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HEADSTART FOR THE PHILIPPINES



CULTURAL NOTES

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

HEADSTART

FOR THE

PHILIPPINES



Manila Skyline
Photo: Mike Gonzalez
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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
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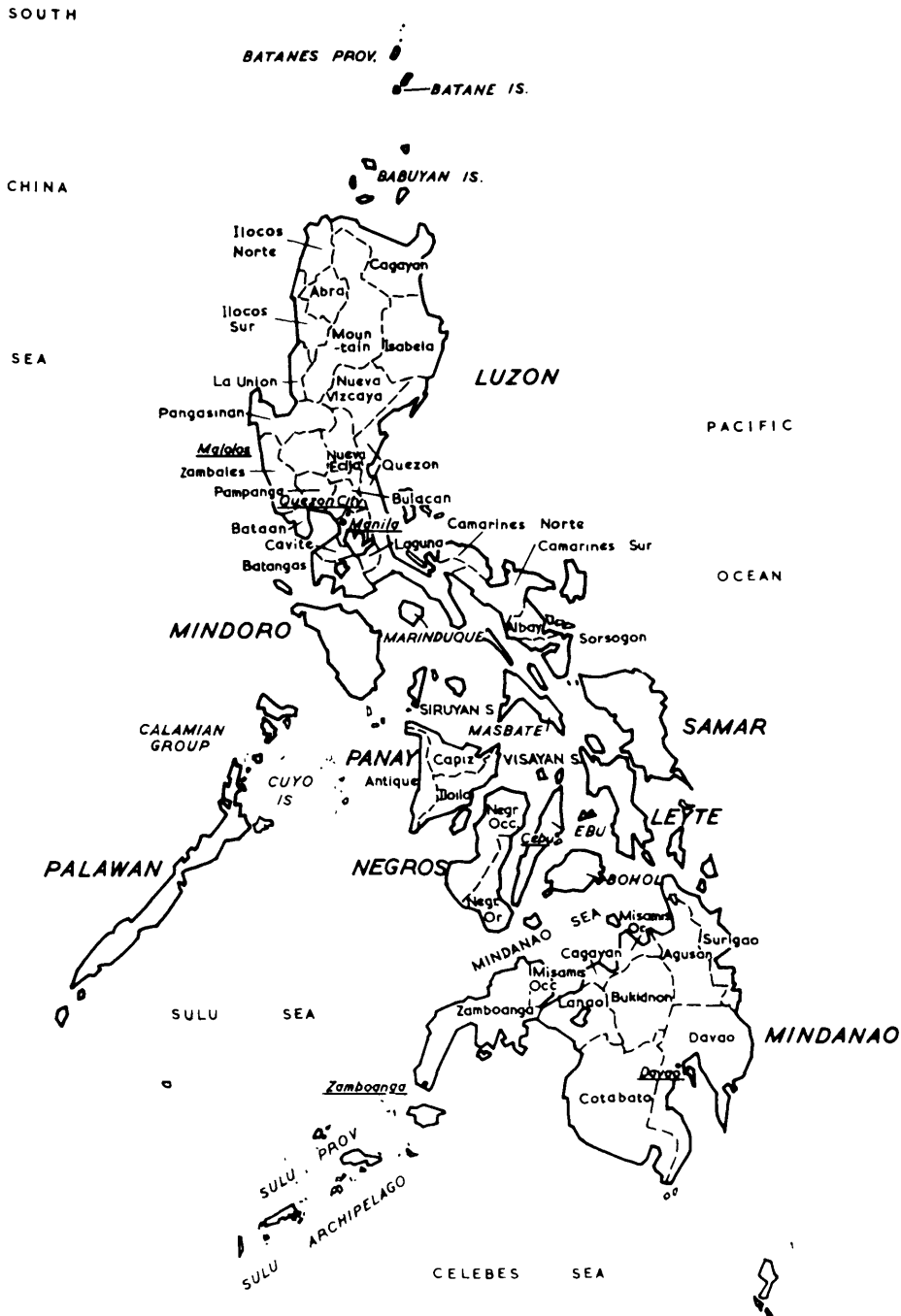
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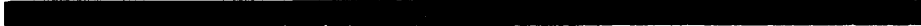
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CONTENTS

Geography	1
Climate	2
People	2
History	4
Language	9
Religion	10
Family Life	11
The Filipina	12
Courtesy and Custom	14
Arts	15
Food and Restaurants	18
Alcoholic Beverages	19
Sports	20
Holidays	21
Sightseeing	23
Shopping	26
Transportation	27
Driving	28
Health	29
Currency	30
Telephone Service	30
Household Help	31
Bibliography	31



Republic of the Philippines



GEOGRAPHY

A few degrees above the equator and several hundred miles from the Asian mainland, the Philippines lie scattered north to south for a thousand miles and east to west for seven hundred. Eleven of the more than 7,107 islands and islets, only 700 inhabited, account for 96 percent of the land. The islands of the archipelago fall into three groups. The northernmost includes Mindoro and Luzon. Luzon, where Manila is located, is the center of government and the most heavily populated and industrialized section of the country. The eight central islands of the Visayan group--Samar, Leyte, Cebu, Bohol, Negros, Panay, Masbate and Palawan--are second in development. To the south lie Sulu and Mindanao with vast but relatively unexploited agricultural and mineral potential.

The terrain offers great contrasts. On the larger islands, the narrow coastal lowlands rise into mountain ranges and peaks. The highest, Mount Apo (9,600 ft.), is in Mindanao. The fertile, rice-producing plain in Luzon is the most important agricultural area in the country. Dense jungles in the interior and rich sugar fields along the coast characterize the Visayan islands. Twelve volcanoes are active, and a number erupt periodically. The islands are subject to occasional earthquakes violent enough to cause substantial material damage and loss of life.



Mt. Apo, Davao, Mindanao

Image: Kleomarlo
Date: 20 March 2008
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CLIMATE

The entire archipelago lies within the tropics. Loose cotton clothing is worn year-round, since the mean temperature in the lowlands averages a humid 80 degrees. November through February brings pleasant weather when the days become clear and relatively mild. April and May are apt to be hot and dry. The wet season, caused by monsoons, lasts from June to October. Every year an average of 21 typhoons strikes, lashing the islands with torrential rains and destructive winds.



A seascape at sunset

Coast of Dipolog City

Photo: Ronnie Puckett
Date: 22 March 2008
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PEOPLE

The Philippines, home to the fifteenth largest population in the world, contains more than 49 million people, descendants of Indonesians and Malays; of Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Japanese, Europeans, and Americans. The mixed racial heritage is predominately Malay, and the culture essentially Southeast Asian with strong Spanish and American influences.

Ninety percent of the population, dispersed throughout the islands primarily in the lowlands, shares a common history and religion as well as similar social and cultural traits. In general,

members of the mainstream are rural people with very small plots of land or, more often, tenant farmers with incomes sufficient only to buy the essentials of life. Many variations in language, dress, diet and regional characteristics exist within this segment of society.



nipa hut built on stilts

Photo: Alexcooper1
Date: 20 April 2011
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Differing from the dominant culture, the Moros, or Muslim Filipinos, of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago still adhere to some degree to customs and values rooted in the Islamic tradition. From Spanish colonial times, the Moros have responded to threats to their way of life with separation and armed resistance.

Many peoples inhabiting isolated regions of the islands are survivors of prehistoric cultures. Bontoc tribesmen of Luzon still exhibit

No image available

Tasadays share food from a communal trough

tattoos identified with headhunting, a tradition that died out only recently, and the 27 families of the Tasaday, a stone-age group in Mindanao, had their first contact with the outside world in the 1970s.

The most significant ethnic minority in the Philippines is the Chinese, who first came to the islands as traders in the ninth century. Many who chose to identify with Filipino culture intermarried to produce the Chinese-Filipino mestizo, a mixture that integrated fully into society. Those Chinese who remained unassimilated, that is racially and linguistically distinct, have historically been subject to prejudice and discrimination.

Traditionally oriented towards business and commerce, the Chinese owners of the popular sari-sari stores (general stores) controlled retail trade in the islands for years. Easy credit, hard work, and attention to business resulted also in their domination of the rice and corn industries. Today Chinese financial institutions constitute a major source of capital in the islands.

HISTORY

The history of the Philippines falls into four distinct phases: the pre-Spanish, the Spanish (1521-1898), the American (1898-1941) and the years since independence (1946-present).

Pre-Spanish Period

The first people in the Philippines, the Negritos, are believed to have come about 30,000 years ago from Borneo and Sumatra across land bridges. Subsequently, successive waves of people of Malay stock came from the south in boats called barangays. The scattered communities they settled were also called barangays and were ruled by chieftains known as datus.

Chinese merchants and traders arrived and settled in the ninth century A.D. In the fourteenth century, Arabs arrived, introducing Islam in the South and extending some influence even into Luzon. The Malays, however, were the dominant group when the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century.

Spanish Period

Ferdinand Magellan claimed the Philippines for Spain in 1521, and for the next 377 years the islands were under Spanish rule. This period saw conversion to Catholicism, and a colonial system developed with a strong centralized government and considerable clerical influence. The Filipinos, restive under the Spanish, staged many unsuccessful uprisings, the most important beginning in 1896 under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo.



Photo: Simon Burchell
Date: 14 Nov 2008
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Villas from the Spanish Colonial period are still in use today in Vigan, Ilocos, the Spanish capital of the North.

American Period

In 1898, following the destruction of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay by Admiral Dewey during the Spanish-American War, the United States occupied the Philippines. In that same year Spain ceded the islands to the United States under the terms of the Treaty of Paris.

The subsequent occupation by the Americans disappointed Filipino nationalists, among them General Emilio Aguinaldo, who proclaimed a Republic of the Philippines on June 12, 1898. In 1899 he directed the Philippine-American War. The occupying forces put down the rebellion, and in 1901 Aguinaldo swore allegiance to the United States.

From the first, U.S. administration of the Philippines was declared temporary and had as

its goal the development of institutions which would permit the eventual establishment of a democratic government. Therefore, U.S. officials concentrated on creating practical supports of democratic government such as public education, a civil service and a sound legal system. Philippine participation in the legislative processes was encouraged, and by 1916 the legislature was largely in Filipino hands. Filipinos also assumed gradual control of the civil service, which they dominated by the end of World War I. When the Catholic Church separated from the state, the government purchased and redistributed much of the church land.

In 1935 Manuel Quezon was elected president of a commonwealth government designed to prepare the country for independence after a 10-year transition period. World War II intervened, and in May 1942, Corregidor, the last American stronghold, fell. U.S. forces in the Philippines surrendered to the Japanese, who occupied the islands until 1945.



A World-War-II cannon rusts on Corregidor Island.

Photo: yeowatzup
Date: October 2005
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Photo: JinJian
Date: 17 April 2008
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Larger-than-life statues on Red Beach, Palo, Leyte, commemorate the landing of General MacArthur and his forces



Image: Stefan Krasowski
Date: 29 January 2009
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The American Memorial Cemetery in Makati, burial ground of 17,000 men who fell during the war in the Pacific

As a result of the Japanese occupation, the guerilla warfare which followed, and the battles leading to liberation, the country suffered great physical damage and a complete organizational breakdown. Despite this, the United States and the Philippines decided to move forward with plans for independence. On July 4, 1946, the Philippine Islands became the independent Republic of the Philippines.

Postindependence Period

Efforts during the early years of independence were directed to rebuilding the country's economy, with the United States playing a major role in the reconstruction. The threat posed by the communist-dominated Huk rebellion in the years 1945-53 complicated the recovery effort. Under the vigorous, honest leadership of President Ramon Magsaysay, this rebellion was suppressed and communism no longer constituted an overt threat to the government.

President Marcos, elected in 1965 and reelected in 1969, declared martial law in 1972 to counter an insurrectionary force, the New People's Liberation Army. During the eight years of martial law that followed, he introduced a program called the New Society aimed at restoring law and order and instituting certain social and economic reforms. In 1978 the government began a process of political normalization by holding local and national elections. In 1981 President Marcos was again reelected to a six-year term.

In addition to moderate legitimate opposition, the Marcos government is threatened by two insurgencies whose roots predate martial law. The Moro National Liberation Front reflects an effort by Filipino Muslims, now supported by

No image available

A Muslim meeting

several Islamic governments, to achieve autonomous status for the Muslims of Mindanao and adjacent islands. The other insurgent group, the small but growing Maoist-oriented Communist New People's Army, is scattered throughout the nation's rural areas. Urban terrorist groups, which first appeared in 1979, are comprised of different factions, some from the middle class. They seek radical but essentially non-communist change.

LANGUAGE

Filipinos speak eight major indigenous languages, all within the Malayo-Polynesian group. In order of the number of speakers, they are Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Ilongo, Bikolano, Waray-Waray, Pampangan and Pangasinan. Each of the eight has a number of dialects; some dialects of the same language are mutually unintelligible. The roots of many words are Sanskrit, and a few are Chinese and Arabic. All the languages possess extensive literatures; the oldest and richest is that of Tagalog, the dialect of central and southern Luzon.

In an effort to promote national unity, the government instituted Tagalog-based Pilipino as the national language in 1939. (Pilipino, English and Spanish are the three official languages of the Philippines.) Fifty-five percent of the population speaks Pilipino, the primary language of instruction in the schools, although English, Spanish and the local vernaculars are also mandatory.

English is spoken by 45 percent of all Filipinos. It remains the most useful tongue for formal communication and is employed by professionals, academics, government workers and businessmen.

Spanish, traditionally the language of the upper-middle class, is spoken today by fewer than one million people, mostly members of the social elite.

The Philippines has one of the highest literacy rates in Asia. About 88 percent of the population speaks, reads and writes at least one language.

RELIGION

As a result of nearly 400 years of Spanish rule, the Philippines is the only predominately Christian nation in Asia.

No image available

The Holy Cross of Wawa, mounted on a flower-decorated barge, floats down the Bacau River during festival time.

Eighty-three percent of the population is Roman Catholic, and the Church influences every aspect of social and political life. Most Filipinos adhere to a religion that is a blend of old--folk tales and witches--and new--saints and the Virgin. Each town and neighborhood (barrio) has a patron saint whose day is celebrated according to local custom and tradition.

Several native churches account for about 6 percent of total church membership. These include the Aglipayan Church, propounding a nationalistic and unitarian doctrine, and the authoritarian, highly political Iglesia ni Kristo.

Islam, introduced by Arab traders and missionaries into the South nearly 200 years before Christianity, remains confined primarily to Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Under Islamic influence, the close-knit community, comprising about 5 percent of the population, has preserved almost intact its prehispanic values and cultural institutions.

About 3 percent of all Filipinos are Protestant. A large number of prominent local and national figures are members of the more than 200 Protestant denominations introduced during the U.S. colonial period.

FAMILY LIFE

The typical Filipino family lives in a rural area in a wood house with a galvanized metal roof. A single light bulb illuminates the two or three simply furnished rooms; water is carried from a public well. Chickens and perhaps a water buffalo (carabao) occupy the surrounding area where rice is pounded and cleaned.

Within the warm and affectionate family, composed of parents, their children and one or two grandparents, most authority is vested in the father. The wife, who controls the purse strings, serves her husband and children. Grandparents compete in pampering their grandchildren and receive deference in return. Taught conformance and obedience at a young age, children perform assigned tasks responsibly. The family celebrates social events, usually birthdays, weddings and similar occasions, with feasting, singing and dancing in the household or barrio. Because social mobility is realized through education, members make great sacrifices to keep a child in school.

No image available

A *carabao*-powered mill

Filipinos maintain extended family ties of varying closeness with a hundred or more blood relatives, including third and fourth cousins and in-laws and their families. Nonrelatives who act as godparents or marriage sponsors also assume the status of family members. Relatives depend on each other to grant support and protection in times of sickness and misfortune, and a person in a position to offer a job or render a service will undoubtedly favor a kinsman.

Only about 10 percent of Filipino families belong to the middle class, mostly urban, comprised of government officials, professionals and small entrepreneurs.

Although Filipinos are often caught between traditional values and more modern ones associated with social change, the family continues to provide great personal security and to act as the repository of sentiment and custom.

THE FILIPINA

Customary law granted the Filipina of the Malay barangay rights equal to those of men. Women owned and inherited property, engaged in trade and industry, and in the absence of a male heir succeeded to the chieftainship. As a token of their deep respect, men walked behind the women.

The colonial Filipina, in conformance with the Spanish concept of refinement, developed qualities of shyness and diffidence. With the coming of the American administrators, many attended universities to become doctors, governors, newspaper editors and corporate presidents. Subsequently the tragedy of World War II strengthened feminine self-reliance. Throughout all her endeavors, the Filipina never lost sight of her primary concern as wife and mother.

Today women continue to exert influence in the home and marketplace. Under the existing laws of the country, however, a Filipina cannot draw up a contract without her husband's consent and, should a couple separate, the wife is entitled to a smaller tax exemption than is her spouse. Few women serving in the armed forces of the Philippines have as yet been commissioned in the higher ranks.

No image available

A beauty queen, Reina Elena, bears a cross in the Festival of Santa Cruz de Mayo.

Hundreds of years of diverse cultures, mixed racial strains and conflicting social demands have produced a resourceful and physically beautiful woman, frequent winner of Miss Universe and other international beauty contests.

The best way to meet a Filipina is, of course, through a Filipino friend. On first impression, she may appear direct to the point of outspokenness. An appropriate masculine response to such forthrightness is honesty in turn and a respectful attitude. Another effective way to break the ice and create a sense of ease is to show a sincere interest in Philippine culture. Spending time with a Filipina means becoming involved with her social circle and relaxing with her family. At the proper time, declare friendship or more by giving her flowers, or better yet, by giving both her and her mother flowers.

COURTESY AND CUSTOM

Filipinos, who live up to their well-deserved reputation for hospitality, often go into debt to entertain others. Many islanders unconditionally open their hearts and homes to friends.

Although individuals of other cultures recognize and extend similar courtesies to some degree, foreign visitors with different cultural outlooks may inadvertently act contrary to their Filipino host's expectations. Misunderstanding may be avoided by recognizing some underlying assumptions of Filipino attitudes.

Traditional values that guide Filipino behavior emphasize obligation and gratitude, sensitivity to insults and reluctance to act in ways that might offend others. Those who perform socially unacceptable acts are subject to an intense sense of shame.

Utang na loob refers to the debt of gratitude incurred when one person aids another. In Filipino society, especially rural, personal security rests on the assurance that people will help each other. A gift is usually presented with no agreed-upon form of repayment. Acceptance indicates the receiver's willingness to reciprocate; rejection implies severance of ties with the giver. Upon reimbursement, the original donor becomes the debtor, and the cycle begins again.

A recipient with limited means is not expected to reciprocate as a matter of course, but he must acknowledge his debt and maintain an attitude of obligation. A debtor who does not make restitution when asked, though, is considered ungrateful and socially irresponsible. Utang na loob aside, Filipinos also enjoy doing favors without concern for repayment. Still, most islanders are embarrassed if unable to reciprocate when the occasion demands.

Pakikisama is the art of smooth social transactions. Lack of courtesy or consideration is perceived as a challenge to personal honor (amor propio). Allowing others their share of self-esteem and dignity helps maintain social balance and acceptance. Consequently, in order to preserve an agreeable social climate, Filipinos often agree with the views of others that totally oppose their own. However, maintaining harmony in this way often makes it difficult to recognize whether a bargain has been made or not, and if made,

just what the exact terms are. Because of this particular difficulty in communication, Filipinos often use middlemen to mediate agreements. Then, if negotiations fail, tensions are minimized because the parties involved have had no contact with each other. Take care not to violate paki-kisama by being critical or sarcastic or by playing practical jokes that embarrass individuals in front of others.

Hiya, sensitivity to social propriety, concerns how one's actions appear to others. It is manifest in the feelings of guilt, shame, alienation and inferiority that accompany the commission of a socially unacceptable act. Accusing a person of not having hiya is a strong insult, signifying that he does not know the difference between right and wrong.

No image available

The Cultural Center of the Philippines, showcase for the performing arts, also houses a museum, gallery and art library

ARTS

Modern artistic expression in the Philippines is grounded in the struggle to fashion a national culture from disparate heritages. Now, as in the past, sculpture, architecture, dance, literature and other art forms reflect both local innovation and contact with outside traditions.

When the Spanish arrived in the sixteenth century, Filipinos were writing a syllabic alphabet on bark and bamboo. Recorded myths and epic poems, as well as other folk art, were lost to history when Spanish missionaries destroyed pagan artifacts. Dance, music and oral literature were the enduring forms. Today only a few fragments of the plastic arts remain from the Malay past. The best surviving examples are carved plaques, embroidered bags and clothing, metal filigree and wooden objects inlaid with various materials such as shell. The national government encourages the continuance of these and other crafts under a program supporting cottage industry.

No image available

Two Yakan women weave fiber on Basilan Island

With the exception of santos, figures of saints made in Spanish times, Philippine sculpture through the years has survived in primitive carvings. Contemporary sculptors and painters draw upon natural tropical forms and abstractions of modern design to produce provocative works in a variety of modes.

Architectural styles prevalent in the islands are the nipa hut, a shelter used since prehistoric times; baroque churches of the Spanish era; and utilitarian edifices, typified by schools, constructed during the American era. Since World War II, many buildings of contemporary design adapted to the tropical climate have been constructed in Manila and its suburbs.



Image: bingbing
Date: 31 July 2005
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A Spanish colonial church in Morong.



Image: Mike Gonzalez
Date: Mike Gonzalez
cc-by-sa-3.0

An American-style building.

(Philippine National Museum in Manila)



Image: Mike Gonzalez
Date: 6 April 2007
cc-by-sa-3.0

A modern building complex in Makati is built open to the air.

(Greenbelt mall in Makati City.)

Aspects of daily life, for example, planting and harvesting are acted out in the dance, still an integral part of Philippine social life. Two well-known troops, the Filipinescas and the Bayanihan Company, perform ethnic works such as the pantomime of the movements of a small wading bird, the tinikling, and the kandigan, a Muslim wedding dance with East Indian influences.

Dramatic entertainments frequently performed in many languages throughout the islands are the Spanish-influenced moro-moro, which tells the story of a Christian-Moorish love affair, and the zarzuela, a folk opera in three acts. A Tagalog serenade, the kundiman, was incorporated into the zarzuela to enliven the dramatic action.

The nineteenth-century novels of Jose Rizal are the masterpieces of Philippine literature. Interesting also as a social and historical document, his first novel, Noli Mi Tangere (Touch Me Not), exposes the excesses of the Spanish colonial period. The development of a national literature initiated by Rizal's generation was disrupted when English became the primary language and the short story the most popular form. Then Tagalog gained, and at present still holds, adherents among journalists and writers.

Strong nationalistic feelings continue to provide stimulus to conserve traditional art forms and to discover new ways of expressing Philippine identity. In 1969, Mrs. Imelda Marcos, wife of the President, dedicated the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila. Supported both by private donations and government sponsorship, the Center maintains cultural landmarks, encourages the performing arts and promotes and develops young artists.

FOOD AND RESTAURANTS

Filipino cooking blends the cuisines of China and Spain. Pancit molo, for example, is much like chow mein, and lumpia are smaller versions of Chinese egg rolls. Leche flan, a sweet custard dish, is typically Spanish, as is rellenong manok, chicken stuffed with hard-boiled eggs, pork, sausages and spices.

In one method of preparation, adobo, pork, chicken or fish is marinated in a mixture of soy sauce, vinegar and garlic. Seafood such as

shrimp, crab, lobster, lapu-lapu and tuna, is cooked simply and quickly to preserve the natural flavors. Numerous recipes call for the use of one of the dozens of varieties of bananas; for example, kare-kare combines peanut sauce, fermented shrimp paste, banana heart and oxtail. Likewise, the ubiquitous coconut enriches many dishes. Vegetables, many familiar to Americans, include camote, a delicately flavored sweet potato. The staple of the Filipino meal is rice or, in some areas, corn, which may be eaten at all three meals. Dessert often consists of succulent tropical fruit--sweet pineapples, mangoes, papayas, mangosteens and jackfruit. The cooling, semi-liquid halo-halo combines chopped fruit, shaved ice, milk, ice cream, and sometimes sweet beans.

Filipino meals are not served in courses; rather, the whole meal, at room temperature, is laid out all at once.

Turo-turo counters, where food is displayed cafeteria style, feature a complete assortment of native dishes. The diner can ask names and prices and choose individual items at his discretion.

Restaurants in cosmopolitan Manila serve Spanish, Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Indonesian and Mexican food as well as Filipino specialties.

No image available

Igorot tribesmen from the mountain provinces around Baguio prepare for a *lechon* (pig) roast.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

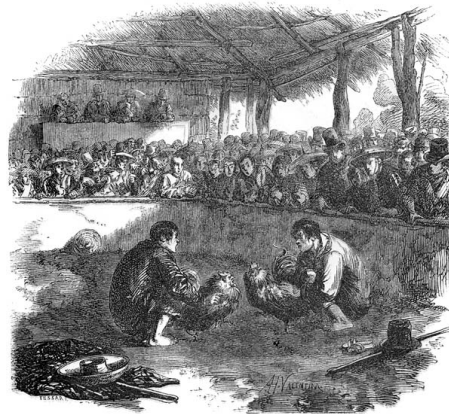
A domestic beer, San Miguel, is known internationally for its fine, natural flavor. Widely distributed throughout the islands, its alcoholic content varies depending on where it is sold. Cerveza Negra is a darker version of San Miguel.

Native alcoholic beverages include tuba (fermented coconut juice); basi (fermented sugar cane); kasuy (derived from cashew nuts); and the very potent lambanog (distilled from fermented rice).

First-class restaurants keep cellars amply stocked with Philippine, European and American wines.

SPORTS

Cockfighting, endemic to the Philippines long before the arrival of the Spaniards, is still the most popular sport in the islands. On every weekend and holiday aficionados converge with near-religious zeal on the cockpits (galleras) of the barrios and towns. No program is ever drawn up. Betting, which is legal, is often conducted on the honor system with participants expected to remember the odds of their transactions.



Philippine cockfight, early 1800s
From "Aventures d'un Gentilhomme Breton aux iles Philippines"
Paul de la Gironiere 1855

Two gamebirds engage in a fight to the death.

Cockfights (tupadas) are decided when one of the cocks, each with a double-bladed spur attached to his claw, turns tail or is maimed to submission. The winning cock must then confirm his superiority by pecking twice at the defeated bird. If the victor refuses, the battle is ruled a draw.

Other well-known native games are sipa, a form of volleyball played with the feet, and arnis, fencing with rattan staffs.

Baseball games between universities are played in Manila's Rizal Memorial Stadium. Basketball, volleyball, tennis, bowling, boxing and jai alai are also favorite pastimes, and golf is gaining in popularity. The championship golf course at John Hay Air Base in Baguio is among the 50 courses located throughout the islands.



Author: unknown
Date: 1898
Public Domain



Author: Unknown
Date: Unknown
Public Domain

Emilio Aguinaldo (1869-1964), patriot and political leader, and Luis Manuel Quezon (1878-1944), first president of the Republic of the Philippines.

HOLIDAYS

National

- New Year's Day (January 1). Families traditionally spend New Year's Eve at a midnight supper.
- Bataan Day (April 9). This day commemorates the 1942 fall of Bataan and the infamous Death March.
- Labor Day (May 1). In a public ceremony the president awards those who have contributed to the improvement of conditions for the working person.
- Independence Day (June 12). Originally celebrated on July 4, the date the country gained its freedom from the United States in 1946. Independence Day was later changed to June 12, the anniversary of the severance of ties from Spain in 1898.
- Philippine-American Friendship Day (July 4). Historic ties are reaffirmed by laying wreaths on the graves of the World-War-II dead at the American Memorial Cemetery in Manila.
- Jose Rizal Day (December 30). The novels of Jose Rizal--physician, scientist and linguist--sparked the revolution against Spain. He was martyred by the Spanish in 1896.
- National Heroes' Day (November 30). Many Filipino heroes and patriots are honored on the birthday of Andres Bonifacio, founder of the Katipunan, an organization dedicated to the overthrow of Spanish authorities.

Religious

- Patron Saints' Days. Fiestas held on feast days of the patron saints of towns and barrios mix amusements and religious rituals.

- Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday). This period is solemnized with fasting, prayers, passion plays and special services.



Image: Magalhães
Date: 20 January 2007
Public Domain

Dancers at the three-day-long Festival of Atr-Athian in Kalibo, Aklan

- All Saints' Day (November 1). During the day Filipinos pay homage at family graves; at night children play Halloween-type pranks.

- Christmas (December 15 to January 6). Friends and relatives observe Christmas Day by exchanging gifts and blessings in a quiet but festive manner.



Image: roger alcantara
Date: 13 May 2004
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Carabao pay tribute to their patron saint San Isidro during the Carabao Festival in Bulacan province

SIGHTSEEING

Greater, or Metro Manila, with a population of seven million, links 13 suburban cities and towns with Manila proper. This metropolitan area encompasses Quezon City, site of the University of the Philippines, and the model business and commercial center, Makati.

Among Metro Manila's other points of interest is the 1700-acre Cultural Center Complex where it is possible to see a play, visit an art gallery and a museum, listen to a symphony and attend an international convention.

Rizal Park and the famous monument to Jose Rizal front Manila Bay. Fountains, gardens and sidewalk cafes make it a favorite spot from which to view the magnificent sunsets over the bay.

Lavishly uniformed guards lead tours of the art collections in Malacañang Palace, former residence of Spanish and American governor generals, now the office-home of the President of the Philippines.



Image: Erich Schmid
Date: 17 November 2005
Public Domain

Ramparts, dungeons and prison cells are preserved in Ft. Santiago, former barracks of Spanish *conquistadores*.

The Spanish walled city of Intramuros, Manila's oldest section, houses the first stone church, San Agustin, the remains of Fort Santiago and the romanesque Manila Cathedral.

Sightseeing

More than 17,000 Americans who died in the Pacific campaign in World War II are buried in the American Memorial Cemetery atop a knoll overlooking Manila.

Across the bay lies the Bataan Peninsula, and at the mouth of the bay, Corregidor Island, where the Pacific War Memorial displays memorabilia of World War II.

No image available

The Pines, oldest and best-known hotel in Baguio

The most popular tourist spot outside Manila is the summer resort of Baguio City, a four-hour drive over treacherous mountain roads. Pine-tree-covered mountains surround Camp John Hay, vacation place of U.S. military personnel. A short distance north of Baguio are the Banaue Rice Terraces, laboriously carved from the mountains thousands of years ago by Ifugao tribesmen.

The adventurous traveler will enjoy shooting the boulder-strewn rapids in a dugout canoe at Pagsanjan, where the river winds to Pagsanjan Falls through 300-foot-deep gorges overgrown with ferns, vines, orchids and begonias.

A visit to Lake Taal, the water-filled crater of Taal Volcano with its protruding active cone, should include a sidetrip to Las Piñas to view the unique bamboo organ.



Santo Niño.

Image: Shubert Ciencia
Date: 17 June 2007
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Artifacts of Spanish rule abound in Cebu City, the Philippine Islands' first settlement, on Cebu Island. Places of historical interest there include the Taoist Temple, Magellan Cross and San Agustin Basilica, repository of the republic's oldest religious relic, the image of Santo Niño.

No image available

Vacationers enjoy a white-sand beach in the Santa Cruz Islands

Zamboanga on the western tip of Mindanao serves as the gateway to the land of the Moros. Noted for seashells and unspoiled tropical scenery, its other attractions include vintas, outriggers with rainbow-striped sails, and a tax-free, barter-trade market.

SHOPPING

Most Filipinos buy food every day at open-air markets. Supermarkets, which are more expensive although still reasonable by American standards, are confined to the larger cities. Department stores that sell both local and foreign items are located throughout the islands.

Handicraft stores offer particularly good buys in abaca* place mats, rugs and bags; rattan and bamboo furniture; shell craft; bronzeware; gold and silver jewelry; and the national costumes for men (barong tagalog) and for women (terno), often sewn from shimmering pineapple-fiber cloth. Clothing and furniture of excellent workmanship are made to order in a remarkably short time.

For the economy-minded, markets and cottage industry centers in provincial towns are excellent sources of local products at low cost.



Image: mark pedron
Date: 15 January 2011
cc-by-sa-3.0

An open-air market with displays of produce and crafts

Often prices in markets and small stores are not fixed, and bargaining, carried out with a sense of humor and fairness, is acceptable. Many shops offer discounts to military personnel.

Business hours are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Some tourist shops are also open on Sunday.

*Abaca, also called Manila hemp, is a fiber obtained from the leafstalk of a banana native to the Philippines.



Image: Uberdoog
Date: 17 November 2008
cc-by-2.0

Tricycles color-coded to different traffic zones transport passengers through the side streets of towns and cities

TRANSPORTATION

Comfortable, air-conditioned automobiles with drivers may be hired for short or extended trips at rent-a-car offices located in Manila and other cities. The islands have a limited number of highways, most surfaced with earth and gravel. Automobile travel is sometimes restricted during the rainy season.

Taxis, hailed in the street or summoned by telephone, ply the major routes in cities and small towns. On some islands horse-drawn carriages replace taxis.

The most popular form of transportation in the cities, colorful, mobile-art jeepneys, carry from six to eleven passengers for a fixed fee. In the larger cities they follow established routes.

City buses, many air-conditioned, run on regular schedules.

Intraisland ships connect the main ports of the islands. Passenger accommodations vary in comfort.

Philippine Airlines offers flights to 41 cities throughout the country. Fifteen international airlines serve Manila from points all over the world.

Light aircraft and helicopters are available for charter in Manila.

DRIVING

The land of continuous religious festivals and a thousand species of orchids is also the land of defensive driving. Drivers unfamiliar with the highway system--few paved roads or traffic lights and signs--should proceed with caution.

When a breakdown occurs on the road, no roadside telephones are available for summoning help, nor does a car-towing system exist. Because gas stations are concentrated in urban areas and law-enforcement officials are few and far between, often the only hope for a stranded motorist is a friendly driver who stops to offer aid.

Automobile owners in the Philippines are expected to comply with well-defined procedures and regulations.

- Register automobiles with the provincial government.
- Purchase Philippine license plates.
- Obtain a Philippine driver's license.
- Buy compulsory automobile insurance. (Insurance requirements are explained at the car-registration office.)
- Obey local traffic laws and speed limits.
- Be alert to unfamiliar dangers such as carabao ambling across the highway.
- Report accidents to the nearest police station immediately.



A highway near Manila.
(Overview from Bridge (NLEX, Sta. Rita))

Image: Ramon FVelasquez
Date: 3 January 2012
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HEALTH

Manila's facilities are considered satisfactory to treat most medical and surgical problems. Doctors and hospitals are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory.

Makati Medical Center is the local hospital most often used by U.S. government personnel. Its emergency room offers prompt round-the-clock service.

Water in Manila and a few other designated areas is safe for drinking. Outside these locations boil or chemically treat public water. Also, take precautions before eating produce: peel, soak, scrub or cook fruit and vegetables and make sure that fish and meat purchased in local markets is fresh.



Photo: flypegassus
Date: 9 Feb 2007
Location: Dalaguete, Cebu Philippines
cc-by-2.0

Fish vendors

Because the tropical environment is enervating and recovery from exercise may not occur as rapidly as in a temperate climate, it is wise to avoid overexertion. Serious burns may follow even relatively short exposure to the sun. Frequent cool showers, air-conditioned rooms and loose cotton clothing are the best defenses against skin rash.

Skin infections are not unusual in the tropics. Immediately clean, disinfect and cover even the smallest wound.

CURRENCY

The basic monetary unit in the Philippines is the peso (denominations of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100), which is divided into 100 centavos (denominations of 5, 25, 50 and 100). Exchange rates usually fluctuate around ₱7-11 to the U.S. dollar, but can go as high as ₱10-15. Check the current rate before making a trade.

Most major credit cards are accepted. Commercial banks offer the highest rates for traveler's checks. Many hotels, restaurants and shops also cash traveler's checks but at lower rates.



New Philippine Peso (Php 1.00) Coin

Photo: Debbie Tingzon
Date: 7 Mar 2012
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TELEPHONE SERVICE

The period for telephone installation ranges from six weeks to six months or more. Single lines are almost impossible to obtain; most subscribers share with another party.

Local service is frequently disrupted. When instruments become worn or unusable, repairs may take an inordinate amount of time.

Telephone service between Manila and other major Philippine cities is not always dependable. Most international calls must be placed only at certain scheduled hours each day. Telephone exchanges on military bases are open twenty-four hours a day for international calls.

The Military Affiliated Radio System (MARS) is an inexpensive way of talking to friends and relatives in the United States. The person receiving the call, which is transmitted HAM-style, pays collect charges only from the West Coast MARS receiving station.

HOUSEHOLD HELP

Americans, like upper- and middle-class Filipinos, find it inexpensive to employ one or more domestic helpers. Competent household help is usually easy to find. A short trial-and-error period is useful to determine the most suitable applicant.

Filipino servants are not covered by the Filipino social security system. Low-cost health insurance is available for domestics, and it is advisable to purchase some. Local laws define working conditions: regular days off, adequate notice to be given prior to discharge and so on.

Live-in maids shop, clean, cook, wash, iron and care for children. In addition to yard work, gardeners shine shoes, help with heavy housework and act as chauffeurs.

Skilled seamstresses, hired by the day or week, mend and sew at their clients' houses. Hairdressers and manicurists also make house calls.

Many apartment complexes offer the protection of security guards. Residents of single-family dwellings who wish to employ guards can negotiate hours and rates.

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