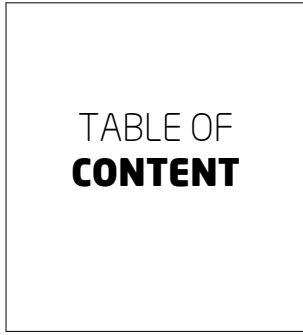


A child in a red robe is shown from the chest up, reaching up with both hands to hold a large, glowing paper lantern. The lantern is made of translucent paper and has a bright flame inside. The child's face is visible, looking upwards with a focused expression. The background is a dark night sky filled with numerous smaller, glowing paper lanterns that are floating upwards. The overall scene is warm and celebratory, capturing a moment from a traditional festival.

A FESTIVAL LOVER'S GUIDE TO MYANMAR



KACHIN MANAW FESTIVAL (NEW YEAR FESTIVAL)

- EARLY JANUARY -

The New Year celebration of the Kachin people. It is a joint festivity of the new year, battle victories, the ethnic groups' reunion, and a long-standing tradition. Manaw poles are erected, and men and women dance around them. This festival is one of the most delightful and popular festivals in Myanmar.



ANANDA PAGODA FESTIVAL (BAGAN)

- MID JANUARY-

You can witness the Buddhist rituals and ceremonies of social gatherings. It is also the best occasion to enjoy local home-cooked food. So, be a part of the festivals of Myanmar to know of their culture and relish the local cuisine.



KOGYIKYAW SPIRIT FESTIVAL

- FEBRUARY-

This festival takes place in Magwe Division for 8 days. Ko Gyi Kyaw Nat is a happy and joyous spirit who loves to drink and gamble. Nat worshippers who also worship Ko Gyi Kyaw Nat would provide offerings like food, drinks and money. Locals who are celebrating the spirit also drink alcoholic beverages and eat the spirit's favourite delicacies.



HTAMANE FESTIVAL

(ON THE DAY OF THE FULL MOON)

- FEBRUARY -

Also known as the Glutinous Rice Festival, Htamane is celebrated throughout the country in February. People of Myanmar celebrate the Htamane Festival by cooking glutinous rice together and participate in a competition to see who can make the best glutinous rice. Besides enjoying the demonstrations and cooking competitions involving the locals, tourists can sit together with them, enjoy the glutinous rice and exchange small talk.



KYAIKKHAUK PAGODA FESTIVAL

(FROM 8TH WAXING TO FULL MOON DAY OF TABODWE)

- FEBRUARY -

Held at the Kyaikkhauk Pagoda every February in Yangon for 8 days, this festival includes a huge fair set up by the locals. Merchants sell many traditional items that can only be found in Myanmar such as handicrafts, silk products and lacquerware. The merchants come in with big carts carrying the items to be sold at the festival, creating a buzz of excitement as tourists visit to purchase souvenirs.



MAHAMUNI PAGODA FESTIVAL (MANDALAY)

- FEBRUARY -

The Mahamuni Pagoda Festival is largely celebrated by the people of Mandalay. Locals gather in front of the Mahamuni Buddha image to pray and pay their respects. It is celebrated for 2 days around the full-moon day.

The image of Buddha, enshrined inside Mahamuni Pagoda, is believed to have been made in front of Buddha himself. Hence, it holds a special place in the hearts of the local people.



PANGUNI UTHIRAM FESTIVAL

- MARCH & APRIL -

Celebrated by the Hindu community, this is considered a major festival for Hindus in Myanmar. Tourists can witness the highlight of the festival – the intriguing fire-walking ceremony that involves devotees walking on hot coal. Attendees would then soak their feet in goat's milk and rub turmeric on their feet. It is believed that walking on hot coal represents self-sacrifice that would ward off evil and will reward the attendee with good fortune. This festival is one of the few traditional celebrations in the developing city of Yangon, which makes it even more unique as it instills ancient traditions into the urban lifestyle of people living in the city.





SHWEDAGON PAGODA FESTIVAL

- MARCH -

This festival is a religious ritual that involves locals reciting prayers with the monks at the famous golden stupa shrine that is rumored to contain strands of hair of Lord Buddha. Pilgrims move clockwise around the stupa as an ancient tradition believed to grant great merits to those who do so. Locals and devotees would weave holy robes for the Buddha images using traditional looms, and flames surround the pagoda along with lit incense sticks and candles.



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SHWE SAR YAN PAGODA FESTIVAL

- MARCH -

The harvest festival is largely celebrated with a combination of activities such as social gatherings, religious ceremonies and country fairs. Farmers bring their carts carrying harvest and local goods to sell to other locals and tourists. Tourists flock the area to experience the authentic lifestyle of locals who walk around the fair to bargain and purchase goods from vendors. There are also woven toys made of dried palm fronds that the locals make as part of the harvest celebration.





PINDAYA SHWE OO MIN FESTIVAL

- MARCH -

Clans in Pindaya celebrate the harvest festival every year in Pindaya, Shan State. Farmers would reap their harvest and sell them to donate their earnings to the pagoda and the monks. The locals have an ancient merit-making practice of filling stone surfaces with indentions of the Buddha image. The villagers will join together in cooking a feast and camping under banyan trees.

ZALUN PYI TAW PYAN PAGODA FESTIVAL

- MARCH -

This festival is held in a small town, Zalun, near the Ayeyarwady River to commemorate the statue that returned from abroad. It dates back to the time when Myanmar was under British rule; the Buddha image was once taken to England and its bronze material was intended to be melted for other purposes. However, the statue was indestructible. At the same time, the Queen suffered from sickness and ordered the image to be returned. The locals have since celebrated the return of the Buddha image.



THINGYAN FESTIVAL (NATIONWIDE)

- APRIL -

The Thingyan festival marks the onset of a new year for the Myanmar people. People get on stages erected on the streets and drench each other in water. People splash water through pipes from jeeps and trucks, and children play with little water pistols. The monks and elderly are spared though. This festival symbolises the cleansing of the past sins, and captive birds and fishes are also freed during this festival.





SALONE FESTIVAL

- END OF APRIL -

This festival marks the time when the Salone people, also called the sea gypsies, leave the sea to avoid the monsoon season by seeking shelter on the islands of the archipelago. As these fishermen and divers spend most of their time at sea, this festival is a rare period of time when they perform agricultural practices on land. The sea gypsies spend a few days inviting nearby villages to join them in their land ceremonies. Culture enthusiasts would love to see them conduct ancient rituals involving shamanism, animal sacrifices and dances to ward off evil.

KASON FESTIVAL (WESAK DAY EQUIVALENT)

- MAY -

Kason festival is celebrated to announce the auspicious enlightenment of Buddha. You can join in the processions followed by the locals and pour water on the sacred Bodhi tree or take river cruises around for watching the festivities. You can also pour scented water in the pagoda. This is one of the most exciting festivals in Myanmar.



PAKOKKU THIHO SHIN PAGODA FESTIVAL (MAGWAY)

- JUNE -

Locals celebrate Pakokku Thiho Shin Pagoda Festival in Magway by bringing in bull carts and selling all kinds of goods and produce. The money earned is donated to the pagoda and monks at the temples. Some generous souls will even buy rice and nutritious food for the monks. You can purchase items from the vendors to experience the authentic local life.





WARSO CHIN LONE FESTIVAL

- JULY -

This is the largest traditional sporting event in Myanmar that is celebrated at the Mahamuni Pagoda compound, where locals meet up and compete in this non-contact sport. Each player passes the chinlone (cane ball) without letting it touch the ground. Through this game, players showcase impressive acrobatic moves that include back flips, spinning kicks and handstands in the effort to keep the ball from falling.



WASO FULL MOON FESTIVAL (NATIONWIDE)

- JULY -

Waso Full Moon Festival is celebrated in July, where monks hold a retreat to teach sermons and meditate. A sacred festival highly respected by the locals, Buddhists all over the country donate robes to the monks.

The festival is celebrated to honour the three turning points of Siddhartha Gautama's life to become Lord Buddha – his conception, departure from the luxurious life of a prince to become a wanderer, and lastly, his first sermon to his pupils.



YADANA GU SPIRIT FESTIVAL (AMARAPURA)

- AUGUST -

People in the town of Amarapura celebrate Yadana Gu Spirit Festival, a spirit-worshipping occasion that involves mediums dancing and getting possessed by Nats, or spirits. In this festival, locals also celebrate the Goddess of Popa, or more commonly known as the protector of women.



TAUNG PYONE SPIRIT FESTIVAL

- AUGUST -

It is said that the village is the execution site of two brothers who once served a Bagan King in the 11th century. The brothers then became powerful Nat spirits that are worshipped by the locals until this day. People offer food like grilled rabbit and fried chicken as well as alcohol to the spirit brothers in order to make them happy, and spirit mediums allow themselves to be possessed by dancing and singing ritualistic songs.

PHAUNG DAW OO PAGODA FESTIVAL (INLE LAKE, SHAN STATE)

- SEPTEMBER -

During this festival, locals pay respects to 5 Buddha images that are wrapped in thick gold layers. The one-legged boat race is the main attraction during this festival. People gather at Inle Lake in September to celebrate this festival, and it is considered the largest Buddhist celebration on Inle Lake.

Tourists and pilgrims come to this pagoda to see the Buddha images that are enshrined in it. The images are covered with so many layers of gold leaf that the actual features could no longer be recognised. Attendees pay tribute to the Buddha images by placing offerings on the pagoda and providing donations to monks nearby. There are rituals involving attendees dancing and singing. Tourists also get to enjoy the unique one-legged boat race that can only be seen in Myanmar.



THADINGYUT FESTIVAL

- OCTOBER -

The festival of lights commemorates the onset of winter and symbolises the return of Buddha from paradise to the mortal land. You can enjoy the sight of lights everywhere or create your own and offer it in one of the pagodas. The most famous highlight of this festival is the uncountable number of lanterns or lights that one can spot in the sky of Myanmar at night.





TAUNGGYI BALLOON FESTIVAL (BAGAN)

- OCTOBER -

The balloon festival is celebrated every year after the rainy season. Candle-lit paper balloons cover the skies. These are believed to drive away all the evil spirits and invite positivity and happiness to the lands. The festival is cited as one of the most beautiful sights at night in Myanmar.



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HOT AIR BALLOON FESTIVAL

- NOVEMBER -

This festival, also known as Tazaungdaing Full Moon Festival, is held in Shan State. People crowd Taunggyi to witness the magnificent view of the hot air balloons in the sky. During the day, the balloons flown are pagoda-themed whereas at night, visitors get to see animal-shaped balloons. Besides hot air balloons, locals light candles and fireworks as a part of the celebration.



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KYAIKHTIYO PAGODA FESTIVAL

- DECEMBER -

People of Mon celebrate the light festival at Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in December. During this festival, the pagoda is decorated with 9,000 candles and 9,000 flowers given by the locals. The candles light up the pagoda, offering a beautiful sight to the locals and tourists. The following morning of the festival involves the offering of rice, sweets and other items.



MAGWAY MYA THALON PAGODA FESTIVAL (MAGWAY)

- DECEMBER -

Magway Mya Thalon Pagoda Festival is celebrated by the people of Magway to welcome the New Year. During the festival, 9,000 oil lamps are offered to the pagoda, resulting in a very brightly lit pagoda at night. The locals also donate food to the monks who have prayed and conducted religious rituals.

