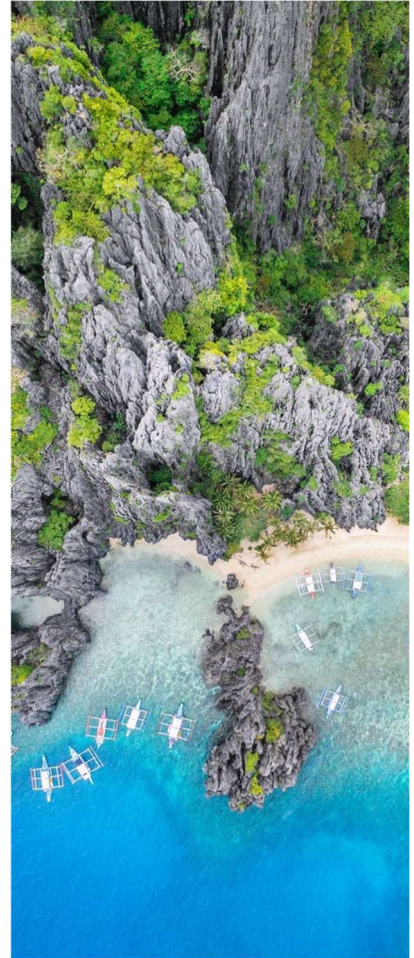




Travel Guide The Philippines



The Philippines

The Philippines are a country and archipelago with 7.641 islands, located in the Western Pacific. 100 million people live in the Philippines. The area of the Philippines is 343.000 km². The currency is the Philippine peso (PHP). The exchange rate is 1€=56,53 PHP. Filipino is the official language, national language and English is the official language.



*Coat of Arms
Flag of the Philippines*

The capital city is Manila. The major cities are: Quezon City, Davao City, Antipolo, Cebu City, General Santos, Paranaque, Bacolod, Las Pinas and Makati. The biggest islands are: Luzon (110.000 km²), Boracay (10,32 km²), Mindanao (97.530 km²), Palawan (12.189 km²) and Cebu (4.468 km²).

Accommodation

In the Philippines there are around 14.000 hotels from 6€-530€ per night.

Cheap hotels are very simple and small not everything works. But expensive hotels have very good reviews.

The Radisson Blu Cebu is a 5* hotel with an environmental certificate. The hotel has 5 different room types: Superior room, Deluxe room, Junior Suite, Business Class room, Executive Suite. Sergio Osmeña Boulevard, Corner Juan Luna Avenue, Cebu City, 6000 Cebu, Philippines. You can have a 5 minute walk to the luxurious shopping center SM City Cebu. As well you can take a 10 minute drive to other attractions.



Regions and ethnicities

The Philippines are split up into seventeen different regions. The most important regions are:

1. NCR = National Capital Region (metropolitan region), around the capital Manila, Manila (administrative centre)
2. Luzon
3. Central Visayas (Region VII) administrative region, Cebu City, region is in the centre, Cebu City (administrative centre), Visayas
4. Calabarzon (Region IV-A) Trece Martires City, Calamba City (administrative centre)
5. Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX) Pagadian City (administrative centre), Mindanao

These are divided into 81 provinces. The landmass of the Philippines consists of three island groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.



The Philippines were the only “Christian” country in all of Asia until East Timor’s independence. Catholic Christians make up 83% of the population, while Protestant Christians make up 9% and Muslims make up 5% of the population. Buddhists, Hindus, Taoists and followers of animistic religions also reside in the Philippines.

The Malays make up 90% of the population. They came to the Philippines centuries ago. The Philippines are also inhabited by the Negritos. They only make up about 2% of the Population.

All groups of people left their own cultural, religious and linguistic traces.

The Philippino population is made up of many different ethnic groups: Tagalog (28.1%), Cebuano (13.1%), Ilocano (9%), Bisaya (7.6%), Ilonggo (7.5%), Bikol (6%), Waray (3.4%) and other ethnic groups (25.3%).

Young indigenous people in the Philippines are alienated from their roots. They are taught English and Filipino. The re-education program stemming from the church and white missionaries devalues indigenous dances, songs and traditions.

History of the Philippines

People came to the islands 40,000 to 50,000 years ago. For a long time there were few inhabitants in the Philippines and there were no large empires. In the Middle Ages the Islam came to some islands in the south.

Ferdinand Magellan landed in the Philippines in 1521. The name Philippines comes from Philip II who was the king of Spain during the 16th century when the country became a Spanish colony.

From 1899 to 1902 the Philippine-American War was an independence movement against the colonial power of the United States. In 1898 the United States defeats Spain in war. The treaty between the United States and Spain gives the United States power over the Philippines. 2 years later the Philippines were taken by the Japanese.



In 1944 the resistance fighters, with the help of the United States, managed to defeat the Japanese and recapture the Philippine Island. On 4 July 1946 the Philippines became independent.



Famous Persons from Philippines

Manny Pacquiao



Manny Pacquiao was born on December 17 in 1978 in Kibawe. He is a politician and a former professional boxer. He was also called by the nickname PacMan.

Rodrigo Duterte

Rodrigo Duterte was born on March 28 of 1945 in Maasin. He became the president of the Philippines at the age of 71 and he is still the current president.



Bella Poarch



The TikTok star was born on February 8 in 1997 in the Philippines. On August 17, 2020 she created the most liked TikTok video on the whole platform with over 50 million likes, which probably led to her fame. Today she is a TikTok star and singer.

Bruno Mars

The singer/songwriter Peter Gene Hernandez famous by the name of Bruno Mars was born on October 8, 1985. He was born in Honolulu, Hawaii but he is still half Filipino because of his mother. Bruno Mars has many famous hits, with the song Uptown Funk as the most famous one (4.5 billion views on YouTube), in which he actually only takes part as a feature.



Culture of the Philippines

The culture of the Philippines comprises a blend of traditional Filipino and Spanish Catholic traditions, with influences from America and other parts of Asia. The Filipinos are family oriented and often religious with an appreciation for art, fashion, music and food. Filipinos are also hospitable people who love to have a good time. This often includes getting together to sing, dance, and eat. The annual calendar is packed with festivals, many of which combine costumes and rituals from the nation's pre-Christian past with the Catholic beliefs and ideology of present day.

Sports

Filipinos are experts at sports, their traditional sport is called Arnis, a form of martial arts.



Language

Tagalog is the national language of the Philippines. The official language is English. Filipinos also often speak Taglish, a mix of Tagalog and English. Bisaya is the main language spoken in the Visayas. Bisaya is reminiscent of the Spanish language. In particular, the times and numbers were taken from Spanish. In total, there are more than 170 native languages in the Philippines.

Music

Filipinos enjoy music, they use different materials to make sound and they enjoy dances and singing groups. Filipino music genres include music performances in the Philippines or Filipinos composed in various genres and styles. The compositions are often a blend of various Asian, Spanish, Latin, American and indigenous influences. Filipino music is a blend of European, American and indigenous sounds. The traditional music of the Philippines, like the folk music of other countries, reflects the lives of ordinary, mostly rural Filipinos. Like its counter-parts in Asia, many traditional songs from the Philippines have a strong connection with nature. A common feature is that vocal music is of great importance to every ethnic group in the country. Although there is some music for dance, the best preserved form of traditional music is that intended for the voice, with epic poetry as the earliest form sung and later supplemented by instrumental accompaniment. Since most of them span more than an octave, they are still considered to be within the capacity of an average singer.



Food

1. Adobo:

Filipinos found that cooking meat (often chicken and pork) in vinegar, salt, garlic, pepper, soy sauce, and other spices was a convenient way to preserve it without refrigeration.

This cooking style can be applied to different types of meat or even seafood. It's best sampled in a Filipino household, but for a garlicky version of lamb Adobo, head to Taguig's Abe Restaurant.



2. Lechon:



Lechon is the most loaded partygoer in the Philippines. The whole pig is spit-roasted over coals, with the crispy, golden-brown skin served with liver sauce, the most coveted part. In Cebu, the pig's stomach is stuffed with star anise, pepper, scallions, bay leaves, and lemongrass to create a highly flavorful lechon that doesn't require sauce.

3. Sisig:

In the culinary capital of Pampanga, they turn the pig's cheeks, head and liver into a sizzling dish called sisig. The crispy and chewy texture of this appetizer pairs perfectly with a cold beer. Serve with hot sauce and Knorr seasoning, according to your wishes and your friends. While sisig can be found in many restaurants, try the original version at Aling Lucing Sisig.

Festivals

Events reflect the culture and traditions. The Sinulog Festival in Cebu City takes place around the third weekend in January and is the largest and most important festival in the Philippines.



At the end of February, there is the Panagbenga (Flower Festival) in Baguio City.

Giant Lantern Festival: On the days before Christmas, the city of San Fernando, in the north of the island of Luzon, celebrates the festival of the giant lanterns. Huge bamboo lanterns trying to recreate the stars that led the Magi to the gates of Bethlehem. Today the festival consists of a luminous procession that illuminates the streets of the town.



Ati-Atihan: One of the happiest and most colorful festivals in the Philippines. It is celebrated in Kalibo, Visayas, where parades are held with particularly peculiar costumes, feathered crowns

and painted faces. A kind of carnival that honors the Holy Child, whose image is always present in all street processions.

Mask Festival: This celebration dates back to 1980 when the country was going through a crisis. On Negros Island it was decided to organize a festival of smiles. Influenced by the carnivals in Venice and Brazil, people started using masks and having a dance competition with music, food and lots of colors.



On December 24th, Filipinos celebrate the traditional "Christmas Eve". The New Year is also celebrated with knitted clothes and fruits on the table.

Sights & activities

First of all, you can say that the Philippines offer a variety of landscapes and sights to visit. Particularly the nature is the main attraction and the highlight of this country. For everyone there is something to explore... a relaxed tour to a lake or for the risky people a tour to a volcano.

In order not to miss anything on your trip we give you the best advice here.



Here are the main islands for tourists to visit:

The first island on our list is Baracay island which has long beaches, many shops and particularly a distinctive nightlife. For people who love nature, they can visit a lot of other islands, for example Siquijor Island, Batan Island, Camiguin Island and Apo Island. All of them have an amazing nature with a lot of beaches, forests, waterfalls and cliffs. But the highlights are the church San Isidro on Siquijor Island, the sunken cemetery at Camiguin Island and a swim tour with sea turtles at Apo Island.



For adrenaline junkies there also is the possibility to dive with whale sharks on Dansol. If you can not get enough from animals you can also visit the Jelly Fish Lagoon or go to the Underground River which offers a variety of animals and plants. For nature fans there are the rice terraces where they can enjoy the extraordinary view. Also a special feature are the chocolate hills which change their colour from green to brown in different seasons.

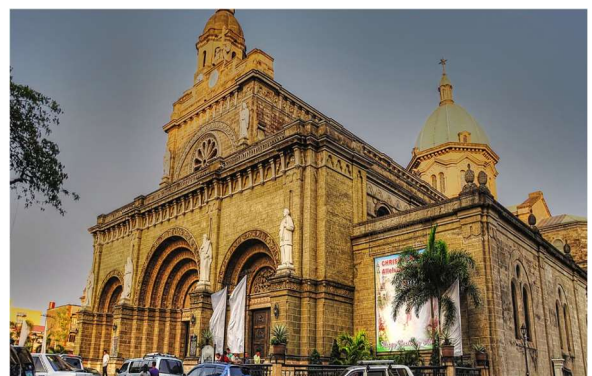
If you want to see a volcano up close you should make a volcano hiking tour on the Hibok-Hibok or on the Taal Volcano, where you can also visit the Taal Lake. Moreover there is the Kayangan Lake on Coron. The lakes are perfect for a nice break on a hiking tour to cool yourself down.

If you do not like to hike through nature you can also book a helicopter beach tour over different islands with an amazing view from the top.

For an extra ordinary experience we recommend visiting the hanging coffins in the Echo Valley. These coffins are from the natives that hang on rock faces.



Besides nature on the Philippines the capital Manila offers a lot of historical places and unusual architecture influenced by colonial period. For instance the Cathedral of Manila or the San Augustin Church. Manila is also a great place for diverse food and distinctive nightlife.



For sporty people out here we have some other recommendations except exploring nature. For example you can do water rafting in different rivers, go paragliding, ziplining, canoeing or wake boarding. A fun activity for the whole family or for friends is a ride on a banana boat.

Politics and economics

politics

The presidential system is the current form of government in the Philippines with Rodrigo Roa Duterte as president since June 30, 2016. He is in the Partido Democratico Filipino.

It is a representative democracy, the head of government and its houses of Parliament are directly elected by their people.

Even so the Filipino politics are very personal constructed so that the houses of parliament are not essential, many politician are part of a political dynasty so that the descendants take over the positions of their relatives.

In the last few years many actors, former basketball stars and similar media personalities have gone into politics.



economics

From a European perspective the Philippines are one of the poorest countries. The economic output of the Philippines has increased steadily by 6 to 7 percent annually in recent years, making it also one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

The Philippines have a very strong service sector due to widespread English language knowledge. Especially call centers that work for American companies are very numerous in the Philippines.

There is a strong economic contrast between a small wealthy upper class such as Metro Manila, the fresh and safe skyscraper city with many international companies and the vast majority of the population in spacious slums, without adequate water and electricity supply. It also has a noticeable north-south income division.

The north is export-oriented in the field of textile-, automobile-, and electronic industries while the south is dominated by agriculture.



Export goods are mainly electronics, machines and means of transport. The main trading partners are the People's Republic of China, the United States and Japan. In 2016, the country was visited by around 6 million tourists who spent \$5.1 billion. The tourism sector is growing rapidly.

Geography and Nature

Geography

The Philippines is an island country in Asia. The Philippines is an archipelago located on Southeast Asia, which includes about 7641 islands. 860 of them are inhabited and 3144 have a name. The area of the landmass is 300.000 km² and is therefore the 5th largest island country in the world. The state is divided into 3 groups of islands. To the north the “Luzan Group”, to the south the “Mindanao Group” and the central “Visayas Group”. Luzon is the largest island in the island nation and is therefore considered the main island. As an island nation, the Philippines have no direct neighbors. Indirectly the state is adjacent to Vietnam, Indonesia, China and Taiwan.



The archipelago lies partly in the western Pacific Ring of Fire, resulting in an increased risk of earthquakes and strong volcanism. Due to the geographic location, the islands are almost exclusively of volcanic origin.

Famous mountain:



The most famous mountain in the Philippines is the “Mayon” due to its almost perfect cone shape. The highest mountain is “Apo” with 2938 m. Both mountains are volcanic elevations.

Lowest Point:

Let’s go from the highest point to the lowest point. At 10.540m deep, the “Philippine Trench” is the second deepest trench on earth.

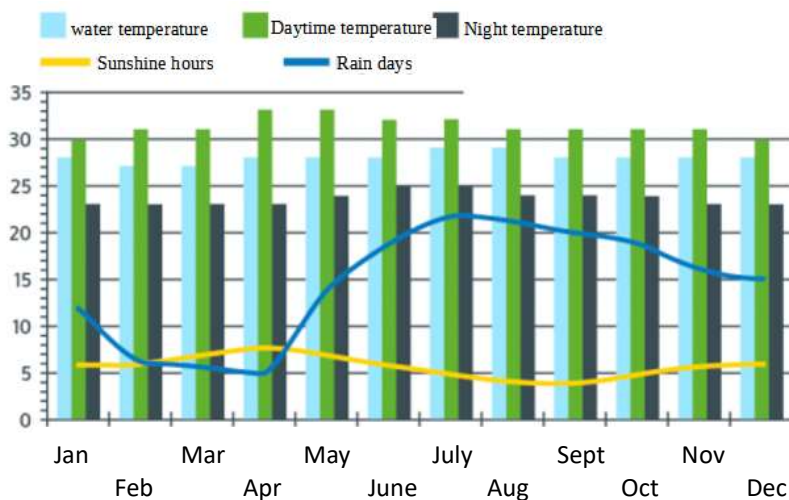
Coastline:

The Philippines still hold a record. With 36.289 km of coastline, the Philippines has the longest stretch of coastline in the world. The islands are characterized not only by the long coastline, but also by many fast-flowing rivers. There are over 421 rivers in the Philippine Islands. The longest is the “Cagayon River” at 505 km.

Likewise most of the islands are covered with tropical rain forest. However, the rain forest area accounts for less than 10% of the total island area due to illegal logging.

At 949 km², “Laguna de Bay” is the largest freshwater lake in the country. For comparison. The “Müritz” is Germany’s largest lake and is just 117 km² in size.

Climate



The weather in the Philippines is mainly influenced by the effect of the sea and tempered by a constant sea breeze. The climate itself is mostly tropical to subtropical with an average temperature of 26.5 °C. In the Philippines, a distinction is made between three seasons. There is a rainy season which lasts

from June to September. The months from October to February are considered cool and dry, while the period from March to May is mostly dry and hot. Typhoons are possible in the Philippines throughout the year but are most likely to occur from July to September.

The unique fauna of the Philippines

The Philippines are home for over 52.177 animal species and about 50% of these species live only there. Also, the Philippines have the highest discovery rate for new species in the whole world, in the year 2021 alone there were about 70 new species discovered.

One of these unique animals is for example the Tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*) which is a small kind of buffalo. There are only about 600 individuals which live in the wilderness on the island Mindoro.



Another species is the Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) which is the national animal of the Philippines. These eagles are the largest eagles with about 90 cm in length. There are also only about 400 adult pairs which live in the wilderness.

There is also the Visayan Warty Pig (*Sus cebifrons*) which is a critically endangered species because of commercial logging, slash-and-burn farming as well as hunting. This species only lives on the islands Cebu, Negros, Panay, Masbate, Guimaras, and Siquijor.



But of course, there are not only unique animal species on land but in the ocean as well.



An example is the Whale Shark which lives in the Sogod Bay in Southern Leyte which is the largest fish in the world which can become about 5,5m to 10m big.

Another unique fish is the Thresher Shark which lives in Malapascua. This shark is about 3,5m to 7,5m long and because of the special form of its caudal fin this shark is able to jump out of the water.



Unfortunately about 700 animal species are already extinct on the Philippines alone, because of encroachment, land fragmentation or habitat loss.

But not all of the unique animals are harmless and can become very dangerous for humans. You should definitely be very careful when you see one of them.

First, there is the Pink Jellyfish which is very common in the Philippines and if you get in contact with it you will be poisoned. Some symptoms are for example a swelling and itching on the insertion point as well as muscle pain, headache breathing problems and heart problems. If you have any of those symptoms and you were swimming you should immediately see a doctor.



The Philippine Cobra is the second most dangerous animal on the Philippines and is one of the most venomous snakes in the world. This Snake is often found on the islands Luzon, Mindoro, Catanduanes, Azria and Masbate.

Also, the Blue-Ringed Octopus is very poisonous and can even kill humans. It is the most poisonous Octopus in the world and it has enough venom to kill about 26 adult humans within a minute. The most dangerous part about this animal is that most of the time bites by the octopus are painless and you won't feel them. You can find these animals in the sandy bottoms and reefs of Samal Island and Palawan.





Another animal you should also be aware of are scorpions. There are about 16 different kinds of Scorpions living in the Philippines but most of them aren't life threatening for humans. However, you will feel a great amount of pain in your whole body, if you get stung.

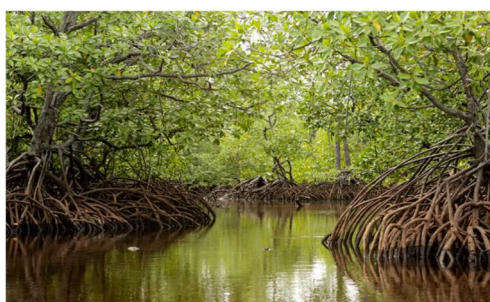
Those were some of the most dangerous animals for humans on the Philippines but there are so many more (like crocodiles or spiders)! So be careful when you deal with animals that you do not know!

Flora of Philippines

The Philippines are home to more than 14.000 species of plants, 8.900 vascular plants, 944 endemic species of orchids, but also aroids, bromeliads, pubic flowers and wax flowers are part of the Philippines.



Another type of plant found in the Philippines is the rafflesia family which forms the largest flowers in the plant world. The *Rafflesia schadenbergiana* was thought to be extinct for 112 years and was rediscovered in the Philippines.



Despite reforestation the forest area of the Philippines is only 24% today. The forests today consist mainly of mangroves and forest plantations. In the Philippines alone there are 40 species from 14 types of the 54 known mangrove species worldwide. This rather small forest area

consists mainly of lowland rain forests, mountain rain forests and mountain forests. These consist of palm trees, rubber trees, banyan trees and bamboo.

Philippine plants are used both in the kitchen and in medicine. The numerous kitchen plants such as chili or lemongrass are mainly used for sauces, soups, dips and stews.



The plants of the Philippines used in medicine are hoya plants they can heal feverish inflammations on the one hand and on the other hand they can relieve ulcers. Well known hoya species are *Hoya australis* and *Hoya imbricata*.

The underwater world of the Philippines also has a lot to offer. The Philippines have got a variety of aquatic plants such as sea grasses and stony corals.



The coral reefs of these islands form an area of 2.7 million hectares. The largest coral reefs in the Philippines are the Caubyan and Calituban coral reef.

But there are also dangers for this very species-rich plant diversity. Among other things a very large part of the forests has already been destroyed by deforestation. Drift fishing using dynamite is damaging coral reefs and uncontrolled tourism is polluting and destroying the flora of the Philippines.



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