

# InFlight

THE PREMIER TRUSTED TRAVEL MAGAZINE

## TRAVELLER

# 42 OF THE PHILIPPINES' BEST BEACHES

THE BEST NEW THINGS  
TO DO IN PANGASINAN  
FROM ZIP WIRE RIDES  
TO POWERKITING

ESCAPE TO  
VILLA ESCUDERO  
TRY LUNCH BY THE  
WATERFALLS OR GO  
BAMBOO RAFTING

From Coron, El Nido,  
Romblon to Cebu

DORNIER  
MEDIA

2016  
VOLUME 3  
ISSUE 13

PhP150

ISSN 2350-88299



9 7723 50 82 99 07

# CORON, PALAWAN

BY  
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## MALCAPUYA ISLAND

**THE 13.5-HECTARE MALCAPUYA ISLAND**, recently acquired by the Henann Group of Resorts, has a beautiful stretch of white-sand beach, regarded as the ultimate virgin beach in Coron, which is home to a collection of some of the most stunning, unspoilt beaches in the country. Travelling time from Manila to Coron and the cost of travel have kept visitor numbers down, but new roads and airport improvements and international promotions have sparked interest in the area. Still, it takes about one to two hours from Coron town to get to Malcapuya, and flights from Manila to Coron, via Busuanga, is about an hour. Malcapuya's draw? Its clear, calm turquoise waters and milky white shore, which people liken to Boracay, which is really not entirely accurate, because Malcapuya and the surrounding islands of Coron offer much more. This, after all, is the country's last frontier. Malcapuya has cottages under the shade of trees for lounging mid-day with the sea just a few steps away. Trek up the view deck for a view of the main beach and the opposite side of the island where outrigger boats are docked.

*Entrance fee to the island is P200 per person. Hennann plans to develop a luxury resort on the site.*

## DETAYTAYAN BEACH

**JUST 30-40 MINUTES FROM BANANA ISLAND**,

Detaytayan is a quiet and little-known gem in Coron, surrounded by a rich coral reef and fringed by powdery white sand. It's off the tourist radar, so the beach is relatively empty without a pier, jetty or accommodation. Pack your snorkeling gear, kayak, picnic and whatever else you may need and enjoy the day on the island.

## SMITH BEACH

**RIGHT BESIDE BANOL BEACH IS SMITH BEACH**, an even smaller white-sand cove with a limited docking space, keeping the crowds at bay. Slip on your snorkel to see a collection of starfish on the sandy seabed.

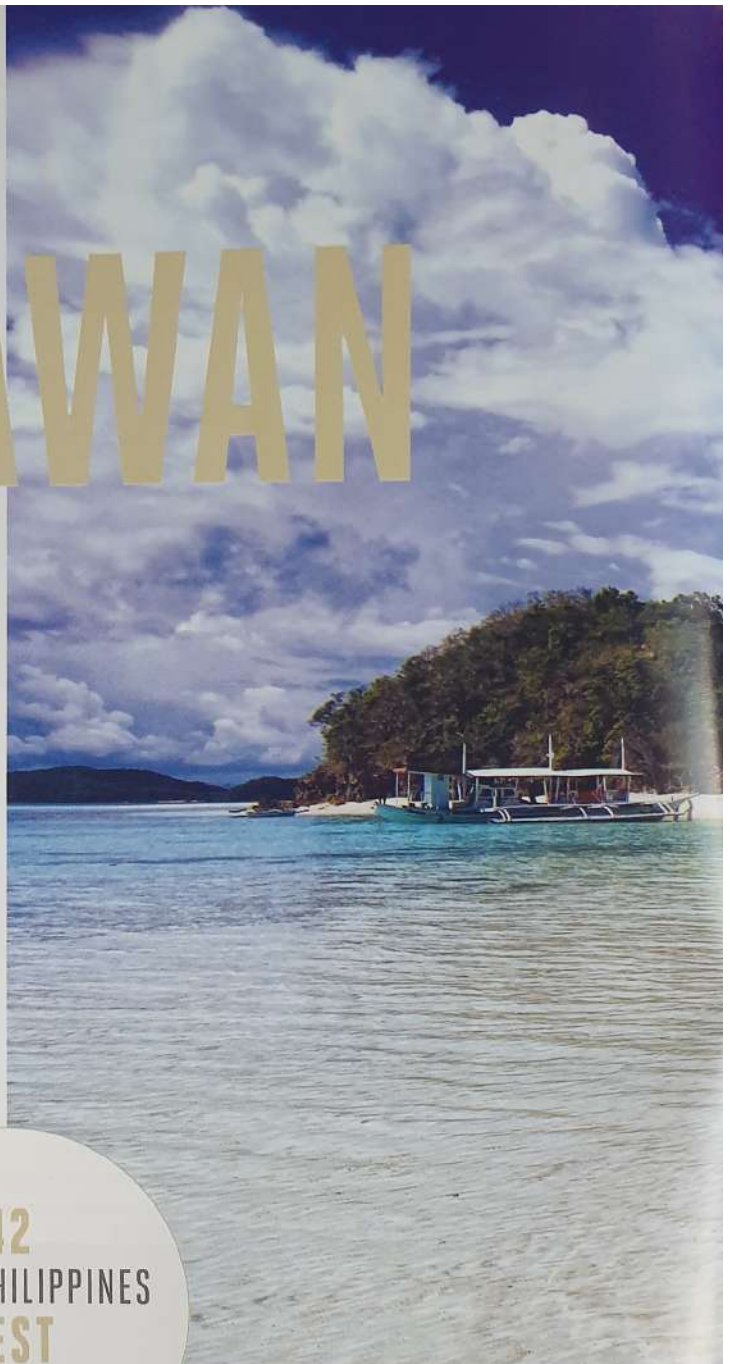
*Entrance fee is P100 per person.*

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## BULOG DOS ISLAND

**BULOG DOS**, is one and a half to two hours away by boat from Coron town center. It's characterized by large rock formations, making for a rugged coastline, and pockets of sandy seabed. There are no facilities here so visits are limited to day trips. If you do come and visit, pack your snorkeling gear because Bulog Dos has a rich and colorful marine life, with thick seagrass and corals just a few meters from the shore. And if you're up for a short steep climb up a hill on the island, you'd be rewarded by a view of the turquoise waters and the luxurious Two Seasons Resort in Malaroyroy Peninsula. There is a winding sandbar connecting Bulog Dos to Malaroyroy, but the peninsula is no longer accessible to the public.

*Entrance fee to the island is P100 per person.*



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Pass Island

## PASS ISLAND

**WITH PRISTINE WHITE SAND** on one side and a mangrove area and coral reef on the other, Pass Island offers the best of two worlds just about two hours away from the main town center. Snorkeling here is excellent and if you're lucky, you might just spot giant clams and manta rays. Guests can stay overnight in basic cottages on the island Robinson Crusoe-style or camp in tents. There is no electricity on the island and the only convenience store has rather scant offerings so best to bring your own packed lunch or dinner, and other supplies.

*Entrance fee is P200 per person.*

## BEACH 91

**BEACH 91**, also known as Caliwantay, is a white-sand beach with nipa huts tucked close to the limestone cliffs behind it. A good place for a picnic or a day out swimming, kayaking and snorkeling.

*Entrance fee is P100.*

## SKELETON WRECK BEACH

**THE TINY SKELETON WRECK BEACH**, also called Malwaway Island, has very fine white sand mixed with pebbles. Adding to the attraction is a shipwreck sunk in relatively shallow waters, its top only about five meters from the water's surface. Most visitors go straight for the dive, exploring the wreck.

*Entrance fee is P100.*

## CYC BEACH

**ENTRY TO THE CORON YOUTH CLUB (CYC) BEACH** is completely free, one of the few beaches in Coron that doesn't charge visitors. This makes the public beach a favorite of locals. The waters close to shore is shallow and ideal for families with kids. Healthy mangroves in the area is a great indicator that marine life here is thriving, with thick mangroves serving as habitat for the area's wildlife and various marine species like shrimps, mud lobsters, and oysters. CYC is also a good training spot for divers because of the gentle slope of the ocean floor.



## BANOL BEACH

A POPULAR STOP for lunch between day tours, Banol Beach is a pocket of white-sand beach almost hidden entirely by lofty limestone cliffs. The short stretch is a peaceful cove only 20 minutes away from the main town center, a convenient stop with small nipa huts available for lunch and a quick *siesta*. The island is an ancestral domain of the native Tagbanua, whose livelihood includes foraging for the nests of swiftlets. These nests are prized ingredients for bird's nest soup in China.

From top: Banol Beach; Banana Island

## BANANA ISLAND

BANANA ISLAND, about one and a half hours by boat from the main town center, is a fish and coral sanctuary in the southern part of Coron. The shore is a mix of white sand and pebbles, but it's a favorite of snorkeling and diving enthusiasts with the crystalline waters teeming with different species of fishes and corals. Other activities include kayaking, beach volleyball or just hanging out and catching a nap in the open huts and hammocks on the island.

Native cottages can be rented for overnight stays. Entrance fee is P200 per person.

## OUR INSIDERS

**MILAGROS GAMBOA** is a long-time resident of Coron and knows the area and its people like the back of her hand. She is the owner and general manager of Coron-based Blue Lagoon Adventure Travel & Tours, issue.

**MIRRA REYES** divides her time between Manila and Coron, Palawan. When she's in Coron, she manages Casa Fidelis and provides tours to guests staying at the family-owned resort. ■

## ESSENTIALS

### HOW TO GET THERE

► **SKYJET AIRLINES** ([www.flyskyjetair.com](http://www.flyskyjetair.com)), **Philippine Airlines** ([www.philippineairlines.com](http://www.philippineairlines.com)) and **Cebu Pacific** ([www.cebupacificair.com](http://www.cebupacificair.com)) all have regular, direct flights from Manila to Busuanga. Your booked hotel usually arranges transfers from the airport. If you're staying in one of the islands off Coron, you most likely have to go to Coron Town, from where there are outrigger boats for hire to take you to any of the surrounding islands.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/CoronBlueLagoonAdventureTravelAndTours](http://www.facebook.com/CoronBlueLagoonAdventureTravelAndTours)

### WHERE TO STAY

► **TWO SEASONS CORON ISLAND RESORT & SPA** is a five-star eco-friendly resort in the Malaroyroy Peninsula. The luxury resort, 22 kilometers south of the main Coron town, is located in a turtle and giant clam sanctuary. Rates start from P25,000 for a room for two. Visit [www.twoseasonsresorts.com](http://www.twoseasonsresorts.com).

► **CASA FIDELIS** is a family-owned resort just 15 minutes from Coron town center. Rates start at P3,500 per person per night including three full meals and airport transfers. The resort also arranges tours for guests. Visit [www.casafidelis.com](http://www.casafidelis.com).

### CORON TOURS

► **BLUE LAGOON ADVENTURE TRAVEL & TOURS** is a Coron-based tour operator, offering trips to the different tourist hotspots throughout Coron and the rest of the Calamianes group of islands. Visit [www.facebook.com/CoronBlueLagoonAdventureTravelAndTours](http://www.facebook.com/CoronBlueLagoonAdventureTravelAndTours)

For more on Coron, read *5 days in Coron* on [Archipelago.com.ph](http://Archipelago.com.ph) ■