

Family Fun

getaway



PHILIPPINES





TOGETHER IN PARADISE

Family holidays are often hard to plan and harder to enjoy. Competing interests and attention spans can dampen any sun-drenched paradise. So for the getaway that caters to the entire family, the Philippines offers a diverse range of settings, activities and cultural discoveries: from pristine beaches to cosmopolitan thrills, from snorkeling and caving to spas and golf, from ancient tribes and a rich colonial history to the shopping Mecca of Manila.

Just seven and a half hours from Australia, your Aussie dollar goes a lot further in the Philippines – and you'll find plenty to indulge in this idyllic, English-speaking archipelago known for its warm hospitality. With thousands of secluded islands perfect for watersports, exploration and, of course, massages under palm trees, each boasts unique natural features, coral reefs and tropical forests that'll have you returning for school breaks to come.



QUICK FACTS

- Population over 90 million people
- Only Christian nation in Asia, mostly Roman Catholic
- Official languages are Filipino and English
- The temperature ranges from 21 to 32°C, averaging 27°C
- The national currency is the peso, divided into 100 centavos

BREAKTIME
MANILA





Pulsating premier city

If the cosmopolitan vibrancy of a major Asian destination appeals to you, head for Manila. There is something for everyone in this multi-faceted metropolis.

An engaging combination of modern urban life and historical relics, Manila boasts antique cathedrals, colonial houses and monuments, as well as high energy business districts, airport size shopping complexes and modern art museums.

For the budding historians, Intramuros, the famed walled city of the Spanish conquistadors, allows you to travel back in time. Built in the 16th century, you'll find cobblestone streets, forts, centuries-old churches, and dungeons. Visit the Rizal Park, check out the amazing Coconut Palace or catch a show at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Stroll over to the seaside Harbour Square, a lively hub of bars and restaurants.

Manila loves children! Top spots for kids are: Museo Pambata, an interactive

children's museum; the SM Science Discovery Center and its 360-degree dome planetarium and robotics hub; Fun Ranch where part of the fun is a kiddie spa massage; Manila Ocean Park for live encounters with marine creatures indigenous to the Philippines; Cosmic Kidz, a four-level playground in Kids Universe; and Star City, an indoor amusement park whose star attraction is the winter wonderland of Snow World.

And if spending a day with your credit cards is on everybody's list, Manila has some of the world's largest malls, lively marketplaces and bargain shops, featuring everything from the latest great value European couture to handmade local wares.

MANILA MUSTS

- Manila Baywalk and spectacular sunset
- Intramuros and attractions within old walled city
- Walking tour to Binondo, one of the world's largest Chinatown
- Mega shopping malls and restaurant belts of Makati, Ortigas
- Bamboo organ of Las Piñas

HOW TO GET THERE

Qantas, Philippine Airlines and Jetstar have regular direct flights from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Darwin.





BREAKTIME

BEYOND GATEWAY CITY

Some of the Philippines' iconic attractions lie on Manila's doorstep. Famed natural wonders, historic sites and a host of unique activities to engage the whole family are just a pleasant day trip away.

CORREGIDOR ISLAND

Known as "The Rock", this small island in Manila Bay was a key bastion of the Allies and is a World War II landmark. Ruins, tunnels, artillery batteries, as well as an underground arsenal and hospital all remain as a memorial to the heroism of the Filipino and American forces.

Explore the lateral tunnels of Malinta, check out the Mile Long Barracks and do a spot of ghost hunting at the hospital. Sunset cocktail parties and bonfire dinners on South Beach are popular. The island also enjoys panoramic views over Manila Bay and the South China Sea.

HOW TO GET THERE

Corregidor is 48km west of Manila, and many hotels and tour operators organise day trips (or overnight stays) via ferry.

ENCHANTED KINGDOM

As its theme song goes, "everyday the magic is here". Enchanted Kingdom is the Disneyland of the Philippines promising spellbinding entertainment in seven themed zones – Victoria Park, Boulderville, Midway Boardwalk, Jungle Outpost, Spaceport, Brooklyn and Portabello. Amazing rides, costumed characters and fun-packed shows will take you from Victorian elegance to the heart of the Amazon, 1940s Brooklyn and the Caribbean.

HOW TO GET THERE

Enchanted Kingdom is in Santa Rosa, Laguna, about 45 minutes drive from Manila. There's a daily shuttle service from the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati.

PAGSANJAN FALLS

Pagsanjan boasts a wealth of natural wonders, from the lush settings of virgin tropical forests to vibrant gardens, hot mineral springs, and the roaring rapids of the famous Pagsanjan Falls. A thrilling banca ride will take you right out to the cascading waters with seasoned boat men navigating through the rapids. Ride a bamboo raft and get a once-in-a-lifetime massage under the falls. You can also swim in the caves behind the falls.

HOW TO GET THERE

Pagsanjan is 100km southeast of Manila, and many hotels and tour operators organise day trips via bus or car.

TAGAYTAY & TAAL VOLCANO

Tagaytay is known as the "summer capital" of Southern Luzon, and is famed for stunning views of Taal Volcano, with its picturesque crater, pristine lake and mountainous backdrop. Beyond taking in this extraordinary setting, families will enjoy a range of activities, from hiking, horse back riding and mountain biking to adventurous treks up the live volcano. Tagaytay offers panoramic picnic spots,

great garden restaurants, and boasts must-try specialties including buko pies filled with tender coconut meat.

HOW TO GET THERE

Tagaytay is only 56km south of Manila, and many hotels and tour operators organise day trips via bus or car.

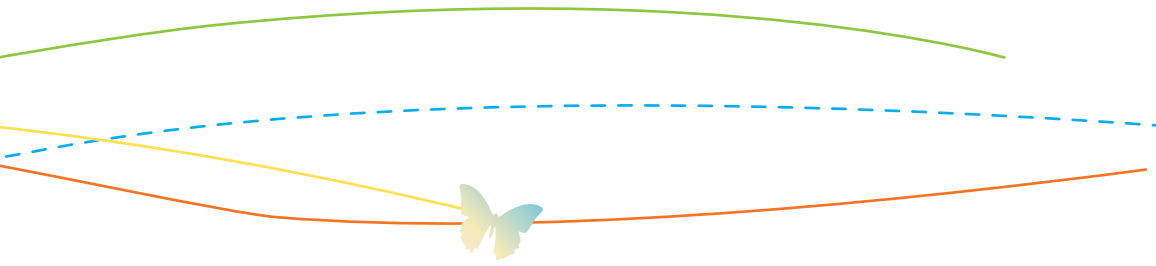
SUBIC

Subic Bay offers a taste of the Philippines' renowned island paradise within two hours' drive of Manila. Some of the best snorkelling and diving in the country can be found here – complete with shipwrecks and astonishing coral. The bay hosts a range of water sports, including jet-skiing, parasailing, and canoeing, while the lush surrounding forest is home to exotic wildlife.

Visit Zoobic for an unforgettable tiger safari ride and close encounters with the Asiatic Black Bear, camels, crocodiles and ostriches.

HOW TO GET THERE

Subic is 110km north-west of Manila, and many hotels and tour operators organise day trips via bus or car.





BREAKTIME BORACAY

Beachside excitement

The perfect family getaway has to begin with the fine, powdery sand and gorgeous turquoise waters of White Beach, a four kilometre stretch of lagoon-like tranquility dotted with resorts, restaurants, shops and bars. Here an exciting range of beachside activities awaits.

Boracay offers a range of luxury resorts and other accommodations, all giving in to the divine aqua coastline, where kids can take diving lessons and fishing trips or explore the numerous beaches while parents grab a massage under a coconut tree or simply relax together on the nearest patch of paradise. And by night, the famous White Beach strip comes alive with impromptu beachside parties and live entertainment in the resort bars and restaurants.

There's plenty to keep you as busy, or as idle, as you please: the more adventurous can walk through jungle paths to visit bat caves (home to giant flying foxes), travel to Willy's Rock, a striking volcanic rock-formation with a Virgin Mary grotto, or snorkel through the extraordinary underwater caves of Crystal Cove. You can also pack a picnic and paraw-sail around the island – a great day's excursion.

Boracay's restaurants include Filipino, Chinese, Greek, Mediterranean, and Western cuisines, with local specialties of charbroiled chicken and raw fish in spicy vinegar to delight your tastebuds.

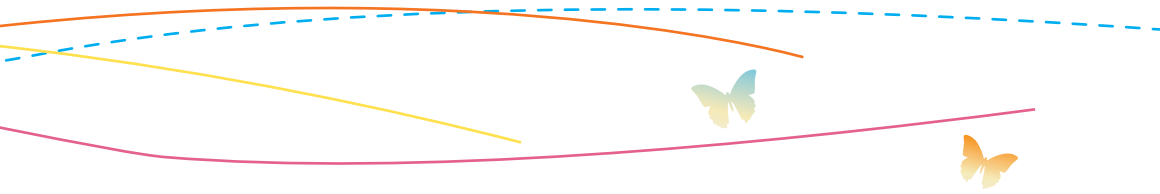
ACTIVITIES INCLUDE

- Snorkelling and scuba diving
- Wind- and kite-surfing
- Jet-skiing
- Sailing
- Kayaking/canoeing
- Horse riding
- Ten pin bowling and pool
- Golf and tennis at the local Country Club
- Mountain biking or trekking to traditional villages
- Massage and spa

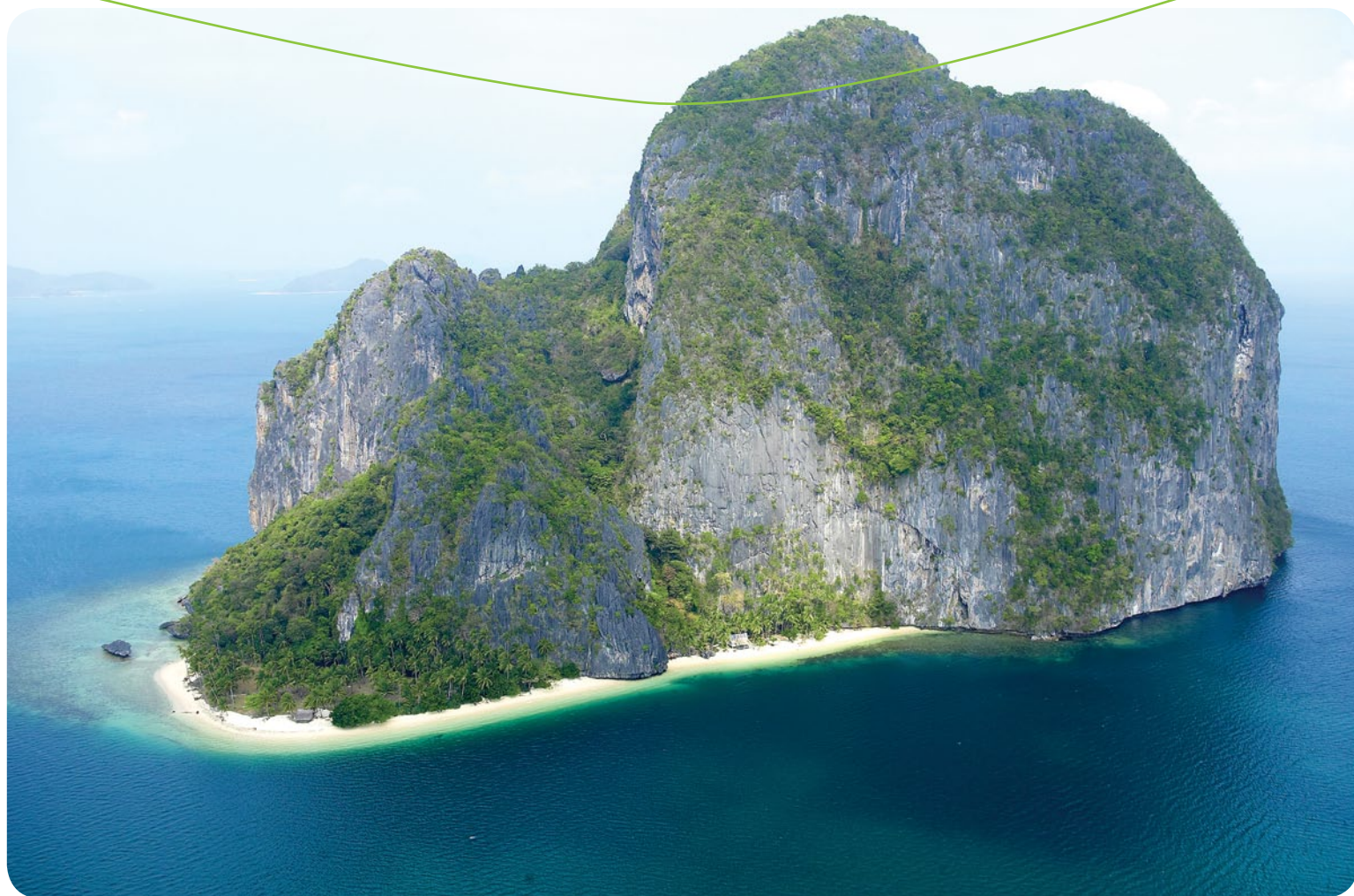
HOW TO GET THERE

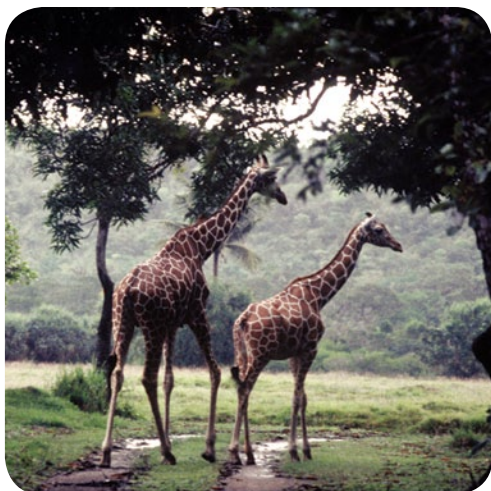
Domestic flights from Manila are 60 minutes to Caticlan, which is a further 20 minutes by boat (there is also a bus option from Kalibo).





BREAKTIME
PALAWAN





Delights of the wild

This breathtaking province comprises 1,768 islands and islets brimming with diverse nature vistas. The virgin forests and pristine beaches will delight adults and children alike, and provide stunning scenery for a relaxed visit.

The young ones will love discovering new wildlife – the native mouse deer, scaly anteater, dwarf otter and chubby frogs. Palawan is also the stomping-ground of exotic African animals which roam the island-sanctuary of Calauit. El Nido island boasts an amazing ecosystem of rainforest, mangroves, sparkling beaches, coral reefs and limestone cliffs, along with an abundance of ocean dwellers including the rare and endangered sea cow.

Puerto Princesa Subterranean National Park boasts the world's longest underground river (at 8.2 kms), which will astound the whole family as it winds through a spectacular cave full of stalactites and stalagmites, swiftlets and bats. Meanwhile, those too young, or old, for caving can swim, snorkel and dive in the many islets of Honda Bay.

On the man-made front there's the Cuyo Fort which dates back to the 1600s and houses a church and convent. Further back still are the Tabon Caves, the "Cradle of Philippine Civilisation", which encompass 22,000 years of human habitation. A great cultural experience for the entire family is meeting Palawan's tribal folks – the highland Bataks, the lowland Palawenos, cave-dwelling Taaw't Bato or the colourful Tagbanwas.

Offering backpacker through to luxury accommodation off the beaten track, various secluded islands (including El Nido, Cuyo, Curon and Busuanga) afford breathtaking views of nature's diversity and beauty.

ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE

- Calauit Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary
- El Nido Marine Reserve
- Puerto Princesa Subterranean National Park
- Snorkeling or diving in Honda Bay
- The ancient Tabon Caves
- The Bataks tribal villages and festivals
- Cuyo Fort

HOW TO GET THERE

Domestic flights from Manila are 60 minutes to the capital, Puerto Princesa, from which boat trips or charter flights are regularly available to take you to the island of your choice.



BREAKTIME
CEBU





Gateway to island adventures

While Cebu City is a bustling cultural hotspot, it is also just moments from various islands offering a range of attractions and activities. Stunning beaches abundant in exotic sea life adjoin golf courses, resorts, spas and even casinos in a discrete combination of natural wonders and creature comfort.



Island-hopping is a great way for the family to spend a day of adventure and discovery. Schedule a trip with a local boat centre, pack a picnic lunch and enjoy a lazy cruise of beautiful isles. Mactan is famous for its resorts, which boast all the leisure and recreational features you could dream of amid an idyllic tropical setting. If you can tear the family away from amazing snorkelling sites, the island will fire their imaginations with the Lapu Lapu monument to the bravery of Filipino islanders in their battle with Magellan's colonists.

extreme adventures involving free falling, climbing vertical walls, and zip lining will please those in search of adrenalin-pumping excitement.

Don't miss out on a horseback ride with the kids to Moalboal hills for breathtaking views, a visit to the local guitar-makers and sampling the fresh and dried mangoes which are a Cebuano favourite.

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Magellan's Cross from 1521
- Lapu Lapu Monument to the Island Chieftain
- Fort San Pedro
- Casa Gorordo Museum
- Basilica Minor del Santo Niño

HOW TO GET THERE

Domestic flights from Manila are 60 minutes, and boats regularly leave Cebu for the surrounding islands. Cebu International Airport connects you with various Asian capitals.



A world of history comes alive in Fort San Pedro, the centre of Spanish settlement and the oldest tri-bastion battlement in the country, and Casa Gorordo Museum, a grand residence kept in the splendour of nineteenth-century gentry living. And the young ones will love the Olango Wildlife Sanctuary, full of migratory birds and mangroves.

For twenty-first century living, however, Cebu City enjoys a cosmopolitan mix of bars, discos and restaurants, along with fantastic shopping. You'll find indoor ice skating rinks at the Mega and South malls. But perhaps the most thrilling city experience to be had is at the Crown Regency, the tallest hotel tower in the country. Skywalks, skyrides and



BREAKTIME BOHOL

Amazing nature showcase

Bohol's breathtaking scenery hosts a wealth of animal and geographical attractions sure to enchant the whole family. More rustic and down to earth than the other island destinations boasting every imaginable modern amenity, here you can relax amid a rich habitat of unspoiled natural beauty.

Most famous are the picturesque Chocolate Hills – 1,268 grassy green domes carpeting the Island, of which two have been developed into an idyllic resort complex with stunning views.

Children will be delighted to meet the tarsier, the smallest primate in the world with great big eyes and knobbly feet. Native to the hills of Corella, two of these impossibly cute critters will sit comfortably in your hand.

If you can wrest yourselves from the hills and their inhabitants, world-famous dive sites surround Bohol island, whose crystal waters are home to schools of exotic fish, dolphins and whales. "Butandings", the gentle giants of the deep are also found here.

Bohol's Loboc river offers serene boat-rides by palm-fringed banks and waterfalls, offering an intimate view of lush tropical forests, along with cascade-baths and "natural waterslides" everyone will enjoy.

Check out the Bohol Bee Farm in the island of Panglao, a real sanctuary set in lush settings and devoted to organic farming. Visitors find themselves

immersed in farm activities like basket weaving, raffia making and bee culture. The Butterfly Farm in Sagbayan Peak and Simply Butterflies in Bilar provide perfect opportunities to marvel at these exquisite creatures in lovely gardens, nature trails and forest-like enclosures.

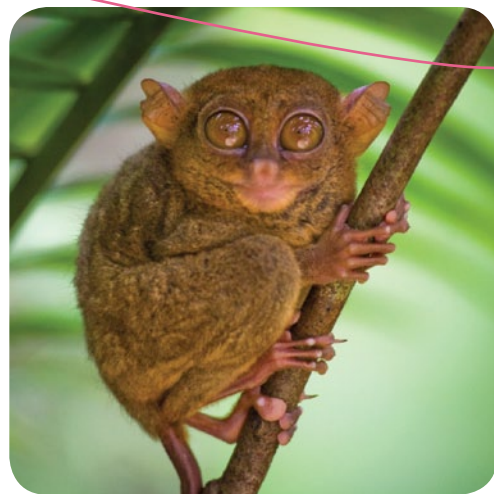
Other attractions in Bohol include two charming churches: the Dauis, renowned for its Spanish architecture, and the Baclayon, an ancient and massive stone edifice; and for the more adventurous, the stunning Hinagdanan Cave filled with stalagmites and stalactites, with famed amphitheatres and as yet unexplored areas.

BOHOL WONDERS TO BEHOLD

- The smallest primate in the world, the tarsier
- Whale watching from Pamilacan Island
- Swimming with the dolphins in Cabilao
- The Chocolate Hills turning brown in summer
- The tropical Loboc river and waterfalls
- Hinagdanan Cave

HOW TO GET THERE

Domestic flights from Manila are 60 minutes direct to Bohol, and supercat ferries run regularly to Cebu.





BREAKTIME BICOL



Adventure and discovery destination

From sparkling islets to sleeping volcanoes, butterfly-filled forests, hidden lakes and tiered waterfalls, Bicol's stunning scenery plays host to a myriad opportunities for family adventure and discovery. Sprawled over the southeastern end of Luzon Island, Bicol consists of six provinces, each blessed with a treasure trove of natural and cultural wonders.

Bicol's all-time star attraction is majestic Mount Mayon, renowned for its picture-perfect cone. Take the family to Skyline Adventure, nestled on Mayon's eastern slopes, for a breathtaking view of the Pacific Ocean and Bicol's towns and villages. Visit the historic churches of Albay and the ruins of Cagsawa – Asia's Pompeii – which was engulfed by lava in 1814. Camsur Water Sports Complex, uniquely designed for wakeboarding, wake skating and water skiing will thrill all ages, whether beginners or pros.

But perhaps the best family experience to be had in Bicol is an encounter with the rare whale sharks of Donsol. Diving and swimming with these gentle creatures is one unforgettable holiday highlight. Cap the day in Donsol with a gondola ride in the river, marvelling at mangroves a-lit with fireflies. For more magical undersea moments, do the manta ray dive at Ticao Pass.

Don't forget to sample the region's distinctive cuisine. Every thinkable meal is cooked with coconut milk and chilli pepper but the most famous is "Bicol Express", definitely a joy ride for adventurous palates.

Bicol's festivities rival the scenery, with colourful events year-round, including an annual rodeo, the whale shark season festival, and Peñafrancia Fiesta, a week-long celebration honouring the Virgin Mary.

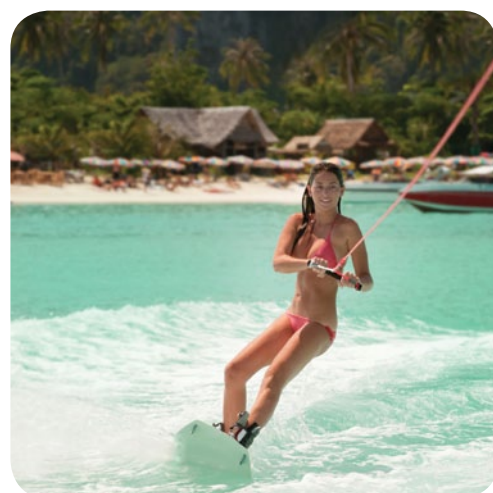
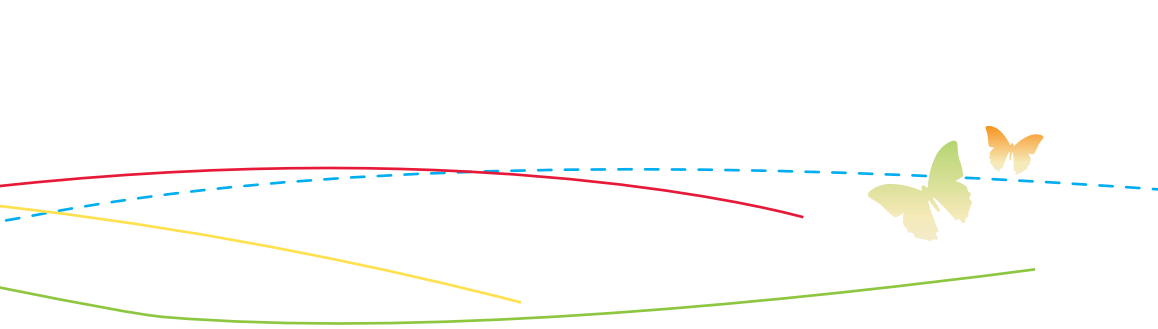
BREATHTAKING BICOL

- Take in a national cultural treasure, the baroque Daraga church built in 1773
- Visit Bulusan Lake, known as the Switzerland of the Orient
- Scuba dive at the famous Spanish galleon wreck site off Santo Domingo
- Gaze at the seven-tiered cascading white foam of Busay Falls in Malilipot
- Soak in the medicinal thermal pools of Tiwi Hot Springs
- Enjoy the magnificent white-sand stretch of Pururan Beach in Catanduanes, a popular surfing destination
- Marvel at the stalactites in Kulapnitan Cave, Camarines Sur or go spelunking in Calabigonan or Pototan caves
- Retreat to a tranquil resort in Caramoan Islands and hop between pristine isles

HOW TO GET THERE

Bicol is just a 45-minute flight from Manila, and is also accessible by land, air and sea from various destinations within the Philippines.





BREAKTIME DAVAO

Adventure central

For those families whose idea of a holiday is to get the hearts pumping all together, Davao offers a variety of mountain, river and beachside settings for your climbing, biking, caving and diving needs.

Sibulan River hosts a range of activities perfect for the more and less adventurous, including white-water rafting and the more relaxed river-tubing, a skill- and stress-free version using an inflatable tyre. You can climb, bike and trek in Mt. Apo, the country's highest mountain, which also boasts a wealth of caves to explore.

There's also cliffside rappelling, a long white-water rafting trip on the Davao River involving thirty rapids, and for the truly intrepid, a crocodile park boasting a couple of twenty-footers.

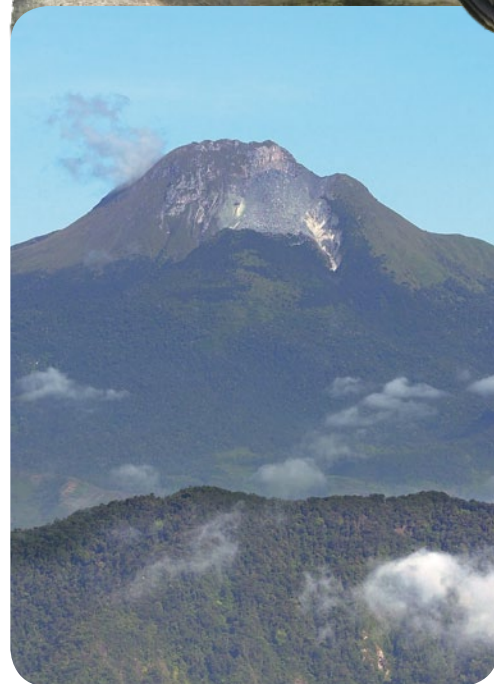
For something more sedate, enjoy bird watching at the Eden Natural Park and The Amazing Bird Show at Malagos Garden Resort featuring trick-performing birds. See the endangered Philippine eagle at the Eagle Research Center.

DISCOVER

- The cascades and caves of Mt Apo
- The natural pools and waterslides of secluded hills
- Davao Museum for an insight into the region's colourful tribes

HOW TO GET THERE

Davao is 95 minutes from Manila and 55 minutes from Cebu by plane.





BREAKTIME

BAGUIO & BANAUE

Head to the highlands

Do what the locals do to escape the summer heat of the lowland cities. Head to the northern mountain provinces. Blessed with a cool climate, pine tree clad hills, lush valleys and gurgling mountain streams, the skylands of the Philippines are a bracing alternative to the tropical isle paradises.



Banaue is renowned for its spectacular rice terraces, mountain views and waterfalls, ideal for adventurous nature lovers. The Tappiya Waterfalls and Guihob Natural Pool are sublime trekking destinations with languid, crystal pools to cool you down, and more of those natural waterslides that will outreach any theme park for excitement, and beauty.

You can also ascend the UNESCO World Heritage Listed rice terraces more than 2000 years old, which reach right up the mountainside and are breathtaking from all angles.

For an exotic cultural encounter, visit the Tam-an and Bokiawan villages of the Ifugao tribe and take home a woodcarved or handwoven souvenir.

Baguio is a holiday adventure hotspot, with hiking and trekking on Mount Santo Tomas, biking and skating in Burnham Park, and horseback riding at Wright Park. Camp John Hay, a former rest and recreation facility for the American military and now a privately-run mountain resort, is Baguio's most popular attraction. It has hotels, a shopping centre and a world-class Jack Nicklaus designed golf course.

Baguio by night boasts a spirited music scene. Folk and rock bands perform in bars and clubs, and jazz piano rings out in music lounges.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Baguio market, a colourful mix of highlands produce, flowers, indigenous craft and souvenirs
- At the Easter Weaving School, watch tribal women at work using back strap looms
- Climb the 100 steps to the rose pink Baguio Cathedral
- Enjoy a round of golf at the Baguio Country Club
- Soak in the hot springs of Asin
- Catch the priceless sight of Batad's amphitheatre-shaped rice terraces
- See the hanging tribal coffins wedged among rocks in otherwise picturesque Sagada
- More ancient mummies in Kabayan, Bontoc

HOW TO GET THERE

Baguio is a 50-minute flight or six-hour bus ride from Manila. Tourist coaches go to Banaue directly from Manila and Baguio City.



ESSENTIAL INFO

ENTRY REGULATIONS

Except for stateless persons and those from countries with which the Philippines has no diplomatic relations, all visitors may enter the country without visas and may stay for 21 days provided they have tickets for onward journey.

AIRPORT FEES

PhP 750 for international departure and PhP 200 for local departure (paid in Philippine pesos only).

CUSTOMS

Visitors carrying more than US\$ 10,000 (or its equivalent in other foreign currency) are to declare the amount at the Central Bank of the Philippines counter at the Customs area.

Foreign currency taken out upon departure must not exceed the amount brought in. Visitors are not allowed to bring in and out more than PhP 10,000 in local currency.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

A certificate of vaccination against yellow fever is required for travellers coming from infected areas. Children less than one year old are exempted but may be subject to isolation when necessary.

TIME ZONE

GMT plus 8 hours.

CLIMATE

March to May is hot and dry. June to October is rainy. November to February is cool. Average temperatures: 78°F/25°C to 90°F/32°C; humidity: 77%.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency is the Philippine peso, divided into 100 centavos.

Most foreign currencies can be easily exchanged at banks, hotels, and authorised foreign exchange dealers. Outside Manila, the use of Philippine pesos for payments is preferred.

Major credit cards are accepted in most hotels, resorts, shops and restaurants.

LANGUAGE

Filipino is the national language. English is the business language and spoken widely. Approximately 111 languages and dialects are spoken in the country.

WHAT TO WEAR

Light, casual clothes are recommended. Warmer garments are needed for mountain regions. When visiting churches and temples, propriety dictates that shorts and scanty clothing be avoided.

ELECTRICITY

220 volts, A.C. 60 cycles. Most hotels have 110-volt outlets.

WATER

While the bottled variety is popular everywhere, water in Metro Manila and in key cities and towns is potable and safe for drinking.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Metered and fixed rate taxis are widely available in key cities as well as car and coach hires. Jeepneys and buses are inexpensive ways of getting around most places.

The elevated Light Rail Transit (LRT) system is an efficient way to travel within Manila. The Metro Railway Transit (MRT) passes through Makati's major arteries.

BUSINESS HOURS

Private and government offices are open either from 8am to 5pm or from 9am to 6pm, Mondays to Fridays. Shopping hubs are open from 10am to 8pm daily.

There are 24-hour convenience stores and chemists. Banks are open from 9am to 3pm, Mondays to Fridays.

TIPPING

Tipping is expected for many services; the standard is 10% of the bill. It's optional on bills that already include a 10% service charge.



For more information contact your travel agent or:

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