MASTER
LIVEABOARDS

Anilao & Verde Island, Philippines

7 nights Itinerary

- **Arrival airport:** Ninoy Aquino International, Manila (MNL)
- **Departure airport:** Ninoy Aquino International, Manila (MNL)

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

Flights and Transfers

Transfers between Manila airport or hotels and Anilao are not included in the liveaboard price, but can be arranged for an additional charge.

Advice on Flights

International flights should be booked into and out of Manila (MNL). We recommend that you plan to arrive in Manila at least one day before the liveaboard departure date to allow for possible flight disruptions or schedule changes and to ensure you make it to Anilao in good time for embarkation.

IMPORTANT: Anilao is around 120km (75 miles) south of Manila by road, and the journey usually takes between two and a half and four hours depending on traffic. We therefore strongly recommend spending the night before embarkation in Manila or Anilao.

Disembarkation in Anilao at the end of the liveaboard will be at 10:00. To allow for the road journey to Manila and check-in, we kindly ask guests not to book flights that depart earlier than 18:00 on the day of disembarkation.

Diving Information

This route combines macro and muck diving around Anilao with current-swept walls and drifts at Maricaban, Verde Island and Escarceo Point. Currents at Verde Island can be strong and can run up and down the wall as well as along it, so experience of diving in changeable currents is important.

The use of a dive computer is compulsory on all dives.

Minimum dive certification and experience

Divers wishing to join this itinerary must have Advanced Open Water certification, or equivalent, with a mandatory minimum of 50 logged dives and experience in medium to strong currents.

Any guests who our crew feel have insufficient skills or experience to dive safely in certain conditions may be denied participation in some or all dives during the liveaboard.

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities and accidents, including emergency evacuation costs. We strongly recommend purchasing diving-specific insurance (e.g. DiveAssure, DAN, etc.) before your trip departure.

Diving Emergencies

There are numerous recompression facilities throughout the Philippines, the most accessible of which are located in Manila, Cebu, Batangas and Subic. There is a hyperbaric chamber at St Patrick's Hospital Medical Center in Batangas City which would be the closest should an incident occur on this itinerary. However, should it be unavailable to deal with a diving emergency, private emergency air evacuation may be needed to access one of the other facilities.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all evacuation costs as well as recompression chamber and hospital treatment.

Diving-specific insurance should be purchased before your trip departure and must cover all costs which may be incurred as a result of a diving-related incident.

Water Temperatures and Exposure Suits

Water temperatures around Anilao are generally between 26°C and 30°C (79°F-86°F), although cool upwellings can make the water feel colder than expected.

Most guests find that a 3mm wetsuit is suitable for the expected water temperatures, although those prone to feeling cold may prefer a 5mm. 3mm shorty wetsuits are available to rent on board. We recommend that those who feel the cold easily, especially with repeated diving, bring a full-length wetsuit and/or an extra rashguard, vest or hood with them.

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: 100 USD per person (payable onboard 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 extras to be paid before disembarkation.

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 22

Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of planned dives is fulfilled, various factors can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific dive location 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 and orientation briefings. If time allows there may be a check dive scheduled but diving on embarkation day is not guaranteed.

Days 2-6: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive. A typical 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 7: Usually 2 morning* dives before Tubbataha Master heads back to Anilao, where she will remain at anchor overnight.

Day 8: Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation at 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.

The following is a sample of some of the dive sites we usually visit on the Anilao & Verde Island itinerary.

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 Tubbataha Master is heading, and which sites are chosen to dive.

Disclaimer: This information is only a general overview of the key areas this itinerary usually covers and some of the diving possibilities 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.

The safety of our guests and crew is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternative locations should we be unable to visit or remain at a specific location.

Anilao

On the Calumpang Peninsula in Batangas, Anilao is often called the birthplace of diving in the Philippines. It is best known for small things, but coral-covered rocks and slopes sit alongside the muck.

Twin Rocks

Two rocks less than a metre apart rise from the seabed to just below the surface, thick with soft corals and crinoids and surrounded by anthias, butterflyfish, groupers and jacks. Mostly dived above 18m (59ft), the slope around them also holds the remains of a capsized barge, with frogfish, blue ribbon eels and jawfish to look for and batfish that come in close.

Cathedral

Two large rocks stand either side of a cross at around 15m (49ft), giving the site the look of a roofless chapel. Originally quite barren, it was seeded with coral and is now a protected sanctuary, with sponges and nudibranchs on the rocks and angelfish, butterflyfish, triggerfish and surgeonfish all around. Feather stars and soft corals open up when the current runs.

Secret Bay

At first glance there is very little here: a sandy, silty slope running around 150m (492ft) out into the bay between 10m and 22m (33ft and 72ft), with hot water venting from the sand in places. Look closely, though, and it is one of Anilao's richest sites. Nudibranchs, seahorses, gobies, frogfish, flamboyant cuttlefish and coconut octopus have all been found here, and mimic octopus and wunderpus live on the eastern side.

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

The hat-like shape above the surface carries on underwater. A broad fringing reef forms the brim, with boulders and coral heads between 5m and 12m (16ft and 39ft), and beyond it ridges, small walls and sandy valleys run past 25m (82ft), hung with gorgonians, black coral and barrel sponges. Anthias, fusiliers and jacks fill the water and turtles are often seen in the shallows. Currents range from mild to strong.

Sepoc Wall

Coral gardens at around 5m (16ft) give way to a wall covered in hard and soft corals, dropping to around 27m (89ft). Small reef fish crowd the shallows, while the wall has barrel sponges, gorgonians, plenty of nudibranchs and larger reef fish, and pelagic fish pass by from time to time. Usually an easy dive with moderate current, it can become rough when the current picks up.

Merriel's Rock

A cluster of shallow reefs and gullies on the north-west face of Maricaban, averaging 18m (59ft) and reaching around 24m (79ft), with a good variety of coral formations and reef fish. Currents can be strong in the gullies, and the surface can become rough when the afternoon wind builds.

Verde Island

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. Currents can change quickly and down currents do occur, so it pays to stay close to your guide.

Washing Machine

A series of shallow canyons where the current can swirl and change direction several times in a dive, down currents included. With little water moving, there is time to explore basket sponges, sea fans, feather stars and frogfish. When it runs, it brings dense schools of anthias, tuna and trevally and sometimes reef sharks, and it is a dive for experienced divers only.

Puerto Galera

On the northern tip of Mindoro, facing the passage, Puerto Galera has more than 30 dive sites within a short distance of Sabang. Currents are strongest on spring tides around the full and new moon, when the sites off Escarceo Point turn into serious drift dives.

The Canyons

A slope leading down to three canyons in the reef, the deepest reaching around 30m (98ft), usually dived as a drift from Hole in the Wall. Sandy bottoms and sheltering walls give you somewhere to stop and watch trevally, batfish, snapper and barracuda working the current overhead, among large sea fans and pink, purple and orange soft corals. Octopus, scorpionfish and sea snakes shelter in the canyons, and an old anchor embedded in the rock marks the end of the last one. On a slack tide it is a gentle dive for photographers; on a strong tide it is not, and it ends with an ascent in blue water.

Hole in the Wall

A short tunnel at 12m (39ft) cuts through a rocky ridge on Escarceo Point, and the current meeting on either side brings in drummers, sweetlips, trevally and snappers. Lionfish and scorpionfish sit in the tunnel, so good buoyancy matters. Beyond it, a second wall of soft corals, sponges and fans drops to a flat landscape of whip corals, all within 20m (66ft). Easy at slack water, it can have strong and down currents on a big tide.

West Escarceo

A sloping reef of large coral boulders from around 5m (16ft), turning to sand at 25m (82ft), where bluespotted stingrays are common. Red-toothed triggerfish, scorpionfish and octopus hide in the cracks, with mackerel, trevally and juvenile tuna nearer the point. It can be a gentle photography dive or a fast drift, depending on the tide.

Sinandigan Wall

A coral wall running down to around 30m (98ft) before becoming a sloping reef, and one of the area's best sites for nudibranchs and other macro subjects.

Sabang Point

Hard corals and crinoids cover this reef from very shallow water to 25m (82ft), with a small wall at 20m (66ft) dropping to white sand. Big purple sea fans on the deeper reef can hide pygmy seahorses, cuttlefish and octopus are regulars, and blue ribbon eels live in the sandy patches.

Sabang Wrecks

Two wooden boats and a small steel yacht lie close together off the beach, no deeper than around 21m (69ft). They do not look like much at first, but this is one of Puerto Galera's best-known photography sites, with frogfish, scorpionfish, stonefish and giant morays on the wrecks, a school of batfish around them, and ghost pipefish and flying gurnards on the sand.

Alma Jane

This 30m (98ft) Filipino cargo vessel was scuttled in 2003 and stands upright on sand at 30m (98ft). Her wide beam makes an easy swim-through with light coming in from above. Batfish school around the wreck, sweetlips and snappers shelter by the rudder, and lionfish, scorpionfish and frogfish are found on the superstructure. Currents can be strong.

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