CHINDWIN & MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO

Chindwin, the loveliest of rivers. In the past we only offered this during the monsoon due to water levels, but now our ultra-low draught Pandaws can sail through to February. The river carves it way through mountains and forests and we stop at delightful unspoiled little towns.

Combining this with the Mergui Archipelago with its 800 islands, one of those areas that remain almost totally unvisited by foreigners.

Please Note: your voyage rates include domestic flight Homalin to Rangoon and domestic flight from Rangoon to Kawthaung, one night at Sule Shangri La Yangon (or similar)

ITINERARY

DAY 1 MONYWA
Afternoon excursion to see Thandboodi Temple, Bawdhi Tahaung statue and the night market in the evening.
DAY 2 PHOWIN TAUNG
In the morning, coach to the Phowin Taung Caves, where we will admire beautiful mural paintings and Buddha statues in riches. Beyond Monywa we enter the Upper Chindwin.

DAY 3 CRUISING
The river narrows and the forested hills fall away to farmland we pass a number of attractive villages like Kanee where we can stretch our legs.

DAY 4 MINGKIN
Mingkin was rediscovered by Paul Strachan in 1987 and described in some detail in his book Mandalay: Travels from the Golden City. It remains for Paul the most art historically interesting site in Myanmar (more so than the now spoilt Pagan) with its Konbaung court style teak monasteries sumptuously decorated. Mingkin may be described as the Luang Prabang of the Chindwin. The gateway town for the Chin State, we explore Kalewa with its markets and quaint wooden architecture.

DAY 5 MAWLAIK
Morning explore Mawlaik replaced Kindat as the administrative capital but ironically the Myanma refused to move there from upstream Kindat. It was mainly settled with the company houses of the by the Scottish owned and run Bombay Myanmarh Trading Corporation in the 1920s and 1930s. There are many splendid ‘Dak Bungalows’ set around a verdant golf course. Mawlaik and the other towns of the Upper Chindwin can only be reached by boat so cars are few. There is a dreamy otherworldly quality to such places and truly one feels that one has travelled there in the Pandaw time machine! Afternoon we pass the mouth of the Yu River which drains the Kubu valley that provided the route for a Lieutenant Grant to march to the relief of the Manipur garrison when the chief commissioner of Assam was massacred in a local rebellion.

DAY 6 SITTHAUNG
Sitthaung was the final resting place of a number of IFC steamers scuppered there in 1942 in an ‘act of denial’ from the advancing Japanese who were a matter of hours behind. We hope to find remains of these ships as we have in the past at Katha on the Irrawaddy. It was from here that the survivors of the Japanese invasion marched out to Tamu on the India border. Pantha was an important oil refinery belonging to the Indo-Burma Petroleum Co (Steel Brothers).

DAY 7 TOUNDOOT
Toungdoot or Hsawng-hsup in Tai, is an ancient Shan enclave which in British times still had a ruling sawbwa complete with palace and court. It will be interesting to see what has become of the royal family and their home and to see these Shan people so far from their Tai-Shan homelands. On the way to Homalin, the furthest navigable point on the Chindwin for vessels of our size, Alister McCrae wrote of his visit there 1935 ‘I loved the atmosphere of quiet and peaceful living there. At night I could hear greylag geese as they came in to the flooded land around us from far away north’. Bird in 1897 says little other than that Homalin is the headquarters of a township, but has very little trade’. Until we get there and explore the place there is not much we can say!

DAY 8 HOMALIN - RANGOON
Disembarkation and transfer to Homalin airport for a domestic flight to Yangon. Transfer to your hotel and rest of day at leisure.

DAY 9 RANGOON - KAWTHAUNG
Transfer and domestic flight Yangon to Kaw Thaung. After lunch explore the town of Kawthaung and surrounding area. Sail on evening or morning tide.

**DAY 10 NAUNG WEE ISLAND**
Sail on to Naung Wee island to visit a Moken (sea gipsy) village and learn about their extraordinary water bourne life. Sail all night.

**DAY 11 SAILING THE ARCHIPELAGO**
Sail all day north through the archipelago with a stop to swim and snorkel and explore ashore on an island of interest.

**DAY 12 MERGUI**
All day ashore to explore this fascinating colonial port city. Afternoon voluntary trip by car to the rarely visited town of Tanintharyi (Tenasserim), once capital of this region.

**DAY 13 LUN LE ISLANDS**
Morning sail to Port Maria to visit the Karen communities there. Swimming and snorkeling off a desert island in the afternoon. Sail all night.

**DAY 14 LAMPI MARINE NATIONAL PARK**
Visit the Lampi Marine National Park with its mangrove forests and diverse bird life including the hornbill. We go up river by kayak deep into the mangroves with excellent bird watching and return to the beach to swim or snorkel. Afternoon visit to Mokkein sea gypsy villages.

**DAY 15 COCKSCOMB ISLAND**
Sail to Cockscomb Island with its limestone caves and hidden lagoon accessible only on the ship’s tenders. In the afternoon we will move round to the South Bay where we can kayak and swim off pristine white sandy beaches and watch the sun go down as cocktails are served on the beach.

**DAY 16 KAWTHAUNG**
Arrive at Kawthaung in the morning and disembark for your onward journey.

**PLEASE NOTE:**
The itinerary for this expedition is indicative only. As we travel to remote areas, changes to the itinerary will inevitably occur. A flexible approach is required if you book this cruise.
YOUR SHIP: ZAWGYI PANDAW

YOUR SHIP: Zawgyi Pandaw
VESSEL TYPE: Luxury River Cruising
LENGTH: 132.9 ft / 40.58m
PASSENGER CAPACITY: 20 passengers
BUILT/REFURBISHED: 2014

In 2015 we added an upper deck with further cabins and a flexible bistro area in addition to the observation saloon on the main deck. The Zawgyi wins the prize for the shallowest draft in the fleet at 2.5ft and therefore we have her deployed on the treacherous Chindwin River niftily negotiating treacherous shoals.

The ship has quality mountain bikes for your independent exploration.

ACCOMMODATION
6 main deck and 4 upper deck staterooms - 150 square feet (14sqm), finished in teak and brass - Premium mattresses - Convertible bed configuration - 24h laundry service

WINING & DINING
Local master chef heading an experienced international culinary team - Personalized meal service - Daily lean & light menu options -

Complimentary coffee, water, tea, soft drinks, local beer, local spirits, juices - Extensive wine list with premium wines - Welcome drink on arrival - Welcome cocktail - Farewell reception - Theme- and gala dinners

ON EXCURSIONS
Admission fees - Shoe cleaning after excursions - Bottled drinking water - We give away aluminium water bottles - Cold towel service after excursions - Refreshing drink following excursions - Private guide and transportation for all excursions - Quality mountain bikes available for independent exploration

SAFETY & SECURITY
All onboard crew is trained and certified as per international marine standards - Fire alarm system in all cabins, public areas and back areas - Firefighting system in all ship areas - Expert marine superintendent - 24 hrs watch on duty
Pricing

Additional Charges: Port taxes/fees 195 USD pp