

Philippines

Business Travel Guide

Compiled by:

Embassy of Switzerland in the Philippines

Manila, August 2021

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Documents

Swiss citizens can enter the Philippines *without* an entry visa for an initial 30 days for tourism or business-related transactions. General arrival requirements include:

1. Unexpired passport;
2. Unexpired entry visa (if applicable);
3. Validly issued return ticket;
4. Immigration form (usually distributed on flight); and
5. Customs declaration form (usually distributed on flight).

The Philippines adopts the '*six-month passport validity*' as a general rule, however, Swiss nationals may be admitted with passports of less than six (6) months validity from date of arrival pursuant to [Operations Order No. SBM -2015-026](#).

IMPORTANT: Due to the covid19 pandemic, no third-country national can enter the Philippines without a visa especially for business or professional purposes. Visa-free entry to the Philippines for Swiss citizens is currently suspended.

Type of Visas

There are at least 14 different kinds of visas issued by the Philippine government grouped into three (3) main categories:

1. Section 9 visas (non-immigrant visas) for temporary visits such as those for tourism, business, transit, study or employment.
2. Section 13 visas (immigrant visas) for foreign nationals who wish to become permanent residents in the Philippines.

3. Special visas such as for investor residents, employment generation, resident retirees, ROHQ staff, and employment visa for offshore banking unit.

Check visa guidelines / requirements published by the [Department of Foreign Affairs \(DFA\)](#).

Check specific requirements for various types of visas at the [Bureau of Immigration \(BI\) and click on visa tab](#).

NOTE: Visa and entry formalities for the Philippines are not within the competency of the Embassy of Switzerland. The links and information given in this guide are for informational purpose only and we kindly advise you to check the exact requirements with the Philippine immigration authorities or Philippine Embassy in Bern, as they may vary/change very quickly.

Customs Duties

Check [IATA country information \(Philippines\)](#), which contains specific information on import regulations (free and prohibited articles), arms and ammunition regulations, wild fauna and flora, export regulations, and baggage clearance regulation.

Residents and non-residents are allowed to carry local currency up to Philippine Peso (PhP) 50,000 and foreign currencies up to USD 10,000. Exceeding amounts must be declared.



See also [Guidelines on Baggage, Balikbayan Boxes, and Parcels](#) as published by the Bureau of Customs.

**DUTY FREE
Philippines**

Visit [Duty Free Philippines](#) for duty-free shops and other privileges.

COVID19 Travel Requirements

Check Guide on Philippine [departure procedures](#) as of 10 May 2021.

Check Guide on [arrival and quarantine procedures](#) in the Philippines as of 8 May 2021.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory and recommended vaccinations

The Philippines follows the recommendations of the [WHO Covid19 Vaccines](#). Due to current global supply issues, the government adopts a [priority list for its vaccination programs](#).

As of May 2021, International flights or inbound travel to the Philippines are limited to essential travel only for returning Filipinos like Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), seafarers, stranded Filipino tourists, and foreigners.

It is advised that all other routine vaccinations should be done in the country of origin before travelling to the Philippines.

Mandatory medical insurance

Medical care is accessible in major cities of the country and the list of all government hospitals can be accessed in the [DOH Hospital](#). Various state of the art clinics are usually located in Metropolitan areas and big cities such as Quezon City, Cebu, Davao, Taguig, and Makati.

Medical insurance is offered by international companies such as Blue Cross, Pacific Cross, AXA, Sun Life, Manulife, Maxicare, and affiliates of local banks such as BPI-Philam Life and PNB Allianz.

It is preferred to secure your medical insurance before traveling to the Philippines as documentary processing could be tedious and expensive. A list of private hospitals in all regions of the country is available at the website of the [Private Hospital Association of the Philippines](#).

PUBLIC SECURITY / RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

Check on the [FDFA Travel Advice before travelling to the Philippines](#). It is recommended that you download [Travel Admin App](#), which is managed by the FDFA to assist travelling Swiss citizens. The website also provides you with tips, travel documents required, and information regarding terrorism and abduction, earthquake, radioactivity, travel links, and assistance while abroad.

For real-time local weather updates, check [PAGASA](#) website.

For disaster related advisories and information, visit [NDRRMC](#) portal.

TIME ZONE

Time difference between Switzerland and Manila

Central European Time – 6hrs

Central European Summer Time is 6 hours behind of Philippine Time and 0 hours ahead of CEST (Central European Summer Time)

You may refer to the [World Time Zone Map](#) for time conversion.

BUSINESS HOURS

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays and Nationals Holidays
Government Offices	08:00 -17:00	closed	closed
Banks	09:00 - 15:00	closed	closed
Shops	10:00 -22:00	10:00 -22:00	10:00 -22:00

Most government offices, banks, and private establishments allow 24/7 digital transactions. Government offices are usually close on weekends and holidays except for frontline agencies. Banks have shorter time period for cheque transactions, but real-time debit/credit is common through digital banking.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2021

A. REGULAR HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day	1 January (Friday)
Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor)	9 April (Friday)
Maundy Thursday	1 April (Thursday)
Good Friday	2 April (Friday)
Labor Day	1 May (Saturday)
Eid'l Fitr (Feast of Ramadhan)	13 May (Thursday)
Independence Day	12 June (Saturday)
National Heroes Day	30 August (Monday)
Bonifacio Day	30 November (Tuesday)
Christmas Day	25 December (Saturday)
Rizal Day	30 December (Thursday)

B. SPECIAL HOLIDAYS (SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT PROCLAMATIONS)

Chinese New Year	12 February (Friday)
EDSA People Power Revolution Anniversary	25 February (Thursday)
Black Saturday	3 April (Saturday)
Ninoy Aquino Day	21 August (Saturday)
All Saints' Day	1 November (Monday)
Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary	8 December (Wednesday)

See also [list of holidays](#) observed by the Embassy of Switzerland in the Philippines.

NATIONAL TRADE FAIR CALENDAR

Trade shows and exhibits in the Philippines can be viewed in [Trade Shows Worldwide-Philippines](#).

COMMUNICATION: TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Philippines' country code is: +63

Local SIM card can be bought at airport kiosks, department stores, and malls.

Internet Wi-Fi services are usually available in public spaces and commercial establishments.



EMERGENCY HOTLINES

EMERGENCY HOTLINE 911	RED CROSS 143 8527-0000	PNP 117	
NDRRMC 8911-1406 8911-2665 8911-5061 TO 65	BUREAU OF FIRE 117 3410-6319	PHIVOLCS 8929-8958 8426-1469 - 79	
DSWD 8511-1259	PAGASA 8927-1541 8926-4251	DOH (0920) 9498419 8711-1001 TO 02	MMDA 136

ELECTRIC SUPPLY

Electricity plug and socket: [Plug & socket types around the world.](#)



The voltage in Philippines is 220 V with a frequency of 60 Hz.
There are available adapters, which you can purchase in stores.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

National currency in Philippines is the Philippine Peso (PHP).
Exchange rate as of May 25, 2021: CHF 1 = PHP 53.50
When entering or leaving the country with PHP 50, 000 or more in cash or other monetary instruments, the money must be declared in writing to the custom office.
For unofficial reference in currency conversion, visit [Oanda Currency Converter](#).
Tipping in restaurants, taxis, or hotels is not required but is highly appreciated by locals.

Acceptance of methods of payment:

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (PHP)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cash (USD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
American Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apple Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Google/Samsung Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GCash / PayMaya (Mobile Apps)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interbank (local) Payment Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DOMESTIC TRAVEL, LOCAL TRANSPORT

The most commonly used mode of public transport are jeepneys, taxis, and ride hailing apps. The quality of the services is good. We usually recommend ride hailing apps for short distance point to point destinations, and privately hired vehicles and drivers for long distance travel (inter-province journey).

Taxi fare for a 15-minute journey ranges from PHP 100.00 – PHP 200.00

Main ride hailing app is Grab. You can choose either car or motorcycle for small deliveries.

Main method of payment for taxi is cash, while digital payments are available for Grab.

Car rental with/without a driver can be arranged at numerous companies (this is based on internet search and does not constitute an endorsement):

- [Avis Car Rental Philippines](#)
- [Hertz Philippines](#)
- [Reserve Car Rentals](#)

Car rental options are widely available on the internet with various promotions and subject to prior client negotiations. You may book online ahead of your pickup schedule.

Domestic air travel is possible with three (3) major airlines in the country – Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific, and Air Asia Philippines. Privately hired small aircraft are also available such as Air Taxi and PhilJets.



By road, several bus companies are available through its terminals centrally located in cities. A few of them can be found in the [Philippine Travel Guide](#).

For ferry transport, there are two (2) major operators namely 2GO and Oceanjet, and other small ferries like SuperCat, Starlite Ferries, and Lite Ferries. See the [Ferries in the Philippines: A Guide to Ferry Travel in the Islands](#).



ACCOMMODATION, TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE

There are a number of hotels to choose depending on your budget and needs. Aside from searching through the websites of international hotels with branches in the Philippines, you may also use well-known accommodation search engines such as [Booking.Com.](#), [Hotel.Com.](#), [Agoda](#), and [Trivago](#).

Flexible temporary office space is also available and can be searched online. Co-working space and shared office space are quite common in Metropolitan areas and big cities. Other options for accommodation are available in [Airbnb](#).

It is better to book your accommodation in advance and notify your hotel or contact of your arrival details. Online payments are mostly accepted including major credit and debit cards. For emergency purchases, it is better to have some cash on hand.

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

English is widely spoken in the Philippines particularly in business transactions. Filipino is the national language and commonly used as well in business meetings. Whether English or Filipino, it should be easy for you to communicate with the locals.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Tips for initiating business contacts:

Filipinos in general are very warm, accommodating, and friendly people. They are known for their hospitality; hence they feel at ease meeting new people even at first instance. Normally, they shake hands as a welcome gesture, and initiate personal conversations to get to know you more. Personal

relationship is key to forging business partnership in the future. This has some resonance to their culture as Filipinos put great importance to family and friends.

Scheduling Meetings:

Schedule business meetings at least one or two weeks in advance. Since virtual meetings are common nowadays, either Zoom or Webex are mostly used by Filipinos due to its accessibility and wide network connection.

Business attire:

A corporate look is preferred during business meetings such as an Americana and a tie. During events, special occasions or business gatherings, it is common to see people wearing Filipiniana or Barong Tagalog (national attires of the Philippines).

Introducing yourself:

When introducing yourself during conversations, stating your first name is socially accepted with hand shaking and/or exchanging business cards. Sharing a bit of your background and company normally gets the conversation going before venturing on detailed business matters.

Building trust and personal relationships:

The key to building trust and cultivating personal relationship is consistency, which means being true to your words and actions such as in business commitments and personal promises. Practicing universally accepted business etiquette is a good start in showing respect. During meetings, it is usual to acknowledge presence of superiors before starting the discussion.

Offering and accepting gifts and invitations:

While small gift giving is not necessary during first meetings, it is somehow appreciated by the host. Some people may refuse it at first instance but if offered sincerely will most likely return the appreciation.

Sensitive topics:

Filipinos in general are highly opinionated in most issues either politics, religion, business, science, etc., hence, anything can be discussed provided the proper context. When you share your views on certain matters, it is polite to also ask the other person of his/her assessment for a balanced conversation.

BUSINESS RISKS

To minimize the risk of fraud when dealing with prospective partner companies, a due diligence is recommended. Check if the company is registered either in the Department of Trade and Industry's Business Name Registration System <https://bnrs.dti.gov.ph/search> OR at the Securities and Exchange Commission <https://www.sec.gov.ph>

The Philippines has a medium risk evaluation ranking 111 out of 198 countries classified by the Global Corruption Index <https://risk-indexes.com/global-corruption-index/> and has a stable legal regime. Its currency is one of the best performing currencies in Asia according to Bloomberg.

The CRC puts the Philippines into category 3 (medium) with 0 as the lowest and 7 as highest. <https://www.serv-ch.com/coverpractice/list>

Swiss Export Risk Insurance SERV insures political and *del credere* risks involved in exporting goods and services.

[Products for exporters](#)

[Product for service providers](#)

[Products for financial institutions](#)

The full range of services and products offered by SERV can be obtained at www.serv-ch.com.

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IMPORT OF SAMPLES AND CATALOGUES

The Philippines has just signed the Instrument of Accession for the Customs Convention on the ATA Carnet for Temporary Admission of Goods on 23 June 2020. The Bureau of Customs is finalizing the operational guidelines of the law. For the meantime, importation of goods of whatever purposes is covered by the regular guidelines.

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Business news	https://businessmirror.com.ph	+63 2 8817 9467	news.businessmirror@gmail.com
	http://inquirer.net	+63 2 8519 2797	
	https://www.philstar.com	+63 2 8527 7777	edlim@philstarmedia.com
	https://cnnphilippines.com	+63 2 5484 688	feedback@cnnphilippines.com
	https://news.abs-cbn.com/anc		
Bureau of Customs	https://customs.gov.ph	+63 2 8705 6000	boc.cares@customs.gov.ph
Trading in the Philippines	https://www.pntr.gov.ph	+63 2 8403 1421	bis_pntr@dti.gov.ph
PH-EFTA-FTA	https://www.efta.int/free-trade/Free-Trade-Agreement/Philippines	+41 22 332 26 13	nst@efta.int

Read the Philippine Economic Report 2020 for additional information.

https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/philippines/en/Philippine_Economic_Report_2020_ext.pdf

ADDRESSES OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Switzerland

24/F BDO Equitable Tower,
8751 Paseo de Roxas
1226 Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines
+63 2 8845 45 45
manila@eda.admin.ch
manila.visa@eda.admin.ch

Consulate General in Cebu

Park Centrale Building
Jose Maria del Mar St., Apas
Upper Penthouse 19th floor, I.T. Park
6000 Cebu City, Philippines
+63 917 637 8933
cebu@honrep.ch

Opening Hours:

Visa Section: 10:00- 12:00

(By appointment only)

10:00 – 12:00 (Mon- Thu)

Consular Section

(By appointment only)

10:00 – 12:00 (Mon-Thu)

Telephone Hours:

8:00 - 12:00 & 13:00 – 16:30 (Mon - Thu)

8:00 – 12:00 (Fri)

Sat- Sun and Public Holidays - closed

Check the [Embassy of Switzerland in the Philippines](#) for the latest updates.

ADDRESSES OF BILATERAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP)

Address: 19th Floor, Philippine AXA Life Centre, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue cor. Tindalo St.,
Makati City, 1200 Metro Manila, Philippines

Phone: +63 2 8845 1323 | +63 2 8856 0423

Email: info@eccp.com

Website: <https://www.eccp.com>

Makati Business Club (MBC)

Address: 2nd Floor, Aim Conference Center Benavidez Street corner Trasierra Street
Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati City, Philippines

Phone: +63 2 7751 1137

Email: makatibusinessclub@mbc.com.ph

Website: <https://mbc.com.ph>

Management Association of the Philippines (MAP)

Address: Unit 608, Ayala Tower One, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue
1226 Makati City, Philippines

Phone: +63 2 751 1149 to 52

Email: map@map.org.ph

Website: <https://map.org.ph>

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)

Address: 3F Commerce and Industry Plaza, 1030 Campus Ave. cor. Park Ave.,
McKinley Town Center, Fort Bonifacio
Taguig City, Philippines 1634

Phone: +63 2 846 8196

Email: secretariat@philippinechamber.com

Website: <https://www.philippinechamber.com>

Philippine Swiss Business Council (PSBC)

Address: c/o PCCI Secretariat Office, 3F Commerce and Industry Plaza
1030 Campus Ave. cor. Park Ave., McKinley Town Center, Fort Bonifacio
Taguig City, Philippines 1634

Email: psbc.secretariat@psbc.com.ph

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