

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR TRIPS TO MYANMAR





AIRLINES (DOMESTIC)

We use the following 9 domestic airlines: , Air Mandalay, Air KBZ, Asian Wings, FMI, Mann Yadanarpon, Golden Myanmar, Myanmar National, Apex, and Yangon Airways. All nine airlines fly French-Italian ATR turboprop planes (Avions de Transports Régionaux), a type of plane well suited for the local conditions, airports and distances. The configuration is either 40 seats (ATR-42) or 70-seats (ATR 72) in rows of 4 seats with a middle aisle. Entry-exit is at the back of the plane. Standard One-class configuration.

AIRLINES (INTERNATIONAL)

The following airlines currently fly into Myanmar: Thai Airways, Bangkok Airways, Air Asia, Nok Air, Myanmar Airways International, Malaysia Airlines, Silk Air/ Singapore Airline, Air China, China Eastern, China Airlines, Air India, China Southern Airlines, Qatar Airways, Vietnam Airlines, Emirates Airline, Tiger Air, Jet Star Airline, Thai Lion, Thai Smile, Viet Jet, Dragon Air, Hong Kong Express, Myanmar National Airline.

ARRIVAL FORMALITIES

Queue up at the immigration counters with a filled out arrival card and your passport with your visa stamped inside. If you are arriving with an e-visa, just hand your print out confirmation to the officer with your passport. After passing immigration, collect your luggage from the luggage belt and proceed to the customs counter. Hand over your filled-out customs form. Note that items of value and currency in excess of 10,000 USD are supposed to be declared and taken again on departure, but in practice things are made quite easy for tourists.

CLOTHING

Comfortable lightweight clothing in natural fabrics such as cotton is most suitable for traveling in Myanmar. The dress code is fairly casual as in most parts of the tropics but it is advisable to cover arms and legs in the evenings against biting insects. A lightweight raincoat and umbrella are a good idea in the rainy season and the umbrella can also offer useful shade from the sun.

Evenings in the hill stations and on Inle Lake can be quite chilly so bring a sweater or other warm clothing if visiting these areas. This applies especially for the winter months, November-February, treks and the Inle lake area, where early morning boat rides can be quite cold. Visitors should not wear shorts, short skirts or other skimpy clothing when visiting pagodas and monasteries. Though a long scarf or sarong may be used as a temporary cover.

Shoes (and socks!) must be removed before entering any religious building or private home. It is therefore useful to wear shoes (or sandals) without too many laces and which can easily be taken off. We provide small towels to clean your feet before putting back on your shoes.

MYANMAR ROADS

Road travel allows visitors to see more of the country and is a great way to get closer to the land and its people. Although the distances might be short in Myanmar, the road conditions can make the journey



quite long. Please check with our staff or your guide to get an accurate estimate on drive times, Google maps are notoriously wrong on drive times in Myanmar.

Although efforts are being made to upgrade most roads, they can still be quite poor in some areas. For elderly people or those with health and back problems, we recommend avoiding longer road trips like Bagan to Kalaw or Inle Lake to Mandalay. In some places like Monywa-Po Win Taung, some jeep rides are planned. Please let us know in advance of people with back problems or who need special attention are traveling in order for us to make necessary arrangements.

ELECTRICITY

Myanmar uses 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. Though many new hotels are fitted with universal plugs, it is still recommended to bring a universal adaptor. Power outages are quite common but most hotels have their own generator.

ENTERTAINMENT

There is not much in the way of western style entertainment in Myanmar. In the rest of the country, entertainment is mostly confined to the hotels and tourist-orientated restaurants. For those seeking a taste of the local culture in the evenings, head to tea shop, beer hall or night market where the locals gather to relax and socialize.

ENTRY/EXIT POINTS

Myanmar is bordered by 5 countries: Thailand and Laos to the east, India and Bangladesh to the west and China to the north east. There are five international land borders open for travelers: Tachilek (located near the Thai border town of Mae Sai), Kawthaung (located in the south near the Thai town of Ranong, 5 hours from Phuket), Mywaddy (located across the river from the Tai town of Mae Sot), near Tachileik (crossing into Laos) and Muse (connecting to China's Yunnan province).

Travelers can now travel freely between borders without requiring any special permission. Evisas are accepted in all International Airports, but only a few land entry points (Tachileik, Kawthaung, and Myawaddy). Overland travelers coming across the other boarders must get a Myanmar visa from an embassy before entering. International flights fly into Yangon (RGN), Mandalay (MDL) and Nay Pyi Taw (NPT).

FOOD

The staples of Burmese cuisine are rice, rice noodles, and curries. The main ingredient of the meal is usually rice and the curries tend to be not as spicy as those from India or Thailand. A clear soup called *hingyo* accompanies most meals and a fermented fish sauce or paste called *ngapiye* is usually served to add to the flavor. Chinese, Indian and European food is served in restaurants at most tourist places.

GEMS / PRECIOUS STONES

Myanmar is well known for its precious stones, especially rubies (pigeon-blood) and jade (imperial-jade). Should visitors choose to purchase gems, they do so at their own risk and rely solely on their own judgment and knowledge. Exo Travel Myanmar does not assume any responsibility for gem and antique



purchases through 'recommendations' made by our guides. Our guides are instructed not to recommend any specific shop. Even if pressed to do so by visitors, the sole responsibility for their purchase lies with the buyer.

A relative guarantee for the quality of purchases is given by an official receipt and certificate issued by government-licensed dealers. Prices in such shops are higher, but are more credible and would theoretically allow you to return the purchase in case you are unhappy or if it is of lesser value. The issued paper can also be shown when exiting the country as export of gems and stones, and without such a government-issued paper are illegal.

HEALTH

No vaccinations are required except for yellow fever if you are coming from an area where the disease is present. However visitors should be inoculated against typhoid, cholera, hepatitis A & B, tetanus and polio. Malaria is present in Myanmar and it is advisable to take precautions especially if traveling off the beaten track. Please consult with your usual doctor or a doctor specialized in tropical countries before traveling.

Medical facilities are rather limited in Myanmar (Yangon has the best facilities) and it is essential to take out a good medical insurance policy before traveling. Such an insurance should cover the cost of an evacuation flight out of Myanmar (most of the time to Bangkok) which are sometimes necessary.

HOURS OF BUSINESS

Offices are usually open from Monday to Friday from 09:00 until 16:00. Most shops are open every day. An exception is Bogyoke Market (Scott Market), which is closed on Monday and public holidays. The museums in Myanmar are open Wednesday – Sunday only and are also closed on public holidays.

INSURANCE

Medical facilities are rather limited in Myanmar (Yangon has the best facilities) and it is essential to take out a good medical insurance policy before traveling. Such an insurance should absolutely cover the cost of an evacuation flight out of Myanmar (most of the time to Bangkok or Singapore) which is sometimes necessary either on a regular flight or on a special flight. For adventure tours, such as cycling, proof of purchase of a travel insurance policy will be required.

INTERNET

Internet access is still in its development stages and not reliable- the connections can be extremely slow at times so patience is required!. Most of the hotels now have Wi-Fi in cities like Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Nyaung Shwe (Inle Lake) and Ngapali. You will also find small internet cafés in most destinations.

LANGUAGE

The national language of Myanmar is Burmese, of which there are over 80 different dialects spoken. The written language uses an amazing looking script based on ancient Indian characters. In the cities, many



of the older generation still speak very good English and it is also becoming popular again with the younger generation.

MOBILE PHONES

Some international SIM cards will work in Myanmar, including Thailand (AIS), Singapore (M1) (SINGETEL) (STARHUB) and Vietnam (Viettel).

Local SIM cards are available throughout the country from three network providers: Myanmar Post & Telecommunications, Ooredoo and Telenor. Typically these cost 1,500 kyat (USD \$1.50) with top-up cards in allotments of 5,000 (USD \$5.00) and 10,000 (USD \$10.00). SIM cards are also available at Yangon Airport and Mandalay Airport.

MONEY (EXCHANGE, ATMS, TRAVELERS CHEQUES)

Currency: The currency in Myanmar is the kyat (pronounced 'chat') and comes in notes of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 5,000 and 10,000 kyat. As in many countries of the area, the US Dollar is the most useful currency to carry but we recommend for travelers to exchange some money into kyat. In many local restaurants and shops, kyat is the only method of payment allowed.

In the past, US dollars were widely accepted throughout the country. In an attempt to limit inflation, the Myanmar Government passed a law in November 2015 that no longer allows businesses to accept US dollars as payment. Hotels will also no longer be allowed to exchange currency. US dollars can still be exchanged in Myanmar, but only at approved money changers.

Exchange:

US Dollars are the best currency for exchanging and the Euro is becoming more popular, especially in Yangon. The exchange rate in Yangon is generally better than upcountry and the larger the bill, the better the rate (ie- 100 USD notes receive 2% more kyat compared to 50 USD notes). Notes should be in pristine condition and not torn, dirty or washed as these will not be accepted in Myanmar. Sometimes, bills will be rejected just because they are creased.

The most convenient place to change money is upon arrival at the airport – these exchanges are operated by domestic banks, selling kyat at the daily exchange rate. Outside of the airports your guide can assist to direct you to any of these places- there are several in Scott Market and in the downtown vicinity- which are open daily from 09.30 – 20.00. All locations accept US Dollars, Euros and Singapore Dollars.



Credit cards: Many restaurants, hotels and shops do accept credit cards (surcharge of 3-8%), but it is not recommended to rely on this service as the Internet often shuts down during the day making payment by card impossible.

Travelers Checks: Travelers Checks currently CANNOT BE USED or exchanged in Myanmar.

ATM Information:

- MasterCard and Visa are accepted at ATMs throughout the country
- ATMs available in Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan, Nyaung Shwe (Inle Lake), Kalaw, and Thandwe (Ngapali)
- 24 hours service
- 1 transaction service charges is 5,000 kyats
- No limited quantity
- One time maximum 300,000 kyats withdraw
- Maximum 1,000,000 kyats can be withdraw within 24 hours

PHOTOGRAPHY

Normal print film is available in Myanmar but professional quality films (like slide films) are very difficult to find and it is better to bring your own. It is not allowed to photograph facilities with strategic military interest (bridges, army compounds, police stations, army personnel, etc.).

DRONES

To bring in a drone, official permission is currently needed. If you would like to bring in a drone, please contact our office at least a month ahead of arrival. Even if permission is granted, many areas are still off limits to filming by drone, such as Shwedagon Pagoda.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Items of jewelry, cameras and foreign currency (above USD 10000) are supposed to be declared at customs upon entry.

Export of Buddha images and antiques or articles of archaeological importance is prohibited. Gemstones can be safely bought only from government-controlled outlets and the buyer should ask for a certificate (please read more details under Gems/Precious Stones above).

RELIGION

Buddhism is the dominant religion in Myanmar and over 85% of the population practice it. The monastery is the traditional focal point of village life in Myanmar and monks rely on villagers for donations of both money and food. Every boy in Myanmar is expected to spend some time as a monk. The remainder of the population are Christians, Muslims and animists.



SHOPPING

There are many fantastic local products in Myanmar that make excellent souvenirs and memories from your trip. Traditional crafts include lacquerware, especially in Bagan, woodcarvings, stone carvings, bronze work, rattan, silver jewellery, silk *longyis* and hand-woven textiles.

TIME DIFFERENCE

Myanmar is 6h 30 min ahead of GMT in winter and 5h 30min in summer: 1500H GMT = 2130H in Myanmar (winter). Myanmar is 30 minutes behind Bangkok (Thailand) time: 1500H in Bangkok = 1430H in Myanmar.

TIPPING

Service	Myanmar
Guide	
FIT < 6 pax	US\$ 5 pax/day
Group 7-15 pax	US\$ 4 pax/day
Group 15 pax up	US\$ 3 pax/day
MICE < 25 pax	US\$ 3 pax/day
MICE > 25 pax	US\$ 2 pax/day
Guide- Adventure Trip	
FIT < 6 pax	US\$ 7 pax/day
Group 7-15 pax	US\$ 6 pax/day
Group 15 pax up	US\$ 5 pax/day
Vehicles	
Driver (city sightseeing)	US\$ 1 pax/day (Max 15 USD per day)
Driver (overland)	US\$ 2 pax/day (Max 20 USD per day)
Incentive	US\$ 2 pax/day (Max 20 USD per day)
Bus boy (helper)	US\$ 0.5 pax/day (Max 10 USD per day)
Cyclo, Tuk-Tuks	US\$1 pax/trip (Max 10 USD per day)
Boat crew	
Short tour (sightseeing)	US\$ 1 pax/day (Max 15 USD per day)
Long tour	US\$ 2 pax/day (Max 20 USD per day)
Cruise with O/N	US\$ 3 pax/night



Hotels	
Porters	500 kyats /luggage
Housekeeping	500 kyats/day
Restaurant (waiters)	
Pre-arranged meals	US\$0.5 - 1/pax/meal
Meal on client's own	5% of bill

VEHICLES

Vehicles used in Myanmar (from 4–seater saloon cars to 45-seater buses) are generally newer models, but in remote destinations they still operate older vehicles.

All vehicles do have air-conditioning, seat-belts and we provide all our clients with complimentary water and towels in ice-boxes in each vehicle.

VISAS

A visa is **COMPULSORY** to enter Myanmar. A 28-day tourist visa is usually sufficient for most visitors. The current regulations for entering Myanmar are as following:

1. Individual visa

This visa is issued by a Myanmar Embassy or Consulate. An invitation letter is not mandatory, and it usually takes 3-5 working days to issue this visa. Visas issued at Myanmar Embassies are \$20

2. Package Tour visa

This visa is issued by a Myanmar Embassy or Consulate. It usually takes 3-5 days to issue the visa. With the confirmation of your booking, Exo will send the letter to the Embassy. Exo will need the full names, passport numbers, nationality and name of Myanmar Embassy we have to send the letter. A copy of the letter will be send to you by fax or e-mail.

3. E-Visa

After years of development, Myanmar’s e-visa online system is now available.

- Arrival allowed at international airports, or at all land borders with Thailand. If coming overland from another country, a visa must be secured before arrival.
- Cost: USD \$50 non-refundable paid during application submission. Visa and MasterCard accepted
- Valid for 28 days in country, single-entry. Travelers must arrive in Myanmar within 90 days of issue date.



- Approval letter will be sent within five working days. This letter needs to be printed to allow boarding of your international flight. Upon arrival, please go straight to the immigration counter. No passport photo needed.
- Children under age of 7 holding their own passports are require to apply eVisa separately and pay USD 50 for the eVisa. If your child is under 7 and is listed in parent/guardian passport and accompanying the trip, please fill up the minor information included in eVisa application form.
- Applications can be submitted at <http://evisa.moip.gov.mm/>. Please contact your travel consultant for additional information.

APPLICABLE NATIONALITIES	
Argentina	Kenya
Albania	Korea, DPR
Algeria	Korea, Republic
Australia	Kuwait
Austria	Kyrgyzstan
Bangladesh	Laos
Belarus	Latvia
Belgium	Lithuania
Bhutan	Luxembourg
Bolivia	Malaysia
Bosnia	Maldive
Brazil	Malta
Brunei	Mauritius
Bulgaria	Mexico
Cambodia	Monaco
Cameroon	Mongolia
Canada	Morocco
Chile	Nepal
China	Netherlands
Colombia	New Zeland
Costa Rica	Norway
Côte d'Ivoire	Pakistan
Croatia	Panama
Cyprus	Peru
CZECH	Philippines
Denmark	Poland
Ecuador	Portugal
Egypt	Qatar



Eritrea	Romania
Estonia	Russia
Fiji	Saudi Arabia
Finland	Serbia
France	Singapore
Georgia	Slovakia
Germany	Slovenia
Ghana	South Africa
Greece	Spain
Guatemala	Sri Lanka
Guinea	Sweden
Hungary	Switzerland
Iceland	Taiwan
India	Thailand
Indonesia	Turkey
Ireland	Uganda
Israel	Ukraine
Italy	United Kingdom
Jamaica	United States of America
Japan	Uruguay
Jordan	Uzbekistan
Kazakhstan	Venezuela
	Vietnam

WEATHER

Myanmar has three seasons: summer, monsoon and winter. Winter, between November and February, is considered the best time to visit with cooler climates across the country. Temperatures range from mild in Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay and Ngapali to cool in Shan State, which includes Inle Lake, Kalaw and Pindaya. Sunny days with virtually no rain in the winter season. October straddles the monsoon and winter season with sporadic afternoon showers in Yangon and Inle. The Southwest monsoon starts at the end of May or beginning of June and lasts until the end of September. This season brings frequent and heavy downpours of rain, mainly in the afternoon and evening especially in Yangon, though the rest of the country is dryer. In the rainy season the weather is more humid and can make travelling less comfortable. September, although still considered part of the monsoon, is a particularly nice time to visit as the subsiding rains turn the countryside a vibrant green. In March the temperatures start to climb again leading up to the next rainy season at the end of May. Temperatures between March and May can be very hot reaching over 35°C in Bagan and Mandalay.

WATER

It is not advisable to drink tap water. Bottled mineral water is safe and available everywhere. All hotels provide a complimentary bottle of local mineral water per person in the room. Ice cubes in drinks are generally OK in good standard hotels and restaurants, but it is best to avoid it at street stalls or in



country areas. Some minor stomach problems are always possible when travelling in exotic countries. Bring a supply of your usual anti-diarrhea medicine.