### MOMENTS on the road

A Burmese Journey From the Shan Hills to the Bay of Bengal
(12 Days)





### ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

We love road journeys. They are by far our favourite way of traveling. We think the world of western China and the countries that border on this region – think Vietnam, Lao, Thailand, Myanmar, for example.

On the Road Experiences is all about sharing with like-minded travelers just how beautiful a road journey in these varied lands can be. Now turn the page to find out what we've come to love so much





#### Chittagong Gangaw MANDALAY **Itinerary Map** Mongyang Kyaukhtu Cox's Bazar कक्रवाकाव Myit Chay BAGAN MOUNT POPA INLE LAKE Yenangyaung MAGWAY Tatkon Si Lanna National Park จุทธานแห่งชาติ ชาตานนา Lay Taung Tha Yet Cho Chiang Mai เทศบาลนคร เชียงใหม่ LAMPHUN 3 NGAPALI Kyauktaga Hpapun Nyaung Lay Pin LITTARADIT Flight from Yangon to Inle Lake YANGON р6 Bogale Pyapon

#### Day-by-Day

#### Dav<sup>\*</sup>

Yangon to Inle Lake – Arrive in Yangon and fly to Inle Lake

#### Day2

In and around Inle Lake – FFloat across the serene waters of Inle Lake and discover the Intha people's unique way of life

#### Day3

Inle Lake to Pindaya – Travel to the pleasant lakeside town of Pindaya and visit Shwe Oo Min Natural Cave Pagoda

#### Day4

Pindaya to Mandalay – Leave the Shan Plateau behind as you approach Mandalay, Burma's last royal capital

#### Day5

In and around Mandalay – Explore the many sights of Mandalay; climb Mandalay Hill and chat to the monks there, while watching sunset over the city

#### Day6

Mandalay to Mount Popa –

Overtake ox carts and drive past

small villages to the most important

Nat pilgrimage site in Burma

#### Day7

Mount Popa to Bagan – Visit a local village and learn how to make thanaka on the way to Bagan

#### Day8

In and around Bagan – Start with a stroll through the colourful local market and continue with visits to the most significant temples of Bagan

#### Day9

Bagan to Magwe – Cross the Irrawaddy and stop at some of the region's hidden temples

#### Day10

Magwe to Pyay – A beautiful drive through rural scenery – past ox carts and cotton plantations

#### Day11

Pyay to Ngapali – Travel on winding roads across the Rakhine mountain range

#### Day12

Ngapali – Back to real life? Or linger here awhile longer?

























































#### Day 1 Arrive in Yangon and fly to Inle Lake

Welcome to Myanmar!

Arrive in Yangon as per your own arrangements, not later than 11am and continue your journey with a flight to Heho, Inle Lake's airport. If you wish to spend a few days in Yangon before joining our trip we will arrange an airport transfer for you.

In Heho, we will meet you at the airport and take you to your beautiful hotel, sheltered in a peaceful inlet on the eastern shore of Inle Lake, surrounded by the Shan mountains.

After settling into the hotel you can watch sunset over the lake before you can enjoy your first local dinner and meeting your fellow travellers.



## Day 2 Float across the serene waters of Inle Lake and discover the Intha people's unique way of life

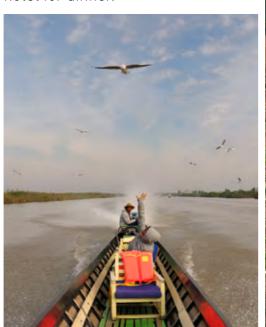
Today you have time to explore Inle Lake by longtail boat. A wonderful watery world of floating gardens, stilt-top villages and crumbling stupas awaits you. We will suggest a route for you and of course will join you on this tour, but if you prefer to go on your own with your own boat and boatman or relax at the hotel you can do so.

Setting out in the early morning, the boatmen will pick us up from the hotel pier. The day will not only include stops to see Inle's famous leg rowers, stilt villages and magnificent scenery but also at the lake's floating gardens. In addition to fishing, locals grow vegetables and fruit in gardens that float on the surface of the lake. The farmers gather

weeds from the deeper parts of the lake and bring them back to make floating flowerbeds anchored by bamboo poles. These gardens rise and fall with changes in the water level, and so are resistant to flooding.

After a delicious, traditional ethnic Inthar lunch in the middle of the lake, we will visit Inthein village on the lake's western shore, where you will find a staircase leading to the hidden Inthein Pagoda complex.

In the evening we return to the hotel for dinner.





#### Day 3 Travel to the pleasant lakeside town of Pindaya and visit Shwe Oo Min Natural Cave Pagoda

Today's drive is relatively short, and we will be able to take it slowly in order to enjoy the region's spectacular scenery and for you to hget used to the driving in Myanmar. Before departing for Pindaya, we will visit a colorful local market in Nyaungshwe, where hill tribes come to sell fruit and vegetables, along with a handful of stalls selling Burmese string puppets.

As we leave Nyaungshwe, we will stop at the charming red-painted Shwe Yan Pyay teak monastery, built in the early 19th century. It provides a home for boys from poor families around the region and provides them with education and meals.

After arriving in Pindaya, a small town of ethnic Danu people in a fertile valley bordered by mountains,

we check into our rustic but charming inn. Then we can take a leisurely walk around Ponetaloke Lake and visit Pindaya Cave. Every nook and cranny in the cave is crammed with Buddha images and statues. The floor of the cave is studded with stalagmites and pagodas, with stalactites hanging from the cave roof.

Tonight's dinner will be at the charming hotel restaurant.

#### **Details**

Driving Distance & Duration
Distance: 95 km
Duration: 2-3 hours

**Elevation** 

Highest Daytime: 1200m Overnight: 1200m

Hotel

Pindaya Inle Inn, Pindaya (\*\*\*)



Day 4
Leave the Shan
Plateau behind as you
approach Mandalay,
Burma's last royal
capital

Today's drive from Pindaya to Mandalay is highly scenic. Multi-colored fields, village live, buffalo cowboys, orange orchards, bullock carts loaded with cabbages and rolling pineclad hills make it an interesting and pleasurable drive.

As we approach Mandalay the scenery changes and flattens as we emerge onto the plains

of Mandalay Division.
After a local lunch in the mountains we will come to the small town of Kyaukse, from here it takes only an hour to drive in to Mandalay.

Mandalay is Burma's second biggest city with a population of roughly one million and the traffic can be dense. Please be aware of the many motorcycles and drive very slow and careful. After a brief stop at our hotel we will drive to Mandalay Hill to see the sunset over Burma's last royal capital. Our dinner will be in a small restaurant where we enjoy a mix of Western and Burmese fusion cuisine.

#### **Details**

**Driving Distance & Duration** 

**Distance:** 202 km **Duration:** 7 hours

**Elevation** 

**Highest Daytime:** 1500m

Overnight: 21m

Hotel

Mandalay Hill Resort (\*\*\*\*\*)



#### Day 5 Explore the many sights of Mandalay

Today you can explore the many highlights of Mandalay, either heading out on your own (our guides and hosts will be happy to help you plan your day), or joining our programme. We have planned a leisurely breakfast followed by a chauffeured drive to Amarapura, the "City of Immortals", where we will visit the 150-year old Mahagandayon Monastery and the famous U-Bein bridge. Afterwards it is worth strolling along the different workshops

Mandalay has to offer as it is known as the center for many of Burma's artisan crafts working in marble, stone, gold and teak wood or making puppets just to name a few.

End the day in a small restaurant where we enjoy a mix of Western and Burmese fusion cuisine

#### **Details**

**Driving Distance & Duration** 

Depending on your chosen activity

Elevation Highest Daytime: 100m Overnight: 21m

Hotel
Mandalay Hill Resort (\*\*\*\*\*)



# Day 6 Overtake ox carts and drive past small villages to the most important Nat pilgrimage site in Burma

Today you will enjoy a beautiful drive through the countryside of Mandalay Division. While the landscape is flat, the rural scenery is never boring, with its ox carts and rice fields. It is a leisurely drive and we will enjoy some interesting stops en route.

Our overnight stop, Mount Popa, was formed in the cone of an extinct volcano and is an important center for Burma's nat worship. This distinctive, steep-sided mountain is considered to be the abode of the 37 nats or spirits.

The hotel we have selected tonight is a beautiful lodge at Mount Popa with a perfect sunset view over Taung Kalat monastery.

#### **Details**

**Driving Distance & Duration** 

**Distance:** 200 km **Duration:** 6 hours

#### **Elevation**

**Highest Daytime:** 1000m **Overnight:** 1000m

#### Hotel

Mount Popa Resort (\*\*\*\*)





#### Day 7 Visit a local village and learn how to make thanaka on the way to Bagan

For those who would like to start the day with a bit of exercise, it is possible to make the 20-minute walk from the hotel to Taung Kalat Hill and then up the 777 steps to the hilltop monastery. Make sure you don't take your breakfast with you, as you may end up "donating" it to the troops of macaques that live around the monastery.

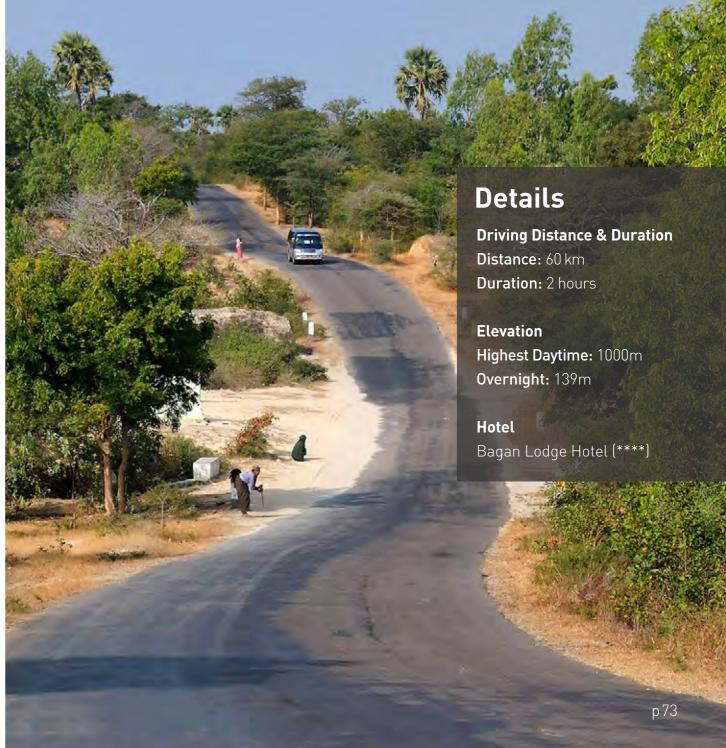
After the climb our team will pick you up from the bottom of the mountain and we will return to the hotel for breakfast before departing for Bagan. On the way to Bagan we will visit a village, which offers a fascinating glimpse of local life. Shortly before arriving in Bagan we make another stop at a workshop – while this may be touristy it still makes a fun break from the road. Here, we will learn how sesame and peanut oil are made using a

vintage ox-driven press, and how to apply Burmese thanaka paste. From here it is another half hour drive to Bagan.

After checking into our hotel and eating lunch, you can explore a few of the 2,200 temples and pagodas that litter the region. In the early evening we set off to watch the sunset from Bagan's most picturesque spot followed by a nice local dinner.







Day 8
Start with a stroll
through the colourful
local market and
continue with visits to
the most significant
temples of Bagan

Today we have a whole day to explore Bagan, a vast plain that once sat at the heart of the Kingdom of Pagan, which ruled this region of Burma between the 9th and 13th centuries. At its height, between the 11th and 13th centuries, over ten thousand monasteries, pagodas and temples thrived in the devoutly Buddhist kingdom.

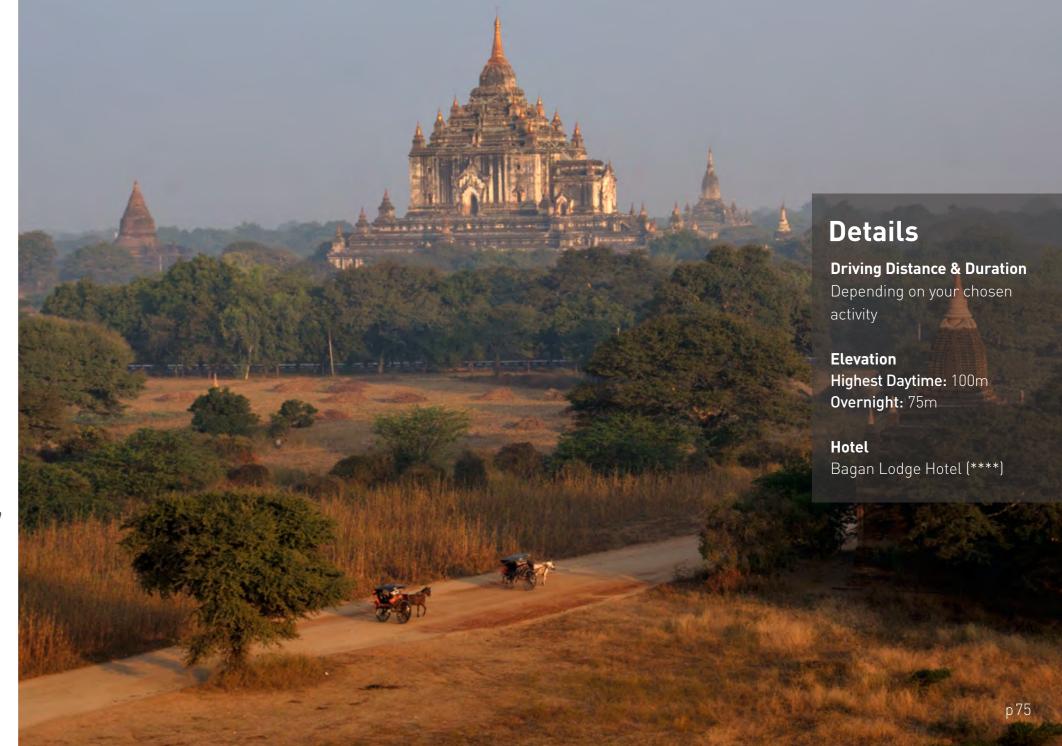
Our day here starts with an optional sunrise drive or you may wish to take the jaw-dropping balloon ride (not included in our package) over Bagan to get a sense of the site's vast scale. Then we will have a shopping stop at

Nyaung U's colorful market before returning to the hotel for breakfast.

The rest of the day is very flexible and we recommend you to explore the many temples and pagodas by horse cart.

In the evening we meet for a dinner at a local restaurant.

Please note, breakfast and dinner are included in the tour price, lunch is not included today.



#### Day 9 Cross the Irrawaddy and stop at some of the region's hidden temples

One of our favorite drives on this journey, the route today leads through the rural area along the west bank of the Irrawaddy, a little-visited region of pretty villages and remote temples. We may attract a police entourage at this point of the journey, because so few visitors use this road to Magwe!

From Bagan we drive south towards Chauk. From Chauk we cross the Irrawaddy from the east bank to the west and the road that will lead us on to the small town of Salin. Rice fields, livestock and riverine life can all be watched as you cruise along. After stopping in Salin for lunch, we drive on to Lagaing, with its concealed old wooden teak monastery, and Sagu where we will stop at a school for monks housed in an old monastery.

We will arrive in Magwe in time to see the sunset over the Irrawaddy and you will enjoy a local dinner near the hotel. Tonight's riverside hotel is the most basic on this journey, but it is the best available in this small town.



#### **Details**

**Driving Distance & Duration** 

**Distance:** 188 km **Duration:** 6 hours

Elevation
Highest Daytime: 60m
Overnight: 60m

Hotel
Nan Thike Thu Hotel, Magwe
(\*)



## Day 10 A beautiful drive through rural scenery – past ox carts and cotton plantations

Toady's drive might feel similar to many roads we have driven already on this journey, but eagle-eyed travellers will still be able to find something fresh and new on the roadsides.
Cotton grows along the road, for example, the plants looking like little flowers. Closer to Pyay the road gets busier as Pyay is an important transit point for goods between Upper and Lower Myanmar and due to its location on the Yangon-Bagan highway.

Pyay's glory days date from the ancient Pyu capital of Thayekhittaya, the partially excavated remains of which lie 7km east of Pyay's other stellar attraction: the dazzling Shwesandaw pagoda.

The Burmese switch between two pronunciations of the town's name: 'Pyay' and 'Pyi'. In British Burma, the British colonialists – apparently unable to deal with either name – called it Prome.

Whatever you decide to call it, soak up this town's atmosphere and prepare for the long drive ahead of you tomorrow.

Please note, hotel choices here are also limited. We have again chosen the best available.

#### **Details**

**Driving Distance & Duration** 

**Distance:** 200 km **Duration:** 6 hours

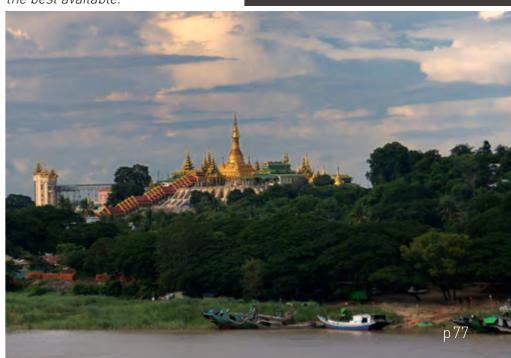
**Elevation** 

Highest Daytime: 60m

Overnight: 30m

Hotel

Mingalar Garden Resort, Pyay
(\*\*)



#### Day 11 Travel on winding roads across the Rakhine mountain range

Our last driving day is also the third of our journey's three longest drives. Almost the whole day will be spent on winding mountain roads across the Arakan Mountains. The road finally flattens out for the last two hours as we finally draw closer to the ocean. The Arakan Mountains separate the coast of Rakhine State from the Central Burma Basin.

This scenic drive leads through small mountain villages and an impoverished primary school, which we can visit on our way. Unfortunately – as in so many other parts of Burma, deforestation has had a considerable impact on this region's scenery, but this drive is still a fantastic one. When we have left the winding roads behind us, we come to the sleepy town of Taungup. Beyond Taungup the scenery changes, the land becomes

flat and very fertile, and our route runs past rice fields, banana trees and cashew nuts as we approach Thandwe and Ngapali Beach.

The hotel you are staying is at one of the best locations along the beach and – with a well-earned cocktail in hand – you can watch the sunset over the Bay of Bengal before we meet for a farewell seafood dinner on the beach.

#### **Details**

**Driving Distance & Duration** 

Distance: 235 km Duration: 9 hours

**Elevation** 

Highest Daytime: 1600m

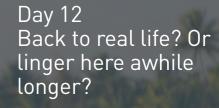
Overnight: 141m

Hotel

Ngapali Bay Villas & Spa

(\*\*\*\*





Some of you will have to fly home today because, after all, life must go on. We will transfer you to the airport in Thandwe, from where you will fly to Yangon. In Yangon our tour comes to an end, leaving you to continue your journey as per your own arrangements.

On the other hand, if you can spare an extra day or two, why not stay on and explore the area around Ngapali? Whether you choose to go snorkeling, kayaking, visiting fishing villages or prefer relaxing on the pristine sands, an extension is thoroughly worthwhile. We are happy to assist you with an extension of your stay.

Regardless of how your trip ends, we hope that you will leave us refreshed and with many new memories of your exotic journey from the Golden Triangle to the Bay of Bengal.





#### **Choice of Cars**

We include in the package price an SUV we procure from Avis or Hertz or another reputable car rental company. Most of the SUVs are Toyotas, but on occasion Mitsubishis or other brands may also make an appearance.

We wish the car rental markets of China and it's southern neighbors would be more developed and we could give you more choice, but this is not so: since we want to provide well-maintained and well insured cars, the choice is rather limited.

But SUVs are in fact the right choice for driving journeys in this part of the world because they are spacious enough to accommodate a lot of luggage, photography equipment, and good-and-bad-weather gear.

Also, they reinforce the feeling of adventure, exploration and discovery...which is, in the end, the mood of journeys in this region, no matter how comfortable or even luxurious the night's hotel may be. What's more, they offer sufficient clearance when required and thus add a sense of safety and all-round ability. (4-wheel drive capability is hardly needed in China these days since all roads are either very well-paved or, with good gravel, offer solid support.)

And so SUVs from reputable brands are our car of choice!

66 ANY car, as long as it is an SUV"

#### **Adventures and Discoveries in Local Cuisines**

While this itinerary is not one of our 'Foodie'-themed journeys, we do believe that each one of our journeys should introduce you not only to hidden gems of cultural and scenic beauty, but that sampling local cuisines is also a must.

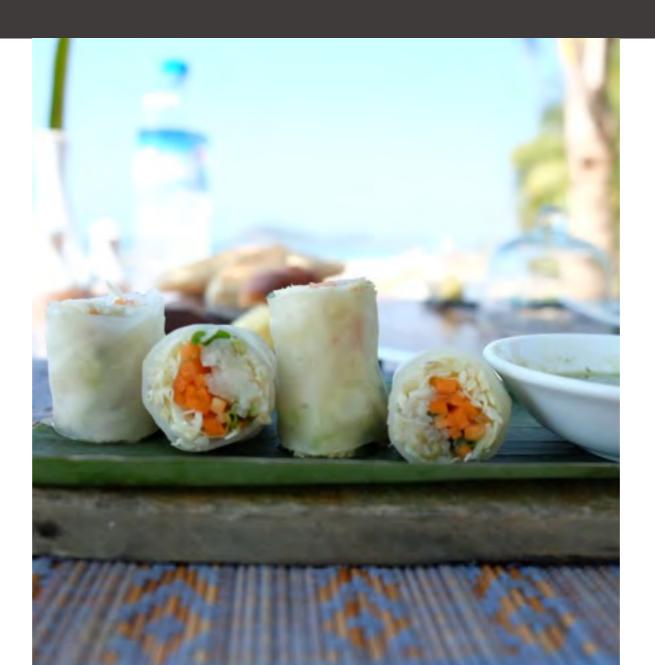
In Burma this means a mixture of Burmese and Chinese food. While local people rely on noodles and salads for breakfast and snacks. main meals are based around various curries prepared fresh each morning, selected from a buffet and served with side dishes. Thanks to the country's unreliable electricity supply, refrigeration is not yet widespread in Burma, and for this reason many local people prefer to eat curry at lunchtime, rather than in the

evening when it will be less fresh. For evening meals, many Burmese people prefer Chinese food, as it is freshly cooked to order. You will enjoy a combination of these two styles on your journey.

Wine and beer is always included in our meals for you to enjoy. (When we travel into high-altitude, we suggest moderation!)

Finally, if you have special dietary requirements are particularly interested in the culinary aspect of one of our journeys, please let us know.

For private journeys, we can, of course, tailor the meal experience to your taste (and budget).









#### What's Included / Best Months to Go...

Generally speaking, our journey packages and prices are all-inclusive. Once you've paid and you arrive at the starting point, you really won't have to take out your wallet again.

- Cars a modern SUV is provided for all driving days, expertly maintained and serviced by Avis Laos, and covered by the best insurance available. The sending of the cars from Ngapali back to Laos is included as well.
- International Journey Host, Guide and Support Vehicle you will be accompanied by a registered Burmese tour guide, an On the Road Experiences host and a fully equipped lead car with a local support driver. In Burma we are also required to have 1 government minder in the lead car.
- Routes A well-researched itinerary and carefully crafted journey experience. You will receive a detailed route book before your departure. We will also supply each car with a pre-programmed GPS and printed maps. (The GPS maps are not yet ideal in Burma, though.)
- Driving License All arrangements, fees and permits for driving in Burma are included
- Fuel & Tolls & Parking we provide petrol for the car throughout the journey, pay all tolls and all parking fees



- Airport Transfers all airport transfers are included
- Flights Flights from Yangon to Heho (Inle Lake) and from Thandwe (Ngapali) to Yangon are included
- Permits and logistics all entry, border crossing and road permits are included.
- Hotels the best available or five-star accommodation is included in each overnight stop

- Meals breakfast (a choice of Western and Local is provided), and lunch and dinner are included on all driving days, as are drinks Meals on non-driving days as specified above. Prepare for a culinary adventure!
- Goodies you will enjoy an On the Road Home-Away-from-Home Kit containing wet towels, anti-bacterial gel and basic toiletries, and a daily picnic basket containing fresh fruit, fruit juice, water, and a mixture of sweets and nibbles

- Other Essentials we provide each car with walky-talkies
- Travel Insurance including 24-hour medical assistance, evacuation and repatriation emergency service
- Tips & Entrance Fees basic tips and entrance fees for jointly attended activities are included
- Activities, Meals, Transport during 'free times' as indicated in this Journey Dossier
- Top-up Collision Damage Waiver insurance

#### What's Not Included

The only items not included in our prices are your flights to and back from Yangon, your Burma visa and personal purchases (e.g., gifts, souvenirs)

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#### **Contact Us**

E-mail contact@ontheroadexperiences.com

Main office

Telephone: +852 3106 4839 Fax: +852 3012 1251

Overseas

Taiwan: +886 978 317 465

+886 921 162 079

Australia: +61 2 8003 5317 Switzerland: +41 (44) 586 58 43

UK: +44 121 288 6879 Germany: +49 160 9622 2506

A picture is worth a thousand words. True, but when it comes to a road journey, moving images are priceless. Please visit:

http://www.ontheroadexperiences.com/en/video-gallery"





BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emersor

