

CEBU

A HISTORY OF CEBU

Cebu is an elongated island located in the main island group of the Visayas with the island of Negros to its west and the islands of Leyte and Bohol to its east. Strategically located in Central Philippines, Cebu has been inhabited by Hindus and Muslims and had been a flourishing trading center even before the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan and the Spanish expedition. Upon his arrival in Cebu in 1521, Magellan persuaded the natives of Cebu to pledge allegiance to the King of Spain and converted Rajah Humabon, the king of Cebu, his wife and hundreds of followers to Christianity.

After baptizing the king and queen and giving them their Christian names, Carlos and Juana, Magellan presented the statue of the Santo Niño (Holy Child) to the queen. Magellan then erected a large wooden cross on the shores of Cebu and converted hundreds of islanders to Christianity. Magellan turned his attention to the ruler of nearby Mactan Island, Datu Lapu-lapu. Lapu-lapu was not willing to pledge his allegiance to the King of Spain, which led to the Battle of Mactan. Lapu-lapu and his warriors repelled the Spanish forces of Magellan and killed Magellan in the process.

CEBU

The Cebu Metropolitan Area is composed of the cities of Cebu, Danao, Mandaue, Lapu-lapu and Talisay as well as 8 other towns and municipalities. Considered as the largest metropolitan area outside of Metro Manila, Metro Cebu has a population of around 2.7 million people in 2010. Its major industries include tourism, business process outsourcing, furniture-making and ship-building.

The city of Lapu-lapu and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport-MCIA-are both located in the island of Mactan, which is connected to the main island of Cebu by two bridges.



GETTING TO CEBU

The Philippines has several international airports, the two busiest of which are the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in Metro Manila and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA) in Metro Cebu. The country's flag carrier, Philippine Airlines (PAL), services several international and domestic routes together with other low-cost carriers like Cebu Pacific, PAL Express, Air Asia Zest and Tiger Airways. Almost every major international airline that services Asia has services to and from Manila while several international airlines fly to and from Cebu. Booking several months in advance may allow you to avail of the different low-fare promotions of these airlines. As of this writing, flights from Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, Busan, Seoul, Bangkok, Tokyo, Taipei and Qatar fly directly to Cebu.



GETTING TO CEBU

Passengers coming in through Manila should be able to get connecting flights to Cebu as multiple domestic flights between Manila and Cebu are offered by several airlines. However, please take note that most international flights coming into Manila (with the exception of Philippine-based airlines like PAL and Cebu Pacific as well as selected foreign airlines which will transfer to NAIA 3 by mid-2014 use the NAIA Terminal 1 while all the domestic flights fly out of NAIA Terminal 2, NAIA Terminal 3 or the old Manila Domestic Airport. Transferring between these terminals entail exiting the terminal and taking a shuttle or public transportation to the other terminals.

PAL uses NAIA Terminal 2 for its international flights and its domestic flights to and from Cebu while Cebu Pacific uses NAIA Terminal 3 for its international and domestic flights. Booking with these airlines gives you the added convenience of your luggage getting checked through all the way to Cebu and saves you from the inconvenience and cost of transferring from one terminal to another. Please check the assigned arrival terminal of your flights before booking your plane tickets.

GETTING TO CEBU

Cebu also serves as the gateway to the Philippines' top tourist destinations such as Boracay, Bohol, Camiguin, Palawan and Siargao. Flights from Cebu to Boracay, Camiguin, Palawan and Siargao are around one hour long while Bohol is only a 2-hr fast craft boat ride away.



AROUND THE AIRPORT

Cebu has two kinds of taxis: the yellow taxis, which transport passengers exclusively from the airport to the city and back, and the white taxis, the regular taxis which can take you to any point of Metro Cebu. Yellow taxis are generally safer since their trips are monitored, readily available but more expensive than white taxis. Yellow taxis are located right outside the arrival area of the MIA. The white taxis are cheaper than the yellow taxis but its availability varies according to the time of your arrival. White taxis are parked in front of the Domestic Departure Area of the MIA.

To get to the Domestic Departure Area, one must go through the Arrival Area and take the elevator up to the Departure Area and exit the terminal through the Domestic Departure Area exit doors. Both taxis are metered so make sure that the meter is flagged down at the start of your trip. Getting to the heart of Cebu City from the MIA takes around 30-60 minutes, depending on the traffic.

GOING AROUND CEBU

The main mode of public transportation around Cebu City is the colorful jeepney, a mini-truck-like passenger vehicle in which commuters sit on a pair of bench-like seats at the back. While taking the jeepney might be quite an experience and would be the cheaper alternative, its varied routes may be confusing to first-time visitors and the commuters' lack of personal space inside it might prove disconcerting to some people. The basic fare of the jeepney in Metro Cebu is PhP8 and this increases depending on the distance of the trip. It is advisable to prepare a small bill denomination for jeepney payment.



GOING AROUND CEBU

In the smaller streets of Cebu's component cities, one would see a three-wheeled vehicle made up of a motorcycle and a covered sidecar full of people and goods or luggage. This public transportation is called the tricycle and people use these to access areas with narrower streets or streets not serviced by jeepneys. The basic fare is Ph₱8, which is then added onto depending on the distance of the trip.



GOING AROUND CEBU

White taxis are readily available around Cebu City during most of the day, getting one during rush hour (0600-0900hr, 1100-1300hr and 1600-2000hr) might be difficult. Getting a taxi at the different hotels and malls are advisable as taxi attendants usually take down the taxi franchise name and license plate number and give you a transport slip with contact numbers of the relevant government agencies. The flag-down rate for taxis is PhP40 for the first kilometer, PhP3.50 for the next 500 meters and PhP3.50 for every 300 meters thereafter.

There are taxi drivers who will try to haggle on the trip fare with you instead of using the taxi meter. Use of the taxi meter is required by law so always insist on using the taxi meter. Also, prepare PhP20, PhP50 or PhP100 bills for your fare as some drivers might not have enough change for large bills. Getting around Cebu City usually takes between 30-50 minutes and between PhP100- PhP300, depending on the traffic. A tip of PhP10 - PhP20 is usually acceptable but you can always give more if the driver is especially helpful.

GOING AROUND CEBU

Self-drive and chauffeur-driven car rentals are also available in Cebu City. A self-driven mid-sized 4-door sedan has an average rental of Ph₱2,500 - Ph₱3,000 for eight hours. Chauffeur-driven rentals will cost significantly more.

