MASTER
LIVEABOARDS

Anilao to Coron, Philippines

10 Nights Itinerary

- **Arrival airport:** Manila, Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL)
- **Departure airport:** Busuanga, Francisco B. Reyes Airport (USU)

- **Embarkation:** Anilao Port, Mabini, Batangas at 13:00
- **Disembarkation:** Coron, Busuanga at 10:00

Flights and Transfers

Flight Advice

We suggest booking International flights to and from Manila (MNL). Return flights from Coron depart from Busuanga Airport (USU), with regular domestic connections to Manila.

We recommend arriving in Manila at least one day before embarkation to allow for flight delays or schedule changes and to make sure you start your trip well rested.

Guests intending to fly from Busuanga on the day of disembarkation should allow at least 3 hours between disembarkation and their flight.

Please allow plenty of time (at least 3 hours) between domestic and international flight times for luggage reclamation, transfer between terminals, check-in and immigration clearance.

Transfer information

Anilao

Anilao is around 120km (75 miles) south of Manila by road. Journey times depend heavily on Manila traffic and are typically between two and a half and four hours, so we strongly recommend spending the night before embarkation in Manila or Anilao.

Coron

Transfer Busuanga Airport to Coron Port takes around 35-45 minutes

Diving Information

This route covers a wide range of conditions. Anilao and Puerto Galera can have strong tidal currents, the Verde Island Drop Off and the outer walls of Apo Reef are often dived as drifts, and the main Coron wrecks lie between around 10m and 34m (33ft and 112ft). Penetration of the wrecks is at the dive guides' discretion and only for divers with appropriate training, experience and equipment.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers ***must have PADI Advanced Open Water*** certification, or equivalent, with **a *minimum of 50 logged dives*** and **experience in strong currents.**

Any guests who do not meet the minimum requirements, or who our crew feel have insufficient experience or skills to dive safely in certain conditions may be denied participation in some or all dives during the liveaboard.

All divers must have insurance which covers scuba diving and all costs which may be incurred as a result of a diving-related incident. We strongly recommend purchasing diving-specific insurance (e.g. DiveAssure, DAN, etc.) before your trip departure.

Recompression Chambers

From Anilao, the nearest hyperbaric chamber is at St. Patrick's Hospital in Batangas City. From Coron, there is a government-funded chamber centre, although availability of services can not be guaranteed. The nearest reliable facilities are located in Metro Manila.

In the unlikely event of an accident, *private emergency air evacuation may be needed* to access these facilities, depending on where we are in the itinerary. In such an event, *you will be liable for all evacuation costs.*

It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all evacuation costs in addition to recompression chamber and/or hospital treatment.

Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions.

Marine Park & Port Fees: 150 (payable on board only)

PLEASE NOTE: ***Marine park fees are subject to change without notice.*** The applicable amount at the time of departure will be added to your onboard bill to be paid before disembarkation.

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 28

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel and, while we endeavour to ensure the maximum number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, this is only indicative and not guaranteed. Weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific area in good time and may impact the number of dives that are possible.

Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or understand English, please contact us.

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

Day 1: Embarkation at 13:00 followed by lunch, briefings, relaxation and dinner. There is ***no diving on embarkation day.***

Day 2-9: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day, depending on location, cruising logistics and land visits. A typical full diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast
- Briefing and dive 1
- Full Breakfast and relaxation
- Briefing and dive 2
- Lunch and relaxation
- Briefing and dive 3
- Snacks and relaxation
- Briefing for sunset or night dive, where possible
- Dinner

Day 10: One morning dive and a visit to Barracuda Lake before cruising to Coron Harbour in the afternoon

Day 11: Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation between 09:30 and 10:00.

*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and the departure of their flight.

Diving Areas & Dive Sites

The following is a sample of dive sites we may visit on this itinerary. *The safety of our guests is paramount, and we always do our best to offer diving at alternative locations should we be unable to visit or remain at any of the locations listed below.*

Disclaimer: This information is only a general overview of the key areas this itinerary usually covers and some of the dive sites at each location. ***The inclusion of specifically named dive sites is not guaranteed,*** and there may be dives at sites that are not listed below.

While we wish to show you the best diving possible, various factors determine the exact route the yacht follows and the dive sites we visit. ***Weather, tides, currents, and sea conditions are just some of the considerations that play a part in the Cruise Director's decision of where the vessel is heading, and which sites are chosen to dive.***

Anilao

Anilao sits on the Calumpang Peninsula in Batangas, facing Balayan Bay and the Verde Island Passage. It built its reputation on small things: nudibranchs, frogfish, octopus and the kind of patient critter hunting that rewards slow fin kicks and a good eye.

Koala & Twin Rocks

Koala is a sandy, rubble-strewn slope where wonderpus, harlequin shrimp and the occasional rhinopias have been found. Twin Rocks is a gentle slope mostly dived above 18m (59ft), with small schools of jacks, barracuda and batfish over the reef, and squat lobsters tucked into the crinoids. Both are relaxed dives and good places to sort out your weighting.

Secret Bay

Anilao's best-known muck site and one for the photographers. At first sight, it appears to be just a barren, dark, silty slope. Take your time looking closely though and mimic and blue-ringed octopus, flamboyant cuttlefish, frogfish, and a long list of nudibranchs start to show themselves.

Kirby's Rock

Anilao's best-known muck site and one for the photographers. At first sight, it appears to be just a barren, dark, silty slope. Take your time looking closely though and mimic and blue-ringed octopus, flamboyant cuttlefish, frogfish, and a long list of nudibranchs start to show themselves.

Kirby's Rock

A shallow wall that bottoms out around 16m (52ft) on one side, with a large boulder on the deeper side sloping to 30m (98ft). Golden pygmy seahorses, fire gobies and twinspot lionfish live here alongside moray eels and frogfish, so it rewards a slow, close look.

Anilao Pier

The pilings are coated in sponges, sea squirts and hydroids, and after dark they become a hunting ground. Frogfish, seahorses and cuttlefish are regulars, with the occasional mimic octopus wandering through.

Maricaban & Tingloy

Across the bay from Anilao, Maricaban Island and its neighbours are exposed to the currents running through the Verde Island Passage. That water movement feeds the soft corals and brings in more fish than the sheltered macro sites on the mainland side.

Sombrero Island

Named for its hat-like shape above the waterline, Sombrero is an undulating landscape of valleys and coral pillars that never drops much below 25m (82ft). A light current keeps the soft corals and gorgonians open, anthias and red-toothed triggerfish fill the water column, and turtles are often found resting on the reef.

Beatrice Rock

Soft corals and sponges cover this rocky outcrop, which makes it good frogfish and nudibranch territory. Turtles are frequent visitors.

Layag Layag

A steep, shallow slope between 10m and 18m (33ft and 59ft) with extensive hard coral and some very large Spanish dancers. Current here can range from moderate to fierce, so it is timed for slack water. When it runs, schools of pelagic fish are not unusual.

Verde Island & Puerto Galera

The Verde Island Passage separates Luzon from Mindoro and is one of the busiest stretches of water in the Philippines, both for shipping and for marine life. Marine scientists have described it as the 'centre of the centre' of shore fish diversity, and the strong tidal flows are a large part of the reason. Diving at Verde Island depends on the tide and the day's conditions.

Verde Island Drop Off

Two rocks breaking the surface at the east end of the island mark the top of a pinnacle that falls to around 300m (984ft). Anthias can be so thick that it is hard to see the reef behind them, and the walls carry soft corals, barrel sponges and sea fans more than 3m (10ft) across, the largest of them at around 30m (98ft). Morays, warty frogfish, banded sea snakes and hawksbill turtles live along the wall, jacks, tuna and mackerel work the blue, and in places small bubbles rise from volcanic vents in the seabed.

The Canyons, Puerto Galera

Three gullies cut into the reef, the deepest reaching around 30m (98ft). It is dived on the incoming tide, when the current runs through big sea fans and soft corals in pinks, purples and oranges. Sweetlips and scorpionfish shelter from the flow while jacks, batfish and Spanish mackerel work the edges. At the last canyon, an old anchor has become part of the reef.

Puerto Galera reefs

Around Sabang and Escarceo Point there is a good mix of reefs, small wrecks and sandy slopes, which gives the Cruise Director plenty of options depending on the tide. Expect macro life on the slopes and healthy hard coral on the shallower reefs.

Apo Reef

Around 28km (17 miles) west of Mindoro, Apo Reef Natural Park covers about 34km² (13 square miles) and is the largest coral reef system in the Philippines. It has been protected since 1980, with fishing banned since 2007, and the difference shows in the size and number of fish. A ranger base and lighthouse stand on Apo Island, the largest of its three small islands.

Shark Ridge

On the eastern side of the reef, a slope dropping to around 25m (82ft) where blacktip and whitetip reef sharks are commonly seen. Mantas pass through from time to time.

Binangaan Drop Off

A deep wall below the rocky island of Apo Menor, dressed in gorgonian fans. Groupers, schooling snapper and bumphead parrotfish are typical, with tuna hunting just off the wall.

Apo Island walls

West of the main reef, the walls around Apo Island are steep and well covered in coral. Turtles are common and several shark species patrol the drop-offs.

Hunter's Rock & Apo 29

Two submerged structures for experienced divers. Hunter's Rock starts around 10m (33ft) and is known for banded sea kraits. Apo 29 is a seamount where currents bring in bigger fish. Both are exposed, so we only dive them when conditions allow.

Northern Busuanga

Dugong snorkelling, Calauit

The seagrass beds off Calauit Island are home to a population of dugongs, and this excursion is run with local Tagbanua guides. We wait quietly for an animal to surface, then slip into the water with mask and snorkel. Chasing or crowding the dugongs is not allowed, and while sightings here are frequent they cannot be guaranteed. Turtles often share the seagrass.

Black Island

Also known as Malajon Island, Black Island is a dark limestone island off the northern coast of Busuanga, with caves above the waterline and reefs and wreckage below.

Coron Bay Wrecks

On 24th September 1944, aircraft from US Task Force 38 attacked a Japanese supply fleet sheltering in Coron Bay. Around ten wrecks lie in the bay today from just below the surface to around 46m (151ft), most of them heavily encrusted in coral and home to plenty of fish. Inside, holds, engine rooms and corridors still hold cargo and equipment.

Okikawa Maru

A 160m (525ft) tanker sitting upright with the seabed at 26m (85ft) and her deck between 10m and 16m (33ft and 52ft). The bow took the brunt of the attack and is twisted upwards, and the hull is covered in coral from end to end. Trained divers can follow routes through the holds and along the prop shaft, where there is a fair amount of ambient light. Current can be strong, especially around the stern.

Kogyo Maru

A Japanese freighter lying on her starboard side, with the deepest point at around 34m (112ft). She was carrying construction materials for an airstrip when she sank, and the holds still contain stacked cement bags, a small bulldozer and other machinery. Schools of barracuda often hang over the wreck.

Lusong Gunboat

A small vessel lying off Lusong Island in no more than 11m (36ft) of water, with her stern breaking the surface at low tide. Hard and soft corals cover the hull and the shallow depth makes this a relaxed dive.

Coron Island

Coron Island is a wall of jagged limestone and the ancestral domain of the Tagbanua people, who manage access to its lakes.

Barracuda Lake

Reaching the water involves a short but steep climb over limestone steps in your dive gear, which is part of the experience. The lake is fed by both fresh and salt water, and that layering makes for an unusual dive. Near the surface the water is around 28°C (82°F); at roughly 14m to 15m (45ft to 50ft) you pass through a visible boundary where it climbs to around 38°C (100°F), before cooling again near the bottom. The underwater limestone formations are striking, and a solitary barracuda is sometimes seen. Fish life is sparse; the geology is the reason to come.

Should you have any questions regarding the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveaboards.com