XPLoRe The Philippines

Rider's Handbook

Date: September 2025
Version: 1.0

Version History

Version No.	Date	Changed By	Narrative
1.0	21st September 2025	Mike Hill	First copy

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILIPPINES 5

1.1. CAPITAL 5
1.2. NATIONAL FLAG 5
1.3. WEATHER IN LUZON 7
1.4. TIME ZONE 9
1.5. TIPPING 9
1.6. SHOPPING FOR SOUVENIRS 9
1.7. FUN FACTS: 11

2. ELECTRICITY 13

2.1. PLUG TYPES AND ADAPTERS 13
2.2. USING FOREIGN DEVICES 13
2.3. VOLTAGE FLUCTUATIONS 13
2.4. SUMMARY 13

3. CURRENCY 14

4. USEFUL WORDS 15

5. SAFETY BRIEFING 17

6. COMMUNICATION WHILST RIDING 19

7. EXTENDED TOUR OPTIONS 20

7.1. ANGELES 20
7.1.1. LOCATION & BASICS 20
7.1.2. MAIN ATTRACTIONS 20
7.2. PUERTO GALERA 20
7.2.1. LOCATION & BASICS 20
7.2.2. BEACHES & ATTRACTIONS 20
7.2.3. DIVING & SNORKELLING 21
7.3. BOHOL 21
7.3.1. LOCATION & BASICS 21
7.3.2. NATURAL ATTRACTIONS 21
7.4. BORACAY 21
7.4.1. LOCATION & BASICS 21
7.4.2. MAIN ATTRACTIONS 22
7.4.3. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS 22
7.5. EL NIDO 22

7.5.1. Location & Basics 22
7.6. Natural Attractions 22
7.6.1. Island-Hopping Tours 23
7.6.2. Lifestyle & Culture 23
7.6.3. Accessibility 23

8. PHILIPPINE TRADITIONAL FOOD 24

8.1. Calderetta 24
8.2. Menudo 24
8.3. Bicol Express 25
8.4. Kare Kare 25
8.5. Chopsuey 26
8.6. Beef Tapa 26
8.7. Adobo 27
8.8. Longganisa 28
8.9. Pansit 28
8.10. Pinakbet 29
8.11. Sinigang 30
8.12. Sisig 30
8.13. Crispy Pata 31
8.14. Lechon Kawali 31
8.15. Pares 32

9. FISH 33

9.1. Bangus (milkfish) 33
9.2. Tilapia 33
9.3. Tuna 34
9.4. Lapo Lapo 35

10. DRINKS 36

10.1. Salabat 36
10.2. Sago't Gulaman 37
10.3. Calamansi Juice 37
10.4. Tsokolate de Batirol 37
10.5. Buko Juice 38
10.6. Tuba 38
10.7. Lambanog 39
10.8. Kapeng Barako 39
10.9. Pandan or Lemongrass Iced Tea 39
10.10. Bayabas (Guava) Shake 40
10.11. Guyabano (Soursop) Shake 40
10.12. Rhum 40
10.13. Craft Beer 41

11. FRUIT 42

11.1. COMMON & POPULAR 42
11.2. NATIVE & UNIQUE 42

1. Introduction to The Philippines

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian country made up of over 7,641 islands in the western Pacific Ocean of which . It has a population of around 117 million and is known for its diverse culture, shaped by indigenous roots and centuries of Spanish, American, and Asian influences. The capital is Manila, and the largest city is Quezon City.

A democratic republic, the country uses Filipino and English as official languages. It is predominantly Catholic, a legacy of over 300 years of Spanish rule. After Spanish and American colonization, the Philippines gained full independence in 1946.

The economy is developing, driven by services, remittances from overseas workers, and tourism.

The Philippines remains one of the most vibrant and resilient nations in Asia, known for its warm hospitality, strong family values, and cultural pride.

1.1. Capital

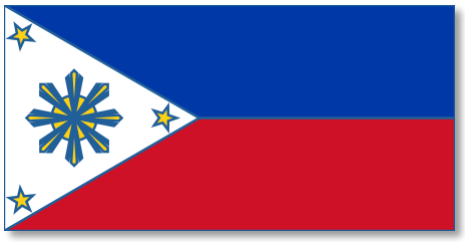
Manila is the capital city of the Philippines and one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Located on the western coast of Luzon, it sits along the eastern shore of Manila Bay, facing the South China Sea. It has a population of over 1.8 million (city proper) and is part of Metro Manila, which has around 13 million people.

Founded in June 24, 1571 by Spanish conquistador Miguel López de Legazpi it has an area of approximately 42.88 km^2

1.2. National Flag

The national flag of the Philippines is rich in symbolism and history, reflecting the country's struggle for independence, values, and identity.

The flag is a horizontal bicolor with a white equilateral triangle on the hoist side, and two horizontal bands:



- Top band: Blue – stands for peace, truth, and justice
- Bottom band: Red – symbolizes patriotism and valor
- White triangle: Represents equality and fraternity

Inside the white triangle:

A golden-yellow sun with eight rays
Three five-pointed stars—one in each corner of the triangle
The Sun: Represents independence and freedom

8 Rays of the Sun: Represent the eight provinces that first revolted against Spanish rule in 1896:

- Manila
- Cavite
- Batangas
- Bulacan
- Pampanga
- Nueva Ecija
- Tarlac
- Laguna

3 Stars: Represent the three main island groups of the Philippines:

- Luzon
- Visayas
- Mindanao

One unique feature of the Philippine flag is that it can be flown upside down during times of war:

- Blue on top = peace (default)
- Red on top = state of war

First unfurled on June 12, 1898, during the declaration of independence from Spain in Kawit, Cavite.

Designed by Emilio Aguinaldo, the first president of the Philippines, while he was in exile in Hong Kong

1.3. Weather in Luzon

Luzon, the largest and most populous island in the Philippines, has a tropical climate that features two main seasons:

Dry Season (Amihan)

November to May

Cool dry season: November to February

- Cooler temperatures, especially in upland areas like Baguio
- Daytime temps: 21–30°C (70–86°F)
- Less humidity, more pleasant weather
-

Hot dry season (summer): March to May

- Hottest part of the year
- Daytime temps can reach 35–40°C (95–104°F) in lowland cities like Manila
- Very sunny, often humid

Wet Season (Habagat)

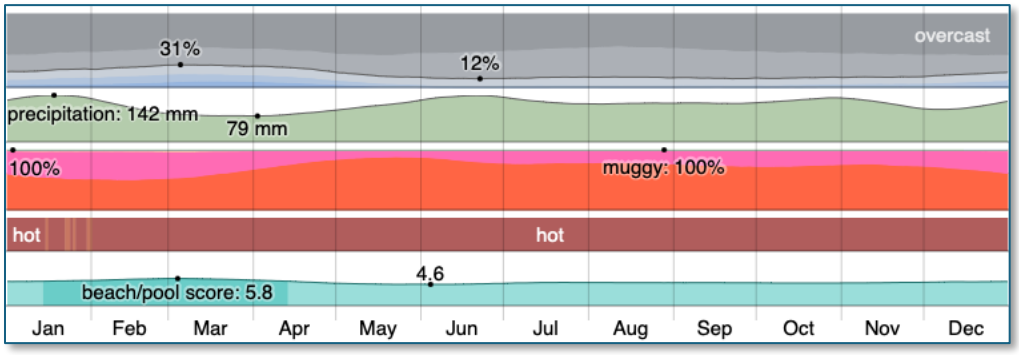
June to October

- Dominated by the southwest monsoon
- Frequent rain showers, thunderstorms, and typhoons
- Humid, with temperatures around 26–34°C (79–93°F)
- July to September: peak of the rainy season; often includes typhoons that affect northern and central Luzon

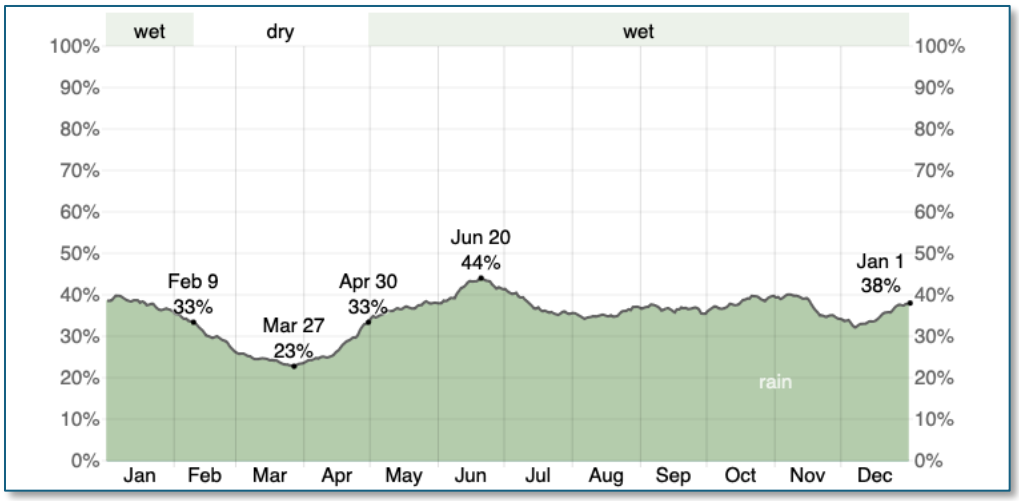
Regional Variation

- Baguio & Cordilleras: Cooler due to elevation (can drop to 10–15°C at night in December–January)
- Metro Manila & Central Luzon: Hot and humid; urban heat island effect intensifies summer heat

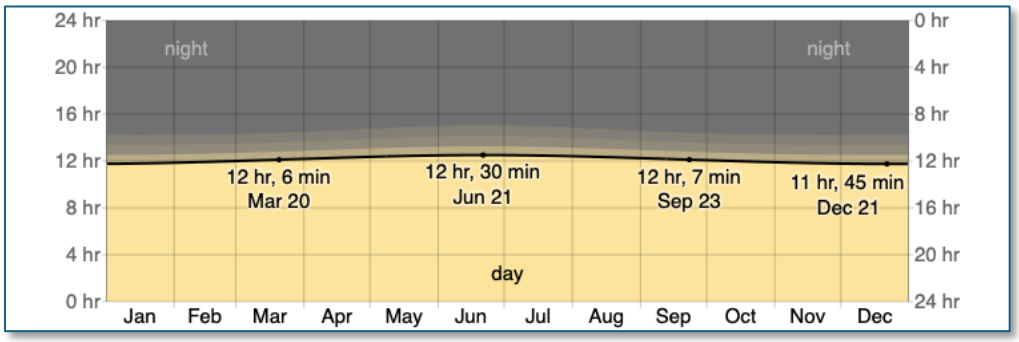
Climate in Luzon



Daily Chance of Rain



Hours of Daylight



1.4. Time Zone

The Philippines is in the Philippine Time Zone (PHT), which is:
UTC +8:00

No Daylight Saving Time (DST) is observed which means the time in the Philippines is always 8 hours ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC+8).

It's the same time zone as countries such as:

- China
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Western Australia

1.5. Tipping

Tipping is not mandatory in the Philippines, unlike other countries such as the USA.

Many mid- to high-end restaurants and cafes automatically add a 10% service charge so no need to tip more unless the service is exceptional.

1.6. Shopping for Souvenirs

Shopping for souvenirs in the Philippines is a fun and rewarding experience. You'll find a wide variety of handmade, cultural, edible, and practical items that reflect the country's rich heritage and creativity.

Here's a guide to the best souvenirs to buy and where to get them:

Handicrafts & Local Goods

- Capiz Shell Decor – Lamps, trays, and window panels made from translucent shells
- Banig – Handwoven mats made of palm or grass, used as decor or bags
- Wood Carvings – From Ifugao rice gods (*bulul*) to home decor from Paete, Laguna
- Pearls & Shell Jewelry – Affordable and locally sourced.
- Barong Tagalog or Filipiniana – Traditional formal wear, great as a cultural keepsake

Edible Treats

- Dried Mangoes – Especially from Cebu, sweet and chewy
- Polvoron – Crumbly milk-based sweets in various flavors
- Ube Products – Ube (purple yam) snacks, jam, or candy
- Local Coffee or Tsokolate – Try Kalinga or Batangas coffee, or tablea (pure cacao)

Wearables

- Graphic T-shirts – Featuring jeepneys, Filipino phrases, or iconic landscapes
- Long sleeve riding shirts – featuring unique Philippine designs
- Handwoven or embroidered bags – Made with native fabrics like *inabel* or *piña*
- Footwear – *Abaca* or *banig* slippers and sandals

Art & Home Decor

- Bayong bags – Stylish woven market bags
- Hand-painted items – Local artists' takes on Filipino culture
- Jeepney miniatures – Fun replicas of the iconic local vehicle
-

Tips for Souvenir Shopping

- Bargaining is common in markets—but be polite
- Bring cash, especially in provincial areas and small vendors
- Support local artisans by buying directly from them or certified shops
- If flying internationally, check customs rules for food items or wood crafts

1.7. Fun facts:

1. Filipinos ranked as the highest selfie-takers in the world! Filipinos have earned the title of the world's most enthusiastic selfie-takers, embracing the art of self-expression through photography.
2. Philippines has 7641 islands – making it one of the largest archipelagos globally. Surprisingly, more than 5,000 of these islands remain unnamed on most international maps, waiting to be discovered.
3. There are three main island groups in the Philippines: Luzon, Mindanao, and Visayas. Luzon, the most populous, is home to the capital city, Manila
4. One of the most remarkable features of the Philippines is its linguistic diversity. While the official language is Filipino, based on Tagalog, there are over 170 languages spoken throughout the archipelago, reflecting the nation's vibrant cultural mosaic.
5. The Philippines is the only Asian nation that is predominantly Christian. More than 86% of the population identifies as Roman Catholic and religion is still a big influence in the country.
6. The largest and most expensive pearl in the world was found in the Philippines. Found in Palawan, weighing a staggering 75 pounds and valued at an astonishing $100 million.
7. Filipinos celebrate Christmas longer than you think! The Philippines takes Christmas celebrations to the next level, beginning in September and lasting until January during the "Feast of the Three Kings."
8. The Philippines has earned its title as the "text capital of the world," with social media and texting being the primary means of communication.
9. Tarsier, one of the world's smallest primates can only be found in the Philippines. It is known for its enormous eyes relative to its body size, aiding night vision.
10. Fertilised duck embryo is the famous street snack. Filipinos enjoy eating this, they call it as 'balut'.
11. The Philippines has unique transportation modes, such as tricycles, jeep, and kalesas.
12. The Philippines is known as the largest supplier of nurses to the world, with over 25% of all nurses in the United States being of Filipino descent.
13. Jeepney as the usual public transportation! It is distinctive and colorful public transportation vehicles, is ubiquitous in the Philippines, providing a unique way to explore its cities.
14. Philippines is one of the largest island countries in the world! It offers an incredible diversity of landscapes and experiences.
15. The Philippines is the second largest producer of coconut products in the world. Locally known as buko, coconut is a top export product of the Philippines. Each year, the country ships around 19.50 million tons or more of coconut fruit.
16. Filipinos are known for being polite, addressing each other with "ma'am" or "sir." Respect for elders is deeply ingrained, reflected in terms like "ate" (big sister) and "kuya"(big brother) and use of "po" (sir, ma'am) and "opo." (yes sir/ma'am)

17. “Filipino time” refers to the cultural phenomenon of Filipinos often arriving late for appointments or events, reflecting their laid-back, relaxed attitude towards time.
18. Two of the world’s largest shopping malls are in the Philippines, offering an incredible shopping and leisure experience. One is SM Megamall, located in Mandaluyong city, with a total floor area of over 5.5 million square feet. Another is SM Shopping Mall of Asia (MOA) is a rambling shopping center in Pasay City, with more than 4.4 million square feet of retail space.
19. The Philippines founded Asia’s first basketball league, the Philippines Basketball Association, in 1975, making basketball a beloved sport in the country.
20. Jollibee is the top fast-food chain the Philippines taking over McDonald’s. Jollibee was the leading limited-service restaurant in the Philippines in terms of sales in 2021. In that year, the restaurant chain generated sales of approximately 24. 53 billion U.S. dollars. Its closest competitor, McDonald’s, had total sales of about 786 million U.S. dollars in the same year.
21. Many people visit the Philippines because of its famous water bodies. In fact, this nation is home to the largest underground river. It is in Puerta Princesa Subterranean River National Park. There are many famous landmarks in the Philippines that will amaze you.
22. Filipinos can’t eat without rice. For almost 99% of the Philippine population, no meal is complete without rice, highlighting its central role in Filipino cuisine.

Back to Table of Contents

2. Electricity

In the Philippines, the standard nominal voltage for residential and commercial electricity is 230 volts at a frequency of 60 Hz. This voltage level is commonly used across households and businesses, aligning with international standards to ensure compatibility with a wide range of appliances.

2.1. Plug Types and Adapters

The Philippines utilizes power plugs and sockets of Type A, Type B, and Type C: (Power Plugs & Sockets of the World)

- Type A: Two flat parallel pins.
- Type B: Two flat parallel pins and a grounding pin.
- Type C: Two round pins.

Travelers from countries with different plug types may need a power plug adapter to use their devices in the Philippines. (Power Plugs & Sockets of the World)

2.2. Using Foreign Devices

Dual Voltage Devices:
If your device is labeled with an input range such as "110–240V," it can operate safely in the Philippines without a voltage converter.

Single Voltage Devices:
Devices rated only for 110V (common in North America) require a step-down voltage converter to prevent damage. (Electrical Safety First, WikiConnections)

2.3. Voltage Fluctuations

The Philippine Electrical Code allows a voltage tolerance of ±5%, meaning the supply can vary between approximately 218.5V and 241.5V. In some areas, fluctuations may be more pronounced, so using surge protectors is advisable to safeguard sensitive electronics.

2.4. Summary

- Standard Voltage: 230V
- Frequency: 60 Hz
- Plug Types: A, B, and C
- For Travelers: Use a plug adapter; a voltage converter is necessary for single voltage (110V) devices.

For a visual explanation of the differences between U.S. and Philippine electrical systems, you might find this video helpful:
USA 110/120 volt vs Philippines 220 volt Outlets, Cords, Connections

Back to Table of Contents

3. Currency

The currency in the Philippines is  the Philippine Peso

Denomination	Type	Comment
1,000	Note	Old paper note being replaced by new plastic one
500	Note	
100	Note	
50	Note	
20	Coin/Note	Note being phased out
10	Coin	New silver coin replacing old one
5	Coin	New silver coin replacing old one
1	Coin	New silver coin replacing old one

Note: Be careful the 10,5 & 1 coins are very similar in size and colour.

Exchange Rates

Currency	Approx Rate	Quick Converter Peso to:
Australian $	36	X 3 then /100, e.g. php1,000 = 3000/100 = 30
British Pound	75	/ 10 then / 7, e.g. php1,000 = 1000/10 = 100 / 7 = 13
Canadian $	40	/10 then /4, e.g. php1,000 = 1000/10 = 100 / 4 = 25
New Zealand $	33	X 3 then /100, e.g. php1,000 = 3000/100 = 30
US$	55	/ 5 then /10, e.g. php1,000 = 200/10 = 20
EUR	63	X 15 then /100, e.g. php1,000 = 15000/1000 = 15
Japan YEN	0.4	X 2.5, e.g. php1,000 = 2,500
Korean WON	0.06	X 16, e.g. php1,000 = 16,000

Back to Table of Contents

4. Useful Words

Tagalog	English
Basic	
Ko	I
Mo	You
Siya	He/She
Sila	They
Ako	Me
Ikaw	You
Akin	Mine
Sayo	Yours
Nila	Theirs
Ate	Older sister
Kuya	Older brother
Po	Sir/Ma'am
Oo	Yes
Hindi	No
Wala	Nothing
Saan?	Where?
Dito	Here
Magkano	How much?
Tiket	Ticket
Salamat	Thank you
CR	Toilet
Pagkain	Food
Kumain	Eat
Inumin	Drink
Tubig	Water
Paki	Please
Mabuti	Good
Maganda	Beautiful
Masarap	Delicious
Maraming	Lots
Konti lang	A little
Lang	Just, only
Naman	Again
Meeting People	
Kumusta	Hello how are you?
Paalam	Goodbye
Ang pangalan ko ay	My name is
Ano pangalan mo?	What is your name?

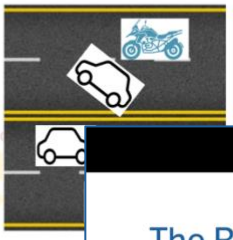
Okay lang	Fine
English ako	I'm English
Australian ako	I'm Australian
Amerikano ako	I'm American
Nagsasalita ng Ingles	Do you speak English?
Mahal ko ang pilipinas	I love the Philippines
Mahal na mahal kita	I love you
General	
Magkano eto	How much is this?
Beer	Beer
Masarap	Delicious
Malaki	Big
Maliit	Small
Malayo	A long way
Malapit	Near
Mabagal	Slow
Matagal	Takes a long time

Back to Table of Contents

5. Safety Briefing

The Ride

- Ride on the RIGHT
- If two lanes ride in the left lane
- If need to ride in right lane:
  - sound horn if you are passing any vehicle
  - beware of vehicle turning right from left lane
- Indicators seem to be optional and usually only deployed at the last second.
- Flashing headlight usually mean "I'm coming through, even if I don't have right of way"



The Ride

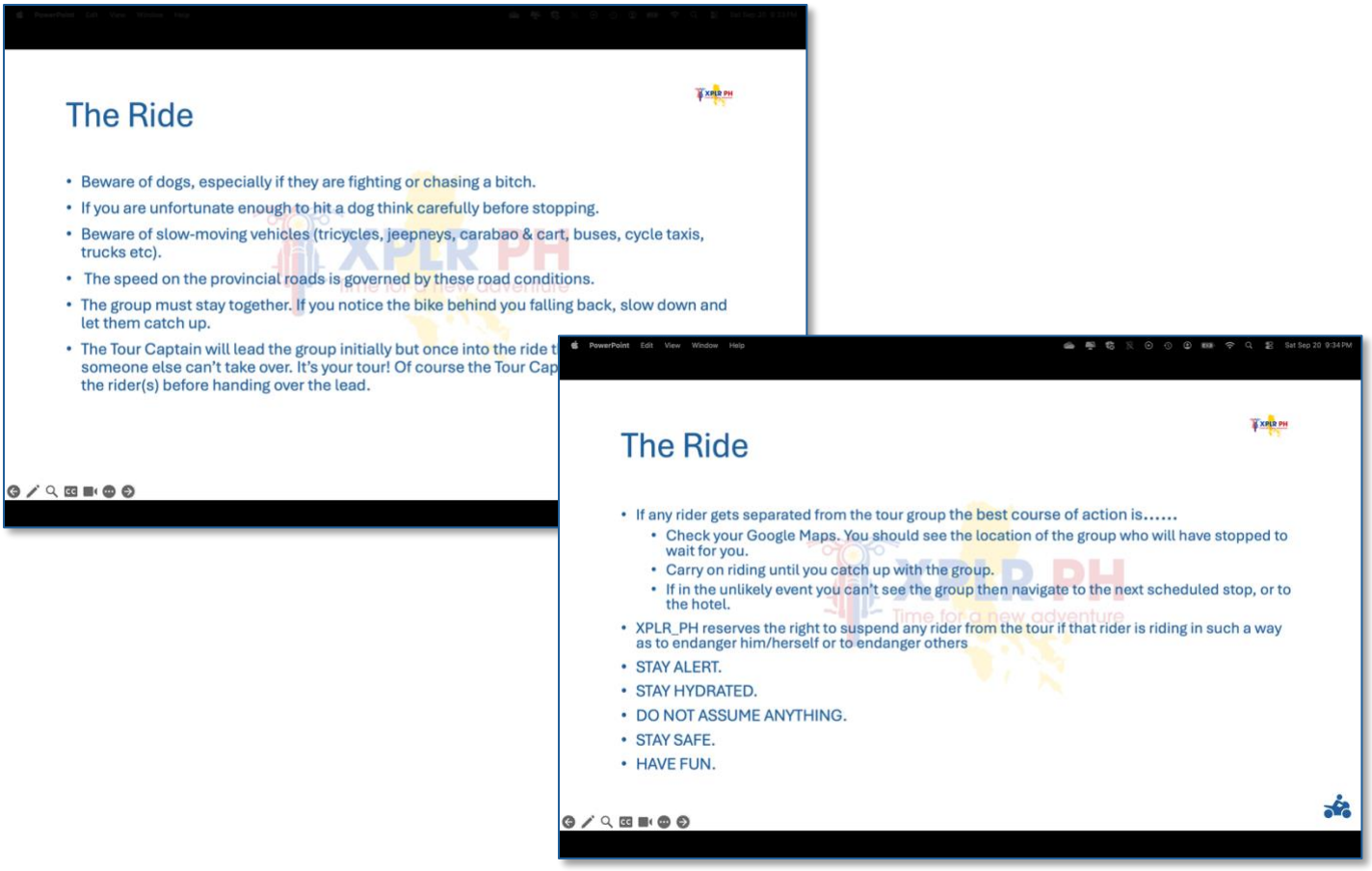
- Expressways
  - Only motorcycles 400+cc permitted.
  - RFID and barrier-controlled toll booths.
  - 2 systems in operation (Autosweeep & Easytrip).
    - Your bike is fitted with RFID tags for both systems & Cards are in your Tour Pack.
  - Left-hand lane is reserved for overtaking only but this is largely ignored.
  - Vehicles overtake on left and right so be alert.
  - Staggered riding.

The Ride

- Expressways continued.....
  - Many expressways have been recently fitted with speed cameras.
  - Lane-Splitting:

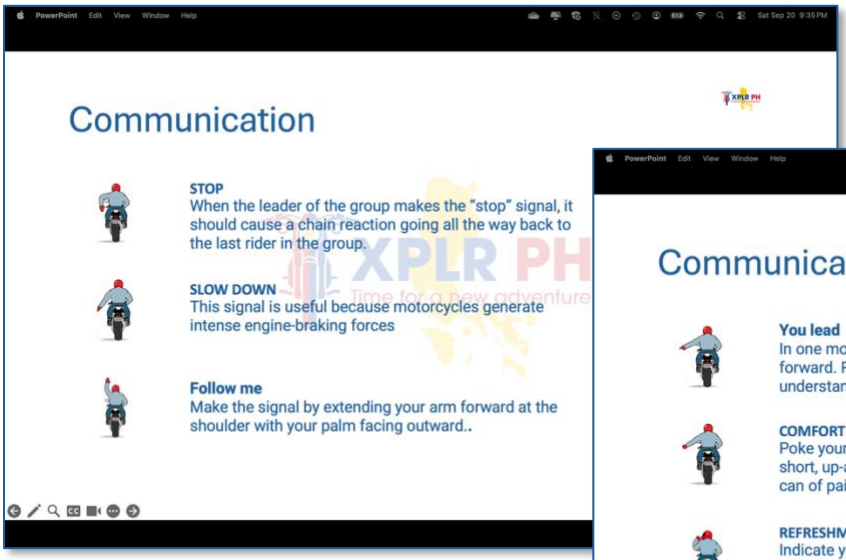
Legal status in the Philippines [edit]

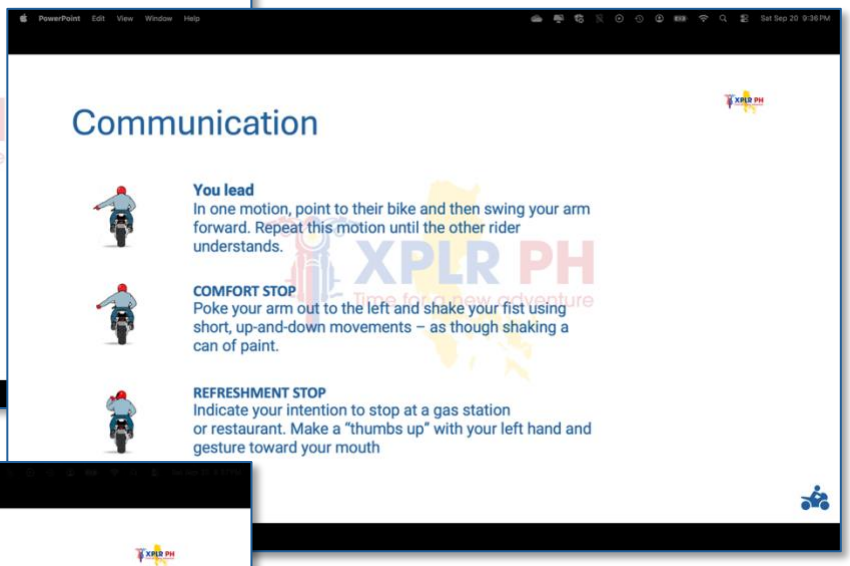
The Land Transportation Office, through Administrative Order No. 15 series of 2008 prohibits motorcycles from lane splitting along public roads and highways in the Philippines. The order, however, does not include provisions to penalize riders for doing so.[58]

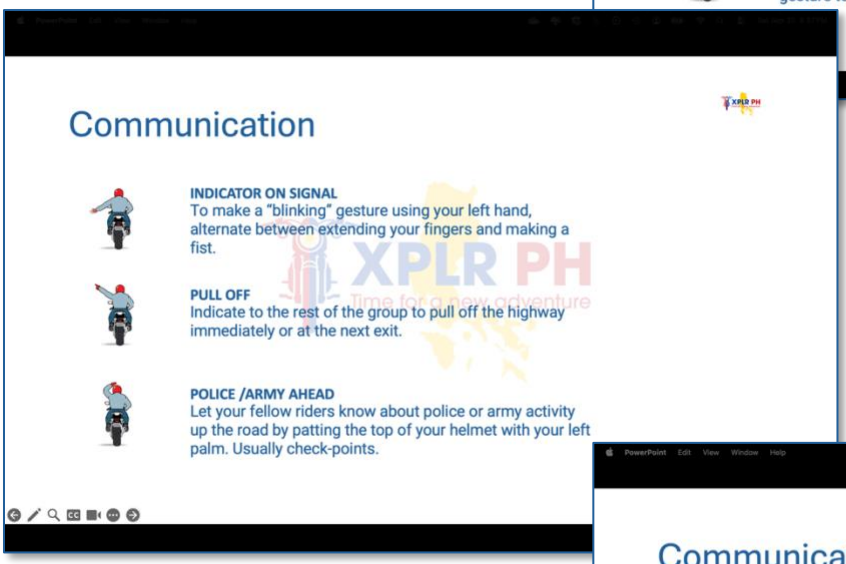


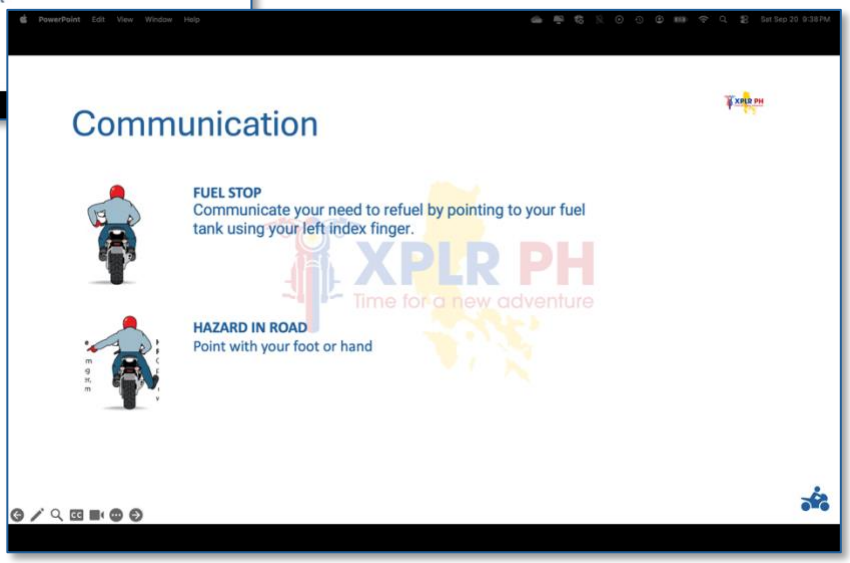
Back to Table of Contents

6. Communication Whilst Riding









Back to Table of Contents

7. Extended Tour Options

If you are considering adding a few days holiday/vacation before or after (or both) your motorcycle tour then here are a few places to consider:

7.1. Angeles

7.1.1. Location & Basics

- Angeles lies about 80 km north of Manila, close to Clark Freeport Zone, which was once the U.S. Clark Air Base.
- Strategically located along major highways like the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) and Subic–Clark–Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX).
- Accessible via a rented big bike from Manila.
- Approx 1.5hrs travel time.

7.1.2. Main Attractions

- Known as a culinary capital of the Philippines, especially famous for *sisig*, a sizzling pork dish said to have originated in Angeles.
- Has a very lively nightlife, entertainment, and tourism scene.

7.2. Puerto Galera

7.2.1. Location & Basics

- A coastal town on the island of Mindoro, about 130 km south of Manila.
- Situated along the Verde Island Passage, known as the **"Center of the World's Marine Biodiversity."**
- Accessible via a rented big bike from Manila to Batangas Port (approx. 1.5 hrs)
- then a fast ferry to Calapan (1.5).
- and a beautiful 1.5hr ride through the hills from Calapan to Puerto Galera

7.2.2. Beaches & Attractions

White Beach
the most popular, lively area with bars, restaurants, nightlife, and water sports.
Sabang Beach
famous among divers; packed with dive shops, resorts, and a very lively nightlife scene.
Talipanan Beach
quieter, more laid-back alternative.
Tamaraw Falls
scenic waterfalls along the road from Calapan.
Aninuan Beach
calm and great for sunset views.

7.2.3. Diving & Snorkelling

- Over **30 dive sites**, ranging from coral gardens to shipwrecks and drift dives.
- Verde Island Passage offers some of the **richest marine biodiversity in the world**.
- Great for both beginners and advanced divers.

7.3. Bohol

7.3.1. Location & Basics

- Bohol is the **10th largest island** in the Philippines, located between Cebu and Leyte.
- Capital city: **Tagbilaran City**.
- Well-connected by **Tagbilaran Airport (Panglao International Airport)** and ferry routes, especially from Cebu.

7.3.2. Natural Attractions

Chocolate Hills

- Over 1,200 symmetrical hills that turn brown during the dry season, giving them a "chocolatey" look.
- Declared the country's **3rd National Geological Monument**.

Panglao Island

- Has a very lively nightlife, entertainment, and tourism scene.
- Known for **Alona Beach**, white sand, and world-class diving/snorkeling.
- Nearby **Balicasag Island** and **Pamilacan Island** are popular for dolphin watching and marine life.

Tarsiers

- One of the world's **smallest primates**, only about the size of a human fist.
- Found in protected sanctuaries like the **Philippine Tarsier and Wildlife Sanctuary** in Corella.

Rivers, Waterfalls & Caves

- **Loboc River Cruise** – scenic boat rides with local food and music.
- **Mag-aso Falls, Can-umantad Falls, Hinagdanan Cave**, and other natural wonders.

7.4. Boracay

7.4.1. Location & Basics

A small island (just 7 km long, 1 km wide) in Aklan province, Western Visayas. Famous for its powdery white-sand beaches, lively nightlife, and luxury + budget travel mix.
The main entry point is Caticlan (Godofredo Ramos) Airport, then a short boat ride to the island.

7.4.2. Main Attractions

White Beach

The crown jewel of Boracay — 4 km of pure white, fine sand.
Divided into Stations 1, 2, and 3:

- *Station 1*: Upscale resorts, quieter vibe.
- *Station 2*: The busiest area, nightlife, restaurants, D'Mall.
- *Station 3*: More laid-back, budget-friendly.

Other Beaches

- Puka Shell Beach – tranquil, with natural shell fragments.
- Bulabog Beach – watersports hub (kiteboarding, windsurfing).
- Diniwid & Ilig-Iligan Beaches – smaller, more private coves.

Island Hopping & Adventure

- Snorkeling and diving sites (Crocodile Island, Crystal Cove).
- Cliff diving at Ariel's Point.
- Sunset sailing on *paraws* (local outrigger sailboats).

Lifestyle & Culture

- Nightlife: Beachfront bars, fire dancers, clubs (Boracay is known for parties).
- Dining: Fresh seafood, local Filipino cuisine, plus international restaurants.
- Festivals: Ati-Atihan in nearby Kalibo often ties into Boracay tourism.

7.4.3. Environmental Efforts

In 2018, Boracay was closed for 6 months for environmental rehabilitation.
Since then, stricter rules apply:

- Limits on beach parties.
- No more dining setups on the beachfront.
- Waste management and building regulations improved.

7.5. El Nido

7.5.1. Location & Basics

- El Nido is a coastal town and group of islands at the northern tip of Palawan.
- Known for its limestone cliffs, turquoise lagoons, hidden beaches, and island-hopping tours.
- Often listed among the most beautiful islands in the world.

7.6. Natural Attractions

Bacuit Bay
Stunning seascape with karst cliffs, clear waters, and islands.

Big Lagoon & Small Lagoon (Miniloc Island)
iconic spots with dramatic rock walls and emerald waters.

Secret Beach
hidden behind cliffs, accessible through a small swim-through opening.

Nacpan Beach
long golden sand stretch, quieter than town beaches.

Seven Commandos Beach
palm-fringed, perfect for swimming and relaxing.

7.6.1. Island-Hopping Tours

El Nido is famous for its 4 main island-hopping packages:

- **Tour A**: Lagoons and beaches (Big Lagoon, Small Lagoon, Shimizu Island).
- **Tour B**: Caves and coves (Snake Island, Cudugnon Cave).
- **Tour C**: Hidden beaches and shrines (Secret Beach, Matinloc Shrine).
- **Tour D**: More secluded spots (Cadlao Lagoon, Paradise Beach).

7.6.2. Lifestyle & Culture

Town Proper:
Has budget hostels, boutique hotels, and restaurants serving Filipino and international food.

Nightlife:
More relaxed than Boracay — beach bars, reggae spots, chill music by the shore.

Eco-Tourism:
Emphasis on sustainability; single-use plastics are discouraged.

7.6.3. Accessibility

Closest airport:
Lio Airport (El Nido Airport) – small, mostly private/local flights.

Many travelers fly into Puerto Princesa (Palawan's capital),
then take a 4–6 hour van/bus ride to El Nido.

Back to Table of Contents

8. Philippine Traditional Food

8.1. Calderetta

Caldereta (sometimes spelled Kaldereta) is a popular Filipino stew known for its rich, tomato-based sauce and tender meat, often goat, beef, or chicken. It is influenced by Spanish cuisine and is commonly served at special occasions and gatherings.

Key Ingredients

- Meat – Traditionally goat meat, but beef, pork, or chicken can also be used.
- Tomato Sauce – Provides the stew's rich, slightly tangy base.
- Liver Spread or Pâté – Adds depth and a creamy texture.
- Vegetables – Potatoes, carrots, bell peppers, and green peas.
- Spices & Seasonings – Garlic, onions, bay leaves, and sometimes chili for spice.
- Cheese (Optional) – Some versions include grated cheese for extra creaminess.

How It's Cooked

- The meat is typically browned, then simmered in a mixture of tomato sauce, broth, and spices until tender.
- Vegetables and liver spread are added towards the end to enhance the flavor.

8.2. Menudo

Menudo is a classic Filipino dish made with pork and liver stewed in a tomato-based sauce, often served with rice. It is different from the Mexican Menudo (which is a tripe soup) and is a staple in Filipino households, especially at gatherings and celebrations.

Key Ingredients

- Pork – Usually cut into small cubes.
- Liver – Adds a rich, slightly earthy flavor.
- Tomato Sauce – The base of the stew, giving it a tangy and slightly sweet taste.
- Vegetables – Potatoes, carrots, bell peppers, and sometimes green peas or raisins.
- Garlic & Onions – For aromatics and added depth.
- Soy Sauce & Fish Sauce – Used for seasoning in some variations.

How It's Cooked

- The pork is sautéed with garlic and onions until browned.
- Tomato sauce and broth are added and simmered until the pork is tender.
- The liver and vegetables are added last to avoid overcooking.

- The dish is simmered until the flavours blend together.

8.3. Bicol Express

Bicol Express is a popular Filipino dish known for its rich, creamy, and spicy coconut sauce. It originates from the Bicol region, which is famous for its love of chili peppers and coconut-based dishes.

Key Ingredients

- Pork – Typically cut into small pieces.
- Coconut Milk & Coconut Cream – Gives the dish its rich, creamy texture.
- Chili Peppers (Siling Labuyo or Siling Haba) – Provides the signature heat.
- Shrimp Paste (Bagoong Alamang) – Adds a deep umami flavor.
- Garlic, Onion, and Ginger – For aromatics and added depth.

How It's Cooked

- The pork is sautéed with garlic, onion, and ginger.
- Shrimp paste is added for a savory depth.
- Coconut milk is poured in, and the dish is simmered until the pork is tender.
- Chili peppers and coconut cream are added for heat and richness.
- The dish is simmered until thick and flavorful.

8.4. Kare Kare

Kare-Kare is a traditional Filipino dish known for its rich, thick peanut sauce. It is often made with oxtail, tripes, or pork and served with bagoong (fermented shrimp paste) on the side for added umami. This dish is commonly served at special occasions and gatherings.

Key Ingredients

- Meat – Oxtail, pork hock, beef tripe, or even seafood in some variations.
- Peanut Sauce – Made from ground peanuts or peanut butter, giving it a rich, nutty flavor.
- Vegetables – Eggplant, string beans, banana heart (puso ng saging), and pechay (bok choy).
- Annatto (Atsuete) Seeds – Used to give the dish its orange color.
- Garlic, Onion, and Ground Rice – Enhance the sauce's texture and depth of flavor.

How It's Cooked

- The meat is boiled until tender.
- The peanut sauce is prepared by sautéing garlic and onions, then adding peanut butter or ground peanuts.

- The cooked meat and broth are added to the sauce and simmered.
- Vegetables are added towards the end to keep them fresh and vibrant.
- The dish is served hot with bagoong (shrimp paste) on the side.

8.5. Chopsuey

Chop Suey is a popular stir-fried vegetable dish in Filipino cuisine, influenced by Chinese cooking. It consists of a mix of crisp, colorful vegetables, meat, and a thick, flavorful sauce. This dish is widely enjoyed for its versatility, as it can be made with different proteins and vegetable combinations.

Key Ingredients

- Vegetables – Cabbage, carrots, bell peppers, cauliflower, snow peas, and baby corn.
- Meat & Seafood – Chicken, pork, shrimp, or beef. Some versions also include liver.
- Garlic & Onion – For aromatics.
- Soy Sauce & Oyster Sauce – Provides a savory, umami flavor.
- Cornstarch Slurry – Used to thicken the sauce.
- Hard-Boiled Quail Eggs (Optional) – A common addition in Filipino-style Chop Suey.

How It's Cooked

- The meat or seafood is sautéed with garlic and onion.
- Vegetables are added and stir-fried quickly to maintain their crisp texture.
- A sauce made from soy sauce, oyster sauce, and cornstarch slurry is poured in.
- The dish is cooked until the sauce thickens and coats the ingredients.
- It is served hot, often with steamed rice.

8.6. Beef Tapa

Beef Tapa is a popular Filipino dish made of thinly sliced beef that is marinated, then fried or grilled. It is often served as part of Tapsilog, a classic Filipino breakfast meal that includes tapa (beef), sinangag (garlic rice), and itlog (fried egg).

Key Ingredients

- Beef – Thinly sliced, usually sirloin or tender cuts.
- Soy Sauce – Adds saltiness and umami.
- Vinegar or Calamansi Juice – Provides a tangy contrast and helps tenderize the meat.
- Garlic – Enhances flavour.
- Sugar – Balances the salty and tangy flavors.
- Black Pepper – Adds mild heat.

How It's Cooked

- Marinate the beef with soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, sugar, and black pepper. Let it sit for a few hours or overnight.
- Fry or Grill – The beef can be pan-fried until slightly crispy or grilled for a smoky flavor.
- Serve Hot – Typically paired with garlic rice, a fried egg, and sometimes a dipping sauce of vinegar with chili.

8.7. Adobo

Adobo is one of the most iconic and beloved Filipino dishes. It is a savory, tangy, and slightly sweet stew made by braising meat in a mixture of vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, bay leaves, and black peppercorns. The dish is known for its deep, well-balanced flavors and long shelf life due to the use of vinegar as a natural preservative.

Key Ingredients

- Meat – Chicken, pork, or a combination of both (sometimes beef, seafood, or even vegetables).
- Vinegar – Gives the dish its signature tanginess and acts as a preservative.
- Soy Sauce – Adds umami and a salty depth.
- Garlic – Infuses the dish with aromatic flavor.
- Bay Leaves & Black Peppercorns – Provide a warm, earthy taste.
- Sugar (Optional) – Some versions add a bit of sugar for a subtle sweetness.

How It's Cooked

- The meat is marinated in soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, and spices.
- It is then browned in a pan to enhance its flavor.
- The marinade, along with additional water or broth, is added and simmered until the meat becomes tender.
- Some variations reduce the sauce to a thick, flavorful glaze.
- Adobo is best served with steamed rice and often tastes even better the next day as the flavors continue to develop.

8.8. Longganisa

Longganisa is a popular Filipino sausage known for its rich, flavorful taste. It is inspired by Spanish longaniza but has been adapted with local ingredients and seasonings. Filipino longganisa comes in many regional varieties, with different flavors, textures, and levels of sweetness or garlickiness.

Types of Filipino Longganisa:

Longganisa is generally classified into two main types:

- Longganisang Hamonado (Sweet Longganisa) – Made with pork, sugar, and sometimes pineapple juice for a sweet flavor. Common in places like Pampanga.
- Longganisang De Recado (Garlic/Savory Longganisa) – More garlicky and salty, sometimes spicy, with no added sugar. Famous in Vigan (Ilocos Region) and Lucban (Quezon).

Key Ingredients

- Ground Pork (or chicken, beef, or even fish in some variations)
- Garlic – Gives a strong, aromatic flavor.
- Vinegar – Enhances taste and acts as a preservative.
- Soy Sauce or Salt – For seasoning.
- Pork Fat – For juiciness and flavor.
- Sugar (for sweet variants).
- Annatto (Atsuete) or Paprika – Adds color to some versions.

How It's Cooked

- The meat is mixed with seasonings and left to marinate overnight.
- The mixture is stuffed into natural or synthetic casings.
- It is either fresh (uncured) or cured (smoked/dried for preservation).
- When cooking, longganisa is typically simmered with a bit of water, allowing it to cook in its own fat as the water evaporates, then fried until browned.

8.9. Pansit

Pancit is a general term for Filipino noodle dishes, which have Chinese origins but have been adapted to local tastes. It is a staple in Filipino cuisine and is often served during birthdays and celebrations because noodles symbolize long life and prosperity.

Popular Types of Pancit:

Pancit Canton

- Stir-fried egg noodles with pork, shrimp, vegetables, and a savory soy-based sauce.
- Similar to Chinese Chow Mein but with a Filipino twist.
- Often garnished with calamansi (Filipino lime) for added tanginess.

Pancit Bihon

- Uses thin rice noodles (bihon), stir-fried with soy sauce, vegetables, and meat or seafood.
- One of the most common pancit dishes in Filipino households and gatherings.
- Pancit Malabon
- Thick rice noodles topped with a rich, orange-colored seafood sauce made from shrimp broth, annatto (atsuete), and sometimes crab fat.
- Topped with shrimp, squid, boiled eggs, and chicharon (crispy pork cracklings).
- A specialty of Malabon City.

Pancit Palabok

- Similar to Pancit Malabon but uses thinner rice noodles and a shrimp-based sauce.

8.10. Pinakbet

Pinakbet is a traditional Filipino vegetable dish from the Ilocos region, known for its bold flavors and nutritious ingredients. It is a stir-fried or stewed vegetable dish flavored with bagoong (fermented shrimp or fish paste), giving it a distinct umami taste.

Key Ingredients

- Vegetables:
- Bitter melon (ampalaya)
- Eggplant (talong)
- Okra
- String beans (sitaw)
- Squash (kalabasa)
- Tomatoes
- Bagoong – Usually bagoong isda (fermented fish paste) in Ilocano versions, but bagoong alamang (fermented shrimp paste) is also used in other regions.
- Pork (optional) – Some versions include crispy or sautéed pork belly for added richness.

- Garlic, Onion, and Ginger – Aromatics that enhance the dish's depth of flavor.

How It's Cooked

- Sauté garlic, onion, and tomatoes in oil.
- Add pork (if using) and cook until lightly browned.
- Pour in bagoong and stir to coat the ingredients with its umami-rich flavor.
- Add vegetables, starting with harder ones like squash, then softer ones like okra and eggplant.
- Simmer until tender but not overcooked to maintain texture.

8.11. Sinigang

Sinigang is a traditional Filipino soup or stew known for its savory-sour flavor. It is typically made with pork (sinigang na baboy), but variations include beef, shrimp, or fish. The dish is characterized by its tangy broth, which is usually flavored with tamarind (sampalok), though other souring agents like green mango, calamansi, or santol can be used.

Key Ingredients

- Protein: Pork (most common), beef, shrimp, or fish
- Souring Agent: Tamarind, green mango, calamansi, santol, or kamias
- Vegetables: Water spinach (kangkong), eggplant, radish, okra, string beans, and tomatoes
- Seasoning: Fish sauce (patis), salt, or soy sauce

How It's Cooked

- The meat is boiled until tender.
- Tamarind (or another souring agent) is added for the signature tangy taste.
- Vegetables are added in stages to retain their texture.
- Seasoning is adjusted before serving.

8.12. Sisig

Sisig is a famous Filipino dish from Pampanga, known for its savory, tangy, and crispy flavors. Traditionally, it is made from grilled and chopped pork parts, especially the face (maskara) and ears, mixed with onions, chili peppers, and calamansi. Some variations include a raw egg or mayonnaise for added richness.
Origins of Sisig

Sisig was originally a Kapampangan dish dating back to the 1700s. The name comes from the old Kapampangan word "sisigan," meaning "to make sour," as early versions were

pickled salads. The modern, sizzling version was popularized by Lucia Cunanan, known as “Aling Lucing,” in the 1970s.

Types of Sisig

- Classic Pork Sisig – Made with chopped pork face, ears, and liver.
- Chicken Sisig – Uses chopped grilled or boiled chicken.
- Bangus (Milkfish) Sisig – A healthier alternative with boneless bangus.
- Tofu Sisig – A vegetarian version using crispy tofu.

How is Sisig Made?

- Boil pork parts until tender.
- Grill or fry until crispy.
- Chop finely and mix with onions, chili, calamansi, and seasoning.
- Serve sizzling hot, often topped with an egg.

8.13. Crispy Pata

Crispy Pata is a beloved Filipino dish featuring deep-fried pork leg (usually the hock), known for its crispy skin and tender, juicy meat. It’s often served with a vinegar-soy dipping sauce and is a favorite in celebrations and beer-drinking sessions (pulutan).

Key Ingredients

- Pork leg (pata) – Usually from the front or hind leg of the pig
- Salt and spices – Garlic, peppercorns, bay leaves, and soy sauce for seasoning
- Dipping Sauce – A mix of vinegar, soy sauce, onions, garlic, sugar, and chili

How It’s Cooked

- Boiling: The pork leg is first boiled with spices until tender.
- Drying: It’s air-dried or refrigerated to remove moisture for extra crispiness.
- Deep-frying: The leg is fried until golden brown and crackling.

8.14. Lechon Kawali

Lechon Kawali is a popular Filipino crispy pork belly dish that is deep-fried until golden brown and crunchy. It is known for its crispy skin, tender meat, and juicy fat layers, making it a favorite comfort food in the Philippines.

Characteristics of Lechon Kawali:

- Main Ingredient: Pork belly (Liempo)
- Cooking Method: Boiling → Air-drying → Deep-frying
- Texture: Crispy on the outside, tender and juicy inside

- Flavor Profile: Savory, rich, and slightly salty with a deep umami taste
- Dipping Sauce: Usually served with liver sauce (Lechon sauce), vinegar with garlic, soy sauce with calamansi, or spicy vinegar

How is Lechon Kawali Made?

- Boil the Pork Belly – The pork is first boiled with salt, pepper, garlic, and bay leaves to make it tender.
- Dry and Rest – The boiled pork is air-dried or refrigerated to remove moisture, which helps achieve extra crispiness when fried.
- Deep-Fry Until Crispy – The pork is fried in hot oil until the skin becomes golden brown and crunchy.
- Rest and Chop – The crispy pork is then drained, rested, and chopped into bite-sized pieces.

8.15. Pares

Pares is a popular Filipino dish that consists of braised beef stew, usually served with garlic fried rice and a clear beef broth. The name *pares* means "pair" in Tagalog, referring to the combination of the beef stew with rice and soup.

Main Components of Pares:

- Braised Beef Stew – The beef is slow-cooked in a flavorful sauce made of soy sauce, star anise, sugar, garlic, onions, and sometimes ginger. This results in a rich, slightly sweet, and savory dish with tender meat.
- Garlic Fried Rice (Sinangag) – The rice is stir-fried with garlic to add aroma and texture.
- Clear Beef Soup – A light broth made from beef bones, seasoned simply with salt, pepper, and sometimes spring onions.

Variations:

- Beef Pares Mami – A noodle soup version where the braised beef is served with egg noodles in a beef broth.
- Chicken Pares – A variation using chicken instead of beef.
- Pares Silog – A breakfast-style serving with a fried egg on top.

Back to Table of Contents

9. Fish

9.1. Bangus (milkfish)

Bangus, also known as milkfish (Chanos chanos), is a popular and widely farmed fish in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, where it is considered the national fish. It is also found in Indonesia, Taiwan, and other tropical and subtropical regions.

Characteristics of Bangus

- Appearance: Silver-colored, streamlined body with a forked tail.
- Size: Typically grows between 40-60 cm (16-24 inches), but can reach over 1 meter (3.3 feet) in length.
- Diet: Feeds on algae, plankton, and small organic matter.
- Habitat: Found in both freshwater, brackish, and marine environments. Juveniles often migrate from the sea to mangroves or freshwater environments before returning to the ocean to spawn.

Why is Bangus Popular?

- Mild, Sweet Flavor: It has a delicate taste and is commonly prepared in various ways, including frying, grilling, and stewing.
- Nutritious: High in protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and essential vitamins and minerals.
- Sustainable Farming: Bangus is hardy and easy to farm, making it a staple in aquaculture.

Common Bangus Dishes in the Philippines

- Daing na Bangus – Marinated and fried milkfish, often served with vinegar and garlic rice.
- Rellenong Bangus – Stuffed milkfish with a mix of vegetables, eggs, and seasonings.
- Sinigang na Bangus – A sour tamarind-based soup with vegetables.
- Bangus Sisig – A sizzling dish made from flaked milkfish, onions, and chili.

9.2. Tilapia

Tilapia is a freshwater fish that belongs to the Cichlidae family. It is one of the most widely farmed and consumed fish worldwide due to its fast growth, adaptability, and mild flavor.

Characteristics of Tilapia

- Appearance: Oval-shaped body with a laterally compressed structure and varying colors (gray, black, red, or gold, depending on the species).
- Size: Typically 30–50 cm (12–20 inches) long, with some species growing larger.

- Diet: Mostly herbivorous, feeding on algae, plankton, and small aquatic plants.
- Habitat: Prefers freshwater environments, such as rivers, lakes, and ponds, but can also tolerate brackish water.

Why is Tilapia Popular

- Mild, Versatile Flavor – Its neutral taste makes it easy to cook in various dishes.
- Affordable & Widely Available – Tilapia is one of the most commercially farmed fish, making it accessible worldwide.
- Fast Growth & High Yield – Ideal for aquaculture due to its quick reproduction rate and adaptability.
- Nutritional Value – Rich in protein, low in fat, and a good source of vitamins and minerals (such as B12, phosphorus, and selenium).

Popular Tilapia Dishes

- Grilled Tilapia – Often marinated and grilled whole with spices.
- Fried Tilapia – A simple, crispy dish commonly served with rice and dipping sauces.
- Tilapia in Coconut Milk (Ginataang Tilapia) – Cooked in a rich coconut milk sauce with vegetables.
- Tilapia Fillet in Garlic Butter Sauce – A popular restaurant-style dish.

9.3. Tuna

Yellowfin Tuna (Thunnus albacares)
Yellowfin tuna, also known as ahi, is a large, fast-swimming fish found in tropical and subtropical oceans worldwide. It is a highly valued species in both commercial and recreational fishing due to its firm texture, rich flavor, and versatility in cooking.

Characteristics of Yellowfin Tuna

- Appearance:
  - Sleek, torpedo-shaped body.
  - Metallic blue-black back with a silver belly.
  - Distinctive long, bright yellow dorsal and anal fins (hence the name “yellowfin”).
- Size:
  - Typically grows between 1.5 to 2 meters (4.9 to 6.6 feet) in length.
  - Can weigh up to 200 kg (440 lbs), though most caught are smaller.
- Diet:
  - Carnivorous; feeds on fish, squid, and crustaceans.

- Habitat:
    - Found in warm waters of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.
    - Often swims in schools with other tuna species and sometimes with dolphins.

Why is Yellowfin Tuna Popular?

- High-Quality Meat – Firm, lean, and flavorful, making it ideal for raw dishes like sushi and sashimi.
- Rich in Nutrients – Excellent source of protein, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin B12, and selenium.
- Versatile in Cooking – Can be eaten raw, grilled, seared, canned, or used in various dishes.

Common Yellowfin Tuna Dishes

- Sashimi & Sushi – Thinly sliced raw tuna, often served with soy sauce and wasabi.
- Seared Ahi Tuna Steak – Lightly seared on the outside, rare in the center.
- Grilled Yellowfin Tuna – Often seasoned with herbs, garlic, and lemon.
- Poke Bowls – Hawaiian-style marinated tuna cubes with rice and vegetables.
- Tuna Tartare – Diced raw tuna mixed with seasonings like avocado, sesame oil, and soy sauce.

9.4. Lapo Lapo

Lapu-Lapu (Grouper Fish)
Lapu-Lapu is the Filipino name for grouper, a prized saltwater fish known for its firm texture and rich flavor. It is widely consumed in the Philippines, China, and Southeast Asia, often served in upscale restaurants or during special occasions.

Characteristics of Lapu-Lapu (Grouper)

- Scientific Family: *Serranidae*
- Common Species:
    - Red Grouper (*Epinephelus morio*)
    - Black Grouper (*Mycteroperca bonaci*)
    - Tiger Grouper (*Epinephelus fuscoguttatus*)
- Appearance:
    - Stocky body with a large mouth.
    - Colors vary from red, brown, gray, or spotted, depending on the species.
- Size:
    - Can grow up to 1.5 meters (5 feet) long.

    - Weighs between 5–100 kg (11–220 lbs).
- Diet:
    - Carnivorous; feeds on smaller fish, crustaceans, and squid.
- Habitat:
    - Found in coral reefs, rocky bottoms, and coastal waters.
    - Common in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia.

Why is Lapu-Lapu Popular?

- Delicious, Firm Meat – White, mild-flavored, and slightly sweet, making it ideal for various cooking methods.
- Highly Prized in Asian Cuisine – Considered a luxury fish and often served in Chinese banquets.
- Rich in Nutrients – High in protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and essential minerals.
- Symbol of Prestige – In Filipino culture, serving steamed lapu-lapu is a sign of prosperity and good fortune.

Popular Lapu-Lapu Dishes

- Steamed Lapu-Lapu (Chinese Style) – Whole fish steamed with soy sauce, ginger, and scallions.
- Escabeche (Sweet & Sour Lapu-Lapu) – Fried fish with a tangy, sweet, and sour sauce.
- Grilled Lapu-Lapu – Cooked over charcoal with a marinade of soy sauce, calamansi, and spices.
- Sinigang na Lapu-Lapu – A sour tamarind-based soup with vegetables.
- Lapu-Lapu in Coconut Milk (Ginataang Lapu-Lapu) – Cooked in rich, creamy coconut milk.

Back to Table of Contents

10. Drinks

10.1. Salabat

What it is:

A hot ginger tea made from fresh ginger root, sometimes sweetened with honey or sugar.

Cultural role:

Popular as a home remedy for sore throats, colds, or warming up on cool mornings.

Taste:

Spicy, warming, slightly sweet.

10.2. Sago't Gulaman

What it is:

A chilled sweet drink made with tapioca pearls (sago), jelly cubes (gulaman), brown sugar syrup, and water.

Cultural role:

A classic merienda-time refreshment, often sold by street vendors.

Taste: Sweet:

Caramel-like from the arnibal (brown sugar syrup)

10.3. Calamansi Juice

What it is:

Freshly squeezed juice from calamansi (a small, tart citrus fruit), sweetened and served over ice.

Cultural role:

A staple in homes and eateries, valued for its vitamin C content.

Taste:

Refreshing, tangy-sweet.

10.4. Tsokolate de Batirol

What it is:

A thick hot chocolate made from tablea (pure cacao tablets) mixed with water or milk, frothed with a wooden whisk called a batirol.

Cultural role:

A Spanish-era heritage drink, still popular in the provinces of Batangas and Baguio.

Taste:

Rich, bittersweet, slightly grainy.

10.5. Buko Juice

What it is:

Fresh coconut water served straight from the young coconut, often with tender coconut meat.

Cultural role:

Common beachside or roadside refreshment and hydrating drink in tropical heat.

Taste:

Lightly sweet, nutty, very refreshing.

10.6. Tuba

What it is:

A traditional coconut or nipa palm wine made by fermenting the sap of the tree.

Cultural role:

Consumed in rural areas during celebrations; part of pre-Hispanic Filipino drinking culture.

Taste:

Sweet when fresh (tuba bahal), sourer as it ferments longer.

Price:

Approx. $2 US per litre

10.7. Lambanog

What it is:

A distilled coconut spirit (sometimes called “coconut vodka”), clear and strong.

Cultural role:

Popular in the provinces; often flavored nowadays with fruits and found in many bars and restaurants.

Taste:

Strong, clean, sometimes fruity.

Price:

Local brew approx. $1.5 US per litre

10.8. Kapeng Barako

What it is:

A robust coffee made from Coffea liberica beans, mainly grown around the region of XPLR PH HQ.

Cultural role:

A symbol of Batangueño identity; known for its strong aroma and bold flavor.

Taste:

Full-bodied, earthy, with hints of chocolate or floral notes.

10.9. Pandan or Lemongrass Iced Tea

What it is:

Infusions of pandan leaves or lemongrass, served chilled, often sweetened.

Cultural role:

Common in rural areas where herbs are abundant.

Taste:

Fragrant, slightly sweet, with herbal undertones.

10.10. Bayabas (Guava) Shake

What it is:

Fruit blended with ice, milk or water, and sugar.

Cultural role:

A tropical take on smoothies, often made fresh at home.

Taste:

Sweet-tart, creamy, fruity.

10.11. Guyabano (Soursop) Shake

What it is:

Fruit blended with ice, milk or water, and sugar.

Cultural role:

A tropical take on smoothies, often made fresh at home.

Taste:

Sweet-tart, creamy, fruity.

10.12. Rhum

In the Philippines, “rhum” (with an *h*) usually refers to locally produced rum, especially from sugarcane molasses, and it has both a cultural and economic footprint.

The spelling “rhum” is a colonial-era carryover from Spanish and French influences, and it’s still used today by brands like Tanduay Rhum.

According to data from *The Economist* referencing IWSR (International Wine & Spirit Research), the average Filipino consumes about 1.4 liters of rum per year, placing the Philippines as the third-highest rum-consuming country globally, behind Cuba (4.9 L) and the Dominican Republic (3.3 L)

10.13. Craft Beer

Local brewers are embracing local ingredients—such as ube, mango, calamansi, and hibiscus—to create uniquely Filipino flavors while supporting regional agriculture.

A growing segment of brewers are focusing on sustainability and wellness, offering, botanical-infused, and eco-conscious options like solar-powered brewing and repurposing spent grains.

The XPLR PH region of Tagaytay is renowned for its diversity and quality of craft beers.

Back to Table of Contents

11. Fruit

11.1. Common & Popular

Mango (Mangga)
Sweet and juicy, especially the Carabao mango, considered one of the best mangoes in the world.

Banana (Saging)
Staple fruit often grown wild, with varieties such as: lakatan, latundan, saba, and cavendish.

Pineapple (Pinya)
Grown mainly in Mindanao, but found all over the Philippines, sweet and tangy.

Papaya (Papaya)
Commonly eaten ripe or used green for cooking

Coconut (Niyog/Buko)
Eaten fresh, used in cooking, and made into coconut water, oil, and milk

Guava (Bayabas)
Used fresh, in juices, or for sinigang (a sour soup)
Watermelon (Pakwan)
Popular in summer
Melon (Cantaloupe/Milón)
Often used in refreshing drinks

11.2. Native & Unique

Langka
One of the largest tree-borne fruits in the world.

- **Unripe langka**
  Used like a vegetable. Cooked in coconut milk (ginataang langka), added to stews, used in dishes like *kinilaw nga nangka*, or as an extender in savory dishes.
- **Ripe langka**
  Eaten fresh, used in desserts, in *turon* (banana roll snacks), in sweet ginataan, halo-halo, jams, candies, etc.

Calamansi
Small citrus, sour, widely used in Filipino cooking and drinks

Lanzones

Sweet, translucent fruit in clusters, popular in Mindanao and Laguna

Rambutan
Red spiky fruit, similar to lychee, sweet and juicy

Mangosteen
Called the “queen of fruits,” with a sweet-sour white pulp

Durian
Known as the “king of fruits,” strong smell but rich and creamy flesh

Atis (Sugar Apple)
Sweet, custard-like texture

Chico (Sapodilla)
Brown fruit with a grainy, sweet caramel-like taste

Santol (Cotton Fruit)
Sour flesh, often used in sinigang or candied

Duhat (Java Plum)
Small, dark purple fruit, sweet and slightly tart

Macopa (Rose Apple)
Bell-shaped, crisp, and mildly sweet

Camachile
Pod-like fruit with pinkish-white sweet-sour pulp

Soursop (Guyabano)
Soft white flesh, used in juices, desserts, and teas

Star Apple (Kaimito)
Purple or green skin, sweet and milky pulp

Bignay
Small berries used for jams, wine, or eaten fresh

Aratiles (Jamaican Cherry)
Tiny red fruit, very sweet, often found in backyards

Back to Table of Contents