

Philippines Travel Planning Checklist

Everything to sort before you fly, in the order you need it. Tick as you go. Full guide and current prices at islavisit.com

1. Documents and entry

- ☐ **Passport valid at least 6 months beyond your departure date**
Renew now if it is close. Airlines refuse boarding on this, not immigration.
- ☐ **Check your visa-free allowance for your nationality**
Most US, UK, Canadian, Australian and EU passport holders get 30 days visa-free for tourism. Confirm your own rule at immigration.gov.ph.
- ☐ **Register with eTravel within 72 hours of arrival**
Free, at etravel.gov.ph. You get a QR code. Anyone charging you for this is a scam site.
- ☐ **Proof of onward or return ticket**
Checked at the airline desk. A refundable or dated onward ticket is enough.
- ☐ **Print or screenshot everything**
Airport wifi is unreliable and your phone will be at 4 percent.

2. Money

- ☐ **Tell your bank you are travelling**
Avoids a frozen card on day one.
- ☐ **Bring some cash to exchange on arrival**
The Philippines is far more cash-based than most visitors expect.
- ☐ **Plan for ATM fees**
Foreign card withdrawals typically add around PHP 250 per transaction on top of your own bank fee. Withdraw larger amounts less often.
- ☐ **Carry small notes**
Tricycles, jeepneys, carinderias and market stalls rarely break a PHP 1,000 note.
- ☐ **Budget for terminal and environmental fees**
Ferry terminal fees and island environmental fees are charged separately and in cash.

3. Connectivity

- ☐ **Sort an eSIM or local SIM before you need it**
An eSIM activated before departure means you land connected. Globe and Smart dominate coverage.
- ☐ **Download offline maps for your destinations**
Rural Palawan and Siargao have real coverage gaps.
- ☐ **Save key numbers and bookings offline**
Screenshots beat apps when there is no signal.

4. Bookings

- ☐ **Book international flights 4 to 8 weeks ahead**
Manila and Cebu are the main gateways.
- ☐ **Book domestic flights and ferries early for peak season**
December to April, plus Easter week, sells out and prices climb sharply.
- ☐ **Book the first two nights of accommodation at minimum**
Arriving without a bed after a long-haul flight is the classic mistake.
- ☐ **Reserve island-hopping tours a day or two ahead in peak season**
Especially El Nido Tours A and C.

☐ **Check what your accommodation actually includes**

Aircon, hot water, generator backup and wifi are not guaranteed at every price point.

5. Insurance and health

☐ **Take travel insurance that covers your actual activities**

Island-hopping, motorbike hire and diving are the three things standard policies most often exclude. Read the activity list, not the headline price.

☐ **Check vaccination and health advice for your region**

Requirements vary by area and season.

☐ **Pack a basic medical kit**

Rehydration salts, motion sickness tablets, antiseptic, plasters, and any prescription medication in original packaging.

6. Packing for humidity

☐ **Light, quick-dry clothing, not cotton**

Cotton stays wet. You will be damp from March to November.

☐ **Reef-safe sunscreen and a rash guard**

Cheaper and more effective than reapplying sunscreen all day on a boat.

☐ **Dry bag for island-hopping**

Bangka boats take spray. This is not optional.

☐ **Universal adapter, Type A, B and C, 220V**

Philippine sockets vary by building age.

☐ **Water shoes or sandals with grip**

Rocky landings, coral, and wet boat decks.

☐ **Power bank**

Long transfer days, few outlets.

7. Before you leave home

☐ **Confirm entry rules once more, 48 hours out**

Rules change without much notice.

☐ **Share your itinerary with someone at home**

☐ **Check the weather window for your islands**

Typhoon season runs roughly June to November, but it varies sharply by region.

IslaVisit - practical Philippines trip planning, researched in the Philippines. Prices and entry rules change; confirm anything critical before booking. islavisit.com