



Bring home memories and a piece of the Philippines with you

The Philippine Islands is home to many proud craftsmen and artisans. These are Filipinos who create world-class products using skills and tools that have been handed down through generations. In harmony with nature and with ingenuity, they use indigenous materials that abound in their communities. These treasures await travelers to the Philippines, as beautiful souvenirs that can be brought home along with memories of a relaxing getaway in this tropical paradise.

The Philippines Department of Tourism partners with the Department of Trade and Industry to support the local handicrafts businesses all over the country. Through this partnership, many local producers have been able to reach a wider customer base. Projects include seminars, trade fairs and expositions, along with souvenir stops at popular destinations. Together with creating travel circuits that are based on attractions in each region, the DOT also highlights artisanal products that can showcase the local talent and culture.

“By showcasing local products, we are able to support livelihoods in the communities as well as help in preserving their heritage for future generations,” says Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

There are many native materials that are transformed into beautiful works of art by Filipino craftsmen. Here are some of the cool souvenirs that travelers can bring home from the Philippines.

Baguio’s woodcrafts

Woodworking in the uplands of the Cordillera Region ranges from utilitarian items used at home or in the fields, to ceremonial items used in community celebrations, and spiritual figures called Bulul that serve as house guardians that are passed on from generation to generation. Baguio’s public market and roadside stalls offer many choices of hand-carved wood items to fit your fancy and your luggage space – such as the infamous ‘barrel man’, or larger statues of warriors and animals such as eagles that can serve as a conversation piece in your home.



Bulul (c/o Dakila Angeles)



Bulul

The Inabel of Ilocos

The practice of weaving cotton thread into fabric on a wooden loom used to be one of the household duties of many Ilocano women. The hardy Inabel or Abel Iloco, is a soft, simple, pliable fabric with varied unique patterns and designs that can be woven to be big enough for use as blankets, table runners, and even dress material. Some Inabel items that are available at souvenir shops such as the ones in Vigan, Ilocos Sur or even online are tea towels, blankets, shawls, bags, and even made-to-order apparel from young designers who are keen to use this sustainably made and sourced fabric.



Inabel or Abel Iloco (c/o Jacob Maentz)



Inabel or Abel Iloco (c/o Erwin Lim)

Vigan's Pagburnayan Clay Jars

Burnay is the Ilocano word for the brown clay pot used by Filipinos even before the Spanish arrived in the country. These earthen pottery pieces were used by early Filipinos as water containers because they help keep the water cool even on a hot day. They were also important household items as containers for salt and rice, or for vinegar, fermented fish paste, and they were vessels for items that were sold to the Chinese in the days of the sea trade. In Vigan, one can visit a pottery shop and learn how Burnay is made using carabao power to mix the mud, and have your own photo opportunity on the potter's wheel. You can also purchase these thick and hardy jars to use as decorative pieces or planters at home.



Pagburnayan Clay Jars (c/o Francis Guerrero)



Pagburnayan Clay Jars (c/o Francis Guerrero)

Cebu's Guitars and Capiz Shells

Guitars that are handmade in Cebu are famous throughout the Philippines because they are durable, affordable, and of high-quality compared to the mass produced ones in the market. The art of making guitars, which was introduced in the Spanish era, have been passed on through generations of local masters who make these musical instruments by painstakingly shaping the wood into the familiar hourglass shape. These are available at souvenir shops or at family-owned guitar stores, particularly in Lapu-Lapu City, have become local attractions for music lovers of all ages.

The Visayas is also where dainty Capiz shell art is a traditional handicraft industry. The translucent Capiz, which can still be found adorning windows of heritage homes or painted in the stained glass windows of churches, comes from the shell of a mollusk called the Windowpane Oyster . After the meat has been eaten, the shells are gathered to be used in handicrafts. Local artists use the shells to create magnificent décor such as complicated chandeliers, pretty wind chimes, beautiful floor lamps, or smaller stationery items that can be given away to friends and family back home.



Cebu's Guitars



Capiz lamp

Barako Coffee from Batangas

Barako is a Tagalog word that means 'strong' and that is a good descriptor for the brew that comes from the coffee beans grown particularly in Batangas and some parts of Cavite. The farmers take pride in their coffee plants, which have been cultivated in their region since the 1800s. Coffee experts describe the taste as woody and smoky with a hint of sweetness from its floral, fruity aroma. Its bold, intense flavor from Liberica beans has been translated into local coffeehouse favorites and even into cakes and pastries. A cup of coffee made from your souvenir bag of ground beans is a great way to perk up on a cold day.



Barako coffee



Barako coffee

Davao's Malagos Chocolates

While growing cacao is an agricultural practice in many parts of the Philippines, Davao is hailed as the country's Chocolate Capital and the entire Davao Region as the Cacao Capital of the Philippines. One of the frontrunners of the industry in the region is the award-winning Malagos Chocolates brand which uses high-quality beans from a sustainable source for a "tree to bar" chocolate journey. Its latest award was for its 100% Premium Unsweetened Chocolate that won four Golds and one Bronze at the 2020 World Drinking Chocolate Competition organized by the International Chocolate Awards. The products offer a rich, velvety, melt-in-the-mouth chocolate experience that makes it a perfect gift for the chocoholics in your circle.



Malagos Chocolates (c/o Jacob Maentz)



Malagos Museum, Davao (c/o Rhonson Ng)

Manila's South Sea Pearls Shops

There are many high-end jewelry stores located at the malls selling a sundry of pearls and other gems. But for those who want to have the element of a bargain when they shop for their jewelry and accessories can visit the bazaars of Manila, where one can find an assortment of South Sea Pearls from Palawan and some parts of Mindanao sold at stalls beside cellphone accessories and rubber shoes. There, one can browse through their collections of luminous necklaces and dainty earrings while asking for the "final price" that the vendor can offer.



South Sea pearls



South Sea pearls



Davao Oriental's Virgin Coconut Oil

Touted to have many health benefits, virgin coconut oil is produced from fresh or mature coconuts, without undergoing chemical refining, bleaching or deodorizing. VCO products that are available in the Philippines come in oil and capsule form or even as cosmetics. While coconuts grow abundantly all over the country, Davao Oriental is poised to become a big exporter of coconut products overseas, with 18 Virgin Coconut Oil processing centers set to rise within the year. Modern production at the processing plants such as the one of Oriental Golden Coco Inc., ensure high quality through multiple micro filtration processes for additional purity to result in products with that wonderful fresh coconut aroma and flavor in what is called the “purest and healthiest” form of coconut oil.



Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO)



Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO)

Cordillera's Heirloom Rice

Heirloom rice varieties have been grown in the Cordillera Mountains for centuries, and studies have found that there could be about 500 traditional varieties of rice that are indigenous in the region and are mostly being planted for personal or family consumption through generations. So far, there have been 88 varieties that have been identified and studies have shown these to have higher nutritional content. Try this heirloom rice with your next meal and have it the Filipino way by eating with your hands for a more authentic experience.



Heirloom Rice (c/o Francisco Guerrero)



Heirloom Rice (c/o Dakila Angeles)

The Philippines' Alcoholic Drinks

Imbibe the spirit of the Philippines through its choice alcoholic concoctions. A short story by the late Don Alejandro Roces who is a National Artist of the Philippines for Literature, cheekily says, “We Filipinos Are Mild Drinkers”. This is offset by the local distilled drinks such as Don Papa Rum, a premium aged single-island rum from the sugar cane fields at the foot of Mt. Kanglaon in the Visayas. Coconut Wine called Lambanog is another potent brew obtained from the distillation of naturally fermented coconut sap. Modern version of this celebratory drink now have added flavors. Travelers can bring this home to European countries if they are for personal consumption while restrictions in Muslim countries may apply.



Don Papa Rum

Liliw, Laguna's Native Slippers

The town of Liliw in Laguna is known for its slipper industry, with local artisans crafting the footwear from abaca which grows abundantly in the area. These comfortable and colorful house slippers are perfect for keeping your feet warm while relaxing at home and they make great handcrafted gifts – just make sure that the recipient gives you a coin in return as Philippine superstition says that if you don't get one, you might get into a quarrel.



c/o DOT IV-A

Filipino Designer's Modern Filipiniana

Young Filipino designers are rediscovering local woven fabrics and reimagining them for use as modern apparel in order to support traditional industries and local communities. While the National Dress of Barong Tagalog (long sleeved embroidered formal shirts) for men and Baro't Saya (that literally translates to blouse and skirt, made from fine pina cloth) for women are still worn at important occasions, designers such as the ones at Filip + Inna are coming up with stunning garments that make use of handmade woven material, beading, and embroidery that can be worn at the office or even at the beach. Bring home something old, something new with the gorgeous designs that will make you stand out in a crowd.



Embed:

<https://filipinna.com/ph/product/ningning-kamisa/>

<https://filipinna.com/ph/product/purita-skirt-2/>

<https://filipinna.com/ph/product/honorata-pants-2/>

<https://filipinna.com/ph/product/sofiya-mangyan-dress/>

More Treasures to Unbox

The Philippines is a haven for those who want to enjoy local culture through tangible items. Rattan is one of the indigenous materials that are used for traditional packaging, the leaves are dexterously woven into shopping bags called bayong and boxes that are used to store items in the home. Banig, or woven mats are another Filipino woven product, used for sleeping or as bags and home accents, while abaca bags are fashionable and summery all year long. Wooden utensils are utilitarian and decorative items, which can be found both on the dining table or in their supersized form, hanging from the walls of the dining room. For those who want to try their hand at a little Filipino cooking, local brand Mama Sita offers condiments and sauces to help capture that local palette.

Souvenir-Hunt Safely

The Tourism Department has been awarded a SafeTravels Stamp by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in recognition of its adoption of “health and hygiene global standardized protocols” that will ensure safe travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, conducts thorough inspection and assessment, to ensure that only those who are accredited are allowed to open and receive guests.

The Philippine government through its Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) is constantly updating its protocols to safeguard Filipinos and foreign nationals who are traveling to the Philippines. To learn more about the Philippines’ new and exciting adventures, as well as safety and travel updates, visit www.morefunawaits.com and <https://www.facebook.com/PhilippineTourismThailand> (for Thailand) and www.morefunawaits.com (for Qatar) or download the Travel Philippines app at the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.