



Siquijor

in a Day

By Karla Rey

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Everybody wants to see Siquijor but nobody wants to stay the night.

As kids, we hear stories about the island's supernatural creatures, but as adults we have always been intrigued by the natural attractions that have put Siquijor on the tourism map. Only an hour by fast craft from the port of Dumaguete City, one is eager to set foot on this small, laidback island rich with history, myths and natural beauty.

Siquijor is slightly bigger than Camiguin, a similar island destination in Mindanao usually accessed through Cagayan De Oro City. It has a 75-kilometer road that spans six towns—San Juan, Lazi, Maria, Enrique Villanueva, Larena and Siquijor, the provincial capital. People come to Siquijor for its century-old trees and churches, waterfalls, natural springs, white-sand beaches and numerous diving sites around the island. And then, there are some, like us, who want to get past the mystery. One day, we had the perfect opportunity.

Among the prides of this once quiet town is the Saint Francis of Assisi Church and Belfry, located just outside the port. It was constructed from 1795 and 1831. The San Isidro Labrador Church, one of the few remaining Baroque churches in the Philippines, is also among Siquijor's attractions. Established in 1857 by Augustinian Recollects, it is a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Across the church is the convent—erected in 1887, it



The Dumaguete port is the usual jump-off point for a visit to Siquijor (top, left). The Cambugahay Falls (top) is one of the tourist attractions in the town of Lazi. Siquijor also abounds with beaches (above).



The San Isidro Labrador Church in the town of Lazi is an interesting heritage site.

is one of the oldest and the biggest in the Philippines—and the museum.

The town of Lazi is home to the Cambugahay Falls, one of the main attractions of the island. It has 135 stone steps for people to view the falls. Cambugahay Falls is a multi-tiered waterfall, the cool water coming from the natural springs in the forested area of the island and flowing into one basin after another and surrounded by lush vegetation and coconut trees.

Truly, no one will regret a day in Siquijor, not because of its odd and bizarre tales but because of its hidden beauty.

