



100 Tips for Foreigners Planning to Visit the Philippines

by: Mark Conrad

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1. Do your research.

If you are traveling to the Philippines for the first time, then you should do your homework by gathering information about the country's culture, learn more about the language, check out the key places to visit, and more. There are many reliable resources on the internet about the Philippines like [It's More Fun in the Philippines](#) and [Plan Your Trip Now](#). You can also read Lonely Planet and other guidebooks. By obtaining adequate information about your destination, you can be assured of a stress-free trip whether it would be for business or leisure.

2. Book early.

Booking at the last minute may happen if you are travelling for business purposes. However, if it is for a vacation with your family, then you should book it ahead of time especially during peak season. Booking a trip ahead of time does not only mean saving more money but also valuable time especially when your itinerary is jam-packed with activities.

3. Inform trusted relatives or friends about your trip.

Aside from informing relatives or friends about your trip, consult those who've been to the Philippines as they can give you some insights about the key places, food, security conditions, and other important details. Always provide your closest relatives your flight and itinerary schedules, your hotel room (or other accommodations) details, and contact numbers (especially if you will be using the local mobile prepaid cards). This way, they would know where or how to get in touch with you, just in case something comes up back home.

Join the [#PHtravelers Slack forum](#) so that other travelers can help you plan your itinerary and provide travel tips.

4. Know the travel requirements for your destination.

Some countries may require only a passport, while others would also require visas. In the case of the Philippines, [most foreign visitors don't need visas to enter](#). Depending on your country of origin, you may be given temporary visas anywhere from 7 days (if you have a Portuguese passport issued in Macau) up to 59 days (if you are a Brazilian or Israeli citizen). Most other nationals are given 30-day visas. To be double-sure, contact the local [Philippine consulate or embassy in your country](#).

5. Get vaccinated promptly.

There are some countries that may require you to get vaccinated for certain diseases, before granting you access to their land. In the case of the Philippines, no vaccinations are required in most areas. But if you plan to visit a malaria-infested area, you should consider getting shots as a preventive against it. Your physician might also advise you to get immunized against Hepatitis A, B, and C. Talk to him about it, and get the necessary shots weeks before your trip, if possible. Here's a list of [CDC recommended vaccines](#) depending on the type of traveler you are.

6. Inform your banks about your travel plans.

Telling your banks about your travel plans can prevent you from experiencing inconveniences and embarrassing situations when it comes to using your credit or debit cards in a foreign land like the Philippines. This is because some banks may put a fraud hold on your cards once they realize that the cards were used overseas. By informing them where you would go, they can put a note on your account, so that you can continue using your cards, without hassles. If you have some payment obligations such as utility bills that might fall due during your trip, arrange for an automatic debit or ask your payees if you can just issue them post-dated checks.

7. Bring a small notebook that fits into your pocket.

With a small notebook or notepad, you can easily jot down important things that you need to remember along the way. It will also be great for recording and keep track of your trip expenses in real time. You want to make sure that it fits into your pocket, so that you won't have to hold it in your hands all the time.

8. Record important numbers.

When you travel, there are lots of important numbers that you want to take note of. Some of which would be your itinerary confirmation number, your flight number, your hotel room number, your flight seat number, as well as a bunch of phone numbers you may need. Write them all down in a notepad or a piece of paper that you can fit into your wallet, so that you can easily refer to it. Store phone numbers of hotels and tour guides (if any) on your mobile phone directory.

9. Double check your health insurance coverage.

Weeks prior to traveling, it is important to check your health insurance coverage. This should be done in order to see whether it can provide you coverage while traveling. If it does not, then checking it early would provide you time to look for an alternative option, so that you would be covered just in case.

10. Pack light.

It is better if you can bring a small carry-on bag with you during the flight, most especially if the flight is a long one. This is where you can store light clothing, toiletries, gadgets, important documents, and food. For going around the islands, use a carry-on bag instead of a larger piece of luggage that you have to check in. Claiming baggage sometimes takes a while, especially if several flights arrive at almost the same time.

11. Back up your computer files.

If you have lots of important files on your computer, then you should back them up prior to leaving. This way, you wouldn't be risking losing them while you are traveling. Make sure though that you keep your back-ups at a safe place (such as a flash drive or an external storage site), so that no one would be able to gain access to them.

12. Sign up with deal sites.

There are lots of deal sites available today and they often include travel, wellness and leisure packages. To ensure that you would be one of the first persons to know about their travel deals and promotions, then sign up for their newsletter. By doing that, you are increasing your chances of getting the best deals.

Here are some of the deal sites that I've tried before: [Deal Grocer](#), [Groupon](#), [Metrodeal](#), [Ensogo](#), and [Cash Cash Pinoy](#).

I would suggest that you do your research on companies offering a particular deal and read their reviews.

13. Access blogs and sites about travel tips.

In the Philippines, local travel agencies and tour groups usually post their trip packages online. Accessing more web pages about Philippine travel can provide you with more insights, especially when it comes to enjoying your trip. Lots of these websites offer important information about certain places you can visit in the country. With that, you would be able to plan out your trip better by knowing what attractions to go to, and what places to visit to enjoy sumptuous meals. Many online agencies already have set packages with complete trip schedules, as well as, pre-arranged hotel and meal accommodations.

14. Sign up for frequent flyer programs.

Whether you are a frequent traveler or not, signing up for airline frequent flyer points may provide you with lots of advantages. The more points you are able to rack up,

the more money you may be able to save in your future travel plans. Just make sure that your account is duly updated with your frequent flyer points, so that you can take advantage of redeeming the points as needed. Local airlines like the [Philippine Airlines](#) and [Cebu Pacific](#) have their own frequent flyer programs too.

15. Keep your passport up to date.

Since the [Philippines does not require visas](#), it is too easy for would-be visitors to neglect checking the expiry dates of their passports. Always make it a point to check the date because most countries like the Philippines do require that your passport must be valid for at least six months before you are allowed to enter. This will save you embarrassing moments at the immigration gate or worse yet, being sent back home.

16. Compare prices before booking flights.

When it comes to booking your flights, do not purchase the one that you come across immediately. Shop around first, until you can find the best rates. Keep in mind that there are [several airlines](#) sites you can book your flights from; and, they are in constant competition against each other, which means that they are trying their best to come up with excellent deals. There are even sites like [skyscanner.com](#) that let you view and compare several airline ticket offers right on one screen for convenience.

17. Check local weather conditions.

The Philippines has a very erratic [weather](#) pattern where it may be bright and sunny for a few hours, and then stormy later on, right on the same day. Almost all year (except from December to March), the country is visited by at least 20 typhoons and tropical depressions. Airports close and flights typically cancel during inclement weather, so it's best to check the weather conditions to know when to fly in or out of the country. And do not cut your flight schedule too close, especially during the rainy season. Be prepared for any flight delays, cancellations, and rescheduling due to weather. Being knowledgeable about the weather conditions will also help you make sound decisions about your travel attire. Here's the [Philippines' Weather Bureau website](#) for your reference.

18. Be conscious of weight limits and baggage allowances.

Each airline has its own policies about weight and size limits of baggage. Make sure you are using bags with dimensions that are within the maximum requirements. Before finally locking up your bags, be sure to weigh them first to avoid overweight charges. These can really rack up a lot of dollars.

19. Select your seats early.

Selecting your flight seats can actually be done days before your actual flight. Although this may depend on the airlines, most of them offer seat selection online. Therefore, instead of waiting for the day to take the flight, select your favorite seats online ahead of time, so that you would have utmost comfort in traveling. This also assures that you will be seated next to your friends or family members during the flight.

20. Double check the travel and hotel websites' reputations.

If it is your first time to book online, or at a particular website, don't forget to double check if it is really a legitimate site to purchase an airline ticket from. One way of doing it is to see if its web address starts with "https://" which basically means that it is secure. Aside from that, you should also check out reviews about it.

21. Have your credit card handy when booking online.

It is actually better if you the card is in front of you when you book it, since most sites would ask not just for the credit card number but also the last three digits at the back of your card, the name that appears on your card, its expiry date, as well as your billing address.

22. Make sure you have enough balance on your debit card account.

In case you're one of the people who prefer to use debit cards in booking your flight and hotel reservations, make sure that your bank account has enough balance. Also check with your bank if your account has a daily spending limit.

23. When in doubt, call or email.

If you want to feel more secure in booking your flight and hotel reservations, you can just call the hotline number of the site you are looking at. One advantage you can gain from that is the agent may be able to provide you with more options. Aside from that, if you have special requests for the hotel or flight reservations, he may also be able to process it for you. Also ask the hotel and airline for written details about your reservations.

24. Make a checklist of things to bring.

It's too easy to forget important things like medications and sunglasses, especially when you are packing a lot of items. Make sure you won't miss anything out by writing

out a list of these necessary items. And keep the same [checklist](#) with you so that you won't have difficulties packing up for the trip home.

25. Print or keep a copy of your itinerary.

If you booked your tours through the Internet, do not forget to print out your itinerary confirmation for it. Or you can simply email the confirmation page to your own email address or copy the information on your mobile phone's Notes page. Having a written itinerary will aid you during your trip especially when you need to ask locals or guides about some places.

26. Book through an agency.

Booking your trip through an agency can save you loads of time from having to look up hotels and flights online. This is especially true if you are not familiar with the Philippines. Your travel agent can also help you find great deals and promotions and can recommend reliable tour guides for local tours. They can also provide other helpful information that may not be found on online sites.

27. Carry your mobile phone and travel documents with you when boarding.

In boarding the plane, keep in mind that you can carry your mobile phone, wallet, and travel documents with you. It is actually a better idea to keep them in your pocket, so that you can easily pull them out when needed. You can always shove these into a small shoulder or belt bag which you can wear on your body. It does make sense because you need to present travel documents at the plane's entrance, and you also need to shut off your mobile phone when required. You may also want to keep some money handy in case you want to make some in-flight purchases.

28. Eat and drink light before the flight.

When traveling on a plane, it is always better to skip heavy food and alcoholic beverages which might cause nausea and air sickness. Drink water to avoid dehydration. Bring light snacks like cookies in case you get hunger pangs during the flight. Also check if meals are provided on your flight so that you'll know how much food (if any) you should bring on board. If you have any food allergies or preference, you should inform your airline beforehand.

29. Wear comfortable clothing during the flight.

Going overseas usually involves very long flights, which is why it is a good idea to wear comfortable clothing. Aside from that, you should also bring a jacket so that you

won't feel cold. Moreover, for women, it is best to wear flat shoes, so that you won't have difficulties in boarding and getting off the aircraft. Wear socks during the flight as the plane's interior can get very cold. As you approach the Philippines, make sure that you remove any warm heavy clothing. There's quite a difference between the frigid plane interior and the hot, humid air once you disembark.

30. Wear light clothing while in the Philippines.

Being a tropical country, the Philippines has an average temperature of about 90 degrees Fahrenheit during sunny days. It's about 10 to 20 degrees cooler in mountain areas like Baguio. But at the most, you'd probably need only a light jacket on cooler days. You may also want to wear a hat and bring an umbrella (must be checked-in during the flight) to shield yourself against intense sunlight or heavy rain. Do wear comfortable shoes as you'll definitely be doing some walking. And don't forget to bring your swimwear as the water's great in many Philippine beaches.

31. Make safety your priority.

Apart from listening to the stewardess' presentation in using the life jacket, and such, you should also take note of the emergency exits. Count the rows towards these exits, and determine which ones are nearest to you. Aside from that, you should also check out the safety manual, which you can usually find in front of you.

32. Take your vitamins.

Keep in mind that when you ride a plane, you would be exposed to other people's germs and such. Therefore, you should boost your immune system, by taking your daily vitamin supplement. Make sure that your supplement contains vitamin C and zinc, so that you would be duly protected from infections.

33. Be ready for any contingencies.

Although it is best to think positive while traveling, you should still be prepared for some setbacks, such as flight delays, getting sick, getting lost, and such. Thus, you should always carry cash in small amounts, flash lights, medications, and your cell phone. Also give yourself a lot of time allowance to return to your home country and do not cut your return flight too close to the date you get back to work.

34. Convert your money into Philippine currency prior to traveling.

Days or weeks before you take your trip, it is a good idea to convert some of your money to [Philippine pesos](#) (or at least to other major currencies like USD, GBP, CAD,

AUD and Euro that can be easily exchanged within the country). This way, you won't get stuck with no local money to pay for the first few expenses you might have to make after arriving. One example of the expense you may incur is paying the taxi cab on your way to the hotel. Make sure you also have both big and small denominations.

35. Carry enough cash for two days' worth of expenses.

You don't want to bring all of your pocket money as you tour around a local vicinity. It would be best to bring smaller amounts at a time, plus your credit or debit card. Based on local current prices, two days' worth of expenses is estimated at about PHP2,000. This is because many establishments in the country, especially small shops and restaurants, only accept cash payments. Taxicabs also only accept cash.

36. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

In traveling to a country that you are not very familiar with, it is best not to keep all your money in one wallet or bag. This way, just in case you get unlucky and become a victim of a pickpocket, then it wouldn't hurt so much. Aside from that, make sure not to show too much money in public, since you might become the next target for thieves. Bring only small denominations so that it'll be easier to get change.

37. Book only at reputable hotels.

I usually book accommodations through [Agoda](#) or [Airbnb](#). The verified profiles and reviews in those sites are really helpful to come up with a decision. Take note of the amenities offered as well as terms and conditions, especially about last-minute cancellations or changes in booking. Do not just base your choice on room rates. Check also the check-in / check-out time and make the necessary arrangements if you'll be coming early or late.

38. Be mindful of the hotel's location.

When you book a hotel, don't just base it on the prices of its rooms or the beauty of its pictures. Make sure that it is close enough or at least accessible to places that you are interested in visiting. Aside from that, it should also be close to restaurants, banks or ATMs, shopping areas, and recreational sites. You can easily check for locations of these through [Google Maps](#).

39. Be cautious when chatting with strangers.

While on board, you may find yourself chatting with the passenger next to you at the airplane or at the airport. Although this is not a bad practice, you must be cautious

when it comes to the information that you give away. Make sure not to tell the other person all your plans or where you are staying, as you never know who's listening. If you think you'd like to stay in touch with the other person even after landing, you can trade email addresses or business contact numbers.

40. Take along a small empty bottle for drinking water at the airport.

While airports do not allow you to bring bottles with liquid of more than 100 ml, they allow you to bring an empty bottle. You must hand-carry that empty bottle and place it on the conveyor along with your carry-on baggage. As long as the bottle is empty, you will be allowed to carry it with you while you're waiting at the boarding area. It'll be handy for refilling water from drinking fountains in case you get thirsty. While on board, you can also request the flight attendant to refill your bottle.

41. Roll clothes instead of folding them.

When it comes to packing your clothes, it is always better to roll them instead of folding. This is because rolling your shirts and your pants would prevent too many creases. Thus, it gives you assurance that you would be able to maximize the space of your bags.

42. Bring a multi-socket universal adaptor.

Electrical socket styles vary between countries. In the Philippines, some sockets may have only two holes, especially those in older buildings, so it's best to bring a universal adaptor which can be used in any part of the globe.

43. Bring your gadget charger and power bank.

As most of your communication in the Philippines may be through your mobile phone or tablet, you will discover that you can easily run out of power before the day is over. Power banks are also indispensable in case your phone battery power depletes while you are on the road.

44. Get your provisions immediately after checking in.

Once you have checked in at the hotel, you should take a few minutes to relax, and then head out. Visit the nearest convenience store, and buy some snacks and beverages. Stock some of them in your room, so that you would have something to eat in case you wake up hungry in the middle of the night.

42. Make sure that your gadgets are set to the correct voltage.

If you are from the Americas where most power inputs are 110-120 volts, you should note that the Philippines uses a 220-volt input capacity. Don't forget to check if your gadget has auto-volt system or at least ask the hotel staff for a transformer so as to avoid damage.

43. When riding a boat, bring a waterproof and crush-proof bag for your delicate items.

Some places in the Philippines can only be toured by sea. There are times when the boat ride gets rough, especially during windy days. Chances are, whatever you have in the boat will get soaking wet unless you bring a waterproof container. It should also be crush-proof in case you want to use it to store your sunglasses, watch, mobile phone, and other delicate items. A folding zippered cooler bag would be great for storing such articles.

44. Stand up, stretch, and walk around occasionally during the flight.

Long flights can take a toll on your neck and back. As much as the airline crew allows, you can unstrap your seat belt, stand up, stretch, and walk around the passenger area. Also take the opportunity to use the plane's bathroom at this time. It is also good to stand up and walk around after a meal to prevent air sickness.

45. Munch on snacks or chew gum in high pressure areas.

High air pressure can cause temporary ear discomfort, particularly pain, stuffiness, and impaired hearing. Try chewing on something, like crackers, chips, or gum to prevent ear discomfort. Yawning may also help relieve some of the discomfort.

46. Be mindful of airline temperature.

Always remember that each airplane may have a different temperature to another. Thus, you should carry your jacket or sweater with you when you take the flight. This way, you won't have to endure the coldness of the flight, especially if it is a long one.

47. Bring extra toiletries with you during the flight.

Keep toilet paper, hand sanitizer, soap, and other toiletries handy. It's best to have your purse or utility under your seat or in the seat pocket. In many long flights, toiletries like bath tissue and soap often get used up long before the plane lands.

48. Freshen up before disembarking the plane.

Wash your face, brush your teeth, comb your hair, and apply makeup a few minutes before the arrival time, just before the FASTEN SEAT BELT sign goes on. Or do this just after landing and before leaving the plane. Some airport bathrooms may be too far, or there could be long lines.

49. Take your time disembarking.

Unless you have no check-in baggage, you should stay in your seat and allow other passengers to take their baggage from the compartments and disembark. This prevents crowding on the aisles. While waiting, you can use your mobile phone to contact the people who will be picking you up from the airport, or to inform your loved ones that you've arrived safely. Besides, you will still need to wait at the baggage claim counter for your bags to come out.

50. Take advantage of layover time.

Layovers usually take at least an hour, so use the time to stretch and walk around. Buy a snack or drink. Use the airport bathroom. This is also a great time to recharge your gadget, communicate with loved ones or office colleagues, or grab a quick nap.

51. Book a whole trip package.

If you want to take advantage of huge discounts, then you should book a whole package. Booking a whole package offers you an opportunity to get the best deals. This is because, most online travel sites offer more discounts when you book the flights, hotel accommodations, and cars together, instead of separately.

52. Learn some useful Filipino words and expressions, and use a translator app.

Filipinos appreciate it when you try to communicate in their language, and making mistakes while doing so is very forgivable. It will also be helpful to have [Google Translate](#) installed and programmed in your phone to translate from English to Filipino, or from Filipino to English. In case of a language gap, you can always write or dictate something in English on your phone, and just show the other party the translated message. Actually, most Filipinos can understand and speak English pretty well so you won't have much problem on this area.

53. Take Filipino hospitality seriously.

Filipinos are genuinely friendly and accommodating. Once you are considered a friend, expect them to invite you to their homes and partake of their food, even though they barely have enough for themselves. Show your appreciation by praising the food, the place, and the people. If you have to leave, be polite and say goodbye to every one of your hosts, starting with the oldest ones.

54. Learn more about the local cuisine.

Prior to taking a trip to the Philippines, you should learn more about its local foods. In fact, Filipino food is highly diverse by region. Try out the specialties of each place. You should also be able to discern which foods you need to avoid. Always ask the waiters or your hosts about the ingredients before even taking a bite. And unless you have a very strict diet, don't ever miss the lechon (roasted pig), the Philippines' flagship food!

55. Don't leave your wallet and important documents in your hotel room.

Even in a five-star hotel, you can never be too sure about their personnel who are tasked to clean your room. Keep in mind that in most cases, housekeeping personnel clean your room when you are not around. Although most of them are honest, you can minimize temptation by not leaving your wallet for them to see. Store those valuables in the room safe or in your baggage and don't forget to lock it up.

56. Use TSA locks.

Normally, TSA people can already determine the contents of your bag just by viewing the x-ray. But there may be times when something in your bag looks dubious, so they will need to open it up to double-check. If you use only an ordinary lock, it could be forced open and will not be usable anymore. On the other hand, TSA locks can be opened when airport authorities need to check what's inside your bag.

57. From the airport, use an airport taxi or hire Uber or Grab taxi services.

If no one is scheduled to pick you up, use these rather than ordinary cabs. Sad to say, there are many taxi drivers who are in cahoots with criminals, especially in big Philippine cities. While airport taxi, [Uber](#), and [GrabTaxi](#) may cost more than standard cabs, you are rest assured that you will reach your hotel in one piece and with all of your belongings intact.

58. Keep an eye on your belongings.

Local Filipinos are generally kind to foreigners, but there are still some criminal elements out there who would gladly take the chance of stealing purses, baggage, and wallets from unsuspecting tourists. Make sure no one is following you, and stay only in lighted places where there are many people. Avoid using gadgets while on the street. Make sure your bag is properly zipped up or fastened.

59. Know where the fire exits are.

Fires can happen anywhere in the Philippines, even in the best establishments. Do not forget to check the hotel fire exits just after you have settled into your own room. This way, you would know where they are and how to get to them, just in case the unfortunate happens. Make sure that the floor where your room is situated has access to it though, so that you won't have a hard time using it.

60. Give tips to hotel staff.

Tipping the hotel staff can go a long way, as far as having a pleasant experience at the hotel you are staying in is concerned. When you tip them, they would actually help in looking out for your room as well as your stuffs. Aside from that, they may even be able to give you some tips on how to go around the city or how to catch the best deals on certain attractions.

61. Bring your medications.

Your prescription and maintenance drugs may not be available at Philippine drugstores. Or if they are, they require a doctor's prescription. Bring enough to last you throughout your trip, and keep them in sturdy containers, preferably compartmentalized ones for easy tracking.

62. Set your watch and phone to Philippine time before arriving.

This will help you get used to local time and minimize jet lag. Do this even during the flight. You can even schedule your naps on board based on the local time. And in the same token, reset your watch and phone to your own country's time during your return flight.

63. Hire a local guide.

It's safer for you to get around the Philippines with a local guide who can speak the language. Your guide can also help you find the best places for sightseeing and

shopping. You can find one online or ask the hotel for recommendations. Even Filipinos who live in big cities hire local guides when they visit unfamiliar places in the country.

You can also do [Couchsurfing](#) and have a host who is familiar in the area help you get around, as well as, be able to immerse yourself in the culture.

64. Take note of the hotel details on your phone or notebook.

It is very important that you take note of the hotel details, especially if you are at an unfamiliar city. Some of the details you want to include would be its name, address, and phone number. By doing this, you would be able to find your way back, just in case you get lost. Or secure the business card of your hotel and keep it in your wallet to show to locals or taxi drivers in case you have difficulty in communicating with each other.

65. Do not forget to confirm your hotel reservation a day before leaving.

Keep in mind that even if you booked your hotel reservation online, and you got a confirmation number for it, there is still a slight chance that it was overlooked. To make sure that you really have a place to stay at your destination, you should call the hotel a day before traveling. This way, you can confirm not just your reservation, but also make sure that you will have the type of room that you really want.

66. Study the local map.

You can do this on the computer. Take note of key places like banks, restaurants, hotels (in case you want to transfer), police stations, and tourist spots. While in a taxicab, turn on your Google Map app and input the name of the place you are going to. This way, you will know if your driver is using the right route to get there.

67. Go for massage services.

After a long day of touring, there's nothing like a soothing massage right in your own hotel room. Massage services are low-priced in the Philippines. Your hotel can arrange for that. Some hotels also have their own spa or you could go to a local spa. It's best to do this before going to bed, so that you will wake up refreshed. But do keep your valuables out of sight during the massage even though most masseuses are generally honest. And be sure to give your masseuse a nice tip for a job well done.

68. Wear comfortable shoes.

You'll definitely be doing some walking, especially if you're in a beach or mountain area. Best types of footwear would be soft leather sandals, flip-flops, tennis shoes, and loafers. On beaches, you can even walk barefoot. But check the condition of the sand first, as there may be stray shards of glass or sharp objects you might risk stepping on.

69. Know your dietary limits.

There are certain individuals who may have special dietary requirements, especially those who have diabetes, cancer, or food allergies. If you are one of them, then you should come up with a list of the foods that you should not eat. With a list, you can refer to it every time you eat outside. If you are not sure, then all you have to do is to show the server or host your list, so that you can avoid eating forbidden foods. Remember that Filipino cuisine, like any other cuisine, has its own share of dishes that are high in fat and sugar.

70. Drink only bottled or pre-boiled water.

Although the tap water in the Philippines is chlorinated, it's still safer to drink bottled water, as there are areas where water may be contaminated. Keep a stock of small disposable bottles in your hotel fridge and bring a couple of them with you while you are out sightseeing.

71. Take a light backpack or utility bag while touring the local area.

It should contain water bottles, a small towel, a small towel, a folding umbrella, toiletries, medications, guidebooks, and anything else you might need during sightseeing. Be careful though about storing expensive gadgets in your bag, make sure it's securely fastened and zipped up.

72. Always haggle for the best prices.

Local vendors and shops usually give you bloated prices, especially if they know that you're a foreigner. Don't take their word for it. Instead, shop around and compare prices before deciding to buy. Usually, vendors give good discounts if you buy at least three or more of the same item.

73. Visit bazaars and small local shops for souvenirs.

The prices at these outlets are so much cheaper than those in [department stores or malls](#). But do check the merchandise for any damage or defect. Try on garments and shoes before buying. And despite the low prices, you should still try haggling for even less.

74. Use a local SIM card.

Prepaid SIM cards just cost about \$1. The two biggest telecom companies are [SMART](#) and [Globe](#). Prepaid load cards come in various denominations and can be bought just about everywhere. While most hotels offer free WiFi access, you can just use local provider's mobile data to be able to connect on the internet while you are on the road or at a remote place with no WiFi.

75. Buy and take home a few Philippine souvenirs.

Souvenirs abound in department stores, specialty shops, and bazaar stalls. Take note especially of tiny replicas of [jeepneys](#) and nipa huts. Look for dress jewelry and home decorations made of shells, wood, pearls, and corals. Just make sure to wrap the fragile items carefully when you pack them. You may want to keep the more delicate ones in your carry-on bag.

76. Bring back some Philippine delicacies.

The best ones to take home are local cookies (like biscocho and rosquillos), snacks (like banana chips, shingalings, dried mangoes, and chicharon), and candies (like pastillas de leche and yema). Also consider buying coconut and mango jams, as well as Barako coffee and herbal teas (like malunggay, sambong, and guyabano). Just make sure that the food items you buy are not banned in your home country.

77. Purchase [travel insurance](#).

Unexpected occurrences such as theft, flight cancellations, and accidents while traveling can be quite a hassle. If you want to feel secure for the whole duration of your vacation, then you should acquire a travel insurance for it. There are lots of companies that offer such kind of insurance policies these days.

I usually get [World Nomads](#) whenever I'm traveling. What I like the most about them is you can file a claim while you're still traveling.

78. Look confident even when you're not.

It is always best to walk as if you know where you are going, especially if you are at a certain place in the city, which you are not very familiar with. This way, people would not see you as a lost tourist. If you are able to achieve that, then you won't be attracting thieves to victimize you. Also look sharp and alert.

79. Rent a car.

Renting a car gives you more flexibility and saves you time from having to [hail taxis](#) or [wait for jeepneys](#) while moving around the area. Most [car rental services](#) in the Philippines can also provide a driver for your convenience. Unless you are quite familiar with the area or have a reliable GPS app, it may be best to leave the driving to a professional. You won't also worry about where to park the vehicle.

80. Keep copies of your important documents.

In case you misplace your passport, identification card or license, it'll be easier to trace them if you have kept copies on paper or in your gadgets. And since you shouldn't be bringing your passport around while sightseeing, it would be good to have a copy handy in your wallet or phone, just in case you are required to present identification.

81. Beware of crowded places.

You may occasionally find yourself in crowded places, especially in big cities and tourist spots. Be very vigilant of your belongings as crowded situations are perfect opportunities for thieves or pickpockets to grab valuables from you or other people.

82. Take plenty of pictures.

The Philippines is chock-full of wonderful scenery that you wouldn't want to forget. Bring along a reliable camera and take photos of majestic mountains, pristine beaches, colorful flora, and lovely people (with their consent, of course!) Also bring a selfie stick so that you can include yourself in that fantastic picture spot.

83. Book a room with a view.

Having a room that offers a magnificent view of the ocean or the city's skyline is one of the best things that you can experience. Many hotel booking sites indicate the type of view you will get with specific rooms, so take advantage of that. If possible, request the hotel for a room that allows you to see the sunrise or sunset, as both are truly awesome scenes in the Philippines.

84. Participate in Karaoke singing.

Karaoke singing is one of the most popular pastimes of Filipinos. They enjoy this either at home, with neighbors, at parties, and in bars. There's no limit to what the average Filipino can sing, as most Filipinos are able to carry a tune pretty well. Don't worry about your voice quality, it's the fun that counts.

85. Visit old churches.

There are numerous churches in every city. You don't have to be a Christian just to enter the churches and marvel at the magnificent centuries-old structures and interiors. There's a lot of history breathing in those churches. Quite a few have survived wars and natural disasters. Filipinos also believe that you should make a wish when you visit a church for the first time. Who knows, your wish might just come true!

86. Visit museums, ancestral homes, and historical structures.

Most of these historical places are open every day. Visiting them will afford you a close encounter with the local history and culture. There are signboards that give narratives or explanations about the key areas of a place, such as statues, artifacts, or dioramas.

Have fun learning tidbits of Philippine history and culture. Some of the historical places you can visit in Manila are the [Intramuros](#), [Rizal Park](#) and [National Museum](#).

87. Meet the local indigenous people.

Some provinces are home to indigenous groups, each of them with unique traditions and attire. Immerse in the local culture and learn from these people. They can teach you their own dialect, dance, music, and way of life.

88. Never participate in local rallies or political protests.

It is against the law for foreigners like you to participate in such activities. Also refrain from making negative remarks about Philippine politicians and authorities while you're in the country. To do such could cause you to be [detained and deported](#). Even if you empathize with the aggrieved parties, remember it's not your war.

89. Do participate in local festivals and celebrations.

This is a more wholesome type of participation. Each province has its own schedule of local festivals. Read about them and make it a part of your itinerary to visit and participate in at least one. Philippine festivals are colorful and happy occasions, so do join and take lots of photos along the way.

90. Provide a lot of time allowance for traffic.

Many streets in large Philippine cities are congested, especially during weekday rush hours. Even on some weekends, expect heavy traffic especially around recreational and entertainment centers, as those are also where local families head out to. The traffic jams can really wreck your daily schedules. Instead, have a Plan B ready in case you're not able to reach a desired place due to traffic. And on the day of your return flight, do plan on leaving your hotel at least four hours ahead of your flight's ETD, unless your hotel is only a stone's throw away from the airport.

91. Drink fresh coconut water (AKA buko juice)

You've probably heard that coconut water is rich in vitamins, micronutrients and antioxidants that prevent heart attacks, lower blood pressure, delay aging, treat dementia, and fight cancer. In other countries, you'd have to buy them by the bottle, which costs about \$3 apiece. But in the Philippines, fresh coconut water abounds and can be bought from vendors or restaurants for less than 50 USD cents per nut. And each coconut can yield about 2 cups of refreshing juice that can also substitute for water. Some supermarkets also sell sealed bottles which have very limited expiry dates, but it's always better to drink it right out of the coconut.

92. Cleaning up the table in fast food

After eating in fastfood, you are not expected to clean the table yourself. People would stare at you if you do it. The service crew assigned on the dining area would be the one to throw the trash and clean the table.

93. Try riding a jeepney.

If you want a thrilling experience, ride the jeepney. The [Philippine jeepney](#) is a showcase in itself, with its colorful designs, outlandish decorations, and booming music. But do get on and off only at authorized jeepney stops and in large public places like malls. Take note of where you last took the ride and get back to it by taking the opposite way. When in doubt, you can always ask the driver or a co-passenger where you should get off. Remember to use important words like "Bayad po" (Here's my payment) and "Para po" (Please stop).

94. Ride a tricycle for shorter distances

The [tricycle](#) is the Philippine version of Thailand's tuktuk. It is a motorcycle with a sidecar for carrying passengers. You'll notice as you travel across the country that every province has a different version of tricycles and can have elaborate designs like jeepneys.

Tricycles are usually used for shorter distances and on routes that jeepneys are not allowed. The fare is more expensive than jeepneys but less expensive than [taxis](#). If you are traveling in a small group in the rural areas, you can also get a tricycle to take you to some tourist spots.

95. Spoon and Fork Combo

Don't be surprised to only find spoon and fork on your table in Filipino restaurants. (You can ask for a knife though if you insist.) Filipinos are not a big fan of knife-fork combo or chopsticks. Filipino dishes are generally bite-sized pieces (chopped, minced or ground) or soup-based so there's no real need for a knife. Usually, the meat is soft enough to be cut using the edge of the spoon. Then, the fork is used just to push the food on the spoon and the spoon is used to put the food into your mouth.

But during picnics at the beach or dining at the comforts of their home, Filipinos aren't afraid to go natural and eat with their fingers.

96. Bring your own first aid kit.

Bringing your own first aid kit is vital, especially if you are traveling with your kids. You should ensure that your first aid kit contains all the medicines that you need, which may not be available at the country you are visiting. If some members of your family have allergies or are asthmatic, then never forget to bring anti-allergies, and inhalers.

97. Never touch or interact with stray animals.

There are many stray dogs, cats, chickens (and rats) all around the streets anywhere in the Philippines. These animals are homeless and depend on people to give them food scraps. No matter how pitiful they look, ignore them and do not even feed or pet them unless you want to contract rabies.

98. Do not entertain panhandlers.

It may sound pretty selfish and cold-hearted, but you should never give in to beggars on the street. Some are actually members of syndicates who are out to deceive pedestrians and car passengers into shelling out a few cents. Many of them use children to do the panhandling. Notice just how insistent these people sound, and that's only an act. If you really take pity on them, just give them food instead of money.

99. Respect local customs and traditions.

If you want to be respected by Filipinos as a traveler, then you should respect their country's customs and culture. You must watch what you and your companions are doing and saying, especially when you are outdoors. Aside from that, you should also do your research about the country's culture and customs beforehand. Being well-informed will prevent you from reacting adversely when you encounter these traditions during your visit. Avoid making faces or snide remarks if a tradition (such as using hands to eat meals) may seem odd for you.

100. Have an intimate encounter with nature.

The Philippines is rich in many wondrous land and water formations, most of which can be enjoyed for free. Hike up and down a mountain trail and look for local animals and plants. Bathe under a waterfall or swim in a lake. Climb to the top of a hill and marvel at the breathtaking landscape. Snorkel in shallow water and encounter colorful fish. Swim with the gentle whale shark and feed the dolphin. And say hi to the tiny tarsier in the trees. Nowhere else but in the Philippines will you be able to experience such intimate moments with nature!

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