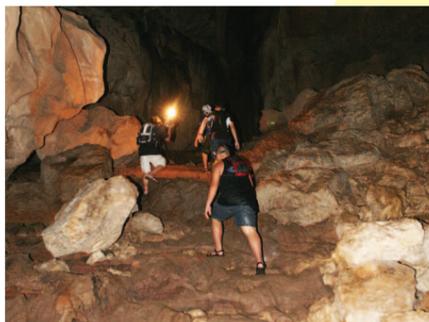


Cordillera Administrative Region

Cordillera Administrative Region is the only land-locked region, consisting of the six provinces of Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province and Apayao with Baguio City serving as the region's capital.

The Cordillera region is very rich in natural resources. It is especially famed for its huge gold deposits, pure stands of pine forest and rich soils and water sources that have enabled its people to sustain agriculture on mountainside rice terraces. The region is home to numerous indigenous tribes and offers one of the most extensive collection of cultural attractions found in the entire country.



Fast Facts

Time Zone: GMT + 8

Visa: Only required if staying more than 30 days

Climate: The best time to see the marvellous landscape of the region in its entirety, particularly if you want to see the green terraces is February - June; rainy season July - January

Average Temperature Year-round: 14°C – 28°C

Average Humidity Year-round: 77%

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: Warm insulating clothing and appropriate gear if planning to do any mountain climbing

Cordillera



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Awe inspiring... breathtaking... stairway to the skies

Getting There

The Cordillera is primarily accessible by land via numerous bus companies, garage cars and tour operators providing transportation requirements from Cubao and other terminals in Metro Manila. The average journey time from Manila to Baguio is about six hours, while Ifugao, Banaue, Bontoc and Sagada are reachable in eight to ten hours through the province of Nueva Vizcaya.

Weather permitting, domestic airlines mount regular flights to Baguio City or Tuguegarao City, cutting the travel time by land. Please check with the airlines for availability and scheduling.

Hotels and Resorts

Medium size hotels are available in the cities of Baguio, Bontoc and Banaue. In more remote areas, hostels, lodges and pension houses provide basic yet clean accommodation options. Homestays can also be arranged.

Shops, Markets and Crafts

The Cordillera is a bargain hunter's paradise where the cost of goods in the flea markets and souvenir shops depend on your haggling skills. Souvenir shops can be found near each tourist attraction where a myriad of ethnic arts, crafts and furniture can be found.

Baguio City is the original trading post of the mountain region, where tribal communities converge and sell various indigenous arts and crafts during market and festival days. There is an abundance of items to buy, from food to furniture, from hand-woven products to works of art, from first-rate to second-hand, but certainly value-for-money.



Sports Activities and Exploration

The Cordillera Autonomous Region offers breath-taking scenery and a chance for some rugged mountain exploration and challenges. In Baguio, local bikers will be happy to guide you along routes ranging from a quick run up Mount Santo Tomas to a lung-busting full day down to Ambuklao Dam. Or perhaps climb Mount Pulag, the second highest mountain in the Philippines. Further north, spelunkers will be thrilled to explore the many underground caves and streams in Sagada, sacred burial grounds of the local tribes. Learn more of Igorot culture by visiting the Village Museum in Bontoc. Go wet and wild by embarking on a white water rafting expedition down the Chico River in Kalinga. Or simply be fascinated by the dozens of rice terraces you will encounter every step of the way.



Major Attractions

BAGUIO CITY

Baguio City is the capital of the Cordilleras. But with its cool mountain air and cosmopolitan flair, Baguio City is also known as “the Summer Capital of the Philippines.”

Botanical Gardens – or so-called “the Igorot Village,” which feature native huts typical of Cordillera architecture. This village captures the ethnic spirit and cultural legacy of the Igorot dweller. The garden is also a site of cultural presentations and other tribal meetings.

Burnham Park – is the oldest of all Baguio parks. One can unwind from the tension of the daily grind by biking, skating or simply reflecting on the day’s experiences amidst a soothing backdrop of colourful flowers.

Camp John Hay – a former American military base which is now open to the public. Its excellent cottages, golf courses, bowling lanes, dining places and natural ambience are all preserved and well maintained.

Mines View Park – provides breathtaking views of mountain ranges and Baguio’s “mineral bowl” where gold, silver and other ores were once quarried.

Wright Park – a pine tree park reserve offering kiddy horse rides and tranquil strolls in and out of mist-shrouded hillsides.

Baguio Market – famous for its wide array of locally sourced goods and products, from colourful woven fabrics and strung beads to primitive wood carvings, cut flowers, strawberries and vegetables.

Baguio Cathedral – this most familiar landmark in the city with its twin spires and one hundred steps sits atop a small hill in the heart of the city, offering churchgoers and visitors an unparalleled view of the entire commercial hub.

Panagbenga Festival – the Baguio Flower Festival is the most colourful event held annually in February. Street parades, floats, costumes and traditional folk dance displays draw huge crowds to Baguio each year.

Other Points of Interest:

Philippine Military Academy, Session Road, Baguio Country Club, Kennon Road. Mansion House, Easter Weaving School, Mount Santo Tomas, Itogon Wood Carver’s Village.



BANAUE (IFUGAO PROVINCE)

Banaue is home to a thriving ancient culture and host to the most picturesque rice terraces in the Cordilleras. Carved from the base of the mountainsides to the top, they appear to be massive green stairways reaching to the sky.

Banaue Rice Terraces – declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995 and dubbed as the “Eighth Wonder of the World,” the 2,000-year-old terraces manifest the engineering skill and ingenuity of the sturdy Ifugao people, who with bare hands carved this stair-like monument out of the Cordillera mountainside.

Batad Rice Terraces – these terraces are shaped like an amphitheatre and can be reached by a 12 kilometre ride from Banaue Hotel and a 2 hour hike uphill through mountain trails.

Mayoyao Rice Terraces – this spot is 44 kilometres away from Poblacion Banaue. The Poblacion of Mayoyao lies in the midst of these rice terraces thus upon arrival in the town, one is awed by a breathtaking view of the rice terraces where all the dikes are tiered with flat stones.

Hapao Rice Terraces – this is another stone-walled rice terraces located in Hungduan municipality and is 55 kilometres from the capital, Lagawe.

Tappiya Waterfalls – about 30 minutes from Batad Village is a cascading waterfall with its enormous natural pool for swimming. A visit to Batad is incomplete without seeing these magnificent waterfalls.

Ducligan Hot Springs – these hot springs are found at the bank of Ducligan River and adjacent to a deep pool. Duncligan is 21 kilometres away from the Poblacion.

Other Points of Interest:

Lagawe (Provincial Capital), Tam-an Village, Philippine War Memorial (Kiangnan), Apfo’or Burial Tombs, Ambuwaya Lake, Bintakan Cave.



SAGADA (MOUNTAIN PROVINCE)

Hanging coffins, underground streams and caves, beautiful waterfalls and clear mountain lakes are just some of the key words that aptly describe this sacred site.

Bomod-ok Waterfalls – reached by a 20 minute jeepney ride or a two-hour walk from Poblacion, the trek to the Falls is a real test of fortitude. While the falls itself is breathtaking, the trek to it is equally amazing, passing through rice terraces and a quaint village.

Sumaguig Cave – also known as the “big cave,” explorers will be able to observe the bizarre limestone formations earning names like “pig pens” and “pregnant woman.” There is even a waterfall inside with a deep pool that is clean, unspoiled and crystal clear. This cave should be traversed with an experienced local guide.

Lumiang Cave – located just north of Sumaguig Cave, the entrance to Lumiang is lined with multiple coffin formations. The uniqueness of the coffins here are in the arrangement where they are fixed wherever space is available.

Echo Valley Hanging Coffins – Sagada’s most famous attraction is undoubtedly the hanging coffins whose tradition begun hundreds of years ago. Their ancestors were either buried in caves or suspended along a steep cliff wall.

Gueday Village – an interesting village practicing an ancient process of planting rice where villagers follow a prehistoric Stonehenge-like arrangement of rocks to tell the appropriate planting season.

Bokong Waterfalls – though it is a smaller waterfall compared with Bomod-ok, the gush of its waters are very strong. The pool of water is cold and refreshing with a depth of 25 feet.

Other Points of Interest:

Bontoc (Provincial Capital), Canduyan Museum, Crystal Cave, Sagada Weaving Shop, Matangkig Cave, Latang Underground River, Danom Lake.

MORE PLACES TO VISIT WITHIN THE REGION

Benguet Province: La Trinidad (Provincial Capital), Ambuklao and Kalinga Dams, the Kabayan Mummies, Mount Pulag, Madayamen, Asin-an Sulfur Springs.

Apayao Province: Kabugao (Provincial Capital), Apayao River, Malabisin Lake and Underground River, Agamata National Park & Wildlife Sanctuary.

Kalinga Province: Tabuk (Provincial Capital), Chico River and Dam, Sungang Viewpoint, Aguinaldo Hill, Tinglayan Rice Terraces, Lubo and Mangali Rice Terraces.

Abra Province: Bangued (Provincial Capital), Gabriela Silang Monument, Abra River, Boliney Hot Springs, Libtec Underground River.

Useful Websites for the Region:

Baguio City	www.baguio.gov.ph www.baguioonline.com www.gobaguio.com http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baguio_City
Banaue	www.banaue.gov.ph www.lakbaypilipinas.com/travel_banaue.html http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banaue_Rice_Terraces
Sagada	www.sagada.gov.ph http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagada
Abra	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abra_(province)
Apayao	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apayao
Kalinga	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalinga
Benguet	www.benguet.gov.ph http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benguet
Ifugao	www.ifugao.gov.ph http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ifugao
Mountain Province	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Province

Useful Contacts:

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Air Asia	+63 (0) 2 722 2742 www.airasia.com

Bus Companies:

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Victory Liner Cubao	+63 (0) 2 929 7460
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Philippine Rabbit	+63 (0) 2 734 9836
Dagupan Bus Company	+63 (0) 2 727 2330
Dangwa Bus Company	+63 (0) 2 731 2879
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Baliwag Transit	+63 (0) 2 364 0860

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Photos courtesy of George Tapan, Robert Regala and Martin Galan

