

Philippines Tourism

Written by John Errol Loffler
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The tourism industry in the Philippines is growing and improving - but I agree its much weaker than it should be.

In **2015** there was a record **5.4 million visitors** to the **Philippines**. Compare that with **Thailand** which had **29.9 million visitors** in the same period.

Its rather vexing when you consider that you get so many of the same experiences in both Countries. The Philippines is arguably better when it comes to things like nature and beaches.

Nonetheless I think there are a few barriers holding the industry back -

Bad Reputation - The Philippines has a reputation (I believe unfair and undeserved) of being quite an unsafe and dangerous destination to visit. Terrorism, crime and the ongoing problems in Mindanao reflect badly on it.

In the end it comes down to public perception. Places like *Thailand* and *Bali* have suffered from terrorism, military coups, etc ..but they have a better 'public relations machine' and seem to do a better job of marketing themselves.

Poor Infrastructure - Yes there are good hotels. However, transportation infrastructure (airports, roads, mass transit, ports) lack serious investment - as anyone who has been through NAIA Terminal 1 will tell you.

Infrastructure in the Cities and particularly in the provinces require major upgrades to make it easier for tourists to visit and get around.

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Not Well Publicized - The '*It's more Fun in the Philippines*' marketing campaign was good but its not nearly enough. Ask your average middle income European or American what they know about the Philippines and the answer is probably not much. Its still a *niche destination* for backpackers and buccaneering, adventurous types.

Lack of Exotic Culture and Intrigue - This is maybe a little unfair - but I think for many Westerners places like Thailand are a little more exotic when it comes to culture, landmarks, cuisine, etc. Whereas the Philippines is very Westernized. Although I don't see this as a major barrier.

{comments on}