Thousand Smiles of Myanmar (10D9N)

Day 1: YANGON

Meet on arrival at Yangon International Airport and transfer to hotel. Sightseeing tour includes the gilded Sule Pagoda, dating back over 2,000 years, Bogyoke Market (Scott's) (closed on Monday and public holiday) with hundreds of stores and a visit of a gems shop. Continue to Chauk Htat Gyi, a huge reclining image of Buddha at Karaweik Hall, a royal floating barge. An extended visit to Shwedagon Pagoda, one of the world's most spectacular religious monuments, will conclude the tour of this picturesque Garden City. The golden dome of the Shwedagon Pagoda rises 98 meters above its base and is covered with 60 tons of pure gold. Overnight at the hotel in Yangon.

Day 2: YANGON - BAGAN (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to Yangon Airport for domestic flight to Bagan. Upon arrival in Bagan, transfer to hotel and sightseeing tour with the busy local market. Continue to visit a diverse selection of the most important pagodas and temples such as Shwezigon Pagoda, built by King Anawrahta in the early 11th century; Ku Byauk Gyi Temple with exquisite murals of Jataka scenes; Khay Min Ga Temple, outstading for its spectacular panoramic view of the area's many monuments and Ananda Temple with four huge stading statue of Buddha and numerous seated figures in niches around the galleried interior.

In the afternoon, a visit of a lacquer craftsmen's workshop in nearby Myinkaba village and sightseeing to Manuha temple, built in mon style in 1059; Nanbaya Temple, a unique sandstone monument, said to have been the palace of King Manuha and Myingaba Gu Gyaukgyi Temple, outstanding for its ancient mural paintings. Comtemplate sunset in the vicinity of Bagan's ancient monuments. Overnight at the hotel in Bagan.

Day 3: BAGAN - NATHTAUNG KYANUNG - BAGAN (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Visit the site of Tayokepyay Temple in Min Nan Thu Village, Phaya Thone Zu and Nandamanya Temples, noted for exquisite murals of 13th century and Kyatkan cave monastery, a famous meditation center in Bagan. Visit farming villages around Bagan. Sightseeing continues with an excursion by boat on the Ayeyarwaddy River to the nostalgic Nat Htaung Kyaung, a wooden monastery built in 1781 by a group of monks, famous for woodcarvings, a collection of ancient Buddha statues and lacquer boxes. Overnight at the hotel in Bagan.

Day 4: BAGAN - MOUNT POPA - MANDALAY (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Optional morning program: We are offering a unique opportunity to see the ancient city of Bagan as it has never been seen before. With 'Balloons over Bagan' you get a magnificent birds-eye view of thousand year-old pagodas, temples and the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River. The champagne flights at sunrise last just under an hour and take off daily from October through March. The balloon is guided by gentle winds not exceeding 24km/h. Eight ou six passengers plus a pilot fit into the balloon's basket.

Continue on a scenic overland journey to Mount Popa, an extinct volcano with its shrine dedicated to animist spirits, known as "Nats". For the energetic, there is time to climb the 777 steps to the shrine at the top of the volcanic plug. Continue by road and head to the Mandalay, the former capital of Myanmar. Overnight in Mandalay.

Day 5: MANDALAY - AMARAPURA - MANDALAY (B)

A sightseeing tour of Mandalay, Myanmar's cultural capital, Visit Mahagandayon, a famous Buddhist monastery, where more than a thousand monks live and study; continue to the 200-year-old U Bein teak bridge, built in 1782 at the time when Amarapura was the royal capital. Visit of Bagaya monastery, with a superb collection of Buddha statues. En route stop at a traditional hand-weaving silk workshop.

Afternoon sightseeing tour including Mahamuni Pagoda with its spectacular Buddha image covered with thick layers of gold leaves, visit to Gold Leaf Making Workshop and Tapestry Workshop. Shwe Inbin, one of the most outstanding monasteries in the country, Shwe Nan Daw Kyaung or Golden Palace monastery, a superb example of a traditional wooden building and Kuthodaw pagoda, known as the world's largest book, consisting of 729 marble slabs engraved with Buddhist scriptures. Sunset on the Mandalay Hill and overnight in Mandalay.

Day 6: MANDALAY - MINGUN - AVA - SAGAING - MANDALAY (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the jetty and board a private chartered boat for a cruise over theirrawaddyRivertowards the former capital of Mingun. After a 45-minute cruise, arrive in Mingun, famous for its huge unfinished pagoda also home to the Mingun Bell, considered as the world's largest uncracked ringing bell. Also visit the beautiful white Hsinbyume Pagoda. Excursion to the former royal capital of Inwa (AVA), reached by a short boat trip. Visits by horse-drawn carriage to Nanmyint Watch Tower, the remains of the palace building nicknamed "leaning to werof ava", maha aungmye bonzan monastery, built of brick and stucco and bargayar monastery, famous for its impressive ornate woodcarvings and teak posts. Continue to Sagaing hills, a retreat for Buddhist devotees, for sunset. Overnight in Mandalay.

Day 7: MANDALY - HEHO - PINDAYA - INLE LAKE (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the airport for the flight to Heho in Shan State. Continue by car and enjoy a scenic drive to Pindaya through the picturesque countryside of Shan State. Visit Pindaya's limestone cave with its maze of chambers displaying more than 8,000 Buddha statues and local handicraft workshops producing Shan paper made from mulberry bark and traditional umbrellas made from the same paper that are used by monks all around the country. Continue the trip to Inle Lake, one of Myanmar's best-known sights. The Intha people, a tribe of Mon descent, mostly inhabit the lakeshores and floating villages. On arrival at Nyaung Shwe village, check in at hotel (for hotel with lake location, transfer by boat). Overnight on Inle Lake.

Day 8: INLE LAKE - INN THEIN - INLE LAKE (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Visit In Dein in the south of the lake by motor boat. From the middle of the lake, continue down a small canal leading to the village of In Dein, a recently opened area in ShanState. After a walk around the village, passing a local school, take the covered stairway to the beautiful Alaung Sitthou area where

ancient stupas are partly covered by vegetation. From here there is a magnificent view over the lake. Overnight at Inle Lake.

Day 9: INLE LAKE - HEHO - YANGON (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. A full day tour of Inle Lake by boat includes a chance to see the leg-rowing fishermen and the floating gardens, built up from strips of water hyacinth and mud and anchored to the bottom with bamboo poles. Visit a floating village at Ywama, the lake's downtown, where a floating market is held every five days. The tour also includes a visit to Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the weavingvillageofInpawkhonand the jumping cat monastery, with beautiful antique Buddha statues. Continue visits of the lake by boat and in the afternoon transfer to Heho Airport for the flight back to Yangon. On arrival, transfer to hotel. Overnight at the hotel in Yangon.

Day 10: YANGON (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. End the tour with a visit to Botahtaung Pagoda with its amazing relic chamber including million dollar worth Jem stone. Then, free time for visitting colonial city center with China town, before transferring to Mingaladon Airport for late afternoon departure flight.

END OF TOUR

Note:

B: Breakfast L: Lunch D: Dinner

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