

ONCE UPON A NIGHT IN YANGON

Experiences | Yangon



OVERVIEW

You haven't experienced downtown Yangon until you've done so in the evening. Start with a chilled beverage of your choice at Lan Thit Jetty before taking a rickshaw to one of the city's oldest Chinese temples and the popular 19th Street. Packed with plastic chairs, folding tables and BBQ stalls, this is one of the best places to soak in local life and eat to your heart's content. To finish the night in style, embark upon a mini pub crawl to three of our favourite bars: Blind Tiger, Gekko and The Strand's Sarkies Bar.



PACE

Medium pace



TOUR PERIOD

Evening



HIGHLIGHTS

- Temporarily escape the heat with a cold beer and light river breeze at Lan Thit Jetty
- Enjoy a short rickshaw ride to Yangon's oldest and largest Chinese temple
- Soak in the local atmosphere whilst enjoying some BBQ food on 19th Street
- Sip on cocktails at three of our favourite bars: Blind Tiger, Gekko and The Strand's Sarkies Bar



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Note: To avoid unnecessary food waste and to make the tour more cost effective, no food or drink is included in the cost of the tour. You can simply buy what you wish to eat and drink on the day.

At 17:00, meet with your guide and transfer to Lan Thit Jetty, an area buzzing with local life and made all the more pleasurable thanks to an ever-present breeze from Yangon River. Surprisingly very few tourists make it to this area, so don't be put off if you start to receive curious stares as you gulp down your first glass of beer (or non-alcoholic beverage).

After a short search for a rickshaw driver, you'll then be pedalled a short distance to the Kheng Hock Keong Chinese temple. Originally built in 1863, this is the oldest and largest temple of its kind in the country. We feel this looks especially picturesque in the evening when it's softly illuminated by hundreds of traditional paper lanterns.

We'll then walk slowly up 18th Street, the road to the left of Kheng Hock Keong, to admire the tightly packed rows of colonial shuttered houses and shop fronts. This serves as a gentle introduction to what's in store at 19th Street, a narrow alley that springs to life in the evening with brightly coloured plastic tables, chairs and BBQ vendors. Stop here to enjoy another cold beverage and your fill of grilled meat, seafood and vegetable dishes. Depending on the strength of your stomach, it's probably best to pass up on the tempting selection of dipping sauces.

Leave the crowds behind and take drive to the first of our three favourite bars in town. The closest thing to a modern-day speakeasy, the Blind Tiger is securing a reputation for its characterful interior, cool music and excellent cocktails. Behind the door with the paw, the building's high ceiling is taken advantage of with restaurant-style seating on the lower level and narrow stairs leading to a more private, balcony-type area above.

Our next stop, and just a short walk away is Gekko. Located on the ground floor of the Sofaer & Co. building, this doubles up as one of Yangon's best restored colonial bars and a top-notch Japanese-Korean fusion restaurant. Keep your eyes peeled for the Manchester-made ceramic encaustic floor tiles and the steel beams manufactured by Lanarkshire Steel Company; prior to Gekko opening its doors, these were left covered and forgotten about for decades.

Finish the night at The Strand Hotel's Sarkies Bar. Described as "the finest hostelry East of Suez" by John Murray in his Handbook for Travellers written in the early 20th century, this 1901-built three story 5-star hotel remains one of Southeast Asia's few grand colonial hotels and certainly one of its most awe inspiring. Interestingly, the bar was once used to stable Japanese officer's horses during World War II; looking at the polished teak interior now, it's hard to imagine that was ever the case.

Sip on one more cocktail before being transferred back to your hotel.

Note: Your vehicle will be on standby until 23:00, after which it will be necessary to use public transport. Sorry for cutting the party short but we need to make sure that our guide and driver are fresh and ready for the next day.



INCLUSIONS

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



EXCLUSIONS

- BBQ food (to avoid waste, we'd advise purchasing this locally)
- Drinks (to ensure the arrangements are cost effective, we'd advise purchasing these locally)



NOTES

- It is not possible to rickshaw on Strand Rd. until after 18:00
- From experience, dipping sauces served with BBQ dishes on 19th Street are best avoided
- Live music performances (usually jazz) take place from 19:00 until 21:00 every Friday at Gekko
- A supplementary fee may apply on certain days – Tour Mandalay will inform you of this beforehand
- The guide, driver and vehicle will be available until 23:00. After this time, it will be necessary to use public transport independently and at your own expense.

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