

M.V. SOLITA'S CRUISING NOTES



**VISAYAN ISLANDS,
PHILIPPINES
UPDATED DECEMBER 2012**



These notes have been compiled with information from our visit to the Visayan Islands in 2012 and from locals and other cruising folk who have also visited the area and are happy to share their information. The other contributors are:

Glynn Craig on the yacht “Déjà Vu” – 2006

Geoff Gentil on the yacht “Arnak” – 2010 to 2011

Claus & Nanette Nilsson on the yacht “Papillion 3” – 2012

Russ Cobb on the yacht “Hygelig” – 2012

Kazuko Tripp on the yacht “Outstripp” - 2012

We found the Lonely Planet’s Guide to the Philippines very useful, and another excellent resource for the Visayas is at www.silent-gardens.com.

These cruising notes are not intended to be a comprehensive cruising guide and all navigational information should be used only as an adjunct to usual navigation practices.

We found the Visayas to be an excellent cruising ground, with numerous good anchorages, friendly people, great snorkeling and diving opportunities, great weather and many options for reprovisioning. They also provide a good passage through the Philippines for boats going west from Palau or boats travelling from Malaysia and wanting to go east to Palau, while avoiding Mindanao, Sulu Archipelago and the Tawi Tawi Islands.

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CONTENTS

THE VISAYAN ISLANDS	4
WEATHER & CLIMATE	6
WHEN TO GO?	7
IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS	8
STOCKING UP	12
LANGUAGE	12
GENERAL FACILITIES IN THE VISAYAS	13
DIVING	14
SOME VISAYAN ISLANDS	15
Romblon	
Masbate	
Leyte	
Samar	
Camotes Islands	
Bantayan, Malapascua & Carnasa	
Bohol	
Siquijor	
Cebu	
Negros	
Panay	
SAILING & YACHT CLUBS IN THE VISAYAS	26
ANCHORAGES	27
VERY SECURE ANCHORAGES	35

THE VISAYAN ISLANDS

The Visayas, a collection of islands in the approximate centre of the Philippines and located between Luzon and Mindanao and east of Palawan, is attracting an increasing number of cruising boats lately. Word of mouth recommendations have put this region on the cruising radar for many folk, and for good reasons.

These islands are one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world and they offer visitors a great variety of geography, fauna and flora. Visayan scenery covers the spectrum of tropical expectations - lush jungle vegetation, steep mountains, palm-fringed islands, white sandy beaches, mangrove belts, coastal plains, clear blue water and coral reefs. The islands are home to many strange creatures such as the tarsier, a tiny and endangered member of the primate family. Underwater the diversity continues, with the coral reefs teeming with life. Many types of soft and hard corals provide homes for small creatures not frequently seen, such as pigmy seahorses, pipe fish, live shells and mandarin fish. Swimming over the reef are numerous varieties of fish and occasionally the more intimidating whale sharks, thresher sharks, large pelagic fish and dolphins.

The larger islands are quite populated and have numerous towns and cities with well-developed infrastructure, varied local industries and most of the facilities a cruising boat could need. There are offices of all major government departments, several international airports, established transport systems throughout the islands and an emergent tourist industry. The larger cities have major chain hotels, western-style shopping malls, up-market restaurants, discos and bars. There are also many smaller islands with a castaway feel, where a cruising boat can explore and not meet another tourist. Some tiny islands are sparsely inhabited and rarely visited by non-locals.

The culture of the Visayans also differs somewhat from that of the rest of the Philippines. Historically the people here have defended their islands from invaders for centuries and this has promoted a proud singular heritage within their Philippines nationality. They are conscious of the historical significance that the first contact with Europeans took place in the Visayas. Magellan, travelling from Spain in the 16th century, landed at Samar and then Mactan Island, near Cebu. Subsequent ongoing contact with the Spanish has led to the proliferation of Spanish style churches built of coral rock throughout this predominantly catholic region. The Portuguese also arrived about this time, hoping to annex the islands. Other historic sites – forts, watchtowers, cathedrals, monuments, bridges and jails - celebrate their particular history and inform the visitor of the Visayan past. During World War 2 the Philippines were invaded by the Japanese. There was an active underground movement here and the eastern Visayan Islands were involved in much of the heavy fighting. Tagalog is not often spoken here - most people speak Cebuano or a similar local dialect, though many also speak English.

We found the Visayan people are open and friendly, keen to please and to assist visitors. Away from the cities, the locals seem excited by visitors and are inquisitive about their presence. Children and teenagers are shy but generally keen to practice their English. Youngsters like to show off their latest superhero greetings. The locals seem to be very friendly towards cruising boats and security has not been an issue.

The weather in the Visayas is another important attraction for cruising people. It is generally moderate and without a strong 'wet' season. The SW monsoon provides trade winds (though usually not in excess

of 25 kts) and rain (more drizzle than downpour) between June and November. The NE monsoon is usually prevalent from around November to April. Between these two monsoon periods the weather is warm to hot and dry, with light and variable breezes. Not great passage-making weather, but perfect for exploring the area and anchoring securely at night. Low pressure systems – some of which will become tropical depressions or typhoons - can develop to the east and usually travel north-west, generally between June and November (although typhoons can occur at any time in the Philippines).

Comfortable anchorages for cruising yachts are numerous and it is possible to day-hop throughout the Visayas. Generally you can find good protection from any prevailing winds in a suitable anchorage every night. Anchorages tend to be fairly shallow and careful navigation around rocks and reef is sometimes needed. There are only a couple of small marinas - more are planned.

Tourism is increasing in the Visayans, primarily for the domestic market, but the major resort areas of Boracay, Malapascua, Dumaguete and Bohol are vying for international recognition. Eco-tourism and diving are growth areas here. There are many diving facilities throughout the Visayas offering wreck dives, specialized species viewing, a variety of courses and packaged holidays. This tourism growth has advantages for the cruising community – good access to flights, hotels and restaurants, many established parks, historic sites, zoos and other similar facilities to visit, and increasing availability of western foods.



Most cruising folk may find the “resort islands” too busy to spend a lot of time there but they can offer many benefits for short-term visitors.

Cebu has developing boat building and refitting facilities, and these are attracting the attention of many cruising boats. For more information about this, refer to our cruising notes “Boat Building & Repair Yards, Pt Carmen, Cebu”, posted on the internet at http://www.noonsite.com/Noonsite/PDF_Files/PortCarmen.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

Located close to the equator and considered as a tropical country, the Philippines generally has hot and humid weather, though rainfall is pronounced in certain areas. It has two major seasons: dry season which is experienced from December to May and wet or rainy season from June to Nov.

These are the types of climate in the country based on rainfall distribution:

- Type 1 - two distinct seasons: dry (November-May) and wet (June-October)
 - prevalent in northwest Luzon including Metro Manila, Palawan, Iloilo, Negros, and lower part of Antique
- Type 2 - no distinct dry season
 - rainy season is experienced from November-January
 - prevalent in Bicol, eastern Mindanao, northern and eastern Samar, and southern Leyte
- Type 3 - dry season from November-April
 - prevalent in central Luzon and Visayas
- Type 4 - even distribution of rainfall throughout the year
 - prevalent in the eastern coast of Luzon, Leyte, Bohol, and western parts of Mindanao

Situated at the typhoon belt, the Philippines has to endure the impact of more than 20 typhoons that strike annually, with the high typhoon season from June to October. Typhoons cross the country in a northwestern direction, so almost all parts of the Philippines experience the onslaught of typhoons. The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) keeps track of typhoons that enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility. PAGASA is likewise responsible for declaring the typhoon signal in a particular area or region.

PAGASA uses four typhoon signals:

- Signal No. 1 – winds of 30 to 60 kph, intermittent heavy rains
- Signal No. 2 – typhoon is likely to hit an area within 24 hours, winds of 60 to 100 kph, heavy floods may occur in low areas
- Signal No. 3 – typhoon is expected to hit within 18 hours, winds of 100 to 185 kph
- Signal No. 4 – typhoon is expected to hit within 12 hours, winds of more than 186 kph, heavy floods and rains

(taken from [www.philippines360*.com](http://www.philippines360.com) on 15-5-12)

Note: Check www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph for weather updates and typhoon warnings.

WHEN TO VISIT?

This is always a personal choice and usually prescribed by current location and destination, with some regard for weather thrown in. Most cruising folk will use the NE or SW monsoons to assist their travels through the Philippines, while avoiding the northern areas of the Philippines during the typhoon season, approximately June to November. Weather records show that in the latter part of the typhoon season storms tend to be further south than in the earlier stage of the season, so we were keen to be at least level with, or south of, Palawan and Cebu's latitudes until November.

We left the Calamian Islands in late April, taking advantage of the relatively calm transition period, and travelled west across the bottom of Mindoro, the northern coasts of Panay, Negros and Cebu. We encountered beautiful calm weather, sometimes with glassy sea conditions, most of that time. When we arrived in Mindoro the winds were predominately N to NE, but frequently they were light and variable, and some days there was no wind. By mid May we arrived in Pt Carmen, Cebu and experienced a few days of light SW wind with some spectacular distant evening storms – we guessed this was the beginning of the SW monsoon.

In Cebu it was quite hot and humid in May and June until the SW winds established themselves. Even after June we sometimes had windless days and generally when it was windy, it was rarely stronger than 15 kts. It was also overcast many days, which made it cooler. By July and August we were getting more cloudy and rainy days but it was usually a light drizzle. The east coast of Cebu seems to be in some sort of rain shadow – there were lots of threatening clouds, thunder and lightning but very little decent rain. By September the SW monsoon was still strong, and often we had afternoon/evening storms, but there were also days of calm and slightly cooler weather.

By September and October we were visiting Bohol and Negros, and the SW monsoon was much more evident there. We often experienced quite strong SW winds by mid morning, which often eased by mid afternoon. Passing squalls were common. There were occasional periods of week-long strong wind and rain when developing typhoons passed heading north and north-west.

In late October we headed north through the channel between Negros and Cebu, towards Bantayan Island. The NE winds were already starting, with just a 4 day transition period after the last of the SW winds. The NE winds strengthened and remained fairly constant through November and December, as we made our way from Cebu back to the Calamian Islands.

"Deja Vu" sailed from the tip of Sabah in mid December, travelled across to Negros, north-east to Bohol, up the east coast of Cebu in late January, then to the west coast of Leyte by early February. They then turned west and sailed across the top of Cebu and Panay during February, and left this island group for the Calamian Islands at the end of that month. They encountered mostly very strong NE winds – usually 20+ kts and often with squalls to 30 kts. On several occasions they had to dodge tropical depressions that threatened to develop into typhoons.

"Hygelig" entered the Visayas in May, travelling west from Palau. Russ stopped off in the Surigao Strait initially and then visited Leyte and Samar. He arrived in Cebu in June, and was probably one of the last boats travelling from Palau to Cebu before the typhoon season started in 2012.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS

Entry and Exit ports in the Visayas

Cebu City is the only official Philippines Immigration port of entry in the Visayas. Other main ports in the Visayas are Pt Carmen on Cebu Island, Dumaguete (on Negros), Iloilo (on Panay) and Tacloban (on Leyte Island).

Other Philippines entry/exit ports are:

Puerto Princessa on Palawan Island

Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga on Mindanao Island

Aparrai, Batangas, Legaspi, Manila, San Fernando La Union, Subic Bay and Tabaco in the Luzon region.

Note: We did meet a boat that was cleared into the country at Dumaguete.

Visa information

You can obtain Philippines visa information by logging on to: www.immigration.gov.ph.

Visa costs and restrictions vary with different nationalities, but most fall into the one category, of Non-restricted Tourist Visa. In May 2012 the web site stated that a Tourist (non-restricted) visa initially issued for 21 days (at no cost) could be extended for another 38 days for a cost of 3,030 pesos. To extend for another 2 months it costs 5,200 pesos + US\$50 for an identity card. (These cards take 10 days to process, and they will not forward them on to another office for you to collect.) To extend again for another 2 months will cost 2,830 pesos. To extend past 6 months, it costs 3,740 pesos for every 2 months.

If you stay longer than 6 months, you need an exit clearance before you leave the Philippines. To get this clearance, you need to visit Immigration with your completed "Re-entry Permit" form, details of your outgoing and return flight details (including receipt or check-in details), 3 x passport photos and 500 pesos. They will fingerprint your thumbs and process the form while you wait, but it is probably best to do this at least a couple of days before you leave.

If re-entering the Philippines by plane, you may be asked by the airlines for details of an ongoing or return air ticket. Have with you a copy of your boat registration, crew list showing you as owner/skipper/crew of the vessel, Customs Clearance form showing your entry by yacht into the Philippines, your Philippines ID card or driver's license if you have them, and a letter from the boatyard/marina/resort where the boat is stored, explaining that your vessel is there, and that they expect you back on to resume responsibility for the vessel. (It may be easier if you write this letter and ask the person in charge of the boat yard/marina/resort to sign it.) This will hopefully avoid the need to buy an airline ticket you don't need.

If you overstay your visa, it will cost you 1,010 pesos to have it reinstated as well as any due visa costs.

You are able to continue with 2 month extensions past 6 months to a total of 16 months. After this time, you must get an exit clearance, leave the country and re-enter, starting the process over again.

Another option to remain longer in the Philippines is to leave the boat, fly out of the country and re-enter, thus starting the visa cycle again. There are 3 international airports in the Visayas – Mactan-Cebu on Cebu Island, Iloilo on Panay Island and Bacolod-Silay on Negros.

There is a scheme in the Philippines similar to the “Malaysia My Second Home”, called the SRRVisa, which is less expensive and restrictive than the Malaysian scheme. For details visit the website of the Philippines Retirement Authority at www.pra.gov.ph

Note: Most Immigration Offices have a strict dress code – men must wear shoes and long pants, women should be “respectably covered”.

You need to visit an Immigration office to extend visas. Immigration offices in the Visayas are:

CENTRAL VISAYAS

Bureau of Immigration Cebu District Office

P. Burgos St., Tribunal, Mandaue City 6014

Mr. Casimiro P. Madarang III - Acting Regional Director and Alien Control Officer

ROMEO L. JUNIA - Technical Assistant to the Commissioner for Region 7

Tel. # (032) 345-6442-4 Fax:345-6441, Airport - (032) 340-1473/3400-751

Bureau of Immigration Dumaguete Field Office

Door # 8 Lu Pega Bldg. 38 Dr.V. Locsin St.,

Dumaguete City 6200

Peter Cabatingan Bueno - Alien Control Officer

Tel. # (035) 225-4401 CP: 09182808425

Bureau of Immigration Bohol Field Office

2nd Floor Sarabia Co, Torralba Bldg.

CPG Ave., Tagbilaran City 6300

Themistocles P. Inting - Alien Control Officer

Tel. # (038) 235-6084

WESTERN VISAYAS

Bureau of Immigration Iloilo District Office

Customs House Bldg. 2nd Flr., Aduana St.

Iloilo City 5000

Bienvenido Regala - Alien Control Officer

Telefax # (033) 509-9651

Bureau of Immigration Boracay Field Office

Villa Camella, Boracay, Malay, Aklan

Marilyn Pulmones Yap - Alien Control Officer

Tel. # (036) 2885267 CP: 0918-9406344

Bureau of Immigration Kalibo Field Office

Municipal Bldg. Office, Kalibo, Aklan

Marilyn Pulmones Yap - Alien Control Officer
Tel. # (036) 5007601 CP: 0918-9406344

Bureau of Immigration Bacolod Field Office

Aguinaldo Street, Bacolod City
(at the back of National Bureau of Investigation Office, Bacolod City)
Mita Chuvy Apuhin Arguelles - Alien Control Officer
Tel./Fax # (034) 433-8581

EASTERN VISAYAS

Bureau of Immigration Tacloban District Office

City Engr. Compound , Justice Romualdez St.
Tacloban City 6500
Milagros B. Repulda - Alien Control Officer
Tel. # (053) 325-6004

Bureau of Immigration Calbayog Field Office

Cinemar Traders, JV Avelino St.,
Calbayog City
Randy Mendoza - Alien Control Officer
Tel. # (055) 209-3310

Bureau of Immigration Catbalogan Field Office

#655 San Roque St. Catbalogan, Samar
Randy Mendoza - Alien Control Officer
Tel. # (055) 251-6470

Bureau of Immigration Maasin Field Office

Maasin City, Southern Leyte
Rene Uyvico Geonzon - Alien Control Officer
Tel. # (053) 381-4136

Our experience with Immigration was relatively problem-free. We checked in with the Puerto Princessa Immigration Office, Palawan, as soon as we arrived in PP, and we were given an immediate and free 21 day visa, dated from the day of our arrival in PP. We asked for an immediate extension, and after waiting 24-48 hours for some sort of approval, we then paid 3,030 pesos per person for an extension of 38 days. We then resumed our travels. We were in Cebu when our visa needed to be extended, so we visited the Immigration office in Cebu City. Being a bigger city, there was a longer wait at the Immigration office – about 2 hours, but we were given a 2 month extension and an ID card for 7,481.50 pesos per person. Two months later we extended again for two more months – this cost 2,830 pesos per person. The next two month extension, from the Dumaguete Immigration Office, cost 4, 240 pesos for some unexplained reason. We were back in Cebu in late November and extended our visas again, for a cost of 3,400 pesos.

Philippines Customs Bureau

We have discussed with many cruising folk whether, as a private non-commercial vessel, we need to visit Customs in the Philippines. Many people do not declare themselves and don't seem to have had a problem. On our 2011 visit we did not declare ourselves to Customs as we only intended to cruise the Palawan Island area for 2 months. We re-entered Malaysia in the company of two other yachts who had cleared in and out of the Philippines Customs, and we were all treated equally by Malaysian Customs and Immigration.

In 2012 we did declare ourselves to Customs in Puerto Princessa. It was quite an effort to find the Customs building and they certainly were not aware of what vessels were in the harbour. They told us that we do need to clear in and out of major ports as we travelled through the Philippines. They gave us a clearance to Cebu, our next major port, and charged us 200 pesos to clear in.

Two months later, we arrived in Cebu. We spent 4 months on our boat refit before visiting Customs in Cebu City, to clear in and out on the one day. They were fine with this, charged us 150 pesos for the paperwork, and cleared us out to Palawan, even though we wouldn't be arriving there for many months. They also inferred that cruising boats should clear through major ports in the Philippines, but they didn't seem too rigid about this.

Note: If clearing in or out with Customs, visit Immigration first, as Customs need to sight your latest visa.

Note: We found having a Customs Clearance form declaring the boat's entry into the Philippines very useful when we flew out of the country then re-entered. The airlines will ask that you have a return or on-going ticket when you enter the Philippines, but we were able to prove that we were returning to our boat, which had been cleared into the country, and would exit the Philippines in it.

CUSTOM PORT DISTRICTS IN VISAYAS

Port of Iloilo

Muelle Loney St., Iloilo City

Telephone: (033) 335-0998 / 337-5834

Port of Cebu

Pier 6, opposite Radison Blue Hotel,
Cebu City

Telephone: (032) 232-0611

(or contact Mr Ernesto Ramizo, Clearance Officer, on 032 234 4712)

Port of Tacloban

Trece Martirez St., Tacloban City

Telephone: (053) 321-3370

STOCKING UP

Most of the supplies and services you will need can be found in the Visayas, or you can usually substitute locally available items. There are large western-style supermarkets, department stores, computer/phone outlets and hardware shops in all the major cities and large towns. We did find some odd items that were either hard to get or impossible to find here. Consider stocking up on items you can't do without before leaving your last major port or country. We had problems locating:

- Specialised boat parts, stainless steel fittings, etc. The local engineering shops are often brilliant at repairing or fabricating parts. If you really need to order something, try Broadwater Marine in Cebu (Ph. +63 32 341 0474) or Marine Supplies Asia (+60 (0) 1437 40053).
- 2 Stroke outboard oil.
- Some favourite foods – decent unsweetened bread and bread mix, yoghurt, Gravox powder, tinned spaghetti & baked beans, yellow or red lentils, good beef, frozen pastry, good crackers, muesli, fresh limes, spray oil.
- Deep cycle batteries, though we did finally find some in Dumaguete, opposite Robinson's Plaza.
- Some specific medications, though you can often buy generic brands for much less.

Other people also mentioned to us they had difficulty finding tampons, condoms, large-sized underwear and swimsuits.

LANGUAGE

Most Filipinos in the Visayas will recognise some Tagalog but tend to speak their own local dialect. There are many various dialects in the Visayas but Cebuano is one of the most commonly used in the central Visayas. Most people also speak quite good English, and we could always find a way to get our questions or information across. Below are a few basic but useful phrases in Cebuano. The locals will appreciate your attempts at their language.

Good morning	Maayong buntag	Thank you	Salamat
Good day	Maayong adlaw	You're welcome	Walay sapayan
Good afternoon	Maayong udto	Yes	oo
Good evening	Maayong gabie	No	dili
How are you?	Kumusta ka?	Where's the toilet?	Asa ang kasilyas?
I'm fine	Maayo ra ko	I'm sorry	Pasayloa ko
Goodbye	adiyos	How much (does it cost)	Pila?

(Thanks to Shiela Caso Jaballa from Sogod, Cebu, for the above)

GENERAL FACILITIES IN THE VISAYAS

We found that the capital cities of the larger islands have most of the supplies and services that a cruising vessel requires, as well as western-style supermarkets and a good variety of restaurants. Many have modern air-conditioned malls with food courts, cinemas and bowling alleys. The larger towns on all the islands we visited have western-style supermarkets offering a good variety of food and other supplies we required, especially if it is a tourist area. Boracay in particular has a number of delicatessens and supermarkets that supplied all sorts of delicacies and alcohol.

Smaller towns all have small crowded convenience stores that sell most products that the locals use, as well as public markets. Generally fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, chicken, pork and seafood are available in the markets of every large village or small town. The variety usually depends on the growing seasons, but basic items like bananas, pineapples, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, cucumber, beans and eggplant seem to be available at all times. While we were there avocados and mangoes were very plentiful and cheap. Some more exotic fruits and vegetables can be found in the supermarkets of large towns. All small villages have sari-sari stores which offer small sized packets of many household products and sometimes fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs.

Beer and local rum is available nearly everywhere, even in small villages, but wine and other spirits could only be found in some supermarkets in the larger towns or Wine Shops in the malls of major cities.

There is an incredible range of eating out options in the Visayas. Every village has small eateries set up by the side of the road or in a market area. All towns have sit-down restaurants of various standards, though you may only find western-style food in the larger towns. The local fast food outlets like Jollibee and Inasal are everywhere and actually provide a good consistent menu. Shopping malls usually have a large food court and many smaller restaurants and fast food outlets.

Internet and phone coverage is fairly good throughout the Visayas. The golden rule seems to be if you can see a telecommunications tower you will get coverage. Some of the outlying or smaller islands did not have any phone or internet connection. There are two major companies that provide these services – Smart and Globe, and some areas were better serviced by one company over another, but generally they both seemed to perform equally overall. To hedge your options, purchase a SIM card from each company and swap SIM cards according to the best reception – they really are quite inexpensive. In the larger towns, many of the fast food chain restaurants, hotels, clubs and resorts offer free wifi.

Land transport is always easily available and cheap. Most places have tricycles, either as a multi-hire public transport or for private hire. Tricycle design tends to change from island to island. In Cebu they are generally pretty rough, have one double seat and a tiny single pad for a small bottom in the cab, and another two or three can ride pillion on the bike. They are pretty small for your average sized Australian. Tricycles are not used in the



centre of large cities like Cebu – modern taxis seem to replace them there.

Public buses are very frequent. They range from the more traditional jeepney to newer and larger buses. Many of the local buses have no glass in the windows. Some of the more up-market ones are air-conditioned. There seem to be no designated bus stops – you can hail one from the side of the road, but all the larger towns have one or more bus stations. Generally they are all overcrowded but the fares are very low. Motorcycles, often termed habble-habbles, provide transport on small islands or in the more remote villages and small towns.



There are many resorts throughout the region that cater for domestic and international tourists. Most islands have some tourist facilities, though some are more up market than others. Boracay, just north of Panay Island, is said to be the premier Philippines resort island. Malapascua Island, at the northern tip of Cebu, has a growing diving tourism industry. Cebu has numerous resorts on Mactan and Cordova Islands. Bohol has many resorts, especially on its southern islands of Panglao and Balicasag. We found many small resorts in the most unexpected places.

DIVING

There are many resorts throughout the Visayan Islands that cater specially for the diving tourist. We also found many great snorkeling spots that haven't been exploited for tourism. Wrecks from WW2 are fairly common and there is an amazing diversity of underwater life. Popular dive areas include:

Cebu: Malapascua (thresher sharks on Monod Shoal) on its northern tip, Moalboal on the western side, Santander on the southern tip of Cebu Island. Whale sharks are reported to be around Oslob on the south-eastern coast from March to May/June or even later.

Bohol: mainly on the western side of the island around Loon, and Balicasag Island.

Leyte: the southern side and Limasawa Island, Sogod Bay in November to May for whale sharks.

Negros: southern side, including Apo Island & Dumaguete.

Note: Divers use the American dive flag here.



SOME VISAYAN ISLANDS – clockwise from the NW corner.

ROMBLON

This small group of islands just north of Panay forms the north-west corner of the Visayan Islands. These islands are pretty well “off the beaten track” despite their proximity to Boracay but they offer many interesting possibilities for anchoring and exploring. These islands have a relatively low population.

Romblon Island is well-known domestically for its marble, quarried at various spots around the island, and for its beautiful beaches and scenic interior. The main town of Romblon is quite attractive, with a small but deep harbour nestled between green mountains, a small plaza along the waterfront, two 17th century forts, San Joseph’s Cathedral – also built during the early Spanish days, an historic bridge, lively public markets just off the waterfront and many narrow streets heading into the hills behind the town. There are also many small shops selling marble items at the Romblon Shopping Centre, opposite the Plaza.

There is a small permanent ex-pat community here who are very welcoming. Bob Burgess owns the Republika Bar and Restaurant on Republika St, and David Kershaw owns the Romblon Deli just a couple of doors along. Both restaurants provide excellent meals. There is also a developing sailing club, which has two moorings in the small bay just north of Romblon Harbour. If available they can be rented for 100 pesos per night. The “club” has also acquired land in this bay and hopes to eventually build a small yacht club there. Information about these moorings can be obtained from Dennis Shepherd on +63 09182479941 or Bob on +63 09212843175.

Otherwise there is just enough room to drop an anchor on the slope of the fringing reef at the head of this bay.

There is a coastal road around Romblon Island with 43 kms of mainly sealed road. We hired a motorbike for the day (call Graham on 0905 617 3630) and really enjoyed seeing something of the interior of the island. We found many small marble “factories” just outside Romblon Town, some beautiful views of the coastline and friendly villages where everyone wanted to say hello.



Sibuyan Island, to the east of Romblon, is very mountainous and densely forested, and often shrouded in cloud. It is known for its amazing diversity of flora and fauna, and most of the island is a national park – its entrance is at Magdiwang. The park is home to at least five unique mammal species. Friends of ours made the long trek from their anchorage at San Fernando on the south coast to the national park but were quite disappointed by the lack of information or displays. The south-western coast of Sibuyan has

several good anchoring options during the NE monsoon period. We were caught here while a large tropical storm passed by, and managed quite well in a couple of the more sheltered bays.

Tablas Island is a large hilly island to the west of Romblon and just two small islands north of Boracay. Its north-south orientation means that there are numerous protected bays and anchorages on the leeward side of the island during both NE and SW monsoons. Looc Bay, on the west coast, offers several good secure anchorages that will protect a boat from varying winds.

MASBATE

The Masbate island group lies in the centre of the Philippines and along the northern edge of the Visayan Islands. It is said to be relatively unpopulated (Masbate Town, the capital, has a similar population to Talibon, a small town on northern Bohol) and is quite a poor, undeveloped province. Most of the facilities, as well as most of the island's attractive beaches and accommodation, are located along the northern coast and around Masbate Town.

Masbate's orientation and position offers good passage opportunities between Romblon and Mindoro and the eastern islands of the Visaya group. There are anchorages and protection from the SW monsoon along its north coast, while the southern coast can be travelled comfortably during the NE monsoon.

We travelled up the western coast of Masbate in December and found it very attractive with several good anchoring options. Looc Bay and Nin Bay are huge protected bays along this coast with some beautiful beaches, and the town of Mandaon is situated on at the back of Nin Bay. There is also a very secure anchorage at Alas Bay, just 1 km from Mandaon Town.

LEYTE

Leyte is a large island to the east of Cebu. It was where much of the fiercest fighting in WW2 took place and its capital, Tacloban, was the site of MacArthur's famous "return". It is separated from Samar Island by a narrow channel – the San Juanico Strait - and Tacloban is situated near this channel on Leyte's north-east coast. Leyte is a well-known diving destination – whale sharks are prevalent around Liloan Bay and Sogod (best times are between February and June, and sometimes in November), and Limawasa and Panoan Islands offer good diving and beaches.

We found the west coast of northern Leyte very attractive, with a mountainous background and several deep bays that offer good anchorages. This coastline makes an easy passage between Masbate and the Camotes Islands or Cebu.

Tacloban

This is a busy cosmopolitan city providing commercial services for both Leyte and Samar. Most government agencies are represented here, including Immigration and Customs. Shopping at the markets and local stores is very good. There is a fair anchorage – not well protected – off the wharf, but watch for fish traps within the harbour.

SAMAR

Samar Island, the most easterly of the Visayan Islands, stretches from the south of Southern Luzon to the northern reaches of Mindanao, and is virtually connected to Leyte by the San Juanico Strait channel on its south-western coastline. It is one of the poorer and least developed provinces in the Visayas, with a rugged and heavily forested interior. Like Leyte, it was heavily involved in bitter fighting during WW2. The island has very little tourist development but its mountainous scenery, caves, forest, subterranean rivers and hiking opportunities are attracting increasing numbers of visitors. There are also beaches with good surf and some diving possibilities on its east coast.

Catarman, on the north coast, and Calbayog and Catbalogan, on the west coast, are small towns with airports, banks, internet cafes and good shopping options, but Tacloban on Leyte tends to function as Samar's capital city.

CAMOTES ISLANDS

This small group of three islands lies approximately 20 miles to the east of Cebu. The larger island, Pacijan, has some beautiful white sandy beaches, short limestone cliffs and rocky islets on its western coast, and most of the accommodation and resorts are sited here. The main town, San Francisco, is on its northern shore close to the causeway connecting this island with Poro Island. Poro has no beaches but appears to be more forested, with opportunities for hiking and caving. The third island, Ponson Island, to the north-east of Poro, is more remote, with no resorts or other tourist development. The waters around these islands are a beautiful clear blue.

These islands are much less populated than nearby Cebu, and can be described as "clean and green". The islands have a well-established garbage management system which seems to be working well. You will see very little rubbish around. The islands are lush and green, from the good rainfall they receive and because there are gardens and plantings everywhere. Most houses, schools and government buildings have colourful gardens and even the streets have shrubs planted at their edges.

To see the interior of the islands you can hire a bike, with or without driver/guide, for about 500 pesos for a day. Be sure to visit the Danao Lakes, the Timburo Cave for a swim in its fresh underwater river, Mangodlong Beach for its limestone islets and crystal clear water, the white sandy beach of Santiago Bay.

There is a good anchorage between the NW corner of Pacijan Island and Tulang Island, though it can be open to NE winds. The channel between the islands is deep but off the sandspit of Tulang there is a large patch of sand and sea grass at depths of 6-9M. This relatively level sandy/grassy bottom continues along the north coast of Pacijan to San Francisco. In calm weather you can also anchor off Esperanza beach, the Consuela wharf and Mangodlong Beach, and during the northerly season, off Santiago Bay.

BANTAYAN, MALAPASCUA & CARNASA ISLANDS

These three islands are administratively, linguistically and commercially linked to Cebu but merit their own section because of their unique beauty and diversity.

BANTAYAN ISLAND: This beautiful island group is situated 9 miles off the north-western tip of Cebu Island. The large main island has some tourist facilities (mainly around Sante Fe and Sugar Beach), a small airport and two large jetties for the frequent ferries from Hagnaya on Cebu to Sante Fe and from Cadiz on

Negros to Bantayan Town. There are several small towns about its coast linked by decent roads, and jeepneys travel between all the small towns of the island. The island is very quiet, “low key” and relaxed. It is much less “touristy” than Malapascua, and is famed for its lovely white sandy beaches and good swimming, rather than snorkeling and diving. It is also said to be the egg-producing region of Cebu.

The town of Sante Fe has some small resorts and bars, grocery shops, bakeries, a hardware store and a public market, but the main town – Bantayan Town, on the island’s west coast – is the administrative centre and has more facilities.

The much smaller Hilantaga-an Island just off the east coast of the main island has a couple of resorts on it, and the tiny island to its north, Virgin Island, is said to be quite undeveloped.

Anchorage during the NE season can be found to the west of Sugar Beach on the south coast, though fringing reef doesn’t allow you to anchor close to shore. Other possible NE anchorages are south of Patao or off Bantayan Town, on the west coast. SW season anchorage is between Sante Fe jetty on the main island and Hilantaga-an Island. There is an island/reef chain off Bantayan Island’s southwest corner that could provide some anchorages but no tourist facilities. However, there are developing seaweed farms amongst these small islands, so access can be very limited, and between some of these islands it is very shallow, with scattered bommies.



MALAPASCUA:

This island, much smaller than Bantayan, is just 3 miles off the north-eastern tip of Cebu, and can be reached by bangka-style ferry from Maya. It has many tourist facilities along its southern coastline – resorts, bar/restaurants and dive shops. It is a popular diving destination with locals and international tourists, with its main claim to fame being the thresher sharks found on nearby Monad Shoal. The northern end of the island is occupied by local fishing villages and scattered nipa huts, and the villages of



the island are connected by dirt roads just big enough for motor bikes – there are no cars on this island. The main town, on the south-western coast, is small, with several sari-sari stores, a couple of stalls selling fruit and vegetables, a bakery and a large church.

There is a good anchorage for the NE season just in front of the lighthouse on the western side, or over the very shoaling sand and grass of the southern coast. In the SW monsoon you can anchor off the northern beach.

There are excellent snorkeling opportunities here – we found the rocky islets to the north and south of the western coast to be well worth a visit.

CARNASA ISLAND:

This quite small island is situated just 10 miles north of Malapascua, 11 miles from the Leyte coast and 13 miles from the southern tip of Masbate. It is subject to the winds, currents and tides that flush through this area and this keeps the water clarity almost pristine, though seas around the island can be confused at times. It is probably best visited in fair weather.

Most of the island's population lives on the western side, and the main village of Carnaza is on the south-west corner of the island. There are some concrete and dirt roads for motorbikes and pedestrians linking the island's villages. There seems to be limited electricity and no internet reception. Daily flights to Cebu leave from the very small airfield. There seem to be many children on the island, which has its own elementary, intermediate and high schools.

It is a stunningly beautiful island, with many small coves, white sandy beaches, crystal clear water, small limestone islets along its coast and verdant green trees and other vegetation behind



the shore. Some of these coves are large enough to provide good anchorages, especially on the western side of the island. You can circumnavigate the island by dinghy in under an hour. There are many limestone pillars, caves and arches to be found along the coast and one islet has a canal to its centre that can easily accommodate a dinghy at half tide. We found the snorkeling good, especially the soft and hard corals and interesting rock formations.

The locals seem very friendly and several offered us some shells for sale (at a very good price!).

BOHOL ISLAND

This island of 4,117 square kms lies to the east of Cebu. It has the third largest population of the Visayan Islands with 1,102,000 people living in rural areas, 48 towns and one city. The capital, Tagbilaran, is situated on the south-western coast and is protected from the south by a smaller island, Panglao. This island is connected to Bohol by two long bridges and has many tourist attractions, resorts, hotels and restaurants.

The north coast of Bohol is a maze of reefs, sand cays and islands but with careful navigation you can explore the area easily. We used the Middle Passage to enter through the outer reef and had depths of at least 5M through the passage. Once through, there are deeper channels between the islands. This area offers many varied anchorages to shelter from any wind. There are several large towns along the north coast – Talibon, Ubay, Buenavista and Tubigon – with large public markets and stores, and they are all connected to Tagbilaran by road. Talibon is a clean and friendly town with a busy market, well-stocked supermarket and specialty stores, including a laundry. We found a small dive resort, Bien Unido, just east

of Talibon and opposite Jau Island, which has limited accommodation, a pool and serves drinks and good meals. They hope to put in a boardwalk with moorings for visiting yachts in the future. There are many fishermen and fishtraps along the north coast.

There are several other large islands off Bohol's west and south coasts, many of which host developing dive areas. Balicasag Island, about 5kms SW of Panglao, is a small round island with excellent reef for diving, and has been declared a marine sanctuary. Because the island is quite steep-to, cruising yachts are encouraged to use the provided orange buoys to moor to, which cost 300 pesos per night. Cabilao Island, on the SW coast near Loon, is another popular resort island.



Bohol's "claim to fame" is the Chocolate Hills, a huge collection of over 1200 similar looking hills which turn a deep brown in the dry season. These are situated in the centre of the island, and can be easily reached by jeepney or motorcycle. The other icon of the island is the tarsier, a tiny but cute endangered primate only found in this part of the Philippines. These can be seen at several private "zoos" around the island, but more responsibly, you can view them at the Tarsier Visitors Centre at Corella, about 10 kms NE of Tagbilaran. An excellent way to see Bohol's "interior" is to take a local bus. From Talibon to Tagbilaran it is a 3 to 4 hour trip, costing 80 – 100 pesos, depending on the bus and the route.

Tagbilaran

Tagbilaran - the capital city of Bohol - is situated on its SW corner and is protected from the south by Panglao Island. Most government agencies, an airport, several shopping malls and most other supplies and services needed by cruisers can be found here. The harbour has several deep holes amongst the shallows to anchor in at least 3-4 M over sand, and there is a "marina" tucked into the inner harbour – 4 pens created by very light floating dock material, offering power and water, for 600 pesos per day. They will let you leave your dinghy here for 100 pesos per day.

SIQUIJOR

Situated to the east of the southern end of Negros and south-west of Bohol, this small but mountainous island appears to be little visited by cruising boats, probably because of the lack of good anchorages. In most places the sea bottom shoals very quickly up to the coast, providing just a thin strip of water of a suitable depth for anchoring.

On the north coast there are several shallow bays but if the SW wind is strong the swell will roll around the western point of the island and along the north coast. There is a small port at Larena, but there is very little room, especially if the daily ferry or barge is in. There is also a wharf and slightly deeper bay at the town of Siquijor, on the western end of the north coast.

During the NE season there are two good-sized bays on the southern coast that should provide good anchorage – Maria Bay and Lazi Bay.

The interior of the island is very mountainous but there are roads crossing the island as well as the coastal road around the island. Siquijor's "claim to fame" is the local faith healers who can provide many potions and elixirs to cure most problems.

CEBU ISLAND

Cebu is situated in the middle of the Visayan Island group and Cebu City, on its east coast, is the capital – the centre of commerce, trade, industry, education and economy - of the Central Visayan region. All Government agencies are represented here. The population of Cebu Island was 4.16 million in 2010, with 1.5 million just in Cebu City and its surrounding satellite towns. It is one of the most populated islands in the region. Cebu port is a major transport hub for both materials and people moving about the region. There is some agriculture in Cebu – maize, some rice and sugar cane in the north are the main crops, but the rainfall is low because of the high mountain range down its centre. There is a copper mine in Toledo.

There are some facilities for cruising boats in Cebu. Some boat building and repair yards are located in Pt Carmen, about 30 miles north of Cebu City, where there is also a large bay suitable as a secure anchorage. The Cebu Yacht Club has a small marina and it is possible to anchor off this area, though the water traffic is busy. Porters is a small facility across the channel from Mactan and the Yacht Club, but it is very difficult to contact them to enquire about its services and facilities.

There are some good anchorages around Malapascua and Bantayan Islands in the north, and the Camotes Islands to the east of central Cebu.

Attractions around Cebu Island

Secure anchorages can be found at the Cebu Yacht Club and at the boat yards and bay of Pt Carmen, just north of Cebu City. There are several options for short land-based excursions from these areas.

- Take a local bus north from Cebu City, along the coast, to Sogod, then inland to Bogod and up to Hagnaya and Maya at the tip of Cebu. The drive is very scenic and you can plan stops for meals or to walk around. Local buses run all the time along this route and don't seem to be too crowded. Take a Ceres Liner (the smaller yellow buses) for very little extra cost and enjoy air-conditioning.
- From Maya you can get a local ferry across to Malapascua Island. This small island just off the northern tip of Cebu has a local fishing community but also caters for tourists and divers at the southern end of the island, where there are many small guesthouses and hotels available at reasonable cost and good restaurants. There are many white sandy beaches on the island and excellent coral reefs for snorkeling and diving.



- Just north of Bogo is the small town of Hagnaya where you can catch a local ferry over to Santa Fe on Bantayan Island, just to the west of the tip of Cebu. This island is not visited much by tourists but there are small resorts and restaurants available.
- On the west coast of Cebu there is a cluster of diving and tourist facilities around Moalboal. This area is easily reached by local bus from the southern bus terminal in Cebu City.

- The Camotes Islands are to the east of Cebu, and can be reached in 2 hours by larger ferries from Danao. (Danao is just an hour north of Cebu City by bus.) These islands are quite small and unpopulated, beautifully clean and green, with scattered lovely white sand beaches. The water around them is usually clear and warm. There are a few tourist hotels and resorts there (mainly on the western and southern shores) and you can hire motorbikes to travel around – the roads are generally in good condition with little traffic.



- Whale sharks have been reported to be “in residence” in the small town of Oslob on the south-eastern coast of Cebu from March to July. Some Moalboal dive companies offer diving/snorkeling packages with these creatures when they are around. Go via Moalboal or direct to Oslob by local bus from Cebu City’s southern bus terminal.

- Cebu City offers some historical landmarks and places of interest, like San Pedro Fort, Magellan’s cross, Museum Sugbo, the Cathedral, several large monuments, as well as shopping malls, cinemas, restaurants and most of the boat services a yachtee would need. Hotels are of varying standards and are generally very reasonable. Check accommodation options with a booking agency like www.agoda.com



- Cock fighting is a popular sport in Cebu and there are many venues where you can witness this blood sport. There is a large cockpit situated on the National Highway in Compostela (about 45 minutes north of Cebu) which has several sessions per week.
- Domestic and international airfares within and out of the Philippines are very reasonable nowadays, and Cebu has an international airport. It may be possible to find a secure anchorage to leave the boat here while undertaking some land travel.

Cebu Yacht Club

This club is situated in Lapu-Lapu City on the island of Mactan, just across the water from Cebu City. Its marina is fairly small but well-situated, close to transport, shopping centre, airport and restaurants. The rates for visiting vessels in May 2012 were:

First 10 days	4,000 pesos
11 th to 17 th day	5,000 pesos
Each additional day	3,000 pesos

The above fees are only good for one visit per year. If a vessel returns within a year, the charge is 3,000 per day. If you anchor off the club and bring your dingy into the marina or yacht club grounds, they will charge you 200 pesos per day. The club's phone number is (032) 340 2939.

NEGROS

The island of Negros, lying between Cebu and Panay, is the fourth largest in the Visayas, with a land area of 12, 706 sqare kms. It is divided into 2 provinces, Negros Occidental (on the western side, with the capital of Bacolod) and Negros Oriental (on the eastern side, with the capital of Dumaguete). The straits on either side of Negros are very busy with sea traffic and many ferries ply these waters, crossing between the nearby islands. The island is quite mountainous at either end, with arable land on the coastal plains. Sugar cane was a major crop in past times, but with failing sugar prices the people of Negros have turned to other cash crops and tourism.

The coastline of southern Negros is very beautiful, with white sandy beaches, resorts and dive operations around Sipalay to the west, and the major diving destination of Apo Island to the east. The tall mountains provide an attractive backdrop to the coastline.

Bobonon

Tambobo Bay is at the southern tip of Negros Oriental and behind it the cruising folks' haven of



Bonbonon. This beautiful deep cove with a "dog's leg" entrance makes it fully enclosed, very comfortable and calm in most weather. The bay is surrounded by mangroves and tall green jungle growth and in the background, the tall peaks of two mountains appear, though they are often covered in cloud. The anchorage is quite large and the end section has an

even depth of 8-10M. There are many yachts stored here, some cruising boats with owners aboard, and also many local fishing boats anchored at the entrance and in the first section of the cove. The approach to the entrance may be difficult to spot (see notes for Bonbonon in "Anchorages" section) but keep closer to the eastern side. In September 2012, the shallow western side was buoyed with white floats and this really helped to define the entrance.

There is a small local village at the entrance to the cove and a semi-permanent ex-pat community within the bay. We were surprised to see at least 45 yachts anchored in the cove, but later realised many were uninhabited and obviously stored here. However, there are quite a few live-aboards - some yachtees have been here for 10 or more years. Many are American or German men with Filipino wives. Some of the ex-pats have bought houses here in the bay.

There are several cafes in the cove run by locals that offer weekly buffets. Arlene and Boy open their cafe for a buffet on Friday nights, and provide a great meal for 170 pesos per person. They also offer ala carte meals at other times, some boat services – cleaning, storage of gear, etc, and will organise habble habble transport for you. Their café has a long dock at the NW corner of the bay and they are



happy for you to tie your dinghy there if you are going to town. Bruce's home – a local house set in beautifully terraced gardens at the northern end of the bay- is open for a buffet meal on Sunday nights, with "all you can eat" for 200 pesos. He also has a swap library and well water that he is happy for you to access. Emma's café, not far from Arlene and Boy's, on the western side of the bay, is open on Wednesday nights with another excellent buffet for 180 pesos.

There are also two small resorts sited at the entrance to the cove. KooKoo's Nest is run by ex-pats and is on the eastern side of the entrance. Tongo Sail Inn, owned and managed by Nigel and Pilar, is on the western side. Both offer meals and drinks.

There is internet reception in Bonbonon – both Globe and Smart have towers around the bay – but reception is frequently very slow and is unable to sustain extensive internet use.

It is safe to leave your dinghy in the water overnight – the local ex-pats told us there is no theft here.

Land transport out of Bonbonon is a little difficult. You need to get a habble-habble (motorcycle) for the 12 kms trip to reach the main road. It is a pretty but at times exciting ride, as the road is not fully sealed. This usually costs between 50 and 70 pesos. At the main road you can get a bus to Dumaguete, for approx. 30 – 40 pesos one way, and it takes about 45-60 minutes. Nigel from Tongo Sail Inn drives into Dumaguete every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and is happy to take passengers for a 200 pesos donation if there is room. There are good public markets in Saiton, especially on Sundays, and it is just a 25-30 minutes ride by habble-habble, for approx. 100 pesos one way. If you have a long-distance dinghy you can cruise down the coast to the large fishing village, leave your dinghy on the beach and catch a hubble-hubble to the markets – about 5kms and 50 pesos per person.

We were here in September/October, and found that strong winds sometimes race up the bay from the south-west, and occasionally there are storms as spin-off weather from nearby developing typhoons. The locals say that it can also be windy during the north-east monsoon period. However the holding in the bay is very good – lots of thick mud down there to offer good purchase for anchors.

Dumaguete

It is a tidy, fairly small town with most of its services and stores within an 8-10 block square. The Silliman University and other colleges are very prominent - geographically, economically and socially - in Dumaguete. There is a large student population and many services for them. The public markets are on Real St, the main department store and supermarket (Lee Plaza) is on the corner of San Jose St and Perdices St. The Immigration Office is in an arcade off Dr V Locsin St. Zenith and Omega are good hardware stores, as well as UMTC (on the corner of Dr Locsin and Perdices Sts). Just south of town on the main road is a large modern mall, Robinsons, which has an excellent supermarket, department store, cinema and many specialty shops. There is another Lee Plaza hypermarket about 1 km west of Robinson's. Tricycles anywhere within the town should cost 10 pesos per trip per person, but you may need to pay more if you have a lot of shopping or baggage with you.

There are several bar/restaurants frequented by ex-pats along Rizal Boulevard. The "Casablanca" and "Why Not" Swiss/German restaurants are two popular ones that also have a delicatessen and alcohol section, where they also sell homemade breads, bacon, pastrami and other imported foods and drinks from Germany and other countries.

PANAY

Panay is a large rugged looking island to the west of Negros and south of Romblon. Its capital is Iloilo City, on its south-east coast, but it is probably better known for its famous resort destination of Boracay. This small white beached island lays just north-west of Panay and is serviced by ferries and the airport at Cataclan, on the tip of Panay's north coast.

Boracay is a very beautiful but busy resort island with many water-based and other activities to engage the tourists, including an active night life. There is a large anchorage off White Beach on the island's west coast, but it is full of reefs and small boats providing water sports. Yachts do anchor off the beach in about 5 metres over sand, but the wash from the many passing boats is incredible. We lasted only one day, and moved over to Cataclan, where we anchored in a quiet spot off the airport in 6 metres. It was then just a 20 minute dinghy run over to Boracay. During the south-west monsoon season, boats anchor off the north-east facing beaches of Boracay.



Guimaras Island, off Panay's south-east coast and a short ferry trip from Iloilo City, is known as the "mango capital" of the Philippines. It is also reputed to be laid back, friendly, scenic, with many lovely bays and offshore islands for anchoring and exploring. We didn't visit here but friends did and loved it.



To the north-east of Panay is the **Gigantes Island Group**. These islands are quite remote and have very few visitors. Both Nth and Sth Gigantes Islands offer several good anchoring bays with some white sand beaches and islets to explore. We were offered fish, crabs and squid by the local fishermen here and some young women also brought out fruit and vegetables. The locals are very friendly. The

Gigantes also offer a good stopping off point if you are travelling east towards Malapascua, Bantayan and Cebu.

Port Batan on the northern coast of Panay offers a very secure anchorage if needed.

SAILING & YACHT CLUBS IN THE VISAYAS

Iloilo Sailing Club, Arevelo, Iloilo City, Iloilo

GPS Locator: N10°41.3' E122°28.2'

Club Facilities: Beach launching, dinghy storage, beach bar / restaurant, sailing courses

Accepts visitors; club membership recommended for medium & long-stay mooring.

Marine VHF: n/a, Tel: +63 33 336-1728, Email: iloilosailing@gmail.com, www: iloilosailing.webs.com

Cebu Yacht Club & Marina, Mactan Island, Cebu

GPS Locator: N10°18.98' E123°57.51'

Marina Facilities: Marina, moorings, anchorage, restaurant, accommodation, Internet and fuel

Accepts visitors; club membership absolutely recommended for short, medium & long-stay berthing.

Tel: +63 32 340-2939, Email: evosmena@yahoo.com, www: cebuyachtclub.com

Pinoy Boat Services & Marina, Port Carmen, Cebu

GPS Locator: N10°33.95' E124°01.51'

Marina Facilities: Marina, showers, restaurant, boat storage, repairs and fuel

Accepts visitors; offers short, medium & long-stay berthing.

Marine VHF: n/a, Tel: +63 32 200-4125, Email: zerox4125@yahoo.com.ph,

[www:pinoyboatservices.com](http://www.pinoyboatservices.com)

Bohol Yacht Club, Tagbilaran City, Bohol

GPS Locator: N9°38.97' E123°50.84'

Marina Facilities: Marina, anchorage, water & fuel (nearby), no clubhouse

Accepts visitors; offers short, medium & long-stay berthing.

Marine VHF: n/a, Tel: n/a, Email: n/a, www: n/a

Note: Some of these “clubs” are very local affairs, often with few marine services, no affiliations with yachting organizations and no clubhouse.

	Anchorage	Access	Depth	Protection	Information
SOUTHERN MINDORO ANCHORAGES	Ambulong island 12*11.9'N 121*0.4'E	Easy. Large reef across south-west end of island. Lighthouse on this island.	8M over sand	Good protection from NE to E. Deep inlet here may give some shelter.	Calm anchorage with clean clear water. IC (internet connection).
	Ilin Island (W side) 12*14.05'N 121*2.0'E	Easy. Best access around north end of Ambulong Is. Watch for isolated reefs and large reef at Sth end of passage	8M, over coral and sand	Very good protection from NE to SE, & S to W, open to SSE but extensive reef at end reduces fetch	Anchorage off sandy beach with small jetty. A lot of passing local traffic – friendly people. IC.
	Sibaton Island (SW corner) 11*58.3'N 121*33.1'E	Easy. Gently shoals towards island in SW corner.	7M over sand and very low coral.	Very good from N thru E to S, but channel open to some SE, though reef reduces fetch.	Seaweed farms in most of bay. Anchor on right hand side of main beach, behind local bangkas. Crystal clear water. May get some swell from N. IC.
	Semirara Island 12*03.93'N 121*21.71'E	Restricted area in 2012. Army will ask you to leave but may relent in bad weather. Reef ++ in harbour, great care needed.	10M over sand.	Protected from N to SE but can get bullets of wind over hill and roly when windy.	Active mine and wharf facility – many vessels. Also weed farms at end of bay. When windy there is coal dust++ flying about from large mine. Good IC.
ROMBLON	San Fernando Sibuyan Island 12*17.9'N 122*36.06'E	Easy. Gently shoaling depth to shore. Watch for bommie in NW corner of bay, 400 M off shore.	4-5 M over sand	Good protection from N to E, though wind bullets may come from island.	In front of San Fernando town – very quiet. Jeepneys to other parts of island from jetty. Local shops, poor IC.
	Sibuyan Island 12*22.84'N 122*29.9'E	Easy. Gently shoaling shore.	5 M over sand	Good protection from N to E, but increased chances of wind bullets from mountains.	In front of Espana Village, near to Olongo River. Road access, local sari-sari stores, good IC.
	Romblon Town 12*35.49'N 122*16.42'E	Care needed to avoid reefs on either side of entrance to this bay. Only sth side is marked by stake. Bay has fringing reef.	10 M over coral rubble & sand	Good protection from NW thru N to SW, but can get bullets off hills. No swell in NE season.	This bay, just nth of Romblon Harbour, is close by dinghy or tricycle. Town has good markets, historical sites, western-style bar/restaurants, ferry port, PO, IC.
	Sante Fe Bay, Tablas Island 12*09.46'N 121*59.28'E	Care needed with reef on both sides of entrance + unmarked rock 200M south of northern headland + central reef in bay.	5-7 M over sand/mud on a slope.	Good protection from NW thru N to SE.	Small town in head of bay. Good IC.
MASBATE	Nin Bay, west coast 12*13.2'N 123*16.8'E	Easy but some submerged rocks in bay (GPS seems accurate) + many fish stakes	4 M over sand/mud 28	Good protection from wind & swell from N to SE. Some bullets off hills when really windy.	Anchorage at head of large bay, by small town of Mandaon. Shops, jetty, IC. Many other anchoring options in this bay + connecting Looc Bay + a very secure anchorage in Alas Bay. Many lovely beaches.
LEYTE	Tacloban 11*15'N 125*00'E	Busy port – lots of fish traps	2-3 M	Anchor off restaurant on pier, NW corner. Poor protection from winds.	Good city with all services – Immigration, shopping, banks, good markets.

ANCHORAGES

	Location	Access	Depth	Protection	Information
ROMBLON VERY SECURE ANCHORAGES	Looc Bay west coast Tablas Island 12°12.5'N 121°58.9'E	Easy access.		Deep bay should offer near all-round protection, though there may be swell from N during NE season.	Several anchoring options within the bay.
MASBATE	Alas Bay, west coast 12°13.24'N 123°17.5'E	Easy access from Nin Bay, but follow GPS + sounder for depth. Shallow draft vessels can get further into the bay.	3-5 M over mud	Completely closed off to larger Nin Bay. No large rivers enter the bay. Surrounded by hills and mangroves.	Large town of Mandaon nearby, connected to rest of Masbate by road. On west coast of Masbate, so generally any typhoons will pass across the island first.
CEBU	Pt Carmen Bay east coast 10°35.12'N 124°1.55'E	Difficult – you need Google Earth or detailed map to enter. Check with www.noonsite.com/Noonsite/PDF_Files/PortCarmen .	3-5M over sticky mud but not even ground. Good holding.	Excellent all-round protection from mangroves, minimal fetch, no river into this bay.	Northern part of bay has minimal fetch, mangroves surrounding. Dinghy to Carmen town for basic supplies, catch tricycle to Danao City, bus to Cebu. IC. Dinghy to Zeke's Boat Yard for bar/restaurant.
	Pt Carmen boatyards 10°23.98'N 124°1.4'E	Travel from entrance of bay along narrow southern inlet to 2 small boatyards. Need permission & assistance to tie to seawalls, banks, other boats	3-5 M over mud	Total protection + tie ropes to many points ashore to secure boat. No water courses draining into inlet.	Zeke's yard has bar/restaurant, stone walls, shower/WC ashore, power & water. Pepe's yard has earthen seawalls, no washing facilities, power but no water. (See www.noonsite.com/Noonsite)
NEGROS	Bonbonon south coast 9°3.45'N 123°7.54'E	Obscured entrance - follow co-ordinates, keep close to cliffs on east side but watch for off lying rocks. Reef on west side may be buoyed. 1. 9°2.83'N, 123°7.1'E 2. 9°3.06'N, 123°7.04'E 3. 9°3.20'N, 123°7.01'E 4. 9°3.32'N, 123°7.01'E	8M over mud, good holding.	Entrance closed off to the sea, so no swell. Excellent protection all round. Generally very calm but can get bullets of wind down the harbour.	Large live-aboard yacht community here. Also bar/restaurants, laundry. For good shopping, 2 hr bus ride to Dumaguete or 30 mins bike ride to Siaton for local markets. Local yachtees can assist with info re shopping, fuel, money-changing, etc. Poor IC.
	Nth side of Sth Bais Bay, east coast 9°34.4'N 123°08.5'E	Caution – travel between reef off mangroves on nth side of entrance and reef/sandbar in centre, which has fish stakes/traps over it.	3-4 M over mud/sand	Bay entrance almost closed off at this point. Excellent protection from virtually all directions if you can get close to shore.	Small town on nth shore. Good IC. Local yachts often anchor here.
PANAY	Port Batan north coast 11°35.5'N 122°28.9'E	Entrance marked with 2 bamboo poles with red & green flags – quite tight but not difficult.	8-9 M over mud	Virtually all-round protection though large waterway may cause fetch in windy weather.	Large ferry uses wharf here 2 x daily, & turns in anchorage. Travel past wharf & anchor to west of it. Channel dredged to main town.

VERY SECURE ANCHORAGES