

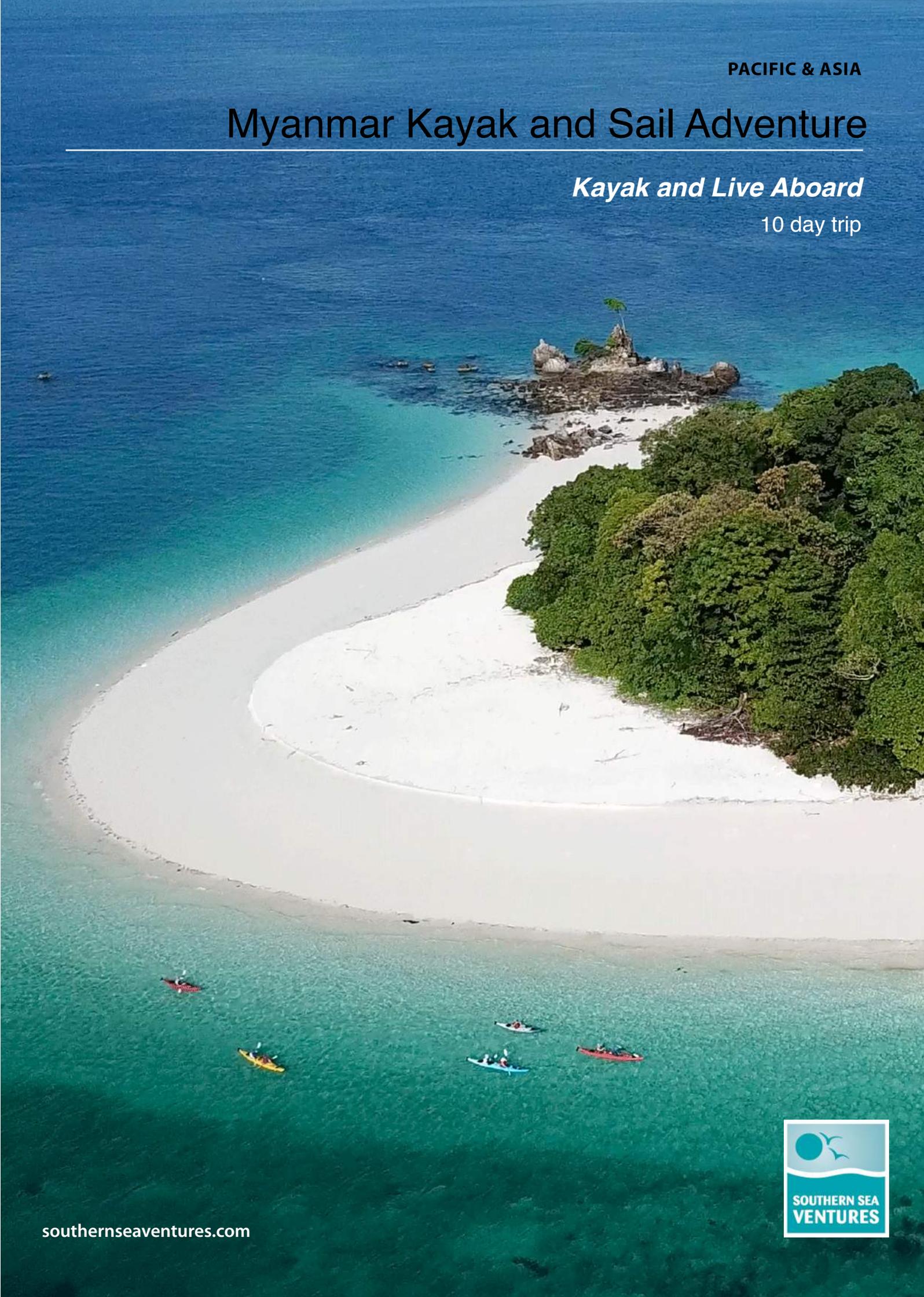
PACIFIC & ASIA

# Myanmar Kayak and Sail Adventure

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*Kayak and Live Aboard*

10 day trip



# Myanmar: Kayak and Live Aboard



## 10 day trip 7-8 days kayaking

The south coast of Myanmar (Burma) stretches over 1900 km along the Bay of Bengal and into the Andaman Sea. The Mergui Archipelago is located in the far south on the western shore of the Malay Peninsular, close to the border with Thailand. The archipelago consists of more than 800 limestone and granite islands, ringed by white sandy beaches and fringed with coral reefs. The marine ecology is highly diverse with dolphins, whales, sharks and dugongs inhabiting the area.

Myanmar is home to one of the last sea gypsy cultures, called the Moken. We will encounter Moken on numerous occasions during the trip as they live on their traditional craft collecting seafood and maintaining their unique culture.

Each day our modern catamaran will move to a new location, allowing kayakers different explorations including mangrove paddling, sea cave exploration and discovering remote sandy beaches. The catamaran provides a comfortable base camp to return to after each day's outing, anchoring overnight in sheltered coves and providing delicious meals, including home-cooked tasty Thai cuisine. Join us for this stunning island adventure!

## A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Arrive Ranong, Thailand. Meet your guide. Overnight hotel.

**Day 2:** Boat to Kawthuang, Myanmar. Board the catamaran. L • D

**Days 3-8:** Explore the islands by kayak and sail. B • L • D

**Day 9:** Transfer back to Ranong . Overnight hotel. B • L

**Day 10:** End of trip arrangements.

## Meeting Place and Time

Meet your guide at 7pm on Day 1 in the lobby of the Tinidee hotel in Ranong, Thailand. The hotel provides complimentary airport transfers.

## How to Get There

There are direct flights from Bangkok to Ranong with Air Asia and NOK Air. Both airlines depart from the domestic section of Don Mueang Airport. If transiting through Bangkok please be aware there are two airports, Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang and they are at least a 90 minute bus ride from each other. There are also regular connections to Ranong by bus and mini van which take about 6-8 hours from Bangkok.

## Sea Kayaking

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Some previous paddling experience is required to participate on this trip. We require all participants to complete and return our kayak experience form on booking.

The kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and ideally suited for this remote trip. Your guide is a highly experienced sea kayaker and on Day 2 you will be given a thorough briefing on all aspects of sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with the kayaks. We generally limit our group size to a maximum of eight participants, plus your dedicated kayak guide.

In general, the fitter you are the more you will enjoy the paddling, so it's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming well before the trip. If you have not paddled recently, we highly recommend some practice before your trip and we may be able to suggest a local operator for kayak hire and/or tuition near your home.

The kayaks supplied are Rainbows, a mixture of doubles and singles. The paddles are from Aquabound-plastic blades with carbon shafts.

The predominant winds are from the east, which is usually not a bother as the best paddling can be found on the more protected west coast of the islands. Additionally, the catamaran provides the flexibility to move from one location to the next, shuttling us to areas that are more protected from the wind.

Kayakers should be of an intermediate standard and have paddled before on outings up to 12km in length. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll but should have an adventurous spirit and recognise that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can't do. We ask that all participants feel confident in swimming.

## Proposed Itinerary

**The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Our aim is to enjoy a tropical adventure and not be governed by a rigid schedule. The program may change to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, to suit local conditions and according to**

**the preferences of the group. Please note that weather and logistical conditions can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

**Day 1:** Arrive in the town of Ranong, Thailand. The group hotel, the Tinidee, provide airport arrival transfers. Please let us know your arrival flight so we can advise the hotel. Meet your guide at the hotel at 7pm for the trip briefing. Meals are not included today.

**OVERNIGHT AT TINIDEE HOTEL (OR SIMILAR)**

**Day 2:** A morning transfer to Ranong harbour. From there, we travel by long tail boat across the Pakchan River to Myanmar and the town of Kawthuang, our official entrance point for Myanmar. After clearing customs, we'll board the catamaran *Mahayana* and set sail for Barwell Island, 30km from Kawthuang. Upon arrival, we'll enjoy a swim and a snorkel before outfitting the kayaks and gear. If there's time, we can head out for a sunset paddle to the stunning beaches and heavy jungle of Barwell Island. Returning to the catamaran, we'll relax over a delicious Thai dinner.

**L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 3:** We sail/motor to the Triple Islets, south of Buda Island. Anchoring in front of a beautiful sand spit we can enjoy a refreshing swim and snorkel during the heat of the day. In the afternoon we'll circumnavigate the western island, a mix of gorgeous beaches, cliff lined coast and turquoise green waters.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 4:** Travelling west, we stop at stunning Peaked Island with its white sand beach situated within a jagged rocky coastline. This is a perfect place for a snorkel and we may see small reef sharks, a variety of fish and coral. We continue on to Great Swinton Island and launch the kayaks to paddle beside stunning sea cliffs, sea caves, arches and sea stacks. We will be picked up by the catamaran at a beautiful beach where we can swim and snorkel.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 5:** As we enter the westerly part of the Mergui archipelago, the landscape changes dramatically as granite and limestone cliffs dominate. Paddling along the west coast of Lord Loughborough Island, we pass incredible rock formations, cliff walls and dense jungle. The view from our kayaks will change from the previous days as the Islands take on a much more rugged and dramatic feel. After a stunning paddle of Lord Loughborough, we anchor in a protected bay on the south coast of the island.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 6:** We'll start the day with a morning transit over to Ba Wei Island. Here we paddle below 350 metre cliff wall and into numerous caves, enjoying the incredible views of these stunning islands. Another short transit during the afternoon sees us arriving in a string of islands just north of Macleod Island. In the afternoon we paddle through these small islands, featuring stunning sea cliffs punctuated with beautiful pocket beaches. The catamaran will follow us as we paddle south, finishing at an incredibly beautiful isthmus.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 7:** Getting up early to beat the midday heat, we continue our paddle south along Macleod Island. The coastline becomes more rugged as we encounter caves, cliff walls and sea stacks. We finish paddling at another stunning beach where the catamaran meets us. After a short transit during lunch, we'll get back in the kayaks to explore the Hero Islands. These two islands are exceptionally dramatic, featuring towering rock walls and impressive rock spires. In the late afternoon we'll transit further south to Say Tan Island, anchoring in a small protected bay with a stunning white sand beach.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 8:** This morning we paddle through stunning limestone islands and explore hidden lagoons, immense caves and impressive cliff walls containing huge stalactites. These islands present the best snorkelling opportunities and we take time out to explore an amazing underwater world.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 9:** A sunrise paddle or swim provides the perfect send off from this incredible archipelago. We'll have breakfast, say goodbye to the boat crew and transfer back to Kawthuang. After customs formalities, we take the longtail boat across to Ranong and check back into the Tinidee Hotel. Dinner is not included tonight.

**B • L / OVERNIGHT AT TINIDEE HOTEL (OR SIMILAR)**

**Day 10:** The trip concludes with a fond farewell from your guide.  
**END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS**

## Climate

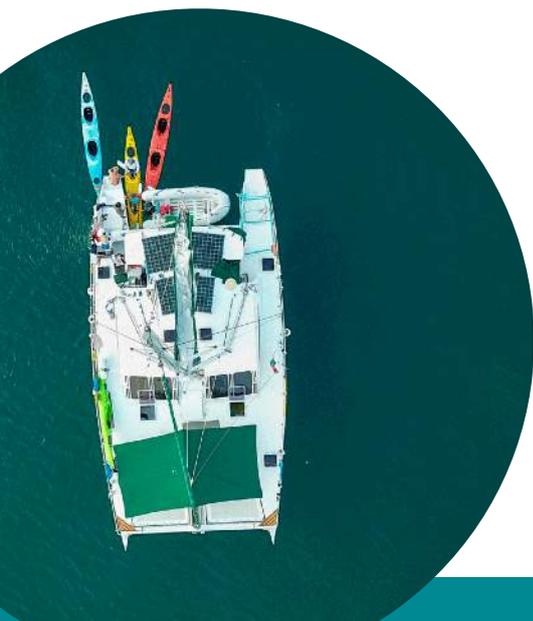
November to April is the best time of the year to visit the Mergui Archipelago. During this period the weather is normally stable with sunny skies and light winds. Day time highs normally reach between 26-30 degrees C and cool off to 21-25 degrees C at night. Rain is possible at any time of the day, but normally doesn't last long. The humidity is always high.

## The Yacht

*Mahayana* is a 51 foot custom built aluminium catamaran. The main attraction of this yacht is her comfortable living areas and abundance of deck space. The four double cabins are located in the pontoons of the catamaran. Two of the cabins have their own ensuite and two have a shared ensuite but private vanities. All cabins have electric fans and reading lights. Roof and side hatches allow for good ventilation. There is plenty of space to store gear as well as a couple of 220 volt charging stations to keep your electronics topped up.

In the communal areas, the vessel offers a large dining table within the saloon or the option to eat outside under the stars.

The trampoline area with its numerous bean bags is the perfect place to sit back and relax, feeling the wind against your face while under sail, either reading a book or taking in the spectacular views on offer.



## **Trip Organisation**

The boat will act as our floating home and allows travelling in comfort between the islands. We'll launch the kayaks each morning and depending on the day, either return to the boat for lunch or spend a full day exploring, maybe enjoying a picnic lunch on one of the white-sand, coral fringed beaches.

Days will start early to take advantage of cooler temperatures. It's a good idea to prepare your personal items for the day before breakfast. Make sure you pack your snorkelling gear as kayakers will be in the water as well as on it!

## **Expedition Staff**

A western kayak guide will lead this trip. They will decide on safety matters, administer the medical kit and liaise with the ship captain and crew. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guide. The catamaran has a crew of three, including the captain and chef. We are also required to bring a Burmese guide, who will accompany us as we travel through the region.

## **Travel Arrangements**

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures and operator Expedition Engineering is not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and your guide will do their best to rectify the situation. Please understand that in this part of the world, delays and waiting are commonplace and whilst we do our best to keep to schedule, it is not always possible. We are sure you will appreciate this and accept it as part of the whole island experience.

## **Travel Insurance**

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to weather or other reasons, and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

## **Passports, Visas and Permits**

At the time of writing, most western nation's citizens may stay in Thailand as a tourist without a visa up to 30 days if entering by aircraft OR 15 days if entering over land (border check point). This visa exemption only applies to persons with a confirmed ticket out of Thailand and at least six months passport validity.

On entering Myanmar, we will obtain a special permit for the Mergui area. This costs about US\$400.00 and is covered in the trip costs.

Guests do not need a Myanmar visa to enter the Mergui area, however if you plan to travel in Myanmar before or after the trip a visa is required prior to travel.

## Time & Communication

There is very little mobile coverage once we leave the port in Myanmar. We may pick up sporadic mobile coverage close to small villages. For emergencies there is a satellite phone onboard the catamaran.

There are about 100 languages spoken in Myanmar. Burmese is the native language of the Bamar people and is the language that is mostly spoken in the Mergui Archipelago.

## Food and Drink

There is a dedicated Thai chef onboard who will prepare our meals. The food is delicious and plentiful. Breakfasts normally feature a huge serving of fruit, granola/muesli and yogurt. Eggs, bacon, pancakes and French toast are on offer several times throughout the trip. The lunch and dinner menu features a nice mixture of Thai and Western dishes.

Tea, real coffee, cold soft drinks and juices are always available and are free of charge.

Beer, wine and spirits can be ordered before the trip. It will be purchased and loaded on the *Mahayana* in Phuket and transported to Kawthaung. A separate ordering form will be emailed to participants before the trip commences.

Dietary requirements can be catered for on the catamaran. Please let the office know if you have any dietary requirements or food allergies and also note these on your medical form.

As with any change in diet, it is wise to accustom yourself slowly to different foods. It is recommended to wash any fruit bought in the market and to drink sterilised or bottled water rather than tap.

## Cultural Considerations

It is very important to behave in a respectful way towards the people of the Mergui Archipelago, their land and sea. Some basic practices you should observe are:

- ask the locals if they mind being photographed.
- restrict wearing bathing suits to remote beaches.
- in villages use a sarong/shirt to cover singlet tops and brief shorts.

## Conservation

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out



everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, water bottles etc.

## Photography

High humidity, along with paddling in a salt water environment, can damage the delicate electronics in cameras. You might consider bringing a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries as there is little opportunity to purchase batteries during our island trip. It is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it.

## Money Matters

### Your tour cost includes:

- Two nights twin share hotel accommodation in Ranong, Thailand.
- Live aboard boat-twin cabin accommodation.
- All meals from lunch on Day 2 to lunch on Day 9.
- Western kayak guide.
- Double and single expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Mergui entry permit.
- Transfers from Ranong in Thailand to Myanmar and return.

### Your tour cost *does not* include:

- Airfares.
- Meals in Ranong.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry and WIFI.

## Money to Bring With You

We will visit island villages where there may be opportunities to purchase local goods. Money will also be needed to purchase meals and drinks in Ranong. We suggest you bring €200-500 euros worth of Thai baht. Thai baht is accepted in the Myanmar villages.

Approximate exchange rate is:

1 Euro=37 Thai baht

1 Euro=1600 Myanmar kyat

## Tipping

Tips are not expected but are very much appreciated by the boat crew. Tips will be collected at the end of the trip by the western guide and will be divided among the three crew members. We suggest that each guest tips the crew a total of €50 Euros or about 1800 Thai baht.

## Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline voucher and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. Theft is a consideration (like at home) so it is always a good idea not to leave things unattended when in the towns or villages.

Valuables can be kept onboard the boat.

Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet in towns.

## Medical Matters

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know of any drugs to which you are allergic as well as noting this on your medical form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

### Hygiene

Be conscious of hygiene. Regularly wash your hands, be wary of uncooked food and wash fruit or preferably peel it (with clean hands!).

### Malaria and Vaccinations

Malaria is present in rural Myanmar but rare in the Mergui islands. **Please consult a doctor or traveller's medical centre regarding malaria medication and prevention.** Some malaria medication can increase the risk of sunburn.

We advise participants to use insect repellent at all times and wear long sleeves and long trousers and socks in the evenings.

For entry into Thailand and Myanmar there are no statutory vaccinations at the time of writing. However, you should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information. All travellers should be up to date with their tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis vaccinations.

### Medical Supplies

On our trips into more isolated areas we carry a comprehensive medical kit. However, it is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require. In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SP30).
- Lip protectant.
- Band-aid strips.
- Insect repellent.
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness.
- Antiseptic soap/liquid hand wash.

### Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

Please bring soft luggage only onto the boat (no hard suitcases). Luggage not required on the boat trip can be stored at the Tinidee Hotel in Ranong to be collected on your return. We recommend you bring a small dry bag (5 litres) for your personal items needed while kayaking (to store sun cream, water bottle, snacks), plus a waterproof case for your camera, if required.

### Gear List

Essential Items:

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- A wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, e.g. straw hat with a strap to put under your chin is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck can be useful too.
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water. Side flaps are a good idea, in particular the type that can be added to conventional sun-glasses by slipping them onto the arms.
- Light weight rain jacket or spray jacket.
- One long sleeve lightweight synthetic shirt. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin. A lightweight capilene or polypropylene top may be suitable.
- Two or three T-shirts.
- A lycra sun top is useful for snorkelling.
- A beach towel. Bath towels are supplied for cabin use.
- One pair of light-weight, quick drying, full length trousers and a shirt with long sleeves to wear during the evenings.
- Two pairs of shorts and swimwear.
- Sarong.

- One pair of Reef shoes for paddling or a good fitting pair of sandals that attach solidly.
- Running shoes and socks (recommended for forest walks).
- Toiletries including shower soap, shampoo and conditioner.
- A headlamp or small torch and batteries.
- Two 1-litre water bottles—the type used by cyclists are fine and inexpensive.
- A small dry bag is good for holding things like sun screen, glasses, water bottle, etc. (try and avoid day packs with metal zips as they will corrode).
- Cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling. Full fingered gloves are recommended as then the tips of your fingers are protected from the sun.
- The captain asks all guests to go barefoot on the boat. If this is not possible, then please bring shoes or sandals with non-marking soles.

**Optional items:**

- Paddle. If you prefer a light-weight carbon paddle, then you may like to bring your own.
- Snorkelling gear is available on the boat but you may like to bring your one for the best fit.
- Camera and film, with waterproof container if the camera is not waterproof.
- Book/games.
- Binoculars.
- Talcum powder to prevent salt water rash.

**Delays or Problems**

A local number for your guide will be provided prior to trip departure.

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287.

**SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

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