

PEARLS OF THE ORIENT

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

ITINERARY

TOUR PREPARATION

PRICING & ACCOMMODATIONS



Date

February 25 – March 9, 2019

Price

\$4,200

Duration

13 DAYS

Availability

Open

BOOK NOW

About This Tour

When Spanish conquistadors came to the Philippines in the 16th century, one Spanish captain dubbed the country the “Pearl of the Orient.” Visitors soon learn this honorary title is both literal (the Philippines is a pearl-producing nation) and metaphorical, blessed as it is with abundant natural wonders. The verdant mountainsides, the deep jungles, the white sands beaches, limestone sentinels along the coast and crystal blue seas are all precious jewels to the visitor, and the archipelago numbering 7,000 islands is itself like a necklace wrapping around this portion of the South China Sea.

With so many islands, no one trip can ever possibly hope to encompass everything the nation offers, but this tour features some of the best highlights, taking in its rich history, fascinating cultures and natural beauty. An added bonus is the fact that the Philippines is the third largest English-speaking country in the world, dating back to 1898 when the country became the United States’ only overseas colony and later served as allies during World War II. We operated our first Philippines tour in January 2018, and it was such a wonderful experience that we are happy to offer this beautiful destination to our Toto adventurers once again!

Tour highlights

- Manila, capital of the Philippines
- Intramuros, Manila’s Colonial Walled City *
- Taal Volcano
- European architecture of Vigan *
- 17th century Sinking Bell Tower
- Island of Palawan
- Archipelago island hopping
- Puerto Princesa Subterranean River *

*** UNESCO World Heritage Sites**

ITINERARY

Monday, February 25, 2019

Welcome to Manila

Arrange your flights to arrive today on Luzon, the largest and most populous island in the Philippines. Manila is the country's largest city and ranks as the world's most densely populated metropolis with more people per square mile than super cities Kolkata, Mumbai, Dhaka, Paris, Shanghai or Tokyo. The first impression of the city is one of controlled chaos, with the city serving as the country's center of commerce, banking, tourism, retail, real estate, new media, fashion, theatre and the arts. A driver transfers you from the airport to our centrally located hotel, where the group meets for the first time over drinks followed by our Welcome Dinner in the hotel's restaurant. ***(Welcome Dinner included)***



[Click to enlarge](#)

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

Manila Sightseeing

Founded in 1571, Manila is where the Orient meets the Occident, and the colonial era meets the modern age. Intramuros, literally translated as “within the walls,” is a massive stone fortress city complex comprised of European buildings and churches, which were later replicated in different parts of the Philippines archipelago. UNESCO designated this as a World Heritage Site in 1993. On our sightseeing tour, we will also Rizal Park, dedicated to the country’s national hero Jose Rizal, a 58-hectare reserve with lagoon, dancing fountains, both Japanese and Chinese gardens, and the National Museum. **(All Meals)**



Intramuros Cathedral

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Taal Trek and Heritage Tour

Located 35 miles south of Manila, Taal Volcano is one of the Philippines’ unique natural sites. It is a semi-active volcano surrounded by a lake within the caldera of another prehistoric volcano. Our trek begins on the volcanic island’s shore and ends at the rim of the larger, outside caldera rim. After lunch at a nearby restaurant, we travel back in time by visiting the Taal Heritage Town, which is a fine example of sustainable development, showcasing the distinct Philippine lifestyle, culture, arts and cuisines, despite the urbanization and modernization of its neighboring towns and cities. We return to our Manila hotel for another overnight stay. **(Breakfast / Lunch)**



Thursday, February 28, 2019

Flight to Laoag / Vigan City

After breakfast this morning, we check out of our hotel and transfer to the airport for our mid-day flight from Manila to Laoag in the north-western region on the island of Luzon. We board a motorcoach and make the 1.5-hour drive to the City of Vigan on the west coast. The evening is free to explore on your own, find dinner in a nearby restaurant, or just relax at our hotel. *(Breakfast)*



Laoag Cathedral

Friday, March 1, 2019

Vigan Sightseeing

Vigan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, renowned for the pristine condition of its 15th century colonial architecture. Walking along the cobblestone streets, past colorful old stone houses and amidst horse drawn carriages is to feel like having taking a step back in time. We will visit the Conservation Complex, see how they make traditional weaving, and visit the Bantay Church. Overnight in Vigan. *(Breakfast)*



Vigan City

Saturday, March 2, 2019

Return Flight to Manila

We depart Vigan this morning and drive back to Laoag, the capital of the Ilocos Norte region. Saint Augustine Church here, more commonly known as Paoay Church, is both a National Cultural Treasure and a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its enormous buttresses designed to protect the structure from massive earthquakes. We will also visit St. Williams Cathedral and the Sinking Bell Tower, which is dropping by an inch a year into the sandy soil. After a stop at the Ferdinand Marcos Museum, we will have lunch at a local restaurant. Our late afternoon flight takes us back to Manila for an overnight stay at our airport hotel. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Sinking Bell Tower

Sunday, March 3, 2019

Fly to Palawan

Enjoy breakfast this morning at our hotel, before transferring to the airport for our morning flight to the island of Palawan. Upon arrival, we make the 45-minute drive through rural countryside to Nacpan Beach. We have time to enjoy this 2.5-mile stretch of white sand beach to swim, sunbathe or laze under the shade of a coconut tree. Enjoy a barbecue lunch on the beach. Later on, we trek through the jungle, crossing some streams and climbing paths, to reach Nagkalit-Kalit Falls, where you can swim in the cool crystal clear pool. In late afternoon, we drive to the town of El Nido to check in to our hotel. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



El Nido

Monday, March 4, 2019

Island Hopping

Embark on a full-day excursion doing some island hopping in Bacuit Bay off El Nido. On Miniloc Island we find a Big Lagoon Island with dense tropical jungle that comes right to the shoreline; a small lagoon ringed by limestone formations, which you reach by swimming through a hole in the rock; a Secret Lagoon reached by swimming through a hidden crevice in the rock face. We visit Shimizu Island for a barbecue lunch and a chance to snorkel among large schools of brightly colored fish. Finally, we cross back to Palawan and visit 7 Commandos Beach which has a little beach bar, the perfect place for cocktail hour in late afternoon. We return to our hotel in El Nido for a free evening. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Island Hopping Lunch

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

Snorkel and Kayak / Beach Hopping

Take a half day tour to Cadlao Island close to El Nido and a great spot for snorkeling or kayaking. After exploring the beautiful lagoon there, we visit some other prime spots such as Pasandigan Beach, Nat Nat Beach, Bucal Beach, and Paradise Beach. These beaches are great for swimming, sunbathing, or more kayaking and snorkeling. A picnic lunch will be served on the beach. We head back to El Nido town in mid-afternoon. *(Breakfast)*



Island hopping big lagoon

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Sabang Beach

After breakfast, we check out of our resort and depart the El Nido area. We drive south into the island's interior, stopping along the way in Taytay Town to see the 17th century Fort San Isabelle. We arrive in Sabang in late afternoon or early evening. Overnight in Sabang. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Fort San Isabelle Taytay

Thursday, March 7, 2019

Underground River

The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River is one of the longest navigable underground waterways in the world, winding its way for 5 miles underneath a mountain range and coming out in the South China Sea. The entire area is a national park encompassing limestone karst formations, intact old-growth forest and distinctive wildlife. The River and its environs became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. Afterward our boating adventure, enjoy lunch before taking a paddleboat to explore the nearby mangrove forests. The rest of day is free back at our resort. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Underground River

Friday, March 8, 2019

Puerto Princesa

This morning we depart Sabang and head to the airport. En route, we enjoy a sightseeing tour of Puerto Princesa to see the City Hall, the blue colored Cathedral, Eulalia Park, and Plaza Cuartel, a restored ruin of a Japanese military base built during the World War II. The tour continues to the St Monica area where we visit the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center. Finally, visit Mitra's Ranch for a panoramic view of Puerto Princesa. After the tour, our group transfers to the airport for our afternoon flight to Manila. On arrival in Manila, we check in to our hotel and later enjoy our Farewell Dinner and our final overnight stay. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Farewell to Paradise

Saturday, March 9, 2019

Departure

The tour officially ends following breakfast this morning. Latest check-out is noon today. If you book a flight departing very late this evening, you will want to extend your hotel reservation for an additional day (indicate on reservation form). Our hotel is connected to the airport through underground concourses, so you will make your own way to the terminals for your departing flights home. *(Breakfast)*



Manila Skyline At Sunset

TOUR PREPARATION

Entry Requirements - To visit the Philippines, U.S. Citizens only need a passport, valid for at least six months past the time of your visit. No visas are required to enter the Philippines for stays not exceeding 30 days.

Immunizations and Health - No immunizations are currently required for travel to the Philippines, but it is wise to have your inoculations up-to-date. Is your tetanus booster current?

Exit Requirements - The Philippine Travel Tax is PHP1,620.00 (approximately \$35.00). All passengers departing from the Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport are expected to pay the Airport Terminal Fee of PHP750.00 (approximately \$17.00). No one is exempt from paying the Airport Terminal Fee. Departure fees are not included in the tour price.

Making Travel Arrangements to the Philippine Islands

On this tour, international airfare is NOT included. You will need to get your international air to/from Manila. We encourage you to work with Steven Goldberg at Frosch Travel in Chicago, who knows the best flights to get you to Manila.

Four internal flights within the Philippines are included in the price of this trip.

You will need to arrive in Manila by 4:00 pm on February 25, 2019. Depart from Manila at any convenient time on March 9, 2019.

Steven Goldberg / Frosch Travel

Toll-Free in USA: 1-800-323-1276

International guests, please call +1-312-371-9686

Email: steven.goldberg@frosch.com

When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. If you leave a message on Steven's voice mail, he will return your call promptly. He will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate.

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible we often must turn away last minute registrants because we relinquish hotel space and air reservations 8 – 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

For passport / visa assistance, call Marc Gilland / Passport & Visa Advisors

Direct: 704-246-6373

Toll-Free in USA: 1-844-318-1765

Email: mgilland@passportvisadvisors.com

Skype: marc.gilland

If you would like assistance with passport renewal for this tour, please contact Marc via email, phone or Skype. When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. Marc and his direct staff have worked with Toto Tours for years and we recommend his services for our client's passport and visa needs. Marc is readily available and typically will respond to emails promptly, after hours as well.

What to Bring

The Philippines lie several hundred miles north of the equator, but it is in a tropical region of Southeast Asia so it is always warm. In February and March, average daily temperatures in the areas we visit range from a low of 70 degrees at night to highs of 87 degrees during daytime. You won't need a suit jacket or tie, as the tour is informal and dinner attire will be casual. Try to pack light and bring only one piece of luggage plus your carry-on. Create mix and match outfits, and think about layering! Pack any medications you require in a carry-on bag and leave expensive jewelry at home.

Suggested Packing List:

- Proof of citizenship. Passport required.
- Comfy walking shoes for day tours and walks.
- Sandals for the boat and beach. Rock-hopper slip-on shoes are helpful during the island-hopping tour, as we jump out of our boat to wade ashore and there can be rocks.
- Polo shirts / T-shirts (8 - 10).
- Long sleeved shirts (3-4) for sun protection.
- Shorts (1 or 2 pairs).
- Lightweight long pants for dinners.
- Jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt for cool evenings.
- Sunscreen / lip balm / sunglasses / sun hat.
- Mosquito repellent, with Deet.
- Personal toiletries.
- Swimsuit.
- Camera, lots of digital memory, extra batteries.
- Ziploc Bags (sandwich size for documents, gallon size for wet items or toiletries).
- Electrical Adaptor: electricaloutlet.org **Click here** to see examples and obtain more information
- A good book for the long flights.

Money Matters

The official currency of the Philippines is the Philippine peso (PHP), which is made up of 100 centavos. Travelers can exchange currency at banks and exchange agencies in the major cities, and will usually be expected to present a passport. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are accepted in larger establishments. As of April 24, 2018 the exchange rate was \$1 U.S to 52.2 PHP. [Click here](#) to see the current exchange rate.

Tipping in the Philippines: Tipping is not obligatory in the Philippines as the country does not have a tradition of receiving tips, but in some localities it is becoming more frequent. In restaurants, you may give a tip if the service is good (about 10% of the bill) and no service fee has already been added to the bill. At fast food eateries, your spare change is appreciated. To hotel bellboys, maids and cleaning staff and to taxi drivers, give at least the equivalent of \$1 U.S. (50 PHP) per day per person. We will offer a group tip to our guides and drivers, and more details will be provided before departure.

The Toto Spirit

Toto Tours provides Adventure Travel Experiences as differentiated from tours in the traditional sense. Adventure Travel allows (even encourages) you to be an active participant. Adventurers can be identified by certain traits. They are:

- fun-loving optimists who have a sense of humor and accentuate the positive;
- good natured realists who are willing to accept situations as they exist;
- undaunted by the unexpected, like occasional delays or bad weather;
- willing to forego some of the amenities we normally take for granted;
- eager to try new things & test limits;
- punctual;
- not whiners!

Join us in the paradise of the Philippine Islands! If you have any questions, please write to us at: tototours@gmail.com or call +1-773-274-8686.

Travel Insurance

We recommend you purchase travel insurance with Travel Guard to cover for unforeseen events prior to and during your trip. Please follow the link below or call us for more information.

Travel Guard®

[LEARN MORE](#)

**Cover your trip with a Travel Guard
travel insurance plan.**



PRICING

Tour prices per person

Price: \$4,200 in double occupancy hotel accommodations.

Private Room: \$900 additional, for a total tour price of \$5,100. (Paying a single supplement is not required. Toto Tours will try to match you with a roommate if you are traveling alone and prefer to share a room. If this is not possible, a single supplement will be applied to your reservation before the final payment date.)

Deposit: \$600

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance: \$3,600 double / \$4,500 single

Remaining Balance Due: December 8, 2018 (80 days prior to departure) (Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Note: The tour price does not include bank service charges for processing credit card payments, and assumes that the balance of the tour price will be paid by check. If you would like to pay the final balance with a credit card, a 4% service charge will be applied. Let us know on your reservation form if you wish to pay by credit card, and we will adjust your invoice accordingly.

Included: 12 nights hotel accommodations; hotel breakfasts daily plus Welcome & Farewell Dinners; other meals as listed in the itinerary; ground transportation in climate controlled motorcoach; four internal flights within the Philippines; airport transfer at the beginning of the tour (complimentary hotel shuttle at end of tour); sightseeing activities and entrances as listed in the itinerary. This is a fully escorted tour, with guides added during tours.

Not Included: International airfare to/from Manila, Philippines (MNL airport code); ground transportation for sightseeing on your own (taxis, local guides, etc.); meals and optional activities not specifically listed in the itinerary; camera fees; alcoholic beverages; insurance; laundry, telephone calls, faxes, or any other expenses of a personal nature. Tips to drivers and guides and other conveyance attendants are not included; tipping guidelines for our group tips will be provided prior to departure.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Click hotel name to read description

- Manila (3 nights): **City Garden Grand Hotel**
- Vigan (2 nights): **Luna Hotel**
- Manila Airport (1 night): **Belmont Hotel**
- El Nido (3 nights): **Casa Kalaw Resort**
- Sabang (2 nights): **Sheridan Beach Resort**
- Manila Airport (1 night): **Belmont Hotel**