



MYANMAR

Land of the Golden Pagoda



Myanmar is a country with a fascinating history from ancient feudal empires, colonial rule and military regimes. It's also a melting pot of cultural diversity, where you can find Hindu temples sitting alongside mosques, and glittering gold spires of Buddhist pagodas touch the sky. It is a land rich in tradition and steeped in myth, of natural beauty and wonder.

Capital city: Nay Pyi Taw

Population: 55.2 million

Language: Myanmar (Burmese)

Currency: Kyat

Time zone: GMT+6.5

International Dialing code: +95





HISTORY

Burma formerly ruled by the tribal monarchs, but since 1824, British Empire had rules Burma as a colony for more than 100 years. This long colonial period brought social, economic, cultural and administrative change to this Southeast Asian country. 1942 with the onset of WWII, Japan occupied Burma. In 1945, Britain liberated Burma from the Japanese army, aided by General Aung San. But only in 1948 did it become an independent republic, named the Union of Burma.

After being independent, Burma started to suffer constant the civil war period. Several uprisings occurred, in 1962 a military dictatorship came into power, isolating the country and closing it off from the world. 1988, the people rioted against the government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi-daughter of General Aung San. The country changed its name to Myanmar.

CLIMATE

Myanmar has a tropical Monsoon climate with three seasons, hot, rainy and cool.

The dry, winter season is from October to March, this is the high season when the weather is cool and sunny. This is the best time of the year to travel to Myanmar.

Summer season is from March to May, the temperature rises in Myanmar and impending rains are due, the humidity is high so the weather is hot and stifling.

The remaining time of the year is rainy season: The weather is very hot and often unpredictably rains, so if you travel to Myanmar this time of the year, we suggest you carry an umbrella or raincoat.

The coastal regions have an average temperature of 32 °C and northern region, considered the coolest an average temperature of 21 °C. The central areas are the driest, while Yangon and the coastal areas receive the most rain.





PASSPORT AND VISA

A passport with at least **six months** validity from the date of entry into Myanmar is required. We recommend you make a photocopy of your passport and keep it somewhere separate, or scan your passport and keep the scan in an accessible email account.

A visa is required for all nationalities and can be obtained via e-Visa or your nearest Myanmar embassy or consulate. Visas for Myanmar can be obtained online from the official governmental [eVisa website](http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/) and costs **\$50** (or \$56 for an express service).

For more information, please visit the Myanmar official [government website](http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/):
<http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/>

TRANSPORTATION

Taxis

Taxis are the main form of transportation in the major cities with fares within city limits ranging from 1000-4000 Myanmar Kyat. Some taxis in Myanmar are driven by the citizens and aren't metered, so

remember that the price should be agreed upon with the driver before getting in the car.

Motorbike taxis

Travel by motorbike yourself in Myanmar is not safe due to the incomplete infrastructure in some parts of the country, so we don't recommend traveling by motorbike, but if you're confident with your riding skill, then this can be an interesting experience.

Please note that travel by motorbike is usually not covered by insurance. Please check the fine print of your travel insurance policy for further information.

LANGUAGE

The official language in Myanmar is Burmese. Despite the fact that they had been under colonial rule by the British Empire for a long time and English is a compulsory subject at primary school, but this country just opened up to the world in the last few years, so not many people can speak English well. We recommend using language guide, or translate software in your mobile phone.



CURRENCY

The official currency of Myanmar is the Kyat (MMK). Foreign currency can be exchanged at banks, airports and money changers.

ATMs that accept VISA and MasterCard are available in the main cities of Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, dispensing money in Kyat. But be sure you always have an amount of Lao Kip in your hand because ATMs may not be available in some parts of the country because there are few if any ATMs outside of the major cities and credit cards may not be accepted at hotels.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

You can purchase local sim cards at the airport or local convenience stores

International roaming is still not widely accessible in Myanmar so you'd better contact your local telecommunication provider for more information.

International subscriber dialing is available at most of major hotels, however it is surcharged and very expensive.

Internet access is available in most tourist areas as well as larger hotels, restaurants and airports. However the Internet connections are relatively slow and can be unstable.

ELECTRICITY

Myanmar uses 230V/50Hz and has two different types of plug sockets that are commonly used: type C and D. So please prepare your own adapters if necessary.



SAFETY

There is a lot of political turmoil and unrest in a few states regarding the persecution of Rohingya Muslims. However, the government doesn't allow tourists or media traveling to this part of the country, so touristy areas remain unaffected by this situation.

Besides, the public transportation may be crowded and not comfortable due to poor infrastructure, but you can pay for a VIP ticket to get a more rested seat.

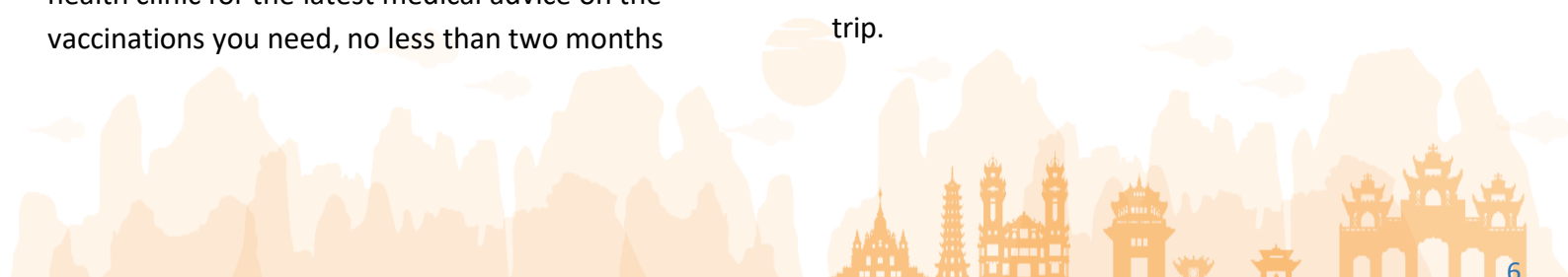
VACCINATIONS

Before travelling, please ensure you have adequate protection against disease. Contact your doctor or health clinic for the latest medical advice on the vaccinations you need, no less than two months

before your departure. Malaria is common in SE Asia and is mainly confined to remote and rural areas.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Every traveler is responsible for his or her own health. Travel inevitably involves some risks and this should be recognized by holiday-makers. Travel insurance is a cost effective way of protecting yourself and your equipment should any problems occur such as cancelled trips, delays, medical emergencies, baggage loss or damage. It also gives you peace of mind so that you can entirely enjoy your trip without worry. Please also ensure your travel insurance covers all activities planned on your trip.





RELIGION

There is no official state religion in Myanmar, but Buddhism is the dominant religion of 88% of the population. You can see quite a lot of temples and pagodas in Myanmar. In addition, there are also mosques and cathedrals. Each place has rules that need to be followed in order to show respect for the place of worshiping.

- Dress appropriately and act with the utmost respect when visiting pagodas or monasteries.
- Do not wear shorts or tank tops. Men and women should make sure their shoulders and knees are covered.
- Remove your hat and leave your shoes at the entrance of any pagoda or monastery grounds.
- When sitting in front of a Buddha, make sure your feet are placed to the side, rather than cross legged.
- Never point your finger or the soles of your feet towards any image of Buddha.
- A woman may accept something from a monk but should never touch or sit next to a monk.

- Giving of alms is deeply rooted tradition and should be done with the utmost respect. Do not give money or cigarettes and be discreet when taking photographs of monks or nuns.

- Show respect and turn off mobile phones, remove headphones, lower your voice and avoid inappropriate conversation.

Myanmar citizens dress very conservatively and topless or nude sunbathing is not acceptable at any time, if you don't get used to hot weather, it's advised to wear lightweight clothes but not to show too much of your skin.

FOOD

It is not advisable to drink tap water in Myanmar. Bottled water is cheap and widely available.

Myanmar food is a mixture of Indian and Chinese cuisine, with curries, soups and rice as staples. The national dish is Mohinga, a fish broth with vermicelli noodles, onion, garlic and lime that is served with fish cakes and fritters and is usually eaten for breakfast.



ETIQUETTE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The Myanmar people are typically easy going and quite forgiving when travelers are not intimately familiar with their customs.

Pay attention to:

- Try not to show annoyance or anger by shouting or becoming abusive. It is considered extremely impolite and is unlikely to achieve a positive outcome. In Myanmar people always try to be considerate towards others feelings before taking an action and will always try to avoid making others 'lose face'.
- Avoid touching a person's head or feet, and do not point with your feet to items or people, as it is considered extremely rude.
- It is customary to take off your shoes and socks before entering a person's home, temples and various buildings. If you are unsure, look to see if there are any shoes outside of the door!
- Displays of affection are not common in

Myanmar, please remain discreet while in public.

- Myanmar people dress very conservatively and topless or nude sunbathing is not acceptable at any time.
- Myanmar people normally greet each other with "where are you going", however the more formal "mingalabar" is widely used by foreigners and appreciated.

HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS

Myanmar has many public holidays, like other Asian countries, most of which are related to religious festivals and based upon the lunar calendar. The most popular festival is Thingyan which precedes the Myanmar New Year. It is usually celebrated during the middle of April (13-16) and is a time when people joins in for one big water fight with buckets and water pistols.



TIPPING

Travelers are recommended to tip for the service if you feel satisfied. Though it isn't compulsory, the staffs will be appreciated, so you can tip any amount you feel is appropriate

- **Guides:** \$5-\$10 per day (depending on group size and performance)
- **Drivers:** \$2-\$5 per day, per person
- **Restaurants:** 10% of the bill.
- **Porter:** US \$1 (per two bags)

PRICE GUIDE

Restaurants

- **Myanmar food:** from US \$5
- **Chinese, Thai, Indian food:** from US \$5
- **Western food:** from US \$10

Drinks

- **Soft drinks:** US \$1
- **Local beer:** US \$3
- **Bottled water:** US \$1
- **Juice:** \$1.5

DONATIONS AND GIFT GIVING

Myanmar is a very poor country with little in the way of social services and you are likely to see poverty. Please read the following advice about donations and gift giving.

- Do not give money to people begging, especially children. This reinforces the belief that begging is an acceptable way to make a living. If children make money from begging, their parents are less likely to send them to school. Children working on the streets are also vulnerable to abuse.

- Giving money and goods to beggars can accentuate an unequal relationship between locals and visitors, with tourists being seen as purely money givers.

- Avoid giving money to people that look like monks, it is a practice frowned upon by most Myanmar people and is considered to go against their Buddhist principles.

- Do not feel that you necessarily have to give material things. Sometimes, giving your friendship, time and interest to locals can be the best gift of all. For more information go to www.thinkchildsafe.org or www.dosanddontsfortourists.com



CLOTHING

1. The weather is hot in the tropical countries such as Myanmar, so bring lightweight clothes, don't forget to bring hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and cover clothes for sunny days
2. Prepare appropriate clothes when visiting religious and historical sites, showing too much your legs and shoulders is considered disrespect, so don't wear shorts, skirts, or tank tops.
3. In many temples or pagodas, you'll have to take shoes off, so slip-on shoes or sandals are useful.

HOT TIPS

1. Keep in mind the telephone number of your country's embassy in Myanmar.
2. Don't put your passport or visa anywhere that's easily reached. Record images of your passport and visa in case of loss or theft.
3. Insect repellent are necessary when exploring forests and national parks, especially during rainy season.

4. In hot season, the sunlight may be intense. Avoid outdoor activities during hottest hours (about 11am to 2pm).

USEFUL WEBSITES

The official tourism website for Myanmar:

<http://www.myanmar-tourism.org/>

U.S Passports & International Travel

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>

The United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/burma>

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cambodia/index>

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST



❖ Documents

- ☐ Passport (at least six months validity from date of entry)
- ☐ Photocopy of passport
- ☐ Visa or a passport photo and US\$20 for visa on arrival
- ☐ Travel insurance
- ☐ All relevant tickets
- ☐ Reconfirmed flights

❖ Clothes

- ☐ Lightweight clothing
- ☐ Long-sleeved shirts and trousers (to religious sites)

- ☐ Shoes, sneakers for trekking, cycling and walking
- ☐ Sunglasses, sunscreen

❖ Travel aids

- ☐ Suitcases, backpack
- ☐ Foreign currency (US\$) and/or ATM card
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Pocket knife
- ☐ Language guide
- ☐ Medications, first aid kit
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Electrical adaptor: 220V, 50Hz; 2 pin plugs

Please note: domestic airlines impose baggage weight restrictions of around 20kg maximum, so travel lightly where possible.

Authentic Asia wish you a safe and pleasant journey.

In case of an emergency, please contact us at:

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