TRAVEL INFORMATION

ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is made up of 7,107 islands and covers a land area of 115,739 sq m (299,764 sq km) with Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao as main island groups and Manila as capital city. Time zone is GMT+8 hours.

Population

The Philippine Commission on Population (PopCom, 2018) estimated the country’s population and annual population growth at 107 million and 1.69 percent. The largest island group of Luzon accounts for more than half of the entire population, with fishing and agriculture as common livelihood.

Language

Filipino and English are the two official languages. Filipino, which is based on Tagalog, is the national language while English is also widely used and is the medium of instruction in higher education. Eight (8) major dialects are spoken by majority of the Filipinos, namely: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinense.

Religion

Some 83 percent of Filipinos are Catholic. About 6 percent are Moslem. The rest are made up of smaller Christian denominations and Buddhists.

Climate

March to May is hot and dry. June to October is rainy. November to February is cool. Average temperatures: 78°F/25°C to 90°F/32°C; humidity is 77%. For updated weather information, click on http://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph.

Clothing

For SEARCA events, smart casual clothing is suitable during the day and recommended all year round because of the heat and humid temperature. Light, loose cotton clothing is best. Nylon and wool should be avoided. Sweaters (cotton, acrylic) are needed during cool season evenings, if visiting mountainous areas, or staying in centralized air-conditioned meeting rooms or halls throughout the day. For formal occasions, suit and tie are suitable business attire for men, minus the suit on warm days. Barong Tagalog, a native formal wear among Filipinos, is always acceptable. For women, a suit or blouse and skirt are best for daytime appointments. Filipiniana is also accepted for formal functions.

Currency

The Philippine monetary unit is the peso, denoted as PHP, divided into 100 centavos. The US dollar is the most recognized foreign currency but the international currencies and traveller’s checks may be exchanged at the airport, hotels, malls and other commercial establishments, banks, and authorized money changing shops accredited by the Central Bank of the Philippines. Banking hours is 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. International credit cards such as Visa, Diners Club, Bank Americard, Master Card, and American Express are accepted in major establishments.

Anti-Smoking Law in Enclosed Places, etc.

Section 5 of the Philippine Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003 (Republic Act 9211) prohibits the carrying of any lighted tobacco product in public vehicles, schools, health centers, elevators, cinemas, malls and in places where fire hazards are present. Smoking is also banned in recreational facilities for minors. Fines imposed on violators of this section range from PHP 500 to PHP 10,000. SEARCA facilities are no-smoking areas.
Airport Tax

1. Airport Terminal Fee of PHP750.00 (approximately $17.00).
2. Domestic travel: PHP 200

Place of payment: Airport of departure.

Exempt:
1. Children under 2 years of age.
2. Transit passengers remaining in the transit area and not leaving the airport.
3. Crew members.

VISA INFORMATION

Guidelines on the Entry of Temporary Visitors to the Philippines

Nationals from countries listed below who are traveling to the Philippines for business and tourism purposes are allowed to enter the Philippines without visas for a stay not exceeding thirty (30) days, provided they hold valid tickets for their return journey to port of origin or next port of destination and their passports valid for a period of at least six (6) months beyond the contemplated period of stay.

Nationals from the following countries are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a period of stay of thirty (30) days or less:

1. Andorra
2. Angola
3. Antigua and Barbuda
4. Argentina
5. Australia
6. Austria
7. Bahamas
8. Bahrain
9. Barbados
10. Belgium
11. Benin
12. Bhutan
13. Bolivia
14. Botswana
15. Brazil*
16. Brunei Darussalam
17. Bulgaria
18. Burkina Faso
19. Burundi
20. Cambodia
21. Cameroon
22. Cape Verde
23. Central African Republic
24. Chad
25. China
26. Chad
27. Colombia
28. Comoros
29. Congo
30. Congo
31. Cote d'Ivoire
32. Crete
33. Czech Republic
34. Democratic Republic of the Congo
35. Denmark
36. Djibouti
37. Dominica
38. Dominican Republic
39. Ecuador
40. El Salvador
41. Equatorial Guinea
42. Eritrea
43. Estonia
44. Ethiopia
45. Fiji
46. Finland
47. France
48. Gabon
49. Gambia
50. Germany
51. Ghana
52. Greece
53. Grenada
54. Guatemala
55. Guinea
56. Guinea-Bissau
57. Guyana
58. Haiti
59. Honduras
60. Hong Kong
61. Hungary
62. Iceland
63. Indonesia
64. Ireland
65. Israel*
66. Italy
67. Jamaica
68. Japan
69. Kenya
70. Kiribati
71. Kuwait
72. Lao People's Democratic Republic
73. Latvia
74. Lesotho
75. Liechtenstein
76. Lithuania
77. Luxembourg
78. Madagascar
79. Malawi
80. Malaysia
81. Maldives
82. Mali
83. Marshall Islands
84. Mauritania
85. Mauritius
86. Mexico
87. Moldova
88. Monaco
89. Mongolia
90. Morocco
91. Mozambique
92. Namibia
93. Nepal
94. Netherlands
95. Nicaragua
96. Niger
97. Nigeria
98. New Zealand
99. Niger
100. North Korea
101. Norway
102. Oman
103. Palau
104. Panama
105. Papua New Guinea
106. Paraguay
107. Peru
108. Poland
109. Portugal
110. Qatar
111. Romania
112. Russia
113. Rwanda
114. Saint Kitts and Nevis
115. Saint Lucia
116. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
117. San Marino
118. Sao Tome and Principe
119. Saudi Arabia
120. Senegal
121. Seychelles
122. South Africa
123. Spain
124. Sri Lanka
125. Slovakia
126. Slovenia
127. Solomon Islands
128. Somalia
129. South Africa
130. Spain
131. Suriname
132. Swaziland
133. Sweden
134. Switzerland
135. Thailand
136. Togo
137. Trinidad and Tobago
138. Tunisia
139. Turkey
140. Tuvalu
Brazilian and Israeli nationals are given fifty-nine (59) days stay based on existing agreements.

*The following are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding fourteen (14) days:

1. Holders of Hong Kong Special Administrative (SAR) passports.
2. Holders of Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) passports.

The following are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding seven (7) days:

1. Holders of Macau-Portuguese passports
2. Holders of Hong Kong British passports.