



Burma Bike

365km bike challenge from Mandalay to Inle Lake



Ultimate Challenges

T: 020 3642 9830

events@theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk
www.ultimatechallenges.co.uk

Bike Burma

The road from Mandalay

Decades of isolation from the outside world has left Burma's strong and colourful Buddhist culture and pristine forest ecosystems relatively untouched by the modern world.

Following Aung San Suu Kyi's request for visitors to return, Burma is slowly opening up and what better way to experience this intriguing and historically rich country than by bike!

This is a unique biking challenge, starting in Burma's second largest city – Mandalay, but the real attractions lie beyond as we ride through unchanged villages dotted alongside the Irrawaddy River. We visit important religious monasteries and stupas, and meet the engaging, gentle and passionate local people, who want to play a part in the world, and want to know what you make of their world.

We visit the famous Pindaya Caves with over 8000 Buddha statues. We ride over undulating valleys and across a patchwork of fields to our finish line at Inle Lake - a wonderful watery world of floating gardens, crumbling stupas and stilted villages.

Burma is different; so come with an open mind and you'll leave with a full heart.



Detailed itinerary

Day 1: Depart London to Mandalay

Late morning flight from London via Bangkok.

Day 2: Mandalay

Midday arrival into Mandalay where we will be met by our guides and transferred to our hotel, where we will stay for two nights. Poetic though its name may be, Mandalay is the second largest city in Burma and is growing into a modern city. But beneath its bustling bravado, there is a more meditative side to life, as it's home to three in five of Burma's Buddhist monks. This afternoon we will have our bike fitting before taking a short visit to watch the stunning sunset from Mandalay Hill, a stupa studded hill looming above the flat city landscape. Dinner will be in a traditional Burmese restaurant followed by a full bike briefing.

Day 3: Mandalay to Sagaing to Mingun 35kms

After a fuelling breakfast, we are straight on our bikes. Heading to the southwest of the city, our first destination is the 18th century capital of Amarapura where we visit U Bein Bridge for a walk along this 200 year-old teak bridge.

Day 3: cont.

The bridge spans over 2 kilometres in length and offers fabulous views of the surrounding farms and streams. Continue by bike across the Irrawaddy River to Mingun. Visit the main sites of Mingun, beginning with the famous Mingun Pahtodawqyi. Then return to Mandalay by boat. Stops will be made at a workshop making gold leaf, where the craftsmen use ancient techniques handed down over generations. You'll also visit Mahamuni Pagoda, home to one of the country's most revered Buddha images which, over the years, has been covered with gold leaf giving it an almost 'lumpy' texture. Overnight in hotel



Day 4: Mandalay to Pindaya 75to 95kms

After an early breakfast we transfer to Ayerwaddy Valley where we start the bike challenge. After lunch in Ywar Ngan we will begin cycling to the Shan village of Kyone. During this ride you will leave the plains of the Ayerwaddy Valley and enter the Shan Hills. The toddy palm trees that once lined the roads around Mandalay will be substituted by a combination of pines and bamboo. The accents and languages will change also, from strictly Burmese that is spoken in Middle Burma to a wide variety of Pa Oh, Taung Yoe, Danu, and Shan that is spoken throughout the Shan State. In Pindaya, we will visit the 'golden' limestone Pindaya Caves on top of the Shan Hills that are filled with thousands of Buddha images. Overnight in hotel.



Detailed itinerary

Day 5: Pindaya to Kalaw

60kms

After breakfast, it's back on our bikes for another superb days riding through the pretty pine-clad and colourful villages of the Shan Plateau. We transfer the final bit of the day to our overnight hotel in Kalaw. The town has a cool reputation among travellers and is surrounded by dramatic mountains, flowing rivers and bamboo groves. Overnight in hotel.

Day 6: Kalaw to Nyaung Shwe

75kms

We cover a greater distance as we make our way to Inle Lake, yet it is not as challenging as some of the previous days. We start with a great downhill ride back to Aungban before we ride up into the hills once again. There is a stretch of flat road around the Heho plains, then climbing up and down into Nyaung Shwe Valley. As you climb you will reach a vantage point where you will have the open road ahead of you, Inle Lake at your feet, the open road in front of you, and the mighty Shan Mountains as your backdrop. From here we descend to Inle Lake, our destination for today. Overnight in hotel.

Day 7: Nyaung Shwe to Inle Lake

55kms

The final day on our bikes! We begin today by cycling to a small lake village of Indein where we will have lunch before loading our bikes on a boat to cross the lake. From here we cycle the last bit of this wonderful challenge to Red Mountain Estate Winery. Red Mountain produces a wide variety of with locally grown grapes of French and Spanish origins. Enjoy an optional tasting or simple go for a stroll around the vineyard.

Tonight we celebrate our biking achievements with a special Burmese dinner.



Day 8: Departure day

Morning departure from Heho for onward connection from Mandalay via Bangkok to London.

Day 9: Arrive London

Challenge grade

Challenging - Tough

Best time of year

November to February

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This itinerary is complex and subject to change



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25 - 27 Vanston Place, London. SW6 1AZ
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ABTA No. W0745