



# DAVAO



## INTRODUCTION TO DAVAO

Located in the southern Philippine island group of Mindanao, Davao City covers over 244,000 hectares in land area. Quite the way down in the deep south from Metro Manila, it is located outside the country's typhoon belt and is strategically poised for trade with neighboring countries in the Southern Pacific. The city has lured investors with its vast space, natural resources, and lower costs, making it a formidable economic hub.

Cleanliness and discipline are palpable, with countless testimonials of lost electronics left untouched in coffeeshops and incident-free late night walks. But most striking is the city's balance between the urban and the provincial, with business districts co-existing with lush mountain ranges and forests, nature parks, and unspoilt beaches all within the city limits. While infrastructure has yet to catch up with Metro Manila's, traffic jams and crowds attendant to the Philippine capital aren't as bad, which is a welcome reprieve for resident and visiting urbanites alike.



Mount Apo





### Malagos Garden Resort

This 12-hectare nature-themed family resort features a chocolate museum, butterfly gardens, a Philippine eagle sanctuary, and fruit tree orchards, among others. Air-conditioned cottages throughout the property and a cafe enable one to commune with nature in comfort. Export-quality artisanal chocolate and cheese produced here are must-tries.



### Samal Island

A short boat ride from Davao City is Samal, a tropical haven comprised of islets and an almost 120-kilometer coastline of beaches for swimming or snorkeling in marine sanctuaries. Hiking, spelunking, and trekking await adventurous landlubbers. In this resort city, accommodations run the gamut, and one can rough it or holiday in the lap of luxury.



### Durian Capital

Durian is the king of fruits in Davao. The spiky delicacy—known for its sweet, creamy, yet pungent flesh, with a stench that has led some airlines to ban it as onboard hand-carry—is not only abundant in city markets but also served in a variety of ways, like coffee or cheesecake.



### Kadayawan Festival

Every third week of August, people have taken to the streets for the Kadayawan Festival, where Davao's multiple indigenous people and cultures are central to the theme of the celebrations. Street dancing, float parades, cultural shows, and food and craft fairs highlighting local delicacies and products from different ethnic groups are just a few of what promises to be a sensory feast.



### Davao Nightlife

Even if establishments stop selling alcohol by midnight, Davao's night life is far from sleepy, with a respectable amount of options for eclectic tastes even among international tourists. From grilled street food at the Roxas night market to fancier fare at craft cocktail lounges. A lot of bars also overlook Davao's skyline.





### Maranao Beach, Pearl Farm Resort

Pearl Farm started out literally as a source of cultured pearls before turning into a premiere family-owned resort in Samal Island. While thoughtfully decorated and carrying probably the most upscale amenities in the area, the true gem of this place is its beach, discreetly tucked in a cove on a tranquil part of the island.



### Food in Davao

Davaoeño food isn't complex but is fresh and earnestly flavorful. The kinilaw is raw fish steeped in vinegar and spices. Sugba (coal grill) can be had as fish, chicken, pork, or seafood. Singulaw, a contraction of kinilaw and sugba, is a medley of vinegar-cooked fish and smokey chunks of chargrilled pork.



### Davao Crocodile Park

While the name clearly lets on what its main attraction is, the conservation park is home to various kinds of animals like wild fowl, reptiles, and other exotic fauna. It likewise schedules educational animal shows and guided tours. Check out their website for updates and bookings.



### Davao Fruits

Davao is a fruit powerhouse with some species not found elsewhere in the country. Apart from durian, people also come here for pomelo, rambutan, mangosteen, and marang (a marriage of jackfruit and durian). Bankerohan and Magsaysay Market offers the widest varieties of fruits with vendors accustomed to packing fruits in crates for travel.



### Eden Nature Park and Resort

Thousands of feet above sea level, rides like Skyswing, Skycycle, and Skyrider are main draws for an adrenaline-filled yet breathtaking view of the city in this mountain resort. You can also go horseback riding, bird watching, hiking, fishing, or walking amid flower gardens and forest animals in this 80-hectare sprawl. Or cozy up indoors in one of their lodges or villas.



# FUN THINGS TO DO



## Drop in on a neighborhood of giant clams

Over 3,000 giant clams that measure up to a meter in length dot a sandy 14-hectare water sanctuary in Barangay Adecor in Samal. Snorkeling at the sanctuary, under the stewardship of Davao del Norte State College, is included in many resorts' tour packages. Though giant clams swallowing people is a myth, they do close as a reflex when something gets into contact with their valves. As with all things endangered, look-but-don't-touch is key.



## Paddle like your life depended on it!

It takes quite the oddball to enjoy hurtling through wild gushing white water over rocks and down river drops on a raft and in very wet clothes. But many who've done white water rafting wax poetic about the rush. Most rafting packages in Davao offer breaks in between, like a swim in tranquil parts of the river or a picnic, so you're not fighting for your life the whole time.



## Get up close with the endangered Philippine Eagle

The Philippine Eagle is one of the biggest and most powerful eagles in the world. Catch a glimpse of these glorious creatures at the Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, a refuge for both rescues and captive-borns. Listen to conservation guides dish interesting facts about these magnificent predators—like how they are monogamous for life (endangered, indeed)—while you zoom in for Instagram-worthy headshots of their mane-like crests.



## Go sky high

In a city teeming with mountains, high-altitude adventures are par for the course. Why bike on the streets when you can pedal your way 60 feet high across a 200-meter cable? Give a children's playground staple an adrenaline twist by being hoisted up a swing about 95 feet off the ground. These and other sky-high adventures can be found at Eden Nature Park and Resort.



## Work those thighs—by reaching the country's highest peak

The three-day thigh obliterator up Mount Apo requires not just a modicum of fitness, but also a commitment requisite to reach the country's highest peak at over 9,500 feet above sea level. There are trails and hikes for beginners and other levels of climbers, with still much to be enjoyed—spotting rare forest animals, river crossings, lakes—without having to complete the ascent.

# THINGS TO KNOW



## How to get there

Fly to Davao's Francisco Bangoy International Airport from Manila, Bacolod, Cagayan De Oro and other Philippine cities; initiatives to ramp up international direct flights are underway. Domestic flights to Davao can take 1 to 2 hours depending on where you're coming from. Getting to prime tourist destination Samal Island takes a 15- to 45-minute motorboat or ferry ride from Davao City, depending on which part of Samal you dock at.



## How to get around

Cabs are affordable enough for traveling within the city; a cab ride from the airport to the city center is about 20 minutes. Jeepneys and multicabs ply fixed routes within the city. Interesting sites farther out from the city center can be reached by bus. In Samal Island, a cheap and common mode of transport is the habal-habal (a motorcycle taxi). Davao City and Samal Island are no strangers to tourists, locals can guide you on public transport routes.



## Where to stay

Davao City's downtown may be the most strategic area for accommodations. It's centrally located and is a good jump-off point for exploring the city, not to mention a lively restaurant and bar scene most likely on account of the business district being in the area. While there is a smattering of waterfront accommodations in Davao City, Samal Island, one of the country's major resort cities, is the best place for beachfront lodging.



## Internet

Most hotels, resorts, and coffee houses, as well as a handful of restaurants, have WiFi, all with different charging schemes—from free to partially free to paid. Some public spaces and parks have WiFi hotspots. All local mobile carriers have bundled mobile data plans even for prepaid SIM cards. This would be the most commonly available option for on-the-go Internet access compared to pocket WiFi hotspot devices. Note, though, that some far flung points of interest, such as those in the mountains or rivers, may not have cellular signal.



## Language

The most widely spoken dialect is Davaoefo Cebuano, an amalgamation of Cebuano or Visayan (spoken largely in the Philippine regions of Visayas and some parts of Mindanao) and Tagalog (the national language, spoken in Manila and other parts of the Luzon region). As a melting pot of various indigenous cultures, Davao is also home to some indigenous dialects. Locals are used to tourists and can transact in Tagalog and, as loyal patrons of American TV, English (in varying levels of fluency).



## Currency

Philippine Peso  
USD 1 = Php 55.00  
as of April 2023



## Time zone

UTC/GMT + 08:00

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