



# TRAVEL THE UNKNOWN

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

**HIDDEN TREASURES OF LUZON**

**15 days**



## Countries visited

India • Philippines

## Tour Highlights

- The walled city of Intramuros in Manila
- Soak up Spanish colonial charm in Vigan
- Trek in the 2000 year old rice terraces of Banaue
- Hanging coffins of Sagada
- Meet the agricultural Ifugao Tribe
- Trek to Mount Pinatubo
- Kayak on Bulusan crater lake
- Witness smoking Mount Mayon - the perfect conical volcano
- Relax, snorkel or go fishing on remote Ticao Island
- Sample delicious Bicolano cuisine

## Places visited

Manila • Laoag • Vigan • Baguio • Sagada • Banaue • Pampanga • Legazpi • Ticao Island

## What's included

- Airport transfers
- Domestic flights
- Accommodation
- Most meals (refer to itinerary for meal plan)
- Ground transport and driver
- Local English speaking guides
- Entrance fees to sites & parks
- Activities as per itinerary

## What's not included

- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Drinks
- Visa fees
- Tipping
- Camera / video camera fees
- Personal items (laundry, telephone, etc.)
- Medical expenses
- Any services not mentioned in itinerary

*All accommodation subject to availability. Final accommodation choices will be confirmed after booking.*

## Your Itinerary Map



## Your Itinerary Explained

Date	Place visited	Meals
	<p>The first part of the text in each day is the itinerary schedule and will explain what you will normally see/do during this day of your itinerary.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>The part of the day's text in italics (and comes after the three dashes "---") is background information on the places or sites on that day of your itinerary. It is not part of your itinerary and may mention places that will not be visited on your itinerary. If you have any questions please ask us. Travel times where noted are only meant as a guideline.</i></p>	<p>B: Breakfast</p> <p>L: Lunch</p> <p>D: Dinner</p>

## Tour Itinerary

Day 1	Arrival	Meals
	<p>Arrive at Manila airport, where you will be greeted by a Travel the Unknown representative and transferred to the hotel. The evening is free at your leisure. Overnight in Manila.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>Overnight in The Bayleaf Intramuros, Manila</i></p>	N/A
Flight		
Day 2	Manila - Laoag	Meals
	<p>Spend the morning sightseeing in Intramuros, the oldest district in Manila. Later, transfer to the airport to fly to Laoag. Overnight in Laoag.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>Intramuros is the oldest district and historic centre of <b>Manila</b>. Originally founded in 1571, the city had been invaded many times over the years by Chinese pirates, and Japanese, American, and British forces. At its peak, Intramuros instilled fear into Spain's enemies and was the only city of its kind in Asia. It survived until WWII, where it was destroyed by US bombs during the Battle of Manila.</i></p> <p><i>Overnight in Java Hotel, Laoag</i></p>	B
Manila		

## Day 3

## Laoag - Vigan

## Meals



Laoag

Enjoy a full day sightseeing tour of Laoag. Visit the fortress-like church of St. Augustine in Paoay before heading to Museo Iloko, where government-controlled tobacco was stored in colonial times. Drive past the Abolition of Tobacco Monopoly Monument in the town plaza and briefly stop at St. Williams Cathedral and its Sinking Bell Tower. Proceed to Paoay Sand Dunes before driving to Vigan. Overnight in Vigan.

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*Known as the 'Sunshine City' or 'City of Lights', **Laoag** declares its position within Filipino cultural heritage as poignantly as the strikes heard from the sinking tower. There are many beaches near to it such as the Paoay Sand Dunes. The fusion of Japanese and Spanish colonial influences can be felt throughout the city.*

*Overnight in Hotel Felicidad, Vigan*

B

## Day 4

## Vigan

## Meals



Vigan

Spend the day exploring Vigan. Visit the old town centre built during the Spanish rule and board a kalesa (horse-drawn carriage) for a heritage tour. Visit the Burgos Museum and take a short drive to a "Burnayan" pottery shop where you can observe the old tradition of pottery making. Sample Ilocano delicacies such as longaniza (sausage), empanada (meat pie) and bagnet (deep fried crispy pork crackling). If time permits, visit a typical Ilocano vegetable farm and witness how the famous Ilocano dish "Pinakbet" is prepared. Overnight in Vigan.

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*The rustic Spanish colonial town of **Vigan** has charmed all that have strolled along its cobbled streets and admired its stone houses (bahay na bato) and wooden mansions built during the Spanish period. Once a centre for the trade of gold and beeswax, the town was under American rule during the Philippine-American war and Japanese rule during World War 2. Due to its unique environment and the fact that it is one of the few remaining Hispanic towns in the Philippines, it has been granted UNESCO World Heritage Site status and has a fusion of Filipino and Spanish colonial architecture.*

*Overnight in Hotel Felicidad, Vigan*

B

## Day 5

## Vigan - Baguio

## Meals



Baguio

In the early morning, drive to Baguio and enjoy an afternoon tour around the city. Explore Burnham Park and Mines View Park before heading to Camp John Hay and Baguio Cathedral. Proceed to Tam - Awan Village, where you can observe reconstructed Ifugao and Kalinga huts as well as see art exhibits and workshops. Continue to Woodcarver's Village, Saint Louis Filigree Shop and the famous Baguio City Market. Lastly, learn about the traditional weaving craft at Narda's Weaving before visiting BenCab Museum. Overnight in Baguio.

B

In the province of Benguet, **Baguio** is the summer capital of the Philippines and the gateway to the Cordillera. Located 1,500 kms high up in the Cordillera Mountains, it sits within beautiful pine forests, earning it the name of the 'City of Pines'. It is a crossroads of cultures, mixing hill tribes with lowland settlers, observed in the Igorot aboriginal wood carvings within the city. It also holds one of the largest student populations in the Philippines, with over a quarter of a million students.

Overnight in Baguio Burnham Suites Hotel, Baguio

Day 6	Baguio - Sagada	Meals
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Sagada

In the early morning, drive to Sagada. Go on an afternoon tour of hanging coffins and burial caves, visiting the Lumian Burial Cave and Sagada Echo Valley. Overnight in Sagada.

B

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Surrounded by mountains, **Sagada** is known for its hanging coffins, the ancient way of burying the dead. The coffins are carved with fearsome lizards and 'hung' from projecting beams, the purpose of this is to bring the deceased closer to heaven. The surrounding caves and beautiful waterfall make for a wonderful and surreal experience.

Overnight in Masferre Country Inn & Restaurant, Sagada

Day 7	Sagada - Banaue	Meals
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Banaue

Drive to Banaue, stopping at Bontoc Museum en route, where you can observe ancient artifacts, tools and houses of the Cordilleras. The afternoon is free at your leisure. Overnight in Banaue.

B

Overnight in Banaue Hotel, Banaue

Day 8	Banaue	Meals
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Banaue

In the morning, take a jeepney to the Saddle Junction and trek through the rice terraces of Batad. In the afternoon, take the jeepney to Bangaan, stopping at spectacular viewpoints along the way. Trek to Bangaan village and meet the Ifugao tribes. Overnight in Banaue.

B

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The agricultural tribe of the **Ifugao**, often called the "people of heaven", occupy the mountainous region of northern Luzon. They are believed to be the oldest residents of the highlands, with an origin dating back as early as 800 - 500 BC during the Indonesian migration. Along with farming, rice terracing is their principle means of livelihood, with their technologically simplistic yet ingenious system of irrigated rice terraces being world renowned.

Described as the 'eighth wonder of the world', the rice terraces of **Banaue** are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and regarded as a national treasure. The exquisite Cordilleras were crafted by the Ifugao 'head hunters' some 2000 years ago and are still tended by them today. Passed on from generation to generation, the Rice Terraces were built at a higher altitude and on steeper slopes than many other terraces. Built with complex stone and mud walls to construct flooded pond fields to cultivate rice, The Rice Terraces occupy a central importance to their culture as entire communities co-operate on cyclical, seasonal systems of planting, pest control and harvest which is tied to the lunar cycle and sometimes religious rituals.

The **Batad Rice Terraces** are arguably the most spectacular in the Ifugao province. Shaped as an Amphitheatre carved steeply along the side of the mountain, a trek uphill will provide you with incredible views over the emerald-green terraces.

Overnight in Banaue Hotel, Banaue

Day 9	Banaue - Pampanga	Meals
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Banaue

Drive to the town of Magalang in Pampanga, where the rest of the day is free at your leisure. Pampanga is often called the "culinary centre of the Philippines", priding itself on its famous Kapampangan cuisine. Transfer to Abe's Farm for your overnight stay.

B

Overnight in Abe's Farm, Pampanga

Day 10	Pampanga - Manila	Meals
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Manila

Start the 2 hour trek to Mount Pinatubo's crater lake. On return, visit the Aeta community who survived the eruption of Mount Pinatubo. Later, drive to San Fernando, one of hundreds of towns and villages which were devastated by the eruption. Drive by the village and visit the Basilica, now 3/4 buried in Lahar. Overnight in Manila.

B

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 Located on the island of Luzon, **Mount Pinatubo** lay dormant for almost 500 years until a devastating eruption in June 1991. One of the most destructive volcanic eruptions of the 20th century, more than 700 people were killed while thick deposits of tephra and lahar caused significant damage to surrounding cities. The eruption emitted millions of tonnes of sulfur dioxide gas into the atmosphere, decreasing the average worldwide temperature by almost 0.5 °C for years after. Although the volcano is still active, it is now safe to visit, with a beautiful crystal clear lake filling the crater.

Overnight in The Bayleaf Intramuros, Manila

## Day 11

## Manila - Legazpi

## Meals



Cagsawa Ruins

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Legazpi City. Visit the WWII Japanese Tunnel before exploring Daraga Church. Finally, proceed to Cagsawa Ruins, where there is a souvenir shop for local crafts and delicacies. Overnight in Legazpi.

B

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*Home to black sand beaches, ancient buildings and beautiful religious architecture, **Legazpi** is known for its volcano Mount Mayon, the most active volcano in the Philippines. It is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire and attracts visitors to its National Park where they get stunning panoramic views of Legazpi. Legazpi is also known as 'the city of fun and adventure' as there are plenty of historical buildings and ruins to explore such as the Cagsawa Ruins.*

*Also known as 'Our Lady of the Gate Parish Church', **Daraga Church** was built after Mount Mayon destroyed the one in Cagsawa. It is regarded as a crowning glory of religious architecture in the Albay province and stands as a testament of resilience and faith of the Bicolano people. Built from volcanic rock, the details of the facade have been eroded from over 200 years of exposure to the elements. To save it, a lime coating has been applied and it is hoped that the church will stand for years to come.*

*Built in 1724, by Fransican friars to replace the church that had been previously destroyed by Dutch pirates, the **Cagsawa ruins** are a popular tourist attraction and are considered to be a powerful symbol of the dangers of living next to a volcano. It was destroyed in 1814, by Mount Mayon's most destructive eruption. Instead of just spouting lava, the majestic volcano released black ash which bombarded the nearby village of Cagsawa, burying it under several hundred million cubic of ash. Hundreds of the town's inhabitants sought refuge in the church, but were eventually killed by the currents of hot air and ash or the flow of debris coming down from the volcano. Today, only the belfry and part of the convent still stands as the facade of the structure collapsed due to earthquakes in the early 1950s.*

*Overnight in Siana Hotel, Legazpi*

## Day 12

## Legazpi - Lake Bulusan - Ticao Island

## Meals



Bulusan Lake

Option available to take a tricycle to the local morning market at 0600H before returning to the hotel for breakfast. Drive to Bulusan Lake, where you can bird watch, take part in easy treks or kayak around the lake. Proceed to Bulusan Port to take a boat ride to Ticao Island. Overnight on Ticao Island.

B

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*Bulusan, which translates as 'where water flows', is truly a sight to behold with its beautiful waterfalls, springs and lakes, not to mention its majestic volcano set at the foot of a crater lake. A boat can be taken across **Lake Bulusan**, so that visitors can see the magnificent volcano in all its glory and explore the bamboo huts, the endemic bird species and hidden grottos.*

*Ticao is an untouched tropical island and the perfect retreat for any traveller. Visitors can take a stroll down the island's one street or visit the mangroves in the evening. They can even take part in the daily life of the island's inhabitants, going fishing with the fishermen and visiting the cattle ranch, the only one of its kind in the area. For the more adventurous, there are many dive spots as well as areas that are perfect for snorkelling and surfing.*

Total travel time : 1.5 hours

Overnight in Ticao Island Resort, Ticao Island

Day 13	Ticao Island - San Miguel - Ticao Island	Meals
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Ticao Island

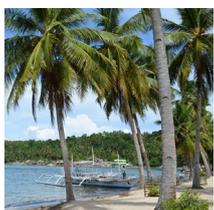
In the morning, there is an option available to head out with the local fishermen to fish the way the locals do. Later, take a boat ride to San Miguel where you can swim, snorkel or kayak. There is also an option to dive with Discover Scuba Diving (advance booking required). Overnight on Ticao Island.

B

**Note:** Fishing schedules are in the early morning from 0500H or in the afternoon from 1600H.

Overnight in Ticao Island Resort, Ticao Island

Day 14	Ticao Island	Meals
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Ticao Island

A day to relax. Laze on the beach, walk around the cattle farm, visit the fishing village, pick vegetables at the resort's organic farm, visit the mangroves, or take a motorcycle to visit the main town of San Jacinto. Overnight on Ticao Island.

B

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*Located on the idyllic Ticao Island with its pristine beaches, **San Jacinto** is a beautiful port on the island. Known for fishing, it became a station for galleon ships in 16th and 17th century, it still has some of the remains of colonial Spanish rule in the architecture of its houses and streets. The island itself is popular with tourists seeking somewhere to relax or some adventure with its firefly-lighted mangroves and numerous diving and surfing hotspots.*

Overnight in Ticao Island Resort, Ticao Island

Day 15	Departure	Meals
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Flight

Transfer to Legazpi City and fly back to Manila. Connect for onward flight home.

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