

# Magical Myanmar

## Royal Enfield Bullets over Burma

6 - 21 December, 2016



**December 6 – Arrival Mae Sot, Thailand** via one hour flight from Bangkok. Roadrunners staff will meet you at Mae Sot airport, with transfer to tour-start guest house minutes away. Briefing by tour leaders at 1500hrs. Please bring your passport, two passport photos and a writing pen for form-filling for our border-crossing procedure in the morning. Optional late afternoon visit to the Eyes to Burma relief site on the edge of town, with a chance to meet Burmese refugees, and see and hear about the great assistance work being done here. Return to guest house for overnight. Group walk to dinner at a local restaurant.



### **7 December – Border Cross – Ride to Hpa An**

After an early breakfast (0730hrs) loading of luggage into support vehicles for transfer to the border. Once clear of Thailand formalities we will cross the bridge with a left to right side road transition before arrival on Myanmar side, where our Burmese guide, van driver, and government minder will greet us. Once clear of Burmese formalities, we will head out on the new highway towards our packed lunch spot near Kyondo. Road will transition from new to old, with road widening construction in progress, so please be careful of surface conditions and oncoming traffic. Afternoon arrival in Hpa-An with comfortable resort accommodations at the foot of Mount Zwegabin. Dinner at the hotel.

### **8 December – Kyaikhto Golden Rock – Bago**

Early start as possible for our long ride to Bago, with stop at Golden Rock along the way. Getting up to Golden Rock requires riding to the road-head then taking a local open air

truck up the narrow mountain road, an adventure in itself! Once down from the mountain (2 hours round trip) we will stop at a restaurant for lunch near the main road, before riding on to Bago. Usual dusk arrival into Bago City. Hotel accommodations. Group dinner in town at a roadhouse.



### **9 December – Transfer to Rangoon**

Early morning sightseeing in Bago, including the beautiful Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha, which has a very interesting riveted steel pavilion, brought in from Calcutta during the days of British administration. Transfer by coach (2hrs) into Rangoon City. Motorcycles not permitted inside Rangoon city zone, so our bikes are being trucked to Bagan, while we tour this fascinating old colonial port city. After dropping our belongings in our hotel, we will find lunch followed by sightseeing with our Burmese guide, including Buddha Chauktatkyi and China Town. Group meeting for drinks and dinner in town. Optional late night street life and beer station activity for anyone who wants to go. Real life Rangoon found here.

## 10 December - Rangoon Sightseeing

Free day in Rangoon, starting with a morning walk down near the river with its many amazing unrestored colonial buildings - fascinating! We will walk by many fruit and booksellers with a chance to grab some good reading on the turbulent history of Burma. We will stop at the charming Strand Hotel (circa 1901) for coffee and absorb some of the lingering British Raj ambience of yesteryear. Lunch inside the Scott Market with handicraft and art stalls and a chance for shopping. Return to hotel for freshening up, before our sunset tour of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda, one of Buddhism's most sacred sites, and another highlight of the trip. Really one of the wonders of the world!



## 11 December – Fly to Bagan

Early morning transfer to Rangoon Airport for our flight to Bagan. Transfer to hotel where our staff is waiting with motorcycles. After lunch, back on the bikes to see some of the thousands of outlying pagodas and stupas that dot the landscape, and for which Bagan is famous. Sunset river - beer cruise on the Ayeyarwady. Return to hotel to freshen up, then group walk to dinner at nearby restaurant.

## 12 December – Mandalay

Morning departure for Mandalay through mostly rural countryside, with a few good photo ops along the way. We will stop in a provincial town for traditional spiced tea and samosas and meet some of the locals. Arrival in Mandalay for a late lunch at our hotel. Boutique accommodations here, very comfortable. Optional songthaew truck transfer to the top of Mandalay Hill for sunset. We have a number of dinner options here tonight, either on your own or with our Thai & Burmese guides.

## 13 December – Mandalay Sightseeing

A full day of sightseeing in Mandalay starting with the famous wooden U Bein Bridge, more than two centuries old and spanning 1.2kms. Nearby stop to see granite carving of Budhas. Visit Sagaing, former capital of the Shan kingdom in the 4th century with many interesting stupas to explore. Visit another former Royal capital called Inwa, which was founded in 1364, with highlights including the “Leaning Tower of Ava”, Maha Aung Mye Bonzan, a brick & stucco monastery, and the elegant teak-wood monastery of Bagaya Kyaung. Return to hotel late afternoon. Group dinner in town or on your own in hotel.

## 14 December – Ride to Pyin Oo Lwin

Leisurely departure this morning for a very interesting three hour ride into the mountains to the old British Hill station of Maymyo, now called Pyin Oo Lwin. Interesting antique Raj accommodations that was once headquarters of British Army Intelligence before the Japanese invasion during World War II. Lunch in the beautiful grounds overlooking the lake. Afternoon visit to the spectacular Kandawgyi Gardens, an amazingly groomed park with orchids and other exhibits, associated with Kew Gardens, London, and world class. Group dinner lakeside at an old favorite.



## 15 December – Ride to Naung Shwe

Dawn departure for our all-day ride to Naung Shwe, situated on the edge of Inle lake. Mixed riding starting with a great run down the dual-carriageway to the foot of the mountain, then some highway riding before our turn-off for some of the best remote back roads of the tour. Local Burmese lunch fare in the mountains, followed by a long afternoon ride as we work our way along the back roads to Inle. Arrival late afternoon, with time to grab a beer at a very impressive new pub, before dinner at a hip local boutique restaurant. Well done and really quite good.

## 16 December – Inle Lake

All day on Inle Lake by long-tail boats, another highlight of the tour. Observe traditional net fishing in almost ballet fashion. Lunch at floating restaurant. Afternoon sites include lotus & silk weaving, Phaungdaw Pagoda and the Nge Pha Kyaung monastery, traditional boat building and cheroot (Burmese cigar) making. Overnight on the lake or return to Naung Shwe.



## 17 December – Ride to Namsang

Morning departure to the working Shan capital of Tuangyi, visible high on the mountain. Before town we stop at a local winery for a quick tour, some great coffee, and a chance to buy a good bottle of wine for our upcoming remote night in the mountains of Shan State. Challenging afternoon riding with switchbacks and varying road surfaces, some quite slippery, so please be careful. Arrival in Namsang late in the afternoon with accommodations at a local resort with bungalow style room accommodations. Dinner in the resort. Not many tourists through here yet.

## 18 December – Ride to Mine Pyin

All-day ride of ten hours through villages and spectacular remote mountain scenery to Mine Pyin. Lunch at a family-run restaurant along the way. We will have at least one police immigration checkpoint. Arrival into Mine Pyin early evening. Basic guest house accommodations, with family-run kitchen and cold canned-beer.

## 19 December – Ride to Kengtung

Great riding this morning through eastern Shan state with a number of good photo ops and tea along the way. Our route takes us over numerous small mountain passes and long ridge contour riding, with a final early afternoon descent into Kengtung town for a late lunch.

Kengtung was the original capital of Shan State so there are a few sites to see once we drop our belongings at the hotel. We will meet for a sundowner on the lake and a choice of local eateries and family run kitchen options.



## 20 December – Ride to Chiang Saen, Thailand

Our last day on tour offers again one of the best riding sections of the trip, with a fast mountain highway descent from Kengtung all the way down to the Thai border at Tachileik. We will say goodbye to our Burmese staff and push through border formalities and back into Thailand before lunch. The border here on the Thai side at Mae Sai is very colorful with much going on and many items for sale. After lunch ride into the Golden Triangle region of northern Thailand, following the Mekong River with Laos visible on the opposite side, and on into Roadrunners home base at Chiang Saen. Comfortable lakeside accommodations with last group get-together for drinks and dinner. We say goodbye to our Thai and Nepali staff this evening.

**21 December – Tour Ends.** Morning transfers to Chiang Rai airport for flights back to Bangkok.



### **What is Included**

All Airport Transfers as necessary. Domestic Flight from Rangoon to Bagan. All hotel and guest house accommodations in Thailand and Myanmar, starting on 6 December and ending on 21 December. All breakfasts and packed lunches when necessary are also included. Royal Enfield Bullet 500cc Motorcycle equipped with saddle bags, all petrol, spare parts, mechanic, and support vehicles for seating and luggage. Pre-departure information pack including route maps, Roadrunners T-shirt and HRR luggage tags.

### **What is Not Included**

International airfare, airfare to Mae Sot, visa fees, cold drinks, alcoholic beverages, bottled water, laundry service, gratuities, overweight baggage charges, and airport taxes.

### **Visa Requirements**

Thai visas available upon arrival at Bangkok Airport and again at Mae Sai and upon our return from Myanmar. Myanmar visas must be applied for from your nearest Myanmar Embassy or Consulate in your home country, or in Bangkok if you have a few extra days. Roadrunners will furnish an invitation letter produced by our partner company in Myanmar that will speed this process.

### **Immunizations**

Immunizations are necessary and highly recommended for travel to Thailand and Myanmar. Please consult your GP/MD or local Travel Clinic for the latest recommendations.

### **Motorcycle Damage Deposit**

A security deposit of USD \$1500 is required prior to motorcycle assignment and this can be done via our RideHigh website via a simple credit card authorization where no charges will appear on card upon return of the undamaged motorcycle. Repairs of small accidental damage from bikes falling over and light spills are normally covered in the tour cost, but HRR reserves the right to appraise all damages and repair costs and bill accordingly.

### **Etiquette & Protocol**

Riding a motorcycle into the Myanmar is a privilege. Himalayan Roadrunners is grateful for permission to operate tours of this kind in the country. Although Myanmar continues to slowly open its doors to the outside world and experiment with new ideas for tourism, participants are reminded of the culturally sensitive nature of this trip and are urged and requested to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and show extra courtesy and riding style while encountering traffic in the country.

### **A Word of Caution**

Motorcycling the mountainous areas Thailand and Myanmar is surely one of the best ways to experience the region's rich cultures, friendly people, and unequalled scenery. At the same time, motorcycling does have its dangers, especially on narrow mountain roads with unpredictable traffic and quick changing weather conditions. Most of the tours operated by Himalayan Roadrunners Ltd. are better termed "Motorcycle Expeditions", and should be undertaken by fit, experienced riders with an open mind to changing conditions and different rules of the road.



**Rider \$5895.**

**Passengers & Non-Riders \$3995.**

**Single Room Supplement \$695.**

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