

# DOs & DON'Ts FOR TOURISTS



HOW YOU CAN VISIT  
MYANMAR RESPONSIBLY

# **Dos and Don'ts for Tourists**

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## **Special acknowledgements:**

U Khaing Oo Swe, Mr. Achim Munz,  
Mr. Axel Neubert, Daw Khin Than Win,  
Daw Kyi Kyi Aye, U Tun Ohn,  
Mr. Felix von Studnitz and all the people who  
were so kind to participate in  
the interviews and focus groups.

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**Published:** October 2012

**“We warmly welcome those who appreciate and enjoy our heritage, our way of life and who travel with respect.”**

- Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy



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**GREETINGS FROM  
THE UNION MINISTER  
OF HOTELS AND TOURISM**

Dear Friends,

Mingalarbar!

First and foremost, I am very pleased and happy to extend my heartiest welcome to the visitors from all over the world who would like to enjoy and value our hospitality, culture and nature based tourism resources.

Since a lot of changes have taken place in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, many people across the world are increasingly interested to visit Myanmar with various purposes. It is of vital importance that we provide our best services and hospitality to the satisfaction of all visitors.

Most importantly, we would like to share some best practices, as exemplified in the present Dos and Don'ts for foreign visitors so that the relationship with the local communities will be friendly, more understandable and beneficial for all.

As the productive outcome of the close and deep cooperation with Hanns Seidel Foundation based in Germany, the present tourism guidelines came to materialize with the efforts of Dr. Andrea Valentin.

We hope that this cartoon booklet is an approachable medium for travelers to understand and respect the traditions and customs of our local community, in order to make Myanmar a better place for people to live in and a better place to visit.

Thank you.

Enjoy your holiday in Myanmar!



**Htay Aung**

Union Minister of Hotels and Tourism The Republic  
of the Union of Myanmar

1 The Myanmar people are friendly, helpful and polite.

**2 Respect the Myanmar people and their unique traditions.**

3 Don't take any photos that may make people feel embarrassed.

**4 Do smile.**

5 Don't point with your foot.

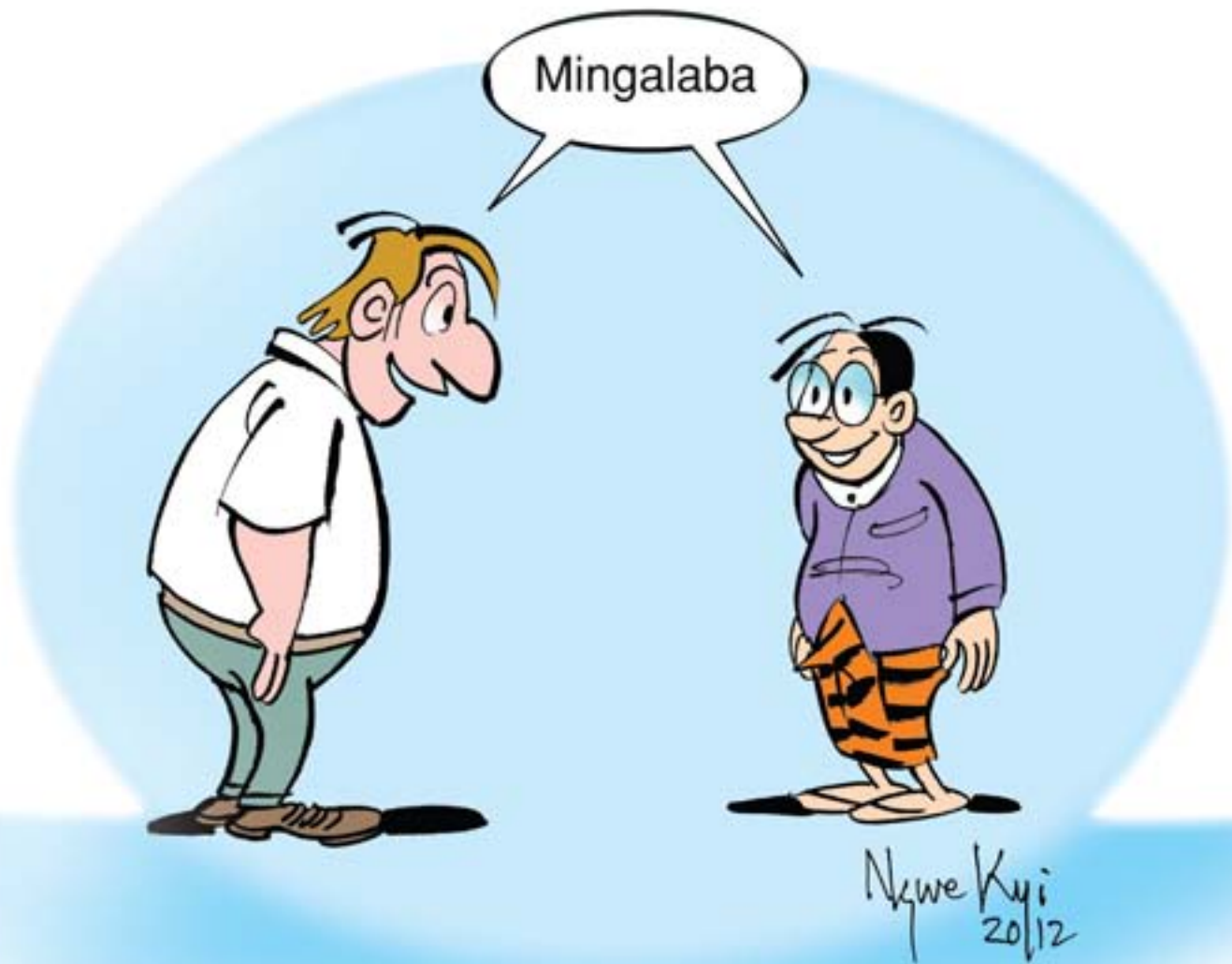
**6 Wear decent clothes when visiting religious sites.**

7 Do tuck away your feet.

**8 Don't touch anyone on the head.**

9 Please learn the basic words of Myanmar language.

**10 Women travelers are very safe in Myanmar.**



**The Myanmar people are friendly,  
helpful and polite.**

The typical Myanmar character is friendly, helpful, kind, polite and trustworthy.





## **Respect the Myanmar people and their unique traditions.**

Visitors are not asked to abandon their ways, they are asked to adapt to the Myanmar environment.



Nywe Kyi  
20/12

## **Don't take any photos that may make people feel embarrassed.**

For example, it is considered disrespectful when tourists take photos of women taking a shower.



## **Do smile.**

The Myanmar people are very friendly.  
A smile will lighten up everyone's day.



## **Don't point with your foot.**

In Myanmar the feet convey messages. Pointing with your feet means disrespect.



Ngwe Kyi  
2012

## **Wear decent clothes when visiting religious sites.**

Please cover your shoulders and knees, and take off your shoes and socks when entering pagoda areas.



## **Do tuck away your feet.**

When you sit, your legs should not be stretched out and your feet should never face the Buddha.



## **Don't touch anyone on the head.**

The head is the most esteemed part of the body.  
To be touched on the head is considered aggressive.



**Please learn the basic words  
in Myanmar language.**

People will be delighted to meet visitors who are willing to immerse themselves in the language.





## **Women travelers are very safe in Myanmar.**

Myanmar is a very safe place for tourists, but it is recommended women dress decently.

11 Don't kiss in public.

**12 Don't disturb people praying or meditating.**

13 Calling with your finger up means calling for a challenge.

**14 Please learn the local customs before visiting ethnic minority villages.**

15 Do try Myanmar traditional transport facilities.

**16 Visitors should be understanding when experiencing electricity outages.**

17 Don't touch the robe of a monk.

**18 Spread your wealth, use your money wisely.**

19 Myanmar is a cultural destination.

**20 Myanmar currency should be exchanged at the official exchange counters and banks.**



## **Don't kiss in public.**

Displaying physical closeness in public places is frowned upon in Myanmar.



## **Don't disturb people praying or meditating.**

Visitors should avoid loud talk and should take care not to touch people meditating.



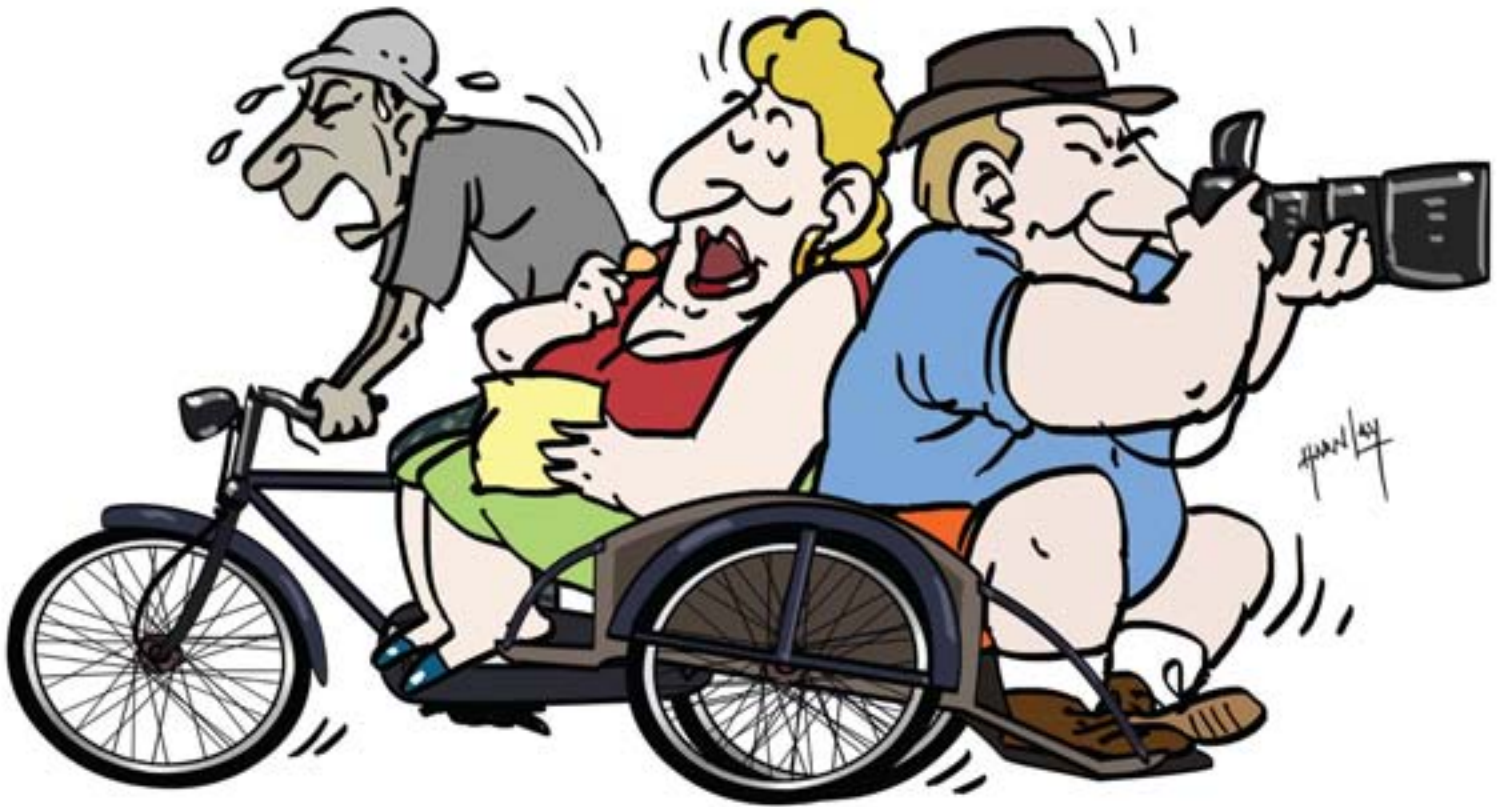
**Calling with your finger up  
means calling for a challenge.**

Calling someone with your fingers down  
is considered polite.



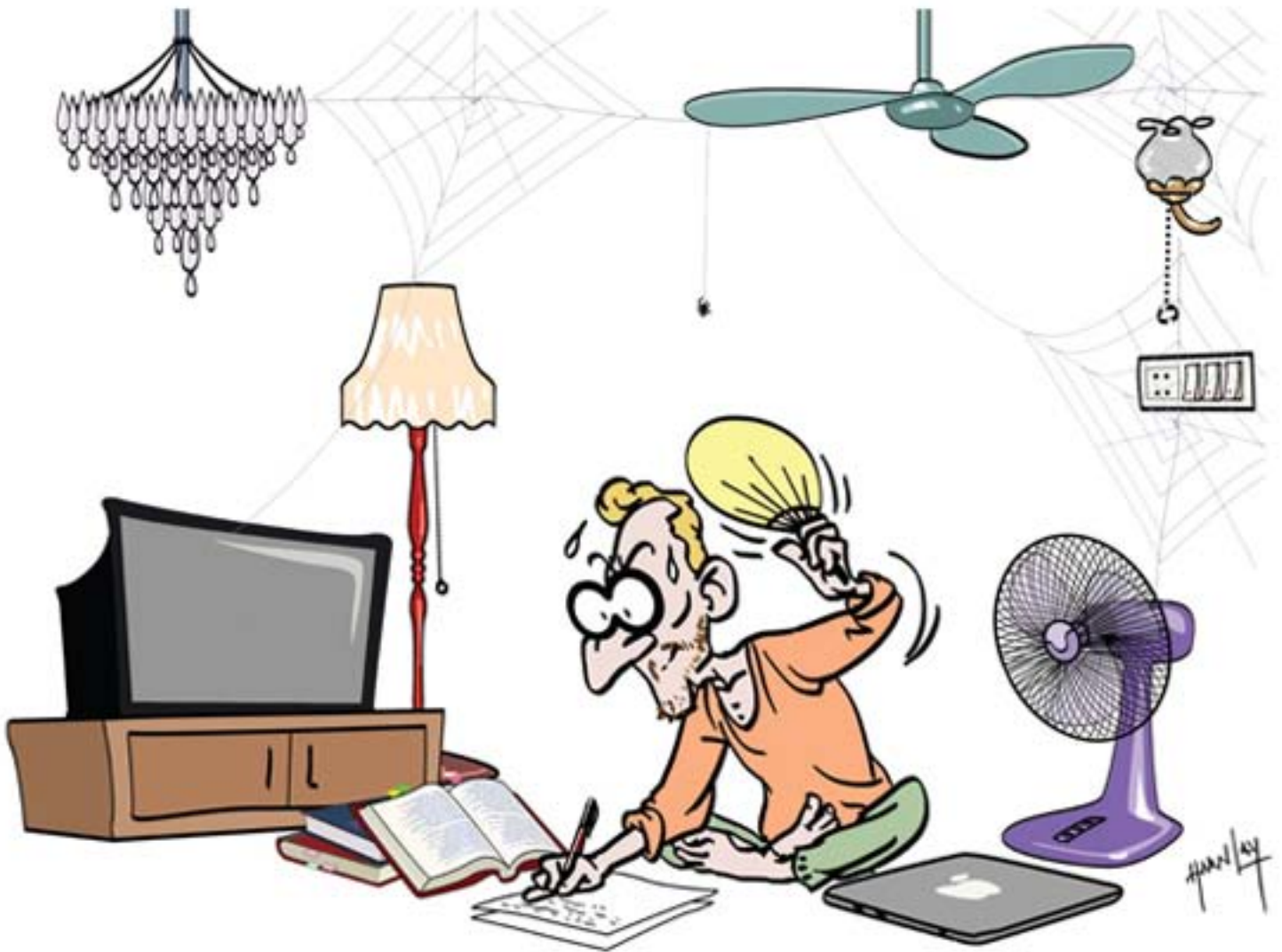
**Please learn the local customs  
before visiting ethnic minority villages.**

The people of Myanmar are very diverse; each ethnic minority has their own local customs. For example, when tourists visit Akha villages they should know not to take photos of pregnant women.



**Do try Myanmar traditional transport facilities. It's sustainable and benefits the locals.**

If they wish, visitors are encouraged to be a bit adventurous and to support local transport facilities.



## **Visitors may experience electricity outages.**

Tourists are urged to be understanding about the electricity situation in Myanmar.





## **Don't touch the robe of a monk.**

Monks are very revered; they observe many rules, study the Dhamma, practice meditation, and are highly respected in Myanmar society. Visitors should never touch the robe of a monk, not even if they see a worm crawling up his robe.



**Spread your wealth,  
use your money wisely.**

Tourists should purchase non-precious items at the local market. Licensed stores will give certificates that guarantee the authenticity of the items, whereas unlicensed stores, as depicted in this cartoon, cannot guarantee the authenticity of the items.



## **Myanmar is a cultural destination.**

Visitors are encouraged to learn about Myanmar's traditional festivals and ceremonies.



**Myanmar currency should be exchanged at the official exchange counters and banks.**

Visitors should change their money at the reliable exchange counters, not on the black market.

21 If tourists wish to help the people of Myanmar, they should consider creative ways to contribute to communities, not to individuals.

**22 Giving money or sweets to children is not advisable.**

23 Myanmar people are delighted when tourists participate in their festivals.

**24 Using drugs is illegal in Myanmar.**

25 Help protect Myanmar wildlife by refusing to purchase wildlife products.

**26 To maintain Myanmar's unique heritage, do not buy antiques. Buy arts and crafts instead.**

27 Help us keep Myanmar clean.

**28 Practice safe sex.**

29 Do not go where you are advised not to go.

**30 Relax and enjoy your holiday!**



**If tourists wish to help the people of Myanmar, they should consider creative ways to contribute to communities, not to individuals. exchange counters and banks.**



## **Giving money or sweets to children is not advisable.**

Instead of creating children's dependency on tourism, visitors should consider the saying: "Don't give a helpless person a fish, teach them how to catch a fish and they will learn for a lifetime".



**Myanmar people are delighted when tourists participate in their festivals. It makes Myanmar people very happy and proud of their traditions**





## **Using drugs is illegal in Myanmar.**

The use of drugs is against the law,  
and will destroy your life.



**Help protect Myanmar wildlife by refusing to purchase wildlife products.**

The illegal selling of wildlife endangers the species native to Myanmar. Tourists should not buy these products.



**To maintain Myanmar's unique heritage, do not buy antiques.  
Buy arts and crafts instead.**

Myanmar loses its heritage every time antique items are taken out of the country.



## **Help us keep Myanmar clean.**

Visitors could set a good example by collecting their rubbish and educating Myanmar people about environmental responsibility.



## **Practice safe sex.**

Prostitution is illegal in Myanmar.



**Do not go where you are  
advised not to go.**

Myanmar is slowly opening up and more destinations will be accessible to foreigners in the future.



## **Relax and enjoy your holiday!**

The present Dos and Don'ts merely offer some useful hints for tourists who wish to visit Myanmar responsibly.

# DOs & DON'Ts FOR TOURISTS

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Offering a peek into  
the unique culture of Myanmar  
to help preserve and maintain  
the charm of the country,  
the present Dos and Don'ts  
are designed to help tourists visit  
Myanmar responsibly, respectfully  
and more aware.



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