

Resource 33: Philippines Culture & Logistical Survival Guide

1. Essential Entry & Visa Rules

- **Visa Requirements:** U.S. citizens can enter the Philippines for tourism without a visa for up to 30 days. Ensure your passport has at least 6 months validity.
- **eTravel Registration:** All travelers must complete the online [eTravel](#) registration within 72 hours prior to arrival.

2. Universal Emergency Numbers

- **Emergency Services:** 911 (Nationwide).
- **Tourist Police:** 166 (National).

3. Transit Rules & Etiquette

- **Jeepneys:** These iconic, colorful vehicles are the primary mode of public transport. Pay by passing your fare to the driver through other passengers, saying "*bayad po*" (here is the payment).
- **Ride-Hailing:** **Grab** is the most reliable and safe way to book transport in urban areas like Metro Manila and Cebu.
- **Taxis:** Always ask to use the meter; if the driver refuses, consider using a different taxi or a ride-hailing app.

4. Money, Currency & Tipping

- **Currency:** Philippine Peso (PHP).
- **Cash Culture:** Cash is essential for smaller vendors, local markets, and rural areas. Use ATMs in banks or shopping malls for better security.
- **Tipping:** Tipping is not strictly required but is appreciated for good service, especially in restaurants (usually 5–10% if not included) and for luggage handling or tour guides.

5. Client Cultural Briefing: Etiquette & Social Norms

Cultural Dimension	Client Behavioral Expectation	Why It Matters
The "Mano" Gesture	If invited, taking the hand of an elder to your forehead is a sign of deep respect.	Shows respect for the elderly in the community.

"Pakikisama"	Prioritize social harmony and avoid conflict in group settings.	Maintaining smooth interpersonal relationships is highly valued.
Hospitality	Accepting refreshments when offered is polite; refusing can sometimes be seen as rejecting hospitality.	Hospitality is a cornerstone of Filipino culture.
Public Decorum	Be modest in dress when visiting rural areas or places of worship.	Filipinos are generally conservative, especially outside of major cities.



6. Tech & Connectivity Realities

- **Outlets:** Primarily Type A and C (220V). A universal travel adapter is recommended.
- **Connectivity:** Wi-Fi is generally available in hotels and cafes, but for reliable data, purchasing a local SIM (Globe or Smart) at the airport is highly recommended.



7. Daily Pacing & Practicalities

- **Water Safety:** Do not drink tap water. Always stick to bottled or purified water.
- **Island Time:** Things may move slower than in the U.S. Encourage clients to embrace a relaxed pace, especially when traveling between islands.



8. Active U.S. Diplomatic Contacts

- **U.S. Embassy Manila:** 1201 Roxas Blvd, Ermita, Manila.



9. Client "Quick-Check" Summary

- **Key Takeaway:** The Philippines is famous for its warm, hospitable people. Be polite, patient with local transport, and prepared to enjoy the "island time" lifestyle.