

Golden Stupas by Day, Hot-Air Balloons at Sunrise — A 9-Day Myanmar Itinerary

Shwedagon's golden spire at sunset, a dawn balloon ride over 2,000 temples in Bagan, and a longtail boat through Inle Lake's floating gardens — real hotels, real flights, and 2026 prices for every stop.

DURATION	BEST TIME TO GO	FROM
9 Days	October–March Myanmar's dry, cool season — this is also the only window Balloons Over Bagan operates, so it drives the whole itinerary's timing.	\$1,480 USD / person for 2 people, incl. 3 domestic flights, 8 nights (Yangon, Bagan, Inle Lake), a Bagan balloon flight, and private Inle Lake & Mount Popa tours (excl. international flights and most meals)

DAY 1

Arrival in Yangon

Touch down in Myanmar's largest city and former capital, where gilded stupas rise between crumbling colonial-era facades along the Yangon River.

Airport Transfer — Yangon International Airport to Hotel

~45 min · from \$20 USD, arranged through your hotel

A private car waits past immigration for the short drive into downtown Yangon, past Inya Lake and the first glimpses of Shwedagon's golden spire on the skyline.

Hotel Check-In — Savoy Hotel Yangon

from \$140 USD/night, for 2 people

A restored colonial-style boutique hotel on Dhammazedi Road with a wood-paneled library bar and a rooftop pool, a short drive from both Shwedagon and downtown.

Savoy Hotel Yangon · savoy-myanmar.com

Shwedagon Pagoda at Sunset

~2 hrs, self-guided · \$10 USD foreigner entry

A 2,500-year-old gilded stupa said to enshrine eight strands of the Buddha's hair, best seen barefoot at dusk as the gold leaf catches the last light and the marble courtyard fills with evening worshippers.

Dinner on Your Own — Rangoon Tea House

~1.5 hrs · ~\$15–25 USD/person

A modern take on a colonial-era tea shop near Sule Pagoda, serving Burmese classics like mohinga and tea-leaf salad alongside strong milk tea.

DAY 2

Colonial Downtown & Bogyoke Market

A full day on foot through Yangon's downtown grid, still lined with the largest collection of colonial-era buildings in Southeast Asia.

Colonial Downtown Walking Tour

~3.5 hrs, small-group guided · from \$30 USD/person

A guided walk past the old Secretariat, the High Court, and Strand Road's riverfront warehouses, with stops at Botataung Pagoda and a few surviving teashops where traders once read the news.

Yangon Heritage Walks · <https://www.getyourguide.com>

Bogyoke Aung San Market

~1.5 hrs, self-guided · free entry

A 1920s covered market of over 2,000 stalls selling lacquerware, jade, and longyi fabric, still laid out in the colonial-era arcades it opened in.

Yangon Circular Train, Partial Loop

~1 hr · ~\$1–2 USD

A slow-moving commuter loop through Yangon's outer neighborhoods and market stops, with vendors boarding and leaving at nearly every platform — a few stops is enough to see how the city actually moves.

Domestic Flight — Yangon to Bagan (NYU)

~1 hr 20 min · from \$120 USD/person, one-way

A morning flight on one of Myanmar's domestic carriers, landing at Nyaung-U Airport a short drive from Old Bagan.

Air KBZ · <https://www.airkbz.com>

Hotel Check-In — Bagan Lodge

from \$150 USD/night, for 2 people

Colonial-style bungalows set around a pool and lawn on Myat Lay Road, with bikes available for riding out to the nearer temples.

Bagan Lodge · <https://www.baganlodge.com>

Old Bagan Temple Tour by E-Bike

~3 hrs, self-drive · e-bike rental ~\$10 USD/day

A loop past Ananda Temple's gilded spires and the massive Thatbyinnyu Temple on dirt tracks between the ruins, with the dust and the scale of the plain doing most of the talking.

Dinner on Your Own — Nyaung-U Restaurant

~1.5 hrs · ~\$10–20 USD/person

A simple Burmese set menu near the market in Nyaung-U, the practical base town just outside the temple zone.

DAY 4

A Dawn Balloon Over the Temple Plain

The reason most travelers build a Myanmar trip around these exact dates — a sunrise balloon flight over the single largest concentration of Buddhist monuments on earth.

Hot Air Balloon Ride — Balloons Over Bagan

~45 min flight, pre-dawn pickup · from \$230 USD/person, Oct–Apr season

A dawn balloon launch that drifts silently over hundreds of brick temples as the sun comes up through the morning mist, widely rated one of the best balloon flights in the world and the reason this trip is dated to the dry season.

Balloons Over Bagan · +959956077481 · <https://balloonsoverbagan.com>

Shwesandaw Pagoda Viewpoint

~1 hr, self-guided · free

A five-tiered pagoda whose upper terraces once drew sunset crowds; today it's quieter than the designated viewing mounds nearby but keeps the same wide view over the plain.

Traditional Burmese Lunch — Bagan

~1 hr · ~\$10–15 USD/person

A rest after the pre-dawn start, with a set lunch of Shan noodles or a Burmese curry spread back near the hotel.

DAY 5

Mount Popa Day Trip

A day trip south to the volcanic plug of Mount Popa, topped by a gilded monastery and guarded, according to local belief, by its resident nats.

Day Trip — Bagan to Mount Popa

~1 hr each way · from \$50 USD/car with driver

A private car and driver for the round trip, passing roadside stalls selling palm sugar and toddy along the way.

Popa Taungkalat Monastery Climb

~2 hrs, self-guided, barefoot · free (small camera fee)

A 777-step barefoot climb up a sheer volcanic outcrop to a gilded monastery at the top, shared with a resident troop of macaques that expect to be fed.

Palm Sugar & Toddy Tasting

~30 min roadside stop · free, tip appreciated

A family-run roadside stand demonstrating how palm sap is boiled down into toddy jaggery, with samples of the raw syrup and finished candy.

Dinner on Your Own — Back in Bagan

~1.5 hrs · ~\$10–20 USD/person

A last dinner in Nyaung-U before the next morning's flight to Inle Lake, with most restaurants along the main strip serving both Burmese and traveler-friendly menus.

DAY 6

Fly to Inle Lake

A short flight to Heho and a scenic drive down into the valley holding Inle Lake, where stilt villages, floating gardens, and leg-rowing fishermen share 45 square miles of water.

Domestic Flight — Bagan to Heho

~45 min · from \$110 USD/person, one-way

A short hop over the central plains to Heho Airport, the gateway to the Inle Lake valley in Shan State.

Air KBZ · <https://www.airkbz.com>

Transfer — Heho Airport to Nyaungshwe

~1 hr · from \$25 USD/car

A mountain road down from Heho's plateau into the Inle valley, with the lake's northern canals coming into view on the approach to Nyaungshwe.

Hotel Check-In — Inle Princess Resort

from \$180 USD/night, for 2 people

Overwater bungalows on stilts along the lake's edge, each with a private deck looking out over the water toward the surrounding hills.

Inle Princess Resort · <https://www.inleprincessresort.com>

Dinner on Your Own — Nyaungshwe

~1.5 hrs · ~\$10–20 USD/person

A canal-side restaurant in the lake's main gateway town, several serving Shan-style noodles and lake fish alongside the standard Burmese menu.

DAY 7

Inle Lake, Full-Day Boat Tour

A full day by private longtail boat across Inle Lake's floating gardens, stilt villages, and workshops, with the lake's famous leg-rowing fishermen along the way.

Full-Day Inle Lake Boat Tour

~7 hrs, private longtail boat · from \$25 USD/person

A wide loop across the lake's floating tomato gardens, the stilted monastery of Nga Hpe Chaung, and workshops for silversmithing, weaving, and cheroot-rolling, with stops built in at whichever pace the boat driver reads from the group.

Inle Lake Boat Tours · <https://go-myanmar.com>

Leg-Rowing Fishermen Photo Stop

included on the boat tour · free

Intha fishermen still row standing on one leg while working a conical net with the other, a technique developed to keep both hands free over the lake's floating weeds.

Lunch on the Lake — Floating Restaurant

~1 hr · ~\$10–15 USD/person

A stilted lakeside restaurant reachable only by boat, serving a fresh-caught lake fish curry as the midday stop on the tour.

DAY 8

Indein's Hundred Pagodas

A boat ride up a narrow canal to Indein village, where hundreds of weathered stupas climb a hillside in various states of ruin and restoration.

Boat to Indein — Shwe Inn Thein Pagodas

~4 hrs round-trip incl. canal ride · from \$15 USD/person

A longtail boat up a shallow, winding canal to Indein village, then a covered stairway lined with souvenir stalls climbing past some 1,054 stupas, many still overgrown and unrestored.

Indein Village & Five-Day Market

~1 hr, self-guided · free

A rotating market that visits Indein roughly once every five days, drawing Pa-O and Shan hill-tribe traders in distinctive dress down from the surrounding hills.

Dinner on Your Own — Lakeside in Nyaungshwe

~1.5 hrs · ~\$10–20 USD/person

A last Inle dinner back in Nyaungshwe, with several restaurants along the canal lit up for the evening.

Indein's s

Fly to Yangon & Depart

A last flight back to Yangon, with time built in for a final round of shopping before the international departure.

Domestic Flight — Heho to Yangon

~1 hr · from \$110 USD/person, one-way

A short flight back down to Yangon, landing with most of the day still free before an evening international departure.

Air KBZ · <https://www.airkbz.com>

Last-Minute Shopping — Bogyoke Market Area

~2 hrs, self-guided · free to browse

A final pass through Bogyoke Market's lacquerware and jade stalls, or the boutiques near the hotel, for anything missed on day two.

Airport Transfer — Hotel to Yangon International Airport

~45 min · from \$20 USD

A final car to the airport for the international connection home, with the golden spire of Shwedagon visible from the terminal road one last time.
