

# မြာကမာ

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MON STATE & KAYIN STATE



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# HIGHLIGHTS

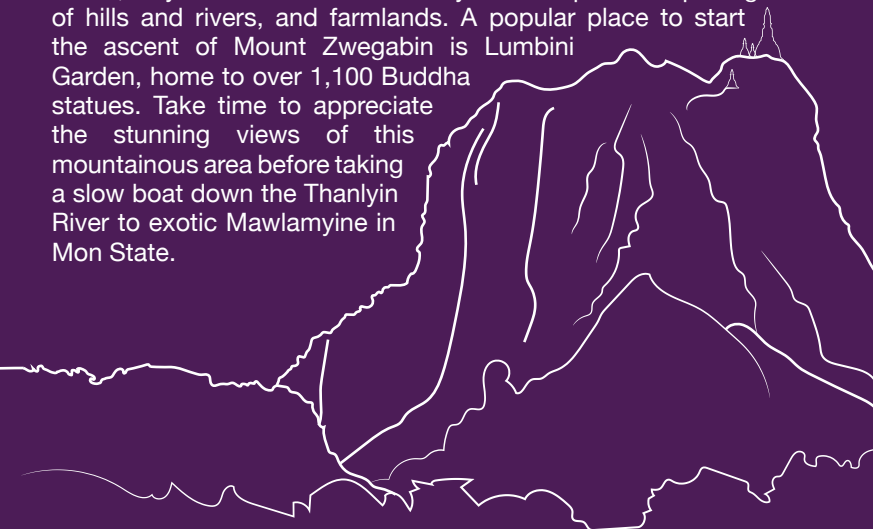
**Individual, culturally rich and scenically inspiring**

## Mon

Boasting varied landscapes which include islands, hills, tropical forest, crop land and plantations, Mon State covers the upper part of the Tanintharyi Peninsula. Its capital, Mawlamyine (also known Mawlamyaing) is Myanmar's 4th largest city, and the capital of the former British Empire. The state is renowned for Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, aptly named Golden Rock, and Win Sein Taw Ya, which is the site of the world's largest reclining Buddha statue. Such rich religious cultural heritage is unsurprising given that Mon is where Theravada Buddhism was first established in Myanmar some 2,500 years ago.

## 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). Most famous for its impressive and very sacred limestone caves, Kayin State also offers many scenic spots comprising of hills and rivers, and farmlands. A popular place to start the ascent of Mount Zwegabin is Lumbini Garden, home to over 1,100 Buddha statues. Take time to appreciate the stunning views of this mountainous area before taking a slow boat down the Thanlyin River to exotic Mawlamyine in Mon State.





# WELCOME TO MON & KAYIN

## **Mon - a place of spiritual birth and rebirth**

Mon State is vibrantly spiritual; monasteries offer insight awareness meditation (satipatthana vipassana), and Pa Auk Taw Ya, which at 500 acres is one of the largest meditation centres in Myanmar, is about 10km from Mawlamyine. Buddhists reside alongside a strong Baptist community since this is where the initial First Baptist Church was founded by American Adoniram Judson in 1827. His legacy included being the first person to translate the Bible into Burmese. History lovers also enjoy the Mon Cultural Museum and visiting Thaton, the capital of the ancient Mon Kingdom.

## **Kayin - a celebration of nature's gifts**

The picturesque scenery of Kayin State, including over an estimated 300,000 acres of monsoon rice paddy, benefits from the rainfall of its hot and humid climate. Farming is a big feature of the landscape, with hillside farms a common sight, cultivating crops of groundnut, sesame, beans and pulses, sugarcane, rubber, areca and fruit. Kayin is also an important tea and coffee producing region. Animist festivals often mark successful harvests and local produce can be found at colourful markets where visitors have the chance to sample and purchase fresh foods and traditional crafts as well as to mingle with friendly native people.











# MON

## Past protagonist and tropical backdrop of many stories

Thanlwin, the longest road and rail bridge in the country, is one of the state's most prominent landmarks. Mawlamyine is the main gateway to south-eastern Myanmar and has an illustrious past as the capital of British Burma. It featured in a number of famous writings such as George Orwell's 1936 memoir, "Shooting an Elephant" and Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Road to Mandalay". Its charm remains to this day; rich history and deep roots in Buddhism mix with colonial architecture, coupled with diverse traditions like the weaving of colourful local fabrics.

Attractions such as Khayone Cave, Kyauktalon Taung (a flat rock formation 91m high with a Buddhist shrine atop), Zin Kyaik Waterfall plus the coastal areas of Kyaikkami, Setse, Bilu Kyun and Gaunsay Kyun make for a varied and interesting topology. Thanbyuzayat is home to an atmospheric memorial to the 100,000 prisoners of war and civilians who perished at the hands of the Japanese during the construction, on perilous terrain, of the so-called "Death Railway" in WWII. The railway was made infamous by the epic 1957 film "Bridge on the River Kwai".







# RELIGIOUS SITES

## Myanmar's ancient birthplace of Theravada Buddhism

With deep Buddhist roots, it will come as no surprise to discover that Mon is studded with golden pagodas and impressive religious sites such as the world's largest reclining Buddha, Win Sein Taw Ya. The approach to it is quite a sight to see because it is lined with a procession of some 500 larger-than-life concrete burgundy-robed monks. Kyaiktiyo Pagoda (Golden Rock), the third most important Buddhist pilgrimage destination in Myanmar (after Yangon's Shwedagon Pagoda and Mandalay's Mahamuni Pagoda), is by far Mon's most famous site. It appears as if it is floating and is a wonderful place to watch the sun set.

Kyaik Than Lan Pagoda, built in 875 is thought to be the setting where Rudyard Kipling wrote "Mandalay", a famous poem penned and published during colonial Burma in 1890. Linked to it by a covered walkway is the state's largest temple complex, Mahamuni Pagoda. Mon has many surprising religious sites like the little known Nwa-la-bo which consists of a stupa on top of three stacked, sausage-shaped gold boulders; Kyaik Ka Mi Yele Pagoda, a metal-roofed Buddha shrine complex perched over the sea as well as Kyaikami Yele Pagoda, Sein Yin Hmyaw Pagoda and Shwe Sar Yan Pagoda.









# KAYIN

## A tranquil place to free your spirit, up high or down low

For those who tackle the steps to reach Mount Zwegabin's 722m-peak, the monkeys will provide entertainment along the way. The effort is rewarded by fabulous views from Kayin's most famous landmark. Visitors wishing to enjoy the sunset spend the night in the monastery, atop one of Myanmar's most sacred mountains. Down by the river Shwe Yin Myaw Pagoda, located on the bank of Thanlwin, is a favourite spot for tourists to watch the setting sun. Its compound is home to statues of a dragon and a giant frog who, according to legend, created the city.

One of Kayin's most amazing sights is Kyauk Kalap, a pagoda perched on the summit of a sheer rock that rises stunningly out of an artificial lake. It is a unique experience to spend time marvelling at the unspoiled nature surrounding this special pagoda near Hpa An. At certain times the usually still waters

of the lake reflect back a mirror image making for the perfect photo opportunity. Another interesting attraction is Kyone Htaw Waterfall, near the town of Hlaing Bwe. Encircled by a pristine forest it draws fascinated tourists due to its naturally green-coloured water.

Developed by the British in Victorian times, to provide respite from the heat, Thandaung is a hill station that is becoming a popular resort town. Located in the north of the state, it is mainly inhabited by Bwe Kayin (Karen) people who are largely Christians and enjoy romantic folklore. Like many of Myanmar's less populated areas, traditions are revered especially locally. However, the lively and joyous Kayin Don Dance is famous throughout Myanmar. Originating as a celebration of the harvest and the New Year it is also now performed in competitions outside of the state.





# CAVES

## An amazing network of sacred limestone caves

Kayin is well known for its caves, the two most famous of which are Bayinnyi and Kawgun. Bayinnyi Cave is in a large complex with hot springs at the base of the hill near Mount Zwegabin whereas Kawgun Cave (also known as Kawgoon) is very close to the state capital. The latter features thousands of tiny clay Buddha images and carvings, some dating back as far as the 7th century. Mounted on the walls and roof of the main cave it is quite an impressive sight. Some of the caves are intriguing for other reasons.

For example Sadan Cave takes about 10-15 minutes to walk through and exits onto lovely views of a lake and paddy fields. On the other hand Kaw Ka Taung consists of 3 caves, only 2 of which are open to the public. The first has a tiled floor and numerous Buddha statues while the second is along a path and is a water-filled cave that serves as a “swimming hole”. For visitors wishing to explore further, Kayin is home to at least 5 other caves which are of interest; namely Phakat, Htaungwi, Yathaepyan, Wepyan & Pathone Khayone.







## Myanmar with its cities and neighbouring countries

**Destination:** Mon State & Kayin State

**Destination Climate:** Mon - Tropical / Kayin - Hot & humid

**State Borders:** Mon - Kayin State, Andaman Sea, Bago Region, Tanintharyi Region & Thailand

Kayin - Mon State, Bago Region, Mandalay Region, Shan State, Kayah State & Thailand

**State Size:** Mon - 12,296 sq km / 4,748 sq miles

Kayin - 30,383 sq km / 11,731 sq miles

**State Capital:** Mon - Mawlamyine & Kayin - Hpa An

**State Population:** Mon - 2.05 million (2014) & Kayin - 1.57 million (2014)

**Destination Lineage:** Mon - Mon, Bamar, Chin, Kachin, Anglo-Burmese, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan & Burmese-Thai

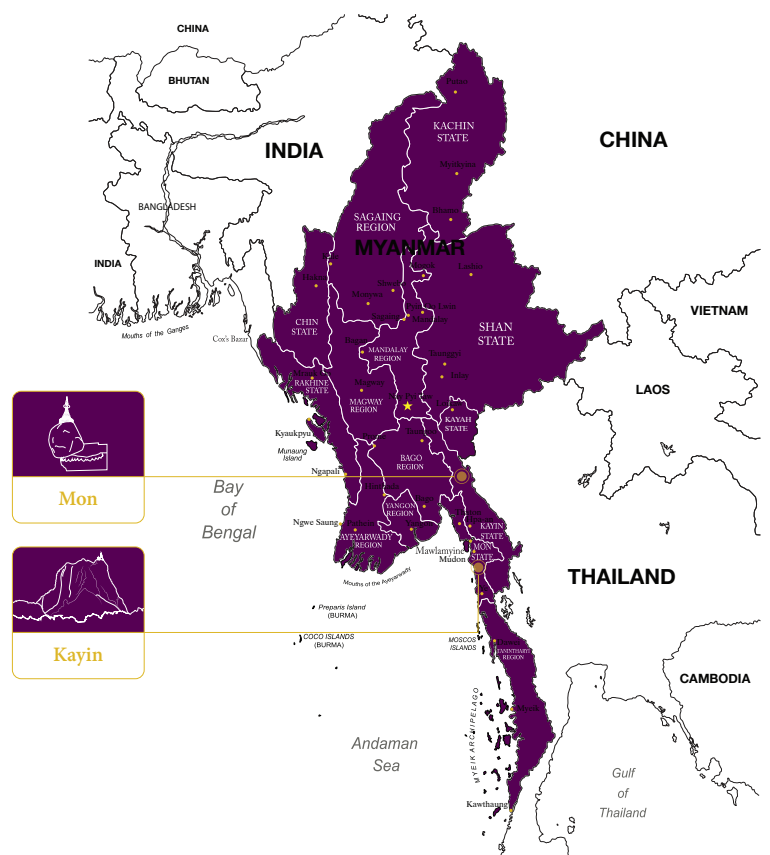
Kayin - Karen, Padaung, Bamar, Shan, Pa-O, Mon, Rakhine & Burmese-Thai

**Destination Languages:** Mon & Kayin - Mon, Kayin, Bamar, Myanmar/ Burmese & limited English

**Religions:** Mon - Buddhism & Christianity

Kayin - Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism & Animism

**How To Get There:** Access to these states is easy by car, express coach services and train from Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. Many visit Golden Rock first and from there the toll roads forks to either Mawlamyine or Hpa An. A pleasant boat trip connecting the two capitals is also possible.







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