

# Bohol

Scenic Bohol casts a spell on visitors drawn to this – oval-shaped island – from the Chocolate Hills to the Tarsier, from 16th century watchtowers to Baroque Jesuit mission churches, from the Loboc River to Tagbilaran City itself.

Add to these are palm-fringed coastlines that are blessed with a myriad of white sand beaches and sheltering coves. And of course, the ever-smiling, ever-friendly Boholano!

Bohol in a nutshell is a little bit of Cebu, Palawan and Boracay rolled into one – Cebu for its rich history and Spanish heritage; Palawan for its lush flora and unusual fauna; and Boracay for its white sandy beaches and resort atmosphere. But make no mistake – Bohol has a unique local flavour unseen in any other part of the Philippines. Throw these all into the mix, and you have one great holiday destination.



## Fast Facts

**Time Zone:** GMT + 8

**Visa:** Only required if staying more than 30 days

**Climate:** November to February – cool and mostly dry; March to June – warm and mostly dry; July to October – warm and mostly wet

**Average Temperature Year-round:** 24°C – 32°C

**Attire:** Light casual clothes all year round

**Money:** Philippine Pesos. Check with the local banks for current exchange rates. All major credit cards accepted

**Water:** Bottled water available in resorts, restaurants and convenience stores

**Communications:** International and direct dial phone and fax. Internet cafes are widely available

**What to Bring:** Sun block, tanning lotions, insect repellent, personal medication, swimwear and accessories, etc.

# Bohol



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# Bohol, ever smiling, ever friendly

## Getting There

**Major Airport Gateway:**  
Tagbilaran City airport (TAG), the capital of the province of Bohol

**Air Transport:**  
Several domestic carriers fly daily to Tagbilaran from Manila (MNL). It's an hour and 15 minutes away.

**Water Transport:**  
Numerous passenger ferries and fast craft services are available from Manila, Cebu and Dumaguete to Tagbilaran and other ports in Bohol. Tagbilaran is a regular stop-over point for vessels headed for Cagayan de Oro, Butuan and other cities in Northern Mindanao.

## Hotels and Resorts

Bohol already has a large number of hotels, resorts, pension houses, tourist inns and other facilities for tourists. Most of these are concentrated in the capital and along the beaches and coastal regions of Panglao island. A few more are scattered around the island. Accommodations are hospitable, safe and affordable.

## Eating Out and Nightlife

Much of the excitement of dining in Bohol lies not in the usual restaurant fare. The *dampa* style of choosing your own selection of food from the local wet market and letting the local chef cook them home-style will be your best bet for an affordable yet extremely sumptuous option to savour excellent seafood. A wide range of the freshest catch is available daily. These can be grilled right off the hook for an instant native gourmet treat, with the ever-popular San Miguel Beer to help you wash down your meal.

Most of the nightlife is found along the beaches of Panglao island, where the majority of tourists prefer to stay. There are only a few clubs and bars in Tagbilaran City, as Bohol remains more of a family vacation destination.

## Shops, Markets and Crafts

Bohol's handicrafts are famous throughout the country, including mats, baskets, raffia woven cloth, fashion accessories, woodcraft, processed food and ceramics. There are also countless gift shops all over the island where native delicacies and souvenirs are available.



Special buys include the very popular Peanut Kisses (a famous Bohol delicacy shaped like the famous Chocolate Hills, but made out of peanuts), purple yam (locally known as Kinampay or ubi), baskets from the town of Antequera and woven products from the town of Tubigon, which are made from local fibres and buri leaves.

## Sports Activities and Exploration

Bohol is an exotic mix of the best that the Philippines has to offer. The rolling hills and low mountains are ideal for trekking and mountain biking excursions. Because of its limestone foundation, the province is also a land of surreal caves that come to life at dusk, with the emergence of hordes of insect-feeding bats. Officially, there are 1,400 caves in this small island, many of which are unexplored and are said to contain "hidden treasures" from World War II. Countryside tours are popular and one can enjoy any of the tours that are organized by local tour operators to places like Loboc (River Cruise), Carmen (the Chocolate Hills), Cambuhat (Oyster Village) and others. And for city-dwellers wishing for a bit of urban living, Tagbilaran provides enough shopping and entertainment activities.

Of course, there is always the beach. For those who are called out from the inlands and into the sea, beaches here are exquisite – ideal for relaxing and taking up some rays. Just a little bit further out into the ocean, more adventure awaits. All sorts of water sports are found on Bohol's waters and shores, everything from parasailing, windsurfing, kayaking, boating, jet skiing, water skiing, wake-boarding, skim-boarding, to island hopping – with around 73 islands to choose from. And when you thought you've done everything possible in Bohol, you discover a whole new universe of wonders as you take a dip in the ocean.



## Diving

Bohol diving is a celestial experience. It boasts of an underwater panorama of impressive coral gardens teeming with colourful marine life. Noted for their deep, steep walls, Bohol's unique dive sites were created by the continental shifts during prehistoric times. Diving is close to most resorts, which means you do not have to travel far from the dive shop to the actual dive site.

The majority of Bohol diving is concentrated around the south western end of the Bohol mainland. The islands of Panglao, Balicasag, Pamilacan and Cabilao are all synonymous to excellent diving year-round. Panglao is a great place to base yourself, but resorts are also available in the outlying islands. Whichever suits your taste, diving is close to shore and very accessible.



## Attractions within the Region

### NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

1. **Philippine Tarsier**  
(Corella, 10 km from Tagbilaran City)

This is one of the rarest faunas found in the Philippine archipelago and considered as the smallest primate in the world. Measuring four to five inches, a few of these tiny creatures are housed in Loboc, for viewing by tourists. However, if you're really interested to see them in their natural habitat, there is a 15-kilometre pathway through the rolling terrain of the interior towns of Corella, Sikatuna, and Loboc where the tarsiers thrive.

2. **Chocolate Hills**  
(Carmen, 55 km from Tagbilaran City)

This is the most famous attraction of the province, with 1,268 perfectly symmetrical hills located near to the town of Carmen. Named as a National Geological Monument, these hills look like chocolate bonbons when their green grass cover turns to brown during summer. Among these hills that abound in Central Bohol, two have been developed into top-class resorts and provide facilities including a view deck, a youth hostel, and a restaurant.

3. **Hinagdanan Cave**  
(Dausis, 6 km from Tagbilaran City)

It has clean, fresh water gushing from rocky sides. An eerie underworld of stalactites and stalagmites with a bathing pool underneath, this cave is about 2½ kilometres away from the poblacion of Dausis.

4. **Loboc River**  
(Loboc, 21 km from Tagbilaran City)

Enjoy a refreshing boat ride in the serene waters of Loboc River, starting from Loay Bridge which is the outlet of the river and along the palm-fringed banks inland. The ride via motorized pump boat ends near the Tontonan waterfalls, which provides a pleasant bathing session. Some tours offer a lunch menu of local delicacies with serenaders en route.



5. **Busay Falls** (Loboc, 26 km from Tagbilaran City)

Busay Falls is 12 metres wide and 4 metres deep. It caters to swimmers and sightseers who would be enthralled to commune with nature. The Floating Restaurants had been anchored there as venue for meetings and conferences.

6. **Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape**

Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape is classified as an Important Birdwatching Area frequented by foreign birders for possible sightings of threatened and restricted-range species of the Mindanao and Eastern Visayas Endemic Region. These include the Mindanao Tarictic and the Mindanao subspecies of the Rufous Hornbill plus must-see species like the Wattled Broadbill, Steere's Pitta and the Yellow-breasted Tailorbird.

7. **Kain-git Beach** (Tagbilaran City)

A popular beach area that is close to the heart of Tagbilaran City and frequented by local bathers. It is being developed and maintained by the city government and is fast becoming a major entertainment area offering kiosks selling drinks, seafood and local delicacies.

In addition, the southern coast of Bohol province is strewn with numerous white sand beaches, from world-famous Alona Beach in the west to Anda Beach in the east. Most resorts are concentrated in Panglao island, so this is where visitors prefer to stay. Bohol's eastern shores, however, offer unpolluted and unspoiled places to visit, relax and try things that only the locals do.

## HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS

8. **Blood Compact Site** (Barangay Bool, Tagbilaran City)

This spot is where a native Boholano chieftain, Datu Sikatuna and Don Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, representing the King of Spain, forged the first "Treaty of Friendship" between the brown and white races in 1565 with drops of their blood. Every year, the event is re-enacted during a major festival known as the "Sandugo," or "One Blood." It is normally held in the month of July.

9. **Anibogan Massacre Site**  
(Catigbian, 73 km from Tagbilaran City)

A memorial to valour, glory and heroism, the site commemorates the massacre of Filipino victims during World War II.

10. **Dagohoy Marker** (Danao, 92 km from Tagbilaran City)

The Dagohoy marker honours Francisco Dagohoy, who inspired an 84-year revolt against Spain from 1744 to 1829 – the longest revolt in the country's history.

11. **President Carlos P. Garcia Memorial Park**  
(Tagbilaran City)

Erected in loving memory of the greatest Boholano, Carlos Polistico Garcia, the fourth President of the Republic of the Philippines. It sits on a rolling site chosen by the late president himself, when he was then-governor of Bohol. The exquisite monument is made by National Artist Napoleon Abueva, another famous son of Bohol.

## RELIGIOUS ATTRACTIONS

The entire island is studded with stone churches that date back centuries. Most towns boast of a church that was built during the Spanish era, the most notable being at Baclayon and Dausis. It is Spain's never-ending legacy in Bohol, and a testament to the very religious nature of the Boholano.

## FESTIVALS

If you want to experience the fiesta in the real sense of the word, come to Bohol in the month of May, where each day is a fiesta day in some town or other. Kinsfolk from all over the world come home to join in the celebrations.

Other notables:

- Ubi Fiesta (January)
- Pana-ad sa Loboc (Holy Thursday and Good Friday)
- Tagbilaran City Fiesta (May 1)
- Bolibong Kingking Festival (May 23 - 24)
- Sandugo Festival (July 1 - 31)
- Sambat Mascaray Festival Regatta (1st Saturday of December)
- Suroy sa Musikero (December 25 – February 2).

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## Useful Websites for the Region:

Bohol [www.bohol.gov.ph](http://www.bohol.gov.ph)  
[www.bohol.ph](http://www.bohol.ph)  
[www.bohol-island.com](http://www.bohol-island.com)  
Tagbilaran <http://www.tagbilaran.gov.ph/>

## Other useful Websites for nearby Regions:

Cebu <http://www.cebu.gov.ph/>  
Negros Oriental <http://www.negor.gov.ph/>  
Siquijor <http://www.mysiquijor.com/>

## Useful Contacts:

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