

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING TO PHILIPPINES

## SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Philippines has two distinct seasons, the wet and dry season. The dry season starts in November and ends in May. The Rainy season starts in June and lasts until October. September and October are often typhoon season. April and May are the hottest months

## MONEY MATTERS

The Philippine peso is the currency in the Philippines (PHP). Notes: PHP1000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. The Peso is divided into 100 centavos. Credit cards: Big city hotels, stores and restaurants will accept international credit cards but if travelling in more remote areas it is unwise to rely on credit cards as a means of payment. One important thing to note about paper money in India is that it comes in varying degrees of decrepitude. Do not accept notes that are too torn, grubby or marked - it is hard to pass them off again, although they can be exchanged in a major bank.

## DRINKING WATER

It is recommended to buy bottled water.

## TIPPING / PORTERAGE

Although tipping *per se* is not a practice in Philippines, instead it is expected that you pay for all services. Most major hotels include a service charge of 10%. Where tipping is left to your discretion, 10% is quite acceptable. Taxi drivers & Tour Guides and porters are grateful for any small gratuity.

## TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

Learn a few words of the local language so you know what's considered polite in terms of eating, greeting and local values.

Appropriate behaviours by travellers helps ensure local communities continue to be hospital and friendly. Respect other people's cultures and avoid imposing your beliefs. Adhere to the hotel's water or energy conservation policies. Buy locally made crafts and support local skills. Buy them preferably from the craftsman himself to ensure your money goes to the artist and not the middle man.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Lock valuables away while travelling and always be vigilant of your belongings. Never leave them unattended.

The official language is English, but each state has its own regional dialect. English is also widely spoken. Current population 104,9 million

South African passport holders do not require a visa for a stay of up to 30 days.

Smoking is allowed in designated outdoor areas; however, it is prohibited in indoor public areas.

Voltage in Philippines is 240 Volts, and the standard frequency is 60Hz. You will require a voltage converter if you are carrying a device that does not accept 240 Volts at 60 Hertz

A Yellow Fever certificate is required by all passengers traveling to Philippines, if you are arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever. Travelling to Philippines carries certain risks and you should obtain immunisations from Hepatitis B, Typhoid, Rabies, Meningitis, Yellow Fever.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Beware of pick pockets in markets.

Don't trust beach hawkers selling excursions; these are not safe.

Rather arrange sightseeing through your hotel or from Thompsons.