

Malapascua and The Visayas, Philippines

10 Nights Itinerary

- **Arrival airport:** Mactan-Cebu International (CEB)
- **Departure airport:** Mactan-Cebu International (CEB)
- **Meeting point for embarkation:** Marina Seaview Restaurant, Mactan Island
- **Embarkation time:** 13:00
- **Disembarkation:** 10:00

Flights and Transfers

Transfer between Mactan-Cebu Airport or local hotels and Philippine Siren on embarkation and disembarkation day is included in the liveaboard price.

Transfers from and to hotels and resorts outside of the Mactan or Cebu City area can be arranged for an additional charge.

Advice on Flights

International flights may be booked into and out of Manila or Cebu. We recommend that you plan to arrive in Manila or Cebu at least 1 day before the liveaboard departure date to allow for possible flight delays or schedule changes and to ensure you start your holiday well-rested.

If travelling via Manila with international and domestic connections on the same day, please allow plenty of time for transfer between domestic and international terminals and check-in.

IMPORTANT: Guests who are planning to arrive in Cebu on the day of embarkation are kindly requested to book a flight which arrives in Cebu no later than 12.00, noon. The airport is a short taxi ride from our embarkation meeting point.

Disembarkation in Cebu at the end of the liveaboard will be just before 10:00; we kindly ask guests not to book flights that depart earlier than 13:30 on the day of disembarkation. Earlier departures are logistically problematic and therefore not recommended.

If a morning flight departure is unavoidable, guests can disembark the evening before but will need to arrange a hotel for the night and their own airport transfer. Please note however that doing so may also exclude you from diving on your last day.

Diving Information

Diving conditions in and around Malapascua and the Visayas are generally suitable for all levels of divers. However, some sites can be challenging for those who are inexperienced in currents.

Minimum dive certification and experience

It is recommended that divers wishing to join this itinerary have Advanced Open Water certification*, or equivalent, with a **mandatory minimum of 25 logged dives** and experience in medium to strong currents.

*PADI Advanced Open Water certification can usually be completed on board if requested and confirmed in advance and requires students to have completed all e-learning beforehand.

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.

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

Gloves, reef hooks, pointers and strobes/flashlights are prohibited at some of the locations we visit on this itinerary.

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 Viscom Station Hospital in Cebu City which would be the closest should an incident occur while diving in the Visayas. 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 are broadly similar throughout the Philippines with averages of around 26°-28°C (79°-82°F) year-round.

Most guests find that a 3mm or 5mm wetsuit is suitable for the expected water temperatures. 3 mm shorty wetsuits are available to rent on board. However, 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: 155 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.

*There is an additional charge of 30 USD per person, also payable on board, for diving with whale sharks at Oslob should you choose to do so.

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 33

The itinerary involves some long-distance travel and, whilst we attempt to ensure the number of planned dives is fulfilled, bad weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific dive site 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*.

Days 2-9: 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 followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast and relaxation, followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch and relaxation, followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snacks
- Briefing for Dive 4
- Dinner

Day 10: Usually 2 morning* dives before Philippine Siren commences the cruise back to the marina.

Day 11: Following breakfast on board, disembarkation is scheduled for 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.

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 Philippine Siren is heading, and which sites are chosen to dive.***

The following is a sample of some of the dive sites we usually visit on the Malapascua & Visayas itineraries. *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 the amount of time spent in each area will be determined by the itinerary duration and other factors, as noted above. Additionally, there may be dives at sites that are not listed below.

Malapascua

There are numerous dive sites off the shores of Malapascua Island and the surrounding areas which offer a variety of dives and potential marine life encounters. The shy and elusive thresher sharks* are one of the main attractions at several locations, along with sea snakes, reef sharks, rays, and a huge array of macro critters.

***PLEASE NOTE:** The use of strobes and flashlights is NOT permitted when diving at locations where thresher sharks are present.

Reef hooks are not allowed in Kimud Shoal or Monad Shoal.

Kimud Shoal

Located southeast of Malapascua Island, along the same trench as Monad Shoal, Kimud is a small sunken island with a top covered in patches of hard coral at depths of 12-16 m (40-52 ft) and steep sides extending down to more than 200 metres. The endangered, pelagic thresher shark regularly visits this area to be cleaned by several species of cleaner wrasse. Other pelagic visitors include mobulids and tuna while the corals and overhangs provide hiding places for a variety of shrimps, moray eels and frogfish.

Gato Island

Located less than 2 hours away from Malapascua Island, Gato provides a diverse range of marine life and underwater topography; White tip reef sharks seek shelter under bommies a plethora of macro critters command the sea floor, and cuttlefish can be seen performing their mating rituals when it is the right season. There are several sites around the small island and we choose from the following:

White Tip Alley

As the name suggests provides an almost guaranteed sighting of white-tip reef sharks that enjoy their rest on the sand tucked under rocks and coral bommies. Other species found here include scorpion fish and seahorses. Whip coral shrimps which cling to the colourful whip corals adorn the overhangs of this Alley.

Nudibranch City

Rubble, rocks, sponges and corals provide a perfect habitat and create an “Undersea City” for a plethora of nudibranchs and flatworms including Blue dragons, chromodoris, hypselodoris and flabellinas.

The Tunnel

Running underneath Gato Island at a depth of approximately 20 metres, the 30 metre long tunnel takes divers from one side of the island to the other. Keep a lookout for resting white-tip sharks or use your light to search for lobsters and crabs that like to dwell within the cavern.

Chocolate Island

The topography of this little island is typical of the area around Malapascua with shallow reef tops full of soft corals and algae that are home to a variety of nudibranchs as well as eels and sea snakes. The shallow bottom (16 m/50 ft) around the island is the perfect place to find odd-shaped bottom dwellers such as bearded scorpionfish, devil scorpionfish and dwarf cuttlefish as well as different kinds of sea stars, sea urchins with urchin clingfish inside, black velutina snails and ringed pipefish.

Moalboal, Cebu

The main attraction of Moalboal is the millions of sardines hanging out in the shallow waters. Other than that the beautiful diving around Pescador Island is just 30 minutes away.

Panagsama Beach

Along with the millions of sardines performing their swaying dance around the reef drop-off, giant frogfish can often be found pretending to be sponges with anemones, green turtles, sea stars and pipefish along the reef.

Tongo Point

Schools of razorfish, crocodile needlefish, purple and threadfin anthias are to be found while reef squids and spade fish are making their way home. Green sea turtles and hawksbill turtles are also commonly seen here.

Turtle Bay

This site is often scheduled for night dives where we can spot sleeping turtles along with different kinds of crabs and shrimps.

Dolphin House

Crocodile needlefish, drummers, milkfish and yellowtail barracudas are living just under the surface while millions of damsels and anthias are darting around the coral reef top.

Pescador Island

Just 30 minutes away from Moalboal, Pescador is the perfect place to explore dramatic steep walls and the vibrant, lively reef top.

Colourful damsel fish, anthias and chromis dart amongst the corals while schools of fusiliers, red-tooth triggerfish, surgeonfish, long-jawed mackerel, juvenile convict fish and big-eyed trevallies fill the blue. Pescador is also home to some giant frogfish and a big cave known as the Cathedral on the northwest side adds some dramatic photo opportunities to this beautiful island.

Dauin, Negros

Dauin, with its black volcanic sand, is famous for its muck diving and fabulous macro creatures. Depending on the season, different types and sizes of octopuses, sea horses, frogfish from minuscule babies to full-grown adults, a variety of ghost pipefish, and flamboyant cuttlefish can be found.

The Cars

Perhaps rather unimaginatively named, the main attraction of this dive site is the artificial reef created from the chassis of two cars that host an amazing amount of marine life. Surrounded by sand at a depth of 24-29 metres, you will usually find groups of snappers, angelfish, lionfish and sweetlips hanging around the wrecks which, if you take a closer look inside, have also created a perfect environment for an array of crustaceans. On the sandy slope that leads to the wrecks, the keen-eyed are likely to discover no end of macro delights including juvenile frogfish, robust, ornate and velvet ghost pipefish, sand divers, dragonets, flamboyant cuttlefish and much, much more.

Secret Corner

It's no secret that this sandy, rubble-strewn slope is potentially a cephalopod lover's nirvana. Blue-ringed, mimic and coconut octopus, wunderpus and flamboyant cuttlefish are just some of the species that can be found here. Other delights include snake and garden eels, waspfish, spiny devilfish, hairy frogfish and seahorses.

Ceres

This is another fantastic macro site featuring a sandy slope and artificial reef made up of tyres and concrete mooring blocks. Named after the local bus company that donated the tyres, marine life that can be found here includes stargazers, seahorses, a variety of frogfish species, flamboyant and pygmy cuttlefish and ambon scorpionfish.

Mainit

Currents at this location are often strong, so it is usually dived as a one-way drift. Featuring a mix of black volcanic sand with patches of hard and soft corals, fish life is prolific and varied. This lively and exhilarating dive ends in an area with yellow, sulphur-rich, hot sand, hence the name Mainit meaning 'hot' in Visayan.

San Miguel

A relatively shallow dive site with sandy slopes, seagrass beds and a small reef full of fish, San Miguel is another critter wonderland! This is the place to find all your favourites including a variety of nudibranchs, ghost pipefish, tiny juvenile frogfish and even the possibility of finding Pygmy Squid, mimic octopus, or newly hatched flamboyant cuttlefish.

Apo Island

Apo Island Marine Reserve is one of the most successful marine sanctuaries established in the Philippines. **Reef hooks and gloves are not allowed** and night diving is unfortunately not permitted. The order of dives will be based on the currents and conditions of the day choosing from:

Coconut Point

Situated on the northwestern tip of Apo Island, strong currents make for an exhilarating and sometimes challenging dive. Also referred to as 'The Washing Machine', this fast-paced drift takes divers over the sloping coral reef to a rock wall; a sandy channel between two cliffs provides an opportunity to take a breather and look out for passing pelagics. Along the way, large schools of trevallies, blackfin barracuda, snappers, sweetlips, potato groupers and plenty of sea snakes can be encountered.

Cogon

On the eastern side of Apo, this is another site that often experiences strong currents and therefore dived as a drift. Starting as a sandy slope that evolves into a coral reef leading to a steep wall, there is plenty of coral and marine life activity to catch your eye as you are carried along by the current. A large school of big-eyed trevally are commonly seen here as well as reef sharks, blue-spotted stingrays and turtles.

The Chapel

On the west side of the island, the reef starts as a gentle sandy slope with scatterings of coral bommies becoming progressively steeper as you get nearer to the wall section which drops off to more than 40 metres. The wall is dotted with small crevices and caverns adorned with soft and hard corals, sponges, sea fans and anemones hosting an abundance of small aquatic creatures. Electric clams, a wide variety of nudibranchs, eels and crustaceans are just some of the delights that await the inquisitive diver. Hawksbill and green turtles can also be found munching on the corals while large predatory fish pass by in the blue.

Rocky Point West

Just beyond the chapel opposite the marine park warden's office, Rocky Point West offers some of the most stunning hard corals to be found in the region with endless patches of leather corals on the top. The steep reef walls support numerous colourful reef species; pyramid butterflyfish and red-toothed triggerfish can usually be seen here in their hundreds. Frogfish, cuttlefish, banded sea snakes and hawksbill turtles are also common sightings.

Oslob (optional)

The optional whale shark encounter, where the whale sharks are hand-fed, can be done by diving or snorkelling, subject to additional fees payable at the destination. Please be advised **it is not allowed to use strobes and/or flashlights here.**

Balicasag Island

The small island of Balicasag, just off the tip of Panglao, is characterised by its many turtles, coral gardens and steep walls which provide overhangs, cracks & crevices in which to search for a variety of marine species. This area has been a marine protected area since July 2017 and allows two dives per day only with valid permits.

Divers Heaven

One of the big attractions of this aptly named, beautiful dive site is the hawksbill and green sea turtles that can often be seen here. The shallows comprise a sandy area covered with seagrass which the turtles come to graze on and also has plentiful coral formations, reef fish and macro species. The coral coverage becomes denser and more extensive as you progress further down the steeply sloping reef which reaches depths of 40+ metres and features many ledges and overhangs with lots of soft corals, gorgonians and sponges. Goldband fusiliers, Big-Mouth mackerel, Midnight snappers, Redtooth Triggerfish, Angelfish, Barracuda, Bluefin trevally and Bigeye trevally are just some of the fish that you are likely to see in large numbers along the reef. Leaf scorpionfish are another delight that can be found in this aquarium-like environment as well as numerous nudibranchs, eels and anemone fish.

Black Forest

Named for the proliferation of black corals that can be found at depths that extend beyond recreational limits, Black Forest is well known for its biodiversity and beauty.

Often dived as a drift, the reef forms a steep slope with a wide variety of corals and marine life. Damsel fish, anthias, chromis, scorpionfish, wrasses, turtles and more can be found going about their business in and around the corals; in the blue, schools of jacks, blue-dash fusiliers and barracuda are common sightings as well as Titan triggerfish and Napoleon Wrasse.

Cabilao Island

There are many interesting and colourful walls and coral gardens around the island of Cabilao; we usually choose from the following:

Gorgonian Wall

Starting at 5 metres and extending to a depth of 60 metres, this 100-metre-long wall is awash with giant gorgonians, corals and sponges. Also featuring many overhangs and small caves, fish activity is plentiful and hidden wonders are waiting for the eagle-eyed to find including pygmy seahorses, frogfish and rare nudibranch specimens.

Lighthouse

So named because the site is in front of the lighthouse on the northwest tip of Cabilao Island, this is a sloping wall covered with seagrass and corals which is often frequented by green turtles. Amongst the corals and sponges, you are also likely to find frogfish, cowrie snails, ghost pipefish, stargazers, Pegasus seamoths, a variety of crustaceans, and electric file clams.

Talisay Tree

Along the northern shore of Cabilao, Talisay Tree is another gorgonian-covered wall with a shallow seagrass garden interspersed with elephant ear and barrel sponges. The site offers some fantastic wide-angle and macro photo opportunities with bubble corals playing host to their commensal shrimps and orangutan crabs.

Cambaquiz

Cambaquiz is a favourite location for a sunset or night dive. Comprising a gentle sandy slope dotted with clusters of soft corals, sea pens and seagrass there is an abundance of delights to be discovered here by torchlight. Stargazers lie camouflaged in the sand while an array of crabs and shrimps can be found hiding in the corals and grassy patches along with seahorses, pipefish and wunderpus to name just a few.

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@masterliveboards.com.