



# PHILIPPINES



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	1	Contact Addresses
	2	General
	3	Passport
	4	Money
	5	Duty Free
	6	Public Holidays
	7	Health
	8	Accommodation
	9	Resorts & Excursions
	10	Sport & Activities
	11	Social Profile
	12	Business Profile
	13	Climate
	14	History and Government
	15	Overview

## 1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

**Location:** South-East Asia.

Philippine Department of Tourism  
Department of Tourism Building, T M Kalaw Street, Rizal Park, Manila 1000, Philippines  
**Tel:** (2) 523 8411-30. Fax: (2) 521 7374/5 or 522 2194.  
**E-mail:** deptour@info.com.ph  
**Web site:** <http://www.tourism.gov.ph>

Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC)  
4th Floor, Suite 10-17, Legaspi Towers, 300 Roxas Boulevard, Metro Manila, Philippines  
**Tel:** (2) 525 9318-32. Fax: (2) 521 6165 or 525 3314.  
**E-mail:** pcvcnet@info.com.ph  
**Web site:** <http://www.dotpcvc.gov.ph/>

Embassy and Consulate of the Republic of the Philippines  
9A Palace Green, London W8 4QE  
**Tel:** (020) 7937 1600. Fax: (020) 7937 2925.  
**E-mail:** embassy@philemb.demon.co.uk  
**Web site:** <http://www.philemb.demon.co.uk>  
**Opening hours:** 0900-1700 Monday to Friday.

Philippine Cultural and Tourism Office  
146 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4EF  
**Tel:** (020) 7835 1100. Fax: (020) 7835 1926. E-mail: tourism@pdot.co.uk  
**Web site:** <http://www.tourism.gov.ph>

British Embassy  
**Street address:** 15-17 Floors, LV Locsin Building, 6752 Ayala Avenue, 1226 Makati City, Philippines  
**Postal address:** PO Box 2927 MCC, Makati City, Philippines  
**Tel:** (2) 816 7116 or 816 7348/9 (consular/visa section). Fax: (2) 815 4809. E-mail: bremb@skynet.net (information) or bemnlcom@skynet.net (commercial).  
**Consulate in:** Cebu

Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines  
1600 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036  
**Tel:** (202) 467 9300. Fax: (202) 467 9417.  
**Web site:** <http://www.embassyonline.com/main.html>  
**Consulates General in:** New York (tel: (212) 764 1330), Los Angeles (tel: (213) 487 4527), Chicago and San Francisco.

Embassy of the United States of America  
1201 Roxas Boulevard, Ermita 1000, Manila, Philippines  
**Tel:** (2) 523 1001. Fax: (2) 522 4361.  
**Web site:** <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/manila/>

Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines  
130 Albert Street, Suite 606, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4

**Tel:** (613) 233 1121/3. Fax: (613) 233 4165. E-mail: [ottawape@istar.ca](mailto:ottawape@istar.ca) or [ambphil@istar.ca](mailto:ambphil@istar.ca)  
**Web site:** <http://www.philembassyca.org>

Canadian Embassy

**Street address:** 9th-11th Floors, Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, 1226 Makati City, Philippines

**Postal address:** PO Box 2168, 1226 Makati City, Philippines

**Tel:** (2) 867 0001. Fax: (2) 810 4299 or 810 4659 (consular). E-mail: [manil.immigration@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:manil.immigration@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)

**Web site:** <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/manila/>

**Country dialling code:** 63.

## 2 GENERAL

**Area:** 300,000 sq km (115,831 sq miles).

**Population:** 73,130,985 (1998).

**Population Density:** 243.8 per sq km.

**Capital:** Manila. Population: 1,654,761 (1995).

**Geography:** The Philippines lie off the southeast coast of Asia between Taiwan and Borneo in the Pacific Ocean and South China Sea. They are composed of 7107 islands and islets (7108 at low tide), 2773 of which are named. The two largest islands, Luzon in the north and Mindanao in the south, account for 65% of the total land area and contain 60% of the country's population. Between the two lie the Visayas Islands.

**Government:** Republic since 1987. Gained independence from the USA in 1946. Head of State and Government: President Joseph Ejercito Estrada since 1998.

**Language:** Filipino, based on Tagalog, is the national language. English is widely spoken, Spanish less so. The Philippines is the third-largest English-speaking country in the world. There are over 111 cultural and racial groups, each with its own language or dialect.

**Religion:** 85% Roman Catholic; the rest are made up mostly of Muslims, other Christian denominations, Buddhists and Taoists.

**Time:** GMT + 8.

**Electricity:** 220 volts (110 volts in Baguio) AC, 60Hz. 110 volts is available in most hotels. Flat and round 2- and 3-pin plugs are in use.

**Telephone:** IDD is available to main towns. Country code: 63. International calls to the smaller towns must be booked through the operator. Outgoing international code: 00.

**Mobile telephone:** GSM 900/1800 network. Operators include Smart Communications Inc. (web site: <http://www.smart.com.ph>) and Globe Telecom (web site: <http://www.globe.com.ph>). Coverage is limited to Manila and other main urban areas.

**Fax:** All 3- to 5-star hotels, most government offices and most businesses have facsimile services.

**Telegram:** Telegrams can be sent from Eastern Telecommunications Philippines Incorporated offices.

**Internet/E-mail:** ISPs include Internet Manila (web site: <http://www.i-manila.com.ph>), Philworld Online (web site: <http://www.pworld.net.ph>) and Cyber Space (web site: <http://www.cyberspace.com.ph>). Visitors can access their e-mail from cybercafés across the country.

**Post:** Airmail to Europe takes at least 5 days. Post office hours: 0800-1700 Monday to Friday.

**Press:** There are about 20 daily newspapers. English-language daily newspapers include the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, Philippine Star, Manila Standard and the Manila Times.

**BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies:** From time to time these change.

**BBC:**  
MHz21.6615.367.1106.195

**Voice of America:** MHz15.2511.709.7706.110

### 3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
<b>British</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>Australian</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>Canadian</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>USA</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>OtherEU</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>Japanese</b>	Yes	1	Yes

**PASSPORTS:** Passports valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond intended length of stay required by all except holders of a Hong Kong or Taiwan Certificate of Identity.

**Note:** (a) Holders of Certificates of Identity do require visas. (b) All children of Filipino nationality must hold individual passports. (c) Children of other nationalities up to the age of 15 and not accompanied by a parent are only permitted entry if they secure a visa based on an approved Waiver Exclusion Ground (WEG) granted by the Bureau of Immigration. Applicants should apply at the Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy) at least 2 weeks in advance.

**VISAS:** Required by all except the following:

(a) 1. bona fide foreign tourists (including business travellers) for stays of less than 21 days provided holding passports valid for a minimum of 6 months and return or onward tickets (except nationals of Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Belize, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, China (PR), CIS, Croatia, Cuba, Egypt, Estonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Korea (DPR), Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russian

Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Tonga, Vietnam, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and holders of Palestinian passports who do require a visa even if staying less than 21 days);

(b) holders of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) passports, British National Overseas (BNO) passports and holders of Macau-Portuguese passports for stays of up to 7 days; (c) transit passengers continuing their journey to a third country within 72 hours provided holding onward or return documentation (some nationals are required to leave by the same or first connecting aircraft; enquire at Embassy for details).

**Note:** (a) Nationals of Afghanistan and Korea (DPR) must have their applications approved by the authorities in Manila before visas can be issued. (b) All tourists wishing to stay longer than 21 days need a visa.

**Types of visa and cost:** Temporary Visitor: £22 (single-entry); £43 (6-month multiple-entry); £65 (1-year multiple-entry).

**Validity:** Single-entry (59 days from date of issue); Multiple-entry (between 6 months and 1 year from date of issue). Visas normally allow stays of up to 59 days. Extensions are possible at the discretion of the Bureau of Immigration.

**Application to:** Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section.

**Application requirements:** (a) 1 application form. (b) 1 passport-size photograph signed on the back. (c) Passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the intended period of stay. (d) Proof of means of support during stay, either by bank statement or letter of employment. (e) Fee in cash or postal order only. (f) If applying by post a registered, stamped, self-addressed envelope is required and the application should be signed by a notary or commissioner of oaths. (g) Business travellers also require a letter from the sponsoring Filipino company or from their employer, stating the purpose of the visit.

Application for a non-immigrant visa should be made in person.

**Working days required:** 2 if applying in person or 7 if applying by post.

## 4 MONEY

**Currency:** Philippine Peso (P) = 100 centavos. Notes are in denominations of P1000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of P5, 2 and 1, and 50, 25, 10 and 5 centavos.

**Currency exchange:** Always use authorised money-changers or banks in Manila. Outside the capital there is a shortage of facilities for changing foreign currency and rates may get progressively worse the further one goes from the city. It is advisable to carry a sufficient amount of Philippine pesos when travelling to other provinces.

**Credit cards:** American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in major establishments throughout the big cities of the Philippines. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

**Travellers cheques:** Travellers cheques and major foreign currency may be cashed in all commercial banks and Central Bank dealers. They are also accepted in most hotels, restaurants and shops. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in US Dollars.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Philippine Peso against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '00 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 £1.00=61.8667.2274.0570.09 \$1.00=41.6844.8051.1548.00

**Currency restrictions:** The import and export of local currency is limited to P5,000. The import and export of foreign currency is unlimited.

**Banking hours:** 0900-1500/1600 Monday to Friday.

## 5 DUTY FREE

The following items may be imported into the Philippines without incurring customs duty: 400 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 2 litres of alcoholic beverage; clothing, jewellery and perfume for personal use up to a total value of US\$1000.

**Prohibited Items:** Firearms, explosives, pornographic material, seditious or subversive material, narcotics and other internationally prohibited drugs (unless accompanied by a medical prescription).

## 6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Apr 9 Bataan Day. Apr 12 Maundy Thursday. Apr 13 Good Friday. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 12 Independence Day. Aug 26 National Heroes' Day. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Nov 30 Bonifacio Day. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 30 Rizal Day. Dec 31 Special Public Holiday. Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Apr 9 Bataan Day. Mar 28 Maundy Thursday. Mar 29 Good Friday. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 12 Independence Day. Aug 25 National Heroes' Day. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Nov 30 Bonifacio Day. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 30 Rizal Day. Dec 31 Special Public Holiday.

**Note:** Easter is a major holiday in the Philippines and travel may be disrupted.

## 7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
<b>Yellow Fever</b>	No	1
<b>Cholera</b>	Yes	2
<b>Typhoid and Polio</b>	Yes	1
<b>Malaria</b>	3	-
<b>Food and Drink</b>	4	-

**1:** A yellow fever or typhus vaccination certificate is required from travellers over one year of age arriving within six days from infected areas. A certificate is also required by those arriving from small pox or plague infected areas.

**2:** Following WHO guidelines issued in 1973, a cholera vaccination certificate is not a condition of entry to the Philippines, unless travellers arrive from infected areas. However, cholera is a risk in this country and precautions are essential. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination, as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness. See the Health appendix for further information.

**3:** Malaria risk exists throughout the year in areas below 600m, except in the Provinces of Bohol, Catanduanes, Cebu and Manila. No risk is considered to exist in urban areas or in the plains. The malignant falciparum strain is present and is reported to be resistant to chloroquine.

**4:** Water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilised. Milk is unpasteurised and should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Pork, salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. For more information, consult the Health appendix. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is endemic in the south. Avoid swimming and paddling in stagnant fresh water. Swimming pools that are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe. Hepatitis B is highly endemic. Hepatitis A and E may occur.

**Health care:** There is no reciprocal health agreement with the UK and health insurance is, therefore, essential. Approximately three-quarters of the hospitals are private.

Travel - International

**AIR:** The Philippines' national airline is Philippine Airlines (PR). Other airlines serving the Philippines include Air France, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, Qantas, Singapore Airlines and Malaysia Airlines.

**NOTE:** The period over Easter, from Good Friday to the following Bank holiday (and sometimes beyond), is a major holiday in the Philippines as is Christmas and New Year. There may be some difficulty booking a flight during these periods.

**Approximate flight times:** From Manila to London is 16 hours; to Paris is 14 hours 10 minutes; to Los Angeles is 14 hours 25 minutes; to New York is 17 hours 30 minutes; to Singapore is 3 hours; to Hong Kong is 1 hour 40 minutes; to Bangkok is 2 hours 35 minutes; to Tokyo is 5 hours 15 minutes and to Sydney is 8 hours.

**International airports:** Ninoy Aquino (MNL) is 12km (7 miles) southeast of Manila. Airport facilities include banks, post office, medical clinic, baggage deposit area, duty-free shops and car hire. Bus and taxi services are available to the city (travel time - 15 minutes).

Mactan International Airport (NOP) (Cebu Island) is 45km (28 miles) from the city centre. Hotels and tour operators provide their own coaches; taxis can be hired.

**Departure tax:** P550 for international departures. Children under two years of age and transit passengers are exempt.

**SEA:** Manila is a major seaport, a crossroads of trade in the Asia-Pacific region. Shipping lines which call at Manila include American President Lines, Eastern Shipping Lines, Premier Shipping Lines, Lloyd Triestino and Evergreen Lines. Schedules and rates are listed in the shipping pages of daily newspapers.

Travel - Internal

**AIR:** In addition to Philippine Airlines (PR), several other charter airlines, including Air Soriano Aviation, Air Ads, Air Philippines Corporation, Asian Spirit Airlines, Cebu Pacific Air, Grand Air, Laoag International Airlines, Mindanao Express and Pacific Airways.

**DEPARTURE TAX:** P100 for internal flights from Manila. Children under two years are exempt.

**SEA:** Inter-island ships with first-class accommodation connect the major island ports. For details, contact local shipping lines.

**RAIL:** The only railway is on Luzon Island, from Manila to Legaspi (operated by Philippine National Railways). This network runs three trains daily to and from Manila. There is also some air-conditioned accommodation.

**ROAD:** There are 161,168 km (100,148 miles) of roads spread among the islands, with highways on the Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon island groups. Further roads are currently being constructed. Traffic drives on the right. Bus: There are bus services between the towns and also widely available jeepneys. These are shared taxis using jeep-derived vehicles equipped to carry up to 14 passengers on bench seats. Fares are similar to buses. Taxi: Taxis are available in the cities and in many towns. Make sure meters are used, as some taxi drivers will set an exorbitant and arbitrary rate. Car hire: Car rentals are available in Manila and in major cities. The minimum age is 18. Documentation: International Driving Permit required, together with a national driving licence.

**URBAN:** A number of bus routes are operated by Metro Manila Transport using conventional vehicles, including double-deckers. Most journeys, however, are made by jeepneys, of which there are an estimated 30,000 in Manila alone. The metro-rail, a light rail transit link, runs from Baclaran terminal in the south to Caloocan terminal in the north. Tricycles (motorbikes with sidecars) and trishaws are a cheaper alternative for shorter distances around towns.

**JOURNEY TIMES:** The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Manila to other major cities/towns in the Philippines.

	Air	Road	Sea
Baguio	0.50	4.00	-
Banaue*	0.50	12.00	-
Batangas	2.00	-	-
Cebu	1.10	24.00	-
Cagayan de Oro	1.25	48.00	-
Davao	1.30	48.00	-
Iloilo	1.00	24.00	-
Laoag	1.25	7.00	-
Palawan	1.10	24.00	-

**NOTE:** \*As far as Baguio City and then another 8 hours by road.

## 8 ACCOMMODATION

**HOTELS:** In Manila there are 11,745 first-class hotel rooms. There are numerous smaller hotels, inns, hostels and pensions. Prices are often quoted both in Philippine Pesos and US Dollars. A complete directory of hotels is available from the Department of Tourism. The majority of establishments belong to the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP), Room 205, Regina Building, corner Aguirre and Trasierra Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City 1229 (tel: (2) 815 4659 or 867 2557; fax: (2) 815 4661 or 892 0277; e-mail: hrap@mnl.sequel.net). In addition, most regions have their own associations. Grading: Hotels are graded in the following categories based on standards set by the Office of Tourism Services, Department of Tourism, Manila: Economy (43% of all establishments are in this grade), Standard (39%), First Class (9%) and Deluxe (9%).

**SELF-CATERING:** 'Apartels' are available for minimum stays of a week.

**CAMPING/CARAVANNING:** Offered only in a very limited number of places.

## 9 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

The Philippines are composed of 7107 islands (7108 at low tide), with a total coastline longer than that of the USA. The warm tropical waters offer the attractions of sunbathing and swimming, while divers and snorkellers can explore coral gardens with beautiful marine life and dramatic drop-offs on the sea bed. Charter planes can be hired for reaching some of the more remote islands. Inland, the rich history and culture of the Filipino people, the dramatic landscapes and thriving cities will fascinate the visitor. For the purposes of this guide, this section has been divided into three areas, with the main tourist attractions listed under Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao and the South.

### Luzon

Luzon is the largest and most northerly of the main islands. Its spectacular landscape is made up of mountainous regions in the north, the flat vistas of the central plain, lakes and volcanoes in the southern peninsula, and a coastline dotted with caves and sandy-beached islands.

**Manila:** Manila, capital and hub of the nation, is situated on the east coast. Founded in 1571 on the ruins of a Muslim settlement, Manila has been a port for hundreds of years. The oldest part of the city, the Intramuros (Walled City), was protected by a massive wall, some of which still remains today despite savage fighting staged here in the Second World War. Places of interest include San Augustin Church and Manila Cathedral, from which there is an excellent view of the 2072 sq km (800 sq miles) of the harbour, and the ruins of Fort Santiago. Outside the Intramuros is Chinatown, a market in the district of Binondo, crowded with shops, stalls and restaurants. Luneta Park contains the Rizal Monument, a memorial to the execution of this great Filipino intellectual of the late 19th century. Other places of interest are the American Cemetery and Coconut Palace.

Manila is a good base from which to make excursions, for instance to Las Piñas, situated a little way outside the city, where the famous Bamboo Organ is located and the Sarao Jeepney factory, where people are allowed to wander around free of charge.

About an hour's drive away from Manila through coconut plantations, Tagaytay Ridge in Cavite overlooks a lake that contains Taal Volcano, which itself holds another lake. Tagaytay is a popular

destination in summer, when all kinds of festivities are celebrated and roadside stalls overflow with flowering plants and fruits in season.

The series of mineral springs of Hidden Valley lie secreted in a 90m (300ft) deep crater in Alaminos, enclosed by rich forests. The pools vary in temperature from warm to cold, and the lush trails end up at a gorge with a waterfall.

Villa Escudero, an 800-hectare coconut plantation in Quezon Province, less than two hours by road from Manila, is part of a working plantation, yielding rare glimpses into rural life. Guests are taken on a tour of a typical village on a cart drawn by a carabao, or water buffalo.

**Corregidor Island:** Corregidor Island, 'The Rock', has a famous memorial to those who were killed during the Japanese invasion, and is accessible by hydrofoil. Day tours include refreshments and guide. A day trip to the town of Pagsanjan, 63km (39 miles) southeast of Manila, includes dug-out canoe rides down the jungle-bordered river to the Pagsanjan Falls. This was a location for the filming of *Apocalypse Now*, and is a popular excursion.

**Laguna:** Laguna, a short distance from Manila, is a province famous for hot sulphur springs. The 'Towns of Baths', Pansol, Los Baños and Cuyab are situated here. 250km (150 miles) north of Manila is Baguio, 1525m (5000ft) above sea level, a cool haven from the summer heat. It is accessible both by air and land, though the drive up the zigzagging Kennon Road is more popular as it offers spectacular views of the countryside. Baguio has a good variety of restaurants, mountain views and walking excursions. Main attractions include The Mansion, summer residence of the Philippine president; Bell Church; Baguio Cathedral; and the Crystal Caves, composed of crystalline metamorphic rocks and once an ancient burial site.

**Banaue:** Banaue is eight hours' bus ride north of Baguio. A remote mountain community lives here, and tourists can visit their settlements. The beautiful rice terraces are the main attraction of this area. A breathtaking sight, they rise majestically to an altitude of 1525m (5000ft), and encompass an area of 10,360 sq km (4000 sq miles). The terraces were hand-carved some 2000 years ago using crude tools cutting into once barren rock, each ledge completely encompassing the mountain. Now listed by UNESCO as World Heritage sites, they offer an unforgettable sight to tourists and trekkers in the area (see also the Sport & Activities section). Banaue has a tourist hotel and many good pensions.

**Hundred Islands:** Hundred Islands, lying off the coast of Pangasinan, is made up of 400 islets surrounded by coral gardens and white sand beaches. This area is ideal for swimming and fishing. Hundred Islands is the second-largest marine reservation in the world, teeming with over 2000 species of aquatic life. The caves and domes of Marcos Island and the Devil's Kitchen are worth exploring.

The entire province of Palawan is a remarkable terrain for adventure and exploration, with its primeval rainforests, St Paul's Underground River and Tubattaha Reef. Inter-island cruises around northern Palawan are now available.

**Mindoro:** Mindoro island, reached by ferry from Batangas pier and south of Manila, is a place where the stunning scenery includes Mount Halcon, 2695m (8841ft) high, Naujan Lake and Tamaraw Falls.

**La Union:** La Union, situated on the northwest coast of Luzon, has some of the best beach resort facilities on the island. There are regular buses to La Union from Manila and Baguio.

**Bicol Region:** Bicol Region, situated in the east, is developing as a tourist destination and offers beaches, hotels and sights such as the Mayon Volcano, a nearly perfect cone, and the Kalayukay Beach Resort.

## The Visayas

The Visayas is a group of islands between Luzon and Mindanao. The main islands are Samar, Panay, Negros, Cebu and Leyte, the latter famous as the island first sighted by the Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan in the 16th century and as the landing point for the American liberation forces in 1944. Samar and Leyte are linked by the San Juanico Bridge, the longest in the country.

**Cebu City:** Cebu City is the main resort of the Visayas. Cebu is the most densely populated island, a commercial centre with an international harbour, and the Philippines' second city. Sights include Magellan's Cross, a wooden cross planted by Magellan himself over 450 years ago to commemorate the baptism into the Christian faith of Rajah Humabon and his wife Juana with 800 followers, and Fort San Pedro, the oldest and smallest Spanish fort in the country, which was built on the orders of Spanish conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565.

**Carcar:** Carcar town, south of Cebu City, has many preserved Castilian houses, gardens and churches. The Chapel of the Last Supper in Mandaue City features hand-carved life-size statues of Christ and his apostles dating back to Spanish times. The Magellan Monument on Mactan Island was raised in 1886 to mark the spot where Magellan died, felled by the fierce chieftain, Datu Lapu-Lapu, who refused to submit to the Spanish conquerors. There is also a monument to Datu Lapu-Lapu honouring him as the first Filipino patriot. Maribago is the centre of the region's guitar-making industry. As well as many historical sites there are popular hotels, beach clubs and resorts.

**Iloilo:** Iloilo on Panay is an agricultural province producing root crops, vegetables, cocoa, coffee and numerous tropical fruits. The attractions include beach resorts and, in Iloilo City (reached by air), the 18th-century Miagao Church, a unique piece of Baroque colonial architecture with a facade decorated with impressions of coconut and papaya trees. Sicogon Island is a haven for scuba divers, and has mountains and virgin forests to explore. Boracay Island is another such island paradise, accessible by air via Kalibo, followed by a bus or jeepney ride to Malay, and finally by ferry or pumpboat to Cataclan. A survey considered its powdery-fine white-sand beach to be amongst the best in the world.

**Bohol Island:** Bohol Island, just across the straits from Cebu in Central Visayas, is the site of some of the country's most fascinating natural wonders; hundreds of limestone hills, some 30m (100ft) high, that in summer look like oversized chocolate drops, earning them the name 'Chocolate Hills'. Covered by thin grass that dries and turns brown in the summer sun, they are a strange spectacle with mounds rising up from the flatlands, and are situated about 55km (34 miles) northeast of Tagbilaran City, the island's capital. Bohol also offers handsome white sand beaches and pretty secluded coves, accessible via good roads. The island is a coconut-growing area and its local handicrafts are mostly of woven materials: grass mats, hats and baskets. Baclayon Church merits a visit, as it is probably the oldest stone church in the Philippines, dating back to 1595. The island can be reached by plane or ferry. The air journey from Cebu to Tagbilaran takes 40 minutes. Ferries go from Cebu to Tagbilaran or Tubigon, another port north of the capital.

## Mindanao & the South

Mindanao is the second-largest and the most southerly island, with a very different feel from the rest of the country. A variety of Muslim ethnic groups live here.

In the southwestern tip of Mindanao is Zamboanga City, considered by some as the most romantic place in the Philippines and a favourite resort amongst tourists. The city is noted for its seashells, unspoiled tropical scenery and magnificent flowers. Zamboanga was founded by the

Spanish, and the 17th-century walls of Fort Pilar, built to protect the Spanish and Christian Filipinos from Muslim onslaughts, are still standing. The city has a number of hotels, cars for hire, good public transport and vintas (small boats), often with colourful sails, available to take visitors round the city bay. The flea market sells Muslim pottery, clothes and brassware. About 2km (1.2 miles) from Fort Pilar are the houses of the Badjaos, which are stilted constructions on the water. Water gypsies live in boats in this area, moving to wherever the fishing is best. Plaza Pershing and Pasonanca Park are worth visiting. Santa Cruz Island has a sand beach which turns pink when the corals from the sea are washed ashore, and is ideal for bathing, snorkelling and scuba diving. There is also an old Muslim burial ground here.

**Davao:** Davao province is the industrial centre of Mindanao, renowned for its pearl and banana exports. Davao City is one of the most progressive industrial cities in the country. The province is the site of Mount Apo, the highest peak in the country, while the Apo Range has spectacular waterfalls, rapids, forests, springs and mountain lakes.

**Cagayan de Oro:** Cagayan de Oro, on the northern coast of Mindanao, is the gateway to some of the most beautiful islands in the Philippines. By way of contrast, in Bukidnon there are huge cattle ranches and the famous Del Monte pineapple fields, and Iligan City is the site of the hydroelectric complex driven by the Maria Cristina Falls.

**Lanao del Sur:** Lanao del Sur is a province characterised by its Muslim community which has settled along the shores of Lake Lanao. Besides the lake, other attractions include Signal Hill; Sacred Mountain; the native market, Torongan; homes of the Maranao royalty; the various Muslim mosques on the shores of the lake; and examples of the famous brassware industry centred in Tugaua.

## 10 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

**Watersports:** Watersports: The Philippines' clear waters, tropical climate, abundant coral reefs and varied marine life make them an excellent location for scuba diving and snorkelling, with options ranging from resort-based diving to extended trips to unexplored areas. White sandy beaches are ubiquitous. The islands of Batangas, Mindoro (particularly Apo Reef Marine Park) Bohol and Palawan offer some of the country's best dive sites. The detailed and informative pocket map 'A Diver's Paradise' is available from the Philippine Department of Tourism (see address section). Boating enthusiasts can rent traditional canoes (bancas) on most beaches.

**Fishing:** Fishing: The Philippines' warm waters, incorporating almost 2,000,000 sq km (772,200 sq miles) of fishing grounds, rank 12th in worldwide fish production. These grounds are inhabited by some 2400 fish species, including many game fish such as giant tuna, tanguingue, king mackerel, great barracuda, swordfish and marlin. Local tour operators in Manila will help arrange trips. Game fishing is best from December to August.

**Golf:** Golf: There are approximately 70 courses, but only a handful of these conform to championship specifications. Unfortunately, good golf courses can be difficult to access: all private clubs have armed guards with instructions to refuse entry to non-members. Courses that admit visitors tend to be expensive. Some of the best courses open to non-members include: El Club Intramuros (at the Grand Boulevard Hotel, central Manila); Forbes Park (in southeastern Manila, where two of three courses are open to visitors); Canlubang (one of many spectacular courses in southern Luzon and the only one open to non-members); and Camp John Hay (near the Baguio hill resort, in the mountains, where golfers can rent private bungalows). Further courses are on the islands of Mindanao and Visayas (at Bacolod, Cebu and Davao), which can be

reached by ferry or on an internal flight. Non-members may sometimes be allowed to play at private clubs on a personal invitation; hotels can also make arrangements. For further information, or to request the brochure 'Golf in the Philippines', contact the Philippine Department of Tourism (see address section).

A traditional game is Sipa, played with a small wicker ball, which visitors can watch in Manila at the Rizal Court.

**Ecotourism:** Ecotourism: Various commercial operators offer package adventure tours with an ecological slant, including activities such as canopy walking (participants are lifted by pulleys to the canopy on the Philippine rainforest near Cagayan de Oro). The best areas for trekking and mountaineering include the region around Matulid River, Mount Pulog and Mount Halcon as well as the famous UNESCO World Heritage-listed rice terraces in the Cordillera mountain range in northern Luzon (see also the Resorts & Excursions section). Whale and dolphin watching is popular in the Tanon Strait near Bohol Island.

## 11 SOCIAL PROFILE

**Food & Drink:** Unlike a lot of Asian cooking, Filipino cuisine is distinguished by its moderate use of spices. Chinese, Malay, Spanish, Japanese and American influences have all left their mark in a subtle blending of cultures and flavours. Naturally, seafoods feature strongly, freshly harvested and often simply grilled, boiled, fried or steamed and served with kalamansi (the local lemon), bagoong (a fish paste) or vinegar with labuyo (the fiery native pepper). Restaurants specialising in seafood abound, offering crabs, lobsters, prawns, oysters, tuna, freshwater fish, bangus (the bony but prized milkfish) and the sweet maliputo, found in deep-water lakes. The lechon (roasted whole pig) is prepared for fiestas and family celebrations. Other delightful specialities include kare-kare (an oxtail stew in peanut sauce served with bagoong), sinigang (meat or fish in a pleasantly sour broth) and adobo (braised pork and chicken, in tangy soy sauce, vinegar and garlic). Among the regional dishes, the Ilocos region's pinakbet (vegetables sautéed with pork and bagoong), Central Luzon's relleno (boned and stuffed chicken or fish) and the Visayas' kinilaw (raw fish marinated in a spicy vinegar dressing) top the list. Rice is a staple of Filipino cuisine. Fruit is plentiful with mangoes, papayas, bananas, chicos, lanzones, guavas and rambutans. Philippine preserves like atsara (a chutney-like vegetable preserve) and the numerous native desserts like the pili nut brittle (a crunchy sweet made with the luscious pili nuts found only in the Bicol region) can be purchased in local markets. All the regional dishes are available in Manila's excellent restaurants, which, like the restaurants of all the main towns, offer a varied cuisine. For the less adventurous, there are also European-style restaurants and American fast food. Restaurants are generally informal, with table service. Drink: Alcoholic drinks include locally brewed beer, of which San Miguel is the best known, and the delicious Philippine rum. Waiter service is common in bars and there are no strict regulations regarding the sale of alcohol.

**Nightlife:** The choice of entertainment in Manila displays the Filipinos' affinity for music. 5-star hotels offer everything from high-tech discos to lavish cultural songs and dances, as well as superb pop singers and performers, trios, show bands and classical string ensembles. On most evenings there are cultural performances by local artists or foreign groups at the many other venues for the performing arts. Free concerts are offered by several parks every week, and occasionally by banks and other corporations. The Philippines also have some unusual musical groups like the Pangwat Kawayan bamboo orchestra, which uses bamboo musical instruments, and the Rondalla group which uses tiny guitars like the ukelele. Casinos are located in Manila, Ilocos Norte, Pampanga, Cebu, Zamboanga, Iloilo and Davao.

**Shopping:** The Philippines is a haven for shoppers. Countless bargain opportunities for the handicrafts of the different regions are found in the numerous shopping complexes, which range from sleek air-conditioned department stores and malls to open-air bazaars. The chain stores offer everything from the famous barong tagalog (hand-embroidered dress shirts for men in delicate jusi material) to Tiffany lamps made with capiz shells. For local colour there's nothing like the flea markets where visitors can buy all kinds of cloth weaves, brassware from the south, woodcarvings and other local crafts, as well as rare seashells and souvenirs, like the painted papier-maché horses of Laguna. Some particularly good buys are the silver jewellery from Baguio, coral trinket boxes, rattan furniture, baskets in different designs, woven grass mats (banig), antique wooden figurines of saints, ready-to-wear clothes, garments embroidered with the traditional callado, Filipino dresses for women (usually made from banana and pineapple fibres), cigars and abaca placemats. Handicraft stores are found everywhere in the country, especially in cities. Large department stores sell both local and foreign manufactured goods. Shopping hours: 1000-2000 Monday to Saturday, but these can vary. Most department stores and supermarkets are open Sunday.

**Special Events:** Dozens of colourful festivals are celebrated in the Philippines each year. A comprehensive listing, including all important Muslim festivals and Catholic feast days in honour of patron saints etc, may be obtained from the Department of Tourism. The following is a list of some of the major events in the Philippines during 2001:

Jan 7 2001 Nazareno (religious procession in honour of the image of Nazarene), Quiapo and Metro Manila. Jan (third week) Ait-Atihan Carnival, Kalibo and Aklan; Sinulog Festival, Cebu City. Feb Feast of Our Lady of Candles, Iloilo City. Feb 25 EDSA Revolution Anniversary. Apr Moriones (re-enacting of the beheading of Longinus), Boac, Mogpog, Gasan and Marinduque; Turumba, Pakil and Laguna. Apr Summer Arts Festival, Baguio. Apr 8-15 Holy Week Lenten Rituals, nationwide. May (whole month) Santacruzán and Flores de Mayo Festival, nationwide; May Carabao Festival, Pulilan and Bulacán; Pahiyas (parades and flower decorations), Lucban and Sariaya. May 17-19 Obando Fertility Rites, Obando and Bulacán. Jun Independence Day Celebrations, Kawit and Cavite. Jun Parada Ng Lechon (roast pig feast), Balayan and Batangas. Jul Pagoda Sa Wawa, Balayan and Batangas; Sandugo Festival, Bohol. Aug (third week) Kadayawan Sa Dabaw, Davao City. Aug 29-Sep (first week) Aurora Festival, Tanjay and Negros Oriental. Masskara Festival, Bacolod City. Aug 31 National Heroes Day, nationwide. Sep Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia, Naga City and Caramarines Sur. Oct Zamboanga Hermosa Festival, Zamboanga City. Oct (second week) Masskara Festival, Bacolod City. Oct (third week) Lanzones Festival, Camiguin Island. Nov 2 All Saints' Day, nationwide. Nov Feast of San Clemente/Gigantes, Angono and Rizal. Dec Giant Lantern Festival, San Fernando and Pampanga; Binirayan, San José and Antique. Dec 25 Christmas Festival, Laoag. Dec 30 Rizal Day (festivities at Luneta Park).

**Social Conventions:** Government officials are addressed by their titles such as Senator, Congressman or Director. Otherwise, usual modes of address and levels of politeness are expected. Casual dress is acceptable in most places, but in Muslim areas the visitor should cover up. Filipino men may wear an embroidered long-sleeved shirt or a plain white barong tagalog with black trousers for formal occasions. The Philippines are, in many respects, more westernised than any other Asian country, but there is a rich underlay of Malay culture. Tipping: Usually 10% of the bill. Hotels generally have a 15% service charge.

## 12 BUSINESS PROFILE

**Economy:** The Philippine economy is basically agricultural, with rice, corn, coconuts, copra, sugar cane and bananas as the main crops. Production of timber, formerly a major export earner,

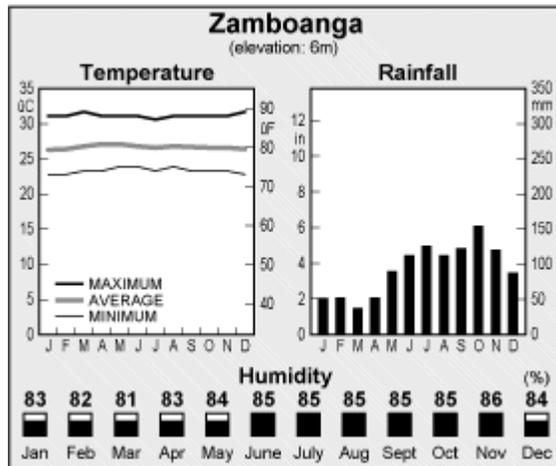
has been suspended due to the effects of deforestation. There is a moderately sized mining industry, producing copper, gold, silver, nickel and coal. Offshore oil production is due to begin in the next few years. Most of the Philippines' recent economic development has been industrial, with food processing, oil refining, and the production of chemicals, electrical machinery, metal goods and textiles all having been established during the last twenty years. Broad financial incentives aimed at attracting foreign investment capital and the creation of five export processing zones (EPZ), with concessionary tax rates and tariffs, prompted strong growth during the early and mid-1990s. The economic growth came to a shuddering halt in late 1997 when the collapse of the region's currencies produced a stock market crash, high inflation, the cessation of foreign investment and a large budget deficit. El Niño, the climatic system which has wrought periodic havoc upon the Philippines, then worsened the situation still further. Although the Philippines was one of the countries most affected by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, it has since recovered well - a reflection of the increasingly robust nature of the economy. Current annual growth is a healthy 4.5% (with industrial production up by 9% on the previous year). Although there remains the threat of political instability, the economy is in reasonably good shape. The Philippines belong to the Association of South East Asian Nations (the anti-Communist bloc which is now assuming an important economic role) and the Asian Development Bank. The country has a trade surplus with most of its major trading partners, including the USA, the UK and The Netherlands.

**Business:** The weather is almost uniformly warm and humid and so short-sleeved shirts, preferably with a tie, can be worn for business visits. However, with most offices being air-conditioned, it is best to wear safari suits or a long-sleeved Filipino barong tagalog when visiting top business officials and executives. Prior appointments are necessary and it is customary to exchange business cards. Filipinos have an American business style and English is widely spoken. Best months for business visits are October to November and January to May. Unless one has urgent business matters to attend to, business visits around Christmas and Easter are not recommended as delays tend to be unavoidable. Office hours: These vary. Usually 0800-1200 and 1300-1700 Monday to Friday. Some private sector offices are open 0800-1200 Saturday.

**Commercial Information:** The following organisations can offer advice: Philippine Trade and Investment Promotion Office, 1a Cumberland House, Kensington Court, London W8 5NX (tel: (020) 7937 1898; fax: (020) 7937 2747; e-mail: dpalondon@philtipo.demon.co.uk); or Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ground Floor, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City (tel: (2) 833 8591; fax: (2) 833 8895; e-mail: pccintr@mozcom.com; web site: <http://www.philcham.com>).

**Conferences/Conventions:** 102 establishments belong to the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC). It has offices in New York, Sydney and Tokyo. For further general information, contact the PCVC (see address section).

## 13 CLIMATE



**Tropical climate tempered by constant sea breezes. There are three distinct seasons:** the rainy season (June to September), cool and dry (October to February), and hot and mainly dry (March to May). Evenings are cooler. Typhoons occasionally occur from June to September.

**Required clothing:** Lightweight cottons and linens are worn throughout most of the year, with warmer clothes useful on cooler evenings. Rainwear or umbrellas are advisable for the rainy season.

## 14 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

**History:** The earliest inhabitants of the Philippines were the Negritos. Other tribes later arrived from Malaysia and Indonesia. In 1521, the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan, financed by the King of Spain, landed on the islands and named them after Philip II of Spain. Friars converted the inhabitants to Christianity, and today the Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in South-East Asia. Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legaspi established the first Spanish settlement in Cebu in 1565; he moved north and defeated the Muslim Rajah Sulayman and, in 1571, established a Spanish base in Manila, extending the area under Spanish control. In 1896, a revolution against Spanish rule led to the establishment of the first Filipino Republic in 1898 under General Emilio Aguinaldo. Later, the United States took control of the islands, and in 1935 a constitution was drawn up giving the Philippines internal self-government. The islands were occupied by the Japanese between 1942 and 1945 during the Second World War, and achieved independence in 1946. In the next two decades there was a succession of presidents who maintained strong links with the United States. In 1965 Ferdinand Marcos of the Nacionalista Party won the presidential elections and began a programme of rapid economic development. Before his maximum of two terms in office were over, in 1972, Marcos instituted martial law and suppressed all political opposition. He also set about large-scale looting of the country's exchequer to fill his and his family's own foreign bank accounts. Opposition to Marcos evolved in two distinct forms: the 'constitutional' opposition organised around dissenting senators such as Benigno Aquino; and the Communist Party which, linking with various tribal groups, launched an armed insurgency based in the southern islands, particularly Mindanao. By the mid-1980s, the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party, was able to sustain a major insurrection right across the country in both rural and urban areas. The turning point for the regime came after the assassination of Benigno Aquino upon his return from exile in 1983. Public

opinion rallied behind his widow, Corazon Aquino. A massive campaign of demonstrations and non-violent protest, popularly dubbed 'People Power', confronted Marcos. Equally important, President Reagan faced a groundswell of American public opinion in favour of Aquino, and withdrew his backing from Marcos. The Filipino military, Marcos' last bastion of support, followed suit and Marcos left for Hawaiian exile in February 1986 and died in September 1989. Lacking any political experience whatever, Corazon Aquino took a while to settle into the presidency. Relations between the new government and the military were the most pressing problem. The army sheltered an influential rump of support for Marcos which busied itself plotting against Aquino and had, by the end of 1989, made no less than six coup attempts. All were put down and Aquino kept the bulk of the military on her side by supporting a hard line in the counter-insurgency campaign against the NPA, whose campaign has since all but fizzled out. Military issues also dominated the Philippines' key foreign relations with the USA. The Americans had maintained two large bases on Luzon Island at Subic Bay (navy) and Clark Air Base, plus a handful of smaller facilities, since the end of the Second World War, but the agreement permitting their use was due to expire in 1991. Aquino again faced conflicting pressures: the economic value of the bases against nationalist demands for their removal. Amid tortuous and protracted negotiations, the problem was solved at a stroke by the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo, dormant for 600 years, in the summer of 1991. Clark Air Base - 10 miles from the volcano - was damaged so badly as to render it unusable and the Americans decided to abandon it. In October 1991, the Philippines Senate accepted a deal carved out between the Government and the Americans allowing for a total pull-out by 1994. The country now turned its attention to the presidential election campaign. The constitution prevented Mrs Aquino from putting herself forward for re-election. Fidel Ramos, Aquino's erstwhile Defence Minister and a key figure in recent Filipino politics, secured her endorsement. The election was closely fought between the three principal candidates: Ramos; Aquino's cousin, Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco; and Miriam Santiago, a fiery and popular lawyer with an impressive record as an anti-corruption campaigner. Ramos won the poll in May 1992 with 5.3 million votes. Imelda Marcos, who also stood, hoping to exploit her husband's residual popularity, came a poor fourth. On November 24, 1993, Imelda Marcos was found guilty of 'political graft' and was sentenced to up to 24 years in jail, although she remained at liberty, pending appeal. The main issues for the Ramos government were the economy - which had been performing well, driven by export growth - and the continuing insurgencies in the southern part of the archipelago, where the NPA threat had been replaced by the Moslem insurgents of the Moro National Liberation Front. Negotiations proved more successful this time, and the conflict was settled in 1996. The economy continued to perform reasonably well until the closing months of 1997 when the Philippines was one of the main victims of the Asian currency crisis. The peso was hit particularly hard and it was only towards the end of 1999 that the economy began recover. By this time, a new administration was in power under the leadership of Joseph Ejercito Estrada, who had comfortably won the presidential election of May 1998. Estrada headed a new political party, Laban ng Masang Pilipino (LMP, Struggle of the Filipino Masses), which also won the largest bloc of seats (falling just short of an overall majority) in simultaneous congressional elections.

**Government:** The constitution adopted in 1987 provides for a dual-chamber congress comprising a 24-member Senate and a House of Representatives with a maximum 250 members, of whom 200 are directly elected. The President, who holds executive power, is elected for a 6-year term.

## 15 OVERVIEW

**Country Overview:** The Philippines lie off the southeast coast of Asia between Taiwan and Borneo in the Pacific Ocean and South China Sea. They are composed of 7107 islands and islets

(7108 at low tide). The warm waters offer the attractions of sunbathing, swimming and diving through a dramatic display of coral gardens and spectacular marine life.

Luzon is the largest and most northerly of the main islands. The spectacular landscape is made up of the mountainous north, the flat vistas of the central plain and lakes and volcanoes in the southern peninsula. Manila, capital and hub of the nation has been a port for hundreds of years. Places of interest include San Augustin Church and Manila Cathedral, which offers an excellent view of the harbour.

Hundred Islands, lying off the coast of Pangasinan, are made up of 400 islets surrounded by coral gardens and white sand beaches. This area is ideal for swimming and fishing.

Mindanao, the most southerly island, has a very different feel from the rest of the country. In the southwestern tip is Zamboanga City, considered by some as the most romantic place in the Philippines and a favourite resort amongst tourists. The city is noted for its seashells, unspoiled tropical scenery and magnificent flowers.

Local dishes include kare-kare (an oxtail stew in peanut sauce served with bagoong) and sinigang (meat or fish in a pleasantly sour broth).

On most evenings there are cultural performances by local artists in the many performing arts venues. Many of the top hotels offer lavish music spectacles ranging from string quartets to show bands.

More countries : <http://www.umzugs.com>