

# Mindoro

Discover





## Welcome, Mabuhay!

Shimmering colourful underwater scenery, undisturbed mountain rainforests, romantic bays and pearl-coloured sandy beaches – Mindoro is one of earth's rare paradises for nature lovers and holidaymakers. Divers from around the world flock to Mindoro as the wealth of species of corals, fish and large marine mammals in the crystal clear ocean is phenomenal and guarantees an unforgettable experience.

The attractions on land are just as spectacular. An impressive mountain range runs through the half moon-shaped island that lies 150 kilometres south of Manila, between Luzon in the northeast and Palawan in the southwest. A magnificent cloud forest flourishes on hillsides and in river valleys. Tropical treasures such as ancient trees covered with epiphytes,

vines and orchids border secret jungle paths that lead to the summits of the highest mountains.

Even the beaches have a picture book atmosphere. White and golden sands, clear blue waters and coconut palms are the perfect ingredients for a romantic and relaxing beach holiday. Aside from the secluded, deserted bays there are lively beach promenades with great restaurants and pleasant cafés. After sunset, visitors can enjoy freshly caught seafood in the open air whilst counting the shooting stars. Mindoro Island is split into two provinces that are named after their location. Occidental Mindoro is situated in the west and Oriental Mindoro in the east.





## **Oriental Mindoro**

The northern and eastern parts of the island belong to the Oriental Mindoro province, one of the most beautiful natural landscapes in the Philippines. Dotted along the coastline are countless secluded beaches with beige and snow-white fine powdery sands. In between are tranquil towns such as Puerto Galera and Calapan, the provincial capital. The mountainous backcountry covered with mountain rainforest is crossed by rivers and is a hikers' paradise. It is here that the Mangyan people live in small towns.

### **Puerto Galera**

The coastal town Puerto Galera sits on one of the most beautiful natural harbours in the world. Puerto Galera is the pearl of Mindoro and famous for its many coral reefs have a wide variety of species. The magical coastal region was declared a preservation area in 1974 under the UNESCO "Man and Biosphere" programme. It offers beginners and experienced divers thrilling views of the varied flora and fauna under the sea.

### **Tamaraw waterfalls**

The Tamaraw waterfalls are 129 metres high and located around 15 kilometres south of Puerto Galera. Several waterfalls cascade down over moss-covered rocks. The small lake at the foot of the waterfalls is a lovely spot for bathing.





## **Beaches**

The beaches around Puerto Galera are no longer a secret. Many travellers feel a magical attraction to the wonderful bays with palm trees and white, fine sandy beaches. Many dwellings, holiday homes, restaurants and bars have sprung up over the last few years.

### **Sabang Beach**

The beach at Sabang, a lively little town northeast of Puerto Galera, is ideal for swimming, snorkelling and diving. In the evenings, the beach is a popular meeting place. The cafés, restaurants, clubs and bars are well frequented at weekends and throughout the week. The journey from Puerto Galera to the beach takes 15 minutes by jeepney or outrigger.

### **Small La Laguna Beach**

Small La Laguna Beach bordering Sabang Beach is also popular. It is a

great location for snorkelling. There is a party atmosphere here too in the evenings, albeit not as lively as on the neighbouring beach.

### **Big La Laguna Beach**

Big La Laguna Beach is another favourite spot for snorkelling thanks to its offshore coral reef that is a sight to be seen. It lies in a beautiful bay and joins Small La Laguna Beach in the west. Its sands are radiant white.

### **White Beach**

Six kilometres west of Puerto Galera is White Beach, a haven for sunbathers. The wide, fine sandy beach is perfect for relaxing and sunbathing. During the day you can unwind in one of the pleasant beach bars or in a good fish restaurant. The small romantic bays near White Beach are perfect for those seeking even greater calm and solitude.







### Excursions to the underwater world



Mindoro is well known around the world as a divers' paradise, and Puerto Galera is one of the most popular departure points for excursions to the species-rich underwater world. It has numerous diving schools and dive shops, mostly in Sabang. The diving instructors who come from different countries are highly experienced and accompany beginners and the more advanced on breathtaking tours to the wonderful coral reefs of Puerto Galera. The equipment meets international standards and ensures that diving can be enjoyed here safely.

Expeditions lasting several days to one of the most beautiful underwater landscapes on earth - Apo Reef - can be booked in Puerto Galera. This spectacular reef that lies between the West Coast of Mindoro and the northern tip of the Palawan region is a large nature sanctuary covering around 15,800 hectares. Even experienced scuba divers are amazed by the countless types of fish, giant clams, sea turtles, sharks and fascinating manta rays and stingrays. Southwest of the vast Apo Reef, which sometimes stands out above the water surface at low tide, is Apo Island. The island is surrounded by a fringe reef that boasts an impressive variety of marine animals and elegant corals. The nature sanctuary also offers white sandy beaches and a large bird colony. In addition to the providers in Puerto Galera, there are also diving schools on the west coast such as in San Jose that organise trips to the Apo Reef.







## **Mindoro Occidental**

Mindoro Occidental is the Western Province of Mindoro. Coastlines with exciting landscapes, impressive mountainous regions, small lakes and natural river valleys make this area a magnet for nature lovers. Those seeking a beach holiday are attracted to the smaller offshore islands such as the magical Pandan island with its white sandy beaches and secluded bays. Scuba divers and snorkelers will love the amazing coral reefs off the coasts of Mindoro Occidental.

### **Mamburao**

Mamburao – the provincial capital - is a small town on the northwest coast, which sits on the South China Sea and the Mamburao River. It has a bustling fish market offering fresh seafood. The small bays and calm sandy beaches in the area are popular destinations for excursions.

### **Lubang Island**

The island of Lubang is situated north of Mindoro Island. In the west near Tagbac is a beautiful beach that stretches over five kilometres and is lined with coconut palms. Tagbac is a 20-minute ride from Lubang City by jeepney. Tilik Beach and Canu Beach are the best beaches for swimming.

### **Cabra Island**

Cabra Island is located southwest of Lubang. This flat island is covered with golden sandy beaches. Spectacular rock formations can be seen on the East Coast. This is a popular destination for people seeking a peaceful and relaxing beach holiday, as well as those who enjoy a spot of fishing.

### **Sablayan**

Sablayan is a small friendly and clean town on Pandan bay. The lighthouse offers great views of the sea and the surrounding beaches. Trekking tours and motorbike excursions to the mountainous world of Mindoro can be organised in Sablayan.



### **Pandan Island**

The small enchanting coral island of North Pandan lies off the coast of Sablayan and has a land surface area of just 30 hectares. Despite being small it has all the ingredients of a dream island destination; white sandy beaches, clear azure blue waters, palm trees and other tropical trees, hammocks and a pretty resort. Those who want to do more than laze around can hire surfboards or discover the coral reefs off Pandan Island.

### **San Jose**

The small town of San Jose in southern Mindoro Occidental is the gateway to Mindoro's diving grounds along the West Coast. A group of islands with idyllic beaches and lovely reefs is just an hour away and can be reached easily by boat. San Jose is also a departure point for excursions to Apo Reef.

### **Ilin Island**

Ilin Island lies off the coast of San Jose. There are shells galore on the island, making both sunbathing and walks along the beach delightful experiences. Many of the island's inhabitants are mussel divers. Ilin Island has five glorious beaches.

### **Ambulong Island**

Ambulong Island has a land surface area of 3,000 hectares and is situated also off the coast of San Jose. It is covered with wonderful white sandy beaches. The brightly coloured coral gardens and underwater caves off the coast are fantastic sights for divers and snorkelers. The island is also the departure point for other diving regions in the area, such as Ilin Point, Baniaga Reef, Ambulong Bank, Dungan Reef, Sardines Reef and of course the spectacular Apo Reef.



## **Mindoro's mountains**

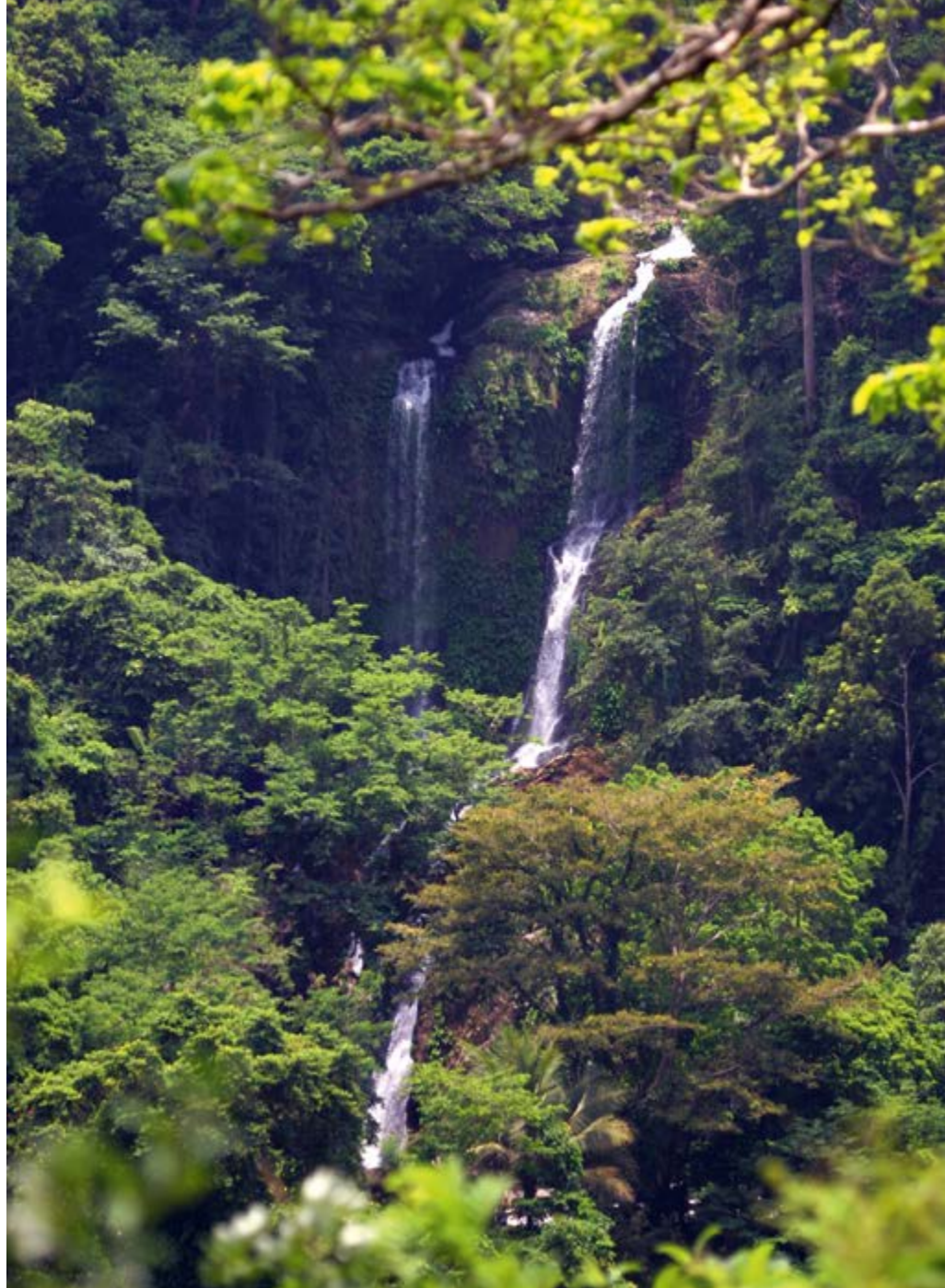
The wonderful mountainous regions of Mindoro with their expansive cloud forests and gigantic mountain ranges make the hearts of nature lovers and mountaineers beat faster. They are the habitat of rare types of animal and plant and home of the Mangyan.

## **The Mangyan tribes**

The Mangyan are friendly and peace-loving but reclusive people who have preserved their way of life in the solitude of their traditions and rites. Iraya, Alangan and Tadwanan are some of the tribes that make up the Mangyan people. A long time ago they also lived as fisherman along the coast, but nowadays their livelihood comes from agriculture in the mountainous regions. They are skilled craftsmen and produce baskets and mats using natural materials. They also create extravagant pieces of jewellery.

## **Trekking tours**

Mindoro's highest mountains are popular with mountaineering fanatics, in particular Mount Halcon which at 2,587 metres is the third largest mountain in the Philippines. Halcon is a real challenge and should only be climbed with an experienced mountain guide. The tour lasts four days and passes through ancient mountain rainforests. The departure point for this trek is in Baco, a town between Puerto Galera and Calapan. When arriving at the summit of Mount Halcon, climbers are rewarded with a fantastic view. Trekking tours can be taken further south to Mount Iglit-Baco National Park, a protected area for the endangered Philippine dwarf buffalo - the Tamaraw. However, there are less arduous walks to Lake Naujan, for example, a large lake on the eastern coastal plain. The protected area is a popular excursion destination for bird-watchers.



# Travel Tips

## Arrivals

Travel to Puerto Galera is by land from Manila and then by ferry. First you travel from the capital city by one of the many public buses to Batangas, a small coastal town further south. The journey to the harbour takes two and a half hours. Several ferries travel between Puerto Galera and Batangas every day. There are also connections to Calapan. You can also travel to Mindoro from Manila by air. The flights last 45 minutes and land in San Jose or Mamburao.

## Climate

Mindoro is divided into three climate zones from west to east. There is a six-month dry season in the west that lasts from December to May. The rainy season dominates the rest of the year. There is a mild oceanic climate in the centre of Mindoro along a narrow strip from north to south. Rain can fall here the whole year through. Eastern Mindoro and thereby a large part of the Oriental province has two more seasons; a three-month dry season from March to May and a rainy season from July to September. The summer months of March, April and May are the best time for diving excursions to Apo Reef.

## Accommodation

Mindoro has many charming and comfortable hotels and resorts to suit all budgets.

## Getting about

Brightly coloured jeepneys and tricycles (motorbikes with a sidecar) are used widely in both parts of Mindoro. The easiest way to organise your excursions is directly in the resort.





