobek.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Then Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice prepared by our consulting physician (an expert in wilderness medicine), and other details.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.



Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at www.mtsobek.com.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at www.mtsobek.com/faq and the form itself at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf.

Terms & Conditions

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form (www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

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