

PHILIPPINES

Location

South-East Asia.

Area

300,000 sq km (115,831 sq miles).

Population

91.1 million (CIA estimate 2007).

Population Density

303.6 per sq km.

Capital

Manila.

Population: 9.9 million (2005 metropolitan area).

Government

Republic since 1935. Gained independence from the USA in 1946.

Language

Filipino, based on Tagalog, is the national language. English is widely spoken, Spanish less so. There are over 111 cultural and racial groups, each with its own language or dialect; up to 988 languages have been recorded.

Religion

Roman Catholic 80.9%; the rest are made up mostly of Muslims, other Christian denominations, Buddhists and Taoists.

Time

GMT + 8.

Electricity

220 volts (110 volts in Baguio) AC, 60Hz. 110 volts is available in most hotels. Flat and round two- and three-pin plugs are in use.

Head of State

President Maria Gloria Macapagal Arroyo since 2001.

Telephone

Country code: 63. International calls to the smaller towns must be booked through the operator.

Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with international mobile phone companies. Coverage is mostly limited to Manila and other main urban areas, but this is improving.

Internet

Internet cafes are available across the country

Media

The media is controlled by powerful commercial interests. There is a busy TV scene, which is dominated by free-to-air networks *ABS-CBN* and *GMA*. Many radio networks are also run by TV broadcasters. Freedom of the press is guaranteed under the 1987 constitution.

Post

Airmail to Europe takes at least five days.

Post office hours: Mon-Fri 0800-1700.

Press

- There are about 17 daily newspapers.
- English-language daily newspapers include the *Daily Tribune*, *Manila Bulletin*, *Malaya*, *Manila Times* and the *Philippine Star*.

Radio

- *Philippine Broadcasting Service (PBS)* is a government-run network operating stations all over the Philippines.
- *ABS-CBN*, *GMA Network*, *Manila Broadcasting Company* and *Radio Mindanao Network* operate stations nationwide.

Note

* Date to be confirmed.

Easter is a major holiday in the Philippines and travel may be disrupted.

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2011-December 2011 period.

1 Jan *New Year's Day.*

25 Feb **EDSA Revolution Day.*

21 Apr *Bataan Day (Araw ng Kagitingan)/Maundy Thursday.*

22 Apr *Good Friday.*

2 May *Labor Day.*

13 Jun *Independence Day.*

29 Aug *National Heroes' Day.*

31 Aug *Eid Ul Fitr (exact date varies).*

1 Nov *All Saints' Day.*

28 Nov *Bonifacio Day.*

25 Dec *Christmas Day.*

26 Dec *Rizal Day.*