



Manila

TELEPHONE CODE 02 / POP 11.5 MILLION

Includes »

City of Manila (Downtown).....	37
Parañaque & Pasay	57
Makati.....	60
Quezon City.....	71
Information	75
Getting There & Away	77
Getting Around.....	79

Best Places to Eat

- » Sala (p67)
- » Corner Tree Cafe (p68)
- » Seafood Market (p53)
- » Sofitel Philippine Plaza (p52)
- » Casa Armas (p53)

Best Places to Stay

- » Manila Hotel (p49)
- » Hotel Miramar (p49)
- » Makati Shangri-La (p63)
- » Casa Bocobo (p49)
- » A Venue Suites (p65)

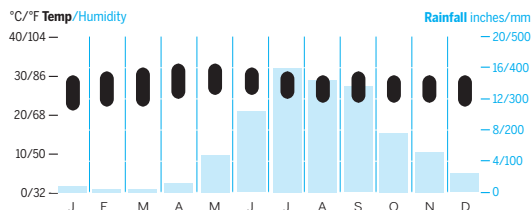
Why Go?

Manila's moniker, the 'Pearl of the Orient', couldn't be more apt – its cantankerous shell reveals its jewel only to those resolute enough to pry. No stranger to hardship, the city has endured every disaster both human and nature could throw at it, and yet today the chaotic metropolis thrives as a true Asian megacity. Skyscrapers pierce the hazy sky, mushrooming from the grinding poverty of expansive shantytowns, while gleaming malls foreshadow Manila's brave new air-conditioned world. The congested roads snarl with traffic, but, like the overworked arteries of a sweating giant, they are what keep this modern metropolis alive.

The determined will discover Manila's tender soul, perhaps among the leafy courtyards and cobbled streets of serene Intramuros, where little has changed since the Spanish left. Or it may be in the eddy of repose arising from the generosity of one of the city's 11 million residents.

When to Go

Manila



Dec–Feb The coolest, most pleasant months.

Mar–Apr Holy Week is no time to be in packed beach resorts, so spend it in sleepy Manila.

Jul–Aug Some say it rains too much; we say it's the best time to escape the searing sun.

MANILA IN...

Two Days

Wander historic **Intramuros** and **Rizal Park**. Head to **Roxas Blvd** to watch the sun set over Manila Bay, then spend some quality hours in the many bars of **Malate**. On your second morning, take the LRT up to the **Chinese Cemetery**, then backtrack to **China-town** for lunch. Spend the evening in upscale **Makati**, where there are oodles of restaurants, bars and nightclubs to choose from.

Four Days

Follow the two-day itinerary, then on your third day take an entertaining **walking tour** around a city neighbourhood. In the afternoon, head back to Makati for the intriguing **Ayala Museum** and some more good eatin'. On your final day, spend the morning at the **National Museum of the Filipino People**, or treat yourself to a massage at one of Manila's many spas. Explore the camp and classic **Cultural Center of the Philippines**, then take in the sunset at the **Sofitel Philippine Plaza** or at one of many bay-facing eateries at gargantuan **Mall of Asia**.

History

Early tourists, such as the 19th-century traveller Fedor Jagor, described Manila as a splendid, fortified city of wide, cobbled streets and regal town houses. Tragically, most of that splendid city was obliterated in WWII.

Manila was colonised by the Spaniard Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1571. Its broad sweep of fertile lands made it more attractive than Cebu, which had been the capital. King Philip II of Spain conferred on the city the illustrious title *Isigne y Siempre Leal Ciudad* (Distinguished and Ever Loyal City), but the city continued to be called by its pre-Hispanic name of Maynilad (presumed to be from *may*, meaning 'there is', and *nilad*, a mangrove plant that grew in abundance on the banks of the Pasig River), which was later corrupted to Manila.

From the late 19th century onwards, it could be argued that Manila was something approaching a Paris of Asia. It was a thriving trading centre, and its multicultural mix provided a good entry point into China and other Asian countries. In 1905 Daniel Burnham, the master planner of Chicago, was hired to produce a master plan for the city. His grand vision included Roxas Blvd, which, even today, under its somewhat shabby patina, echoes Lake Shore Dr in Chicago. The streets were lined with grand structures, many reflecting the best of Art Deco design.

WWII changed everything (see 'The Destruction of Manila' on p414). Many claim the city has never recovered. Rebuilding af-

ter the war was sporadic, and the city was never able to reclaim either its regional importance or its sense of self. Many locals complain about the scattered character of Manila; it's true that the various cities within the city feel disunified and there is no sense of a whole.

CITY OF MANILA (DOWNTOWN)

The vast urban sprawl known as Metro Manila is composed of 16 cities, but its heart and soul remains the City of Manila proper ('downtown' Manila; population 1.7 million). It was here that the city was founded on the banks of the Pasig River; it was here where the Spanish solidified their claim to the Philippines after overthrowing the Muslim rulers of Maynilad; and it was here where the city suffered its darkest hours in the dying days of WWII.

The traditional tourist belt encompasses the area immediately south of the Pasig River – specifically Intramuros, where the main tourist attractions are concentrated; and Ermita and Malate, where most tourists still stay. Immediately to the north of the Pasig are the districts of Binondo and Quiapo, gateway to Chinatown. Other districts are Paco, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, San Nicolas and slum-ridden Tondo, near the ferry docks.

Until recently most tourists had little reason to leave the downtown area, but Metro Manila's best restaurants and bars have