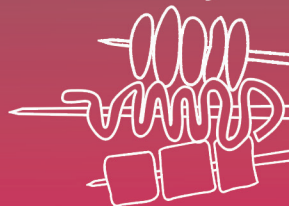




DISCOVERING PHILIPPINES

A Culture Resource Guide





Contents

- 1** **Introducing the Philippines**
History,
Culture
- 2** Family
- 4** Cuisine
- 5** Dress
- 6** Daily life and Social Customs
- 8** Friendships,
Gender and Family Roles
- 9** Concept of Time,
Independence and
Responsibility
- 10** Notions of Modesty
- 11** Touch,
Money
- 12** Equality and Superiority,
Status,
Religion
- 13** Gestures
- 14** Others





“Studying abroad in the Philippines opened new doors for me in learning a new language and culture, trying new foods, and giving me a chance at what it is like to be Filipino. And being with a host family and at a high school allowed me to do that. I have learned more about myself and experienced a whole new life. It would not have been possible without AFS Philippines and the generous volunteers.”

- Katie Larue, YPysNH15



Philippines | Republika ng Pilipinas

Is a country of 7,107 islands located in Southeast Asia, with three major islands: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao with Manila as the capital.

Filipinos are widely known for being friendly, smiley, and very proud. Filipino is the national language, although Cebuano is widely spoken in the country coming both from Visayas and Mindanao. Whereas English is the medium of instruction in schools and in public, making it a tourist-friendly country in Asia.

Filipino food are generally sweet! from pasta, salad, bread, main dish and etc. Resulting to significant numbers of Filipinos getting diabetes.

Transportation is fun! From two-wheel vehicle to three and four! Depending to your destination, few wheels like tricycle goes around your neighborhood or the famous jeepney runs around the city. International and domestic transport remains available in various cities.

Entertainment never gets you outdated! Filipinos are updated as the West getting the latest top playlist on their ipods and songs played in FM stations all over the country even at the most rural areas.

Philippines will be a fascinating country to live in! With people never get you serious but resilient, with close-knit family that feels you as part of the family, with transportation that gets you from one place to another easily, with English language as widely spoken, with healthy food you could chose from cheaply, and a paradisiacal places to unwind.

Philippine History | Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas

The Philippines is the third largest English-speaking nation in the world. The country has a lavish history with a mixture of influences of Asian, European, and American. Before the Spaniards conquered the Philippines in 1521, the Filipinos had a wealthy culture




and civilization and were trading with neighboring countries most especially with China and Japan. During the Spanish colonization in the country, which resulted the establishment of Intramuros or the Walled City in 1571 composed of building, churches and infrastructures designed after the European influence. In 1898, after 350 years and 300 rebellions, the Filipinos, with leaders and later proclaimed national heroes like Jose Rizal and Emilio Aguinaldo, succeeded in winning the Philippine independence.

In 1898, the country became the first and only colony of the United States of America. Following the Philippine-American War, the US brought widespread education to the islands. Filipinos fought alongside Americans during World War II, particularly at the famous battle of Bataan and Corregidor, which delayed Japanese advance in the country. The war against the Japanese lasted for 5 years, from 1941 to 1945. The Philippines regained its independence in 1946.

Philippine Culture | Kultura ng Pilipinas

For 48 years of American settelement in the Philippines, the country has had huge influences in so many ways. Today, Philippines remains the widely known English speaking country in Asia. The mushroomed American customer care centers in the Philippines mirrors significant history and its major impact.

Filipinos are a freedom-loving people, having waged two bloodless EDSA revolutions, against harsh and corrupt leaders. Filipinos are a fun-loving people. Throughout the islands, there are fiestas celebrated everyday and foreign guests



are always welcome to their homes. Filipino culture remains distinctive especially when it comes to socials and values.

Food has also largely influenced Filipinos by having some cravings on burgers, sandwiches, pizzas, ketchup, spaghetti, sodas, etc. This resulting to growing numbers of American fastfood chains like McDonalds, KFC, Dunkin Donuts , Shakey's, Wendy's nationwide and others limited in major cities like Burger King and Starbucks.

The Philippines is a vibrant democracy, as evidenced by 12 English national newspapers, 7 national television stations, hundreds of cable TV stations, and 2,000 radio stations.

To help you well-guided with your experience, here are some safety topics below that summarizes Philippine culture.

Family | Pamilya

• What is the family composed of?

The importance of family loyalty, obligation,

and interdependence supports the family structure and kinship ties that reflect the multicultural Filipino heritage.

Both the mother and father's lineages are of equal importance. The extended family system is pronounced and typical in the Philippines. Within given households, nuclear families average six to eight members in size. Unmarried adult daughters and sons typically remain in their parents' home and contribute to family support. Additional extended family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins also may live in the same house and assume vital roles.

• Who is the head of the family?

In a traditional family, the Father is considered the head and provider of the family, while the mother is regarded to be in charge of the needs within the house which includes the emotional growth and values formation of the children. Both performs different task and being remaked as separately by the children. Children see their mothers as soft and calm, while the father as strong and eminent figure of the family.



- **What is a typical family routine on weekdays?**

Parents are at work and children are at school. School and work typically starts at 7:30am and ends at 5pm. Everyone is expected to be home by 6PM especially the children. After dinner, children typically do homework or study lessons for the next day. In spare times, most families bond together by watching home videos or televisions, ranging from news channels to soap operas.

- **What is a typical family routine on weekends?**

Saturday could be home-cleaning, each assigned with household chores then a family bonding either indoor like watching television or home movies, stationary games or outdoor like going to the malls, cinemas, parks and picnics in the afternoon. For Sunday, most families (Catholics) go to church and eat lunch outside or remains at home to rest, bond, then children do homework.

- **How should children ask permission when going out with friends?**

Parents could be overprotective. Permission must be done ahead of time and info on 4Ws and H must be provided. It is a need to tell your parents on your whereabouts.

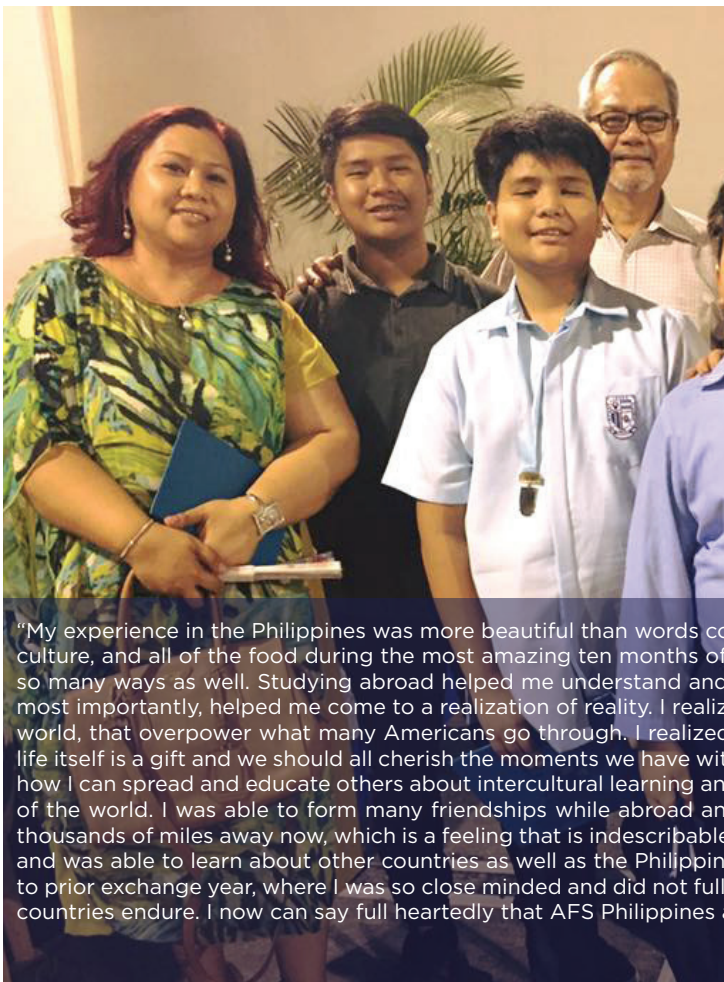
- **How do children reconcile with parents when in trouble or made problems?**

An exceptional Filipino trait is their strong respect for elders. Children are taught from birth, as early as possible how to say “po” and “opo”. These words are used to show respect to people of older level. Children fighting back or addressing parents or

elder people with arrogant tone are not at all tolerated. Parents do not expect children to talk back to parents but explains in a proper way.

- **How is sibling relationship?**

Sibling respect is deeply rooted in Filipino



“My experience in the Philippines was more beautiful than words could describe, and all of the food during the most amazing ten months of my life was so many ways as well. Studying abroad helped me understand and appreciate the world most importantly, helped me come to a realization of reality. I realized that the world, that overpower what many Americans go through. I realized that life itself is a gift and we should all cherish the moments we have with each other. I realized how I can spread and educate others about intercultural learning and the beauty of the world. I was able to form many friendships while abroad and travel thousands of miles away now, which is a feeling that is indescribable and was able to learn about other countries as well as the Philippines. Prior to my prior exchange year, where I was so close minded and did not fully understand how countries endure. I now can say full heartedly that AFS Philippines is a great experience.”

homes. Siblings are generally close with each other but may have the same or different interest and activities. With the restructuring of Filipino families the past several years, siblings and their relationships have also evolved over the years. Siblings confide each other from time to time about a range of topics and

issues, may be personal with the hopes of satisfying their need for comfort and guidance.

In many instances, the eldest among siblings is consulted regarding pressing family matters, and next to the parents, has



could ever begin to describe. I enjoyed the community, the life of my life studying abroad. My exchange year helped me in comprehend a totally new environment and culture, and realized international problems that occur in other parts of the world that life is not about the materialistic items, but instead, about the people we love. I also learned a lot about myself and how we should all consider what life is like in other parts of the world and still manage to keep those relationships, despite being away from home, being that I now have so many international connections and friends. My worldview now is so much broader now compared to before. I can now understand what challenges other people from different cultures face and my exchange year have changed my life forever.”

- **Brittany Hunt, YPysNH15**

a major part in decision-making. Filipino values dictate that the younger defer to the older, unless the older passes the responsibility to another sibling. Signifying respect, the eldest among the siblings are addressed with “Ate” for females and “Kuya” for males.

Filipino Cuisine is one of the richest cuisines in the world brought upon by the different influences throughout its long and colorful history. Tracing the influences of other countries to Filipino

food, you will see influences of the Malays, the Spanish, Mexican, Arab, Chinese, American, Indian and Japanese. Also to consider is the fact that the country is divided into different regions and islands and each has its own influences, customs and produce. All these add to the uniqueness and richness of the Filipino Cuisine.

• What type of food do you typically eat?

The staple food is rice, and it is usually found in every meal. To go with rice are the different dishes according to the meal of the day. Usually for breakfast, there is the typically fried, garlic rice and the usual like the dish of tapas (dried beef), tocino (cured meat), fried fish, hotdog with boiled or fried egg.

In some regions breakfast usually starts with pieces of local bread, called pandesal with coffee, milk or fruit juice. For lunch, the typical Filipino dish is rice with a particular dish like sinigang, adobo and kare-kare. For dinner, there is the typical seafood cuisine since the Philippines has an abundant supply of seafood. They are cooked in different ways, from broiling to grilling. Some of the seaweed is also made into exotic salads to complete the seafood meal. For merienda or snack, there are the ones made from root crops, such as the sweetened banana on a stick (banana cue), sweetened camote (sweet potato cue) on sticks, or cassava. There are also different rice cakes to enjoy, like the kakanin.

- **How often do you eat during the day and at what times?**

5 times a day (Breakfast, Morning Snack, Lunch, Afternoon Snack, Dinner)

- **Is it more common to eat with utensils? With your hands? Are there certain foods you eat with your hands?**

It is common to eat with utensils and/or with hands but varies in certain circumstances. Eating with bare hands is still widely practiced in the country especially in homes but not in fine dining restaurants and special occasions. Finger foods and/or rice with fried food (i.e fish, chicken) can be eaten using your clean, washed bare hands.

- **What is the best way to let people know that you are full?**

By telling them directly that you are full enough to take more food. It is in the culture of the Filipinos the tendency to offer you more food during meal time unless you tell them you are already full. It is fine to say you had enough food already, but deliver it in a modest and appreciative way.

- **Will the students expect any problems with vitamins, fat, how foods are prepared, etc.?**

Yes, especially to those who are not into oily food since we love to prepare different course of meals and/or for some provinces/communities with so much spices. Filipino meals are generally meaty although there are vegetables. Most families cook meals at home but since there is an expansion trend of convenience stores, fast food franchises and establishments in the country, some families and children tend to dine outside. Families are encouraged to take active roles in influencing and consuming more healthy and nutritious food.

- **What should students be cautious about?**

In some households, tap water is potable. Drinking purified and distilled water is highly encouraged. These can be purchased from supermarkets and legitimate stores like water refilling stations. Trying street foods in the Philippines is fun, challenging and

offers you a variety of inexpensive cuisine. Street foods are mostly spotted on schools, bus or jeep terminals, church, parks and mini-stores along the streets from vendors or peddlers. People are advised to be cautious and rigid in observing the sanitary preparation and serving of these foods.

- **What is considered positive in the host culture cuisine that may seem odd to Americans?**

Rice in all 3 types of Meals.

Eating with your bare hands during meals.

Using spoon with your right hand and fork with the left hand during meals. In some households, using dinner knife is uncommon.

Dress | Damit

- **What is typical to wear to school?**

School uniforms in the Philippine context are officially required in public and private schools especially in secondary institutions. In some schools, however, like international and private universities, colleges, there are specified days when students can wear civilian clothing and in mostly progressive schools, there is no uniform except for required physical education classes or practicum/internship. Uniforms for public high schools and private schools vary widely in pattern and color mostly the official colors of the school, but usually consist of cotton material for the warm weather with white socks, black leather shoes.

- **Is formal dress required for certain occasions? What do you consider formal clothing? On what occasions do you dress up?**

Parties such as debut, graduation, anniversaries, and/or official function(s), a formal dress is required. In official school activities where there is a clear standard of appropriate attire, some schools restrict and highly discourage the use of tight, immodest, revealing clothes by students.

- **Is it common to wear shoes in the house?**

In most Filipino homes, one takes off his/



her before switching into a pair of house slippers or sometimes barefoot.

• Is it common for both boys and girls to shave?

Some ladies do and while others don't shave or wax depending on their upbringing, cultural and personal grooming, lifestyle and financial situation. Shaving legs and armpits is more common to girls compared to boys.

• Is it OK to wear ripped jeans? Is it considered in bad taste to wear ripped clothing?

It is okay to wear ripped jeans except in schools or some religious sites and centers.

Ways to Stay Out of Trouble

- Avoid dressing in a way that makes you stand out or perceived as arrogant and disrespectful of one's self.
- Be mindful of your surroundings; always think about security and safety, e.g. never walk alone especially late at night, in areas with little or no light, hold onto your belongings, etc.
- Avoid drinking alcohol – it makes you more vulnerable to trouble.
- Intake and consumption of marijuana and other prohibited drugs is strictly prohibited.
- Remember that members of the opposite sex in the host country may be attracted to you because you are foreign. Don't expect to always be treated the same way as a girl/boy as you are in the U.S.
- If you choose to have intimate relationships and indulge in romance and love-making, practice safe sex.
- Closely monitor weather forecast and check-up-to-date weather warnings

- Respect and abide Philippine national and local laws.

Daily Life and Social Customs

• Do teenagers typically do things only with members of the same gender? Is it common to go out in mixed groups?

Typically, yes! The tendency of same gender hanging out together, pursuing their same interests and shared activities is expected and visible. But, for some communities especially in big, major cities, it is also common to go out in mixed groups.



"My study abroad in the Philippines allowed me to make new friends from around the world. I loved spending time with my host family, volunteering, and experiencing a new culture. The Philippines will always have a special place in my heart, and I can't wait to come back!"

- Ella Tyler, YPysNH15



"At first I didn't know what to expect about the program, but I was excited and nervous all at once. My experience was so much different but better than I ever could have imagined. It wasn't always easy, but because of that, I experienced a lot of personal growth and also learned a lot about the Filipino culture. I gained a second home and family, and am so grateful for everything my host family did for me! I am extremely lucky to have had this experience, and am thankful for AFS."

- Marissa Leonard, YPysNH15

- **Is your social life connected with school activities?**

The majority of friends are made in schools, some in varied co-curricular and extra-curricular activities especially for minors and those enrolled in educational institutions. But for those of legal age, it does not necessarily follow.

- **Is it common to date? If you go out on a date, is it common to date alone or with a group?**

It is not very common to date alone. Some friends and classmates go out on a date together as a group. In the school context, *tuksohan lang* (just teasing) is the usual term associated with pairing off potential couples in Filipino culture. This is common among teenagers and young adults. It is a way of matching people who may have mutual admiration or affection for each other. It may end up in a romance or avoidance of each other if the situation becomes embarrassing and awkward for both individuals. If you intend to go on a date alone or in a group, it is still a must to ask permission from your Filipino Parents.

- **If you go on a date, who invites? Who pays? What is the norm in dating?**

The dating culture in the Philippines involves stages and phases before you finally have the right to call each other as girlfriend or boyfriend. Most still want to undergo the courtship stage where the guy will prove to girl that his love is sincere and he's worth it. Traditionally, it should be the male who invites and pays. Shared expenses is becoming common and mainstream.

- **What are common activities to do with friends (outside of school) for a teenager?**

Commonly done by teenagers are watching movies, window-shopping, hanging out within the school/university campus and/or strolling around mall, downtown/parks. Some would like to engage in educational activities, dance schools and sports like basketball, tennis, badminton, volleyball and biking among others. Others belong to youth groups of churches and other community organizations.

- **Will the school provide many extra-curricular and/or social activities?**

The schools emphasis is on academic excellence but also addresses development and engagement of students in varied co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as time, interests, and abilities allow them.

Schools bring their students from a traditional classroom experience into various activities, contests, exhibits, games, workshops and presentations that will allow students not only to train and nurture the skills they currently have, but also to unearth undiscovered talents and stir up new interests. Examples would be different school clubs like English, Math etc clubs to activities like intrams, JS prom, school fair, community and service learning projects. Not a lot of opportunities for theatre.

Friendships | Pagkakaibigan

- **Is it common to have a lot of friends or a small group of friends?**

It is common to have a lot of friends. Having group and circle of friends that share the same interests within a given class is also common.

- **Is friendship something that can be developed over a short period of time?**

Filipinos are naturally friendly, warm and hospitable. They smile a lot, which makes it easier for strangers or foreigners to feel at ease with them. They can easily initiate a conversation with the person seated next to them. Filipinos can communicate with people of other countries with ease because the majority of the population can fluently converse in English.

Gender and Family Roles | Kasarian at Tungkulin ng Pamilya

- **Who commonly prepares the meals in the family? Who does the laundry? The grocery shopping? The cleaning?**

These chores are traditionally done by Mothers and shared with the children. However, for Middle Class and/or High Class families, they have a house help to do the said chores.

- **Do girls receive the same education as boys?**

Yes. Both girls and boys are entitled to receive education. Women enjoy equal social and political rights with men.



- **Do both boys and girls help around the house?**

Yes, tasks at home are usually delegated and/or specified. (i.e Boys take care of throwing the trash while Girls take care of the cleanliness of the house and laundry). Chores such as common bathroom cleaning, washing dishes and laundering and pressing clothes is usually done by the household help. The older siblings in the family may know how to cook, helps prepare meals for the family. But in general, children are expected to contribute in the doing of household chores in the house.

- **Do boys and girls have different curfews or dating rules?**

Yes. Traditionally, Parents are protective for both their son(s) and daughter(s). In some households, parents tend to be stricter to girls than boys.

Concept of Time | Konsepto ng Oras

- **In general, if you arrange to meet a friend, do you arrive at the exact time? Or when do you arrive?**

We are flexible with time. For Western People, it is usually considered late. When we say, we will meet at 2:00pm; we will

be arriving at around 2:30pm or beyond. This is called the “Filipino time” however, this concept is slowly fading as Filipinos nowadays tend to meet at the scheduled appointment or meeting either earlier or on time.

- **Is the concept of punctuality different if you have an appointment with a dentist or a doctor? If you are invited to a party?**

For Doctor’s appointment, we are to be punctual. For parties, flexibility of time still applies. However, it is always encouraged to arrive earlier or on time as scheduled.

- **If a teenager is at a party, is it common that she / he is expected to be home at a certain time? Do parents generally have a curfew time? If a teenager is going to be late, what is commonly done?**

Yes. Generally, Parents have certain curfew for teenagers. Should the teenager be late, they commonly talk to them and may directly or indirectly give them a warning for.

Common Annoyances in the country

- Crowded public transportation
- Heavy traffic/being a pedestrian
- Pickpocketing/Crimes
- Spitting

Independence and Responsibility | Kalayaan at Responsibilidad

- **Are teenagers generally financially independent? Do they have a job outside of school?**

Generally, teenagers are financially dependent to their parents. In some cases wherein parents are unable to send their children to school due to financial constraints, students may have part-time jobs to help them pay their education. Part-time jobs may include but is not limited to working in café, fast-food chain and restaurants, in-person and online tutorial, school and teacher assistants. Youth employment (above 18 years old) is practiced in different households as needed.

- **Do you have a curfew? If you are at a party and it gets very late, is it OK for you to stay over with a friend without telling your parents?**

Traditionally, Parents, even though you will be home past your curfew, they will expect and still want you to be home. Again, Parents can be overprotective. It is still a must that you ask permission and seek approval from your parents if you want to spend the night in your friend's house.

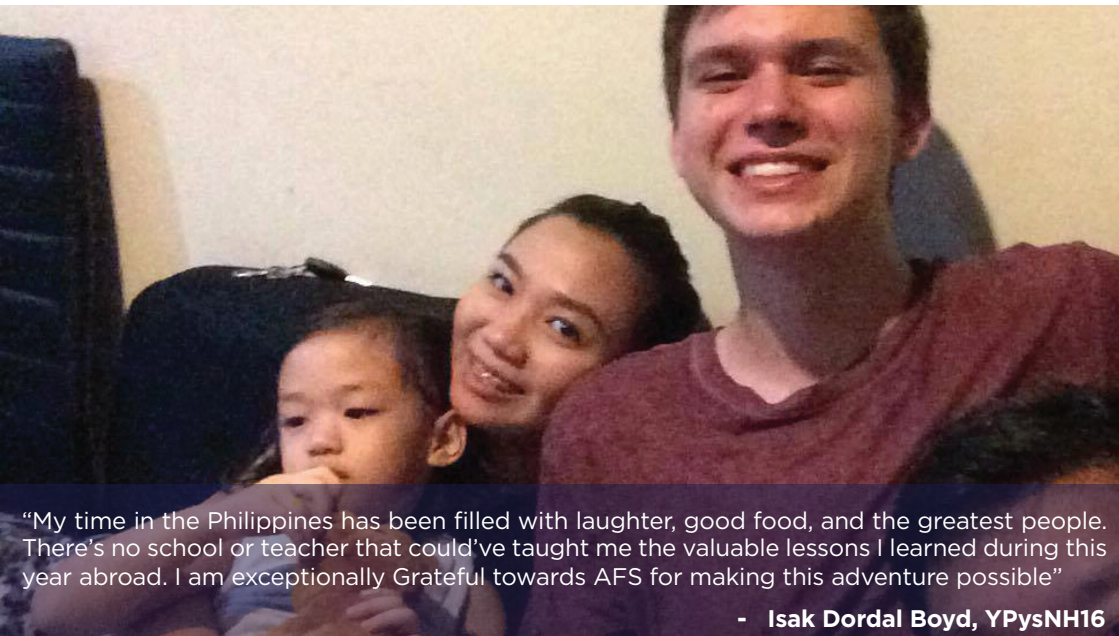
- **What are typical responsibilities for teenage children at home?**

Typically, teenage children are to help with house chores and focus in their studies.

Notions of Modesty | Kuru-kuro ng Kababaang Loob

- **What do you wear at the beach or in pools? Do you wear a one-piece bathing suit or a bikini?**

Typically, one-piece. In general, Philippines does not have the culture of sunbathing. People go to the pools and beach for leisure, vocational and social purposes. There will be some people, especially women who would prefer going to the pools and beach with their clothes on- mini shorts and shirts instead of one-piece or bathing suits.



"My time in the Philippines has been filled with laughter, good food, and the greatest people. There's no school or teacher that could've taught me the valuable lessons I learned during this year abroad. I am exceptionally Grateful towards AFS for making this adventure possible"

- Isak Dordal Boyd, YPysNH16

- **Are teenagers encouraged to be independent of their families? At what age do young people typically move out of their parents' home?**

Teenagers, even though encouraged to be independent, are still expected to depend on their parents that they can only be fully independent as soon as they get a job after College. It is also typical that some unmarried and married young adults stay with their parents and are still dependent on them.

In most public and private-owned pools, wearing of proper swimming attire is strictly implemented.

- **Is it common to wear short, tight clothing? Are there certain recommendations you can make about dress length, short shorts, etc?**

In major cities, it is a common trend amongst teenagers to wear shorts and/or tight clothing. Dresses, shorts and skirts must be just 2-3 inches above the knee. If students are from conservative towns, wearing shorts and tight clothing is unusual.

• Do you wear shoes in the house? Are bare feet OK?

No, we usually wear house slippers or go bare feet.

• Is it common to walk around the house in nightclothes? In a robe?

No, typically, we use a shirt, shorts and/or a pair of pajamas.

• Should you be dressed for the day when you eat breakfast, or is it okay to wear your pajamas?

For most families, it is okay to wear pajamas.

• What areas of your body do you want to avoid exposing? (The small of the back is a big deal in some countries).

Back, legs, and cleavage for girls

• Are public displays of affection, anger or other emotions acceptable?

Most Filipinos are generally open about their emotions (as long as in their judgment, they are appropriate and positive). But they do not normally express anger in public so as not to appear rude and maintain modesty and humility. Public display of affection such as holding hands and putting arms around the shoulders of one's significant other are acceptable.

Touch | Hawak

• Is it common to touch a friend when you are carrying on a conversation?

Yes. But, not too much.

• How do you greet a friend? A relative? How do you say goodbye? Demonstrate typical greetings and gestures.

Greet a friend with a smile and by saying "Hello" or "Kamusta ka? (How are you?)".

For relatives, if they are Grandparents, Uncles and/or Aunts, must be greeted by blessing their hand or the "mano" or "beso"/ kissing the cheek.

Saying goodbye: For relatives; they say 'goodbye' with a hug or beso.

For friends; just saying 'goodbye' with a smile is okay. Some close friends will do the beso.

• Is it acceptable for two girls or two boys to hold hands in public? For a girl and a boy? How is kissing regarded in public?

Holding hands in public is acceptable but kissing (on the lips) in public, although somehow accepted, will get the attention of people and may be regarded as exaggerated public display of affection.

• Does acceptable touching behavior differ according to the age of the people? For example, is it more permissible for an elderly person or a child to touch others? Does status permit someone to initiate touch?

Touching behavior will differ according to the sex/gender, age and relationship with the people.

For Girls: Girls should not be too touchy with boys because they might misunderstand it to something inappropriate.

For Boys: Boys should not be too touchy with girls because they might misunderstand it to being rude and/or to something inappropriate.

Money | Pera

In terms of handling money, there are a few things to keep in mind when going out and spending in the Philippines. Be mindful of these guide questions when doing so:

• How much money did you bring with you?

• How did you access money?

• What kinds of things did you spend your money on?

• When you are with your host family, should you offer to pay for things?

No, it is not necessary to pay for your host family's expenses, and doing so may send the wrong message to your host family.

• Are you aware of any social norms about money that might be new or different for Americans?

Remember to not spend too much, because you'll never know when you will need extra cash for emergencies. Also, be very careful of your money, and your belongings in general, when in public to avoid being victimized by snatchers and robbers.

Equality and Superiority | Subordinate Relations

• **Are there status differences? How do you treat you grandmother? The policemen? Your teacher? What is done to acknowledge status differences?**

Generally speaking softly and with respect and wear a smile when talking to grandparents

• **Would your parents rise to greet their pastor/minister/rabbi/priest?**

Traditionally, yes.

• **Are there situations when you allow someone to speak first? To talk louder? To interrupt the conversation? To initiate touch?**

Talk with moderate volume.

A family with a car is considered middle class or upper class.

• **How important are these things? If they are not important, what in life is most valued? Can you generalize?**

Close-knit family, reputation, gratitude

Religion or Faith | Relihiyon o Pananampalataya

The Philippines is the only Christian nation in Asia and Filipinos have high spiritual passion. They observe holy days (business establishments are normally closed during Holy Week- Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, All Saints'-All Souls' Days and Christmas). Sunday is considered both a religious and a family day.

• **Is it typical for people to attend religious services?**

Yes. Date and time of religious service differs per religious affiliation.

• **Is religion talked about in day to day conversations?**

It's a case to case basis.

• **Do people speak openly about their religion?**

Yes.

• **How does religion affect your life? Does the church/synagogue/mosque/temple provide a social life as well as a spiritual life?**

Youth participate in choir and church activities

• **How do Filipinos regard to Ethnicity?**

Filipinos have a strong sense of regionalism. Strong ties bind those who come from the same province or those who speak the same dialect. They support each other because they consider themselves as "brothers or sisters".

• **How important is social status or socio-economic status?**

Status is very pronounced.

• **What connotes status? A fancy car? An elegant house? Nice clothes? An advanced degree? A fancy title? Possessions?**





Wow, the exchange was one of my biggest challenges in life thus far, but working through it made me so much of a stronger person. I see things differently now; things that seemed so important before are so insignificant now. I'm more accepting and distance myself from negativity, something I never did before. I love, I love so many people, so many places, and so many objects. My life is colorful now, I was blind before the exchange.

- Karla Villanueva, YPysNH15

Gestures | Galaw

- **Are there some gestures familiar in the US which might be different in the host country?**

Ok sign in US means money in Philippines

- **What do I need to know about verbal and non-verbal communications?**

Filipinos differ in ethnic background, religious affiliation, social class, gender and age are important in determining people's level of comfort with touching, tone of voice and gestures.

Generally, Filipinos try to avoid hurting other people's feelings, so they struggle with the word "no" when asked for a favour or request to do work (they may say "maybe", "I'll see...", "I'll try..." etc.). As much as possible, they express their opinions and ideas with diplomacy and humility so as not to appear arrogant. They have difficulty contending with frankness or directness.

It is common to shake hands with both men and women, when introduced or greeting a person.

A beso among women is usual. But touching, especially men touching women, is not taken well by Filipinos. Carefully observe the degree of comfort and sense of space in Muslim-dominated areas.

Eye contact is important, especially professionally. It is a good sign of self-confidence. But if a person refuses to or is reluctant to make eye contact, it is considered a sign of shyness.

Filipinos use a lot of non-verbal communication. Some examples are raising eyebrows or lifting the head upwards slightly to indicate "yes" or to greet friends. It is considered impolite to pass between people conversing or facing one another. If you must do so, the Filipino polite way is to extend an arm or two arms with the hands clasped and pointing downwards. Some gestures that are considered rude are middle finger erect, waving/curling a pointed index finger back and forth and pointing at someone.

Filipinos prefer to save “face” (self-pride) rather than feel shame (“hiya”) for a sudden act or a wrong decision. So it is better to discuss privately with a colleague or friend “strategies to resolve the conflict”. It is difficult to know if a friend is having problems with you because Filipinos do not like to assert themselves or appear aggressive.

“Eyebrow flash”—a quick lifting of eyebrows—is a Filipino greeting or may signify as recognition or agreement.

If Filipinos don't understand a question, they open their mouths.

Staring is considered rude and could be misinterpreted as a challenge, but Filipinos might stare or even touch foreigners, especially in areas where foreigners are rarely seen.

To Filipinos, standing with your hands on your hips means you are angry.

Others

- Cultural misperceptions and stereotypes
- Who to call in an emergency
- What types of emergencies you may encounter
- Know how to ask for basic help
- Who or who not to ask for help
- Have multiple copies of your passport

STUDENTS LIKE TO EXPERIENCE AS WELL AS HEAR THINGS. YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER BRINGING THE FOLLOWING TO SHARE CULTURES:

- Some currency
- A remembrance (artifact, clothing, jewelry, art)
- If another language, some simple phrases written out ahead of time
- The flag
- A costume, or typical clothing from the host country
- A large map where you can show where you have lived
- A taste of a typical food



The time that I spent in the Philippines, although short, was filled with learning about the culture, overcoming setbacks, and my own character. I gained new relationships everywhere I went because I was not a tourist or “foreigner,” but a part of the community, and all because of exchange. From learning to make lumpia with my host family my first week, to doing one last photo shoot with my host sister before I left, it was all part of the experience. Every one of the tiniest memories is what made my experience special, and it was all because of YES-Aboard and AFS Philippines.

- Elisa Owens, YPysNH16



“If Filipino culture was a photograph of a person, my understanding of the culture would only amount to a drawing of the person's silhouette- ambiguous, vague, and lacking many details aside from the characterizing traits.”

- Durowaa Agyeman Mensah, YPysNH16



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