

ARTISANS AND ANIMISTS

Experiences | Loikaw



OVERVIEW

Enjoy an action-packed day of sausage making, learning about the process of natural dyeing, animist culture, musical instruments, an ox cart ride and sunset (weather permitting) at the scenic Seven Lakes.



PACE

Easy going



TOUR PERIOD

Full day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Observe a sausage demonstration at a local artisan's house.
- Visit the Cultural Museum to get a true sense of Kayah State's immense cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Learn about the process of natural dyeing at Loikaw's Weaving and Vocational Training Centre.
- Enjoy a locally sourced lunch at Hta Nee La Leh's Visitor Centre.
- Walk to Hta Nee La Leh's Kayhtoebo to learn more about the village's animist practice.
- Meet with musicians who will serenade you with the sounds of traditional instruments.
- Take a leisurely (and slightly bumpy) ride on the back of an ox cart to Seven Lakes for sunset.



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Start the morning with a visit to a local artisan's house to learn more about the production of the nationally renowned spicy Kayah sausage. Similar to a coiled bratwurst in-style, this is typically barbecued, held together with long sticks and served with a generous side of chilli flakes. Cooking enthusiasts may wish to try their hand at making their own, but this will depend on what time we arrive and how busy the owners are (it is a thriving business after all).

Our next visit will be the Loikaw Weaving and Vocational Training Centre. Start by exploring the centre's luscious organic garden; here you will learn about the origin of the natural colours used in Kayah clothing, the dyeing process and traditional weaving techniques. There is also a large outbuilding full of 40 to 50-year-old mechanical Japanese looms – the sound that these make when switched on is terrifying but exciting at the same time! Be sure to ask for a demonstration. Keen to pick up a bargain? We'd advise visiting the make shift souvenir shop, where it will be possible to pick up a variety of naturally dyed garments (made in house of course!) for a lot less than you'll find anywhere else in Myanmar.

We will then travel by car to Hta Nee La Leh, a small animist village located approximately 45 minutes away. Our first stop will be the recently constructed Visitor Centre; mostly made from bamboo, this is where we'll meet with our dedicated Community Guide, who will provide a short introduction to the village, its people, history and customs. Assigning another guide may seem unnecessary, but this is a way of ensuring that the money you spend flows back into the community, other villagers we meet feel comfortable, and that someone is available to interpret the local dialect.

Before we begin exploring the village, and having surely worked up an appetite, a barbecue lunch will be served inside the Visitor Centre, or the home of a local resident.

After lunch, we'll visit Hta Nee La Leh's Kayhtoebo, a traditional animist hunting shrine. Spread over an area a little bit larger than a football pitch, this is an extremely sacred area of land typically used to carry out animal sacrifice. It is also the perfect place to learn more about traditional Kayah religious beliefs, festivals and fortune telling techniques.

Following this, pay a visit to a musician's house to listen to some live traditional music. This is a very important part of the culture and you'll be amazed at the simplicity and ingenuity of the hand-crafted instruments; take the bamboo guitar for example, the whole thing (even the strings!) are made from the same piece of wood and even more surprisingly, the depth of sound is incredible.

To end the day in style, hop on board an ox-drawn cart to the scenic Seven Lakes. Surrounded by mountains and tropical jungle, the lake provides the perfect setting from which to put your feet up and take in the sunset.

If you're not in a rush to get back, before returning to the hotel we'd recommend stopping off at Red Dynasty beer station beside the lake in Loikaw to enjoy a refreshing beverage.



INCLUSIONS

- Transportation to/from Loikaw hotel in an air-conditioned vehicle
- Entrance fees
- Local lunch
- Ox cart ride
- English speaking tour guide (for other languages, please enquire)
- Drinking water and hand towel



EXCLUSIONS

- Any drinks or food at Red Dynasty



NOTES

- This is a suggested routing and it may be necessary for your guide to adapt the arrangements due to unpredictable elements that are out of Tour Mandalay's control.
- A supplementary fee may apply on certain days – Tour Mandalay will inform you of this beforehand.
- Festivals in this region are not uncommon and sometimes they happen unannounced. If this is the case, it might not be possible to carry out every excursion featured.

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