

# PALEIK & KYAUK SE

Experiences | Mandalay



## OVERVIEW

Drive 40 or so minutes south of Mandalay and you'll reach the sleepy settlement of Paleik. Referred to by some as the 'Little Bagan' due to its surprisingly large collection of ancient stupas, it's also where you'll find a thriving local industry and a temple home to revered snakes. A little bit further south of here you'll find Tamote Shinpin Shwegugyi, a one-thousand-year-old temple that was re-discovered by local residents in 1993. Learn about this and more as we spend a full day exploring some of Mandalay city's best kept secrets.



### PACE

Easy going



### TOUR PERIOD

Full day



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Leave the other tourists behind and discover some of Mandalay's best kept archaeological secrets.
- Come face to face with large pythons at Hmwe Paya
- Stroll through the sleepy settlement of Paleik whilst learning about the town's history, local industry and the overlooked collection of ancient stupas.
- Discover 'Little Bagan', so-called due to the large concentration of Ava-style pagodas
- Enjoy a local lunch in the lively town of Kyauk Se
- Lay eyes on a one-thousand-year-old temple that was rediscovered in 1993
- Stop at Shin Pin Set Thwar to pay respects to one of the most unique Buddha images in the country



## ITINERARY IN DETAIL

This morning you'll be met by your guide at a place of your choosing; the exact time will be confirmed by your guide or the hotel the afternoon prior. We'll then drive 45-minutes south of Mandalay to the sleepy town of Paleik. Popular with pious pilgrims due to its 'Snake Temple', other reasons to come here are to explore the quiet streets of the town and the crumbling cluster of pagodas known as 'Little Bagan'.

On arrival into Paleik, we'll head straight to the 'Snake Temple', or Hmwe Paya in Myanmar language. As the name suggests, the temple is home to some giant snakes, pythons to be precise, which have a curious affinity towards the central Buddha image. Ideally, we'll want to arrive just before the snakes are bathed and fed; this is the time pilgrims and local tourists flock to the temple to witness and help out with the time-honoured ritual. Don't worry, unless you opt to do so, you will not be expected to take part yourself.

*NOTE: Even though the pythons here are revered and receive around the clock care, the forced containment is likely to seem unnatural and borderline cruel to some travellers. If this is something that's likely to cause offence, you may wish to consider skipping the visit to Hmwe Paya.*

For many, Paleik's main draw will be the grand collection of Ava-style pagodas that stand a short distance away from Hmwe Paya. Referred to as 'Little Bagan', you get the sense that these have been overlooked for decades, with multiple earthquakes and years of dense jungle growth having taken their toll. With the site attracting very few visitors, there's a good chance you'll get the place all to yourself.

Next, we'll explore the sandy backstreets of Paleik on foot. Whilst doing so, you'll get the chance to converse at leisure with local residents, learn about the town's cottage industry and step inside a colonial mansion that now operates as a second-hand book shop and hair salon. Should you wish, we could always arrange to book you in for a haircut; be warned, it's no Vidal Sassoon!

Having surely worked up an appetite, we'll drive 30-minutes south to the town of Kyauk Se; here we'll stop for a well-deserved authentic Myanmar-style lunch.

*NOTE: Lunch options in Paleik and Kyauk Se are basic and limited to Myanmar-style.*

It's then just a short drive out of town to our next stop, Tamoke Shwe Gu Gyi. Built by King Anawrahta in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, extended by King Narapatisithu towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> and encased completely within a pagoda built by King Uzana in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it's fair to say this temple has enjoyed a long and fascinating history. It doesn't end there though. A few hundred years on and King Uzana's pagoda had been become a natural mound; in true Myanmar fashion, a pagoda was erected at the top of this in 1915. It wasn't until 1993 that it was rediscovered when traces of the pagoda's base came to light.

With the story of its discovery, well-preserved masonry work, colourful murals and the use of different architectural styles, you may be surprised to learn that very few international visitors make it here.

To conclude the tour, we'll stop at Shin Pin Set Thwar, a temple in which sits an image of Buddha inside a Buddha. Assuming he's around, there will also be a chance to sit down, talk and drink a cup of tea with the resident monk.

*NOTE: It is not possible to guarantee a meeting with the resident monk, but we'll try our best to arrange it; their religious duties must prioritise.*

Transfer back to Mandalay in time for an early dinner.



## INCLUSIONS

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



## EXCLUSIONS

- Mandalay zone fee
- Any services not mentioned
- Any meals other than lunch



## NOTES

- You will be expected to remove your shoes when entering temples – wearing footwear that is easy to take on / off is highly recommended.
- Lunch options are limited, basic and Myanmar in style.
- A supplementary fee may apply on certain days – Tour Mandalay will inform you of this beforehand.

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