



Myanmar (Burma)

95 / POP 66.2 MILLION

Includes ➔

Yangon.....	483
The Delta, West Coast Beaches & North Of Yangon.....	495
Southeastern Myanmar	499
Inle Lake & Shan State.....	503
Mandalay & Around...	509
Bagan & Around	522
Western Myanmar.....	532
Understand Myanmar	536
Survival Guide.....	540

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Aung Thukha (p486)
- ➔ Daw Yee (p501)
- ➔ Starbeam Bistro (p528)
- ➔ Lin Htett Myanmar Traditional Food (p505)

Best Places for Cultural Connections

- ➔ Hsipaw (p521)
- ➔ Kyaingtong (p509)
- ➔ Mrauk U (p534)
- ➔ Mawlamyine (p500)

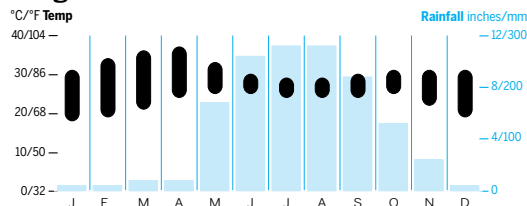
Why Go?

Now is the moment to visit this extraordinary land, scattered with gilded pagodas, where the traditional ways of Asia endure and previously off-limits areas are opening up. As the country makes tentative steps towards democracy, sanctions have been dropped and the world is rushing to do business here. Thankfully, the pace of change is not overwhelming.

Travelling in Myanmar remains a chance to swap the hubbub and electronic demands of modern life for the spirituality of sacred temples and hushed monasteries. Enjoy slowly unfolding journeys through serene landscapes, including meandering rivers, lush jungles, ethnic minority villages and pristine palm-fringed beaches. Best of all, you'll encounter locals who are gentle, humorous, engaging, considerate, inquisitive and passionate.

When to Go

Yangon



Jan Independence Day (4 January), celebrating the end of British rule, is marked by nationwide fairs.

Apr The Water Festival (Thingyan) is fun, but it's one of the hottest times of year.

Dec Peak season with many visitors heading here over the Christmas–New Year break.

Don't Miss

Myanmar is one of the most devout Buddhist countries in the world. Yangon's Shwedagon Paya, Mandalay's Mahamuni Paya and Bagan's plain of temples are all must-see locations, but there are many other Buddhist sites that will impress you with their beauty and spirituality. A 10-storey-tall seated Buddha watches over Pyay's hill-top Shwesandaw Paya providing sweeping views of the town. The old Rakhine capital of Mrauk U is dotted with ruined and functioning temples and monasteries, while in Mt Kyaiktiyo you can join the pilgrims.

ITINERARIES

One Week

In Yangon, visit the Shwedagon Paya and shop for handicrafts at Bogyoke Aung San Market. Overnight on a bus to Mandalay, climb Mandalay Hill, see the famed Mahamuni Paya and beautiful teak monastery Shwe In Bin Kyaung. Take a morning boat to Mingun, home to a giant earthquake-cracked stupa, following up with a sunset boat ride past U Bein's Bridge at Amarapura. Connect by bus or boat to Bagan, allowing a couple of days to explore the temples there.

Three Weeks

In addition to the above, venture east to beautiful Inle Lake; consider trekking there from Kalaw (minimum two days). From Bago head to Mt Kyaiktiyo to view the amazing Golden Rock, then to Mawlamyine for a taste of tropical Myanmar. Use the Kayin State capital, Hpa-an, as a base for exploring lush countryside peppered with sacred caves and limestone mountains. Return to Yangon then fly to Sittwe, where you can take another boat to the amazing temple ruins of Mrauk U (minimum five days).

Essential Food & Drink

- **Āthouq** Light, tart and spicy salads made with raw vegetables or fruit tossed with lime juice, onions, peanuts, roasted chickpea powder and chillies. A common one is *leq-p'eq thouq*, which includes fermented tea leaves.
- **Mohinga ('moun-hinga')** A popular breakfast dish of rice noodles served with fish soup and as many other ingredients as there are cooks.
- **Shan khauk-swe** Shan-style noodle soup; thin wheat noodles in a light broth with meat or tofu, available across the country but most common in Mandalay and Shan State.
- **Htamin chin** Literally 'sour rice', this turmeric-coloured rice salad also hails from Shan State.
- **Black tea** Brewed in the Indian style with lots of milk and sugar.

AT A GLANCE

- **Currency** Burmese kyat (K)
- **Language** Burmese
- **Money** Cash mainly.
- **Visas** 28 days, extendable.
- **Mobile phones** International roaming available. Limited availability of prepaid SIMs for local phones.

Fast Facts

- **Area** 676,578 sq km
- **Capital** Nay Pyi Taw
- **Emergency** Police (Yangon) ☎199

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	K8890
Euro Zone	€1	K1350
Laos	10,000K	K1225
Thailand	10B	K300
UK	UK£1	K1640
USA	US\$1	K985

Set Your Budget

- **Guesthouse** US\$10–30
- **Street-stall meal** US\$2–5
- **Large beer** US\$1.50

Entering the Country

The main land border crossings are from Mae Sai, Ranong and Mae Sot in Thailand, and Ruili in China.