



Wandering Around the Philippines: Top 10 Vacation Destinations of 2013

A country comprised of 7,107 islands (plus/minus islands that get submerged on high tides), the Philippines offers thousands of stunning destinations catering to various interests of individual travelers. Hidden gems and world-famous attractions abound, allowing the country to live up to its name as *The Pearl of the Orient*.

The following destinations are among the top choices in 2013, with tons of Instagram pictures, blog posts, tweets, airline bookings, and FB posts made by excited travelers offering colorful evidence of their popularity.

10. Siquijor. Forget anything you've heard about witchcraft and voodoo often associated with this island. Today, Siquijor is one of the emerging contenders for best places to visit in the Philippines. Tucked away in the towns of this small island are white sand beaches and fantastic views to feast your eyes on. Of the many resorts in this pristine island, Salagdoong Beach tops the list of favorite places to visit.

9. Batangas. Home to the world's smallest volcano, Batangas continues to be among the top destinations in the country. It also helps that high vantage points such as Tagaytay offer a panoramic view of the volcano surrounded by the lake. Aside from that, Batangas also features miles and miles of stunning beaches often figuring in local films and soap operas. Don't forget to check out Tanauan, dubbed as *The Skydiving Capital of the Philippines*.

8. Zambales. Quickly making its way to the top of the list is Zambales, home to Subic Bay and the remarkable Zoobic Safari which takes pride in being the only tiger safari in the country. A visit to Zambales is never complete without enjoying the amazing safari and various shows in this world-famous zoo. For a more exciting adventure, join the night safari. Warning: not for the faint hearted!

7. Bohol. The province is renowned for its Chocolate Hills and the tarsier, the world's smallest primate endemic to the area. View stunning limestone hills that turn chocolate brown in summer. Fall in love with the beauty of nature while cruising along Loboc River, serenaded by the angelic voices of a choir and feasting on a sumptuous buffet of fresh seafood menu. Heavenly.

6. Manila. Although nature spots are rare in the country's capital, Manila continues to be the most visited place in the country. Of course, that may be because it houses the country's seat of power but could also be due to the various historic landmarks and cosmopolitan shopping centers across the city. Links to neighboring cities and towns make it the perfect base for exciting vacations. The stunning sunset over the Manila Bay is something that should not be missed.

5. Camarines Sur. Also known widely as "CamSur", Camarines Sur offers some of the best beaches in the country. This is the place where travelers can choose among black sand and white sand beaches, all perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and swimming. Coral reefs abound, offering exciting venues for scuba diving and snorkeling. Outdoor enthusiasts also enjoy hiking up the trails to the peaks of Mount Isarog and Mount Asog, both active volcanoes.

4. Siargao. Exhilarating activities such as snorkeling, scuba diving, and surfing are some of the exciting things that travelers can enjoy in Siargao. This tear-shaped island is billed as *The Surfing Capital of the Philippines*, gaining world renown especially with its "Cloud 9" right-breaking barrel reef wave. The reefs also offer a stunning setting for scuba diving, with colorful tropical fishes and panoramic underwater landscapes.

3. Baguio. Baguio continues its reign as *The Summer Capital of the Philippines*. Cool temperatures across this highly urbanized city means that even in the hottest summer days, travelers will find no need to turn on the air conditioning (if there was even one installed in the room!). The city is also the gateway to the Sagada Province and the majestic world-famous rice terraces.

2. Boracay. One simply could not make a list of top vacation destinations in the Philippines without including Boracay. This island is home to miles of white sand beaches that have placed the country in the map when it comes to stunning, world-class vacation destinations. It is the mecca for travelers who wish to escape the sweltering summer heat by cooling off in the turquoise tropical waters. Parasailing, kite surfing, scuba diving, snorkeling, beach volleyball, and sailing are among the endless activities to enjoy on the island.

1. Palawan. Beating Boracay by a hairline is Palawan, emerging as the best destination in 2013. Those who wish to commune with nature and enjoy stunning beaches will love Palawan. Its charm lies in its virgin quality, offering tourists with fantastic vacation spots without the heavy crowds that perpetually fill the beaches of Boracay. El Nido and Coron are among the top destinations. Palawan is also home to world-famous UNESCO Heritage Sites: Puerto-Princesa Subterranean (underground) River National Park and the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park.