

Title:

Philippines Travel: The Old World Charm Of Ilocos

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426

Summary:

Going to the province of Ilocos is like treading back in time. Not only for the Spanish colonial houses, but for the simple, laid-back feel of the towns and its people.

In old times, Ilocandia has been described as a God-forsaken land because of its arid and difficult terrain. But the hardy people of this province had the patience and the will to survive, and eventually turned it into a lush and abundant highland. Amidst all these, is a rich history consisting of legendary...

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Article Body:

Going to the province of Ilocos is like treading back in time. Not only for the Spanish colonial houses, but for the simple, laid-back feel of the towns and its people.

In old times, Ilocandia has been described as a God-forsaken land because of its arid and difficult terrain. But the hardy people of this province had the patience and the will to survive, and eventually turned it into a lush and abundant highland. Amidst all these, is a rich history consisting of legendary uprisings, monumental edifices, and noble men and women who have made Ilocos a unique and remarkable place that it is today.

Vigan is a sleepy town at the heart of Ilocos Sur. It's easy to find your way around because the people are friendly and warm to visitors. At the center of the town is Plaza Salcedo erected in honor of Juan Salcedo who named this place Ciudad Fernandina after King Ferdinand of Spain. Right across the plaza is the St. Paul's Cathedral built in 1641 and which came under the Diocese of Nueva Segovia in 1758.

A few minutes walk will bring you to the Burgos House. Now converted into a museum, the house is the birthplace of Fr. Jose Burgos, one of the priests

executed in Cavite during the revolution. The museum houses what were left of the Burgos family belongings which include antique furnitures, clothing and other artifacts donated by some prominent families in Vigan.

Indeed, Vigan is best known for its Castillian houses with old tile roofs, hardwood floorings and azoteas. These houses are located in Heritage Village which is the core of the Mestizo district. Some of the houses remain in possession of descendants of their original owners with the antique interiors and furnishings intact, while some of these ancestral homes have been turned into cozy inns, museums, and souvenir shops.

Although many of these houses have been converted into commercial establishments, the brick structures are preserved. The whole block breathes in an eerie feeling emphasized more by the calezas or horse-drawn carriages which remain a mode of transportation around town.

You can buy real or reproduction antique furniture around Vigan's antique stores or visit pottery factories along Rizal street for ceramic products. These factories will be more than happy to give a demonstration on pottery-making. You can also buy woven blankets and table napkins at low prices.

Vigan has been declared a World Heritage Site and it is recommended that you view the houses at night with the streets lighted perfectly and the air cool.