

# MYANMAR (BURMA)



Bagan

*"It will be quite unlike any land you know", so said Rudyard Kipling, so prepare to be amazed, dazzled and moved by all that you will see and experience in this intriguing land. Myanmar (formerly Burma) is a beautiful treasure trove of pristine nature, majestic, ancient religious sites, the mighty Ayeyarwady River, mysterious cave pagodas and beautiful white sand beaches. The Burmese people, are warm and welcoming and cannot wait to share their rich traditions, customs and culture with you.*

## WHY VISIT MYANMAR?

Following years of seclusion Myanmar has now opened its doors to visitors hungry for new experiences. The 21st century world has barely touched this gentle land, so prepare to be captivated by a strong sense of the old Orient.

Temples appear at almost every turn, particularly in Bagan, where thousands of ancient temples and pagodas are strewn across the sprawling dusty terrain. Hire a horse and cart to leisurely explore these astonishing monuments, which include the well-preserved Temple of Ananda and gold-domed Shwezigon Pagoda.

Yangon (formerly Rangoon) was the British colonial capital and is noted for a number of famous religious sites, not least of which is the imposing golden Shwedagon Pagoda (sunset vistas are highly recommended). The city's

bustling streets and narrow alleys are filled with shops, markets and tea houses where the aroma of spices and freshly-cooked food wafts through the air. Mandalay is Myanmar's cultural centre, full of craft workshops and tree-shaded monasteries. From Mandalay Hill enjoy magnificent views (particularly at sunset) over the city and Ayeyarwady River, as it meanders through the countryside beyond.

At Inle Lake, witness a unique way of living as the Intha people live in villages built on stilts over the water and travel by boat everywhere! Remarkably, they row standing up with one leg wrapped around an oar! Kalaw is a former British hill station and along with many colonial buildings, the region is also known for its hill tribes.

Ngapali is renowned as the country's best beach. There are no noisy beachside bars and no crowds; all that's on offer is unspoiled beauty and white sand lapped by deep blue water stretching as far as the eye can see.



Bagan



Inle Lake

**It's the perfect destination for...**

Myanmar is recommended to those who are well-travelled, particularly in Asia. There is a huge demand to visit this captivating land and good quality accommodation is limited, although new hotels are on their way, so plan in advance and book early. Airport announcements can be vague, infrastructure is still developing and while holiday prices may appear expensive at the outset, once in Myanmar the cost of food and drink is minimal. Whatever challenges arise, the rewards for visiting this incredible country are priceless and we recommend you go now before the inevitable change takes hold.

**Classic Myanmar**

Taking a tour really is the best way to see Myanmar, particularly for a first visit. Our tours on pages 204-205 include all the major places of interest; however, as you'll travel by air-conditioned car with your own guide, you have the flexibility to linger longer at sights where desired. Alternatively, join a leisurely seven night river cruise which, along with larger towns and cities, will also take you to small villages, only accessible by boat, for a real glimpse of local life.

**Explore more...**

Shorter side trips and river cruises are also available, making it easy to extend a tour. While most people won't think of visiting Myanmar to simply get away from it all, Ngapali Beach offers just that opportunity.

**Myanmar and beyond**

With so much to explore within Myanmar few will look to combine extensively with other countries. One option is to combine with our fabulous Vietnam & Cambodia tour. Of course, if you wish to break your journey to Myanmar, the excellent airline links allow stopovers in the Middle East or at Asian capitals such as Bangkok, Singapore or Kuala Lumpur.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**The prices**

Our holidays include flights with scheduled airlines, domestic flights (where stated) accommodation, meals as detailed and private transfers (unless otherwise indicated). Room upgrades and meal supplements are per person per night. All prices shown are based on the best value travel dates in low season.

**Getting there**

There are no non-stop flights between the UK and Yangon, so flights via Bangkok take 14½ hours. Alternatively flights go via KL, Singapore, Dubai or Doha.

**Best time to go**

The best time to visit most of Myanmar is November to February. From March to May the temperature rises considerably and the monsoon rains arrive from May to October. If visiting Ngapali Beach the best time to visit is October to April as outside these months, the monsoon weather can be inclement and many hotels close.

**Flight upgrades**

Why not travel in style and upgrade to a higher class cabin, where you will benefit from greater comfort and space. Myanmar upgrade prices are: Premium economy from £359; business class from £995 or first class from £4199 one way.



Ngapali Beach

**MYANMAR**

Myanmar tours from the UK	204-205
Myanmar river cruises	206
Ngapali Beach hotels	207

See page 263 for Holiday Information for Myanmar



U-Bein Bridge, Mandalay

7 night privately escorted tour from  
**£1969**pp



**Mandalay** 2 nights ~ **Bagan** 2 nights  
**Inle Lake** 2 nights ~ **Yangon** 1 night



Buphaya Pagoda in Bagan

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Departures:** Daily.

**Accommodation:** 3★ accommodation. Upgraded hotels and extra nights in each destination available at a supplement.

**Meals:** Breakfast. Lunch is also included on day 5.

**Tour price:** The price shown is based on the best value travel dates in low season and includes return international flights from the UK, domestic flights, private transfers between your hotels, accommodation, sightseeing as outlined, private services of an English speaking guide and entrance fees.

National Museum in Yangon is closed on Mondays and public holidays. Inle Lake can be chilly in the mornings and evening between Nov-Apr, so you may wish to pack a jumper.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF MYANMAR

PRIVATELY ESCORTED TOUR BY AIR-CONDITIONED CAR

fascinating traditional ceremonies • centuries-old temples • stunning sunsets at picturesque locations

**Day 1:** Fly to Mandalay

**Day 2 Mandalay:** On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel. Enjoy time to relax, or maybe pre-book an optional trishaw excursion (additional expense) around Mandalay Hill?

**Day 3 Mandalay:** Early morning transfer to Mahamuni Temple to see a traditional ceremony (which starts at around 4.30am) with monks, nuns and local people who come to pay homage to the temple's Buddha image. Afterwards, you have the chance to watch activities around the temple including monks chanting and locals praying. There is also a covered market which is well worth a browse before you return to your hotel.

Later, explore Sagaing and Amarapura, two ancient capitals of Myanmar. On the way to Sagaing, stop at Shankalay Kyun, a small village home to talented artisans, where you can stroll through the plantations and village to see craftsmen at work.

Cross the Ayeyarwady River via Yadanapon Bridge, also known as New Ava Bridge, and enjoy views of the Old Ava Bridge built by the British in 1934. The bridge leads to Sagaing, the spiritual centre of Myanmar where hundreds of white, silver and gold pagodas and monasteries dot the hilly landscape. Visit some of the most prominent pagodas before continuing to a small village to discover the unique craft of paper doll making. Continue to Amarapura to see silk weaving workshops and then onwards to the famous U Bein Bridge, built from teak and stretching across Taung Thaman Lake, where you have time to linger and see the breathtaking sunset before returning to Mandalay.

**Day 4 Mandalay/Bagan:** Transfer to the airport for the flight to Bagan, a spectacular plain beside the Ayeyarwady River dotted with thousands of centuries-old temple ruins. Visit some of the most remarkable temples including Shwezigon Pagoda, Ananda Pahto, Manuha Temple and Shwesandaw Pagoda.

**Day 5 Bagan:** Travel from Bagan to Mount Popa, stopping en route in the small village of Shwe Hlaing for a Burmese-style tea party hosted by a local family in their home. Stroll around the village and watch the locals demonstrate how they climb the palm trees and use the sap to make palm sugar and fiery liquor. Continue to Mount Popa, an extinct sheer-sided volcano that rises out of the plain. Topped by golden stupas it is a famous pilgrimage site for locals who come to worship at the Nat temples. Enjoy lunch at the midway point of this legendary summit, taking in the panoramic views across the plains, valleys and mountains before returning to Bagan. This evening, witness the sun setting beyond the mountains as you cruise along the Ayeyarwady on a private boat. The sight of pagodas and temples glinting in the moonlight is incredibly beautiful and won't disappoint.

**Day 6 Bagan/Inle Lake:** Transfer to the airport for the flight to Heho. On arrival, drive to Pindaya a quiet town perched on the bank of placid Pone Ta Love Lake. Explore the Pindaya caves ensconced in a limestone ridge cramped with thousands of Buddha images in various styles and sizes. Continue to Inle Lake and transfer by boat to your hotel.

**Day 7 Inle Lake:** Travel across the peaceful lake by longtail boat to visit a local farm where tomatoes are grown on an island that floats on the surface of the lake. Next, visit an Inthar village to see typical houses constructed on wooden stilts in the water. Spend some time with a local family who will generously open their home for you. Later, enjoy a boat ride on the lake to discover its calm serenity, still waters and colourful floating vegetation. Enjoy the awe-inspiring scenery and watch the fishermen who row uniquely with their legs to glide gracefully across the lake. Visit the enchanting floating gardens, a teeming market and a lakeside village before visiting the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, lotus and silk weaving villages and Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery.

**Day 8 Inle Lake/Yangon:** Transfer by boat and onwards by road to Heho for the flight to Yangon. On arrival, embark on a city tour which begins at the Sule Pagoda, a gleaming octagonal pagoda that stands squarely at the centre of the city. Afterwards, visit the National Museum to gain an insight into Myanmar and then continue to the Shwedagon Pagoda, a highlight within the city. Towering over the city, this pagoda is the most sacred spot in the country and is at its most beautiful during the sunset hours, as the golden stupa reflects the changing colours of twilight.

**Day 9 Yangon:** Your tour concludes with a transfer to the airport for your journey home, or perhaps extend your stay?

### Why not extend your stay?



BEACH

Extend your stay with time to relax at beautiful Ngapali beach, which is just short flight from either Yangon or Heho (see page 207).



Kuthodaw Pagoda, Mandalay

12 night privately escorted tour from  
**£2479**pp

## DISCOVER MYANMAR

PRIVATELY ESCORTED TOUR BY AIR-CONDITIONED CAR

mesmerising sights sure to live long in the memory • insight into everyday life • traditions and culture

**Day 1:** Fly to Mandalay.

**Day 2 Mandalay:** On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel. This afternoon see the Royal Palace, Shwenandaw Monastery and Kuthodaw Pagoda, known as the world's largest book as surrounding the pagoda are 729 shrines each containing an inscribed marble slab. Continue to Mandalay Hill for panoramic city views.

**Day 3 Mandalay:** Begin with an hour long boat ride along the Ayeyarwady River to Mingun. On arrival visit the Mingun Pagoda, the Mingun bell and finally Mya Thein Tan Pagoda, regarded as the Taj Mahal of Myanmar. Return by boat to Mandalay and continue to Amarapura to see the Bagaya Monastery, Kyauktawgyi Pagoda and a silk weaving workshop. Proceed to the U Bein Bridge to watch the sunset before returning to Mandalay.

**Day 4 Mandalay:** Travel to picturesque Sagaing Hills, a retreat for Buddhist devotees with numerous pagodas and monasteries. Stop at some of the most famous temples, such as Tupayon Paya and Hsinmyashin Paya (the Pagoda of many Elephants). Continue to the former royal capital of Inwa (Ava), now a quiet rural oasis on the banks of the Ayeyarwady River. Board a horse-drawn carriage for a leisurely ride around the peaceful countryside, briefly visiting Bagaya Kyaung, a beautiful teak wood monastery, Maha Agungmyay Bonzan Kyaung and Nan Myint Tower. On the way watch local artisans make their alms bowls out of iron.

**Day 5 Mandalay/Mount Popa:** Transfer to the airport and fly to Bagan. On arrival, visit The Nyaung U Market which provides great photo opportunities and the chance to mingle with local people. Proceed to Schwezigon Pagoda, a prototype of later Myanmar stupa; Wetkyi-in Gubyaukkyi Temple; and Tharabar Gate. Drive to Mount Popa, an extinct volcano, upon which the sacred Popa Taungkalat Monastery is dramatically perched. It's an energetic climb of 777 steps to the summit but you're rewarded with stunning views over the region.

**Day 6 Mount Popa/Bagan:** Drive to Salay and visit Yoke-son Monastery which is fabulously decorated with religious woodcarvings. Drive to Bagan and after an insight into the lacquerware industry visit Manuha Temple, home to gigantic Buddha images. Continue to Nanpayya, an early-style temple with fine stone carvings and this evening visit the Ananda Temple, thought to have been built around 1105 by King Kyanzitha.

**Day 7 Bagan:** Visit Minnanthu village for a glimpse of typical Myanmar village life. This afternoon sightseeing in Bagan includes a variety of temples and pagodas such as Shwe Gukyi Temple, "Thatbyinnyu", Dhammayangyi, and Sulamani Temple where you can see fine frescos from the 18th century.

**Day 8 Bagan/Pindaya:** Transfer to the airport for a flight to Heho. On arrival drive to Pindaya and visit Pindaya caves, well-known for the thousands of Buddha images housed inside. Later, visit a local family that makes colourful handmade paper umbrellas and gifts.

**Day 9 Pindaya/Kalaw:** Drive to the old hill station of Kalaw, which has a refreshing climate and scenic views, from which you'll trek to the surrounding Palaung Hills to visit local hill tribe villages.

**Day 10 Kalaw/Inle Lake:** Tour a market in Kalaw before travelling to Nyaung Shwe, home to Inle Lake. En route visit a vineyard and winery and sample some of the wine.

**Day 11 Inle Lake:** Morning lake cruise to see the Intha fishermen that row with one leg and use conical fishing nets. Visit a traditional lotus and silk weaving village, the cheroot Burmese mild cigar cottage industry, silversmith village and learn about traditional boat making. Continue to Nga Phe Kyaung Monastery and Phaung Daw Oo Monastery.

**Day 12 Inle Lake:** Travel by boat to the western shore of the lake to a stairway and walk to the hidden Indein temple complex. Located on the shore of the lake, this site consists of hundreds of small stupas overgrown by moss and greens. Continue on foot past rice fields to the village of Sae Ma, stopping to explore. In the afternoon meet village locals on the lake and travel to a monastery to view monastic activities.

**Day 13 Inle/Yangon:** Transfer to Heho airport and fly to Yangon. On arrival visit Chaukhtatkyi Pagoda home to a colossal reclining Buddha before a brief stop at the Sule Pagoda. This evening proceed to the Chinatown area and Bogyoke Market which is housed in a beautiful colonial building and has more than 2000 shops selling all kinds of products. Finally, head to Shwedagon Pagoda, the most well-known in Yangon, which is completely covered in gold.

**Day 14 Yangon:** Today's sightseeing includes Botataung Pagoda, a famous landmark on Yangon's waterfront, Pansodan Jetty and the wonderful Strand Hotel which opened in 1901. En route to the airport visit Kaba Aye (World Peace) Pagoda and Mahapasana Gua (Great Cave). Your tour ends with a transfer to the airport for your onward journey. Alternatively, why not extend your stay with time at Ngapali beach (see page 207).



Mandalay 3 nights ~ Mount Popa 1 night ~ Bagan 2 nights  
 Pindaya 1 night ~ Kalaw 1 night ~ Inle Lake 3 nights  
 Yangon 1 night



Mount Popa

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Departures:** Daily

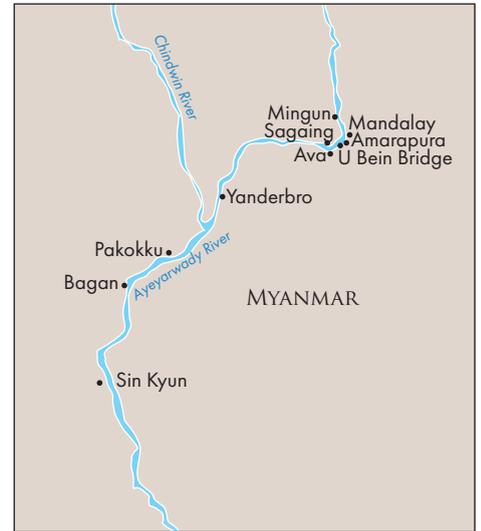
**Accommodation:** 3★ accommodation. Upgraded hotels and extra nights in each destination available at a supplement.

**Meals:** Breakfast.

**Tour price:** The price shown is based on the best value travel dates in low season and includes return international flights from the UK, domestic flights, private transfers between your hotels, accommodation, sightseeing as outlined, private services of an English speaking guide and entrance fees.

Pindaya, Kalaw and Inle Lake can be chilly in the mornings and evening between Nov-Apr, so you may wish to pack a jumper.

# RIVER CRUISES



Get a glimpse of hidden Myanmar with a voyage along the fabled Ayeyarwady River.

As rivers remain the lifeblood of Myanmar, despite the introduction of railways in colonial times and roads more recently, a cruise on the Ayeyarwady is undoubtedly the most enthralling way to uncover Myanmar's secrets.

Today, numerous ships ply the waters and we've showcased just a few of our favourites, from the great value RV Kalaw Pandaw to the more luxurious Heritage Line and Sanctuary Ananda vessels. Each of these voyages include all meals as well as selected drinks and a variety of fascinating shore excursions to ensure you don't miss any of the sights.

Journeys vary in duration from two nights up to seven nights and take you from the former capital of Mandalay and the incredible temples of Bagan, or vice versa. While stopping off points do differ, many include visits to the ancient capitals of Ava, Saigan and Amarapura; while at Mingun the highlight is the unfinished pagoda and the Mingun Bell within an easy stroll.

Whichever voyage you opt for, you can expect a tranquil pace, glorious scenery, magnificent temples, charming fishing villages and the chance to interact with inquisitive locals.



Mandalay Hill Temple



Deluxe stateroom

3 night river cruise from **£599** pp

## HERITAGE LINE ANAWRAHTA 3 NIGHT RIVER CRUISE

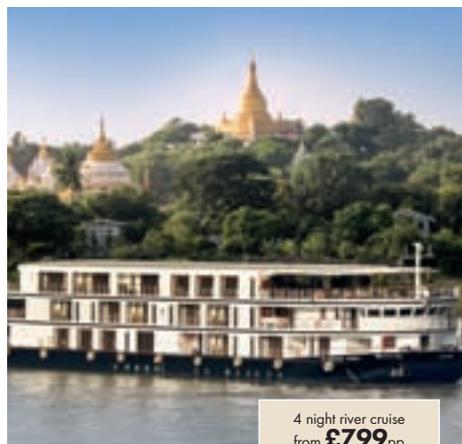
Built to resemble a British colonial paddle steamer, Anawrahta has three grand decks with a bar, lounge, restaurant, spa, gym and huge sundeck with pool. There are 23 large and bright staterooms and suites, all with bathroom, mini bar, safe and balcony. This captivating voyage begins in Mandalay and heads to Sagaing, one of Myanmar's ancient capitals before visiting the former royal capital of Ava. Other stopping points include the quiet riverside village of Yanderbo for a chance to mingle with the locals; the old trading town of Pakokku and finally, Bagan, where you can explore the array of remarkable temples, stupas and pagodas.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Departures:** On selected dates August-December 18.

**Meals:** All inclusive which includes all meals; free-flow of beverages (mineral water, soft drinks, juices, tea & coffee at all times, plus local beer and house wine by glass during lunch and dinner); drinking water in cabins and during excursions.

**Tour price:** The price shown is based on the best value travel dates in low season, 3 nights accommodation in a deluxe stateroom, daily sightseeing and onboard entertainment.



4 night river cruise from **£799** pp

## SANCTUARY ANANDA 4 NIGHT RIVER CRUISE

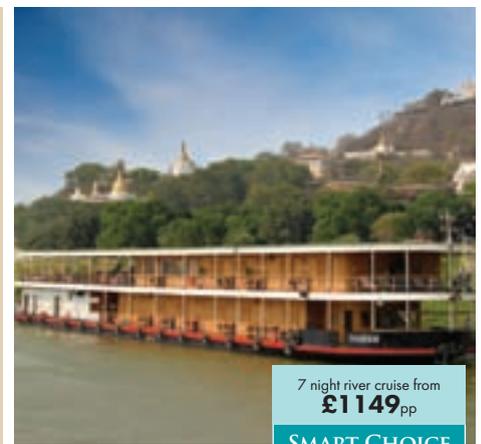
This refined all-suite vessel showcases Burmese design and contemporary chic across the four decks. Amenities include a restaurant, lounge, spa, gym, swimming pool and sundeck, while each of the 21 suites have floor-to-ceiling windows, balcony, shower and living area. The first day of this voyage begins in Mandalay and heads to the pagoda sprinkled hills of Sagaing, the village of Ywataung, Amarapura and the U Bein Bridge. During the next two days visit quaint Sin Kyun, Mingun and the awe-inspiring landscapes of Bagan. A variety of cultural experiences and shore excursions are included.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Departures:** Selected Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays.

**Meals:** Full board - all meals, soft drinks and local beer whilst on board, local wine with meals.

**Tour price:** The price shown is based on the best value travel dates in low season and includes private transfers between the airport and ship, 4 night cruise in a Bagan Deck suite and all shore excursions. Children below 6 years are not allowed.



7 night river cruise from **£1149** pp

**SMART CHOICE**

## RV KALAW PANDAW 7 NIGHT RIVER CRUISE

Save and see all the 'wow' sights at a lower price than other ships offer on shorter cruises when you cruise aboard the colonial RV Kalaw Pandaw. There are 18 identical staterooms with shower, safe and French window (there are no televisions, mini bars or telephones in the staterooms). Features include promenade decks, open-air lounge, library, dining room and sun deck. This 7 day voyage includes an overnight stay in Bagan allowing ample time to explore one of the richest archaeological sites in the world, before visiting the quiet traditional town of Pakokku, Yandabo village, Amarapura to visit the U Bein Bridge, Mingun and finally Mandalay.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Departures:** Every Saturday from September-March.

**Meals:** Full board and all day local soft drinks, local beer and spirits, tea/coffee and mineral water.

**Tour price:** The price shown is based on the best value travel dates in low season and includes coach transfers to and from the ship, 7 night cruise in a stateroom, sightseeing, entrance fees, guide services and gratuities to crew.

# NGAPALI BEACH



**Getting there:** Thandwe is the nearest airport for Ngapali. Flights take around 50 minutes from Yangon/Heho. The drive from Thandwe to Ngapali takes around 15 minutes and the resort hotels arrange your transfers.

**Best time to go:** Ngapali is best visited between October and April as outside these months the monsoon weather can be inclement and many hotels close.

Myanmar's premier beach resort, on the Bay of Bengal coast, has idyllic white sands lapped by deep blue water stretching as far as the eye can see.

Pronounced Napally and said to be named after the Italian city of Naples, Ngapali maintains a charming fishing-village vibe as, despite something of a construction boom, only a handful of hotels and resorts are spread across more than 15 miles of coast. The soft white sands are fringed with palm trees and lead down to the clear blue waters where traditional fishing boats bob around offshore.

Should you tire of lounging on the beach, a colourful underwater world awaits your exploration or alternatively, trips to nearby small islands can be arranged.

On land, there's a 9 hole golf course, or you may opt to hire a bicycle and join the local traffic of ox drawn carts and cycles to visit the numerous fishing villages where the way of life has remained largely unchanged for generations.

In the nearby small town of Thandwe there are three modest stupas which offer fantastic views over the area while at its thriving market all manner of regional produce, clothes and locally-produced handicrafts can be purchased.

Dining options at the beachside hotels and resorts include Asian and western food, while local beach restaurants serve up wonderfully fresh seafood, at ridiculously low prices, allowing you to dine with sand between your toes as the sun sets over the Bay of Bengal. A word of warning though, Ngapali isn't the place for those seeking a lively nightlife, there are no discos on the beach, it's simply a laid-back paradise to get away from it all in perfectly idyllic surroundings.



3 nts with flights from **£465**pp  
extra night from **£36**pp

## BAYVIEW BEACH RESORT

4★ Ngapali Beach

At this modern resort, set in the centre of Ngapali's sweeping bay, you can unwind beside the pool, stroll along the glorious sands or enjoy a variety of activities. Spacious rooms sit within the exotic gardens or at the beach and each feature a balcony or terrace.

**Features:** 45 rooms • restaurant • bar • swimming pool • non-motorised watersports • massage and beauty centre • bicycle rentals • 9 hole golf course nearby • guided tours

**Accommodation:** In deluxe garden view rooms with shower, mini bar, safe and balcony or terrace

**Room upgrades:** Deluxe garden view bungalows from nil • deluxe beachfront bungalows from £5.

**Meals:** Breakfast.

**Transfers:** 15 minutes from Thandwe airport by hotel shuttle.

**Note:** Resort closed Aug Sep 18.



3 nts with flights from **£465**pp  
extra night from **£44**pp

## AMAZING NGAPALI RESORT

4★ Ngapali Beach

This charming resort enjoys an idyllic setting beside the vast expanse of Ngapali's gorgeous white sand beach. Throughout the resort there's a wonderfully relaxed ambience and feeling of spaciousness so unwinding here won't be difficult.

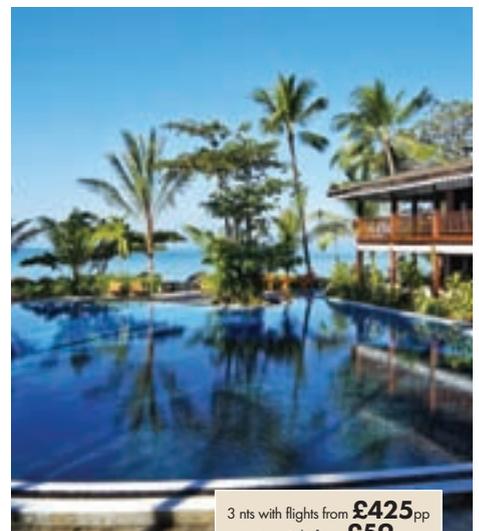
**Features:** 49 rooms • restaurant • 2 bars • swimming pool • spa and massage • bicycle rentals • golf nearby • shuttle bus to nearby Thandwe Town • free WiFi

**Accommodation:** In sea view deluxe rooms with bath/shower, mini bar, safe and terrace.

**Room upgrades:** Spacious beachfront suites from £37 which offer a lounge area and bath and separate shower • two storey Amazing suite beachfront villas (price on request).

**Meals:** Breakfast.

**Transfers:** 5 minutes from Thandwe airport by hotel shuttle.



3 nts with flights from **£425**pp  
extra night from **£59**pp

## SANDOWAY RESORT

5★ Ngapali Beach

Nestled amongst verdant gardens on the beachfront, this stunning resort is crafted in traditional style and has a wonderfully refined, but unpretentious atmosphere. All guest accommodation has an understated luxury in keeping with the resort's castaway feel.

**Features:** 59 rooms, cottages & villas • restaurant • bar • swimming pool • spa • cinema • library • free bicycle hire • 9 hole golf course nearby • free WiFi

**Accommodation:** In two storey deluxe rooms with shower, mini bar, safe and living room. There are no televisions in any rooms.

**Room upgrades:** Village cottages with upstairs bedroom and downstairs living area from £10 • beachfront cottages from £41.

**Meals:** Breakfast.

**Transfers:** 20 minutes from Thandwe airport by hotel shuttle.

**Note:** Resort closes annually 01 Jun-30 Sep.