

LIFE ON THE TRACKS, YANGON'S CIRCLE LINE

Experiences | Yangon



OVERVIEW

To ride Yangon's circular city train network is to take a ride through history. The 46 kilometre 38 station loop connects Yangon's rural suburbs with the city's urban heart. Originally built in the colonial times by the British, the charmingly decrepit line has been ferrying passengers in and out of Yangon for over 60 years. More than 85,000 people depend on this network as a form of commute every day, making it the secondary mode of public transportation in Yangon after the bus. With many possible permutations, the journey will be adapted to your schedule, but one thing always remains a constant, and that's the chance to ride side by side with Yangon's suburban residents as they go about their daily errands.



PACE

Easy going



TOUR PERIOD

Half day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience Yangon at a slower pace, escaping the noisy and frequently congested roads.
- Get the opportunity to interact with the friendly commuters.
- Witness what life's like outside of Yangon's city core.
- Photographing genuine local moments.



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Transfer from your hotel (or a place of your choosing) to Yangon Central Railway Station. The current station was built in 1954, designed by a Burmese architect Sithu U Tin, who was also the same person responsible for the construction of Yangon City Hall and the Independence Monument in Maha Bandula Park. With many residents still relying on this 100-year old plus rail network to get from A to B, a step inside is one of the best ways to get a true sense of what life is really like for people beyond Shwedagon and the city's crumbling colonial facades.

Board the next available train and start your slow and clunky journey around the city's surprisingly green suburbs. From children playing chinlone (a traditional sport played with a small wicker ball) to monks enthusiastically conversing on station benches, it's possible to witness an abundance of local life, culture and suburban contrast. It's all rather hypnotic. That is until one of the local snack sellers loudly announces what goodies he, or she, has in stock whilst continuing to energetically parade up and down the narrow aisles. With many market sellers also using this as an affordable way of transporting produce, don't be surprised if you're then asked to make some room for a big bag of vegetables. Granted, it may not sound idyllic, but this is one way of ensuring you experience a real slice of local life.

Depending on the time and the direction you take, it may be possible to alight at one of the railway markets. There are a few options with one of our favourites being Mingalardon-zay. Whether it's a pair of polished army boots, or a sweet snack made from sugar cane, you'll find no shortage of quirky souvenirs here. If it's possible to take one of the trains heading to a market such as Mingalardon-zay, the guide will arrange for the driver to pick you up from there. This gives you plenty of time to explore before heading back to your hotel in the comfort of an air-conditioned vehicle.



INCLUSIONS

- Transportation to/from hotel in an air-conditioned vehicle
- Train ticket
- English speaking tour guide (for other languages, please enquire)
- Drinking water and hand towel



EXCLUSIONS

- Any meals



NOTES

- To stand a better chance of interacting with locals, we'd recommend wearing a longyi (a sarong worn by both men and women) for this excursion.
- If possible we'd recommend riding on the older non-air-conditioned carriages, but the government is in the process of phasing these out. They are still possible to board, but the timing's not always convenient.
- The market will only be possible if time and routing permits.

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