
Traversing Osmena Peak with the Symph Team

P.S. Not an article with a moral lesson on how to live better. It's just you reading my story.



Osmena Peak by [Carl Kho](#)

What, when, where, who, and how. I never imagined becoming a journalist to ask my parents' permission. Luckily, there was little to no debate of my attendance at the Osmena Peak overnight getaway with the Symph Team, the people I *WFH* with. This is surprising since I've never been on a mountain before, much less sleep on it for a day. Making this experience a very memorable one and, dare I say it, triumphant over the experiences I've had abroad—mostly because I was too young to fully appreciate things—Sorry, Singapore.

If you're reading because of ate Lenli, [insert threat here]. :)

After a year of hard work, a few Symphers decided they needed to recharge and refresh. It is high time we do it face-to-face since everyone has been meeting only digitally for almost two years. So, right after the Friday evening sync, I embarked on the journey. I first met with Jerel, Roland, Krisha, and, coincidentally, my 10th Grade Filipino Teacher, Mrs. Rosillo (she isn't part of the trip by the way, but it was a cute interaction.) in Pueblo Verde. Whining how there wasn't an available *Grab Taxi* (think of it as a local Uber). A few minutes later, we ditched the app and booked for a ride the traditional way. We were then on our way to I.T. Park to converge with the rest of the Symphers heading Osemena Peak, which was about 2 hours away.

Fast forward, I finally met Symphers for the first time. Jarrhey was super tall! What really surprised me was the fact that we hit off like we've known each other for years (well, they did). We grab dinner from a certain golden M restaurant. Then I was placed in a van together with Ram, Krisha, **Jarrhey**, Adrian, Lenli, Jerel, and **Jarrhey**. The ride had varied conversations. You wouldn't believe me if I'd say we talked about Adrian's stories with his band, [Sansette](#) (stream [Sunburn](#) by the way). We then quickly moved on to the topic of not rinsing after brushing your teeth. Fun fact: our American CEO, Dave, does not rinse after brushing (so they say), and his pearly whites *definitely* looks pearly.

It was late at night when we arrived at our destination, Osmena Peak. Finally. I saw the path towards the camp area and let me just say: I now understand the metaphors of fighting an uphill battle—literally. To things worse, I had to carry a gallon of water along the way. I remember making my way to the **entrance** of the famous tourist spot. My jacket was already drenched with sweat. "It will be quick. This'll only take 15 minutes!" said my experienced, mountain-hiking-as-a-hobby Symphers. Walking up was a struggle. It was dark, the gallon was heavy, and I stopped to catch for air every minute. I walked with Adrian and Jarrhey. They took frequent breaks too. But the best part was when they offered to take turns and help me carry the gallon. I took a long break and ended up walking together with ate Lenli. We continued walking and, to cope, I made up a lot of jokes about local *bald* celebrity Wally Bayola on the top of my head. I thought out loud, "Maybe he saves more on a monthly basis because he uses less shampoo." Did I mention that he has no hair? Yes I did. It was even in italics. Learn how to read, my dear readers. It was safe to assume that the joke was funny. I think. Ate Lenli laughed along with me (or was it **at me?**) all the way. A few pants later and we made it, but there was another problem: looking for a flat surface to place the tents on. I helped Jerel and Ram set up our supposed tents, but suddenly, I was made to sleep with (actually sleep) Ace the hopeful. "Di mag-guol," he would say, which translates to "don't worry" in English.

The thing was, we didn't sleep.



Jamming to OPM hits, "[Mundo](#)" & "[Buwan](#)"

Shortly after, we gathered around. Tearing up the Doritos and Lays open. Tim finally let me try their famous handcrafted coffee and I drank 3 "shots" of it. My fellow Symphers were pretty excited and made drinking alcohol a big deal. I guess it was a way of teasing me since I was still 17 and I am still not allowed to drink. Ate Lenli and kuya Jarrhey made sure I didn't. A few moments later, the guitar started strumming

and we started singing. I didn't sing the first few songs because I don't really listen to Original Pinoy Music (OPM), but boy, at that night have I grown to love it. Especially when they started singing [*Mundo by IV of Spades*](#) and [*Buwan by JK*](#). I didn't like singing, but because of the moment, I sang with passion too. A funny moment was when Roland, *official* lead singer, sang the lyrics wrong. Saying "circumcise" instead of circumstance. We didn't notice, but it was already 3 AM. The music has started dying down, and people were starting to debate if love is a feeling (Van) or love is a choice (Adrian). In the end, with multiple years of experience, drunk Adrian wins this one. "Love is a choice!" has become the mantra-meme for the rest of the trip.





Breakfast and the morning view ft. sleepmate Ace

5 AM. I woke up to find myself on the other side of the bed. Again, literally. I slept on the right side at night but found Ace sleeping on the left side by dawn. When almost half of the team has woke up, it turned out that it wasn't only Ace and me who had a funny story. For Van also sleepwalked, telling Lenli and Krisha, who was in an entirely different tent, to get out because he had to sleep. Tim and Lenli cooked up breakfast which made everybody wake up. It was cold but peaceful. As

the sun started to peek, I couldn't help but whisper a word of thanks. Shortly after, the team climbed the actual peak to capture memories, with Jerel nearly falling to his death as he attempted to sit down on the empty side of the mountain. Good thing me and Sheen caught him from death's grasp, if Grim Reaper was a nature lover who was covered in leaves.





The team (left), Keith risking her life for a photo (middle), and our camp site (right)

It was time to say goodbye. We had to pack up and leave by noon since we had to go to another area, Alcoy Beach, to celebrate the birthday of John Rey. But that's another story for next time. It was nice traveling the path without gallons of sweat (a gallon AND sweat worked for this case too). Traveling and sleeping on Osmena Peak was so nice, I would gladly say yes as soon as they would invite me again for their next venture. Thank you for the opportunity, Symph and team! Because of this, I learned that the Philippines is beautiful—and I encourage you, dear reader, to get out there, venture, and enjoy what the world has to offer.



Happy [me](#) atop Osmena Peak

By [Carl Kho](#) on [January 19, 2022](#).

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