

# GRAND PRIX MANILA 2015 TRAVEL GUIDE



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Philippines

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## Introduction

First time here in the Philippines? Welcome to the Pearl of the Orient!

We, the Filipino Magic Judges, compiled this travel guide for your use in order to help you get your way around the metro. While most of the information here contains most of the things you need to know about the country, there are also some recommendations that will definitely hit your curiosities (*such as local food and places to visit*).

The sections are divided into parts, starting with the map on how to get from the airport to the Grand Prix venue, followed by general information, and then other things you might want to know while staying in the Philippines.

If you need specific directions, you may contact our local judges by phone and we'll be more than happy to assist you (*check the General Information and Safety Tips at the end of the guide for the contact numbers*).

## How to get there?

### From Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA)

The best way to go to the GP venue is to take a taxi from the airport after arriving. Take note that there are three terminals in the airport, in which NAIA 1 and 2 are grouped together, and NAIA 3 is in a different location.

The airport taxi (which is yellow in color) is the only taxi you can take outside the airport (*as they are the only authorized ones by the airport to pick up passengers*). It may cost PHP 70 or more but they will take you to the GP venue within an hour or so (*depending on the traffic*).

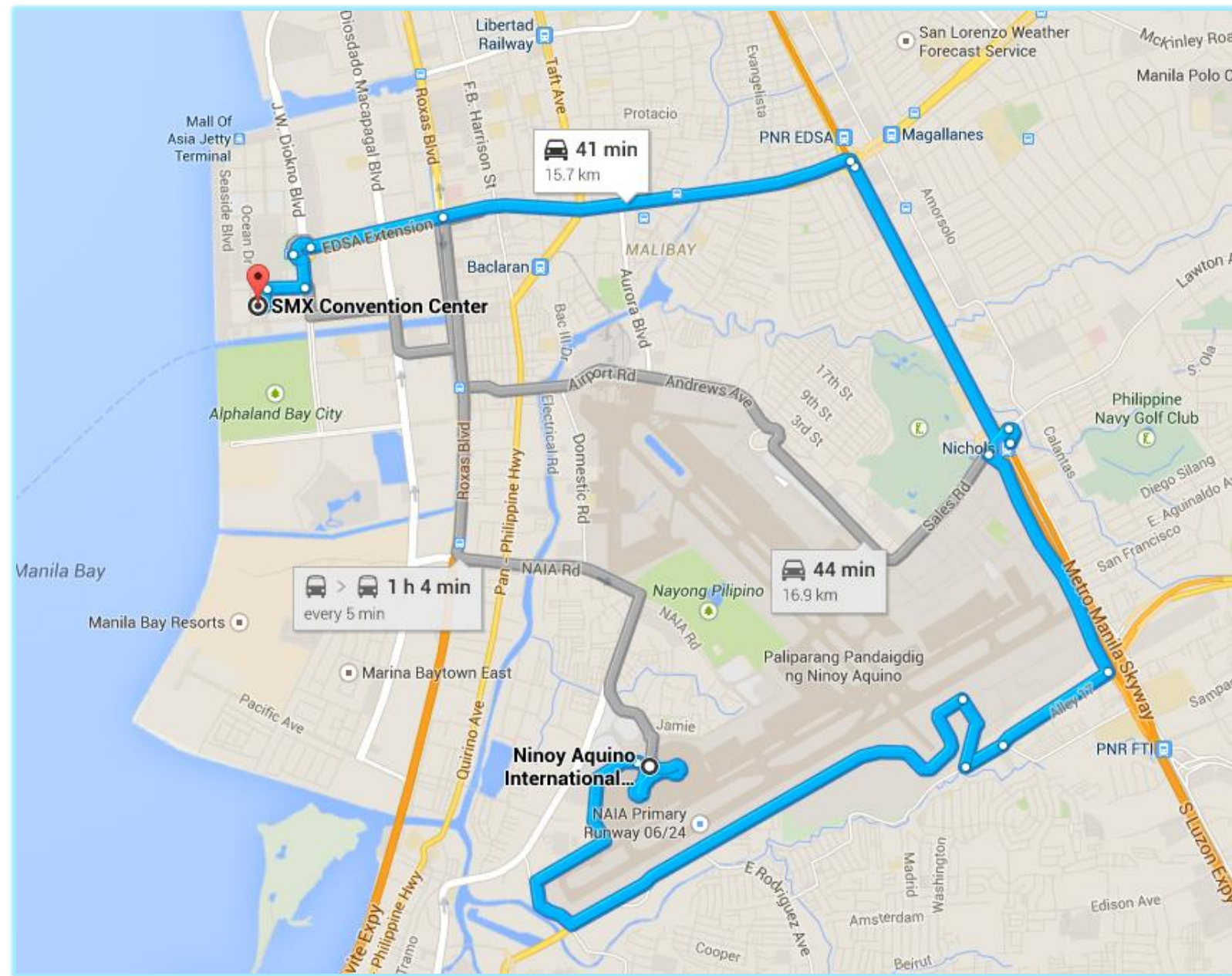
If you happened to pick up a normal taxi (which is white in color), they charge a minimum flat rate of PHP 40. We highly suggest that you pick up the airport taxi instead, for your utmost safety.

Just tell the driver that you'll go to SMX Convention Center in Pasay City (near SM Mall of Asia) and you're good to go.

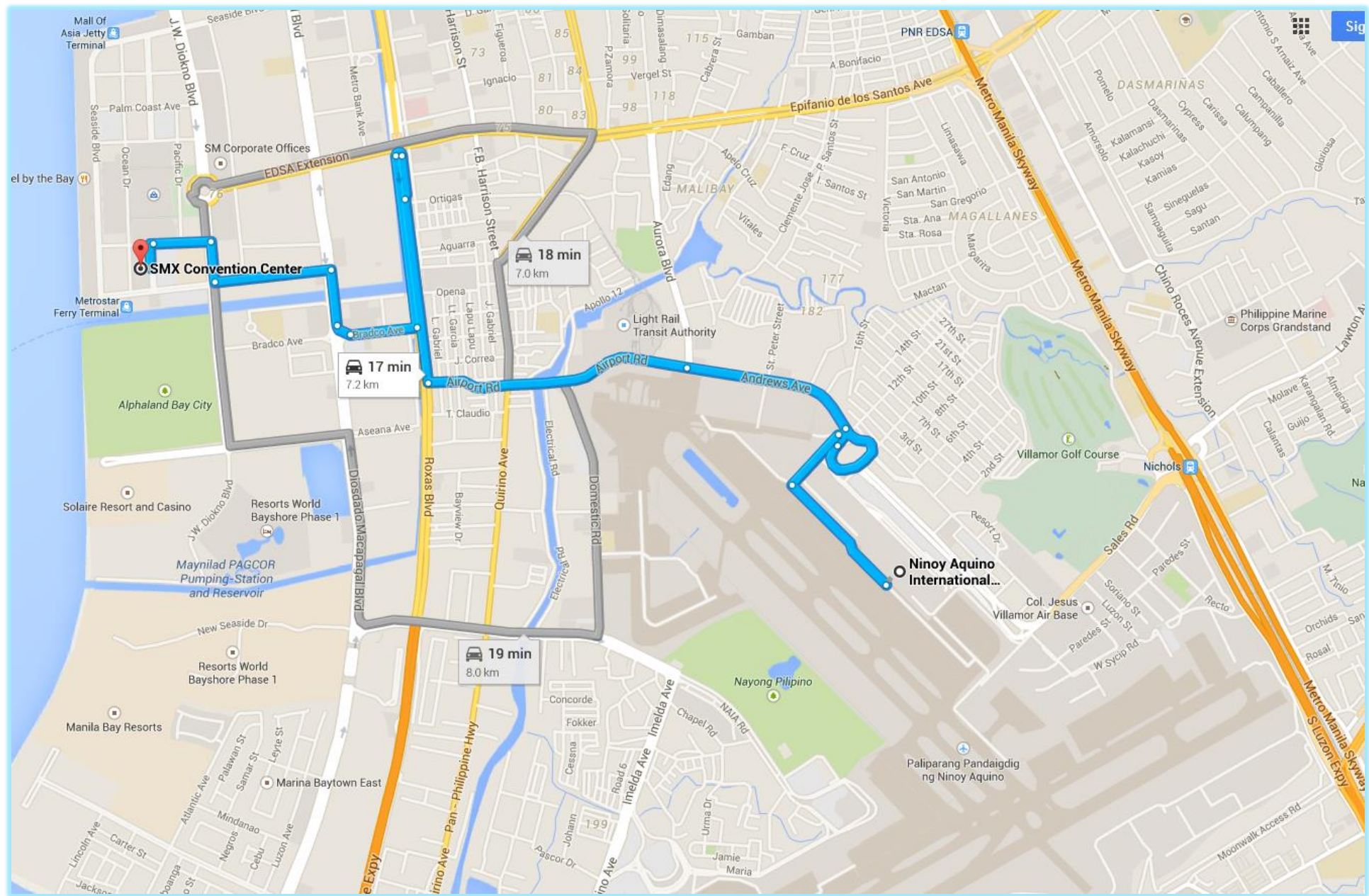
Maps are provided on the next pages.

NAIA 1 or 2 to SMX – <http://goo.gl/9NSQQN>

NAIA 3 to SMX – <http://goo.gl/5bpkUy>









**Staff Hotel:**

**Microtel Inn & Suites**

Address: Coralway Ave cor Seaside Blvd, Mall of Asia complex, Pasay City

Website: <http://web.microtelbywyndham-manila.com/>



*Outside view of Microtel Inn*

The staff hotel venue is very near the GP venue – actually just a short walk from it.

**GP Venue:**

The GP venue will be held at SMX Convention Center. It is one of the largest convention centers around the metro, and is very near the biggest malls around Asia which is SM Mall of Asia.

Website: <http://www.smxconventioncenter.com/others/location-map>



*(SMX Convention Center in Pasay City)*

General Information

Time Zone: GMT +8

**Climate:** It might be a bit cold during this time of the year, with temperatures between 20-25 degrees Celsius - appropriate clothing and a portable umbrella should be considered (*sudden, occasional raining happens*).

Regarding road traffic, traffic around Manila can be really bad during the morning (7AM up to 10AM) and again in the afternoon (3PM up to 8PM). While taking the taxi isn't really a good option, it is suggested that you commute via public bus.

**Currency:** PHP (*Philippine Peso or Piso in the vernacular - Tagalog*)  
Estimated Conversion: \$1 = PHP 43.50-44.50



Below are trade-accepted bank notes.


(25 centavo coin – Front and Back)

(1 peso coin – Front and Back)

(5 peso coin – Front and Back)

(10 peso coin – Front and back)

New Generation Philippine Bank Notes	Old Generation Philippine Bank Notes
	
(20 peso bill, Front and Back)	(20 peso bill, Front and Back)





(50 peso bill, Front and Back)



(50 peso bill, Front and Back)



(100 peso bill, Front and Back)



(100 peso bill, Front and Back)



(200 peso bill, Front and Back)



(200 peso bill, Front and Back)



(500 peso bill, Front and Back)



(500 peso bill, Front and Back)



(1000 peso bill, Front and Back)



(1000 peso bill, Front and back)

About Credit Cards / Debit Cards

Typical to about any metropolis such as Manila is the prevalence of cash-less transaction based on debit/credit cards in most establishments. But this is not the case on the streets where simpler food establishments and service providers are not likely to have such an option – bring just the right amount of local cash as pocket money.

Money Exchange

While it’s not advisable to exchange most of your money in the airport (*since most of them at the airport have lower exchange rates*), there are better money exchangers near the GP venue in SM Mall of Asia.

They are conveniently located in the department store section of the mall and some other locations as well; it’s very hard to miss it.

**Electricity:** 220W AC 60Hz. Socket type shown below.



**International Dialing Code:** +63

Mobile Calls and Data Plan:

There are three (3) major network providers in our Country, namely, GLOBE, SMART and SUN. They offer prepaid packages that are really cheap (the SIM cards for all those networks are cheap as well, ranging from 30 to 50 PHP). GLOBE or SMART is recommended. Rates are below.

If you need a mobile data package, SMART offers the best package for prepaid. You will need to inquire about their LTE-ready nano SIM card (if your phone is LTE-capable, cost is between 100-200 PHP).

With regards to LTE, SMART’s signal is good around the GP venue and in some parts of Manila. Going outside of Manila, however, will prove to be a different story.

<p>GLOBE Rates:</p> <p>SMS – PHP 1 per 160 characters</p> <p>Calls (GLOBE to GLOBE) – PHP 6.50 per minute</p> <p>Calls (GLOBE to other networks) – PHP 7.50 per minute</p> <p>Local Landline Calls – PHP 7.50 per minute</p> <p>International SMS – PHP 15 per 160 characters</p> <p>International Calls – USD 0.40 per minute</p> <p>3G Internet – 50 PHP per day.</p> <p>LTE – (only available for postpaid subscribers)</p>	<p>SMART Rates:</p> <p>SMS – PHP 1 per 160 characters</p> <p>Calls (SMART to SMART) - PHP 6.50 per minute</p> <p>Calls (SMART to other networks ) – PHP 7.50 per minute</p> <p>Local Landline Calls – PHP 7.50 per minute</p> <p>International SMS – PHP 15 per 160 characters</p> <p>International Calls – (rates vary)</p> <p>3G Internet – 50 PHP per day.</p> <p>LTE – 50 PHP per day, 250 PHP per week.</p>
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**Most Languages Spoken:** Tagalog and English (almost every Filipino, young or old, is conversationally fluent). Also, most of the Filipino language may end in “po” or “opo”. These are used as a sign of respect, especially to the elderly (*or seniors*) although they are likely to omit these when they realize that you are foreign.

Some of the words that you can use to communicate in Tagalog:

In English	In Tagalog
Good morning!	Magandang umaga po!
Good afternoon!	Magandang hapon po!
Good evening!	Magandang gabi po!
Thank you! / Thank you very much!	Salamat po! / Maraming salamat po!
You’re welcome.	Walang anuman.
How are you?	Kamusta po ikaw?
How much is this?	Magkano po ito?
What time is it?	Anong oras na po?
One/Two/Three/Four/Five	Isa/Dalawa/Tatlo/Apat/Lima
Six/Seven/Eight/Nine/Ten	Anim/Pito/Walo/Siyam/Sampu
One Hundred	Isang daan
One Thousand	Isang libo

## Public Transportation

*Around the city:*

### 1. Public Utility Bus

- Public Utility Buses travel along major roads in Metro Manila
- They have pre-determined stops, and a lot of these stops are near major landmarks in the metropolis.
- They come in two types – ordinary and air-conditioned. It is highly recommended that you take air-conditioned buses for comfort and safety's sake.
- Fares start at around PHP 12-15, and increase depending on distance travelled.
- A conductor will be on-board to collect fares and issue tickets (keep them for inspection). They know the stops like the back of their hand, so they can help if you need directions going somewhere.

### 2. Public Utility Jeepney

- A “mini” bus of sorts, characterized by their stainless steel body and often colorful design.
- They have a pre-determined route, and while some of them travel along major highways, they often travel minor roads as well.
- Majority of jeepneys do not have air-conditioning, except for Makati City, but they are still pretty rare.
- Fares start at Php 8.50, with additional fares depending on distance travelled. Most jeepneys have a fare matrix document posted inside for reference.
- This is where your coinage will matter. Hand your fare towards the driver as you mention where you are to alight and people will help pass it along. You get your change the same way.
- Jeepney stops are not often clearly defined, so etiquette dictates to ask the driver whether disembarking is allowed at your destination.



*(Public Utility Jeepney)*

### 3. Taxi

- Taxis will take you to any destination in Metro Manila.
- Fares start at Php 40, and increases at PHP 3.50 increments depending on distance and time travelled. Be wary when the driver suggests a flat rate instead of using the meter, as oftentimes it will be more expensive.
- An app for mobile phones is available that will allow you to call a cab to your location. They are GrabTaxi and EasyTaxi. Please refer to their website for more details on how to avail their service:

GrabTaxi: <http://grabtaxi.com/manila-philippines/>

EasyTaxi: <http://www.easytaxi.com/ph>

- Note that GrabTaxi and EasyTaxi charges PHP 70.00 for using their service, in addition to the fare that they'll charge you for the destination.



#### 4. MRT

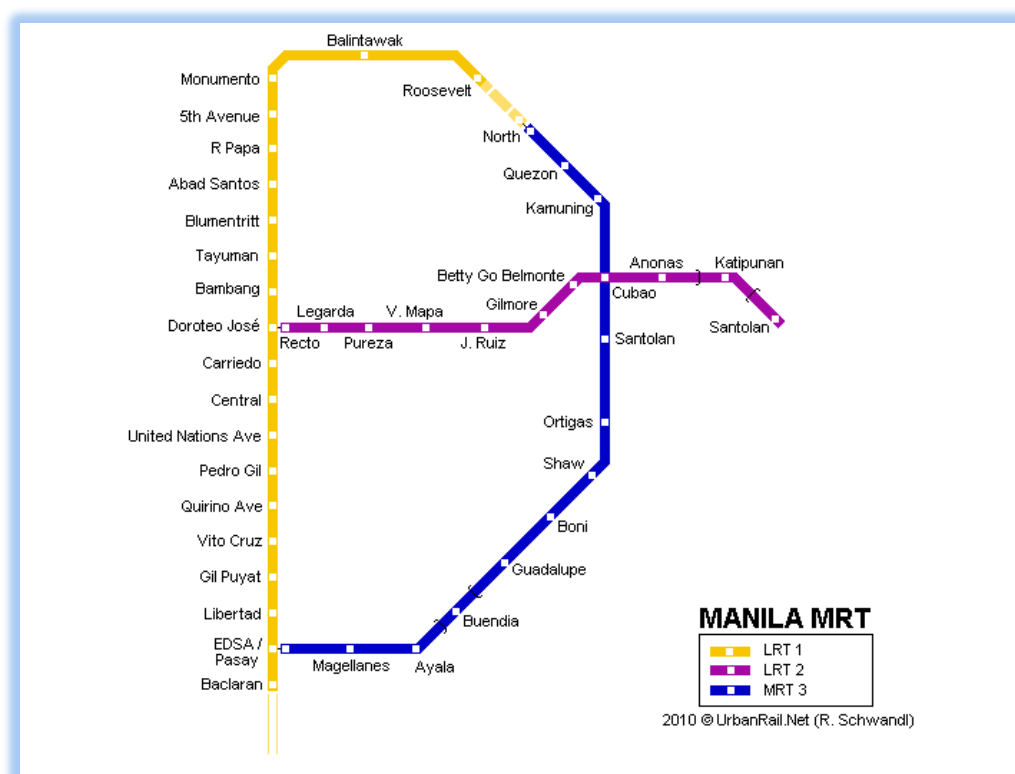
- The MRT (Metro Rail Transit) is an above-ground train that runs along EDSA (the metro's main highway).
- It travels all the way from North Avenue in Quezon City to Pasay City.
- Single-ride tickets are available between PHP 11-15 depending on how far your destination will be. Pre-paid tickets are available for PHP100 and are fully consumable with a last-ride bonus (*i.e. when your ticket is down to less than PHP 11, you don't need to pay for the remainder*).
- Since EDSA is a very well-travelled road, expect long queues and packed trains, but it is often the fastest way to travel along EDSA.

#### 5. LRT-1

- The LRT-1 (*or Light Rail Transit 1*) is an above-ground train that runs through Pasay City, Manila, Caloocan City and Quezon City.
- It travels all the way from Baclaran in Pasay City, to North Edsa in Quezon City.
- Single-Ride Tickets are available between PHP 12-20 depending on how far your destination will be. Pre-paid tickets are available for PHP100 and are fully consumable with a last-ride bonus (*i.e. when your ticket is down to less than PHP 12, you don't need to pay for the remainder*).
- Expect long queues and packed trains, but it is often the fastest way to get around Manila.

#### 6. LRT-2

- The LRT-2 (*or Light Rail Transit 2*) is an above-ground train that runs through Manila, San Juan, Quezon City and Marikina City.
- It travels all the way from Recto in Manila to Santolan in Marikina.
- Single-Ride Tickets are available between PHP 12-20 depending on how far your destination will be. Pre-paid tickets are available for PHP100 and are fully consumable with a last-ride bonus (*i.e. when your ticket is down to less than PHP 12, you don't need to pay for the remainder*).
- The LRT-2 is a much bigger train than the LRT and MRT. Though some stations will have long queues, trains are usually not that packed.



The map above shows the train path around Manila. The blue line represents EDSA, while the Yellow line represents some parts of Manila. The purple line is a connecting lane going from Cubao to Recto.

### **What to do around Manila?**

Manila in general, has a very rich history and most of the historical landmarks are maintained to date. There are a lot of places to mention in this guide, but for this guide to be shorter here are some links to those places you may want to visit during your stay in Manila:

[http://www.tripadvisor.com.ph/Attractions-g298573-Activities-Manila\\_Metro\\_Manila\\_Luzon.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com.ph/Attractions-g298573-Activities-Manila_Metro_Manila_Luzon.html)

<http://celdrantours.blogspot.com/>

### **Party Places around the Metro**

If you are looking to spend your nights under great lights, with great people and sights, the best (*and also the nearest*) places to start are Bonifacio Global City (*Taguig*) and Makati City. These vibrant city centers are business hubs during the day but also house the best places to party by dark. Their diverse offerings of various activity and ambience will suit almost every nightowl's wanting.

<http://manilaclubbing.com/best-clubs-in-manila/>

### **Outside Manila**

If you are planning to go outside of Manila to explore, here are some places that are recommended to go to:

#### ***Tagaytay***

Tagaytay is very famous for its cold weather and its trademark volcano, Mount Taal. Think of it as a Volcanic Island (*though it is no longer active*). If you want to visit the said volcano and do horseback riding, this is a great place to visit. From Manila, it should take at least 3-4 hours travel time.



*(Aerial view of the Taal Volcano)*





*(Tagaytay Picnic Grove)*

### ***Baguio***

A tiny metropolis nestled high above the mountain ranges of the Cordillera; Baguio is just a few hours (3 to 6 hours) away north of Manila. From just being dubbed as the ‘*Summer Capital*’, Baguio has evolved into a center of **commerce** and **education**.

The city is well-known for its cool weather (especially during the summer months), majestic sights, colorful history and rich cultural heritage. Most importantly, it serves as a gateway to nearby provinces, providing easier access to other renowned destinations such as the *Strawberry Fields* of La Trinidad, the *Sleepy Town* of Sagada, and the wondrous *Rice Terraces* of Ifugao.



*(The famous Lion's Head)*





*(Burnham Lake Park)*

***Palawan*** (by Wil Dizon)\*

When you come back from a visit to the Philippines, there is a good chance that your friends will be asking if you went to Palawan – probably the hottest destination the country has to offer. Two sites on the island were nominated into the UNESCO roster of new wonders – the Tubbataha Reef and Puerto Princesa’s Underground River – the latter actually winning a slot into the title.

Getting to Palawan is usually done by plane from Manila – a short 50 minute flight. Getting to the island was recently again made possible by sea but such a trip takes at least 24 hours not counting the time it takes for things like vessel boarding and other nuances. Palawan’s night life has become increasingly vibrant through the years. Its major urban areas are now dotted by establishments meant to accommodate needs felt after dark. Local Filipino cooking, from all regions, has melded very well in Palawan – partly due to the fact that migration from the North (Luzon), South (Visayas) and from Mindanao has been continuous for a long time. The top destinations to hit are still El Nido and Puerto Princesa.





The provincial capital, Puerto Princesa, is located smack in the middle of the island. Its offers a rapidly growing array of offerings with island hopping, cave spelunking and wildlife displays as the most vogue of attractions. Spend at least two nights at Puerto Princesa to enjoy the best of what it can offer – bring at least \$160 to get you through, add a little for souvenirs (this does not include your airline ticket).

El Nido, located at the north end of the main Palawan Island, is blessed with a world-class collection of uniquely distinct islands well-known for its sights and shores. Getting to El Nido from Puerto Princesa costs a day's trip by land. El Nido's main attraction is almost exclusively island hopping - guests from around the world have been known to spend months in El Nido. Although it may sound like simple by description, El Nido is said to be the best place in all of Palawan – it takes at least three nights of stay to understand fully what was meant (\$200 should be enough for food, lodging, day touring and shopping – this excludes transportation costs outside of day tours).

*\* Judge Wil Dizon worked as a Palawan Travel Specialist for at least three years. He was General Manager of Isla Palawano – a successful travel concierge based on the island. He also played live music in at least six towns in the said province.*

**Sightseeing and shop attractions near the venue:**

**SM Mall of Asia**

Address: Seaside Blvd, Pasay City

Website: <http://smmallofasia.com/>



*(Outside view – SM Mall of Asia)*

SM Mall of Asia is one of the biggest malls in the Philippines. Everything you might need is here. There are a lot of restaurants, shopping places and entertainment centers inside the mall (*there's even a bowling alley, an arena and an ice skating rink inside*).

**Resorts World Manila**

Address: Newport Boulevard, Newport City, Pasay, 1309, Manila

Website: <http://www.rwmanila.com/>



*(Exterior of Resorts World Manila)*

Resorts World Manila is located near the airport. There are two hotels inside this compound (Remington and Maxims Hotel, respectively) which you can stay in (*though it's a bit expensive*). They also have a casino inside, if you want to try out your luck (*free membership is required to go inside the casino, and there are house rules inside including dress code*).

Also, Resorts World Manila has their own theater called "Newport Performing Arts Theater" where there are live shows being held every month (*like operas and stage plays*).

### **Solaire Resort and Casino**

Address: 1 Aseana Avenue, Entertainment City, Parañaque City

Website: <http://solaireresort.com/>



Solaire Resort and Casino is located near the GP venue, though you'll have to ride a taxi from the venue in order to get here. Like Resorts World Manila, they also have a casino if you want to try out your luck.

### **Aling Tonya's Seafood Dampa**

Address: Seaside Macapagal, D. Macapagal Blvd. Manila Bay Reclamation Area, Pasay

Aling Tonya's is one of the popular food places near the GP venue. They are offering a wide variety of dishes, ranging from local Filipino cuisine and some other foreign dishes as well. The best thing about this place is that you can choose to buy the ingredients from their store (*mostly seafood*) and they will prepare it for you.



### **Buffet 101 / Vikings**

Address:

(Buffet 101) Building K, SM By the Bay, Sunset Blvd., Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City

(Vikings) Building B, SM By the Bay, Sunset Blvd., Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City

Both of these establishments offer a wide range of local and international cuisine. While their prices are a bit competitive (may range from PHP 688 and PHP 1088, depending on the day you're going to dine in), they have the best reputation when it comes to buffet dining in these parts of the mall. If you're looking for a great selection of food, they have it here.









Local Food in the Philippines

Cuisine

Filipino cuisine, in general, is not the healthiest, as they are often full of fat and sodium. People watching their diet against these should consume local stuff in moderation. Certain traditional dishes can be exotic in nature, so some of them are not for the faint of heart. Also, we recommend eating the dishes along with steamed rice as they were meant for such.

For traditional Filipino dishes, we recommend the following:

 <p>(Chicken Adobo)</p>	<p><b>Adobo</b>— Meat, seafood, or vegetables marinated in a sauce of vinegar, soy sauce, and garlic, browned in oil, and simmered in the marinade.</p> <p>The meat used in the dish varies between pork, chicken, and sometimes includes the innards (like the gizzard and liver of the chicken). It is believed that Adobo is the most common of dishes in the country.</p>
 <p>(Pork Sinigang)</p>	<p><b>Sinigang</b>— A soup (or stew) made with a sour soup base (usually tamarind) made with pork, fish (salmon or milkfish), beef or shrimp.</p> <p>It also includes a variety of vegetables, including tomatoes, radishes, eggplant, <i>kangkong</i> (water spinach), onions, <i>sitaw</i> (beans), okra and <i>gabi</i> (taro).</p>
 <p>(Traditional Sisig)</p>	<p><b>Sisig</b> – Diced meat (usually a pig’s jowls and ears, sometimes includes the liver) served with garlic, onions, and chili peppers, topped with a raw egg, and often served on a sizzling platter.</p> <p>Though most frequently made with pork, variants include fish (tuna or milkfish), or sometimes even tofu cubes. Commonly paired with alcohol as a snack while drinking but also popularly found on dinner tables</p>

 <p>(Bicol Express)</p>	<p><b>Bicol Express</b> – If you like extremely spicy food, then you have got to try this out. It is a stew made of meat (almost every kind of meat has been tried) long chilies, mixed in coconut milk, shrimp paste or stockfish, onion, pork and garlic.</p>
 <p>(Bistek Tagalog)</p>	<p><b>Bistek Tagalog (Filipino Beef Steak)</b> – Bistek tagalog is a dish made from strips of sirloin beef, slowly cooked in soy sauce, calamansi (or Calamondin, commonly known as Philippine Lime) juice and lots of onions.</p>
 <p>(Kare-kare paired with shrimp paste)</p>	<p><b>Kare-Kare</b> – A local stew made of oxtail (sometimes this is the only meat used), pork hocks, calves feet, pig feet, beef stew meat; and occasionally offal, or tripe. Vegetables may include eggplants, Chinese cabbage, daikon, green beans or asparagus beans.</p> <p>As for the soup base, it’s made from ground roasted peanuts or peanut butter, onions and garlic. The main stew is often made bland intentionally as it is meant to be eaten with shrimp paste (always served with it), and can be eaten plain or spicy (if preferred).</p> <p>Shrimp paste is salty and is packed with a cacophony of flavor.</p>
 <p>(Nilagang Baka, sometimes with cooked bananas)</p>	<p><b>Nilagang Baka</b> – A very common dish in the Philippines that is made of beef, potatoes and some vegetables cooked in a beef soup base.</p> <p>Unlike sinigang, this one isn’t sour but rather savory.</p>





*(Traditional lechon, roasted in charcoal)*

**Lechon** – A traditional dish for every Filipino celebration, lechon is basically roast pig but the entire cooking process involves the pig roasted whole.



*(Typical Chicken Inasal, served with rice and fried garlic)*

**Chicken Inasal** – While the dish originated outside Manila, the dish is quite popular across the archipelago nowadays.

Chicken Inasal is grilled chicken treated in a special vinegar marinade.



Local Delicacies

Here are some local delicacies that you may want to try during your stay in the Philippines:



(Balut Eggs, served hot)

**Balut** – A very famous delicacy around the Philippines, Balut eggs are ducklings that are boiled before they are hatched.

Quite an exotic food by many, it’s best eaten with salt and/or vinegar.



(Kwek-kwek / Tokneneng)

**Kwek-kwek / Tokneneng** – Kwek-kwek (*as the locals call it*) are essentially normal hard-boiled chicken eggs that are dipped in batter and fried.

This is a very common street food found in the Philippines, and is usually eaten by dipping it with vinegar or a sweet or spicy sauce.

The small ones are called “Tokneneng”, and they are made of hard-boiled quail eggs.



(Special Halo-Halo)

**Halo-Halo** – A very famous local dessert here in the Philippines. It is made with assorted sweet beans and fruits and is topped with milk, purple yam and ice cream. Shaved ice is also added to the mix.

The idea of eating it is to mix the ingredients all together in the glass rather than eating it piece by piece. Hence, the word “Halo” (*HA-LOH*), which means “to mix” in English.



(Pastillas de Leche)

**Pastillas** – These are sweet milk candies that are usually soft in texture. They are usually served as dessert but can also be eaten as a quick snack.

The milk often used is from Carabao’s milk, but cow’s milk can be also used to make these sweets.



*(Taho, with sago and syrup)*

**Taho** – Taho is a usual morning snack being sold around the Philippines, and is made with hot, soft bean curd, a sweet syrup and tapioca balls (*sago in Tagalog*) that are also mixed together.



*(Assorted Puto)*

**Puto** – Puto is a steamed rice cake. They are usually very soft and spongy.

There are a lot of varieties of puto being sold in the Philippines, with most of them having cheese on top or sometimes, chicken or pork meat inside.



*(Traditional Buko Pie)*

**Buko Pie** – Buko Pie is a custard pie made from fresh, young coconut meat.

Buko Pie is mildly sweet, and is best eaten hot.

# General Information and Safety Tips

## Pickpockets

Be careful especially in crowded areas. Never carry your wallet, passport, mobile devices in a backpack on your back when walking around in a crowded location, or in a cramped bus/train. Pay attention to your luggage at all times.

## Swindlers

It is best to travel with a local when touring the city. Having a local with you ensures that you will never need to pay more than what you need to for goods and services, as the possibility of swindlers overcharging you for your purchases is very real.

## Fake Taxis

While taking taxis to travel is a good option, there are some opportunistic taxi drivers who might sometimes try to rob you (*especially knowing that you’re a foreigner*). In this case, be careful of what taxi you ride into. It is suggested that you use the “GrabTaxi” or “EasyTaxi” service or ride a taxi outside malls (*they are attended with security men for your convenience and safety*).

## Emergency

The Philippines’ emergency number is **117**. You can use a mobile phone (*with a local carrier in the Philippines*) to make a call to 117, just in case you are lost or having troubles during your stay in Manila (*such as robberies and accidents*).

## Local Contact Numbers:

Wil Dizon (+63943-679-7533)	
Phil Peña (+63917-934-7475)	