

ORIENT ODYSSEY 2009

Tour Code: GPB

14 Day

Golden Passage of Burma

USA – Bangkok – Yangon – Bagan – Mandalay – Mingun – Inwa – Sagaing –
Amarapura – Pindaya – Inle Lake – USA

*****Escorted SMALL group with min. of 10, and maximum of 18 travelers*****
Premium service with professional guides, luxury hotels and sumptuous meals
 Affordable private journeys can be arranged with VIP service of a private English speaking guide, a chauffeur and a car at extra cost

Then, a golden mystery up heaved itself on the horizon – a beautiful, winking wonder that blazed in the sun, of a shape that was neither Muslim dome nor Hindu temple spire. It stood upon a green knoll.....

“There is the old Shwaydagon,” said my companion.

The golden dome said, “This is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about”.

- Rudyard Kipling, Letters From The East (1889)

*Enjoy an in-depth exploration of this exotic country that is untouched by outside influences
 Let us marvel at the Plain of Temples, Floating Gardens, Haunting Ruins, Leg Rowers and Hill Tribes*

2009 Departure Dates	Tour Cost (US\$) Per person double occupancy departing from				Land Only Includes domestic flights	Single Room Supplement
	Los Angeles San Francisco		New York			
	Tour Cost	Cash Discount Price	Tour Cost	Cash Discount Price		
-2009 Departures- Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 10, Apr 14, May 5, Sep 15, Oct 13, Nov 3, 10 -2010 Departures- Jan 12, Feb 23, Mar 16, Apr 6	3580	3380	3750	3550	2762	751

US tax \$98, int'l flight fuel surcharge \$290, and Myanmar domestic air tax of \$92 per person is extra.
 Rates for departures from other major US gateway cities are available upon request.

****Summer departures and private journeys are also available! Please call 1-800-637-5778****

Enjoy Cash Discount Price and save \$200 per person!

To qualify, you must be the first 10 passengers booked on your tour / departure

Initial deposit can be paid by check or credit card

Remaining balance of the tour cost must be paid by check or money order only

Operated by ***Orient Odyssey***



*B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner, F-In flight meals,
 SL / SD-Special local flavor meal or banquet*

Day01 USA – Bangkok

Depart from Los Angeles, San Francisco or New York. Enjoy award winning in-flight meals and services. Move our watch one day ahead as we cross the international dateline. *Prices for departing from other major gateway cities are available upon request. **F**

Day02 Arrive in Bangkok

After immigration and customs, a local representative will greet and accompany us to the 4 star deluxe ***Century Park Hotel Bangkok***. Enjoy a restful day to recover from jetlag. **F**

Day03 Bangkok –Yangon, Myanmar

The morning is free to rest or explore Bangkok at our own pace. [Optional tours](#) (extra cost) are available to visit the [Grand Palace](#), or [cruise on a long tail boat](#) through water canals of Bangkok and see the [floating communities](#). Our hotel is conveniently located, only a 10-15 minutes walk to the “sky train” – the most affordable and efficient way to get around in Bangkok. Check-out around noon, we can leave our luggage at the concierge while explore the city. This afternoon we board [Thai Airway International](#) flight TG305, leaving at 5:55 p.m., reaching Yangon at 6:40 p.m.. We check-in at the 5 star, luxurious [Traders’ Hotel \(by Shangri-la\)](#). Welcome to Yangon, lying in the fertile delta of southern Myanmar, on the wide Yangon River. The city is filled with tree-shaded boulevards and shimmering stupas float above the treetops. B/F

Day04 Yangon

Our journey begins at the old colonial-style [city center](#). We first visit the gilded [Sule Pagoda](#), dating back over 2,000 years. The gleaming octagonal pagoda was once used by the British as the nucleus of their grid pattern for the city. Enjoy a photo stop at the [Kandawgyi \(Royal\) Lake](#) and take pictures of [Shwedagon Pagoda](#). We then continue to the [National Museum](#) with an interesting collection of treasures, including the 8 meter high [Sihasana Lion Throne](#) used by [King Thibaw Min](#), the last Burmese king, and returned to Burma in 1908 by [Lord Montbatten](#). Other interesting artifacts include royal jewellery an relics, Hintha opium weights and inscribed tablets. We will stroll through the [Bogyoke Aung San \(Scott\) Market](#). With over 2,000 stalls, it is a pleasant covered market containing crafts, including gems and fabrics, from all corners of the country. This afternoon we will tour the [Botathaung Pagoda](#) next to the [Yangon River](#), named after the 1,000 military leaders who escorted relics of the Buddha from India over 2,000 years ago. It houses a marvelous collection of antique Buddha images. We will also visit the [Chauk Htat Gyi Pagoda](#), with its [huge reclining Buddha image](#). Late evening we explore the highlight of today’s journey – a special [sunset visit](#) to the [Shwedagon](#)



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[Pagoda](#). For Myanmar Buddhists, this 2,500 year old structure is the most sacred of all Buddhist sits in the country, one which all Burmese hope to visit at least once in their lifetime. It features a massive bell-shaped superstructure that is covered by 60 tons of pure gold, still being augmented today. In the heart of the day, the stupa glitters bright gold. When the sun sets it casts its last rays on the soft orange dome, and a swarm of sparrows migrates from the Shwedagon ground until their return the following morning. It can be quiet and contemplative, or colorful and raucous. The shrine is certainly most beautiful during sunset when the stupa reflects the changing colors of twilight. Kipling called it “*a golden mystery.....a beautiful winking wonder that blazed in the sun.*” B/L/D

Day05 Yangon – Bagan

We transfer to the airport and take a morning flight on [Air Bagan](#) W9 141 departing at 6:45 a.m., arriving in Bagan at 8:05 a.m.. One of the great sights of Asia, Bagan is not to be missed.

It is a plain stretching from the [Irrawaddy River](#) dotted with [thousands of spectacular 800 year old temple ruins](#). [Somerset Maugham](#)



wrote the temples loom “*huge, remote and mysterious out of the mist of the early morning like the vague recollections of a fantastic dream*”. . We first visit the golden stupa of [Shwezigon Pagoda](#), one of the most important shrine in the area. Completed between 1086 and 1090, its graceful bell-shape became the proto type for most of the later stupas in Burma. Next we go to see the distinguished architecture and the great colorful painting about the life of Buddha at [Gubyaukgyi cave temple at Wetkyi-Inn](#). We then travel through [Tharaba Gateway](#) into [Old Bagan](#). Check-in at the 4.5 star, deluxe, [The Hotel at Tharabar Gate](#). Next stop is [Ananda Temple](#), one of the largest, best preserved and most revered of the Bagan temples. Built around 1105 A.D., the perfectly proportioned structure heralds the stylistic end of the Early Bagan period. We will



also visit [Manuha Temple](#), a thousand year old structure enshrines the unusual combination of



three seated and one reclining Buddha. It is said to be built by King Manuha, the respected “Captive King” while held here in the 11th century. Enjoy *Orient Odyssey’s* “[People to People Contact](#)” program, we explore the [Myinkaba village](#), known for producing the finest

lacquer ware in the country. We stop by one of the [workshops](#) and learn about the painstaking [process of laureate making and decoration](#). Enjoy interaction with shop owners and villagers, unveiling authentic village life of Burma. We also tour the [Gubyaukgyi Temple](#) to enjoy the fine stuccowork. At [sunset](#), we [climb one of the monuments](#). The stairways lead up from the square bottom terraces to the round base of the stupa, from where we can enjoy splendid [panoramic views](#) of the surrounding plains, strewn with numerous ancient temple ruins and the Irrawaddy River. [B/L/D](#)

Day06 Bagan

Today is designed as a free day to rest, shop or explore at our own pace. The guide can also arrange any of the following optional excursions (extra cost) upon request.

[Horsecart Ride To the Ruins](#)

Hire a horse cart for couple of hours and ride through pagodas ruins, and monuments.

Stop along the way at your discretion. You can re-discover the sites that visited yesterday, or explore new stops.



[Balloon Ride Over Bagan](#)

Enjoy an unique opportunity to see the ancient city from a different perspective. From a balloon one will get a magnificent birds-eye view of thousand years-old pagodas, temples and the mighty Irrawaddy River. The champagne flights at sunrise last just under one hour – the balloon is guided by gentle winds not exceeding 15 miles per hour.



[Excursion to Mt. Popa and Village of Salay](#)

This is a full day excursion. Drive to Mount Popa, traditional home of the animist nat

worship which predated Buddhism in Myanmar.

Small shrines to nat (spirits), many of whom have wonderfully

whimsical names such as Mr. Handsome and Bandy Legs, are found lining the steps up the mountain. Enjoy the stunning view from the top. Then you will visit village of Salay to observe authentic village life.



Day07 Bagan – Mandalay / Mingun

We board *Air Bagan* flight W9009, departing at 7:35 a.m., arriving in Mandalay at 8:05 a.m.. Mandalay was the [last Royal capital](#) of the country before British took over. An ancient culture center with great historical importance, it is the most Burmese of the country’s large cities. It is home to the country’s most important Buddhist



Monasteries where sixty percent of all the Burmese monks reside. We begin our sightseeing with [an excursion to Mingun](#). We board a wooden boat and [cruise up the Irrawaddy River](#). Enjoy an inside [glimpse of the local river life](#) – fishing villages, bullock carts, corn fields, market boats, women attending to their washing, and children playing in the water. Upon arrival, we visit the ruins of [Mingun Paya](#), a monument to human ambition and designed to be the world’s largest pagoda. Thousands of slaves and prisoners of war labored here. The work was halted in 1819 when the king died, leaving a brick base about a third of its intended height. The earthquake of 1938 caused major damage. We also visit the nearby highlights: The [Mingun Bell](#) – cast in 1808 and weighing 90 tons, it is [the worlds’ largest uncracked bronze bell](#); the [Hsinbyume Paya](#) – beautifully designed and constructed by the king in memory of his wife,



the Hsinbyume princess. Cruise back to the city, which takes its name from Mandalay Hill, the high bluff that rises just to the Northeast of the Mandalay Fort and its royal palace, we check-in at the 5 star, luxurious, *Mandalay Hill Resort*. Our next stop is [Mahamuni Pagoda](#). The

mahamuni image enshrined here is perhaps the most venerated image in the country, covered by

15 cm of gold leaf. Worshippers flock daily to the shrine at four in the morning to observe the unique face washing ceremony. Next we head to the intricately carved [Shwenandaw Kyaung](#), “[the Golden Teak Monastery](#)”. It represents the pinnacle of the exquisite traditional wood building techniques, and is a fragile reminder of the [old Mandalay Fort](#). At one time this building was part of the palace complex and the private apartment of King Mindon and his chief Queen. After his death, the next monarch had the building dismantled and reassembled on its present site in 1880 as a monastery. When the original palace complex was completely destroyed by fire, this monastery became the only reminder of the original splendor of royal life. We will see the spectacular, intricate carvings, and imagine the lavish life of the royal court. Next we tour the [Kyaukdawgyi Paya](#),



where a large Buddha statue has been carved out of a single block of local marble. The block was from the mines of nearby Sagyin. It was so colossal that it required 10,000 men laboring for 13 days to transport it from a canal to the current location. We will also visit the [Sandamani Paya](#). Enjoy the view of a cluster of slender white washed stupas built on the site of King Mindon's temporary palace, used while the new Mandalay Palace was under construction. Our last stop is the “[world's largest book](#)”, the Buddhist scriptures or “tripitaka” inscribed on 729 marble slabs, at [Kuthodaw Pagoda](#). At dusk, we will [climb the Mandalay Hill](#) and view the [golden sunset over the city](#).
B/L/D

Day08 Excursion to Amarapura / Sagaing / Ava (Inwa)

Today's program begins at [Amarapura](#), “[the City of Immortality](#)”. Once a royal capital, the four pagodas that marked the four corners of the city walls still remain, as well as the watch tower and the treasury building. We enjoy [Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact"](#) program with a special visit to the [Mahagandayon Monastery](#). This prestigious temple houses over 1,000 monks of all age groups.. Our specially planned



logistics enable us to [observe the daily mid-morning alms giving](#) by faithful Buddhists to the monks and novices. Feel free to [chat with the monks](#) to [obtain interesting insight into monastery life](#). We then go to the picturesque [Sagaing Hill](#), which is [the country's spiritual center](#) and [Buddhist devotees' favorite retreat](#). Sagaing Hill is crowded with hundreds of pagodas and monasteries, housing thousands of monks and nuns who retreat here for meditation and contemplation. We visit [Tupayon Paya](#), with an unusual style of three stories each encircled by arched niches; and [Datpaungze Paya](#), a more recent pagoda containing relics from other older temples. The most unique is the [Hsinmyashin Paya](#), with intricate elephant statues stationed at the entrance way. We then [board a local ferry](#) to [Ava \(Inwa\)](#), located on an



island between the Irrawaddy and the Myintnge Rivers. The quiet rural oasis was once the ancient capital of Burma from 1364 to 1783. We will

explore Ava by [horse cart](#), and pass through the [ancient city walls](#) to the impressive [Bagaya Kyaung](#), a monastery built of teakwood and supported by 267 teak posts. The main hall stands on a [raised platform](#), separate from the [monk's quarters](#), and is designed so that space between the walls and roof allow air to circulate. The library on site also [houses an interesting collection of palm-leaf manuscripts](#). Then we go to the brick and stucco monastery called [Maha Aungmye Bonzan](#) (also known as [Ok Kyaung](#)). It was built in 1818 by King Bagyidaw's chief Queen for the royal abbot Nyaunggan Sayadaw. We continue to the [Nanmyin Tower](#), the famous “[Leaning Tower of Ava](#)”. The 27 meter high masonry watch tower is all that remains of the royal palace. The upper portion was shattered by the 1838 earthquake and the rest has taken a precarious tilt.

Enjoy lovely views over the river from the top. At day's end, we return to Amarapura and stroll on the 150



year old [U Bein's Bridge](#). The picturesque, long, rickety teak bridge extends over one kilometer across the [Taungthaman Lake](#), curved to withstand wind and waves. From the bridge we can [see lush rice field and small villages](#). At

dusk, the bridge teems with monks and local people as they stroll home or linger to enjoy the colors of the sunset. Feel free to interact with the locals. B/L/D

Day09 Mandalay – Heho – Pindaya

Air Bagan flight W9011 will depart at 9:25 a.m., reaching Heho at 9:55 a.m.. Enjoy a scenic drive, passing villages, rice fields and markets, to the colorful highlands near Pindaya. We check-in at the superior *Conqueror Hotel*. Explore Pindaya



Caves, ensconced in a limestone ridge with a birds' eye view overlooking the lake. Inside the cavern are more than 8,000 Buddha images,

made from alabaster, teak, marble, brick, lacquer and cement, and arranged to form a labyrinth through the cave chambers. We will visit Shwe U Min Paya, a cluster of low stupas just below the ridge near the cave. On the full moon of Tabaung, Pindaya hosts a colorful pagoda festival. B/L/D

Day10 Pindaya – Inle Lake

We continue our scenic drive past tribal villages and colorful markets to reach Nyaung Shwe, the gateway village to Inle Lake. Upon arrival at the lake we board a wooden boat and head out onto the lake, passing villages built on stilts and floating gardens tethered by bamboo poles. When we first encounter the lake – its placid flatness in stark contrast to the peaks on either side – it seems like a real-life Atlantis where the plug has been partially pulled and one must hop in a boat to gossip with a neighbor only a few meters away. The lake is



considered to be the most beautiful spot of Burma. We will see calm waters dotted with patches of floating vegetation and fishing canoes. High hills rim the lake on all sides. The lake shore and islands contains 17 villages mostly inhabited by the Intha. Enjoy the spectacular scenery and observe the skilled fisherman using their leg-rowing technique to propel themselves around the lake. They are the famous legrowers. After check-in at the 4.5 star, luxurious *Inle Lake View Resort*, we travel to the southern part of the lake, where we cruise by floating gardens, a floating market and an Intha

village. Through *Orient Odyssey's* "People to People Contact" program we will



have an opportunity to interact with local villagers and children gaining insight into their

daily life. A highlight today will be the visit of Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery, one of the oldest on the lake and famous for its "jumping cats", which have been trained to jump through hoops. B/L/D

Day11 Inle Lake (In Dein and Sae Ma Village)

The boat excursion crosses the lake to the western shore. The vessel cruises upstream in a long canal, passing through water locks and narrow waterways surrounded by lush bamboo and rice fields. We soon reach In Dein Temple Complex. A covered stairway led us to the beautiful Alaung Sitthou area, with hundreds of ancient pagodas, undiscovered carvings and unscratched ruins hidden in the overgrown moss and greenery. We



spend some time exploring the site and enjoying the fantastic views. Then we approach the village of Sae Ma. Enjoy *Orient*

Odyssey's "People to People Contact" program, we take a walk through the village, visiting a local school. Interact with villagers and school children. We then tour the Phaung Daw Oo



Pagoda, the most important religious site in southern Shan State. The beautiful temple is a favorite among local villagers for daily prayer and important ceremonies. The evening is free to explore, rest, or view the golden sunset over the lake. B/L/D

Day12 Inle Lake – Weekend Market – Yangon

After breakfast, a scenic coach ride will take us back to Heho. On route, we will visit a bustling weekend market. Hill tribes and ethnic villagers bring handicrafts and products down from the mountain once a week to sell and they also buy daily necessities. We will be able to see their unique customs and clothing. Stroll through the

colorful vendors to take the perfect picture. The market is a wonderful place to [mingle with locals and observe their life style](#). Our afternoon flight HK728 departs at 3:55 p.m., arriving in Yangon at 6:05 p.m.. We will be met and transferred to the 5 star, luxurious *Traders Hotel (by Shangri-la)*. [B/L/D](#)

Day13 Yangon – Bangkok

After breakfast, we head to the airport and check-in for *Thai Airway International's* flight TG304, departing at 10:05 a.m., arriving in Bangkok at 11:45 a.m.. After immigration and customs, the local representative will greet and take us to the 4 star deluxe *Century Park Hotel*. The rest of the evening is free for us to explore, rest, or shop, and get ready for the long flight home tomorrow. [B](#)



Day14 Bangkok – USA

Savor the memory of our spectacular **Burma Expedition**, we will be escorted to the airport and check-in for our homebound flight, arriving in USA on the same day. [B/F](#)

***Optional Extension**

Our programs are flexible! You can extend your stay in Bangkok, or enjoy an excursion to the "golden triangle" in Northern Thailand to explore ethnic tribes. You can also go to Phuket or island of Samui to relax on the white sandy beach, or, connect this package with an expedition to Laos, India or mountain kingdom of Bhutan..... Please contact us for more information.

***International Flights**

Orient Odyssey features *Eva Air, Japan Airlines, China Airlines, Asiana Airlines* and / or *Northwest Airlines / Delta Airlines* as the international carrier for this package. Based on your departure cities and tour logistics, Orient Odyssey reserves the right to secure other major international carrier for your journey. Flight arrangements will be finalized at least 60 days before departure.

Sample international flight schedules are as follows. Schedules are subject to change.

From Los Angeles (LAX):

CI005	Los Angeles – Taipei	1450 / 2020
CI065	Taipei – Bangkok	2220 / 0110
CI836	Bangkok – Taipei	1750 / 2225
CI008	Taipei – Los Angeles	2325 / 1950

From San Francisco (SFO):

CI003	San Francisco – Taipei	0115 / 0605
CI833	Taipei – Bangkok	0935 / 1225
CI836	Bangkok – Taipei	1750 / 2225
CI004	Taipei – San Francisco	2325 / 1910

From New York (JFK):

JL007	New York – Tokyo	1000 / 1410
JL703	Tokyo – Bangkok	1600 / 2105
JL704	Bangkok – Tokyo	2330 / 0715
JL006	Tokyo – New York	1130 / 1015

***Note**

Fuel surcharges and taxes are subject to change. Due to lowered fuel cost, actual fuel surcharge might be less than quoted. Updated and accurate amount will be advised before the final payment due date. Tour cost is quoted based on current foreign exchange rate as of Dec 1, 2008. Price is guaranteed once full payment is received.

Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions

For inquiry, please feel free to call

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