

Philippines

Capital:	Manila
Population:	89.4 million (approx)
Religion:	83% Roman Catholic, 9% Protestant, 5% Muslim, 3% Buddhist. Animists and unaffiliated persons number 400,000.
Government:	Republic. The president, directly elected to a single six year term, has executive power, governing with the assistance of an appointed cabinet. Legislative authority is vested in a bicameral popularly elected Congress consisting of a 250 member House of Representatives and a 24 member Senate.
Ethnic Groups:	92% Christian Malay, 4% Muslim Malay, 2% Chinese.
Language:	Pilipino (from Tagalog, a Malay dialect) is the national language. English is the other official language. There are eight major dialects - Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan. Over 87 languages are indigenous to the Philippines.
Currency:	The Philippine's unit of currency is the peso, indicated by a 'PHP'.

- Lying in the western Pacific Ocean, the Philippines is the world's second largest archipelago after Indonesia. It comprises 7,107 islands; 1,000 of them inhabited. These islands have been inhabited since before recorded human history. To this day, one can find human culture at every level of technology living there. Many Filipinos live in modern, bustling cities, while others live in isolated tropical jungles at a stone age level of civilisation. For example, the Tasaday tribe of hunter-gatherers on Mindanao Island only came into contact with the outside world in 1971.
- Culturally, Filipinos are unique. Although the majority are of Malay stock, and over 100 distinct ethnic groups live in the Philippines, most have Hispanic surnames, are Roman Catholic (this is the only Christian nation in Asia), and speak some English which makes the Philippines the fourth largest English-speaking country in the world, after the United States, the United Kingdom, and India.
- Many Filipinos see their history as a struggle against foreign domination, first by Spain, then by the United States. Only since 1946 has the Republic of the Philippines been an independent nation. As a result, foreigners should be especially sensitive to Filipino's ambivalence towards the United States. Foreigners should avoid assuming that references to the United States, in communication with Filipinos, are positive or negative. They could be either, but probably they are not neutral. Approach such references cautiously.
- Women have traditionally played a prominent part in life both in the home and in politics.

Business and Social Etiquette

- Foreigners are expected to be on time for all business appointments. Filipinos tend to be reasonably punctual for business meetings.
- It is usual to shake hands on greeting and leaving. Foreign business women may initiate a handshake with Filipino men or women.
- Always use academic or professional titles where appropriate.
- Business cards may be printed in English; it is not necessary to translate them into Filipino. The exchange of business cards is more casual than in other parts of Asia.
- Because of the heat and humidity, business dress for Filipinos is often casual: dark trousers and white, short sleeved shirts for men, white long sleeved blouses and skirts for women.
- Filipinos consider everyone worthy of respect. The more important you are, the more you are expected to be humble and generous.
- Speak in quiet, gentle tones. Filipinos revere harmony.
- The pace of business negotiations in the Philippines is much slower than in the United States.
- Because Filipinos avoid conflict, they are unlikely to say what they think the other person wants to hear. Filipinos try hard not to say 'no'. In the Philippines, 'yes' can mean anything from 'I agree' to 'maybe' to 'no'. Thus, do not interpret a Filipino's politeness as acceptance of a business proposal. Tactfully press for a clear understanding of a positive response before you celebrate.
- Expect to see your Filipino business partners often at social situations. Never decline an invitation to a social event.
- Remember that social contacts are more important in the Philippines than business ones. A Filipino must like you and be comfortable with you, in order to do business. Make an effort to build warm personal relationships with your Filipino counterparts.
- Filipinos smile constantly. However, as with the Japanese, smiles and laughter do not necessarily indicate happiness or amusement. Filipinos may laugh or smile in situations that westerners consider inappropriate. Smiles hide embarrassment and discord. Filipino business people may laugh at the most serious part of a business meeting.
- While foreigners are not expected to smile as much as Filipinos, they are expected to restrain their temper. As in Japan, one who expresses anger in public has shamefully lost face and respect.
- Food is vitally important in Filipino culture. Social occasions always involve food. Expect to be invited to dinners and parties at the home of your Filipino partner. Celebrate the conclusion of a business deal by inviting your Filipino partners to a restaurant. The person who issued the invitation always pays.
- Gift giving is an important part of Filipino society. Flowers and food are the most common gifts. When invited to a Filipino home, bring flowers or a delicacy, such as chocolates. Filipinos follow the Asian habit of not opening gifts in the presence of the giver.

Language

- Many Filipinos did not have surnames until the mid-nineteenth century. In 1849, the Spanish government ordered all Filipinos to adopt Hispanic surnames. Families chose surnames from lists provided by the government, and the first letter of every surname on a list was specific to a particular area. Even today, the first letter of a person's surname can provide information about where his or her family originally came from.
- Always use titles when known eg. Minister, Engineer, or Mr, Mrs or Miss if unknown. Avoid using Filipino's first names unless invited to.
- Some Filipino women choose to hyphenate their family names after marriage.

English	Tagalog	Phonetics
Hello	Kumasta	Koom-ah-stah
Good morning	Magandang umaga po	Ma-gahn-dahng oo-mah-gah po
Good evening	Magandang gabi po	Ma-gahn-dahng ga-bee po
Good bye	Paalam	Pa-ah-lahm
Yes	Opo	O-po
No	Hindi po	Heen-dee po
Please	Paki	Pah-key
Thank you	Salamat po	Sah-lah-maht po
You're welcome	Walang anu man	Wah-lahng ah-noo mahn
I don't understand	Paki ulit po	Pah-key oo-lit po

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