



# PHILIPPINES MADE EASY

The Compact Guide  
for Travel Agents



# An Introduction

**M**abuhay and welcome to the Philippines! Dive into the heart of a nation made up of 7,641 islands and help your clients discover and fall in love with this extraordinary country.

The Philippines is a land of breathtaking diversity, offering a unique tapestry of landscapes, cultures, and people. Whether exploring lush tropical rainforests, lounging on pristine beaches, scaling majestic mountain peaks, or diving into vibrant underwater worlds, the archipelago is home to some of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet.

But the beauty of the Philippines goes beyond its landscapes. Each region boasts its own rich cultural heritage, reflected in local cuisine, a multitude of dialects, and vibrant festivals. Here, traditions are not just preserved—they are lived with pride and joy.

Yet, the true treasure of the Philippines lies in its people. Renowned as some of the friendliest in the world, the Filipinos welcome every visitor with warmth and genuine hospitality. Whether you're exploring bustling cities or visiting indigenous communities in remote villages, you'll be greeted with a smile and the opportunity to experience Filipino culture in its most authentic form. Travellers to the Philippines are sure to be enchanted not only by its natural wonders but by the warmth, kindness, and fun spirit of its people.

With so much diversity, your clients will be spoiled for choice when planning their trip. In our sales guide, we'll help you navigate the options—whether it's finding the perfect island for each traveller, tips on island-hopping, or insider advice on crafting the ultimate dream trip to the Philippines.



A common mode of transportation in the Philippines: the Tricycle

## Important Basics for Travelling in the Philippines



### The Filipinos – One Big Family!

The warm-hearted Filipinos are known for their deep sense of family. Your customers can easily connect with locals by using terms like "Ate" (big sister) or "Kuya" (big brother) when addressing waiters, service staff, market vendors, or drivers. This small gesture will not only be appreciated but is sure to bring a smile to their faces!



### Crash Course in Tagalog

Tagalog, the official national language of the Philippines, is rich in cultural history, diverse influences, and has a melodic sound. Learning a few basic phrases, such as "Kumusta ka?" ("How are you?") or "Salamat!" ("Thank you!"), can go a long way in showing respect for the locals, instantly winning their hearts. Both are pronounced just as they are written.

But don't worry — most Filipinos speak English fluently, as it's the official business language in the Philippines. This makes travelling easier and allows for more meaningful connections with the locals.



### The Unique Filipino Humour

Filipinos have a fantastic sense of humour and love slapstick comedy, both on screen and in everyday life. While laughing at small misadventures might be seen as mockery elsewhere, in the Philippines, it's all in good fun. This lighthearted approach to life adds an extra dose of joy to every situation.



### Master the Art of "Tawad"

Haggling, known locally as "tawad", is a common practice in the Philippines, especially at local markets. Encourage your guests to ask "Tawad?" or "What's the best price?" to secure a bargain or two. It's a fun and engaging way to shop like a local!



### The Philippines is The Philippines

Avoid using the acronym "P.I." when referring to the Philippine Islands. This term was used during colonial times and is no longer favoured, as the Philippines is proudly recognised as an independent nation. While it's true that the country is made up of many islands, the term can be seen as derogatory. Additionally, "P.I." is also an abbreviation for a Filipino curse, so it's best to stick to simply calling it "The Philippines."



# It's a Match! An Island for Every Traveller

**W**ith 7,641 islands, the Philippines offers an endless array of options for every type of traveller. To help narrow down the choices, here's a quick guide to finding the perfect island for your customers:

## WESTERN AND CENTRAL VISAYAS

- **Beaches and Underwater Adventures:** Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental, Siquijor, and Boracay offer stunning beaches and world-class diving spots.
- **Culinary and Cultural History:** Iloilo and Bacolod are rich in gastronomic heritage. Negros Occidental, known as the sugar capital, and Guimaras, home to the sweetest mangoes and the vibrant Manggahan Festival, are must-visit spots.

## BICOL REGION

- **Adventure, Nature, and Volcanoes:** Mount Mayon in Albay is perfect for thrill-seekers with activities like ATV rides and ziplining.
- **Natural Wonders and Wildlife:** Donsol, Masbate, and Ticao Island are known for their stunning beaches, caves, bays, and opportunities to swim with whale sharks and manta rays.

## NORTH AND CENTRAL LUZON

- **Nature and Cultural Exploration:** Batanes, Ilocos Norte, and Sagada offer breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural experiences.
- **Indigenous Culture Insights:** Banaue and Zambales provide unique glimpses into the indigenous cultures of the region.

## PALAWAN

- **UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** The Underground River in Puerto Princesa is a natural wonder worth exploring.
- **Diving and Local Immersion:** El Nido offers pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and picturesque fishing villages, while Coron is renowned for its shipwreck diving and encounters with dugongs.





# FAQs: Answering the Most Important Questions to Travel Smart

## Travelling from Island to Island: How to Get Around?

Once you've decided which islands to visit, the next step is figuring out how to get from one to another. The Philippines offers a range of transportation options by air, sea, and land, ensuring seamless island-hopping adventures.

**By Air:** The most efficient way to travel between major islands is by domestic flights. Numerous flight connections link the main islands, although many routes require a layover in Manila and other parts of the country.

**By Sea:** For inter-island travel, passenger ships and smaller ferries are essential. Traditional "bangka", small wooden boats with outriggers, offer an authentic experience, while modern speed boats provide quicker journeys. Large cruise ships also frequently dock in and out of Manila, offering a more leisurely travel option.

**By Land:** Navigating the islands by land is straightforward, thanks to national highways and an extensive public transportation network. The jeepney, a colourful symbol of Philippine culture, is the most popular mode of transport, alongside cabs, buses, tricycles, and even trains in urban areas. In some cities, you can also enjoy a ride in a calesa, a traditional horse-drawn carriage.



"Bangka", also known as Filipino boats

## Ring of Fire (and Water): How to Navigate Nature's Impact on Travel?

While the Philippines experiences annual typhoons during its distinct rainy season, there's always a sunny spot somewhere on its 7,600+ islands! Being aware of this helps travellers plan better around the weather patterns. Earthquakes can also occur in the Philippines. Rest assured, our team is always updated on any warnings or forecasts. We have robust safety protocols and a crisis management plan to handle emergencies and minimise disruption.



Maasin River, Siargao



Hagimit Falls in Davao Del Norte



# The Real Philippines: Expert Tips from Our Team

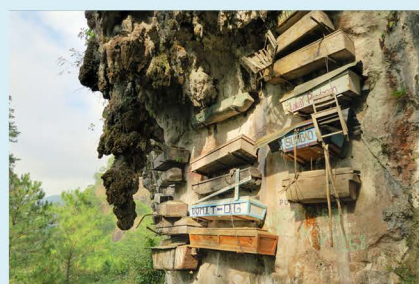
## The Filipino Flair in Culture

**M**ayet Yusingco, our Operations Manager, has an insider's knowledge of Philippine culture. One of her top recommendations is the **Binondo Food Walk in Manila**, where guests can experience a blend of cultural and historical exploration with a culinary twist. "True to the saying, 'the way to the heart is through the stomach,' your guests will uncover the city's rich heritage while savouring local delicacies and getting a glimpse into the daily lives of the locals," says Mayet.

For a more immersive experience, Mayet suggests visiting the Aeta community in the jungles of Subic, just three hours from Manila. "This visit offers a rare opportunity to delve into the traditions and lifestyle of the Aetas," she notes. "Tribal members will guide guests on hikes through the lush Bataan forests, sharing insights about sustainable projects within their community."



A woman from the Aeta community teaching traditional cooking techniques



Hanging coffins, Sagada

Mayet also recommends exploring the breathtaking **rice terraces of Banaue** and the **mysterious caves of Sagada** in northern Luzon. "These sites offer a close encounter with indigenous cultures, bustling markets, and stunning mountain landscapes, perfect for adventurous travellers."

## Above, Below, and Beyond the Beaches

**M**arj Aquino, our Head of Sales and Marketing, finds her inspiration in nature. Her favourite spots include the world-famous **Chocolate Hills** in Bohol, part of the first UNESCO Global Geopark in the Philippines. "Nearby, your guests can visit the Tarsier Sanctuary and get up close with the world's smallest primates," she shares as an insider tip.

**Palawan**, Marj's favourite island, is a natural paradise. "Besides the iconic Twin Lagoon, Palawan offers unique experiences for nature lovers, including the chance to see dugongs (manatees). For divers, the **Tubbataha Reefs**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offer an unparalleled marine ecosystem, while Coron is a haven for wreck divers with its sunken Japanese ships," Marj enthuses.



Shipwrecks turned into reefs in Coron



Chocolate Hills with up to 1776 hills



# The Real Philippines: Expert Tips from Our Team

## Tropical Thrills

If it's an adventure your guests seek, Jona Lee, our Sales & Marketing Manager, has just the spots. She swears by **Siargao**, the surfing capital of the Philippines: "The island is famous for its world-class waves, especially the legendary Cloud 9, which draws surfers from around the globe. With its relaxed island vibe and pristine beaches, Siargao is a dream destination for surfers of all levels."

Jona also recommends the **Masungi Geo Reserve**, known for its unique geological formations. "Adrenaline junkies will love walking across the floating net 'Sapot', climbing the highest peak 'Tatay', or tackling suspension bridges and rope courses. A special highlight is the 'Duyan', a massive hammock spanning several hundred metres that offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape."



Viewing platform in Masungi Georeserve

## The Philippine Palate Pleasures



Boodle Fight

Gregor Zajc, our General Manager and resident foodie, highlights the **Boodle Fight** as a must-try experience. "This communal feast, rooted in military tradition, is a vibrant way to dive into Filipino culture. Various dishes are spread out on banana leaves, and everyone eats together using their hands. It's a true expression of unity and community, featuring grilled fish, meat, seafood, rice, vegetables, and tropical fruits."

Gregor's personal favourite is **Adobo**, the unofficial national dish of the Philippines. "This dish is a flavorful blend of salty, sour, and spicy notes, usually prepared with chicken or pork marinated in vinegar, soy sauce, and spices, then slow-cooked to perfection. It's a flavour explosion your guests won't forget."

For dessert, Gregor recommends **Halo-halo**, a shaved ice treat with a colourful mix of ingredients. "The name 'halo-halo' means 'mix-mix,' and the dessert lives up to it with a variety of toppings, including ube, a local purple root vegetable that adds both flavour and visual appeal."

Manila is also home to some top-notch dining spots. Gregor's recommendations include:



Dessert with traditional "Asin (Salt) Tibuok" at Toyo Eatery

**Mōdan**, an intimate private dining experience that reinterprets Japanese flavours with a modern twist.

**Metiz**, listed among Asia's 50 Best Restaurants, Metiz celebrates local, seasonal ingredients and revives traditional Filipino techniques like fermentation and drying.

**Toyo Eatery**, another of Asia's 50 Best, this restaurant offers modern dishes using Filipino ingredients, enhanced by innovative fermentation and preservation techniques.



Halo-Halo



# In Best Hands: DTH Travel — Your Reliable Partner in the Philippines

22

## Local Offices

always ready to serve you

65+

## Years of Experience

in welcoming explorers to Asia

14

## Countries in Asia

with thousands of journeys  
for your clients

**D**TH Travel, formerly known as Diethelm Travel, is a destination management company specialising in bespoke travel experiences across Asia, with a commitment to authentic and responsible tourism. In the Philippines, we operate under the name Blue Horizons Travels and Tours. Our boutique approach enables us to leverage on unique insights in creating our products, and consistently deliver personalised client servicing at a local level.

We provide our clients with one of the highest insurance coverage rates in the industry. And our progressive approach ensures that we use the latest technologies to help streamline processes, facilitating faster turnaround times for our clients.

We have offices in 14 countries, including the Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bhutan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Japan. With over 65 years in the industry, DTH Travel is proud to have been repeatedly recognised as Asia's Leading Destination Management Company by the World Travel Awards for multiple years.

## Our Team in the Philippines



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