

= Philippines =

The Philippines (/ ˈfɪlɪˈpiːnz / ; Filipino : Pilipinas [ˈpɪlɪˈpinɐs]) , officially the Republic of the Philippines (Filipino : Republika ng Pilipinas) , is a sovereign island country in Southeast Asia situated in the western Pacific Ocean . It consists of about 7 , 641 islands that are categorized broadly under three main geographical divisions from north to south : Luzon , Visayas , and Mindanao . The capital city of the Philippines is Manila and the most populous city is Quezon City , both part of Metro Manila .

The Philippines ' location on the Pacific Ring of Fire and close to the equator makes the Philippines prone to earthquakes and typhoons , but also endows it with abundant natural resources and some of the world 's greatest biodiversity . The Philippines has an area of approximately 300 , 000 square kilometers (115 , 831 sq mi) , and a population of more than 100 million with faster growth than any other east Asian country . It is the seventh - most populated country in Asia and the 12th most populated country in the world . An additional 12 million Filipinos live overseas , comprising one of the world 's largest diasporas . Multiple ethnicities and cultures are found throughout the islands . In prehistoric times , Negritos were some of the archipelago 's earliest inhabitants . They were followed by successive waves of Austronesian peoples . Exchanges with Chinese , Malay , Indian , and Islamic states occurred . Then , various nations were established under the rule of Datus , Rajahs , Sultans or Lakans .

The arrival of Ferdinand Magellan in Homonhon , Eastern Samar in 1521 marked the beginning of Hispanic colonization . In 1543 , Spanish explorer Ruy López de Villalobos named the archipelago Las Islas Filipinas in honor of Philip II of Spain . With the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi from Mexico City , in 1565 , the first Hispanic settlement in the archipelago was established . The Philippines became part of the Spanish Empire for more than 300 years . This resulted in Roman Catholicism becoming the dominant religion . During this time , Manila became the western hub of the trans - Pacific trade connecting Asia with Acapulco in the Americas using Manila galleons .

As the 19th century gave way to the 20th , there followed in quick succession the Philippine Revolution , which spawned the short - lived First Philippine Republic , followed by the bloody Philippine - American War of conquest by US military force . Aside from the period of Japanese occupation , the United States retained sovereignty over the islands until after World War II , when the Philippines was recognized as an independent nation . Since then , the Philippines has often had a tumultuous experience with democracy , which included the overthrow of a dictatorship by a non - violent revolution .

The nation 's large population and economic potential have led it to be classified as a middle power . It is a founding member of the United Nations , World Trade Organization , Association of Southeast Asian Nations , the Asia - Pacific Economic Cooperation forum , and the East Asia Summit . It also hosts the headquarters of the Asian Development Bank . The Philippines is considered to be an emerging market and a newly industrialized country , which has an economy transitioning from being one based on agriculture to one based more on services and manufacturing .

= Etymology =

The Philippines was named in honor of King Philip II of Spain . Spanish explorer Ruy López de Villalobos during his expedition in 1542 named the islands of Leyte and Samar Felipinas after the then Prince of Asturias . Eventually the name Las Islas Filipinas would be used to cover all the islands of the archipelago . Before that became commonplace , other names such as Islas del Poniente (Islands of the West) and Magellan 's name for the islands San Lázaro were also used by the Spanish to refer to the islands .

The official name of the Philippines has changed several times in the course of its history . During the Philippine Revolution , the Malolos Congress proclaimed the establishment of the República Filipina or the Philippine Republic . From the period of the Spanish - American War (1898) and the Philippine - American War (1899 - 1902) until the Commonwealth period (1935 - 46) , American

colonial authorities referred to the country as the Philippine Islands , a translation of the Spanish name . From the 1898 Treaty of Paris , the name Philippines began to appear and it has since become the country 's common name . Since the end of World War II , the official name of the country has been the Republic of the Philippines .

= = History = =

= = = Prehistory = = =

The metatarsal of the Callao Man , reliably dated by uranium @-@ series dating to 67 @,@ 000 years ago is the oldest human remnant found in the archipelago to date . This distinction previously belonged to the Tabon Man of Palawan , carbon @-@ dated to around 26 @,@ 500 years ago . Negritos were also among the archipelago 's earliest inhabitants , but their first settlement in the Philippines has not been reliably dated .

There are several opposing theories regarding the origins of ancient Filipinos . F. Landa Jocano theorizes that the ancestors of the Filipinos evolved locally . Wilhelm Solheim 's Island Origin Theory postulates that the peopling of the archipelago transpired via trade networks originating in the Sundaland area around 48 @,@ 000 to 5000 BC rather than by wide @-@ scale migration . The Austronesian Expansion Theory postulates that Malayo @-@ Polynesians coming from Taiwan began migrating to the Philippines around 4000 BC , displacing earlier arrivals .

The most widely accepted theory , based on linguistic and archeological evidence , is the " Out @-@ of @-@ Taiwan " model , which hypothesizes that Austronesians from Taiwan , who were themselves descended from the neolithic civilizations of the Yangtze river such as the Liangzhu culture , began migrating to the Philippines around 4000 BC , displacing earlier arrivals . During the neolithic period , a " jade culture " is said to have existed as evidenced by tens of thousands of exquisitely crafted jade artifacts found in the Philippines dated to 2000 BC .

The jade is said to have originated nearby in Taiwan and is also found in many other areas in insular and mainland Southeast Asia . These artifacts are said to be evidence of long range communication between prehistoric Southeast Asian societies . By 1000 BC the inhabitants of the archipelago had developed into four kinds of social groups : hunter @-@ gatherer tribes , warrior societies , highland plutocracies , and port principalities .

= = = Precolonial epoch = = =

Some of the societies scattered in the islands of what would later become the Philippines remained isolated but many evolved into states that developed substantial trade and contacts with the peoples of eastern , southern and southeastern Asia ; including those from Brunei , China , India , Indonesia , Malaysia and Japan as well as other Austronesian islands .

The first millennium saw the rise of the port principalities and their growth into maritime states composed of autonomous barangays independent of or allied with larger nations which were either Malay thalassocracies led by Datus , tributary states to China ruled by Huangs or Indianized kingdoms governed by Rajahs .

The Kedatuan of Madja @-@ as was founded following a civil war in collapsing Srivijaya , wherein loyalists of the Malay datus of Srivijaya defied the invading Chola Dynasty and its puppet @-@ Rajah , called Makatunao , and set up a guerrilla @-@ state in the islands of the Visayas . Its founding datu , Puti , had purchased land for his new realms from the aboriginal Ati hero , Marikudo .

Madja @-@ as was founded on Panay island (named after the destroyed state of Pannai allied under Srivijaya which was located in Sumatra) . Afterwards , the people of Madja @-@ as often raided the port cities of southern China and warred with the Chinese navy .

The Rajahnate of Cebu was a neighbor of Madja @-@ as in the Visayas led by Rajamuda Sri Lumay , a monarch with partial Tamil descent . This state grew wealthy by making use of the inter

@-@ island shipping routes within the archipelago .

Meanwhile , the Rajahnate of Butuan in northeastern Mindanao attained prominence under the rule of Rajah Sri Bata Shaja , who was from a Buddhist ruling @-@ class governing a Hindu nation . This state became powerful due to the local goldsmith industry and also maintained commercial ties and a diplomatic rivalry with the Champa civilization . Both the Rajahnates of Butuan and Cebu maintained contact and traded with Kutai , a Hindu country in south Borneo established by Indian traders .

The Huangdom of Ma @-@ i centered in Mindoro , ruled by Huang Gat @-@ sa @-@ Lihan , was noted for its trust @-@ worthiness in trade .

In northern Luzon , the Huangdom of Pangasinan under Huang Taymey , exported horses and silver to China , the Kingdom of Ryukyu and Japan .

In central Luzon , the Kingdom of Tondo was ruled over by the Lakandula dynasty and the kingdom grew wealthy via the exclusive trading @-@ rights of Chinese goods which they marketed in southeast Asia . This was granted to them by the Ming Dynasty .

The 1300s saw the arrival and eventual spread of Islam in the Philippine archipelago . In 1380 , Karim ul ' Makdum and Shari 'ful Hashem Syed Abu Bakr , an Arab trader born in Johore , arrived in Sulu from Malacca and established the Sultanate of Sulu by converting Sulu 's rajah , Rajah Baguinda Ali and marrying his daughter . At the end of the 15th century , Shariff Mohammed Kabungsuwan of Johor introduced Islam in the island of Mindanao and established the Sultanate of Maguindanao . The sultanate form of government extended further into Lanao .

Around this time , the people of Luzon were collectively called Lucoes and they rose to prominence by participating in trading ventures and military campaigns in Myanmar , Malacca and East Timor where they were employed as traders and mercenaries .

Islam then started to spread out of Mindanao in the south and went into Luzon in the north . Manila in Luzon was Islamized during the reign of Sultan Bolkiah in 1485 to 1521 . This was accomplished because the Bruneian Empire subjugated the Kingdom of Tondo by defeating Datu Gambang and installing the Muslim Rajah , Rajah Sulaiman I to the throne and by establishing the Bruneian puppet @-@ state of the Kingdom of Maynila . Sultan Bolkiah also married Laila Mecana , the daughter of Sulu Sultan Amir Ul @-@ Ombra to expand Brunei 's influence in both Luzon and Mindanao .

Nevertheless , states like the animist Igorot , Malay Madja @-@ as , Sinified Ma @-@ i , and Indianized Butuan still maintained their cultures . The rivalries between the datos , rajahs , huangs , sultans , and lakans eventually eased Spanish colonization . Furthermore , the islands were sparsely populated due to consistent natural disasters and inter @-@ kingdom conflicts . Therefore , colonization was made easy and the small states of the archipelago quickly became incorporated into the Spanish Empire and were Hispanicized and Christianized .

= = = Colonial era = = =

In 1521 , Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan 's expedition arrived in the Philippines , claimed the islands for Spain and was then killed at the Battle of Mactan . Colonization began when Spanish explorer Miguel López de Legazpi arrived from Mexico in 1565 and formed the first Hispanic settlements in Cebu . After relocating to Panay island and consolidating a coalition of native Visayan allies and Hispanic soldiers , the Spaniards then captured Islamic Manila , therein they put down the Tondo Conspiracy and exiled the conspirators to Guam and Guerrero . Under Spanish rule , they established Manila as the capital of the Spanish East Indies (1571) .

They also defeated the Chinese @-@ warlord Limahong . In response to the Islamic invasion of the Philippines , the Castilian War was waged against the Sultanate of Brunei and war was also waged against the Sultanate of Ternate and Tidore (in response to Ternatan slaving and piracy against the Butuan Rajahnate and Bohol) . Fortifications were also set up in Taiwan and the Maluku islands . These were abandoned and the soldiers withdrew back to the Philippines in order to re @-@ concentrate their military forces because of a threatened invasion by the Japan @-@ born Ming @-@ dynasty loyalist , Koxinga , ruler of the stronghold of Tungning . However , the invasion was aborted . Meanwhile , settlers were sent to the Pacific islands of Palau and the Marianas .

Spanish rule eventually contributed significantly to bringing political unity to the fragmented states of the archipelago . From 1565 to 1821 , the Philippines was governed as a territory of the Viceroyalty of New Spain and then was administered directly from Madrid after the Mexican War of Independence . The Manila galleons , the largest wooden ships ever built , were constructed in Bicol and Cavite . The Manila galleons were accompanied with a large naval escort as it traveled to and from Manila and Acapulco . The galleons sailed once or twice a year , between the 16th and 19th centuries .

Trade introduced foodstuff such as maize , tomatoes , potatoes , chili peppers , chocolate and pineapples from Mexico and Peru . Within the Philippines , the Marquisate of Buglas was established and rule of it was awarded to Sebastian Elcano and his crew , the survivors of the first circumnavigation of the world , as well as his descendants . New towns were also created and Roman Catholic missionaries converted most of the lowland inhabitants to Christianity . They also founded schools , a university , hospitals and churches which were built along the Earthquake Baroque architectural style . The Spanish also decreed the introduction of free public schooling in 1863 . As a result of these policies the Philippine population increased exponentially .

During its rule , the Spanish quelled various indigenous revolts . There were several external military challenges from Chinese and Japanese pirates , the Dutch , the English and the Portuguese . Those challengers were fought off despite the hostile forces having encircled the Philippine archipelago in a crescent formed from Japan to Indonesia . British forces occupied Manila from 1762 to 1764 in an extension of the fighting of the Seven Years ' War . Spanish rule was restored following the 1763 Treaty of Paris . The Spanish ? Moro conflict lasted for several hundred years . In the last quarter of the 19th century Spain conquered portions of Mindanao and Moro Muslims in the Sulu Sultanate on Sulu formally recognised Spanish sovereignty .

In the 19th century , Philippine ports opened to world trade and shifts started occurring within Philippine society . Many Spaniards born in the Philippines (criollos) and those of mixed ancestry (mestizos) became wealthy and an influx of Latin American settlers opened up government positions traditionally held by Spaniards born in the Iberian Peninsula (peninsulares) . The ideals of revolution also began to spread through the islands . Criollo dissatisfaction resulted in the 1872 Cavite Mutiny that was a precursor to the Philippine Revolution .

Revolutionary sentiments were stoked in 1872 after three priests ? Mariano Gómez , José Burgos , and Jacinto Zamora (collectively known as Gomburza) ? were accused of sedition by colonial authorities and executed . This would inspire a propaganda movement in Spain , organized by Marcelo H. del Pilar , José Rizal , and Mariano Ponce , lobbying for political reforms in the Philippines . Rizal was eventually executed on December 30 , 1896 , on charges of rebellion . As attempts at reform met with resistance , Andrés Bonifacio in 1892 established the secret society called the Katipunan , who sought independence from Spain through armed revolt .

Bonifacio and the Katipunan started the Philippine Revolution in 1896 . A faction of the Katipunan , the Magdalo of Cavite province , eventually came to challenge Bonifacio 's position as the leader of the revolution and Emilio Aguinaldo took over . In 1898 , the Spanish ? American War began in Cuba and reached the Philippines . Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence from Spain in Kawit , Cavite on June 12 , 1898 , and the First Philippine Republic was established in the Barasoain Church in the following year .

The islands were ceded by Spain to the United States as a result of the latter 's victory in the Spanish ? American War . A compensation of 20 million US dollars was paid to Spain according to the terms of the 1898 Treaty of Paris . As it became increasingly clear the United States would not recognize the nascent First Philippine Republic , the Philippine ? American War broke out , the First Republic was defeated , and the archipelago was administered under an Insular Government . The war resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of combatants as well as a couple of hundred thousand civilians , mostly from a cholera epidemic .

The Americans then suppressed other rebellious sub @-@ states : mainly , the waning Sultanate of Sulu , as well as the insurgent Tagalog Republic , the Cantonal Republic of Negros in the Visayas , and the Republic of Zamboanga in Mindanao . During this era , a renaissance in Philippine culture occurred , with the expansion of Philippine cinema and literature . In 1935 , the Philippines was

granted Commonwealth status with Manuel Quezon as president . He designated a national language and introduced women 's suffrage and land reform . Plans for independence over the next decade were interrupted by World War II when the Japanese Empire invaded and the Second Philippine Republic of José P. Laurel was established as a collaborator state .

Many atrocities and war crimes were committed during the war such as the Bataan Death March and the Manila massacre that culminated during the Battle of Manila . In 1944 , Quezon died in exile in the United States and Sergio Osmeña succeeded him . The Allied Forces then employed a strategy of island hopping towards the Philippine Archipelago , in the process , retaking territory conquered by Imperial Japan .

From mid @-@ 1942 through mid @-@ 1944 , the Filipino guerrilla resistance had been supplied and encouraged by U.S. Navy submarines and a few parachute drops , so that the guerrillas could harass the Japanese Army and take control of the rural jungle and mountainous areas ? amounting to about half of the Philippine archipelago . While remaining loyal to the United States , many Filipinos hoped and believed that liberation from the Japanese would bring them freedom and their already @-@ promised independence .

Eventually , the largest naval battle in history , according to gross tonnage , the Battle of Leyte Gulf , occurred when the Allied Forces started the liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese Empire . Allied troops defeated the Japanese in 1945 . By the end of the war it is estimated that over a million Filipinos had died .

= = = Postcolonial period = = =

On October 24 , 1945 , the Philippines became one of the founding members of the United Nations and the following year , on July 4 , 1946 , it became recognized by the United States as independent , during the presidency of Manuel Roxas . Disgruntled remnants of the communist Hukbalahap continued to roam the countryside but were put down by President Elpidio Quirino 's successor Ramon Magsaysay . Magsaysay 's successor , Carlos P. Garcia initiated the Filipino First Policy , which was continued by Diosdado Macapagal , with celebration of Independence Day moved from July 4 to June 12 , the date of Emilio Aguinaldo 's declaration , while furthering the claim on the eastern part of North Borneo .

In 1965 , Macapagal lost the presidential election to Ferdinand Marcos . Early in his presidency he initiated numerous infrastructure projects but was accused of massive corruption and embezzling billions of dollars in public funds . Nearing the end of his term , Marcos declared Martial Law on September 21 , 1972 . This period of his rule was characterized by political repression , censorship , and human rights violations but the US were steadfast in their support . His wife Imelda continued to live a lavish lifestyle as the majority of Filipinos remained in poverty .

On August 21 , 1983 , Marcos ' chief rival , opposition leader Benigno Aquino , Jr . , was assassinated on the tarmac at Manila International Airport . Marcos eventually called snap presidential elections in 1986 . Marcos was proclaimed the winner , but the results were widely regarded as fraudulent , leading to the People Power Revolution . Marcos and his allies fled to Hawaii and Aquino 's widow , Corazon Aquino was recognized as president .

= = = Contemporary history = = =

The return of democracy and government reforms beginning in 1986 were hampered by national debt , government corruption , coup attempts , disasters , a persistent communist insurgency , and a military conflict with Moro separatists . During Corazon Aquino 's administration , U.S. forces withdrew from the Philippines , due the rejection of the U.S. Bases Extension Treaty , and leading to the official transfer of Clark Air Base in November 1991 and Subic Bay to the government in December 1992 . The administration also faced a series of natural disasters , including the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in June 1991 . After introducing a constitution that limited presidents to a single term , Aquino did not stand for re @-@ election .

Aquino was succeeded by Fidel V. Ramos , who won the Philippine presidential election held in

May 1992 . During this period , the economy was known as the " Tiger Economy in Asia " , with an average of 6 % GDP growth rate . However , the political stability and economic improvements , such as the peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996 , were overshadowed by the onset of the 1997 Asian financial crisis . On his Presidency the death penalty was revived in the light of the Rape @-@ slay case of Eileen Sarmienta and Allan Gomez in 1993 and the first person to be executed is Leo Echegaray in 1999 .

Ramos ' successor , Joseph Estrada assumed office in June 1998 and managed to regain the economy from ? 0 @.@ 6 % growth to 3 @.@ 4 % by 1999 amidst the 1997 Asian financial crisis . The government had announced a war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in March 2000 and neutralized the camps including the headquarters of the insurgents . In the middle of ongoing conflict with the Abu Sayyaf , accusations of alleged corruption , and a stalled impeachment process , Estrada 's administration was overthrown by the 2001 EDSA Revolution and succeeded by his Vice President , Gloria Macapagal @-@ Arroyo on January 20 , 2001 .

In Arroyo 's 9 @-@ year administration , The economy experienced GDP growth from 4 % in 2002 to 7 % growth in 2007 with the completion of infrastructure projects like the LRT Line 2 in 2004 and managed to avoid the Great Recession . Nevertheless , it was tied with graft and political scandals like the Hello Garci scandal pertaining to the alleged manipulation of votes in the 2004 presidential elections . On November 23 , 2009 , the Maguindanao massacre led to the murder of 34 journalists .

Benigno Aquino III won the 2010 national elections and served as the 15th President of the Philippines . He was the third youngest person to be elected president and the first to be a bachelor . , beginning with the 2010 Manila hostage crisis that caused deeply strained relations between Manila and Hong Kong for a time . During the previous years , The Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed on October 15 , 2012 , as the first step of the creation of an autonomous political entity named Bangsamoro . However , territorial disputes in eastern Sabah and the South China Sea have escalated . The economy performed well at 7 @.@ 2 % GDP growth , the second fastest in Asia . Aquino signed the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 , commonly known as K ? 12 program in May 15 , 2013 aiming to enhance the educational system in the country . On November 8 , 2013 , Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) struck and heavily devastated the country , especially in the Visayas . On April 28 , 2014 , when United States President Barack Obama visited the Philippines , the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement , was signed . From January 15 to 19 , 2015 , January 15 to 19 , 2015 , Pope Francis stayed in the Philippines for a series of publicity tours and paid visits to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) . On January 25 , 2015 , 44 members of the Philippine National Police @-@ Special Action Force were killed after a clash took place in Mamasapano , Maguindanao putting efforts to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law into law in an impasse . On December 20 , 2015 , Pia Wurtzbach won the Miss Universe 2015 , making her the third Filipino to win the Miss Universe title following Gloria Diaz in 1969 and Margarita Moran in 1973 . On January 12 , 2016 , the Philippine Supreme Court upheld the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement paving the way for the return of United States Armed Forces bases into the country . On March 23 , 2016 , Diwata @-@ 1 was launched to the International Space Station (ISS) , becoming the country 's first micro @-@ satellite and the first satellite to be built and designed by Filipinos .

Davao City mayor Rodrigo Duterte of PDP ? Laban won the 2016 presidential election becoming the first president from Mindanao . Camarines Sur representative Leni Robredo won the vice presidency . On July 12 , 2016 , the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in favor of the Philippines in its case against China 's claims in the South China Sea .

= = Politics = =

The Philippines has a democratic government in the form of a constitutional republic with a presidential system . It is governed as a unitary state with the exception of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which is largely free from the national government . There have been attempts to change the government to a federal , unicameral , or parliamentary government since the Ramos administration .

The President functions as both head of state and head of government and is the commander in chief of the armed forces . The president is elected by popular vote for a single six year term , during which he or she appoints and presides over the cabinet . The bicameral Congress is composed of the Senate , serving as the upper house , with members elected to a six year term , and the House of Representatives , serving as the lower house , with members elected to a three year term .

Senators are elected at large while the representatives are elected from both legislative districts and through sectoral representation . The judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court , composed of a Chief Justice as its presiding officer and fourteen associate justices , all of whom are appointed by the President from nominations submitted by the Judicial and Bar Council .

= = = Foreign relations = = =

The Philippines ' international relations are based on trade with other nations and the well being of the 11 million overseas Filipinos living outside the country . As a founding and active member of the United Nations , the Philippines has been elected several times into the Security Council . Carlos P. Romulo was a former President of the United Nations General Assembly . The country is an active participant in the Human Rights Council as well as in peacekeeping missions , particularly in East Timor .

In addition to membership in the United Nations , the Philippines is also a founding and active member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) , an organization designed to strengthen relations and promote economic and cultural growth among states in the Southeast Asian region . It has hosted several summits and is an active contributor to the direction and policies of the bloc .

The Philippines values its relations with the United States . It supported the United States during the Cold War and the War on Terror and is a major non NATO ally . Despite this history of goodwill , controversies related to the presence of the now former U.S. military bases in Subic Bay and Clark and the current Visiting Forces Agreement have flared up from time to time . Japan , the biggest contributor of official development assistance to the country , is thought of as a friend . Although historical tensions still exist on issues such as the plight of comfort women , much of the animosity inspired by memories of World War II has faded .

Relations with other nations are generally positive . Shared democratic values ease relations with Western and European countries while similar economic concerns help in relations with other developing countries . Historical ties and cultural similarities also serve as a bridge in relations with Spain . Despite issues such as domestic abuse and war affecting overseas Filipino workers , relations with Middle Eastern countries are friendly as seen in the continuous employment of more than two million overseas Filipinos living there .

With communism no longer the threat it once was , once hostile relations in the 1950s between the Philippines and China have improved greatly . Issues involving Taiwan , the Spratly Islands , and concerns of expanding Chinese influence , however , still encourage a degree of caution . Recent foreign policy has been mostly about economic relations with its Southeast Asian and Asia Pacific neighbors .

The Philippines is an active member of the East Asia Summit (EAS) , the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) , the Latin Union , the Group of 24 , and the Non Aligned Movement . It is also seeking to strengthen relations with Islamic countries by campaigning for observer status in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation .

= = = Military = = =

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are responsible for national security and consist of three branches : the Philippine Air Force , the Philippine Army , and the Philippine Navy (includes the Marine Corps) . The Armed Forces of the Philippines are a volunteer force . Civilian security is handled by the Philippine National Police under the Department of the Interior and Local

Government (DILG) .

In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao , the largest separatist organization , the Moro National Liberation Front , is now engaging the government politically . Other more militant groups like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front , the communist New People 's Army , and the Abu Sayyaf have previously kidnapped foreigners for ransom , particularly on the southern island of Mindanao . Their presence has decreased in recent years due to successful security provided by the Philippine government . At 1 @. @ 1 percent of GDP , the Philippines spent less on its military forces than the regional average . As of 2014 Malaysia and Thailand were estimated to spend 1 @. @ 5 % , China 2 @. @ 1 % , Vietnam 2 @. @ 2 % and South Korea 2 @. @ 6 % .

The Philippines has been an ally of the United States since World War II . A mutual defense treaty between the two countries was signed in 1951 . The Philippines supported American policies during the Cold War and participated in the Korean and Vietnam wars . It was a member of the now dissolved SEATO , a group that was intended to serve a role similar to NATO and that included Australia , France , New Zealand , Pakistan , Thailand , the United Kingdom , and the United States . After the start of the War on Terror , the Philippines was part of the coalition that gave support to the United States in Iraq .

= = = Administrative divisions = = =

The Philippines are divided into three island groups : Luzon , Visayas , and Mindanao . These are divided into 18 regions , 81 provinces , 145 cities , 1 @, @ 489 municipalities , and 42 @, @ 029 barangays . In addition , Section 2 of Republic Act No. 5446 asserts that the definition of the territorial sea around the Philippine archipelago does not affect the claim over the eastern part of Sabah .

= = Geography = =

The Philippines is an archipelago composed of about 7 @, @ 500 islands with a total land area , including inland bodies of water , of approximately 300 @, @ 000 square kilometers (115 @, @ 831 sq mi) . Its 36 @, @ 289 kilometers (22 @, @ 549 mi) of coastline makes it the country with the 5th longest coastline in the world . It is located between 116 ° 40 ' , and 126 ° 34 ' E longitude and 4 ° 40 ' and 21 ° 10 ' N latitude and is bordered by the Philippine Sea to the east , the South China Sea to the west , and the Celebes Sea to the south . The island of Borneo is located a few hundred kilometers southwest and Taiwan is located directly to the north . The Moluccas and Sulawesi are located to the south @- @ southwest and Palau is located to the east of the islands .

Most of the mountainous islands are covered in tropical rainforest and volcanic in origin . The highest mountain is Mount Apo . It measures up to 2 @, @ 954 meters (9 @, @ 692 ft) above sea level and is located on the island of Mindanao . The Galathea Depth in the Philippine Trench is the deepest point in the country and the third deepest in the world . The trench is located in the Philippine Sea .

The longest river is the Cagayan River in northern Luzon . Manila Bay , upon the shore of which the capital city of Manila lies , is connected to Laguna de Bay , the largest lake in the Philippines , by the Pasig River . Subic Bay , the Davao Gulf , and the Moro Gulf are other important bays . The San Juanico Strait separates the islands of Samar and Leyte but it is traversed by the San Juanico Bridge .

Situated on the western fringes of the Pacific Ring of Fire , the Philippines experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity . The Benham Plateau to the east in the Philippine Sea is an undersea region active in tectonic subduction . Around 20 earthquakes are registered daily , though most are too weak to be felt . The last major earthquake was the 1990 Luzon earthquake .

There are many active volcanoes such as the Mayon Volcano , Mount Pinatubo , and Taal Volcano . The eruption of Mount Pinatubo in June 1991 produced the second largest terrestrial eruption of the 20th century . Not all notable geographic features are so violent or destructive . A more serene legacy of the geological disturbances is the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River , the area

represents a habitat for biodiversity conservation , the site also contains a full mountain @-@ to @-@ the @-@ sea ecosystem and has some of the most important forests in Asia .

Due to the volcanic nature of the islands , mineral deposits are abundant . The country is estimated to have the second @-@ largest gold deposits after South Africa and one of the largest copper deposits in the world . It is also rich in nickel , chromite , and zinc . Despite this , poor management , high population density , and environmental consciousness have resulted in these mineral resources remaining largely untapped . Geothermal energy is a product of volcanic activity that the Philippines has harnessed more successfully . The Philippines is the world 's second @-@ biggest geothermal producer behind the United States , with 18 % of the country 's electricity needs being met by geothermal power .

= = = Wildlife = = =

The Philippines ' rainforests and its extensive coastlines make it home to a diverse range of birds , plants , animals , and sea creatures . It is one of the ten most biologically megadiverse countries . Around 1 @,@ 100 land vertebrate species can be found in the Philippines including over 100 mammal species and 170 bird species not thought to exist elsewhere . The Philippines has among the highest rates of discovery in the world with sixteen new species of mammals discovered in the last ten years . Because of this , the rate of endemism for the Philippines has risen and likely will continue to rise .

The Philippines lacks large predators , with the exception of snakes , such as pythons and cobras , saltwater crocodiles and birds of prey , such as the national bird , known as the Philippine eagle , which scientists suggest as the largest eagle in the world . The largest crocodile in captivity , known locally as Lolong , was captured in the southern island of Mindanao .

Other native animals include the palm civet cat , the dugong , the cloud rat and the Philippine tarsier associated with Bohol . With an estimated 13 @,@ 500 plant species in the country , 3 @,@ 200 of which are unique to the islands , Philippine rainforests boast an array of flora , including many rare types of orchids and rafflesia .

Philippine maritime waters encompass as much as 2 @,@ 200 @,@ 000 square kilometers (849 @,@ 425 sq mi) producing unique and diverse marine life , an important part of the Coral Triangle . The total number of corals and marine fish species was estimated at 500 and 2 @,@ 400 respectively . New records and species discoveries continuously increase these numbers underlining the uniqueness of the marine resources in the Philippines . The Tubbataha Reef in the Sulu Sea was declared a World Heritage Site in 1993 . Philippine waters also sustain the cultivation of pearls , crabs , and seaweeds .

Deforestation , often the result of illegal logging , is an acute problem in the Philippines . Forest cover declined from 70 % of the Philippines 's total land area in 1900 to about 18 @.@ 3 % in 1999 . Many species are endangered and scientists say that Southeast Asia , which the Philippines is part of , faces a catastrophic extinction rate of 20 % by the end of the 21st century . According to Conservation International , " the country is one of the few nations that is , in its entirety , both a hotspot and a megadiversity country , placing it among the top priority hotspots for global conservation . "

= = = Climate = = =

The Philippines has a tropical maritime climate that is usually hot and humid . There are three seasons : tag @-@ init or tag @-@ araw , the hot dry season or summer from March to May ; tag @-@ ulan , the rainy season from June to November ; and tag @-@ lamig , the cool dry season from December to February . The southwest monsoon (from May to October) is known as the Habagat , and the dry winds of the northeast monsoon (from November to April) , the Amihan . Temperatures usually range from 21 ° C (70 ° F) to 32 ° C (90 ° F) although it can get cooler or hotter depending on the season . The coolest month is January ; the warmest is May .

The average yearly temperature is around 26 @.@ 6 ° C (79 @.@ 9 ° F) . In considering

temperature , location in terms of latitude and longitude is not a significant factor . Whether in the extreme north , south , east , or west of the country , temperatures at sea level tend to be in the same range . Altitude usually has more of an impact . The average annual temperature of Baguio at an elevation of 1 @, @ 500 meters (4 @, @ 900 ft) above sea level is 18 @. @ 3 ° C (64 @. @ 9 ° F) , making it a popular destination during hot summers .

Sitting astride the typhoon belt , most of the islands experience annual torrential rains and thunderstorms from July to October , with around nineteen typhoons entering the Philippine area of responsibility in a typical year and eight or nine making landfall . Annual rainfall measures as much as 5 @, @ 000 millimeters (200 in) in the mountainous east coast section but less than 1 @, @ 000 millimeters (39 in) in some of the sheltered valleys . The wettest known tropical cyclone to impact the archipelago was the July 1911 cyclone , which dropped over 1 @, @ 168 millimeters (46 @. @ 0 in) of rainfall within a 24 @- @ hour period in Baguio . Bagyo is the local term for a tropical cyclone in the Philippines .

= = Economy = =

The Philippine economy is the 39th largest in the world , with an estimated 2016 gross domestic product (nominal) of \$ 369 @. @ 188 billion . Primary exports include semiconductors and electronic products , transport equipment , garments , copper products , petroleum products , coconut oil , and fruits . Major trading partners include the United States , Japan , China , Singapore , South Korea , the Netherlands , Hong Kong , Germany , Taiwan , and Thailand . Its unit of currency is the Philippine peso (? or PHP) .

A newly industrialized country , the Philippine economy has been transitioning from one based upon agriculture to an economy with more emphasis upon services and manufacturing . Of the country 's total labor force of around 40 @. @ 813 Million , the agricultural sector employs 30 % of the labor force , and accounts for 14 % of GDP . The industrial sector employs around 14 % of the workforce and accounts for 30 % of GDP . Meanwhile , the 47 % of workers involved in the services sector are responsible for 56 % of GDP .

The unemployment rate as of 14 December 2014 , stands at 6 @. @ 0 % . Meanwhile , due to lower charges in basic necessities , the inflation rate eases to 3 @. @ 7 % in November . Gross international reserves as of October 2013 are \$ 83 @. @ 201 billion . The Debt @- @ to @- @ GDP ratio continues to decline to 38 @. @ 1 % as of March 2014 from a record high of 78 % in 2004 . The country is a net importer but it is also a creditor nation .

After World War II , the Philippines was for a time regarded as the second wealthiest in East Asia , next only to Japan . In the 1960s its economic performance started being overtaken . The economy stagnated under the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos as the regime spawned economic mismanagement and political volatility . The country suffered from slow economic growth and bouts of economic recession . Only in the 1990s with a program of economic liberalization did the economy begin to recover .

The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis affected the economy , resulting in a lingering decline of the value of the peso and falls in the stock market . The extent it was affected initially was not as severe as that of some of its Asian neighbors . This was largely due to the fiscal conservatism of the government , partly as a result of decades of monitoring and fiscal supervision from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) , in comparison to the massive spending of its neighbors on the rapid acceleration of economic growth . There have been signs of progress since . In 2004 , the economy experienced 6 @. @ 4 % GDP growth and 7 @. @ 1 % in 2007 , its fastest pace of growth in three decades . Average annual GDP growth per capita for the period 1966 ? 2007 still stands at 1 @. @ 45 % in comparison to an average of 5 @. @ 96 % for the East Asia and the Pacific region as a whole . The daily income for 45 % of the population of the Philippines remains less than \$ 2 .

The economy is heavily reliant upon remittances from overseas filipinos , which surpass foreign direct investment as a source of foreign currency . Remittances peaked in 2010 at 10 @. @ 4 % of the national GDP , and were 8 @. @ 6 % in 2012 and in 2014 , Philippines total worth of foreign exchange remittances was US \$ 28 billion . Regional development is uneven , with Luzon ? Metro

Manila in particular ? gaining most of the new economic growth at the expense of the other regions , although the government has taken steps to distribute economic growth by promoting investment in other areas of the country . Despite constraints , service industries such as tourism and business process outsourcing have been identified as areas with some of the best opportunities for growth for the country .

Goldman Sachs includes the country in its list of the " Next Eleven " economies but China and India have emerged as major economic competitors . Goldman Sachs estimates that by the year 2050 , it will be the 20th largest economy in the world . HSBC also projects the Philippine economy to become the 16th largest economy in the world , 5th largest economy in Asia and the largest economy in the South East Asian region by 2050 . The Philippines is a member of the World Bank , the International Monetary Fund , the World Trade Organization (WTO) , the Asian Development Bank which is headquartered in Mandaluyong , the Colombo Plan , the G @-@ 77 and the G @-@ 24 among other groups and institutions .

= = = Transportation = = =

The transportation infrastructure in the Philippines is relatively underdeveloped . This is partly due to the mountainous terrain and the scattered geography of the islands , but also the result of consistently low investment in infrastructure by successive governments . In 2013 , about 3 % of national GDP went towards infrastructure development - much lower than many of its neighbors . There are 213 @,@ 151 kilometers (132 @,@ 446 mi) of roads in the Philippines , with only 25 @.@ 56 % of roads paved .

Under President Benigno Aquino III 's administration , various projects were initiated in an attempt to improve the country 's infrastructure and transportation systems . Buses , jeepneys , taxis , and motorized tricycles are commonly available in major cities and towns . In 2007 , there were about 5 @.@ 53 million registered motor vehicles with registrations increasing at an average annual rate of 4 @.@ 55 % .

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines manages airports and implementation of policies regarding safe air travel with 85 public airports currently operational . Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) serves the Greater Manila Area together with Clark International Airport . Philippine Airlines , Asia 's oldest commercial airline still operating under its original name , and Cebu Pacific , the leading low @-@ cost airline , are the major airlines serving most domestic and international destinations .

Expressways and highways are mostly located on the island of Luzon including the Pan @-@ Philippine Highway , connecting the islands of Luzon , Samar , Leyte , and Mindanao , the North Luzon Expressway , South Luzon Expressway , and the Subic ? Clark ? Tarlac Expressway .

Rail transport in the Philippines only plays a role in transporting passengers within Metro Manila . This area is served by three rapid transit lines : LRT @-@ 1 , and LRT @-@ 2 and MRT @-@ 3 . In the past , railways served major parts of Luzon , and railroad services were available on the islands of Cebu and Negros . Railways were also used for agricultural purposes , especially in tobacco and sugar cane production . Rail freight transportation is currently almost non @-@ existent . A few transportation systems are currently under development : DOST @-@ MIRDC and UP are implementing pre @-@ feasibility studies on Automated Guideway Transit . A so @-@ called Hybrid Electric Road Train which is a long bi @-@ articulated bus , was also being tested as of 2015 .

As an archipelago , inter @-@ island travel using watercraft is often necessary . The busiest seaports are Manila , Batangas , Subic , Cebu , Iloilo , Davao , Cagayan de Oro , and Zamboanga . 2GO Travel and Sulpicio Lines serve Manila , with links to various cities and towns through passenger vessels . The 919 @-@ kilometer (571 mi) Strong Republic Nautical Highway (SRNH) , an integrated set of highway segments and ferry routes covering 17 cities was established in 2003 . The Pasig River Ferry Service serves the major rivers in Metro Manila , including the Pasig River and Marikina River having numerous stops in Manila , Makati , Mandaluyong , Pasig and Marikina .

= = = Science and technology = = =

The Philippines has pursued efforts to improve the field of science and technology . The Department of Science and Technology is the governing agency responsible for the development of coordination of science- and technology @-@ related projects in the Philippines . The National Scientist of the Philippines award is given to individuals that have contributed to different field of science in the country . Notable Filipino scientists include Maria Orosa , a food technologist famous for her formulated food products like calamansi nip , soyalac and the banana ketchup ,

Fe del Mundo , a pediatrician whose pioneering work in pediatrics as an active medical practice spanned 8 decades , Paulo Campos , a physician who was dubbed as " The Father of Nuclear Medicine in the Philippines " for his contributions in the field of nuclear medicine , Ramon Barba , an inventor and horticulturist known for his method to induce more flowers in mango trees .

Research organizations include the International Rice Research Institute , an international independent research and training organization established in 1960 with headquarters in Los Baños , Laguna , focusing on the development of new rice varieties and rice crop management techniques to help farmers in the country improve their lives . The Philippines bought its first satellite in 1996 . In 2016 , the Philippines first micro @-@ satellite , Diwata @-@ 1 was launched aboard the US Cygnus spacecraft .

= = = Communications = = =

The Philippines has a sophisticated cellular phone industry and a high concentration of users . Text messaging is a popular form of communication and , in 2007 , the nation sent an average of one billion SMS messages per day . Over five million mobile phone users also use their phones as virtual wallets , making it a leader among developing nations in providing financial transactions over cellular networks . The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company commonly known as PLDT is the leading telecommunications provider . It is also the largest company in the country .

The National Telecommunications Commission is the agency responsible for the supervision , adjudication and control over all telecommunications services throughout the country . There are approximately 383 AM and 659 FM radio stations and 297 television and 873 cable television stations . On March 29 , 1994 , the country went live on the Internet via a 64 kbit / s connection from a router serviced by PLDT to a Sprint router in California . Estimates for Internet penetration in the Philippines vary widely ranging from a low of 2 @.@ 5 million to a high of 24 million people . Social networking and watching videos are among the most frequent Internet activities .

= = = Tourism = = =

The travel and tourism sector is a major contributor to the economy , contributing 7 @.@ 1 % to the Philippine GDP in 2013 and providing 1 @,@ 226 @,@ 500 jobs or 3 @.@ 2 percent of total employment . 2 @,@ 433 @,@ 428 international visitors arrived from January to June 2014 up by 2 @.@ 22 % in the same period in 2013 . South Korea , China , and Japan accounted for 58 @.@ 78 % while Americas accounted for 19 @.@ 28 % and Europe 10 @.@ 64 % . The Department of Tourism has responsibility for the management and promotion of the tourism sector .

The country 's rich biodiversity is one of the main tourist attractions with its beaches , mountains , rainforests , islands and diving spots among the most popular tourist destinations . As an archipelago consisting of about 7 @,@ 500 islands , the Philippines has numerous beaches , caves and other rock formations . Boracay has glaring white sand beaches and was named as the best island in the world by Travel + Leisure in 2012 . The Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifugao , the historic town of Vigan , the Chocolate Hills in Bohol , Magellan 's Cross in Cebu and the Tubbataha Reef in Visayas are other highlights .

= = = Hydrology = = =

Among the achievements of the government in the Philippines are a high access to an improved

water source of 92 % in 2010 ; the creation of financially sustainable water service providers (" Water Districts ") in small and medium towns with the continuous long @-@ term support of a national agency (the " Local Water Utilities Administration " LWUA) ; and the improvement of access , service quality and efficiency in Manila through two high @-@ profile water concessions awarded in 1997 .

The challenges include limited access to sanitation services , high pollution of water resources , often poor drinking water quality and poor service quality , a fragmentation of executive functions at the national level among numerous agencies , and a fragmentation of service provision at the local level into many small service providers .

In 2015 it was reported by the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation by WHO and UNICEF that 74 % of the population had access to improved sanitation and that " good progress " had been made . The access to improved sanitation was reported to be similar for the urban and rural population .

= = Demographics = =

The population of the Philippines increased from 1990 to 2008 by approximately 28 million , a 45 % growth in that time frame . The first official census in the Philippines was carried out in 1877 and recorded a population of 5 @, @ 567 @, @ 685 .

It is estimated that half of the population resides on the island of Luzon . The 3 @. @ 21 % population growth rate between 1995 and 2000 decreased to an estimated 1 @. @ 95 % for the 2005 ? 2010 period , but remains a contentious issue . The population 's median age is 22 @. @ 7 years with 60 @. @ 9 % aged from 15 to 64 years old . Life expectancy at birth is 71 @. @ 94 years , 75 @. @ 03 years for females and 68 @. @ 99 years for males .

Since the liberalization of United States immigration laws in 1965 , the number of people in the United States having Filipino ancestry has grown substantially . In 2007 there were an estimated 12 million Filipinos living overseas .

According to the official count the population of the Philippines hit 100 million at the time of midnight on July 27 , 2014 , making it the 12th country to reach this number .

= = = Cities = = =

Metro Manila is the most populous of the 12 defined metropolitan areas in the Philippines and the 11th most populous in the world. as of 2007 , census data showed it had a population of 11 @, @ 553 @, @ 427 , comprising 13 % of the national population . Including suburbs in the adjacent provinces (Bulacan , Cavite , Laguna , and Rizal) of Greater Manila , the population is around 21 million .

Metro Manila 's gross regional product was estimated as of 2009 to be ? 468 @. @ 4 billion (at constant 1985 prices) and accounts for 33 % of the nation 's GDP . In 2011 Manila ranked as the 28th wealthiest urban agglomeration in the world and the 2nd in Southeast Asia .

= = = Ethnic groups = = =

According to the 2000 census , 28 @. @ 1 % of Filipinos are Tagalog , 13 @. @ 1 % Cebuano , 9 % Ilocano , 7 @. @ 6 % Bisaya / Visayans , 7 @. @ 5 % Hiligaynon , 6 % Bikol , 3 @. @ 4 % Waray , and 25 @. @ 3 % as " others " , which can be broken down further to yield more distinct non @-@ tribal groups like the Moro , the Kapampangan , the Pangasinense , the Ibanag , and the Ivatan . There are also indigenous peoples like the Igorot , the Lumad , the Mangyan , the Bajau , and the tribes of Palawan .

Filipinos generally belong to several Asian ethnic groups classified linguistically as part of the Austronesian or Malayo @-@ Polynesian speaking people . It is believed that thousands of years ago Austronesian @-@ speaking Taiwanese aborigines migrated to the Philippines from Taiwan , bringing with them knowledge of agriculture and ocean @-@ sailing , eventually displacing the

earlier Negrito groups of the islands . Negritos , such as the Aeta and the Ati , are considered among the earliest inhabitants of the islands .

Being at the crossroads of the West and East , the Philippines is also home to migrants from places as diverse as China , Spain , Mexico , United States , India , South Korea , and Japan . Two important non @-@ indigenous minorities are the Chinese and the Spaniards .

The Chinese , mostly descendants of immigrants from Fujian , China after 1898 , number 2 million , although there are an estimated 18 to 27 million Filipinos who have partial Chinese ancestry , stemming from precolonial and colonial Chinese migrants . Intermarriage between the groups is evident in the major cities and urban areas .

At least one @-@ third of the population of Luzon as well as a few old settlements in the Visayas and Zamboanga City at Mindanao , have partial Hispanic ancestry (from varying points of origin and ranging from Latin America to Spain) . Recent genetic studies confirm this partial European and Latin @-@ American ancestry .

Other important non @-@ indigenous minorities include Indians , Anglo @-@ Americans , Britons , and Japanese people . Descendants of mixed couples are known as mestizos .

== Languages ==

Ethnologue lists 186 individual languages in the Philippines , 182 of which are living languages , while 4 no longer have any known speakers . Most native languages are part of the Philippine branch of the Malayo @-@ Polynesian languages , which is itself a branch of the Austronesian language family . The only language not classified as an Austronesian language is Chavacano which is a creole language of Mexican Spanish and is classified as a Romance language .

Filipino and English are the official languages of the country . Filipino is a standardized version of Tagalog , spoken mainly in Metro Manila and other urban regions . Both Filipino and English are used in government , education , print , broadcast media , and business . However , most people outside cities do not speak much English . In most towns , the local indigenous language is spoken . The Philippine constitution provides for the promotion of Spanish and Arabic on a voluntary and optional basis , although neither are used on as wide a scale as in the past . Spanish , which was widely used as a lingua franca in the late nineteenth century , has since declined greatly in use , but is experiencing revival due to government promotions , while Arabic is mainly used in Islamic schools in Mindanao . However , Spanish loanwords are still present today in many of the indigenous Philippine languages .

Nineteen regional languages act as auxiliary official languages used as mediums of instruction : Aklanon , Bikol , Cebuano , Chavacano , Hiligaynon , Ibanag , Ilocano , Ivatan , Kapampangan , Kinaray @-@ a , Maguindanao , Maranao , Pangasinan , Sambal , Surigaonon , Tagalog , Tausug , Waray , and Yakan . Other indigenous languages such as , Cuyonon , Ifugao , Itbayat , Kalinga , Kamayo , Kankanaey , Masbateño , Romblomanon , Malay , and several Visayan languages are prevalent in their respective provinces .

Languages not indigenous to the islands are also taught in select schools . Mandarin is used in Chinese schools catering to the Chinese Filipino community . Islamic schools in Mindanao teach Modern Standard Arabic in their curriculum . French , German , Japanese , Korean , Spanish are taught with the help of foreign linguistic institutions . The Department of Education began teaching the Malay languages of Indonesian and Malaysian in 2013 .

== Religion ==

The Philippines is an officially secular state , although Christianity is the dominant faith . Catholic Church data from 2015 found that about 82 @.@ 9 % of the population professed Catholicism . Around 37 % regularly attend Mass and 29 % identify as very religious . Protestants are 1 @.@ 8 % of the total population . The Philippine Independent Church is a notable independent Catholic denomination . Iglesia ni Cristo is a notable Restorationist denomination in the country .

Islam is the second largest religion . The Muslim population of the Philippines was reported as

about 5 % of the total population according to census returns in 2000 and as of 2011 , and as 11 % in a 2012 report by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos . The majority of Muslims live in the Bangsamoro region . Most practice Sunni Islam under the Shafi'i school .

An unknown number of Filipinos are irreligious but may form as much as 10 % of the population . Catholicism 's historic dominance is steadily declining , with about 9 % of adherents considering leaving their church .

An estimated 2 % of the total population practice Philippine traditional religions , whose practices and folk beliefs are often syncretized with Christianity and Islam . Buddhism is practiced by around 2 % of the population , and is concentrated among Filipinos of Chinese descent . The remaining population is divided between a number of religious groups , including Hindus , Jews , and Baha'is .

= = Health = =

There are an increasing number of private health providers and , as of 2009 , 67 % of healthcare came from private expenditures while 32 % was from government . In 2013 , total expenditures on the health sector was 8 % of GDP , below the WHO target of 5 % . Health expenditure represented about 6 % of total government spending . Per capita total expenditure at average exchange rate was USD52 . The budget allocation for Healthcare in 2010 was ? 28 billion (about USD597 million) or ? 310 (\$ 7) per person but had an increase in budget in 2014 with a record high in the collection of taxes from the House Bill 5727 (commonly known as Sin tax Bill) .

There are an estimated 90 ,000 physicians or 1 per every 833 people , 480 ,000 nurses , 43 ,000 dentists , and 1 hospital bed per every 769 people . Retention of skilled practitioners is a problem . 70 % of nursing graduates go overseas to work . The Philippines is the biggest supplier of nurses for export .

In 2001 there were about 1 ,000 hospitals , of which about 40 % were government run and 60 % private . Cardiovascular diseases account for more than 25 % of all deaths . According to official estimates , 1 ,965 cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) were reported in 2003 , of which 636 had developed acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) . Despite the increase of HIV / AIDS cases from 12 ,000 in 2005 to 17 ,450 as of April 2014 with 5 ,965 people that were under anti retroviral therapy , the country is still a low HIV prevalence country with less than 0 .1 % of the adult population estimated to be HIV positive .

= = Education = =

The Philippines has a simple literacy rate of 95 .6 % , with 95 .1 % for males and 96 .1 % for females . The Philippines has a functional literacy rate of 86 .45 % , with 84 .2 % for males and 88 .7 % for females in 2008 . Literacy in females is greater than in males . Education spending accounts for 16 .11 % in the proposed 2015 national budget .

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) lists 2 ,180 higher education institutions , 607 of which are public and 1 ,573 private . Classes start in June and end in March . The majority of colleges and universities follow a semester calendar from June to October and November to March . There are a number of foreign schools with study programs . A 6 -year elementary and 4 -year high school education is mandatory with an additional two years being added in 2013 .

Several government agencies are involved with education . The Department of Education covers elementary , secondary , and nonformal education . The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) administers the post secondary middle level education training and development . The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) supervises the college and graduate academic programs and degrees as well as regulate standards in higher education .

In 2004 , madaris were mainstreamed in 16 regions nationwide , mainly in Muslim areas in

Mindanao under the auspices and program of the Department of Education . Public universities are all non @-@ sectarian entities , and are further classified as State Universities and Colleges (SUC) or Local Colleges and Universities (LCU) . The University of the Philippines is the national university of the Philippines .

= = Culture = =

Philippine culture is a combination of Eastern and Western cultures . The Philippines exhibits aspects found in other Asian countries with a Malay heritage , yet its culture also displays a significant number of Spanish and American influences .

Traditional festivities known as barrio fiestas (district festivals) to commemorate the feast days of patron saints are common . These community celebrations are times for feasting , music , and dancing and the Moriones and Sinulog festivals are a couple of the most well @-@ known .

Some traditions , however , are changing or gradually being forgotten due to modernization . The Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company has been lauded for preserving many of the various traditional folk dances found throughout the Philippines . They are famed for their iconic performances of Philippine dances such as the tinikling and singkil that both feature clashing bamboo poles .

= = = Cosmopolitanism = = =

Vigan in Ilocos Sur is also known for the many Hispanic @-@ style houses and buildings preserved there .

One of the most visible Hispanic legacies is the prevalence of Spanish names and surnames among Filipinos ; a Spanish name and surname , however , does not necessarily denote Spanish ancestry . This peculiarity , unique among the people of Asia , came as a result of a colonial edict by Governor @-@ General Narciso Clavería y Zaldua , which ordered the systematic distribution of family names and implementation of Hispanic nomenclature on the population . The names of many streets , towns , and provinces are also in Spanish . Spanish architecture has left an imprint in the Philippines in the way many towns were designed around a central square or plaza mayor , but many of the buildings bearing its influence were demolished during World War II . Some examples remain , mainly among the country 's churches , government buildings , and universities . Four Philippine baroque churches are included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites : the San Agustín Church in Manila , the Paoay Church in Ilocos Norte , the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (Santa María) Church in Ilocos Sur , and the Santo Tomás de Villanueva Church in Iloilo .

In Iloilo , a lot of the colonial edifices constructed during the American occupation in the country can still be seen . Commercial buildings , houses and churches in that era are abundant in the city and especially in Calle Real .

However , certain areas of the country like Batanes have slight differences as both Spanish and Filipino ways of life assimilated differently due to the climate there and limestone and coral were used as building materials . Idjangs or Ivatan castles were the primary shelter of the people prior to the Spanish conquest of the whole Philippines .

The common use of the English language is an example of the American impact on Philippine society . It has contributed to the ready acceptance and influence of American pop cultural trends . This affinity is seen in Filipinos ' love of fast food and American film and music . Fast food outlets are found on many street corners . American global fast food chain stalwarts have entered the market , but local fast food chains like Goldilocks and most notably Jollibee , the leading fast food chain in the country , have emerged and compete successfully against their foreign rivals .

= = = Music = = =

Philippine music has evolved rapidly due to the different influences stemming from colonialism under other countries . Before the Spanish conquest of the islands , most music was reminiscent of ,

or heavily influenced by , nature . Some examples of this tribal music is Koyu No Tebulul of the T'boli and Ambo Hato of the Ifugao . This genre is often accompanied by gong music and one well known instrument is the Kulintang .

During the Spanish era Rondalya music , where traditional string orchestra mandolin type instruments were used , was widespread . In the Philippines , Rondalya refers to any group of stringed instruments that are played using a plectrum or pick . Filipino instruments are made from indigenous Philippine wood ; plectrums , or picks , are made from tortoise @-@ shell . Other stringed instruments composing the standard Filipino rondalla are the 14 @-@ string bandurria found only in the Philippines , the laúd , the octavina , the Twelve @-@ string guitar , the Ukulele , the bajo de uñas or double bass , the Guitarrón mexicano , and other Filipino @-@ made instruments modeled and developed after the guitar . Harana and Kundiman are prevalent during this time wherein these songs are often used in courtship rituals .

Marcelo Adonay (organist) , Simplicio Solis (organist) , Diego C. Perez (pianist) , Jose Consecro (pianist) and Doña Dolores Paterno (composer) were some of the recognized musicians in this era . Nowadays , American pop culture has a heavy hold on the Filipinos that evolved from the Spanish times when the American occupation happened . Along with Korean pop , these two are dominating the recent music scene in media . However , the revival of Spanish @-@ influence folk music has been done due to the different choir groups in and out of the country like the Philippine Madrigal Singers .

= = = Visual art = = =

Pottery and weaving are among the very first art forms showcasing Filipino artistic design and are evident from cave dwellings all over the country . Among these are mostly anthropomorphic earthenware jars dating from c . 5 BC to 225 AD . Weaving was mostly done by women , using fibers from abaca , pineapple , cotton , and bark to make clothes , rugs and hats . Baskets were mostly utilized to carry grain and other foods .

Early Philippine sculpture is characterized by frontal nudity . One of the earliest forms are the bulols by the Ifugao peoples which serve as an assurance for bountiful harvests . The original function of these sculptures are related to the ceremonies and beliefs of the tribes who created them . Arab and Russian missionaries also brought beveled type of carvings in the form of Okkil . The beginnings of this sculpture type started with the Islamization of Sulu . The Spanish colonization of the country did not hinder Filipinos creating sculptures for objects of adoration . During this time , sculptures of deities and saints were used to teach Filipinos Christian doctrines . During the American colonialism , worshippers of faith were not discouraged to sculpt in order to adorn churches .

Filipinos ' first exposure to painting happened when Spain conquered the Philippines and these were used as religious propaganda often displayed in churches . However , as education progressed and wealth increased , more and more artists started to shift from the traditional religious motifs to a more secular pattern of imagery .

Paintings of early modernist painters such as Damián Domingo often still had a religious association but the art of Juan Luna and Félix Hidalgo showed a trend towards political statement . The first Philippine national artist Fernando Amorsolo used post @-@ modernism to produce paintings that illustrated aspects of Philippine culture , while other artists such as Fernando Zóbel used both realistic and abstract techniques .

In the modern period , the integration of architecture in the Art Deco style happened . Many of these examples can be seen in statues all over the country especially in public parks and spaces .

= = = Values = = =

As a general description , the distinct value system of Filipinos is rooted primarily in personal alliance systems , especially those based in kinship , obligation , friendship , religion (particularly Christianity) , and commercial relationships .

Filipino values are , for the most part , centered around maintaining social harmony , motivated

primarily by the desire to be accepted within a group . The main sanction against diverging from these values are the concepts of " Hiya " , roughly translated as ' a sense of shame ' , and " Amor propio " or ' self @-@ esteem ' . Social approval , acceptance by a group , and belonging to a group are major concerns . Caring about what others will think , say or do , are strong influences on social behavior among Filipinos .

Other elements of the Filipino value system are optimism about the future , pessimism about present situations and events , concern and care for other people , the existence of friendship and friendliness , the habit of being hospitable , religious nature , respectfulness to self and others , respect for the female members of society , the fear of God , and abhorrence of acts of cheating and thievery .

While in most of the world the popularity of formal female beauty contests has diminished , they remain both popular and widespread in the Philippines . Binibining Pilipinas is a closely followed event throughout the country along with other major national pageants such as Miss Philippines Earth and Miss World Philippines . Filipinas have garnered one Miss World , three Miss Universe , five Miss International , three Miss Earth , and one Miss Supranational titles .

= = = Dance = = =

Just like the evolution of Philippine music , dance as well has been in constant change . Prior to colonial rule , the Philippines has a wide array of ethnic dances from different tribal groups . This is due mainly to the fact that Philippines is an island thus the different varieties of dance developed . Both Luzon and Visayas , at first , were more akin to tribal movements until the Spanish came . Mindanao represents more of an array of Muslim inspired dances and Spanish influence was minimal in the region of Zamboanga .

Universal dances in the Philippines are found at societal functions such as rituals , mimicry , life cycle and parties . During the Spanish era , most dances are accompanied by Rondalya music usually with 14 @-@ string bandurrias that the Filipinos invented or by other type of stringed instruments that locally evolved in to the culture as well .

One famous dance that is well known is called the Tinikling , where a band of Rondalya musicians play along with the percussive beat of the two bamboo poles . It usually starts with men and women acting a scene about " How rural townsfolk mingle " . The dancers then graze thru the clashing of the bamboo poles held on opposite sides . The end displays the paired bamboo poles crossing each other . The Muslim version of this where bamboo poles are also used is called the Singkil . Nowadays , in the Modern and Post @-@ Modern time periods , dances vary from the delicate ballet up to the more street @-@ oriented styles of breakdancing to name a few .

= = = Cuisine = = =

Philippine cuisine has evolved over several centuries from its Malayo @-@ Polynesian origins to become a mixed cuisine with many Hispanic , Chinese , American , and other Asian influences that have been adapted to local ingredients and the Filipino palate to create distinctively Filipino dishes . Dishes range from the very simple , like a meal of fried salted fish and rice , to the elaborate , such as the paellas and cocidos created for fiestas .

Popular dishes include lechón , adobo , sinigang , kare @-@ kare , tapa , crispy pata , pancit , lumpia , and halo @-@ halo . Some common local ingredients used in cooking are calamondins , coconuts , saba (a kind of short wide plantain) , mangoes , milkfish , and fish sauce . Filipino taste buds tend to favor robust flavors , but the cuisine is not as spicy as those of its neighbors .

Unlike many of their Asian counterparts , Filipinos do not eat with chopsticks ; they use Western cutlery . However , possibly due to rice being the primary staple food and the popularity of a large number of stews and main dishes with broth in Philippine cuisine , the main pairing of utensils seen at the Filipino dining table is that of spoon and fork , not knife and fork .

The traditional way of eating with the hands known as kamayan (using the washed right hand for bringing food to the mouth) was previously more often seen in the less urbanized areas . However ,

due to the various Filipino restaurants that introduced Filipino food to people of other nationalities as well as to Filipino urbanites , kamayan fast became popular . This recent trend also sometimes incorporates the " Boodle Fight " concept (as popularized and coined by the Philippine Army) , wherein banana leaves are used as giant plates on top of which rice portions and Filipino viands are placed all together for a filial , friendly and / or communal kamayan feasting .

= = = Literature = = =

Philippine mythology has been handed down primarily through the traditional oral folk literature of the Filipino people . While each unique ethnic group has its own stories and myths to tell , Hindu and Spanish influences can nonetheless be detected in many cases . Philippine mythology mostly consists of creation stories or stories about supernatural creatures , such as the aswang , the manananggal , the diwata / engkanto , and nature . Some popular figures from Philippine mythologies are Maria Makiling , Lam @-@ Ang , and the Sarimanok .

Philippine literature comprises works usually written in Filipino , Spanish , or English . Some of the most known were created from the 17th to 19th century . Adarna , for example , is a famous epic about an eponymous magical bird allegedly written by José de la Cruz or " Huseng Sisiw " . Francisco Balagtas the poet and playwright who wrote Florante at Laura is recognized as a preeminent writer in the Filipino language . José Rizal wrote the novels Noli Me Tángere (Touch Me Not) and El Filibusterismo (The Filibustering , also known as The Reign of Greed) . He is considered a national hero . His depiction of the injustices of Spanish rule , and his death by firing squad , inspired other Philippine revolutionaries to seek independence . Several Filipino writers were awarded National Artist of the Philippines such as N. V. M. Gonzalez , Amado V. Hernandez , Francisco Arcellana , Nick Joaquín , F. Sionil José and many more .

= = = Media = = =

Philippine media uses mainly Filipino and English . Other Philippine languages , including various Visayan languages are also used , especially in radio due to its ability to reach remote rural locations that might otherwise not be serviced by other kinds of media . The dominant television networks ABS @-@ CBN , GMA and TV5 also have extensive radio presence .

The entertainment industry is vibrant and feeds broadsheets and tabloids with an unending supply of details about celebrities and sensationalist daily scandals . Drama and fantasy shows are anticipated as are Latin telenovelas , Asianovelas , and anime . Daytime television is dominated by game shows , variety shows , and talk shows such as Eat Bulaga and It 's Showtime . Philippine cinema has a long history and is popular domestically , but has faced increasing competition from American , Asian and European films . Critically acclaimed directors and actors include Lino Brocka and Nora Aunor for films like Maynila : Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (Manila : In the Claws of Light) and Himala (Miracle) . In recent years it has become common to see celebrities flitting between television and movies and then moving into politics provoking concerns .

= = = Sports = = =

Various sports and pastimes are popular in the Philippines including basketball , boxing , cockfighting , volleyball , football (soccer) , American football , both codes of Rugby football , badminton , karate , taekwondo , billiards , ten @-@ pin bowling , chess , and sipa . Motocross , cycling , and mountaineering are also becoming popular . Basketball is played at both amateur and professional levels and is considered to be the most popular sport in the Philippines . In 2010 , Manny Pacquiao was named " Fighter of the Decade " for the 2000s (decade) by the Boxing Writers Association of America (BWAA) , World Boxing Council (WBC) , and World Boxing Organization (WBO) . The national martial art and sport of the country is Arnis , Eskrima or Kali in some regions

The Philippines has participated in the Summer Olympic Games since 1924 and was the first

country in Southeast Asia to compete and win a medal . The country had competed in every Summer Olympic Games since then , except when they participated in the American @-@ led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics . The Philippines is also the first tropical nation to compete at the Winter Olympic Games debuting in the 1972 edition .

Internationally , Philippines has been well documented for its successes in beauty pageants . Binibining Pilipinas is a closely followed event throughout the country , and Philippines has received 1 Miss World , 3 Miss Universe , 5 Miss International , 3 Miss Earth , and 1 Miss Supranational titles making it the first country to complete all five major titles .

= = = Games = = =

Traditional Philippine games such as luksung baka , patintero , piko , and tumbang preso are still played primarily as children 's games among the youth . Sungka is a traditional native Philippine board game . Card games are popular during festivities , with some , including pusoy and tong @-@ its , being used as a form of illegal gambling . Mahjong is played in some Philippine communities .

Sabong or cockfighting is another popular entertainment especially among Filipino men , and existed prior to the arrival of the Spanish . Antonio Pigafetta , Magellan 's chronicler , first documented this pastime in the kingdom of Taytay . The yo @-@ yo , a popular toy in the Philippines , was introduced in its modern form by Pedro Flores with its name coming from the Ilokano language .