

# THE PHILIPPINES

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The Philippine Islands, officially known as the Republic of the Philippines, is an archipelagic country located in Southeast Asia. The country's 7,107 islands are divided into three major island groups: Luzon in the North, Visayas in the middle and Mindanao in the South. With an area of 300,000 square kilometers, the Philippines is endowed with a coastline of around 36,000 kilometers, rich natural resources and great biodiversity.



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The Philippines is a presidential democracy headed by the current president, Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III, who also serves as the head of state and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The country is geographically and politically divided into regions, provinces, cities and municipalities. Its capital city is Manila, which is part of the world's 11<sup>th</sup> most populous metropolitan area, Metro Manila. Its other important urban centers are Metro Cebu and Metro Davao.



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With a population of almost 98 million people in 2013, the Philippines is considered as the 12<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world. The population is divided into several ethnic groups with Tagalog, Visayan, Ilocano and Hiligaynon as some of the largest groups. As stated in the country's latest constitution, the official languages are Filipino and English. Both these languages are taught as required subjects in the Philippine basic education system and are used in government, in the industry and in the community so majority of the Filipino people can understand and communicate in the English language.

Pre-dominantly Christian, 80% of the Philippine population are Roman Catholics, 10% are Protestants while the remaining 10% practice other religions such as Islam and Buddhism.



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Considered as a newly industrialized country, the Philippines has experienced sustained economic growth in the last decade and is now considered by the United Nations as the 39<sup>th</sup> largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product in 2012. Service industries such as tourism and business process outsourcing are considered as some of the areas with the best growth potential. While the Philippines has a lot to offer as a tourist destination, it is most known for its beaches and water activities.

It's more fun in the  
**Philippines**



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Boracay Island, in the province of Aklan, has been consistently named as one of the best beaches in the world while Siargao Island has recently been identified as one of the best surfing spots in the world. Cebu and Bohol were named as two of the top 5 islands in Asia by the Conde Nast Traveler's magazine in 2013 while Palawan's underground river was classified as a UNESCO heritage site.



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The Philippines is a tropical country with relatively high temperature, humidity and rainfall. While rainfall is experienced periodically throughout the year, the period from March to May is usually dry and hot, the period from June to November is wet while the period from December to February is dry and cool. Temperatures range from 21°C – 32°C with April and May as the months with the highest average temperatures.

All regions of the Philippines are within the same time zone so all areas of the Philippines follow the Philippine Standard Time, which is eight hours ahead of the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +8). The Philippine Standard Time is determined by the country's weather bureau, PAG-ASA. To synchronize your time pieces or the times in your devices, check out PAG-ASA's website

<http://kidlat.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/ourtime.shtml>