

SNAPSHOT

The province of Cebu is made up of the main island of Cebu and 167 smaller islands. Often called the “Queen City of the South,” it is the oldest city in the Philippines. The entire province has a total population of over 3 million. Cebuano is the native language but English is widely spoken by most people. Consistently in the Condé Nast list for “top island destinations in Asia,” Cebu is known for world-class beaches, marine sanctuaries and exceptional diving spots.

GETTING THERE

One of the easiest ways to get to Cebu is by plane. Known as an international destination with flights connecting to Singapore, Hong Kong, Seoul and many other locations, arrivals from all over the world land at the Mactan International Airport daily. Cebu is also a great jump-off point to get to other island destinations in the country. The capital, Manila, is an hour away by plane.

Some of the international airlines that land at Mactan International Airport are:

Philippine Airlines	Cebu Pacific Air	Airphil Express	
Cathay Pacific	Korean Air	Asiana Airlines	Silk Air

It is recommended to check out travel websites like www.tripmoba.com or www.skyscanner.net to search for the most reasonable flight options, or go direct to the website of the airline of your choice.

WEATHER

The climate in Cebu is tropical like the rest of the country. Most evenings and early mornings are cool from December to February and scorching from March to May. It is best to wear light clothing in natural fiber. It is a resort town so dress down but stay chic.

MONEY

The local currency is the Philippine Peso that is divided into 100 centavos. Major currency can be exchanged at authorized foreign exchange dealers at airports, hotels, shopping malls, major establishments and banks. Major credit cards are accepted at most restaurants and stores.

TRANSPORTATION

Colorful jeepneys that are the city’s main public transportation are only for the adventurous. Proceed with extreme caution and with plenty of help from your hotel concierge regarding routes. Air-conditioned metered taxis are inexpensive and the easiest way to get around the city.

TIPPING

Bellhops expect a small tip, as do waiters, taxi drivers, hairdressers, beauticians, and porters. Most hotels and restaurants add 10% service charge on top of the government tax so tipping is not necessary but always welcome. An extra 5% on top of the service charge is generous. Generally, a tip of 5-15% of the bill is appropriate if no service charge is included.

MUST NOT MISS

The Spanish discovered the Philippines when Ferdinand Magellan landed in 1521. In 1575, it became the 1st Spanish settlement in the country. The historical landmarks of Magellan's Cross, Fort San Pedro, the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño and the Pari-an district give you a glimpse of Cebu's rich past.

Being known for its beaches and islands, most resorts in Mactan offer a day's stay if you happen to be in the city. Island hopping is also a popular must-do for a picnic and swim in nearby marine sanctuaries. Swimming with Oslob's gentle giants, the whale sharks or butanding, is a unique life experience. While it isn't easy to get to, it is definitely worth all the trouble of getting up at 3AM and driving 3 hours one way,, if you have a day to do it.

And there is Cebu lechon – a pit-roasted pig with golden brown crisp skin and sinewy meat that is juicy and tender to the bite.

HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS

MAGELLAN'S CROSS

Housed in a kiosk, this iconic and much prized monument marks the spot where the explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, planted a cross after baptizing the Filipinos. This makes Cebu as the cradle of Christianity in the Philippines. Look skywards to admire the ceiling paintings depicting the historical event.

BASILICA MINORE DEL SANTO NINO

The first Asian basilica was built in 1740, and teems with devotees clambering to catch a glimpse of the oldest and most celebrated religious icon in the Philippines, the Santo Nino statue, presented to Queen Juana of Cebu by Magellan.

CASA GORORDO

A tour inside this residence is a brief journey into a Filipino lifestyle from 1860-1920. The historic former Bishop's home features noted paintings, museum relics, a courtyard, antique household items and furniture.

FORT SAN PEDRO

Built in 1740 as a nucleus for Spanish settlers, this is the smallest and oldest tri-bastion fort in the country. The green setting makes this fine little fort a good place to take a breather from Cebu City's chaotic streets.

CEBU METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

Still near Fort San Pedro and Sto. Niño Church is another Catholic church that you should not miss to visit while in Cebu City. The Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral, also called as The Metropolitan Cathedral of the Most Holy Name of Jesus and St. Vitalis, is the ecclesiastical seat of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Cebu. The cathedral was first constructed in 1689, completed in 1909, and rebuilt in 1950 after it was almost destroyed during World War II.