

## General Travel Tips for the Philippines

Traveling to the Philippines can be an exciting experience, and being prepared can enhance your trip. Here are some practical tips to consider:

### 1. **Cash is King:**

- While credit cards are accepted in many places, cash is still preferred, especially in rural areas. Bring enough Philippine pesos for small purchases.
- **Best First Step:** Upon arrival, consider withdrawing cash from an ATM at the airport to have pesos on hand for immediate expenses, like transportation.
- **Further Exchange:** If you need more cash, check out local banks or licensed money changers in the city for better rates later.

### 2. **Public Toilets:**

- Many public restrooms do not provide toilet paper, so it's wise to carry your own or use wet wipes.

### 3. **Footwear:**

- Bring comfortable slippers or flip-flops (thongs) for relaxing and walking around your accommodation, especially if you're staying in more rural or beach areas.

### 4. **Lightweight Clothing:**

- The Philippines has a tropical climate, so pack lightweight, breathable clothing. Quick-dry fabrics are ideal for humid conditions and unexpected rain.

### 5. **Sunscreen and Insect Repellent:**

- Protect yourself from the sun and mosquitoes. Use sunscreen with a high SPF and apply insect repellent, especially when visiting rural areas or natural reserves.

### 6. **Stay Hydrated:**

- Drink plenty of water, especially during excursions. Consider carrying a refillable water bottle to reduce plastic waste.

### 7. **Travel Insurance:**

- Consider getting travel insurance that covers health, accidents, and trip cancellations. It can provide peace of mind while exploring.

**8. Emergency Numbers:**

- Familiarize yourself with local emergency numbers and have a plan for emergencies.

**9. Respect Local Customs:**

- Familiarize yourself with Filipino customs and traditions. For example, it's polite to greet people with a smile and to address elders respectfully.

**10. Cultural Etiquette:**

- When visiting religious sites, dress modestly and remove shoes when required. It's also respectful to ask before taking photos of people or sacred places.

**11. Local SIM Card:**

- Consider getting a local SIM card (we suggest Globe) for your phone to access mobile data. This can be helpful for navigation, communication, and staying connected.

**12. Language:**

- While English is widely spoken, learning a few basic Filipino phrases (like "salamat" for thank you) can enhance your interactions with locals.

**13. Bargaining:**

- In markets and with street vendors, don't hesitate to negotiate prices. It's common practice and can lead to a better deal.

**14. Transportation:**

- Download ride-hailing apps like GRAB (although not available in Bohol) for convenient transportation in cities. For longer distances, familiarize yourself with local transportation options, like jeepneys, tricycles (tuk-tuks), buses, and ferries.

**15. Power Adapter:**

- The Philippines uses Type A and B power plugs with a standard voltage of 220V. Bring a travel adapter if your devices have different plug types.

**16. Travel Apps:**

- Download helpful travel apps, such as Google Maps, Grab, and language translation apps to facilitate your journey.

**17. Explore Nature:**

- The Philippines is home to stunning natural landscapes. Take advantage of the opportunities to explore beaches, mountains, and underwater attractions like snorkeling and diving.

**18. Health Precautions:**

- Consult with your doctor about necessary vaccinations before your trip (e.g., hepatitis A, typhoid, etc.). Carry a basic first aid kit with essentials like band-aids, pain relievers, and any personal medications.

**19. Try Local Cuisine:**

- Don't miss out on local dishes such as adobo, sinigang, lechon, and various street foods. Eating at local eateries (carinderias) can be a delicious and budget-friendly way to experience the culture.

**20. Plan for Natural Disasters:**

- The Philippines is prone to typhoons and earthquakes. Familiarize yourself with local emergency procedures, especially if you're traveling during typhoon season (June to December).

**21. Respect the Environment:**

- Practice responsible tourism by not littering and following "Leave No Trace" principles, especially in natural areas. Use reusable bags and water bottles to reduce plastic waste.

**22. Travel During Off-Peak Seasons:**

- If possible, travel during the off-peak season (June to November) for fewer crowds and potentially lower prices, but keep in mind the risk of rain and storms during this time.

**23. Bargain for Transportation:**

- When using local transportation like tricycles or jeepneys, agree on the fare before starting your journey to avoid misunderstandings.

**24. Use Official Transportation:**

- For long distances, consider using reputable bus companies or booking ferries through official channels to ensure safety and reliability.

**25. Mind the Heat:**

- The sun can be intense, especially in the summer months. Take breaks in the shade, wear a hat, and use sunglasses to protect yourself.

**26. Local Markets and Souvenirs:**

- Visit local markets for unique handicrafts and souvenirs. Haggling is common, so don't hesitate to negotiate for better prices.

**27. Cultural Festivals:**

- If your travel dates align, check out local festivals like Sinulog in Cebu or Ati-Atihan in Aklan. These vibrant celebrations offer a glimpse into Filipino culture and traditions.

**28. Travel with a Group:**

- If you're not comfortable navigating alone, consider joining group tours, especially for island hopping or excursions. It can be a fun way to meet fellow travelers.

**29. Keep Emergency Contacts:**

- Have a list of important contacts, including your embassy, local emergency services, and accommodation details, both in physical form and on your phone.

**30. Respect Wildlife:**

- If you plan to engage in activities like swimming with whale sharks or diving, choose ethical operators that prioritize conservation and animal welfare.

**31. Be Open-Minded:**

- The Philippines is diverse, with various cultures and traditions. Embrace the differences and enjoy the unique experiences that each region offers.

**32. Internet Usage:**

- Use a VPN for secure internet browsing, especially on public Wi-Fi networks, to protect your personal information.

**33. Pack a Light Jacket:**

- While the Philippines is generally warm, it can get cool in the evenings, especially in highland areas like Baguio. A light jacket or sweater can be handy.

**34. Cultural Sensitivity:**

- Be mindful of cultural differences and practices. For example, removing shoes before entering someone's home or being discreet when discussing politics or religion.

By following these tips, you can enhance your travel experience in the Philippines, ensuring a smoother, safer, and more enriching adventure!