

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 US 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 classified as lower middle income. 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.

Vaccinations

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 airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours 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, typhoid fever, or a one time polio booster if you haven't previously received one for travel. 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 US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

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

(2019) Malaria risk exists throughout the year in 9 remaining endemic provinces (Palawan, Sultan Kudarat, Davao del norte, Maguindanao, Sulu, Mindoro occidental, Tawi-tawi, Cagayan Valley and Davao City).

- 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 Palawan and Mindanao Islands. None in metropolitan Manila and other urban areas.

- Drug resistance³: Chloroquine.
- Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 70%–80%, *P. vivax* 20%–30%, *P. knowlesi* rare.

- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, or tafenoquine.⁴

³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

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, anthrax disease, avian influenza, enteroviruses, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, Nipah virus, schistosomiasis, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the US Department of State (DOS), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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 Bangsamoro 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. US (DOS), UK (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 may infrequently occur and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

Armed conflict occurs in western and central Mindanao Island and the Sulu Archipeligo. Armed groups may be present in rural areas throughout the country. 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

High risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road traffic death rate is 12 to 24 per 100,000 population. The rate is less than 10 in most high-income countries.

Speed laws are poorly enforced.

Drunk driving laws are poorly enforced.

Structural standards for vehicles may not meet international standards.

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] 2-7757-8100; www.philippines.embassy.gov.au

Philippines' Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.philippineembassy-usa.org
- In Canada: ottawape.dfa.gov.ph
- 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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