



## Myanmar Discovery Dossier

### Immerse Yourself Tour | 15 Days | Active

Yangon – Bagan – Mandalay – Pindaya – Inle Lake – Loikaw

A land of dazzling pagodas, crumbling temples and age-old customs, this Immerse Yourself Tour delves deep into the magic and mystery of Myanmar. You will explore cultural treasures, try your hand at traditional crafts and meet some of the country's diverse local people.

#### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- Cycle by Bagan's temples
- Ascend Mt Popa
- Learn to hammer gold leaf
- Hike the Shan Highlands
- Explore Inle Lake
- Meet ethnic minority tribes



## Myanmar Discovery tour inclusions

- Return international flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (If your group is 10 or more travellers)

*Personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.*

## Immerse Yourself Tour

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Immerse Yourself Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts or Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. Our Immerse Yourself tours include:

- Cycling and walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

## Active Tour

'Myanmar Discovery' is an **Active** tour. This is one of the most demanding trips Wendy Wu Tours offers. As a whole, this itinerary requires a high level of fitness.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time.
- At some of the sights visited there are a large number of steps to climb
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats often without assistance.

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our 'Immerse Yourself' Tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

## Country Profile: Myanmar

Myanmar is a spiritual country, largely unexplored by tourists until recently. It is known as the 'Golden Land' because of the countless number of pagodas and temples that dominate the landscape. In Myanmar, 89% of the population is devoutly Buddhist, which is reflected in their gentle and welcoming nature.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Yangon and end the tour on Day 14 in Yangon. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

## Important Information Regarding Itinerary Changes and Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our Myanmar office on **+95 (0) 9 977 11 5310 (24 hours)** to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in Myanmar. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in Myanmar as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival time.

## Myanmar Discovery Itinerary

### DAY 1: FLY TO YANGON

Fly to Myanmar and, together with those arriving at a similar time, you will be met by your guide or driver in the arrivals hall at Yangon airport to travel to your hotel for check in. The remainder of the day is at leisure

#### Destination Information

**Yangon** - With a population of over five million, Myanmar's former capital possesses a peaceful atmosphere with colonial boulevards and tranquil lakes. This charming city thrives by night with bustling streets filled with stalls selling everything from locally made handicrafts to fruit and cigars.

### DAY 2: YANGON

After breakfast visit the Shwedagon Pagoda to enjoy the peace and beauty of this awe-inspiring pagoda complex. At this time, it is very quiet and serene. Visit the National Museum, rich in artefacts and historical pieces from Myanmar's past. Then take a short ride on the circular train route before having lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch go to the spacious two-story colonial style home of General Aung San and where Aung San Su Kyi first lived. It is now a small museum, and with its lovely house architecture and the pictures and mementoes, it is worth the visit for those looking to soak up some historical ambience. Then you will travel to the inner downtown area for a walking tour to see the bustling sidewalk markets and the many large and impressive colonial buildings still in use from the time of the British Raj. End your walk at the historic Strand hotel

with a cocktail in the Strand Bar before returning to the hotel for dinner.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### Destination Information

**Shwedagon Pagoda** - Located on top of Singuttara Hill, where many locals and Buddhists come to worship. Shwedagon Pagoda is thought to have been built between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries; however it has been rebuilt many times. It is here that eight strands of Buddha's hair are said to be kept. The pagoda is covered in gold and contains diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

**National Museum** – Housing works of art and historic memorabilia. Here you will learn the history and tradition of Myanmar.

**Strand Road and Pansodan Street** – Many fine examples of British colonial architecture dating from the mid 1800's are located downtown. Pansodan Street intersects Strand Road, which runs parallel to Yangon River and where Pansodan Jetty is located. This is a great opportunity to witness a hive of activity along the riverfront.

### DAY 3: YANGON TO BAGAN

This morning fly one hour and 20 minutes to Bagan where upon arrival, you will visit beautiful Ananda temple before boarding a private boat for an enjoyable 30 minute ride on the Irrawaddy river to Kyun Thiri Village. The village is somewhat isolated from main Bagan and is a lovely place to wonder around and observe the ways of life. We will have

tea and snacks at the village monastery which is in a charming setting with trees and its own small golden pagoda. Return by boat to Bagan for lunch at a local restaurant and later visit a lacquer ware craft shop. In the late afternoon, take a leisurely horse cart ride among the villages, temples and monasteries as the afternoon wanes.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

**Bagan** - It is believed as many as 13,000 temples and stupas once stood in the area around Bagan; however, invasions, war and natural disasters have reduced most of these to rubble. Despite this, Bagan is home to more than 2,200 standing ancient temples and is Myanmar's greatest architectural site.

**Shwezigon Pagoda** - This beautiful pagoda was built by King Anawrahta in the 11<sup>th</sup> century to enshrine one of the four replicas of the Buddha's tooth found in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Today it is considered Bagan's main religious site rising from the earth in three separate terraces.

**Htilominlo Pagoda** - This pagoda built in 1218, marks the spot where King Nantaungmya was chosen to be the crown prince. Today it still has some of the original plaster and carved reliefs on display.

#### **DAY 4: BAGAN**

Today drive two hours to Mt. Popa and climb more than 750 steps to the nearby temple of Taung Kalat, set atop an extinct volcano and said to contain 37 spirits, also known as 'nats'. In the afternoon, take a bicycle ride to see the Kauk Gyu Cave Temple. Explore the temple and drive back to your hotel, as your bikes will be returned separately.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

*Please note: If you do not want to partake in the bike ride, you can arrange with your guide to leave the hotel later by bus to arrive at the temple at the same time your group members do.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Mt Popa** - Formed by a volcano almost 250,000 years ago and a revered spiritual residence of the 37 'nats,' worshipped in Myanmar in unison with Buddhism. There are a number of statues and shrines that represent these spirits located along the mountain. Once you reach the top, the temple of Taung Kalat affords sweeping views of Myingyan Plain below.

#### **DAY 5: BAGAN TO MANDALAY**

Leave Bagan and fly 30 minutes to Mandalay this morning. Considered the epicentre of Myanmar culture, Mandalay's

sites reflect this. Visit a gold leaf hammering shop. Then we visit the famous Mahamuni Buddha figure, one of the most revered in all Myanmar. Then on to Shenandaw Monastery, a unique teakwood structure, before going to Kuthodaw pagoda 'the world's largest book', which has the complete Buddhist scriptures carved on 729 marble slabs. After lunch, take a private boat upriver to the massive base of what would have been the Mingun Pagoda, meant to stand 150m high. The base is 50m and still makes an impressive shape as we approach from the river. We also see the 'world's largest hanging uncracked bell', originally intended to be in the Mingun Pagoda once finished. Return to Mandalay and enjoy the late afternoon views as you sail back.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

**Mandalay** - Is the second largest city and the last royal capital of the Burmese Kingdom. Located along the Irrawaddy River and centred around the Royal Palace, Mandalay is within easy distance to former colonial hill stations and ancient cities.

**Mahamuni Pagoda** - Enshrining the Mahamuni Buddha - a highly revered image in Myanmar. It is covered in thick layers of gold leaf applied by male devotees. As a result, this has started to distort its shape.

**Shwenandaw Monastery** - Once part of the royal complex of King Mindon, this building was dismantled and reassembled outside the palace walls in 1880. As luck would have this move ensured that it survived the WWII bombing campaign in Mandalay, where many other royal buildings perished.

**Kuthodaw Pagoda** - Famous for housing the world's largest book; Separated into 15 volumes each page is inscribed in marble and housed in its own stupa.

**Mingun** - A riverside village home to many unique pagodas and the world's largest ringing bell, weighing over 87 tonnes.

#### **DAY 6: MANDALAY**

In the morning travel across the river to Sagaing a former royal capital and now a centre of religious learning. Sagaing spreads along the hills overlooking the Irrawaddy River and here we visit a nunnery to see some of the daily life of the women who take vows and are nuns. We can donate stationary to them, as they are all students of Dharma Buddhism. After lunch at Sagaing we travel by a short boat ride to the Island of Inwa where we take horse carts around this former Burmese Royal capital. There are still remnants of the old palace walls, an old wooden monastery and old pagodas. Later, we travel to nearby U Bein Bridge, the

longest teakwood structure in the world, which spans Lake Tautaman and we go out on the lake in small boats to enjoy a distinctive view as the sun sets over the ancient bridge and enjoy cocktail onboard.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

#### **Destination Information**

**Inwa Island** - Founded in 1364, Inwa Island lasted nearly 400 years as a royal capital. The city was finally abandoned after it was destroyed by a series of major earthquakes in 1839.

**U Bein Bridge** - This teak wood bridge built 200 years ago spans 1.2km across the Taung Thaman Lake and is the longest teak bridge in the world.

#### **DAY 7: MANDALAY TO HEHO**

After breakfast, transfer to the airport to board your flight to Heho. Arrive at Heho airport and sightseeing of Pindaya caves where more than 8,000 Buddhas are scattered throughout the extensive limestone caves. In the late afternoon visit a Shan umbrella maker.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

**Pindaya Caves** – The caves are an important pilgrimage site for Burmese Buddhists, and over centuries, thousands of Buddha images have been placed in the caves, differing in material, size and shape.

#### **DAY 8: HEHO TO INLE LAKE**

This morning, take a short trek (two to three hours) around Pindaya and see villages and a tea plantation. Enjoy a rest and lunch at Pindaya, afterwards transfer to Inle Lake. You will arrive at the hotel late afternoon for an evening is at leisure

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

#### **Destination Information**

**Inle Lake** - Located 900m above sea level and approximately 22km long and 11km wide, this water paradise is inhabited by over 200 villages constructed on stilts. The lake is most famous for the extraordinary lives of the people who live on and around it, known as the 'Intha'.

#### **DAY 9: INDEIN**

This morning you will travel to the village of Indein, most noted for its 17<sup>th</sup> century pagodas, some of which seem half hidden in the underbrush. To get to Indein, travel up a small creek for about 25 minutes, traversing small dams built to slow the flow of water and enjoy the sights along the way, such as water buffalo and children playing in the water. Enjoy sightseeing at the pagoda site and village, and

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then return by boat back to Inle Lake. After lunch continue your sightseeing on the lake including the silk weaving craft shop with its traditional hand looms, lotus blossom weaving, silver smithing and cheroot making. As you travel on the lake, pass by some of Inle's renowned 'floating gardens' and learn how they are made. You will also pass by some local fishermen who are unique in the way the fish in their distinctive one-legged rowing style.

Your lunch will be at a local restaurant with scenic views on the lake.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

#### **Destination Information**

**Indein Pagoda Complex** – One of the amazing historical sites in Inle Lake, where hundreds of small stupas decorated in sculptures of mythological animals and beings lay overgrown by moss and vegetation.

#### **DAY 10: INLE LAKE**

Visit the colourful local morning market and buy some ingredients for your cooking class later today at the Intha House with a local chef. Enjoy sightseeing at Phaung Daw Oo pagoda with its five, small gold-gilded Buddhas so highly revered. After the cooking class, enjoy the lunch you have made before returning to your hotel to relax. In the late afternoon take a local tuk tuk to the Red Mountain Winery run by a German winemaker who produces a very good local wine. Enjoy a tour of the wine making facilities, wine tasting and return to your hotel by bus.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

#### **DAY 11: INLE LAKE TO LOIKAW**

Today travel far down the lake and into the south. Stop at the pottery village of Sae Khaung, the village of Thar Yar Gone to visit the villagers and see the production of rice alcohol wine. Stop at Sagar with its ancient pagodas, some of which are partially submerged in water during parts of the year. Enjoy lunch at a restaurant in Sagar as well as exploring the village (Sae Khaung, Thar Yar Gone and Sagar are all relatively close so the order of visits may be adjusted according to timing and guides discretion). Your trip will be around five hours altogether and as the lake narrows it becomes very scenic, passing by many Shan, PaO and Intha villages and farms on the way. Disembark at Pe Khon village and continue by vehicle to Loikaw in the Kayah State (about a one hour drive) arriving in the late afternoon.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

#### **Destination Information**

**Sagar** – Once a royal capital, today the ruins of ancient monasteries and pagodas, built in 1479 remain.

Call 1300 727 998 to speak to a Reservations Consultant

## **DAY 12: LOIKAW**

In the morning visit the local market before making an excursion to the village of Pan Pat where you can see Padaung villagers and witness their way of life. Return by car to Loikaw for lunch and visit the Kayah museum with its examples of artefact and historical items and dress from the ethnic groups. Visit a beautiful old colonial house built in 1912 which was used by the former Shan royal family and is now a monastery for children. Appreciate the architecture and historical pictures and also examples of Howdahs, the real riding seats used on their elephants. Then visit the enchanting looking Taung Kwe Pagoda, which is built up on limestone outcrops in the middle of the city and provides a panoramic view of the entire area.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Destination Information**

**Padaung** - The Padaung are the ethnic group known as the 'giraffe neck' people because of the rings the women traditionally have worn around their neck to elongate it.

## **DAY 13: LOIKAW TO YANGON**

This morning fly from Loikaw to Yangon. On arrival as you transfer from the airport, depending on your flight time,

you will stop for lunch at a local restaurant. After completing your hotel check in, continue downtown to the sprawling Bogoke (Scott) Market, built in 1928 and filled with artefact and souvenirs from throughout Myanmar which make for a great last shopping stop. Time permitting, you can continue to Botataung Pagoda and Nanthida jetty to observe the daily life of the local people. Enjoy a special farewell dinner at the House of Memories restaurant, where General Aung San once had his office, which is filled with old mementoes and has excellent food.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destination Information**

**Bogyoke (Scott) Market** – With more than 2000 shops and the largest selection of Myanmar handicrafts and souvenirs you'll find under several roofs, you can easily spend several hours here.

## **DAYS 14-15: YANGON TO AUSTRALIA**

Enjoy the morning at your leisure before you are transferred to Yangon airport to board your flight to Australia, arriving home the same or following day.

*Meals Included: Breakfast*

*Please note: Only breakfast is provided on the groups day of departure; no refund will be given for meals missed.*

## **MYANMAR DISCOVERY TRAVEL INFORMATION**

### **Visas**

**Visa Requirements** - Entry visas are required by all visitors to Myanmar and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for Myanmar are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 28 Days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are **due in our office 90 days prior to departure**; if received after this, urgent visa processing fees will apply. Also, please note we do not accept passports and visa applications within 70 days prior to departure. Passports will be returned with your Final Documentation four weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee will apply.

### **Insurance**

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

### **Eating in South East Asia**

South East Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass,

ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in most local dishes. The food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. Meals shown on the itinerary above (excluding drinks) are included group tours. When dining in Myanmar, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetisers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Myanmar and some other countries in South East Asia, a fork and spoon are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Myanmar is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Myanmar cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

## Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and South East Asia. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide.

Rest assure that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs

Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

## Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Myanmar have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometers as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

**Seatbelts:** Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Myanmar and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason, some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

**Air:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-flight seat allocation is not available on international and internal flight sectors.

## Development in Myanmar

Although Myanmar is developing quickly, they still lack the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from you National Escort or Local Guides.

## Myanmar Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Myanmar Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. Water Festival is celebrated between 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April. Myanmar New Year Holiday is between 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

## Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort/Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of eight travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides only.

## Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experience in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is paid in US Dollar. Any additional tipping on any our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

## Packing List and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

## Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

## Exchanging Cash

The Central Bank of Myanmar has withdrawn all foreign currency exchange license for businesses including Hotels, Restaurants, Airlines and Souvenir Shops. Starting from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015, institutions such as the ones named will not be allowed to accept payments in US dollars. Tourist can bring US-Dollars and change it into local Kyats or withdraw local currency at any ATM with their credit card.



US Dollars are the preferred currency in Myanmar. ATM's are limited in Myanmar, so we suggest that you bring enough US Dollars in cash to last the duration of your stay. It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Myanmar. For your convenience, please ensure that US Dollars should be from the new series from the year 2003 onwards and in low denominations, as well as good condition to avoid any difficulties exchange money during your trip. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange.

We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

## Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$350 per person, per week should be sufficient; however for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional tours may be offered in each city you visit during your tour at an additional cost. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide.

## Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or Pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

## Cultural Difference

Myanmar is predominantly Buddhist; however, it is a nation with many cultures and histories. Please be considerate of the local beliefs and customs and dress with consideration.

## Appropriate Dress

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques.

Religious sites and homes throughout Myanmar – for Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces. The following itinerary will indicate when you need to consider this.

## Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au).

## Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

## After Your Booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice with deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately four weeks prior to departure.

**Updated: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017**