

Visit Philippines

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Fascination is an understatement of the feeling that one gets by visiting Manila, a lively metropolis commanding a magnificent view of the world-famous Manila Bay and its golden sunset. Historic, bustling, awe-inspiring, the “Philippine Cosmopolitan Capital” is a blend of cultures and flavors that offers an endless serving of places to see, sights to behold, and experiences to never forget.

Right in the heart of Manila is found the “Walled City” – Intramuros. Constructed in 1571, during the period of Spain’s colonization of the Philippines, it comprised of European buildings and churches that have been replicated in different parts of the archipelago. It had been one of the world’s best preserved medieval cities. Here, dungeons and old churches share space with art galleries, theaters, a nature park.

At the center of Intramuros is the grand Manila Cathedral, the seat of the Catholic Archdiocese of Manila. Then there is San Agustin Church, the oldest stone church in Metro Manila and one of the four Philippine Baroque Churches inscribed in UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Marking its entrance at the northwestern tip is Fort Santiago, one of the oldest fortifications of Intramuros. Built in nearly 150 years through Filipino forced labor, it now houses a lush park with flowering trees, homing pigeons, and rides aboard horse-drawn carriages.

Manila is home to Malacañang Palace, the official residence of the highest chief executive of the country and one of the most historic structures in the Philippines, and the National Museum of the Philippines, the official repository and guardian of the Philippine cultural, historical, and natural heritage. Along the northern bank of the historic Pasig river is Chinatown, a symbol of the long history of Chinese presence in the Philippines long antedating the arrival of the Spaniards. Today it is an important trade and business center, and a primary bargain shopping destination.

Five-star hotels and restaurants, some of them housed in historic buildings, make the perfect party place in the city. The nightlife offers everything from dazzling cultural shows to futuristic discotheques, lively casinos, sensational entertainment lounges, and fashionable cafes. The popular districts of Malate and Ermita showcase a wild variety of restaurants, clubs, bars, cafes, art and antique shops – truly, the ultimate cosmopolitan paradise.

Manila is geographically advantaged. It is an hour or two away from full-day excursions to Cavite and Corregidor Island, Batangas, and Laguna, replete with exceptionally beautiful beaches, stunning views, and local color. The city is over 17 hours away by air from Los Angeles, less than five hours from Tokyo, and seven and a half hours from Sydney. Wherever you are, you are less than a day away from one of Asia’s greatest cities – Manila.

Language:

Filipino and English are the official language of the country

Electricity:

220 volts a/c is the common standard. 110 volts a/c is also used, especially in major hotels.

Time Zone:

Philippines is 8 hours ahead (PST(UTC+8)) of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Currency:

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Banking Hours:

Banks are open from 8 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

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%.

Transportation:

Taxi service is available to NAIA from all points of Metro Manila. Also, jeepney and bus routes are available to the airport. Both forms of transportation facilities connect all three NAIA terminals as well. Take only official, metered or pre-booked taxis. Taxis charge around 150-200 Pesos (6USD-8USD) to central Manila hotels. It will take about 20 minutes to one hour for the trip, depending on traffic. Many of the major hotels run cars which you can book in advance, or you can look for a hotel representative in Arrivals. The cost is around 750-950 Pesos (30USD-38USD).

Manila airport is also connected to the Manila Light Rail Transit System (LRT) by a two-kilometer taxi ride to Baclaran station. In the future, with the extension of the existing Yellow Line, a new station, Manila International Airport station, is set to connect the airport, albeit still indirectly, to the LRT.

Tipping/Taxes

Many establishments already incorporate Service Charge (depicted by SC) in bills. Tipping independently is optional. Goods are charge with 12% value-added tax.

Other useful Information can also be found at www.tourism.gov.ph, www.manila-airport.net

