

myanmar

Be enchanted

MANDALAY



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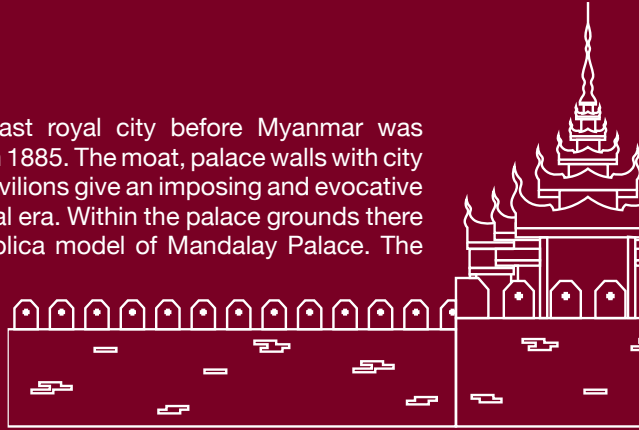
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HIGHLIGHTS

Absorb the enchanting atmosphere of these inspiring places

Royal City

Mandalay was the last royal city before Myanmar was colonised by Britain in 1885. The moat, palace walls with city gates and wooden pavilions give an imposing and evocative impression of the royal era. Within the palace grounds there is a museum and replica model of Mandalay Palace. The city, the second largest in the whole country, is a thriving economic hub in Upper Myanmar. Still considered the centre of Burmese



culture, it boasts many important pagodas and monasteries and is also a key place of spiritual pilgrimage. Must visits include the stunning 4m-high Maha Myat Muni Buddha image, located at the pagoda bearing the same name, and Kuthodaw Pagoda. The latter (built by King Mindon Min at the same time as the nearby Royal Palace) features a gilded pagoda, several pavilions and hundreds of shrines. It also houses 729 marble slabs inscribed with Buddhist teachings and is thus dubbed the world's largest book.

On the Water

Mandalay's intimate proximity to the Ayeyarwady River means no visit to the city is complete without spending some time on the water. Made famous by Rudyard Kipling's poem, the country's largest river, flowing from north to south through its lands, is also referred to as "The Road to Mandalay". A river cruise is a wonderful way to visit the former royal city and discover the surrounding areas. Moreover, bodies of water such as Thaingthaman Lake (over which the iconic U Bein Bridge stretches) are magical in their own right.

Environs

Lying as it does between the vast plain of Ayeyarwady River's terrace, the plateau of Shan state in the east, and at the foot of historic Mandalay Hill, Mandalay is a great base from which to explore the ruins of nearby ancient capitals. Most highly recommended are those located near the river, such as Inwa (Ava) and Sagaing. The gardens at the refreshing colonial hill station of Pyin Oo Lwin are also worth a visit. Further afield, a 200km drive from the city of Mandalay is Mogok, which is world-renowned for its rubies.





WELCOME TO MANDALAY

Immerse yourself in the cultural heart of Myanmar

Mandalay is the place where the most refined arts and traditions of dance, music and drama live on. Traditional entertainment in Myanmar comes in the form of Pwe, which often involves dancing and vividly colourful costumes. The folk art of puppetry called Yoke The Pwe has been preserved here so visitors can enjoy marionette shows and theatre performances often accompanied by traditional music.

For local culinary delights try kyar zan hin, a glass noodle soup with chicken, mushrooms, onions and boiled egg, garnished with coriander, crushed dried chilli and a dash of lime; pickled tealeaf salad served with various crunchy condiments; and htoe mont, a typical Mandalay sweet, glutinous rice cake with raisins, cashews and coconut shavings.

Many festivities take place in and around Mandalay throughout the year. Most notable of these is the 2-week long Maha Myat Muni Pagoda Festival in February. Another colourful celebration is the week-long Taung Pyone Nat Festival in Taung Pyone village, about 20km north of Mandalay which attracts spirit worshippers from throughout Myanmar and curious tourists.





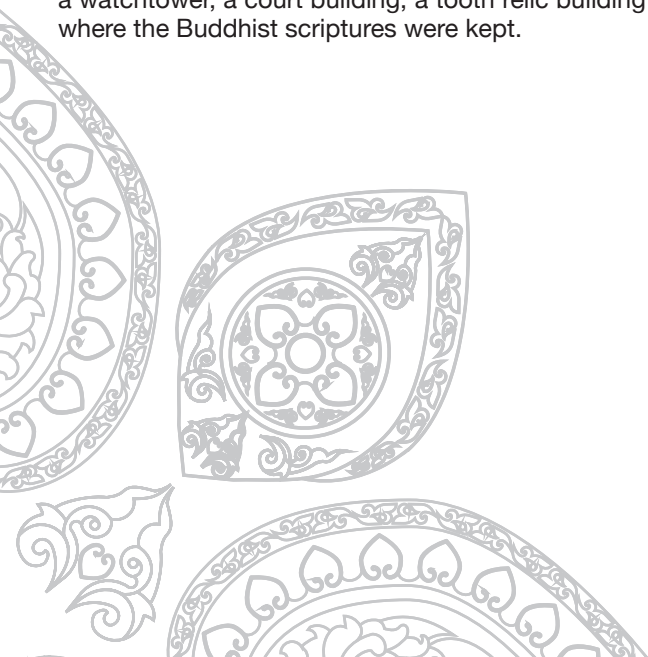
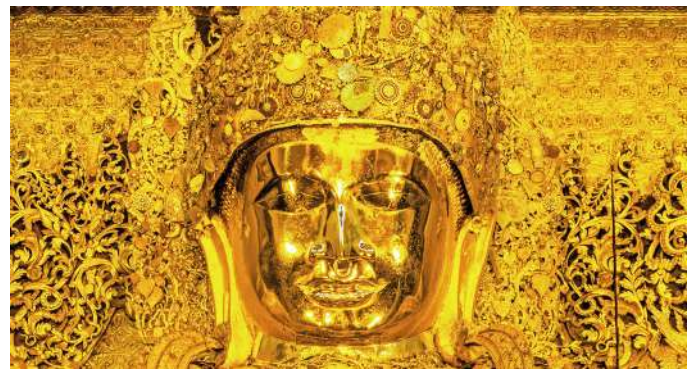


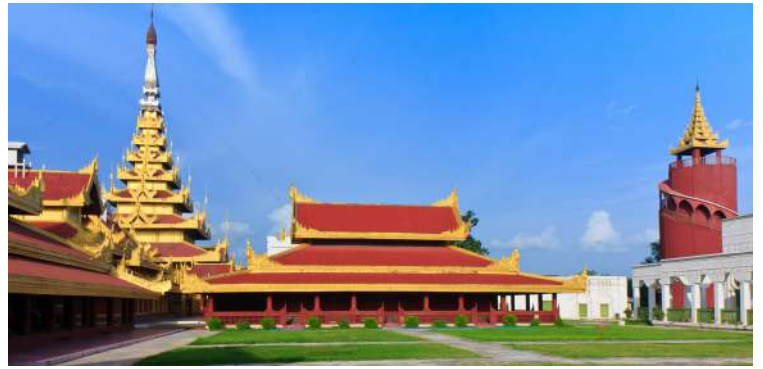
ROYAL CITY

The spectacularly majestic seat of the last Burmese king before British rule

Mandalay Palace

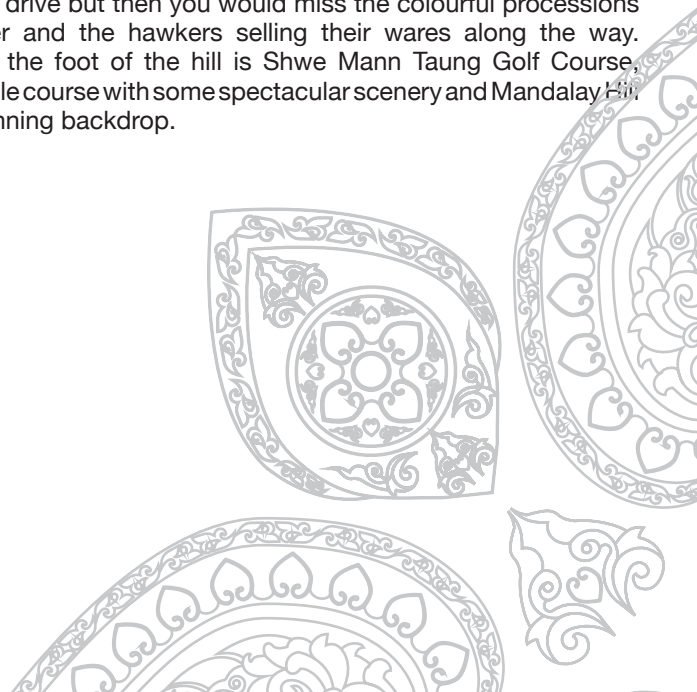
When King Mindon Min founded Mandalay in 1857 he ordered the construction of a new Royal Palace. This was the last palace built by Burmese royals. While the scale of King Mindon's ambition for the walled citadel is clear from first glance, much of the magnificent palace complex was destroyed in WWII and has since been reconstructed. Encircling the citadel is a picturesque 60m-wide moat with a number of bridges protects the large complex which includes audience halls, throne halls, a monastery, a watchtower, a court building, a tooth relic building and a library where the Buddhist scriptures were kept.





Mandalay Hill

North of downtown Mandalay is 230m-high Mandalay Hill, dotted with pagodas and Buddhist temples. The fabulous panoramic view of the city is worth the effort of the barefooted climb on the covered stairway on the hill's southern slope. You can also drive but then you would miss the colourful processions of prayer and the hawkers selling their wares along the way. Lying at the foot of the hill is Shwe Mann Taung Golf Course, an 18-hole course with some spectacular scenery and Mandalay Hill as a stunning backdrop.





ON THE WATER

Breathtaking riverine trips that are full of grandeur and simplicity

Mingun

The banks of the Ayeyarwady hold many places of historical interest. A compact riverside town in Sagaing Region, Mingun lies on the Ayeyarwady River on the west bank about 10km from Mandalay. It is a popular excursion for a half or full day exploring its impressive sights. Arriving by boat from Mandalay is the most enjoyable although you can also arrive by road from Sagaing. Mingun is known for Mingun Bell (measuring almost 4m high it is considered the largest ringing bell in the world), the enormous, unfinished stupa of Mingun Pahtodawgyi (intended to be the largest in the world at a projected height of 150m) which now lies ravaged by earthquakes and Hsinbyume Pagoda whose wavy, white design is unmistakably romantic.

Amarapura

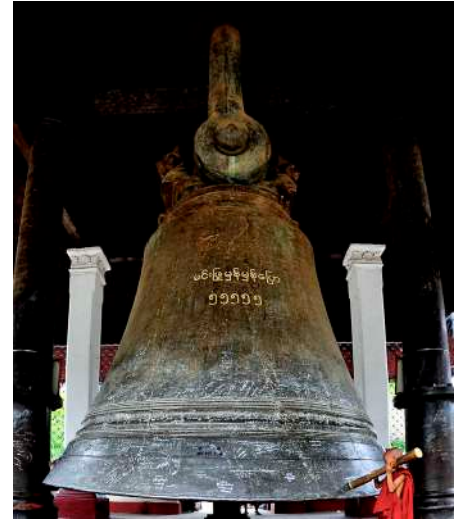
Founded by King Bodawpaya in 1783 as his new capital, Amarapura is famous for silk weaving. Spanning 1,200m across Thaungthaman Lake, U Bein Bridge is believed to be the oldest and longest teakwood bridge in the world. Built in the mid 19th century using reclaimed teak from dismantled buildings, it is a glorious sight especially against vivid sunrises and sunsets. Given its age (and the fact that only a few of the 1086 poles on which it rests have been replaced by concrete supports) U Bein is iconic but not for the faint-hearted. Worth a visit nearby is Mahar Wai Yan Bon Thar Bargaya Monastery, decorated with over 28,000 carved wooden figures, it boasts over 500 Buddha images and the largest catalogue of palm leaf manuscripts.

Innwa

Located on the banks of both the Ayeyarwady and Myitnge rivers (Innwa, also known as Ava) was the capital of several kingdoms between the 14th and 19th century. Its main attractions are the 19th century Maha Aung Mye Bonzan Monastery and the 1830s Bagaya Kyaung Monastery supported by nearly 300 huge teak stilts and known for its intricate woodcarvings. An impressive 1,200m-long bridge crosses from Ava to Sagaing.

And more...

As a centre of Buddhist learning and meditation, the hills of Sagaing are studded with pagodas and monasteries, including Kaungmudaw Pagoda. Yandabo is a village popular for pottery making and also famous for an Anglo-Myanmar peace treaty that was signed in 1826. Kyauk Myaung is another pottery village, but it is much bigger than Yandabo. It is specialised in the production of huge glazed Martaban jars, which are sold throughout the country and are used to hold water, rice and cooking oil.



ENVIRONS

Oases of tranquility and diverse localities wait to be explored

There are many fascinating and diverse localities to visit in the area surrounding Mandalay. Pyin Oo Lwin, a summer retreat during British rule, is a picturesque hill station that offers the perfect escape from the heat of the city thanks to its cool alpine climate. Also worth visiting are Dat Taw Gyaint Waterfall and National Kandawgyi Garden (modelled on the UK's Kew Gardens) that has many collections of flora, both native and foreign species, as well as exotic, shady trees and a fabulous lake to enjoy.

One of Myanmar's most fascinating journeys is the train ride from Pyin Oo Lwin to the scenic and laid-back town of Hsipaw (or even on to Lashio), taking in the northern Shan hills and the famous Gokteik Gorge and viaduct. Other attractions include Peik Chin Myaung Cave (about 20km from Pyin Oo Lwin), featuring colourful Buddhist scenes, a large number of shrines and a picturesque waterfall at its entrance and Mogok "City of Gems", 200km north of Mandalay whose rubies are world famous.



TRADITIONS

The cultural birthplace of plentiful, delightful examples of craftsmanship

Mandalay, considered the centre of the nation's culture and arts, is home to many examples of traditional crafts and probably most renowned as the only place in Myanmar for the ancient gold leaf industry. In a painstaking, 7-hr process of pounding, a total of 2,000 very thin gold leaves can be obtained from a tinkle of 24 karat pure gold. These leaves are then applied by Buddhist devotees to stupas. Witness marble carving near Maha Myat Muni Pagoda where many religious items, mainly Buddha images and stone slabs used for inscriptions, are produced.

Wooden handicrafts workshops can be visited near Maha Myat Muni Pagoda and Tampawaddy, located between Amarapura and Mandalay. The best place to see embroidery and appliqué work is in the Shwe-gyi-do quarter of Mandalay. Meanwhile, one of the main professions of the people of Amarapura people is silk weaving, for which the area is famous. Tampawaddy is also home to metalworking workshops doing bronze casting. Additionally, many silverware workshops can be found in Ywa-Htaung, a village which is on the Sagaing-Monywa highway road.



Myanmar with its cities and neighbouring countries

Destination: Mandalay in Mandalay Region

Destination Climate: Mild - no rainy season as in a dry zone

Region Borders: Magway Region, Sagaing Region & Shan State

Region Size: 37,024 sq km / 14,295 sq miles

Region Capital: Mandalay

Region Population: 6.1 million (2014)

Destination Lineage: Myanmar, Kayin, Kayah, Chin, Pao, Mon & Shan

Destination Languages: Myanmar/Burmese, Shan, Chinese & limited English

Destination Religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Islam & Hinduism

How To Get There: Capital of Mandalay Region, the second most populated city in the country and the top commercial hub for Upper Myanmar, Mandalay is a busy metropolis. Named after Mandalay Hill, it was made famous more recently by Rudyard Kipling's poem, Road to Mandalay, but has inspired visitors for centuries. It is home to the "world's largest book" and at its heart is the restored Mandalay Palace from the Konbaung Dynasty, surrounded by a moat. With its international airport it can be reached by air, but also by road and rail.





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