



Beaches, Culture, and Play in the Philippines A Women's Travel Circle to Manila, Palawan, & Bohol

January 3-15, 2025

January 3 Mabuhay Manila! (Dinner)

Today you will make your way from the US to Manila: Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL) We will arrange for a transfer to our hotel the Seda Manila Bay so please arrive by 3:00pm.

Our welcome orientation friendship session meeting starts at 5 pm. Enjoy a Cocktail or nonalcoholic juice as we get to know each other!

Afterwards we'll enjoy a Traditional Welcome Dinner.

Overnight Manila

January 4 Exploring Manila: Women's Voices to Karaoke! (Breakfast, Lunch) Manila

We're eager to get out to the islands but we'll start our trip in Manila, the political, financial, and commercial capital city of the Philippines for 3 nights and 2 full days. Manila is one of the most densely populated cities in the world so there's a ton to see, to eat, to buy, and even to sing about! ;

9:00am We are off for our City Tour to learn about the incredible history of the Philippines, from Pre-Colonial and the era of Spanish Colonialism & Catholicism, to contemporary times. We will start at Fort Santiago, 1593, which is located in the ancient walled city of Intramuros. We will visit the famous Rizal Shrine which is dedicated to Rizal. The fort has seen history shape the city right from the Spanish conquest to World War II. Next we are off to the San Agustin Church, built-in 1586. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to its striking Baroque architecture. We will see other sites on the bus as we make our way to lunch, then the Manila Cathedral. The Basilica was originally built in 1571, and the current structure is in its eighth epoch. The cathedral is a stellar example of Neo-Romanesque architecture.

We end our exploration in Manila with lunch then a visit (& yes shopping!) at Saffy Handicrafts, a workshop to create employment for women and young adults in marginalized areas of Manila. They manage a workshop in Manila that specializes in capiz shell products.

3:30 pm This afternoon we have a very special GFC panel to meet some local women! Three Filipina will each share 10 -15 minutes of what they think makes women from the Philippines special/the contribution that Philippine women can make in the world, and what

some of the challenges are that they believe they face that are unique to them. Then we'll have the opportunity to ask them any questions for about 30 minutes.

5:00pm Free time to rest, explore & dine with your travel GFC buddy!

8:00pm Optional: GFC Karaoke Party! We can't come all the way to one of the capitals of Karaoke and not partake! What better way to immerse in the culture than to sing along! And no worries if you're not a singer, we can do some group singing and cheer each other on.

Overnight Seda Manila Bay

January 5 Herbalism, Markets & Street Food (Breakfast, Dinner)

10:00am Learn about herbalism in the Philippines as we meet with a representative of the Institute of Herbal Medicine. Herbal remedies, proven for their medicinal benefit, along with popular liniments have gained the trust of Filipino moms through the years.

11:30am Visit Quiapo Market, the market is a labyrinth of stalls and vendors, offering a wide array of goods ranging from fresh produce, meats and seafood to traditional Filipino snacks, sweets and delicacies. Free time to shop & have lunch.

3:00pm Time to rest at the hotel, swim or get a massage.

6:00pm Dinner is fun tonight as we will have Filipino Street food at various places.

Overnight Seda Manila Bay

January 6 Palawan: Cooking in El Nido (Breakfast, Dinner)

Palawan

We're off to Palawan Island where we'll spend 3 days/3 nights in El Nido and then 2 days/2 nights at Puerto Princesa. Known for its pristine natural landscapes, this island is a true paradise filled with unspoiled beaches, crystal clear waters, limestone cliff's, underground rivers, and mangrove forests. There's a reason it's been named "World's Best Island" by several travel magazines repeatedly over the years!

Morning check out of our hotel. We are off to Palawan Island– less than a 90 minute flight. We will start our visit in El Nido, well known for its stunning limestone cliffs, white sandy beaches, and crystal-clear waters! It is one of the most outstanding seascapes in the Philippines.

2:00pm We will settle into our hotel & have time to enjoy the beach & swim in our pool.

4:00pm Depart resort and proceed to El Kusina Cooking Class and dinner.

8:00pm Return to your resort.

Overnight at Huni Lio

January 7 Island Strolling & Hopping! (Breakfast, Lunch)

8:30am Depart resort and proceed to the port for our full day Boating Excursion. Today we are island hopping with lots of opportunities for swimming & snorkeling. The crystal-clear seas offer such great views underwater– it's not unusual to encounter dolphins, sea turtles, and even the rare sea cows! Islands to be visited includes Big Lagoon, Payong Payong Beach, Secret Lagoon, Seven Commando, Shimizu Island.

12:00pm Picnic lunch.

4:00pm Return to our resort. Evening is free to dine, rest & restore.

5:00pm Optional evening stroll! Join Shasta if you want to stroll along the coast to watch the sunset of Lio beach.

Overnight accommodation at Huni Lio

January 8 Lagoon Kayaking & Waterfall Hikes (Breakfast, Lunch)

6:30am Early breakfast

7:30am Depart resort and proceed to boat loading area for Cadlao Lagoon where today we will leisurely enjoy kayaking and stunning scenery. A picnic lunch is provided today.

1:00pm Bike Ride & Waterfall Hike: We will ride bikes about 30 min north of town Nagkalit-Kalit falls. From there we will walk a few kilometers through rice fields, jungle, and also some small streams, so bring shoes that can get wet! Then we get to swim in the fresh waters of the beautiful natural pool!

Evening is free to dine, rest & restore

Overnight accommodation at Huni Lio

January 9 From San Vicente to The Batak (Breakfast, Lunch)

7:00am Early breakfast in the resort.

8:00am Check out of our hotel to make our way to the middle of the Palawan Island to its capital city: Puerto Princesa. We will stop for lunch in San Vicente and enjoy its tranquility. We can stretch, swim & take in the morning sun on Long Beach which holds the title of being the longest white beach in the whole Philippines. The 14-kilometer shoreline is unspoiled with little to no establishments on its shoreline. We will have free time for lunch here then shower & continue our drive.

2:00pm Learn about the Batak nation, as we visit a village & exchange with the community. The Batak people are believed to have descended from the earliest wave of human populations that crossed the land bridges connecting the Philippine islands with mainland Asia up to 50,000 years ago. We will see the culture and way of life of tribal people that are now diminishing in the mountains in Palawan. This super special cultural experience involves a 90 min walk through the forest.

Evening is free to dine, rest & restore. Or some of us can leave at 10 pm for the Before & After Club, an after hours nightclub with an alfresco Moon Lounge overlooking the beach. Before & After club is a part of the Artaplaya "Life Playground" project with a focus on arts, alternative and electronic music.

Overnight Princesa Garden Resort

January 10 The Wonderful Underground River Tour (Breakfast, Lunch)

6:30am Early breakfast in the hotel

7:30am Depart hotel for Sabang! This is another big day doing one of the most amazing things to experience in the Philippines! Experience this UNESCO World Heritage Site as we cruise down the river in the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park. It's considered one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature as it's the world's longest navigable underground river stretching over 8.2 km.

1:00pm Lunch at a local restaurant and enjoy some time to swim on Sabang Beach before we return to Puerto Princesa.

Evening is free to dine, rest & restore.

Overnight Princesa Garden Resort

January 11 Bohol via Cebu (Breakfast, Dinner)

Bohol

Did you know there are over 7,641 islands in the Philippines? (Only 2,000 are inhabited.) So we have to go visit more! Cebu is the largest island in the Visayas group of islands and is located in the center of the country. We'll spend our final 4 days/4 nights here where they boast incredible coastline, beautiful waterfalls and the famous Chocolate hills!

9:00am Check out of our hotel. Transfer to Tagbilaran Airport for Puerto Princesa to Cebu flight on PR2348 11:50am. Arriving Cebu at 1:00pm. Transfer to Cebu port for your 2-hours ferry ride to Tagbilaran, Bohol.

Upon arrival in Bohol transfer to Bohol Beach Club, check-in and enjoy dinner.

Overnight accommodation Bohol Beach Resort

January 12 Bohol Chocolate Hills & Tarsiers/Countryside Tour (Breakfast, Lunch)

8:30am Today we will take you on a tour of the region's most inspiring and famous sights. We will visit it Baclayon Church & Museum. This church is dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, one of Bohol's greatest sacred treasures. This coral stone building was completed in 1727.

Next up we will visit the Tarsier Sanctuary, delve into the mystical world of tarsiers, as you encounter these tiny, wide-eyed primates in their natural habitat.

Then we are off for a Loboc River Cruise, glide through the heart of Bohol on a relaxing river cruise. On to Chocolate Hills, a surreal landscape of symmetrical mounds that transform into varying hues, creating a panoramic masterpiece.

Proceed to Lasang Farm, visit a picturesque cacao farm, where the secrets of chocolate craftsmanship unfold. Engage in the art of "tableya" making, from the cultivation of cacao trees to the intricate process of transforming beans into luscious hot chocolate drink tea locally called "sikwate". Indulge your senses with the rich aromas and flavors of freshly crafted chocolate tablets.

5:00pm Return to the resort to rest and enjoy free time for dinner.

Overnight accommodation at Bohol Beach Resort

January 13 Dolphin Watching and Balicasag Turtle Encounter (Breakfast, Lunch)

7:00am Early departure from the resort so we can arrive early to board an outrigger boat for Dolphin watching then proceed to Balicasag Island, enjoy swimming and snorkeling with the resident sea turtle of the island. Lunch in the boat.

3:00pm Return to the resort where the rest of the day is at your leisure to enjoy the beach or get massage at the resort.

Evening Dinner is free.

Overnight accommodation at Bohol Beach Resort

January 14 Can-umantad Falls and Cadpdapan Rice Terraces (Breakfast, Dinner)

9:00 am This morning we are off for an expedition with the thundering applause of majestic waterfalls at the Can-umantad Falls. Feel the cool mist on your face as you stand in awe of the sheer power and beauty of these cascading marvels.

12:00pm Lunch break (we will have a reservation and you can order off the menu) then we will proceed to Cadapdapan Rice Terraces, where the landscape transforms into a mesmerizing melody of lush green tiers. Learn about the ancient agricultural techniques that have shaped these

