



IMPRESSIVE GORGES

Mandalay - Katha - Mandalay

The scenery of the Upper Ayeyarwady is the most dramatic along the 1,200-miles of the river along the three 'defiles' (sometimes erroneously referred to as gorges). Passing through the second of these is particularly memorable. Within that defile there is a famous rock, painted like a parrot's beak. It has been used as a water level marker for many years and is needed due to the great water difference between the seasons. Although the rain water of the monsoon does contribute, the real supplier to the river is the melting waters of the Burmese Himalaya mountains. It's a beautiful and unspoiled part of the world that makes travelling here a life enriching adventure.

**Please find below the program of the Impressive Gorges cruise
from Mandalay - Katha - Mandalay for an 8-days / 7-nights stay.**

Day One

Mandalay - Nwe Nyein

Morning embarkation in Mandalay and sailing north, through the Dolphin Sanctuary. There will be a morning lecture on Myanmar culture entitled "Myanmar Ways of Life" and a Myanmar traditional dress demonstration early in the afternoon. In the cooler air of late afternoon we will embark for a tour to the pottery village of Nwe Nyein. Here you can see the traditional techniques still being used to produce a wide variety of decorative pots. At night, a Longyi Cocktail Party will break the ice with your fellow guests.

Day Two

Taguang

In the morning, we offer yoga and meditation on the sun deck. Today's sailing is through the rolling hills of the Third Defile. Passing by bamboo villages and small fishing settlements, you will realize how tranquil these lives can be. Join our chef for a cookery demonstration in the morning and attend an informal Burmese language lesson in the afternoon. We will reach Taguang for another late afternoon tour, which will show life on the riverbank and introduce you to this small town with its ancient fortifications, archeological area and famous nat or spirit shrines.



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Day Three

Katha

Have a relaxing morning, perhaps enjoying the facilities of our spacious spa (including the only Swedish-style sauna on the Ayeyarwady) or our 8-meter Jacuzzi swimming pool which enables you conveniently observe the passing scenery while lying in the water as we sail towards Katha. Early afternoon we reach the enchanting colonial town of Katha, a setting of George Orwell's *Burmese Days*. Little has changed since then. Of interest are the collections of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's ships' bells taken from sunken ships in the Second World War. Katha was the final resting place for many of the old flotilla as over a hundred ships were scuppered here in 1942 - an act of denial before the advancing Japanese. Our tour will take you around all the places that appear in the novel including George Orwell's house, and give you the opportunity to really imagine how life was in this far-flung corner of the British Empire. Our special lecture will be hosted at the former British Commissioner House by the Katha historian Nyo Ko Naing. Join an afternoon tea picnic in the garden of the British Commissioner House before we head back on board. After dinner, we welcome Shan tribes who settled at a village near Katha. Enjoy the traditional Shan dance and music on the sun deck.

Day Four

Naba Train Ride & Katha Market

In the morning, we will take an oriental train ride from Katha towards Naba through the thick Kachin jungle and teak forest. Enjoy a travel back in time to the old colonial days on this scenic train ride passing through hidden villages in the forest. Eventually we transfer back to Katha for our Katha Market visit. It's time for some shopping at the colorful local market of Katha, where you can practice your Burmese language skills during a market rally (no worries, language lessons, an assistant and change is provided for shopping).

In the afternoon you may relax on the sun deck while we continue sailing upstream to Shwe Gu. Afternoon tea will be served right before our guide gives a lecture on Myanmar history and current affairs.

As the evening approaches and the Burmese sun immerses everything in a golden light, a special event will take place at the Kipling's Bar. Dress up in style as we send "a toast to the past" during a British Club where gents may whiff cigars and ladies sip on tasty gins with tonic. Share some tales of the old British-Burmese days. This is the perfect time to lose time. Join us for movie under the stars on the sun deck after the dinner.



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Mandalay - Bhamo - Mandalay

Day Five

The Second Defile and Kyun Daw

In the early morning, be prepared on the sun deck as we make our first passing through the impressive Second defile. It will take about two hours depending on the force of the current. Enjoy your breakfast on the sun deck while passing through the dramatic Second Defile. Once on the other side, we will turn at the Sinkan Bridge and begin our return journey by plunging again into the fast flowing waters of the Defile. It may take as little as 25 minutes to reach the other end! We sail on, passing by Kyun Daw Island where we visit countless small pagodas, local villages and river nomads who live on the river banks of the Ayeyarwady. We return to the ship for lunch and continue our journey southwards the Ayeyarwady River. After dinner, enjoy the entertainment of our crew with their talent for Myanmar's traditional dance.

Day Six

Hsithe

In the morning we offer yoga and meditation on the sun deck. Those wishing for some mental stimulation can join a lecture on 'Religion in Myanmar' and another Burmese language lesson before lunch. Afterwards, a demonstration of Traditional Burmese Cigar and Chewing Betel Nut takes place. In the early afternoon, we reach the picturesque fishing village of Hsithe. The village is home to fishermen who conduct co-operative fishing with the critically endangered Ayeyarwady River Dolphin. The village is a developing community based on tourism with guidelines and support of the Darwin Initiative Project and the Harrison Institute. We will take you on a village tour, see the traditional agriculture products and teach you how to cast a traditional fishing net. Afternoon tea will be served at the visitor center of the village with a presentation about the river, the wildlife and the people. We return to the boat for dinner. Afterwards, you can join our outdoor cinema at the village together with the friendly villagers of Hsithe.



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Day Seven

Mandalay

Today you have the last opportunity to simply relax and enjoy the luxurious facilities on board and the passing scenery as we sail towards Mandalay. Be prepared on the sun deck as we pass by Mingun, a showcase of the monumental and unfinished stupa of King Bodawpaya. It has never been completed due to an astrologer that stated: once the temple will be completed, the king will die.

We reach Mandalay in the late afternoon, right in time to visit Amarapura which is known for its traditional silk weaving, silver and bronze casting, and to see the sunset at the famous “U Bein’s Bridge”, the longest teak bridge in Myanmar. After a farewell dinner, you can enjoy this evening’s entertainment: a Ramayana show that is a legendary story and performance accompanied with traditional music instruments.

Day Eight

Mandalay

Bid farewell to the crew as you check-out after breakfast.

Mentioned times are approximate. Although it is our intention to operate the proposed itinerary as outlined above, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes of the program that might be necessary as a result of weather conditions, alterations to cruise schedules or other operational factors. Detailed embarkation and disembarkation information is available on our website in the download section.

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