

# Topdeck



## Philippines: Snorkel & Stargaze 2025-26

TRIP VIBE = iconic sights and in-depth adventures with a local Trip Leader.

Blissful white-sand beaches. Palm trees strung with hammocks. Eye-popping jungle scenery. The Philippines = PARADISE. And this epic adventure around the country's Palawan region is the stuff that dreams are made of. Think: lazy days spent island hopping, sunset yoga sessions, stargazing on the sand. Ready to pull up a deck chair and grab yourself a fresh coconut? Let's GO.



# About your trip notes

These trip notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

**IMPORTANT:** please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

## **Lub D Manila @ 18:00**

7820 Makati Ave, Makati, Metro,  
Manila, 1210

## **R2R Bayview Coron @ 09:00**

207 Poblacion 5, Busuanga Rd,  
Proper, Coron, 5316



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## Included activities

- ✓ Flight to Puerto Princesa
- ✓ Island hopping boat tour from Port Barton
- ✓ Beach camping experience, including bonfire, stargazing and karaoke
- ✓ Visit Fort Santa Isabel
- ✓ Visit Lio Beach
- ✓ Sunset yoga and meditation on Lio Beach
- ✓ Island hopping boat tour around El Nido
- ✓ Local ferry to Coron

## Trip options

- Visit Las Cabanas limestone cliffs: prices available locally
- Jungle canopy walk experience: from USD 23
- Ziplining experience: from USD 17
- Discovery scuba diving experience: prices available locally
- Visit to Maquinit Hot Springs: prices available locally

## Currencies you'll use

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# Your itinerary

## Day 1

Meet us in Manila – the Philippines’ buzzing capital – where we’ll kickstart this INCRED tropical adventure. Say ‘kumusta’ (that’s hello in the local lingo) to your new trip buddies and get those tastebuds tingling at your first included dinner. Afterwards, continue your convos at one of the Makati district’s swanky bars. Get your souvenir shopping sorted early at Tutuban Night Market. Or have a chilled evening back at the hotel. Your trip = your vibe.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Lub d Philippines Makati  
or similar



#### Meals

+ Dinner

## Day 2 | Port Barton

Pack your bags cos we’re swapping big city vibes for the island paradise of Palawan! Pristine beaches, rugged mountains, serene lagoons. This place is gonna blow your MIND. You’ll get your first glimpse of it from the plane window as we touch down in Puerto Princesa. Feeling peckish? We’ll stop off at an oceanside restaurant for a delish local lunch before continuing onwards to Port Barton – a seriously pretty pearl-farming town and our base for the next two nights. Drop your stuff at the hotel and hit Port Barton Beach to watch the sky turn into a million different shades of pink and orange as the sun sets over the Pacific Ocean. This is what you came for.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Hotel Oasis Port Barton or  
similar



#### Activities

+ Flight to Puerto  
Princesa



#### Meals

+ Breakfast  
+ Lunch

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## Day 3

Slap on the sunscreen and grab your sunnies. We're spending the whole day on the water during a private boat tour – hopping between tiny tropical islands, kaleidoscopic coral reefs and silky sandbars. Wanna snorkel alongside turtles? How about bathing on your own deserted beach? Or spotting starfish in the shallows? Today's the day. We'll also tuck into a delish local lunch \*wipes drools from chin\*. When we get back to Port Barton, the evening's all yours. Our suggestion? Head to a local beach club for mocktails, burgers and another spectacular sunset.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Hotel Oasis Port Barton or similar



#### Activities

+ Island hopping boat tour from Port Barton



#### Meals

+ Breakfast  
+ Lunch

## Day 4 | Remote Beach Camp

After a lazy morning chilling in Port Barton, we'll relocate up the coast to a BEAUT remote beach. Always wondered what it would be like to be stranded in paradise? Here's your chance. Tonight, you'll be snoozing in bell tents right on the sand (don't worry, you'll get a roll mat) with the ocean as your lullaby. But first: there's an afternoon of swimming and an included group BBQ dinner on the cards. Tums full and spirits high, settle down around the cosy bonfire with your trip mates. Don't want this magical evening to end? Sing your hearts out with a karaoke sesh beneath the stars. Memories = made.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Island campsite



#### Activities

+ Beach camping experience, including bonfire, stargazing and karaoke



#### Meals

+ Breakfast  
+ Dinner

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## Day 5 | El Nido

Start your day off right with a relaxing sea swim before we pack up camp and make tracks for our next stop: El Nido. This coastal gem sits in northern Palawan and it is STUNNING. We're talking: powder-soft sand coves, swaying coconut palms, islands surrounded by emerald waters. En route, we'll make a pitstop in Taytay where we'll get our history hats on at Fort Santa Isabel. Delve deep into the region's past, discovering heaps of facts about its indigenous people and the country's Spanish colonisation. Then: onwards to El Nido where the rest of the day is yours. Enjoy a lil downtime at the hotel (you deserve it). Pick up some souvenirs along the town's bustling main street. Or opt for an optional trip to Las Cabanas Beach to soak up its dramatic limestone cliffs and jaw-dropping sunsets. Need local dinner recs for this eve? Your Trip Leader's got the deets.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Jurias Garden Hotel or similar



#### Activities

+ Visit Fort Santa Isabel



#### Meals

+ Breakfast

### Your options

+ Visit Las Cabanas limestone cliffs: prices available locally

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## Day 6

Here's a morning to just do you. Need a lie-in after yesterday's journey? You got it. You could also get horizontal beneath a palm tree on Corong Corong Beach. Or head to a local cafe to sip coffee and watch the world go by. Fancy something a lil more active? Conquer your fear of heights with an out-of-this-world optional canopy experience in the jungle. Or hop on a local tricycle to the El Nido zipline where you'll fly above the treetops and over the sparkling sea. Later, we'll round up the group for an awesome AF activity: a trip to Lio Beach. Take your pick of local beachside eateries for lunch before spending the afternoon strolling (or snoozing) on the sand. And if things couldn't get even MORE idyllic, we'll finish the day off with a sunset yoga and meditation sesh right on the beach. Namaste!

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Jurias Garden Hotel or similar



#### Activities

- + Visit Lio Beach
- + Sunset yoga and meditation on Lio Beach



#### Meals

- + Breakfast

### Your options

- + Jungle canopy walk experience: from USD 23
- + Ziplining experience: from USD 17

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## Day 7

You're gonna want to go big at breakfast today. Why? Cos we've got another island-hopping trip on the cards! The scenery around El Nido is RIDICULOUSLY breathtaking. Insert: sun-bleached sandy beaches on Simizu Island, shimmering turquoise water at the Big Lagoon and the dreamy Secret Lagoon that's only accessible through a tiny opening through limestone cliffs. We'll also make a pitstop at jaw-dropping Seven Commando Beach (named after the seven soldiers once stranded on its shores) AND gorge on another tasty included lunch. Don't say we never treat you. Hearts and camera rolls full, we'll return to land for a chill evening in El Nido. Need dinner recs? Seek out some fresh seafood (think prawns, squid and crab) or order up a bowl of steaming *kaaldas* – a local soup featuring pork, papaya and ginger. YUM.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

Jurias Garden Hotel or similar



#### Activities

+ Island hopping boat tour around El Nido



#### Meals

+ Breakfast  
+ Lunch

## Day 8 | Coron

It's time to wave goodbye to enchanting El Nido \*tries not to cry\*. Luckily, we're swapping it for the equally as dreamy Coron – known for its shipwrecks, shimmering lagoons and countless soft-sand beaches. FYI, the ferry there is looooong, so you'll wanna stock up on snacks and make sure your phone's got some juice. If it's sunny, claim a spot on the top deck, grab a cold one and soak up those rays. When we reach the idyllic archipelago of Coron, grab the gang and head to the nearest beach bar for a few bevies and general good times.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

R2R Bayview Inn or similar



#### Activities

+ Local ferry to Coron



#### Meals

+ Breakfast

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## Day 9

Ready to dive straight into this incredible island oasis? We thought so. Pull on some comfy shoes and climb 210 metres to the summit of Mt Tapyas for INSANE views of Coron Bay. Or glide through wrecked WWII Japanese warships home to turtles, rays and reef sharks on an optional beginner's scuba diving experience. Prefer to keep things chilled? Swap thrilling ocean adventures for a soothing spa day at the Maquinit Hot Springs. Later: catch up with your new travel besties at our final group dinner, and watch the sun set in paradise one last time.

### Your Inclusions



#### Accommodation

R2R Bayview Inn or similar



#### Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner

### Your options

- + Discovery scuba diving experience: prices available locally
- + Visit to Maquinit Hot Springs: prices available locally

## Day 10

You've swum in the lagoons, soaked up all the views, practiced your downward dog on the sand. Now all that's left to do is swap TikTok handles with your travel fam and say your goodbyes. Not quite ready for the fun to be over? Hang around Palawan for more epic diving adventures. Or tick another South East Asian gem of your travel wishlist. Thailand. Vietnam. Cambodia. All the above?

### Your Inclusions



#### Meals

+ Breakfast

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# Travel advice

## Finances

### Changing money

**Cash:** Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

**Credit cards:** Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

**Cash machines:** ATMS are widely available.

### Tipping

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

## Topdeck app

Locked in your next adventure? It's time to download the Topdeck Travel app and get REAL excited! It's like that organised mate who keeps everything in check, leaving you to enjoy allll the vibes completely hassle-free. Think: a fun trip countdown clock and full access to Your Topdeck Experience (including Local Lowdown Maps featuring awesome local recs for specific cities). Plus, your day-by-day itinerary at your fingertips. Nice!



## Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Yup! Most of the places we stay offer free Wi-Fi (except in the middle of the Sahara Desert or while sailing on a felucca down the Nile... obv).

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When you're out and about, most restaurants and cafes will allow you to jump on their Wi-Fi when you order something. Or you can buy your Topdeck eSIM from [here](#) and save \$\$\$ on roaming fees. Easy.

## Insurance

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQs for more info [here](#).

Got more Qs? Chat with our [Customer Service team](#).

## Passports and visas

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

## Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

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Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!
- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and-tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

## Night out

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy –

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you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

## Drug use

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER: if you are found in possession of drugs, you risk getting in trouble with the local police.

## Respecting fellow travellers

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates. The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

## How to be a responsible traveller

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth

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- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

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# What to Pack

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

## Clothing

- |                             |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Shirts/T-shirts           | ✓ Sweaters/jumpers          | ✓ Jeans/trousers            |
| ✓ Shorts/skirts             | ✓ Warm jacket               | ✓ Rainproof jacket          |
| ✓ Underwear                 | ✓ Socks                     | ✓ Swimwear                  |
| ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Comfortable walking shoes | ✓ Thongs/jandals/flip-flops |

## Other essentials

- |             |   |                         |
|-------------|---|-------------------------|
| ✓ Towel     | ✓ Toiletries                                | ✓ Hat                   |
| ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Adaptor plug                              | ✓ Reusable water bottle |
| ✓ Snow gear | ✓ Basic medical kit (plasters, aspirin etc) |                         |

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# That's everything!

We can't wait to smush your face. Well, we won't do that exactly, but the sentiment is there.

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