

# Philippines



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



**DIVE**   
ADVENTURES  
YOUR DIVING HOLIDAY SPECIALIST

# Philippines

The Republic of the Philippines is blessed with a unique culture where east meets west both spiritually and culturally, blending the old with the new. In the Philippines everybody knows how to smile and have fun!



The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands in Southeast Asia. The country stretches from the south of China to the tip of Borneo, covering almost 300,000 sq km with 15,500 kilometres of beaches.

**History:** The islands were originally home to Indo-Malays and Chinese merchants. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan discovered the islands. The Spanish named them Las Islas Filipinas in honour of Philip II of Spain. In 1565 a colonial government was formed in Cebu and later moved to Manila in 1571. The Filipinos waged Asia's first nationalist revolution in 1896. They won their independence from Spain on June 12, 1898. Next came the Americans who ruled for 48 years until the Japanese invasion on Dec 8, 1941. After 4 years the US forces returned to liberate the country and Philippine independence was recognised on July 4, 1946.

**The environment:** The Philippines is divided into 3 main geographical areas: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It has 17 regions, 80 provinces and 122 cities. Most of the volcanic islands have mountainous, rainforest covered interiors surrounded by low plains, sandy beaches and coral reefs. The populated islands of Luzon and Mindanao have sprawling, modern cities alongside old Spanish-Filipino colonial architecture. The country is prone to earthquakes, volcanic activity and typhoons, and is one of the top 10 biologically mega-diverse countries.

**The people and culture:** Filipinos are happy-go-lucky, welcoming people, predominantly of Malay stock with some Chinese, Spanish,

American and Arab blood. Over 90% of the 96 million population are Christians. Food and festivals commemorating the feast days of patron saints are an important part of the Filipino culture.



## General information: Passports:

Travellers must hold a current passport with a minimum of 6 months validity beyond your stay plus a return or onward travel ticket.

**Visas:** Australian passport holders may enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding 30 days (subject to change at any time).

**Climate:** Tropical average temperatures of 21°C to 32°C with 3 seasons. The hot, dry summer from March to May; the rainy season from June to November; the cool, dry winter from December to February. Typhoons mostly occur from July to October. Seasons vary in some regions.

**Health:** Malaria may be present on some islands. Ensure your regular travel vaccinations are up to date. Consult your doctor for the best precautions to be taken. Drinking bottled water is recommended.

**Electricity:** 220 volts / 60 cycle AC. Small islands may be powered by generator and may have no hot water.

**Language:** The national language is Filipino a form of Tagalog. English is widely spoken. Over 500 dialects are spoken in the Philippines.



**Time:** 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

**Communications:** direct dial phone and fax services, mobile phone coverage, internet and email services are most commonly available.

**Currency:** Philippine Peso. Banking hours 9.00am - 3.00pm Monday to Friday. ATM facilities are available. Credit cards are accepted at most hotels and restaurants. When travelling to the smaller islands it is recommended to carry sufficient amounts of Pesos.

**Packing Hints:** Light casual clothing although not too brief when away from resort areas. Long sleeves and pants recommended at dusk. Don't forget a hat, comfortable shoes, insect repellent, sunscreen and torch.

**Getting there and around:** Manila is the main international gateway. A combination of domestic flights, boats, shuttle transfers, local buses (the colourful jeepney) and taxis are used for travel within the country.



# Manila - National Capital Region

**Metro Manila** is a constantly expanding, teeming megacity of 11 million people. This mighty megalopolis is made up of 16 cities and one town - Caloocan, Las Piñas, Makati, Malabon, Mandaluyong, Manila, Marikina, Muntinlupa, Navotas, Parañaque, Pasay, Pasig, Quezon, San Juan, Taguig, Valenzuela, and Pateros. From its historic neighborhoods to its outrageous housing developments, Metro Manila is a maze of vibrant energy with bits of calm in between.

The city of **Manila** is a collection of towns with no definable centre. Built by the Spanish in 1571, the walled city of Intramuros once was the traditional centre of Manila and is now one of the best models of a medieval fort outside Europe. Ride a kalesa (horse drawn carriage) through the



historic streets of Ermita and Binondo, whose Chinatown is said to be one of the oldest Chinese settlements in the world. Take a stroll down Roxas Boulevard to watch the sunset over Manila Bay. People watch in Rizal Park. See the shrine dedicated to national hero, Dr José Rizal, who was executed here on Dec 30, 1896 by the Spanish authorities for spurring on the revolution, or visit the National Museum.

**Makati City** is the commercial business and nightlife centre of modern Manila; an urban oasis of high rise buildings, shopping malls and upscale eateries. It's where the locals go to work, play and relax. Jupiter Street has throwback restaurants, bars and karaoke joints. For a more modern night out, try Greenbelt or Malaguy Street in The Collective. Connected by walkway bridges, shop 'til you drop at Glorietta, SM Makati, Greenbelt (for brand name goods) and Landmark (for bargain hunters) malls.



Shopaholics head to Greenhills in San Juan City, famous for its tiangges (market stalls) where bargains are to be found and bargaining is the norm. Afterwards, satisfy your hunger at one of the many restaurants on Wilson Street.

For some of Metro Manila's hottest restaurants and nightspots, head to Bonifacio Global City in **Taguig** or Tomas Morato and Timog Avenue in **Quezon City**. **Pasay City** has many attractions such as the Cultural Centre, World Trade Centre, SMX Convention Centre, SM Arena, Coconut Palace and SM Mall of Asia, the 4th largest mall in the world.



\* Please enquire about accommodation options in Manila.

# Donsol - Bicol Region

The small fishing town of **Donsol** is found at the southern tip of Luzon Island in the province of **Sorsogon**. Here an adventure of gigantic proportions awaits!

## Swimming with the Whale Sharks:

From November to June, schools of the world's biggest fish congregate in the waters of Donsol to feed on the abundance of plankton and krill in the area. The whale sharks in Donsol are typically between 4-12 metres in length with distinctive characteristics that include a broad, flat head, 3 prominent ridges on the upper flank, a checkerboard pattern of white spots and stripes on its blue-gray-brown-skin.

Due to restrictions implaced by the Department of Tourism, there is a designated whale shark interaction area. With the promotion of eco-tourism in Donsol, efforts for the preservation of this endangered species has heightened. Scientists and conservationists have also migrated to Donsol to further study these animals by using tracking devices and photo identification.

Snorkelling besides the whale sharks in Donsol is an experience of a lifetime not to be missed.



## Getting there:

Donsol is approximately 500 kilometres from Manila - reached by a short 45 minute flight from Manila to Legazpi city followed by a 1 hour drive to Donsol.



## Elysia Beach Resort

**Elysia Beach Resort** is the ideal place to relax and unwind. The resort has been well designed to mix modern beauty with local flair. 14 modern but naturally styled rooms surround the pool. The rooms are air conditioned with en-suite bathroom and LED flat screen cable TV. Deluxe rooms have a double bed, whilst Super Deluxe rooms have a double and single bed.



**Hotel Facilities:** Swimming pool, pool deck and cocktail bar, restaurant, beach lounge area with beach beds and chairs, dive shop and activities centre.

## Ticao Island - Bicol Region

**Ticao Island** is one of three islands in the province of **Masbate**. Diving is prohibited around Donsol, so scuba divers head to Ticao Island where most dive sites are only 10 to 30 minutes away.

**Diving:** Ticao Pass has one of the world's highest concentrations of plankton due to the strong currents flowing from the San Bernardino Strait making an ideal feeding and cleaning centre for the manta rays between November to June. The Pass is the deep sea "big-boys' alley", also attracting whale sharks, hammerheads, thresher sharks and other pelagics.



**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**Manta Bowl Shoal:** a depression in the underwater atoll off Ticao Island, also known as the Manta Ray Capital of the Philippines. With huge number of remoras and cleaner wrasse, you get the most sightings of manta rays and whale sharks here with the occasional hammerhead and thresher shark.

**RAC Point:** Hide from the current and watch the schools of surgeons, fusiliers, butterfly fish, and damsels play and feed in the current. You may encounter a manta ray or two.

**San Miguel Island:** 45 mins from Manta Bowl, off the north of Ticao Island. There are several dive sites, all very different. Admire limestone formations with swim throughs and mini caves, colourful sponges and soft corals. Drift dives with sharks and rays or search for critters.

**Getting there:** Ticao Island is a 1.5 to 2 hour boat ride from Donsol. From Legazpi, it is 3 hours travel either via Donsol or via Bulan (2 hour road transfer to Bulan then 1 hour boat ride from Bulan to Ticao Island).

**Things to do:** From Donsol / Ticao take an evening Firefly Tour along the Donsol River; kayak through the mangrove river, fish or join a cultural tour. From Legazpi, climb the cone shaped, active volcano of Mt Mayon at 2,421 metres.



Photo credit: Mike Bartick

### Ticao Island Resort

**Ticao Island Resort** is a peaceful getaway with a white sand beach, clear blue water and sprawling grounds. 4 Budget Rooms are housed in a bungalow style structure with 2 single beds, common veranda, fan and shared bathroom facilities. 9 Beachfront Cabanas are air conditioned with 2 double beds, en-suite bathroom, veranda, safety deposit box, tea and coffee making facilities and bottled water.



**Hotel Facilities:** Bar and restaurant with full board meals included, use of wooden kayaks, activity centre, internet access.

## Puerto Galera - Mindoro Island

**Puerto Galera** in **Oriental Mindoro** province is one of the oldest Spanish settlements in the Philippines. Malay, Chinese and Indonesian merchants were doing business with local traders as early as the 10th century. The harbour was an excellent location for the Spanish Galleons to take refuge from heavy storms and typhoons and replenish provisions.



Today, Puerto Galera is known as the "Pearl of Mindoro", a popular destination for its beautiful bays and natural harbour, dazzling white sand beaches and delightful scenery. Sabang Beach is the main resort area while White Beach is popular amongst local travellers. Both have restaurants and bars along the beachfront and an active nightlife. Behind are the huge and mostly unexplored mountain ranges of central Mindoro. Indigenous tribes still live scattered over the mountain sides.

**Getting there:** Puerto Galera is located on the northern peninsula of the island of Mindoro, 130 km south of Manila (2.5 hour drive) and about 14 nautical miles from Batangas city (1 hour boat ride).

**Things to do:** Scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, sailing, boating, beach hopping, sunset cruises and fishing. Trek through the jungle and mountains alongside rivers and waterfalls, take a Mangyan village tour, play golf or explore trails on mountain bikes.

**Diving:** Mindoro Island is separated from Luzon by the Verde Island Passage. Here the water is flushed by the South China Sea currents. The diving varies from easy training dives amongst pristine coral to spectacular, exhilarating drift dives. A variety of wrecks have been sunk in the area. Over 30 dive sites are within a 15 minute bangka ride from the beach. Diving is conducted year round, best between March to October. Visibility is between 15 - 40 metres and water temperature ranges from 22°C (November-February) to 29°C (March-June).

**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**The Canyons:** An exciting drift dive for experienced divers. Three drop-offs below the Hole in the Wall are covered in soft corals and sponges. Duck into the canyons for a break from the current. Large schools of drummers, snapper, emperors, sweetlips, jacks, barracudas, trevally and occasional sharks make this an exciting dive. Depth: 30 metres.

**Shark Cave:** A large overhang 30 metres long serves as a resting point for white tip sharks. Also home to blue spotted sting rays, moray eels and octopus. Depth: 27 metres.



# Puerto Galera - Mindoro Island

**Sabang Wreck:** 3 wrecks - a wooden Chinese fishing junk with a resident school of friendly batfish and large surgeonfish. Eels, lionfish, damselfish, trumpets, flounders, goby and shrimp can be found in the sand. A newer wooden wreck is popular for frogfish and large trumpet fish. The steel yacht also has frogfish and ghost pipe fish. Depth: 18m.

**Technical Diving:** The Verde Island passage is very deep making it one of the main technical diving destinations in Asia. Both dive resorts below offer technical diving and training. There are at least 20 deeper water sites around Puerto Galera. The tech dives are mostly drift dives on reefs, small wrecks, caverns and stepped deep walls.

## El Galleon Beach Resort

### El Galleon Beach Resort

is on Small La Laguna Beach. Thirty rooms including Budget rooms (no view); Poolside rooms; Family rooms capable of adding an extra 1 or 2 beds; Sea View rooms and 1 Penthouse Suite with private kitchen and large balcony have been built on the hillside. All rooms are air conditioned with ceiling fan, en-suite bathroom, mini bar and wireless internet.



**Hotel Facilities:** Beach restaurant, swimming pool, spa treatments, conference room and wifi are available. The Point Bar also serves food. Asia Divers and Tech Asia dive centres are located at El Galleon.

## Atlantis Resort

### Atlantis Resort

features a unique Flintstones design, built into the hills over Sabang Beach. The resort has forty rooms and spacious suites, some with large private terraces. All rooms and suites have air-conditioning, ceiling fan, a well-stocked mini-bar, cable TV with free movie and sports channels, en-suite bathroom, in-room safety deposit box and wireless internet.



**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant, sea-front bar, swimming pool, Spa, tour desk, boutique and wifi connectivity. The resort's Dive Centre is able to cater for all your diving needs including tech and rebreather diving.

# Coron - Busuanga

**The Calamian Islands** in the north of Palawan province include Busuanga, Coron, Calauit, Culion and Sangat. From the main settlement of Coron Town on Busuanga you can explore the spectacular islands and reefs of Coron Bay. Hidden amongst the jagged limestone cliffs of Coron Island are secluded lagoons and coves.

**Getting there:** There are daily flights from Manila to Busuanga. Flight time is 1 hour. Daily ferries depart from El Nido to Coron Town.



**Things to do:** Island hopping, kayaking, snorkeling, diving and trekking. Climb up to and snorkel in the volcanic Kayangan Lake on Coron Island. Culion Island to the south is the former home of a leper colony whilst Calauit to the north is home to an African wildlife sanctuary. The area is also a feeding ground for the endangered dugong.

**Diving:** Most divers come to the Coron area to dive the WWII Japanese shipwrecks that were sunk in the air raid by 120 US aircraft on 24 September, 1944. There are 12 wrecks in the area of dive-able depths between 5 - 40 metres. Visibility on the wrecks is affected by the tides (average 10-15m), best during quarter moon and/or at high tide. July to October is rainy season. Coral reef and lake diving is also possible.



## Some of the more popular dive sites:

**Iraku Maru:** A 147 metre long refrigeration ship, still almost intact and one of the best wreck dives with good visibility. Home to turtles, big groupers, schools of tuna, yellow fin and jacks. A swim through the engine room reveals a network of pipes and valves inhabited by moray eels and lionfish. Depth: 25 - 43 metres.

**Barracuda Lake:** Start with a challenging climb in full scuba gear over sharp limestone cliffs. The top 4 metres of the lake is freshwater lake and below is salt water served by a hot spring. The water temperature varies between 28 - 38°C with distinct thermal layers. The resident 1.5 metre long barracuda likes to guide you around. Depth: 40+ metres.

**Okikawa Maru:** A 200 metre long tanker totally covered in corals with a large variety of marine life. There are many penetration options, a highlight being the propeller shaft and tank systems. Depth: 9 - 26m.



## Puerto Del Sol Resort

**Puerto Del Sol Resort** is located at the entrance of D'Pearl Bay, Busuanga, a 1 hour transfer from the airport. The resort blends into the hillside with spectacular views over the bay. Choose from Bay View Cottages, a Suite Cottage with Private Pavilion (daybed, sitting area and hammock) or an Air Conditioned Cottage. Bathrooms do not have hot water.



**Hotel Facilities:** Swimming pool, restaurant and bar, wifi in restaurant area, laundry service. The onsite D'Divers Dive Centre offers recreational diving, courses, Nitrox, technical diving facilities and is rebreather friendly. The closest wreck dive is only 5 minutes away.

## Dumaguete - Central Visayas



Apo Island

**Dumaguete**, "The City of Gentle People", is best known for the Silliman University established in 1901 as the Philippines first Protestant university, and the oldest private American university, in Asia. It is a bustling university town with an airport, several hospitals, shopping malls and other modern conveniences located on the southeast coast of Negros Island in the province of **Negros Oriental**. Dumaguete is the jumping off point to dive the **Apo Island Marine Sanctuary**. Most dive resorts are situated in the coastal town of Dauin, about 15 kilometres (30 minute drive) south of Dumaguete.

**Getting there:** There are daily flights from Manila (1hr 20mins) and Cebu (35mins) to Dumaguete. You can also reach Dumaguete by road from Cebu via a 3.5 hour drive to the southern tip of Cebu followed by a ferry crossing.

**Things to do:** Island hopping, snorkeling, diving. Snorkelling trips to swim with the whale sharks at Oslob can be arranged. Twin Lakes or Balanan Lake has kayaking, fishing, trekking and man-made plunge pools within the rainforest itself and local waterfall visits.



**Diving:** The marine sanctuaries along the Dauin coast house some of the world's rarest critters competing for the underwater photographer's attention. The world renowned Apo Island is a short boat ride away. Apo has been protected since 1982 and is a scuba diver's heaven with its walls, stunning coral and schooling fish.

**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**Rock Point East/West (Apo):** Lots of marine life on this steep wall. Turtles, potato groupers, scorpionfish, black and white snapper, batfish, butterfly fish and pufferfish. Look out for the banded sea snake. Macro lovers will find nudibranchs, flat worms, gobies and anemone shrimp hiding in the coral. Depth: 30 metres.

**Masaplod North (Dauin):** Has more schooling fish and pelagics than any other on the coastline.

Home to blue spotted stingrays, schools of surgeon fish, the occasional barracuda, big staghorn, potato and lettuce coral formations and a resident school of big eyed jacks encircle divers. Search for baby frogfish, scorpionfish and flounders. Depth: 25m



### Atmosphere Resorts & Spa

#### Atmosphere Resorts & Spa

is a boutique beachfront resort on an old seven acre coconut plantation. All their Suites, Garden Apartments and luxury 2 bedroom Penthouses come with air-conditioning, flat screen TV, DVD player, mini-bar, wireless internet, California king beds, en-suite bathroom with solar heated rain shower, coffee and tea making facilities.



**Hotel Facilities:** Fine dining restaurant, poolside bar and dining, beach BBQ and Filipino fiesta, wine cellar, infinity pool, 80 metre beach with protected marine sanctuary, Dive Centre with Nitrox, babysitting & Kids Cove play centre, The Sanctuary Spa & Yoga.

### Pura Vida Beach & Dive Resort

#### Pura Vida Beach

**Resort** is spread over spacious grounds amongst tropical gardens with a volcanic sandy beach. The Standard Rooms are situated by a coconut grove and are made from bamboo with en-suite bathroom, ceiling fan and a terrace. Some Standard Rooms are air conditioned. The Deluxe Rooms, Family Rooms and Suites have a garden, pool or sea view, air conditioning, cable TV, en-suite bathroom, ceiling fan, mini bar and terrace.



**Hotel Facilities:** Swimming pool, pool bar, restaurant, Vida Spa, Dive Centre, wireless internet, souvenir shop and tour booking assistance.

## Malapascua - Central Visayas

**Malapascua** is a small island, only 2.5 km long and 1 km wide, located 8 km off the north-east tip of **Cebu** island. Most of the island's inhabitants live off tourism, fishing, boat building or coconuts. The white, sandy Bountiful Beach lines the south-east coast.

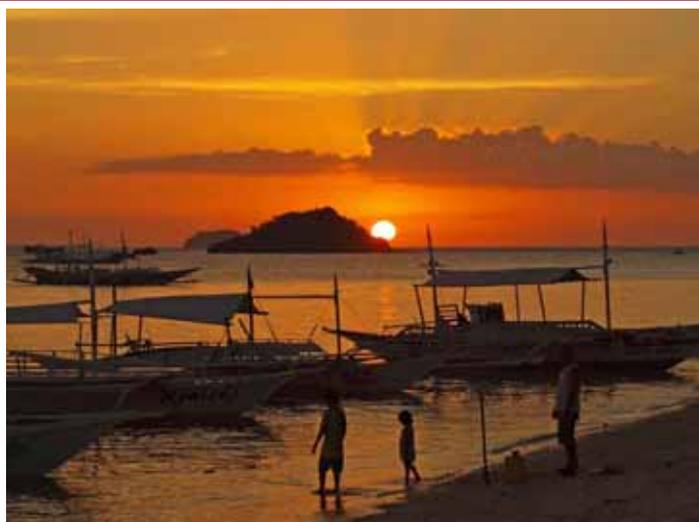


#### Getting there:

Cebu City north to Maya on the island of Cebu is about 3 hours by road followed by a 30 minute outrigger boat ride to Malapascua.

#### Things to do:

Scuba dive, snorkel, wind surf, ocean kayak, visit a local village or relax on a sunset cruise.



## Malapascua - Central Visayas

**Diving:** Malapascua is the only place in the world for regular sightings of thresher sharks before sunrise. Thresher sharks use the **Monad Shoal** seamount as a cleaning station. Manta rays are also common. Schooling hammerheads appear between December to May.

**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**Gato Island:** a marine reserve and sea snake sanctuary with interesting rock formations, overhangs, a tunnel and swim throughs supporting a wide variety of marine life - sea snakes, cuttlefish, seahorses, nudibranchs, frogfish, moray eels, scorpion fish, squid, big-mouthed mackerel and white tip sharks. Depth: 24 metres.

**Calanggaman Island:** a picture postcard desert island with steep walls covered in hard corals and gorgonian fans dropping into the blue. Look for pelagics or unusual fish like clown triggers and critters on the wall.



### Tepanee Beach Resort

**Tepanee Beach Resort** is a small, private resort on a rocky outcrop overlooking the sea, 2 minutes walk from the main beach. 14 Cottages (10 are air conditioned) and 5 Air Con Rooms with a double bed, ceiling fan, en-suite bathroom, hot shower, mini-bar, safety box, wifi, 24 hour electricity, balcony with sofa and the option to add one extra single bed. Deluxe Cottages can fit a second single bed.



**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant, beach bar, sun beds, beach umbrellas and gazebo on the beach.

### Ocean Vida Beach & Dive Resort

**Ocean Vida Beach Resort** is located right on Bounty Beach. Choose from 12 Deluxe Sea View Rooms with air conditioning on the beach or 8 Garden Rooms located in a quieter area near the dive centre. All rooms have a fan, safety-box, mini-bar, hot and cold shower, beach towels, coffee and tea. Some of the Garden Rooms have air conditioning and can be connected to form a Family Room suitable for 2 adults and up to 4 children.



**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant, beach bar and dive centre. From 3pm - 11pm a Chill Out area is set up on the beach with bean bags and tables

## Moalboal - Central Visayas

**Panagsama Beach** near Moalboal in **Cebu** province is a small resort area for divers with restaurants, a disco, night clubs and street bars in a relaxed, laid back atmosphere. There is not much sand on the beach as it was blown away in a typhoon in 1984. A little further north is White Beach with a 2 km sandy beach and nice, clear water.

**Getting there:** Moalboal is on a peninsula on the west coast of the island of Cebu, 90 km from Cebu International Airport (2.5 hour drive).

**Things to do:** Scuba dive, snorkel, kayak, hike through the jungle to waterfalls and mountain peaks, abseil and canyon the waterfalls. Take a mountain bike, motorbike or dirt bike tour. Visit the orchid farm or local markets. Tour to Oslob to swim with the whale sharks.



**Diving:** There is a great variety of marine life (from small nudibranchs to whale sharks) and varied terrain (slopes, steep walls, small caves and canyons). **Pescador Island** lies only 3 km off the coast. Massive sardine bait balls come and go around Pescador



Island attracting predators such as tuna, barracuda, mackerel and occasionally, thresher sharks.

**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**Cathedral Cave (Pescador):** an unbelievable variety of corals and fish life can be found here - frogfish, schools of lionfish, barracuda, tuna, snapper, jacks, clown fish. There is a chimney starting at 37m, exiting at 22m and 16m. The cave is magnificent when filled with light in the afternoon. The wall is covered with soft corals. Depth: 5 - 65 metres.

### Magic Island Dive Resort

**Magic Island Dive Resort** on the water's edge overlooks the Tañon Strait, Pescador and Bandian Islands and the hills of Cebu. The 10 spacious cottages are air conditioned with ceiling fan, have an en-suite bathroom with hot water and hair dryer, safe deposit box, pool towels, complimentary mineral water, desk and chair, 220V European power outlets and a private veranda.



**Hotel Facilities:** restaurant / bar with outdoor dining terrace, swimming pool, lounge bar, massage / spa treatments, small library, wifi access, dive centre with rooftop sun terrace, house reef.

### Kasai Village Dive & Spa Resort

**Kasai Village Resort** caters for singles, couples, friends and families. The Sea View Rooms have magnificent views over the Tañon Strait and neighbouring Negros islands whilst the Poolside Rooms surround the pool area and tropical gardens. All rooms are air conditioned with ceiling fan, en-suite bathroom, mini-bar, native furniture and outdoor terrace.



**Hotel Facilities:** Swimming pool, restaurant, seaside bar, gift shop, wireless internet access in reception, business centre, kids club, spa, jetty, pool table, kayak rental, volleyball area, dive centre, house reef.

## Bohol - Central Visayas

**Bohol** is one of the most diverse and attractive destinations in the Philippines. Bound on the north by the Camotes Sea, on the west by the Cebu Strait, and on the south by the Bohol Sea, Bohol is home to white sandy beaches, offshore islands, a hilly interior, rice terraces, historic churches and watchtowers, enchanting waterfalls and caves, Bohol also boasts the stunning and unique Chocolate Hills and a Tarsier Sanctuary where you can see this small, cute, endangered primate in their natural habitat.



**Getting there:** The capital city of the province is Tagbilaran, located at the south western end of Bohol island. There are daily flights from Manila (1hr 15mins) to Tagbilaran. You can also catch a ferry from Cebu City Pier (approx 2.5hrs).



### ANDA

The town of **Anda** is located on a small peninsula of the same name at the eastern tip of Bohol Island, 99 kilometres from Tagbilaran. Quietly developing as an eco-tourism destination, Anda has a long peaceful stretch of unspoiled white beaches, curious limestone rock formations and cliffs, countless caves (some used as a burial place of the ancient Andahanons) and un-crowded, beautiful scuba diving.

**Getting there:** From Tagbilaran it is a scenic 1hr 40min drive to Anda.

**Diving:** The diving around Anda is varied with steep cliff faces, caves, soft corals and coral gardens - suitable for beginner and advanced divers. Anda is Bohol's best kept secret!

#### Some of the more popular dive sites:

**Paradise Gardens:** an amazingly bright coral garden populated with marine life. Look for schools of jacks, fusiliers and sea horses. This is also a fantastic snorkeling site. Depth: 3 - 30 metres.

**Dap Dap:** great for a second dive with so much to see in the crevices on this steep reef wall. Spot the occasional barracuda, lionfish, tiny naked snails, sea spiders and huge flatworms. Depth: 3 - 20 metres.

**Virgen:** a steep coral wall filled with vibrant corals and split into two sites, East and West. Can be affected by current. Look out for turtles, trigger fish, sea snakes and humphead parrotfish. Depth: 8 - 27 metres.

### Amun Ini Beach Resort & Spa

**Amun Ini** is set on an idyllic, private beach cove surrounded by a 14 km long coral reef, a 10 min drive from Anda. There are 16 spacious Ocean View Deluxe Rooms in two cogon thatched roof longhouses with air conditioning, king or twin beds, sofa bed, flat screen cable TV, internet, mini-bar, en-suite bathroom and pebble floored outdoor terrace.



**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant and beach bar with a decent wine selection and fine views of the infinity pool, beach and the clear blue waters of the Bohol Sea and Camiguin Island in the distance; sun lounges, hammocks, spa, dive centre, kayaks.



### CABILAO

**Cabilao** is a 7.2km<sup>2</sup> triangular shaped island off the west coast of Bohol in the Cebu Strait. The island has white sandy beaches, a nature reserve, two fish protection areas and is home to Bohol's only natural lake, Lake Lanao, which also serves as a small bird sanctuary. There are five villages on Cabilao, populated by about 3,500 inhabitants who survive on fishing, tourism, small agriculture and weaving of bags.

**Getting there:** From Tagbilaran it is a 1 hour drive to Mocpoc Pier, Loon then a 20 minute outrigger boat ride to Cabilao.

**Things to do:** Scuba dive and snorkel. Explore the island by foot, tricycle or motorbike. Take an excursion to the main island of Bohol or Pangilao island.



**Diving:** These waters have strong currents which feed impressive soft corals. Great wall dives with big gorgonian fans and good macro life can be found. However, the real attraction here is the schooling Hammerheads which gather between December to April.

#### Some of the more popular dive sites:

**Lighthouse:** a slope with sea grass and corals down to a sandy bottom. Look for devil fish, stone fish, leaf fish, robust and harlequin ghost pipefish, crocodile snake eels, sea kraits, harlequin shrimps, mantis shrimps and an extraordinary variety of nudibranchs. Depth: 20 metres.

**Current View Point:** a plateau in 25 - 30 metres. The sandy bottom is full of broccoli coral and some fan coral with pygmy seahorses.

**Cambaquiz:** a wall drops from 10 - 70m with small caves and a larger cave at 30m. See damsel fish, fusiliers, parrotfish, turtles, baby sharks.

### Vida Amorosa (formerly Cabilao Beach Club)

**Vida Amorosa** is located on a white, palm fringed beach, set amongst well-kept tropical gardens at the north eastern tip of Cabilao. The 18 rooms are air conditioned with a hot shower and a terrace. The Deluxe Rooms are on the cliff top with split king bed, ceiling fan and sea views. The Standard Rooms are either ground level beside the Dive Centre or on top of the cliff and the Economy Rooms are at the back of the resort.



**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant with billiard table, beach bar, massage centre, wireless internet. The Dive Centre is located just beside the resort.

# Bohol - Central Visayas



## PANGLAO

**Panglao Island** is directly connected to the most southern part of the main island of Bohol by two bridges and is a popular destination for both Filipinos and foreigners who come to enjoy the beautiful beaches, namely the 1.5 km long Alona Beach and Doljo Beach as well as the superb scuba diving. The white sand coral beach at Alona is lined with many resorts, restaurants, bars, souvenir and dive shops.

**Getting there:** Alona Beach is a 30-45min drive from Tagbilaran Airport.

**Things to do:** Scuba diving, snorkeling, whale or dolphin watching, island hopping and exploring the old town of Panglao.

**Diving:** Panglao is the most easily accessible dive area in Bohol offering shallow reefs and good wall diving at Napaling and Puntod. Balicasag Marine Park is a 40min boat trip away with some of the Visayas' best diving. East is Cervera Shoal and it's colony of banded sea kraits. The drift dives of Pamilacan Island offer sightings of manta rays, whale sharks, large napoleon wrasse and reef sharks.

### Some of the more popular dive sites:

**Arco Point (Panglao):** a drop off with a tunnel at 8m, exiting at 18m. The site is covered with soft corals and is home to a sea snake colony, schools of glass fish, moray eels, snake eels and frogfish.

**Doljo Point (Panglao):** has several good dive sites. Fan Coral Garden and Hammerhead Point are on the north side and have a deep drop off with huge fan corals, elephant ear sponges and giant frogfish. If you're lucky, you could see manta rays, whale sharks or even a hammerhead.



**Balicasag Island:** often compared to Sipadan in Malaysia. A wall drops to 40 metres. Black Forest is the most famous site with giant, rare black corals at 35 metres. Tuna, grouper, turtles, wrasse, barracuda and trigger fish cruise by. Diver's Heaven with schooling jack fish and barracuda, turtles, sponges, anemones, soft and hard corals make this site a must see.



## Alona Vida Beach Resort

**Alona Vida Beach Resort** is located in the middle of Alona Beach, connected with the popular Coco Vida Bar and Restaurant. The resort has 4 quiet and spacious Superior Rooms towards the back facing the pool and 8 Deluxe Rooms. All



rooms have cable TV, air conditioning, mini fridge, kettle, safety deposit box, en-suite bathroom, hot shower, terrace or balcony. The Deluxe Rooms also have a ceiling fan.

**Hotel Facilities:** Oceanfront restaurant and bar, swimming pool, wifi throughout the whole resort, dive centre at the front of the resort.

## Amorita Resort

**Amorita Resort** is an intimate resort located on top of a cliff at the quiet end of Alona Beach. 24 Deluxe Rooms in a 2 storey building have a small terrace and two queen beds. 14 Villas have either a Garden or Ocean View, king bed, iPod dock



station, ceiling fan and private plunge pool. All rooms have air conditioning, cable TV, hot shower, hair dryer, mini fridge, coffee and tea making and a safety deposit box.

**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant, bar, infinity pool, wireless internet, dive centre, Kids programme, bicycles, kayaks, stand up paddle boards.

# Philippine Liveboards

The Philippines is a prime destination for liveaboard diving as there are so many islands with various diving regions spread throughout the country, some of which are located a considerable distance from any land mass or are best dived during selected months only. Liveaboard diving enables you to cover more terrain on a single trip and is the ultimate way to experience the amazing natural and historical dive sites the region has to offer.



## Philippine Liveboards - Apo Reef



**Apo Reef** in Sablayan, **Occidental Mindoro** province is the world's second largest continuous reef system and the largest one in the Philippines. Part of the Apo Reef Natural Park (ARNP), it was declared a Protected Area on 6 September, 1996. The ARNP consists of three islands - Apo Island, Apo Menor (Binangaan Island) and Cayos del Bajó covering an area of 27,469 hectares including its surrounding buffer zones. The atoll reef system is made up of two coral reefs separated by a 30 metre deep channel.

**Diving:** Apo Reef is famous for its vertical walls dropping to 80 metres, its rich coral diversity and array of marine life such as schooling jacks, tuna and snapper, white tip and grey reef sharks, eagle and manta rays, green and hawksbill turtles, and in cooler weather, hammerhead sharks.



Located 33 km west off the mid-coast of Occidental Mindoro, Apo Reef is mostly visited by liveboards and safaris. The best time to dive here is November through May.



**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**Apo Island:** several sites here are the best for coral with huge table corals, brain corals, stag horns, fire corals and many soft corals. Sheer drop-offs have unpredictable currents on the north, east and southern sides while to the west is a more gradual slope.

Depth: 10 - 50 metres.

**Bahura 29 (Apo Menor):** A sloping reef wall surrounded by schools of jacks, surgeon fish, fusiliers and trigger fish. Dogtooth tuna cruise in the deeper water and white tip reef sharks scour the reef for prey.

**Shark Ridge:** on the east of Apo Reef. Has many overhangs. A good place to spot white tips and grey reef sharks, turtles and barracuda.



## Philippine Liveboards - Tubbataha Reef



The UNESCO World Heritage Listed **Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park** is the crown jewel of diving in the Philippines. Due to its remote location, 150 km (10 - 14 hour boat ride) south east of Puerto Princesa city on **Palawan** island, Tubbataha is only dived by liveboard from mid-March to mid-June when there are clear skies, calm seas and 30 - 45 metre visibility. The marine park lies in the centre of the Sulu Sea and consists of two coral atolls (North and South Atoll) and Jessie Beazley Reef to the north covering an area of 130,028 hectares.

**Diving:** Tubbataha boasts a pristine coral reef with a spectacular 100 metre vertical wall and a great diversity of marine life. It is one of the last guaranteed shark dives in Asia with the highest population of white tip reef sharks, an important nesting and resting ground for the endangered green and hawksbill turtles and a breeding ground for endangered seabird species. Currents here can be strong and unpredictable.



**Some of the more popular dive sites:**

**Washing Machine:** a very colourful dive with many schools of reef fish from big eye jacks to tiny orange and purple anthias and turtles. Whale sharks have been seen here.

**Black Rock:** there is so much to see here - schools of surgeon fish, rainbow runners and sweetlips, mackerel and barracuda, turtles, white tips and nurse sharks resting under huge table corals, scribbled filefish, boxfish, leaf fish and spiny lobster.

**Jessie Beazley Reef:** a small reef offering some stunning diving. The shallows support a diverse population of reef fish amongst the corals. Reef sharks, tuna, grouper, huge Napoleon wrasse and hammerhead sightings can be consistent. Occasional mako and thresher sharks, manta and eagle rays visit these waters.



# Philippine Liveboards

## S/Y PHILIPPINE SIREN

**S/Y Philippine Siren** is an Indonesian Phinisi style, custom built dive liveboard handcrafted from ironwood and teak. This modern and spacious liveboard comfortably accommodates 16 divers in 8 cabins equipped with personal computer, audio visual entertainment system, en-suite bathroom with hot water, bathrobes, hairdryer, towels and individually controlled mood lighting. Scuba gear, Nitrox and use of kayaks are provided on a complimentary basis. Extra thought has gone into including special features for the underwater videographer and photographer such as indoor and outdoor workstations, large storage drawers, numerous charging points with some adaptors available and large rinse tanks solely for camera and video equipment.

### Schedules and Itineraries:

Several diving itineraries of 6 - 13 nights in duration take you to the best dive sites on offer at the optimum time of year.

**Southern Visayas** ex Cebu (Mactan or Moalboal). Visit the islands of Cebu, Cabilao, Panglao, Balicasag and Pescador, along with the Apo Island marine sanctuary and critter hot spot Dauin.

**Malapascua & The Visayas** ex Cebu (Mactan or Malapascua). Thresher sharks & Malapascua wrecks, plus the above.

**Batangas - Coron** ex Batangas or Busuanga. Dive Anilao, World Heritage listed Apo Reef and the wrecks of Coron.

**Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park** ex Puerto Princesa including extended trips with the highlights of the Southern Visayas.

**Southern Leyte** ex Mactan, Cebu. Snorkel and dive with the whale sharks in Sogod Bay and Limasawa Island.

In addition, Philippines and Palau Combo trips are scheduled between June to August.



### Specifications and Facts:

Launched: 2009; Length: 40m; Breadth: 9.70m; Draft: 3m; Maximum speed: 10 knots; 13 crew; 6 x twin cabins; 2 x double cabins with en-suite bathroom; air conditioning; indoor lounge with cocktail bar and 42" flatscreen TV, computer network; camera work-stations / storage; European 2 pin sockets; outdoor dining area, un-shaded sun deck, shaded dive deck; 2 x tender boats; emergency long distance radio, satellite phones, EPIRB; scuba gear, Nautilus Lifeline rental; Nitrox; rebreather friendly; AOW and EANx courses; first aid and medical oxygen on board; laundry and massage service; kayaks.



## ATLANTIS AZORES

This 32 metre luxurious aluminium monohull vessel has been set up by divers for divers including modern safety features and lots of creature comforts to help set the standard in liveboard diving in the Philippines. As part of the Atlantis Resorts family, you can expect the same quality level of service and standards throughout. Designed to comfortably accommodate 16 divers, Atlantis Azores features a roomy dive deck with individual gear storage areas, hot showers on the back of the deck and a three tier camera table and charging station for all your photography needs. An emphasis on serving freshly prepared meals and snacks will leave your stomach and taste buds completely satisfied after a full day of diving.

### Schedules and Itineraries:

The Atlantis Azores offers several distinct itineraries showcasing parts of the Philippines, or schedules only possible by liveboard.

**Late December to February:** Dive around **Malapascua** and see the thresher sharks at dawn and the many sleeping sharks and sea snakes at Gato Island, a protected Marine Sanctuary.

**Mid March to early June:** **Tubbataha** is the most popular season - explore kilometres of pristine drop offs and see just about anything.

**June to February:** **Dumaguete** is the base for these months. The Visayas / Bohol Safari is a unique opportunity to take in several beautiful islands including Balicasag, Panglao, Pamilican and Siquijor all in one week.

All charters run Saturday to Saturday with the exception of 10 and 12 night Cebu - Malapascua charters.



### Specifications and Facts:

Built: 1989; Length: 32.60m; Beam: 5.50m; Draft: 2.15m; Cruising speed: 10 knots; 6+ crew; 7 x Deluxe cabins lower deck; 1 x Suite upper deck with double + single berth, en-suite; air conditioning; salon; partially covered sundeck with wet bar and hot tub; swim platform and spacious dive deck with hot showers and individual gear storage; 3 tier camera table and charging station; 110V electricity, flat 2 pin US style; 2 x Zodiac tenders; VHF radio, satellite phone, some internet & cell coverage; Nitrox available; scuba courses; safety equipment; optional land tours; tech and rebreather diving possible if pre-arranged. Does not accept children under 15 years.



# Philippine Liveboards



## DISCOVERY PALAWAN

Originally built in 1972 in Groningen, Holland as a three-masted schooner taking wealthy clients to cruise the Caribbean, this ship was subsequently converted into a training ship for a Danish navigation school. In 2013, she was renamed Discovery Palawan and underwent a US \$1.5 million renovation for a fresh, modern look.

### Schedules and Itineraries:

Full diving and non-diving programmes are offered. Non-divers can enjoy a full day of snorkeling, island visits, kayaking and beach hopping.

**Late March to Mid June:** for Divers only - 7 days / 6 nights Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park with an option to add on Cagayancillo and Calusa ex Puerto Princesa.

**Mid October to Mid March:** for Divers and Non-Divers - 8 days / 7 nights Pandan Island, Coron and Apo Reef ex Batangas

In between, Discovery Palawan runs a transition trip between Anilao, Batangas and Puerto Princesa, and vice versa.

### Specifications and Facts:

Built: 1972; Length: 49.20 metres; Width: 8.50 metres; Draft: 3.20 metres; Maximum speed: 10 knots; 20 - 32 crew; 20 cabins with centralised air conditioning in the lower deck and personal climate control in the upper deck, twin, double or queen beds available; air conditioned salon / camera room; sundeck; 2 shaded decks: dining deck & separate bar deck; 220V electricity; 3 x chase boats; satellite phone; scuba gear rental, Nitrox available; scuba courses; medical oxygen onboard; massage service; tours and activities for non-divers. Maximum Guests: Tubbataha 32 divers; Other 16 divers / 24 non-divers.



## M/Y VASCO

**M/Y Vasco** has the unique and rare history of being a Russian spy trawler during the Cold War. A few years after her decommission she was converted into a full service dive vessel. M/Y Vasco has been cruising in Philippine waters since 1998, making her one of the longest running dive liveboards in the country with a highly experienced crew.

### Schedules and Itineraries:

**April to June:** 7 days / 6 nights Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park ex Puerto Princesa.

**October to March:** 5 days / 4 nights Visayas - Cabilao and Balicasag in Bohol including a stop at Oslob to dive with the whale sharks and Sumilon ex Mactan.

M/Y Vasco also runs transition trips between seasons and accepts private charters for Malapascua and Southern Leyte / Visayas dive cruises.

### Specifications and Facts:

Built: 1974; Length: 34.60 metres; Beam: 7 metres; Draft: 2.60 metres; Cruising speed: 9.50 knots; 10 crew + the diving team; 6 cabins with twin + single bed; 2 cabins with 2 single beds; 4 bathrooms/toilets twin shared between 2 cabins; air conditioning; inside saloon with bar, TV, video, stereo; 220V and 24V electricity; deck saloon and upper dining deck; aft dive deck platform and 1.5t hydraulic crane; 2 diving lockers; 2 scientific lockers with air conditioning; 2 x tender boats; long distance radio, satellite phone; scuba courses and gear rental. M/Y Vasco can accommodate 16 passengers in 8 guest cabins.



## SOME OF OUR OTHER POPULAR DIVE DESTINATIONS



**SYDNEY -**

Unit 607, 379 Pitt St. Sydney 2000 - Lic. No. 2TA 003537  
 PH: (02) 9299 4633 FAX: (02) 9299 4644  
 TOLL FREE BOOKINGS: 1800 222 234  
 email: sydney@diveadventures.com.au

**MELBOURNE -**

Unit A 5.2, 63-85 Turner St Port Melbourne VIC 3207 - Lic. No. 31669  
 PH: (03) 9646 5945 FAX: (03) 9646 8589  
 TOLL FREE BOOKINGS: 1800 242 724  
 email: melbourne@diveadventures.com.au

Travel Compensation Fund No. 04589.

BALLAO HOLDINGS PTY. LTD. A.B.N. 65 003 137 586 T/A DIVE ADVENTURES (INCORPORATED IN NSW)

**Your Agent:**