

# Southern Leyte and Visayas, Philippines

## 7 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 liveboard 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 liveboard 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 liveboard 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 Southern Leyte and the Visayas are generally suitable for all levels of divers. However, some sites can be challenging for those who are inexperienced in currents

*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.*

### 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.*

### 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](http://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 21

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel between sites 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 location 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 and briefings. If time allows there may be a check dive scheduled but diving on embarkation day is not guaranteed.

**Day 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 followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Dive
- Dinner

**Day 7:** Usually 2 morning\* dives before Philippine Siren commences the cruise back to the marina.

**Day 8:** Following breakfast on board, disembarkation is 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.

Following is a sample of some of the dive sites Philippine Siren usually visits around Southern Leyte and the Visayas.

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 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 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 diving possibilities 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.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Strobes and flashlights are NOT permitted at locations where thresher sharks or whale sharks are present.

## Whale Sharks in Southern Leyte

Whale sharks have been visiting the coast of Pintuyan for decades. Small-scale community-run ecotourism started in 2007 out of Son-ok village through a local people's organisation called KASAKA. In 2009, the municipality passed an ordinance to regulate ecotourism activities and minimise potential disturbance to the whale sharks, so ensuring a long-term sustainable livelihood for the community of Son-ok.

KASAKA are responsible for the overall management, control, supervision and maintenance of both the whale shark interaction tours and the protection of the Son-ok Fish Sanctuary. One of their main duties is providing spotters and tour guides for the whale shark watching tours that visit the area.

The whale sharks come to Pintuyan and Liloan to forage on zooplankton blooms that happen close to shore. If there is enough food for them, the whale sharks tend to stick around for a while; Some of them even stay for the entire season (that can last for 1 to 6 months) while others migrate in and out during the season.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Scuba diving is NOT allowed at the locations that are frequented by the whale sharks. Therefore, those sites will be offered as a snorkelling option only.

## Sogod Bay

### Napantao Fish Sanctuary, San Francisco

Arguably, this is one of the best dive sites in the Philippines. This long-established (since 1996), community-enforced marine protected area hosts a rich selection of marine life. Hard and soft corals make up the slope to the reef wall. The wall drops down to about 50 metres. Large quantities of fish of all colours can be seen here; anthias, damselfish and various kinds of wrasse.

Moreover, there are hunting trevallies, some resident hawksbill turtles, giant frogfish, white-tip reef sharks under big coral structures, and occasionally, whale sharks swim by the wall during their season in the area.

## Santa Paz Sanctuary

This rocky and dark sand muck dive is full of critters. Robust pipefish, ornate ghost pipefish, and hairy frogfish are found here in the dark sandy substrate. Although cephalopods can be seasonal, coconut, mimic and wunderpus octopuses can be found here. The last one is a night predator so keep an eye out for them on a sunset or night dive.

## Son-ok Point, Pintuyan

Son-ok Point is located 15 km south of Napantao and is rich in soft corals although some hard coral cover can still be found. The currents can be strong during tidal changes, but when there is a current, fish are swarming everywhere. Frogfish and hawksbill turtles are found here along the reef's edge at 12 - 15 m. Like in Napantao, when it is the season, you may be lucky enough to witness whale sharks in their natural habitat.

## Padre Burgos

### Maureen's Place

A small banca (traditional Filipino boat) wreckage can be found in the shallow waters whilst the reef slopes down to a whip coral-covered wall where schools of snappers and bannerfish hang out in the gentle currents. Different coloured pygmy seahorses can be found in the Gorgonian fans and stingrays can be seen hiding beneath the table corals.

### Padre Burgos Pier

At just 6 metres, divers could spend hours at this wondrous site and still not find all of its hidden gems; Freckled frogfish, stargazers, seahorses, ghost pipefish, blue ring octopus, pleurobranchus, nudibranchs all muddle together on the soft coral and sponge laden pier supports. Juvenile batfish can also be seen mimicking leaves in the shallow water, and at sunset, the mandarin fish come out to play; definitely a spot for the weird and wonderful.

## Limasawa Island

History was made on this island. In 1521, it was here that the first Catholic Mass was held in the Philippines following the arrival of the Portuguese explorer and conquerer, Ferdinand Magellan. We can organise a visit to the island to see the historic site.

### Gunter's Wall

Covered with corals, sponges and sea fans, the wall here is a great place to spot nudibranchs and crustaceans such as pink squat lobsters. Turtles and sea snakes are also common and the shallow coral gardens are a superb place to hunt for leaf fish, robust ghost pipefish and seahorses.

### Adrian's Cove

Similar to Gunter's Wall, Adrian's Cove features a coral-covered wall with a swim-through and shallow reef top which is teeming with brightly coloured reef fish. Xeno-crabs can often be found clinging to sea whips at this dive site, as well as many sand-dwelling fish such as gobies, jawfish and moray eels.

## Lighthouse

A small, relatively shallow wall around the Northern tip of Limasawa Island where hundreds of fire urchins provide housing to Coleman shrimps and zebra crabs and on the sandy bottom. The top of the reef is adorned with gorgeous hard and soft corals; a nice and easy drift dive along the margin.

## Limasawa Pier

The area around the pier at Limasawa is a superb location to find small macro species such as frogfish, cowries, crabs, shrimps and nudibranchs. Whale sharks sometimes come into this area at night to feed on plankton

## Balicasag Island

The small island of Balicasag, just off the tip of Panglao and Bohol Island 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.

## Bohol Island

The Anda region along the eastern shore of Bohol offers diving mostly along gorgeous walls, Bohol features some amazing dive sites.

## Coco White

Coco White is an extensive wall that is often defined as two dive sites, namely Coco White North and Coco White South. Dropping steeply from 4 metres to 25+ metres, the entire length is richly covered in corals and alive with fish and macro life. Seafans provide camouflage for pygmy seahorses, Mantis shrimps creep out for rocky holes, turtles feed on soft corals, orangutan crabs nestle in the lobes of bubble corals, frogfish pretend to be sponges and Spanish dancers and blue-ringed octopus may be found hiding in crevices.

## Snappers Cave

This dive site comprises a vibrant, steep wall reaching down to 30 metres which features a wide cave near the bottom. Crevices and overhangs conceal a plethora of delights including blue dragons, banana nudibranchs and leopard shrimps. Groups of reef squid and banded sea kraits can also often be seen here as well as turtles and a variety of colourful reef fish.

## Paradise Gardens

Another beautiful wall dive that starts as a shallow slope adorned with healthy, colourful hard and soft corals, sponges and crinoids. The vibrancy of the reef top is enhanced by the rainbow of fish that weave around them and the turtles that use it as a breeding ground. The wall is no less rich in life with schools of Moorish idols, snappers, and jacks being just some of the large fish you can encounter. Search for seahorses at around 20-30 depth and scour the nooks and crannies for nudibranchs, eels, shrimps and other small creatures.

## 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](mailto:dive@masterliveboards.com)