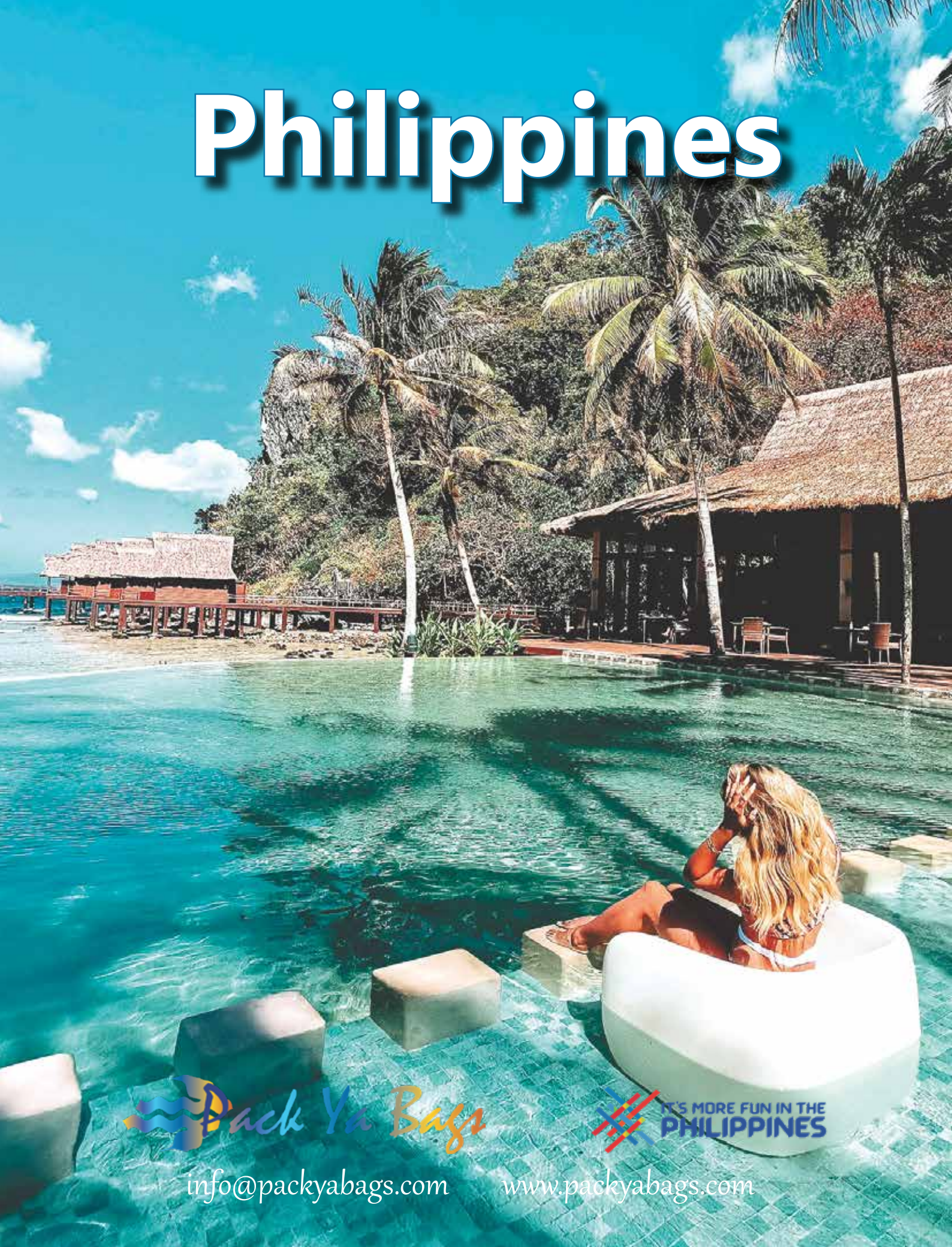


# Philippines



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**Metro Manila**  
Makati, Manila, Pasay

**Cordillera Region**  
Banaue Terraces, Sagada, Ifugao

**Ilocos Region**  
Vigan, Laoag

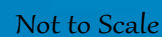
**Cagayan Valley**  
Cagayan Valley, Batanes

**Central Luzon**  
Mt Pinatubo, Subic, Minalungao National Park, Angeles City, San Fernando

**Calabarzon**  
Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon, Rizal, Taal Volcano

**Mimaropa**  
Mindoro, Palawan, Rombion

**Bicol Region**  
Legazpi, Mayon Volcano, Donsol, Camarines, Masbate, Catanduanes



Front Cover Photo: Dapa Surigao del Norte by Yuriry Bogdanovand and UNSPLASH.  
We would like to thank and acknowledge all the products, services, hotels, resorts and tour companies including the Pack Ya Bags image library for photographic use and the contributors to articles within this publication and the Philippines Department of Tourism.

This is a cross between a brochure and a good read. It has no prices or dates but has a few suggestions including lots of images of various places in the Philippines. With more than 7000 islands to discover, we really are only scratching the surface of what and where you can go in this wonderful country

This brochure is also downloadable from the [www.packyabags.com](http://www.packyabags.com) site.



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# What you need to know

## On Arrival

Ninoy Aquino Airport (Manila) has 4 terminals. Check which terminal you arrive in and depart from. An airport shuttle between terminals departs every 15 minutes. Other international airports are in Cebu, Bohol and Clark.

Take only official, metered or pre-booked taxis. Do not accept rides from people that approach you in the terminal.

A Meet and Greet and transfer service is recommended on arrival.



## Getting Around

Travel throughout the Philippines is easy. Flights are regular, usually inexpensive and service all points in the Philippines. However, sometimes flights are not available between islands. Cebu and Bohol are an example. Fast ferries are often used with frequent services to and between the popular destinations. Long distance bus services are very good with both air and non air conditioned buses. This is a cheap mode of transport. Check with Pack Ya Bags.

## Languages

There are two official languages, Filipino and English. Filipino which is based on Tagalog, is the national language. English is widely used throughout hotels and resorts. Be aware when travelling through lesser known areas that English is less spoken. When leaving your hotel or resort make sure you have a written description of where you are staying to give to the taxi or bus driver.

## Currency

Currency is the Peso. Most large stores, restaurants, hotels and resorts accept all major credit cards.

## Philippines Airlines

PAL's vision is to create a superb hub to not only the Philippines but to many destinations around the world. With the renowned friendliness of the staff to look after you the airline looks forward to being part of your dreams.

## Cebu Pacific

Operating as Cebu Pacific and stylized as cebu pacific, is a Philippine low-cost airline based on the grounds of Mactan-Cebu International Airport, Lapu-Lapu City, Metro Cebu, Philippines. Founded in 1988, it is Asia's oldest low-cost airline.

## Air Asia Philippines

Philippines AirAsia, Inc. is a low-cost airline based at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Metro Manila in the Philippines. The airline is the Philippine affiliate of AirAsia, a low-cost airline based in Malaysia.

## Swift Airlines

AirSWIFT is a Filipino-owned regional boutique airline company with a permit to operate domestic scheduled and non-scheduled air transportation services. It also serves the aircraft transportation requirements of its affiliated company, El Nido Resorts

# This is worth a read



## A bit about the Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago that consists of 7,641 islands, and is the third largest English speaking country in the world. With Asian, European, and American influences, the culture is diverse, as is the wonderful variety of food. The Filipinos had a rich culture and were trading with the Chinese and the Japanese prior to the Spanish colonization in 1521. In 1898, after 350 years, the Filipinos, with leaders like Jose Rizal and Emilio Aguinaldo, succeeded in winning their independence.



## How to say it

Try using these very simple phrases:

Hello = Mabuhay.  
Thank you = Salamat.  
Please = Paki  
Yes = Oo.  
No = Hindi.  
How are you? = Kamusta  
I. Me = Ako.  
You = Ikaw.  
Delicious. = Sarap  
Sorry, excuse me. = Paumanhin.  
Farewell. = Paalam.

Here are three phrases you may want to try. Actually translates to Beautiful Morning and so on.

Good Morning =  
Magandang umaga.  
Good Afternoon =  
Magandang hapon.  
Good Evening =  
Magandang gabi  
The Filipino language is phonetic so don't be shy and give it a go.

## Other ways of getting around

There are lots of fun ways to get around in the Philippines, such as with the famous Jeepneys and the tricycles. A very cheap public transport system throughout the Philippines, the Jeepneys were originally made from left over jeeps at the end of WWII and are decorated in the most fantastic colours and designs. The Tricycle can carry around 4 persons but you will sometimes see them with many more passengers. They are great fun and cheap.

## Useful Airport Codes

Angeles City, Clark	(CRK)
Bacolod	(BCD)
Baguio	(BAG)
Busuanga	(USU)
Cagayan De Oro	(CGY)
Camiguin	(CGM)
Caticlan, Boracay	(MPH)
Cebu	(CEB)
Coron	(XCN)
Davao	(DVO)
Dumaguete	(DGT)
El Nido	(ENI)
Iloilo	(ILO)
Kalibo	(KLO)
Legaspi	(LGP)
Manila	(MNL)
Puerto Princesa	(PPS)
Tablas	(TBH)
Tagbilaran, Bohol	(TAG)
Taytay	(RZP)





# Metro Manila



## Metro Manila:

Manila is the main entry point to the Philippines. There are 16 cities that make up busy Metro Manila. The secret to staying in Manila is to decide what you want to do and determine your budget. If it is merely a stopover before flying on to another destination, opt for something close to the airport in Makati or Pasay city. If it is nightlife or shopping, then Manila, Makati and Pasay are fabulous.

Many styles and levels of accommodation are available. From cheap and cheerful budget and backpacker hostels, through to apartments, boutique hotels, ritzy and luxurious internationally branded hotels. Manila is a true International City with many places to visit and experience.

## Things to do:

Besides the shopping, eating and nightlife, Manila has some excellent day and overnight touring to be enjoyed. The former US Naval facility at Subic Bay, trekking the Taal Volcano, and 4x4 adventure on Mt Pinatubo, Hidden Valley with its warm volcanic pools, Pagsanjan Falls in a dugout canoe, coconut plantation visit, historical architecture and sites from the Spanish, Asian and ancient Filipino, dinner cruising on Manila Bay, exploring Ocean Park, Manila Museum and the old Manila centre called Intramuros and lots, lots more. Phew! You can never be bored in Metro Manila.

And then there is the shopping. Mall of Asia, Glorietta, Aura Premier, Robinsons, Megamall, Greenhills, and many more. This really is a city where you can shop 'til you drop.

## Getting there:

Ninoy Aquino Airport (Manila) has 4 Terminals. Check the arrival and departure terminals. When transferring between airlines, a different terminal may be required.

There is free shuttle bus available for those passengers that need to transfer between terminals. Operates 24/7. This still may take a little time as queues for domestic flights can be long and slow during holiday season.

**Pack Ya Bags** has access to hotels throughout Manila and the Philippines. Many are handpicked by us so as to give you the most comfortable stay. Prices vary from the budget to the luxury. We can organise a meet and greet which we recommend to make your transfer an easy experience.





# Metro Manila



## Things to do:

As a major international city, well in fact 19 cities within Metro Manila, there is so much to explore whether staying in the city boundaries or exploring a day trip to places like Taal Volcano and Tagaytay or Mt Pinatubo, Pagsanjan Falls in a dugout canoe, coconut plantation visit, historical architecture such as the oldest fort in Manila the Fort Santiago. This was built in 1571 so goes back a long way. There are many very old churches, museums and monuments to visit. A visit to Intramuros, the walled city, is a must which was a Spanish centre for more than 300 years. The famous Rizal Park with its 60 hectares of gardens and historical interests.

Don't forget China Town across the Pasig river. The main thing in this city is to explore and to try and spend a few days getting to know what the city is all about.

Go visit the famous old US base at Subic Bay offering views of the blue mountain, sea and forests. You might even want to try a survival course there!

Day trips to Anilao for instance, considered a mecca for a day out and diving from Manila. Just three hours south by car, bus or jeepney





# Luzon North of Manila

## Historical North



### Historical North:

A fantastic region to trek, hike and walk. If you have not discovered the Philippines northern region, now is the time. This is the mountainous region of Luzon and is home to the Ifugao people. This ancient tribal area was home to headhunters and they fiercely resisted Spanish colonisation. Their ancestors built extensive rice terraces by hand which are used and maintained to this day.

Trekking through this area is along not well worn trails, but along the small paths and ridges between the rice terraces and through remote villages. The rice terraces stretch over mountainous areas, hundreds of meters high and are UNESCO World Heritage listed.

Staying in local guesthouses, visiting the hanging coffins around Sagada and viewing the amphitheatre styled terraces of Batad are truly memorable experiences.

Trekking through the rice terraces in the rainy season is not recommended as getting there from Manila may not be possible due to flooding, slips and storms. Many companies cease operations between July and October. Trekking between November and June is the good season while January to May is an adventure that all walkers should experience. It is suitable for all ages provided you have a reasonable level of fitness.

Travelling as a small group has definite financial advantages as departures for people travelling on their own are very limited. We can help you organise a group for whatever reason to the Philippines.

A description of the north is not complete without mentioning Vigan. This is one of the few remaining 16th century Spanish towns in the Philippines. Cobble streets, colonial mansions, horse drawn carriages and carts are a fabulous backdrop to a fusion of Spanish, Filipino and Oriental cultures.

### Getting there:

If short on time, flights into Laoag will speed the whole adventure up, however the most popular way is to take one of the buses from Manila. They depart in the morning and overnight, and take at least 9 hours to Banaue and 6 hours to Baguio. Organised trekking and other tours will include the journey from Manila in a private, air-conditioned car or van unless your choice is the budget option.

### Suggestion only:

Depart on one of our 5, 6 or 7 day journeys from Manila. Pack Ya Bags offers trekking and/or discovery options, depending on your desired level of activity. Add the Mt Pinatubo extension, the site of one of the world's largest volcanic eruptions in the last 100 years. For serious walkers, trek for 8 or 10 days but definitely hire a local porter. Again we will organise all this for you.





# Views of Luzon North of Manila

including Babuyan, Batanes Islands



Sapot Masungi Georeserve



Mount Pinatubo



The Hundred Islands National Park



Batanes

### Luzon and islands:

Luzon is a very large region much of it little known from a tourist point of view. It is impossible to show every interesting place to visit.

On the page opposite you will see the Sapot Masungi Georeserve just 47 kilometres east of Manila and Mt Pinatubo, the site of one of the biggest volcano eruptions of the 20th Century

The photo above shows the Batanes situated right at the top of the Philippines and Luzon. There are 10 islands in the group. Further south other islands are Babuyan, Fuga and Camigin Islands. I have heard these islands described as being a little like New Zealand due to the green looks.

The Hundred Islands National Park is the first national park and a protected area located in Alaminos, Pangasinan in the northern Philippines. There are 123 or 124 islands depending on low or high tide with only seven of them used for island visits: The area has a wealth of flora and fauna that make up these coral islands. It takes around 5 hours by bus to get to the region but a day tour from Manila is a lot quicker.

Mount Pulag National Park is a must visit and is quite spectacular being around 3000 metres high. Mount Pulag is famous for its “sea of clouds” and its exceptional view of the Milky Way Galaxy at dawn. There are a number of national parks and caves to explore.

North of Manila is perhaps the wettest part of the Philippines especially from July to October and a number of companies stop during this period.

Many of the areas in Luzon are off the popular tracks so planning is essential to get the best out of your time there. Pack Ya Bags can organise this for you. As you would imagine, trekking is a big part of the region.

Luzon does stretch East, West and South of Manila also, so read on as they have descriptions on pages that follow. Always good to conduct your own research to make sure you get the best out of your time in the Philippines.



# Boracay



Boracay Island is the famous holiday destination in the Philippines. It is a 7km long island approx 1 hour by flight south of Manila and around the same time north west of Cebu. White Beach regularly makes it into the Best Beaches in the World listing. The picture perfect, white sand beach is over 2 km long and fringed with palm trees and low rise resorts, hotels and accommodation places along it's length. What more could you ask for!

The location for each resort is provided by which station is nearby. There are 3 stations. D'Mall is the hub with restaurants, bars and shops and lies between Stations 1 and 2.

This is the fun, holiday island of the Philippines



Bulabog Beach is the less popular and local side of the island but has the lovely 7 Stones Apartments which is only a 5 minute walk from D'Mall. The beach hosts amazing parasailing and wind or kite surfing. The wind blows onto Bulabog Beach from October to June. July to October is the season of Hagabat when White Beach gets the prevailing south east winds and Bulabog Beach becomes sheltered.

When choosing a hotel, remember that beachfront hotels or rooms will be more expensive. 2 and 3\* hotels rub shoulders with 4 and 5\* international resorts.. Shangri La is at the northern end of the island with it's own private beach. There is a road on the island, however most visitors walk the beach to move between locations.

# Boracay

## Getting there:

Flights are into Caticlan on the neighbouring island from where boats will transfer everyone to the island. (around 10 minutes) On the island, tricycles take arriving people to their hotels. The transfers are generally arranged with the hotel at the time of booking.

## Suggestion Only:

5 to 7 days on Boracay is perfect. Take a local paraw (sailing boat) ride, try some island hopping, learn to parasail or cook Filipino food. Of course there is diving, snorkelling, walking the beach and generally kicking back and relaxing. Have a few drinks in The Hobbit House located in D'Mall and for something totally unique, join the Mermaid School and learn to pose and swim with a tail or even become a mermaid instructor!!!





# Batangas

and Tagaytay



**Batangas:**  
What about discovering an island with a lake. Inside the lake there is another island...with a lake. Inside that lake...there is another island. As complicated as that sounds, at some stage there will probably exist another lake...with an island. This is the Taal lake with it's volcano. Trekking on the volcano is a popular day or overnight trip from Manila. There are even little fresh water, sandy beaches tucked around the shores of Lake Taal. These are perfect for a picnic or a lazy day. Amazing tiny floating bamboo shacks on old drums are picturesque, making for brilliant photos and an insight into the local people's lifestyle.

Stay in Tagaytay overnight and explore the area. It is well worth it.

Mostly people rush through the Batangas region on their way south to catch a ferry to Mindoro and Puerto Galera, but those who wish to take a little longer, stop, experience and generally slow down will be richly rewarded. The Batangas is the province south of Manila and features the beautiful Lake Taal and some gorgeous beaches, particularly in the Anilao area in the south west. While the beaches are not the soft white powdery sand of other areas, the beaches are generally more local and less crowded with superb diving and snorkelling. First time divers may wish to try a discover scuba here. Those a little braver with a little more time can take a dive course and there is plenty to enjoy for experienced divers.

**Getting there:**  
Batangas City is a 1 hr drive from Manila using the express and tollway. Coach, private transfer or air-conditioned bus are all available and Jeepneys, taxis and tricycles once in the area.

**Suggestions Only:**  
Take a 2 night break or more from Manila and stay in Anilao. Indulge in a little island hopping, snorkelling or diving and take a trek to the top of the mountain. There are accommodation styles to suit most budgets. Just need a day away? Take the full day excursion from Manila and explore Lake Taal and the Taal Volcano. For a slower pace, stay in Tagaytay overnight.





# Mindoro

including Puerto Galera and Pandan Island



**Mindoro:**  
Mindoro Occidental is the west and Mindoro Oriental is the eastern side of the island. with Puerto Galera on the north side of Oriental Mindoro  
As you arrive it is a beautiful sight with many mountains as a backdrop and the buildings tucked into the hillside with the tropical rainforest setting the scene. A number of resorts are dotted in the bays and all have incredible views of the sea and surrounding area.

Because this area is relatively close to Manila you do not have to take an internal flight to get here which is a plus for many visitors. From Manila it is an easy transfer by shuttle to Batangas City and from there a 1 hour boat ride to the island Mindoro. The views, serenity, seclusion and cool evening breeze while relaxing on a private balcony or relaxing with your cocktail is something you will always remember along with the low prices.

Your dollar goes along way!  
Puerto Galera, has every imaginable watersport, day trips to all parts of Mindoro, cooking lessons, heaps of activities for kids at the resorts and fabulous local food. Excellent night life if this takes your fancy so you can be active or take your time to relax. The bays and coves around this area are just fantastic with fabulous beaches including 'white beach' Yes there are many white beaches named in the Philippines!

Apo Reef is situated off the western side of Occidental Mindoro, about 28km. It is thought to be the world's second-largest continuous coral reef system, and is the largest in the Philippines. The reef is protected and is one of the best known and most popular diving regions in the country.

**Getting there:**  
By road and ferry combination from Manila while the south side of the island is serviced by flights from Manila. Fly from Manila to San Jose Airport to get to the fabulous Pandan Island.  
**Suggestion Only:**  
Definitely 7 days at one of the resorts. It is a great place to take the family. Or take the 4 day/3 night package on Pandan Island. It is a private island paradise and the closest island to Apo Reef. Perfect for snorkellers and divers with a bit of adventure thrown in. This whole area is renowned for being one of the top diving destinations, but certainly there is something for everyone here.





# Busuanga

## including Coron and Sangat



### Busuanga:

is in the island group called Calamianes and they are north of Palawan and south of Mindoro.

During WWII Japanese cargo and support vessels sought shelter in its sheltered bays and they were subjected to heavy aerial bombardment by the US Forces which resulted in Japanese gun boats, sub chasers, cargo and supply vessels, a sea plane tender and more joining other wrecks in Coron Bay. Now the wrecks are home to beautiful corals, thousands of fish, turtles, dugong, rays and are a paradise for divers.

Not only is there wreck diving but Barracuda Lake has top layer of fresh water, a layer of

salt water and a geothermal hot water bottom providing for interesting lake diving with barracuda (of course), little crayfish, rabbit fish, grouper and catfish. Not a diver? Then there is still so much to enjoy. Snorkelling, secluded beaches, island hopping, wind surfing, paddle boarding, jet skis, hiking, rock climbing, natural hot springs, sunset cruising, shopping in Coron Township and heaps more.

### Coron:

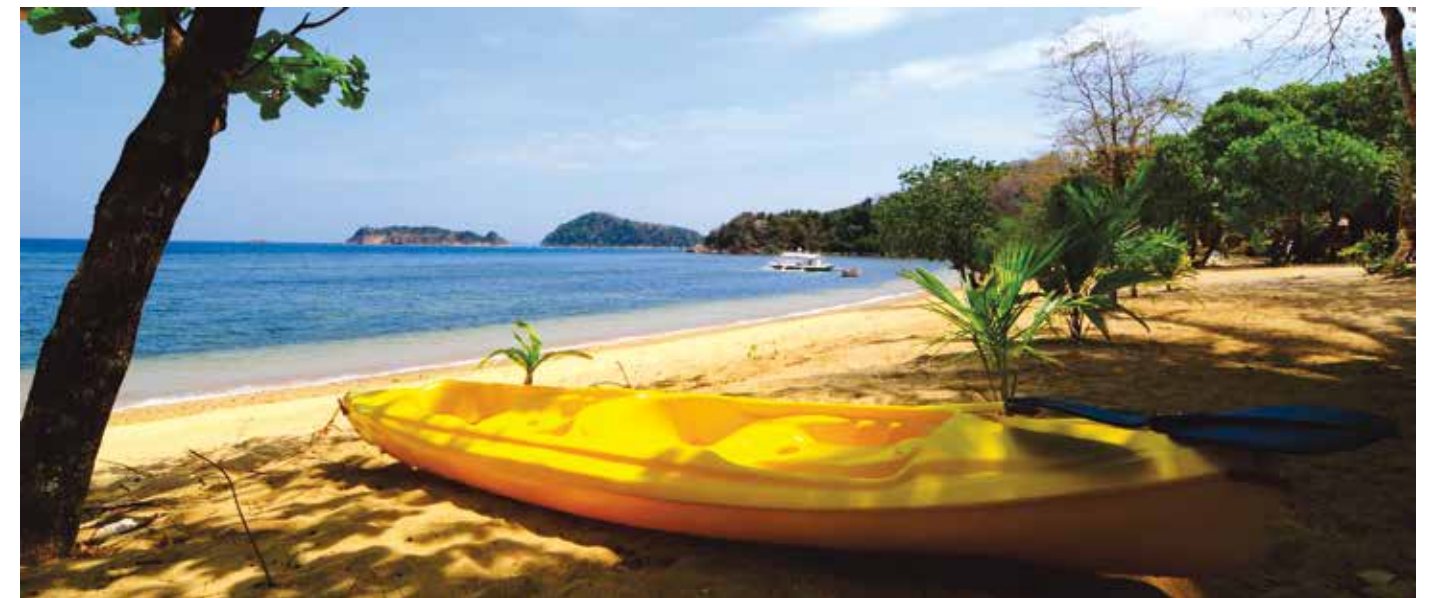
is a small fishing village in Busuanga and is the entry point to this beautiful part of the world.

### Getting there:

A recently introduced 4 hour ferry service between Coron and El Nido is a great way to arrive or depart and enjoy a scenic cruise at the same time. There are also daily flights from Manila. Once in Coron, outriggers take you to your respective resort and holiday locations.

### Our Suggestion Only:

You need a minimum of 3 nights here but we would suggest making it 5 or 7 nights. Maybe combine with another 3 or 4 nights at El Nido. Because of flight times, you may need a night either side in Manila.







# Palawan

## Palawan

is the destination in the Philippines that the Filipino people aspire to visit and it is easy to see why. The Palawan archipelago of around 1,700 islands and has a coastline of almost 2,000 kilometres in length featuring the most stunning of coves, bays, secluded beaches and tiny, jungle clad limestone islets. This last ecological frontier contains over 100 differing species of birds, 5 species of endangered species of sea turtle, abundant tropical sea life in clear waters, coral reef fringed coastlines and lush tropical rainforest. Plus one of the 7 natural wonders of the World, the UNESCO World Heritage listed Underground River, is in Palawan, and is 8 kilometres long and navigable! And it's not all about the water.

Crocodile farm visits, local arts and crafts, historical Spanish buildings, hiking trails, ziplines through the tropical forest canopy and the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Centre.

Palawan has been listed as one of the most beautiful places in the world. This has brought visitors from all over the world. Staying in one of the more remote resorts makes sure that the pristine beauty of this amazing place is still yours to enjoy. Personalised cruising on local outriggers lets you relax on private bays and beaches and enjoy the beauty of this place in your own way and in your own time-frame. For those staying in El Nido, the nightlife is busy with cheap eats and bars and is very popular with backpackers and travellers.

The organised day trips from El Nido can be busy, but again, you are taken to the most glorious, beautiful, stunning and every other superlative you can think of, bays, coves, lagoons and beaches. The water is clear, the snorkelling incredible and you will not just be taken to one location, but multiple. This area has incredible scenery at every turn.

In the north, luxurious resorts feature over-water bungalows, forest dwellings, private beaches and romantic escapes. Alternatively, budget hideaways cater to the more adventurous and frugal travellers wanting to dive, snorkel, sea kayak, bird-watch, or just relax.

Stay for ages!!





# Palawan



## Palawan:

The main city of Puerto Princesa is the departure point for the Underground River at Sabang, the live-aboard boats taking divers to the Tubbataha reefs and the glorious Honda Bay with its islands, dolphin watching and numerous water activities.

This region is certainly stunning and families love the snorkelling and adventures to be experienced here. Don't forget to take your snorkels on the Honda Bay excursions. The water is crystal clear and there is so much to see. "Starfishes were everywhere. It's was like looking up at the stars at night but into the water with the daylight instead! So beautiful to look at."

## Getting There Information:

Flights to El Nido are from Manila. On arrival, small bancas take visitors to the islands and remote locations. Flights into Puerto Princesa are from Manila and Cebu plus a once weekly flight from Cataclan. There are no flights between El Nido and Puerto Princesa.

Travel times on Palawan tend to be slow with the journey between Puerto Princesa and El Nido available only by road and the best part of a day needs to be allocated to make this journey. (around 4 to 5 hours)

If visiting Puerto Princesa between April and June, the sea is calm and the temperature is generally a wonderful 27 degrees...Perfect!

## Suggestion Only:

Fly to Puerto Princesa and visit Honda Bay. Transfer to Sabang to visit the Underground River then take a private vehicle transfer to the north. Here your choices are luxurious resorts with overwater bungalows or local and charming accommodation. Either way, you have the opportunity to enjoy this amazing tropical destination. We suggest a minimum of 7 to 8 nights for this itinerary with longer recommended.







## Bicol

including, Legazpi and Donsol

### Bicol:

The Bicol region has a wide variety of activities and sights. Bicol is awe inspiring with a huge amount attractions such as eco-tourism with highlights of nature's formations, habitats, waterfalls, caves, and eco-parks. Add to this water sports, such as scuba diving and snorkelling and cultural art, food, weaving and pottery. Many old buildings are to be seen as well as the now famous Mayon Volcano, one of the world's most perfect volcano shapes.

Here are just a few things you can experience in this region.

### Culinary Experience

When it comes to Filipino food, Bicol is definitely a region that will be top of mind to have among the best and most unique Filipino dishes. Try your hand at cooking for a couple of hours.

### Mountain Bike Or Motorcycle Tour

Pick between a motorcycle or a mountain bike and travel roads less travelled with your guide. Get up into the heights so you can see the fantastic views.

### Sorsogon

A trip to Sorsogon will take you to Paguriran Lagoon, San Benon Hot Springs, Old Barcelona Church, and Bulusan. Bulusan is worth a look as it includes a volcano, a rainforest, lakes, waterfalls and handcrafts all in one area.

### Matnog

Matnog has some of the most pristine beaches of the Philippines with islands of powdery white sand and turquoise water. What makes Matnog most special are the beaches with PINK sand!

### Mayon Volcano ATV and Trekking.

How about this one! Drive an ATV to the Lava Wall of Mayon Volcano. If you prefer you can trek this volcano with various trails including a 3 day walking tour. This region has no less than 7 volcanoes.

### Bulusan Volcano Trekking

A jewel of the Sorsogon province, the Bulusan Volcano Natural Park was declared a National Park in 1935. You will find an active volcano, a virgin rainforest, waterfalls, springs, and crater lakes and flora and fauna endemic to the region.

### Scuba Diving

From Ticao Island there are several dive sites. It is also from Donsol or Ticao where you can interact with whale shark from November to June. This is by snorkelling only

Surfing is also available in the region.





# Cebu

including Mactan, Malapascua,  
and Moalboal



**Cebu:**  
Cebu City is the oldest city in the Philippines and from the early 1500s the Spanish really made their mark on the country as did the Chinese. This is definitely reflected in the food. Historical buildings and streets are favourites on the city tours.

There are many cultural historical buildings here as well as the famous Magellan Cross. Great shopping and many day tours from here so ideal as a base. The busier Mactan is just across the bridge so really you can get the best of two worlds

Go north from Cebu City and a number of resort are located, Around 4 hours further north by road is the departure point to Malapasua Island which is a must do dive area for divers.

Mactan Island is connected to the mainland by the Mactan-Mandaue Bridge. The Cebu-Mactan International Airport is situated here. The resorts on Mactan are both local and international and spread down the eastern coast of Mactan Island.

Being a coral island, Mactan offers some of the best diving, snorkeling, island hopping, jet ski, sailing and cultural activities of any island in the Philippines. Mactan Island is located a few kilometers from the main island of Cebu. It is separated from Cebu by the Mactan Channel and connected to the province mainland by the bridge.

Travelling south and over the range to the west coast for approximately 2.5 hours from Cebu will see you in Moalboal. Again, the diving and snorkelling is memorable with dolphin watch cruises popular in the Tanon Strait.





Cebu  
including Mactan, Malapascua,  
and Moaboal



**Malapascua:**  
Malapascua is a small island, only about 2.5 by 1 kilometre. It has also become known for its beautiful coral gardens, coral walls and excellent local dive spots, as well as further-out sites including Gato Island, Monad Shoal, and Kemod Shoal. Monad Shoal is an underwater plateau where thresher sharks and manta rays can regularly be sighted. The site is best known as the only place in the world where thresher sharks can be seen regularly at and just before sunrise. They use the seamount as a cleaning station for bluestreak and moon cleaner wrasse to remove ectoparasites such as gnathiids from their skin and clean their gills and mouths.

The shoal also attracts devil rays, eagle rays and occasional hammerheads.

**Moalboal:**  
Moalboal has been featured by several Filipino TV show hosts, such as Kuya Kim Atienza of Matanglawin, Drew Arellano of Biyahe ni Drew, Slater Young, and Kryz Uy. Moalboal also has canyoneering in Badian and the Kawasan Falls, 20 kilometres (12 mi) away from Moalboal. Recreational diving is the main tourist activity in Moalboal, and reefs along the west coast of the Copton peninsula are home to a great variety of marine life.

Off the coast, is Pescador Island, with 3 of the most popular dive spots on underwater dives such as the cave known as “the Cathedral”. Indeed, a breath-taking view of the underwater world as some of the country’s best diving sites in Moalboal as the terrain of the reef follows the entire coast line, making the place ideal for scuba-diving, snorkeling and freediving, with a shallow drop-off close to shore dropping down to more than 40 metres (130 ft). The area is also known to be a sanctuary for sea turtles, as well as vast schools of sardines. Whale shark, dolphins and threshers are also seen out of the blue.



# Bohol

## including Panglao and Cabilao Island

**Bohol:**  
If white sand beaches, turquoise blue water and a beach lounge under a coconut palm are your dream holiday combination, then Bohol and Panglao are definitely where you should be. The Airport is now called Bohol-Panglao Airport or New Bohol International Airport. Bohol's ferry terminal is at Tagbilaran.

Resorts and hotels are scattered around Bohol as well as on Panglao Island which is connected to the south of Bohol by a causeway.

To the south is the tiny day trip island of Balicasag. This is a popular day trip island for diving and snorkelling, as there is so much marine life, beautiful corals and of course, turtles. Off the west coast of Bohol is Cabilao Island where the under-water photographer will never want to leave, particularly once they have found the pigmy seahorses.

For a day out go north to the Chocolate Hills. Around 1500 mounds. These are a unique geographic formations. They are green in the rainy season and brown in the dry season, hence the name. This area is also where you can see the world's smallest monkey, the tarsier. They are nocturnal and just too cute with their great big eyes as they sit in the trees, snacking on small insects flying by. Tours into this area also generally include a cruise on the Loboc River with entertainment and local Filipino food and a visit to the Butterfly Park.

There are a number of excellent places to stay on various parts of Bohol such as Cabilao noted for its excellent diving and snorkelling and luxury resorts such as the Amun ini Beach Resort and dive resorts such as Magic Oceans both at Anda Cove to the east of the island.

**Getting there information:**  
Flights to Bohol are from Manila. If a Cebu, Dumaguete or Siquijor connection is required, then a ferry needs to be taken. These depart a number of times throughout the day from Tagbilaran Ferry Terminal.

**Our Suggestion Only:**  
Spend at least 6 or 7 nights on Bohol. Stay in a beach side resort to suit your budget and enjoy the beach, islands, scenery and wildlife. This area is relaxed and a perfect place to wind down or have a spot of adventure. Combine your holiday with Siquijor or Dumaguete for a extension to your break. Go to Cebu and/or Mactan for a busier alternative and little nightlife.

If your international flight takes you to Manila then fly to one destination, ferry to the next, and fly back to Manila. Lots of combination options.





# Negros

including Dumaguete, Apo Island and Dauin



### Dumaguete:

Dumaguete is the main city to fly to to explore the island of Negros. The city is nicknamed 'The city of gentle people'. It is not only a university city but also the gateway by fast ferry to the island of Siquijor, the 'enchanted island'. The main marine parade at night comes alive and is vibrant with many cafes and restaurants, as well as local people eating from street vendors all along the parade. A complete meal in a restaurant here is around \$10 so great value. Good shopping will also keep you busy!

### Negros:

Although we have described areas in Negros Oriental, the other part of this large island, Negros Occidental, offers a number of getaways resorts. Ask us for details.

### Apo Island:

The waters around Apo Island are a marine sanctuary and have been since 1982. With more than 650 species of fish and 400 species of coral it makes the island very special for swimming, snorkelling and diving. The island is famous for the protection of Green Sea Turtles and it is rare indeed if you do not encounter these wonderful animals. The island lends itself to fantastic photo opportunities.

There are a number of walks on the island including a nice eco-trail, a little steep in parts but well worth the effort. The beaches are small but good.

Day trips from Dumaguete, Dauin and Siquijor are offered to the island and it is a day not to miss.

### Dauin

Dauin, is a coastal town just 15 kilometers south of Dumaguete, Dauin is most noted for its reef system and Marine Sanctuary. If you are adventurous you can hire a motorbike to get around and explore a little. There are a number of excellent resorts along this coast from budget to upmarket. All have great facilities, Dauin is also home to beautiful coral reefs and sandy beaches but fishing activity is prohibited in several locations.

### Suggestions Only:

The Colonial Church of San Nicolas is in Dauin, the oldest in the Negros Oriental. Along the beach you can explore the ruins of two dome shaped watchtowers. The local legends say that the watchtowers used to be a warning post to warn off pirates. Maybe a visit to the hot springs.





# Siquijor



**Siquijor:**  
Siquijor is known as the Enchanted Island, the southernmost island in the Visayan Island Group.

It is a beautiful island, and one of Pack Ya Bags's favourites, with 102 Kilometres of shoreline and fabulous white sand beaches, crystal clear seas and rich marine biodiversity

Pack Ya Bags and the staff have been to the island many times and can recommend a great 7 or more days on the island. We are always treated with such fond memories

Siquijor is known throughout the country for its unique healing arts. The tradition of creating local potions is still being practiced and used as alternative medicine. You can even try a local healer while on the island

During the Spanish time, the island was called the Island of Fire. As it teemed with twinkling lights during night time. However this turned out, to be the wonderful fireflies.

Cambugahay Falls is a waterfall and a swimming hole with clear waters. Great place to have a picnic. Your accommodation will organise this for you. It is reachable by a short walk but with a number of stairs. The Island has around 45 caves, the most famous of which is the long and winding Cantabon Cave with its beautiful stalactites.

The coral reefs ringing the island offer some of the best diving in the Philippines for snorkelers and scuba divers so is within easy reach.

The island is also close to many day trips to various places such as Apo Island, the Whale Sharks, Cebu and Bohol.

**Getting there:**  
To get to Siquijor and Coco Grove Beach Resort, You can fly from Manila or Cebu to Dumaguete, or take the ferry from Bohol or Cebu to Dumaguete. Once in Dumaguete, it is a ferry ride to the island and a jeepney transfer to Coco Grove Beach Resort.

**Our Suggestion Only:**  
Coco Grove Beach Resort is a 4\* resort, spread along half a kilometre of sandy beach and with a range of accommodation options, and a huge range of activities including day trips to neighbouring islands to swim with turtles or whale shark. Because of the space and beautiful landscaping, this resort is suitable for families, couples and honeymooners while their function facilities are perfect for weddings or conferences.





# Davao

## and Surrounds

**Davao**  
is located on the island of Mindanao, and is located furthest south of all the islands of the Philippines. Many flights per day depart from Manila and Cebu. There are many attractions in Davao. It is one of the fastest and exciting destinations in the Philippines. The highest mountain, Mt Apo is situated here. Davao is known as a safe and very clean City

**Cagayan de Oro**  
This city is situated on the north west side of the island and is the gateway to a number of adventures, such as whitewater rafting with 14 rapids along the Cagayan de Oro River. The rainy months of September and October are good for intermediate and professional levels (class 3 to 4) Whitewater Kayaking is lots of fun and can be a great challenge.



**Eden Nature Park,**  
More than 80 hectares of trees, flowers, herbs and spices, all located at just below 1000 metres above sea level. The park includes lots of fun things to do such as the SkyRider, (riding a bike on a wire), Skyswing, swimming, fishing, horse riding, together with walks and eateries.

**Philippine Eagle Centre:**  
The Philippine Eagle Center is home and a conservation sanctuary to the Philippine Eagles. The centre is displayed in a tropical rainforest setting and eco system.

**Museums:**  
There are number of unique museums including the fabulous D' Bone Collector Museum.

**Adventure:**  
Wild water rafting is very popular on the Davao River. The 3 1/2 hour wild water rafting starts from Barrio Tamugan in Calinan, and then ends at the lowlands. The water course features some 30 rapids of varying degrees of difficulty in the 15 kilometers of rough water portion of the Davao River.

From Davao there are a number of excellent resorts and hotels to choose from including those with fabulous beaches. Ray from Pack Ya Bags says that he loved this area and would go back on an extended holiday. That's him above snorkeling with giant clams.

Please Note: A number of countries have an advice against travel to Mindanao. Please check with us for latest information as we do have staff based in Davao.





# And Now For Something Different

*Yours to explore*

*Keeping you busy:*

We wanted to show you the many different things you can do in the Philippines so these pages are a pictorial view through many places and interests in the country. With so many Islands and out of the way places, you would need two lifetimes to get around them all.



ATVs



Local Crafts



Kaparkan Falls, Tineg Abra (Far North)



Sibang Cove, Cagayan



Asik-asik Falls, North Cotabato



Kalangaman Island, Leyte



Boliniao Falls Pangasinan



Baloclod The Ruins



Tinipak River, Rizal



The Mossey Forest, New Bataan (Davao)



Sipalay, Negros



Balabac, Palawan



# Diving in the Philippines

## Diving through the Philippines:

Although we have well known diving and snorkelling areas there are many areas in the Philippines untouched by tourism and are well worth exploring for the adventurous. Sometimes many divers will be diving on well known sites from all over the world, but underwater you very rarely see other divers and the clarity of the water is usually excellent.

Places like Tubbataha Reef out in the middle of the Sulu Sea and a UNESCO protected site to Apo Island, a turtle sanctuary, Donsol to see whale shark, Moalboal for the sardine balls, Busuanga and Coron for WWII wrecks...and nice coral, Malapascua to see the fabulous thresher shark. There are many thousands of dive sites in good clear warm water. The Philippines has a number of initiatives to protect the seas, reefs and animals.

Some of the dive sites are a close drive from Manila and others short flights. Most dive sites are dived from the local boats called banca boats. The dive companies we use are all very good, with excellent experienced staff and equipment. There are many diving areas not mentioned here. We can only give a few suggestions. But be assured the Philippines has some of the most diverse and perhaps the largest range of diving sites in the world, from corals to wrecks. And to cap it off, the prices to dive fits everyone's pocket.

Pack Ya Bags has dived throughout the country and it certainly remains one of our highlighted diving destinations.

Get in touch with us and we will create an itinerary for you or your club dive expedition.

## Liveboard Dive Boats:

Liveboards give you an amazing flexibility to explore many areas of diving without leaving your accommodation. Placing you on top of the dive sites is the ultimate. If you are experienced or have never been on one before, now is the time to do it.

The Philippines has a number of Liveboards offering trips through various months throughout the year.

Trips such as 7 days to Tubbataha Reef, Apo Reef and Coron, Malapascua, Bohol Safaris. We even have one to Palau from the Philippines for 8 days. These are suggestions only so we will adapt to suit.

Pack Ya Bags has all the information you need and any questions you may have, just ask one of our experienced staff.



# Must do Dive Areas



## Malapascua Island, North Cebu: (D)

Highlights: Famous for Thresher Shark, Mantas, Seahorse, Cuttlefish, Nudibranchs.

Getting there: From Cebu 3 hours drive north to Maya then boat to Malapascua.

## Tubbataha Reef, Sulu Sea: (E)

Highlights: marine sanctuary, In top 10 sites in the world, World Heritage. Diving by liveboard only from March to June. Fantastic! Coral, Mantas, Hammerheads, and Gorgonia.

Getting there: From Puerto Princesa to Reef. Liveboard options available.

## Apo Island, Negros Oriental: (F)

Highlights: Famous for Turtle Sanctuary, huge Table Coral, Drop Offs. Great photography.

Getting there: From Dumaguete to resorts around 30 minutes. From Siquijor around 1 hour.

## Moalboal and Pescador Island, Cebu: (H)

Highlights: Diving from the beach down to 35 metres. Caverns and overhangs, Gorgonia, Turtles and the occasional Whale Shark.

Getting there: From Cebu 2.5 hours by road then ferry.

## Panglao Island, Bohol: (J)

Highlights: Black Coral, Nudibranchs, Dolphins. Good for novice and confident divers. Excellent photography.

Getting there: From Bohol 45 mins to the island by road causeway.

## Cabilao Island, Bohol: (G)

Highlights: Big variety of dive site, with Sea Snakes, Hammerheads, Barracudas, Groupers, and the famous Pygmy Seahorse.

Getting there: From Bohol 1 hour by road then short boat ride to the island.

## Donsol, Bicol: (K)

Highlights: Whale Shark, Mantas, Hammerheads, Caves. In view of the world famous Mayon Volcano.

Getting there: From Manila to Legazpi and by road and boat or take the bus by road all the way around 9 hours.

## Batangas, Luzon: (L)

Highlights: Excellent for diving and snorkelling. Great macro photography, Blue-Ringed Octopus, Sea Gobblins, Wrecks, Caves and Tunnels. Wide variety of Nudibranchs.

Getting there: From Manila around 2.5 hours by road.

## Puerto Galera, Mindoro, Apo Reef: (M)

Highlights: A Marine Sanctuary making it a well protected habitat for many tropical fish, and Pelagics. The canyons is a drift dive with fantastic life.

Getting there: From Manila just 110km by road and boat. Apo Reef SW

## Palawan: (P)

Highlights: Diving throughout the island including the El Nido area. Don't forget to visit the underground river, one of the wonders of the world.

Getting there: From Fly to El Nido or Puerto Princesa.

## Coron, Busuanga, Mindoro: (S)

Highlights: Concentration of Japanese WWII Wrecks with many intact. Many other dive sites with great underwater life.

Getting there: From Fly Manila to Coron.





# Diving Packages Suggestions

*Yours to explore*



**Ray Aucott:**  
I have dived throughout the Philippines and I just love it, for the variety of diving locations, the underwater life and of course the wonderful Filipinos, who take very good care of you. The Philippines offers some of the best diving in the world. If you want me to take you, just let me know!

The following package suggestions are just that. They are not scheduled or fixed tours and are organised to suit you or your groups requests. Give us a call now so we can start to plan with you and get the best for you and you dive trip.

**7 nights dive package at Coco Grove Siquijor.**  
Includes:  
7 nights accommodation  
Transfers from/return Dumaguete  
All Meals  
Unlimited Diving (equipment hire extra)  
Apo and other areas.

**7 nights Donsol dive package at Ticao Island Resort**  
Includes:  
7 nights accommodation  
Transfers from/return Legazpi  
All Meals  
Unlimited Diving (equipment hire extra)  
Mantas and Whale Shark (Nov to Jun)  
Snorkelling only with the Whale Shark.

**7 nights dive package at El Rio y Mar Coron.**  
Includes:  
7 nights accommodation  
Transfers from/return Coron Airport  
All Breakfasts  
Unlimited Diving (equipment hire extra)  
Dugong and wreck diving.

**7 nights dive package at Sangat Coron**  
Includes:  
7 nights accommodation  
Transfers from/return Coron Airport  
All Breakfasts  
Unlimited Diving (equipment hire extra)  
Coral and wreck diving  
The Coron area is famous for its WWII wrecks of all kinds with great visibility to see them!



**9 nights dive package Malapascua/Moalboal/ Dauin**  
3 nights Ocean Vida Resort Malapasua  
3 night in Kasai Village  
3 nights in Pura Vida Dauin  
includes:  
All transfers Cebu/Dumaguete  
All Breakfasts  
18 dive package.

**9 nights dive package Malapascua/Pangalao/ Dauin**  
3 nights Ocean Vida Resort Malapasua  
3 night in Alona Beach (Bohol)  
3 nights in Pura Vida Dauin  
includes:  
All transfers Cebu/Dumaguete  
All breakfasts  
18 dive package.

**9 nights dive package Cabilao/Pangalao/ Dauin**  
3 nights Ocean Vida Resort Malapasua  
3 night in Alona Beach (Bohol)  
3 nights in Pura Vida Dauin  
includes:  
All transfers Bohol/Dumaguete  
All breakfasts  
18 dive package.

**10 nights dive package at 2 Magic Resorts**  
Includes:  
4 nights each accommodation at both Resorts  
Transfer to/Moalboal then Bohol  
All meals  
Unlimited Diving (equipment hire extra)  
This will give you a good variety of dives. Ask for details now!

In the Dauin area(Dumaguete) we have packages from upmarket resorts such as [Atmoshere Resort](#) to budget style resorts such as [Liquid Dumaguete](#). Ask us for details.

**7 nights dive package at El Galleon and Asia Divers**  
Puerto Galera  
Includes:  
7 nights accommodation  
Transfers from/return Manila  
All Breakfasts  
Unlimited Diving (equipment hire extra)

We can organise any type of dive and snorkelling trips for individuals and groups. Ray will work with you to make sure you get the the dive holiday you would like with the type of diving and experience level needed.





# Adventure

including surfing, walking  
and out of the way places

**Adventure:**  
Many visitors to the Philippines are familiar with its fabulous beaches, resorts and diving. What is less known is the type of adventure both soft and hard that can be experienced.

Following are a few suggestions but if you have a particular interest please get in touch with us and we can make it happen for you or your group.

**Surfing:**  
Surfing can be done throughout the islands but perhaps the most famous is on the Island of Siargao the surfing capital, which lies north of Mindanao. During the season from October to May waves can average around 2 to 3 metres. Cloud 9 is the most well known which is a perfect barrelling right hand break. It is suitable for Intermediate to experts.

**Ifugao:**  
A 5 day trip to the Ifugao region together with its people. Trips normally depart on a night bus and return on a night bus unless a private tour is requested. Famous for the Banaue Rice Terraces and natural beauty we can take you deep into the area meeting with the people and the culture in different villages.

**Trekking:**  
There are many trekking tours available throughout much of the Philippines including the Ifugao, Palawan, Mindanao, Cebu and Bohol to name just a few.

**Climbing and Caving:**  
From soft to hard adventure, we can cater for all tastes and pockets.

**Kayaking:**  
Some great tours for sea kayaking such as circumnavigate the island of Coron or paddle around the El Nido area in Palawan. These tours are usually by camping so will give you a real experience of the wild country areas not always seen when staying in a resort.

**White Water Rafting:**  
Always fun on the rivers from the tame to the more extreme. The Chico River is one such river to try this exhilarating sport.

Places to visit can also be more adventurous such as the Subterranean River, Calamian Islands, Maligcong, Sadanga, and Kalinga. With rainforests, reefs, unique flora and fauna, shipwrecks and more, what are you waiting for!





# Festivals, Parades and Fiestas



**Festivals:**  
With more than a 1000 Festivals and parades happening in the Philippines every year, somewhere in the country, they are absolutely spectacular. Some are religious based and some just carnival time. Famous ones such as the Sinulog in January, or the Vigan Town Fiesta also January, are well worth visiting. Maybe the fusion of fiestas of the 13 cities and 19 towns of Negros Occidental is worth spending the week.

Celebrating such events as racing between outriggers, festival of balloonists, gathering of ethnic tribes, arts and crafts, flower festivals, foundation of towns and cities, strawberry festival, re-enactments, fishermen’s harvest, battle of Mactan, music and dance festivals, body painting festival, Food festivals, street dancers, mask making, Phew! Have I left anything out?



The following package suggestions are just that. They are not scheduled or fixed tours and are organised to suit you or your group’s requests. Give us a call now so we can start to plan with you and get the best for you and your holiday.

## A few holiday ideas

### 5 Days / 4 Nights Chill Out

With over 7,100 islands, the Philippines are spoilt with thousands of beautiful beaches. Choose a glorious one and relax. The hub is Manila and some can be joined with direct ferries or flights. 4 nights is a starting point. Choose from dozens of destinations including the popular Cebu, Bohol, Boracay, Palawan, Siquijor and Coron. La Puerto al Paraizo on Guimeras is very different.

### 4 Days / 3 Night Mermaids:

Stay on Boracay for 3 nights and learn how to be a mermaid. Complete with tail and photos! This is just the BEST photo opportunity and totally recommended for groups of friends, wedding parties, family groups, party groups and anyone wanting to have a record of themselves in a totally different light!

### 5 Days / 4 Nights Ifugao

Depart Manila for sightseeing or trekking through the rice terraced region of the Ifugao people. Visiting Banaue, Batad, Bang-An, Cambulo, Sagada, Bontoc and Baguio. Extensions for longer trekking are available. Up to 8 days with 6 days trekking is perfect for experienced trekkers. Budget options are available using the overnight public bus. A 2 Day / 1 Night /Mt Pinatubo addition is certainly worthwhile.

### 7 Days / 6 Nights Mindoro

Depart Manila for the island of Mindoro by either road or flight (your choice) Enjoy both Pandan Island and Atlantis resorts before returning to Manila. This journey is excellent for small family groups and the Busuangas is a great extension for a longer holiday.



### 3 Days / 2 Night Whale Shark Interaction

Starting from Legazpi, this quick adventure brings you up close to some of the most magnificent gentle giants of the sea world. Top it off with magnificent views of the Mayon Volcano, floating down Firefly River and swim in crystal clear lagoons. There are daily flights to Legazpi from Manila and Cebu.

### 9 Days 8 Nights – Visayas Dive Safari

Dive in seven world-class diving destinations: Malapascua, Moalboal, Pescador Island, Dauin, Apo Island, Panglao and Balicasag Island. See the richness and variety of the Philippines’ islands, reefs and marine life. Starts in Bohol and concludes in Cebu. A supreme sample of diving for a small group of dive buddies.

### 6 Days / 5 Nights - Adventure Palawan

Palawan is exotic, even for Filipinos. Nowhere else in the country can you float down a river flowing through an 8 kilometre tunnel of karst or kayak amidst towering islands of sheer limestone walls that rise directly out of the sea. And yes, Palawan’s beaches will make you wonder why you ever bothered with anything less perfect. Brilliant for small family and adventure groups.

### 10 Days / 9 Nights Cebu / Bohol / Siquijor Combo

Arrive in Cebu and enjoy 3 nights on Mactan Island. Take a local ferry transfer to Bohol and relax on the beautiful beaches of Panglao and visit the Chocolate Hills and the tiny tarsiers in the hinterland for another 3 nights. Take another local ferry to the witching island of Siquijor via Dumaguete and completely relax for another 3 nights. When it’s time to leave you will be whisked back to Dumaguete. This is perfect for families and couples alike. Extra nights can be added as can the flight from Dumaguete to Manila.

### 8 Days / 7 Nights Babuyan Islands Adventure

The Babuyan Islands are as remote as they come, and simply getting to them is an adventure in itself braving the trip to the northern-most point of Luzon and the daily three- to four-hour roller-coaster boat rides on very rough Pacific Ocean waters.

Discover five islands, each isolated from the others by miles of ocean and distinct in its features.

**Palau**i has foothills, mangroves and a marine sanctuary.

**Camiguin** has mountains at its center and humpback whales off its coast.

**Dalupiri** is a huge block of rock rising up from the sea with sheer walls.

**Fuga** is as flat as a pancake and has grasslands as far the eye can see.

**Calayan** is home to the most amazing cove in the Philippines.

This tour is not for everyone. Beds and plumbing are not part of the package. We sleep in tents, bathe in rivers and do our business in catholes. Given the unpredictability of the weather and ocean conditions, the itinerary is not fixed and getting stranded on an island for a day is a very real possibility. The boat rides are long, rough and oftentimes scary. If all this excites rather than discourages you, then sign up for this adventure.





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