

Title:

Philippines Travel: Exploring Sagada On A Shoe-String Budget

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Summary:

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Article Body:

Urban dwellers would normally prefer to rove around the metropolis and explore every side-street in search for ideal refuge, more than traveling to remote provinces. However, there are more than 7,000 reasons to explore the parameters of this archipelago, taking into account its profuse land and marine resources and myriad sanctuaries.

Among the many interesting regions in the Philippines is the mountainous terrain and savanna in northern Luzon as inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Part of this region is Sagada. With a measly P2,500, a determined explorer can take a fulfilling jaunt to Sagada—a serene mountain community in Mt. Province. The adventurous travelers would customarily take the 10-hour bus ride from Manila to Banaue, Ifugao (via Solano, Nueva Ecija route) that costs not more than P300.

In Banaue, travelers have the option to take the day off and trek along the well-engineered Banaur Rice Terraces or take a jeepney ride to Bontoc and from there, one can catch a bus ride to a more tranquil region, Sagada in Mt. Province.

Sagada has economical lodging houses and hotels to spend the night over. For as

low as P200, a traveler can avail of a bedroom for two and a well-scrubbed common bathroom with sufficient amount of water—for an overnight abode. Even though electricity and water are accessible in these highland regions, one of the guidelines in immersing to remote areas is not to expect for urban amenities.

However, the lack of adequate necessities is not an hindrance to any devoted backpacker. Indeed, the remarkable view of the mountains, sight of abundant natural resources, and exposure to mountain community are enough reasons to enjoy the trip.

Trekking along the narrow mountain trails of Batad and Bangaan Villages in Banaue is one of the many leisure options where panoramic views of the terraces can be enjoyed. To keep track of the trail, a number of villagers can be hired for hours as tour guides.

The trip is truly breathtaking and for an amateur trekker, the long hours of walk should not impede them to reach the other side of the trail. There are a number of brooks along the curvy mountain range that are guaranteed to quench one's thirst during the hours of hike. Meanwhile, the awe-inspiring endpoint is an antidote to muscle pain.

Batad is comparable to realizing the pot of gold at the other end of the rainbow. It boasts of scenic and unspoiled layers of rice fields forming a colossal amphitheater, where native Ifugaos mostly dwell. The terraces is still a functional source of livelihood and personal sustenance for Ifugaos, except for some where irrigation systems have been destroyed through seepage, landslides, prolonged drought, erosion, and other inevitable natural calamities.