CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

TREK BURMA (MYANMAR)
BURMA-MYANMAR

Fri 27 Feb - Sun 08 Mar 2015

In aid of your choice of charity

27 Feb - 08 Mar 2015

10 DAYS | BURMA-MYANMAR | TOUGH

Arguably South East Asia's best kept secret, Myanmar is a mystical blend of unique culture, regal history, jaw-dropping views and a magnificent temple-lined landscape.

This challenge ventures to the beautiful Inle Lake through the Shan Hills. Here we trek for five days through mountainous tribal villages and staying in Buddhist monasteries along the way.

The itinerary includes a full day at Inle Lake, one of Burma's most beautiful attractions. Explore the lake by private boat, passing villages on stilts inhabited by the local Intha people who still practise the ancient traditions of their forefathers.

The challenge ends in the modern, bustling city of Yangon (formerly Rangoon).

- Uncover the secrets of magical Myanmar
- Encounter local Burmese villagers, still practising the traditions of their ancestors
- Overnight in traditional Buddhist Burmese monasteries
- Explore the wonders of the beautiful Inle Lake
- A guide-led tour of the city of Yangon, formerly Rangoon

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Fri 27 Feb*

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International Departure from London

The day has arrived and it's finally time for the long-awaited departure to Burma (Myanmar). Here we meet the rest of our team and the Charity Challenge representative, before saying goodbye to family and friends.

DAY 2 *Sat 28 Feb*

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Arrive Yangon and onwards to Heho

Upon arriving in Yangon, the group will be transferred to a location near the airport for a rest and refreshments. Later we head back to the airport for an internal flight to Heho, in the central district of Taunggyi.

Once in Heho, the group will check in to tonight's accommodation. This evening there will be a challenge briefing and the first team dinner together.

DAY 3 *Sun 01 Mar*

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Trek Heho – Myin Hmu Village (approximately 5 to 6 hours)

Wake up refreshed for the start of our trekking adventure! Over the course of the next five days we will encounter the Danu and Taung Yoo tribes as we pass through several villages. Follow dirt trails through lush green forests, which open out into the vast tea plantations that support the local villages. After lunch it's three hours to Myin Hmu, where we overnight in a monastery.

DAY 4 *Mon 02 Mar*

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Trek Myin Hmu – Nawa Taung (approximately 6 to 7 hours)

Today's route takes in more of the Pindaya area, including hill tribe villages and pine forests. Be prepared for boggy terrain, though it will get rockier as we approach the limestone caves at Oo Min. During the afternoon we continue to trek through villages and open agricultural land, visiting Di Gone before arriving at Nawa Taung. We dine in the village and overnight in another monastery.

DAY 5 *Tue 03 Mar*

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Trek Nawa Taung – Nan Ta La Te (approximately 6 to 7 hours)

Rise and shine early as we venture further into the Shan Hills on a two hour trek to Myin Ka, a small village resting high in the misty mountains. We will hike across undulating terrain, passing villages located on the ascents. From Myin Ka it's another hour towards Luot Pyin, where we stop to refuel before continuing onwards to Nan Ta La Te, for the night.

DAY 6 *Wed 04 Mar*

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Trek Nan Ta La Te – Hti Taing (approximately 5-6 hours)

This morning will be spent experiencing traditional village life in Nan Ta La Te, before the day's trek begins. Then it's on to Kgone Hla for lunch. This afternoon's trek is considerably flatter than on previous days, but more exposed to the scorching sun. The route passes by rice paddy fields and plantation fields, en route to the village of Hti Taing where we spend the night.

DAY 7 *Thu 05 Mar*

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Trek – Hti Taing – Then Taung – Inle (approximately 3 to 4 hours)

Conditions could be cooler for the final leg of our trek to Then Taung village. The backdrop is beautiful, but expect a steep descent through fields of bamboo and banana trees. The route opens up to a lush riverside walk to the finishing line at Then Taung. After lunch we tour Inle Lake and its floating villages. Tonight will be spent around the lake celebrating.

DAY 8 *Fri 06 Mar*

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Inle Lake

Spend the day exploring the beautiful Inle lake. Visit the ruins of In Dein before heading to the lake's morning market where surrounding hill tribes come to trade their wares. Other highlights include many floating gardens, Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the weaving village of Inpawkhone and a cheroot factory, where the typical Burmese cigars are made. Transfer to hotel to spend the afternoon at leisure.

DAY 9 *Sat 07 Mar*

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Inle – Heho – Yangon – international flight to Bangkok

Transferring to Heho, we fly to Yangon for a day of sightseeing. A Charity Challenge guide will lead you around the city's attractions, including the Shwedagon Pagoda, the most revered Buddhist temple in Burma. After lunch it's back to the airport for an evening flight to Bangkok, then on to London.

DAY 10 *Sun 08 Mar*

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Arrive UK

Be sure to swap contact details with new friends and trekking partners, before arriving back in the UK early this morning.

NB

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER	MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP	FLEXI
-	-	-
Pay a registration fee of £329.00 when you book *Then a balance of £1958.00* *(8 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise as much as you can for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £329.00 when you book* *Raise a minimum of £3995.00 for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £329.00 when you book* *Then £329.00 towards challenge costs* *(8 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise a minimum of £3324.00 for your charity.*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Public liability insurance
- Discount on personal equipment from The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Nomad & MASTA
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Fundraising advice
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Fitness training notes
- Warm up exercise routines

On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Group first aid supplies
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- All challenge management before, during and post event
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

On your challenge

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 19/12/2014), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 05/04/2015). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Prices include all known air taxes	We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 13 - 16 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 13 participants. We can run this trip with 8-12 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75. This is payable by you if you book as a Self Funder or your charity under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi payment option if you have raised the necessary minimum fundraising target. For Self Funders, we will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary, and it will be added to your final balance of challenge costs invoice.

Optional extras	Trek/bike training weekends* Extensions at end of trip* Single room supplements* Travel insurance Business class upgrades* (*subject to availability)
Travel insurance	Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. Charity Challenge has chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine (for UK residents) and Rise & Shield* (for non-UK residents). Both companies can arrange cover for an extensive number of activities, such as high-altitude trekking and cycling events, which include emergency medical treatment and repatriation expenses. Please note that Charity Challenge is not able to advise on matters relating to individual travel insurance policies and does not accept any liability for policy matters or claims. Full details including costs may be found at https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge and https://riseandshield.com/partners/charity-challenge/ * Rise and Shield do not provide cover to Cuba.

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our Responsible Tourism pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more here

Training

Training and fitness is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, and balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. The trek takes place in a hilly environment, so the best training advice is to get outdoors into some of the mountains of the UK to familiarise yourself with walking on rugged terrain, while carrying weight in your daypack. You need to be able to sustain around 4-7 hours of trekking for 5 continuous days, so if you can then replicating this over a weekend would be fantastic training. In your members area you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes in your members' area. You can also look to join one of our training weekends.

Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities. This is allowed for.

There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. In the event of an emergency, the Charity Challenge Emergency Management Plan will kick in, and our first-aid trained, qualified expedition leaders will manage the situation by getting you to the support vehicle as quickly as possible.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of its participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. In a nutshell, Our Challenge Safe brand formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the activity itself. Your welfare is paramount!
In terms of your Burma Trek, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- On clear days, temperatures in Burma can reach the mid 30s. You should be ideally be covering up, wearing a sun hat and sun cream, and hydrating constantly.
- Your trip is in an incredibly remote area, and some parts do not have vehicle access. This means that evacuation to hospital could take up to around 14 hours depending on the situation. You will be with remote first-aid trained leaders at all times, but you should take this into account in terms of any existing health problems.
- You will be flying internally from Heho to Yangon with a Burmese airline. We have had an external safety audit carried out on the available airlines, and we will only request those carriers that have fulfilled the audit checks.
- Smoke alarms are not a legal requirement in Burma, and as such the monasteries and hotels we use do not have them in place. Your leader will explain the emergency fire procedures to you.

Phone and WiFi

Phone signal on the challenge will be patchy, and certainly in the mountains you won't have access to signal or WiFi. Depending on the service provider, your phone may or may not work. Equally, in most of the hotels WiFi is advertised, although it is not often reliable or fast. Don't rely on having WiFi available every night, and when it is, some websites such as Facebook may be blocked. In Burma, you can look forward to a simpler way of living, technology-free!

Toilets

These range from very basic ('communing with nature' on the trek itself, and squat toilets in the monasteries) to normal western standards in the hotel at Inle Lake.

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are a high quality gore-tex waterproof jacket and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also highly recommended. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Food & Drink

Food in Burma is mainly South-East Asian fare, and delicious. For breakfasts you will have a mixture of Western and Asian fare, including eggs, pancakes, fruit, cake, fried rice, eggy bread etc. Lunch is eaten en route at a local village, and could consist of a range of things including noodles, soup, avocados, sesame biscuits, fruit. Dinners will be a range of vegetarian and meat dishes, with noodles and rice. It is important that you eat as much as possible during the trekking phase in order to replace body salts lost due to increased perspiration, and you should bring snacks to keep yourself going while trekking. The tap-water is not safe to drink. Bottled water will be provided during the trekking sections. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

Accommodation

Whilst on the trek, you will be staying in working monasteries, and a sleeping bag is essential. The facilities are very basic, but adequate, with bucket showers and squat toilets being the order of the day. In some locations there may not be shower facilities available at all. You will also be sharing a large room with the rest of your fellow trekkers, or split into two or three smaller rooms. However, once you arrive at Inle Lake you will be roomed in twin-rooms in a much more comfortable 3 star standard hotel. All rooms here are en-suite, so if you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please ensure that you note this where appropriate when booking or email challenges@charitychallenge.com.

Typical day

You will usually be woken early by the sounds of life in the monasteries, and eating breakfast by around 7am. You will pack up your belongings to put in the support vehicle for onward transport, and then fill up your water bottles, put together your daypack and set off for your trek around 8am. You will stop for an early lunch (between 11.30am-1pm) in a local village, and generally the lunch will be a long one of perhaps 1-2 hours. You will be walking for 4-7 hours each day and arriving in the late afternoon at your next accommodation. Most people are in bed early, by around 10pm. Specific hours of activity for each day are given in the itinerary

Level of Difficulty

The Burma Trek has been graded as “Challenging”. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, and who enjoy walking in the UK. This will be an opportunity to test yourself physically, but the cultural and comfort differences on this trek will be the real challenge.
You can tell your supporters that on your Burma Trek you will be:

- Trekking for around 5-8 hours per day.
- Covering approximately 80km across 5 days of hiking.
- Depending on the weather, you could be trekking through fields of mud, or in the soaring heat. Burma’s weather goes one of two ways!
- On clear days, temperatures in Burma can reach the mid 30s. You should be covering up, wearing a sun hat and sun cream, and hydrating constantly.
- Staying in monasteries each night, using bucket showers and squat toilets. Facilities will be very basic while on the trek, and in 2 of the monasteries there are no shower facilities available at all.

Luggage allowance and valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at around 23kg. However, we suggest that for our Burma challenge you should only need around 15kg-17kg. If you don't need it, don't bring it, is a good rule. Carry your passport with you and make sure you have a photocopy of your documents (travel insurance etc.) in case they get lost or damaged.

Terrain

The trek takes place entirely in the agricultural areas around the Shan State. You will be trekking through different landscapes including potato, ginger and chilli fields, pine woods, farmland and steep muddy hillsides. In October the trek is made more difficult by the land being muddy and wet after the rainy season. You will have many challenging climbs in high temperatures.

Climate

Burma has two distinct seasons – wet and dry. At all times, it's fairly hot. The wet season runs from May-September, with the dry season from October-April. We run our treks mainly in October or January/February. October is just out of the rainy season, so the surroundings will be lush and the agricultural land will be full of buffalo, often rolling around in the mud! Jan/Feb is dry, the terrain is hard underfoot and the farmers are preparing for the real heat of March/April. You can expect daily temperatures from 25 – 35 degrees. Obviously, like the UK, the weather is changeable, and these are rough guidelines.

Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be 13 people minimum in order to run and maximum of approx. 16 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 8 to 12 people by charging a small group supplement of £75 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56

days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main Q&As page.

Flights

You will be flying indirect from London Heathrow to Yangon. The flying time is approx. 13-14 hours, with one stop. Your flight tickets will be issued to you upon departure at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office first, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

For more general flights questions, please refer to our main FAQs page.

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website: http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting in Burma, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Visa

UK citizens do require a visa to enter Burma, and we will provide you with information at 3 months prior to departure. There are two different methods of applying for a Burmese visa: either an e-visa, or the traditional paper form. This will be explained on our visa application advice. The visa costs approximately £14/£35 depending on the method of application. You will need at least 6 months validity on your passport after the end of the challenge.

Money

Currency: The currency in Burma is the Kyat (pronounced Chat), but we recommend that you carry a mixture of Kyat and US Dollars, which are widely accepted in hotels and by currency exchange houses. However, please ensure that any bills are in good condition. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com.

Credit Cards: Credit cards will be used for emergencies, but are not widely accepted aside from in large hotels.

ATMs: ATMs are not widely available in Burma, and throughout the trek you will not have any access to money. You should carry small amounts of Kyat with you, and larger amounts of US Dollars which you can exchange at Inle Lake and in Yangon.

How much to bring: All accommodation and meals are included within the price of the trip, as well as water during the days of your trek. You will not need to carry a lot of money with you during the challenge, but you may have the

opportunity to purchase drinks or snacks in the small local villages that you pass through on the way. The real shopping and spending opportunities come in Inle Lake, where there are lots of incredible artisanal products. We recommend carrying approximately £200 in a mixture of Kyat and US Dollars. Please get small denominations of dollars for exchanging.

Tipping: Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff are paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture, and Burmese guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. If you choose to tip, we would suggest an amount of approximately $75USD per person, which will be split across the team for your whole challenge. Your challenge leader may collect a small ‘kitty’ amount at the start of the trek, which will be distributed to all members of staff, hotels, boatmen and rest stops along the way.

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There are not the words to describe what a fantastic experience this trek has been; the warmth of the people, exploring monasteries and villages, scenery so breath-taking it makes you cry. The support of the trek leaders and the friends made have made this an unforgettable life changing trip and I return to the UK a far richer person.

Deborah Redmond

“

Charity Challenge has provided a way of experiencing Burma that gives a true impression of nature and gives an insight into how people in Burma live in rural communities.

David Tigwell

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Beautiful unspoilt Burma exceeded all my hopes for the trip. Not only have I gained some great friends from fellow trekkers, we've shared the "undulating" countryside & accompanying emotions. It's been liberating to leave behind modern life and return to the simple things, to be welcomed by strangers willing to invite us into and share their world.

JANE TICKELL

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Any more questions?

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