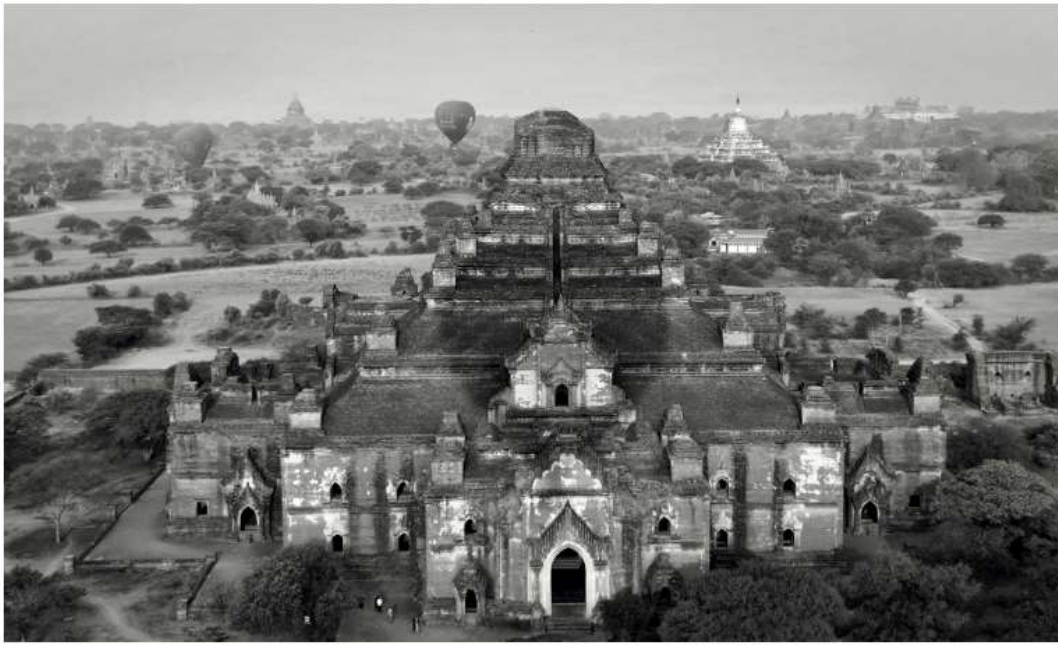


# TALES FROM THE ROAD – BACKYARD TRAVEL 2014 PHOTO COMP WINNER

## Recent Posts

- > [Easter Holidays 2017: 6 Reasons to Hop over to Asia](#)
- > [Best Time to Visit Myanmar \(Burma\)](#)
- > [Best Time to Visit Laos](#)
- > [30 Best Places to Eat Hanoi Street Food](#)
- > [Best Time to Visit Cambodia](#)

## Backyard Travel

Backyard Travel is an Online Travel Agency specialising in authentic and local travel & tours in Asia. Our travel specialists reside in Asia. They live Asia, they breathe Asia. And they're intrigued explorers as much as they are citizens of Bangkok, or Bali, or Luang Prabang.




## Categories

- > [Destinations \(300\)](#)
- > [Bhutan \(11\)](#)
- > [Paro \(3\)](#)
- > [Timphu \(2\)](#)
- > [Borneo \(10\)](#)
- > [Kota Kinabalu \(1\)](#)
- > [Kuching \(1\)](#)
- > [Cambodia \(63\)](#)
- > [Angkor \(10\)](#)

28

OCT 2015

## TALES FROM THE ROAD – BACKYARD TRAVEL 2014 PHOTO COMP WINNER

Posted By  Maeve Nolan /  Be an Insider, Laos, Myanmar, Travel Stories /  Backyard Travel, Photography /  No Comments



*Brazilian Ana Carolina De Lima was the winner of the 2014 Backyard Travel Photo Competition. Here she recounts her journey with us, and all the magical people and moments she met along the way.*



December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. I don't give the proper attention when I receive a notification of a new email on my phone. It's almost Christmas Eve and spam messages are popping all around in my inbox. But as I got nothing else to do, I decide to check the new message anyway. And there it was: "Congratulations! Your photo has won the Backyard Travel photo competition!".

Well, I guess I don't need to say how happy I was. I mean, who wouldn't enjoy having \$8000 to spend with one of Southeast Asia's best travel companies?

I look at the winning picture: a llama posing in front of a volcano in Peru. When I took this picture, I was feeling really sick due to high altitude issues. And the llama shows at the picture also tried to spit on me because I was too close from her (spitting is a type of self-defense for llamas) But right now I don't care. And it looks like the llama it's looking at me and saying: 'see, it worth it!'

Winning this competition was a good example for those who believe in coincidences: I was already going to Asia, so the tickets were already bought.

So the big question was: how to spend the prize? As a keen photographer, I decided to use my prize with what Backyard Travel does best: 'off the beaten track' tours. The trip was then divided in two parts: the second is yet to come, but the first you'll read below:

I was enjoying the unique chaos of Vietnam by myself, when I decided to have some tranquility in Laos. So I asked Backyard Travel to put me on a flight from Hanoi to Luang Prabang.



Situated in northern Laos, the city was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. Considered by many travellers and writers as being the heart of Laotian culture, the tiny town is encircled by mountains and is 700 metres above sea level at the confluence of the Nam Khan and Mekong River. There you hear nothing but the sound of crickets or the monks chanting by the end of the day. The monk's day, by the way, begins very early in the morning, when the 'almsgiving, an ancient tradition in which monks leave the monasteries early in the morning, walk single file, oldest first, carrying their alms bowls in front of them.



People wait for them, sometimes kneeling, and place food, flowers or incense sticks in the bowls. By the end of the day, you can enjoy the sunset by the magnificent Mekong.

Already immerse in the 'zen' mood, I head to my next stop: "Myanmar. After a quick flight from Bangkok, I arrive in Mandalay, the country's second largest city (after Yangon). Myanmar is a unique country, very different from any place you have ever been: people are very welcoming, it's already to be discovered by tourists and there are places that will make you feel like you are in a different place of time, like my next stop: Bagan.

The city is located on the banks of the Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) River and is home to the largest and densest concentration of Buddhist temples, pagodas, stupas and ruins in the world with many dating from the 11th and 12th centuries. The shape and construction of each building is highly significant in Buddhism with each component part taking on spiritual meaning.

---

> Phnom Penh (3)

---

> Siem Reap (8)

---

> China (41)

---

> Beijing (2)

---

> Great Wall of China (5)

---

> Hong Kong (5)

---

> Shanghai (2)

---

> Indonesia (61)

---

> Bali (12)

---

> Sulawesi (3)

---

> Ubud (2)

---

> Yogyakarta (4)

---

> Japan (65)

---

> Kyoto (9)

---

> Tokyo (10)

---

> Laos (40)

---

> Luang Prabang (6)

---

> Vientiane (4)

---

> Myanmar (77)

---

> Bagan (10)

---

> Inle Lake (6)

---

> Mandalay (4)

---

> Yangon (7)

---

> Thailand (95)

---



Once I get there, someone calls me in my hotel before the sunrise to go to the tour that is a must-do to everyone that goes to Bagan: the balloon trip. It's still dark and cold when I arrive at the ballooning camp, so I'm offered a nice breakfast with buns, cookies and coffee until the balloons are prepared for a 45 min flight.

Once I get there, someone calls me in my hotel before the sunrise to go to the tour that is a must-do to everyone that goes to Bagan: the balloon trip. It's still dark and cold when I arrive at the ballooning camp, so I'm offered a nice breakfast with buns, cookies and coffee until the balloons are prepared for a 45 min flight.



Looking at Bagan's temples from above is a magical experience and you can see how very little has changed since the temples were built.

---

> Bangkok (13)

---

> Chiang Mai (7)

---

> Vietnam (74)

---

> Halong Bay (5)

---

> Hanoi (9)

---

> Ho Chi Minh City (11)

---

> Press Release (141)

---

> Travel Tips (69)

---

> Amazing Activities (5)

---

> Best Time to Visit (11)

---

> Do's and Don'ts (5)

---

> Fun Facts (8)

---

> BUS and BUSES (2)

---

> Fun Facts (8)

---

> Get Your Visa (5)

---

> How-to's (4)

---

> Sustainable Travel (33)

---

> What to Bring (1)

---

> Where to Sleep (3)

---

> Unique Experiences (309)

---

> A Luxe Experience (42)

---

> Adventurer at heart (102)

---

> Astounding Festivals (10)

---

> Back to Nature (20)



When you land, there is a whole team ready to pick you up and offer you some fruits and champagne as well as a 'flight certificate'.

After saying goodbye to Bagan, I head to my final destination: an authentic experience that only a travel agency like Backyard Travel can offer: spending a few days in a Chin village.

Mountainous Chin, bordering India and Bangladesh, is Myanmar's poorest state. More than 70 % of its population lives below the poverty line, rising to 81% in rural areas, according to UN agencies in Myanmar. This place, which across was forbidden to tourists until two years ago, hides a vanishing tradition: the face-tattooed women.



To get there is not easy. First, I took a short hop flight from Yangon to Sittwe, the capital of the Rakhine State. A guide was waiting for me there and took me to Rakhine State Cultural Museum, whose large collection of artifacts and exhibits helps to bring to life the history and culture of the Rakhine people. Then, I went to see the sunset over the Bay of Bengal.



The following day started with a visit to Sittwe fish market, where I could see a bit of everyday life of the Rakhine people.

Then, the long journey started. I was taken to Sittwe's port where a private boat was waiting for my six hour cruise up the Kaladan River to Mrauk U. Even though a six-hour trip doesn't sound much appealing, once you get to see the amazing landscape of Myanmar countryside, you will end up wishing the boat ride was even longer.

I'm a blessed person who has travelled to interesting and unusual places to photograph. However, even though every time I tell my friends about my destinations I hear a "wow, what an adventure!" as answer, I have never had the feeling of 'adventure' before, like when you just feel like "whoa, I can't believe I'm here!"

> Be an Insider (97)

> Beach Vibe (33)

> Dream Honeymoon (6)

> Eco-Friendly (6)

> Expect the Unusual (28)

> Family Adventures (33)

> For Serious Foodies (88)

> Incredible Lodgings (2)

> Mountain Love (10)

> Off the Grid (36)

> Travel Stories (22)

> Welcome Aboard (18)

> Wildlife Addict (7)

Travel Inspiration

Inspired? Get in touch!

Name \*

Email \*

Destination of interest \* ▾

Let us know your holiday ideas. The more details you provide, the more personal your tailor made travel itinerary.

Subscribe for Inspiration and Offers?

SEND INQUIRY



Therefore, as people say there is a first time for everything, and while my private boat was crossing the water of Kaladan river I had this feeling for the first time. And it got even better when I arrived in Mrauk U, a major archeological site who was Burma's capital in the 15th century and one of the wealthiest places in Asia. More than any place that I've ever been, Mrauk -U doesn't even look real. Places like Koethaung Temple, Yadana Mannaung and Sakaya Mannaung Pagodas are really incredible, let alone Mrauk U's most important monument, Shitthaung Temple, built in 1535, just 35 years after my country, Brazil, was 'discovered'.



On the way to one of the temples, there was a initiation rite of a novice Monk at the street. The family of the little boy invited me to join the ceremony, offered me food and treated me as if I was a part of their family.

Next day I took another boat trip along the Lay Mro River to the Lay Too Chin minority villages for 2-3 hours. There, I had the chance of knowing more about the Chin culture, best known for their colorful fabrics, as well as tattoo on faces of women.



After visiting two villages, I was taken to a village where I stayed overnight at a Chin family's house.

The following day I came back to Mrauk Oo in the late afternoon by boat then cruised to Sittwe, knowing that I've been to places that most people never dreamed it exists.

This is how the first leg of my trip finishes. In December I'm heading to Bhutan and Cambodia so stay tuned for more updates of my journey across this amazing continent, that is also open for you, 'adventurous traveller', to explore.

Follow Antropologia Visual on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aantropologiavisual>, Instagram <https://instagram.com/antropologiavisual/> and website: [www.antropologiavisual.com.br](http://www.antropologiavisual.com.br)