

MANILA

PHILIPPINES

English-speaking, Westernized, and the most accessible entry point into Southeast Asia.

Region

Southeast Asia

Climate

85–95°F / 29–35°C — typhoon season June–November

Language

English — official language, zero barrier

Currency

Philippine Peso (PHP) — \$1 USD ≈ 56 PHP

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CITY GUIDE

Manila

Manila is the chaotic, energetic capital of the Philippines and the most Westernized city in Southeast Asia. BGC and Makati are the neighborhoods for expats and professionals.

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LANGUAGE BARRIER

85-95°F

TEMP RANGE

13M+

METRO POPULATION

Grab

UNIVERSAL TRANSPORT APP

— WHERE TO LIVE

- ◆ **BGC (Bonifacio Global City)** — Modern, safest, cleanest — the best neighborhood for expats.
- ◆ **Makati CBD** — Business district, upscale bars and restaurants.
- ◆ **Ortigas** — Alternative business hub, more affordable than BGC.

— GETTING AROUND

- ◆ **Traffic** — Extremely bad — plan accommodation around your primary neighborhood.
- ◆ **Grab** — The universal transport app, very affordable.

NOMADBOLD INSIDER TIP

Choose your neighborhood based on where you'll spend 80% of your time, not the cheapest rent — Manila traffic can turn a 5-mile commute into a 90-minute ordeal.

COST OF LIVING

Manila

Manila offers extraordinary value for urban Southeast Asian quality.

THREE REAL BUDGETS

BARE-BONES

\$700-\$900/mo

Ortigas studio, cooking and local eateries.

COMFORTABLE

\$1,100-\$1,600/mo

BGC or Makati 1BR, eating out, gym, social life.

PREMIUM

\$1,900-\$2,600/mo

BGC high-rise with amenities, frequent dining out.

LINE-ITEM BREAKDOWN

ITEM	TYPICAL COST
1BR apartment (BGC)	\$500-\$900/mo
1BR apartment (Makati)	\$400-\$750/mo
Local meal (carinderia)	\$2-\$5
Restaurant meal	\$6-\$18
Gym membership	\$20-\$50/mo

NOMADBOLD INSIDER TIP

BGC condo buildings vary wildly in amenity quality for similar prices — always tour in person and check the gym/pool condition, not just the listing photos.

DATING GUIDE

Manila

Filipino women are known for their warmth, English fluency, and openness to Western men. There is no language barrier.

— WHERE TO MEET PEOPLE

- ♦ **BGC & Makati bars** — Professional-leaning social scene.
- ♦ **English fluency** — Zero communication barrier, unlike most of the region.

— APPS THAT WORK HERE

Tinder — most popular

Bumble — professionals in BGC/Makati

Filipino Cupid — serious connections

OkCupid — active

NOMADBOLD INSIDER TIP

Filipino Cupid consistently outperforms Tinder for men seeking a serious relationship rather than a casual connection — the user intent skews noticeably more toward long-term.

VISA GUIDE

Manila

The Philippines has one of the most generous and simple visa systems in Asia.

— THE PATH, STEP BY STEP

1

Tourist entry

30 days visa-free for most Western passports.

2

Extensions

Extendable up to 36 months total, 2 months at a time, ~\$50 per extension.

3

SRRV (retiree visa)

Available from age 35 with a \$10,000–\$20,000 deposit.

NOMADBOLD INSIDER TIP

The Philippines does not tax foreign-sourced income — one of the simplest tax situations of any NomadBold destination, though always confirm current rules with a tax advisor.

MEDICAL TOURISM

Manila

Manila has world-class private hospitals with English-speaking staff throughout.

COST COMPARISON

PROCEDURE	MANILA	US TYPICAL
Dental implant	\$400–\$800	\$3,000–\$5,000

FACILITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Medical City — JCI accredited, one of the best in Southeast Asia
- St. Luke’s Medical Center (BGC) — international standard

NOMADBOLD INSIDER TIP

English fluency at every step (booking, consultation, aftercare) makes Manila one of the lowest-friction medical tourism destinations in the region for first-timers.

DIGITAL INCOME

Manila

Manila has excellent English-language resources for building a digital business and is a major outsourcing hub.

100-300 Mbps

FIBER IN BGC/MAKATI

GMT+8

GOOD FOR AU/EAST ASIA

Abundant

ENGLISH-SPEAKING VA TALENT

0%

TAX ON FOREIGN INCOME*

— COWORKING

- ◆ **Clock In / Launchpad** — Popular BGC options.
- ◆ **WeWork Manila** — International-standard alternative.

NOMADBOLD INSIDER TIP

*Confirm current Philippine tax rules with an advisor — the headline rate is favorable but rules evolve.

WANT THE MEMBER EDITION?

This guide covers the essentials for Manila. The Member Edition goes further on every section — deeper budget breakdowns, named venues, step-by-step visa filing, procedure-level medical pricing, and a full 90-day action plan — plus it's included on all 15 NomadBold cities.

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