

Atulayan Island, Camarines Sur

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

At the southernmost end of Luzon island, the **Bicol region** has six provinces composed of **Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes** and **Masbate**.

GETTING TO AND AROUND

There are short flights (roughly 75-90mins) from Manila to Legazpi in Albay, Naga City in Camarines Sur, Virac on Catanduanes and Masbate island. CALABARZON's Quezon province is also a gateway to Bicol. By road, it's about 475km/9hrs 30mins from Manila to Legazpi. Buses, jeepneys and cars are popular means of getting around the region.

WHERE TO STAY

The most popular places to stay in Bicol are the business centres of **Naga, Legazpi, Tabaco, Daet, Iriga, Sorsogon, Donsol** and **Masbate**, with generally simple, clean and affordable accommodation including homestays. Naga and Legazpi have some upmarket options. For an upscale beach holiday experience, there's the luxury Misibis Bay Resort & Spa on Cagraray Island in Albay.

BICOL



CLIMATE

Tropical, without pronounced dry and wet seasons in the western and southern areas and no dry season in the eastern and northern areas. The average temperature throughout the year ranges from about of 27°C to 30°C. Minimum monthly rainfall occurs from March to May.

Regional Office
Department of Tourism, Regional Center Site Rawis, 4500 Legazpi City,
Tel: +63 52 742-5004, bicol.dot@gmail.com, www.bicoltourism.ph

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TPB
PHILIPPINES

Department of Tourism
Embassy of the Philippines
2nd Floor, 10 Suffolk Street
London SW1Y 4HG
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7321 0668

info@itsmorefuninthephilippines.co.uk
www.itsmorefuninthephilippines.co.uk

BICOL

Mayon Volcano

 IT'S MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES

WELCOME TO THE BICOL REGION

Covering the southern part of **Luzon Island** and nearby island-provinces, **Bicol** lures lovers of the great outdoors with its active volcanoes, mountains, caves and cliffs, along with blissful white-sand beaches and coral reefs.

A growing ecotourism destination by virtue of the need to preserve its stunning natural resources, this region south of Manila overflows with culture and fantastic outdoors activities as well as offering a growing number of nature resorts.

"From whale sharks to manta rays, kaleidoscopic coral to a perfectly conical volcano, a journey into the Philippines' Bicol region highlights the extraordinary natural riches of this island-nation."

— National Geographic

Masbate Island



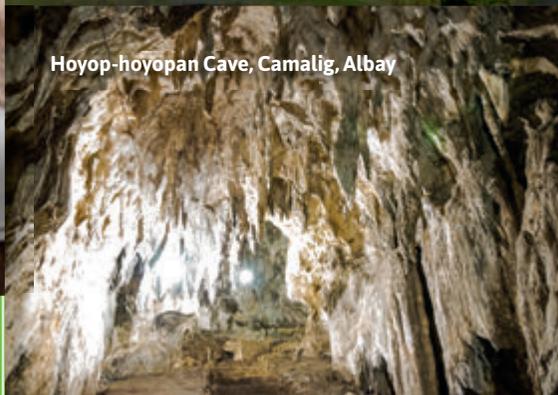
Cagsawa Ruins



Bicol Express



Hoyop-hoyopan Cave, Camalig, Albay



WHY IT'S MORE FUN IN THE BICOL REGION

Swimming with whale sharks (known locally as *butanding*), the world's largest fish, is the activity most people associate with this part of the world, but there's plenty more outdoorsy fun to be had in the **Bicol** region – both on the water and on land. And when you need to relax, there's a lot of scope for that on the white-sand beaches.

CULTURE AND FOOD

The **Bicol** Region has an array of cultural sites that showcase its rich history. Originally descended from incomers from China, the inhabitants of Bicol often mix Chinese, Arab and Spanish ancestry, and most are devout Catholics.

Bicol is also famed for its spicy food, which is based largely on coconut and chillies – as evidenced in the likes of *gulay na lada* or *Bicol Express* (pork and local chillies cooked in coconut cream). Other dishes not to miss are *laing* (taro leaves with meat or seafood in coconut milk, spiced with chilli, lemongrass and more) and local specialities featuring local *pili* nuts.

Whale shark watching, Donsol

Daraga Church



Wakeboarding, Camarines Sur Watersports Complex



Caramoan Island



Tinagba Festival, Iriga City



TOP 10 ACTIVITIES

- See and snorkel near whale sharks in **Donsol** in Sorsogon.
- Go island-hopping and snorkelling around **Caramoan** and its islands in the east of Bicol.
- Surf on **Catanduanes Island** and swim in its waterfalls and lagoons.
- Take an escorted tour by all-terrain vehicle to the active volcano **Mount Mayon**.
- Explore Bicol's main city, **Legazpi**, with its Franciscan church, Spanish pier and Japanese tunnels.

TOP EVENTS & FESTIVALS

- Tour the **Cagsawa Ruins** – the atmospheric remnants of a 16th-century Franciscan church.
- Take a boat-ride through the **Quitinday Underground River**, a natural cave system.
- Visit the imposing **Daraga Church**, set on a hilltop against a backdrop of Mayon volcano.
- Head for **Lignon Hill Nature Park** with its zip-line, hiking trail and valley views.
- Relax in **Albay Park and Wildlife** with its bike hire, lagoon boating and fishing.
- **Tinagba Festival, Iriga City, February** – a harvest thanksgiving including parades, street dancing and sporting challenges.
- **Ibalong Festival, Legazpi, August** – a celebration of a local legend, with masked and costumed reconstructions of classic battles.
- **Peñafrancia Festival, Naga, September** – a barge procession, fireworks and more, celebrating Bicol's patron, Our Lady of Peñafrancia.