

CULTURE + WALKING

# MYANMAR

Mandalay to the Temples of Bagan



*Classic*  
JOURNEYS



“Classic Journeys provides unbeatable access to experiences around the globe.”

— *Travel + Leisure*

## Burma, Lost in Time

Experience the re-emergence of Myanmar. After years of isolation, this exotic land has opened its doors. From Yangon's gold-encrusted Shwedagon Pagoda to mind-boggling Bagan where 2,000 pagodas and temples dot the plain, you'll see the country's essential landmarks. But most of all, we'll immerse you in the lovely countryside and the lives of the people whose local traditions continue. We'll introduce you to floating farmers, lacquerware artisans, schoolchildren, and ethnic tribespeople in village markets. You'll meet elephants and the mahouts who train them in an elephant sanctuary. Throughout you'll stay in an array of fine accommodations – from eco-resorts to gracious converted mansions.

## DAILY ITINERARY

MYANMAR | MANDALAY TO THE TEMPLES OF BAGAN | CULTURE + WALKING

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### DAY 1

#### YANGON

- Marvel at the colonial-era architecture on a guided walk
- See Shwedagon Pagoda shimmer in the tropical sunset

On your arrival, we'll meet you at the airport to escort you to your hotel, the former home of the ruler of Burma's southern states. You start with a guided walk in the downtown area where you take in the gilded Sule Pagoda and a reclining Buddha that's nearly 200 feet long. And you'll be amazed by the splendid colonial-era architecture that lines many of the tree-shaded streets – an important element of the city's heritage that has survived nearly intact.

After lunch in a neighborhood restaurant, you visit Shwedagon Pagoda, the gold-domed, diamond-encrusted stupa, to see it shimmer in the tropical sunset.

**OVERNIGHT: YANGON**

**MEALS: L, D**

### DAY 2

#### YANGON / HEHO

- Enjoy a vineyard walk and tasting
- Settle into a lodge on the shores of Inle Lake

You take a short flight north to Heho, the gateway to the Inle Lake region of Myanmar. Your first destination is a sight you might never have expected in this country: the Red Mountain Estate Vineyards. The vines were all imported from France and Spain to grow in the cool climates and fine soil of the region. You walk in the vineyard to learn about its history and relax in the winery for a tasting and lunch.

This afternoon, you arrive at your lodge on the shores of Inle Lake. It's such a fascinating region because of the many ethnic tribes that use these waters as their lifeline. Boats are the primary transportation. Houses, markets and even gardens literally float on the water. The mild temperatures are perfect for the walks you take as you explore over the coming days.

**OVERNIGHT: INLE LAKE/NYAUNG SHWE**

**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 3

#### INLE LAKE

- Meet silk weavers and floating farmers
- Canoe on a serene lake

After breakfast, you walk to Khuang Daing Village. It is famous for its delicious handmade soybean crackers, tofu and other mouthwatering treats. The village makes traditional snacks and you have a chance to visit local houses and learn about their daily business.

After lunch, you visit Nampan village to see their local cigar making and continue onto Inn Paw Khone, a small village that specializes in silk weaving. The day will end with a tranquil canoe ride to witness life in one of the floating villages scattered around the lake.

**OVERNIGHT: INLE LAKE**

**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 4

#### GREEN HILL VALLEY

- Meet elephants and the mahouts who train them
- Participate in a re-forestation program
- Explore the forest

With breakfast under your belt, you head off for a distinctive eco-centric day. Your first stop: Kalaw, a hill station built by the British at a cool 1,300-meter altitude to rise above the heat of the plains. The buildings retain their colonial charm, and the local people of Nepalese and Indian descent are reminders of the workers who came here to build the railway and roads.

Then you're off to the Green Hill Valley Elephant Camp, where elephants "retired" from the lumber industry live out their lives in their natural habitat. You have the chance to feed and bathe the elephants and explore through the forest. It's a fascinating, close-up look at the heroic work being done by the experts to protect the grand animals that have been part of Myanmar's landscape for generations. During your visit, you also pitch in to help plant some of the native trees grown in the camp's own nursery.

You end the day back at your lodge for a leisurely dinner.

**OVERNIGHT: INLE LAKE**

**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 5

#### MANDALAY

- Visit with the monks of Mahagandayon Monastery
- Walk with the locals on the scenic U Bein bridge

This morning, you take a quick flight to Mandalay, the last royal capital of Burma.

Today, this bustling city is a treasure chest of Myanmar's art and architecture. You visit Mahagandayon Monastery where more than 1,000 young Buddhist monks live and study. The population is so high because most young men of Myanmar are expected to spend some time serving as a monk, and you get a close look at this way of life. Nearby is the scenic teak pedestrian bridge of U Bein. The high, narrow walkway extends more than half a mile across Taungthaman Lake. At dusk, it's an amazing scene with fishermen on the water below, saffron-robed monks and local residents biking home from work. It's a scenic and human panorama that may well be one of your defining moments in Myanmar.

**OVERNIGHT: MANDALAY**

**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 6

#### MANDALAY / BAGAN

- Marvel at the pagodas of Mandalay
- Make a short hop to Bagan

Your day begins with a visit to Mahamuni Pagoda, named for the image of Buddha that he was said to have embraced himself, bringing it to life. The intricacy of the wood carvings at the Golden Palace Monastery is nearly inconceivable. It's one of the great Burmese architectural treasures, all that remains of a royal palace built by King Mindon in the mid 19th century. Every inch of its teak façade is covered by an incredible panoply of serpentine dragons, dancers, mythical animals, flowers and vines.

## DAILY ITINERARY

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This afternoon, you make the hop to Bagan, one of the richest archeological sites in Asia due to the broad plain that contains more than 2,000 pagodas, temples and monasteries.

**OVERNIGHT: BAGAN**  
**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 7

#### BAGAN

- Begin the day with a hot-air balloon ride over the temples
- Explore the architectural wonders of Bagan plain
- See first-hand how lacquer artisans create their wares

The near-epic scale of Bagan deserves a full day for exploration. For a dramatic orientation, you ascend in hot-air balloons in the calm, early morning air. Floating silently, the Irrawaddy is to your west and mountains rise to the east. But the sharpest peaks in view are the innumerable spires that pierce the tree-covered plain. The first buildings were erected in the 11th century, and today you discover a dizzying range of architectural styles and degrees of ruin that make every moment unique.

It's hard to describe the spiritual aura of this place. There are no shops or other development. In these early days of Myanmar's re-emergence, it's serene, peaceful and un-touristed. On your guided visit you explore several of the most prominent structures including Gubyaukgyi, a 13th-century temple with fine frescoes...Htilo Minlo, a vaulted cave temple covered with rare glazed sandstone tiles...and Ananda temple, sometimes called the "Westminster Abbey of Burma."

Bagan is also known for its profusion of lacquer artisans and other craftspeople. You take a break in the afternoon to stop at a workshop and learn about the process – from the gathering of the tree sap that's used as a varnish to the hand-etching of the intricate traditional designs.

Finally, as dusk nears, you witness Bagan at its spectacular best as you ascend the spire of a pagoda for an awe-inspiring and truly unforgettable view at sunset.

**OVERNIGHT: BAGAN**  
**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 8

#### BAGAN/IRRAWADDY RIVER

- Experience village life in Phwar Saw
- Cruise the Irrawaddy River

There's wonderful continuity here in Bagan, too, as you see when you get a look at real village life in the small settlement of Phwar Saw. En route, you wander amid the amazing array of fresh fruits and vegetables at Nyaung Oo Market.

After lunch in a local restaurant, hop aboard a pony cart for a trot in areas of Bagan that cars can't reach. Far to the north, the Irrawaddy River arises from tributaries that flow from the Himalayas. Rudyard Kipling called this river "The Road to Mandalay." Since it was first used for trade in the 6th century, the Irrawaddy has been central to Burmese life and you get your own unique perspective when you take a leisurely cruise with a front row seat for the showy sunset. Tonight's farewell dinner will be at one of our favorite local restaurants.

**OVERNIGHT: BAGAN**  
**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 9

#### YANGON

- Return to Yangon
- Explore the National Museum
- Shop for handicrafts at the Bogyoke Aung San Market

After breakfast, you take a short return flight to Yangon. Upon arrival, you visit the National Museum which affords an excellent introduction to Burmese history throughout the ages. Highlights include the Lion Throne belonging to the last King of Myanmar, King Thibaw Min and a stunning collection of ceremonial dresses.

After lunch at a local restaurant explore Bogyoke Aung San Market, still commonly known by its old British name of Scott Market. Undoubtedly offering the largest selection of handicrafts in Myanmar, the market is a great place to discover a bargain and have fun haggling with the local traders.

Around 4pm, you return to the Yangon Airport your flight home.

**MEALS: B**



## DAILY ITINERARY

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### Tour Hotels



#### Belmond Governor's Residence

A colonial-style mansion dating from the 1920s, this romantic 5-star hotel was once home to the ruler of Myanmar's southern states. Rooms are decorated in carved teak and silk. Take a dip in the swimming pool, or enjoy a spa treatment in your room.

**OVERNIGHT: YANGON | NIGHTS: 1**



#### Inle Lake View Resort

The only deluxe boutique hotel on the shores of the lake, this classic property sits on 24 lush acres. Rooms are decorated in Burmese style, and each has a private balcony and excellent view of the lake. The property also has a wonderful spa.

**OVERNIGHT: NYAUNG SHWE TOWNSHIP, SOUTHERN SHAN STAT | NIGHTS: 3**



#### Hotel by the Red Canal

An oasis by the landmark Red Canal in local folklore just minutes from the famed Mandalay Palace and other attractions. The Hotel by the Red Canal is a convenient sanctuary, with its lush tropical greenery and calming water features, amidst the hustle.

**OVERNIGHT: MANDALAY | NIGHTS: 1**



#### Aureum Palace Resort

Set amid the ancient temples of Bagan, this expansive resort and luxury spa has 27 acres of landscaped gardens. Antiques, artifacts and art uniquely adorn the property, and bedrooms are spacious. Take an evening stroll on the property's lovely paths.

**OVERNIGHT: BAGAN | NIGHTS: 3**

## Tour Dates & Prices

| Tour Dates               | Price per Person | Price per Person |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                          | Double Occupancy | Single Occupancy |
| March 9-17, 2020         | \$4,995          | \$6,290          |
| November 9-17, 2020      | \$5,295          | \$6,590          |
| Dec 27, 2020-Jan 4, 2021 | \$5,495          | \$6,790          |
| February 1-9, 2021       | \$5,295          | \$6,590          |
| March 8-16, 2021         | \$5,395          | \$6,690          |
| November 8-16, 2021      | \$5,395          | \$6,690          |
| Dec 27, 2021-Jan 4, 2022 | \$5,495          | \$6,790          |

Want a different date? Or your own date? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE) to learn more about private journeys.

### INTERNAL AIRFARE

This trip includes internal flights, which are priced separately from the land tour. The total cost for the internal flights is approximately \$595 per person.

## Trip Essentials

**TRIP LENGTH:** 9 Days, 8 Nights

**START:** 9:30 AM Lobby of Belmond Governor's Residence, Yangon, Myanmar

**END:** 4:00 PM Yangon Airport, Yangon, Myanmar Typically, we return on YH flight g10 arriving into Yangon at 10:15 AM. Please check with us for any flight updates before you ticket your international flights out of Myanmar.

**TERRAIN:** Easy to moderate on good trails and lakeside paths; often with a vehicle in close support.

## What's Included

- Memorable accommodations for 8 nights
- All breakfasts, lunches and dinners from lunch on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

## Above & Beyond Benefits

- **Invisible Check-In**
- **Privileged Access Events**

READY TO BOOK?  
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

### Or give us a call

1-833-387-1210

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

[moreinfo@classicjourneys.com](mailto:moreinfo@classicjourneys.com)



### TRAVEL WORRY-FREE!

It's easy with insurance from Travel Guard. Your policy can cover trip cancellation, travel delays, lost luggage, medical emergencies, and more. If you are traveling with kids, add them to your policy at no extra cost. [Click here](#) or call 800-826-4919 for details.

### AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to a [whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

### ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

\*\*Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

# THE Classic Journeys Difference

## HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.



At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

President & Founder



## You can expect the highest standards:



### Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



### Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



### Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



### Small Group Travel:

With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



### Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



### Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

## You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Myanmar...

- Watching the sunset as you cruise the Irrawaddy River
- Meeting Burmese fisherman, farmers and cigar makers
- Walking the city walls of legendary Mandalay
- Visiting with the artisans in the silk weaving village of Inn Paw Khone
- Hot-air ballooning over the temples of Bagan

*"Traveling with Classic Journeys is the ideal way to see and immerse oneself in the local atmosphere."*

—Nancy R.

Let's Go!

TO RESERVE: 833.493.5038 | CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/RESERVATIONS

You might also enjoy...



## Bhutan

### Himalayan Villages & Monasteries

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Exploring dramatic Himalayan monasteries
- Meeting rice-farmers and yak-herders at work in the countryside
- Witnessing the butter-lamp blessing ceremony and the skill of native masked dancers

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/bhutan/>.



## China

### Shanghai to Shangri-La

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Hiking the most scenic stretch of the Great Wall
- Dancing with locals in the town square of Yangshuo
- Feeling the Himalayan Breezes in a Tibetan wildflower meadow

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/china/>.



## India

### Rajasthan & Taj Mahal

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Exploring rustic villages
- Traversing countryside trails
- Scouting bustling bazaars with a local chef

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/india/>.



You might also enjoy...



## Nepal

### Himalayan Villages & Chitwan Safari

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Meeting Nepali farmers and villages on valley walks
- Experiencing sunrise over the Himalayas
- Spotting one-horned rhinos in Chitwan National Park

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/nepal-walking-tours/>.



## Thailand

### Phuket, Chiang Mai & Chiang Rai

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Cruising through Phang Nga Bay on a traditional junk boat
- Mingling with members of colorful hill tribes
- Communing elephants along forest and jungle paths

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/thailand/>.



## Southeast Asia

### Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Rambling past rice fields to friendly villages untouched by tourism
- Playing with an elephant in the Mekong River
- Absorbing Angkor Wat at sunrise

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/vietnam/>.

# “Enthusiasm is Contagious”

AS TRAVEL + LEISURE NAMES CLASSIC JOURNEYS THE WORLD'S BEST TOUR OPERATOR FOR 2019, FOUNDER EDWARD PIEGZA REVEALS HOW IT FEELS. ENTHUSIASTICALLY.



*EDITOR'S NOTE: Just before publication of this issue, Travel + Leisure magazine announced that its readers have voted Classic Journeys the World's Best Tour Operator for 2019. It's the second time Classic Journeys has won that recognition and the 14th consecutive year the company has been in the Top 10.*

### **Congratulations! How did you get the news?**

I received a top-secret email and phone call from the editor of *Travel + Leisure* a few weeks ago with orders not to tell ANYONE. Friends and neighbors must have wondered why my smile has been so extra big lately. Now they know.

### **And how does it feel to be the World's Best Tour Operator again?**

Awesome. Humbling. So, so satisfying. Deeply gratifying to learn that we have achieved what we set out to do which is to handcraft trips of a lifetime for every guest who travels with us. I'm known as long-winded, so I could probably come up with 10 or 15 more ways to describe it if you want me to keep going.

### **Why do you think *Travel + Leisure* gave you this recognition?**

Actually, it isn't the *T+L* editors who make the decision. That's the best part. Their readers cast the votes. So the people who do the traveling, the guests who explore the world with us and our competitors — they are the ones who raised their hands to tell *T+L* that Classic Journeys is the World's Best Tour Operator based on their own experiences. Let me say it right here: "To all of you who voted for us, you are the World's Best Guests!"

### **What do you think makes your guests the World's Best Guests?**

That's easy. They are curious. They care about connecting with people of different cultures and immersing themselves in the world. They treasure experiences more than things. Like the old ad slogan went, they go for the gusto and crave the chance to have one-of-a-kind moments. They are incredibly interesting and interested people, and all of us at Classic Journeys count it as a real privilege to share in their passion for travel. And we feel that way on the

other 364 days of the year when we're not celebrating recognition like this.

### **I guess this is what you meant when you told me that "Enthusiasm is contagious."**

Absolutely. That's not our official motto, but it could be. We love what we do. We enjoy helping guests figure out how to invest their precious time and budget. I can honestly say that all of us feel that way — the Guest Services folks who interact with you while you're planning your trip, the Tour Operations team members who plan all of the logistics, the local guides who lead each one of our trips full time. There's just a huge amount of positive energy in what we do, and I think it truly is hard to resist. We'd climb into every one of our guest's suitcases and go along with them if we could. Because we can't, we call each guest while they're on tour just to be sure they are having a trip of a lifetime.

### **Has anyone ever called Classic Journeys obsessive?**

I hope so, because we are. Everything is in the details. For instance, we've created a special tour for the total eclipse of the sun which is going to pass over parts of South America in 2020. We've already analyzed likely traffic patterns in the most remote areas and figured out how to structure our itinerary so that our guests will be in place in the path of totality while the people who don't plan ahead will be stuck in jams on remote dirt roads. We enjoy obsessing about details like that so that our guests never have to.



### **How can you top this?**

Oh, we never let ourselves think of it that way. We just continue to approach every single guest on each and every departure like the most important guest we've ever had. It seems to be working! Of course, we keep looking for new ways to win more converts. For 2019, we've launched a new series of Classic Journeys that are based from

## **"I voted for you!"**

We've heard that expression so many times lately from guests who registered their votes with *Travel + Leisure*. Given the results, we know it's true ... and you know that your votes really count!

### **STAFF AND GUIDES**

"I always feel like I'm traveling with a best friend. I prefer your local guides to the ones that other companies fly in."

### **ITINERARIES AND DESTINATIONS**

"If it's on my bucket list, you always seem to go there. Of course, with so many options you always seem to make my list longer and longer!"

### **ACTIVITIES**

"On your trips, I've cooked with Michelin chefs, sung songs with Quechua schoolchildren, and walked on glaciers with the descendants of Vikings. Fun doesn't begin to describe it."

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

"How you manage so many 5-star properties on these trips shocks me. But please, please, please keep it up!"

### **FOOD**

"I have never eaten so well so often so happily. When you people claim that you are foodies, you aren't kidding."

### **OVERALL VALUE**

"We have never had a better vacation at any price."

river cruise boats. On a different note, seeing how many travelers can't always find as much vacation time as they really want, we have developed a series of 6-day or shorter quick trips that go as far afield as Iceland, the Galápagos and Morocco.

### **Final thoughts?**

It's always an honor to win recognition. But, for all of us at Classic Journeys, the biggest privilege is to share the dreams of our guests and make those dreams come true. That connection is the best feeling of all.