

Cycle Myanmar (Burma)



Duration: 10 days

Myanmar, or Burma as it is still known, is a country of jungles, mountains and fertile plains, with graceful pagodas dotted across the diverse landscapes. Cycling is the perfect way to discover the friendly culture of this land almost untouched by tourism.

From Mandalay we head for Bagan's ancient temples, before riding east through hot dry lowlands, passing small villages, teak plantations and rice paddies before tackling the long winding road up into cooler jungle-clad hills. A great descent brings us to the shores of beautiful Lake Inle, where we have time to relax and see the local way of life.

This is a fascinating route combining Myanmar's cultural highlights with fabulous cycling and an insight into the everyday lives of the local people.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London

Day 2: Arrive Mandalay

We arrive in Mandalay, the last royal capital, and a thriving city with many temples and colonial buildings preserving its history. Time permitting, we'll enjoy sunset at the famous U Bein Bridge, the world's longest teakwood bridge, before dinner and a trip briefing. Night hotel.

Day 3: Mandalay – Myingyan – Bagan

We drive south out of the busy city to Myingyan and start our cycling challenge! It's a scenic day in the saddle, as we head south through small bustling villages dotted across the agricultural plains. These central lowlands are quite dry, and it is likely to be hot and quite dusty, though many of the roads are tree-lined and shady. Our highlight today is the vast plain of Bagan, the remains of an ancient kingdom and one of the most unforgettable sights in Myanmar. At its height in the 11th-13th centuries, Bagan was home to over 10,000 pagodas; although many of them were destroyed, over 2000 remain. We ride among them on sandy tracks, temples and stupas of many sizes rising up into view. This wonderful day ends by climbing the steep steps to the top of one of the many pagodas for the magical sunset over the plain before heading to our hotel in the adjacent modern town of New Bagan. Night hotel.

Drive approx. 3 hours; cycle approx. 78km

Day 4: Bagan – Mount Popa

Leaving Bagan and its enchanting temples behind, we ride southwest towards Mount Popa, an extinct volcano rising to 1518m above the central lowlands; it can be seen for miles around. As we cross the rolling plains we pass fields of sesame, ground nuts and corn. There are also miles of magnificent palms, which are used to produce palm sugar and toddy, the local alcoholic offering – we'll stop at a toddy climber's hut for a chance to discover more! At Mount Popa, there's the opportunity to climb the 777 steps to the top, and visit the Popa Taungkalat Shrine, with its many statues depicting the spirits who are revered here. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 60km

Day 5: Mount Popa – Meikhtila

We continue east through the lowlands. Today is our longest day, and it will be hard at times despite most of the terrain being flat, but there is always plenty to watch as people go about their daily lives! We'll see local people working in the fields, and many people riding old metal bicycles, often balancing an array of local produce; we will feel quite humble on such modern bikes! Friendly waves and smiles accompany us as we pass villages, and there are plenty of chances to stop at the roadside for a cold drink or a tasty snack. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 115km

Day 6: Meikhtila – Kalaw

If there's time we'll head out for a look around the fascinating market before hitting the saddle. The landscape changes before our eyes today, as we leave the hot dry plains for the lush green hills of the Shan highlands. We pass farmland, forest and teak plantations on flat roads; as we approach the hills we start to see rice paddies and plenty of water-buffalo, and the vegetation around us becomes much greener and denser. Motorbikes and small tractors buzz past as we pedal along the quiet tree-lined roads, becoming progressively hillier. After a long winding climb on a beautiful tree-lined road, with wonderful views, we enjoy a lovely descent into a small town and continue on into the hills. It's hot, hard work but the scenery is wonderful and you'll have the perfect excuse to make plenty of photo-stops! Our vehicle picks us up before the last steep climb into Kalaw; lying at 1285m, this was the summer retreat of the British colonials escaping the heat of the lowlands, and it's a wonderful place to

end our day's ride. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 86km

Day 7: Kalaw – Indein – Lake Inle

Our last day is shorter, but spectacular! After a small climb out of town we sweep downhill, joining tracks which take us through the rolling hills and farmland of the Shan Plateau, passing paddy-fields and small villages perched on the hillsides. The villages are home to hill-tribes such as the Palaung; their different cultures and colourfully woven clothes show us yet another side to the country. There is plenty to immerse yourself in as we cycle through and, however tired your legs may be after the past few days, you'll want today to be longer! We have a wonderful 10km descent to Indein, an impressive temple complex on Lake Inle where the pagodas are overgrown by trees and vegetation; we'll have time to explore. Our challenge ends on the shores of Lake Inle, where motorised canoes take us to our hotel on the lake. After time to freshen up we'll have a great evening to celebrate our achievements. Night hotel.

Day 8: Lake Inle – Yangon

Today we enjoy discovering the local way of life on Lake Inle, where stilted villages and floating gardens demonstrate the innovative local culture. We explore the creeks and waterways by boat, discovering the craft workshops, temples and houses built on the lake. One of the highlights will no doubt be to watch the leg-rowing fishermen, an unique way of fishing that the local people have developed, which allows them to use two hands to cast their nets. A boat then takes us out into the open, northern part of the lake, where we enjoy the views en-route to He ho. Here we take a short flight to Yangon. Night hotel. *(Dinner not included)*

Day 9: Yangon; flight departs

We have plenty of time to explore the sights of Yangon, where the main highlight is the magnificent golden Shwedagon Pagoda, before heading back to the airport for our flight home. *(Lunch and Dinner not included)*

Day 10: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Mandalay / Yangon return
- All food (other than three meals) and accommodation
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides and drivers
- Vehicle support and backup equipment on the trip
- 21-speed mountain bike (Trek/Giant or equivalent)
- Entrance to Bagan and any other sites visited as part of the itinerary

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and 2 water bottles
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Inbound airport departure tax
- Burma entry visa
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions and activities (e.g. shrine visit on Mt. Popa)
- Airline taxes: we cap these so £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | YELLOW

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **YELLOW** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 25 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.