



Cebu

Discover

 IT'S MORE FUN IN THE
PHILIPPINES



Welcome, Mabuhay!

The island of Cebu in the middle of the Visayas region is one of the cultural and economic centres in the Philippines and stretches 200 kilometres long and up to 40 kilometres wide. Life vibrates in Cebu City, the oldest town in the country that is labelled "Little Singapore" due to its important standing in different export industries. The glitzy metropolis on the East Coast charmingly combines the cosmopolitan flair of the big city with the sincere hospitality of the Filipinos.

Cebu has many interesting cultural sites as well as stunningly beautiful nature. Cebu is a tropical beauty surrounded by enchanting pearls. Two of the most appealing islands are Malapascua and Bantayan. Wild pineapples, coconut palms and orchids flourish inland on the islands, while shimmering white sandy beaches as fine as powder adorn the coastline. Secluded bays and small lagoons offer privacy and guarantee a relaxing stay. Bluecheek butterfly fish, blue ribbon eels and dwarf seahorses cavort among the red sea squirts, anemones and starfish in the royal blue and turquoise shimmering ocean. The specie-rich coral gardens of Cebu are famous around the world and are some of the most beautiful in Asia.

The wonderful island world with its gradually sloping beaches and excellent infrastructure is an attractive destination for families with children. Whether you want to build sandcastles or relax beneath palm trees, are interested in culture and nature or want to experience the fabulous underwater world, your holiday dreams can come true in Cebu.



Cebu City, the capital of Cebu province, is the most important economic centre in the Visayas and Mindanao regions. It is also very significant in terms of its culture and art. Cebu City is the oldest town in the Philippines and steeped in historical and architecturally impressive buildings that relate to the country's chequered past.

Basilica Minore del Santo Niño

The Basilica Minore del Santo Niño, whose history is intrinsically linked with the spreading of Catholicism in the Philippines, is worshipped across the entire country as a sacred site. It was built in 1565 and is home to many valuable Catholic relics.

Mangellan's Cross

Mangellan's Cross was donated in 1521 by Ferdinand Magellan, leader of the Spanish fleet. The cross stands in the spot where the first Philippine Christians were baptised in the 16th Century.

Fort San Pedro

This 16th century fortress is the oldest triangular bastion in the Philippines. It was designed to protect Spanish settlers from aggressive pirates. During the Japanese occupation, Fort San Pedro served as a prison, during which time the structure suffered greatly.

Colon Street

The oldest street in the Philippines is in Cebu. Colon Street was named after Christopher Columbus and runs through the centre of the town.

Taoist Temple

Another highlight of the town is the magnificent Taoist Temple that was built according to the teachings of the legendary Chinese philosopher Lao Tse. The artistic structure is a reminder of how well the large Chinese population is integrated in Cebu City.

Casa Corordo Museum

The Casa Corordo Museum provides interesting insights into the colonial domestic culture between 1860 and 1920. Besides the antique furniture and household items, paintings are also exhibited.

Carbon Market

Every stay in Cebu City should include a stroll around the impressive Carbon Market. Friendly traders sell fresh fish, exotic fruits and vegetables, flowers, handicrafts and other regional specialities. It is worthwhile for bargain hunters and tourists looking for mementos to come here.



Mactan Island

The attractive coral island of Mactan, east of Cebu City, is connected to the town by two bridges and is one of the most visited islands in Cebu province. It has many exclusive beach hotels, resorts, excellent shopping, beautiful beaches and places of cultural interest. Lapu-Lapu City is the largest town on the island and was founded in 1730 by Augustinian monks.

Lapu-Lapu Monument

The Lapu-Lapu Monument is devoted to Lapu-Lapu, the first Philippine hero who defeated Ferdinand Magellan, leader of the Spanish fleet at the famous Battle of Mactan. The monument is located at the Mactan Shrine on the northern tip of Mactan.

Magellan's Marker

The memorial stone was erected in the Magellan Shrine in 1866 and marks the place where colonizer Ferdinand Magellan died after a battle with Chief Lapu-Lapu.

Guitars from Maribago

The Maribago district in Lapu-Lapu City is known around the world for its artistic guitar production. Visitors often fly home with one of these handmade instruments in their luggage.

Beautiful beaches

The Southeast Coast of Mactan has numerous beautiful sections of beach that border turquoise crystal clear waters. Marigondon Beach is especially popular. Here you can hire boats and travel to the nearby tropical oasis Olango Island or head to one of the many exciting diving grounds.





Excursion destinations on Cebu Island

A mountain range runs along the length of Cebu Island, whose highest mountain towers up 1,000 meters into the sky. To the north and south the island flattens out up to 400 metres. The lowlands of the coastal regions are especially widespread in Northern Cebu.

The Southeast Coast

A trip along the south east coast offers delightful landscapes. The rugged mountainous landscape and the impressive coastline offer magnificent views. Carcar lies 40 kilometres south of Cebu City and is home to the splendid church of St. Catharine of Alexandria. Onwards around 27 kilometres from Carcar is Argao, a small charming town by the sea, home to the 200-year old church of St Michael the Archangel with its lovely ceiling frescoes and statues of angels. At Riverstone Castle, a castle built from river stones, is a small zoo with monkeys, snakes and other indigenous animals. The region on the southern tip is called Santander and is an Eldorado for sun-seeking beach holidaymakers. Beach resorts, romantic lighthouses and fairytale white sandy beaches with coconut palm trees entice visitors to dream and laze about.

The West Coast

One of Cebu's main attractions is on the West Coast. Copton Peninsula is situated past the town of Moalboal. Its beaches attract sunbathers as well as divers who are thrilled with the excellent dive spots such as the offshore Pescador Island Marine Park and the in-house reef. A little further south to the Badian region, the beaches are equally breathtaking and beautiful. The main attraction however is hidden away in the mountain world near Matutinao. The majestic Kawasan Waterfalls are part of the Matutinao river system that flows for nearly twenty kilometres. They plunge into large, green and turquoise shimmering pools where you can go for a swim. Even rafts float around in them.





Cebu's small idyllic islands

Cebu is surrounded by a number of smaller islands. Aside from their attraction to divers, their popularity is also increasing with travellers who have different interests. This is no surprise since their attractive sandy beaches, undisturbed natural landscapes, cultural sites of historical importance and, of course, the hospitable islanders are all great reasons to visit.

Olango Island

Olango lies alongside Mactan Island and is a very worthwhile excursion destination, especially for bird and nature lovers. The island's attraction is the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, established in a large lagoon in 1992. Bird watchers are treated to the sight of many coastal and beach birds such as the graceful plovers and many types of egret. Every year Olango is home to the largest colony of migratory birds in the country. The birds come from many countries including Siberia, China and Japan and use the island as a wintering ground or to refuel their energy supplies for their continued journey. There are many sources of food in the tidal areas. Footbridges

lead into the bird sanctuary and connect several viewing points. The island is reached by either public boat or on a booked tour that usually includes a picnic. The departure point for crossings is Lapu-Lapu City on Mactan Island.

Camotes Islands

In the middle of the Camotes Sea off the Northeast Coast of Cebu is an extremely beautiful and almost untouched group of volcanic islands. They are known as the Camotes Islands and include the two main islands of Pacijan and Poro, which are connected by a dam, as well as the two smaller islands of Tulang and Ponson. The Camotes Islands have attractive beaches. Tulang is surrounded by a fine white sandy beach and Pacijan is also adorned with palm-lined idyllic beaches. Lake Danao, the largest freshwater lake in the Visayas region, is on Pacijan and is shaped like a number eight. Its water is very clean and clear, for which it has received several awards. Even the numerous cave systems, undisturbed jungle areas, rocky coastal landscapes as well as the romantic fishing villages and small dreamy towns make the Camotes a worthwhile travel destination.

Malapascua Island

The small island of Malapascua is Boracay's secret twin sister. It is just as appealing and beautiful although quieter and more native and is reminiscent of Boracay as it was twenty years ago. It lies eight kilometres away from the northern tip of Cebu and is just two and a half kilometres long and one kilometre wide. Secluded bays, snow white sandy beaches and rocky stretches of coastline surround the green jewel. Visitors are greeted by extremely friendly people in the pretty fishing villages. Bounty Beach has a special allure with its fine white sands that entice visitors to the southern coast. Alongside the sunshine and crystal clear waters, it also has trendy beach bars, restaurants, accommodation and diving shops. The lighthouse on Malapascua Island, which was built in 1994, is also worth paying a visit. It provides a magnificent view over the island and the sky blue Visayan Sea.

Bantayan Island

Long white sandy beaches, crystal clear waters, delicious seafood and of course the beautiful towns with their amiable people have all made Bantayan Island one of the most popular of the small Philippine islands. Peculiar caves, colourful markets and ancient churches are all here to be discovered. Bantayan is situated northeast of Cebu Island and is divided into three municipalities; the commercial centre of Bantayan, Madridejos – the fishing centre and Sta. Fe. Bantayan is especially lively during Easter week. Thousands of visitors and pilgrims travel here during this time to experience the fabulous processions commemorating the life and death of Jesus Christ.





Divers' paradise

Cebu province has many spectacular underwater landscapes and is heaven for passionate divers.

Moalboal

Moalboal, a town on the West Coast of Cebu, is a perfect departure point for excursions to the specie-rich coral gardens. Sunken Island is a must for diving enthusiasts. It is a place where large schools of shark, tuna and countless other inhabitants of the sea can be observed. The best time for diving is early in the morning. One of the most beautiful dive spots in Moalboal is Pescador Island. The small island towers out of a deep-sea trench and is surrounded by a flat reef plateau. Corals in all shapes and colours, sponges and sea anemones all populate the reef. The dramatic overhanging steep face is full of cracks and caves. The view of the majestic Pescador Cathedral – one of the huge underwater caverns - is breathtaking and is reminiscent of an old cathedral. There is an extraordinary variety of marine life species here.

Diving Mecca of Mactan

Mactan Island is considered the "diving Mecca of the South". The island has more than a dozen beach resorts that provide divers with all the essential equipment and organise tours. Tropical warm water, extensive reefs just a few minutes from the coast and unusual underwater fauna and flora full of many different species make diving here a pleasant and exciting experience.

Underwater gardens around Malapascua

Malapascua Island is another divers' paradise. The most popular diving grounds are Malapascua Island North Point, Gato Island, Monad Shoal and Calanggaman Island, as well as the fabulous wrecks of sunken warships.

Shopping in Cebu

It is not just the glorious beaches, dive spots and historical sites that make Cebu a popular travel destination. Visitors are also attracted by its many shopping opportunities. Large malls such as the enormous SM Super Malls and the long shopping streets can be found in Lapu-Lapu City on Mactan Island and of course in Cebu City. You can find everything here, from the latest fashion trends to food, electrical goods and jewellery to souvenirs and handicrafts. There are also some interesting art galleries in Cebu City. They primarily feature the work of local and regional artists and groups of artists. The capital of the province also has shops selling national and international antiques. Antique collectors and lovers can discover rare Chinese porcelain, old pieces of Philippine-style furniture, religious artefacts and much more.

Nightlife

Not many visitors to Cebu sleep once the sun has set, rather the opposite is true. The nightlife here, in particular in the metropolitan area of Cebu City, is as exciting and great as never before thanks to the increasing number of cafés, karaoke bars and clubs.

Restaurants

Philippine cuisine reflects the country's culture and is shaped by many influences from the Orient and Occident. Rice is a staple ingredient in most dishes. Mixed together with meat or fish, spicy sauces and crispy vegetables it is a favourite food. The Philippines are also famous for their exotic seasoned soups and tropical sweet desserts. Fresh seafood cooked in a variety of different dishes is best tasted in one of the many gourmet temples on the beach, looking out over the sea. Besides the local specialities, this diverse gourmet landscape also offers international cuisine including Italian, Persian, Japanese and many other delicacies.



Travel Tips

Arrivals

Cebu is located almost 590 kilometres south of Manila and can be reached by plane in an hour. Mactan Cebu International Airport in Cebu City is very modern, and many of the large Asian airlines offer direct flights to Cebu as an alternative to Manila. Crossings from Manila to Cebu by boat take 22 hours. Quick ferries and aeroplanes operate between Cebu and most of the country's other large islands. There are excellent connections to Luzon, Palawan, Negros, Mindanao, Samar and of course to neighbouring island Bohol. The quick ferries between Cebu and Bohol run on a daily basis and take just one and a half hours. There are connections from Cebu City to Tagbilaran and Tubigon. Outriggers set sail from Argao to Cabilao Island and Catagbacon.

Climate

The weather in Cebu is very moderate. There are no clearly defined rainy and dry seasons, making the island a perfect holiday destination the whole year through. Temperatures vary between 23°C and 33°C, usually with the cooler days in January and the hottest days in May. Sunbathers and visitors to the beach can enjoy uninterrupted sunshine from January to December.

Accommodation

Several new hotels and resorts, especially in the medium price bracket, have appeared on Cebu in the last few years. You won't have any difficulty finding suitable accommodation. Every budget is catered for on Cebu, from exclusive beach resorts to inexpensive accommodation.

Getting about

Travel around Cebu is easy. The province has colourful jeepneys as well as public (mini) buses and taxis. Tricycles - motorbikes with sidecars are also very popular. Ships and boats also travel from different locations to the smaller islands around Cebu Island.

Festivals

Artistically designed festivals and colourful parades take place in the province throughout the whole year. The Sinulog Festival is the biggest and most popular festival in Cebu. It takes place in Cebu City every year on the third Sunday in January. The celebrations centre on honouring the infant Jesus. Incredibly colourful parades, street dances and processions are organised. Another impressive sight is the flock of believers who make a pilgrimage to the Basilica del Santo Nino to light thousands of candles and to pray.



