MASTER
LIVEABOARDS

Visayas to Anilao, Philippines

10 Nights Itinerary

- Arrival airport: Mactan-Cebu International (CEB)
- Departure airport: Ninoy Aquino International, Manila (MNL)
- Meeting point for embarkation: Marina Seaview Restaurant, Mactan Island
- Embarkation time: 13:00
- Disembarkation: Anilao Port, Mabini, Batangas at 10:00

Flights and Transfers

Transfer between Mactan-Cebu Airport or local hotels and Tubbataha Master on embarkation day is included in the liveaboard price. Transfers from hotels and resorts outside of the Mactan or Cebu City area can be arranged for an additional charge.

Transfers from Anilao to Manila airport or hotels on disembarkation day are not included in the liveaboard price and can be arranged for an additional charge.

Flight Advice

The simplest option is usually to book return international flights to and from Manila (MNL), with a domestic flight from Manila to Cebu (CEB). We recommend that you plan to arrive in Manila or Cebu at least one day before the liveaboard departure date to allow for possible flight disruptions 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.

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. 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 thresher sharks and Gato Island's tunnels at Malapascua with macro diving around Romblon, the walls and Blue Hole of Tablas, and the current-swept Verde Island Drop Off. Some sites go deep, and currents at Verde Island can be strong and can run up and down the wall as well as along it, so experience diving in changeable currents is important.

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 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.

Reef hooks, strobes and 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 in the Visayas, and one at St Patrick's Hospital Medical Center in Batangas City, which would be the closest around Anilao and Verde Island. However, should these 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 in addition to recompression chamber and/or 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 on this route are generally between 26°C and 30°C (79°F and 86°F), although cool upwellings around Anilao can make the water feel colder than expected.

Most guests find that a 3mm wetsuit is sufficient, 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: 150 USD per person* (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 32

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel and, while we endeavour to ensure the planned number of dives is fulfilled, this is only indicative and not guaranteed. 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
- 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: Usually 2 morning* dives before Tubbataha Master continues to Anilao where she will remain at anchor overnight.

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.

The following is a sample of some of the dive sites we usually visit on the Cebu to Anilao 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.

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 dive sites at each location. The inclusion of specifically named dive sites is not guaranteed. Additionally, there may be dives at sites that are not listed below.

Malapascua

Off the northern tip of Cebu, Malapascua is one of the few places where divers can regularly see pelagic thresher sharks. Sea snakes, reef sharks and a long list of macro subjects give the surrounding sites plenty of variety.

*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 at Kimud Shoal.

Kimud Shoal

A small sunken island with a top of patchy hard coral at 12-16m (39-52ft) and steep sides that fall away beyond 200m (656ft). Thresher sharks come up from deep water to be cleaned by wrasse, usually early in the morning, and devil rays and tuna also pass through. Moray eels, frogfish and shrimps hide in the corals and overhangs.

Gato Island

A small island and marine sanctuary with several sites around it, known for banded sea kraits, whitetip reef sharks, walls and overhangs. A tunnel of around 30m (98ft) runs right through the island at about 20m (66ft), with whitetips often resting inside. It is an overhead environment and is only dived when conditions allow, by suitably experienced divers. Nudibranch City and White Tip Alley, on the outside of the island, are good alternatives, with seahorses, scorpionfish and nudibranchs among the rocks and sponges.

Chocolate Island

Soft corals and algae cover the shallow reef top of this small island, sloping to sand at around 16-18m (52-59ft). Seahorses, frogfish, pipefish and devil scorpionfish live on the bottom, along with sea snakes and plenty of nudibranchs.

Romblon Island

Romblon and its neighbouring islands of Logbon, Alad and Cobrador sit in the Sibuyan Sea, with more than 40 known dive sites and very few divers on them. This is macro territory first and foremost: local guides have recorded over 500 species of sea slugs and nudibranchs here, along with the Romblon sashimi shrimp, which is known only from these waters. Most sites lie between 5m and 20m (16ft and 66ft), with little or no current.

Bonbon Fan Coral Collection

A deeper dive on a slope reaching around 35m (115ft), with fields of very large fan corals. Search the fans for pygmy seahorses and cowries, and there are nudibranchs and unusual crustaceans throughout.

Bonbon Sea Grass Valley

Large coral-covered boulders are scattered across a wide seagrass meadow, no deeper than around 20m (66ft). Nudibranchs, seahorses and octopus live among the blades and blocks, and schooling snapper add some movement above them.

Logbon Coral Canyon

An unusual underwater landscape of small mountains, valleys and ridges, densely covered in corals and sponges and busy with reef life.

Broken House, Logbon

A wall and steep slope dotted with coral blocks. It is one of the better sites for frogfish and scorpionfish, with cowries, nudibranchs, pygmy seahorses and mushroom coral pipefish to look for.

Alad Marine Sanctuary

Starting in the shallows and sloping to around 35m (115ft), this protected reef is known for its great fields of soft and leather corals, with large barrel sponges and hydroids. Seamoths, frogfish, snake eels, dragon shrimp and Durban dancing shrimp all live among them.

Sunken Island, Cobrador

Also known as Takot Reef, this submerged island in the Cobrador Marine Sanctuary starts at around 10m (33ft) and slopes to 30m (98ft), covered in corals. Groupers, cuttlefish, stingrays and schooling fish are regulars, while sharks, eagle rays, turtles and the occasional manta ray are possible.

Eastern Coral Garden, Cobrador

Coral formations covered in hard corals, gorgonians and sponges, with plenty of reef fish, in relatively shallow water.

Lunas

A muck dive on muddy sediment, and one for those who like to look closely. Wunderpus, flamboyant cuttlefish, blue-ringed octopus, sawblade shrimp and bobbit worms have all been found here.

Anchor Bay

Another sandy macro site, with colourful nudibranchs, small frogfish, numerous crustaceans and pygmy seahorses. Its best-known resident is the tiny and rarely seen Lembeh sea dragon.

Tablas Island

The largest island in Romblon province, Tablas is essentially the top of a mountain that drops away steeply underwater. In many places, deep water lies just off the shore, giving walls that fall past 40m (131ft) before continuing as steep sandy slopes. Sea fans here grow to a remarkable size.

Blue Hole

A vertical chimney around 6-8m (20-26ft) across opens in a reef shelf at about 6m (20ft) and drops to a rubble mound at around 22m (72ft), with fan corals on top. A cavern runs back towards land to about 30m (98ft), and a wide archway between 26m and 35m (85ft and 115ft) leads out onto the wall. Hundreds of Durban dancing shrimp and large lobsters shelter in the cracks. Strong currents can run up and down the hole, so it is only dived at slack water.

Gorda Wall

Close to the Blue Hole, this wall starts at around 10m (33ft) and continues far below recreational limits. It is decorated with barrel sponges, soft corals, sea fans and feather stars, where pygmy seahorses, nudibranchs and shrimps can be found. Whitetip reef sharks, rays and turtles sometimes pass by, and the dive finishes on a shallow reef of table and brain corals.

Gorgonian Forest

A deep dive for those with the training and experience for it. A descent down the mooring line brings you to the first sea fans at around 30m (98ft), and the site deepens beyond that to where the largest fans, more than 3m (10ft) across, are found. There can be some current, so it pays to stay close to your guide.

Guindauahan Island

Off this small island close to the Tablas shore, a rocky wall carries some very large sea fans and gorgonians, and the reef has plenty of varied topography. In the shallows on its south-western side, Fields of Feather Stars is packed with reef fish and vibrant corals, between 3m and 18m (10ft and 59ft), and is often dived as a drift when the tide is running.

Carmen's Cliff

Next to a rocky island, below a cliff covered in vegetation. Large fish, schools of eagle rays and occasional sharks are the attraction here.

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.

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.

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