

Cebu

Cebu lies in the heart of the Philippine archipelago and serves as the ideal gateway for tourists to more than 7,100 fascinating islands of the country.

A visit to Cebu presents a pleasant discovery of its rich history, multifaceted culture and captivating people. It provides a glimpse of the country's glorious past, with a number of preserved historic relics standing until today. Apart from its popular heritage sites, Cebu is endowed with a wealth of inviting, natural attractions that engage visitors in various activities. It boasts of white sand beaches, pristine waters and rich marine life fit for diving and snorkeling, as well as verdant mountains, mysterious caves and challenging trails for mountain trekking, spelunking and other outdoor sports activities.

Cebu is also home to a vast array of products that are at par with the world's best.

But more than these, Cebu offers distinct warmth of the people that sets Cebu apart from other tropical destinations. Cebuanos, known for their hospitality, friendliness, industriousness, resilience and deep sense of patriotism, are gracious and friendly hosts.

Come and experience life in Cebu, the Queen of Southern Philippines!



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.



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IT'S MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES

An island of revelry, a captivating paradise

Getting there:

Major Airport Gateway Mactan-Cebu International Airport
Airport Road, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu Philippines 6016
Tel. Number: +63 (032) 340 2486

Air Transport:

Travelers may fly directly into the Mactan-Cebu International Airport from Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei, Busan, Palau, Tokyo, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Shanghai and Doha, Qatar. A wide range of domestic flights from Manila and other parts of the country are also available. Being centrally located, most domestic flights to and from Cebu last about an hour.

Water Transport:

Cebu is home to over 80% of inter-island shipping in the Philippines. The Cebu International Port is the biggest and main seaport of entry in the province and the Central Visayas Region. Various shipping lines sail to Cebu regularly from key cities all over the Philippines. Check out the services provided by shipping lines like Cebu Ferries, Trans-Asia, Sulpicio and SuperFerry, to name a few.

A one-way trip between Cebu and Manila takes approximately 22 to 24 hours.

Getting Around

Public transport is available round the clock using jeepneys, buses or taxicabs. In outlying areas, try out the tricycles (motorcycles with sidecars). Fares are fixed and inexpensive, except for taxicabs, which have metered fares.

Hotels and Resorts

All types of accommodation facilities can be found throughout Cebu City and Mactan Island, ranging from prime hotel/resort chains to meager apartelles and pension houses. Scores of resort facilities can be found in the outlying tourist islands and beaches, with many operating 5-star luxury dive centres.

Eating out and Nightlife

It may not be as famous as French, Indian, or Chinese, but Cebuano cuisine holds its own against the great culinary cultures of the world. The style is distinctive and the flavours are subtle. Like other cuisines common in humid climes, Cebu's dishes tend to be wet - soups and sauteed dishes prevail. Even table salt has been replaced by a liquid seasoning. This may take some getting used to at first, especially for Europeans. But the effort to adapt and learn is definitely worth your time. "Sugba" is a Visayan word which means grill, and is usually the preferred manner by which to cook fresh



seafood. Try the dish with the ever-popular San Miguel Beer or the multi-awarded Tanduay Rum.

Visitors are spoilt with a seemingly endless choice for nightlife in Cebu City with its various restaurants, casinos, nightclubs, discotheques, music lounges, pubs and cafes. Entertainment venues are relatively cheap and some remain open until the morning.

Shops, Markets and Crafts

Cebuanos have managed to produce all sorts of handicrafts as they are blessed with an inherent entrepreneurial spirit and creativity. Cebu has practically everything from silver jewelry and hand-woven cloth to Capiz lampshades and ashtrays, abaca bags and coral jewelry boxes. At Carbon Market, which is Cebu's biggest public market, there are many great bargains. Another choice is to take a stroll down Colon Street, with its many stores and malls it offers the best of Cebu.

You can watch the craftsmen at work at Maribago, the centre of Cebu's guitar-making industry. The quality of Cebu's hand-crafted, shell-inlaid guitars can be compared to the best in the world. All kinds of musical instruments are produced from ukuleles and guitars to banjos and mandolins.



One of Cebu's top export earners is rattan furniture with over 2/3 of the country's rattan furnishings made in Cebu. Cebu has also attracted international recognition with the Cebuano's craftsmanship in making furniture of bamboo, stone and other indigenous materials. Many good buys can be found in Mandaue City furniture shops. For antiques, Cebu is a good hunting ground. Cebu is filled with religious relics and architectural details that date back a couple of centuries since it was an early Spanish settlement.

Festivals

Cebu is host to a dozen festivals, but the Sinulog Festival is the biggest and most popular. The feast is in honor of the Señor Santo Niño de Cebu (the Holy Child) and takes place annually on the third week of January. It is the most celebrated among Cebu's events, where people converge along the routes of a grand solemn procession and partake in the gaiety amidst a madri-gras parade immersed in wild colours and the constant beating of drums.

Other festivals are: Pasko sa Sugbo, Sanayon, Paskuhan, Kadaugan sa Mactan, Pasko sa Kasakit, Tagbo, Cassava Festival, Cancar Festival Barangayan, Via Crusis, Dinagat, and Nuestra Señora de Regla Fiesta.

Attractions in Cebu City and environs

- Magellan's Cross** – Planted on April 21, 1521 by Ferdinand Magellan, this is the place where Christianity was symbolically introduced in the Philippines. The original cross still stands today in the exact spot where it was erected, encased in a hollow hardwood case and enshrined in a kiosk.
- Fort San Pedro** – is the smallest and oldest tri-bastion fort in the country which served as the nucleus of the early Spanish settlement in the Philippines.
- Magellan Marker** – marks the spot where Ferdinand Magellan was killed by Lapulapu, chieftain of the island of Mactan, when the former attempted to subjugate the native tribes and convert them to Christianity.
- Lapulapu Memorial** – commemorates the bravery of the chieftain of Mactan island, who on April 27, 1521 defied and defeated the Spanish conquistador in a battle for supremacy and strength.
- Colon Street** – The oldest street in the Philippines was named after Christopher Columbus. It is the heart of downtown Cebu, a glittering area by night lined with moviehouses, restaurants, department stores and other business establishments. An obelisk detailing its historical significance was constructed on its northern end.



- University of San Carlos** – The oldest Jesuit-run school in the country, formerly known as Colegio de San Ildefonso, was established in 1565.
- Capitol Building** – The seat of the Provincial government is of pre-war vintage and has the undulating mountains of Cebu for its background. Majestic and imposing, it is considered as one of the most beautiful buildings in the country, and was constructed in 1937 during the administration of Governor Sotero Cabahug.
- Basilica Minore del Santo Niño** – This church was built by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi and Fr. Andres Urdaneta on the site where the image of Santo Niño was found in 1565. Conferred the status of Basilica in 1965, this church is a famous pilgrimage site for devotees of the Holy Child Jesus.
- Image of Santo Niño** – Considered as the oldest religious relic in the Philippines, the image was a baptismal gift presented by Magellan to Queen Juana. A replica is housed in a side altar inside the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño.
- Mactan Island** – is a coral island 15 minutes away from Cebu City. It is a famous resort island equipped with numerous beach resorts of international standards, each offering easy access to a wide array of underwater adventures. It is also the site of the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, the main airport gateway to the province and the region.

Attractions around Cebu

Malapascua Island
Located on the northeastern tip of Cebu, Malapascua Island is surrounded by bright white sand beaches endowed with crystal-clear waters perfect for diving, swimming and snorkeling. The island is best known as one of the best shark diving locations in the Philippines, attracting numerous species such as White Tips, Black Tips, Bamboo, Nurse, Cat, Hammerheads and the magnificent yet rare Thresher sharks. Monad Shoal of Malapascua is the only known place in the world where Threshers, whose superb tail extends as long as its body, can be closely observed on a daily basis.



Sumilon

Located in the southeastern tip of Cebu, Sumilon is a favorite diving environment for all enthusiasts. Dubbed as the country's first marine reserve, Sumilon Island is a treasure trove of hundreds of marine flora and fauna species guaranteed to give a truly unique diving experience. Large coral formations blossom under its sparkling clear blue waters making it a breeding foreground to one of the region's most magnificent aquatic life.

Argao

One of the most interesting places in the province, Argao has prominent traces of Spanish and early-American influences. It is also blessed with its share of natural attractions from pristine white-sand beaches to intricate cave systems.

Danao

Danao City is a major seaport which links the Camotes group of islands with the Cebu mainland. As such, the fishing industry is very much alive in Danao. Here one finds colourful fishing boats line up along the city's shores in the daytime, when local fishermen are at rest. Because of coal mining and other industries in nearby regions, Danao is also known as the "Industrial Hub of Cebu."

Bantayan Island

Bantayan is widely considered as one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the country. Bantayan is a magnificent small island off the northwest coast of Cebu and is famed for its serenity and cleanliness. Its fine white sand beaches and crystal clear blue waters are a constant lure for tourists and locals alike and have avoided large commercialization and development.

Camotes Islands

The Camotes is a group of four islands that are a part of the province of Cebu. Its people emerged from a cocktail of civilization and history borne by the sea. Camotes still reveals archeological finds dating back to the Spanish era. Attractions include supremely beautiful beaches, natural pools, waterfalls and a lake.

Oslob

An hour and half land trip from Cebu City is the town of Oslob. It is a popularly known area where Whale Sharks regularly congregate. Travellers can either take a bus or a private hire to the town center and find suitable accommodations that suits every budget.

Badian Island

The island is 3 hours away from Cebu City and boasts of white sand beach, resort activities, spa treatments, azure lagoon famous for its beautiful corals reefs and other points of breathtaking natural beauty.

Olango Wildlife Sanctuary

Olango Island supports the largest concentration of migratory birds found so far in the country. Migration starts from the birds' breeding places in Siberia, Northern China and Japan. Olango Island is used as a major refueling station and over-wintering ground, making it a perfect bird-watchers' paradise.

Carcar

Approximately 40 kilometres south of Cebu City, Carcar is a junction town where one still finds strong traces of Spanish influence, evidenced by large antique residences, quaint houses decorated with intricate lacy woodwork, an imposing town plaza and the Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Moalboal

Located 89 kilometres southwest of Cebu City, this island offers short stretches of white sandy beaches and rich marine life for scuba diving. Notable as an excellent diving area is the water around Pescador Island. One can dive straight off Panagsama Beach (located 2.5 km from Moalboal) to an extraordinary view of corals, anemones, sponges and swarms of brightly coloured reef fish.

Useful Websites:

- www.cebucentral.com
- www.cebuharbour.com
- www.cebucitytour.com
- www.mactan-cebuairport.com.ph
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cebu_City
- www.malapascua-island.com
- www.moalboalguide.com

Useful Contacts:

Department of Tourism Offices:

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Airlines:

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|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Philippine Airlines | +63 (0) 2 855 8888 | www.philippineairlines.com |
| Cebu Pacific | +63 (0) 2 636 4938 | www.cebupacificair.com |
| Air Juan Aviation, Inc. | +63 (0) 2 718 8111 | www.airjuan.com |
| Air Asia | +63 (0) 2 722 2742 | www.airasia.com |

Ferries:

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| SuperFerry | http://www.superferry.com.ph |
| Negros Navigation | +63 (0) 2 243 5359 |
| Sulpicio Lines | +63 (0) 32 232 5361 |
| Cebu Ferry Corporation | +63 (0) 32 232 4229 |
| SuperCat Fast Ferry Corp | +63 (0) 32 234 9600 |

Other useful Contacts:

- | | |
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Main photograph courtesy of Joemeth Robles.
Other photographs courtesy of Alex Robinson

