

The PJM Volunteer

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THE VOLUNTEER IN THE PHILIPPINES

1. INTRODUCTION

You've Arrived:

Mabuhay!

Welcome to the Precious Jewels family. You have been in our prayers as you have been preparing to join us, and now you are about to arrive, or have already done so. There will be much to see, learn, and do while you are in the Philippines. The PJM team looks forward to being a resource to you. For your private reflection, here is a collection of information that might be of interest to you, as you find yourself plunged into this Filipino culture.

2. STAYING HEALTHY

Water

Depending on the length of your stay in the Philippines, you may choose to avoid drinking local tap water, in favour of bottled water. Long-term residents develop a tolerance to the water quality: you may or may not want to risk stomach upset. If you do opt for purified water, here are some pointers:

- Only drink bottled water where you are confident the protective seal has remained intact.
- Remember to use purified water for brushing your teeth and rinsing your toothbrush.
- Use ice only in big-name chain restaurants, where cubes are large. Other ice is likely made from local tap water.
- Remember that juice is made from tap water. If in doubt, ask. Purchased, sealed juice packs are safe.
- Boiled water, such as in coffee, should be safe. The general rule is that water should be boiled 20 minutes. Water at PJM is regularly boiled and set aside for safe drinking. You will be shown the canister of cool drinking water, and invited to label a bottle for your own use and leave in the "ref" or refrigerator.
- In the event you experience some stomach upset despite your precautions, you are in good company: even Filipinos get diarrhoea from time to time! Imodium is

the best medication to take for this condition.

Diet

The Filipino diet is heavy on rice and low on dairy products. Fruits/vegetables and proteins are easily obtained from the various dishes of *ulam* that are served atop the rice. If you are concerned about dairy intake, you would do well to consider dietary supplements available at the drug store. An alternative is to use milk powder as an additive to your meals, or to drink as a beverage.

Exercise

For this, you must be determined, as exercise is not a regular part of this culture except for the most disciplined. There is a park not far from the PJM headquarters, where some PJM'ers go to walk in the early mornings. A gym is available down Quezon Avenue, a jeepney-ride away. There is also a swimming pool available for public use. Please ask PJM staff and friends for more information on these options.

3. CURRENCY NEWS

Cash

Exchange centres are available at banks, and also at National Book Store and ShoeMart Department Store. Remember to take with you your passport for identification. Travellers' cheques are difficult to exchange and often the only places where this can be done are at the airport or at the American Express office in the Mega Mall. Again, you will need your passport and the original purchase receipt for your travellers' cheques. You might wish to change \$100 - \$200 at a time, and leave it in the safe at PJM so that you may draw on it as needed. The best option is to use a bank card and cash points can be found at most major banks in Manila. The Filipino currency is the peso, and is valued at approximately 43 pesos to the Canadian dollar, and 45 to the US dollar. The peso is further divided into cents. It is usually not necessary to have more than P500 on you at any one time, unless you are planning a trip out of town or a major expenditure. Bills come in denominations of P20, P50, P100, P200, P500 and P1,000. Avoid, if

you can, having any higher denominations than P500, as merchants may be reluctant to change them. Local transport (tricycles, jeepneys, buses and taxis) will only take small denominations of coins and bills.

Valuables

A convenient system of storing valuables is to keep them in the safe at PJM. The combination is known only to Joke and Grace, and either will allow you access to your belongings at your request. Passport, travel tickets, excess currency and credit cards are safer there than on your person or in your room. Avoid carrying valuables on your person that are not necessary, as robberies do occur. Regardless of safety precautions, you may encounter the unfortunate situation of being pick-pocketed or robbed. If this happens, *do not resist!* A store manager will likely let you use the phone to call PJM, and we will help you.

4. CUSTOMS TO KNOW

Meals

- Filipinos eat rice as often as three times a day, served with various cooked toppings of *ulam*. This is a topping that may be fish, or chicken, or a soupy broth with vegetables and meat. Do not be surprised if food is not served piping hot: it is often placed in serving bowls early enough to cool, and thus is sometimes at room temperature.
- Filipinos eat with a spoon and fork: the fork is used to push food onto the spoon, and it is the spoon that usually bears food to the mouth. Knives are seldom seen at the meal table.
- *Merienda* is the Filipino snack-time, faithfully observed morning and afternoon and sometimes evening as well.

Toilet Tips

- Public restrooms are called *Comfort Rooms*, or *C.R. 's*. If you ask for a restroom or washroom or bathroom, you will likely be met with a blank look.
- If you see posted signs reminding you not to flush foreign objects, be aware that this also includes toilet paper! The plumbing system here is not designed to absorb

paper products, and so a wastebasket is usually provided for used toilet tissue. If in doubt, ask. It takes some getting used to...

- Always carry a small amount of tissue with you, and small packaged handi-wipes to clean your hands. Public C.R. 's are not always fully equipped.
- Both outside and within Manila you may encounter C.R. 's where there is no flush tank but only a large drum of water standing adjacent. The flushing method in such C.R. 's is to use the scoop provided to manually pour water into the toilet bowl.

5. GETTING AROUND

Manoeuvring the Manila traffic in a private vehicle is not always the preferred choice. Public transport (or just called "public") is cheap and usually reliable.

- **Tricycles** are the motorbikes with sidecars that ply the side streets. These accommodate 1 to 4 passengers, and cost approximately P15 for short distances.
- **Jeepneys** carry passengers on the more major roads, and the cost is similar to tricycles but depends on the distance travelled. The jeepney's route is displayed on the front windshield or on the side: climb in! When passing your fare to the driver, say *bayad*; when you wish to get out, say *para*.
- **Buses** are available in *air-con*(ditioned) or regular, and travel similar routes to jeepneys. Wait for the conductor to tell you your fare, and keep your ticket.
- **Taxis** are metered, inexpensive and plentiful. Check that the driver resets the meter before setting off. Again it is wise to have small denominations of coins/bills available to pay the fare. Be prepared to assist your taxi driver to get you to your destination because, although many drivers know the major routes, many do not know the local streets well. Don't be overwhelmed! You will not need to travel alone on public unless you are truly keen and ready to do so. Usually you will travel with a *casama* (companion), and thus will only need to follow his or her directions.

BASIC FILIPINO PHRASES

Good day	<i>Magandang araw</i>
Good morning	<i>Magandang umaga</i>
Good afternoon	<i>Magandang hapon</i>
Good evening	<i>Magandang gabi</i>
Goodbye	<i>Paalm</i>
How are you?	<i>Kamusta ka?</i>
Please/thank you	<i>Paki/salamat</i>
You are welcome	<i>Walang anuman</i>
What is your name?	<i>Anong pangalan mo?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Ang pangalan ko ay si...</i>
Where is the restroom?	<i>Saan ang CR?</i>
How much is this?	<i>Magkano ito?</i>
I like it	<i>Gusto ko</i>
Yes/no	<i>oo/hindi</i>
Do you understand?	<i>Naintindihan mo?</i>
Excuse me	<i>Dyos Takninan</i>
God loves you	<i>Mahal ka ng dyos</i>
God bless you	<i>Pagpalaiin ka ng dyos</i>

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

WESTERN	&	NON-WESTERN WORLDS
1. Punctuality orientation	vs.	Event orientation
2. Sequential time orientation	vs.	Cylindrical time orientation
3. Goal orientation	vs.	Personal interaction orientation
4. Competitive	vs.	Supporting
5. Confrontation	vs.	Non-confrontation
6. Frankness	vs.	Reserve
7. Make it happen	vs.	Let it happen by itself if it is God's will
8. Tell your leader	vs.	The leader should know
9. Democratic society	vs.	More authoritarian style
10. Vulnerability a strength	vs.	Vulnerability a weakness
11. Long range planning	vs.	Living in the "now"
12. Permanence	vs.	Change
13. Individualism	vs.	Group orientation
14. Self-promotion acceptable	vs.	Let others promote you
15. Prestige something you earn	vs.	Prestige something inherited or ascribed
16. Laws of the land traditionally based more on Biblical truth	vs.	Laws based on loyalty to family clan, loyalty to the ruling party, the president of the nation, the elderly or male gender