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THE BEST YANGON HOTELS – FROM GRAND COLONIAL GEMS TO BOUTIQUE

LOFT HOTELS

LARA DUNSTON ON JANUARY 23, 2018 AT 5:12 PM

The best Yangon hotels range from grand colonial-era gems such as The Strand, which has had a recent renovation, and Belmond Governor's Residence, in a 1920s teak mansion, to a boutique hotel with loft-style duplex suites and a Thai-style luxury hotel with a palm-fringed pool.

Yangon, the largest city in Myanmar, doesn't have the sheer number of hotels that [Bangkok](#) in neighbouring Thailand has, nor the abundance of stylish boutique resorts of [Siem Reap](#). However, the best Yangon hotels – our picks below – are easily some of the best in the region.

If we had to choose one property, then The Strand with its long history, old world charm and unbeatable location for exploring the downtown on foot, would be our pick of the best Yangon hotels, particularly as it now has a swimming pool – a must in a city that is hot and steamy (like most Southeast Asian cities) for much of the year.

If a swimming pool was my top priority, then the Belmond Governor's Residence, while not in the downtown, has a gorgeous pool, as does the Chatrium, which, while even further from the centre, is a fantastic choice for a chilled couple of days at the end of an epic trip around Myanmar.

If a pool isn't important to you, you're happy to cool down in an air-conditioned room, and

you prefer contemporary urban-style boutique hotels, then try The Loft, in an up-coming neighbourhood handy to the market and local eateries.

If you're looking for a hotel to stay at before you take the [Yangon to Mandalay train](#), one of our favourite journeys in Southeast Asia and a must for lovers of slow travel, then the closest hotels are the Sule Shangri-La Yangon, PARKROYAL Yangon and The Loft.

Here are our picks of the best Yangon hotels...

BEST YANGON HOTELS – FROM GRAND COLONIAL GEMS TO LOFT STYLE BOUTIQUE HOTELS

THE STRAND

The best of the best Yangon hotels is The Strand, located on Strand Road on the edge of downtown Yangon opposite the port and river, in an unbeatable location for exploring the historic downtown on foot. Built in 1901 by a British entrepreneur, the grand colonial hotel was acquired by legendary hoteliers, the [Sarkies brothers](#), of Penang's Eastern and Oriental and Raffles Singapore fame. Illustrious guests have included George Orwell, Rudyard Kipling, Noël Coward, Orson Welles, and Mick Jagger. When we stayed at The Strand just before its extensive renovations, our main problems with the five-star property were that it didn't have a pool, the fine dining restaurant was unappealing, and smoking was still allowed in the otherwise atmospheric bar. We loved the colonial-style café with its rattan chairs, whirring fans and fine renditions of Myanmar's beloved noodle soups, mohinga and ohn no khao swè, and the enormous suites with their creaky floorboards, lofty ceilings and bookshelves of Burmese lacquer-ware. Not to mention the butlers on every floor who carried our afternoon tea shoulder-high on large wooden trays skilfully balanced on one hand. History oozed from The Strand's every floor tile and carpet pile and I have to admit being disappointed when management announced it was remodelling. I'm pleased to see that after an extensive facelift, this grand old lady is looking gorgeous, even with modern nips and tucks, such as the red-painted rattan chairs in The Strand Café styled for the Instagram generation. The Strand

Restaurant looks more inviting and its new farm to table cuisine and multi-course tasting menus sound more exciting. The Strand's 13 suites have been spruced up with plush furnishings, splashes of colour and Egyptian cotton bathrobes and towels. Best of all, the exterior courtyard, previously closed to the public, has a swimming pool with sun loungers and poolside tables.

We're yet to find out if The Strand has changed the bar smoking rules.

The Strand, 92 The Strand Rd, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book The Strand online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

BELMOND GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE

Easily one of the best Yangon hotels and another boutique property for heritage lovers, Belmond Governor's Residence is set in a handsome two-storey teak mansion, built in 1920, that served as the home of British Burma's colonial governors. In 2006, it became an Orient-Express hotel, and then in 2014 a Belmond hotel after re-branding. Situated in the Embassy Quarter, the hotel might seem a little out of the way to first-timers to the city, however, it's actually located near notable colonial landmarks, such as India House, the Indian ambassador's residence, the [Pegu Club](#) and the British Gentlemen's Club, as well as Yangon's star attraction, the gleaming [Shwedagon Pagoda](#). The [National Museum](#) is not far away. I'd check in here for the gorgeous swimming pool and lush tropical gardens alone. Dinner on the veranda at the Burmese Curry Table, where rich aromatic curries simmered on traditional charcoal burners, was also outstanding – and it's rare that we'll dine at a hotel in a destination such as Yangon where the cuisine, especially the street food, is so fantastic. Rooms have polished hardwood floorboards, silk cushions, and hand-woven textiles strewn across the carved wooden bed. There are comfy window seats and small writing desks. Our only complaint was that our room was dark and the wifi was slow. Let staff know upon check-in if you prefer a light-filled room and if fast Internet is important.

Belmond Governor's Residence, 35 Taw Win Road, Dagon Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book Belmond Governor's Residence online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

CHATRIUM HOTEL ROYAL LAKE YANGON

Easily one of the best Yangon hotels, the 303-room Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon, overlooking [Kandawgyi Lake](#), with glimpses of gleaming Shwedagon Pagoda in the distance, is one of the city's most luxurious resorts. The expansive rooms are plush, but we especially love the Suites with polished floorboards, purple velvet sofas and over-sized bathrooms. Check into the massive 85sqm Luxury Suite with separate living and dining areas and a wraparound balcony with outdoor terrace with table and chairs and lake vistas and you'll be ordering room service for dinner. It's definitely worth booking a room with private balcony and pagoda and water views to make the most of the location. A warning: settle into a suite and you won't want to leave – which is why we recommend a stay at the end of a trip. Having said that, while the Club Rooms aren't as pretty, they come with a long list of perks, including complimentary drinks and snacks in the Club lounge. While the five-star Chatrium is a business hotel, it's a brilliant choice for chilling out after a few days exploring Yangon or an epic journey around Myanmar. The colossal palm-lined swimming pool alone is reason to check in, with plenty of sun-beds to go around. There's also an excellent fitness centre and Thai-style spa. The lavish breakfast at the elegant Emporia all-day-dining restaurant was Yangon's best of all the hotels we tested out, and the Kohaku Japanese restaurant with its sublime sashimi and sushi is a must if you're ready for a change from Burmese curries. It's generally a 20-minute taxi ride from the Chatrium into the centre of Yangon, but during peak hour it can take twice as long, so plan your outings around rush hours.

Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tamwe Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

[Book Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon online](#) with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

THE LOFT

The city's first urban-style boutique hotel, The Loft could easily be one of the best Yangon hotels if only it had been built with a rooftop swimming pool or lap pool – a much-needed and very welcome relief after a sweaty morning's sightseeing. The Loft's 32 rooms bring a little Manhattan-style semi industrial-chic to Myanmar with its high ceilings, bare bricks, bold-coloured feature walls, and striking black and white prints of locals. While all the rooms are spacious and

comfortable, with polished floorboards and leather sofas, the two-storey loft-style Duplex Suites are the pick of the room categories and are the best option if you're planning to stay a while. All rooms have floor to ceiling windows with views onto the street – infinitely entertaining if you're a fan of people-watching and absorbing everyday local life. Thoughtful room amenities include mini-bars packed with all kinds of snacks and drinks and espresso coffeemakers. The free wifi was fast compared to most properties we stayed in. While the reception team was excellent and the door staff's meet and greet was always welcome, service in the restaurant was excruciatingly slow when we stayed. The Loft is located in the increasingly hip neighbourhood of Dagon Township, on the edge of downtown Yangon, which is peppered with modern cafés, restaurants and bars, as well as some notable spots for traditional specialties. The Loft is also well-located for sightseeing and shopping – a short walk down the road, around the corner and over the railway line and you're at Bogyoke Aung San Market, also known as Scott Market, a shopper's paradise.

The Loft, 33 Yaw Min Gyi St, Dagon Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book The Loft online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

SULE SHANGRI-LA YANGON

Boasting one of the busiest and most sumptuous lobbies of any Yangon hotel, with towering pillars, high-backed rattan chairs and a vivid mural on the wall, the Sule Shangri-La Yangon makes a good impression. For us, the location alone of this luxurious five-star, slap-bang in Yangon's downtown, within walking distance of the gleaming Sule Pagoda, the bustling Bogyoke Aung San Market (Scott Market), lively Chinatown, and some of the city's finest heritage buildings, makes this one of the best Yangon hotels. Hop in a taxi and you're just a 10-minute cab ride to some of Yangon's must-do sights, including Shwedagon Pagoda, the National Museum, People's Park, and Kandawgyi Lake. A lot larger than we normally like our hotels, with 474 rooms, we've made exceptions to our 'small is always be better' rule for the Sule Shangri-La due to that superb central location, sweeping city views from the Horizon Club rooms, attentive staff, and one of the most lavish buffet breakfast in the city. (A warning, however: go to breakfast early. Leave it too late and it's impossible to get a table – and we were last there in low season, too.) The pool is perfectly okay for a cooling dip, but there

aren't enough sun-beds for such a big hotel. The Sule's rooms are spacious, yet conservative. It's definitely worth paying extra for Horizon Club rooms, which are warmer in tones, more plush and on higher floors – they're located on levels 18, 20, 21 and 22. Horizon Club membership benefits include a long list of perks such as complimentary sunset cocktails and canapés in the lounge – which has Shwedagon Pagoda views.

Sule Shangri-La Yangon, 223 Sule Pagoda Road, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book Sule Shangri-La Yangon online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

NOVOTEL YANGON MAX

The massive outdoor swimming pool and breezy rooftop wine bar with Shwedagon Pagoda views easily make the five-star Novotel Yangon Max of the best Yangon hotels. Add to that the fact that the hotel is doing incredible work to support local NGOs and it's located near to the Junction Square shopping mall (more about both of those things in another post) and you have four excellent reasons to check in. We've never been huge fans of the Novotel brand (too many disappointing experiences at the Dubai property left a bad taste in our mouth) but the Yangon Max is more luxurious than any Novotel we've stayed in before, with modern facilities and one of the most expansive buffet breakfasts (with ten cuisines to choose from) that you'll find in a city notable for outstanding breakfast spreads. Incredibly spacious and comfy rooms, fast Wifi and outstanding service make this an excellent choice for a Yangon stay. There is just one thing that lets the hotel down, although, it's something easy to get around with good planning, and that's the hotel's location on a busy arterial road a little way out of the downtown – when the traffic is gridlocked during peak hour, it's bumper to bumper and a slow crawl to your destination. Plan your excursions carefully so that you avoid rush hour. The best place to be at that time is watching it from the rooftop bar.

Novotel Yangon Max, 459 Pyay Road Kamayut Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book Novotel Yangon Max online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

PARKROYAL YANGON

At the very end of the street that The Loft is on you'll find the PARKROYAL Yangon – and a decent-sized swimming pool. While the pool may not be the best in the city, the 267-room PARKROYAL is arguably one of the best Yangon hotels with its sumptuous lobby with towering columns, marble floors and fresh flowers, its state of the art gym and spa, and its excellent service. Rooms, firmly targeted toward business travellers, are on the conservative side, with silk cushions, tribal textiles and striped carpets (in some rooms) providing splashes of colour in the neutral spaces. There are several restaurants, including Japanese and Chinese, with an unlimited dim sum lunch that's popular. The location is handy to the downtown and its markets and sights in one direction and Shwedagon Pagoda and more lustrous pagodas in the other. Though you'll need to rely on taxis to get around, as it's far too warm to walk from here for much of the year.

PARKROYAL Yangon, 33 Alan Pya Phaya Road, Dagon Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book PARKROYAL Yangon online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

BEST WESTERN CHINATOWN HOTEL

It's rare that we write about a Best Western hotel, and even more unusual that it would appear in a list of our best Yangon hotels, however, this 91-room hotel, which had just opened when we stayed, is a very affordable option for visitors looking for clean, quality accommodation at mid-range prices. Located in a shiny downtown tower, it's aimed squarely at business travellers. Having said that, the Wifi was slow when we stayed, although management put this down to teething problems. Still, the rooms are incredibly spacious and super comfortable for the price and management and staff were welcoming and friendly and went out of their way to take care of guests. The location is terrific for sightseeing, exploring the surrounding streets, shopping, and grazing on street food. Just avoid the buffet breakfast whatever you do.

Best Western Chinatown Hotel, 127-137 Anawratha Rd, Corner of Lanmadaw St, Latha Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Book Best Western Chinatown Hotel online with our booking partner [Booking.com](#).

Have you been to Yangon? We'd love to hear what your picks of the best Yangon hotels are and whether you think a pool is a must. You haven't been to Yangon yet? Then here's [why you need to get to Yangon soon](#) and some of our favourite things to do in Yangon when you do. One reason you need to go is for the [Burmese food](#) and here's [what to eat in Myanmar](#) when you get there.

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