



PHILIPPINES

Short Facts

Official Name: Republic of the Philippines

Political System: Presidential Republic. The President is both head of state and head of government and also controls the armed forces

Official Language: Filipino (Tagalog) and English

Currency: Peso

Capital City: Manila (Population 1,600,000) Greater Manila Area has a population of 20million

Geography: Total Area: 300,000 square kilometres approximately. The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands

Population: 91,983,000

Neighbours: The Philippines coastline makes it the country with the 5th longest coastline in the world. The coastline borders the Philippine Sea in the east, the South China Sea in the west, the Celebes Sea in the south and Taiwan directly to the north.

Ethnicity of the population: Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligaynon Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4%, other 25.3%

Population by religion: Roman Catholic (81%), Muslim (5.0%) Evangelical (3.0%) other Christian religions (5.0%) Iglesia ni Kristo (2%), Aglipayan (2%) The remaining (2.0%) include Buddhist and Taoist faiths among others

HISTORY

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan claimed the islands of the Philippines for Spain. Colonization began when Spanish explorer Miguel López de Legazpi arrived from Mexico in 1565 and formed the first European settlements in Cebu. In 1571, the Spanish established Manila as the capital of the Spanish East Indies. Spanish rule contributed significantly to bringing political unity to the archipelago. During its rule, the Spanish fought off challenges from Chinese pirates, the Dutch, and the Portuguese. During the Seven Years' War, British forces briefly occupied the Philippines.

In 1935, the Philippines was granted Commonwealth status. Plans for independence over the next decade were interrupted by World War II when the Japanese Empire invaded. On July 4, 1946, the Philippines attained its independence.

CLIMATE

The Philippines has very mountainous regions. Situated on the outskirts of the "Pacific Ring of Fire", it experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity. Up to 20 earthquakes are registered daily, but most are too weak to be felt. The last major earthquake was the 1990 Luzon earthquake. The Philippines has a tropical climate and is usually hot and humid. The average yearly temperature is around 26.5°C. There are three recognized seasons: the hot season or summer (from March to May), the rainy season (from June to November), and the cold season (from December to February).

ECONOMY

The national economy of the Philippines is the 47th largest in the world. Primary exports include electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, and fruits. Because of the volcanic nature of the islands, mineral deposits are abundant. The country is estimated to have the second-largest gold deposits and one of the largest copper deposits in the world. The country is also abundant in nickel, chromite, and zinc.

SCHOOLS IN THE PHILIPPINES

During the period of colonisation by the United States, education in the Philippines changed radically, modelled on the system of education in the United States of the time.



PHILIPPINES

Filipino children may enter public school at about age four, starting from Nursery up to Kindergarten. At about seven years of age, children enter elementary school (6 to 7 years). This may be followed by secondary school (4 years). Students may then sit for College Entrance Examinations (CEE), after which they may enter tertiary institutions (3 to 5 years).

Other types of schools include private schools, preparatory schools, international schools, laboratory high schools and science high schools. Elementary schooling is compulsory. Secondary schooling is recommended, but is not compulsory, and is of four years duration only.

The school year in the Philippines starts in June of one year and ends in March of the next, with a two-month summer break for April and May, one week break between semesters (the last week of October), and a week or two of Christmas break.

CULTURE

The culture of the Philippines displays a significant amount of Spanish and American influences. These influences are obvious in literature, folk music, folk dance, language, food, art, and religion. Traditional festivities known as barrio fiestas (district festivals) to commemorate the feast days of patron saints are common. Community celebrations are times for feasting, music, and dancing.

Spanish architecture has left an imprint in the Philippines in the way many towns were designed around a central square or plaza. This can be seen in the country's churches, government buildings, and universities.

The common use of the English language is an example of the American impact on Philippine society. It has contributed to the ready acceptance and influence of American pop cultural trends. Modern day Filipinos also listen and watch contemporary American and European music and film. However, original Filipino music and local films are also popular.

FOOD

Filipino food has evolved over several centuries from its Malayo-Polynesian origins to become a mixed cuisine with many Hispanic, Chinese, American, and other Asian influences that have been adapted to local ingredients. Popular dishes include lechón, adobo, sinigang, kare-kare, tapa, crispy pata, pancit, lumpia, and halo-halo. Due to the influence of the American culture, Filipinos do not eat with chopsticks! Halo-halo is a dessert made of ice, milk, various fruits and ice cream.

RECREATION

Various sports and pastimes are popular in the Philippines including boxing, volleyball, football and badminton. Basketball is considered to be the most popular sport in the Philippines

YFU IN THE PHILIPPINES

YFU Philippines provides arrival and departure orientations for students. In some areas, local volunteers may organise events and outings for YFU students in the area.

EXCHANGES WITH

Japan, Norway, USA, Australia, New Zealand