

EXPLORE!

Book with confidence

North Philippines Explorer

PHILIPPINES - TRIP CODE PIP

DISCOVERY



Why book this trip?

This Philippines adventure focusses on Luzon, the largest island of the archipelago. We explore the whole island discovering contrasting landscapes including incredible 2000 year-old rice terraces, cobbled Spanish colonial towns, white-sand beaches, volcano lakes and the teaming mega-city that is Manila.

- **Banaue rice terraces** - Discover UNESCO-listed 2000-year old rice terraces built the Ifugao people
- **Sagada** - Discover mysterious burial caves and ancient hanging coffins
- **Vigan** - Explore a little slice of Spain when taking a kalesa (horse-drawn carriage) through its narrow streets

					
INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 12 Lunch: 1	TRIP STAFF Explore Tour Leader Driver(s)	TRANSPORT Bus 4WD Boat	ACCOMMODATION 12 nights comfortable hotel	TRIP PACE: Moderate	GROUP SIZE: 10 - 16

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour in Manila

Arrive in the heart of Spanish activity in the Far East during the 16th century. Once known as the 'Pearl of the Orient', the city went on to witness Chinese insurrections, a British occupation, a war against the Spanish and the Americans, and some of the bitterest fighting of World War II. Today it is the capital of the Philippines and one of the most populous cities in the world.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to have dinner on the roof deck restaurant of the hotel. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Manila at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you will need to arrive into Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL), which is one hour's drive from our hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up in the lobby at 9am on day two.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to visit the National Museum of the Philippines Complex, which houses the Fine Arts Museum, Natural History Museum and Anthropology Museum. It is less than a 10-minute walk from the hotel, and admission is free.



ACCOMMODATION:
Bayleaf Intramuros Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - In Manila: explore the old town; free afternoon

This morning we take a tour of the city by bus visiting Rizal Park and the historic walled city of Intramuros, where we find San Agustin, the oldest church in the Philippines and a UNESCO World Heritage site. In nearby Binondo, one of the first Chinatowns in the world, we explore the network of alleys and side streets that lead us to Binondo Church, Santa Cruz Church and the old commercial district of Escolta where we'll see art deco structures, such as the Perez-Semanilio building, that survived World War II. The afternoon is free. The bus will return to the hotel, however you may wish to stay in Chinatown for lunch and further exploration of this colourful area, visiting one of the Taoist temples or mingling with the locals in the street markets, returning independently by taxi.



ACCOMMODATION:

Bayleaf Intramuros Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Drive to San Pablo City for rafting on Pandin Lake; drive to Tagaytay

We depart Manila this morning and head south to San Pablo City in Laguna Province, where we find ourselves amongst tropical foliage and coconut trees, scenery typical to this rural part of the Philippines. We board a large bamboo raft on Pandin Lake where we gently float across the lake. Those wishing to swim are welcome to take a dip. We enjoy an included lunch in traditional Filipino style - using our hands to eat food served on a banana leaf. Afterward we drive on to Tagaytay for an overnight stay.



ACCOMMODATION:

View Park Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 4 - From Tagaytay visit Taal Volcano; drive to Manila and fly to Laoag

This morning we drive to nearby Taal Volcano, one of the smallest in the world. The volcano itself is located on Taal Crater Island within a lake, a caldera formed by prehistoric eruptions, and is still active. We enjoy a boat trip across the lake to the island, where we trek up to the crater to be rewarded with beautiful panoramic views of the caldera lake. You may wish to treat yourself to a fresh coconut drink as you enjoy the scenery. We make our way back to the mainland where we will stop for a lunch break before driving back to Manila for our late afternoon flight north to Laoag. Total walking time is around three hours with a climb of 300 m.



ACCOMMODATION:
Java Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - In Laoag; free time with optional excursion to the beach for the day

We have a full free day to enjoy the many activities available nearby. Optional activities include an

excursion to Paoay Lake and the Baroque 18th century UNESCO Paoay Church, otherwise known as the Church of Saint Augustine - famous for its unusual architecture and bell tower built with coral stones; a Walk across the coastal La Paz sand dunes or an excursion to the tropical palm fringed sandy beaches of Pagudpud on the northern coast of Luzon, around an hour and half from Laoag.



ACCOMMODATION:
Java Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Drive to the colonial city of Vigan; free afternoon

We spend the morning driving south to the charming town of Vigan. One of the few Hispanic towns left in the Philippines. Vigan's historic heart was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1999. The best-preserved example of a Spanish colonial town in Asia, it is home to cobbled streets, colonial villas and the imposing grandeur of a 16th century cathedral. This afternoon is free for you to relax or head out and get a feel of the city ahead of our full day's sightseeing tomorrow.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Felicidad (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - In Vigan; full day sightseeing by horse drawn carriage and on foot

This morning we discover Vigan by kalesa (horse-drawn carriage). We see well-preserved old stone houses made from hard adobe stones such as the Syquia Mansion, a former presidential residence. We also visit the Burgos museum, a small ethnographic museum. Later we take a short drive to a pottery workshop known locally as Burnayan, where we learn about the ancient tradition of pottery making, dating from the 16th century. Here we can also browse shops that showcase hand woven fabrics and antiques. We head back to the city and on to Calle Don Mena Crisologo where we sample famous Ilocano delicacies such as the longaniza (sausage), empanada (meat pie) and bagnet (deep fried crispy pork crackling).



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Felicidad (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Drive to Sagada; discover burial caves and hanging coffins

After an early breakfast, we drive to Sagada, arriving in the early afternoon. We visit nearby Echo Valley to see the mysterious hanging coffins and Lumiang cave, a burial cave. The indigenous population have been burying their dead in coffins perched high on cliff faces for over 2000 years. No one knows exactly why this practice started but it is believed to both keep the preserved bodies safe from wild animals and take them one step closer to heaven.



ACCOMMODATION:

Masferre Country Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Drive to Banaue Rice Terraces; visit Bontoc Museum en route

We make our way this morning to Bontoc, a bustling market town and former capital of the Cordillera region. We will visit its small museum that has a number of interesting exhibits about the region's indigenous communities. We continue on to Banaue (1300 m). Carved into the mountains of Ifugao province, the 2000-year old rice terraces that occupy these high, fertile landscapes are considered by Filipinos to be the Eighth Wonder of the World. Our destination is the town of Banaue, our gateway into the remote villages of the Cordilleras. The Banaue Rice Terraces and recognised as a National Culture Treasure along with the rice terraces that are found in Mayoyao, Batad, Bangaan, Kiangan and Hungduan. It is believed that if these ancient terraces were laid end to end they would reach halfway around the planet! This afternoon we take a local jeepney (a converted jeep/bus) and drive out towards Hapao village. As we drive through the mountains we enjoy some spectacular views of the Cordilleras as we pass through a series of deep gorges and canyons to the Hapao Rice Terraces where we are rewarded with spectacular scenery of terraced rice fields cut through by the clear waters of the Hapao River. Total walking time is around two hours.



ACCOMMODATION:
Banaue Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - In Banaue; visit Hapao Rice Terraces

This morning, we ride a jeepney to Sadel, the starting point of our trek to the Batad and Banga-an rice terraces. The trek takes us along the terraces and up to a viewpoint that overlooks the terraces. From here the view is almost completely panoramic and some describe it as like looking down onto an ancient amphitheatre.



ACCOMMODATION:
Banaue Hotel (or similar)


Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Drive to Mabalacat; free late afternoon in rural surrounds

Today sees an early start for a full day drive to Mabalacat, our base for climbing Mount Pinatubo tomorrow morning. Located in the mountains that separate the central plains from the west coast of Luzon Island, Mount Pinatubo volcano was the scene of the second largest terrestrial eruption of the 20th century when, on June 15, 1991, it erupted with an intensity that was ten times that of the Mount St Helens volcano, a decade earlier. On arrival in Mabalacat later on today we have the opportunity to rest in tranquil rural surroundings.



ACCOMMODATION:
Abes Farm (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Climb Mount Pinatubo; drive to Manila

This morning we leave quite early for the drive to the Santa Juliana station, where we take 4x4 jeepneys to drive to the foot of the trail head , from where we trek to the volcano's crater - a relatively easy walk of usually around two hours each way, although in the months of March to May when there may be some erosion of the path due to rainfall, the roads are manually paved to allow access, making the jeepney drive longer and the trek shorter. After a lunch break we return by road to Manila for our final night.

Total walking time is around four hours. Please note that there are several stream crossings in ankle-deep water on this trek, so please be prepared for your footwear to get wet.



ACCOMMODATION:

Bayleaf Intramuros Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Tour ends in Manila

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Manila.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Manila at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL), which is 40 minutes from our hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Philippines

Climate

Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. The central and northern islands of the Philippines have a tropical monsoon type of climate with a single season of heavy rain. In most areas the wettest time is from July to October with rainfall being particularly heavy in the period August to October, when much of it comes from tropical typhoons in the South China Sea. Temperatures remain fairly high throughout the year (late 20's Celsius) except in the mountains which will be cooler.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+8	2 Pin Flat	Catholicism	Filipino

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Full day excursion to Pagupud Beach from Laoag 30US\$ pp (minimum 4 pax)

Clothing

The region is tropical (humid) and days can be very hot although evenings in the Cordillera mountains will be cooler. Casual, loose fitting clothes are the most practical. We recommend shorts, lightweight trousers and skirts, lightweight shirts and T-shirts. An umbrella is excellent in sticky, tropical conditions and a sunhat is essential.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes for the Mount Pinatubo and Banaue rice terrace walks. Trainers and/or sandals for other sightseeing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor suncream (at least factor 15), good quality sunglasses and a lip salve with sun protection.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$40.

International Departure Taxes

If you're leaving the country from Cebu Mactan airport you must pay a departure tax of 750 pesos in local currency or the equivalent in US dollars. From 1 February, there's no longer a departure tax at Manila airport.

Philippines

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£4	£6	£1.00 - 3.00	£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange	Where To Exchange
Peso	US Dollars	In all major towns and cities
ATM Availability	Credit Card Acceptance	Travellers Cheques
In all major towns and cities	In major restaurants and shops	Not recommended

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, 4WD, Boat

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information.[Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Philippines: Citizens of the UK, EU, Australia, US and Canada may enter for 21 days without a visa. However, you will need to provide a valid flight ticket to show that your return journey is within this time. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on exit from the Philippines. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trip's joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend

booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Philippines

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Although not compulsory travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Why book this trip

The Philippines have been listed in the Top Ten destinations to travel to by the Lonely Planet in 2015 and we believe this trip showcases the diversity of the landscape and culture of the island of Luzon. This trip is ideal for reasonably fit and adventurous travellers as there are a few early starts and some long days on the road as well as plenty of activity - including a volcano climb and walking amongst rice terraces. All in all this holiday is an unforgettable trip to one of the less visited South East Asian destinations.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS