

MYANMAR

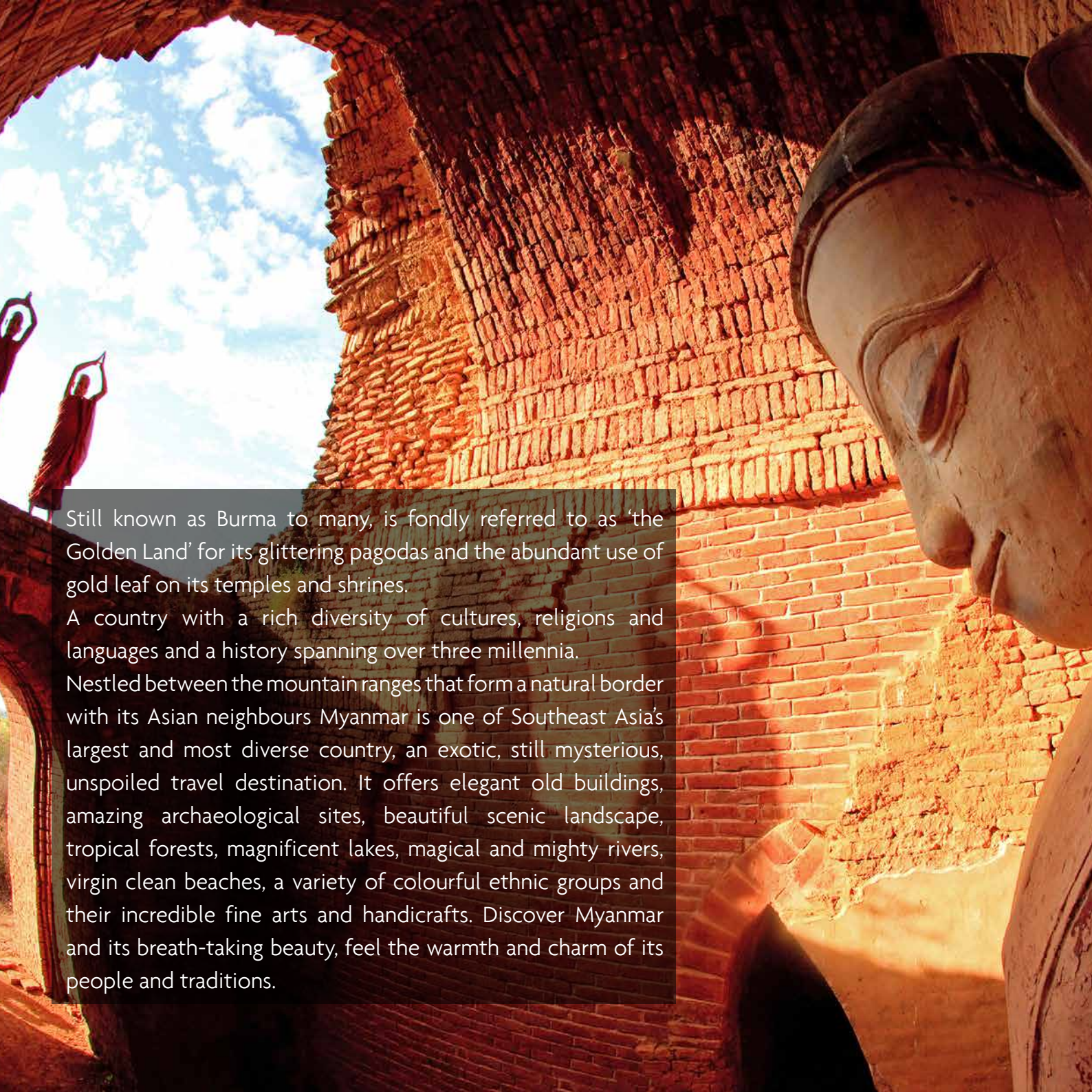
THE GOLDEN LAND



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Still known as Burma to many, is fondly referred to as 'the Golden Land' for its glittering pagodas and the abundant use of gold leaf on its temples and shrines.

A country with a rich diversity of cultures, religions and languages and a history spanning over three millennia.

Nestled between the mountain ranges that form a natural border with its Asian neighbours Myanmar is one of Southeast Asia's largest and most diverse country, an exotic, still mysterious, unspoiled travel destination. It offers elegant old buildings, amazing archaeological sites, beautiful scenic landscape, tropical forests, magnificent lakes, magical and mighty rivers, virgin clean beaches, a variety of colourful ethnic groups and their incredible fine arts and handicrafts. Discover Myanmar and its breath-taking beauty, feel the warmth and charm of its people and traditions.

YANGON

Yangon, capital of Myanmar, a green and lush city with shimmering pagodas. The centre of Yangon still retains many impressive old buildings from the British colonial period.

- **Shwedagon Pagoda**, a 2,600 years old gilded Pagoda, offers its most beauty at dawn or dusk when the transversal sunrays enlightens the golden walls, it is the most sacred Buddhist pagoda in Myanmar, as it is believed to contain relics of Buddha. One of the resident monks will guide you through the spiritual practices officiated at the pagoda.
- **National Museum** to discover the priceless ancient artefacts, works of art and historic memorabilia that will drive you inside the country's long history. Meet and greet with the museum curator for private handlings and insights.
- **Myanmar Gems Museum** is dedicated to precious Burmese gem stones. A special arrangement with reliable and official gems dealer will provide you an exclusive experience into the shining colors of local stones.
- **Traditional Burmese puppetry**, Htwe Oo Myanmar marionette troupe, is a place where Myanmar Traditional and cultural heritage of puppetry will disclose its peculiar beauty to you. Puppetry has a long history in Burma and was once performed as entertainment for the country's royalty and at the seasonal festivals.
- **Colonial Heritage Walk**, Yangon is home to some of Asia's finest shopfronts and imposing edifices borne out of the ambitions of 19th century captains of European industry; explore together with a architect the iconic period architecture, derelict mansions with banyan trees sprouting up from within, and beautifully restored masterpieces rivalling some of Asia's finest buildings. Tase the grandeur of the old town which captured the hearts of visitors from Orwell to Kipling.
- **Thar Kay Ta**, visit the small quarters of Yangon to experience the local ways of life and view artisans at work: wood carving, gemstone carving art, straw paintings, pottery and embroidery.



OLD BAGAN

An ancient city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, from the 9th to 13th centuries, the city was the capital of the Pagan Kingdom, the first kingdom that unified the regions that would later constitute modern Myanmar. One of the most remarkable archaeological sites in Asia and home to over 2,000 temples and pagodas.

- Together with an archaeologist visit the temples area and get access to **Shwezigon Pagoda**, one of the oldest monuments in Bagan and the prototype of Burmese Stupas, **Gubyaukgyi Temple**, known for its wall paintings depicting scenes from the Jatakas (life stories of the Buddha), **Sulamuni Temple**, made of bricks and stones has incredibly wellconserved frescoes, **Ananda Temple**, with its four huge Buddha images in standing position, facing to the four directions.
- **Hot air balloon** at dawn for a truly unique adventure of a breath-taking ride over the ancient temples and pagodas of Bagan.
- **Chinlone performance** at the river banks, while sipping a cocktail at sunset in an exclusively arranged area. Also know as caneball, is the traditional sport of Myanmar, first created as a means of entertaining Burmese royalty.
- **Lacquer workshop**, learn from a local artist the best and highest quality the techniques, secrets and the unique method of Myanmar traditional lacquer.
- Visit the nearby city of **Salay**, the ancient religious center of Myanmar, get access to numerous ancient monasteries, adorned with beautiful woodcarving and enjoy the beauty of this compact city of colonial buildings, monasteries and stupas.

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MANDALAY

Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city was the last capital of Burmese kingdom and is considered the country's cultural heartland. As an important trade center, it is home to some of Myanmar's most important pagodas as well as its finest handicraft workshops.

- Explore **The Royal Palace** and stroll through the buildings housing original artefacts, climb the watchtower with views over the whole palace compound and the city, the fort also contains the tomb of King Mindon.
- **Shwe Nandaw Monastery**, this "Golden Palace Monastery" is a fragile reminder of the old Mandalay Fort, once part of the palace complex and used as an apartment by King Mindon.
- **Kuthodaw Pagoda**, the 729 marble slabs surrounding this pagoda are inscribed with the entire Tripitaka, earning this pagoda the moniker of "the world's biggest book".
- **Tha Kya Di That Nunnery**, the biggest nunnery in Myanmar where you will get access to the way of life of Buddhist Nuns. We will have a unique opportunity to watch their daily blessings and rituals.
- Together with your guide access the workshops of local artisans to discover their arts: marble and wood carving, bronze foundries, gold-leaf making, silk weaving.

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INLE LAKE

Inle Lake, included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) is surrounded by green mountains and overlooks the misty Shan Mountains, it is home to the Intha people, who have adapted their environment by building entire villages rising on stilts in shallow waters. Lake dwellers grow an array of flowers and vegetables in picturesque floating gardens and fields, tended by workers in canoes.

- **Indaing Village**, located half way along the western side of the lake it is a must visit due to its 1,094 stupas surrounding the main Indaing pagoda, the original home of the five famous Buddha images of Inle Lake. Some of the stupas were built during the 11th century and feature beautiful stone carvings.
- **Phaung Daw U Pagoda**, this complex is the holiest religious site in the southern area of the Shan State, it hosts five gold-leaf-covered statues, of which three are Buddha images and two are reportedly Arahats (historical disciples of the Buddha). The gold leaf on the figures has become so thick that the images have become almost unrecognizable.
- **Kyauk Taing** pottery village, enjoy the amazing landscapes along the boat ride on Inle Lake, also learn about the local life and experience the process of pottery making. The village is mostly famous for its underground kilns, there are around 100 houses and pottery making workshops.
- **Lotus weaving**, access one of the last places where the process of lotus weaving can be seen. It is worth watching how the weavers work the lotus into thread, dyed and woven.

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RIVER CRUISE

With the largest cabin space on the Ayeyarwady river (Mandalay to Bagan, up/downstream), *Anawrahta* offers the finest on-board experience in Myanmar. This impressive vessel is named after the founder of the Burmese nation, the modern day Myanmar. During his reign, from 1044-1077, he introduced and spread the religion of Theravada Buddhism throughout the land.

Blending the purity and serenity of King Anawrahta's Buddhist beliefs with the opulence of the British Empire, *Anawrahta* is the perfect vessel on which to explore Myanmar's mighty Ayeyarwady River. Built to resemble a British colonial paddle steamer, the elegant 65-meter/ 214 feet long *Anawrahta* features three spacious decks and 23 luxurious cabins. With its gleaming white rails, polished lacquer, intricately carved woodwork and shining brass, *Anawrahta* takes guests back in time to an era of bygone elegance.

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