

## Burma Hill Tribes & the Golden Triangle

Visiting: Burma, Laos, Thailand  
Code: PAGO

Tour price from **GBP 2003.00** for **20 days** - Land Only

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## Burma Hill Tribes & the Golden Triangle Trip Notes

At Imaginative Traveller we always aim to provide accurate information for our travellers. Unfortunately information such as the price of optional activities is occasionally subject to change, and this means that we are constantly revising our trip notes. In order to ensure that you have the most up to date information for your trip we suggest that you check the trip notes for your tour around one month before departure.

**Trip code:** PAGO

**Trip valid from:** 01/08/2012

**Trip valid until:** 30/06/2014

**Trip length:** 20

**Trip starts in:** Bangkok

**Trip ends in:** Bangkok

**Maximum group size:** maximum 15

## Highlights

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Loi-mwe Hill Station

Minority Hill-tribe Villages

Mekong Slow Boat Cruise

The Monks Of UNESCO World Heritage-listed Luang Prabang

On this expedition trip we cross from Thailand into Burma (Myanmar) at the famous Golden Triangle and spend a week exploring a rarely-visited corner of this mysterious land. Hidden away - yet close to the Lao, Chinese and Thai borders - the area around Kengtung (Kyaingetong) has numerous ethnic minority groups living traditional lifestyles side by side. In a series of day treks we explore many of these remote and inaccessible hill tribe villages before experiencing the tranquil old British colonial settlement of Loi Mwe, a little-known former hill station. With our time in Burma coming to a close, we look east across the Mekong River to neighbouring Laos. Our plan is to cross back into Thailand and then on to Laos, where we spend a night in Huay Xai. Flexibility will be the key as the border situation can change at short notice! Regardless, we make our way to Luang Namtha and visit Lao minority villages on a day trek. Our exploration of this off the beaten track area continues at Nong Khiaw, a beautiful little town surrounded by limestone karsts. Here we find our boat driver ready to navigate us down the Nam Ou (Ou River) to Luang Prabang. There is no better place to relax for a day or so and reflect on our amazing journey. This lovely town is a firm favourite with both newcomers and seasoned travellers in Asia. Finally we fly back to Bangkok and our expedition is complete, with three weeks of incredible adventures behind us.

[Read our statement on ethical travel to Burma/Myanmar](#)

## Itinerary

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**Day**

Bangkok

(Sat) Welcome to Thailand! You arrive in Bangkok and transfer to your hotel.

**Day**

The Golden Triangle - Chiang Rai

Fly to Chiang Rai and travel to the tripoint area. Cross into Burma at Mae Sai-Tachileik and travel to Kengtung. (B)

**Day**

## Tachileik - Kengtung (Kyaingetong)

Explore minority villages and markets in the Kengtung region. For these eight days, you travel by truck to remote regions and by foot into villages that are inaccessible by road. Meet the various people of the hills – Akha, Enn, Lahu, Loi and Palong. Trek to several more minority villages before returning to Kengtung for a final night in Burma. We travel back to Thailand via Tachileik before crossing into Laos at the Chiang Khong border to spend a night in Huay Xai. (B, L)

### Day

#### Kengtung (Kyaingetong) - day trek to Pintauk area

Drive from Huay Xai to Luang Namtha for a day trek to visit Laotian minority villages. Continue on to the beautiful riverside village of Nong Khiaw. Take boat down the Nam Ou (Nam River) to Luang Prabang, the royal capital of Laos before 1975. (B, L)

### Day

#### Kengtung (Kyaingetong) - day trek to Hochin (Ho Kyin) area

Spend a few relaxing days exploring the historic UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang – the jewel of Laos – before returning by air to Bangkok for a final night. Our journey ends after breakfast on Day 20 (Thu). (B, L)

## Itinerary Variation

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While the information presented here details our planned itinerary, including routes taken, activities included, accommodation and meeting times, please accept that unforeseen changes may occur. We are constantly on the lookout to improve our program and further enhance your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date with any last minute amendments to your tour.

## About The Imaginative Traveller

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Our aim has always been to provide exceptional travel experiences. We believe that adventure travel should be stimulating, and that it should give you an authentic experience of a place. We want our travellers to relish the amazing diversity of countries and cultures the world has to offer. Our focus is on innovation, not imitation.

## Obsessed with quality

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One of our strengths has been our obsession with quality. We've always believed that our commitment to you doesn't end as soon as you've paid for your holiday. On the contrary, it is just beginning. Whilst most operators simply get a local company to handle the day to day operation of their tours, we do it all

ourselves. We have managers for each of our **key destinations** around the world and all our small groups are escorted by our own leaders. Our local teams include guides, drivers, administration staff and contacts in the local community who help us ensure that our adventures are active and involving.

For comparability, all prices in this dossier are quoted in one currency. We use the US Dollar since that is familiar to most. However, once on tour you will need to pay for all goods and services in the local currency. See your Country Dossier for details of exchange rates.

## **Trip Grade**

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### **Trekking**

Whatever continent you choose, trekking gets you up close and personal with some of the world's wildest and most beautiful landscapes. Whether you're following man-made wonders through stunning scenery – China's Great Wall, the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu – or taking the measure of continental icons – up Kilimanjaro, around Mont Blanc, into the Everest Range – at its best a trek is a test, an exploration, of both self and place. Treks can open up countries in a whole new way: check out the spellbinding Simien Mountains of Ethiopia, Japan's Alps or the Mongolian Altai trek for a glimpse at the rugged, hidden heart of these countries. From Nepal's unbeatable high passes to Papua New Guinea's classic, gruelling Kokoda Track, it's truly better to travel than to arrive – particularly when the travel's all on your own steam.

## **Included**

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- The services of Peregrine's expert English-speaking Thai, Burmese and Lao tour leaders and local guides. - Local flights: Bangkok to Chiang Rai and Luang Prabang to Bangkok. - Sightseeing (including entrance fees where relevant): Chiang Rai, the Golden Triangle, Luang Prabang temples and Royal Palace Museum, Night Bazaar, Pak Ou Caves and Kuang Si Waterfalls. - A series of day treks in the secluded Shan state area of Burma not frequented by travellers, visiting numerous hill tribes. - Day trek in Luang Namtha region in northern Laos near the Chinese border. - Full day boat ride down the Ou River from Nong Khiaw to Luang Prabang. - All breakfasts. - Arrival transfer.

## **Not included**

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International flights not included in the itinerary, airport departure taxes, departure transfer, visas, insurance, other meals, drinks, optional additional tours or activities during free time, tips and items of a personal nature.

## **Meals**

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19 breakfasts, 10 lunches,

## Accommodation

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Comfortable hotel,Basic hotel

## Single room supplement

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Most of our travellers like the thought of travelling with a few like-minded souls. There are NO compulsory single supplements on most tours as we simply arrange twin shared accommodation for you and another tour member of the same sex. But don't worry if that doesn't appeal. We do understand there are times when you just want a bit of privacy and 'me' time so we are more than happy to arrange a private room upon request when you book.

## Transport

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Boat,Bus,Trek,Truck

## Passport

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Well before travelling, please ensure that you have a current passport, with an accurate photo, that is valid for at least six months after your scheduled return home. Also check that your airline tickets are in exactly the same name as your passport. Some countries may require that you have a return air ticket, or have sufficient funds to purchase such a ticket.

## Insurance

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You are required to have travel insurance before heading off on a Peregrine trip. Insurance can be organised by your Peregrine representative or your travel agent.

## Visas

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**Burma** - Please note that visa requirements can and do change. It is essential that you confirm requirements with the nearest relevant embassy or check with your travel agent before you travel. At the time of writing, a visa is required by most travellers visiting Burma (Myanmar) including Australians, New Zealanders, Americans, British and Canadians. All other nationalities should check with the Myanmar (Burmese) Embassy or Consulate in their country for up-to-date visa information. Visas CANNOT be

obtained on arrival in Yangon and Mandalay International Airport. The Visa must be obtained in advance of travel from your nearest Burmese Embassy prior to arriving in Burma. A letter of invitation is required when applying for your visa and this is supplied by our local operator. In order for us to arrange this letter you must provide your full passport details at time of booking.

**Laos** - Please note that visa requirements can and do change. It is essential that you confirm requirements with the nearest relevant embassy or check with your travel agent before you travel. At the time of writing, a visa is required by most travellers visiting Laos including Australians, New Zealanders, Americans, British and Canadians. All other nationalities should check with the Laotian Embassy or Consulate in their country for up-to-date visa information. It is preferable to obtain your Lao visa before you start your travels, however visas can also be obtained on arrival in Vientiane International Airport and at the land borders at both Huay Xai and the Friendship Bridge. The process takes 15-30 minutes and requires two passport photos. The cost is normally between US\$30-US\$40 (varies with different nationalities), but amounts may change and an additional 'late fee' is sometimes levied at the land borders if you arrive late in the afternoon

**Thailand** - Please note that visa requirements can and do change. It is essential that you confirm requirements with the nearest relevant embassy or check with your travel agent before you travel. At the time of writing, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Americans and British citizens do not require a visa to visit Thailand for stays of up to 30 days. However, travellers will only get 15 days of stay if arriving without a visa at a land border checkpoint from a neighbouring country. Travellers arriving in Thailand this way and planning to stay in the country longer than 15 days should obtain a Thai visa before they leave home. All other nationalities should check with the Thai Embassy or Consulate in their country for up-to-date visa information. Please note that those nationalities requiring a visa may need to acquire one before they arrive Thailand, as obtaining a visa on arrival may not be possible at certain land borders.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have all required visas for your trip. Rules and regulations governing the issuance of visas are constantly changing, and vary for different nationalities and you should check visa requirements with your travel agent or relevant consular authority well before travel.

## Vaccinations

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Vaccinations may be required for this trip. Talk to your doctor about the up-to-date information for this region.

## Other information

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A good level of fitness is required. You will be trekking on hilly terrain, generally on well-defined paths, walking about 3-8 hours per day.

**The itinerary and supplementary information has been compiled with care and provided in good faith. However it may be subject to change, and does not form part of a contract between the client and The Imaginative Traveller.**

## Responsible Travel - Travellers' Guidelines

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At Imaginative Traveller we love helping our clients experience the beauty and cultures of the destinations we visit. However, hand in hand with this we have always been aware that we have a responsibility to minimise any negative impacts that tourism can bring.

Responsible Travel is twofold. It's about taking people to the places they want to go in a safe and responsible manner but also about respecting and maintaining the natural and often delicate balance of the destination. Economic gain from tourism is often fundamental to a country, but should never be at the expense of its culture or the environment.

## Our Aims

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It is our aim to provide journeys that have minimal negative and maximum positive impact on the places we visit.

We do not believe that, as visitors, we should impose our own cultures on others; rather that we should experience foreign cultures and appreciate them for what they are.

Whilst it is our aim to show destinations and cultures in a positive light, we do not believe in papering over the cracks or shielding visitors from the realities of life. This does not mean, however, that we condone or endorse certain situations or regimes that may be in place.

Our guidelines are meant not as rigid instructions but rather as suggestions to make our holidays more enjoyable – for everybody. As cultural and environmental sensitivities vary from country to country more specific guidelines can be found in our individual country and trip dossiers.

## Travellers' Guidelines

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- ✓ Before you depart try to spend some time familiarising yourself with the destination you will be travelling to – their culture and customs. The country dossiers on our website offer detailed information about all the regions we visit. They also include some useful phrases in the local language for you to use on your trip! A few words of the local language can open up many more opportunities for you to interact with the people you will meet.
- ✓ Although it is tempting to give out pens, sweets and money to people begging, and particularly tempting to give to children, we feel that this encourages a begging mentality and has a long-term negative impact on communities. If someone begging earns more than someone in the same community who works this can discourage local employment. If children regularly bring home money it may discourage their parents from sending them to school. It is of course your own personal choice but you could consider giving to registered charities or contributing to our Responsible Travel fund instead. Money donated through our fund to our worldwide projects is matched pound for pound by Imaginative Traveller and used to help local grassroots projects.

- ✓ Always ask permission to photograph local people and respect their decision if they would prefer not to have their picture taken.
- ✓ Respect local dress codes, especially at religious sites. Our tour leaders are always on hand to give you advice about this.
- ✓ In many of the countries we visit you might see examples of animal cruelty (for example dancing bears, performing monkeys and snake charmers). Please do not take photographs of this or offer money as it encourages the activity.
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in. It sounds obvious but do not throw litter, take it with you or use rubbish bins! You may see locals throwing rubbish on the street but do not follow their example!
- ✓ When shopping in countries where haggling is the norm – enjoy it and only pay what you feel is a fair price for the goods you are purchasing. However, remember that the shopkeeper does have to make a living so do stop once you have reached a price you are happy with. Bargaining should be fun but always remember that a small amount can mean much more to the vendor than to you.
- ✓ Endeavor to take home souvenirs made locally; the money you spend can be very important to the local communities. However, do use your common sense and don't buy anything that you think might be made out of endangered animals or plants.
- ✓ To help keep as much money as possible in the host country - try to eat in locally owned restaurants and order local drinks and produce rather than international brands.
- ✓ In hotels do be conscious of how much water you are using. Many of the areas we visit regularly have shortages; try not to have hour long showers! Don't leave lights, air conditioners or fans on when you leave the room – you wouldn't at home!
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in, especially when in national parks or reserves. Pay attention to rules about keeping on paths, keeping a distance from animals and not removing any of the natural habitat.
- ✓ Relax and immerse yourself in the differences of the culture you are in – you'll be back home in the familiar soon enough (and wishing you were still on holiday!). These cultural differences are part of what makes your experience special.

If you would like to offset the carbon dioxide that will be produced on your flights you can do this on our website ([on our Responsible travel page](#)). We work with climatecare, who will reduce the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that you produce in another part of the World through their emission reduction projects. These projects are low carbon efficient technologies in developing countries and not only serve to reduce emissions but also help to spread the adoption of low carbon technologies and improve the quality of life for local communities. Details of climatecare's projects can be [found on their website](#).



If you would like to contribute to our Worldwide projects, helping communities all over the World, you can also do this on our website or with a sales consultant. Please refer to our [responsible travel page](#) on the website for details of our current projects. Any donation you make will be matched £ for £ by Imaginative Traveller (up to a maximum of £1000).

Have a great trip!

Please do let us know if you have any comments about responsible travel at [rto@imtrav.net](mailto:rto@imtrav.net)

The Imaginative Traveller & Peregrine Adventures This trip is operated by our partner company, Peregrine Adventures. Peregrine is an Australia based company with more than 30 years experience in adventure travel and they share our ethos for offering unique holiday adventures. As this is a codeshared departure you can expect there to be both Imaginative Traveller and Peregrine travellers on your trip.  
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