

Davao

Davao City is a modern metropolis bursting with life, verve and colour. It is located in a land area of 244,000 hectares, which places it among the world's largest cities. Teeming with a vibrant populace, the city is a bustling hub of commerce, education, tourism, arts, culture and wellness in Southern Philippines.

With a dominantly-migrant population, Davao is a melting pot of cultures where diversities are appreciated and nurtured in a harmonious and peaceful environment. As much as Christians mix freely with Muslims and churches stand alongside mosques, Davao is especially famous as the home of colourful ethnic minorities, some of which include the Bagobo, B'laan, Mandaya, Mansaka, Manobo, and T'boli. Indeed, there is more cultural diversity in Davao than any other part of the country.

Davao is a place of ideal balance. It is fast-paced yet relaxed where the luxuries of cosmopolitan living complement the breathtaking beauty of the great outdoors. It serves as the gateway to explore the pristine wonders of Mindanao.



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

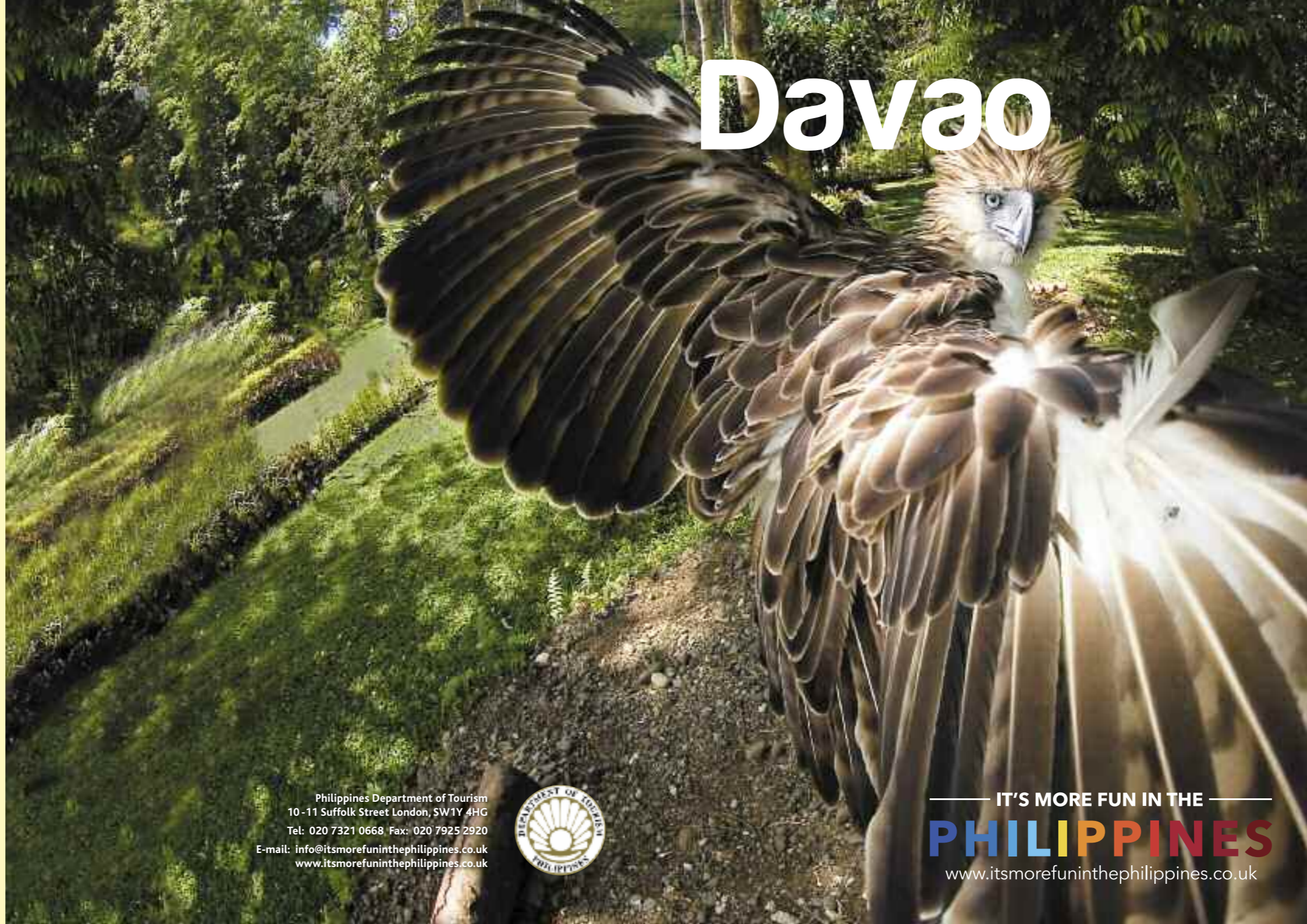
Attire: Light casual clothes all year round

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.



Philippines Department of Tourism
10-11 Suffolk Street London, SW1Y 4HG
Tel: 020 7321 0668 Fax: 020 7925 2920
E-mail: info@itsmorefuninthephilippines.co.uk
www.itsmorefuninthephilippines.co.uk



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Gateway to the Cultural Wonders of Mindanao

Getting There

Major Airport Gateway

Davao International Airport. (DVO)

Distance between Davao and Manila is 1,545 kilometres.

Air Transport

Various domestic carriers fly to Davao from several points in the country while a few international carriers fly from several neighbouring Asian cities including Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, Singapore and Seoul.

Water Transport

Major shipping lines service the Davao area from Manila and nearby southern points. The Davao seaport also serves as the shipping point of exit for most of the agricultural exports of Southern and Southeastern Mindanao.

Hotels and Resorts

Davao offers a variety of lodging accommodations for travelers to the region. These facilities range from affordable quality accommodations to serene resorts lying on secluded coves. First class business hotels are also available nearer the city centres of each region.

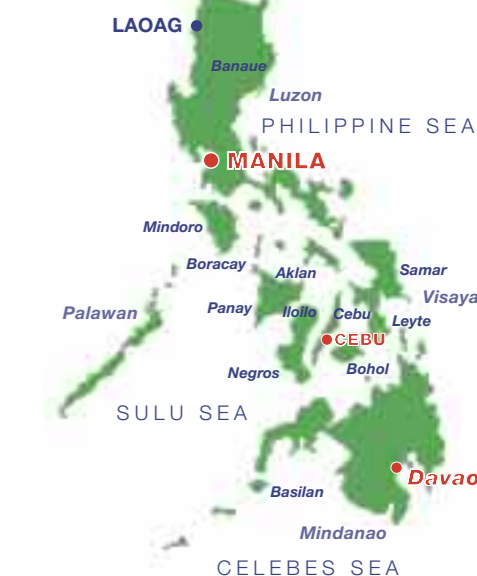
Sports Activities and Exploration

Mindanao is a host to an extensive collection of sport activities that range from recreational activities like golf, horseback riding, beach combing, trekking to intense adrenaline fuelled sports including mountain climbing, white water rafting, and surfing.

Major Attractions

Mount Apo National Park

At 2,954 meters, Mt. Apo is the country's tallest peak. Every March, the local government organizes the Mt. Apo Trek, and hundreds of mountain climbers participate. Its natural wonders attract outdoor enthusiasts to trek to its towering peak while bearing witness to nature's tranquility, including steaming blue lakes, geysers, sulfur pillars, thundering rivers and waterfalls. Taday Falls at 100 metres, is the tallest waterfalls that can be found in the region.



San Pedro Cathedral

The Cathedral serves as the seat of the Catholic Archdiocese of Davao and the oldest church in the city. The church was built in 1847 during the Spanish period and even its original altar is preserved to this day.

Puentespina Orchids & Tropical Plants

What started as a hobby in 1977 grew to become one of the biggest producers of cut flowers in the country today. Nowadays, it is a busy centre for the local cut flower industry, supplying major cities nationwide with its beautiful floral products, especially the Vanda Sanderiana, or the Waling Waling.

Shrine of the Infant Jesus

Located at the top of Matina Hill, this open-air shrine with replicas of the Infant Jesus of Prague and Our Lady of Fatima serves as a nice and quiet place to reflect and worship while also granting exceptional views of Davao City, Davao Gulf, and Samal Island.

Crocodile Park

The park is one-of-a-kind in the region, and serves as a sanctuary for locally bred crocodiles. One of its native inhabitants, measuring over 18 feet in length, is the largest crocodile in the country aptly named "Pangil" (Fangs). Other attractions include horseback riding, swimming pools and a picturesque picnic area.

Eden Nature Park

Situated at the foot of Mt. Talomo, Eden Nature Park provides magnificent views of Davao City and the Gulf. The park provides a relaxing venue in contrast to the bustling city life.

Philippine Eagle Conservation Centre

The centre is primarily dedicated to the conservation of the extremely rare Philippine Eagle (*Phitecophaga jefferyi*), first discovered by British ornithologist John Whitehead in 1896. It is the largest eagle standing about one metre tall with a wingspan of two metres. In the wild, these eagles are found in the forests around Mount Apo, while in the centre, you will see various Philippine Eagles bred in captivity.

Davao River

Representing the third largest river catchment in the entire country, it is currently the venue for the latest craze for adventure-seekers in Davao City. White water rafting along the river is a three-hour run starting from the highlands of the Baguio District, going through Calinan and then finishing in the lowlands. There are about 30 rapids, varying in difficulty from class one up to the extreme class five.

Samal Island

Located just 10 minutes from Davao City, Samal Island is lined with white sand beaches and provides a multitude of activities both on and offshore. Inland tours to spectacular rivers and falls, heritage sites and a renowned cave housing an incredible 1.8 million bats are popular with tourists. Aside from overland adventures, this island is blessed with a multitude of dive sites to suit all tastes and experiences. Names like Ligid Caves and Pinnacle Point in the northeast, to Mushroom Rock in the southeast, conjure images of giant gorgonian fans, octopus, moray eels, jacks, dolphins and other pelagic animals. There are also spectacular sights for snorkelers, like the Marissa reefs where the hawksbill turtles are regular visitors.

Kadayawan Sa Dabaw Festival

The festival was originally called "Apo Duwaling," a name created from the icons Davao was famous for – Mt. Apo, the country's highest peak; durian, the king of fruits; and waling-waling, the queen of orchids. Today, Kadayawan has metamorphosed as one of the country's biggest, honoring Davao's artistic, cultural and historical heritage through tribal dances and floral parades in full regalia.



Attractions within the Region

Camiguin Province

Lying in the Bohol Sea some 90 kilometres north of Mindanao is the pear-shaped volcanic island of Camiguin. It is an island paradise known for its beautiful coastlines and rich marine resources surrounded by natural wonders like hot springs, waterfalls, volcanoes (of which there are seven in the island) and exotic flora and fauna. Camiguin has two other attractive islets known as White Island, a 2 kilometre uninhabited white sand bar and Mantigue Island, four hectares of forest fringed white sand beaches. Also located in the island is the Old Catamaran Church Ruins, remnants of the oldest Spanish settlement in the area destroyed by the 1871 Vulcan Daan Eruption. The island's most popular event is the Lanzones Festival, held annually in the month of October.

Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte

Siargao is a teardrop shaped island located in the northeast of Mindanao. The eastern coastline faces directly out into the Pacific Ocean and the Philippine Trench, 10,057 metres deep. The island is primarily known throughout the world as a first class quality surfing location where international competitions are held every October. Other activities include sailing, spelunking and exploring the spectacular seascapes through snorkeling and diving.

Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur

"Zamboanga Hermosa", or Beautiful Zamboanga is also the name of the most popular festival in the "Ancient City of Flowers", where vestiges of Spanish rule still stand out in the architecture, the language and the day-to-day way of life. Zamboanga City is home to numerous historical sites dating back to the Spanish era, when countless battles were fought by the Spaniards against the Moros.



Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental
 Located in northern Mindanao, Cagayan de Oro is faithful for luring adventurers to its bountiful natural resources. It is famous for its selection of outdoor activities including spelunking through the numerous exotic caves, traversing sky bridges along century old forests and white water rafting along the mighty Cagayan de Oro River. It is also the home of the Malasag Eco-Tourism Village, which successfully captures the ethnic spirit of the indigenous tribes of the area.



Bukidnon Province
 Bukidnon is a highland haven in the heart of the island. It is known as the Food Basket of Mindanao and is home to the world's biggest pineapple plantation. It is well endowed with natural attractions like the Kitanglad Ranges that includes Dulang Dulang, the second highest peak in the country. The province is also endowed with a very high concentration of endemic biodiversity. Malaybalay City, the Provincial Capitol, plays host to the increasingly-popular Kaamulan Festival every March.

Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
 Recognized as one of the most important watershed areas in the country, Lake Sebu consists of many small streams, creeks, rivers, and springs that provide irrigation water for rice lands throughout the provinces of South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. Two leading tribal peoples, the T'boli and the Ubo, make their home on and around Lake Sebu. The T'bolis in particular are known for their skill in weaving and making brassware. Wildlife is commonly observed in the region, and communities of birds such as cockatoos, swallows, kingfishers, kites, herons, and egrets have made their permanent homes in the area.

General Santos City, South Cotabato
 Given its prime location along the migratory routes of Southern Philippines, "Gensan" has become the Tuna Capital of the Philippines, and provides a rich harvest of yellowfin tuna to a worldwide market. Other than this, Gensan is a well-known outdoor destination, with top-quality products like Kalaja Karsts Land (featuring Kalaja Cave and Kalaja Face), Bunga Springs, Absekong Waterfalls and Nopol Hills.

Festivals

- Araw ng Koronadal (second week of January; Koronadal);
- Kahimunan (second week of January; Butuan);
- Kalilangan (second week of February; General Santos City);
- Sibug-Sibug (fourth week of February; Zamboanga);
- Araw ng Zamboanga Sibugay (fourth week of February; Zamboanga);
- Araw ng Dabaw (first week of March; Davao);
- Panagtagbo (first week of March; Tagum City);
- Kaamulan (first week of March; Bukidnon);
- Bangwahon (second week of May; Dapitan City);
- Pagsalabuk (last week of May; Surigao);
- San Juan Hibok-Hibokan (last week of June; Camiguin);
- Sirong-Sirong (last week of June; Surigao);
- Sagayan (first week of July; Lanao del Norte);
- T'Nalak (second week of July; Cotabato);
- Kinabayo (last week of July; Zamboanga);
- Kalibongan (second week of August; Cotabato);
- Kayag-An (last week of August; Cagayan);
- Flomlok (second week of September; Cotabato);
- Padigo San (second week of September; Davao);
- Zamboanga Hermosa (second week of September; Zamboanga);
- Sambuokan (second week of September; Davao);
- Kidapawan (first week of October; Kidapawan City);
- Lanzones (second week of October; Camiguin);
- Ting'Udo (second week of October; Cotabato);
- Banayan (last week of October; Davao);
- Helobong (second week of November; Cotabato);
- Kalimudan (third week of November; Sultan Kudarat);
- Kadagyaan (first week of December; Cotabato);
- Kanyong Kawayan (third week of December; Cotabato).

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Useful Websites for the Region:

Davao	www.davaocity.gov.ph www.clickdavao.com www.discoverdavao.com http://www.kadayawan.com/ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davao_City
Camiguin	www.camiguin.gov.ph http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camiguin www.camiguin.redbearnet.com
Samal	www.samalcity.gov.ph
Siargao	http://siargao.com
Zamboanga	www.zamboanga.com www.zamboanga.gov.ph
Cagayan de Oro	www.cagayandero.gov.ph http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cagayan_de_Oro_City
Bukidnon	http://www.bukidnon.gov.ph/tourism.htm http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bukidnon
General Santos City	http://www.gensantos.gov.ph/

Useful Contacts:

Department of Tourism Offices:

London	+44 (0) 20 7321 0668 info@itsmorefuninthe Philippines.co.uk www.itsmorefuninthe Philippines.co.uk
Davao	+63 (0) 82 221 6955 www.discoverdavao.com
Cagayan de Oro	+63 (0) 88 726 394 dotr10@yahoo.com
Cotabato City	+63 (0) 64 421 110 stdtdotr12@pldtvibe.net
Butuan City	+63 (0) 85 225 5712 dot13@yahoo.com
Zamboanga City	+63 (0) 62 991 0218 dotr9@yahoo.com

Airlines

Philippine Airlines	+63 (0) 2 855 8888 www.philippineairlines.com
Air Philippines	+63 (0) 2 843 7770 www.airphils.com
Asian Spirit	+63 (0) 2 840 3811 www.asianspirit.com
Cebu Pacific	+63 (0) 2 636 4938 www.cebupacificair.com
Sea Air	+63 (0) 2 894 0100 www.flyseair.com

Ferries

WG & A Superferry	+63 (0) 2 894 3211
Negros Navigation	+63 (0) 2 243 5359
Cebu Ferry Corporation	+63 (0) 32 232 4229
SuperCat Fast Ferry Corp	+63 (0) 32 234 9600

Other useful Contacts:

British Embassy Manila	+63 (0) 2 816 7116
British Consulate Cebu	+63 (0) 32 346 0525