

## Dold World Journeys, LLC

# Irrawaddy (Burma) Pre-Departure Journey Information

We are delighted you have decided to join our journey and want you to know we will do everything possible to make it a pleasant and rewarding experience for you.

This hosted journey is operated by the **Globus Family**. Alex has been working with them since 1990, and thousands of people from Hawaii have enjoyed them during this time. We at Dold World Journeys promote these programs because we feel that, considering the quality of the features included and the length of time spent, Globus gives you the best value for your travel dollars. This is especially true when it come to their *deluxe Avalon River Cruises*.

At this stage we would like to give you some information to help you prepare for your trip—after all, the excitement of getting ready for any journey is a good part of the fun that comes with travel. Also, you are investing a considerable amount of money, and we would like to make sure the program you are buying is what you actually want. We know there are many, many questions in your mind, and we will try to answer the basic ones in this flier. If there is anything else you want to know, please contact Alex. Communicating can easily clarify many things and avoid misunderstandings later.

### What kinds of documents do I need?

You need a **PASSPORT** that is valid past **May 2017**, with at least **4 blank** visa pages (*amendment pages do not count as visa pages*). While traveling you should carry your passport with you always; never leave it in your suitcase (hotel safe is okay).

As far as individual country entry and exit requirements are concerned, if you are a U.S. citizen, you will need a **Tourist Visa for Burma**. We will help you acquire this visa. When you make your final payment you will need to send us a **copy of your current passport** (picture page) and a **CURRENT digital COLOR photo**. The cost of visa for Burma is currently \$60 per person.

If you **do not** have a passport, apply for it as soon as possible. You can apply at most major post offices, public libraries, and the University of Hawaii. To find a location nearest you and download passport application forms online visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>.

You can only apply for a passport at the Honolulu Passport Agency in the Prince Kuhio Federal Building if you have less than **two weeks** to departure and/or need a tourist visa. Phone 1-877-487-2778 for an appointment.

### Kapiolani Community College's Passport

**Acceptance Office** accepts **ONLY** first-time applicants and minors under age of 16. The people there are friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable, and they can also provide passport photos on-site. Please contact them at (808) 734-9258 or <http://www.kapiolani.hawaii.edu/project/u-s-passport-office/>.

When applying the following are required: The proper application; Evidence of U.S. citizenship—a valid passport, certified birth certificate or naturalization papers; Photo identification—a driver's license or State/Military/Student I.D. card; Photocopy of the ID document you are presenting; Applicable fee of \$135 is payable by credit card, personal checks (two), cash, or money orders; and One passport photo. Allow about six weeks for processing.

For renewals the following are required: The proper renewal application, your old passport (issued within 15 years and when you were at least 16 years old at the time of issue); Applicable fee of \$110; and One passport photo. Allow about six weeks for processing.

All passport photos must be taken within six months of application. Some places to take passport photos are Costco, SAM's Club, or Kaimuki Camera (735-5955).

**At all times it is important we have the correct spelling of your full name and address and your telephone number. We need these for documentation and correspondence. Should you note any errors or deviations on our part in this respect, please notify us immediately.**

If your passport is from another country (**NOT** United States), please contact us right away at 808-732-9430, since different regulations may apply.

### Do I have to get any shots?

As this is written there are **no vaccinations** required for Burma. There are medical risks in this area and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does *offer a list of recommendation*. We **strongly suggest** you talk with your own physician about any trip. If your doctor is not familiar with foreign destinations, then consider visiting a travel clinic like Straub, Queen's Medical, Kaiser or Weinstein Pharmacy. Travel Clinics are a wealth of great medical information and very reasonable in cost. It might even be covered by your health insurance.

## What if I need special assistance on tour?

If you have any type of special circumstance regarding your health and/or mobility, please advise us as soon as possible so we can inform Avalon. Dold World Journeys and Avalon will make reasonable attempts to accommodate the needs of disabled travelers but are not responsible in the event we are unable to do so.

Enjoying your visit to Burma requires a fair amount of physical fitness. Walks through ancient ruins, cobbled streets, raised walkways, and light trails can be lengthy and uneven. As an equal member of this group, you should be in reasonably good health and able to manage walking, dining, getting on and off motorcoaches and other vehicles, and taking care of any other personal needs independently. A qualified and physically able companion must accompany travelers who require such assistance and must assume full responsibility of their well being. Of course, Alex and cruise personal are there to assist you, but under normal circumstances their primary job is taking care of everyone in the group.

Also, the Americans with Disabilities Act is only applicable within the United States, and facilities (including wheelchair ramps and special bathroom features) for disabled individuals are often limited or non-existent abroad.

## What if I get sick on tour?

There are excellent doctors and hospitals to be found throughout the world. Our cruise director and Alex, with the help of the local representative, will see to it that you are well taken care of.

If you are taking drugs under a physician's orders, have the **container clearly labeled** and carry a copy of the prescription with you. Carry medicines in your hand luggage. Let us know if you're under medical treatment. You should also get a clean bill of health from your doctor before you go. If you wear eyeglasses, take an extra pair.

The three biggest concerns while in **Burma** are food and water-, bug bites-, and exposure to germs-. Preventative measures should be taken seriously. Drink only bottled water and eat only food that has been cooked and fruits that can be peeled. You might ask your doctor to give you something against intestinal upset, just in case. Protect yourself from bug bites by wearing proper clothing, like long sleeved shirts, and applying insect repellent. Constantly wash your hands and bring your disinfectant wipes and antibacterial hand cleaners to avoid germs.

Medical insurance policies vary widely, and you may or may not be covered by your policies when abroad. Many policies do cover travel overseas but with specific limits. Medicare and Medicaid do not cover expenses outside of the United States. It is wise to review your policies or check with your insurance agent to be sure.

## What about baggage and clothing?

The best advice is "if in doubt, leave it out." Due to the flight restrictions and capacity on the ship, you may only bring one checked bag per person. It is highly recommended you bring a suitcase **you can handle**. The dimensions *should be* a maximum 62 linear inches, and your bag cannot weigh more than **50 pounds**. Portage for this bag is included in the program's price. If the suitcase exceeds the established weight and/or dimensions, an additional charge will be collected by the cruise director and/or airline carrier.

**Carry-on bags should not exceed the dimensions of 12" x 11" x 6".** *Carry-on bags* with *wheels* will not be allowed in motorcoaches, but stored with suitcases.

Use wash-and-wear clothes. Take interchangeable outfits to get the utmost versatility out of your wardrobe. Overall dress is causal, but you might want to bring evening attire—it does not have to be formal wear. Men are not required to wear suits. Women will look good in a nice blouse and slacks. Outdoor / hiking type clothes will be practical. Comfortable walking shoes are a must!

A few other things which you will probably find convenient are: toothbrush, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, bacterial wipes, small sewing kit, band aids, your favorite cold and headache remedy, **washcloth** (many hotels do not provide washcloths, only towels), a small sewing kit, band-aids, spray spot remover, laundry suds which are pre-packaged for travel, a small flashlight, and a travel alarm clock. Put toiletries in plastic cases and then in plastic Ziploc bags for double protection against leaks. Plastic bags come in handy for many things, including damp laundry and washcloths. A pair of binoculars will add considerably to the pleasure of your tour.

## What will the weather be like?

The fall is the ideal time to travel to Burma when the rains are over and the weather be similar to Hawaii. Also our timing is right before the peak season.

It will most likely be warm for most of us. The average day temperature is about 86°. Yangon will likely be the warmest around 90°, and Mandalay will be the coolest around 83°. The nights average 66°. Protection from the rain (jacket, poncho, or umbrella) and sun will be important. Comfortable walking shoes will come in handy.

## What about valuables, cameras, and film?

Do not take anything with you that will create an emotional or financial hardship if lost or stolen. It's that simple. Leave extra credit cards and keys, as well as favorite or expensive jewelry, at home. Your cash and any valuables you cannot live without should be carried in your purse, an inside pocket, or money belt. Do not put them in your suitcase or travel bag. **A money belt is highly recommended.**

Bring plenty of film and/or memory cards and batteries, since these are usually more expensive overseas. Remember to keep an eye on your valuables at all times and keep items (like your passport) in the room safe.

### What about Customs?

Group participants are usually passed through customs in foreign countries without formality, but you must be prepared to open your baggage for inspection at any time. Be prepared to itemize your currency, alcohol, tobacco products, and film, and answer all questions truthfully. Generally, there is no objection to reasonable amounts of any item for personal use.

Technically, if you have any foreign-made article that you purchased on a previous trip or in the U.S., such as cameras, watches, or jewelry, register them with the U.S. Customs Office in downtown Honolulu. Otherwise, they could be subject to duty on your return. In other words, you must prove prior possession.

As a resident of the United States, you are entitled to an exemption of \$800 for the articles you bring back. The \$800 exemption may not be claimed if you have used the exemption, or any part of it, within the preceding 30 day period, but a \$200 exemption may apply. The only limitations are liquor and tobacco. No more than 200 cigarettes (one carton) and 100 cigars may be included in your exemption. One liter (33.8 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages may be brought to the U.S. duty free, if you are 21 years of age or older and if it is not in violation of the laws of the state in which you arrive. Anything in excess of these limits is subject to duty and tax.

On our return flight to the United States you will clear customs at your port of entry. The flight attendant will distribute Customs declaration forms for you to complete. For this purpose it is a good idea to keep a record of your purchases.

### May I use electrical appliances?

Yes. Electricity in Burma is 220/230 volts. Depending on your item you may need a converter and adapter plug (round two prong type C). These can be found at stores that sell travel accessories and/or luggage. [Multi-region plugs are available in our cabins and Yangon hotel.](#)

### May I deviate from the tour?

Yes, you can change your flights as you desire, the question will be how much will it cost? We are only able to offer you the group's air schedule. If you wish to deviate from these flights, then you'll be purchasing a Land Only package from us. We'd be happy to refer you to Sara at ES International. She is the agent that will be issuing our group's airlines tickets. You can reach her at 808-596-0490.

When you deviate from the group, keep in mind there may be charges for any changes made after the cancellation deadline (normally 180 to 120 days prior to departure; please refer to the General Conditions page of your brochure). Once we issue your airline tickets, they are **non-refundable**, and the airlines will charge **fees** for any changes.

We suggest you discuss this with us soon as possible because there is a *limit on the number* of deviations and land only seats we can sell per tour.

### What about seat assignments?

Once everyone in the group has made **full payment**, we send all the names to the airlines for seat allocation. *The airlines have full control of all seats.*

We do everything we can to place spouses together with one of them sitting in an aisle. For roommates we request as many aisle seats as we can and strive to put roommates close to each other. If you would like to request a window seat or be seated next to your roommate with only one of you in the aisle, please let us know before the **final payment deadline**. These requests can never be guaranteed, but we will do our best. Window seats and aisle seats are very limited.

It is not possible for you to use mileage to upgrade your seats on our group tickets. Please feel free to call us for more information.

### What additional expenses will I have?

Hotel accommodations, airfare, entrance fees to the attractions featured in the itinerary, and most meals are included in the tour price. Additional expenses include (but are not limited to) optional excursions; additional meals; tips to the driver who takes you through your tour, the tour director who takes care of you on tour, local guides, and hotel personnel; and souvenirs you are planning to buy. Please see our General Conditions found on the back of the itinerary for more details.

To give you an idea, there are not optional excursion on this program (although I am looking into Ballooning in Bagan). While in flight transit, there are 3 lunches (@ \$15) and 3 dinner (@ \$30) not included. Tips to drivers and local guides are included, but there is the Cruise Director and ship staff (suggested \$70 to \$90 each). Total out of pocket would be \$325. Of course I do not include shopping.

It is best to pay these additional expenses with cash. For tips and a number of purchases you can use *clean and crisp US Dollar*. A **credit card** can be used in major shops and hotel for bigger purchases. Make sure your credit card and ATM card have a **chip**. We can use US Dollar and our ATM to acquire small amounts of local currency.

## Will we have a tour escort with us from Hawaii?

Yes, Alex Dold will be your journey host and accompany you from Honolulu (provided there are a minimum of 12 people flying together). He will see to it that you are taken care of en route. On the program a multi-lingual cruise director will take over and look after our needs. This cruise director is a professional who has covered the area many times and is well acquainted with the different aspects of Burma. This director will be supplemented with a number of local guides.

## Should I take out insurance?

Insurance for Trip Cancellation and/or Interruption is strongly recommended, especially when travel to remote areas like Burma. Also with the strict cancellation charges the airlines and tour operators impose upon us, it is important to insure against these cancellation charges, plus loss of money and personal accident. You will find an insurance policy online or we can send you one. Look it over and discuss it with us. It is best to purchase this insurance with your deposit to be covered for any pre-existing conditions. **Your last chance to purchase it is with final payment.** It is better to be safe than sorry.

## When must I make final payment?

We will send you an invoice around 104 days prior to your tour's departure, with final payment due no later than 90 days prior. **DO NOT send any money or credit card info until you receive our invoice.** Please read the refund and cancellation clause under General Conditions carefully so there will be no misunderstanding.

We prefer you make payments by a single **credit card**. The balance will be divided between the land operator, airlines, and E.S. International (our ticketing vendor).

## When do I get my documents?

At least three weeks before your journey's departure we will have a get-together where we will brief you once more, try to answer your questions, and give you your final documents. You will receive a sufficient supply of hotel lists and flight schedules to leave with relatives and friends, a final itinerary, etc. We will send you an invitation to this meeting. For those of you joining us from the neighbor islands, if you cannot attend, we will mail you your documents.

## Before departure...

You should tell the local police and neighbors that your house or apartment will be vacant. Stop mail and newspaper deliveries or they will be piling up outside your door. Arrange for the care of Scooby your dog, Garfield your cat, and all your plants. Turn off the gas and water,

and disconnect all electrical appliances, especially the television set. Buy a timer in a local hardware store and arrange a lamp in a strategic place to be turned on at sunset and off at midnight. Make sure everything is locked. Leave a set of house and car keys, plus an itinerary, with a relative or trusted friend. It is also a good idea to make sure your insurance policies are up to date.

## And a final word...

Travel at all times is an intensely rewarding experience. It is also a very personal experience. We all see the same things, but we react differently to them, depending upon our background, nature, and personality; therefore, what is absorbed, remembered, or treasured varies from individual to individual.

Much work has gone into the planning and operating of your itinerary. The program has a great spiritual value, will be lots of fun, and will provide you with memories to last a lifetime.

If you love travel, enjoy being with people, and love to explore the mysteries of faraway places, you will have an absolutely wonderful time. Yet group tour travel is not for everybody; it requires understanding. There are literally hundreds of components that make up a complete tour package, and some people find it difficult to adjust to the occasional discomfiting situation, which arises when you travel through vastly different regions having different lifestyles. Travel abroad also requires consideration of different customs, habits, and living standards. It necessitates agreeable acceptance of foreign conditions, accommodations, service, and most of all, people for what they are and not for what we would like them to be. All generalizations and preconceptions are excess baggage. They are like blinders and should be shed. If you travel with an open mind, you will gain much better insight into the various aspects of life abroad, and you will have a far richer experience.

Let us assure you we will make every conceivable effort to make sure you have an exciting journey to Burma.



*“Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.”*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson