

Myanmar(Burma)

LUXURY IRRAWADDY RIVER CRUISE

Why join this Voyage?

- Lined with ancient palaces, pagodas and traditional villages, a cruise down the Irrawaddy between Mandalay and Bagan offers the perfect introduction to this enchanting country
- Daily guided excursions, including Bagan, with its 2,000 temples and pagodas, the revered sites of Mount Popa and Sagaing, the colonial hill station of Maymyo, as well as traditional villages
- Travel in style onboard the recently refurbished *Road to Mandalay*, a graceful river cruiser offering comfort and luxury for up to 110 passengers in a choice of cabins, all with air conditioning



Trip Summary

Travel through the heart of this magical land on an Irrawaddy River cruise on board the recently refurbished and very comfortable *Road to Mandalay*. Operating in both directions between the evocative city of Mandalay, made famous by Rudyard Kipling, and the ancient site of Bagan, this leisurely paced 8 day voyage provides the ideal way to explore some of Burma's best known sites, as well as to experience traditional village life. This is very much a cultural cruise with opportunity to meet the charming Burmese people themselves, who are incredibly hospitable and welcoming towards visitors. Throughout the voyage, the *Road to Mandalay* acts as your floating hotel, offering comfort, luxury and impeccable service, while all land-based excursions and onboard lectures will be accompanied by experienced guides.

Itinerary

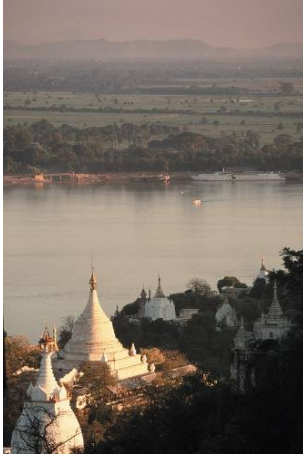


Day 1 London/ Bangkok

Depart London Heathrow on the evening Thai Airways flight to Bangkok, flying overnight.

Day 2 Bangkok/ Yangon

Depart Bangkok on the Thai Airways flight to Yangon (Rangoon), arriving early evening. Met on arrival with transfer to your hotel, the Governor's Residence.



Day 3 Yangon

Leisurely breakfast followed by guided sightseeing of the city's main sights, including the magnificent Shwegadon Pagoda, which dominates the city's skyline.

Day 4 Yangon/ Mandalay/ Embark

Morning domestic flight from Yangon to Mandalay. On arrival transfer to the *Road To Mandalay*. After lunch, guided tour of the key sights of Mandalay, then set sail.

Day 5 Burmese Village

After an early breakfast visit a local village for a walking tour. This traditional Burmese village gives you the opportunity to discover the Burmese way of life first hand, from farming and handicrafts to spirit houses and tea-shops. Rest of the day spent relaxing on board observing the fascinating local river life.



Day 6 Bagan

Arrive at Bagan, where over 2,000 temples and pagodas are scattered over the plain beside the river. A guided orientation tour introduces you to the most important temples. After lunch, option to return to Bagan, or hire a bicycle or horse-drawn cart to explore independently.

Day 7 Mount Popa

Full day excursion to Mount Popa, a national park and believed to be the sacred home of powerful 'Nats' (spirits). On top of a rocky crag is a picturesque complex of monasteries, pagodas and shrines reached via a winding, covered walkway.



Day 8 Bagan

Morning exploring some of Bagan's local markets selling wood carvings, fabrics, *longis*, rattan goods and famous lacquer ware, or you can explore independently. Mid-morning the ship sets sail for Mandalay. On board lecture on the Ayeyarwady River. The ship anchors mid-river for the evening providing a marvellous opportunity to observe the stars. A casual cocktail party is followed by dinner.

Day 9 Sagaing

Continue sailing up the river to the little Burmese village of Shwe Kyet Yet. After lunch enjoy an excursion to Sagaing considered to be the living centre of the Buddhist faith in Burma and famous for its silversmiths who still work traditionally.



Day 10 Maymyo

Visit to Maymyo, a colonial hill station set high in the hills above Mandalay. Soak up the atmosphere with its cool climate, English style houses, colourful market and beautiful botanic gardens. A typical Shan lunch is taken at a colonial house.

Day 11 Mandalay/ Disembark/ Yangon

After an early breakfast, transfer to Mandalay's airport for your onward flight back to Yangon.

Day 12 Yangon/ Bangkok/ London

Day at leisure to relax or explore further. Depart Yangon on the early evening via Bangkok back to London.



Day 13 London

Early morning arrival back into the UK.

The Boat



Road to Mandalay
Capacity: 110 passengers

Formerly the MS Nederland, she was purchased by Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express in 1995 and underwent a complete refurbishment. This graceful river cruiser offers very high standards of comfort and luxury, with unparalleled personal service and gourmet regional cuisine, whilst discovering the hidden gems of this unspoilt land.

The 66 well-appointed cabins are arranged across four decks with 5 different cabin categories, all of which feature satellite television with in-house video, en-suite bathroom, shower amenities & a small personal safe. The ship has a small on-deck swimming pool, a large sun deck, a spacious observation lounge with large picture windows, a restaurant able to accommodate all passengers and satellite communications.

Buffet lunches are served on the observation deck or in the restaurant and at dinner attentive waiters serve you delicious courses created by our experienced chefs. The air-conditioned Observation Lounge on the main deck is a comfortable retreat during the heat of the day and the focus for the local on-board entertainment in the evenings. The atmosphere on board is informal and friendly.

Route Map



2011 Departure Dates

Mandalay-Bagan-Mandalay

**Wednesday departure

January 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
February 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd
March 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th
April 20th, May 27th, July 27th
October 5th, 12th & 26th
November 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th
December 14th

Bagan-Mandalay-Bagan

**Saturday departure

January 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th
February 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
March 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
October 8th, 15th & 29th
November 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

Guide Prices for 2011

Cabin Type

(from guide price quoted per person)

Superior	£3,910
Deluxe	£4,570
State	£5,430
Governors Suite	£6,850
Single dedicated cabin	£4,295

Includes

- International & internal flights
- Airport transfers and pre & post voyage 5* hotel accommodation in Yangon (Rangoon)
- Transfers to/ from the ship
- 7 night/ 8 day cruise based on full board basis
- All guided excursions during cruise and in Mandalay

Excludes

- Any additional services or arrangements not included
- Travel insurance
- Inoculations & visa
- Drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other items of a personal nature
- Gratuity to the crew

The above prices are a guide price only based on 2 people sharing a cabin and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations. Please note that hotels and flight costs are higher during the **High Season**, November - February.

Pre & Post Extension Ideas

For those travellers wishing to take the opportunity to explore further, we would be delighted to help design a tailor-made pre &/ or post voyage land based extension for you encompassing further travel in Burma, Thailand or other parts of SE Asia. These are all areas we know very well and have specialised in for many years.

Visa Information

Visa requirements to visit Myanmar change on a regular basis and it's best to check with the Burmese embassy in your country before making your travel plans. A tourist visa's validity expires 90 days after issue and only allows a 28-day, single-entry visit. It officially costs \$20 but sometimes runs to €25 in Western Europe. You'll need three passport-sized photos for the process. At all times it remains your responsibility to organise visas, although we are more than happy to advise, help and provide the relevant supporting documentation where necessary.

Want to discuss this trip?

Please call Alex on 01285 880981 for more details or to check availability



Fostered by a childhood in the West Indies, the travel bug bit Alex early. Propelled by his enthusiasm for diverse cultures and hot food, he's travelled to over 50 countries across 7 continents, including both poles. Some of his most memorable recent experiences include dog sledding in The Arctic, kayaking in Alaska, snorkelling with whale sharks off Mexico and piranha fishing in The Amazon.

Alex is General Manager of Steppes Voyages
alex@steppestravel.co.uk