A Traveler's Guide to the

Philippines

Luzon and Mindoro

Marshall and Wendy Evans

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Mary Marshall
and
Wendy Evans

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FOREWORD

This is the first of a two-part Traveler's Guide to the Philippines. It comprises a comprehensive introduction to the whole archipelago, and a detailed guide to Luzon and Mindoro, with maps, suggested tours, places of interest and hotel listings. The authors are now working on the second part, a similar in-depth guide to the rest of the country.

The authors are aware that despite the care that has been taken in its preparation the guide may contain imperfections which are the result of the rapidly changing face of the Philippines. They apologize in advance for any such blemishes and welcome advice from readers which may be incorporated into subsequent editions.

The publishers accept no advertisements. All mentions and recommendations in the text are gratuitous and reflect only the authors' opinion.


PROVINCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Kilometers
50 0 50 100 150
Batanes
Luzon Strait
PACIFIC
Ilocos Norte
Cagayan
Abra
Kalinga-Apayao
Ilocos Sur
Mountain Province
Isabela
La Union
Ifugao
Benguet
Nueva Vizcaya
PHILIPPINE
SEA
Pangasinan
Aurora (Subprovince)
Tarlac
Nueva Ecija
Zambales
Pampanga
Bulacan
LUZON
CHINA
SEA
Bataan
Rizal
OCEAN
Cavite
Laguna
Camarines Norte
Batangas
Quezon
Camarines Sur
Catanduanes
Marinduque
Mindoro Occidental
Albay
SEA
Mindoro Strait
Mindoro Oriental
Sibuyan Sea
Sorsogon
Northern Samar
Romblon
Masbate
Western Samar
Aklan
Biliran (Subprovince)
Eastern Samar
PANAY
Capiz
Antique
Iloilo
Visayan Sea
Leyte
VISAYAS
Southern Leyte
Negros Occidental
Cebu
Palawan
Bohol
Surigao del Norte
Negros Oriental
Camiguin
Surigao del Sur
Mindanao Sea
Agusan del Norte
SULU SEA
Misamis Occidental
Misamis Oriental
Agusan del Sur
Zamboanga del Norte
Lanao del Norte
Bukidnon
Davao del Norte
Zamboanga del Sur
Lanao del Sur
North Cotabato
Davao City
Davao Oriental
MINDANAO
Maguindanao
Sultan Kudarat
Davao del Sur
Davao Gulf
Sulu
South Cotabato
CELEBES SEA

CONTENTS

GENERAL TOURIST INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION

In Manila there is an excellent range of hotels, from 5-star category downward, see p. 189. Hotel resources in Baguio and Legaspi are also good, see pp.194-195. There are also some well-appointed beach and inland "resort hotels," listed on pp. 197-198. In most provincial towns, and elsewhere off the beaten track, hotel accommodation, if it exists at all, ranges from very moderate to rudimentary. The provincial hotels listed on pp. 192-196 are licensed by the Department of Tourism but have not been visited by the authors.

As they travel in the Philippines tourists will often see notices advertising local "resorts." This term does not necessarily mean that overnight accommodation is available, and can in fact apply to anything from a small area of picnic shelters to a well-appointed tourist hotel.

Always book overnight accommodation in advance from Manila if possible. Consult your travel agent or the Department of Tourism.

TRANSPORTATION

In Manila hire-cars and taxis are easily available. Public transport is cheap and consists of jeepneys, *kalesas* (horse-drawn carriages), tricycles (motorbikes with covered sidecars) and passenger buses. At least 20 major bus companies ply between provincial towns throughout Luzon. Within such towns local transport is often limited to jeepneys and tricycles.

Good arterial highways extend from Manila northwest to the Ilocos Provinces and south to the Bicol. Secondary roads, however, particularly in the rainy season (June to November), can be unreliable. In most remote areas a four-wheel-drive vehicle is essential. Many beautiful sites are still only accessible on foot. To cover such areas a growing number of safari trips are being organized to cater for the more adventurous tourist. Apply to American Express and the Information Bureau of the Department of Tourism for further details.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A valid passport is the basic requirement for travelers. All tourists, except those from countries with which the Philippines has no diplomatic relations, stateless persons and nationals from restricted countries, may enter the country without visas and may stay for 21 days, provided they hold tickets for onward or return journeys. Visas may be obtained from Philippine diplomatic or consular offices abroad.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

Visitors must have international health certificates for smallpox and cholera. Yellow-fever vaccination is also needed on arrival of passengers from infected areas, except children under one year of age who may be subject to isolation when necessary. Tourists in remote areas should take antimalarial drugs as a precautionary measure.

CUSTOMS

Tourists may bring in the following items free of duty: 200 cigarettes *or* 50 cigars *or* 250 gms of pipe tobacco *or* an assortment of these products; 2 regular-sized bottles of alcoholic beverages; cars and other vehicles, pro-

vided they are covered by "Carnet de Passages en Douanes" and a letter of commitment from the Philippine Motor Association guaranteeing the exportation of the vehicle within one year from the date of arrival or the payment of the corresponding duties and tax thereon.

BUSINESS AND OFFICE HOURS

Shops open from 9 or 10 A.M. to 7 P.M. Mondays to Saturdays. In Manila many tourist shops stay open on Sundays. Government and office hours are 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Mondays to Fridays with a lunch break from 12 noon to 1 P.M. Banks are open from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Mondays to Fridays.

ELECTRICITY

Power supply is generally 220 volts, 60 cycles.

WATER

Manila's water is officially potable. However, if you have a sensitive stomach or are in a rural area, it is safer to insist on boiled water or to drink bottled proprietary soft drinks.

SHOPPING

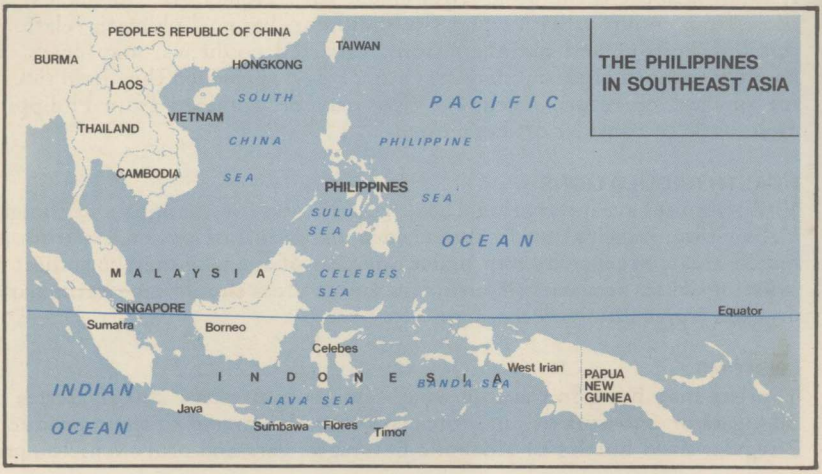
Best buys are: rattan furniture; woodcarving; shellcraft and mother-of-pearl items; local batik, and the local fabric *ramie* (linen-type), *jusi* ("banana silk") and *pina* (pineapple fiber); embroidery; cigars; brass- and bronzeware. Many shops will pack and ship large items for abroad.

For recommended shopping areas in Manila see p. 151.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN THE PHILIPPINES

January 1st, New Year's Day; April 9th, Bataan Day; Maundy Thursday and Good Friday; May 1st, Labor Day; June 12th, Independence Day; July 4th, Fil-American Friendship Day; November 1st, All Saints' Day; November 30th, Bonifacio Day; December 25th, Christmas Day; December 30th, Rizal Day.

Other holidays are sometimes announced at short notice.



BACKGROUND TO THE PHILIPPINES

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines lies on the west side of the Pacific Ocean between latitudes 21°25 N and 4°30 N and longitudes 116°E to 127°E. The country extends some 1,760 km. (i.e. 1,100 mi.) from north to south between the extreme latitudes.

The country consists of an archipelago of 7,107 islands and islets (of which only 1,000 are inhabited), which lie 1,000 km. off the southeast coast of Asia, but nevertheless forms part of the region of Southeast Asia. The present islands are the upland areas of a submerged continental shelf (see *Topography,* p. 4). The one-time land bridges from (i) Northwest Borneo through Palawan to Luzon; (ii) Northeast Borneo through the Sulu Archipelago to the Zamboanga Peninsula of Mindanao; (iii) Northeast Celebes through the Sangiha Islands to South Mindanao; and (iv) mainland Asia through Taiwan and the Batan Islands to Northern Luzon, no longer exist.

The Islands can be divided into three main groups: (1) Luzon and islands; (2) the Visayas; (3) Mindanao; and are surrounded by the following seas: (1) the South China Sea to the west and northwest; (2) the Sulu Sea between Palawan and Mindanao; (3) the Celebes Sea to the south; and (4) the Philippine Sea to the east. Off the east coast of the Visayan Islands and Mindanao is the Philippine Deep, a trench in the ocean floor whose depth has been measured as 10,600 m. Known as Swire Deep, it is one of the deepest soundings taken in the world.

Climatically, the islands are part of the Southeast Asia tropical region with seasons governed not by temperature changes but by wind regimes (trades, monsoons and typhoons) and the resultant rain (see *Climate,* p. 6). The common tropical climate has led to similar landscapes in both mainland and island Southeast Asia, of which the Philippines is no exception (see *Vegetation,* p. 8). The dominant features are: (1) lush rain forest; (2) rapid soil erosion where forest is cleared; and (3) river systems with rich alluvial deposits in the lowlands, eminently suited to rice cultivation.

Culturally the Islands are related to the mainland of Southeast Asia whence the original peoples came (see *Prehistory,* p. 22). However, today, the Philippines stands out as the only predominantly Christian country of Southeast Asia.

Of the 7,107 islands known, Luzon (105,000 sq. km.) and Mindanao (95,000 sq. km.) represent two-thirds of the total land area of the country. Only 45 of the islands have a land area of more than 100 sq. km. and together represent 98 percent of the total land area. The country is slightly larger than the United Kingdom, or New England and New York State together, slightly smaller than Japan and about the same size as Italy. The combined coastlines, estimated at 17,500 km., are about twice as long as that of the United States.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Philippine Islands lie in a zone of major earth movement down the western margin of the Pacific Ocean. Much of the present-day pattern of island distribution has resulted from the fact that the Philippines lies in a zone of convergence of several Pacific mountain building zones. That there has been pronounced recent movement is demonstrated by limestones, formed of coral, which are now lying at considerable elevations on numerous islands, e.g. Sagada, Northern Luzon; Palawan.

Geology. Geologically the Islands are part of the Sunda platform, a shelf extending out from the Asian continent (from Kamchatka in the north down through Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia and finally through to New Zealand), which was inundated by shallow seas at the end of the last glacial period, 500,000 years ago. The present islands are the upland areas of this original continental shelf. The islands vary enormously in size and shape, and in number (as small coralline and volcanic islands can appear and disappear at different times), and can be regarded basically as a half-drowned mountain range.

The major alignment of the Philippine mountain masses is an inverted "Y," with the arms converging in the Visayas. These arms are marked by recent faulting, folding and volcanic activity. The main fault zone runs from northwest to southeast from the Lingayen Gulf (west coast of Central Luzon) across Central Luzon, the Bicol Peninsula (Southern Luzon), East Masbate and Central Leyte, and then southward through the mountains of East Mindanao. This fault line is marked by many of the highest elevations in the country, as well as by numerous recently active volcanoes, e.g. Taal, Mayon.

Two less pronounced fault lines are those running from southwest to northeast from Northwest Borneo through to Luzon via Palawan, and from Northeast Borneo through to the Zamboanga peninsula via the Sulu Islands.

Relief. The archipelago is generally mountainous with a general north to south trend, and rugged due to rapid erosion in areas cleared of natural vegetation. There are also many relief features typical of volcanic activity, such as volcanoes, e.g. Mt. Mayon (see p. 154); and crater lakes, e.g. San Pablo Lakes, (see p. 170).

For more detailed relief of the Islands, see the individual entries in alphabetical order.

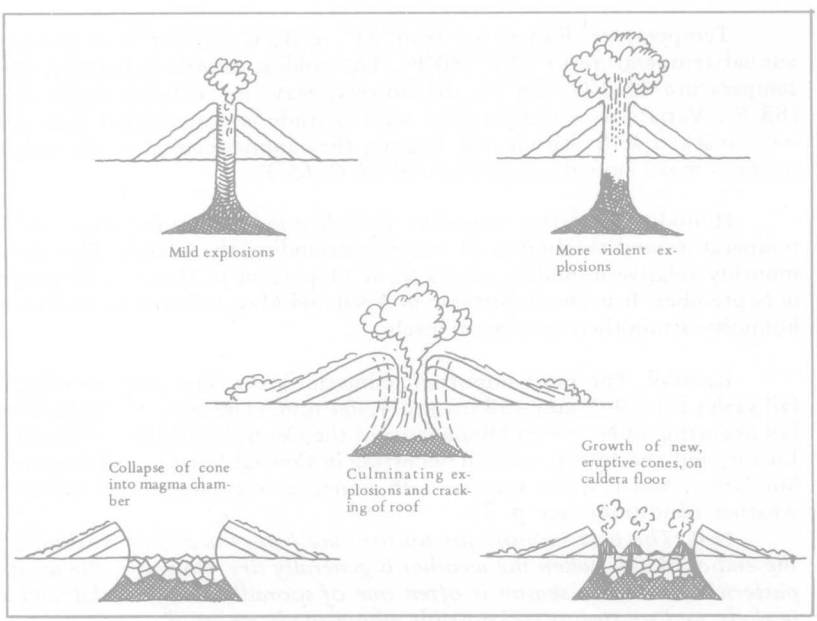
Soils. One notable feature is the reddish-brown soil on many hillsides, particularly in areas of climate categories 1 and 2 (see p. 7). This is laterite (Latin *later,* a brick). Lateritic soils are a result of chemical weathering and are very common in tropical regions with distinct dry and rainy seasons. During the wet season leaching takes place, i.e. the heavy rain washes through the soil and over the rock, dissolving the soluble minerals. During the dry season rapid evaporation occurs and dissolved materials are deposited, mostly in the form of insoluble hydroxides of iron, aluminum, silica, etc., which accumulate over the years as a reddish-brown deposit—laterite.

Volcanicity. An important feature of Philippine topography. Volcanic activity includes all phenomena associated with the escape to the earth's surface of magmatic materials from the depths through volcanoes and fissures, volcanoes being more important in the Philippines. Magma is molten rock charged with gases (especially steam) and volatile constituents, and differs from merely molten rock as, for example, soda water from water. As the magma rises to the surface the overhead pressure decreases and the gases begin to escape freely or explosively. The molten material which reaches the surface is therefore impoverished in gases and is called lava.

Volcanoes. An active volcano such as Taal or Mayon is a vent through which magmatic materials are continuously or intermittently charged. In addition to the eruption of hot gases and molten lava, vast quantities of fragmental materials are often produced by the explosion of the rapidly liberated gases. These are collectively called pyroclasts, and vary in size from dust to vast blocks, and can be themselves newly consolidating lava or fragments of older rocks blown off during the eruption.

When eruptions take place through a vertical chimney, the orifice is widened into a crater with flaring sides, by outward explosion and inward slumping. By accumulation of volcanic materials around the vent a conical or dome-shaped mountain is gradually built up (see *Mayon*, p. 154). The variation in form of this cone-and-crater structure depends largely on the fluidity of the lava, i.e. the more fluid, the further the lava flows and the shallower the cone.

Sequence of events in evolution of caldera of subsidence e.g. Taal



Within the walls of their truncated summits some volcanoes have gigantic, often water-filled, depressions, resembling great enlarged craters. These are due to the engulfment of the former superstructure, or less commonly to an enormous explosion, and are called calderas. Taal lake (see p. 175) is a caldera. New eruptive cones form on the floor of the caldera (see *Taal Volcano*, p. 175).

Most volcanoes erupt intermittently. Between eruptions activity may cease altogether, or be restricted to the exhalation of steam and other vapors through various vents called fumaroles. Fumaroles may become geysers or hot springs at a later stage as the volcano wanes into extinction (see *Mt. Makiling*, p. 158). Craters of extinct volcanoes are often water-filled (see *San Pablo Lakes*, p. 170 and *Alligator Lake*, p. 79).

The dangers of living on or near an active volcano are outweighed by the advantages of the fertile soils which are derived from the lava and rejuvenated by light intermittent showers of ash.

CLIMATE

The Philippine climate is monsoonal in character. However, the clearly marked seasons of a typical Southeast Asian monsoon climate are tempered by the maritime location of the islands, the trade winds and, to some extent, the topography. Generally June to November is the season of the southwest monsoon, a broad stream of hot humid equatorial air, bringing sultry wet weather. December to May is the season of the northeast monsoon, bringing dry, but increasingly humid weather.

There are three important elements in the Philippine climate: temperature, humidity and rainfall.

Temperature. Ranges are from 21° to 32°C (70°-90°F) with a mean annual temperature of 27°C (80°F). The coldest month is January, mean temperature 25.5°C, (78°F); the hottest, May, mean temperature 28°C, (83°F). Variation in temperature with latitude is insignificant, but much more marked with altitude, e.g. Baguio, the summer capital, at about 1,500 m. has a mean annual temperature of 18°C (65°F).

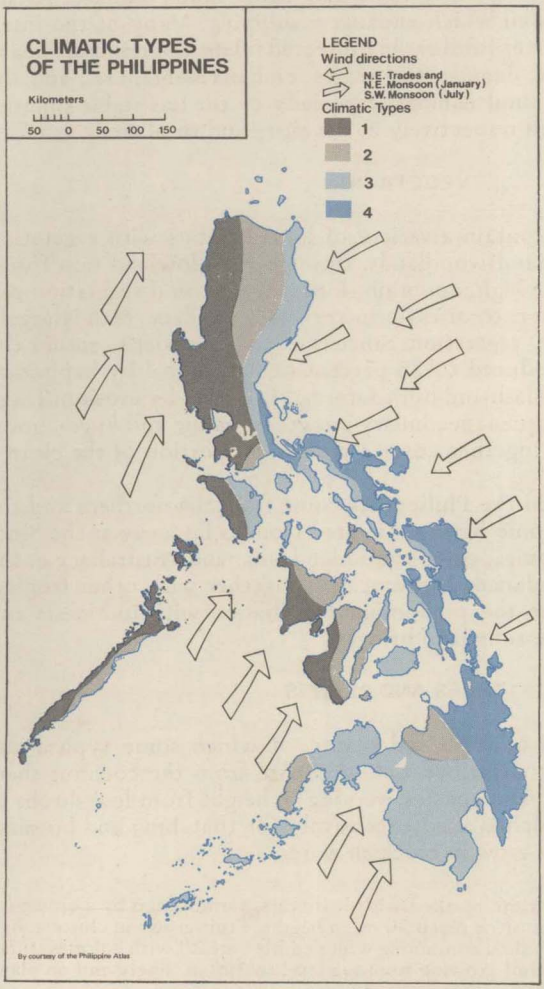
Humidity. Relative humidity is high due to a combination of high temperature and the bodies of water surrounding the Islands. The average monthly relative humidity ranges from 71 percent in March to 85 percent in September. It is uncomfortable in April and May, when temperature and humidity attain their maximum levels.

Rainfall. The most important climatic factor. The mean annual rainfall varies from 965 mm. (38 ins.) to 4,064 mm. (160 ins.), the highest rainfall occurring in Northern Mindanao and the Central Cordillera of Northern Luzon, and the lowest rainfall occurring in Central Visayas and Southwest Mindanao. Much of the summer rain comes from typhoons and associated weather conditions (see p. 7).

N.B. *The best months for tourism are from the end of November to the end of March, when the weather is generally dry. However, the weather pattern in the rainy season is often one of sporadic heavy rainfall and dry periods, and tourism is still possible where roads are good.*

Typhoons. Typhoon is the name given to a tropical revolving storm occurring in the western North Pacific. In other parts of the world such storms are referred to as "hurricanes" (Atlantic and South Pacific), "cyclones" (Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal) and "willy-willies" (north and west of Australia).

A typical typhoon is small but deep with very low central pressure. This central area is called the "eye" of the storm and is calm and almost cloudless. Around the eye intense cyclonic circulation is set up with winds reaching 100 mph on occasion. The cloud here is very dark and can extend to 20,000 ft. Heavy and continuous rain falls from these clouds.



The climate of the Philippines can be divided into four main categories, based on rainfall.

1) Two pronounced seasons: dry, November-April; wet, rest of the year. Topography a controlling factor—high mountain ranges to east shield area from northeast monsoon and trade winds (hence dry season); area more open to southwest monsoon.

2) Seasons not very pronounced: relatively dry November-April, wet rest of the year. These areas only partly sheltered from northeast monsoon and trade winds (hence less dry season); area more open to southwest monsoon, and some typhoons in the North.

3) Rainfall fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. These areas moderately affected by northeast monsoon and trade winds; more affected by southwest monsoon, and typhoons in the North.

4) No dry season, with pronounced maximum rainfall from November to January. These areas receive full force of northeast monsoon and trade winds; in the main path of the typhoons in the North.

Most of the typhoons affecting the Philippines and the Far East in general originate in a clearly marked trough of low pressure which runs from the Marianas Islands (Guam) to Taiwan and thence toward the Japan Sea. A much smaller number of typhoons form over the South China Sea between the Philippines and Indochina.

These typhoons travel northwest toward the Philippines, Southeast China and Taiwan, all of which experience some direct passages, and then veer north and northeast toward Japan. Those that hit the Philippines directly mainly do so in the Eastern Visayas and East and North Luzon, the latter being the most affected. There are 20 to 30 typhoons a year.

Climatologically typhoons are very significant. Not only does rain occur within the core area of the typhoon itself but over a wide area in the broad low-pressure area surrounding the storm. A large proportion of the summer rainfall originates in this way. In May 1976 during typhoon "Didang" 450 mm. (18 in.) fell in 24 hours.

The violent winds and heavy rains may cause much damage. At sea there is a very heavy swell which endangers shipping. Many of the inter-island ferries have to shelter for days in protected inlets. Overland the heavy rains cause flooding and damage to bridges, embankments, etc., and the winds cause severe structural damage, especially to the less stable shanties and nipa huts to be found respectively in the cities and rural areas.

VEGETATION

The Philippine Islands contain a variety of local habitats with vegetation ranging from coastal strand woodlands, through rich, lowland rain forest to the mossy oaks of the high mountain slopes. The natural vegetation can be divided into two main categories—primary and secondary. Man is largely responsible for secondary vegetation. Since the early twentieth century the forest cover has been reduced to 25 percent of its original by haphazard commercial logging and slash-and-burn farming, followed by erosion. Tragically, much of the consequent secondary growth is *parang* and *kugon* grassland (see p. 13), which together cover a greater proportion of the cleared area than cultivation.

Species of plants in the Philippines come from the northern and the southern hemispheres, some having migrated from as far away as the Sino-Himalayan region, e.g. pines, oaks, rhododendrons; and Australia, e.g. the southern conifer of Mindanao. Dipterocarps, together with other tropical lowland trees, emphasize the predominant affiliation with Indonesia and Malaysia through the one-time land bridges.

TREES AND PLANTS

There are many species of trees and plants, of which some typical and interesting examples are described below. Apart from the coconut there are a many varieties of palm species, varying in height from low shrubs to very tall trees. Nipa, which is used extensively for thatching and housing, is the only palm that can grow in brackish water.

Coconut. Long, thin trunk marked with leaf scars, surmounted by a crown of huge featherlike leaves. Trees often reach 30 m. in height. Fruit grows in clusters, has outer fibrous layer, and inner shell containing white edible "meat" with colorless fluid in center. Coconut palms found growing from sea level to 300 m. singly and on plantations. (For uses see *Coconuts and Copra*, p. 43.)

Banana. Trunk made of overlapping leaf bases which arise from underground stem—no true wood. Large, broad leaves 4 m. long. Trees 3-10 m. high. Flowering stem with purple flower emerges after a year and hangs downward. Bananas develop in clusters further up the stem. Widely cultivated in lowlands and in upland agricultural areas especially where *kaingin* farming predominates. Do not confuse with abaca.

Papaya. Fast growing to 8 m. with slender, leaf-scarred trunk, topped with a spiral of long-stalked leaves with 7-11 broadly toothed lobes. White flowers on trunk. Fruit (see p. 16). Grows in gardens and backyards and wild—many self-seeded plants survive.

Coconut tree

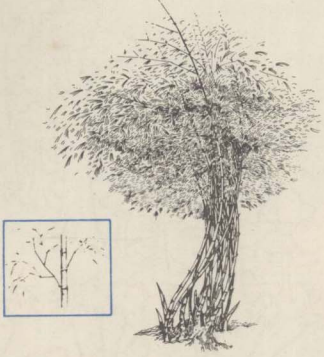
Banana tree

Papaya tree

Bamboo. A perennial grass with stems which are woody, usually hollow (except at the nodes) and treelike in appearance, with short-stalked leaves. The spiny variety can reach a height of 23 meters. Used in building and furniture making.

Mango. Big evergreen tree with dense, dome-shaped canopy, grows 15-20 m. in height. Lives 100 years or more. Fruit (see p. 16). Often planted for shade near homes.

Traveler's palm. A palmlike tree of unique appearance belonging to the banana family. Gigantic leaves arranged in one plane like a fan above unbranched woody stem. Large boxlike cells of each leaf stalk contain about one quart of clean, refreshing



Bamboo tree

Mango tree

CLASSIFICATION OF PHILIPPINE VEGETATION BY ALTITUDE

PRIMARY

Mangrove Swamp Forest: tidal mud-flats and brackish estuaries	**Beach Forest:** salt-spray tolerant coastal fringe incl. *Pandanus* (screw-pines)	**Mixed Swamp Forest:** wet alluvial plains, umbrella crowns of *Barringtonia* trees, 40 m. high	**Lowland (Dipterocarp) Rain Forest:** 3 distinct layers of trees, with shrubs, ferns, vines etc:. Note buttressed trunks

2750 m

1000 m

300 m