

## FOOD & DRINK

*The food in Myanmar is not as spicy as other South-East Asian countries, and may lack the diversity of its Thai neighbors but is none the less delicious and filling. As with most Asian cuisine rice is at the core of most meals, and the dishes often reflect the local vegetable, plant and seafood available. The food has been influenced by Burmese, Mon, Indian and Chinese over centuries and soups, salads, fish, meat, vegetables and herbs are found in four primary flavours: bitter, salty, sour and spicy. In Myanmar when having a meal, all dishes are put onto the table at the same time and diners can choose a combination of items that suit their individual tastes. The most common method of cooking fish or meat is to fry it in boiling oil with shallots, garlic, ginger, turmeric, chili and spices. The spices are essential and the most popular spices used for fish or shrimp is local chili powder.*

Things to try in Myanmar:

### LAHPET THOKE (BURMESE TEA LEAF SALAD)



A tasty dish based on ***pickled tea leaves*** with a dash of oil and served with sesame seeds, fried garlic and roasted peanuts, usually eaten as dessert and considered to be a key part of Myanmar's culinary heritage.

### MOHINGA (BURMESE RICE NOODLE SOUP)



Myanmar's unofficial national dish is mohinga – fine, round rice noodles served in a hearty, herbal fish- and shallot-based broth, often supplemented with the crunchy pith of the banana tree. It's beloved as ***a breakfast dish***, but, sold by mobile vendors, it's ***a common snack*** at any time of day or night.

### NANGYI THOKE



The Burmese love ***"dry" noodle*** dishes -- essentially noodle-based "salads" with broth served on the side -- and perhaps the tastiest and most ubiquitous is nangyi thoke. The dish takes the form of thick, round rice noodles with chicken, thin slices of fish cake, par-boiled bean sprouts and slices of hard-boiled egg. The ingredients are seasoned with a mixture of roasted chickpea flour and turmeric and chili oil, tossed by hand and served with sides of pickled greens and a bowl of broth.

### BURMESE SWEET SNACKS



Most Myanmar *snacks are made of rice or glutinous rice*, milk or grated shreds of coconut, and sugar or jaggery as sweeteners. Myanmar people are very fond of snacks either breakfast items, as fast food or as at tea-times.

### DEEP-FRIED STUFF



The Burmese have an obsession with deep-frying foods in oil. One deep-fried dish particularly worth seeking out is *buthi kyaw*, *battered and deep-fried chunks of gourd*. When served hot, the thin, crisp batter conceals a soft, slightly watery interior of tender gourd, and the fritters are typically served with a sour/sweet dip made from tamarind that can be made savory with the addition of bean powder.

### SHAN-STYLE RICE



Known in Burmese as *nga htamin (fish rice)*, this Shan (one of the country's main Buddhist ethnic groups) dish combines rice that's been cooked with turmeric and squashed into a disk with a topping of flakes of freshwater fish and garlic oil. Oily and savory, when served with sides of leek roots, cloves of raw garlic and deep-fried pork rinds, nga htamin becomes a snack that runs the gamut from pungent to spicy.

### SHAN-STYLE 'TOFU' NOODLES



One of the most unusual dishes in Myanmar is *hto-hpu nwe*, literally "warm tofu." Associated with the ethnic Shan of northern Myanmar, the dish doesn't actually include tofu, but rather *a thick porridge made from chickpea flour*. The sticky yellow stuff is served over thin rice noodles, chunks of marinated chicken or pork. It's topped with a drizzle of chili oil and includes sides of pickled veggies and broth.