

Myanmar

0 40 km
0 20 miles
not for navigation



Myanmar (Formerly Burma)



MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO

Western Myanmar is bordered by the Andaman Sea. Countless island, reef and rocky pinnacles fill the coastline and offer countless dive sites, many of which are still waiting to be discovered. The gateway city here is Kawthaung. Golden reclining Buddhas and temple spires greet ships coming into the straits to the city.

Diving in Myanmar is done by live aboard. It is normally a quick stop with a set fee, and entry and exit handled by your live aboard cruise director. Officials there will keep your passport until you return.

Once the formalities are done, your boat will head up to some beautiful islands and pinnacle dive sites. There are an estimated 800 islands in the 14,000 square mile region that is part of the vast Mergui Archipelago. It is much less developed here and there are also more small 'long tail' fishing boats around.

The Mergui Archipelago, a group of over 200 islands in the Andaman Sea, is where the Isthmus of Kra divides it from the lowland forests of the Sundaic region. The flora and fauna of these two regions overlap and as there has been no commercial, and low residential, development, the islands maintain a high level of natural biodiversity. Some of the wildlife has been exposed to poachers and illegal logging, but birdlife is still very good with hornbills, colorful king-

fishers, parrots, flycatchers and sunbirds all found here. Monkeys, snakes and fruit bats also thrive in the forests. Ground creatures include wild boars, monkeys, sea otters, monitor lizards and even wild elephants.

The islands thrive from this peninsular rainforest. Nutrients filter into coastal mangrove swamp that sends nutrients far out to sea.

The region's sites have only recently been explored and mapped by live aboard dive operators from Phuket, such as Fantasea's *Ocean Rover*, which went through countless negotiations and were allowed to dive here and pioneer new sites incredibly recently in 1997.

Much farther west, trips are now being made to the far reaches of the Andaman Sea and the Andaman Islands. Midway between Thailand and India, the peaks of a submerged mountain range create the Andaman and Nicobar Island chains.

Dive tourism is still in development stages in Andaman and Nicobar but new dive sites are being found on a seasonal basis. A few times a year, live aboards board passengers from Phuket, Thailand or from Port Blair, India.

Myanmar		GOOD SNORKELING	NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
49	WESTERN ROCKY ISLAND	•		•	
50	FAN FOREST PINNACLE	•		•	
51	NORTHERN ROCKY PINNACLE	•		•	
52	MOULIN ROUGE	•		•	
53	NORTH TWIN ISLAND (WEST RIDGE)	•		•	
54	NORTH TWIN PLATEAU	•		•	
55	THREE ISLETS	•		•	
56	BLACK ROCK	•			•
57	NORTHEAST LITTLE TORRES ISLAND	•		•	