

THE SUNKEN STUPAS OF SAGAR

Experiences | Inle Lake



OVERVIEW

Veer away from the typical tourist trail and discover a quieter, more authentic side of Inle Lake. Travelling two and a half hours south by boat, cross paths with Shan, Intha and Pa-O commuters, explore crumbling stupas, wonderfully quaint villages and learn about the production of fermented rice wine.



PACE

Easy going



TOUR PERIOD

Full day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Should your visit coincide, join members of the Shan, Intha, Taungyo and other ethnic groups as they carry out their weekly shop at the five-day rotating market.
- Spot indigenous and migratory bird species as you travel two hours south on Inle Lake's waters.
- Enjoy a tipple (or two) of some fermented rice wine, brewed using traditional techniques.
- Eat lunch whilst taking in a glorious sweeping view at A Little Lodge in Samkar.
- Time permitting, return to your accommodation in Inle Lake via Se-khong blacksmith village.



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

You will be collected from your hotel (or a destination of your choosing) early this morning and escorted to your private boat.

With the aim of escaping the crowds, we'll proceed to travel approximately two hours south of Inle Lake, stopping off at one of the five-day rotating markets should opportunity permit en route. Here it is not uncommon to spot members of the Shan, Intha, Taungyo, Pa-O, Danu, Kayah and Danaw ethnic groups as they go about sourcing their weekly shop.

Long off-limits to tourists, Sagar is still relatively untrampled and this is made immediately apparent due to fewer motorised boats, hotels and restaurants. In place of these you'll find a plethora of rare and indigenous wildlife, unspoilt countryside and stupas that date back as far as the 13th century.

Our first stop will be Takhaung Mwetaw, a pagoda complex made up of 200 plus densely packed stupas and shrines. At the top of the long hallway connecting the bank of the river with the complex, you'll often find monks sat conversing amongst themselves or with pious locals on colourful mats. If they're free, it's worth sitting down to have a chin-wag (with the guide's help of course) to learn about the fascinating history of the complex and life in the region in general. For us, one of the highlights of exploring Takhaung Mwetaw is the peaceful nature of it all, a sense that's further enhanced when you gaze upon the pagoda's vast and natural surrounds.

Take a short stroll north of Takhaung Mwetaw towards the village of Thaya Gone. Home to various ethnic groups including Intha, Shan and Pa-O, entering the village this way (as opposed to doing so by boat) is a great way to appreciate the region's rich cultural diversity and avoid crossing paths with other visitors. In recent years, Thaya Gone has made a bit of a name for itself; not for its ethnic diversity, pleasant lake views and laidback nature, but for the production of 'monkey labelled' fermented rice wine. We'll stop briefly to learn about the distillation process and to sample a taste of the end result for ourselves.

Reconvene with the boatman at Thaya Gone and take a short boat journey towards the eastern bank until we reach the seemingly 'sunken' stupas of Sagar. Tremendously 'wabi-sabi' in style, these are a group of 100 or so crumbling 16th to 17th century stupas that are partially submerged in the lake's tranquil waters.

Having surely worked up an appetite, stop for a lunch at A Little Lodge in Samkar. With no rush to head back, leisurely dine whilst taking in the sweeping view from the restaurant's balcony area. Also visible from the restaurant is the giant white royal tomb of Sao Sein Phoo, the 10th Saopha (Shan Chief) of Samkar village. Colonial history enthusiasts will be interested to learn that the Shan Chief was awarded the Territorial Decoration Medal (TDM) by the Superintendent for Southern Shan State, Arthur Hedding Hildebrand. This detail and more can be found written on the recently restored shrine.

If time permits, return back to your hotel in Inle Lake (or a destination of your choosing) via Se-khong blacksmith village. The villagers here are regionally renowned for their ability to produce durable knives and farming tools.



INCLUSIONS

- Transportation to/from hotel in a private long tail-boat (complete with chairs, cushions, umbrellas and blankets)
- English speaking tour guide (for other languages, please enquire)
- Lunch at a local restaurant
- Drinking water and hand towel



EXCLUSIONS

- Accommodation
- Inle Lake zone fee



NOTES

- The visit to the five-day rotating market will depend on many factors, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible on the day.
- From late March until the start of the rainy season, the narrow tributary connect Inle Lake to Sagar usually becomes inaccessible by boat as a result of low water levels.
- A supplementary fee may apply on certain days – Tour Mandalay will inform you of this beforehand.
- Blankets are provided in winter months only – the mornings have a tendency to be extremely cold.
- Umbrellas are provided all year round to protect you from the sun, splashes of water and cold air.
- There are many different permutations of this routing and it may need to be altered due to unforeseeable factors e.g. time of departure from the hotel, national holiday, a large concentration of tourists, weather etc.

www.tourmandalay.travel

Find us on:

