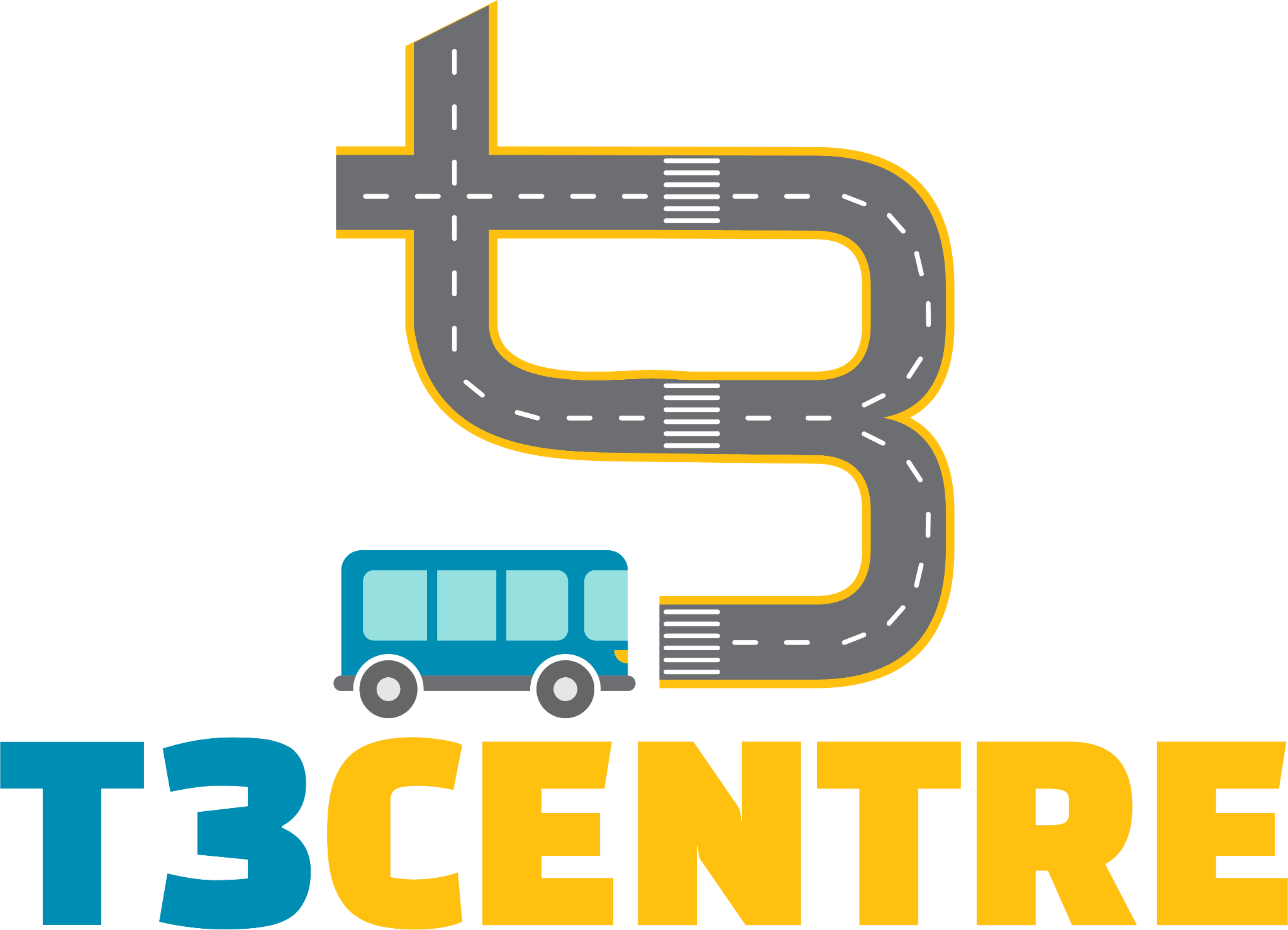
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**SLOW, COMMUNITY-BASED & CREATIVE TRAVEL IN NEGROS ISLAND, PHILIPPINES**

***Is Slow Tourism a new trend?***

Slow tourism is a response to the fast-paced nature of modern tourism and aims to provide a more enriching and less hurried travel experience. It allows travelers to connect more deeply with the places they visit, fostering a greater appreciation for the diversity and beauty of the world.

Slow tourism is a concept closely related to slow travel, emphasizing a leisurely and immersive approach to exploring destinations. It involves taking the time to appreciate the local culture, environment, and heritage while minimizing carbon footprints and the negative impacts of tourism. Slow tourism seeks to create a more sustainable and authentic travel experience for both visitors and local communities.

Key characteristics of slow tourism include:

**Connection with the local community:** Slow tourism encourages travelers to engage with the local population, fostering cultural exchange and understanding. This might involve participating in community activities and supporting local businesses.

**Exploration of off-the-beaten-path destinations:** Instead of focusing solely on popular tourist hotspots, slow tourism encourages travelers to explore lesser-known areas, promoting a more balanced distribution of tourism benefits.

**Sustainable practices:** Slow tourism emphasizes environmentally friendly and sustainable travel practices.

**Culinary experiences:** Food plays a significant role in slow tourism, with an emphasis on savoring local cuisine and supporting local farmers and food producers. This often involves enjoying meals in local eateries and markets.

**Mindful and experiential travel:** Slow tourism encourages travelers to be present and mindful during their journeys, focusing on the quality of experiences rather than the quantity of destinations visited. This might involve activities like hiking, cycling, or taking scenic drives to appreciate the natural beauty of a region.

**Preservation of cultural heritage:** Slow tourism values the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions. Travelers are encouraged to learn about the history and customs of the places they visit and to contribute positively to the conservation of cultural landmarks.

In essence, slow tourism aims to create a more sustainable, respectful, and enriching travel experience, benefiting both the travelers and the communities they visit. It aligns with the idea that travel should be a meaningful and mutually beneficial exchange between visitors and locals.

***Creative Tourism: What is it and why do we need to incorporate it in our tours?***

Creative tourism is a type of tourism that focuses on engaging tourists in creative and cultural activities, fostering a deeper connection with the local culture and community. Rather than merely observing attractions, creative tourism encourages travelers to actively participate in hands-on, artistic, or cultural experiences. This type of tourism aims to promote local creativity, preserve cultural heritage, and provide visitors with unique and authentic experiences.

Key features of creative tourism include:

**Hands-on experiences:** Travelers are encouraged to actively participate in creative activities, such as art workshops, cooking classes, music and dance lessons, or other artisanal practices. This allows tourists to learn new skills and gain a deeper understanding of the local culture.

**Interaction with local artists and artisans:** Creative tourism often involves direct interaction with local artists, craftsmen, and creative individuals. This provides travelers with insights into the artistic process and the opportunity to connect with the local creative community.

**Cultural immersion:** The focus is on immersing tourists in the local culture through creative activities. This might include traditional art forms, local festivals, or storytelling sessions that convey the cultural heritage of a destination.

**Support for local creativity:** Creative tourism contributes to the sustainability of local creative industries by providing income opportunities for artists and artisans. Tourists' participation in creative activities can help support and preserve traditional craftsmanship.

**Promotion of authenticity:** Creative tourism aims to offer visitors authentic and unique experiences, moving away from mass-produced, standardized tourist activities. This promotes more genuine and personalized interaction between tourists and the local community.

**Community involvement:** Local communities often play a crucial role in creative tourism, actively participating in the development and implementation of creative activities. This ensures that the benefits of tourism are distributed more equitably within the community.

Creative tourism can take various forms, depending on the destination's cultural assets and creative resources. It is an evolving concept that seeks to enhance the overall travel experience by promoting creativity, cultural exchange, and community engagement.

**Community-Based Tourism: Why is it important in sustainable travel?**

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a form of tourism that is initiated, owned, and managed by local communities themselves. Instead of relying on outside operators, the community takes the lead in sharing its cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and way of life with visitors. This approach ensures that the benefits of tourism directly support local livelihoods, while also strengthening cultural pride and environmental stewardship.

Key characteristics of community-based tourism include:

**Active community involvement:** Residents plan and manage tourism activities, ensuring that local voices guide the direction of development.

**Cultural exchange:** Travelers are invited to experience traditions, stories, and daily life—such as joining festivals, cooking meals, or learning crafts.

**Economic empowerment:** Income generated from tours, homestays, or guided activities is reinvested in the community, supporting education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

**Environmental care:** CBT often takes place in rural or natural settings, where communities practice sustainable methods to preserve resources for future generations.

**Authenticity and intimacy:** Rather than mass-market attractions, CBT highlights genuine, small-scale encounters that foster deeper connections between hosts and visitors.

In essence, community-based tourism transforms travel into a partnership between visitors and locals. Guests gain unique and meaningful experiences, while communities strengthen their identity and improve their quality of life.

**Gastronomy Tourism: Why is food at the heart of travel?**

Gastronomy Tourism, also called food tourism, is a type of travel that focuses on discovering a destination through its flavors, culinary traditions, and food heritage. It is more than just eating; it is about connecting with the people, history, and land that shape a region’s cuisine. By tasting local dishes, meeting farmers and food producers, and exploring traditional markets, travelers experience the culture of a place in its most delicious and memorable form.

Key characteristics of gastronomy tourism include:

**Celebration of local cuisine:** Highlighting traditional dishes, heirloom recipes, and regional specialties that reflect the identity of the community.

**Connection with producers:** Meeting farmers, fishermen, winemakers, or artisanal food makers to understand the journey from field to table.

**Culinary experiences:** Joining cooking classes, food festivals, or guided food trails that allow travelers to participate in the preparation and enjoyment of local dishes.

**Preservation of food heritage:** Gastronomy tourism helps safeguard culinary traditions and supports the continuity of indigenous and regional practices.

**Sustainability and innovation:** By valuing local ingredients and seasonal produce, gastronomy tourism fosters responsible consumption and supports the local food economy.

In essence, gastronomy tourism turns every meal into a cultural journey. It allows travelers to savor not just flavors but also the stories, heritage, and creativity behind each dish—making food one of the most powerful ways to understand and appreciate a destination.

**Tikim and Timpla: A Bacolod Food and Crafts Crawl**

*A perfectly seasoned day of tasting, making, and discovering the soulful heart of Negros.*

You simply can’t leave Bacolod without tasting the flavors it’s known and loved for. Join *Team Tikim* for a day: *Tikim* means “to taste,” while *Timpla* is “to mix” or “craft”… making this tour perfect for foodies and creative souls alike.

Start with a bowl of rich, comforting *cansi*, a local beef bone broth simmered for hours with spices and *batwan*. Since Negros produces over 60% of the country’s sugar, it’s only fitting to indulge your sweet tooth: flaky *napoleones*, oversized melt-in-your-mouth *ensaimadas*, crunchy *piaya*, and more. In the afternoon you’ll get to craft your own wind chime - a simple, beautiful keepsake to bring home. We’ve also included a heartwarming visit to the NVC Foundation, where upcycled Nespresso pods and mosaic art are turned into stunning pieces that help feed children in need… proof that creativity really can spark change.

Cap the day with dinner at Lanai by FreshStart, a Slow Food experience that celebrates all things good, clean, and fair. Hyperlocal? Yes, absolutely!

Itinerary

9:00 Pick up Hotel

9:30 Running tour of Bacolod City

Piaya is really good! Crispy, thin (almost wafer-like), with muscovado filling - it's hard to go wrong with this Negrense delicacy. Let’s get our hands deliciously messy!!!

10:30 Visit the NVC Showroom, where creativity meets compassion. Marvel at stunning mosaic art and upcycled Nespresso capsule masterpieces handcrafted by local artisans. Every piece sold helps fund meals for undernourished children … proof that art can truly feed both body and soul.

11:00 Try Cansi! Bacolod’s bone-in beef shank soup is like bulalo and sinigang but without the vegetables and batwan fruits are used as the souring agent.

1:00 Napoleones … yes, Bacolod is famous for this popular puff pastry! Ensaymada, anyone? Just bring one home.

Provincial Capitol and Lagoon, a short stop to show you one of the sites.

2:30 Next stop is the Manokan Country. This time, try the ones that you might be curious about: isol (chicken butt), tina-e (chicken intestines), and if you want more paa (chicken drumstick and thigh) or petsopak (chicken breast with wing), … it is a go!

4:00 Afternoon workshop at the Handmade Gallery. Meet the owner and artist, Ms. Mary Anne Feria Colmenares who will conduct a hands-on workshop on how to make chimes more melodious, and you get to keep the one you make.

5:30 It will be a 6-course introduction to a Slow Food degustation complete with Slow Drinks at Lanai by Fresh Start.

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes

**Earth & Elegance: A Day of Farms, Crafts, and Flavors in Bago**

*Celebrate sustainability and style in Bago City through immersive food and craft experiences.*

Less than an hour to the South of Bacolod lies Bago City. Bago is known as the “Home of

historical and natural treasures” as well as being the rice granary of Negros Occidental.

Set against the backdrop of the scenic Bago River, Bantayan Park offers a tranquil environment for our guests as they do creative ways of jewelry-making with the help of

Tumandok Crafts Industries. TCI helps preserve nature by using sustainable indigenous material and seashells found in Negros Island. Definitely something to bring home before your flight back home.

That is just for starters. Then we meet the organic farmers of Mailum and join them in the pre-harvest ritual of making pinipig. The community will also prepare native delicacies and

sumptuous lunch ... truly a welcome feast for everyone.

Have you heard about the elusive criollo cacao? We will visit the cacao nursery farm of

Christopher Fadriga and listen to his inspiring story.

Cap the day with an early degustation dinner at the Lanai by Fresh Start.

Itinerary

9:00 Pick up Hotel

10:00 Morning workshop – hands on upcycling and recycling with Tumandok.

Depart for MOVA

12:00 ETA Mailum Organic Village Association. Lunch with the farmers and learn how to make pinipig (rice crispies) and other native delicacies in season. Enjoy light moments with farmers and see their rice fields. If it is planting season, you might end up planting with the community.

Depart for Chris Fadriga’s Nursery Criollo Cacao Farm

ETA Fadriga Farm – learn about criollo cacao.

See the sunset at Bantayan Park

Depart for Bacolod

6:00 Time for the last stop of the day. It will be a 6-course introduction to a Slow Food degustation complete with Slow Drinks at Lanai by Fresh Start.

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes, bring sunblock and a hat.

**Tracing the Taste: Pond to Plate, Soil to Soul (EB Magalona and Silay)**

*Immerse in real-life stories of sustainable food production, from aquaculture in EB Magalona to organic farming in Silay; where good food begins at the source.*

Take the road less traveled (literally) and take part in a sustainable aquaculture experience at 7 Hectares. EB Magalona is where Kiko Torno’s fishponds are. Lunch, a gem of a taste workshop, includes a light lecture on the sustainability of a pond’s ecosystem. Learn about the current issues and opportunities for small scale pond owners. You will also be served a 10-course meal events called "scintillas" (which means "spark" in Latin) … a degustation that is not like any other.

In the afternoon, we take another introduction to Slow Food with a farm visit in Silay, Fresh Start.

Early dinner at one of the ancestral homes in Silay.

Itinerary

9:00 Pick up Hotel

10:00 ETA 7 Hectares

Meet Kiko Torno and let him take you to world of sustainable pond growing. Take time savoring the curated lunch. Activities will include harvesting and food preparation.

2:00 Leave for Silay

2:30 ETA Silay

Visit Fresh Start, a pioneer in organic agriculture in Negros, Fresh Start Farm promotes healthy living through sustainable farming practices. Visitors can tour the farm, learn about composting and vermiculture and its importance to farming.

5:00 Early dinner at one of the ancestral homes in Silay

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes, bring sunblock and a hat.

**Pedals, Palettes & the Sea: A Sagay Community Experience**

*Where green destinations, good food, and kind hearts come together.*

Begin with a visit to the Sagay Museo Pambata, A premiere children’s hands-on museum

that will awaken and stimulate the creative and intellectual potential of children allowing

them to discover, understand and appreciate themselves, others, their environment, their

culture and the rest of the world.

The Suyac Island Mangrove Eco-Park, covering around 15.6 hectares in a city in northern Negros Occidental, has received recognition nationally and internationally. However, the real impact goes beyond awards, bringing improved lives and more opportunities to the local fishing community. Situated just a short 10 to 15-minute boat ride from the mainland, the island, occupying 1.8 hectares and hosting 750 residents in the village of Taba-ao, is within the larger 32,000-hectare Sagay Marine Reserve. What awaits our guests during a trip to Suyac Island (awarded as green destination) are century-old mangroves and friendly people who reside on the island.

Lunch is at Enting’s featuring Mark, a young Kinilaw Master chef see how the best kinilaw (local ceviche) prepared. You may be able to make your own kinilaw from fresh fish to shrimp.

Visitors can explore the area with the Bougainvillea Trisikad Tour, led by 3 wheeled bike guides who are passionate about showcasing their community. The location is particularly appealing to coffee lovers due to 'Kape ALBARAKO,' a vibrant bamboo structure converted into a coffee shop near picturesque Margaha Beach. It's a perfect retreat for avid coffee drinkers and art enthusiasts alike!

Itinerary

7:00 Pick up Hotel / Leave for Sagay

9:00 Visit the Museo Pambata

Depart for Suyac Island, take a 15-minute boat ride.

Suyac Island with Mangrove Tour

Optional: Lunch at Carbin Reef

Lunch at Enting’s and enjoy the bounty of Sagay.

Take the Trisikad Tour

Coffee Break time and visit a local artist’s abode beside the seashore.

4:00 Leave for Bacolod

6:00 ETA Bacolod City / Back to the hotel

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes, bring sunblock and a hat. Swimwear for a Carbin Reef dip or snorkeling.

**Brewed at the Roots: A Coffee Journey in Sugar Valley, Murcia**

*From indigenous hands to your cup—taste the story behind every bean.*

The scent of coffee kicks off the start the tour; the freshly brewed coffee coupled with light snacks of suman (glutinous rice cooked with muscovado sugar) is all you need before you engage in an Easy Course (Elevation 470asl) at the back yard of the Canete coffee farm. Activities might include selective Harvesting, Coffee Post Harvesting (Floatation, Depulping, Drying Bed activities, and Bean selection).

Teddy Canete belongs to the Bukidnon Indigenous people of Murcia. As a 3rd generation coffee grower, he (along with the other farmers in their community) has been blessed with an environment that makes their farm organic by default. Teddy’s wife Joy takes pride in the lunch that she usually prepares for their guests. Ingredients are sourced from the area and are as fresh as you would want them to be.

In the afternoon, visit one of the organic farms in Murcia. Or you may enjoy a coffee cupping experience with Thomas Sproten, a roaster and Q grader and owns Coffee Culture.

Itinerary

8:00 Pick up Hotel / Leave for Murcia

9:00 ETA Sugar Valley, Murcia

Coffee and Suman snacks

Tour of coffee farm

Get to know Teddy Canete and the other coffee farms

Lunch at Sugar Valley

Depart for a sustainable farm in Murcia

Or an optional coffee cupping in Bacolod

5:00 Back to hotel

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes, bring sunblock and a hat. Foot wear for rugged terrain, extra shirt, small towels, water tumblers.

A group of people working in a garden

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A green and white flyer with images of people in the foreground

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A green and white card with people walking on a bridge

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A green and white flyer with images of people and coffee beans

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**Hacienda Tales: A Gentle Day of Art and Ancestry in Negros in Silay and Talisay**

*A perfect farewell day: heritage homes, hands-on art, and an unforgettable sunset at The Ruins.*

The good life personified in the heritage houses of Negros would often take centerstage when it comes to Talisay and Silay Tours, however, we shall take culture and heritage farther with hands on activity in Casa Gamboa or inside the Silay City Art Space and Showroom (Old Silay Puericulture Center). Hand painting of Calatrava bags or single wire arts or stone art painting in the afternoon and interaction with local artists.

Lunch at one of the ancestral homes in Silay followed by historical site visits (museums are all closed during Mondays) and an ancestral home in Talisay. The Tana Dicang is the oldest ancestral home that is open to the public.

End the day at the Ruins.

However, this tour may be recommended if you have a flight back to Manila.

Itinerary

9:00 Start of the tour

9:30 Running tour of Talisay and Silay

Hand painting of Calatrava bags at Silay City Art Space and Showroom or Casa Gamboa

Light lunch at one of the ancestral homes in Silay

1:00 Historical Site Visits

Silay pro Cathedral

Severino Hofilena Ancestral Home

Balay ni Tana Dicang

The Ruins

5:00 To the Airport or back to the hotel

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes.

**Obra Lokal: Creative Pulse of Bacolod Where Art Meets Heart**

*Celebrate creativity with conscience in Bacolod … where every stroke tells a story and every piece has purpose.*

Unleash your creative spirit with “Obra Lokal,” an immersive exploration of Bacolod’s thriving contemporary art scene. Begin your journey at the vibrant Art District in Bacolod, where bold murals, graffiti-covered walls, and artist-run cafés set the stage for inspiration.

Step into the Orange Project Gallery for a deeper dive into the region’s most provocative and thoughtful contemporary works. From there, visit the private home-studio of a celebrated local artist; part gallery, part sanctuary, where the lines between art and life blur beautifully.

In the afternoon, take part in a guided hands-on workshop or seminars: all under the mentorship of passionate local artists. A stop at NVC Foundation adds a powerful dimension of social creativity, showcasing how art and sustainability intersect through handmade pieces crafted by volunteers using recycled materials. Throughout the day, enjoy Bacolod’s iconic meals and snacks because in Negros Island, local is the new premium.

What to wear: Any comfortable clothes.