

myanmar

Be enchanted

MINGALABA



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HIGHLIGHTS

Inspiringly authentic and magical moments await your discovery

Golden Land

Perhaps unsurprising, given its thousands of shimmering pagodas, Myanmar is often called “the golden land”. This moniker is not only limited to grand stupas covered in gold leaf by Buddhist devotees; it also refers to the rich experiences visitors enjoy, thanks to the generosity of spirit of the Myanmar people. Moreover, it points to the nation’s wealth of cultural heritage, largely untapped, like a treasure trove waiting to be discovered. Such is Myanmar’s beauty and exoticism, that Rudyard Kipling wrote in his 1898 “Letters from the East” (using its former designation), “This is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about”.

Culture

Diversity, with over 130 different ethnic groups; and authenticity, engendered by passion and a period of seclusion; are defining characteristics of the preservation of Myanmar’s unique heritage. The mostly Buddhist culture permeates numerous aspects of history and society but the country’s location, at the crossroads of Southeast Asia, has brought many influences from neighbouring countries. Furthermore, British colonial rule has left an indelible mark on the architecture of cities like Yangon. Now, in the new era of openness and accessibility, society is modernising and embracing change while also staying faithful to its past.

Your Journey

A visit to Myanmar is more than a trip; rather it is a journey of discovery which reveals a way of life and depth of society that has been lost in many other parts of the world. All of this is set against a landscape of mighty rivers, soaring mountains, fertile plains and turquoise seas. This is the journey you have been waiting for and now is your time. Explore ancient kingdoms and temples built millennia ago, visit bustling cities and laid-back hill stations, witness the simple customs of people residing on rivers and lakes; or simply relax on beautiful, pristine beaches. Myanmar is many destinations within one destination. Are you ready to be enchanted?





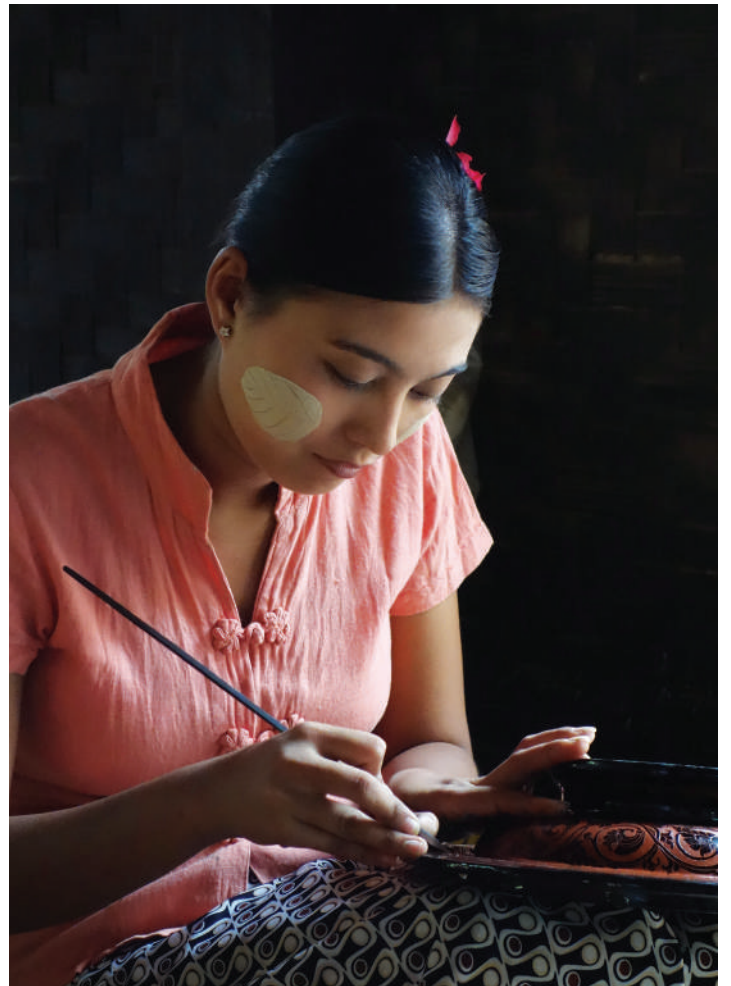
WELCOME TO MYANMAR

**Explore a world of possibilities
and a wealth of enriching,
immersive experiences**

Mingalaba, which roughly translates as “auspiciousness to you”, is a traditional Burmese greeting that you will hear throughout your stay in Myanmar. Made up of over 130 different ethnicities, the rich diversity of the people will astound you, as will the warm welcome you will receive. This is a delightful and integral part of the experience associated with visiting a country that was closed to the outside world for several decades. This is a land that has an undefinable quality to make you fall in love with its mountains, beaches, islands, lakes, food and culture and of course the people that bring these places to life. A collective of diverse cultures and traditions woven together to form a mesmerizing landscape of wonder.

From the temple-strewn plains of Bagan to the glassy waters of Inlay Lake, Myanmar’s beauty is unmatched. You are cordially invited to discover our destinations. Take a balloon trip over Bagan, relax on a deserted beach or get your hiking boots out in the Chin Hills - explore the myriad of activities on offer in Myanmar.







YANGON

A surprising mix of commerce, cultural heritage and serenity

Home to the nation's most beloved landmark, the glorious Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon was founded by King Alaungpaya of the Kone Baung Dynasty when he took the village of Dagon in 1755. He named the settlement Yangon meaning "End of Strife". The former capital of Myanmar, and still the country's commercial hub, it is one of the most attractive cities in southeast Asia. It has a unique charm with tree-lined streets, serene parks and tranquil lakes combined with the hustle and bustle of street vendors and thriving markets. Recent years have seen the modernisation of the urban landscape but Yangon still boasts the highest concentration of colonial heritage in the region.

As the point of entry for most international visitors arriving by air and sea, it is often seen as a gateway for many amazing excursions around Myanmar. However, its own plentiful attractions should definitely not be overlooked. Yangon highlights include: Shwedagon Pagoda, Sule Pagoda, Bogyoke Market, Circular Train ride, Kandawgyi Gardens, Inya Lake, Yangon Zoo, National Museum, river cruises, National Races Village, Twante, Thanlyin, Hlawga National Park, Allied War Memorial and Bago.

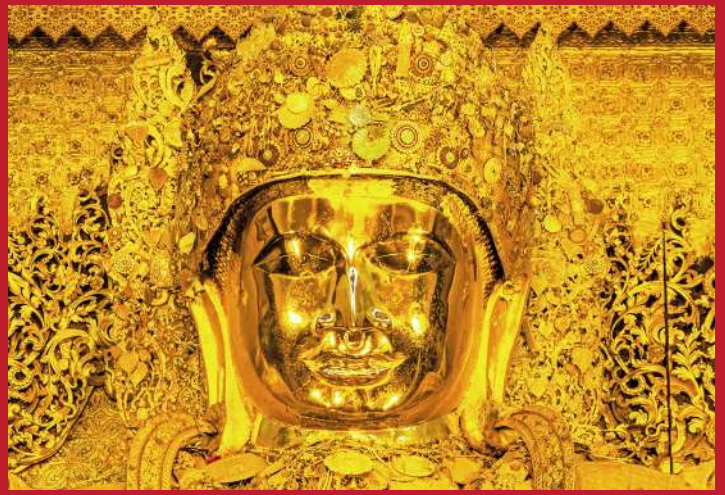


MANDALAY

Discover the delights of Myanmar's second most populated metropolis

As mystical and regal as Mandalay is, given its status as the last royal capital before the country was colonised by Britain in 1885, it must not be forgotten that this is the country's second most populated city. Indeed, it is Upper Myanmar's most important and most thriving commercial hub. The metropolis has a rich and vibrant history that boasts the citadel of the former royal palace, spectacular pagodas, beautiful teak monasteries and fabulous scenic panoramas. It is also a great springboard for day trips into neighbouring Sagaing Region.

Mandalay is also the principal centre for the study of Buddhist literature and many sacred rituals can be observed here. Considered the beating heart of the nation's culture, Mandalay showcases many Myanmar arts, architecture and handicrafts like; traditional puppetry, stone carving, woodcarving, basket wares, bronze casting, tapestry making and silk weaving. Mandalay highlights include: Mandalay Palace, Maha Myat Muni Pagoda, Kuthodaw Pagoda, Mandalay Hill, Amarapura, Mahar Wai Yan Bon Thar Bargaya Monastery, U Bein Bridge, river cruises, Mingun, Innwa, Sagaing, Yandabo, Kyauk Myaung and Pyin Oo Lwin.



BAGAN

Experience a magical world - as if you have been transported back in time

Built by the early Myanmar kings to glorify their religion, the thousands of temples, stupas and monuments, that Bagan's rust coloured plains play host to, come in astounding shapes and sizes. This undoubtedly makes it one of Southeast Asia's most memorable destinations. Beautiful as it is, Bagan is also of undisputed historic relevance and features on everyone's bucket list. Located in the heart of the country and flanked by the mighty Ayeyarwady River and mountains, the setting of this temple fairyland is spectacular. For a truly traditional experience, explore by horse and cart or jump on a river cruise.

Bagan is famous for its lacquerware, bronze ware and woodcarving. Many surrounding villages also specialise in other handicrafts like basket weaving, pottery and foods products where they are made in traditional ways. Bagan highlights include: Visiting some of the sacred pagodas and temples like Ananda, Buphaya, Dhamayangyi, Htilominlo, Lawkananda, Myingaba Gubyaukgyi, Shwezigon, Sulamani and Thatbyinnyu, river cruises, hot air balloon rides, Mount Popa, Salay Town, Zee O Village and Nga Tha York Village.



INLAY

Where ethnic and natural biodiversity exist in abundance

The breathtaking beauty of Inlay Lake makes the perfect backdrop for the iconic fishermen from the Inthar tribe who are famous for their single-foot paddling techniques and conical nets. Out on the lake experience fabulous sunrises in the cool highland air, visit villages on stilts and floating gardens growing produce for the colourful markets where many ethnic groups such as the Pa-O gather. Unique Inlay is an inspiring combination of ethnic customs, pageantry and splendour. Here you can find many local handicrafts preserved by generations. Textile weaving, using traditional looms, is one of the region's

specialties in particular garments made of silk which is woven from threads painstakingly extracted by hand from the stems of lotus plants harvested from the lake. Inlay is also home to an extensive and biodiverse wildlife sanctuary measuring 1,664 sq km. Trekking enthusiasts will delight in the stunning scenery both around the lake and even beyond in nearby Kalaw. Inlay highlights include: Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, Shwe Inthein Pagoda, traditional villages on stilts, handicrafts, festivals, floating gardens, markets, Taunggyi, Nyaung Shwe, Pindaya and Kalaw.





KAYAH

Join the first pioneering spirits in the state's journey and savour its delights

Closed for half a century, Kayah, has opened up and is one of Southeast Asia's last frontiers for inspiring, authentic travel. Myanmar's smallest state is packed with diversity and potential for "off the beaten track" experiences. Home to nine distinct ethnic groups, the joy of Kayah is its simplicity and authenticity. The two main tribes are the Kayah people, well known for their bright, red attire and the Kayan, one of Southeast Asia's most recognisable ethnic groups, due to the practice of wearing bright, brass neck rings.

Local hospitality and precious insight into the lives of indigenous tribes are offered through community-based tourism initiatives at specially selected villages. Here inhabitants share their customs, artistry and local crafts. Now largely Christian, the people of Kayah were traditionally animists who, through sophisticated ceremonies and practices paid respect to the spirits. Kayah highlights include: Loikaw, Taung Kwe Pagoda, tribal villages; Daw Ta Ma Gyi, Hta Nee La Leh, Htay Kho & Pan Pet, forest treks, jungle picnics, 7 Lakes, Thiri Mingalar market, Demoso market and the weaving centre.



CHIN

A pristine environment with striking scenery and unique hill tribes

Remarkably untouched, spectacular Chin State (also known as Chin Hills because of its mountainous terrain) is inhabited by various different Chin tribes, Naga, Rakhine and Myanmar. In the town of Mindat and the surrounding area for example, reside members of the indigenous Dai, Upu and Ya tribes. The female elders of these tribes have intriguing full facial tattoos with patterns distinctive to their ethnic groups. Ritual practices such as these are still preserved in remote parts of the region but in general they are slowly dying out.

This is one of the most rugged and rural areas in the country due to its remoteness. It boasts a host of unique sights which make it well worth a visit. These include a natural, heart-shaped lake called Rih, located in Falam Township and Mount Victoria in Kanpetlet Township. Unusual flora and fauna are found here, like the Mythun which is a rare species of cattle. Nature lovers should not miss UNESCO-recognised Nat Ma Taung National Park. Chin highlights include: Mount Victoria, Mount Rung, Nat Ma Taung National Park, Rih Lake, Hakha, Falam, Matupi, Mindat, Bungtla Waterfall, trekking and birdwatching.





MON & KAYIN

Savour the special individual charms of these two neighbouring states

Mon

Mon State's capital, Mawlamyaing, is Myanmar's 4th largest city, and the former capital of British Burma. The state is renowned for the aptly named Golden Rock (Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda), the world's largest reclining Buddha and the atmospheric Thanbyuzayat War Memorial which is dedicated to those who perished building the infamous "death railway". Mon highlights include: Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, Kyaikthanlan Pagoda, Kyaikami Yele Pagoda, Win Sein Taw Ya Reclining Buddha, Mawlamyaing, Thaton, Setse Beach, Bilu Island and Gaunsay Kyun Island.



Kayin

Encircled by karst limestone peaks that soar out of lush green paddy fields, Hpa An, is the picturesque capital of Kayin State (also known as Karen). It is most famous for its impressive and very sacred limestone caves. Take time to appreciate the stunning scenery of this mountainous area or take a slow boat down the Thanlyin River to exotic Mawlamyaing in Mon State. Kayin highlights include: Kyauk Kalap Pagoda, Mount Zwegabin, the Kayin Don dance; the sacred caves Bayinnyi, Kawgoon, Sadan and Kaw Ka Taung.



NAY PYI TAW

The capital city plays host and warmly welcomes visitors

Capital

After four years in the making, Nay Pyi Taw became the nation's new administrative and political capital in 2006. Most commercial activity still takes place in the former capital, Yangon; however Nay Pyi Taw enjoys a more central situation in Myanmar. Closer to three important states namely Shan, Kayah and Kayin, it is located in the country's dry zone so it mostly escapes the yearly monsoon rains. In the last decade much development has taken place. With its wide, manicured, multi-lane roads, it is free from the traffic and crowded streets of Yangon. It is efficient and, given its growing economy, has suitably large venues for a country in transition.



Attractions

The most prominent, shimmering landmark is Uppatasanti Pagoda. A replica of Yangon's treasured Shwedagon Pagoda, it is a slightly shorter and is unusual in that it is hollow with superbly decorated ceilings. Moreover, it affords spectacular views across the surrounding areas and has some auspicious white elephants housed nearby. In fact, Nay Pyi Taw Zoological Garden is also home to the country's largest zoo with more than 420 animals and within a 45-min drive is an elephant sanctuary called Phokyar Resort. The city's attractions include visits to the enormous Parliament House, the Gems Museum, the Water Fountain Park, and the National Landmark Garden.

MICE

With the best event facilities in the country, Nay Pyi Taw is positioning itself as Myanmar's top MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions) destination. The new capital has over 50 hotels (totalling more than 5,000 rooms) including top international brands with luxury facilities that have received VIP guests such as President Barack Obama. For major conferences welcoming several thousand delegates, there are two large, international standard buildings, the Myanmar International Convention Centres. It is here that global events such as the World Economic Forum East Asia, ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Tourism Forum have been held.

KACHIN

An appealing mix of colourful tribes and remote rural landscapes

Hkakaborazi, the nation's highest peak at 5,882m, is found in Kachin State, a mountainous region in the far north of Myanmar. Myitkyina is the state capital and is where throngs of diverse peoples congregate in their thousands to perform mass dances in their colourful and highly decorated tribal costumes at ethnic festivals such as the week-long Manaw Festival. About 45km north of Myitkyina is Myitso, where the Maykha and Malikha rivers meet. This scenic confluence marks the start of the mighty Ayeyarwady River, Myanmar's largest river and most important commercial waterway which flows from north to south.

Kachin is also home to Indawgyi, Myanmar's largest natural lake, a stunning and secluded destination for nature lovers. It is fairly untouched although adventure activities such as recreational fishing, kayaking, trekking and cycling are available. More daring travellers can do an extended excursion to the remote, snow-capped mountains in Putao. Kachin highlights include: Myitkyina, Festivals (Manaw and other festivities such as harvest festivals), Indawgyi Lake; Shwe Myitzu Pagoda and Shwe Taung Pagoda, the villages of Hepa, Namde and Lwemun.



RAKHINE

Unspoiled, palm-tree fringed beaches & ancient, unfrequented pagodas beckon

Situated on the coast of the Bay of Bengal in Rakhine State, is Ngapali Beach, Myanmar's premier beach destination. Close proximity to Yangon, just 45 minutes by air, makes it popular with the city's residents yet it remains far from crowded. Famous for its turquoise waters, wide stretches of white sand, palm tree groves and fishing village, it is relatively unspoilt. A growing number of resorts line the beach offering fresh seafood, spa treatments and relaxing stays. Popular tourist activities include trips on local fishing boats; kayaking; snorkelling and scuba diving. It is also possible to enjoy the coastline scenery on foot, by bike or motorbike.

Those seeking cultural heritage will love atmospheric Mrauk Oo, the ancient city of the Rakhine Dynasty. Largely untouched and not often frequented by tourists, here you can explore hundreds of pagodas and take in dramatic rural landscapes. Sittwe, usually only a stop-off point for travellers on their way to Mrauk Oo, is an interesting port with sea views, markets and spicy local dishes. Rakhine highlights include: Ngapali Beach, Mrauk Oo (pagodas like Shitthaung, Dukkanthein, Kothaung, Laymyatnha, Andaw) and Sittwe.





The allure of the sea and its many bounties are enchanting

Dawei

The capital of Tanintharyi Region, Dawei is a key trading town of growing importance. It has interesting examples of colonial architecture and a host of pagodas to enjoy. Its main attraction is Shwe Taung Zar Pagoda and its markets. A little further afield are Shin Mokthi Pagoda and the 74m-long and 21m-high Shwe Tha Lyaung Daw Mu Reclining Buddha. A well-known beauty spot in Myanmar, Maungmakan Beach, is about 12km from Dawei and is also popular with the locals. For a quieter experience visit San Maria Bay, Teyzit Beach and Nabule Beach where you can find seemingly endless and empty stretches of brilliant white sand.

TANINTHARYI



Myeik

Myeik archipelago (also known as Mergui) comprises over 800 islands. From aboard special yacht cruises you can swim and dive among spectacular marine life and untouched coral reefs. It is also possible to observe the fascinating sea-based existence of the nomadic Salone people (Sea Gypsies or Moken). Myeik offers a wide variety of sights including bird nest caves and pearl farming as well as adventurous activities, from kayaking through virgin mangroves to hiking through lush tropical valleys. Key islands to visit are Cook Comb, Western Rocky, Macleod, Lampi, Nyaung Wee, Bo Cho, Mway Daw and Island 115.

Kawthaung

The southernmost town of Myanmar, Kawthaung, was known as Victoria Point in colonial times, named after Queen Victoria. From the summit of Ngar Thone Lone Hill (Triple Five Hill) you can take in superb views of the town. Kawthaung is also a good point of departure for snorkelling and diving tours of the Myeik (Mergui) archipelago. Under 10km from the centre are Shwepyi Thar Pagoda, a museum (where finds from the sea, such as whale bones and turtle shells are exhibited) and Pa Lone Tone Beach. Further afield, in an area of breathtaking scenery, Maliwan Waterfall and Maliwan Hot Springs can be found.



AYEYARWADY

Lush landscapes and expanses of turquoise seas are a recipe for relaxation

The Ayeyarwady Delta is an interesting place to explore as it is so rich in the greenery and wildlife that characterise Myanmar. Relaxing spots like Ngwe Saung Beach and Chaung Tha Beach are located along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. Being close to Yangon (just a 4-5hr drive) both are very popular weekend getaway destinations for Yangonites and expats living there. Other activities in Ngwe Saung include sailing competitions at the marina, water sports, snorkelling and a visit to the sleepy fishing village nearby. For animal lovers there is an elephant camp in Padaung Village, under a 1-hr drive from Ngwe Saung towards Patheingyi.

Patheingyi, the region's capital city, is famous for its beautiful, colourful handmade parasols and you can visit workshops to marvel at the artistry of local craftsmen. Also worth seeing are the night bazaar and pagodas. There are various other towns of interest in the region, for example Myaungmya which is where U Nu, the first premier of independent Myanmar and Daw Khin Kyi, the wife of national leader late General Aung San were born. Ayeyarwady highlights include: Ngwe Saung Beach, Chaung Tha Beach, Patheingyi and Myaungmya.



MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Get off the beaten track and choose an alternative itinerary

Pyu Ancient Cities

The so-called Pyu ancient cities contain remnants of the Pyu Kingdoms that thrived for over 1,000 years between 200BC and 900 AD; specifically those of three cities - Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra. They have been recognised as UNESCO World Heritage sites since 2014. The Pyu culture was heavily influenced by trade with India, importing Buddhism as well as Hindu cultural, architectural and political concepts. Little of the original cities remain today but the existing monuments and the ruins of the royal palace, a collection of temples, parts of the walls and gates are of significant historical importance.

Border Towns

With five neighbouring countries, Myanmar's border towns are often of interest to foreign travellers for their heady mix of influences and diverse cultures. Kyaing Tong, near the borders of China, Thailand and Laos and Tachileik, the gateway to Mae Sai in Thailand are two examples. Both are located in the Golden Triangle Area of Shan State. Charming, laid-back Hsipaw (located high in the hills of Shan State) is an atmospheric stop on one of Myanmar's most scenic train journeys. Meanwhile Muse, a small town on the banks of the Shweli River, is the main border gateway between Myanmar and Yunnan Province in China.



THEMED LOCATIONS

Fulfil your pastime passions with flair and exotic style

Caves

Myanmar is home to some impressive cave networks. Many have been explored, venerated and decorated for centuries so they are full of sacred Buddha images, making them particularly enchanting. For Myanmar nationals, visiting caves is usually a spiritual pilgrimage or for cultural reasons such as during festivals. Altogether, there are fourteen cave exploration sites in Myanmar. These include Pyadalain, Myinmahti, and Pindaya Shwe Oo Min in Shan State; Peik Chin Myaung and Kyauk Gu U Min in Mandalay Region; Sadan, Bayinnyi, Phakat, Htaungwi, Yathepyan, Kawgoon, Wepyan, Pathone and Kaw Ka Taung in Kayin State.



Golf

Considered one of Southeast Asia's last virgin destinations for golfing holidays, Myanmar is surprisingly well-equipped. Over 100 courses exist, many with spectacular, verdant, or heritage backdrops. As more golfers discover the beauty and cultural wonders of Myanmar, avid players can visit with golfing as their mission or add it to their itinerary as courses exist from Myitkyina in the far north to the southernmost town of Kawthaung. The best 18-hole city golf courses, built to international standards, are Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay and Taunggyi. There are also 9-hole courses at Mount Popa near Bagan and Ngapali Beach in Rakhine State.



Myanmar with its cities and neighbouring countries

Country Name: Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Climate: Tropical (subtropical in the north) with permanent high humidity. Rainy season from mid-May to mid-October

Location: Southeast Asia

Borders: Bangladesh, India, China, Laos & Thailand

Country Size: 676,578 sq km / 261,227 sq miles

Administrative Capital: Nay Pyi Taw

Commercial Capital: Yangon

Population: 51 million (2014)

Lineage: The majority belong to the Tibetan-Burmese ethnic group, also Mon-Khmer and Thai-Chinese lineage groups; overall 135 distinguishable ethnic groups

Languages: Myanmar/Burmese, ethnic languages & English

Religions: Theravada-Buddhism, Christian, Muslim, Hindu & Animist

How To Get There: Most tourists arrive in Myanmar by air at Yangon International Airport, Mandalay International Airport and Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. There are also border crossings via neighbouring countries and arrivals by cruise ships.





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