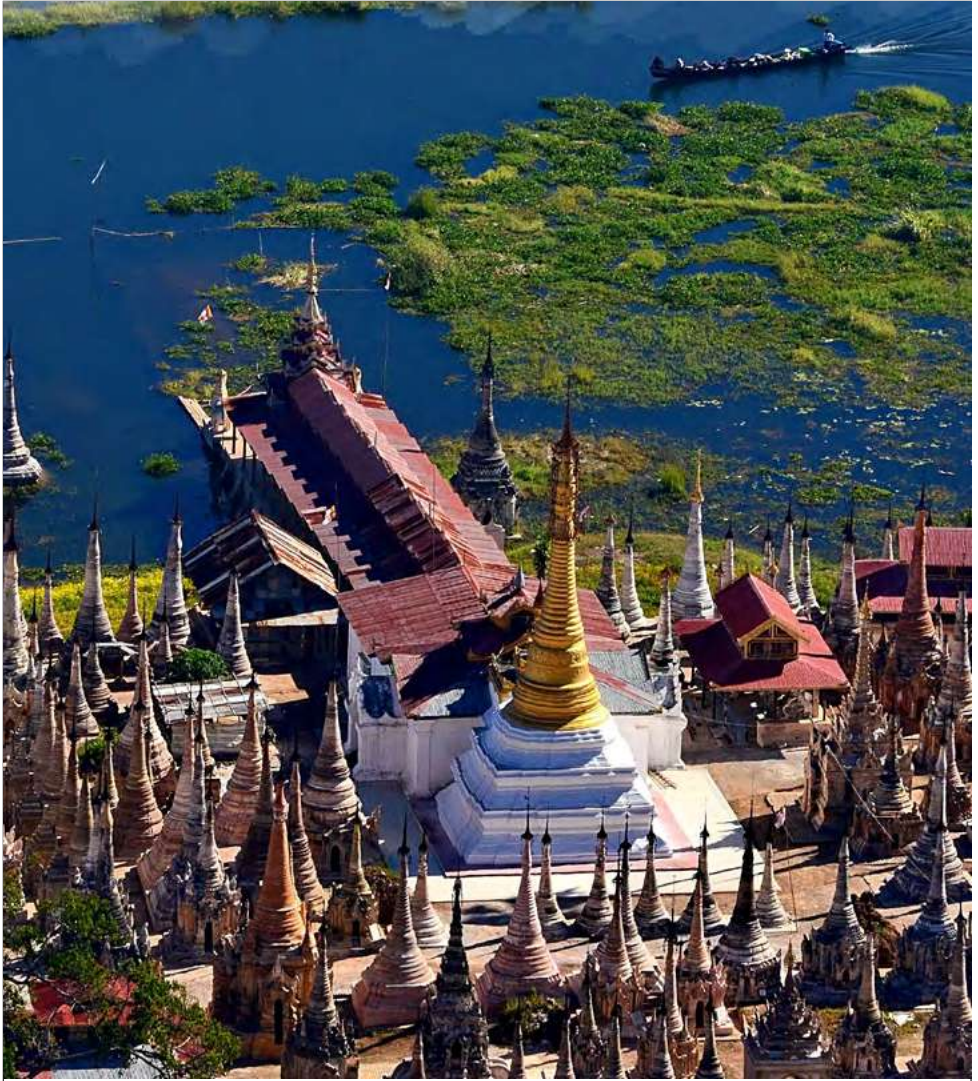


**LOSE YOURSELF  
TO THE CHARMS OF**

*Turle Lake*





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## INTRODUCTION

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Inle Lake is the second largest lake in Myanmar, located in southeast Myanmar. The lake is quite massive extending to 22 kilometres in length and 10 kilometres in width.

It is also home to around 70,000 people who live in four cities and innumerable villages

bordering the lake. Most of them belong to ethnic groups who depend on this freshwater lake for their livelihood.

From a traveller's perspective, Inle offers everything that one can wish for – amazing activities, unparalleled natural beauty,

gorgeous food, one-of-its-kind experiences, opportunity to get a glimpse of the local life and much more.

This e-guide features everything you need to know to plan a trip to Inle Lake. Plan yours and bring back memories of a lifetime.



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BEST TIME TO VISIT

**October/  
November - April**

YOU CAN  
ALSO CONSIDER:  
**July - August**

## HOW TO REACH?



### FLIGHT

The most comfortable yet expensive way to travel to Inle Lake is by a domestic flight. The nearest airport is Heho Airport in Nyaung Shwe located about an hour away. Taxis are easily available from the airport to travel to Inle. Heho Airport is well connected with the rest of the country. It takes around 1 hour 15 minutes to reach from Yangon and only 30 minutes from Mandalay.



### TRAIN

A reasonable and comfortable way to travel is by train. Direct trains are available from Yangon and Kalaw. The train from Kalaw travels through scenic mountains and fields for 3.5 hours. The train will drop you at Nyaung Shwe, 13 kilometres away from Inle Lake.



### BUS

The cheapest but less comfortable and most time-consuming option is to take the bus. Buses depart daily from Yangon (12 hours) and Mandalay (8 hours).



### BOAT TRIP ON INLE LAKE

Carry warm clothes since the early mornings can be quite cold. Some boatmen also provide a blanket. Wear sunscreen since you will be spending a lot of time directly under the sun. Carry umbrellas, a hat and sunglasses to protect yourself from the sun.

## LIFE ON THE WATER

The people living around the lakes have created a life on the water and it is remarkable to see how they have innovated to make the most of what is available to them.

### WATER VILLAGES

Inle Lake is dotted with floating villages. Men, women and children go around the lake doing everything on the boat – from shopping to visiting relatives.

### FLOATING FARMS

The villagers are dependent on the water for their livelihood and they have innovated through means of creating floating farms on the water where they grow crops such as tomatoes, beans, and flowers. From sowing to harvesting, everything is done through boats.



### WATER LANES

There are water pathways between farms and houses where villagers move around in their boats. The traffic along these lanes are quite high, so don't be surprised if you get caught in a jam.

### ONE-LEGGED ROWING

You will not be able to see this anywhere else in the world. This is the traditional rowing technique which dates back to the 12th century. The rowers stand on one leg and lock another in the oar and row by moving this leg.



### ATM

There are many ATMs in Nyaung Shwe town at Inle Lake.

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## ACTIVITIES: BE SPOILT FOR CHOICE

### 1 EXPLORE THE LAKE

This is the first thing you need to do when you get there. Enjoy a joy ride while exploring the beautiful natural surroundings. Usually, your boatman will take you to visit souvenir shops, lotus weaving factory and the silversmith workshops. However, if you want to only enjoy nature, you can tell your boatman and he will surely oblige.

**Cost:** 15,000 Kyats (full day). If you are a solo traveller, you can tag along with others. The boatmen will charge 4,000 Kyats - 5,000 Kyats per person.

### 2 INDEIN VILLAGE

Indein village stands out among the innumerable villages on the river mainly for its bustling market and two groups of ancient pagodas - **Nyaung Ohak Pagodas** and **Shwe Inn Thein Pagodas**. The village is part of the 5-day market where the market is held on rotation across five villages. The Pa-O people who live in the surrounding hills sell their crops here.

#### HOW TO GO:

It is located on the west side of the south tip of the lake. It can be easily reached by boat. In winter and rainy season, the boat goes through the scenic Inn Thein Creek.



**3 NYAUNG OHAK PAGODAS**

These pagodas are well-preserved, have maintained their ancient look and have an eerie feeling about them. Many of them are decorated with sculptures of celestial beings and mythological animals such as Naga serpents and Clinthes. Some have images of Buddha.

**Opening Hours: 8.00 AM - 6.00 PM**

**Cost: Camera fee and VCR fee each cost 300 Kyats (for Nyaung Ohak Pagodas and Shwe Inn Thein Pagodas).**



**4 PHAUNG DAW U PAGODA**

This is a beautiful pagoda located on the bank with five small gilded images of Buddha covered in gold leaf. You can find old photographs hanging on the monastery walls.

**5 SHWE INN THEIN PAGODAS**

A short climb from Nyaung Ohak will take you to Shwe Inn Thein Pagodas, which dates back to 3rd century BC. You will find hundreds of pagodas here, with a shrine of Inn Thein Buddha image at the centre.

**Opening Hours: 8.00 AM - 6.00 PM**

**Cost: Camera fee and VCR fee each cost 300 Kyats (for Nyaung Ohak Pagodas and Shwe Inn Thein Pagodas).**



**6 MYANMAR CATS VILLAGE**

If you are a feline lover, this is a place you will love. You can see purebred Burmese cats and pet them too. The village is running a conservation project for Burmese cats to preserve the species and prevent them from extinction.

**7 LOTUS WEAVING**

Myanmar is the only country that makes lotus fabric. It is fascinating to see how fibre is extracted from lotus and then woven into beautiful cloth. They are lovely to touch and something to treasure.

**8 SILVERSMITH WORKSHOPS**

Inle Lake is famous for its fine silversmith artisans who sell their creation in boats in and around the lake. Even if you don't wish to purchase anything, you can visit these workshops to watch the craftsmen at work.

**9 5-DAY MARKET**

A 5-day market is held on a rotation basis between 5 villages every week. If you want to do something non-touristy and get a feel of the local life at the lake, this is worth a visit.

**Market Schedule:** You can talk to any local and find out about the schedule.

**10 BIKE RIDE**

If you love travelling in a non-traditional way, hire a bike and ride through the surrounding villages. Guided tours are also available where friendly English-speaking guides are happy to assist you.

**11 UNIQUE SHOPPING EXPERIENCES**

The banks of Inle are dotted with shops and workshops of several kinds. Even if you are not a shopaholic, you cannot help but be impressed by the sheer variety of products available in these shops.

**Pro Tip:** Visit the factory of handmade sweet cigar "cheroot", made from tobacco, rice flour, honey, tamarind, banana and anise, to buy something unique. A cigar box will cost around 10,000 Kyats.

**12 BIRD WATCHING**

Inle Lake has a wildlife sanctuary and is home to a spectacular variety of birds, many of which are rare species. The local warden will be happy to arrange a knowledgeable guide who will show you around and also tell you the English names of birds.

**Best time to visit:**

December - January

**Cost:** Around 12,000 Kyats (excluding the cost of the boat and the boatman)



## OFF THE BEATEN PATH

### Want to do things that others don't?

Here are a few things that are not featured in most itineraries.

#### 1 HIKES

Inle Lake is surrounded by hills which are ideal for day hikes. If you are the more adventurous kind, you can hike for 2-3 days to Kalaw, a quaint hill station located in Shan State. You will be walking through forest, mountains, villages and tribal villages. You can find English speaking guides who will help you get the best experiences.

Cost: **10,000 Kyats per person**  
(day hikes)

Timing: **8am - 4pm / 6pm**  
(day hikes)

#### 2 HOT SPRINGS

A hot spring is located about 45 minute's drive from the lake, nestled between the mountains. There are 2 small pools, one for males and another for females. You can hire a bike/taxi and go there. The ride itself is scenic and passes through roads lined with trees.



### **3 COOKING CLASSES**

Shan cuisine has some of the best dishes in Myanmar. If you are a chef in the making, you can take cooking classes and learn the tricks of whipping up delicious food.

**Cost: Around 20,000 Kyats per class**

### **4 HTAT EIAN CAVES**

These caves are located on a hill near Nyaung Shwe and have Buddha statues inside. You can see people praying and meditating here. A calm, quiet and cool place to escape the heat.



### **BIRD WATCHING**

Carry your own binoculars to get the best experience. Head out early in the morning when the birds are most active.

### **HIKING**

The hikes can be exhausting especially in the sun. Carry plenty of water since it can be very difficult to buy clean water.





### INTERNET

You will find several internet cafes in Nyaung-Shwe town.

### BE SAFE

Avoid venturing alone at night. The roads are frequented by dogs and are not conducive to walking around.

## ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

### LUXURY HOTELS

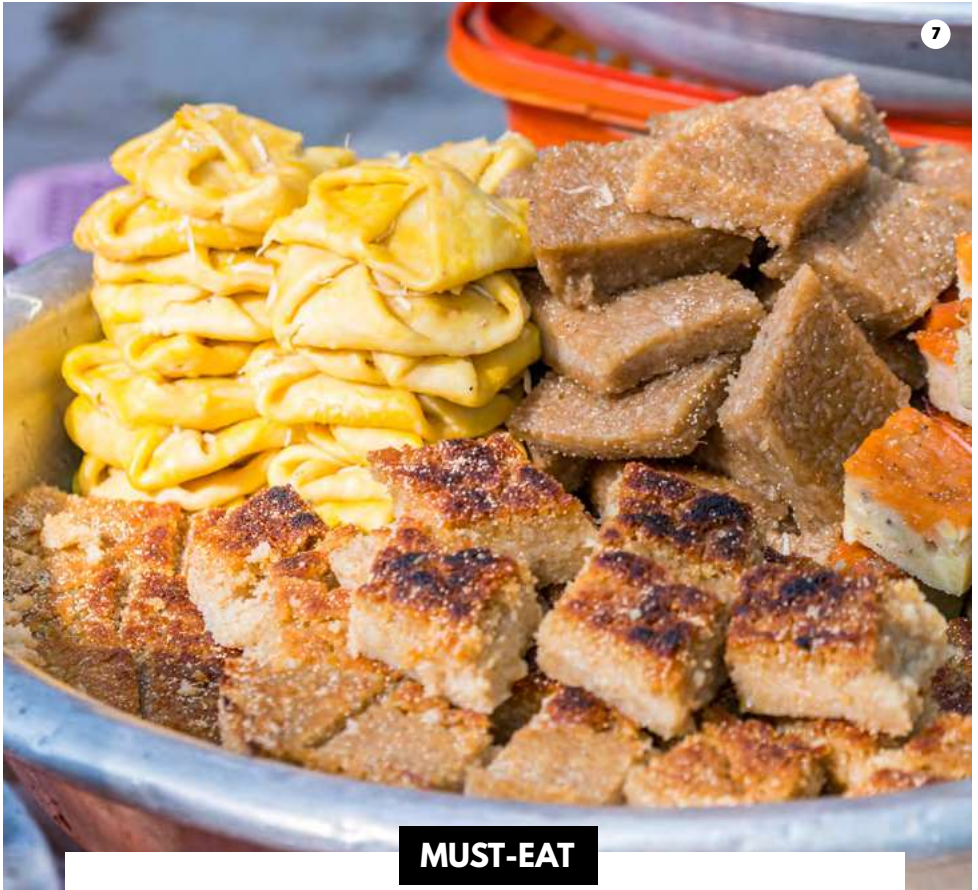
If you are looking for the experience of staying in a house on stilts, then you will want a hotel on the lake. It is quite an experience, and a moment to cherish as you travel through waterways on the lake by boat to see the waking sunrise. Most of the hotels are situated on the west coast, but there are a few on the east as well. Both have top facilities of a swimming pool, gym, and fast WiFi, but have pretty high costs as well. This would be the top choice if you want a serene view of the lake as you settle in for the night.

### BACKPACKERS

For backpackers looking for the cheapest option, you'll find what you need in Nyaung Shwe. The options here are many and while they might not be equipped with 5-star facilities, the positive recommendations on nearby restaurants are more than enough to make up for it. Most of these guesthouses have common areas that are conducive to initiating conversations with like-minded travellers.

### OTHERS

If you want an accommodation with easy access to bars and restaurants but don't want to give up a luxury stay, such hotels in Nyaung Shwe are also available. They present some of the best rooftop bars in town, have a quiet and peaceful atmosphere, and come with a swimming pool and gym.



## MUST-EAT

The nearby town of Nyaung Shwe offers a variety of cuisines including Shan, Thai, Indian, Italian, French and Chinese.

### LOCAL FAVOURITES

Local food such as Shan noodle, falafel, samosas, pakora, coconut tarts and bean paste pastries are known favourites around the lake. Look out for restaurants that serve the Intha-style fish curry and tea leaf salad.

### FOREIGN TASTES

For more international flavours, you can try a Shan-French fusion type of cuisine.

Different types of coffee, including Myanmar and Italian coffee, are served to accompany the dishes.

### ATMOSPHERIC DINING

For a dining experience overlooking the lake, try the older restaurants in the region that serve Shan-style food such as traditional salads, curry masala and pork noodle dishes.

Some of them serve excellent pizzas made fresh from the oven. You can enjoy your meal with a view of the tranquil waters and surrounding mountains.



## INDULGE IN SOME SHOPPING

Inle provides unique shopping experiences for travellers. Visit the floating markets and pick up whatever you like.

### WHAT TO BUY?

Lotus-silk products  
Silverware  
Shan bags  
Shan dresses  
Buddha statues  
Lacquerware  
Handicrafts

### WHERE TO BUY?



#### INPHAW KONE VILLAGE

This village is popular for weaving workshops. You can visit the village and watch the weavers operating the looms made from teak and bamboo with great expertise.

**Best Buy: Lotus silk shawls.**



#### IMINE THAUK MARKET

A bustling market featuring a large selection of goods, this is one of the locations of the five-day market. From fresh produce such as tomatoes and peppers to lacquerware, you can purchase almost anything here.

**Best Buy: Buddha statues, Lacquerware and Shan Bags.**