



Philippines



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Itineraries



Greatest Hits

Fly into **Manila**, worth a one-day stopover to tour historic Intramuros and its nearby museums.

On day two fly to **Busuanga** in Palawan's Calamian Islands. Visit majestic **Coron Island**, dive the WWII wrecks, do a kayak tour and camp overnight on an idyllic off-shore island such as Calumbuyan, Pass or North Cay.

Next, take a ferry to Palawan's other crown jewel, **El Nido**, home to some of the world's prettiest beaches and jumping-off point for island-hopping trips in the spectacular Bacuit Archipelago. Enjoy El Nido's burgeoning drinking and dining scene, then hit **Boracay**, where the party never stops.

Fly back to Manila and take an overnight bus to **Banaue**, jumping-off point for the rice terraces of Ifugao. Enjoy the Zen-like peace and quiet of **Batad** for a day before taking a bus back to Manila to catch your flight home.



North–South Traverse

Spend your first three days in **Manila** getting acclimatised, reserving one day for a journey outside Manila – climbing moonlike **Mt Pinatubo**, whose eruption shook the world in 1991, would be our first choice. Scenic **Tagaytay**, which has some of the best restaurants in the country, is a mellower option.

Next, head to the Bicol region in Southeast Luzon. It's an adventure hub with surfing, wakeboarding and volcanoes on offer. Around Legazpi you can snorkel with whale sharks off **Donsol** or ride an ATV around the base of impressive **Mt Mayon** (if it's not erupting).

Proceeding south, cross the San Bernardino Strait to the rugged islands of Samar and Leyte in the eastern Visayas. Along the way, have the spelunking adventure of a lifetime in **Catbalogan**. Stop off in **Tacloban**, Imelda Marcos' home town. It was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Typhoon Yolanda) but has reinvented itself as a hip provincial centre. Head to nearby **Red Beach** for a dose of WWII history. Then take a ferry to the Visayas' gritty capital, **Cebu City**, for modern comforts and nightlife.

You'll be approaching week three of your trip by now, and possibly ready for some serious beach time. Take the fast ferry to Tagbilaran, the capital of Bohol and gateway to the beach resorts of **Panglao Island**. From Panglao you are well positioned to enjoy all Bohol has to offer: go diving, snorkelling and dolphin-spotting offshore, then head inland to stand-up paddle the Loboc River, view the **Chocolate Hills**, kayak with fireflies on the Abatan River and spot palm-sized primates at the **Philippine Tarsier Sanctuary**.

Next, move north from Panglao and catch a classic back-door ferry: 3½ hours from Jagna, Bohol, to **Camiguin Island**. Camiguin can keep both adventurous travellers and beach bums satisfied for days. Spend at least several here, then make the short hop over to mainland Mindanao by ferry. For your last few days, choose between **Cagayan de Oro**, a buzzy university town with white-water rafting, and **Siargao**, the Philippines' top surf spot as well as an idyllic island with lagoons and mangroves galore.



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SVETLANA BOKOVA / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Top: Busuanga Island
(p411), Palawan

Bottom: A jeepney in
Banaue (p155)

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WEEKS

Voyage to the Visayas

Beach-lovers and dive buffs need look no further than this central group of idyllic islands.

Kick things off in **Cebu City**, soaking up some history during the day before partying it up at night. Then it's time to hit the islands: divers will want to head straight to **Malapascua Island**, where you'll have a good chance of encountering thresher sharks; while sun worshippers should check in on laid-back **Bantayan Island**. Double back to Cebu City and continue south to adventure mecca **Moalboal**, where waterfalls abound and you can go freediving with schooling sardines.

Continue to Cebu's southern tip and cross the narrow Tañon Strait to Negros and **Dumaguete**, which is all about promenading on the scenic boulevard, great seafood, rowdy nightlife and superb diving at Apo Island. Next, take a detour to the mellow island of **Siquijor**, just 1¼ hours away by ferry. Spend a day or three here and be sure to visit one of its famed folk healers.

Retreat to Dumaguete and take the long bus ride around the southern horn of Negros to delightfully laid-back **Sugar Beach** on the west coast. It's a divine sweep of fine golden sand in range of quality diving and mangrove kayaking. From here another long bus journey north takes you to **Bacolod**, where you can revel in great food and bar-hopping, and take a side trip to **Silay** for a fascinating journey through haciendas and sugar-cane plantations.

From Bacolod it's an easy fast-ferry trip over to **Iloilo City** on the island of Panay. Check out the colonial architecture of the Jaro District and have a night out in Smallville. A short boat ride away is **Guimaras**, a gem of an island with low-key resorts, mountain-biking and famous mangoes. Return to Iloilo and meander north via **Antique Province**, where hidden beaches await, before alighting on **Boracay** to whoop it up on White Beach.



3 WEEKS North Luzon

Not a beach person? The mountains of the Philippines' main island delight with rice terraces, trekking and hill tribes.

Head north from Manila to **Baguio**. Visit some of the city's fascinating ethnographic museums.

From Baguio, take a bus to **Kabayan**, centre of Ibaloi culture and base for hikes in Mt Pulag National Park. Next, **Sagada** beckons. This tranquil backpacker village is tough to leave.

Take a jeepney to **Bontoc** and explore the amphitheatre-like rice terraces of **Maligcong** on a day trip. Continue north to **Tinglayan**, a base for treks into indigent Kalinga villages where the contemporary world feels far away.

Head back to Bontoc, then continue to **Banaue** and **Batad**, site of Luzon's most famous rice terraces. Stunning hikes will keep you busy for days. Try to spend at least a night or two in a homestay.

With a little R&R in mind, catch a bus south to San Jose (you might have to overnight here) to connect to another bus to the surfing town of **Baler**.



2 WEEKS Water world: Palawan

The Philippines' star attraction lends itself to easy south-north exploration.

Spend an evening in **Puerto Princesa** checking out the city's culinary scene and a day exploring the surrounding countryside. From Puerto, organise a ride to **Sabang**, a laid-back beachfront village and the base for trips through the famous Underground River.

From Sabang, hightail it further north to **Port Barton**, a beautiful and relaxing retreat with chilled-out beach bars. Heading north again, reserve at least a day for undiscovered **Taytay** before rejoining the tourist masses in **El Nido**, sandwiched between limestone cliffs and the fantastically picturesque **Bacuit Archipelago**.

From El Nido, take a boat to **Busuanga Island**. If you have time, the trip to Busuanga can be done as a five-day island-hopping expedition through the heavenly Linapacan and Calamian archipelagos. From Busuanga, venture out to the striking lakes of **Coron Island** and some of the best wreck diving in the world. Flights and ferries are available to usher you back to Manila and reality.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Body surfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/MRT/MTR station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Skytrain/Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



Michael Grosberg

[Boracay & Western Visayas, Mindanao](#). Michael has worked on more than 45 Lonely Planet guidebooks. Whether covering Myanmar or New Jersey, each project has added to his rich and complicated psyche and taken years from his (still?) relatively young life. Prior to his freelance writing career, other international work included development on the island of Rota in the western Pacific; time in South Africa where he investigated and wrote about political violence

and helped train newly elected government representatives; and a stint teaching in Quito, Ecuador. He received a Masters in Comparative Literature and taught literature and writing as an adjunct professor at several New York City area colleges. Michael also researched the Understand the Philippines section.



Iain Stewart

[Cebu & Eastern Visayas](#) Iain trained as journalist in the 1990s and then worked as a news reporter and a restaurant critic in London. He started writing travel guides in 1997 and has since penned more than 60 books for destinations as diverse as Ibiza and Cambodia. Iain has contributed to Lonely Planet titles including *Mexico*, *Indonesia*, *Central America*, *Croatia*, *Vietnam* and *Bali & Lombok*. He also writes regularly for the *Independent*, *Observer* and *Daily Telegraph* and tweets at

@iaintravel. He'll consider working anywhere there's a palm tree or two and a beach of a generally sandy persuasion. Iain lives in Brighton (UK) within firing range of the city's wonderful south-facing horizon.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Paul Harding

Curator, Around Manila, Southeast Luzon As a writer and photographer, Paul has been travelling the globe for the best part of two decades, with an interest in remote and offbeat places, islands and cultures. He's an author and contributor to more than 50 Lonely Planet guides to countries and regions as diverse as India, Iceland, Belize, Vanuatu, Iran, Indonesia, New Zealand, Finland, Philippines and – his home patch – Australia.



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Manila, Mindoro, Palawan Greg is a freelance writer, tour operator and travel planner based out of Siem Reap, Cambodia, and Manila, Philippines. Greg began his writing career in the late '90s in Ukraine, working as a journalist and later editor-in-chief of the *Kyiv Post*, an English-language weekly. As a freelance travel writer, he has contributed to some 35 Lonely Planet titles, mostly in Eastern Europe and Asia. In addition to writing, he now organises adventure trips in Cam-

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Celeste Brash

North Luzon Like many California natives, Celeste now lives in Portland, Oregon. She arrived, however, after 15 years in French Polynesia, a year and a half in Southeast Asia and a stint teaching English as a second language (in an American accent) in Brighton, England – among other things. She's been writing guidebooks for Lonely Planet since 2005 and her travel articles have appeared in publications from *BBC Travel* to *National Geographic*. She's currently writing

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OVER MORE
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Published by Lonely Planet Global Limited

CRN 554153

13th edition – Jun 2018

ISBN 978 1 78657 470 1

© Lonely Planet 2018 Photographs © as indicated 2018

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Singapore

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