

Frontier Scuba

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We are all looking forward to meeting you when you arrive. We hope this Short A-Z of tips and hints will help you get ready for your trip.

Airport The airport can be a little confusing. Here are some simple instructions for finding our driver depending on whether you arrive with a) PAL or B) all other airlines

- a) After collecting your bags exit the terminal. Outside the terminal turn right and walk past the Coffee shop. Just beyond this point are barriers. Our driver will be here and will have a signboard with your name and 'Frontier Scuba'. Identify yourself and the driver will help you with your bags.
- b) Collect your bags and exit the terminal. You must then cross the service road and take the stairs down to the lower service road. On the other side of the lower service road you will see barriers with people waiting for friends. Our drivers will wait under the letter 'F' with a signboard with your name and 'Frontier Scuba'. Identify yourself and the driver will help you with your bags

If you can't see the driver please call us on 0917 540 8410 or 043 287 3077
We can tell you exactly where the driver is waiting.

On departure there is a \$15 or P750 exit tax.

Baby sitting We can arrange baby sitters from our local friends. They are friendly and caring, but are not trained professionals. \$2 an hour

Banks There are no banks or ATM machines in Puerto Galera. In Manila banks are open M-F 0900-1530 and ATM machines accept most int'l ATM cards (BancNet, MegaLink etc).

Budget How much to bring? It is much cheaper to live here than in the west and meals, cloths, gifts and drinks are all cheap. \$20~30 a day would be a rough guide, but if you plan to eat and drink a lot (but not between dives!) then bring a bit more

Rate June 2007: \$1 = Euro 1.35 = Peso 46, STG 1 = P98

Beer	P45	Dinner	P350~450	Shorts	P150
Rum/Coke	P45	Film (36)	P150	T-shirt	P250
Lunch	P250	Water	P25	Film developing	P230
Coffee	P45	Boat to Puerto	P300	Jeep to PG	P10

Boats	Local boats can be hired to take you to local beaches, White beach, Puerto Galera or the pick up point for the Golf course. Trip costs usually include waiting time and most boats can accommodate up to six people
Church	The Philippines is a Catholic country and there is a Catholic church in Sabang with a meeting everyday at 0930. The larger church in Puerto Galera holds services throughout the day and there is also a small Mosque in Puerto Galera.
Clothes	Dress is very informal in Puerto Galera. Bring mostly light summer clothes (see Weather for year round temperatures). Shorts and T-shirts and polo shirts are cheap and available everywhere here. When visiting government offices or churches long trousers or skirt are required. Vans and shopping malls in Manila are heavily air-conditioned so a sweater is recommended. The final rule would be: If you think you don't have enough then you've probably carrying too much!
Credit cards	Most places in Sabang, including Frontier Scuba, accept Mastercard and Visa cards (not Amex or other cards), but add a 7~10% surcharge . This is accepted practice in the Philippines. If you don't want to pay the surcharge bring lots of cash
Dentist	There is a 24-hour dentist in Sabang with X-ray and modern facilities.
Dive Gear	Frontier Scuba has full sets of new equipment to rent (including digital gauges) as well as a range of underwater digital cameras. We also sell a full range of accessories, PADI course manuals, dive watches and computers and of course T-shirts.
Dive insurance	We highly recommend that every diver has dive insurance that will cover them for their entire trip. If you plan on doing deep/technical courses make sure that your insurance covers you to maximum depth of the course (Adv. Nitrox 45m ; Extended range 55m ; Trimix 100m).
Doctor	There is a doctor in Sabang who can take care of minor health or travel problems. Our nearest hospital is St. Patrick's hospital in Batangas (1 hour away) with modern facilities, a recompression chamber and hyperbaric doctors on staff (Tel: 63 43 723 8388).
Electricity	Voltage is 220v/60Hz. The dive center has a transformer for 110v/50Hz. Plugs are flat two pin and adaptors are available locally for all plugs except square 3 pin plugs.
Email	There is a local internet cafe located in the center of Sabang. Email currently costs P2 a minute.
Fax	Faxes can be sent in town for approximately P25 a page for local calls.
Equipment	The dive center sells a range of dive equipment including books, PADI manuals, computers, dive silver and T-shirts. All diving and snorkeling equipment is also available for rent at a very reasonable rate. Knives and hunting equipment are not required and are not allowed on dives. We also discourage the use of gloves. By the way, don't forget to bring your c-card and logbook!
Golf	There is a 9-hole golf course near Puerto called Ponderosa. It is perched 2000ft up a mountain and gives spectacular views of the local area. A round including green fees, clubs, balls and caddy is about \$14 a head. Dress is casual and the

course is tough! Transfer to Ponderosa costs about \$20 which can be shared amongst a group of players.

- Handicapped The dive center is well set up to assist physically challenged dives into and out of the water as well as for diving. However, the Philippines as a whole is not set up to deal with wheel chairs. There are few sidewalks and in Sabang there is no road at all.
- Hair-dressers There are several local hair salons. A hair cut should cost from P100~P200
- Health While it is unusual for people to fall sick here we do recommend that you get **travel/health insurance** with your travel agent. Malaria, typhoid, cholera or yellow fever shots are NOT required. As a diver it is a good idea to have your tetanus booster shot up to date. The sun can also be very strong so a hat and high factor sunscreen is a very good idea. Dehydration, especially when walking around with a wetsuit on, can be a real problem. Drink lots of water – table water is fine, otherwise mineral water is about \$1 a gallon. Medicines are easily available in town, however it is a good idea to bring any prescription medicines that you require.
- If you plan on taking a PADI course while you are with us, we will ask you to fill out a copy of the PADI Medical Statement. We can email you a copy. Our local doctor will need to clear you as fit to dive if there are any 'Yes' answers, or you can have your own doctor do this before you come to the Philippines.
- Insurance We recommend that you take out a general travel policy which also covers for diving before you arrive.
- Internet There are several internet cafes in town with adequate connection speeds for emailing. Rates vary but are about \$1~\$2 per hour.
- Laundry Several of the ladies at the resort act as washer-women. Generally they charge per piece or per kilo and are much cheaper than regular resort laundries. There is also a laundry in town.
- Manila We recommend the City State Tower Hotel in Manila. It is in the heart of the tourist belt and close to many bars, shopping malls, cinemas and good restaurants. If you are taking a taxi from the airport ask for the City State Tower Hotel, Mabini St (near corner of Padre Faura Ave., Ermita. Tel: 02 400 7351). The SIKAT bus/ferry connection leaves from this hotel. Please email for our Manila fact sheet.
- Money The Philippines is a cash based economy. Cash (dollars, euros, pounds and yen) are accepted or can be changed almost everywhere, however many places do not accept credit cards or travelers checks. We prefer cash!. (See CREDIT CARDS)
- Money changer Euros and dollars can be easily changed at several changers in Sabang. The rate for travelers checks is slightly lower. Please note that Frontier Scuba cannot accept travelers checks. Changers in Manila offer a slightly higher rate. We recommend only one changer in Manila – Edzen, located west side of Mabini St., Ermita opposite the 7-11 (about 150m south of City State Tower Hotel)
- Motorbikes Bikes are great fun and there are many great routes to explore in the area. Many beaches, waterfalls, rainforest and untouched areas are accessible by bike.

Rates are about \$15 for the day, \$10 for the half day for either Kawasaki 125 two stroke, or Honda 200 four stroke. Most shops do not rent helmets and there is no insurance. Please remember that motorbikes are the biggest killer of tourists in Asia !

- Photography** Print, slide and AFS film is available at many stores in Sabang and is generally cheaper than in Europe. There is a one-hour film laboratory which can also process E6 slides (minimum 4 films at a time). Puerto Galera is famous for it's diversity of small animals and fish so macro tubes and close up lens are advised for underwater photography.
We rent several types of digital underwater cameras. Rates are \$15 a dive or \$20 for the day, which includes transferring your photos to a photo CD.
- Restaurants** There are many good places to eat in Sabang. Within 5 minutes from the shops are French, Italian, German, Swiss, Korean, Thai, Australian and of course Filipino restaurants. Lunch and dinner costs between \$4~6 . Beer and soft drinks are about \$0.70. Talk to our staff and we will be happy to show you some nice places to eat.
- Safety deposit** It is safe in Puerto Galera, but it is best not to leave valuables in your room. Valuables can be deposited with the resort reception or in the dive center safe.
- Sikat** The Sikat is a tourist bus/ferry service that leaves the City State Tower Hotel in Manila (and return from Puerto) everyday at 0800. The trip takes about 4.5 hours, is safe and costs approximately \$24 round trip.
- Supermarkets** Two small supermarkets in Sabang supply almost of what you might need. Food, drinks and toiletries are all available. Milk and diapers are also available for babies. Tampons and contact lens solution are not available.
- Telephone** Local pay phones can make international calls for about \$0.40 per minute using \$5 phone cards.
- Tipping** Tipping at the restaurant, resort or dive center is not required, but is always welcome. Most establishments have a tip box where you can tip the whole staff. In Manila Taxis usually expect a 10% tip. Porters or boatmen carrying bags are usually paid P30 a bag.
- Trekking** There are some great day treks in the area to waterfalls, tribal villages or into the rainforest. We can introduce you to several good guide companies in Sabang. Rates vary according to the season and the size of group, but expect to pay about \$30 a day including lunch and drinks. The same companies also arrange river kayaking and overnight trips.
- Visas** With a return air ticket you will be issued a 21 day visa at the airport. For longer stays it is best to apply for a 59 day visa at the Philippine embassy in your own country. After 59 days you can get another extension of 2 months for approximately \$80.
- Vegetarian** Most of the restaurants in the area have vegetarian menus, but are fairly uninspired. If desperate just explain what you want and most places will cook away from the menu. If you are booked with meals at the dive center please advise us of any dietary requirements in advance so that we can prepare a suitable menu

Water	Table water in restaurants is safe to drink. Most restaurants and supermarkets also serve mineral water.
Weather	The Philippines is generally hot year round, with the summer being quite hot and humid. Unlike the rest of the Philippines our rainy season is short
Winter	Average 29c Sunny and dry from January to mid March
Summer	Average 33c Hot and humid from March to July, with May and June being the hottest months
Monsoon	Average 32c July to the end of August. It usually rains only in the early morning and early evening.
Autumn	Average 30c Hot and dry in September and October, starting to cool down in November. December is the beginning of the winter and can sometimes be rainy.
Typhoon season	Typhoons generally don't hit Puerto Galera and aren't dangerous in our area. They come through the Philippines from July to October and can affect diving for just 2 days.
Wetsuits	A wetsuit is required throughout the year. In the summer (water 29C) a 3mm shorty of full suit is fine. In the winter (water 23C) a 3mm suit with hooded vest or 5mm full suit is absolutely necessary (late December, January and February). Hooded vests are available for sale in the dive store for \$43(sizes: XS to XL)