

Nytårsrejsen til Filippinerne - 2014.

Martins Dagbog



Dorte og Michael kørte os til Kastrup, og det lykkedes os at få en opgradering til business class - et gammelt tilgodebevis fra lidt lægearbejde på et **Singapore Airlines** fly. Vi fik hilst på vore 16 glade gamle rejsevenner ved gaten. Karin fik lov at sidde på business class, mens jeg sad på det sidste sæde i økonomiklassen.

Vi fik julemad i flyet - flæskesteg med rødkål efterfulgt af ris á la mande. Serveringen var ganske god, og underholdningen var også fin - jeg så filmen "The Hundred Foot Journey", som handlede om en indisk familie, der åbner en restaurant lige overfor en Michelin-restaurant i en mindre fransk by - meget stemningsfuld og sympatisk. Den var instrueret af Lasse Hallström.

Det tog **12 timer at flyve til Singapore**, og flyet var helt fuldt. Flytiden mellem Singapore og Manila var 3 timer. Vi havde kun 30 kg bagage med tilsammen (12 kg håndbagage og 18 kg i en indchecket kuffert). Jeg sad ved siden af en australsk student, der skulle hjem til Perth efter et halvt år i Bergen. Hans fly fra Lufthansa var blevet aflyst, så han havde måttet vente 16 timer i Københavns lufthavn uden kompensation. Et fly fra Air Asia på vej mod Singapore forulykkede med 162 personer pga. dårligt vejr.

Miriams kuffert var ikke med til Manilla, så der måtte skrives anmeldelse - hun fik 2200 pesos til akutte fornødenheder. Vi vekslede penge som en samlet gruppe for at spare tid og gebyr - en \$ var ca. 45 pesos. Vi kom i 3 minibusser ind til **Manila Hotel**, hvor det tog 1,5 time at checke os ind på 8 værelser. Vi var fremme ved hotellet kl. 15 lokal tid. Plakater viste, at man venter besøg af paven d. 15 - 19. januar. Der var 28° varmt.

Så var der tid at lære dette fine gamle hotel at kende. Karin og jeg fik et fint værelse - faktisk soveværelse med stue, og vi bestilte som sidst roomservice med butterchicken og hotellets signatordrink. Det kom ind på et fint rullebord. Vi var meget trætte - jeg fik en sovepille, og sov fra 21 til 03. Værelset lå ud til Roxas Boulevard, så der var en del larm, og aircondition-apparatet støjede også.

Vi sov godt - dejligt efter en lang rejsedag. Programmet i dag var morgenmad kl. 6 - udcheckning fra hotellet tidligt og **sightseeing i byen** kl. 8 til 12. Morgenmaden var dejlig - som den naturligvis er i et 5-stjernet hotel. Den søde guide Mrs. Lilah So Lacbayo kom præcis til tiden, og vi startede med at køre ad Roxas Boulevard langs Manila Bay forbi USA's ambassade. På den store tribune var de ved at gøre klar til Pavens tale d. 18. januar - der ventes



millioner af tilskuere. Man var også ved at ordne tribuner til fejring af Nytårsaften og markering af nationalhelten José Rizal's dødsdag d. 30. december.

Vi så **Coconut Palace** - bygget til et Pavebesøg i 1981 - og det store kulturcenter **CCP Complex**, hvor der bl.a. havde været afholdt Miss World konkurrencer, boksekampe med

Casius Clay og store musikarrangementer. Ismelda Marcos kunne godt lide at gøre noget for kulturen. Beatles gav engang koncerter i Manila, men blev smidt ud af landet, fordi de ikke ville acceptere Ismelda Marcos invitation til at give en privat opvisning i præsidentpaladset.



The Philippines, And The Height of The Beatles' Turmoil (fra Wikipedia)

Later in July 1966 when the Beatles toured the Philippines, they unintentionally snubbed the nation's first lady, Imelda Marcos, who had expected the group to attend a breakfast reception at the Presidential Palace.

When presented with the invitation, Brian Epstein politely declined on behalf of the group, as it had never been the group's policy to accept such "official" invitations, but the group soon found out that the Marcos regime was unaccustomed to accepting "no" for an answer. Imelda Marcos was infuriated when finding out that one of her frequent grand parties of 200 guests did not include the Beatles.

After the snub was broadcast on Philippine television and radio, all of their police protection disappeared. Epstein tried to make an apology on Channel 5 in the Manila Hotel, but the state-controlled channel blacked out when it reached his interview. The group and their entourage had to make their way to the Manila International Airport on their own. The hotel was being attacked and everyone had to make way to the airport. The halls of the hotel were dark and lined with staff who shouted at them in Spanish and English.

As the Beatles moved through the terminal, little bands of demonstrators appeared, grabbing at them and trying to hit them. They checked in for their flight as quickly as possible then were herded into a lounge "where an abusive crowd and police with guns had also gathered." At the airport, road manager Mal Evans was beaten and kicked, and the band members were pushed and jostled about by a hostile crowd. Ringo Starr would quip, "they started spitting at us, spitting on us." The Beatles hid among a group of nuns and monks huddled by an alcove. Other members of their entourage, though, were kicked and beaten. They could not even differentiate between the angry mob or the cops carrying guns trying to maul them. Lennon described hearing people yell "You're treated like ordinary passengers!" as they pushed them around.

Paul McCartney said, "When we got on the plane, we were all kissing the seats. It was feeling as if we'd found sanctuary. We had definitely been in a foreign country where all the rules had changed and they carried guns. So we weren't too gung-ho about it at all." Ringo remembered being afraid of going to jail. Once the group boarded the plane, Epstein and Evans were ordered off, and Evans (fearing he would be imprisoned or executed) said, "Tell [my wife] that I love her." Epstein was forced to give the tax authorities £6,800 worth of Philippine peso notes from the Manila shows, and had to sign the tax bond verifying the exchange before being allowed back on the plane. Upon leaving the country, band members publicly expressed resentment at their treatment, with John Lennon saying "If we go back, it will be with an H-bomb. I won't even fly over the place." This also caused the band to end their Asia tour in India.

Vi så **Rizal Park**, hvor der er nationalflag og monument for nationalhelten - lægen, skribenten og frihedshelten José Rizal. Stedet, hvor han 35 år gammel blev skudt, var markeret med en monumental skulptur af henrettelsessituationen. Vi fortsatte til **Intramuros**, som skal ligne en gammel spansk kolonialby. Vi var inde i **San Agustin-kirken** fra 1607, og **Casa Manila** lige overfor. Vi gik også en tur i **Fort Santiago**, men her var ikke meget

bevaret. Vi sluttede sightseeingturen med et besøg i **Robinsons Department Store**, hvor vi kunne købe lidt alkohol og få lidt frokost. En flaske Gilberts Gin kostede 225 peso sv.t. 4,5 \$.



Turen til **Batangas** gik fint - vi var fordelt i 3 minibusser, og vi kørte i 3 timer. **Sejlturen i udriggerbåd** tog 1 time og 20 minutter, og vi måtte over i en mindre båd for at kunne komme i land. Vi blev ved ankomsten budt på dagens **Happy Hour** drink - Pina Colada og fik koralhalskæde. Vi fik vore værelser, og vi havde et bedre værelse end ved forrige besøg.



Servicefamilien kom og hilste - Mario og Angie. Vi spiste middag i restauranten, hvor flere af de ansatte kunne huske os og kom og hilste på os bl.a. Jenny, vores daværende servicefamilie, hvis datter blev født ved kejsersnit sidste nytårsaften.



Restauranten var fint pyntet med julelysguirlander og hvide dekorationer.



Da vi kom tilbage til værelset, havde vi en **flagermus** i rummet, men vi fik lokket den til at flyve ud. Gekkoerne gav lyde fra sig - meget stemningsfuldt. Vi fik SMS fra Viveca - man vil slukke for respiratoren hos Sten og Trines 3 måneder gamle datter - hun gennemgik en stor hjerteoperation på Rigshospitalet for et par uger siden. Der var stor tristhed omkring det, og jeg sendte en e-mail til støtte. Karin fik også SMS-kontakt med Michael. Nogle kunne fortælle, at det var - 15 grader i Norberg, og der var snekaos i de franske alper, mens vi havde 28 grader og tørvejr i Coco Beach.



Tirsdag d. 30. december vågnede jeg kl. 4 efter en nat **under myggenettet**. Så kunne jeg i fred og ro læse Politiken, skrive dagbog, løse lidt sudoku og sidde på terrassen og lytte til junglenattens lyde, høre bølgeskvalpet og se himlen blive lysere fra kl. 6,45, hvor Mario "The Soapman" kom med termokanden med kaffe.

Nogle blev overrasket over, at hytterne ikke er forsynet med varmt vand. Jeg skrev en lille sympatitilkendegivelse til den århusianske neurokirurg, der er i en længerevarende mediestorm pga. en tv-udsendelse om en fejlagtig hjernedødsdiagnose. 4 danske lægekolleger var medunderskrivere.

Vi sad længe ved morgenmaden, indtil de startede med vandgymnastik til meget høj musik. Vi checkede nyhederne på Internettet. Og så **var vi i og ved poolen**, selvom det var gråvejrs. Det var en **afslapningsdag**. Vi hilste på andre danskere, og Jenny inviterede os til datterens 1 år fødselsdag i morgen. Miriam sejlede med Christina og Helle til Sabang for at købe lidt tøj - hendes kuffert var endnu ikke kommet, men dukkede op ved middagstid.

Jeg fandt "Frelseren" af Jo Nesbo i hotellets bogreol og gik i gang med at læse den. Karin og flere damer var til **manicure og pedicure**. Vi havde en hyggelig Happy Hour, og servitricen tilbød os at bestille husets vin til i morgen aften - 3200 pesos for 1 gallon, så jeg bestilte 2. Vi spiste aftensmad ved et langt bord, og elektriciteten forsvandt en stund.

Vi sov igen under myggenettet, **elektriciteten forsvandt en stund**, og toilettet fungerede dårligt. Jeg vågnede kl. 5, og kunne på terrassen nyde nattens lyde og se dagen bryde frem. Kaffen kom kl. 6. Resort-avisen "**Coco News**" lå sammen med dagens 2 flasker vand foran døren. Vi kunne læse om den **tropiske storm Seniang**, der passerede Filippinerne syd for os - den gav også os overskyet og regnfuldt vejr.



Der var aftrykt programmet for Nytårsaften, som indbefattede sejltur med cocktails og pica-pica, underholdning, stor middag og fyrværkeri. Vi sendte også nytårshilsner hjem på e-mail, og var til **1-års fødselsdag hos Jennys datter Sofia** - vi gav hende et fint Rasmus Klump-kort og 10 \$ i en konvolut. Der var 30 børn og 10 voksne på besøg, og vi sang fødselsdagssang, fik lækkerier som spagetti, nudler og flot lagkage. Den lille pige var sød. Jennys mand skal optræde som klovn i aften.

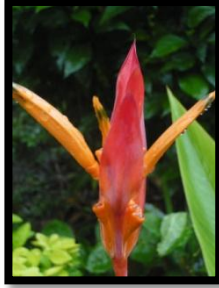
Michael ringede og ønskede godt nytår, og vi sendte nogle hilsner ud på e-mail og Facebook. Vi sendte også 3 postkort. Kl. 16 blev vi sejlet **over til en nærliggende strand, hvor der var get-together med drinks, pica-pica og optræden af orkester**. Til sidst kom lidt regn. Der var vist ca. **200 gæster på Coco Beach**, og der var dækket fine borde foran scenen og pyntet med balloner. Nogen havde set, at politikerens Per Clausen fra Enhedslisten også var her.

Selve **nytårsfesten begyndte kl. 19**. Menuen var pæn og omfangsrig med 5-6 retter. **Coco Band spillede** næsten kontinuerligt rytmiske ældre melodier, men det var meget højt og umuliggjorde enhver samtale. Vi havde heldigvis pladser længst væk fra musikken. Der var underholdning af en **tryllekunstner** og **Coco Kids**, der dansede både folkedanse og moderne dans. Vi fik **nytårshatte og truthorn**.

Vi havde bestilt **2 gallons vin**, og da de tog slut, bestilte Helle en gallon mere. Påklædningen var tvangfri og uformel - mange var i shorts og T-shirt. Vore hovedbeklædninger - lyserød glorie, lysende djævehorn og vippende sølvkugler gjorde lykke. Der var dans, og nogle i vor gruppe fik undervisning i **linedance**.

Der var **nedtælling til midnatsslaget**, og så blev der skålet, og vi så et meget **flot fyrværkeri** ude over havet. De fleste gik derefter hurtigt hjem, og elektriciteten forsvandt i 5 minutter kl. 0.30. Vi følte, at vi havde oplevet en **rigtig filippinsk nytårsaftensfest**.







Vi havde ingen mulighed for at synge "Vær velkommen Herrens år" eller høre Tennysons "Ring klocka ring...". Kirsten Starup havde også medbragt en sang, som vi ikke kunne afsynge pga. støjniveauet. Der var 10 securityvagter på Coco Beach. Brandslanger var rullet ud pga. risiko for ild fra fyrværkeri.

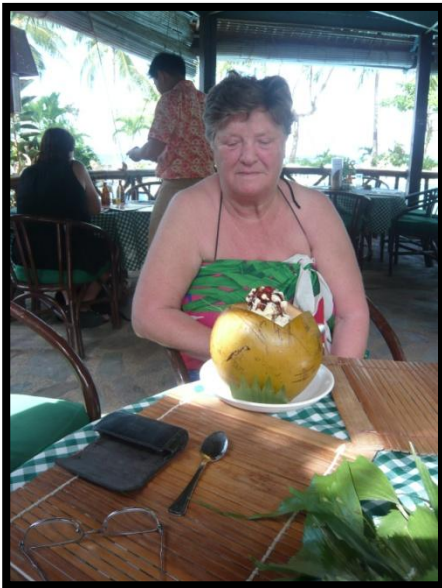
Torsdag d. 1. januar blev vi vækket af **regndråber på palmehyttens tag**, og vi gik ned til morgenmaden. I receptionsområdet kunne vi også checke de danske nyheder på Internettet, vi så **Dronningens nytårstale**, og vi var glade for nogle e-mails og likes på Facebook. Jeg var lidt syg med luftvejsinfektion og vasomotorisk rhinitis, så vejret fristede til en middagslur - vi sov fra 11 til 14!

Det var nærmest **heldagsregn**, men kl. 15 havde nogle ordnet en **botanisk vandretur**. Vi gik en time op gennem hotelområdet og så på blomsterne og sluttede ved **Silent Pool**, hvor vi holdt Happy Hour. Vi indledte **Tour des Chambres** med at invitere alle forbi hos os til en gin og tonic, inden vi gik op og spiste aftensmad i den højtliggende **asiatiske grillrestaurant** med den flotte udsigt. Vi fik et bord til 18.

Det blev en **hyggelig aften med fin underholdning** - Kirsten havde medbragt en sang om pensionister, og Mirjam, Cecilia og Lars Hedkvist fremførte muntre solonumre. Elektriciteten forsvandt som vanligt flere gange i løbet af aftenen, og vi havde daglig brug for vore lommelygter. Nogle forlængede aftenen med et besøg i **Barracuda Bar**.

Fredag d. 2. januar: Det regnede også om natten. Vi har fået en del myggestik. Vi var allerede til morgenmad kl. 7, og himlen var lysere end i går med enkelte blå områder. **Morgenserveringen var dejlig** med varmt nybagt brød og fine frugter f.eks. meget velsmagende mango.

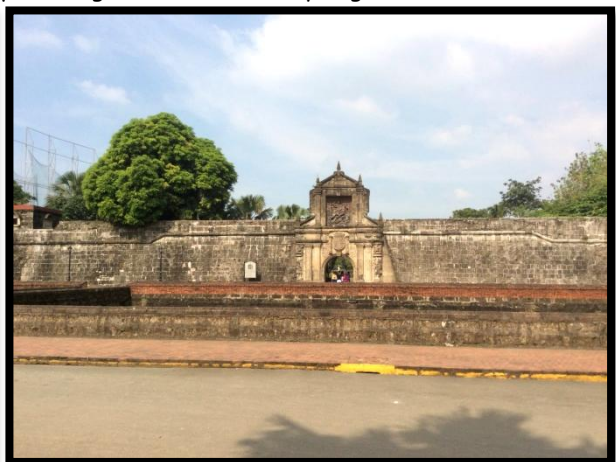
Selvom det var overskyet, kunne vi **ligge hele dagen ved poolen**. Nogle var ude og **snørkle**, og nogle var med den gratis formiddags-bangka til en af de nærliggende strande. Karin fik vasket håret hos frisøren - i koldt vand. Vi vaskede også tøj i koldt vand, og det var svært at tørre pga. høj luftfugtighed. Der var ganske mange svenskere på Coco Beach. Personalet på anlægningen er meget **venlige og servicemindede**. Mange turister er her for at dykke ved de flotte koralrev.



Om eftermiddagen tog vi ind til Puerto Galera og gik en lille tur i byen - vi besøgte kirken og markedsområdet. Vi drak kaffe på en italiensk cafe. Nogle snorklede, joggede til Sabang eller deltog i zumba ved poolen. Efter Happy Hour holdt vi en ekstra Happy Hour i Helles hyggelige hytte på de høje pæle. Nogle spiste middag i den roterende restaurant - som ikke roterer. Andre prøvede den filippinske ret Pinutas - fisk og ris med ingefær og kokossaft i bananblade - og der kom en lille musikgruppe og underholdt. Vi har hørt om enkelte tilfælde af Cairo Quick-Step i gruppen. Mirjam havde haft en meget stor gekko i sin hytte.

Lørdag d. 3. januar: Karin havde hørt en kokosnød ramme taget i nat; vi stod op til godt vejr og lagde os ved swimmingpoolen efter morgenmaden. Vi talte med mange andre danskere - en farmor havde inviteret søn, svigerdatter og barnebarn på 15 med til Coco Beach som konfirmationsgave. Vi hilste også på 2 danske piger på 10 og 14 år, som begge har dykket med fuldt udstyr. Her var også en del franskmænd.

Det var en varm dag ved poolen. Vi fik Oriental Fried Rice til frokost - man kan også få Buko Surprise - en udhulet kokosnød med blandede frugter og vaniljeis. Nye gæster modtages med sang. Dagens cocktailmøde var hos Cecilia og Lennart i H7 - vi har nu set 3 forskellige typer værelser, og her var der aircondition og varmt vand. Sidst vi var på Coco Beach var der bassiner med mange små havskildpaddeunger, men der har myndighederne forbudt.





Om aftenen var der **Garden Fiesta Party** med cocktails på stranden, stor buffetmenu med helstegt pøtægriis og levende musik og fin underholdning af Coco Kids og Service Mamas. Maden var god - menuen var cocktails med vegetable & seafood tempura, seafood mango salad, fish chowder, roasted pig with salad bar, mashed sweet potatoes, steamed rice and steamed vegetables, rice cake and fresh fruits. Særlig suppen var dejlig. Vi talte med et fransk par fra Loire-dalen, men de kunne ikke meget engelsk.

Musikunderholdningen var bedre end nytårsaften, og der var også lidt fornøjelige selskabslege. Orkestret kunne spille Kim Larsens "Susanne Himmelblå". Servitricen Amalie tiggede og fik Karins lyserøde helgenglorie. Internettet fungerede dårligt hele dagen. Vi læste, spillede candy crush og gættede krydsord. Karin ringede til





Michael - minutprisen er 24 kr. Vi checkede ud og betalte regningen inden sengetid. Man får en flaske rom i afskedsgave.

Søndag d. 4. januar: der var afgang med båd til Puerto Galera kl. 7.30 efter morgenmaden. Det var meget lavvandet, så vi måtte først i en mindre båd, inden vi kom

i den rigtige **bangka** til **Puerto Galera**. Der var 3,5 timers kørsel til **havnen i Roxas**. Først var vi igennem højland med meget snoede veje, så fulgte lavland med rismarker, bananplantager og kokospalmer. Der var mange huse, mennesker og dyr langs vejen, og mange biler og motorcykeltaxier med sidevogne.

Der var lidt ventetid ved færgen, men så kunne vi iagttage folkelivet. Vi kom med en meget **gammel og nedslidt kinesisk (?) færg**, men havet var nogenlunde roligt og meget blå, og vi var på en del af Strong Republic Nautical Highway. Sørejsten tog omkring 4 timer, og så var vi i **Caticlan**. Det var en flot dag med en smuk solnedgang. Lars satte en konkurrence om navne på krydderier i omløb. Men **færgen kunne ikke lægge til** pga. pladsmangel i færgelejet, så vi ventede udenfor havnen nogle timer på det meget beskidte skib. Der var en flot solnedgang.

En ung mand fra Casa Pilar modtog os og sørgede for **transport med udriggerbåd til Borocay**, hvorfra vi kom videre i 2 minitaxier og en motorcykeltaxi, som Karin og jeg måtte ned i. Vi blev modtaget med et glas kold juice, og indcheckningen gik hurtigt, så vi kunne komme hen i restauranten efter en hel dag uden noget at spise. Øllet var dejligt koldt, og jeg fik en god chicken curry med ris og nationaldesserten **halo-halo**.

Vi boede i **Casa Pilar** i **Section 2** tæt på den 4 km lange **White Beach**. Casa Pilar havde navn efter ejerens hustru, som hedder Pilar. Der var en dejlig have med en swimmingpool og en restaurant ned mod stranden. **Borocay** er berømt for denne strand - "Travel & Leisure" udnævnte for et par år siden Borocay til verdens bedste ø. Der er mange turister og mange tilbud til turister - fra golf, hesteridning og helikopterflyvning til alle former for vandsport. Der er også et meget levende natteliv. Det var fuldmåne.



Mandag d. 5. januar: Ved morgenmaden hørte vi, at **Cecilia og Lennart havde guldbryllup i dag** - de fik mange lykønskninger. Det var en meget varm dag. Vi gik en fin tur langs den lange strand - der var masser af strandliv, barer, restauranter og butikker. Vi fik nogle bøger af en dansk familie, som rejste hjem i dag. Om formiddagen badede vi i hotellets swimmingpool, og om eftermiddagen var vi i havet - en meget flot strand og pragtfuldt vand.

På restaurant kostede en ret mad 250 - 350 peso, en gin & tonic eller anden drink 140 peso; 100 d. kr. er 670 peso. Men så kunne man også få en margarita uden is og en G & T uden tonic, for ikke alt fungerede perfekt. Vi så nogle flotte hoteller f.eks. The Sands. Vi kunne i dag se på Internettet, men hverken Karin eller jeg har modtaget nogen e-mails. Kirsten fik set Dronningens nytårstale. Der kom en sms fra Michael.



Karin og Martin organiserede et lille **cocktailparty ved poolen til Cecilia og Lennarts ære**. Vi fik frugt punch og chips. Hotellet havde arrangeret et **langt bord under et brødfrugttræ**, og der var 3 tårne med frugt punch og pica-pica. Helle kom med en flaske rom. Hotellet bidrog på Karins opfordring med en flot blomsterbuket og en chokoladekage til kaffen. Der var **mange taler og sange og en rigtig god stemning**. Vi gav guldrudeparret et gavekort på en rundtur på Boracay med motor-tricycle. Mange fik så meget pica-pica på tallerkenen, at de sprang aftensmaden over. Det kostede 5500 peso at invitere 18 mennesker på guldbryllupsfest, og mc-turen kostede 700 peso.

Vi spiste **aftensmaden på en italiensk restaurant, som havde sat borde ud på stranden under røde lygter**. Langs stranden var der meget folkeliv bl.a. nogle, som **jonglerede med ild**. Der var også hyggestemning ved nogle af hotelværelserne, hvor man samledes i mindre grupper. Nogen havde medbragt en koral fra Coco Beach - den lignede et søpindsvin. Måske var den ikke helt død, for kuffertens indhold lugtede fælt, da vi nåede Boracay.

Tirsdag d. 6. januar: vi sov godt i nat og stod igen op til en dejlig dag med sol og varme. Vi hørte skandinaviske stemmer i poolen, så nogle tog sig et morgenbad. Hotellets restaurant lå lige ud til stranden, og her fik vi **American breakfast**. Et yngre dansk-svensk par bad om professionel hjælp: for dem var 5 dage med regn blevet efterfulgt af 5 dage med opkastninger og diarré. Mange i gruppen er blevet meget solbrune.

Vi sendte en hilsen hjem på e-mails. Vi fik nogle skønne **mango shakes**. Vi sendte **guldrudeparret ud på MC-tur: øen rundt på 1 time**. Karin gik på shopping for at købe **tøjgaver til børnebørnene**. Det var **pragtfuldt vejr**, og vi badede og soled. Senere på eftermiddagen var vi til Happy Hour på en af strandrestauranterne og fik gode margaritas. Kl. 18.30 var vi inviteret til drinks ved Gunnels værelse. Her var hyggelig stemning, og vi hørte om nogle, der havde haft en fin **sejltur i nogle små sejlbåde**, der suser hen over vandet.

Vi spiste aftensmad i hotellets restaurant, hvor de bl.a. havde en fortræffelig yellow chicken curry med ris og sizzling gambis dvs. store rejer. Stig fortalte, at den flotte strand for en stor del består af **foraminofeer** - mikroskopiske kalkholdige organismer. Da vi gik tilbage til hotelværelset var det **stjerneklart med fuldmåne** - Orion stod flot lige over os.





Boracay opnåede en vis berømmelse pga. nogle halskæder lavet af **puka shells** - Elisabeth Taylor bidrog til at gøre dem kendte. De er opkaldt efter stranden Puka på Boracays nordside. Vi har også set et stort reklameskilt med billede af verdens største perle på over 6 kg - mon den findes her? Jeg læste "Paganini-kontrakten" af Lars Kepler.

Onsdag d. 7. januar stod vi igen op til godt vejr og American breakfast. Ved morgenmaden fik vi en interessant snak med Lars, som er professor i måleteknik på KTU. I dag var der mail fra vore børn - hurra!!! Et ung dansk-svensk par, som har rejst sammen med os, har været syge; en lokal læge har diagnosticeret **denque feber** hos pigen, som får i.v. væske i sit hotelværelse. Vi er alle blevet stukket af mange myg.

Efter frokost tog nogle af os på en times **sejltur langs stranden** - man sejler i små katamaraner, hvor rorsmanden lige kan sidde i midten, mens passagerne sidder på net udspændt mellem nogle stænger. Bådene er hvide med blå sejl, og man bliver ganske våd undervejs. Vandet er meget klart og smaragdgrønt. Der går en del sælgere rundt langs stranden - man kan **købe perler**.

Vi var til Happy Hour i "After Dive Club", hvor vi samtidig kunne nyde den **flotte solnedgang**. Vi var inviteret til drinks før middagen hos Helle og Christina, og her var igen en hyggelig stemning med fornøjelige sangindslag. Nogle havde **bestilt bord til hele gruppen i "Calypso"**, hvor vi spiste vor sidste middag på Boracay. Det var en moderne, men hyggelig restaurant, som var ejet af nogle schweizere. Maden var god - seafood, thai chicken curry, flamberet banan med is og andet godt. Karin og Martin takkede deltagerne for denne gang. Og så gik vi til hotellet og pakkede kufferter.

Torsdag d. 8. januar var vi klar til afgang kl. 9 efter morgenmaden. Regningerne blev betalt, og hotellet gav os en gul bærepose som souvenir. Vi var fordelt i 3 biler til den lille havn, hvorfra vi sejlede til Caticlan. Terminalafgift var 100 peso. Men vi slap for afgifter på 175 peso ved ankomsten til Boracay. I Caticlan stod igen 3 minibusser, som bragte os **til Kalibu på 1,5 time**. Vi kørte et stykke langs kystlinien med flot udsigt over havet.

Vi kom også op i højland ad snoede veje, og vi så utroligt mange skoler. Den unge danske pige, som var syg, var med, men måtte gøre stop ved et apotek for at købe medicin mod opkastninger. Flere steder var man i gang med at pynte op til festivaler. **Kalibu International Airport** var ganske enkel, og det tog lang tid at checke ind. Vi betalte 500 peso i lufthavnsafgift.

Silk Air flyet til Singapore skulle afgå kl. 14.30, men var flere timer forsinket. Der blev serveret lidt ris og kylling, mens vi ventede, og jeg fik købt 2 par kondisko for 55 \$. I flyet fik vi udleveret den store Singapore-avis "The Strait Times", som på forsiden havde en stor artikel om et terrorangreb på avisen Charlie Hebdo i Paris - Jyllandsposten var også nævnt.m

Vi ankom til Singapores lufthavn til før kl. 21, og skulle med et lille førerløst tog fra terminal 2 til terminal 3. Det er en meget stor lufthavn. Karin ringede til Michael. Vi begyndte at skifte shorts og T-shirt ud med skandinaviske

vinterklæder - vi ventede 4°, når vi landede i Kastруп kl. 6 om morgenen fredag d. 9. januar. Det var også regnvej, og stormen Dagmar var på vej mod landet. Det var en lang nat i flyet. Vi fik sagt pænt farvel til hinanden - nogle skulle videre til Stockholm, Oslo, Ålborg og Halmstad.

Ferdinand Magellan var oprindelig portugiser, men rejste i 1519 fra Spanien med 5 skibe. Han sejlede syd om Sydamerika og nåede Filippinerne, hvor han omvendte de lokale til katolicismen og handlede. Han lovede at hjælpe kongen på Cebu i konflikten med den oprørske vasal Lapu-Lapu, men Magellan blev dræbt i Slaget ved Mactan. Sytten måneder senere vendte et af de 5 skibe tilbage til Spanien med 18 overlevende, mens 219 havde mistet livet undervejs. Der var den første jordomsejling.

New Year's Eve Dinner Program
December 31, 2014
Carabao Garden

16:00 Departure from Coco Beach to Haligi Beach
Sunset Cruise w/ Cocktails by the beach
Coco Band will welcome everyone at Haligi

19:00 Coco Band Number
Introduction and Welcome
Start of New Year's Eve Dinner

Prawns Cracker
Mini Pan Con Cipolla
(garlic pizza bread with caramelized onion and mozzarella)

Distribution of hats with New Year's luck

19:35 **Appetizer**
Baked Scallop
(fresh scallops baked in oven with some herbs and quick melt cheese)

FOR KIDS
Crumbed fish fillet with Aioli sauce
(julienne fillet of Kingfish rolled in bread crumbs)

Soup
Ministrone with parmesan cheese

FOR KIDS
Sopas Ala Cocco
(cream of elbow macaroni with shredded chicken and mixed veggies)

Salad
Chicken, bacon and mango salad
(with cucumber, cherry tomatoes, croutons and mix leaves in honey mustard dressing)

20:15 Break in Dinner/ Dance number by Coco Kids

21:00 **Main Entrée**
Crumbed Fillet of Kingfish
(served with mango salsa)

Break in Dinner/Dance by PGNHS Dance Troupe

Australian Rib-eye
(accompanied with mashed potato, butter veggies and different sauces)

Dessert
Fruit Cakes
Mini cup cakes

Dancing and listening to Coco Band Music

23:30 Distribution of trumpets
23:55 Countdown to New Year
24:00 Fireworks Display

COCO NEWS
The Daily Edition
December 31, 2014 Wednesday

Dear Guest,

Welcome every morning with a smile. Look on the new day as another special gift from your creator, another golden opportunity to complete what you were unable to finish yesterday. Be a self-starter. Let your first hour set the theme of success and positive action that is certain to echo through your entire day. Today will never happen again.

A message from the Coco Beach Family

"The first step in the acquisition of wisdom is silence, the second listening, the third memory, the fourth practice, the fifth teaching others."

101 Activities

Featured Activity
Free Boat

Puerto Galera boasts of many beautiful beaches and coves like Haligi Beach, Long Beach, Agas Beach and Bayanan Beach. Explore one beach/cove everyday with our Free Boat. Leave by 09:30, back by 11:45.

FREEBOAT SCHEDULE

Monday - Bayanan
Tuesday - Long Beach
Wednesday - Haligi
Thursday - Agas Beach
Friday - Long Beach
Saturday - Haligi Beach
Sunday - Agas Beach

Please sign up at the Activity Center or in the reception beforehand.

Daily Updates

Breakfast
at the Carabao Restaurant

Have a bowlful healthy cereals, oatmeal, corn flakes and muesli on your breakfast from the choices at the buffet table. Breakfast starts at 6:45am until 10:00am. Your day begins with a great breakfast.

Special Lunch

Try this special pasta from our chef, if you want to try it ask your attendant to serve it for you because it is a surprise.

Pasta Ala Chef
with garlic bread
Php. 210

♦♦♦

COCO BEACH SUPPORTS THE MANGYANS (INDIGENOUS PEOPLE)...

The CoCo Beach family is still supporting our mangyan people by simply helping them to sell their product that's why "The CoCo Mangyan Program was initiated to create sustainable work. You can buy some of their products at the Shopping Arcade. By buying this products you are supporting the project and all income goes directly to the mangyan working on this project.

Exchange

US\$ 1 = Php 42.00
DKK 1 = Php 6.50
€1 = Php 52.00
A\$ 1 = Php 36.50
HK\$ = Php 4.00
¥ 1 = Php 0.35
S\$ 1 = Php 31.50

Sammenfattende kan man om den rejse sige:

Vi har oplevet at **fejre filippinsk nytår ved stranden på Coco Beach**, og det var festligt og fornøjeligt.

Vi har boet på det **historiske Manila Hotel** og oplevet de vigtigste af **Manilas seværdigheder**.

Vi har besøgt **4 af Filippinernes over 7000 øer**, og oplevet tropisk skov og smukke strande.

Vi har fået et indtryk af det **filippinske folks venlighed, deres livsforhold og hørt om deres historie**.

Vi har prøvet de **lokale færger, set jeepneys og mc-tricykeltaxier** og fået en fornemmelse af den u-landsagtige infrastruktur.

Vi har **nydt vandet og solen** og blevet pænt **solbrændte**.

Vi har **trivedes i gruppen med fælles Happy Hour og middage**, sang og gode historier.

Vi har oplevet det **tropiske paradis Coco Beach**, hvor personalet formår at udstråle en familær og venlig atmosfære.

Vi har oplevet **badøen Boracay** med den fantastiske **White Beach** og det rene varme vand. Trods meget turisme oplevede vi en afslappet og venlig atmosfære.

Vi har nydt **filippinske madretter** som seafood, yellow chicken curry, pinutas, halo-halo, buko surprise, friske mangoer og meget andet godt. Og spændende drinks som Weng-Weng, Mojito, Cosmopolitan og Gin og Tonic.

Nogle har **snorklet og set flotte koraller, farvestrålende tropiske fisk og store havskildpadder**.

Vi har deltaget i **festligholdelsen af et guldbryllup**, og Karin og Martin har været til 1 års fødselsdag hos service-mamma Jennys datter.

Hele gruppen har stort set været **sunde og friske** på hele rejsen - men en ung dansk pige lå syg en uge på vort hotel Casa Pilar med formodet dengue feber.

Vi har oplevet, at **prisniveauet på Filippinerne er lavt** sammenlignet med skandinaviske forhold - man kan spise på restaurant uden at blive ruineret.

Og **vore fly er stort set gået til tiden**, således at rejseplanen er blevet fulgt som planlagt.

Det var **10. år i træk**, vi holdt **Nytår i udenfor Danmark** sammen med større grupper: Kina, Kina, Kina, Indien, Cuba, Sverige, Puerto Rico, Myanmar, Dubai og nu Filippinerne. Hvad mon næste nytår vil bringe?

Tak til alle rejsedeltagerne

Pearl of Lao Tzu - From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Pearl of Lao Tzu (also referred to as Pearl of Lao Tze and previously as Pearl of Allah) is the largest known pearl in the world. The pearl was found in the Palawan sea, which surrounds the island of Palawan in the Philippines, and was found by a Filipino diver. It is not considered a gemstone pearl, but is instead what is known as a "clam pearl" or "*Tridacna* pearl" from a giant clam. It measures 24 centimeters in diameter and weighs 6.4 kilograms.

The pearl came from Brooke's Point, Palawan in the Philippines. Wilburn Cobb, an American who brought the pearl from the Philippines in 1939 and owned it until his death in 1979, published an account of how he came to own it in *Natural History* magazine. According to Cobb, he wanted to buy it from a Philippine tribal chief when he first heard of it in 1934, but the chief, a Muslim, did not want to sell because he considered the pearl sacred, in part because of its resemblance to the turbaned head of the Prophet Muhammad. However, Cobb relates, he saved the life of the chief's son, who was stricken with malaria, in 1936 and was given the pearl as a token of gratitude. Because of its sacred associations, the pearl came to be known as the Pearl of Allah.

Much later, Cobb wrote a new account in the February 1969 *Mensa Bulletin*, this time promoting the pearl as an artifact of Chinese legend. He alleged he had been approached by a Chinese fellow named Li, who told him that the pearl had first been grown in a much smaller clam around a jade amulet inserted by a disciple of the legendary sage Laozi more than 2,500 years ago, and been transferred over the centuries to ever larger clams, growing to record size. Wars had supposedly been fought over the artifact, and it had been sent off to the Philippines as a protective measure, where it was lost in a storm.

After Cobb's death in 1979, Peter Hoffman and Victor Barbish bought the pearl from his estate for the much smaller sum of \$200,000. Barbish has claimed to have had further contact with other Li family members. (The legend of a "Pearl of Laozi", however, is only known from the claims of Cobb and Barbish.)

When Victor Barbish borrowed money from a Joseph Bonicelli, he gave him an interest in the pearl. In 1990, Bonicelli took Barbish to court to collect his loan, and the court ruled that Hoffman, Barbish and Bonicelli were equal partners in the pearl. Bonicelli died in 1998, and after more legal proceedings, the court ordered the pearl to be sold (it has not been), with a third of the money going to Bonicelli's estate. The pearl is not on display to the public and as of 2008 was being held as part of the probate inventory of Victor M. Barbish., the pearl was owned in three equal shares by the heirs of Joe Bonicelli, Peter Hoffman, and Victor Barbish.

While biologists would regard this object as a kind of pearl, gemologists regard it as a non-nacreous pearl, lacking the iridescence of the pearls that come from saltwater pearl oysters and freshwater pearl mussels. The interior of a giant clam has no nacre (mother of pearl); instead it is porcellaneous, like a china plate. Because of its great size, a giant clam can create a very large pearl, but not an iridescent, gemlike one. The Gemological Institute of America (GIA) and CIBJO now simply use the term "pearl" (or, where appropriate, the more descriptive term "non-nacreous pearl") when referring to such items, rather than the term "calcareous concretion" and, under U.S. Federal Trade Commission rules, various mollusc pearls may be referred to as "pearls" without qualification

Gemologist Michael Steenrod in Colorado Springs has appraised the pearl at \$60,000,000 (1982) and \$93,000,000 (2007). Another 1982 appraisal, by Lee Sparrow who owned a gem laboratory and appraisal business in the Phelan Building in San Francisco, put the pearl at \$42,000,000. In America, the pearl was exhibited at the Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium in New York, valued at \$35,000,000. The Palawan Princess, considered the second largest pearl, was offered at auction by Bonhams and Butterfields of Los Angeles on December 6, 2009. Though the five pound pearl was estimated to bring \$300,000 to \$400,000, it was not sold.

Nytårsrejse til Filippinerne



Fin flyforbindelse med Singapore Airlines – en nat på det over 100 år gamle og meget historiske Hotel Manila – 6 dage i det tropiske paradys Coco Beach – gode muligheder for snorkling og dykning ved koralrev – Nytårsfest på stranden – transfer til badeøen Boracay – 4 nætter på strandhotel – pragtfuldt varmt klima, men 20 årlige tyfoner – interessant historie – verdens næststørste ørige med over 7000 øer – verdens næststørste producent af kokosnødder – katolikker – udbredt fattigdom og mange gadebørn - meget flinke mennesker – over 100 sprog – aktive vulkaner – 98 millioner indbyggere – over 50 etniske minoriteter – kun omkring 13.000 danskere rejser ind i Filippinerne årligt – happy hour og god mad - sol

28. december 2014 – 9. januar 2015

Pris: 13.990 kr. pr. person

**Yderligere informationer og interesselilmelding senest 23. juni
2014**

**til Martin Smedebøl, tel: +45 26 13 45 77 eller
martin@smedebol.dk**

Rejsens program:

Rejsebureauet C & C Travel har følgende tilbud:

Lørdag d. 27. december 2014: afrejse fra Kastrup kl. 12.30 med Singapore Airlines

Søndag d. 28. december 2014: ankomst til Singapore kl. 7. 25 og videre med Singapore Airlines kl. 9.35 med ankomst til Manila kl. 13. 10. Transfer til Hotel Manila.

Manila Hotel er måske det mest berømte hotel i Manila, her har præsidenter og rockstjerner boet og allerede når man træder ind i den imponerende foyer, hvor der sidder et klassisk orkester og spiller velkendte melodier, føler man sig hensat til fortiden. Her er en klassisk indretning over det hele, og de skønne værelser har typisk en flot udsigt over byens skyline eller havnen og havet. Morgenbuffet er flot og her er en dejlig udendørs pool

Mandag d. 29. december 2014: transfer med minibus og udryggerbåd til Puerto Galera og indkvartering i 6 nætter i resortet Coco Beach – Nytårsaften holdes her.

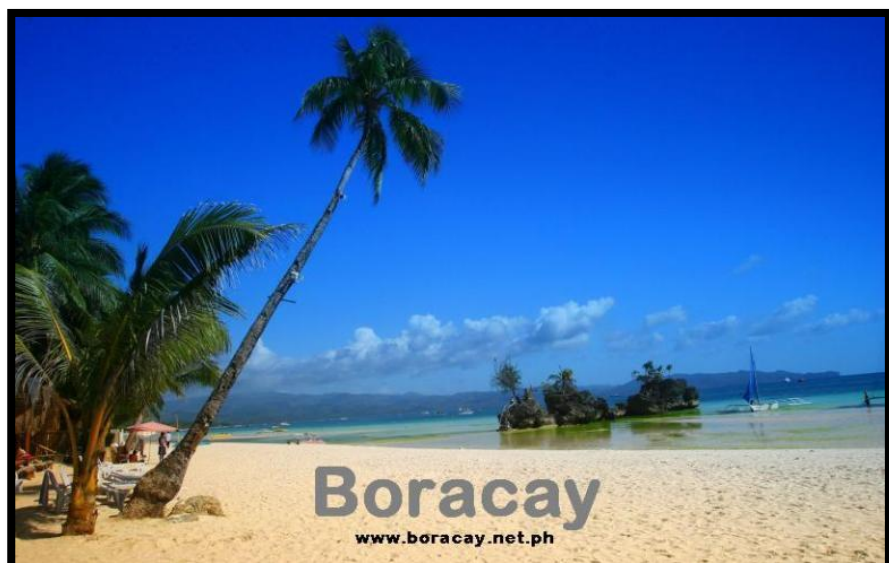


Coco Beach Resortet er placeret idyllisk i en tidligere kokosplantage med egen privat strand. De fleste af hytterne er bygget i naturens materialer, nemlig bambus. Nogle er enkeltstående hytter, andre er dobbeltbungalows, hvor du har en nabo, eller hvor par kan bo ved siden af hinanden. Nogle har få trapper, andre har mange, men fælles for alle er, at de har en balkon med god udsigt ud over resortet og muligvis havet. Resortet har to swimmingpools, fire restauranter, shopping arkade, frisør & skønhedssalon, massage & spa, egen bager og sågar egen læge. Coco Beach byder på mange spændende udflugtsmuligheder i det naturskønne område omkring Puerto Galera, og så er området kendt for, at have noget af det bedste dykning i Filippinerne. Coco Beach er således for alle: her er noget for både familier, unge par og ældre, for dig der ønsker at opleve en masse og for dig, der ønsker bare at slappe af og nyde livet.

Søndag d. 4. januar 2015: Transport (båd) fra hotel til Puerto Galera, og ad landevejen til Roxas (Mindoro). Herfra med færge til Caticlan og videre til hotellet Casa Pilar Beach Resort, Boracay - NOTE: Denne transport tager ca. 3 timer, alt efter vejret.

*Casa Pilar Beach Resort har igennem en årrække været C&Cs gode standard hotel i Boracay. De har et rigtig sødt personale, der er glade for vore gæster, her er en dejlig restaurant og stedet ligger lige midt på den livlige strand. Her er en dejlig pool og ikke en overflod af faciliteter, men her er hyggeligt. Stedet er med andre ord rigtig godt til prisen. OBS: mulighed for at vælge andet hotel med mere rolig beliggenhed. **Boracay** er en [filippinsk](#) ø ca. 315 km syd for [Manila](#). Den er cirka 7 km lang og 3 km bred og er et yndet mål for filippinske turister, ligesom flere [europere](#) er begyndt at holde ferie på øen. På øen er der over 200 [hoteller](#) og resorter, der spænder fra store suiter til små træhytter langs den lidt over 4 km lange hvide sandstrand. Golfbane.*

Torsdag d. 8. januar 2015: transport (bil/minibus og båd) fra hotel til Lufthavn og med Silk Air MI577 kl. 14:30. Ankomst kl. 18:10 til Singapore. Der fortsættes med Singapore Airlines kl. 23:45 fra Singapore.



Fredag d. 9. januar 2015: Ankomst kl. 06:00 til København

Karin og Martin var 17 dage på Coco Beach i november 2013 – vi syntes godt om det enkle jungle- og bountyagtige – se gerne på www.smedebol.dk under "Afsluttede rejser"

Pris: ca. 13.990 kr. pr. person i delt dobbeltværelse. Enkeltværelsestillæg: ca. 2650 kr.

Inkluderet i rejsens pris er:

- Flyrejser på økonomirejse som anført i program
- Lokale transportere som anført i program
- Hotelovernatninger med morgenmad som anført i program

Ikke inkluderet er:

- Alt som ikke er anført i programmet f. eks. måltider og udflugter
- Lufthavnsafgifter ved afrejse fra filippinske lufthavne
- Afbestillings- og rejsesygeforsikring
- Visse lokale miljøafgifter
- Drikkepenge
- Der kræves ikke visum til Filippinerne for at deltage i denne rejse

C & C Travel har 16 pladser på denne rejse –

Er du interesseret i denne Nytårsrejse, vil vi gerne høre hurtigst muligt fra dig. Kontakt Martin Smedebøl på tel. +45 26 13 45 77 eller martin@smedebol.dk

Vi håber at gense gamle rejsevenner – og måske møde nye glade mennesker!



Primo november 2014

Hej

Høsten går og der er mindre end 2 måneder til julen - og så skal vi til Filippinerne, fejre nytår og komme godt ind i 2015. Sidste år var der 30° i Manila d. 1. januar - og det bliver der nok også i år.

Hvad kan vi tænke på forinden?

- Er rejseforsikringen i orden?
- Er rejsen betalt?
- Hvad skal jeg pakke?
 1. Vigtigst er: pas, penge, forsikringspapirer, kreditkort, flybilletter, papirer fra C & C Travel, personlig medicin, evt. guidebog,
 2. Tøj: der er ingen grund til at medbringe finere tøj, evt. regntøj
 3. Sollotion, solbriller, badetøj, evt. snorkeludstyr, myggespray (der er moskitonet på Coco Beach),
 4. El-adapter, lommelygte, hårtørrer, lidt materiale til førstehjælp
 5. Rejs enkelt - medbring ikke dyre eller uerstattelige ting
- Hvad skal jeg glæde mig til?
 1. sol, varme, fred & ro, junglestemning, happy hour, varmt vand i poolen
 2. at se lidt af Manila
 3. måske nogle vil gøre en udflugt til Puerto Galera og deltage i den lokale gudstjeneste?
 4. måske nogle vil forsøge en vandretur op i junglen og besøge lokale folk? - her kan anbefales evt. at medbringe aflagt brugt børnetøj (T-shirts, shorts) - der er stor fattigdom
 5. måske nogle vil lære at dykke - tid bør bookes hos Coco Beach dykkercenter
 6. måske nogle vil arrangere en udflugt til en nabostrand med picnic on the beach?

Vi fik for nylig en mail fra Lonely Planet - Filippinerne var med på listen over de 10 lande, som de mener, er de bedste at besøge i 2015 - her er deres tanker om det:

Many would say the time is well overdue for the Philippines to be recognised as the next big travel destination in Southeast Asia. With more than 7100 islands (compare that to Thailand, with a paltry 1430), the Philippines has one of the world's most beautiful coastlines, fringed by dive-tastic coral reefs, sprinkled with sunbathe-ready white sand, backed by swaying palm trees and dotted with simple resorts of nipa-palm thatched huts, like Thailand used to be when the Beach Boys were still top of the charts .



Officially, 2015 is Visit Philippines Year, and the government is laying on all sorts of special events to raise the profile of the archipelago. And if there's one thing Filipinos know how to do, it's throw a party - expect street parades, food festivals, sports tournaments and live music shows, with lavish sponsorship from powerhouse brands like San Miguel and Beer Na Beer. In fact, thanks to the Filipino love of live music, a cabaret atmosphere prevails almost every night. Now that Philippine Airlines has gained approval for direct flights to Europe, America and Australia, what are you waiting for?

Life-changing experience - There are plenty! Try clinging to the back of a jeepney speeding through the crowded streets of Metro Manila. Based on US Army jeeps left behind after WWII, these stretched wonders are part public bus and part art installation, adorned with extravagant chrome trim, custom upholstery, hundreds of decals and dozens of superfluous lights. Boarding and disembarking from these supercharged vehicles is conducted at break-neck speed, then it's back into the traffic, horn blaring, music blasting, and on to the next stop.

Current craze - Gosh, what isn't a craze in the Philippines? Filipinos love fads, and everything from the yoyo to the sellotape selfie (yep, that's a portrait of your own face bound up with sellotape) has had its moment in the sun in the Philippines. Indeed, the city of Makati was recently feted as the world's 'selfiest' city. One craze that never goes out of fashion in the Philippines is karaoke - alone, or in company, Pinoys love to sing, and no social gathering or business meeting would be complete without a swift rendition of the latest hits on the karaoke machine.

Trending topic - Flesh-eating bacteria and apocalyptic prophecies, apparently. In 2014, a news story about a new skin disease in Pangasinan province sparked a social media panic, as locals linked the outbreak to an end-of-the-world prophecy made by an Indian holy man. Within hours, the hashtag #PrayForPangasinan had been tweeted by more than 80,000 people. While officially Catholic, many Filipinos are extremely superstitious, embracing everything from faith healers to *kulam* (old-fashioned witchcraft).

Random facts - The colours of the Philippines flag are officially reversed in wartime - if you see a red band on the top of the flag, beware... The modern yoyo was invented by a Filipino - the word 'yoyo' means 'come back' in Tagalog. 1.39 billion SMS messages are sent every day in the Philippines.

Most bizarre sight - Live crucifixion. But don't worry, the devout Christians who offer themselves up for real, but temporary, crucifixion in San Fernando de Pampanga every Good Friday do so on a strictly voluntary basis. Regarded as the ultimate sign of religious devotion, this gruesome practice can be habit-forming - former construction worker Ruben Enaje has been crucified every year since 1985!

Read more: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/best-in-travel/countries/08-philippines?detail=1#ixzz3HtkiynUv>

Hvad vi gerne vil kunne huske om Filippinerne: (noter fra vores besøg i Filippinerne i 2013)

Om historien: I forhistorisk tid var Filippinerne landfast med Borneo og Malaccahalvøen, og der foregik indvandring af grupper, hvis efterkommere er **negritoerne**, der nu lever i skovene. Senere indvandringer kom over havet - indonesere, malajer, kinesere. Islam blev introduceret i 1300-1400-tallet. **Ferdinand Magellan** kom i 1521, og Filippinerne fik navn efter den portugisiske Kong Filip 2. Magellan blev sammen med 27 af sine mænd dræbt i kamp mod høvding Lapu-Lapu på Mactan Island.

De spanske **conquistadorer** indledte kolonistyre i 1565, og Filippinerne var frem til 1821 administreret af en generalguvernør, som var underlagt den spanske vicekonge i Mexico, hvorefter de kom under direkte spansk styre. Spaniernes hovedformål var at udbrede kristendommen og udslette den oprindelige kultur.

En **selvstændighedsbevægelse** opstod i sidste del af 1800-tallet, men frigørelsen fra Spanien fulgte som et resultat af Spaniens nederlag til USA som følge af krigen om Cuba i 1898. Amerikanerne moderniserede meget af det filippinske samfund, som i 1935 fik fuldt selvstyre og løfte om uafhængighed 10 år senere. Men 2. verdenskrig kom imellem, og der var frygtelige kampe på Filippinerne.

Selvstændigheden kom d. 4. juli 1946. Ved indløbet til Manila-bugten ligger fæstningsøen Corregidor, som fungerede som forsvarsstøttepunkt allerede fra den spanske periode. Amerikanerne gjorde fæstningen næsten uindtagelig med mange underjordiske tunneller og bunkere. Men japanerne indtog den i 1942, og 12.000 amerikanere måtte overgive sig. General Mac Arthur - "I will be back" - havde forinden forladt stedet i en motortorpedobåd. I februar 1945 generobrede amerikanerne øen med et tab på 225 amerikanere - kun 20 ud af 5000 japanere blev taget til fange.

Efterkrigstiden har været præget af genopbygningsprogrammer med amerikansk støtte, indførelse af demokrati, korrupsion, økonomisk tilbagegang, forbud mod det kommunistiske parti, militærstyre og diktatur under præsident Marcos, genetablering af demokrati under Corazon - Cory - Aquino, yderligere fremgang under tidligere forsvarschef Fidel Ramos, derefter tilbagegang under den korrupte Joseph Estrada og så igen bedre tider under Gloria Arroyo.

Om landet: Filippinerne er verdens næststørste ø-rige efter Indonesien - der er 7107 øer bl.a. Luzon, Cebu, Mindoro og Mindanao. På sidstnævnte ø er der politiske uroligheder med muslimsk baggrund. Befolkningstætheden er ca. 275 pr. km², hvilket er det dobbelte af i Danmark.

Om sociale forhold og økonomi: 29 % af filippinerne når ikke over eksistensminimum, hvilket er 16.481 peso om året. Kvinder nyder agtelse i det filippinske samfund også på hjemmefronten, og mange kvinder når højt i samfundshierarkiet. Der er meget korrupsion i landet.

Om Korallrev: korallrev opbygges af små rovdyr, koraldyr, som af ydre ligner søanemoner, Koraldyr er polypdyr med en blød sækkformet krop. De er fastsiddende med den ene ende hvilende i en udsøndret kalkskal. Den anden ende er åben med en mund omgivet af fangarme, hvorpå der sidder talrige nældeceller. Koraldyrene lever af plankton og af småfisk og af krebsdyr, som gribes med fangarmene og bedøves af nældecellerne. Revdannende koraldyr kan formere sig ukønnet ved knopskydning, således at der dannes vældige kolonier. Når polypper dør, vokser andre polypper videre på forgængernes skeletter. Forskellige arter har hver deres vækstmønster, hvorved der opstår med vidt forskellige former, som antydes af navnene, fx hjortetaks-, orgelpibe- og hjernekoraller. Korallerne kan også formere sig kønnet ved at udskille æg og sæd fri i vandet. Dette foregår samtidigt for milliarder af individer og er styret af månens cyklus. Et natdyk blandt gydende koraller er en uforglemmelig oplevelse.

Tropiske korallrev opstår kun, hvis havets temperatur er 20-30° og kun på dybder indtil ca. 50 meter. Når et korallrev er vokset så højt, at det kommer i kontakt med luften, standser den lodrette vækst, og revet vokser kun i omfang. Revet forstærkes af et bindemiddel dannet af kalkalger, som holder sammen på korallblokkene. Det nedbrydes af fisk - fx papegøjefisk - og af bølger og omdannes dermed til det smukke hvide koralsand, der kendes

fra tropiske strande. Der findes intet marint miljø, der har større rigdom på dyr. Korallrevene er tilholdssted for en hærskare af fisk og andre dyr i alle mulige størrelser, former og farver, og de er en vigtig del af havets økosystem.

bOm befolkningen: Filippinere har over 98 millioner indbyggere - pinoys. 10 % udgøres af mere end 50 etniske minoriteter, hvoraf muslimer er den største gruppe. De er også opdelt i flere stammer. Negrito er fællesbetegnelsen for de oprindelige folk, der bor spredt i skovene opdelt i mange stammer - f.eks. lever stammefolket Mangyan på Mindoro. De er også opdelt i mindre stammer f. eks. Iraya og Hanunoo, hvoraf sidstnævnte er blandt de få, som har udviklet eget skriftsprog.

Der findes mere end 100 sprog og dialekter i Filippinerne - størst er tatalog/filipino. 75.000 gadebørn lever i Manila. 40 % af befolkningen er under 15 år. Millioner af filippinere lever udenlands - overalt på kloden. Mange (måske 45 %) lever under eksistensminimum (indtægt på 1 - 2 \$ pr. dag).

Om religionen: I Filippinerne er 83 % katolikker, 9 % protestanter, 5 % muslimer og 3 % buddhister og animister. Filippinerne har levet 300 år i kloster (under spanierne) og 50 år i Hollywood (under amerikanerne), så høj religiøsitet findes sammen med prostitution og børneprostitution.

Om klimaet: Der er tropisk klima med 3 årlige sæsoner - regntiden slutter i oktober. Få dage før vor ankomst ramte supertyfonen "Haiyan" Filippinerne, og anrettede kolossale skader. Det var en kategori 5 storm med vindhastigheder op til 72 meter/sekund - den blev kaldt verdens stærkeste storm. Vores værste orkan i Danmark havde maksimale vindhastigheder på 54 meter/sekund. Der var store ødelæggelser med total ødelæggelse af byen Tacloban og flere andre byer, mange tusinde døde, skader for mere end 1 milliard \$ og nedbør på 250 - 300 mm. Tyfonen skiftede navn til "Yolanda", da den ramte Filippinerne. Der var kontinuerlige uhyggelige reportager i massemedierne, og der blev igangsat en massiv international hjælpeaktion.

Filippinerne rammes hvert år af 20 tyfoner, og i sidste måned havde de et 7,1 magnitude jordskælv. Der er også mange aktive vulkaner. Taal-vulkanen syd for Manila er en turistattraktion - den er en ø i en sø i en ø i en sø. Filippinerne har 37 vulkaner hvoraf mindst 18 er aktive. Landet ligger i en jordskælvszone. Mount Pinatubo 80 km nord for Manila eksploderede 15. juni 1991 med et vældigt brag, aske skød op i 40 km højde, over 100 landsbyer blev begravet i aske og mudder og 250.000 mennesker blev hjemløse. Clark Air Force Base blev dækket i aske. Amerikanerne opgav kort efter basen, og det blev økonomisk nedtur for området. Nu har man lavet det til toldfri zone med lufthavn, 4 kasinoer og hoteller og 5000 ældre mænd fra USA og Australien har bosat sig her og lever billigt og sorgløst - ofte med en lokal kvinde.

Om kulturen: man kan lide katolske messer, religiøse optrin f. eks. ved påsketid, amerikansk popmusik, dans, skønhedskonkurrencer, hanekamp, faith healers, korsfæstelser ved påsketid i byen Fernandes 50 km nord for Manila.

Om kokosnødder: Filippinerne er verdens næststørste producent af kokosprodukter. Omkring 30 % af det opdyrkede land er tilplantet med kokospalmer, og ca. 25 % af befolkningen får deres udkomme helt eller delvis fra kokosindustrien. Den gennemsnitlige kokosfarm har en størrelse på knap 4 Ha. Ejeren selv bor ofte ikke på stedet, men betaler lokale bønder for at høste nødderne. Kokospalmen kan blive 25 - 30 meter høj og bære 50 - 80 nødder om året. Den danner grundlag for et væld af produkter. Palmevin fås ved at tappe saften fra unge kokosblomster og lade de gære. Frugtkødet fra umodne kokosnødder kan spises, bruges i bagværk eller presses til kokosmælk. Den vandige kokosjuice i nøddens midte er en lækende drik. Det vigtigste produkt fås ved at flække modne kokosnødder og lægge de to halvdele til tørre i solen. Det tørrede frugtkød skræbes ud af nøddens skal og sælges som kopra. Af kopra udvindes olie som bl.a. indgår i produktionen af sæbe og margarine. De tilbageblevne skaller svies til trækul. Det trevlede lag uden på nødderne udnyttes til fremstilling af kurve, måtter, børster, koste eller bruges til fyld i puder eller som vækstmedie i blomsterpotter. Stammen anvendes som bygningstømmer.

Om Puerto Galera og Mindora: Mindoro er en stor bjergrig ø med mange dejlige strande og koralrev ved Puerto Galera. Mindoro er en sammentrækning af det spanske **mina de oro** (guldmine), men det blev aldrig til større guldfund. Bjergene er op til 2500 meter høje, og i de indre skove lever stammefolk f.eks. Mangyan-stammer. Puerto Galera - **galeonernes havn** - blev anlagt af spanierne i 1574, fordi der er en **fin naturhavn**. Galeonshandelen foregik i næsten 250 år - fra 1573 til 1813. Hvert år sendtes 2 galeoner med østerlandske varer fra Manila til Acapulco, hvor de blev omlastet og videresendt til Europa. Som betaling returnerede skibene med sølv og guld. Omkring 40 galeoner er forlist i farvandet omkring Puerto Galera. Man har oprettet maritime reservater omkring Puerto Galera af hensyn til koralrevene.

I 1974 dukkede den japanske løjtnant Hiroo Onoda op efter at have **skjult sig 30 år i junglen** på Lubang Island nord for Mindoro. Han vidste ikke, at 2. verdenskrig var forbi. Han vendte hjem som en helt og skrev senere en berømt bog med titlen "No Surrender". I 1980 fandt man kaptajn Fumio Nakamura, der i 36 år havde levet på skrånningen af Mount Halcon på Mindora, hvor han havde afventet nærmere ordrer fra Tokyo.

The Coco Beach Paradise Song:

They call it Paradise
There's a place in the world - they call it Paradise
A place in the world, they call it Paradise
Gecko's on the ceiling - crabs in the sand
Mosquitoes kissing you legs - is your blood sweeter than wine
Steaks from the kitchen - Weng-Weng from the bar
Girls at the reception - showing their smile
Some people drink Champagne - some people drink red wine
Some people went to Sabang - they dance like butterflies
The hammock at the beach front - wave goes up and down
A snore of a lady - it sounds like lullaby
One early morning they say they fly back home
The palm trees are swaying, waving goodbye
There's a place in the world they call it Paradise

José Rizal (1861-1896) er Filippinernes nationalhelt. Han blev uddannet som øjenlæge i Spanien, og vendte i 1892 tilbage som samfundsdebatør og forfatter. Han blev forvist til Mindanao og efter opstanden i 1896 blev han dødsdømt og henrettet i Fort Santiago i Manila. Et berømt digt blev smuglet ud i bunden af en olielampe: "Mi Ultima Adios": et uddrag lyder i oversættelse:

Farvel mit elskede land, kærttegnet af solen
Perlen i Orientens hav, vort tabte Eden,
Bedrøvet og nedtrykt, men med håbet i behold giver jeg dig mit liv.
Jeg dør, mens jeg ser begyndende lys på himlen,
Tegn på dagens komme efter en dyster nat.
Tag mit blod, hvis du behøver det til din morgenrøde.
Bed for de ulykkelige, der døde,
For dem, der har lidt smerte,
For vore stakkels mødre, som har grædt bitre tårer,
For faderløse, enker og fanger, der behøver hjælp.
Bed til at du må opleve din egen forløsning.

Philippines is a sovereign island country in Southeast Asia situated in the western Pacific Ocean. It consists of 7,107 islands that are categorized broadly under three main geographical divisions: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Its capital city is Manila while its most populous city is Quezon City; both are part of Metro Manila.

To the north of the Philippines across the Luzon Strait lies Taiwan; Vietnam sits west across the South China Sea; southwest is the island of Borneo across the Sulu Sea, and to the south the Celebes Sea separates it from other islands of Indonesia; while to the east it is bounded by the Philippine Sea and the island-nation of Palau. Its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire and close to the equator makes the Philippines prone to earthquakes and typhoons, but also endows it with abundant natural resources and some of the world's greatest biodiversity. At approximately 300,000 square kilometers (115,831 sq mi), the Philippines is the 64th-largest country in the world.

With a population of about 100 million people, the Philippines is the seventh-most populated country in Asia and the 12th most populated country in the world. An additional 12 million Filipinos live overseas, comprising one of the world's largest diasporas. Multiple ethnicities and cultures are found throughout the islands. In prehistoric times, Negritos were some of the archipelago's earliest inhabitants. They were followed by successive waves of Austronesian peoples. Exchanges with Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Islamic states occurred. Then, various nations were established under the rule of Datus, Rajahs, Sultans or Lakans.

The coming of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 marked the beginning of Spanish colonization. In 1543, Spanish explorer Ruy López de Villalobos named the archipelago Las Islas Filipinas in honor of Philip II of Spain. With the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi from Mexico City, in 1565; the first Spanish settlement in the archipelago was established. The Philippines became part of the Spanish Empire for more than 300 years. This resulted in the predominant religion in the country being Roman Catholicism. During this time, Manila became the western hub of the trans-Pacific Manila–Acapulco galleon trade connecting Asia with the Americas.

As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, there followed in quick succession the Philippine Revolution, which spawned the short-lived First Philippine Republic, and the Philippine–American War. Aside from the period of Japanese occupation, the United States retained sovereignty over the islands until 1945. After World War II, the Philippines was recognized as an independent nation. Since then, the Philippines has had an often tumultuous experience with democracy, which includes a People Power Revolution overthrowing a dictatorship. The nation's large population size and economic potential have led it to be classified as a middle power. It is a founding member of the United Nations, World Trade Organization, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and East Asia Summit.

The Philippines was named in honor of King Philip II of Spain. Spanish explorer Ruy López de Villalobos during his expedition in 1542 named the islands of Leyte and Samar Felipinas after the then Prince of Asturias. Eventually the name Las Islas Filipinas would be used to cover all the islands of the archipelago. Before that became commonplace, other names such as Islas del Poniente (Islands of the West) and Magellan's name for the islands San Lázaro were also used by the Spanish to refer to the islands.

The metatarsal of the Callao Man, reliably dated by uranium-series dating to 67,000 years ago replaced the Tabon Man of Palawan, carbon-dated to around 24,000 years ago, as the oldest human remains found in the archipelago. Negritos were also among the archipelago's earliest inhabitants, but their appearance in the Philippines has not been reliably dated. There are several opposing theories regarding the origins of ancient Filipinos. The most widely accepted based on linguistic and archeological evidence, is the "Out-of-Taiwan" model, which hypothesizes that Austronesians from Taiwan began migrating to the Philippines around 4000 BCE, displacing earlier arrivals. By 1000 BCE the inhabitants of the archipelago had developed into four kinds of social groups: hunter-gatherer tribes, warrior societies, highland plutocracies, and maritime harbor principalities.

Some of the societies scattered in the islands remained isolated but many evolved into states that developed substantial trade and contacts with the peoples of Eastern, Southern and Southeastern Asia; including those from Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan as well as other Austronesian islands. The 1st millennium saw the rise of the harbor principalities and their growth into Maritime states composed of autonomous barangays independent of, or allied with larger nations which were either Malay thalassocracies led by Datus, Chinese tributary states ruled by Huangs or Indianized Kingdoms governed by Rajahs. The 1300s heralded the arrival and eventual spread of the Islamic religion in the Philippine archipelago. In 1380, Karim ul' Makdum and Shari'ful Hashem Syed Abu Bakr, an Arab trader born in Johore, arrived in Sulu from Malacca and established the Sultanate of Sulu by converting Sulu's rajah and marrying his daughter. At the end of the 15th century, Shariff Mohammed Kabungsuwan of Johor introduced Islam in the island of Mindanao. He subsequently married Paramisuli, an Iranun princess, and established the Sultanate of Maguindanao. The sultanate form of government extended further into Lanao. Eventually, Islam spread out of Mindanao in the south into Luzon in the north. Even Manila was Islamized through the reign of Sultan Bolkiah in 1485 to 1521, wherein, the Bruneian Empire subjugated the Kingdom of Tondo by converting Rajah Salalila to Islam. However, states like the Animist Igorot, Malay Madja-as, Sinified Ma-i, and Indianized Butuan still maintained their cultures. In some kingdoms, anti-Islamic fervor was present. As a result, the rivalries between the datus, rajahs, huangs, sultans, and lakans eventually eased Spanish colonization. These states became incorporated into the Spanish Empire and were Hispanicized and Christianized.

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the Philippines and claimed the islands for Spain. Colonization began when Spanish explorer Miguel López de Legazpi arrived from Mexico in 1565 and formed the first Hispanic settlements in Cebu. After relocating to Panay island and consolidating a coalition of native Visayan allies and Spanish soldiers, the Spaniards marched upon Islamic Manila. Under Spanish rule, Manila became the capital of the Spanish East Indies (1571), therein they put down the Tondo Conspiracy and defeated the Chinese-warlord Limahong. Spanish rule contributed significantly to bringing political unity to the fragmented states of the archipelago. From 1565 to 1821, the Philippines was governed as a territory of the Viceroyalty of New Spain and then was administered directly from Madrid after the Mexican War of Independence. The Manila galleons and its large naval fleet linking Manila to Acapulco traveled once or twice a year between the 16th and 19th centuries. Trade introduced foods such as corn, tomatoes, potatoes, chili peppers, and pineapples from the Americas. Roman Catholic missionaries converted most of the lowland inhabitants to Christianity

and founded schools, a university, and hospitals. While a Spanish decree introduced free public schooling in 1863, efforts in mass public education mainly came to fruition during the American period.

During its rule, the Spanish fought off various indigenous revolts and several external colonial challenges from Chinese pirates, the Dutch, and the Portuguese. In an extension of the fighting of the Seven Years' War, British forces occupied Manila from 1762 to 1764. Spanish rule was eventually restored following the 1763 Treaty of Paris. In the 19th century, Philippine ports opened to world trade and shifts started occurring within Philippine society. Many Spaniards born in the Philippines (criollos) and those of mixed ancestry (mestizos) became wealthy, and an influx of Latin American settlers opened up government positions traditionally held by Spaniards born in the Iberian Peninsula (peninsulares). The ideals of revolution also began to spread through the islands. Criollo dissatisfaction resulted in the 1872 Cavite Mutiny that was a precursor to the Philippine Revolution.

Revolutionary sentiments were stoked in 1872 after three priests—Mariano Gómez, José Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora (collectively known as Gomburza)—were accused of sedition by colonial authorities and executed. This would inspire a propaganda movement in Spain, organized by Marcelo H. del Pilar, José Rizal, and Mariano Ponce, lobbying for political reforms in the Philippines. Rizal was eventually executed on December 30, 1896, on charges of rebellion. As attempts at reform met with resistance, Andrés Bonifacio in 1892 established the secret society called the Katipunan, who sought independence from Spain through armed revolt. Bonifacio and the Katipunan started the Philippine Revolution in 1896. A faction of the Katipunan, the Magdalo of Cavite province, eventually came to challenge Bonifacio's position as the leader of the revolution and Emilio Aguinaldo took over. In 1898, the Spanish–American War began in Cuba and reached the Philippines. Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence from Spain in Kawit, Cavite on June 12, 1898, and the First Philippine Republic was established in the Barasoain Church in the following year.

The islands were ceded by Spain to the United States as a result of the latter's victory in the Spanish-American War. A compensation of 20 million US dollars was paid according to the terms of the 1898 Treaty of Paris. As it became increasingly clear the United States would not recognize the nascent First Philippine Republic, the Philippine–American War broke out, the First Republic was defeated, and the archipelago was administered under an Insular Government. The Americans then suppressed the sub-states the First Republic fractured into: mainly, the waning Sultanate of Sulu, as well as the insurgent Tagalog Republic, the Cantonal Republic of Negros, in the Visayas, and the Republic of Zamboanga, in Mindanao. During this era, a renaissance in Philippine culture occurred, with the expansion of Philippine cinema and literature. Daniel Burnham built an architectural plan for Manila which would have transformed it into a modern city.

In 1935, the Philippines was granted Commonwealth status with Manuel Quezon as president. He designated a national language and introduced women's suffrage and land reform. Plans for independence over the next decade were interrupted by World War II when the Japanese Empire invaded and the Second Philippine Republic of José P. Laurel was established as a collaborator state. Many atrocities and war crimes were committed during the war such as the Bataan Death March and the Manila massacre that culminated during the Battle of Manila. In 1944, Quezon died in exile in the United States and Sergio Osmeña succeeded him. Allied troops defeated the Japanese in 1945. By the end of the war it is estimated over a million Filipinos had died.

On October 24, 1945, the Philippines became one of the founding members of the United Nations and the following year, on July 4, 1946, it became recognized by the United States as independent, during the presidency of Manuel Roxas. Disgruntled remnants of the communist Hukbalahap continued to roam the countryside but were put down by President Elpidio Quirino's successor Ramon Magsaysay. Magsaysay's successor, Carlos P. Garcia initiated the Filipino First Policy, which was continued by Diosdado Macapagal, with celebration of Independence Day moved from July 4 to June 12, the date of Emilio Aguinaldo's declaration, while furthering the claim on the eastern part of North Borneo.

In 1965, Macapagal lost to Ferdinand Marcos, who was elected president. Early in his presidency he initiated numerous public projects but was accused of massive corruption, such as the embezzlement of billions of dollars in public funds. Amidst great social turmoil and nearing the end of his term, Marcos declared Martial Law on September 21, 1972. This period of his rule was characterized by political repression, censorship, and human rights violations. His wife Imelda continued to live a lavish lifestyle as the majority of Filipinos remained in poverty. On August 21, 1983, Marcos' chief rival, opposition leader Benigno Aquino, Jr., was assassinated at Manila International Airport. Marcos eventually called for snap presidential elections in 1986 against Aquino's widow, Corazon. Marcos was proclaimed the winner, but the results were widely regarded as fraudulent, leading to the People Power Revolution. Marcos and his allies fled to Hawaii and Aquino was recognized as president.

The return of democracy and government reforms beginning in 1986 were hampered by national debt, government corruption, coup attempts, disasters, a persistent communist insurgency, and a military conflict with Moro separatists. Corazon Aquino's administration ended with the eruption of Mount Pinatubo on June 1991, withdrawal of U.S. forces due the rejection of the U.S. Bases Extension Treaty and transfer of Clark Air Base in November 1991 and Subic Bay in December 1992 officially to the government, ending the basing of American military forces in the country. The economy was known as the "Tiger Economy in Asia", with an average of 6% GDP growth rate during the administration of Fidel V. Ramos, who won in the Philippine presidential election held in May 11, 1992. However, the political stability and economic improvements, such as the peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996, were overlooked by the onset of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Ramos' successor, Joseph Estrada assumed office in June 1998 and managed to regain the economy from -0.6% growth to 3.4% by 1999 amidst the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The government had announced a war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in March 2000 and neutralized the camps including the headquarters of the insurgents. In the middle of ongoing conflict with the Abu Sayyaf, accusations of alleged corruption, and a stalled impeachment process, Estrada's administration was overthrown by the 2001 EDSA Revolution and succeeded by his Vice President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on January 20, 2001.

In Arroyo's 9-year administration, The economy experienced GDP growth from 4% in 2002 to 7% growth in 2007 with the completion of infrastructure projects like the MRT Line 2 in 2004 and managed to avoid the Great Recession. Nevertheless, It was tied with graft and political scandals like the Hello Garci scandal pertaining to the alleged manipulation of votes in the 2004 presidential elections. On November 23, 2009, the Maguindanao massacre led to the murder of 34 journalists.

Benigno Aquino III won the 2010 national elections and served as the 15th President of the Philippines. He was the third youngest person to be elected president and the first to be a bachelor. During the previous years, The Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed on October 15, 2012, as the first step of the creation of an autonomous political entity named Bangsamoro. however, territorial disputes in eastern Sabah and the South China Sea have escalated. The economy in the country performed well especially in 2013 at 7.2% GDP growth which is 2nd fastest in Asia Aquino signed the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, commonly known as K-12 program in May 15, 2013 aiming to enhance the educational system in the country. On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) struck the country and heavily devastated the country especially in the Visayan Region.

The Philippines has a democratic government in the form of a constitutional republic with a presidential system. It is governed as a unitary state with the exception of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao which is largely free from the national government. There have been attempts to change the government to a federal, unicameral, or parliamentary government since the Ramos administration.

The President functions as both head of state and head of government and is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The president is elected by popular vote for a single six-year term, during which he or she appoints and presides over the cabinet. The bicameral Congress is composed of the Senate, serving as the upper house, with members elected to a six-year term, and the House of Representatives, serving as the lower house, with members elected to a three-year term. The senators are elected at large while the representatives are elected from both legislative districts and through sectoral representation. The judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court, composed of a Chief Justice as its presiding officer and fourteen associate justices, all of whom are appointed by the President from nominations submitted by the Judicial and Bar Council.

The Philippines' international relations are based on trade with other nations and the well-being of the 11 million overseas Filipinos living outside the country. As a founding and active member of the United Nations, the Philippines has been elected several times into the Security Council. Carlos P. Romulo was a former President of the United Nations General Assembly. The country is an active participant in the Human Rights Council as well as in peacekeeping missions, particularly in East Timor.

In addition to membership in the United Nations, the country is also a founding and active member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), an organization designed to strengthen relations and promote economic and cultural growth among states in the Southeast Asian region.¹ It has hosted several summits and is an active contributor to the direction and policies of the bloc.

The Philippines values its relations with the United States. It supported the United States during the Cold War and the War on Terror and is a major non-NATO ally. Despite this history of goodwill, controversies related to the presence of the now former U.S. military bases in Subic Bay and Clark and the current Visiting Forces Agreement have flared up from time to time. Japan, the biggest contributor of official development assistance to the country, is thought of as a friend. Although historical tensions still exist on issues such as the plight of comfort women, much of the animosity inspired by memories of World War II have faded.

Relations with other nations are generally positive. Shared democratic values ease relations with Western and European countries while similar economic concerns help in relations with other developing countries. Historical ties and cultural similarities also serve as a bridge in relations with Spain. Despite issues such as domestic abuse and war affecting overseas Filipino workers, relations with Middle Eastern countries are friendly as seen in the continuous employment of more than two million overseas Filipinos living there.

With communism no longer the threat it once was, once hostile relations in the 1950s between the Philippines and China have improved greatly. Issues involving Taiwan, the Spratly Islands, and concerns of expanding Chinese influence, however, still encourage a degree of caution. Recent foreign policy has been mostly about economic relations with its Southeast Asian and Asia-Pacific neighbors.

The Philippines is an active member of the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Latin Union, the Group of 24, and the Non-Aligned Movement. It is also seeking to strengthen relations with Islamic countries by campaigning for observer status in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the military force of the Philippines that is responsible for national security and is composed of three branches: the Philippine Air Force, the Philippine Army, and the Philippine Navy (includes the Marine Corps). Currently, The Armed Forces of the Philippines' manpower is a voluntary force meaning it acquires its personnel from volunteers through recruitment however, according to the Section 4, Article II of the Constitution of the Philippines, conscription may be possible. Civilian security is handled by Philippine National Police under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the largest separatist organization, the Moro National Liberation Front, is now engaging the government politically. Other more militant groups like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the communist New People's Army, and the Abu Sayyaf which have been reported of kidnappings of foreigners, where victims are held for ransom, particularly in the southern island of Mindanao, but their presence has decreased in recent years due to successful security provided by the Philippine government.

The Philippines has been an ally of the United States since World War II. A mutual defense treaty between the two countries was signed in 1951. The Philippines supported American policies during the Cold War and participated in the Korean and Vietnam wars. It was a member of the now dissolved SEATO, a group that was intended to serve a role similar to NATO and that included Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. After the start of the War on Terror, the Philippines was part of the coalition that gave support to the United States in Iraq.

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands with a total land area, including inland bodies of water, of approximately 300,000 square kilometers. Its 36,289 kilometers of coastline makes it the country with the 5th longest coastline in the world. Most of the mountainous islands are covered in tropical rainforest and volcanic in origin. The highest mountain is Mount Apo. It measures up to 2,954 meters above sea level and is located on the island of Mindanao. The Galathea Depth in the Philippine Trench is the deepest point in the country and the third deepest in the world. The trench is located in the Philippine Sea.

Situated on the western fringes of the Pacific Ring of Fire, the Philippines experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity. The Benham Plateau to the east in the Philippine Sea is an undersea region active in tectonic subduction. Around 20 earthquakes are registered daily, though most are too weak to be felt. The last major earthquake was the 1990 Luzon earthquake. There are many active volcanoes such as the Mayon Volcano, Mount Pinatubo, and Taal Volcano. The eruption of Mount Pinatubo in June 1991 produced the second largest terrestrial eruption of the 20th century. Not all notable geographic features are so violent or destructive. A more serene legacy of the geological disturbances is the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River, the area represents a habitat for biodiversity conservation, the site also contains a full mountain-to-the-sea ecosystem and has some of the most important forests in Asia.

Due to the volcanic nature of the islands, mineral deposits are abundant. The country is estimated to have the second-largest gold deposits after South Africa and one of the largest copper deposits in the world. It is also rich in nickel, chromite, and zinc. Despite this, poor management, high population density, and environmental consciousness have resulted in these mineral resources remaining largely untapped. Geothermal energy, however, is another product of volcanic activity that the country has harnessed more successfully. The Philippines is the world's second-biggest geothermal producer behind the United States, with 18% of the country's electricity needs being met by geothermal power.



The Philippines' rainforests and its extensive coastlines make it home to a diverse range of birds, plants, animals, and sea creatures. It is one of the ten most biologically megadiverse countries and is at or near the top in terms of biodiversity per unit area. Around 1,100 land vertebrate species can be found in the Philippines including over 100 mammal species and 170 bird species not thought to exist elsewhere. The Philippines has among the highest rates of discovery in the world with sixteen new species of mammals discovered in the last ten years. Because of this, the rate of endemism for the Philippines has risen and likely will continue to rise.

Philippine tarsier (*Tarsius syrichta*), one of the smallest primates.

The Philippines lacks large predators, with the exception of snakes, such as pythons and cobras, saltwater crocodiles and birds of prey, such as the national bird, known as the Philippine eagle, which scientists suggest as the largest eagle in the world. The largest crocodile in captivity, known locally as Lolong, was captured in the southern island of Mindanao. Other native animals include the palm civet cat, the dugong, and the Philippine tarsier associated with Bohol. With an estimated 13,500 plant species in the country, 3,200 of which are unique to the islands, Philippine rainforests boast an array of flora, including many rare types of orchids and rafflesia.

Philippine maritime waters encompass as much as 2,200,000 square kilometers producing unique and diverse marine life and are an important part of the Coral Triangle. The total number of corals and marine fish species was estimated at 500 and 2,400 respectively. However, new records and species discoveries continuously increase these numbers underlining the uniqueness of the marine resources in the Philippines. The Tubbataha Reef in the Sulu Sea was declared a World Heritage Site in 1993. Philippine waters also sustain the cultivation of pearls, crabs, and seaweeds.

Deforestation, often the result of illegal logging, is an acute problem in the Philippines. Forest cover declined from 70% of the country's total land area in 1900 to about 18.3% in 1999. Many species are endangered and scientists say that Southeast Asia, which the Philippines is part of, faces a catastrophic extinction rate of 20% by the end of the 21st century. According to Conservation International, "the country is one of the few nations that is, in its entirety, both a hotspot and a megadiversity country, placing it among the top priority hotspots for global conservation."

The Philippines has a tropical maritime climate and is usually hot and humid. There are three seasons: tag-init or tag-araw, the hot dry season or summer from March to May; tag-ulan, the rainy season from June to November; and tag-lamig, the cool dry season from December to February. The southwest monsoon (from May to October) is known as the Habagat, and the dry winds of the northeast monsoon (from November to April), the Amihan. Temperatures usually range from 21 °C (70 °F) to 32 °C (90 °F) although it can get cooler or hotter depending on the season. The coolest month is January; the warmest is May.

Sitting astride the typhoon belt, most of the islands experience annual torrential rains and thunderstorms from July to October, with around nineteen typhoons entering the Philippine area of responsibility in a typical year and eight or nine making landfall. Annual rainfall measures as much as 5,000 millimeters (200 in) in the mountainous east coast section but less than 1,000 millimeters (39 in) in some of

the sheltered valleys. The wettest known tropical cyclone to impact the archipelago was the July 1911 cyclone, which dropped over 1,168 millimeters of rainfall within a 24-hour period in Baguio. Bagyo is the local term for a tropical cyclone in the Philippines.

The national economy of the Philippines is the 39th largest in the world, with an estimated 2013 gross domestic product (nominal) of \$272.207 billion. Primary exports include semiconductors and electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, and fruits.^[5] Major trading partners include the United States, Japan, China, Singapore, South Korea, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Germany, Taiwan, and Thailand. Its unit of currency is the Philippine peso (₱ or PHP). The Philippines is classified as a middle power. A newly industrialized country, the Philippine economy has been transitioning from one based on agriculture to one based more on services and manufacturing. Of the country's total labor force of around 40.813 Million, the agricultural sector employs close to 32% but contributes to only about 14% of GDP. The industrial sector employs around 14% of the workforce and accounts for 30% of GDP. Meanwhile the 47% of workers involved in the services sector are responsible for 56% of GDP.

The unemployment rate as of September 10, 2014 stands at 6.7% accounting for 1.06 million jobs, lower than the 7.5% recorded in Q4 2013. However, due to the damage of the recent typhoon and the port congestion, the inflation rate was high in July 2014 at 4.9%. Gross international reserves as of October 2013 are \$83.201 billion. In 2004, public debt as a percentage of GDP was estimated to be 74.2% but in 2008 it fell to 56.9%. and in 2012, 40.2%. The country is a net importer but it is also a creditor nation.

After World War II, the country was for a time regarded as the second wealthiest in East Asia, next only to Japan. However, by the 1960s its economic performance started being overtaken. The economy stagnated under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos as the regime spawned economic mismanagement and political volatility. The country suffered from slow economic growth and bouts of economic recession. Only in the 1990s with a program of economic liberalization did the economy begin to recover. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis affected the economy, resulting in a lingering decline of the value of the peso and falls in the stock market. But the extent it was affected initially was not as severe as that of some of its Asian neighbors. This was largely due to the fiscal conservatism of the government, partly as a result of decades of monitoring and fiscal supervision from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in comparison to the massive spending of its neighbors on the rapid acceleration of economic growth. There have been signs of progress since. In 2004, the economy experienced 6.4% GDP growth and 7.1% in 2007, its fastest pace of growth in three decades. Average annual GDP growth per capita for the period 1966–2007 still stands at 1.45% in comparison to an average of 5.96% for the East Asia and the Pacific region as a whole and the daily income for 45% of the population of the Philippines remains less than \$2.

Other incongruities and challenges exist. The economy is heavily reliant on remittances which surpass foreign direct investment as a source of foreign currency. Remittances have peaked in 2010 at 10.4% and 8.6% in 2012 of the national GDP. Regional development is uneven, with Luzon – Metro Manila in particular – gaining most of the new economic growth at the expense of the other regions, although the government has taken steps to distribute economic growth by promoting investment in other areas of the country. Despite constraints, service industries such as tourism and business process outsourcing have been identified as areas with some of the best opportunities for growth for the country.

Goldman Sachs includes the country in its list of the "Next Eleven" economies. but China and India have emerged as major economic competitors. Goldman Sachs estimates that by the year 2050, it will be the 20th largest economy in the world. HSBC also projects the Philippine economy to become the 16th largest economy in the world, 5th largest economy in Asia and the largest economy in the South East Asian region by 2050. The Philippines is a member of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asian Development Bank which is headquartered in Mandaluyong, the Colombo Plan, the G-77, and the G-24 among other groups and institutions.

The transportation infrastructure in the country is relatively underdeveloped. Partly this is due to the mountainous terrain and the scattered geography of the islands, but also the result of the lower investment of the government in infrastructure. In 2013, About 3% of the GDP went to infrastructure development which was lower than that of some of its neighbors. Consequently, while there are 213,151 kilometers (132,446 mi) of roads in the country, only around 25.56% of the total is paved. The current administration under President Benigno Aquino III has been pushing to improve the country's infrastructure and transportation systems through various projects.^[224] Nevertheless there are many ways to get around, especially in urban areas. Buses, jeepneys, taxis, and motorized tricycles are commonly available in major cities and towns. In 2007, there were about 5.53 million registered motor vehicles with registration increasing at an average annual rate of 4.55%.^[225]

Travelling from one island to another by means of air travel is an option in the country. The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines has the responsibility of the management of airports and the implementation of policies regarding safe air travel. with 85 public airports that are currently operational The Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) serves the Greater Manila Area along with Clark International Airport. Philippine Airlines, Asia's oldest commercial airline still operating under its original name, and Cebu Pacific, the leading low-cost airline, are the major airlines serving most domestic and international destinations.

Philippines' roads and highways consist of a network of national and provincial highways, Expressways, secondary and municipal avenues and roads spanning a length of 205,497 km as of December 2007. The expressways and highways in the country are mostly located on the island of Luzon including the Pan-Philippine Highway, connecting the islands of Luzon, Samar, Leyte, and Mindanao, the North Luzon Expressway, South Luzon Expressway, and the Subic–Clark–Tarlac Expressway.

Rail transport in the Philippines plays a vital role of transporting passengers and cargo within major cities as well as long distance travel. Rail network in the country including Manila Light Rail Transit System (LRT-1 and MRT-2), and Manila Metro Rail Transit System (MRT-3) serving the Metro Manila area,^[237] Philippine National Railways (PNR) serves the Luzon Island, and the defunct Panay Railways that previously served the island of Panay.^[240] Three types of train systems are currently under development namely the Automated

Guideway Transit, an electric powered, fully automated train, the Hybrid Electric Road Train which is a long bi-articulated bus, and a full-scale passenger train.

As an archipelago, inter-island travel via watercraft is often necessary. The busiest seaports are Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, and Zamboanga. 2GO Travel and Sulpicio Lines serve Manila, with links to various cities and towns through passenger vessels. The 919-kilometer Strong Republic Nautical Highway (SRNH), an integrated set of highway segments and ferry routes covering 17 cities was established in 2003. The Pasig River Ferry Service serves the major rivers in the metro including the Pasig River and Marikina River having numerous stops in Manila, Makati, Mandaluyong, Pasig and Marikina.

Philippines have pursued efforts to improve the field of science and technology. The Department of Science and Technology is the governing agency responsible for the development of coordination of science and technology-related projects in the Philippines. National Scientist of the Philippines award was given to individuals that have contributed to different field of science in the country. Notable Filipino scientists include Maria Orosa, a food technologist famous for her formulated food products like calamansi nip, soyalac and the banana ketchup, Fe del Mundo, a pediatrician whose pioneering work in pediatrics as an active medical practice spanned 8 decades, Paulo Campos, a physician who was dubbed as "The Father of Nuclear Medicine in the Philippines" for his contributions in the field of nuclear medicine, Ramon Barba, an inventor and horticulturist known for his method to induce more flowers in mango trees.

In July 1996, The country's first satellite, The Palapa B-2P, acquired by the Mabuhay Philippines Satellite Corporation, was launched and moved to a new orbital slot in August 1, 1996 and renamed as Mabuhay. Plans of launching the country's first microsatellite was visioned by the Department of Science and Technology within July 2016 in cooperation with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency. Research organizations formed in the country, including the International Rice Research Institute, an international independent research and training organization established in 1960 with headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna, focusing on the development of new rice varieties and rice crop management techniques to help farmers in the country improve their lives.

The Philippines has a sophisticated cellular phone industry and a high concentration of users. Text messaging is a popular form of communication, and in 2007, the nation sent an average of one billion SMS messages per day. Over five million mobile phone users also use their phones as virtual wallets, making it a leader among developing nations in providing financial transactions over cellular networks. The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company commonly known as PLDT is the leading telecommunications provider. It is also the largest company in the country. The National Telecommunications Commission is the agency responsible for the supervision, adjudication and control over all telecommunications services throughout the country. There are approximately 383 AM and 659 FM radio stations and 297 television and 873 cable television stations. In March 29, 1994, the country became live in the internet through a router serviced by PLDT to a Sprint communication's router in California via a 64 kbit/s connection. Estimates for internet penetration in the Philippines vary widely ranging from a low of 2.5 million to a high of 24 million people. Social networking and watching videos are among the most frequent internet activities.

The travel and tourism sector is a major contributor to the economy, contributing 7.1% share in the Philippine GDP and employing 1,226,500 jobs, accounting for 3.2 percent of total employment in the country in 2013. The industry had grown by US\$4.8 billion in 2013. 2,433,428 international visitors have arrived in the country from January to June 2014 up by 2.22% in the same period in 2013. South Korea, China, and Japan accounted for 58.78% while Americas accounted for 19.28% and Europe 10.64%. On 2013, The sector has employed 1,226,500 jobs accounting for 3.2 percent of total employment in the country. The governing body Department of Tourism has the responsibility for the management and promotion of the tourism sector. On January 6, 2012. A new slogan named "It's More Fun in the Philippines" of the tourism department was launched^[276] and ranked third in world's™s best marketing campaigns according to Warc 100.

As an archipelago consisting of 7,107 islands, Philippines has numerous beaches, caves and other rock formations. Tourist attractions in the country includes the white sand beaches of Boracay, named as the best island in the world by Travel + Leisure in 2012, commercial shopping malls located in Manila including the SM Mall of Asia, Festival Supermall, etc., Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifugao, historic town of Vigan, Chocolate Hills in Bohol, Magellan's Cross in Cebu, Tubbataha Reef in Visayas and others in the rest of the country.

The population of the Philippines increased from 1990 to 2008 by approximately 28 million, a 45% growth in that time frame. The first official census in the Philippines was carried out in 1877 and recorded a population of 5,567,685. As of 2013, the Philippines has become the world's 12th most populous nation, with a population of over 100 million. It is estimated that half of the population resides on the island of Luzon. The population growth rate between 1995 to 2000 of 3.21% decreased to an estimated 1.95% for the 2005 to 2010 period, but remains a contentious issue. The population's median age is 22.7 years with 60.9% aged from 15 to 64 years old. Life expectancy at birth is 71.94 years, 75.03 years for females and 68.99 years for males. There are about 12 million Filipinos outside the Philippines. Since the liberalization of United States immigration laws in 1965, the number of people in the United States having Filipino ancestry has grown substantially. In 2007 there were an estimated 12 million Filipinos living overseas.

According to the official count the population of Philippines hit 100 million at the time of midnight on July 27, 2014, making it the 12th country to reach this number.

Metro Manila is the most populous of the 12 defined metropolitan areas in the Philippines and the 11th most populous in the world. As of the 2007 census, it had a population of 11,553,427, comprising 13% of the national population. Including suburbs in the adjacent provinces (Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal) of Greater Manila, the population is around 21 million.

Metro Manila's gross regional product is estimated as of July 2009 to be ₱468.4 billion (at constant 1985 prices) and accounts for 33% of the nation's GDP. In 2011, it ranked as the 28th wealthiest urban agglomeration in the world and the 2nd in Southeast Asia, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers.

According to the 2000 census, 28.1% of Filipinos are Tagalog, 13.1% Cebuano, 9% Ilocano, 7.6% Bisaya/Binisaya, 7.5% Hiligaynon, 6% Bikol, 3.4% Waray, and 25.3% as "others", which can be broken down further to yield more distinct non-tribal groups like the Moro, the Kapampangan, the Pangasinense, the Ibanag, and the Ivatan. There are also indigenous peoples like the Igorot, the Lumad, the Mangyan, the Bajau, and the tribes of Palawan. Negritos, such as the Aeta and the Ati, are considered among the earliest inhabitants of the islands.

Filipinos generally belong to several Asian ethnic groups classified linguistically as part of the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian speaking people. It is believed that thousands of years ago Austronesian-speaking Taiwanese aborigines migrated to the Philippines from Taiwan, bringing with them knowledge of agriculture and ocean-sailing, eventually displacing the earlier Negrito groups of the islands. The two most important non-indigenous minorities include the Chinese and the Spaniards. Chinese Filipinos, mostly descendants of immigrants from Fujian-China after 1898, number 2 million, although there is an estimated 18 million Filipinos who have partial Chinese ancestry, stemming from precolonial Chinese migrants.^[298] Inter-marriage between the groups is evident in the major cities and urban areas. Furthermore, at least, one-third of the population of Luzon as well as a few old settlements in the Visayas and Zamboanga City at Mindanao, have Hispanic ancestry

Top 5 national languages (Ethnologue, 2013)	
Language	Speakers(millions)
Tagalog/Filipino	52
Cebuano	16
Ilokano	7
Hiligaynon	6
Bikol	5

References:^{[302][303]}

Ethnologue lists 175 individual languages in the Philippines, 171 of which are living languages, while 4 no longer have any known speakers. Most native languages are part of the Philippine branch of the Malayo-Polynesian languages, which is itself a branch of the Austronesian language family. The only non-Austronesian language indigenous to the Philippines is Chavacano, a Spanish-based creole. According to the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Filipino and English are the official languages. Filipino is a standardized version of Tagalog, spoken mainly in Metro Manila and other urban regions. Both Filipino and English are used in government, education, print, broadcast media, and business. The constitution mandates that Spanish and Arabic shall be promoted on a voluntary and optional basis.

Nineteen regional languages act as auxiliary official languages used as mediums of instruction: Aklanon, Bikol, Cebuano, Chavacano, Hiligaynon, Ibanag, Ilocano, Ivatan, Kapampangan, Kinaray-a, Maguindanao, Maranao, Pangasinan, Sambal, Surigaonon, Tagalog, Tausug, Waray-Waray, and Yakan Other indigenous languages such as, Cuyonon, Ifugao, Itbayat, Kalinga, Kamayo, Kankanaey, Masbateño, Romblomanon, and several Visayan languages are prevalent in their respective provinces. The Chavacano language, a creole language born from Spanish (of the Mexican and Peruvian strain), is also spoken in Cavite and Zamboanga. Languages not indigenous to the islands are also taught in select schools. Mandarin is used in Chinese schools catering to the Chinese Filipino community. Islamic schools in Mindanao teach Modern Standard Arabic in their curriculum. French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish are taught with the help of foreign linguistic institutions. The Department of Education began teaching the Malay languages Indonesian and Malaysian in 2013.

The Philippines is a secular nation with a constitutional separation of church and state. As a result of Spanish cultural influence, the Philippines is one of two predominantly Roman Catholic countries in Asia, the other being East Timor, a former Portuguese colony. More than 90% of the population are Christians: about 80.6% belong to the Roman Catholic Church while 9.5% belong to Protestant Christian denominations, such as the Iglesia ni Cristo, the Philippine Independent Church, United Church of Christ in the Philippines (a mainline Protestant United Church), and Jehovah's Witnesses.

According to National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), as of 2012 Muslims were a minority reported as comprising 11% of the population, most of whom live in parts of Mindanao, Palawan, and the Sulu Archipelago – an area known as Bangsamoro or the Moro region. Some have migrated into urban and rural areas in different parts of the country. Most Muslim Filipinos practice Sunni Islam according to the Shafi'i school. There are some Ahmadiyya Muslims in the country. Philippine traditional religions are still practiced by an estimated 2% of the population, made up of many aboriginal and tribal groups. These religions are often syncretized with Christianity and Islam. Animism, folk religion, and shamanism remain present as undercurrents of mainstream religion, through the albularyo, the babaylan, and the manghihilot. Buddhism is practiced by 1% of the populations, and together with Taoism and Chinese folk religion it is dominant in Chinese communities. There are smaller number of followers of Hinduism, Sikhism, and Judaism and Baha'i. About 1% to 11% of the population is non-religious.

The National Statistics Office reported a simple literacy rate of 95.1% for male and 96.1% for female having an average of 95.6% and a functional literacy rate of 84.2% for male and 88.7% for female having an average of 86.45% in 2008. Literacy in females is greater than in males. Education spending accounts for 16.11% (US\$8.197 billion) in the proposed 2015 national budget, higher by 15.1% than the current 2014 budget. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) lists 2,180 higher education institutions, 607 of which are public and 1,573 private.

Healthcare in the country are mostly taken up by private health providers. In 2013, total expenditures on the health sector is still short compared to the 5% WHO standard representing only 3.8% of the GDP. As of 2009, 67.1% of healthcare came from private expenditures while 32.9% was from government. External resources accounted for 2.9% of the total. Health expenditures represented about 6.1% of total government spending. Per capita total expenditure at average exchange rate was \$52.^[329] The budget allocation for Healthcare in 2010 was ₱28 billion (about \$597 million) or ₱310 (\$7) per person but had an increase in budget in 2014 with a record high in the collection of taxes from the House Bill 5727 (commonly known as Sin tax Bill).

There are an estimated 90,370 physicians or 1 per every 833 people, 480,910 nurses, 43,220 dentists, and 1 hospital bed per every 769 people. Retention of skilled practitioners is a problem. 70% of nursing graduates go overseas to work. The country is the biggest supplier of nurses. In 2001 there were about 1,700 hospitals, of which about 40% were government-run and 60% private. Cardiovascular diseases account for more than 25% of all deaths. According to official estimates, 1,965 cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) were reported in 2003, of which 636 had developed acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Despite the increase of HIV/AIDS cases from 12,000 in 2005 to 17,450 as of April 2014 with 5,965 people that were under anti-retroviral therapy, The country is still a low-HIV-prevalence country with less than 0.1% of the adult population estimated to be HIV-positive.

Philippine culture is a combination of Eastern and Western cultures. The Philippines exhibits aspects found in other Asian countries with a Malay heritage, yet its culture also displays a significant amount of Spanish and American influences. Traditional festivities known as barrio fiestas (district festivals) to commemorate the feast days of patron saints are common.

The Moriones Festival and Sinulog Festival are a couple of the most well-known. These community celebrations are times for feasting, music, and dancing. Some traditions, however, are changing or gradually being forgotten due to modernization. The Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company has been lauded for preserving many of the various traditional folk dances found throughout the Philippines. They are famed for their iconic performances of Philippine dances such as the tinikling and singkil that both feature the use of clashing bamboo poles.

One of the most visible Hispanic legacies is the prevalence of Spanish names and surnames among Filipinos. However, a Spanish name and surname does not necessarily denote Spanish ancestry. This peculiarity, unique among the people of Asia, came as a result of a colonial decree, the Clavería edict, for the systematic distribution of family names and implementation of the Spanish naming system on the population. The names of many streets, towns, and provinces are also in Spanish. Spanish architecture has left an imprint in the Philippines in the way many towns were designed around a central square or plaza mayor, but many of the buildings bearing its influence were demolished during World War II. Some examples remain, mainly among the country's churches, government buildings, and universities. Four Philippine baroque churches are included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the San Agustín Church in Manila, the Paoay Church in Ilocos Norte, the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (Santa María) Church in Ilocos Sur, and the Santo Tomás de Villanueva Church in Iloilo. Vigan in Ilocos Sur is also known for the many Hispanic-style houses and buildings preserved there.

The common use of the English language is an example of the American impact on Philippine society. It has contributed to the ready acceptance and influence of American pop cultural trends. This affinity is seen in Filipinos' love of fast food and Western film and music. Fast food outlets are found on many street corners. American global fast food chain stalwarts have entered the market, but local fast food chains like Goldilocks and most notably Jollibee, the leading fast food chain in the country, have emerged and compete successfully against their foreign rivals.

Philippine cuisine has evolved over several centuries from its Malayo-Polynesian origins to become a mixed cuisine with many Hispanic, Chinese, American, and other Asian influences that have been adapted to local ingredients and the Filipino palate to create distinctively Filipino dishes. Dishes range from the very simple, like a meal of fried salted fish and rice, to the elaborate, such as the paellas and cocidos created for fiestas. Popular dishes include lechón, adobo, sinigang, kare-kare, tapa, crispy pata, pancit, lumpia, and halo-halo. Some common local ingredients used in cooking are calamondins, coconuts, saba (a kind of short wide plantain), mangoes, milkfish, and fish sauce. Filipino taste buds tend to favor robust flavors but the cuisine is not as spicy as those of its neighbors.^{[342][343]}

Unlike many of their Asian counterparts, Filipinos do not eat with chopsticks; they use Western cutlery. However, possibly due to rice being the primary staple food and the popularity of a large number of stews and main dishes with broth in Philippine cuisine, the main pairing of utensils seen at the Filipino dining table is that of spoon and fork, not knife and fork. The traditional way of eating with the hands known as kamayan is seen more often in less urbanized areas.

Philippine mythology has been handed down primarily through the traditional oral folk literature of the Filipino people. While each unique ethnic group has its own stories and myths to tell, Hindu and Spanish influences can nonetheless be detected in many cases. Philippine mythology mostly consists of creation stories or stories about supernatural creatures, such as the aswang, the manananggal, the diwata/engkanto, and nature. Some popular figures from Philippine mythologies are Maria Makiling, Lam-Ang, and the Sarimanok.

Philippine literature comprises works usually written in Filipino, Spanish, or English. Some of the most known were created in the 19th century. Francisco Balagtas the poet and playwright who wrote Florante at Laura is recognized as a preeminent writer in the Filipino language. José Rizal wrote the novels Noli Me Tángere (Touch Me Not) and El Filibusterismo (The Filibustering, also known as The Reign of Greed) and is considered a national hero. His depiction of the injustices of Spanish rule, and his death by firing squad, inspired other Philippine revolutionaries to seek independence. Several Filipino writers were awarded National Artist of the Philippines such as N. V. M. Gonzalez, Amado V. Hernandez, Francisco Arcellana, Nick Joaquin, F. Sionil José and many more.

Philippine media uses mainly Filipino and English. Other Philippine languages, including various Visayan languages are also used, especially in radio due to its ability to reach remote rural locations that might otherwise not be serviced by other kinds of media. The dominant television networks ABS-CBN, GMA and TV5 also have extensive radio presence.

The entertainment industry is vibrant and feeds broadsheets and tabloids with an unending supply of details about celebrities and sensationalist scandals du jour. Drama and fantasy shows are anticipated as are Latin telenovelas, Asianovelas, and anime. Daytime television is dominated by game shows, variety shows, and talk shows such as Eat Bulaga and It's Showtime. Philippine cinema has a long history and is popular domestically, but has faced increasing competition from American, Asian and European films. Critically acclaimed directors and actors include Lino Brocka and Nora Aunor for films like *Maynila: Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (Manila: In the Claws of Light) and *Himala* (Miracle). In recent years it has become common to see celebrities flitting between television and movies and then moving into politics provoking concerns.

Various sports and pastimes are popular in the Philippines including basketball, boxing, cockfighting, volleyball, football, badminton, karate, taekwondo, billiards, ten-pin bowling, chess, and sipa. Motocross, cycling, and mountaineering are also becoming popular. Basketball is played at both amateur and professional levels and is considered to be the most popular sport in the Philippines.^{[356][357]} In 2010, Manny Pacquiao was named "Fighter of the Decade" for the 2000s (decade) by the Boxing Writers Association of America (BWAA), World Boxing Council (WBC), and World Boxing Organization (WBO).

The Philippines has participated in the Summer Olympic Games since 1924 and was the first country in Southeast Asia to compete and win a medal. The country had competed in every Summer Olympic Games since then, except when they participated in the American-led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics. The Philippines is also the first tropical nation to compete at the Winter Olympics.

Traditional Philippine games such as luksung baka, patintero, piko, and tumbang preso are still played primarily as children's games among the youth. Sungka is a traditional native Philippine board game. Card games are popular during festivities, with some, including pusoy and tong-its, being used as a form of illegal gambling. Mahjong is played in some Philippine communities. The yo-yo, a popular toy in the Philippines, was introduced in its modern form by Pedro Flores with its name from the Ilokano language. Arnis (Eskrima or Kali in some regions) is the national martial art and sport.

Manila is a [huge city](#) with several [district](#) articles containing sightseeing, restaurant, nightlife and accommodation listings — have a look at each of them.

Manila is the capital of the [Philippines](#) and the nation's center of education, business, and transportation. [Metro Manila](#) is the most populous metropolitan region composing the city of Manila and surrounding cities like [Makati](#), [Mandaluyong](#), [Muntinlupa](#), [Parañaque](#), [Pasay](#), [Pasig](#), [Quezon City](#) and [Taguig](#).

Manila has a reputation as a congested, polluted concrete jungle, and is often overlooked as a mere stopover for travelers aiming to reach other Philippine provinces or islands. To an extent this reputation is deserved, but Manila is nevertheless rapidly developing and has its own rich history and experiences to offer. The city is sprawling, bustling, and culturally complicated, with a colorful multi-cultural heritage and varied nightlife.

Manila is distributed into 16 territorial districts, which are all original towns except one, the Port Area District. Each district is distinguished through its history, culture and cuisine.

The eight districts of the City of Manila (not to be confused with [Metro Manila](#)) north of the Pasig River are:

- [Tondo](#) — The densest, poorest, dangerous, and undeveloped part of Manila
- [Binondo](#) — The world's oldest Chinatown thriving before the arrival of the Spaniards in 1571 and the city's original center for business, finance, and wholesale, as well as retail trade ranging from jewelry to aromatic essences. It's famous for its authentic Chinese, mostly Hong Kong cuisine and quaint interesting Chinese shop-houses. Its church is a fascinating fusion of Spanish Baroque & Chinese styles as shown in its pagoda bell tower.
- San Nicolás — shares Divisoria Market (see Tondo) with other co-district is the hub for the adventurous shoppers that may venture for cheap and wholesale bargains.
- [Santa Cruz](#) — is on the edge of Chinatown, which is the district of usual frenzied mix of commercial and residential premises. It's where Escolta starts - the main artery that used to be Manila's old Wall Street and 5th Avenue during the early American Colonial period to the 1960's. Carriedo St. is where a hodge podge of stalls selling locally-made clothes, export overruns, and household items. It is also home to a cultural curio and the second oldest cemetery in the city - the Chinese Cemetery, where the Chinese community's burials were relegated due to restrictions by the colonial Spanish administration. It features palatial mausoleums with hotel-like suites, some with jacuzzis.

- [Quiapo](#) — Home to Plaza Miranda, Manila's original answer to Trafalgar Square, and most especially to the Black Nazarene, an enduring Catholic icon brought from Mexico in the early 1600s. It is also a place famous for flowers, herbal remedies, love potions, fortune tellers, religious items, as well as electronic goods (Raon St.) to native handicrafts and tourist curios sold at Quinta Market and under an overhead bridge fondly called by some locals as Ille de Toule a French corruption of Tagalog "Ilalim ng Tulay" translated in English as "Under the Bridge". Old and delightful Art-Nouveau elite houses are now converted to tumbledown slum enclaves sharing space with B-rated movie houses past their grandeur and glory days. The premier and oldest mosque in the city serves as a centerpiece for Manila's small rendition of Arab & Muslim Town, a concept set up by Imelda Marcos to imbibe some sense of cosmopolitanism in the city.
- [Sampaloc](#) — the word for tamarind, this University Belt district, an easily identifiable nerve center of the country's major institutions of learning and a hotbed of diploma mills, is where the University of Santo Tomas, Asia's oldest university (founded in 1611), famous not more for its notoriously morally bankrupt and corrupt Dominican Friars during the Spanish colonial days as the inspiration portrayed by the National Hero Jose Rizal in his fiction novels, nor for its movers and shakers alumni, but also for being converted into the biggest concentration camp of international civilians held by the Japanese during WWII. Also, it's where lies the Dangwa Flower Market. It is also the student dorm central of the Philippines where most Filipinos nationwide claim temporary board and lodging - in the myriad of apartment houses and ever rising condo-dorms (some as high as forty plus stories) lining a warren of narrow streets - while enrolled in the more than a dozen universities, colleges, and review centers within it, along with service shops such as bookstores, copier & printing (including fake diplomas, identification cards, and certification papers a white collar jobseeker needs) shops, thesis and reports mills, and computer rental shops, as well as entertainment joints catering to a student clientèle such as internet and video games, bootleg DVD & software shops, billiard halls, and student-budget sex and related vices safe houses. The imposing San Sebastian Church, inside the campus of a university, is the first and only iron pre-fabricated church in the Philippines manufactured in Belgium in the mid 1800s.
- [San Miguel](#) — still part of the University Belt hosting some spillover colleges and universities outside of Sampaloc district, it's where the Malacañán Palace is located, the official executive seat and residence of the sitting Philippine President as well as museum. It is also the birthplace of the famous and namesake [San Miguel Beer](#).
- Santa Mesa — from the Spanish term holy table, this working class district is not so holy anymore as it hosts most of the city's short time love hotels and motels; marks the first shot of the Filipino-American War.
- [Port Area](#) — the country's chief seaport consisting of North and South Ports, where warehouses are arrayed elbow to elbow along docking and refueling stations for all ships, ferries, and cruise liners, and where one can witness the dramatic sunset of Manila Bay.
- [Intramuros](#) — taken from the Spanish, intra & muros, literally "within the walls", the History Town of the Philippines and considered as Old Manila itself during Spanish times, just right south of the mouth of the traversing Pasig River. First of all, it is a fortress city used to be surrounded by a moat now transformed into a putting green, and it is where the old Spanish Fort Santiago was headquartered. The fort, converted into a museum, a very historical piece of landmark where almost all the who's who of Philippine colonial resistance - Spanish, American, & Japanese were incarcerated. It used to house a dozen or so churches and congregation mother houses that during clear skies, the skyline was picturesquely lined with cupolas and spires and the morning air was deafening with peeling bells coming from belfries; the finest assembly of colonial architecture, just reduced to ashes with the exception of San Agustín Church during the last World War. Sir Banister Fletcher, a noted architectural historian wrote "Until...years ago the Philippines could offer many well-preserved examples of Spanish architecture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Intramuros, the old walled stronghold of Manila, the capital, which was once a treasure-house of ultramarine Hispanic art, suffered irreparable damage during World War II." Ultramarine Hispanic Art, whatever it was, must have been another lost 8th Wonder of the World which this and future generations have sorely missed. A great plan was under way in the late 70's by Imelda Marcos to reconstruct the old city but since everything else associated with her means opulence and extravagance, it fizzled off. The Manila Cathedral styled as Philippine version of Romanesque-Byzantine Revival, prominently stands within the walls of this district. There is a patch of land east of the walled city informally called Extramuros, the new Civic Centre designated by the Americans where the Classical Revival style Post Office Building majestically visible, built on an imposing spot that should have been used for a more important stately building such as the Classic Senate House sited on a spot where it can only be viewed obliquely and less grandly on a passing glance, and by now demoted as the National Art Gallery, The Art-Deco stylish Metropolitan Theater, and the City Hall with its subdued Mughal-Big Ben style clock tower are situated nearby.
- [Ermita](#) — one of the two Tourist Districts (another is the Malate district) south of Intramuros, used to be the one and only Red Light District, bars, pubs, cafes, bistros, night clubs, and massage parlors, share equal billing (and rent) with most of the city's overseas job recruitment firms, a cosy set up for mostly Middle Eastern employers to unwind after a day's round of interviewing applicants on a business with pleasure trip. It has a lively and diverse nightlife; also offers numerous coin, art and antique, and souvenir shops. Ermita is also where the American Embassy is located, together with Rizal Park, where the National Hero-Martyr José Rizal was executed by firing squad by the Spaniards, now immortalised by his statue-and-obelisk-on-a-pedestal memorial; and also Manila's mini rendition of New York's Central Park, the only biggest lung of the city used as promenade with a dual role as a national mall. The Manila Ocean Park, Manila's answer to Singapore's Sentosa Aquarium is also located in this park complex, as well as the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Artist's Gardens, the Orchidarium, the Open-Air Auditorium hosting the weekly Concert-at-the-Park and foreign film screenings, the Planetarium, and the Classical Revival style National Museum renamed Museum of the Filipino People building as well as the pathetic looking 1950's style National Library. At the east end of the Park is where used to be Wallace Field where the American-style Mardi Gras festival Manila Carnival was yearly

held for 32 years until it was abruptly ended by World War II. Around and nearby is where one can also find the grand Manila Hotel, one of the finest hotels in the Far East, dusty outside due to air pollution. And much farther down a few blocks south is the Supreme Court building back to back with the equally Greek/Roman Classical styled campus of the Manila branch of the premier state university, the University of the Philippines (and its signature welcoming cruciform figure, the Oblation), which location is the very first campus of the University built around 1900 before it was transferred to Quezón City after World War II.

- **Malate** — just right south of Ermita, an equally very colourful hotel district, used to be famous for its mansions where the city's cream of the crop resides and its elite girls convent schools as well as the De La Salle University, which started as an elite boys school now transformed into a learning center of choice for the country's Chinese elite class. Malate is now more known as the center of bohemian night life in the city and the whole metropolis. Also, the site of the fiercest atrocity done by the Japanese to any civilians at the closing of World War II where whole neighbourhoods were forced to assemble in the nearby Rizal Memorial Sports Coliseum to be dealt with mass orgy of rape and massacre. The district has a quaint and handsome Philippine-Baroque style church. The Manila Zoo, Asia's oldest zoo and, together with the title, is probably the most huggard looking.
- Imelda Marcos' dreamy City by the Bay called the Cultural Centre of the Philippines Complex or CCP Complex for short, a flat extended open space reclaimed from the bay that resembles Beijing's Tienanmen or Moscow's Red Square lined with coconut palm trees, as Civic Center and breezily tropical as it gets and an inspiration for Singapore's Marina, is bannered by the zen-like and boxy Cultural Centre of the Philippines - home for national theatrical performances, co-inaugurated by then Marcos buddy and Governor Ronald Reagan. Designed by Leandro Locsin, King Bolkiah of Brunei and Imelda's favorite architect, in the mold of Oscar Niemeyer and Meis Van Der Rohe, this travertine veneered masterpiece is typical of those "less is more" fancies of the 1960's-70's. Other similar structures in the vicinity designed by him are the Philippine International Convention Centre, the National Design Centre, a supporting institution for the growth of industrial design arts, the Folk Arts Theater, built specifically to host the 1974 Miss Universe Pageant, and the sharp and still spiffy Philippine Plaza Hotel. Most are now in their not-so-pristinely-intended condition. The two other important landmarks in the complex not designed by him is the said to be haunted Manila Film Centre, the venue for the first and only Manila International Film Festival which premiered the film "Gandhi" in 1982, now the repository National Film Archives, and the architecturally intriguing, humble and yet tasteful Coconut Palace now as the Office of the Vice President of the Philippines. The last important structure here is the GSIS Building or the Government Service Insurance System, meant as the social security apparatus of government workers with the Banawe Rice Terraces concept in mind, also architecturally engaging, now temporarily housing the National Senate, the senior legislative arm of the government. Although technically contiguous, these landmarks, except for the Cultural Center, are not part of the district anymore and belong to the city of Pasay.
- **Pandacan** — district home to many of the country's literary and musical geniuses, originally named after the pandan plant species.
- **Paco** — a working class district that started out as Little Tokyo during the Spanish era, lies the city's historic but ruined and abandoned Paco Train Station where overhead, Japanese and American planes combated in a dogfight showdown after the Pearl Harbor attacks and the run-up to the invasion of Manila by the Japanese. It's also the location of the mysterious circular cemetery now simply called Paco Park, the first burial site of the national hero - Jose Rizal, after he was executed by the Spanish, now used as venue for chamber music symphony concerts. Paco Market, another of the city's major wet-dry public market, has one of the most frenzied, colorful, and interesting market scenes in the city with it's boisterous ambulant vendors, busy Chinese owned stalls, and hawker market food. The district specializes in furniture and hardware items.
- **Santa Ana**— known as Sapa in ancient times, this district is the old capital of Namayan Kingdom which is the precursor of modern Metro Manila and used to be a quiet upmarket residential neighborhood comparable to Chelsea district in London during the American colonial era, but now a blighted working class district with its defunct Santa Ana Hippodrome (located in next door Makati City which used to be suburbia), once, one of the finest horse racetracks in Asia, now bought by Ayala Corporation and is now being converted and developed as another of their signature mixed commercial-residential development projects. A small museum by the colonial church of Our Lady of the Abandoned or simply Santa Ana Church, shows remnants of a pre-Spanish settlement.
- **San Andres Bukid** — also known as St. Andrew Fields in English, was previously part of Santa Ana. It is also home to San Andrés Market - another major public market, famous for it's variegated fruit stalls and a little bit touristy ambiance.

For over three centuries Manila was colonised and administered by **Spain** which left an enduring architectural heritage throughout the Philippines, especially with respect to churches, forts and other colonial buildings which can still be seen in the ruins of Intramuros, built in the late 16th century. Manila began as a settlement on the banks of the Pasig River, and its name originates from "Maynilad," referring to the mangrove plant known as Nilad, which was abundant in the area. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century, Manila was home to Muslim-Malays, who were descended from the Arabs, Indians, East Asians and other Southeast Asians. In 1571, 50 years after Magellan's discovery of the islands, Spanish conquistador Miguel López de Legazpi claimed the Philippines as a colony and established Manila as its capital. Manila was also briefly colonised by the British for two years. Manila was also part of the Spanish East Indies until 1898, when the U.S. took over the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.

Manila was first sought by the Spaniards, then the Americans. The Spaniards wanted a counterbalance to the expanding Portuguese empire which had almost taken a big slice of the pie in the lucrative Spice Trade. They got it through Manila, so strategically placed

between China together with the rest of Asia, and Mexico - the next closest transit point for goods onwards from Asia to Europe.

Its location seemed a well thought out choice. Legazpi took five years after arriving in the Philippines and settling in Cebú in 1565 to mull over before deciding to finally move up north to Manila in 1571 and make it the capital of the new territory. By numbers, it shortened the travelling distance to the other side of the empire in Acapulco. Manila is also in a much easy and straighter drafting reach for sailing ships to catch the Pacific Trade Winds as it blow northeastward to Japan for Acapulco and blow precisely at San Bernardino Strait for the westward-bound return trip without being diverted any farther. Most importantly, Manila is much closer than Cebú to China.

When Mexico pushed for its independence from Spain and finally shoved her out, the Philippines' glittering importance began to dwindle due to the discontinuance of the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade, cutting off the Acapulco to Vera Cruz segment and it accelerated more when the Suez Canal was opened enabling the Chinese exports to go opposite direction and making Singapore as most important transit hub to Europe in the region. A token administration was just maintained in Manila which confined it to the doldrums being one of the unreachable and hard to maintain colonies of Spain. Until a new imperialist era dawned, emboldened countries embarked on a new competition for raw materials and market.

Netherlands, Britain, and France are already there now with Germany, lurking somewhere and fit to fill in the voids about to be vacated by waning superpowers. Germany was already sniffing its way around the Pacific Ocean like a shark smelling a kill when the US, spurred by the windfall of acquiring Hawaii and which desperately wanted a toehold in Asia for her trade, notably with Japan and China, grabbed the first opportunity of coveting the Philippines. The Philippines once more, so strategically placed as the soon-to-be-linchpin of American imperialism extended her colonial servitude to the US.

With the dynamic geo-politics working, the Philippines and Manila in particular prove to be manna from heaven as Japan begins to flex her muscles. The result, the Philippines served as first line of defence for Australia and the mainland US to buy time and it really proves more beneficial as another realignment was in force after World War II when communism comes into the scene and is threatening to swallow the whole of East Asia except Japan, putting the Philippines as a buffer zone for whatever adverse contingency and as long as the Manila leadership sides with the US, things will be OK.

Now that communism is under control and every country on both sides of the Pacific seemed to be embracing free market economy, all of Southeast Asia are grinding strong and busy buzzing. The factors of time, location, and distance are not a consideration anymore and what needs to be important is that Manila is as peaceful, orderly, productive, and creative as all her neighbours to win visitors' attention.

Being a city with its ears and antennae acutely tuned in to American and some European trends, and in the forefront of modernisation and constant cultural refinement, Manila witnessed or hosted innovations - political, cultural, civic etc. more than any other city in Southeast Asia or Asia as a whole.

Ever so physically endowed, it is sitting in the throes of two notoriously dangerous volcanoes - Pinatubo to the north, which made headlines in 1991 when it spewed dust all over the world and dropped global temperature by 2°, and Taal to the south which always makes headlines every decade or so, while this city straddles the Pacific Rim of Fire underneath. What more, it lies in the path of the tropical monsoon bringing those more and more powerful typhoons during the second half of the year. It is fringed to the south by the idyllic Lake Bai - a veritable scenic showcase of Hispanized native folk and traditional culture, and farther south by cool and refreshing Lake Taal.

The City of Manila is in the western part of Metro Manila. It is bordered on the west by Manila Bay, to the north by Navotas, Quezon City and Caloocan City, to the east by San Juan and Mandaluyong City and to the south by Pasay and Makati.

Landmarks

- Baywalk - South of the Luneta is the renovated Baywalk a linear park adjacent to Manila Bay. Restaurants formerly on the actual baywalk have been moved inwards to allow a clear view of Manila's legendary sunsets.
- Bonifacio Shrine - A shrine in honour of Andrés Bonifacio who was one of the Filipinos who struggled and fought for freedom for the country against the Spanish forces.
- Chinatown - Manila has one of the largest Chinatowns in the world, where one can find exotic Chinese goods and delicious cuisine.
- Coconut Palace - a residence commissioned and built along the waterfront by First Lady Imelda Marcos for Pope John Paul II's visit in 1981. While open to the public at some point, it is currently (as of June 2011) occupied by the current Vice President and still open for public visits (by appointment by calling the Office of the Vice President, leaving a return call number and waiting for a confirmation).
- Intramuros - At the northern end of the Bay lies the remnants of the old walled Spanish settlement of Manila, Intramuros (Spanish for 'within the walls'). Intramuros contains some of the city's most interesting museums, ruins, and churches including

the Manila Cathedral, the most important church in the country.

- Mabini Shrine - Apolinario Mabini's former home. Mabini was a Lawyer and fought for Philippine Independence. During the American Occupation, this home became the first intellectual headquarters of the First Philippine Republic.
- Malacañán Palace - Manila is the host of the official residence of the president of the Philippines. While heading your way here, you will see wonderful places. People can roam the garden afterwards.
- Manila Hotel - Just outside Intramuros and on the edge of Manila Bay is the beautiful and historic Manila Hotel, a legacy of the American colonial era and the place where General Douglas MacArthur made his home before World War II.
- Plaza San Luis - A commercial complex consisting five house; Casa Manila, Casa Urdaneta, Casa Blanca, Los Hidalgos and El Hogar Filipino. Plaza San Luis showcases Filipino-Hispanic Architecture. Other than Souvenir shops there is a museum in Casa Manila.
- University of Santo Tomás (Universidad de Santo Tomás (UST)). This University, constructed by the Spanish, is the oldest existing University in the whole of Far East and second to be founded in the Philippines. Used as a concentration camp by the Japanese during their occupation and cramming about 10 000, exceeding the maximum capacity of 4000. The University has a museum housing a collection that dates back to 1682 mostly natural history, coins & medals, ethnography, oriental arts, and catholic iconography. The building where the museum sits, known as the paraninfo or simply Main Building to most, has a lobby containing powerfully steering wall-to-wall mural by National Artist Botong Francisco in the genre of his contemporary, Diego Rivera. Fee.
- Manila Metropolitan Theater - The Manila Metropolitan Theatre or MET is an art deco building designed by the Filipino architect Juan M. de Guzman Arellano, and inaugurated on 10 December 1931, with a capacity of 1670. The theatre is located on Padre Burgos Avenue, near the Manila Central Post Office. Renovated under the auspices of Imelda Marcos, it now falls back under the management of neglect and decadence.
- Manila Central Post Office - Designed by Filipino architect Juan Marcos de Guzman Arellano, located in a very prominent visual and commanding spot of the first Civic Centre in Manila and could have been perfect location for a Senate building, the Post Office building was built in neoclassical architecture in 1926. It was severely damaged in World War II, and rebuilt in 1946 preserving most of its original design. It is located in the Intramuros district of the city, at the bank of the Pasig River. The front of the building faces the Liwasang Bonifacio plaza (now known as Plaza Lawton).

Museums

Manila has seen a drastic improvement in its museum offerings with the recent renovation of old favorites such as the National Museum of the Filipino People and the Ayala Museum (located not in Manila but in nearby Makati City). Other must-see museums in the city are the Bahay Chinoy (Chinese House), Casa Manila, San Agustin Museum the Museum of Filipino Political History, the "Museo Pambata" children's museum'.

- National Museum of the Philippines (Pambansang Museo), P. Burgos Ave, ☎ +63 2-527 1209. Built and opened in the 1900s The museum showcases significant collections from archaeology, arts, cultural properties, zoology, botany and many more. This museum boasts of amassing over a million artifacts but in actual, only 125 pieces or so are on show. An optimist would describe something as a glass half full, and for one, this museum is less than half full for one would see halls and halls of empty space. A floor would have just about a maximum of two utilised halls with displays in it. As in anywhere in the Philippines, things are forever in transition. At the entrance is somewhat an apology board explaining that there's supposed to be three separate buildings - this one and the one facing it as showcases for anthropological and archaeological artefacts while the third one, the former Senate Building functioning as the National Art Gallery where paintings and sculptures are to be housed. There is no time frame when will this wishful thinking be achieved.
- The National Art Gallery as explained, took over the premises of the former Senate Building and the repository of works of Filipino masters. The more than life-sized painting of Juan Luna titled "Spolarium", a powerful imagery in the mold of classical theme and Romanticist in style is the museum's version of "Mona Lisa", meaning the most priced Philippine artwork.
- Museum of Philippine Political History (National Historical Institute Museum), T.M. Kalaw Ave., Manila. Includes documents such as the signing of Independence displayed in a holy grail-like showcase.
- Metropolitan Museum of Manila (Met Museum), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila, ☎ +63 2-521 1517. M-Sa 9AM-6PM. Inaugurated during Imelda's heyday, it used to display works by Caravaggio. This premiere art museum of Manila showcases both traditional, hispanic and modern art through its exhibits. Located along Roxas boulevard, across the

Manila Yacht club.

- Bahay Tsinoy (Museum of Chinese in Philippine Life), 8 Anda, corner Cabildo Street, Intramuros (Facing the Manila Cathedral, take the right side street. Turn left two blocks after Manila Cathedral, about 50 m is the entrance to Bahay Tsinoy museum.), ☎ +63 2-527 6083. 9am-5pm. Bahay Tsinoy is the only museum of its kind in Southeast Asia and, arguably, the world. The Chinese, having come to the Philippines in batches since pre-Spanish colonial times, have been settling and assimilating as Filipinos. The museum gives an idea of the nuanced past that Chinese immigrants had to live through, and details their impressive journey from largely being itinerant vendors and coolies during the Spanish Occupation to being captains of industry and prominent figures in art, politics, media and government today. Museum is closed on Mondays, but open on Sundays. Although Bahay Tsinoy is open by 9AM, try to go there at 1PM at the earliest; only then is the air-conditioning turned on, for electricity-saving reasons. ₱100.
- Museo Pambata, Roxas Boulevard corner South Drive Manila, Philippines 1000 (From EDSA, turn right on Roxas Boulevard then take a U-turn on T.M. Kalaw Street. From Quiapo, take Quezon Bridge going to Padre Burgos Street then turn left on Roxas Boulevard. Or you may take the LRT-1 or a jeepney (A. Mabini route), get off on United Nations Avenue, and walk to Roxas Boulevard. Museo Pambata is right beside the U.S. Embassy), ☎ +63 2-523 1797 or +63 985-360595 (mobile)., Aug-Mar: 8AM-5PM daily; Apr-Jul: 9AM-5PM daily. The Museo Pambata is a children's interactive museum, the first of its kind in the Philippines. Opened in 1994, Museo Pambata is the dream come true of Nina Lim-Yuson, who was inspired by the Boston Children's Museum to open up a similar facility in Manila. ₱100.
- Rizal Park Right outside the walled city is Rizal Park more widely known as the Luneta. The Luneta is the venue for the national museums, bayside restaurants, an open-air theater featuring free classical music concerts and acclaimed international films, a planetarium, an open gym for early morning jogging and tai chi enthusiasts, or a night ballroom, as well as Japanese, Chinese, Filipino gardens, an orchidarium, an aquarium, and a children's museum. It is a popular meeting spot for family picnics and lovers' trysts, and was the site of the execution of José Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, and where a monument and final resting place most importantly - but sadly and disrespectfully overshadowed by poking skyscrapers nearby - is erected, as well as the inaugural grandstand for the incoming President.
- Paco Park was actually built as a final resting place for Spanish families residing in Manila. After José Rizal's execution, his remains were sent and buried here, which is today commemorated by a monument in the park. It is now a public park with jogging lanes and open air concerts, and is also a popular venue for weddings. It is accessible by taxi and bus, as well as a 10 minute walk from the LRT-1 United Nations Ave. station.
- Manila Zoo is rather decrepit, and in need of drastic renovations. The Manila Zoo covers an area of 0.055 square kilometres. Accessible via LRT-1 Quirino station. Also here is housed its famous occupant, the lonely elephant Mali, the Philippines' only living elephant, known and friend but not intimately to Hollywood stars such as Sir Paul McCartney & Pamela Anderson who have yet to personally inspect her condition and 'solitary confinement'.
- Manila Ocean Park is a much better maintained marine wildlife facility which was recently opened in 2008 and is located behind the Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park. The 8000 square metres oceanarium is larger than the Sentosa Underwater World oceanarium in Singapore, and features a 25 metres underwater acrylic tunnel. Mostly accessible by taxi, but can be walked if you are in the vicinity of Rizal Park.
- Arroceros Forest Park Situated in the heart of downtown Manila, Arroceros Forest Park is a 2.2-hectare piece of land behind the old art deco Metropolitan Theatre. Arroceros got its name, which means "rice dealers," from the rice trade along the Pasig riverbank during the early colonial period.

Baroque colonial churches were once proud showcases of the past especially before World War II but the wanton destruction of the Japanese and the equally guilty American soldiers during the Battle of Manila in 1945 dissolved all that except for a handful remaining. Lack of maintenance, vandalism, theft, and no proper awareness, guidance, or education by administering priests and architects who undertook renovation blunders (multiplied more incidents in the provinces) complicated the already pathetic state of remaining churches.

- San Agustín Church
- Manila Cathedral
- Malate Church
- Santa Ana Church
- Binondo Church
- Santa Cruz Church
- San Nicolás Church
- Tondo Church
- Basilica of San Sebastián - The only all steel church of the Asia, the Spanish were tired of building the church over and over again after fires and earthquakes, they finally decided to build the cathedral in solid steel. The materials were ordered from Europe while the architect is Gustav Eiffel; the architect of the Eiffel tower in France. Its Gothic architecture might make you

think you're somewhere in the middle of Europe.

Iglesia ni Cristo Churches

Aside from the interesting Spanish Colonial Churches, there is one group of church-structures belonging to the Iglesia ni Kristo, a homegrown reformist church established by a Manileño named Félix Manalo in 1914 that is uniquely Filipino somewhat parallels with the Latter-Day-Saints Mormons (its cultish-ness and disciplined regimen demanded from its congregation), that merit some curiosities. These unique churches have two outstanding features: that they are kept in pristine white condition (with some little colour highlights), and they soar to the sky like those gothic cathedrals, or Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, or the Salt Lake Temple in Utah. In some cases, they jot out in the middle of a green countryside off the suburbs of Metro Manila. But even in the midst of urban jungle in Manila, one can't help but notice its towers and spires projecting through the clouds among the busy skyline.

No name yet is given to this architectural style but it may safely be called Philippine Gothic Revival and the churches show the usual suspects of Gothic tracery, lacework, and rosettas, with the emphasis of verticality and noticeable indigenous geometric motifs as substitute.

Its "Vatican" is located in the New Era District of Quezon City and can be easily seen from about two to three miles away from all directions heralding in a Cinderella-like castle fashion, their main shrine and headquarters.

Saint Days

Manilans are mostly very pious Catholic people. On a different angle, being afflicted with problems and ailments, Manilans may not have much alternative and feel that some things are just out of their control and the best way is to ask for answers and solutions to their favorite saints. It would be interesting to note that some streets leading to a patron saint's home church are extra tight during their special days.

For the anthropologically curious, it also provides a good peek into the daily life of the locals, young and old, men or women. It also reveals a facet trait of the Filipino - being fatalistic and true blue believer of some higher spirits.

- St. Jude Thaddeus Shrine, San Miguel District, Manila - Near Malacañán Palace, this church is the busiest on Thursdays.
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine, Not in the City of Manila but situated in Baclaran District of Pasay City. Nevertheless heavy traffic affects the southern portion of the city towards the cities of Pasay-Parañaque, all interconnected by the LRT-1. This Church is the liveliest on Wednesdays much more especially so because the surrounding area is carpeted by a flea market.
- The Black Nazarene Minor Basilica, Quiapo District, Manila - Its feast day is on 9 January but its special day of the week falls on Fridays.
- Intramuros Tour - visit the Walled City starting from Fort Santiago. Inside is the Rizal Shrine, honoring the country's National Hero, Jose Rizal - polymath, doctor, engineer, scientist, artist, linguist, propagandist, and most of all, an avid traveler who was incarcerated in exactly that same cell before he was executed, now transformed into his shrine. His patriotism and nationalist advocacy preceded that of Mahatma Gandhi's by about 20 years. His shrine houses his memorabilia. Other places to see are the Plaza Mayor, Plaza de Roma, Ayuntamiento, Palacio del Gobernador, and the Manila Cathedral. San Agustin Church needs more than a passing glance. The monastery-church complex houses priceless collection of religious art. Across is Plaza San Luis Complex comprising a group of houses replete with authentic furnishings of the colonial period. Trace the walls of the city and the interestingly unique gates of the walls, eight in all and stopping at Parian Gate, the gate leading to Bahay Tsinoy, meaning House of the Filipino-Chinese, Philippines' version of the Peranakan House-Museums in Singapore and Malacca. The House-Museum extolls also the economic, political, and cultural, among other things, from the humble beginnings to, achievements and contributions of the Filipino-Chinese community.
- Rizal Park Tour - Designed by Daniel Burnham, this park is the Philippines' answer to Paris' Jardin des Tuileries or Washington Mall. Gaze at Rizal Monument, a must stopping point for Heads of State visits, the Japanese & Chinese Gardens, the National Museum, the Planetarium, the Ocean Park, the Museo Pambata, as well as the Quirino Grandstand, the oath-taking stand for Presidential inaugurations.
- Downtown Manila Tour - This self-guided tour starts at Bahay Nakpil on Bautista St. in Quiapo, on a turn-of-the-century house, then to Plaza Miranda, now teeming with vendors of religious, herbal merchandizes, as well as fortune tellers and prayer proxies as you make your way to the Quiapo Basilica housing the Black Nazarene. Stroll to Raon, Villalobos, and Palanca Sts. on your way to Quinta Market and the Ile de Toule (Ilalim ng Tulay) for handicrafts and souvenirs. Pass by Carriedo and Juan Luna Sts. another commercial strips towards Chinatown at Binondo where it ends in Binondo Church, the heart of town.
- Malate & Ermita Tour - Cover this area starting from Plaza Rajah Sulayman and Malate Church, a quaint baroque church, then meander in any direction along Adriatico, Mabini, Del Pilar Sts., and Roxas Blvd. Make sure to stop at San Andres Market.
- CCP Complex Tour - Probe into the mind of Imelda Marcos by strolling, jogging, or biking into the reclaimed CCP Complex where a menagerie of her showcase art-beauty-culture projects stands, albeit not in its spic-n-span condition. See

Districts/Malate' and Understand sections. These public buildings except for the Cultural Center Building or Theater for the Performing Arts, used to be accesible but have now been reduced to being admired from the outside. The Coconut Palace, always unpredictably closed, is now open for viewing, albeit by appointment.

- Skyscraper Gazing Tour - Outside of the City of Manila, get a hands on experience of the modern city with four greatest and latest skyscraper showcases of the metropolis starting via LRT-1 to MRT-3 stopping at Ayala Center in Makati, the oldest at 50 plus years and kept on re-inventing itself. Step into Ayala Avenue, the new Fifth Avenue of the Philippines and walk breezily in its 5-meter wide, flat, and very feet-friendly sidewalks (a rarity in Manila) while gazing at the ever becoming higher and higher skyscrapers. The walking tour heads to Ayala Triangle - a mini park spotted with sprawling acacia trees and a green carpet of turf, home to the Makati and Philippine Stock Exchanges buildings. The vertices of the triangle-park are highlighted by significant Filipino heroes. On the South vertex and first approach is the image of the fiery and enraging female heroine-on-horseback of the Spanish Revolt - Gabriela Silang, on the North vertex, the hubris-full and regal posing Muslim Sultan Kudarat, and on the East vertex, the meek and helpless nerd-looking assassinated hero, Ninoy Aquino. Trace back towards EDSA and switch to another mode of transport, a taxi or on an AUV in order to get to the second major destination, the BGC or Bonifacio Global City, then back again to EDSA, on the way skirting through the third cluster of skyscrapers in an area called the Rockwell Center, then finally to EDSA at MRT-3 Guadalupe Station. The line to the north heads to another concentration of skyscrapers, the Ortigas Center, the last end of the tour. There are alternative routes connecting these four. As you go along, you will be arching back your neck and staring upwards. Manila has seen another period of construction boom in practically the busiest areas in the metropolis (and these areas are just a sample) with an upward sales growth of condominium units). Be discreet on taking photos. Just like in traumatized New York or Los Angeles, here in Manila, skyscrapers and camera equals trouble. People here are not used to seeing a lot of tourists and mostly will have some second thoughts why you are doing this thing, unless you are white.
- Electric Chariots Tour of Intramuros - tour in style, meaning in segway rented from White Knight Hotel, Intramuros.
- City Tour of Metro Manila Via train - This do-it-yourself tour provides a panoramic view of the city from a different vantage point, exactly from a moving elevated train about 15 feet above street level. It comes in three lines - Line-1 (Yellow) for the North to South Route which is mostly within the City of Manila, Line-2 (Purple) for the East to West Route, a quarter of which is in the City of Manila, and Line-3 (Blue) for the circumferencial route, totally out of the city. For an all female-tour, LRT-1 and MRT-3 has an exclusive all female coach just for discerning takers.

Fiestas & Festivals

- New Year Welcoming Festival, not a recommended place to be where Manila is converted into a war zone with unbearable noise, blanket haze, and stray bullets fired from unknown sources.
- Chinese New Year Welcoming Festival, Chinatown, Binondo District
- Oblation Run, University of the Philippines Campus, Diliman District, Quezon City not in Manila although it may have its own version.
- Feast of the Black Nazarene and Carozza Parade, Quiapo District, Manila, January 9
- Fiesta del Santo Niño, Tondo District, Manila, 3rd Sunday of January
- EDSA People's Power Revolution Comemmoration, not in the City of Manila
- Manila Summer Sea Sports Festival, March along Roxas Boulevard
- Holy Week or Semana Santa, Catholic Churches throughout Metropolitan Manila
- Santacruzán Festival, the famous one hosted by Manila Hotel
- Flores de Mayo
- Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage, not in the City of Manila
- Philippine Independence Day Celebration at the Luneta
- La Naval Fluvial Parade at the Pasig River
- All Souls & Saints Day Celebration, Cemeteries throughout Metropolitan Manila
- Marián Festival in Intramuros
- Misa De Gallo held in all churches.
- Christmas Day held in all Christian homes
- Metro Manila Film Festival along Roxas Boulevard
- Pageant of the Three Kings held in all churches
- Bota De Flores, Ermita District, Manila

A part of the Philippine's bustling capital is a remarkable melting pot of Asian, Oceanic, and Latin cultures, which are thick with history and flavor in tune with most traveler's interests. The best way to get a feel for Manila shopping is to go to a 'tiangge', a market of stalls where everything can be bargained. Market! Market!, St. Francis Square, Greenhills Shopping Center and Tiendesitas in Pasig City are examples of such. There are shopping centers catering to handicrafts, antiques, and curio souvenirs. Aside from Ilalim ng Tulay in Quiapo are the shops in the districts of Ermita and Malate around M. Adriatico, A.Mabini, and M.H. del Pilar.

If you are interested in a Western-type mall, you cannot pass SM Mall of Asia, currently the 4th largest mall in the world. Warning to shopaholics and their spouses: You could spend a day there and still not see every shop or have to time to ice skate. That's right, there is an ice rink as well.

Manilans, or Filipinos in general are avid mallers, the Philippines outranking affluent Thailand, Malaysia, or Indonesia, and to some degree, competing with Japan and China in mall per capita. It's best to see these living museums to observe Filipino behavior and culture.

Public Market

Public markets are one microcosm of Manila. Practically, Manilans from all walks of life come here to buy their everyday needs. They are as lively and colorful as any market in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam. Generally, they are divided into wet and dry sections and another section for dining. Dining is very cheap and can be wholesomely hygienic. Just look out for the huge block of ice dragged along the floor on its way from the delivery truck to a dining stall. If you see one delivered in that manner, never mind, don't eat there, ever. Joking aside, a filling meal will cost you as little as US\$1.25.

Ukay Ukay

If you happen to see just about every Tom, Dick, and Harry in a blighted neighborhood in Manila wearing Abercrombie & Fitch & Levis jeans, chances are it's original and bought at Ukay Ukays. How can they afford it? Ukay Ukay is the answer. It's the Philippines' answer to Salvation Army. Nowadays, they are everywhere and Manilans love them. Ukay ukay happens to be a contraction of the Tagalog word "Hukay" meaning to dig, the description for the exact action done while rummaging through the bins of clothes. But there are actually no bins installed in those stores, only clothes neatly hanged on the racks. For less than \$2, one can find hand me down good qualities of branded wear. The more enterprising provide home delivery and roaming services by hanging them on racks installed on pedicabs, as they make the run on neighborhoods. Judging by the unaffordable cost of living to most of the middle class and the soaring gasoline prices, they may be here to stay.

It's also great for the budget tourist who would not want to have the hassle of packing and carrying tons of clothes by simply buying them here, then discarding them somewhere as his piles of souvenirs accumulate.

Shopping List

Make sure you buy the traditional barong Tagalog. These are long shirts made of very light-weight, semi translucent material, often with Filipino arts and decorations and are worn by both men and women on most special Filipino and formal occasions. Cotton varieties are much more affordable, but for the real deal, go for one made by the strands of a pineapple leaf. It is worn outside trousers - ie not "tucked in".

If you really want to look the "bee's knees" travel to the Visayan island of Negros and buy some barongs hand woven from Abacá fibre (used to be called Manila Hemp - made from the trunk of *Musa textilis*, a species of banana native to the Philippines) with geometric design details from the mountains to the west of Bais City.

Here are just some of the regional dishes that feature in the restaurants, canteens, and carinderias in Manila:

Northern Luzon Island Region or Ilocos (Ilocano)

Ilocanos, the most affluent of ethnic tribes next to the Tagalogs, are known as industrious and thrifty people who live in the limited cultivable strip of land bounded between China sea and the Cordillera mountain range in northern Luzon island.

- Pinakbet - vegetable dish seasoned with fermented fish
- Papaetan - tripe seasoned with bile secretion
- Dinengdeng -

Central Luzon Island Region (Kapampangan)

Pampaguenos lead in the art of combining the best of Spanish and Chinese legacies.

- Relleno - stuffed fish or chicken.
- Pastel -
- Cocido -
- Pansit Palabok - noodle dish.
- Sisig - a dish of chopped meat or seafood creamed with mayonnaise and spiced with Philippine chili.

- They also excel in fine desserts such as Turon de Casuy, Mazapan, Leche Flan and Biscochos Borrachos.

Central Luzon Island Region

Tagalogs are generally good cooks too:

- Adobo - now considered as National Dish, it's pork, beef, chicken, or practically anything marinated in soy sauce and vinegar.
- Sinigang - Philippines' answer to Thailand's Tom Yam, a meat or seafood boiled in a sour fruit.
- Dinuguan - internal organs of butchered animals and cooked with pork blood. (Note: eating animal organs was introduced by the Spaniards).
- Hipong Halabos - boiled shrimp.
- Kari-Kari - beef parts flavored by vegetables and pounded peanut turned into sauce.
- Biya with Gata - fish cooked in coconut milk.
- Pangat - fish cooked without coconut milk.

Southern Luzon Peninsula Region (Bicol)

Bicolanos are considered the hotties because they can tolerate chili more than any other Filipinos. They also like coconut milk.

- Pinangat - minced young coconut meat with either shrimps or freshwater fish (mudfish, tilapia, catfish) and hot pepper wrapped in taro leaves then cook boiled in pure coconut milk.
- Tanaguktok - (also called sinanglay) fish stuffed with tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger and the inevitable hot pepper wrapped in banana leaf and then cooked in cocomilk.
- Gulay na Natong - Taro leaves cooked in coconut milk.
- Bicol Express (the local recipe)- a dish comprising of 70% julienned chilli peppers with a mixture of pork fat, salted small shrimps (locally known as balaw) sauteed in onions, garlic, ginger and sometimes tomatoes then cooked in cocomilk.

Western Visayas Islands Region

These islands, including Iloilo (Ilongo), are fertile and more blessed with rain than the other Visayan islands and the waters abound with fish. Ilongos are some of the most creative in the Visayas when it comes to cooking.

- Pansit Molo - soup with wanton like dumplings.
- Laswa - vegetables cooked in little water with fermented fish.
- Linagpang - broiled fish.
- Inasal - another fish cooked over charcoal.
- Kadyos - vegetables with fish or meat.

Central Visayas Islands Region [\[edit\]](#)

Cebuanos live on these dry and barren islands and are corn eating rather than rice eating people. They have been influenced by the Mexicans.

- Corn Suman - corn desert removed from the cob and re-wrapped in the husk.
- Utap or Hojaldres - Cebuano biscuit.

Eastern Visayas Islands Region or Samar-Leyte [\[edit\]](#)

Warays are coconut milk lovers minus the hot chili pepper.

- Kinilao - raw fish in lime and vinegar.

Street Food/Comfort Food

Street Food is often described as "Pamatid Gutom" or food to tide over, something to temporarily hush a stomach growl, sold at small food stalls, food stands, or food carts set up in places with high amount of pedestrian traffic. Cheap and rushed, it could be something commuters can chew & swallow, or gulp in seconds while transferring from one route to another, or from station to station, with a quick

standing stop at a sushi, siomai, barbecue, or hotdog stall.

The variety of street food available is tremendous and may reward the truly adventurous traveler. Because of the huge variety, we have split the examples into two sections: those dishes normally sold by Stationary Vendors and those often sold by Ambulant (or itinerant) Vendors:

Stationary vendors

- **Boiled Eggs**
 - Balut – boiled duck embryo, generally safe to eat as the whole duck egg is intact and well cooked. The sight of the fully formed duckling complete with wings, ribbed feet and beak may not be too easily swallowed by the squeamish however.
 - Penoy – boiled undeveloped duck egg - just the white and the yolk.
 - Quail Egg – boiled quail egg.
- **Grilled Meat Cuts**
 - Barbecue – the term barbecue in the Philippines usually means bite size pieces of pork marinated, skewered and charcoal grilled. Chicken barbecue (bbq for short) is also common.
 - Isaw, Helmet, Adidas and Betamax - grilled chicken (or pork) intestines, chicken head, chicken feet, and chicken or pork blood with funny names, respectively.
 - Atay, Balun-Balunan, Puso - body parts liver, gizzard, heart, skewered.
- **Deep Fried or Grilled Processed Meat**
 - Kikyam – ground meat wrapped in bean curd sheets, then deep fried.
 - Sausage – small cured meat cuts then deep fried.
 - Hotdog – deep fried hotdog, in different sizes - bite size, jumbo, meat types, grilled and topped with sauces - New York Style, Chili, Pesto, etc.
- **Meat-Flavored Dough Balls**
 - Bola Bola – deep fried dough balls (totally without the meat) with flavor variations extracted from fish, squid, shrimp, pork, chicken, beef; or combination of two or more of them, and sometimes with thrown in mix of chopped parsley or spring onion.
- **Batter With Filling Added**
 - Kwek Kwek and Tokneneng – very uniquely Filipino and ubiquitous, voted by Class D & E Manilans as the choiced comfort food, consist of boiled egg (duck, chicken, or quail) dipped and coated in an artificial orange colored batter, then deep fried. When eaten, usually floated in a small bowl of vinegar sauce with chopped cucumbers, onions, chili peppers, and garlic, while being mashed or cut into pieces by fork or bamboo stick.
 - Ukoy - shrimp, mung sprouts, carrots or any veggie thrown in and formed into flat pattie from a batter and deep fried.
 - Waffle Hotdog - exactly American style.
- **Meat & Bread**
 - Empanada - with variation in fillings such as cheese, chicken, tuna, pork, beef, etc.
 - Burgers - exactly American style but half the size.
 - Sandwiches - exactly American style, most common are cheese, salami, ham, tuna, or simply mayonnaise, none of the veggies.
 - Pita - like Persian and Italian styles but more similar to Greek gyros.
 - Shawarma - introduced by Filipinos who have worked in Middle East and acquired Middle Eastern taste.
- **Dimsum - Cantonese is the most influential of Chinese food contribution to Filipino palette.**
 - Siomai - meat dumpling wrapped in wonton wrapper with variations as either pork, shrimp, chicken, beef, sharks fin, or beef & shrimp.
 - Siopao - steamed bun with stuffings such as asado, bola bola, or egg, or combination, lately there is now a baked wheat version.
- **Noodles - maybe dry such as bihon, palabok, canton, miki; or wet such as sotanghon, molo, luglug, etc..**
- **Hong Kong Style Dry Fried Noodles - a basic combination of fried dry noodles and a choice of fried pork, BBQ pork, beef, chicken, tuna, meatballs, or siomai balls and then topped with do-it-yourself concoction from an array of choices - teriyaki, garlic chili, barbeque, sweet chili, chili, sweet, sweet & sour, peanut, oyster, to be topped again with Philippine lemon and garlic, etc.,**

eaten on a paper bowl and chopsticks.

- Sisig To Go - hot spicy, from one basic ingredient of chopped chicken, chicken liver, pork, beef, milkfish, tuna, or squid, topped by fish, chicharon, and garlic flakes, and mixed all together with mayonnaise, local lemon (or calamansi), then garnished with the local chili. This type of preparation mimics that of a SUBWAY outlet's where there is a plethora of choices of cuts, ingredients, and condiments.
- Sushi Rolls
- Plantains
 - Boiled Saba – Philippine plantain, boiled.
 - Banana Cue/Q – Philippine plantain fried in hot oil coated with caramelized brown sugar and served on a barbecue stick like a barbecue.
 - Maruya – deep fried plantain slices held together by a batter.
 - Turon – sweet spring rolled plantain with a slice of jackfruit flesh, deep fried.
- Root Crops
 - Camote Cue/Q – sweet potato served the same way as banana cue/q.
 - Kalingking - sweet potato cut french fries style, a handful are held together in batter and deep fried.
- Fresh Fruits - these are popular snack fruits:
 - Pakwan - sliced watermelon on stick (May-June).
 - Singkamas – sliced jicama topped with fermented shrimp (May-June).
 - Pinya – sliced pineapple on stick (year-round).
 - Mangga – sliced or chopped crunchy mango topped with salt or fermented shrimp paste (year-round).
 - Lanzones - (September-October).
 - Lychee - Chinese import.
 - Rambutan - (August-September).
 - Santol - (August-September).
 - Guapple - giant guava the size of a big apple, sprinkled with salt; very crunchy.
 - Indian Mango
- Pancakes
 - Pancake – simply slattered in margarine.
 - Crepe – with variation in fillings.
 - Waffle– with variation in fillings.
- Native Cakes
 - Puto Bungbong – exact Philippine version of the Puto Bambu sold at Pasar Seni in Kuala Lumpur and where "white" tourists are going gaga. Here, the mixture of grounded rice and sugar is steamed over a real bamboo over charcoal on a claypot and not by industrial stove as the Malaysian version. Sold especially during the 9 days of "Misa de Gallo" a very long time tradition of early morning mass prelude to the eve of Christmas.
 - Nilupak – a steady fixture along the streets abutting markets, this local pudding variety is made from sweetened pounded root crop tuber and formed in a style of mashed potato but with drier and stickier consistency.
 - Bico
 - Puto
 - Kalamay
 - Bibingka
 - Palitaw
 - Kuchinta
 - Pichi Pichi - cassava patties.
 - Espasol
 - Ube
 - Ube Halaya
 - Sapin Sapin
 - Suman - glutinous sweet rice or cassava wrapped in leaf and steamed.
- Japanese and Chinese Cakes
 - Mochi
 - Buchi
 - Peanut Ampao
 - Tikoy

- Hopia
- Japanese Cake - with variation in jelly fillings similar to donuts.
- European Bread & Pastries
 - Donut
 - Pan de Coco - bread stuffed with coconut gratings
 - Ensaymada
 - Buko Pie - coconut pie
 - Pineapple Pie
- Fusion
 - Putopao - another Philippine product of fusion ingenuity, the common Chinese pao or bao or steamed meat bun has its dough substituted by steamed rice cake instead.
- Beverage or Palamig - very popular, cheap, and are now spinning into other variations and combinations
 - Gulaman - one of the most ubiquitous, refreshing drink made from sugar syrup and water, made heavier by adding colorful squiggly pieces of jelly from agar agar sometimes mixed with evaporated milk.
 - Sago - another very popular drink by the locals, sugar syrup mixed on iced water with tapioca balls similar to Korean Boba.
 - Mix - mix of gulaman & sago.
 - Buko Juice - coconut juice and shreds.
 - Melon Juice
 - Pineapple Juice
- Other Popular Combination Palamig - the first three sugar syrup based beverages above may be combined with other ingredients to form the following:
 - Fruit Salad Juice - just like a fruit salad but with thinner consistency to be gulped and not spooned.
 - Halo Halo Juice - same principle as in fruit salad but with Halo-halo ingredients.
 - Ube Macapuno Juice - yam & coconut sport or abnormally formed coconut flesh.
 - Corn Juice
 - Coffee Juice
- Creamed Palamig - much thicker in consistency and less as a beverage.
 - Buko Macapuno Cream - young sport coconut shredded with very diluted cream almost like evaporated milk, in a portable cup.
 - Buko Macapuno Pandan Cream - likewise, with Pandan flavor distinguished by its green color.
 - Buko Macapuno and Nata de Coco Cream - likewise but added with Nata from coconut, the jelly cream formed from fermented coconut juice.
 - Jelly Cream - an all-jelly cast, including nata.
 - Combined Macapuno & Jelly
- Sorbetes/Ice Cream

When it comes to dining, in a nutshell, Filipino food can be described as timid in flavor, not much creativity, as well as care for presentation. Food is trained to have only one dominant flavor - either the bitterness, the sweetness, the sourness, the saltiness, or the umami is enhanced. For some reason, the ingredients used don't have that wide range like those in Malaysia, Vietnam or Thailand, its closest neighbors. Filipinos are just as happy and contented to limit their range of ingredients, people that have no sophisticated royalty, say as the Thais, who, among those that had/have a monarchy, developed their superior palate taste through the royal court. No particular dotting attention to food is given other than it fills the stomach of the ordinary hungry person.

Just for example in a close comparison between the Philippines and Vietnam on a vegetable & spice market tour, the Philippine counterpart is limited. For seasoning, Filipino dishes do not digress from the daily triumvirate of garlic, onion, and tomatoes, sometimes ginger. No cinnamon, anise, or cardamom, available only in a high end specialty supermarket, not an everyday thing. On the herb section, only parsley, spring onion, and lemon grass are popularly known to Filipinos, while in Vietnam, there are so many kinds of herbs used in the daily diet by an average Vietnamese. While the troika of soy sauce, vinegar, and fish sauce defines the limited vocabulary of Philippine sauce condiments section. One glaring observation, basil and laurel are not eaten fresh, only as seasoning sold as dry as a dead leaf. As a side note, the saw-leaf herb which is an everyday ingredient in Vietnam which happened to originate in Mexico, ironically skipped the Philippines during the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade.

Speaking of Acapulco, Mexicans drink tamarind as a beverage. Surprisingly another conundrum, tamarind juice coming from the tamarind fruit, being as Asian as rice, is surprisingly absent in the Philippine beverage menu even though it is popular in Latin America and the rest of the Southeast Asian countries, which are on its left and right spheres.

Noodle varieties are limited to a handful. The lack of creativity is also seen in rice wrappers for spring roll is just one type, unlike in Vietnam. Having plenty of variation and versatility for example as other people, the Vietnamese would use rice as sesame crackers in

their main meal. And even Mexicans would make their corn into taco shells, or Indians would use wheat as poppadoms. A far out creative imagination of rice for Filipinos would be granola-type dried rice snack bars.

Filipino food is safe to say more as a comfort food, a peasant food concocted at a time when all Filipinos were all living on agricultural-fishing existence, contented to eat simply on rice and one or two-dish meal - one dry and the other wet or soupy. Even if Filipinos have attained a higher degree of sophistication (although others would rather patronize Japanese and French cuisine to match their economic and educational attainment), the same ingredients are used and the same flavor is maintained. It's only now that Filipinos are slowly realizing after the diaspora of the 1970's to the present, startling revelations of how low their standard is in the totem pole of world cuisine are getting to consciousness. And with increasing pride and economic competition among neighboring countries, nowadays, one can find Manila restaurant offering haute cuisine adobo laced with cayenne pepper and Spanish paprika.

Most sit-down and casual dining restaurants in Manila would fall under the mid-range category. But there are budget ones as well. For budget dining, just follow the office workers making a beeline to building basements, canteens, or carinderias (road side stalls) during lunchbreak almost everywhere in the city and even in high class Makati area. The men usually wear short sleeved Barong Tagalog and the ladies, like bank teller attires. These are not lowly workers but they pay lunch as cheap as US\$1.00 complete with a clear broth, a dish, and a cup of rice enough to energize the office worker for the rest of the day. University canteens open to the public offer student meals and have resident nutritionists too. Along Recto and Nicanor Reyes Sts., the epicenter of downtown university belt cosmos, there are dime a dozen shops that offer complete and filling budget meals as low as ₱35.

This oxymoron sums up what is all about eating in this genre of dining - eating high-end type seafood fares (prawns, tuna, abalone, and lobsters) most Filipinos can't afford, inside a humble shack. Dampa is a Tagalog term for a hovel on a roadside by the sea. That's where it all started. They may be there since time immemorial, mostly proliferating along the southern part of Metro Manila from the reclaimed area along Roxas Boulevard to Cavite - the next-door province south of Metro Manila, where the catch from the sea and Manila Bay was easily downloaded and freshly grilled for fish-loving Manilans, or may have been copied from dining experiences in trendsetting Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Bangkok, or Singapore. It has been transformed into more decent Singapore-style wet and fancy-free hawker center and to even air-conditioned "pearl-jade-dragon" style Chinese restaurant and now are scattered in every entertainment-dining district in the metropolis. But the billboard sign stays - Dampa-Style Dining.

The concept is simple: catch (or pick) it and throw in the fire in real time - no time lapse in between, right before your eyes, so to speak. So one can savor it as fresh as it gets. Simply as it is, a spin off of turo-turo style (point and take) where arrays of dishes are arranged on a counter and the customer checks and chooses by pointing his forefinger, this time the ingredient is still alive, some in aquarium boxes. Then, the next thing to do is instruct the attendant what style it should be cooked and what other spice and vegetable ingredients to be added.

This type of dining has also took-off from seafood to other ingredients like beef, pork, and chicken, etc.. And some variations, it may still be that lowly dampa-looking structure in the middle of a fish pen raising milk-fish or tilapia along Laguna de Bay or a rice paddy.

- Halo-Halo - the queen of Philippine Snacks/Desserts, a Japanese invention of a salad of sweet beans and peas, jellies, and fruits and shaved ice found everywhere in the Far East. The Philippine version always has these ingredients - young sweetened coconut shreds called Macapuno, nipa palm nut flesh or Kaong, Pinipig or toasted sweet rice, Ube or purple yam paste, Leche Flan or egg custard, and ice cream.
- A very localised drinking experience in Manila are beer gardens (or beerhouses as commonly called). They are scattered mostly around the working districts of Sampaloc, Santa Mesa, Quiapo and even the tourist belt areas of Ermita and Malate. Every city in the metropolis has practically it's own adult entertainment strip, block, or district where these establishments can be found. These are heavily sexualized. It's mostly working class men and those working in the military and police establishments who are the clientele with young sexy and provocatively dressed waitresses or euphemistically called GROs or Guest Relations Officers serving the customers. Some beer gardens take it up a level higher and have entertainment on the sides with scantily two-piece suit dancers taking turns on the stage. The kind of food served somewhat resemble the Spanish Tapas style ranging from the simple such as peanuts, corn, and peas - boiled or deep fried to mundane such as fried pork, beef, chicken to the adventurous such as other body parts - ears, gizzards, livers, hearts, intestines, brains, balls, blood, and what have you. They are categorized under the subject [Pulutan](#).

Manila is a city where one should exercise caution. As a slum haven, Manila is one of the most blighted cities in Asia rivaling Calcutta, Bombay, and Dacca. Sufficient to say that it is not convenient to wander around carefree as one would encounter sidewalks fringed with makeshift shanties that lead to a sudden turn into a labyrinth of squatter neighborhoods. It is very scary if not annoying encountering lolling group of male adult and teenage bystanders, although nowadays, these areas are most likely manned by village watchmen and everyone is more than willing to help and interact with lost strangers.

Nuisances that impedes a pleasurable walking tour are dirty and malnourished children who freely use the streets as their playground, manholes that were left open (or probably its cover stolen to be sold as metal scrap), dog feces, uncollected garbage, undisciplined cars and mostly jeepneys weaving in and out of the lanes as they pick up passengers, as well as political billboards.

A popular scam as of recent days is for someone to approach you and pretend they recognize you. They will say they work at your hotel (such as room service or security) and that they know you from there. They then say it is their day off and since they just happened to bump into you they want to show you something nice that is nearby. They may be very convincing even to experienced travelers. It is

always a scam.

Another popular scam is for a con artist to befriend a tourist and offer to show them around, hang out, etc. After gaining the tourist's trust, the con artist then slips drugs into the tourist's food or drinks. The con artist then leads the drugged, groggy victim to an ATM and watches while he/she enters her pin. The con artist is then free to withdraw all the money from the account.

Get into a car or go anywhere with people only if you know them (even if they say that have helped you at the hotel on a previous occasion). Of course, if you ask them which hotel they will not be able to answer. They are best fended off if you just ignore them. If they persist, say, "Are you going to leave me alone or should I call the police?" That makes them leave quickly.

Theft is common, especially pick pocketing. You should act cautiously as you would in any other poor country, especially considering if you do not look Filipino. Thieves and scam artists are likely to see you as an easy target. However, most travelers from other Asian nations, especially from southeast Asia, should have no problem blending in with the crowd.

Never wear valuable jewelry or anything else to broadcast your wealth. Displaying that expensive mobile phone or digital camera out in the open is also a good way to attract thieves.