

Safety Tips for Traveling to Manila

1. General Safety

- **Petty Crime:** Pickpocketing and bag snatching can be common in crowded areas, such as public markets, public transport, and tourist hotspots. Keep your belongings secure and avoid displaying valuables like expensive jewelry or gadgets.
- **Scams:** Be wary of common tourist scams, like overcharging taxis, fake guides, or counterfeit goods. Always agree on prices beforehand or use trusted services.
- **Areas to Avoid:** Some neighborhoods, particularly in less developed parts of the city, may have higher crime rates. Research your destination and stay in established tourist-friendly areas like Makati, Bonifacio Global City (BGC), or Ortigas.

2. Transportation

- **Traffic Congestion:** Manila is notorious for its heavy traffic. Plan your travel times carefully, especially if you're heading to the airport or have an important schedule.
- **Public Transportation:** Jeepneys and tricycles are iconic but can be unsafe or difficult for tourists to navigate. Use ride-hailing apps like Grab for safer and more reliable transport.
- **Airport Transfers:** Arrange your airport pickup with your hotel or use official taxi stands for security.

3. Health and Hygiene

- **Water Safety:** Avoid drinking tap water. Stick to bottled or filtered water, and be cautious about ice in drinks.
- **Food Safety:** Street food can be delicious, but only eat from vendors with good hygiene practices. Avoid raw or undercooked food.
- **Mosquito-Borne Diseases:** Mosquitoes can carry dengue or chikungunya. Use insect repellents and wear protective clothing, especially during the rainy season (June–November).

4. Natural Hazards

- **Typhoons and Flooding:** Manila is prone to typhoons, especially from June to November. Roads can flood quickly during heavy rains. Check weather forecasts before traveling.
- **Earthquakes:** The Philippines lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire, so earthquakes are possible. Familiarize yourself with basic earthquake safety procedures.

5. Cultural and Social Tips

- **Local Customs:** Filipinos are generally friendly and hospitable. A smile and basic politeness go a long way.
- **Language:** English is widely spoken, but learning a few basic Tagalog phrases can be appreciated.
- **Respect for Laws:** Avoid bringing or using illegal substances, as the Philippines enforces strict penalties.

6. COVID-19 Considerations

- **Health Protocols:** Check the latest COVID-19 guidelines, as restrictions and requirements (e.g., masks, vaccination proof) may still apply in some areas.

Key Recommendations

- **Emergency Contacts:** Know the local emergency numbers (e.g., 911 for police/ambulance services).
- **Stay in Safe Areas:** Choose accommodations in reputable neighborhoods like Makati, BGC, or Pasay.
- **Insurance:** Travel insurance covering health and theft is highly recommended.