

## CULTURAL GEMS OF NORTHERN PHILIPPINES

13 DAYS / 12 NIGHTS



### I. HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the colonial heritage of Manila and Vigan, explore historic churches and ancestral houses, and immerse yourself in the traditions of indigenous communities.
- Trek to breathtaking waterfalls, explore scenic coastlines and marvel at the stunning landscapes of Sagada and Banaue.
- Interact with local communities, learn about traditional practices and craftsmanship, and gain insight into the diverse cultures of the Philippines.
- Climb Mount Pinatubo, explore burial caves, and trek through rice terraces, experiencing the thrill of outdoor adventures amidst spectacular natural settings.

### II. ITINERARY

#### DAY 1

#### Arrival in Manila

Your journey kicks off with your arrival in Manila, the bustling capital of the Philippines. After settling into your accommodations, take some time to unwind and rest from your travels.

Depending on your arrival time, you may have the chance to explore the nearby area and get a taste of the city's vibrant atmosphere.

#### DAY 2

### Discover Old Town Manila

Begin your day with a journey through the historic streets of Old Town Manila. Explore Intramuros, the well-preserved Spanish colonial district, where you can visit iconic landmarks such as Fort Santiago, San Agustin Church, and Casa Manila. Dive into the rich history and culture of Manila as you stroll through cobblestone streets lined with centuries-old architecture. Enjoy a leisurely afternoon to further explore the city's hidden gems or indulge in some shopping at local markets.

#### DAY 3

### Fly to Laoag, Visit Paoay Church

Board a flight to Laoag, the capital of the province of Ilocos Norte. Upon arrival, visit the UNESCO-listed Paoay Church, also known as the St. Augustine Church. Admire its unique architectural style, characterized by massive buttresses and a façade adorned with intricate designs. Explore the charming town of Laoag, soaking in its laid-back atmosphere and cultural heritage.

#### DAY 4

### Kabigan Falls and Coastal Exploration

Venture into the natural wonders of Laoag as you embark on a morning exploration of the enchanting Kabigan Falls. Trek through lush forests, listening to the soothing sounds of cascading water as you reach the picturesque falls, offering a refreshing dip in its crystalline pools. In the afternoon, unwind by the coast, basking in the sun-kissed shores and indulging in delectable seafood delights.

#### DAY 5

### Journey to Vigan

Prepare for a full day of exploration as you discover the cultural treasures of Vigan aboard a traditional horse-drawn carriage and on foot. Marvel at architectural wonders such as the iconic Calle Crisologo, stroll through bustling plazas adorned with colonial-era monuments, and delve into the city's rich heritage at museums and heritage sites. Lose yourself in the romance of Vigan's old-world charm before retiring for the night.

#### DAY 6

### Sightseeing in Vigan

Head to Sagada, a picturesque town nestled in the mountains of the Cordillera region. Explore its unique attractions, including ancient burial caves and hanging coffins. Delve into the local culture and traditions as you learn about the indigenous tribes that call Sagada home.

#### DAY 7

### Journey to Sagada

Bid farewell to Vigan as you journey towards the mystical town of Sagada, nestled amidst the rugged landscapes of the Cordillera Mountains. Prepare for an unforgettable adventure as you

delve into the ancient traditions of the indigenous Igorot people, exploring burial caves adorned with hanging coffins suspended from limestone cliffs. Immerse yourself in the rich cultural tapestry of Sagada before settling in for the night.

#### DAY 8

### Exploring Bontoc and Favarey Village

Embark on a journey to Bontoc, the gateway to the stunning landscapes of the Ifugao province. Upon arrival, lace up your hiking boots for a scenic walk to the traditional village of Favarey, where you'll immerse yourself in the age-old customs and traditions of the Ifugao people. Engage with local artisans, sample traditional delicacies, and gain insights into the intricate craftsmanship of Ifugao culture before retiring for the night.

#### DAY 9

### Journey to Banaue

Today, you'll journey to the breathtaking rice terraces of Banaue, a UNESCO World Heritage Site hailed as the "Eighth Wonder of the World." En route, make a stop at the Bontoc Museum, where you'll delve into the fascinating history and culture of the Cordillera region. Arriving in Banaue, marvel at the awe-inspiring landscapes sculpted by generations of Ifugao farmers before settling into your accommodation for the night.

#### DAY 10

### Exploring Banaue's Rice Terraces

Prepare for a day of adventure as you embark on a guided hike through the terraced wonders of Batad and Bangaan. Trek through verdant rice paddies cascading down steep mountainsides, marveling at the ingenuity of Ifugao engineering dating back over 2,000 years. Along the way, encounter local farmers tending to their fields and gain insights into the sustainable farming practices that have sustained these terraces for centuries.

#### DAY 11

### Rural Retreat in Mabalacat

Bid farewell to the majestic landscapes of Banaue as you journey to the tranquil rural setting of Mabalacat. Spend the afternoon unwinding amidst the serene surroundings, perhaps indulging in a stroll through the countryside or simply relaxing in the comforts of your accommodation. Immerse yourself in the laid-back pace of rural life before retiring for the night.

#### DAY 12

### Summiting Mount Pinatubo

Prepare for an exhilarating adventure as you embark on a trek to the summit of Mount Pinatubo, one of the Philippines' most iconic natural landmarks. Ascend through rugged terrain, marveling at the otherworldly landscapes shaped by the volcano's historic eruption in 1991. Reach the summit and be rewarded with panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, a testament to the raw power of nature. After descending, journey back to Manila for a well-deserved rest.

## DAY 13

### Tour Conclusion in Manila

As your journey comes to a close, take some time to reflect on the memories made and friendships forged during your Philippine adventure. Bid farewell to your fellow travelers and tour guides, cherishing the experiences shared and the moments that will last a lifetime. Whether it's exploring historic cities, venturing into the wilderness, or immersing yourself in local cultures, this tour has offered a glimpse into the diverse tapestry of the Philippines, leaving you with a newfound appreciation for its beauty and charm.

**Tour extensions: pre-tour or post-tour extensions are available, which would include accommodation and private transfers, please speak to Focus Asia travel consultant for further details.**