

A woman in a vibrant red sari is seen from behind, holding a large, matching red umbrella. She stands on a hillside, looking out over a vast landscape of ancient stupas and pagodas, characteristic of Bagan, Myanmar. The scene is bathed in soft, natural light, suggesting a clear day. The background is filled with numerous tiered stone structures, some partially obscured by lush green trees and vegetation. The overall atmosphere is serene and historical.

DELICIOUS MYANMAR: A CULINARY JOURNEY

12 Days/11Nights

Proposal



Itinerary Outline	
Day 01	Yangon / Arrival
Day 02	Yangon-Bagan
Day 03	Bagan
Day 04	Bagan – Mt. Popa – Bagan
Day 05	Bagan-Mandalay
Day 06	Mandalay – Ava – Amarapura – Sagaing – Mandalay
Day 07	Mandalay- Pyin Oo Lwin- Mandalay
Day 08	Mandalay - Heho - Inle Lake
Day 09	Inle Lake- Sagar- Inle Lake
Day 10	Inle Lake- Heho- Yangon
Day 11	Yangon
Day 12	Yangon /Departure

- Have tea and snacks at traditional local tea shops in Yangon and Mandalay.
- Explore Bagan by horse carriage.
- Learn about the making of Bagan's most famous food at a local shop.
- Make lunch with a lake-dwelling Inthar family and join them dining at a round table.
- Visit a vineyard and winery and try out their wines.
- Take a cooking class with an expert local cook in Yangon.



Day 01

Upon arrival, meet your guide who will transfer you to your hotel.

Formerly known as 'Rangoon' in its days as a British colony, the city has many fine old colonial buildings. Yangon also has a rich spiritual heritage, reminders of which are spread throughout the city in the form of temples and pagodas.

After checking in, visit Sule Pagoda. Take a stroll around Mahabandoola Park's colonial courthouse and city hall, before walking to the main colonial area and discovering its many old buildings.

Lunch will be at a local tea shop, Shwe Yi. The British introduced the practice of drinking strong tea with condensed milk and sugar over a century ago. Green tea is still drunk, often after the strong tea in order to wash it down.

Try an assortment of snacks and noodles here, including rice pancakes, golden sticky rice and 'Mohingar', Myanmar's national dish, rice noodles in a fish soup. Shwe Yi tea shop is famous for its Kyauk Pa Daung Palartar, which should be tried while you're here.

After lunch, head to the Yangon River to see riverside life by the busy Mawtin Jetty. Next we'll go to Chinatown; a great place to try out some other local foods, including meat and vegetable satays and draught Myanmar beer.

Dinner is at your leisure this evening, so you can stay in Chinatown or if you prefer, your guide can recommend somewhere else.

Overnight in Yangon.

Meals included: Lunch

Day 02

Yangon-Bagan

After breakfast, take the short hop flight to Bagan. Once at Bagan meet your guide, who will take you around its wonderful scenery and architecture.

See the glittering Shwezigon Pagoda, before visiting the cave temple filled with exquisite murals at Wetkyi-In Gubyaukgyi. Next is more interesting craftsmanship with the fine plaster carvings of Htilominlo Temple.

For lunch we will stop at Shwe Myanmar; a popular place where visitors come mainly for the delicious curry they serve.

Visit Ananda Temple and its nearby monastery, then further explore Bagan in a horse carriage. Clopping along, you'll pass through the village of Taungbi; see the highest temple in Bagan, Thatbyinnyu; and the enormous Dhammayangyi Temple, noted for its intricate brickwork.

Overnight in Bagan.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 03

Bagan

After breakfast, we'll go to lively Nyaung Oo Market where your guide will help you to discover the many herbs and vegetables used in Myanmar cuisine. After this, you'll learn about the making of Bagan's most famous food, 'Pone Yay Gyi' at a local shop. This black paste is made from soy beans and you'll get to see how it's made, from the raw soy beans through to the finished product.

Try out the popular dish of Pone Yay Gyi salad here, where onion, dry shrimp, green chilli and peanut oil are added to the paste. Many pilgrims buy the famous paste in Bagan as a treat to take home to their families.

Next, see the making of another local specialty, Pe Chaung; a brittle bean snack. Drive on to a local village where the people make a range of products using the juice of the palm tree, including sweet molasses and wine. See the farmers as they climb the trees to collect the juice. Lunch will be prepared for you by a local family, which you can enjoy in the shade of the palm trees.

Visit a workshop next producing lacquer ware. Bagan is famous for this craft, and the skills involved are constantly being refined and passed down from generation to generation. Board a local boat next for a cruise down the Irrawaddy River. See the sun set from the river as you pass riverside villages and temples.

Enjoy the New Year Eve dinner at the Hotel.

Overnight in Bagan.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch & Eve Dinner

Day 04

Bagan – Mt. Popa - Bagan

Meet your guide and driver at the very early morning to enjoy the amazing Bagan sun rise at a nice view point. Your experienced Backyard's guide will help you to point out the good view pint to see the sun rise.

Then, after breakfast, drive to Mt. Popa (Taung Kalat) the important spiritual site. The shrine here is dedicated to the worship of the 37 animist spirits known as 'Nats'.

Your guide will teach you more about the Nats as you climb to the peak of the mountain. Once at the top, you can enjoy excellent panoramic views of the Myingyan Plain.

Your guide and driver will be with you to escort and transfer you to your hotel.

Dinner would be at the local restaurant.

Overnight in Bagan.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast & Dinner



Day 05

Bagan-Mandalay

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for a short flight to Mandalay.

Begin your tour with the revered Buddha image at Mahumani Pagoda. Learn more about the craftwork for which Mandalay is famous by visiting workshops and cottage industries. You'll see gold-leaf techniques, wood carving and kalaga tapestry weaving.

Try another Burmese dish now; La Phat Toke. This is a salad made from fermented tea leaves which have been mixed with salt, garlic, lime juice and green chilli. Beans, peanuts and sesame are added, along with other ingredients depending on taste, and the dish is eaten as a snack, a dessert, or even with rice as part of a main meal.

Go to a popular tea house for lunch. Tea houses are centre of social and commercial life in Myanmar, and Min Thiha Tea Shop is no exception. You can see all kinds of people here, from business people and brokers to students and families all doing their daily business or just relaxing and socializing. Try the Mandalay Monte or Khotaung Monte here.

After lunch, see the 'World's Biggest Book'; the 729 marble stone slabs of Buddhist scripture at Kuthodaw Pagoda.

Enjoy panoramic views of the city from the top of Mandalay Hill as the sun begins to set.

Your evening is free at leisure.

We recommend a trip to Chapatti Corner, where people gather to enjoy the many Indian foods on offer here, such as biryani and mutton curry.

Overnight in Mandalay.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 06

Mandalay-Amarapura-Ava-Sagaing-Mandalay

Leave after breakfast for the former capitals of Sagaing, Ava and Amarapura. Cross the Irrawaddy River to Sagaing; the religious centre of Myanmar. Sagaing Hill is home to over 3000 monks and 600 pagodas; and you'll meet some of these monks as you visit famous pagodas like U Min Thone Sae and Swan Oo Pon Nya Shin.

See a typical Burmese market at Sagaing, selling a range of things including local handicrafts. We'll stop at a pottery village to see the process of making water pots.

Continue to Ava, which was the capital of the Burmese Kingdom from 1364 to 1841. Tour the calm streets by local horse cart, seeing everyday countryside life as you visit the old wooden Bagaya Monastery and the remains of the Royal Palace and Fort.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before getting back on the road to the next former capital: Amarapura.

First stop here is a silk weaving workshop, followed by Mahagandayon monastery; home to over 1000 monks. Walk along the world's longest teak bridge now. U Bein Bridge is 1.2 km long and is constructed of 984 teak posts that were once part of Inwa Palace.

Overnight in Mandalay.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch



Mohinga, Myanmar's national dish of fish noodle soup with fresh herbs is recommended to try at least once when travelling in the country.



Day 07

Mandalay- Pyin Oo Lwin- Mandalay

After breakfast, depart this morning from Mandalay on a scenic two-hour drive to the former British hill station of Maymyo, now officially called Pyin Oo Lwin.

The town is located on a plateau 1000m above sea level and renowned for its cooler temperatures and lush foliage. Many reminders of the colonial era are still present in Pyin Oo Lwin, including brick and timber houses with British names and the Botanical Gardens to the south of town.

Visit the local market in the center of the town near the clock tower where a colorful array of items are for sale including locally-produced jams and fruit wines.

Lunch at local restaurant.

This afternoon, enjoy a traditional horse and carriage ride through the town to see the historical houses including Candacraig, built in 1905. Your horse and carriage will drop you off at the 175-hectare Botanical Gardens where you can take a relaxing walk through the beautifully-landscaped gardens.

Then drive back to Mandalay and the rest of your day is free and easy as your leisure time.

Overnight in Mandalay.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast.



Day 08

Mandalay-Heho-Inle Lake

Take the short flight to Heho this morning. From here, it is a scenic one-hour drive to the village of Nyaung Shwe, the gateway to the magnificent Inle Lake.

Head out onto the lake in a private motorboat, passing floating garden houses built on stilts and the famous 'leg-rowing' fishermen who make their living from the lake's plentiful supply of fish.

Visit a floating tomato garden. Meet the farmers and learn how they grow tomatoes and other plants on the lake.

Make lunch with a local Inthar family at their house next.

Join them in their kitchen and learn about the ingredients and cooking of Inthar cuisine, before joining them at a traditional round table to enjoy the food.

Your boat will take you to the famous Nga Hpe Chaung Monastery. The monastery contains many Buddha images but is famed mainly for its 'jumping cats': local cats which have been trained in the unique skill of jumping through hoops!

You have a chance to see more of Myanmar's rich craft heritage next, in a visit to the weaving village of Inpawkhone. Also visit a cheroot factory, where the cigars are still made by hand in the traditional way.

Overnight on Inle Lake.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch



Mohinga, Myanmar's national dish of fish noodle soup with fresh herbs is recommended to try at least once when travelling in the country.



Day 09

Inle Lake- Sagar- Inle Lake

After Breakfast, visit your lakeside hotel for Sagar, the far southern region of Inle Lake. Sagar is one of the most beautiful places in the Shan State with the mountains forming a backdrop for the small villages and fishermen on the water.

Upon arriving in Sagar area there are several stops that will be made (the order will depend on the time, other tourist boats and activity in the villages) The main highlight for many travelers are the 'sunken' stupas of Sagar- 108 stupas from the 16-17th centuries that are partially underwater for a few months a year. There is also a local monastery and village that can be visited here.

Continue to the village of Thaya Gone, home to Pa-Oh, Shan and Inthar people and known for its production of local rice wine. Watch the process of distillation and then sample some of the local brew if you wish. In Thaya Gone there is also the chance to climb to the top of a small hill which there are great views of the lake and surrounding villages.

Another stop will be made in Sae Khaung Pottery Village to see the crafting of oil and water pots as well as the natural, underground kilns used by the villagers. On the western shores of the Sagar area is Tar Kaung, a series of more than 200 stupas which also make a fabulous photo stop.

Lunch will be arranged along the way (either picnic lunch or local lunch at a small restaurant.)

Around 2.30 the boat will begin its journey back to the main section of Inle Lake. Traveling back in the afternoon the light has shifted and the route looks much different on the return, with different activities occurring on the water and in the villages. Rice noodles can be seen drying in the sun, spun cotton is hung out to dry and kids are returning from school at this time of day.

You'll reach your hotel early this evening in time to freshen up and watch the sunset.

Overnight on Inle Lake.

Meal included: Breakfast.



Day 10

Inle Lake-Heho-Yangon

After breakfast, see the lake's lively morning market; where the community of the lake, including local hill tribes, all come to trade with each other. It's a bustling centre of activity with many interesting sights.

Continue by boat to the northwest side of the lake and the village of Khaung Daing. The village is famous for its traditional tofu treats. You can watch as the triangular treats and fried tofu crackers are made by hand, and of course you'll get the chance to give them a try.

Next, visit the Red Mountain Estate Vineyards and Winery, where you can try out their wines and learn how their different grape varieties are grown.

After the drive back to Nyaung Shwe, enjoy lunch at Viewpoint Restaurant, which serves some of the best Shan food in the country. Take a stop to see the beautiful Buddha images and carvings of Shwe Yan Pyay Monastery, before transferring to Heho Airport for your flight back to Yangon.

Overnight in Yangon.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 11 Yangon

Meet an experienced local chef this morning. They will take you to a local market and help you to select ingredients to be used in cooking.

After the market, head to Monsoon Restaurant where your chef will teach you how to make several Myanmar dishes. Once you've made your dishes, you can try them out for lunch.

Visit Kyauktawgyi Pagoda, where locals come to pay respect to the 70 meter reclining Buddha. There are some interesting murals here depicting the life of Buddha, which your guide will be happy to tell you about. Next, visit Shwedagon Pagoda, the most revered site in Myanmar.

Walk around the huge complex and its 65 stupas. The central stupa is 90 meters tall and gilded with gold-leaf. See the sunset from here, overlooking the city.

Afterwards we'll go to the green expanse of Kandawgyi Park. The park is a popular place for people to come on an evening to relax and dine at one of its many restaurants.

It houses the Karaweik barge, a replica of the royal barge; and also a large lake with views of Shwedagon Pagoda.

Overnight in Yangon.

Meals included on this day: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 12 Yangon – Departure

Your day is free at leisure until you transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Meal included on this day: Breakfast



MYANMAR COUNTRY GUIDE

Timezone: GMT +6:30

Population: 54 Million

Religion: Theravada Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Animists.

Currency: Kyat (pronounced 'chat'). Bring enough cash in US\$ or EUR as there are very few ATMs in Myanmar and credit cards are not widely accepted. US\$ is the currency of choice and only bring new bills if possible as torn or dirty notes will not be accepted. We recommend changing your currency at official exchange counters as the service is monitored and you will receive a receipt. Travelers cheques cannot be used or exchanged in Myanmar. ATMs can be now found in some major cities but are not widely available throughout the country.

Electricity: 220V. We recommend bringing a universal plug adaptor.

Climate: Myanmar has three distinct seasons. November to February is dry and cooler and is generally the best time to travel (and the season when most tourists choose to visit). March through May, the temperature increases and can often reach 35 degrees Celsius until the rainy season begins in May, which lasts until the end of September. The beach season is from October to March with steady temperatures in the low 30's Celsius accompanied by plenty of sunshine. All mountain and hinterland areas can from cool to freezing especially in the winter months, so prepare accordingly.

Mobile Phones: Roaming is not widely available but is possible for some networks. Local SIM cards are obtainable and an inexpensive way to make local and international calls, and mobile phones can be rented on arrival at Yangon Airport. At time of writing, a basic SIM card and handset can be rented for 5 days for US\$50 with prices rising on 5-day increments.



Visas: All visitors need a visa to enter Myanmar. Pre-arranged visas on arrival are available only for groups of 10 persons or more. Visas obtained through Myanmar embassies abroad typically take 02-07 working days to process.



Suggested Reading: Finding George Orwell in Burma by Emma Larkin, The Gentleman in The Parlour by W. Somerset Maugham, The Glass Palace by Amitav Ghosh.

Clothing & What to Pack: Comfortable, casual lightweight clothing in natural fabrics is suitable for a Myanmar vacation. Bring warm clothes if you're traveling to hill stations, especially when traveling from November - February. Dress modestly and don't wear shorts or tank tops when visiting religious buildings, such as temples. It is customary to remove shoes and socks before entering a private home.

Cuisine: Sitting at a regional crossroads, Burmese cuisine is itself a reflection of the country's diversity. A typical Burmese meal comes in a wide array of small dishes, featuring seafood or freshwater fish, curries, salads, and rice. Hingyo, a clear soup, as well as ngapiye, a fermented fish paste, accompany most meals. Chinese, European and Indian food is served in restaurants at most tourist places.

Health: Travelers should be inoculated against typhoid, cholera, hepatitis A and B, tetanus, and polio as these are present in Myanmar, and it is advisable to take precautions. It is essential to have a good medical insurance that covers evacuation flights.

Safety: Myanmar is a safe country to visit, but it is advisable that you never leave your belongings unattended in public.

Tipping: Not expected but always appreciated in Myanmar. However, it is customary to tip tour guides and drivers.

Water: Don't drink tap water. Ice cubes should not be consumed in simple street stalls and restaurants.

