

# ***FAST FACTS ON THE PHILIPPINES***

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Philippines is made up of 7,107 islands covering a land area of 115,739 sq. m. (299, 764 sq. km.) Main island groups are Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Capital is Manila. Time Zone is GMT + 8 hours.

## **GETTING THERE**

Manila, Cebu, Davao, Clark, Subic and Laoag are the international gateways. The Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in Manila is the premier gateway. It is served by more than 30 airlines which fly to different cities around the world. The Mactan International Airport (MIA) in Cebu handles regular flights from Japan, Singapore, and Australia as well as chartered flights from Japan, Singapore, and Australia as well as chartered flights from Hongkong, the United States, and other major travel capitals. Davao International Airport handles regular flights from Indonesia and Singapore. The Diosdado Macapagal International Airport and Subic Airfield in Central Luzon service both chartered and cargo planes. Laoag International Airport in Ilocos Norte services regular chartered flights from China, Taiwan, and Hongkong. The Philippines has 112 airports throughout the islands.

Philippine Airlines, the country's flag carrier, links Manila to 14 cities in 8 countries. Major cruise liners call on the port of Manila.

## **ENTRY REGULATIONS**

Valid passport. Except for stateless persons and those from countries with which the Philippines has no diplomatic relations, all visitors may enter the country without visas and may stay for 21 days provided that they have tickets for onward journey. Holders of Chinese passports require entry visa. Chinese nationals who are members of group tours organized by accredited tour operators in the Philippines and China may get visa upon arrival subject to valid documentation and payment of appropriate fees (\$25 each). However, they should arrive and depart at the same port and leave with the same tour group. Visa and special permits may be obtained from Philippine Embassies and Consulates.

## **CLIMATE**

Generally warm and sunny throughout the year but may be rainy from June to October in some areas. Average temperatures: 78 °F/25 °C to 90 °F/32 °C; humidity is 77%.

## **WHAT TO WEAR**

Light casual clothes are recommended. An umbrella and raincoat are musts during the rainy season. Warmer garments are needed for trips for the mountain regions. On formal occasions, a dinner jacket and tie or the Philippine Barong Tagalog may be worn.

## **CURRENCY**

Unit of currency: Pesos (P) = 100 centavos. Bank notes: P10, P20, P50, P100, P200, P500, P1000. Coins: 5c, 10c, 25c, P1, P5, P10.

## **SHOPPING**

Visitors can choose from an exciting selection of great buys in a country known for export-quality items at reasonable prices: South Sea pearls, hand-woven cloths, embroidered fineries, fashionable ready-to-wear and haute couture clothes, terra – cotta, porcelain, coral and mother-of-pearl home accessories.

Artifacts, pineapple fiber shirts, prehistoric jars, native handicrafts, and footwear are interesting items, too. The Philippines also produces fine basketry, furniture, fresh and processed fruits, exquisitely crafted jewelry, and gifts items made of shell, wood, and stone.

## **BUSINESS AND BANKING HOURS**

Private and government offices are open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm., Mondays to Fridays, Some private companies hold office on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Most shopping centers, department stores, and supermarkets are open from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm daily.

*\*Banks are open from 9:00 am to 3:00pm., Mondays to Fridays.*

## **CREDIT CARDS**

International credit cards such as Visa, Diners Club, Mastercard, and American Express Card are accepted in major establishments.

## **ELECTRICITY**

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

## **WATER**

Water in Metro Manila and in most cities and towns is potable and safe for drinking. Bottled drinking water is available in many hotels, restaurants, resorts, supermarkets, and 24-hour convenient stores.

## **COMMUNICATION FACILITIES**

International direct dialing telex, facsimile, e-mail, worldwide express delivery, postal, and telegram services are available.

Most of the country's newspapers are in English while the rest are in various dialects. Foreign newspapers and magazines are sold in major hotels and in big supermarkets and bookstores in the country.

## **CONVENTION FACILITIES**

Manila, the pioneer convention city in Asia, has played host to a number of prestigious international events. The Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) is equipped with modern convention facilities and services. It can accommodate 4,000 delegates in its Plenary Hall and 5,700 persons in its Reception Hall. Smaller meeting can be held in hotels and other establishments. Out-of-town hotels and resorts around the country are alternative convention sites.

## **LANGUAGE**

Filipino is the national language. English is widely spoken and is extensively used in business and government.

## BASIC FILIPINO PHRASES

### *Basic Greetings*

Hello!	Mabuhay!
How are you?	Kumusta ka?
I'm fine	Mabuti naman ako
Thank you	Maraming Salamat
Goodbye	Paalam
Good Morning	Magandang Umaga
Good Afternoon	Magandang Hapon
Good Evening	Magandang Gabi

### *Oft-Used Phrases*

I cannot speak Filipino	Hindi ako marunong mag-tagalog
Do you speak English?	Marunong ka bang mag-Ingles?
I do not understand.	Hindi ko maintindihan.
Please speak slowly.	Paki dahan-dahan lang ang pagsasalita

### *In Case of Emergency*

Where is the rest room?	Saan ang CR?
May I use the telephone?	Pwedeng makigamit ng telepono?
Can you help me?	Pwede ninyo akong tulungan?
I need a doctor	Tumawag kayo ng doctor.

### *Bargain Hunting*

What is this?	Ano ito?
How much is this?	Magkano ito?
Any discount?	Wala nang tawad?
I'll buy/get this	Bibilhin/Kukunin ko ito
Expensive/Cheap	Mahal/Mura