

Southern Leyte, The Visayas, and Malapascua, Philippines

10 nights Itinerary

- **Meeting point for embarkation:** Marina Seaview Restaurant, Mactan Island
- **Embarkation time:** 13:00
- **Disembarkation:** 10:00

Transfers between Cebu Airport or local hotels and Marina Seaview Restaurant are provided free of charge on embarkation and disembarkation day.

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

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 prior to disembarkation.

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

Minimum dive certification and experience

Diving conditions in and around the Visayas are generally suitable for all levels of divers although some sites can be challenging for inexperienced divers due to currents.

Divers wishing to join this itinerary are advised to have Advanced Open Water certification*, or equivalent, with a minimum of 10 logged dives and experience in strong currents.

*PADI Advanced Open Water certification can usually be completed on board if requested and confirmed in advance.

Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements may be denied participation in some or all dives.

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Itinerary Details

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

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 33

This 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 on 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 2-9: 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, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Dive
- 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.

Following is a sample of the dive sites which we may visit during your time aboard Philippine Siren.

The safety of our guests is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations, should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

Guests are welcome to suggest preferred dive sites to the Cruise Director who will be happy to accommodate guests' wishes where possible and the schedule allows for it.

Malapascua

Malapascua Island and the surrounding area offer a wide variety of dive sites and potential marine life encounters. The shy and elusive thresher sharks are one of the main attractions for many divers although there are plenty of other shark species to be seen along with sea snakes, rays, turtles and much more. The reefs directly off the shores of Malapascua Island are relatively shallow with patches of coral and some great 'muck' sites, while the outer reefs offer stunning walls, pinnacles and plateaus with plenty of colourful corals and an abundance of marine life.

Gato Island

Located Northwest of Malapascua Island, Gato is a marine reserve and sea snake sanctuary which hosts a diverse range of marine life and stunning underwater topography. The small rocky island features a 22 metre deep, 30 metre long 'tunnel' that cuts right the way through the island where whitetip reef sharks can usually be spotted hiding in the caves or hanging around the exit. Gato is also a breeding location for sea kraits as well as boasting a plethora of macro delights, crustaceans and corals.

Kimud Shoal

Located southeast from Malapascua Island, Kimud Shoal 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. It is also known for occasional, but rare sightings of hammerhead sharks which visit the area between December and May. Other pelagic visitors include mobulids and tuna while the coral and overhangs provide hiding places for a variety of shrimps, moray eels and frogfish.

Chocolate Island

The topography of this little island is typical of the area surrounding Malapascua with shallow reef tops full of soft corals and algae that are home for a variety of nudibranchs as well as eels and sea snakes. The shallow seabed around the island of maximum 16 m (50ft) is the perfect spot for odd shaped bottom dwellers like bearded scorpionfish, devil scorpionfish and dwarf cuttlefish but also many different kinds of sea stars, sea urchins with their urchin clingfish inside, black velutina snails and ringed pipefish can also be found.

Southern Leyte

Whale sharks have been visiting the coast of Pintuyan for decades. In 2007, small-scale community-run ecotourism started out of the village of Son-ok through a People's Organisation called KASAKA. In 2009, the municipality passed an ordinance to regulate ecotourism activities and minimise any potential disturbance to the whale sharks, trying to ensure a long-term sustainable livelihood for the community of Son-ok.

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, damsel fish 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 pipe fishes, ornate ghost pipefish, and hairy frog fishes are found here in the dark sandy substrate. Although cephalopods can be seasonal, coconut, mimic and wonderpus 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 is 15 km south of Napantao. This point is rich in soft corals and some hard coral cover can still be found. The currents can be strong during tidal changes, but when there is current, fish are swarming everywhere. Frog fish 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 wreckage (i.e. a traditional Filipino boat) can be found in the shallow waters whilst the reef slopes down to a whip coral covered wall where schools of snappers and banner fish 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 conqueror of the Philippines first made contact with Filipinos. We can organise a visit to the island.

Gunter's Wall

Covered with green tree corals and barrel sponges, 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.

Limasawa Pier

A superb place to find the small macro species – finds include frogfish, cowries. Whale sharks do come into this area at night to feed on plankton.

Adrian's Cove

Divers will often find xeno-crabs clinging to sea whips at this dive site, as well as many sand dwelling fish such as gobies, jawfish and moray eels.

Lighthouse

A little wall that ends into a shallow bottom, where hundreds of fire urchins provide housing to Coleman shrimps and zebra crabs. The top of the reef is adorned with gorgeous hard and soft corals; an easy and nice drift dive along the margin.

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 become a marine protected area since July 2017 and allows two dives per day only with valid permits.

Divers Heaven

The main attraction of this beautiful dive site is the green sea and hawksbill turtles in the shallow waters. The reeftop edge is a nice habitat for schools of colourful damsels and anthias and when lucky also for giant frogfish.

Black Forest

Once famed for its black coral is where we encounter schools of jacks, long-jawed mackerels, red tooth triggerfish and different kinds of fusiliers.

Bohol Island

Offering mostly diving along gorgeous walls, Bohol features some amazing dive sites.

Coco White

A nicely populated wall where you may find giant shells, lots of sergeant majors, nudibranchs. Spanish dancers, and barracudas.

Snappers Cave

An attractive steep wall from 4 down to 30 metres and a wide cave at 27 metres. Bringing your torch is recommended.

Paradise Gardens

Another beautiful wall dive with gorgeous corals, a resident turtle and loads of other marine life. Search for seahorses at around 20-30 depth

Cabilao Island

There are several interesting wall and coral garden dives around the island of Cabilao and we choose from the following:

Gorgonian Wall

Provides a gentle drift along a fantastic coral reef with schooling fish and plenty of macro life in the shallow water, including the possibility of spotting a Denise's pygmy seahorse.

Lighthouse

Sloping walls full of sponges and gorgonian fans. This is a great place to dive with large green turtles. Also being seen are giant frogfish which can be spotted resting on sponges and numerous cowries hiding amidst the stunning hard coral garden.

Talisay Tree

Beautiful wall with gorgonians where bubble coral shrimps and orangutan crabs can be found in the bubble corals. The shallow grassy garden with its elephant ear sponges and barrel sponges is a perfect spot for wide angle photography.

Cambaquiz

A fantastic spot where we often make night dives. A gently sloping reef and sandy bottom to 20m – soft corals and sea pens can be found dotted over the sand; also a great site for sightings of bottom dwellers. The grassy top is a favourite crab hideout.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveaboards.com who will be pleased to assist and advise you.