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Established since 1996

Guidebook on 12 Travel Tips for The Sustainable Traveller “What You Can Do to Travel Responsibly?”

For Enquiries & Suggestions on Shan Yoma’s Sustainability Policies

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**A Warm Welcome by Mr Hla Aye
Sustainability Champion & Ambassador
Managing Director, Shan Yoma Travel & Tours**

MINGALABA! On behalf of my team & myself, A VERY WARM WELCOME to all our cherished guests!

THANK YOU SO MUCH for allowing us this privilege to be your hosts to our Golden Land of Myanmar. We hope that as you Explore Myanmar with Shan Yoma, you will experience many wonderful moments and be totally amazed with the magic of Myanmar!

As a leading travel agency in Myanmar, trusted & established since 1996, we have achieved many travel awards. One of our latest is being awarded as Country Winner - SME Excellence, for Most Innovative Travel Agency at the ASEAN Business Awards 2019.



We are thankful to be recognized for our continual efforts to bring high quality innovative tours to all our valued guests, and we hope that this current journey you are going with us, will bring about even higher metrics to our benchmarks for customer satisfaction.

More importantly, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you our commitment to sustainable & socially responsible travel.

Since four years ago, from 2015, my team and with myself leading them, have actively participated in several activities which are related to responsible and sustainable tourism. We have attended the 4th National Conference on Communities and Tourism, workshops on Development of Marine Tourism in Goyangyi Island, Destination Management, and other product development workshops and training given by **TRAVELIFE** (<https://www.travelife.org/>) for responsible and sustainable practices.

We also share our beliefs in sustainability & social responsibility with our partners, stakeholders, & suppliers, as well as encourage them to play an active part in this very important mission to help ensure that our world is liveable and enjoyed by our future generations.

We believe that given our strategic position as a travel company of influence in Myanmar, Shan Yoma Travel & Tours, together with our employees, our customers, our partners & suppliers, can do our part in contributing to, and creating an active eco-system to help protect our environment and culture for our future generations, and to promote human dignity and the standards of living & employment conditions in the places that we do business in, especially in our Golden Land of Myanmar.

In this Guidebook that we have specially prepared for our guests, we would like to share with you some ways that you can join us & help in our quest to work together **so that whilst we all enjoy our travels in Myanmar, we will also do all we can to minimize harmful social & environmental consequences, so that our world will continue to be live-able for our children & enjoyed by our future generations.**

I am sure many of you are already doing your part in being a sustainable & responsible traveler, & if you have any suggestions on how we can be more effective in our pursuit of being a sustainable travel agency, we want to learn from you. So please share with me directly, or via any of the contact details we have provided. We love to hear from you!

Thank You! Enjoy Your Journey with Shan Yoma!

Mr Hla Aye

Sustainability Champion & Ambassador
Managing Director, Shan Yoma Travel & Tours

Guidebook on 12 Travel Tips for The Sustainable Traveller “What You Can Do to Travel Responsibly?”

1.

Prepare for your trip, by learning as much as you can about our country, culture & heritage. More than just a history lesson, this will help you when you interact with the locals and make some new Myanmar friends!

More importantly, respecting local customs & cultures & not overstepping boundaries shows us as a responsible traveler, and that we are treating people the way we ourselves want to be treated. When you book one of our Shan Yoma tours, we will send you information prior to your trip, so that you can immerse yourself with a good understanding of the culture & customs of the places you are going to visit.

2.

Consider the most sustainable form of transport to get to Myanmar. Depending where you are going, you may have the option to fly, drive or take a train or coach. Weigh up your options, & choose the greener route. Become part of the emerging “slow travel” trend by going to fewer places and spending more time in each. Train travel is a good way to do this. Not only will you experience a deeper sense of place, you will also decrease your carbon footprint.

When you are in Myanmar, use the most sustainable form of transport - go by foot or bike whenever possible. These are the greenest transport options. Use public transport, minibuses or car pools to get around instead of private cars. This way, not only are you helping with the environment, you really get to explore many more parts of Myanmar – especially local lifestyles.

Ask our Shan Yoma tour guides, if you need advice on choosing the greener route to get from point to point. They will give you good & safe options. Also at Shan Yoma – we have Bike Tours in Bagan, Bike Adventures in Southern Myanmar, and you can also soak in Yangon by joining our Yangon Circular Train Tour.

3. Try to join tours which employs local guides and works with local communities. Ask about the type of accommodation, and **try to stay with lodgings that are run by locals.** This way, you really help benefit the local communities!

Shan Yoma has many Community-based Eco-Tours, where we focus on working with & helping the local communities.

4. Eat & Drink like a Local & at as many of the local restaurants that you may come across. This way, expenditures stay in the local communities...& you also get to truly experience local cuisines, lifestyles & culture!

If you drink – try our Myanmar local beer or wine! When you drink a locally brewed beer you will contribute to eco-friendly travel because your beer & wine will have less mileage.

On Shan Yoma tours, our guides will give you plenty of dining choices, including many of the local restaurants, which we know are hygienic & delicious and also honest in their pricing.

5. Shop like a Local. When you travel, try to avoid the mega shopping centres & big brands. Shop local – that goes for clothes too! Locally-made clothes from some of Myanmar small, artisanal shops are generally way better for the environment. Of course Myanmar has many shopping centres carrying the big brands...but by buying from our local stores, you will be supporting the local community and a small business owner.

Our Shan Yoma guides have a very good knowledge of where to buy local – so ask them on your tours!

6. When buying souvenirs, go for souvenirs that are truly local, especially if they are hand-made by local artisans. Avoid imported souvenirs that will have been flown or shipped in and therefore have a larger carbon footprint. It is better to take home souvenirs unique to Myanmar, rather than something from a factory from elsewhere. Try to invest in things of lasting value, such as local art or ceramics.

They may be slightly more expensive, but you will be supporting authentic cultural heritage and providing needed jobs for the locals who make them. For gifts to friends back home, consider buying local consumables – nuts, spice mixes, herbs, tea, etc.

Our Shan Yoma guides have a very good knowledge of where to buy everything local – from local Myanmar crafts & artefacts to local Myanmar sauces, pickles, honey, walnuts, organic green tea, etc.

7.

Say NO to buying products made from endangered plants/animals –

elephant husks, sea shells, necklace made of animal teeth or endangered flowers, hand-stitched hats or garments made from wildlife fur. Do not support this industry, especially their cruelty to animals & wildlife. Not only is it wrong, but you may not be able to get them back through our Myanmar customs.

At Shan Yoma – we will not bring you to shops that sell products made from endangered plants/animals and which we believe may be illegal or unsustainably sourced.

8.

Say NO to plastic... plastic bags, cups, straws, utensils, etc. Plastic is bad for our environment, because they do not degrade for a very long time. Take your own reusable bags when you go shopping! Ask our Shan Yoma tour guides for your very own Shan Yoma reusable bag!

9.

Say NO to Single-use plastics, like water bottles – which are already polluting much of our earth. Instead of using plastic water bottles, refill a BPA-free reusable water bottle or hot water flask. and keep it with you at all times. Do not drink water from taps in Myanmar. So boil some water at your hotel, add our famous organic Myanmar green tea, and bring it along with your re-usable water bottle. Delicious, good for your health and our environment!

10. Travel with reusables. Not only reusable water bottle, you may want to consider a travel mug, a cloth shopping bag to transport purchases, a metal straw & metal utensils. If you have these on hand, you'll never need to use single-use disposables.

11. Reduce energy use whenever possible. Turn the lights, air conditioner & TV off when you leave the room. Yes, enjoy your stay in the hotels, but limiting our energy use, whenever possible is a big step toward sustainable travel. For the months from Oct – Mar, Myanmar's weather can be really nice & cool. So on some nights you may just want to try sleeping in natural & fresh air!

12. Conserve water wherever possible, especially when you shower. Try not to take long baths on a daily basis. Try not to use the hotel laundry. If possible, wash your clothes as you shower, then hang them up overnight so they are dry the next day. So pack wisely. Hang up your towels after each use, which is the universal sign that you like to use them again. You don't wash your towels every day at home, so why do it when you travel?

So help us make conscious decisions. We believe every single one of our guests travelling with our tours can make a positive difference if you choose to travel responsibly. So help us make a positive difference in this very important journey to help ensure that our world is liveable and enjoyed by our future generations – even as you enjoy the tours & discoveries of Amazing Myanmar that we at Shan Yoma have specially arranged for you!

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world." – *Mahatma Ghandi*

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" – *Laozi*

Resources

We follow some of the latest thinking and practices on Sustainable Tourism. We have found the following resources to be useful, & should you wish to find out more, we have provided you with their website links:

The **Global Sustainable Tourism Council** (<https://www.gstcouncil.org/>) provides some rich resources with actionable tips for taking part in responsible travel.

The **UN World Tourism Organisation** (<http://www2.unwto.org/>) is a good place to go to find official, reliable and up-to-date information about the tourism industry and sustainable tourism.

The **International Ecotourism Society** (<http://www.ecotourism.org/>) helps keep you up to date with everything that is happening in the sustainability community, including resources and ongoing workshops.

Sustaining Tourism (<https://sustainabletourism.net/>) and **The Eco Club** (<https://ecoclub.com/>) provide valuable information on what sustainable tourism is and why everyone should get involved.

We are constantly updating our list of resources on Sustainable Tourism. If you come across some resources that you like & find useful, please share these with us, so we can help share with our guests and our community.

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