

KING BODAWPAYA'S MINGUN

Experiences | Mandalay



OVERVIEW

Opposite Mandalay on the west bank of the Irrawaddy River, you'll find Mingun, a small town for which King Bodawpaya had incredibly grand aspirations. Paying a visit to the unfinished Mingun Pahtodawgyi aside, there are plenty of things to do and see here including striking one of the world's largest working bells and taking in far-reaching panoramic views from the top of Hsinbyume Pagoda. Although it never fails to attract its fair share of tourists, Mingun's bustling with local life and this can best be enjoyed inside one of the small town's tea shops; here you'll be sure to cross paths with people from all walks of life.



PACE

Easy going



TOUR PERIOD

Half day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Temporarily escape Mandalay's hustle as you cross the mighty Irrawaddy River on a private boat.
- Learn about King Bodawpaya and his grand aspirations to build what would have been the tallest temple in the world.
- Strike one of the largest working bells in the world.
- Explore the 200-year old Hsinbyume Pagoda.



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Transfer from your hotel (or a place of your choosing) to Mandalay's jetty to board a private river boat to Mingun, a small town famous for its ginormous temple ruins (Mingun Pahtodawgyi) and a 90-tonne bronze bell.

Construction of Mingun Pahtodawgyi began in 1790, with King Bodawpaya aiming for it to be the tallest in the world at 150-metres. On the back of an astrologer's advice, the King halted the build in the belief that he would die if it was ever finished – seeing as he lived until the grand old age of 74 (a remarkable feat at the time), superstition clearly worked in his favour. Even if permission to complete the design was given, it is likely the state of the temple would be similar to that of today. In 1839, a strong earthquake rattled the structure so intensely it left huge cracks along the walls and parts of the corners collapsed – it even toppled the two lion statues whose job was to keep watch over and protect the temple.

Equally as grand is the 13-foot tall bronze bell that can be found nearby. As per above, weighing 90-tonnes, it has been recorded as the heaviest functioning bell in the world at several times in history. It's also claimed to be the largest functioning bell in the world, although it doesn't have a clanger and is instead rang by striking the outer edge. On the bell you will notice five identical squiggles (almost resembling the numerical digit nine); this is how you write number five in Myanmar language and it indicates that the bell weighs 55,555 vis, a number that is likely to have greatly appealed to King Bodawpaya's superstitious mind-set.

We'll conclude our tour of Mingun at Hsinbyume Pagoda, an architecturally unique monument that's a favourite with photo enthusiasts looking to capture images of novice monks circling around its wavelike base – these images regularly featured in Myanmar travel-related promotional material. Even though we can't guarantee any monks will be around, it is still a very interesting site to visit. Built in 1816 by King Bagyidaw, it is dedicated to the memory of his first consort and cousin. The design is said to have been inspired by the mythical Sulamani pagoda on Mount Meru, with the seven wavelike terraces representing the seven mountain ranges that lead to the summit.

Should time permit, take a short break at a local teashop before returning back to Mandalay by boat. Transfer from the jetty to your hotel (or a destination of your choosing) by car.



INCLUSIONS

- Transportation to/from hotel in an air-conditioned vehicle
- Mingun zone fee
- Private return boat transfer from Mandalay to Mingun
- English speaking tour guide (for other languages, please enquire)
- Drinking water and hand towel



EXCLUSIONS

- Any meals
- Mandalay zone fee
- Drinks at Mingun tea shop
- Any services not mentioned



NOTES

- You will be expected to remove your shoes when entering temples – wearing footwear that is easy to take on / off is highly recommended.
- A supplementary fee may apply on certain days – Tour Mandalay will inform you of this beforehand.

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