

AMELIA DALTON^{LTD}

TRAVEL

BURMA 2018

Exploring Rangoon, the Irrawaddy River, Mandalay, Bagan & the colonial hill country.



Escaping the European winter gloom to BURMA (Myanmar), a truly beautiful land of superb heritage sites, gentle religious people and stylish charm.

We begin in **Yangon** with two nights at one of the world's most romantic and elegant hotels – **The Governor's Residence** and enjoy a private dinner on our first evening at small tables in the luxuriant garden.

Next morning, a guided Heritage Walking introduces us to the **colonial area**, we will see the **Customs House**, old **Post Office** and **Irrawaddy Flotilla Company** buildings before dropping into the old-school **Strand Hotel**. Life in **Burma** still revolves round the tea house and our first introduction to 'tea society' is at the buzzy **Rangoon Tea House**. In the falling evening light, we visit the **market of holy goods** en route to the **Shwedagon Pagoda**; dusk is the most magical time to see this magnificent shimmering golden pagoda. Tonight we dine in a historic house nearby. Next morning a short flight takes us to **BAGAN** where we board our ship.





The **Irrawaddy**, one of the world's most fascinating rivers, has been a highway since the 6th century, and continues to shape the country's history, influencing settlement patterns and economic development. As well as being incredibly diverse, the river provides us with an insight into village life as the varied boat traffic and rural scenes slip by. We venture forth on foot (at a pleasant leisurely pace), by cycle-rickshaw, ox-cart and even by private local bus.

Using our boat as a base, we visit **villages, river islands, markets, schools** and **hill towns** redolent of the British Colonial time. We see **historic sites** in **MANDALAY** and **AVA**, the iconic **U BEIN bridge**, carefully selected monasteries and pagodas, as well as what may be for some, the high point of the tour - **BAGAN**, where 3,000 temples are spread through the countryside across the great river plain.



Amelia Dalton: *I have visited and worked in Burma regularly over the past 10 years leading and lecturing and have re-worked this itinerary picking places that are accessible from the river to provide a truly unusual and varied collection. I have travelled the entire navigable area of the Irrawaddy River from the far north down to Yangon and the delta and have also been fortunate enough to travel extensively throughout the more remote areas of the country, exploring many of the other rivers and visiting the coastal and upland areas. Spending many weeks in this charming country has enabled me to create this colourful and varied itinerary illustrating the culture, people, history, temples, markets and sites of Burma.*





DETAILED ITINERARAY

Friday 12th January 2018: YANGON: After arriving at Yangon international airport you will be met and transferred to the beautiful **Governor's Residence Hotel**. This evening, we meet for a private dinner in the delightful tropical garden at the hotel.



Saturday 13th January: YANGON: guided by our English-speaking guides, one of whom will be with us throughout our days in Burma, our **Heritage Walking Tour** starts amongst one of the world's most complete and fascinating collection of **colonial architecture**.

We see the **City Hall**, combining traditional tiered roofs with European design, pass what was once the '**Harrods**' of the period, complete with corner tower and balconies, see the **Law Courts** built in 1931 in powerful Imperial style with an imposing colonnade. We drop into the luxurious **Strand Hotel**, continue to the **Custom House** with an elegant tower and double faced clock, see the **Art Deco Port Authority building** and the **colonaded façade** of the famous **Irrawaddy Flotilla Company**. This unique collection of colonial buildings will all be part of the leisurely morning's walking tour.



After the bustle, colour and street life of the centre of town we adopt the local custom and have lunch at the **Rangoon Tea House** evocative of colonial times with ceiling fans and tall windows, there is a large number of specialist teas and delicious and varied local food from steaming bowls of soup to different curries (as well as non-spicy food). Used by both locals and Europeans alike, this is a place typical of new, developing Myanmar. A brief rest at our hotel precedes a late afternoon departure to the sacred golden **Swedagon Pagoda**. Entering through the **market of holy goods**, where all the accoutrements a monk needs from slippers to his fan, are for sale, we arrive at the main area, to join families and monks strolling round the pagoda in the setting sun. Dinner tonight will be at the **House of Memories**, a mock-Tudor colonial villa full of antiques and old photos that was once the office of General Aung San where his typewriter and desk remain in situ.





Sunday 14th January: RIVER SAILING

Early this morning, with Reggie to accompany us, we take a short flight north to **BAGAN** to embark on our ship, the luxurious '*Road to Mandalay*'. Leaving Bagan astern, the ship voyages upstream with the mighty **Irrawaddy River** our 'highway' for the coming days. In the afternoon there will be a demonstration of how to tie a *longyi*, the Myanmar sarong worn by both men and women and later you may wish to attend a talk on *Myanmar's Past, Present and Future* given by one of the on-board guides. Tonight, dinner is served in the elegant Restaurant with a selection of Asian and Western dishes. We will anchor overnight with a breathtaking special river 'Surprise' (weather permitting).

Monday 15th January: River Island Village Walk

Our day starts at a leisurely pace: you can choose this morning between sunrise yoga, a meditation class, a cookery demonstration or simply a Spa treatment and laze by the pool before lunch on the open top-deck as we cruise north. The ship's doctor will give a presentation on the charitable and community activities he is involved with at villages along the river, such as school building and healthcare projects. In the afternoon we stroll the simple dirt tracks across a mid-river island through fields of beans, corn and millet passing villagers going about their daily lives to visit a community of woodcarvers who create decorative ox carts for ceremonial processions.

Tuesday 16th January: MANDALAY

Arriving early into the evocative town of **Mandalay**, we have a full day to explore. Eschewing the less-worthy sites, we witness the custom of giving alms to monks, visit the **Jade Market**, see the extraordinarily beautiful 729 carved marble 'pages' at **Kuthodaw Pagoda**, and the glorious teak monastery of **Shwenandaw**, once part of King Mindon's personal quarters. We end our time ashore at **U Bein Bridge** a photogenic and fascinating construction of 1000 teak pillars, before a performance of acrobats on deck concludes a busy day.





Wednesday 17th January: **Pyin Oo Lwin**

Leaving the river plains of the Irrawaddy River, we travel up country through teak forests into lush hill country to visit the British hill station of **Pyin Oo Lwin**, once the summer escape for the British establishment. Half-timbered villas create a compact, genteel little town with a superb hill-country Shan farmers' market selling a vast colourful variety of local produce from strawberry liqueur to crickets, medicines and tea. This is an opportunity to see some of the differing tribes and a different way of life from the Irrawaddy farmers. We see the **Kandawgyi Gardens** created in the early 20th century by Turkish soldiers with its contrasting highly manicured areas with roses and pansies to wilder stands of bamboos and orchids. We visit the **Governor's summer residence**, now a relic of the early 20th century and tour the town by horse and carriage before returning to our ship for a delicious dinner either al fresco on deck or in the main restaurant: the choice is yours.



Thursday 18th January: **Ava & Sailing**

Those who wish may take an early-morning visit to the village of Shwe Kyet Yet; the base for our ship *The Road to Mandalay* for many years, where you have the opportunity to donate food to monks from the local monastery. During our return on foot we will see the bustling early morning activity around the teashops. On our return the ship sets sail for **AVA**,



the ancient imperial capital situated between the Irrawaddy and Myitnge Rivers. This historic area can best be explored either by horse cart (or bike if you prefer) the lanes wind through the fields passing ruined palaces, temples and the old city walls.

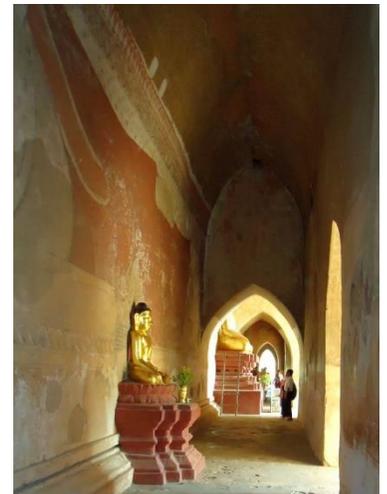




Returning in the mid morning, to the comforts, spa and pool of the *Road to Mandalay*, we spend the remainder of the day cruising down river with time to enjoy the unrolling scenery, watch the varied boats pass by and laze on deck. In the afternoon there will be a talk on the *Traditions of Burmese Life* before we anchor mid river for the night.

Friday 19th Janaury: **BAGAN**

Arriving at breakfast time, the ship drops anchor near the Taung Be village jetty at **Bagan** where the river plain is dotted with thousands of temples from different eras and is deemed to be one of the world's great sites on a par with Ankor Watt or Borobudur. The complex of pagodas,



both ruined and restored, offer a fascinating insight into Bagan's history and architectural styles. Temples are surrounded by fields where farmers grow crops such as peanut, sesame and beans, we will choose the most significant and historically important ones to visit. Returning for lunch on board, in the afternoon we have a choice of activities from visiting **a village** where local food specialties are produced or to a creator of colourful **bamboo fans** which are given as gifts at weddings. In the evening light we return to our ship through



the archaeological area by **horse-cart** trotting along small tracks amongst the trees, temples and fields: a photographer's dream. Grilled specialities are a highlight of dinner tonight served from cooking stations under the stars on the Observation Deck. Afterwards there will be a traditional classical marionette performance. Historically these shows were royal entertainment, depicting stories from the early life of Buddha, but they were also considered a safe way to deliver messages to the King.



Saturday 20th January: Chauk & Salay

This morning we travel approximately an hour south to visit the rural market at the town of **Chauk** and then to the riverside small town of **Salay** with its wonderful colonial architecture. We wander quiet lanes, lunch in a restored colonial home and see the intricately carved shrines at **Yoke Sone Kyanug** as well as the lacquer Buddha said to date from the 13th century.



Sunday 21st January: Bagan

Those who wish may have a spectacular **hot-air balloon ride** (additional cost) to see the sun rise over the temples. The sounds of villagers starting their day, smells of breakfast cooking, dogs, cockerels and calling children float up as the balloon drifts over head. Upon disembarkation this morning, we visit **Nyaung U** - a superb place both to observe the locals doing their shopping from buying tealeaf salad to choosing pickled bamboo and also for us perhaps to buy a *longyi* or silk sarong or some beautiful glossy **black lacquerware** –



Bagan is **the** place for lacquer. In time for lunch we arrive at the Aureum Palace where we can indulge in a relaxing afternoon pool-side, or continue visits to temples, villages or go shopping with Reggie, our guide. Tonight, our final evening together will be with the floodlit temples of Bagan as a backdrop.

Monday 22nd January: Bagan - Yangon

Early next morning there will be transfers to Bagan airport for your appropriate onward flight.

This itinerary is subject to change depending on local conditions such as the Irrawaddy water level.

ACCOMMODATION

Governor's Residence is simply **the** hotel in Yangon. Housed in a charming, elegant colonial building dating from the 1920's, it was the home of the ruler of Burma's southern states. Built largely of local teak, the fan-cooled verandas overlook the tropical garden, lotus ponds and large swimming pool. Bedrooms are air conditioned, spacious with teak and silk furnishings.

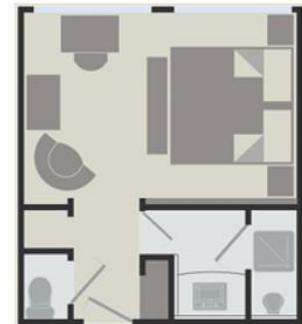
Our ship: Road to Mandalay was specially transported by **ORIENT EXPRESS** to Burma to cruise the Irrawaddy. Cruising the river is truly an unforgettable and delightful experience, relaxing but full of interest. The on-board team is professional and attentive, food (both European and Burmese) is varied and delicious. There is also an on-board doctor.

Cabins: The spacious en-suite cabins have large windows, are air-conditioned and furnished with beautiful fabrics, fine linens and soft towels. There are three types of cabin available, we will have the highest grade **STATE** cabins (23sqm.) each with en-suite shower, telephone, satellite TV with in-house video, safe and hairdryer. Early morning tea and coffee are available in the cabin.

Restaurants: the executive chef creates delicious innovative dishes using local ingredients as well as European alternatives with wines to compliment the rich and varied menus; house wine is included with meals. There is both an airconditioned restaurant and an al fresco deck grill.

Sun Deck; has a swimming pool, grill restaurant and a bar with comfortable chairs to relax in as the scenery slips past.

Spa & Gym: time for yourself - whether you prefer to work out or simply have a luxurious massage.



State Cabin





AUREUM PALACE, Bagan

Generally regarded as one of the very best hotels in Bagan, the stunningly situated buildings area spread over 27 acres of gardens and echo the red brick colours of the temples. The spacious, stylish rooms are furnished with teak décor. The splendid swimming pool has superb views of the temples and there is a spa, massage and fitness centre. We will have **Lotus grade** rooms.



Costs remain as previously quoted with no supplements for up-graded cabins or at the Aureum Palace. NOT included are personal items, e.g. Balloon Flights, spa treatments, wines & spirits not at lunch/dinner, tours & transfers not mentioned etc. flights to/from Myanmar, gratuities, Myanmar visa, travel insurance and Government levies or taxes introduced after the publication of this programme.