

ORCHARDS, FORESTS AND ROCKPOOLS

Experiences | Dawei



OVERVIEW

Spend the day exploring Ka Lone Htar, an inland orchard community, nestled amidst verdant forest and rivers. Enjoy various community-led experiences including a short nature trail through lush forest, a locally sourced riverside picnic, a 'barefoot forest spa', and a refreshing dip in a crystal clear, hidden rock pool.



PACE

Medium-paced



TOUR PERIOD

Full day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Spend a day exploring the mostly self-sufficient, inland orchard community of Ka Lone Htar
- Trek through orchards and forests, before feasting on a community-prepared lunch
- Reinvigorate the senses with some wild swimming
- Pamper yourself at the riverside community foot spa



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Depart your hotel at approximately 08:00, starting your one-hour drive to Ka Lone Htar, using a mixture of flat and gently undulating, bumpy local roads. En route, pass by rivers, rugged rock formations and spot signs of bustling local industry.

Start the tour at the community's most celebrated building, the colourful and immaculately kept, teak monastery. Here, a community-based guide will welcome you, before escorting you to the 'Community Club' for an introduction to the village, its people, history and customs. Assigning another guide may seem unnecessary, but this is a way of ensuring that the money you spend flows back into the community, other villagers we meet feel comfortable, and that someone is available to interpret the local dialect.

Armed with a better understanding of the project and why the community stands to benefit from tourism to the area, take a leisurely stroll to the 'Forest Pharmacy' – this is a local initiative set up to cultivate a range of widely administered herbal medicines. Having identified a variety of these unassumingly magical plants, we'll trace our steps back to the monastery to learn more about the community work initiated by the forward-thinking, resident head monk.

Leaving the village behind, we'll next embark upon a two-hour trek through a fruit orchard and deep into the shade of forest. Whilst passing through the orchard, learn how to identify a variety of seasonal produce including cardamom, betel nut, bamboo and banana. With the forest being a living repository for herbal medicines, we challenge you to recognise some of the same plants you would have been introduced to at the 'Forest Pharmacy'.

Lunch will be enjoyed in a shaded, community-built picnic spot, complete with bamboo tables and chairs – here, a slap-up community-cooked picnic will be served, presented eye-catchingly on sheets of banana leaf. After lunch, there will be some time to relax and swim in the nearby emerald green river.

Feeling refreshed, continue trekking for another hour or so, traversing multiple streams and rivers in the process. Sections of this route are regularly used for the drying of betel nut and mineral panning. If opportunity permits, stop to learn more about the practice and strike up conversation with accomplished artisans.

It won't be long until we arrive at Ka Lone Thar's riverside community foot spa, a natural hot spring source, where villagers convene to gather thoughts and pamper their soles. Whilst treating your feet, some healthy snacks and a herbal drink will be served. There will also be an opportunity to apply Myanmar's most famous natural cosmetic, Thanakha.

Having said your goodbyes, return to Dawei by car in time for dinner.



INCLUSIONS

- Return transportation from Dawei to Ka Lone Htar
- English speaking tour guide (for other languages, please enquire)
- Community-based tour guide
- A forest picnic
- Snacks and drinks at the community foot spa



EXCLUSIONS

- Accommodation
- Bottled water, soft drinks or alcohol
- Anything not mentioned



NOTES

- This is a relatively active excursion, so a moderate level of fitness is required.
- Water bottles will not be provided, so it is essential you bring your own. You can then use these to fill up free of charge at the community water refill station.
- This experience includes the use of two guides: an experienced English-speaking guide from Dawei and a community-based guide from Ka Lone Htar. This might seem unnecessary, but we have purposely chosen to work with community-based guides to help with the development of the region. Not only do they benefit financially, but they will also gain important first-hand touring experience, which can then be used to improve career prospects and educate others. As mentioned above, thanks to them being from the village, it also helps to ensure you are treated more like a guest as opposed to a stranger.
- Expect to get wet. As such, packing a towel and change of clothes is highly advised – the towel can be borrowed from your hotel in Dawei.
- Wearing comfortable, closed footwear is advised. Flip flops or sandals will not be suitable for the orchard and jungle trek.
- Packing mosquito spray and sun cream is recommended.
- Due to fast-flowing river water, it is not possible to book this tour in Myanmar's rainy season (June to September).
- The local bees (found in the orchard and forest) like the scent of perfume – it is advised you don't apply before or during the tour.
- Dietary requests can be catered for, but we will need to inform the community about this well in advance.

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