



# Philippines



Photo credits: Department of Tourism FB Page



## Geography

Being an archipelago, much of the Philippines is surrounded by bodies of water. The north is bordered by the Babuyan Channel, the west by the West Philippines Sea, and the south by the Celebes Sea. The Philippines' eastern coast faces the Pacific Ocean. With approximately 7,641 islands, its coastline of 36,289 kilometers is almost twice that of the United States and its land area is a little larger than Arizona. Of the 7,641 islands, only about 2,000 are inhabited. They are clustered into the three major island groups of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. There are 81 provinces in the Philippines and its capital city is Manila.

The Philippines is a republic with a presidential form of government wherein power is equally divided among its three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.



## Demographic Data

Population: Almost 110,000,000  
Languages: Filipino and English are the official languages but there are about 170 distinct indigenous Philippine languages  
Religion: 80.58% Filipino population are Roman Catholics  
10.8% are Protestants and 5.5% are Islamic.  
Total area: 300,000 Sq Km | 115,831 Sq Mi  
Monetary Unit: Piso (Peso)  
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (psa.gov.ph)



## Philippine Flag and Anthem

The Philippine national flag has a rectangular design that consists of a white equilateral triangle symbolizing liberty, equality and fraternity; a horizontal blue stripe for peace, truth and justice; and a horizontal red stripe for patriotism and valor.

The sun stands for the gigantic strides that have been made by the Sons of the land on the road to progress and civilization. The eight rays of the sun in the triangle represent the first 8 united provinces that revolted for independence - Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Manila, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, and Tarlac. The three stars in the triangle stands for the 3 major geographical divisions of the country - Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (3 main islands).

The country's national anthem is Lupang Hinirang.  
To listen, scan this code:



## History and Culture

Historians believe the presence of humans in the Philippines dates back to the Paleolithic age. Based on the archeological artifacts recovered, Filipino society and culture were fairly developed prior to contacts with other countries. Filipinos had commercial relations early on with China, Indo-China, Malaysia, India, and the Arab countries.

On March 16, 1521, Ferdinand Magellan came to the Philippines and claimed the country for the Spanish Crown. A colonial government was established in Manila in 1571. In 1896, the Filipinos staged the first nationalistic revolution in Asia against the Spaniards. The 1896 Revolution was the culmination of a succession of revolts against Spanish oppression. The death by musketry of Dr. Jose Rizal, who led the reform movement, fueled the fires of revolution. On June 12, 1898, leaders of the revolution declared the country's sovereign state and proclaimed the first Republic of the Philippines, the first constitutional democracy in Asia.

Because of its history and relations with various nations, the culture of the Philippines comprises a blend of traditional Filipino and Spanish Catholic traditions, with influences from America and other parts of Asia.

The learn more about PH history, scan this code:



## Trade and Economy

The Philippines has been one of the most dynamic economies in the East-Asia Pacific region. Average annual growth increased to 6.4% between 2010-2019 from an average of 4.5% between 2000-2009. However, the pandemic and community quarantine measures imposed in the country have severely impacted economic growth and poverty reduction.

By enhancing Covid-19 pandemic response, the country is getting back on track to become an upper middle-income country in the next few years. The economy has started to recover with a 3.7% year-on-year expansion in the first half of 2021. With continued recovery and reform efforts, the country is getting back on track on its way from a lower middle-income country with a gross national income per capita of US\$3,430 in 2020 to an upper middle-income country (per capita income range of US\$4,096-\$12,695) in the short term.

Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/overview#1>



# PHILIPPINE TOURISM



## WHERE TO JUAN-DER IN THE PHILIPPINES?

### DIVE



#### OSLOB, CEBU

Swim with the gentle giants or opt for just whale shark watching in the town of Oslob, Cebu in Barangay Tan-awan.

#### SAMAL ISLAND

Samal or "Island Garden City of Samal" in the province of Davao del Norte is a quick go-to destination of the locals looking for beach time. The island offers from simple and raw beach lines to high-end luxurious beach resorts.



### ADVENTURE



#### ULTRA LIGHT FLYING AT MATI CITY

See Dahican Beach and the whole of Mati City in a stunning perspective through the ultra light flying experience offered by Mindanao Flying Saga at Mati airport.

#### MT. TIMPOONG AND MT. HIBOK-HIBOK RANGE NATURAL MONUMENT

Mt. Timpoong stands at 1,580 meters while Mt. Hibok-Hibok, is an active volcano that rises at 1,200 meters. These two mountains make up the Natural Monument which was declared as an ASEAN Heritage Park in 2015 for being home to a wide range of flora and fauna that is endemic to the island-province.



### FOOD AND HOSPITALITY



#### KAMPOJUAN HERITAGE HOUSE

The Kampojuan Heritage House is the famous Bahay na Bato mansion of Manolo Fortich which is home to an astonishing collection of antiques bearing age-old narratives from various points of Filipino history. The house itself is a preserved relic as it was built in the colonial Philippines in Pangasinan.

#### LUCBAN'S PANCIT HABHAB

Lucban's signature dish Pancit Habhab is usually served on a piece of banana leaf and is meant to be eaten without the use of any utensils. Your visit in the Quezon province won't be complete without trying this dish.



### EVENTS AND CULTURE



#### BANAUE RICE TERRACES

Banaue Rice Terraces is one of the top tourist destination in the country and dubbed as the "Eight Wonder of the World" and now listed as a World Heritage Site with a distinct name of its own as the "Living Cultural Landscape" by the UNESCO.

#### MAGELLAN'S ANCHORAGE

The fleet of Ferdinand Magellan anchored near an island called Mazaua (it is derived from the native word Masao). In Mazaua, the two Butuanon brother kings attended the first Mass in the Philippines and the Magellan crew planted a cross on a hill. A memorial was built in Masao near the site where it represents the site that Magellan's fleet have made an anchorage.



To know more about the exciting destinations in the Philippines, scan these:



764islands.ph



philippines.travel



## EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES



The Embassy is the principal representative of the Philippine Government in the conduct of its relations with the Government of the United States of America. In this capacity, the Embassy promotes the foreign policy thrusts of the Philippines.

Sentro Rizal Washington DC is the 30th branch of the Sentro Rizal and Its main purpose is the promotion of Philippine arts, culture and language throughout the world. It is the primary vehicle through which the Embassy will conduct its cultural diplomacy programs.

The present Ambassador of the Philippines to the United States of America is Ambassador Jose Manuel G. Romualdez.

**Address:** Bataan Street corner 1600, Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C., 20036

To know more about the Embassy, scan the following:

EMBASSY HOMEPAGE:

<https://philippineembassy-dc.org>

CONSULAR SERVICES:

[consular@phembassy-us.org](mailto:consular@phembassy-us.org)



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# THE PHILIPPINES AND ITS GOVERNMENT

## Philippine Political System

The Philippine political system is closely patterned after the USA. It is a republic with a presidential form of government that is democratically elected. The government is equally divided among **three branches** namely: the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial.

Furthermore, as an archipelagic country with 7,641 islands, the Philippines is grouped into three major island groups:

- **Luzon** - this island group is the largest and northernmost one that is comprised of 8 administrative regions from Regions I to III, IV-A, V, NCR (National Capital Region), CAR (Cordillera Administrative Region) and MiMaRoPa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan). Manila, the current capital of the Philippines, is found in Luzon and is the seat of Philippine political power.
- **Visayas** - the central island group is comprised of Regions VI, VII and VIII. Cebu was the very first capital of the Philippines, is the oldest city of the Philippines, and is known as the "Queen City of the South."
- **Mindanao** - It is divided into six regions specifically Regions IX, X, XI, XII, XIII and the BARMM (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao). Mindanao has the largest concentration of ethnic groups and Muslim population in the Philippines.

The Philippine government exercises general supervision over local government units broken down into the regional/provincial, then the city and municipal level. And right under the municipal level is the smallest and unique political and administrative unit called the *Barangay*. It serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects, and activities in the communities.



### Did you know...?

- With more than 75 years of diplomatic relations, the Philippines is the **United States' oldest treaty ally in Asia.**
- Official diplomatic relations between the two countries began after the Philippines gained independence on July 4, 1946.
- Following the Spanish-American war in 1898, the Philippines was ceded by Spain to the United States as a colonial territory.
- The Philippines and the US have strong people-to-people connections with more than 4.3 million Filipino-Americans living in the US, while almost 300,000 U.S. citizens reside in the Philippines.
- History shows that Filipinos were in the United States as early as October 1587 when the Galleon Trade Route connect the Philippines and the United States.
- The United States Peace Corps Program in the Philippines is the second-oldest country program with nearly 10,000 volunteers having served in the Philippines since it started over 60 years ago.



## EXECUTIVE

The Executive Branch is composed of the President and the Vice-President. As a democratic country, the President and Vice President are elected into office and serve a term of **six** years.

**Unlike the US, the Filipino people can directly vote for both the President and Vice President** overseen by a National Commission on Elections. Anyone over the age of 18 can register to be a voter, receive a ballot on election day, and exercise their right to choose the country's top political leader. A Philippine President and Vice President may only serve for one term, and are **not eligible for reelection**. The term of both the President and Vice President always starts at noon of the 30th day of June right after the latest election.

The president is the Head of Government and State, and also serves as the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. As chief executive, the President exercises control over all the executive departments, bureaus, and offices.

The vice president mainly serves to assist the president. Also, they are mandated to assume the presidency in case of an incumbent's president's death, disability, or resignation.

Originally, the Philippines was handed over by Spain to the United States of America back in 1898, which started the official American colonization of the Philippines. At the same time, the Filipino revolutionaries had declared a provisional government led by Emilio Aguinaldo. Emilio Aguinaldo eventually became the inaugural President of the Philippines prior to his capture by American forces in 1901.

Fast forward to 1935, the Philippines Commonwealth was inaugurated when the US Congress passed the Philippine Independence Act. This allowed the Philippine islands a ten-year period of peaceful transition before the United States fully recognizes the independence and birth of the Filipino nation.

Manuel L. Quezon was elected as the second President (after President Aguinaldo) of the Philippines and the first President of the Philippine Commonwealth. However, when World War II broke out, President Quezon had to extend his presidential term and the Philippine Commonwealth was forced into exile as Japanese forces invaded the Philippines. President Quezon functioned as the Philippine President all the way from Washington DC, USA - right where the Philippine Embassy's Annex Building currently stands.

Because of this close relationship and deeply connected history between the Philippines and the United States, it is no surprise that there are many similar aspects between our governments.





## LEGISLATIVE

The power and functions of the Legislative Branch is found in the Congress of the Philippines. This Congress is also split into the Philippine Senate, or the upper chamber of Congress; and the Philippine House of Representatives, or the lower chamber of Congress.

The Philippine Legislature was created under the Philippine Autonomy Act, popularly known as the Jones Law, which was passed by the Congress of the United States and became law on August 29, 1916. It served as the legislative body of the Philippines from October 1916 to November 1935, until it was succeeded by the National Assembly upon the inauguration on November 15, 1935 of the Commonwealth provided in the Constitution of the Philippines.

With Philippine independence from America in 1946, the legislature was called the Philippine Congress which shared governmental powers with the executive and the judiciary.

The Philippines Senate is composed of 24 Senators - where 12 Senators are regularly voted into office every 3 years. A Senator is elected to six-year terms, renewable once, under a plurality system.

Meanwhile, the Philippine House of Representative adopts a predominantly plurality system where district representatives are elected into office (for 80% of the representatives) but also a party-list system where the remaining 20% of the congresspersons are based on the percentage of votes a political party gains during the election. The larger the vote percentage of a political party, the more congresspersons they can appoint to the House of Representatives.

This party-list state promotes representation from the underrepresented indigenous groups and community sectors.

Because of the inseparable relationship between the Philippines and the United States, Filipino and American congresspeople organized the Philippine-US Friendship Caucus. This serves as an informal, bipartisan group of Congress Members dedicated to maintaining and strengthening U.S.-Philippine cooperation, as well as addressing the needs and concerns of the millions of Filipino-Americans in the United States.



Philippine Official Gazette



Brittanica Profile

Scan the QR codes to learn more about the Philippines and its Political System.



## JUDICIARY

The Judicial Branch Power is vested in the courts with the Supreme Court of the Philippines as the highest judicial body, and the numerous lower courts. It holds the power to settle controversies involving rights that are legally demandable and enforceable. This branch determines whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part and instrumentality of the government.

The Philippines and the United States have a rich shared history, which is why the Philippines modeled its government institutions on those of the United States and why most Philippine laws, official notices and court decisions - including those promulgated by its Supreme Court - are in English. Even the Philippine Constitution is virtually a duplicate of the Constitution of the United States, specifically the portion containing the Bill of Rights.

The Philippine constitution was ratified by a nationwide plebiscite on February 2, 1987. Former Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr. stated that the 1987 Philippine Constitution is the best in the world, *"It contains sufficient provisions against abuse of power and guarantees people's participation in governance including the use of people power. It is the only Constitution I know of which is pro God, pro-Filipino, pro-people, pro-life, pro-family, pro-marriage, pro-poor, pro-human rights, pro-women, and pro-environment among others."*

The Philippine Supreme Court also consists of a chief justice and 14 associate justices, similar to the United States Supreme Court. On the other side, Philippine lawyers also have a professional code of conduct and standards to follow and are registered with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines - which again is heavily inspired by the American Bar Association.

The Barangay also plays an important role in dispute resolution at the local level outside the court system.

Lastly, comparable to the American Criminal Justice System, the Philippines is composed of five pillars:

1. Law Enforcement (Philippine National Police and Barangay officials)
2. Prosecution (Philippine Office of the Prosecutor)
3. Courts (Supreme Court and Lower courts)
4. Corrections (Philippine Bureau of Corrections)
5. Communities (Barangay officials and other government bodies)



## PHILIPPINE EMBASSY

The Embassy of the Philippines in Washington, DC - led by its ambassador - is the principal representative of the Philippine Government in the conduct of its relations with the Government of the United States of America.

Specifically, under the Philippine Foreign Service Act of 1991 the Embassy aims to advocate the three (3) main pillars of the Philippine Foreign Policy:

1. Preservation and enhancement of national security
2. Promotion and attainment of economic security
3. Protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare and interest of Filipinos overseas.

Aside from the three pillars above, the Embassy also introduces the Philippines to the public, while encouraging members of the Filipino diaspora to promote Filipino culture and heritage.

### Thrusts on Politico-Military and Security relations

- To advance and safeguard the Philippine Government's interest in partnership with the government of the United States of America;
- To maintain of close ties and cooperation between the Philippines and the U.S. on U.S. policies regarding global, regional, bilateral and national political and security positions and initiatives of major interest to the Philippines;
- To enhance the defense and security relations through the decades-old Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) and military-to-military interaction between the Philippine and American armed forces;
- To work together on international concerns such as terrorism, narcotics, avian flu, among others; and
- To support the U.S. in promoting democracy, open markets, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Philippines is an active member of many regional and international organizations, most notably the United Nations (UN) and its various agencies, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Embassy participates actively in activities of the ASEAN Committee in Washington, D.C. (ACW) to promote awareness of ASEAN among U.S. government agencies, the private sector, academe, think-tanks, and other organizations.

To learn more about the Philippines and the Embassy, scan the following:



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