

THE AWE OF KALAW

Experiences | Kalaw



OVERVIEW

Surrounded by pine forests and a rolling procession of patchwork hills, it won't take long to figure out why the British were so keen to settle in Kalaw; it was quickly made a home away from home, with the cooler, less humid climate adding that extra slice of authenticity and comfort. Today, the Brits might be long gone, but from the train station to the dilapidated colonial mansions that dot the outskirts, many remnants of their summer getaway retreat still remain. That's not to say the town has been without change however; the centre is impressively cosmopolitan with Danu, Shan, Pa'O and Nepalese communities—and that's just to name a few—all coming together to mingle harmoniously at markets, in restaurants, and the various religious monuments that can be found erected side by side. In true British style, scenic trekking routes can also be enjoyed, with some taking you over the forest-capped hills and through the surrounding multi-ethnic villages. During the course of this full day tour, we'll aim to showcase the best of 'what was' and leave you with a lasting impression of 'what is'.



PACE

Easy-going



TOUR PERIOD

Full day



HIGHLIGHTS

- Marvel at the town's multi-ethnic and culinary diversity at Kalaw's morning market
- Feel like you've warped back in time at Kalaw's redbrick railway station
- Continue to explore some of the town's best surviving colonial architecture
- Leisurely trek through pine forests and remote countryside



ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Start the morning with a visit to Kalaw's bustling daily market, one of the best places to take in the region's cultural and culinary diversity first-hand; having travelled from miles around, it's common to see Danu, Palaung and Pa'O selling their equally diverse and colourful wares back-to-back. This spectacle is even more impressive on a "rotating market" day, which usually takes place every five days*; on these days, the market increases exponentially in size, as do the associated sights, sounds and smells.

Our next stop is the eye-catching, red brick, mock-Tudor train station. Arguably the most impressive of Kalaw's surviving colonial relics, you'd be forgiven for thinking this was the set of a British period drama set in the 1900s. It might look 500-years-old and in need of urgent repair, but believe it or not, the station services more rail traffic today than ever before. Travelling to Yangon? It will only take you 15-hours from here...

Having admired the 1932-built steel tracks, the Station Master's Office and the slow-paced nature of everyday life on the tracks, go on to explore the timber framed mansions and bungalows that were once treasured homes of the colonial elite. Some of these once grand abodes are—according to local superstition—haunted by the ghosts of British officers, so it should come as no surprise that some now stand as eerie ruins. Others—clearly the ones with an 'at peace' spiritual vibe—have fared much better, with manicured lawns and rose gardens helping to evoke a sense of unrivalled colonial nostalgia.

For lunch**, there's a range of options to choose from. With Kalaw having a thriving Nepalese and Indian community—this also has colonial ties with many being direct descendants of rail and forestry workers—you may wish to consider eating at Nepali Everest Food Centre (Nepalese), or Yadana Talkie House (an Indian restaurant housed in an old cinema). For something healthy and not as heavy on the stomach, it's hard to beat Sprouting Seeds. If Mexican would help to spice up your life, Hostel Picasso Restaurant opposite the station serves some of the best quesadillas and burritos in Myanmar (the Head Chef is a repatriate having worked in some top international hotels). Last but not least, you have Simple Life, which is our number one choice when it comes to pizza, pasta and salads.

To the south of town stands the immaculately preserved Christ the King Church. Thanks to the small, yet dedicated, community of Catholic worshippers and the late priest whom famously served for 69-years, this remains one of the best-preserved buildings of its kind. If visiting on a day of service—please check with your guide—you may want to rejig the timing of this visit as it's a spectacle not to be missed. Just opposite you'll find an architecturally impressive building, now a school, which once served as the British army hospital.

Having allowed your food to settle, we'll now indulge in the most popular of all British pastimes; a countryside stroll. Starting just up the road from Kalaw Princess, this medium-paced, gently undulating hike will see you explore approximately five to six-kilometres of pine forest and luscious Shan countryside. Terminating at a small Danu tribe village, this is one of the best short hikes you can do that still remains *relatively* off the beaten track and unknown to tourists. It's also one of the few that shows off the side of Kalaw the British would have come to know and love.

Once at the village, reconvene with your driver who'll take you on an enjoyable countryside drive back to Kalaw***.

**Should you wish to visit Kalaw's market on a "rotating market" day, please let us know and we'll do our best to reorganise the itinerary accordingly.*

***Lunch is not included in the price of this tour, giving you the flexibility to eat where you want to.*

****This itinerary assumes you'll return back to Kalaw; for other destinations, a surcharge will apply.*



INCLUSIONS

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



EXCLUSIONS

- Accommodation
- Any meals
- Any entrance fees (unless stated)



NOTES

- This itinerary assumes you'll be staying in Kalaw the night before. If travelling from anywhere else, we may be required to make small changes to the itinerary.
- If there is something you'd like to see other than the suggested attractions, please let us know and we'll try our best to accommodate
- Kalaw's morning market operates daily, with a larger "rotating" market taking place every five days. Should you wish to visit Kalaw's market on a "big market" day, please let us know and we'll do our best to reorganise the itinerary accordingly.
- Lunch is not included in the price of this tour, giving you the flexibility to eat where you want to
- This itinerary assumes you'll return back to Kalaw; for other destinations, a surcharge will apply

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