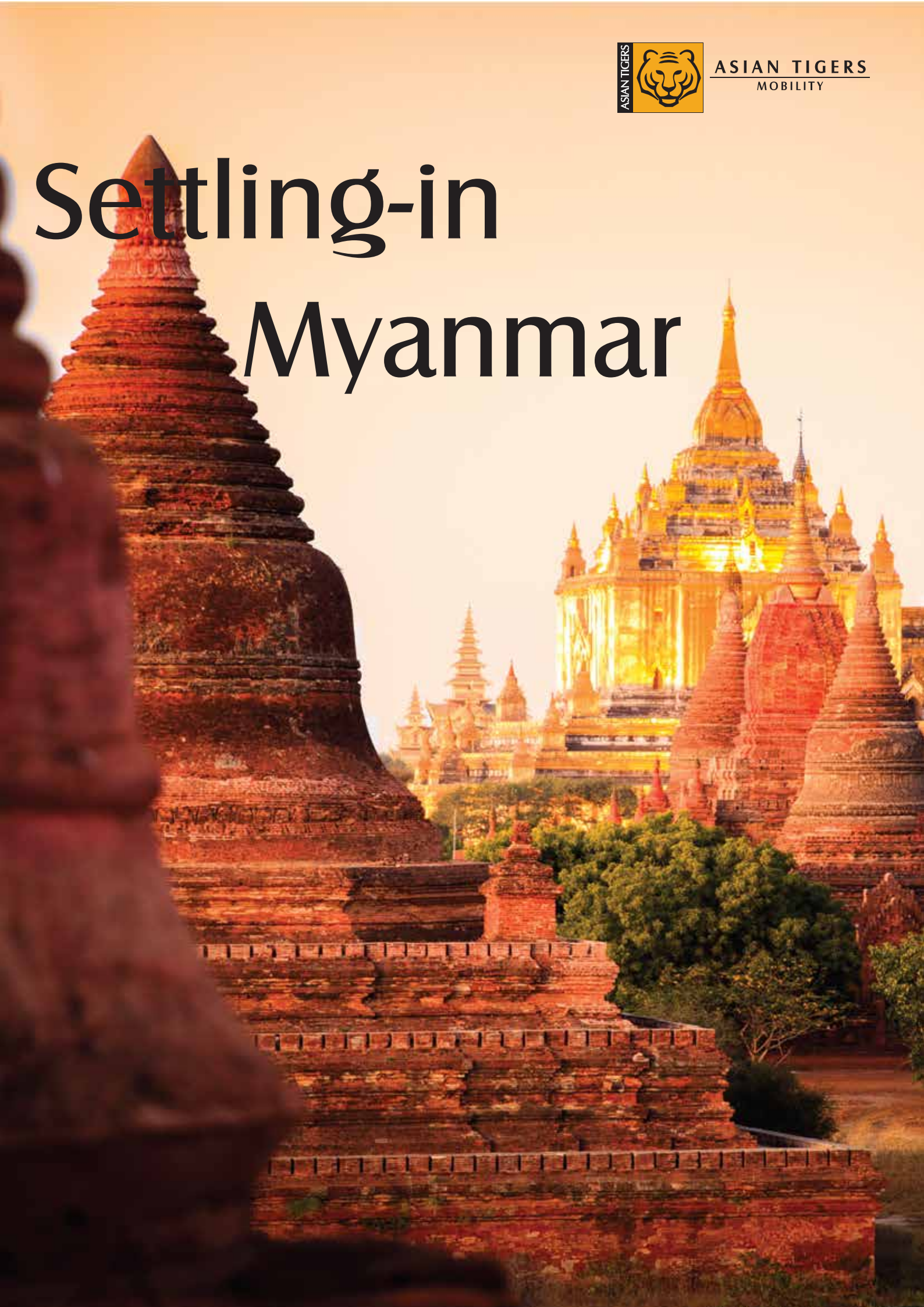




ASIAN TIGERS
MOBILITY

Settling-in Myanmar



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A person is seen from behind, walking on a sandy beach towards the ocean. They are carrying a large, dark, woven basket on their back. The person is wearing a light-colored, patterned shirt and dark pants. The beach is wide and sandy, with gentle waves lapping at the shore. In the background, there is a dense line of tropical trees, including palm trees, and some buildings are visible through the foliage. The sky is clear and bright. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

The Basics

About Myanmar

When referring to Myanmar, Rudyard Kipling wrote, 'It is quite unlike any place you know about.'

Yangon, formerly Rangoon, was the capital of Myanmar until November 2005. Named in 1775 by King Alaungpaya, Yangon means 'End of Strife.' The largest city in Myanmar, it is the main economic and transportation hub of the country as well as being the commercial and industrial center. Major exports include rice, teak, petroleum, cotton, metal ores, and precious stones.

The city is an amalgamation of British, Burmese, Chinese and Indian influences, and is known for its colonial architecture, with the largest number of colonial buildings in South East Asia. Unlike other major Asian cities, Yangon does not have any skyscrapers. Made up of 34 townships, Yangon is the most ethnically diverse city in the country. Today the majority of the population is of Bamar (Burman) descent, but there are still large communities of Indians/South Asians and Chinese. Though over 100 different dialects are spoken, Burmese is the principal language.

Yangon is also the location of the 2,500-year-old Shwedagon Pagoda, the biggest pagoda in the world. As the centerpiece of the city, this beautiful golden stupa is visible from all over town. The contrast of the ancient Buddhist pagodas alongside the vibrant and colorful streets gives Yangon a unique charm of its own. It is also cool and green with tropical trees, shady parks, and beautiful lakes.

The climate is monsoonal, with three distinct seasons: a wet rainy season from June to September with average temperatures of 25-30°C, a cooler and drier season from October through to February averaging 20-24°C, and a hot dry season from March to May with temperatures reaching 30-35°C. The winter season from November to January is less humid and cooler than the remaining months. Major festivals occur throughout the year, most notably Thingyan (the water festival, equivalent to the Thai festival of Songkran), in April.

Time also is an oddity. Usually, countries set their time in one-hour increments from GMT. This country has it set in a 30-minute increment difference.

Myanmar's Facts & Figures

Land Area	: 678,500 sq. kilometer
Population	: 53.37 million
Density	: 81 people per square kilometer
Government	: Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic
Time Zone	: GMT + 6.30
Currency	: Myanmar Kyat (MKK)
Religion	: Predominantly Buddhism, followed by Muslims and Christians
Language	: Burmese
Weather	: Largely tropical with 3 seasons
Important Laws & Regulations	<p>: Drug use and trafficking, money laundering, trading in antique items and the transporting, buying or selling of restricted items are liable to severe punishment by law</p> <p>Foreign tourists are may not be accommodated in the residential areas of Myanmar's cities or villages</p> <p>A specific license must be obtained to operate vehicles in Myanmar. International licenses are not accepted. To take precaution against any car accidents due to lack of knowledge of traffic rules in Myanmar, it is recommended to refrain from self-driving</p> <p>International visitors should not contact any political activists, visit their offices or residences, or get involved in any of their political activities</p>



Let's Talk About Culture

Local Culture

Residents of Myanmar are famously known for their hospitality. The slow pace and laid-back attitude of the people may take some getting used to. However, you will quickly feel right at home in such a friendly atmosphere. Yangon people are very friendly, outgoing and prepared to socialize. The more graciously you can accept their kindness, the better disposed towards you they will become. Unlike some cultures, people from Myanmar tend to trust everyone until they give a reason not to be trusted.

Make an effort to learn the local culture and customs. Buddhism is a way of life in Myanmar and should be greatly respected at all times. As with the rest of the Asian countries, elders are also treated with respect. Please also note to dress with respect for the local culture. Shorts, short skirts or revealing and suggestive clothing are not appropriate, especially when visiting temples or any religious sites of worship. Myanmar is a conservative Buddhist culture, and improper dress can be considered offensive. Particular customs also apply to monks, who must at all times avoid physical contact with women.

Physical demonstrations of affection in public are common between friends or between members of the family but seldom seen between lovers. It is common to see friends walking together holding hands or with arms, but couples rarely do so, except in major cities. Also, Burmese women never travel without at least one female companion. The local people regard female visitors who travel alone as slightly strange.

In many cultures, traditionally people will bring a gift for your hosts, but this is not necessary for Myanmar culture. However, if you do decide to bring a gift, ensure to make it a modest one. For example, Myanmar people love reading and value literature especially rare international publications. Do not be surprised if the receiver seems aloof about accepting the gift. It is neither a sign of impoliteness nor a snub; gifts are not considered important in this culture.

Do remember the above is a very broad generalization, and every person is different. Most often, common sense, staying open-minded and respect will help you learn how to adapt and live in an unfamiliar culture. Your Asian Tigers Mobility Consultant will be happy to provide details on recommended reads as well as Cross-Cultural Training Programs.

Cultural Do's & Don'ts

Do's

Make an effort to find out about their customs and tradition when you visit local villages as it is recommended to show respect to their norms.

Greeting with a smile is a customarily accepted cultural norm of the Myanmar people.

Show high reverence and respect for the Buddhist monks and the elderly as such care is customary of the Myanmar people. Do not give money directly to a begging monk. Place it directly in his alms bowl.

Dress appropriately and modestly when entering temples and other sacred places of worship.

Remember to remove shoes when entering private homes.

Purchase local products to support the local community. Bargaining is acceptable but do offer a fair price.

Lower your head a little to show respect when you pass by an elder person.

Don'ts

Don't show affection in public such as kissing and hugging as this is not an acceptable custom in Myanmar.

Don't indicate something with your chin or your foot, as this is considered highly impolite.

Don't be tempted to give individual charity to anyone on the roadside. Donations to established charitable organizations are a recommended way to support community growth and demonstrate social responsibility.

Don't show disrespect by touching anyone's head. The head is thought to be the "seat of the soul".

Don't take photographs or videos without seeking approval first, especially when it comes to indigenous national groups as it may cause embarrassment.

Don't engage in political discussions with the local people, especially in public places, as politics is considered a sensitive subject.



Settling in Tips



Getting Around

Private Car

Those wishing to drive must apply for a Myanmar license at the Department for Road Transport and Administration in Yangon. An International Driving License cannot be used in Myanmar but can be shown to obtain a local Myanmar license. There is no requirement to take a written or road test.

Many of the roads in Yangon are in poor condition and not wide enough to accommodate an increasing number of cars. In Myanmar, cars are driven on the right side of the road, however many cars on the road are still right-hand drive (RHD) made for driving on the left side.

Myanmar as road quality, driving habits of locals and road safety may be different from your current location. As Myanmar is opening up commercially, there has been a noted increase in the number of traffic accidents.

Bus Services

Public bus service is available in the city, but buses are typically overcrowded, chaotic and in poor condition. They provide the cheapest mode of transport but can be difficult for expats as signs will not be in English. The bus network is extensive with over 300 public and private bus lines operating a total of about 6,400 buses throughout the city. The bus service is not typically used by transferees relocating to Myanmar.

Train Services

Public bus service is available in the city, but buses are typically overcrowded, chaotic and in poor condition. They provide the cheapest mode of transport but can be difficult for expats as signs will not be in English. The bus network is extensive with over 300 public and private bus lines operating a total of about 6,400 buses throughout the city. The bus service is not typically used by transferees relocating to Myanmar.

Food

In the last few years, Yangon has seen an explosion of restaurants reflecting the multi-ethnic nature of the city. Almost any type of international cuisine from Western to Japanese to Italian is available. Local cuisine such as Bamar food is readily available alongside a large number of Indian and Chinese restaurants, due to the influence and inhabitants from the neighboring countries. Typical Burmese dishes are curry-based and make

use of chicken, seafood, and mutton. Curries tend to be less spicy than those served in Thailand. As the

country is Buddhist run state, there is very little use of pork or beef because the Buddhist diet is composed of mainly vegetarian dishes, with tofu as a common meat substitute. Staple dishes tend to be rice or noodles, usually served with a variety of side dishes such as curries with meat or fish, vegetables, salads, soup, and condiments. There are many excellent and cheap Burmese restaurants in Yangon

Small teashops also line the streets of Yangon where one can find delicious local dishes such as the "mohinga," a light fish noodle soup. Considered the national dish, it is served practically everywhere and is typically eaten as breakfast. The Burmese traditionally eat with their fingers, although the usage of Western utensils and chopsticks has become more widespread, especially in towns and cities..

Street food

Street food, though commonly popular in many South East Asian countries, is generally not very varied or popular in Yangon. There is a stretch of hawker food stalls around the Anawratha and Mahabandoola Roads, but due to the high density of dust and smoke in the air, the environment for al fresco dining is not appealing.

Western Food

For Western food, there are restaurants and hotels around Inya Lake. Dishes are usually available in buffet style, as well as a la carte menus. Worldwide fast food chains are notably absent in the city, although this has given rise to a few local fast food establishments and cafes.

Medical Care

Private Clinics & Hospitals

Myanmar SOS International Ltd

Tel: +95 (0)1-667 871

Address: Inya Lake Hotel, 37 Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Yangon, Myanmar

Asia Royal Clinic

Website: <http://www.asiaroyalmedical.com> Tel: +95 (0)1-538055

Address: No.14, Baho Street, Sanchaung Township, Yangon

Bahosi Hospital

Website: <http://www.bahosimedical.com/> Tel: +95 (0)1-212933

Address: B 1/6 - 31/36 - 37/38, Bahosi Housing Complex, Wardan Street, Lanmadaw Township, Yangon

Pun Hlaing International Hospital Email: enquiry.phih@spa.com.mm Tel: +95 (0)1-684323

Address: Pun Hlaing Golf Estate, Hlaing Tharyar Township, Yangon

Shwegondaing Specialist Center

Tel: +95 (0)1-542400

Address: 7 East Shwegondaing Road, Yangon

Expatriate Housing in Myanmar

Depending on how long a period of temporary accommodation you would need, you could stay in a hotel or serviced apartment. Generally, if you plan to stay more than 2 weeks, it would be more cost efficient to stay in a serviced apartment than a hotel. Advantages of serviced apartments are that they include all bills except telephone charges and have 24-hour electricity (using a backup generator). All of the serviced apartments tend to have their swimming pool, gym/sauna, provide designated parking and also have good security.

Permanent Housing

Housing in Myanmar ranges from houses with landed property, villas, apartments, condominiums and flats. These can include renovated properties as well as new developments. Housing has seen a recent boom in pricing in Myanmar and is expected to continue to rise with foreign direct investment. The average rent for a detached home with reliable telephone service, Internet, water and electricity has doubled in the past two years. Areas with high development due to foreign investment in Myanmar have directly affected the increasing price of rent. 'Apartment Hotels,' which are the equivalent of serviced apartments, offer comfortable and reliable living arrangements. Most of the long-term housing in Myanmar is unfurnished. The lease term in Myanmar is typically one year and renewable pending lease negotiation. A deposit of one or two months is required, and agents usually charge up to one month's rent on signing the contract.

Asian Tigers Mobility will gladly assist you according to your home finding needs. Please contact your consultant for further guidance.

International Schools

There are a number of international schools in Yangon. However, as there is a recent rise in the expatriate population, many candidates find themselves on a waiting list to enter these schools.

Asian Tigers Mobility will gladly assist you with your school search. Please contact your consultant for further guidance.

Useful Links and Contacts

International School Yangon (ISY)

<http://www.internationalschoolyangon.org>

Address: 20, Shwe Taungyar, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar

International Language & Business Center (ILBC):

<http://www.ilbcedu.com>

Address: 34, Lay Duant Kan Road, Tarmway Lay Ward, Tarmway, Yangon, Myanmar

Myanmar International School

<http://www.mis-edu.com/>

Address: No. 20, Pyin Nya Waddy Street Yankin Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Yangon International School

<http://www.yismyanmar.net/>

Address: No. 117 Thumingalar Housing, Thingangyun Township, Yangon, Myanmar

International School of Myanmar

<http://www.ismyanmar.com/>

Address: W -22 Mya Kan Thar Main Road

Mya Kan Thar Housing, 4th Ward, Hlaing Township Yangon, Myanmar

Horizon International School

<http://www.horizonmyanmar.com>

Address: 235, Shu Khinn Thar Pat Road, Takayta Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Daily Needs

Banking

Kyat is the currency in Myanmar, and its symbol is MMK. US dollars are also accepted and are the most desired currency. Legally speaking, cash dollars can only be accepted by establishments possessing a license to accept US dollars. However, in reality, all merchants are quite happy to take them. There are very few ATMs in Myanmar, and they are not always working. Credit cards are generally not accepted anywhere, except for a few expensive hotels and high-end jewelry shops. The best choice is to bring US dollars, clean and unmarked as some institutions may not accept bills that are too old, marked (with writing), or wrinkled. Also, be advised that concerns over counterfeit money mean that some US Dollar bills with serial numbers beginning with AB or BC may not be accepted.

There are some different Myanmar currency notes and coins in circulation. Currency notes currently in use are 1 kyat, 5 kyat, 10 kyat, 20 kyat, 50 kyat, 100 kyat, 200 kyat, 500 kyat, and 1,000 kyat notes. For coins, officially there are 1 pya, 5 pya, 10 pya, 25 pya (one mat), 50 pya (ngar mu), 1 kyat, 5 kyat, 10 kyat, 50 kyat, and 100 kyat coins. Although coins are officially in use, very few coins are actually produced. Therefore, there are almost no coins in use in Myanmar.

Groceries

Compared to other Asian cities like neighboring Thailand and Singapore, supermarkets in Yangon are limited. Nonetheless, you can buy some imported products at one of the newest supermarkets in Golden Valley called Market Place. There is also a supermarket chain called City Mart Supermarket that has foreign imported items, but compared to Market Place, it is not as extensive. Also, the prices of imported goods tend to be more expensive than neighboring countries.

Shopping

Yangon is also well known for antique shopping and unique tapestries. Collectibles also include statues, wooden fixtures, old clocks, and more home furnishings. Meanwhile, fabric shoppers will be delighted with the available selection of colorful longyi, a traditional form of clothing worn by both men and women, formally referred to as a sarong. Woodcrafts ranging from small items such as figurines and wooden canes to heavy home furniture are also available. Prices are very reasonable, and in most markets, bargaining is acceptable. The most popular places for bargain hunting are Bogyoke Aung San Market and Chinatown.

Utilities

Electricity

Most of the time, electricity is cut off unless you happen to live in a more affluent area. Always have candles and flash lights accessible, as well as emergency lights at your home. Electric generators or battery inverters are also extremely useful items in case of electricity outages.

Water

The municipality of Yangon provides water. This is safe for general use and cooking but for drinking purposes, it is better to use bottled water. It is also possible to install water purifiers at your house. Tap water shouldn't be consumed unless it has been boiled, filtered, or chemically disinfected. For safety precautions, also avoid drinking unbottled beverages or drinks with ice that may be made from tap water. Be aware of expiration dates and imported products. Many neighboring countries have used Myanmar as a dumping ground for low quality or expired products.

Domestic Help

Finding a good and reliable maid in Myanmar may prove difficult. Since many expats leave after a short period of time in the country, maids are hesitant to sign on as they may have to look for employment elsewhere within months. Some community services like Christian missions and churches are able to help, but your best bet in finding a maid is through contacts and word of mouth advertising. Some maids who have worked for expats previously are considered well qualified and even trained to cook western food. Expect to pay more for their services.

A large crowd of people is gathered at night, many holding up red flags. In the background, a large plume of white smoke or steam rises into the dark sky, illuminated by a tall street lamp. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light sources being the smoke and the street lamp. A semi-transparent yellow banner is overlaid across the middle of the image.

Let's Have Fun

Networking

There are several recreational clubs in Yangon where you can meet other expatriates and extend your network. The American Club, the British Club and the Australian Club all organize events all year round. These clubs are mostly for members only, but there are various activities that are open to non-members. On Inya Lake, there is a sailing club that has boat races on weekends. About 20 minutes outside Yangon, there is a horse riding club that is maintained by the Yangon Equestrian Club. There are also volunteering opportunities at numerous charities and organizations.

Yangon Golf Club

Kha Yae Pin St Da Nyin Gone Ward Insein

www.yangongolfclub.com

Phone: 635563

Yangon Sailing Club 132 Inya Road Kamayut Township Yangon

www.yangonsailing.com

Phone: 513899

Yangon United Football Club

No.(143/149), Sule Pagoda Road Kyauktada Township Yangon

<http://www.ygnutd.com>

Phone: 380059

Myanmar Women's Development Association

cbi@mptmail.net.mm

The Salvation Army

176/78 Anawrahta Street Botahtaung Township Yangon

www.salvationnarmy.org/myanmar

Phone: 294267

Myanmar Christian Fellowship of the Blind

No/165, Baho Street, 2 Qtr. Mayangone Township Yangon

www.mcfblind.com

Phone: 661689

Alliance Française de Yangon

340 Pyay road, Sanchaung, Yangon

alliance@cccl-rgn.net.mm

Phone: 535428/436900

A vintage rotary telephone is the central focus, resting on a dark wooden desk. The phone has a black handset and a light-colored base with a rotary dial. In the background, a wooden mallet with a turned handle stands upright. To the left, a glass jar with a decorative stopper is partially visible. The scene is lit with warm, low-key lighting, creating a nostalgic atmosphere. A semi-transparent yellow banner is overlaid across the middle of the image.

Need Help?

Emergency Contacts

Emergency

Police	: 199
Ambulance	: 192
Fire	: 191
Electricity	: 215666
Yangon General Hospital	: 256112
Immigration	: 651113
Yangon International Airport	: 533094
Railways	: 202176
Road Transport	: 374207
Red Cross	: 295133
Telephone Complaint	: 100
General Post Office	: 285499
Weather	: 660176
Customs	: 253046
Labour Office	: 651198
Myanmar DHL	: 664423
Funeral Service Association	: 578184

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