

A photograph of a boat on the water at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow. The water is dark with some ripples. In the background, there is a dark silhouette of a coastline or island. The boat is in the middle ground, facing right.

Mergui Island Expedition

Discover Myanmar's Hidden Paradise aboard MY Dre nec

The Mergui Archipelago in Myanmar's South

Be One of the First to Explore an Untouched World

Think white beaches lined with palm trees and dense jungle. Think swimming in azure water amongst colourful reef fish, spotting corals, and collecting seashells. Now, picture eagles circling above, gibbons and monitor lizards eyeing you from the thickets, while a sundowner is being mixed for you on board the yacht.

And best of all: you have this entire experience to yourself. You can sail for days on end and meet not a soul but the odd fisherman in a dugout canoe.

Just across from the Thai border, the archipelago opened to foreigners as recently as the late 1990s. With only a few of the 800 islands sparsely populated and a couple dozen visitors to the entire area each month, the Mergui Archipelago remains one of the planet's most unspoilt destinations.



"It was a dreamy voyage that took us beyond internet connectivity, from green coastal waters to the kind of blue inked in by 100ft depths, past piratical-looking fishing boats and islands with the outlines of rusty blades. Scampering macaques foraged for crabs on the islands' rocky shores, white-bellied sea eagles wheeled."

The Sunday Telegraph





Explore and Discover

Visit the Moken “Sea Gypsies”

The traditional inhabitants of the Mergui Archipelago are the Moken, a people who live off, and on, the sea. Sometimes called “sea-gypsies”, this ethnic minority group leads a traditional, semi-nomadic lifestyle, dominated by diving for sea cucumbers, fishing and bartering.

Over the generations, they have adapted to their environment and developed incredible skills useful for a life partly taking place under water. Moken divers often go to depths of more than 20 meters without oxygen tanks. Studies of Moken children have shown them to have incredible underwater vision—twice as good as that of European children of the same age.

The Moken used to roam the archipelago in their traditional sailing boats, called Kabangs. In recent years, some families have settled on the islands and fish the surrounding waters from their dugout canoes.

Nature and Activities

A Paradise all to Yourself

Explore tropical forests, hiking through valleys and up hills, walk along kilometres of beach with the only foot prints those behind you, kayak through enchanted mangroves, swim, snorkel, and go fishing: you've got it all. The Mergui Archipelago is teeming with wildlife.

Due to government neglect and the region's long isolation, its 800 plus islands have remained virtually untouched. They are composed of limestone and granite and vary in size from tiny to islands larger than Singapore.

Most of them (we have yet to find one that isn't) are covered in thick jungle growth, which drops into azure waters, interrupted only by beaches, rocky headlands, tidal rivers, and mangrove forests. Lampi, one the largest islands, is part national park and home to some of the planet's oldest mangrove forests.



Trip Highlights



Barefoot
Luxury



Paradise
Beaches



Discover &
Explore



On-board
Spa



Delicious
Food



Underwater
Encounters





MY Drenec

Explore in Style

Drenec was built in The Netherlands as a working boat designed to spend long weeks on the open seas. In 1986, she underwent a major overhaul and was reborn as a high-class expedition vessel. Drenec spent the following years on expeditions to the Arctic, the Indian Ocean, Central American waters and the Mediterranean. In 2012, she was completely refitted and upgraded in Malta with the interior designed by Sophie Bouakel-Kastelein.

Decks: main, upper and sun deck all covered with teak, with teak-varnished handrails **Cabins:** 1 owner's suite, 4 staterooms, each with individual bathrooms, air-con, etc.
Activities: 2 canoes; water skiing, snorkelling, diving, stand-up paddle board **Entertainment:** library, movie library, on-board spa service **Communication:** Satellite phone, satellite internet, HF and VHF radio





Prestine, Untouched Nature

Day 1 Boarding time is at 3 pm. While you enjoy your welcome drink on board, the crew takes care of immigration formalities for you, before Dre nec heads towards South Bay on **Za Det Gyi Island**. For the first night's dinner, the chef surprises with fresh catch served under the clear evening sky.

Day 2 In the morning we head to the beach for snorkelling and swimming. We have lunch under passage while Dre nec takes us to **Myin Khwa Island**. We explore the beautiful limestone caves, which lead into a hidden lagoon, only accessible by dinghy boat and kayak. In the evening we drop anchor at **Macleod Island**. On its peaceful beach, we light a bonfire and sip sundowners while counting the stars.

Day 3 Right after breakfast, Dre nec heads to **Boulder Rock**. With its gorgeous white beaches and long reefs, this is the perfect spot to explore the underwater life. After lunch on the beach, Dre nec sails to **Jar Lan Kyun**, where we visit the Moken sea gypsies and the island temple. We spend the afternoon in their village and learn about Moken culture before Dre nec heads to **Kyant Gyo Island** for a quiet night

Day 4 In the early morning hours we explore the mangrove forest and watch eagles and hornbills circling above before Dre nec heads back to **Kawthaung**. We arrive at the pier by noon.



South Route



Lampi National Park & More

Day 1 Boarding time is at 3 pm. The crew welcomes you aboard with a glass of champagne and takes care of official formalities. While Dre nec sets course for **Barwell Island**, the captain introduces the area and our itinerary. Dre nec's gourmet chef serves dinner under the stars.

Day 2 After an early morning swim by the beach, Dre nec heads towards the Mid Group: some of Myanmar's most scenic islands. After a picnic on the beach, we visit the Moken sea gypsy village on **Nyaung Wee**, where we spend the afternoon. We visit the temple and the school before heading north to **Tar Yar Island**. At night, the gibbons' song from the beach lulls us to sleep.

Day 3 After breakfast aboard, we explore the wildlife and the mangrove forests of the Lampi National Park. We'll head towards **Kyun Phi Lar** and check the fossils on the islands. After we board the yacht, Dre nec heads towards **Za Det Kale Kyun**. We celebrate the last evening with a bonfire on the beach. The sun sinks into the ocean and we don't ever want to leave.

Day 4 We jump into the crystal water for a swim before enjoying a long brunch on deck while Dre nec makes her way back to **Kawthaung**. Arrival is at noon.

North Route



2015/16 Departures

South Route

Departing each Friday, returning each Monday

Trip Duration: 3 nights

Boarding time: 3 pm, return 12 pm

Dates: 30 October - 2 November, 6-9 November, 13-16 November, 20-23 November, 27-30 November, 4-7 December, 11-14 December, 18-21 December, 15-18 January, 22-25 January, 29 January-1 February, 5-8 February, 12-15 February, 19-22 February, 26-29 February, 4-7 March, 11-14 March, 18-21 March, 25-28 March, 1-4 April, 8-11 April, 15-18 April, 22-25 April

North Route

Departing each Monday, returning Thursday

Trip Duration: 3 nights

Boarding time: 3 pm, return 12 pm

Dates: 2-5 November, 9-12 November, 16-19 November, 23-26 November, 30 November - 3 December, 7-10 December, 14-17 December, 18-21 January, 25-28 January, 1-4 February, 8-11 February, 15-18 February, 22-25 February, 29 February - 3 March, 7-10 March, 14-17 March, 21-24 March, 28-31 March, 4-7 April, 11-14 April, 18-21 April, 25-28 April

North & South Route

Departing each Fridays, returning each Thursday

Trip Duration: 6 nights

Boarding time: 3 pm, return 12 pm

Dates: 30 October - 5 November, 6-12 November, 13-19 November, 20-26 November, 27 November - 3 December, 4-10 December, 11-17 December, 15-21 January, 22-28 January, 29 January - 4 February, 5-11 February, 12-18 February, 19-25 February, 26 February - 3 March, 4-10 March, 11-17 March, 18-24 March, 25-31 March, 1-7 April, 8-14 April, 15-21 April, 22-28 April



Getting There is Easy

We depart in Kawthoung in Myanmar's south, just across the border from Thailand. Getting there is easy and you have several travel options.

Flying to Kawthoung
If you are arriving from within Myanmar, you can

book online and fly directly to Kawthoung Airport. We'd be more than happy to help you organise transportation and meet you at the airport.

Flying to Ranong
Another option is to fly to Ranong Airport. There are daily flights from Bangkok by Nok Air. The airport is well served by local taxi drivers but we can also pick you up from Ranong Airport, of course.

Once you are in Ranong, you will take a longtail

boat across the Pakchan River to Kawthoung on the Myanmar side, which takes about 30 minutes. We will help you with the immigration procedures before boarding the yacht.

Arriving via Phuket
Phuket International Airport is a convenient and well-connected place to fly to. From there, it's a scenic 3 - 4-hour car ride to Ranong, the Thai border town. Here, too, we are happy to assist you and will send a driver to meet you the airport.

Quick Facts

What's included? All on-board meals, all non-alcoholic drinks, all activities, fuel, etc. Not included are visa fees, airport transfers, and the visitor fee the government of Myanmar asks foreigners to pay. This fee is USD 250 per person for 3 nights. For 6 nights, this fee will be 290 USD

Will I need a visa for Myanmar? Yes. Most travellers will get a visa-on-arrival in Myanmar and we will take care of the procedure when you enter the country while you relax or explore.

Is it safe to travel in Myanmar's Mergui Archipelago?
Yes, it is! There are no conflicts in our sailing area, nor are there any pirates. There is a mid-level malaria risk in southern Myanmar and you should take precautions by using

mosquito-repellent and wearing long sleeves and trousers if onshore at night (which you are unlikely to be much).

Is it ethically OK to travel to Myanmar?
We think so. A few years ago, things have started to fundamentally change in Myanmar and Aung San Suu Kyi has been released. She and her party now embrace individual and ethical tourism by travellers whose money does not go straight into the pockets of the generals. We are here to support just that.

What else should I bring? You don't need much. Bring your bathers, a hat, sunglasses, your camera and you're pretty much set! Do remember to get a travel insurance before joining our cruise. On board, you won't need shoes

but you can bring flip-flops or reef shoes for beach outings if you want. We provide full lodging, including bedding, towels, all meals, water and soft drinks. We also provide fishing and snorkelling equipment and first-aid, if necessary.

What's the best season to go? The best time for cruising is between late October and end of April. The rainy season starts in May.

What temperature to expect? During daytime about 28-32°C. The water temperature will be about 26-29°C.

What kind of food do you serve? Our chefs specialise in Asian cuisine but also serve Western dishes. Six weeks prior to departure we ask all our guests about their preferences.



Recommended by

