

DALA ON TWO WHEELS

Experiences | Yangon



OVERVIEW

In partnership with Uncharted Horizons, Tour Mandalay bring you Dala in Two Wheels. Waking at the crack of dawn, we'll cycle from downtown to Dala, crossing the Yangon River using a public ferry. Proceed to explore the satellite township, whilst cycling through luscious green rice paddies, high-fiving excited locals and feasting on snacks at a social enterprise business that specialises in upcycling plastic waste. Pedal your way around an island village that sees few tourists, before embarking upon another boat journey back into downtown.



PACE

Medium



TOUR PERIOD

Half day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Mountain bike through downtown Yangon, Dala and the satellite township's green surrounds
- Enjoy homemade banana cake and light refreshments at Chu Chu, a small social enterprise business that upcycles plastic waste



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Meet with your guide at the crack of dawn as we transfer you to Uncharted Horizons' office in time for a 07:30 bike fitting and safety briefing. Shortly after this, temporarily say goodbye to your Tour Mandalay guide; for this part of the tour, we'll be handing you over to one of Uncharted Horizons' experienced adventure guides.

Having familiarised yourself with your bike, set out into the heart of downtown for a ten-minute ride to Pansodan Jetty. Whilst the roads are relatively devoid of traffic, cycle past and admire the grandeur of the Secretariat Building, once the administrative seat of British Burma, and the once prosperous office buildings on Pansodan Road.

If you're still feeling sleepy, fear not, arriving at Pansodan Jetty terminal will be sure to awaken the senses. Bustling with thousands of river commuters from dawn until dusk, a visit here's a great way to experience a side of Yangon very few international tourists ever lay eyes on. On arrival, kick back the bike stands and wait for the next public ferry to Dala.

Despite the township being a stone's throw away from Yangon's bustling downtown hub, Dala is still largely rural and undeveloped; this is due to it only being accessible by ferry, or a two-hour car journey. There are plans to build a USD168 million cross-river bridge, which the government hopes to complete by 2021; when this happens, the township's likely to urbanise rapidly.

Once across Yangon River, reconvene with your guide who'll provide a quick low-down on the rules of the road out here; as we pull out of the jetty, traffic conditions are likely to be 'locally hectic', so please make sure you abide by these and stay close to the guide. It won't be long until we're free of the honking and cycling in unison along Dala's quiet backstreets, canals and rice paddy fields. The frantic nature will eventually resume however, when we stop for a stroll through the stalls that make up Dala's bustling morning market; from live chickens to bouquets of flowers, you'll find a range of produce on sale here.

Not long after leaving the market behind, stop for a break at Chu Chu's workshop; hidden on a quiet residential street, this has been partially constructed using plastic bottles and old car tyres. Chu Chu, which got its name from the Myanmar word for a plastic bag, is a social enterprise venture set up by Cesvi, an Italian NGO keen to find treasure in the heaps of trash that litter Yangon's alleys and gutters. By upcycling this discarded material and turning it into colourful crafts, the business aims not only to clean up the streets, but also to provide training, employment and a regular source of income to the otherwise disadvantaged families involved. Knowing this should hopefully help the banana bread and freshly brewed coffee served here to taste extra good.

Continue cycling and high-fiving children (you'll soon find out what we mean by this!) until you reach a small jetty where a boat will be waiting. After loading the bikes and clambering onboard, we'll be shuttled across to the motor vehicle-free paradise that is Seikgyi-kanaungto island. Whilst weaving in and out of humans and livestock, spend the next hour or so exploring the island's narrow alleyways, bamboo groves, street markets and boat repair yards. Having made our way to the other side, take another boat back across Yangon River to Wardan Jetty (located west of downtown).

For the final leg of our tour by bicycle, pedal half the length of Strand Road, home to myriad colonial relics including the New Law Courts (now Rosewood Hotel), the half-bombed Accountant-General's Office (now Yangon Division Court) and the much-talked-about Strand Hotel. For part of this journey, we'll be required to travel alongside the road until it's possible to turn off onto a make-shift bike lane.

Once back at Uncharted Horizons' office, enjoy a cold beverage in an air-conditioned space before meeting back up with your Tour Mandalay guide again.



INCLUSIONS

- Transportation to/from hotel in an air-conditioned vehicle
- A privately guided Uncharted Horizons 'Island and Rivers' tour
- Snacks and refreshments at Chu Chu



EXCLUSIONS

- Any meals
- Anything not mentioned



NOTES

- Uncharted Horizons will provide you with a disclaimer, which you'll be required to sign in order to carry out the tour. It is recommended that you take out a comprehensive insurance policy to cover you for this activity. On a few occasions you'll be required to cycle on busy roads. Vehicles aside, there will also be unexpected obstacles such as humans, animals, cracks / holes in pavements and discarded objects lying in the way.
- Life jackets will be provided on the small boats, which we would advise you wear
- The cycling tour with Uncharted Horizons will run from 07:30 to 12:30 (this includes time for bike fitting, guide introduction etc)
- The cycling can be handled by anyone who is healthy, knows how to ride a bike and has excellent road awareness
- The terrain is flat and mostly concrete, with a few dirt paths
- Prior to the tour, we would recommend packing a pair of sunglasses, sun cream, comfortable shoes (no flip flops), shorts, clothing suitable for sweaty conditions (but not too revealing), a bit of local currency (just in case you want to carry out any ethical souvenir shopping at Chu Chu) and a camera
- Please bear in mind that shoulders and knees will need to be covered if you plan to enter any temples, pagodas or monasteries
- A refillable aluminium bottle and water will be provided; this can be filled up at water refill stations as your cycle around
- Lunch is not included, but we'll be happy to escort you anywhere you wish to go

www.tourmandalay.travel

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