

myanmar

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TANINTHARYI REGION



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HIGHLIGHTS

Experience a magical world of
bygone days

Urban Life

A visit to Myanmar's southernmost region will likely entail arrival at Dawei, Myeik or Kawthaung, where domestic airports are located. Despite being the capital of Tanintharyi, Dawei is quite a laid-back, tropical seaside town. Dotted with pagodas and some interesting colonial buildings, it is easily accessible by all means of transportation. Myeik has been a bustling, strategically located port for five centuries and despite its role as the regional economic hub it has a characterful mix of meandering streets with heritage buildings and modern buildings. Kawthaung, at the very tip of the country, is one of the entry ports into Myanmar for visitors from Thailand.



Island Life

Most visitors to Myanmar's southernmost region, Tanintharyi, go there to enjoy the spectacularly gorgeous and remote Myeik archipelago. Scattered across the turquoise waters of the Andaman Sea are more than 800 glorious islands. The majority of islands in Myeik archipelago have never seen international tourists since access has been restricted to protect their delicate environments and ecosystems. This makes for fabulously pristine, uninhabited islands thick with vegetation and wildlife; all waiting to be discovered. The towns of Myeik and Kawthaung are jumping off points for the stunning islands of the Myeik or Mergui archipelago. Organised tours usually sail from the towns of Myeik (generally short trips) or Kawthaung (ordinarily multiple-day, live aboard trips).

Activities & Traditions

The towns, villages and islands provide insight into the maritime existence and the indigenous traditions of inhabitants such as fishing, the preparation and drying of fish and seafood, betel nut cultivation, pearl farming, woodcarving, weaving and pottery. Out of town be sure to connect with nature, enjoy a picnic by a waterfall, on a vast white sandy beach, or simply hang out with the locals at one of their eateries to sample some of the finest and freshest seafood in the country. However, most visitors to Tanintharyi come to delight in the beautiful underwater scenery in the turquoise seas surrounding the hundreds of uninhabited islands which make up the Myeik archipelago.





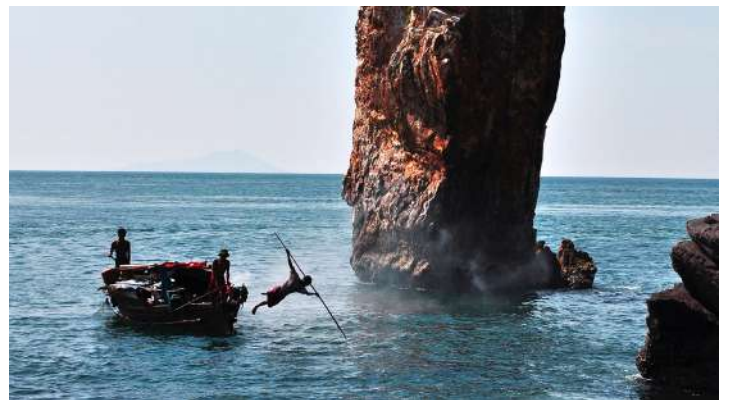
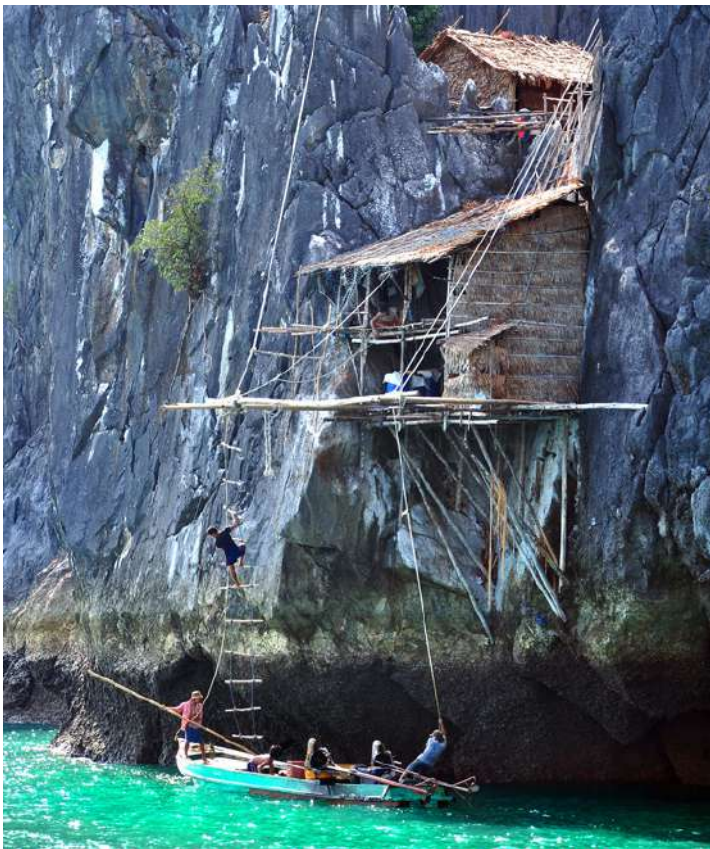
WELCOME TO TANINTHARYI

The allure of the region, both on land and at sea, is enchanting

Myanmar's decades-long isolation - with very few tourists visiting the country's southernmost region - has helped preserve the environment, in particular the Myeik archipelago which remains virtually deserted. It also protected the traditional existence of the Moken (sea gypsies or Salone as they are also known), the most distinct of Myanmar's many ethnic groups, who live a largely nomadic, sea-based life among the atolls. Take to the seas to observe their fascinating traditions, such as spear-fishing and free diving, or simply to appreciate the awe-inspiring setting in which they exist and thrive - sometimes against all odds.

Visit in February and you may also enjoy Salone Festival where they celebrate their seafaring, tribal existence. Here you can see spiritual dances and customs, diving and rowing competitions, folk singing and a traditional Salone feast. The conservation of both local traditions and the environment in Tanintharyi is of prime importance and Lampi Marine National Park offers various nature-loving opportunities such as observing sea turtles, bird-watching and canoeing in the mangroves or visit local villages to sample deliciously fresh seafood.







URBAN LIFE

Maritime hubs and seaside towns full of appeal

Dawei

The seaside capital of Tanintharyi Region is a trading post of growing importance. Enjoy the colonial architecture and a host of pagodas especially Shwe Taung Zar Pagoda. Further afield are Shin Mokthi Pagoda and Shwe Tha Lyaung Daw Mu Reclining Buddha. Not far from Dawei is Maungmakan Beach, a popular place to watch the sun set with the locals. For a quieter experience with seemingly endless, empty stretches of brilliant white sand visit San Maria Bay, Teyzit (Tizit) Beach and Nabule Beach.



Myeik

A harbour town humming with activity, Myeik has one of Southeast Asia's best kept collections of colonial era buildings. Visit Theindawgyi Pagoda which offers fabulous views across the town and harbor and Patay Padet Kyun Island, just 500m across the water to see the reclining Buddha, hilltop pagoda and monastery. All a couple of hours by boat from Myeik town are the beautiful islands of Smart, Bailey, Kadan, Kala, Marcus and Natthamee Yae, making them suitable for day trips.





Kawthaung

Formerly known as Victoria Point (after Queen Victoria) Kawthaung is Myanmar's southernmost town. Take in superb views of it from the summit of Ngar Thone Lone Hill. Under 10km from the centre are Shwepyi Thar Pagoda and Pa Lone Tone Tone Beach. Further afield, in an area of breathtaking scenery, Maliwan Waterfall and Maliwan Hot Springs can be found. Kawthaung is a good departure point for snorkelling and diving tours of the Myeik archipelago.

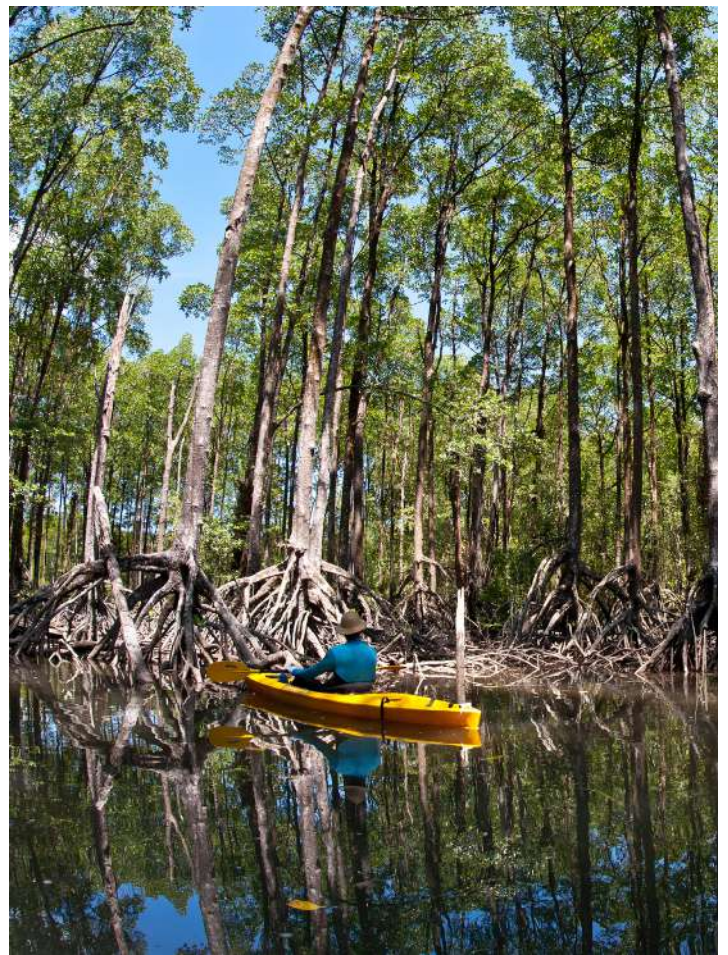


ISLAND LIFE

The azure seas, deserted beaches, lush forests beckon

Undeveloped with restricted access, most islands in Myeik archipelago are untouched. Myanmar's first marine national park was established in 1995, and declared an ASEAN Heritage Park in 2003. The park protects a rich biodiversity, with over 1,000 recorded species; and also provides conservation of the evergreen and mangrove forests, beaches, dunes and coral reefs.

To name just a few of the 800+ islands that are worth visiting; Lampi Island, formed like a giant horseshoe, is the largest, most famous island in the southern part of the archipelago; south of Lampi is Bo Cho Island with its mile-long sandbank and scenic views overlooking the village from the pagoda located on the hill. During the monsoon season it is a major settlement of the nomadic Salone people. Cocks Comb Island, southwest of Kawthaung, has a stunning interior lagoon. It is also fondly referred to as "Emerald Heart Island" due to the shape of this lagoon and the fact that it changes colour with the sea. Meanwhile a snorkelling haven, curiously named Island 115, is home to lizards, snakes and birds' nest caves.



In order to protect the archipelago's pristine condition, local traditions and natural resources, there is very limited accommodation for tourists throughout the islands, and this adds to the charm of this breathtakingly beautiful environment. Watch spectacular sunrises and sunsets, enjoy powdery white sand that seems to stretch for miles, marvel at monkeys sitting on the beach leisurely snacking on crabs and swim in the azure, crystal clear waters in what appears to be paradise lost.



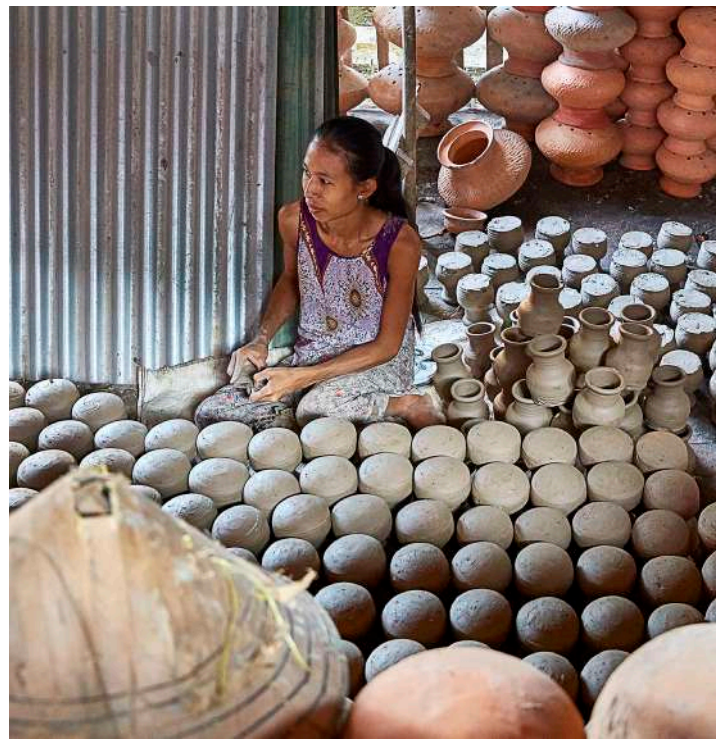
Many visitors undertake daytrips to the islands from one of the urban bases, while others do cruises lasting several days enabling a more leisurely itinerary. For the latter there is a wide choice of vessels available depending on your taste and budget, these include beautiful teak sailing boats, superyachts, classic gaff-rigged schooners and even a high-tech solar catamaran. However, if you prefer to be land-based, rather than sleep on-board a yacht, recent developments mean that there are now different accommodation types on offer ranging from camping on Thein Ni Aw Island, an eco-lodge on Macleod Island and a recently opened luxury resort on Kyun Phi Lar Island, also called Pila.



ACTIVITIES & TRADITIONS

Virgin territories and glimpses of a tribal existence like no other

From bustling metropolitan centres with their fresh produce markets, fish-drying businesses, noodle shops and restaurants offering fabulous locally caught seafood to the supreme serenity of outlying islands punctuated only by starlight and the sound of gentle waves, Tanintharyi is an enticing destination. Traditional industries often remain closely linked to nature; these include fishing, pearl farming; an Asian delicacy edible bird's nest as well as plantations for sugar, oil palm and rubber. Some locals craftspeople still undertake weaving and wood-making. The Salone (or Moken) make their living by diving for pearls, spear-fishing or collecting sea urchins and sea cucumbers.



There is a strong connection with nature in almost every activity on offer to the visitor, whether that is snorkelling to enjoy beautiful underwater scenes and marine life; caving to explore incredible rock formations, or trekking through lush forests to discover waterfalls and hidden beaches, or on a jungle safari to explore the pristine environment alive with an amazing array of flora and fauna. For those who like water sports, scuba-diving, yachting, kayaking and paddle-boarding are increasingly popular.



Myanmar with its cities and neighbouring countries

Destination: Tanintharyi Region

Destination Climate: Tropical monsoonal climate

Region Borders: Mon State, Andaman Sea & Thailand

Region Size: 43,345 sq km / 16,735 sq miles

Region Capital: Dawei

Region Population: 1.4 million (2014)

Destination Lineage: Dawei, Bamar, Rakhine, Mon, Shan, Burmese-Thai, Kayin, Salone & Malay

Destination Languages: Burmese, Dawei, Myanmar/ Burmese & Thai

Destination Religions: Buddhism, Christianity & Islam

How To Get There: Reaching Tanintharyi Region and the Myeik archipelago usually entails flying from Yangon into either Myeik or Kawthaung airports with domestic airlines. Some flights may not operate during the monsoon season. You can also enter Myanmar from the Thai border in the south, travelling via Ranong. From here you will need to take a boat ride to cross the river to Kawthaung. Myeik and Kawthaung are the departure points for chartered boats to the islands. Flights to Dawei operate throughout the year.





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