

# Adventures in Paradise

A GUIDE TO BACKPACKING THE  
BEST OF THE PHILIPPINES IN 30  
DAYS.

WRITTEN BY A BACKPACKER.

Charlotte Little



# Welcome to Paradise

In my fourth month backpacking through Asia I reached my most **highly anticipated** destination. During the lead up to my epic adventure I was watching **Philippines** travel videos on repeat, dreaming of that **crystal turquoise** shore washing over my sunkissed feet.

Turns out this Country was everything I dreamed and **more**.

*Are you ready to venture off the beaten track of Southeast Asia and reach a true **untouched paradise**?*

Think of the Maldives but no honeymooners, dirt-cheap rum and jaw-dropping sites around **every** corner.

**Welcome to my guide to backpacking the Philippines!**

I spent **30 days** hopping around this collection of **incredible** tropical islands in the most direct route I could in order to save money. This is how to hit the **best** beaches, waterfalls and backpacker spots of the archipelago...



# Cebu City

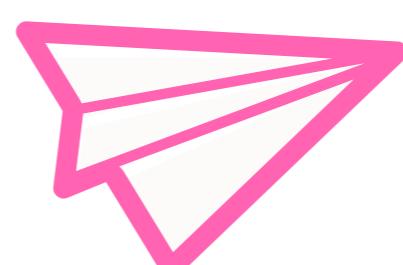
I recommend you fly into **Cebu City** or travel straight there from **Manila** to start your journey.

Calm down. This is **NOT** what the Philippines looks like but we all have to start somewhere right?!

**Cebu** is a large island so upon landing here you will need to catch a cab into the City (*white ones are safest and cheapest*) from the airport which is floating on a little piece of land connected to **Cebu** by a bridge and a 45 minute drive.

I don't recommend hanging out here for long, in the middle of the day I embarked on a 10 minute walk from my hostel to a nearby restaurant and was followed by a dangerous man with a weapon.

Luckily a local came to my aid and this is a good example of Filipino nature but there is the odd nutter nearby so try to **avoid walking alone** in the cities.





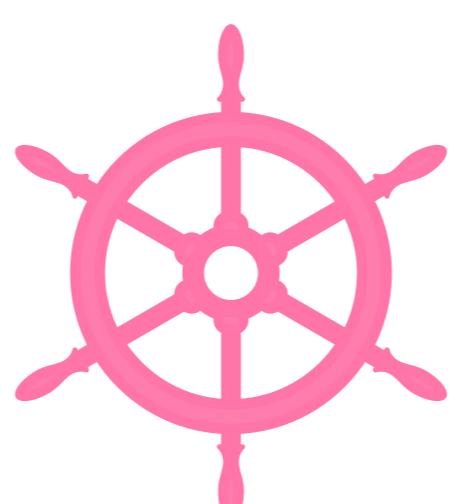
# Ferry to Bohol

Get your beautiful self out of Cebu City as soon as you can.

I stayed for one night to recover from transit and hailed down a jeepney (*local taxi vans*) to the ferry port in the morning to catch one of the hourly boats to Tagbilaran ~ **Bohol island**.

The ferry ports in The Philippines are like airports, you go through security, check in your bag (*or carry on to save money*) and then check in and pay a very small terminal fee before boarding with your ticket.

It's very easy and there are always staff around leading you through the process. **No pressure babe.**





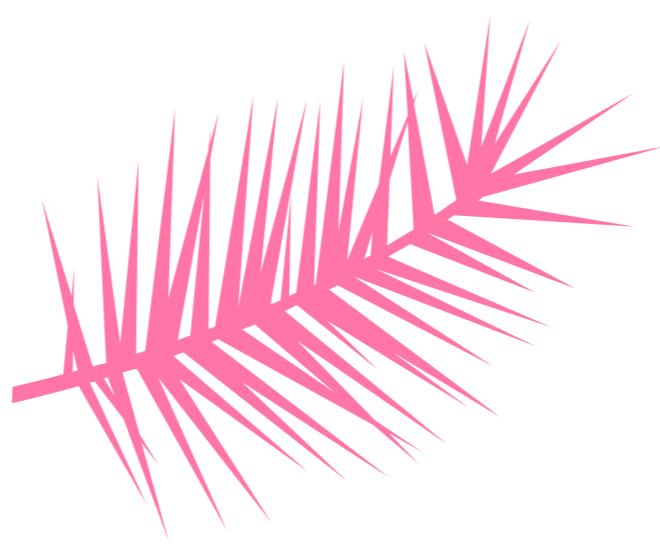
# Bohol

**Bohol** is a stunning green island that I spent an amazing 3 days on.

The backpacking epi-centre is called **Alona Beach**. **Bohol** isn't famous for it's gorgeous beaches like other islands in The Philippines but you can certainly chill out here in the trendy cafes with an afternoon smoothie bowl.

I stayed a 10 minute ride away at **Coco Farm Hostel** and can't recommend it enough. Their food is grown on site and it's **incredibly** peaceful.

Take a day trip around the island to see the famous little creatures called **Tarziers** that live here, visit the mind blowing **Chocolate Hills** and cruise up the river to see the local villagers backflip into the green water and do traditional dances.





# Siquijor

Siquijor is a **highly underrated** island.

It floats a few hours from Bohol via [\*\*ferry\*\*](#), just South of Cebu and is worth venturing too. It's shores are filled with gorgeous sandbars that peak above the shallow oceans.

The nearby snorkelling at **Apo island** is out of this world and the bright blue **waterfalls** on the island are magical.

Pay a visit to the famous **Salagdoong beach** and challenge yourself with the 30ft cliff jump ... or just relax in the clear water like I did.

The island also has a peculiar witchcraft scene if you fancy being [\*\*healed\*\*](#) by a local up the mountain.

Enjoy a few days laying on the sand and eating at the local grills (*please eat at **Ga-ay**, best food in The Philippines*).





## Oslob

Now you've had a few days to relax your beautiful self on some awesome beaches it's time to move on.

Catch the cheap ferry/cargo boat back to **Cebu**, you will dock at a small town called **Larena**. From here you can catch the even cheaper big bus to **Oslob** - only 10 minutes up the road.

The bus waits outside the port for everyone getting off the boat and leaves for **Cebu City** every hour.

Get dropped off directly at **Sharky Hostel** so you can be the first in the water to swim with the majestic **Wale Sharks** the next morning. Although there is much debate about whether this experience is **100% ethical** I did my research and even spoke to a volunteer Vet who assured me the sharks were perfectly fine.

Your underwater morning starts at **5am** so by the time you've swam with these beautiful creatures and refueled at breakfast you can catch a taxi van to **Tumalog Falls**. These amazing waterfalls mist over you and you'll get them all to yourself at 9am!



# Moalboal

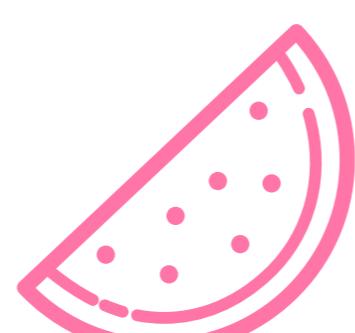
Once you've visited the sharks and falls there isn't any reason to hang about in **Oslob** so catch the hourly bus to **Moalboal** - a City 2 hours up **Cebu** island.

*(If you stand by the main road you can flag it down as it passes, super simple!)*

Spend a couple of days in **Moalboal**, home to the breathtaking **Kawasan Falls** that I'm sure you've seen Instagram snaps of before.

The water is unbelievably blue and there are many levels of the falls to explore. A bus passes through town every hour, we left at 7.30am to get the falls to ourselves which I highly recommend as they get VERY busy in the afternoon.

You can also do sardine **dive trips** and **canyoning** in **Moalboal** or explore the awesome markets and beaches around the town.





# Venture to Boracay

After exploring **Moalboal** get back on the big bus for 2-3 hours to **Cebu City** - it will pass through town every hour.

Optionally spend **a night or 2** in the city to recover from your adventures so far. Some friends and I grabbed a great **Airbnb** apartment near the airport with a **gym and pool**.

It was so much fun to cook our own food and have movie nights after **months** of living in dorm rooms.

Next you're off to Boracay!

*(Try and have any domestic flights booked in advance to avoid paying big bucks.)*

**Caticlan airport** is just a short boat ride from **Boracay**, don't be phased by the **chaos** of people trying to get a boat.

A **bus** will take you from your plane to the terminal, from there it's a short walk to the ferry port after collecting your bag. Join the ticket lines and jump on a boat for the **10 minute** ride to **paradise**.



# Boracay

**Boracay** was named '**the world's best island 2016**' and is famous for it's **fine white sand**.

The island is also known for hosting some pretty **insane parties** so prepare to have **lots** of late nights followed by plenty of **lazy** beach days ~ *its a tough life in The Philippines!*

The main beach (**White Beach**) isn't as pretty as it used to be. The ocean is filled with green algae and the sand has been **taken over** with sunbeds owned by the beach bars and restaurants.

Venture to **Puka Beach** or **Bulabog Beach** for a patch of **paradise** all to yourself.

Depending on how much you like to **party** you can chose your length of time on this **patch of heaven**. I managed 4 days before the infamous Filipino rum beat me.

But don't worry, I made sure to save the **best** location till last!





# Palawan

When visiting **The Philippines** travellers rarely miss a trip to **Palawan**, and **why would you?**!

It's been named the '**Best Island in the World**' **3 times** - coming **above** Hawaii and the Maldives!

The water is a colour I can only describe as **perfection** and there's an **endless supply of lagoons** and **secret beaches** to explore.

Catch a quick flight from **Boracay** to **Puerto Princesa** so you can pay a visit to the **Underground River** - one of the new **Natural Wonders of the World**.

Whilst you **cruise** along the mountain-side you will catch a glimpse of the cave opening and its **bright green** waters.

The cave opens up to many different rooms -It's an **out of this world** experience.

From the river you can catch a shuttle (*or miss it like I did and get the local bus for half the price*) to **El Nido**, the **true diamond** of **The Philippines**. It's about 6 hours on a bus to this absolute gem.



# El Nido

Leave yourself 6-7 days of **pure bliss** to enjoy the most **beautiful** place in the world and take in this unreal location.

**El Nido** town itself just has one bay that's rather polluted by the constant flow of boats so venture out on **Tour A** or **Tour C** offered by local tourist shops and hostels. These will take you to the **most incredible** lagoons and beaches.

**Don't miss** a trip to **Nacpan Beach**; an unbelievable expanse of perfect sand and calm ocean to chill out on all day long. Visit **Las Cabanas** for more of a party beach scene or stop off at **Happiness Bar** in town for some **delicious** mojitos and the **best** falafel I've ever tasted.

I had the **best week** of my entire 30 days in **The Philippines** whilst staying at **Outpost Hostel** just outside of town - It's miles ahead of other accommodation in the area and is a **great way** to make **amazing** friends and party the night away, **right on the beach**. Expect free shots, beer pong and the **most comfortable** bunk-bed of your life.



## Move on to... Coron

It's time to leave **undoubtedly** one of the most beautiful places in the world but don't worry, you're headed somewhere arguably BETTER!

**Coron** is a very similar picture to **EI Nido**, dramatic cliffs exploding from the ocean and the **clearest** sea you can imagine but half the amount of tourists.

**Coron** is a 5 hour ferry ride from **EI Nido** port and well worth the trip. The boat leaves in the **morning** and ensure you have a ticket in advance.

Expect to see **lots** of tiny islands and deserted beaches on the way, also expect to get **splashed** a lot through the gaps in the ferry windows, it's a very... *comfortable* boat.

You will know when your destination is on the horizon as the island is topped with a white cross and Hollywood style '**CORON**' sign.



# Coron

You can climb to the top of the hill called **Mount Tapayas** that these sit on as a great **island activity** with a killer view. It's about **750 steps** up the mount and expect the sun to be beating down so pick your time of day wisely. (*9am is cool and empty!*)

The island also offers a select few island hopping tours that are worth every small price tag.

Check out the '**Ultimate Tour**' to and swim in **Kayangan Lake**, dubbed the **cleanest** fresh water in Asia plus some unbelievable beach stops - including **CYC Beach** pictured above.

To re-energise from your heavenly adventures take the '**Coron Beach Tour**' and let your catamaran boat wash ashore the best secluded islands in the Country.

Sip on a **coconut** and take in as much of the **beauty** as you can. 4-5 days is ideal for enjoying this *utopia* and sailing around the surrounding drops of paradise.



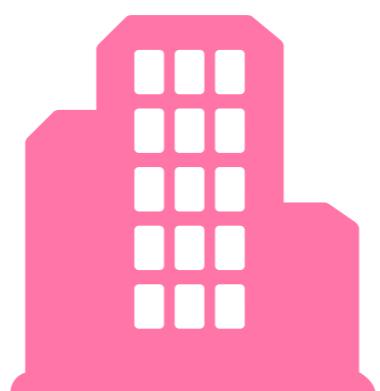
# Manila

Of course you've heard of this **monster city** if you're heading to **The Philippines**. I'd say unless you have the money to stay in a **luxury** hotel, it isn't worth staying here at all.

Catch the overnight ferry from **Coron** to **Manila**, it only leaves a few times per week so bear this in mind.

Take care doing **any** wandering here, the streets aren't always safe and scams happen **every day**. Be **wise** if you want to explore and take minimal belongings out with you.

I simply went straight to the airport and chilled out there with movies and good food for 12 hours until my flight to **Bali** flew me away from once paradise to another.



# Recommended Hostels

**Cebu City:** Steven's Place Hostel

**Bohol:** Bohol Coco Farm

**Siquijor:** Charisma Beach Resort

**Oslob:** Sharky Hostel

**Moalboal:** Moalboal Tropics

**Boracay:** Frendz Resort and Hostel

**Puerto Princessa:** Ezy Stay Pension House

**El Nido:** Outpost Beach Hostel

**Coron:** Joval Homestay

## About Me

In January 2017, after falling in love with Thailand and exploring Europe solo, I embarked on my biggest trip yet -1 year backpacking around Asia!

The adventures have been more beautiful than I ever could have imagined and meeting other travelers everyday has been my highlight.

We compare stories and share advice so I decided to expand my travel blog tips into a budget, bag friendly guide for fellow backpackers who always ask me questions about less travelled countries like **The Philippines!**

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