

Philippines

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

The Philippines is a developing nation in the lower half of the world's economies. Located in Southeast Asia in the Pacific Ocean and consisting of more than 7,000 islands, the climate classifications range from humid equatorial (no dry season) in the south to humid equatorial (long dry season) in the north.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Philippines, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- Requirement: A vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This also applies to all airport transit stops in risk countries.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, Japanese encephalitis, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2018) Malaria risk exists throughout the year in areas below 600 m, except in the 22 provinces of Aklan, Albay, Benguet, Biliran, Bohol, Camiguin, Capiz, Catanduanes, Cavite, Cebu, Guimaras, Iloilo, Northern Leyte, Southern Leyte, Marinduque, Masbate, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Western Samar, Siquijor, Sorsogon, Surigao Del Norte, and metropolitan Manila. No risk is considered to exist in urban areas or in the plains. Human *P.knowlesi* infection has been reported in the province of Palawan.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) ^a

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Present in rural areas <600 m (1,969 ft) except none in the 22 provinces of Aklan, Albay, Benguet, Biliran, Bohol, Camiguin, Capiz, Catanduanes, Cavite, Cebu, Guimaras, Iloilo, Northern Leyte, Southern Leyte, Marinduque, Masbate, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Western Samar, Siquijor, Sorsogon, and Surigao Del Norte. None in metropolitan Manila and other urban areas.

- | Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Low.
- | Drug resistance⁴: Chloroquine.
- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 70%-80%, *P. vivax* 20%-30%, *P. knowlesi* rare.
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine.

⁴ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

Moderate risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chikungunya, dengue, murine typhus, scrub typhus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, avian influenza, enteroviruses, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, schistosomiasis, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to terrorism, kidnapping (including maritime kidnapping), and other ongoing security concerns, Canada (GAC) advises avoiding travel to western and central Mindanao, including Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; advises avoiding travel to the southern Sulu Sea, including the waters south of Palawan Island; and advises reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to eastern Mindanao. U.S. (DOS), U.K. (FCO), and Australia (DFAT) have more limited warnings.

Terrorism Risk

High risk of attack by domestic terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially on Mindanao Island. Targets may include domestic and international organizations and businesses; public places and events, including those frequented by tourists; and transportation systems.

High risk of kidnapping by terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially on Mindanao Island and in the Sulu Archipelago and coastal resorts and offshore areas in the Sulu and Celebes seas. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners).

Crime

Moderate risk of violent crime (armed robbery, sexual assault, assault, and murder) and high risk of petty crime exist

throughout the country, especially in Manila (including the Makati Central Business District), Cebu and other large cities; in resort towns; on or near public transportation, and in crowded malls.

Kidnappings by criminal groups occur throughout the country, especially in cities. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners).

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities.

Unsafe Areas

Armed conflict occurs, a dangerous security environment exists, and ethnic tensions are present on Mindanao Island and in surrounding areas.

In 2017, intense conflict between military forces and militants resulted in significant infrastructure destruction to Marawi City, Mindanao Island. Martial law (including curfews and security checkpoints) has been in place since May 2017.

Piracy (involving commercial and private, leisure vessels) occurs in coastal or international waters, especially in the Sulu and Celebes seas.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries traveling between islands. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Transportation Safety

Risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is 7 to 12 per 100,000 population. The rate is less than 10 in most high-income countries. Speed laws are poorly enforced.

Traffic flows on the right-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Avoid public buses and light rail due to safety and security concerns, including risk of armed robbery.

Many taxis are unsafe. Use taxis from official ranks or dispatched via smart phone app or radio from a reputable company and ascertain the license or identification number of the dispatched vehicle.

Airline Safety

U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The typhoon season is from May through December. The monsoon season is from May through December. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur, including in Manila.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Philippines

- | United States: [+63] 2-301-2000; ph.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+63] 2-857-9000; www.philippines.gc.ca
- | United Kingdom: [+63] 2-858-2200; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-manila
- | Australia: [+63] 2-7578-100; www.philippines.embassy.gov.au

Philippines' Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: www.philippineembassy-usa.org
- | In Canada: philembassy.ca
- | In the U.K.: londonpe.dfa.gov.ph
- | In Australia: www.philembassy.org.au

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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