

# Boracay Sun

**FREE**

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**BORACAY'S MONTHLY NEWSPAPER**  
AND DAILY ONLINE NEWS

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Photo by Den Bersaba (Boracay Drone)

# Breathtaking Boracay Is Among The "Top 100 Beaches On Earth"

By Freida Dario-Santiago

**B**oracay Island's White Beach places 18th among the "Top 100 Beaches on Earth" 2023 survey by the World Beach Guide. Last year, the famed Boracay beach ranked second among the most amazing beaches on the planet. Known for its definitive selection of beautiful beaches worldwide, the World Beach Guide describes what makes a beach great: "Think powder white sand, turquoise seas, permanent sunshine and only the lightest of breezes wafting

through the palms that fringe the beach and you're there. But that's not the whole story; we've also included some of the most amazing beaches on earth that don't tick all the usual boxes ... But it doesn't stop there." The website's users weigh in on the top 100 list and rate every beach listed on the website with their patented five-star rating system, resulting in the rankings.

"So you can forget your Blue Flag awards, TripAdvisor polls and whatever else you might have read on the internet. If you want to know which is the finest, greatest and downright coolest beach on

the planet, look no further!"

Here's what they had to say about White Beach, Boracay Island: "They call it White Beach for a reason—several kilometers of brilliant white sand to contrast with the swaying palms behind and the turquoise ocean in front.

Now, many people will say that Boracay has been somewhat spoiled by too much tourism. Whilst there is no arguing that it is probably the most popular tourist destination in the Philippines, I think White Beach still has plenty of charm. One thing that helps is that the beach is divided into three

zones, or stations as they are referred to. Station 1 is the least built up and busy with Station 2 being one of the island's main hubs of activity with cafes, bars, watersports and everything else you can imagine. The sea off the beach is great for snorkeling with plenty of corals and fish to see. It is also a popular spot for kite-surfing / wind-surfing. One of the less energetic, but equally rewarding, activities on offer though is completely free: watching the stunning sunsets." ([www.worldbeachguide.com](http://www.worldbeachguide.com))

*continued on page 3*





ube  
mama

"ALREADY HAS US DREAMING OF COMING BACK TO THE ISLAND"

*Esquire*

FROM THE MAKERS OF COCOMAMA

AT D'MALL PALENGKE



EDITORIAL

# Editor's Note

## Habagat Hits

**T**he southwest monsoon season called *Habagat* officially makes itself felt with the wind constantly on your face and petulant waves to conquer when in the water, but only if you're on one of the world's top beaches, White Beach. Running parallel on the opposite side of the island, one experiences the polar opposite—a completely unexpected Boracay, that's quite magical in its own right: Bulabog or "Back" Beach. We invite you to put your game face and traveler flip-flops on, and venture into uncharted territory. (Read "Take A Walk on the B-Side")

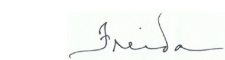
Also in this issue is our ultimate guide to the top (and fun) Island activities in the windy wonderland of Boracay, for all types of travelers. (Read "Unleash Your Adventure") There is so much to dig your teeth into off-the-tourist trails, including

enriching workshops and classes to join and dining spots that serve sumptuous beach bites that won't break the bank. So, kick back and enjoy because we've got you covered this month!

To borrow from a famous Irish blessing, "May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand."

Peace and good vibes,

Editor-In-Chief



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## WE ARE BORACAY SUN NEWS

**T**he *Boracay Sun News* is a bright and energetic must-read publication, covering the news, issues and subjects that matter most, aspiring to inspire our readers to be responsible stewards and responsible guests, for a healthy and sustainable Boracay. As the community's newspaper, we are the voice of the people, expressing your views, and sharing stories that depict the soulfulness of Boracay's people and the richness of our diversity.

It is our vision to likewise be an insider's guide and an authority for tourists and travelers looking for objective, credible and useful information, and be the community's source for what's going on in and around the island now. This is only possible with the help and collaboration of dedicated locals that pour their hearts into words. The result is a labor of love that showcases our way of life with substance, heart and truth.

Behind these pages is a motley mix of contributors that share our collective stories, with devoted passion, every month.

**We are BORACAY SUN**  
Serving you with good news, sunny side-up!

On behalf of **Jeffery International Media Publishing Inc.** and Boracay Sun founder **Victor Jeffery**, it brings me much pride and joy to welcome our regular contributors back (some of whom have been with us from the start back in April 2008). Though the pandemic broke up the band three years ago, the *BSN* team is now slowly coming back together to pick up where we left off, and striving to deliver the story of us all!



The original BSN 2019 startup team with editor-in-chief Freida Dario-Santiago (5th from left), founder Victor Jeffery, chief operations officer Claire Ablazo Jeffery, publisher & CEO Chelsea Ablazo Jeffery, and social media manager Alexandra Heard



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**Victor Jeffery and Freida Dario-Santiago, working hard to deliver Boracay Island's monthly news and insider's guide**

**Victor Jeffery**  
Founder and publisher

*"Work is not like work if you love what you are doing. Passion and love of life is an easy driver."*

For the past 30+ years, Victor has been working in the branding, advertising and publishing industries. Semi-retirement on Boracay seemed like a good idea five years ago after running his businesses in nine different countries throughout Asia. After assuming control of the BSN once again after being away for a few years, the word "retirement" disappeared into the background.

**Freida Dario Santiago**  
Editor-In-Chief

*"Life is meant to be enjoyed and not endured." – Dieter Schrottmann*

A veteran journalist and publicist with over 25 years in the publishing and communications business, and a Boracay resident since 2003, Freida left a successful career as a Manila-based editor to immerse in Boracay Island's tropical subculture, devoting herself as a media correspondent for various publications and channels including Warner Media/Turner Broadcasting, Inc. (*CNN Asia Pacific/Discovery Channel*). More importantly, she's been writing for the *Boracay Sun* from the beginning (since 2008) as its chief correspondent through the years. She first took on the job of editor-in-chief in 2014, and once again upon Vic's relaunch in 2019. The illustrious writer continues to usher *BSN's* readers through intricate detours and rare glimpses of her island home with veracity and utmost sincerity. As EIC, she hopes that the community newspaper depicts the many facets of Boracay and its people and serves not only as an entertaining read but a catalyst for social change and environmental sustainability. She is also the author/editor of *The Complete Guide to Boracay Island*, published by the Boracay Foundation, Inc. (BFI).

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## THE SECRET IS OUT!

So there you have it. Just when you thought that this remote dog bone-shaped island located off the northwest tip of the island of Panay in the Western Visayas region had been forgotten by travelers in the farthest ends of the Earth, the world is reminded of the Philippines' crown jewel tourism destination.

Screengrabs from [www.worldbeachguide.com](http://www.worldbeachguide.com)

Only last month my cousin DJ Manolet Dario who has been visiting the island since the 90s and sharing his brand of House music since 1999 with his legendary "Manomission" annual Boracay beach parties (that's over 30 solid gold years!), celebrated his nth birthday in Boracay with his wife Diane, and posted this after his weeklong sojourn:

After all this time, he still wants to keep coming back.

Makes you wonder: What makes a person return to the same holiday destination?

Emotional attachment. "I think many destinations become repeat destinations because travelers develop an emotional attachment to these spots through amazing experiences they've had there – often with family and friends," Nancy

Schretter, managing editor of the *Family Travel Network*, told *HuffPost*.

In an article for *CNN.com* entitled "Travel psychology: Why do we visit the same places over and over again?" Lilit Marcus reveals: "Travelers have different reasons for going back to the destinations they know and love. Sometimes those reasons aren't even things they can put into words – how a certain place stirs our emotions in a way nothing else can.

But that indescribable something that comes from a truly incredible vacation just can't be duplicated.

Whether it's on the other side of the planet or in your own backyard, the places that make us 'ping' are like jewels. And everybody should be lucky enough to find one of those jewels in their lives."

For regular Boracay travelers like Manolet, we really need not ask "why," just look around!

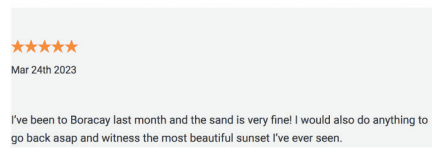
They expect their visit to be exactly the same each time: the powdery sand, the crystal-clear waters, new delectable discoveries, and gems of places with pocketsful of surprises, while reconnecting with island friends and making new and cherished acquaintances.

And that, my friends, is why beautiful and breathtaking Boracay never gets old!

Each time you return, it's the same magic, but then there's always a new and amazing experience to be had—maybe a new water activity, a new restaurant or bar.

But unlike the famous Thai bumper sticker "Same, same, but different," in Boracay, it's "Same, same, but better" each and every time! 🌴

### White Beach Reviews



## Boracay Sun News Reader Sightings

Boracay Island's much-loved community newspaper continues to make its rounds, beachcombing and blazing a trail all over the island! We thank you for making us a part of your day ☀️ Send us a photo of yourself enjoying your free copy so we can share it in our next issue! Facebook Messenger @boracaysunnews



We spotted Pinky Webb, broadcast journalist and Senior Anchor and correspondent for CNN Philippines, enjoying her copy of Boracay Sun News during her last island sojourn, (Photo by Freida Dario-Santiago)

continued from page two

## Get to know the people behind the bylines...



### Amanda Virrey

A pioneering writer on *BSN's* dynamic team, Amanda's passions for sports, travel, adventure and the sea, and her devotion to her precious daughter have inspired her writing career that spans almost two decades. She rejoins the team, eager to expand her horizons while continuing to revere her lustrous island home and the awesome community that she is honored and grateful to belong to.



### Azenith Resurreccion

Azenith returns as contributing writer for *BSN*, continuing where she left off as our local insider for her deep connections with the island community. Still passionate about sports, music, arts and crafts, she is now a full-time "Mama" to two boys and a self-taught home baker/cake artist (thanks to the pandemic), she also side hustles as a wedding and events coordinator.



### Denise Tolentino

Denise is an illustrator, children's book author and former Boracay resident. Her book "The Quick and Careful Adventures of Muni" won the 7th National Children's Book Awards for Kid's Choice (Chapter Books Category). She is currently working on a comic about her life in Boracay Island and shares them here as a returning *BSN* contributor. You will find most of her work and adventures on Instagram and TikTok: @drawnbydenise.



### Rica Velasco

Rica (Pixie to friends) formerly resided in Boracay for eight years and has since returned to live here again, going on 11 months now. She has served as a *BSN* contributor since 2014. She currently works as a hotel group operations manager and has been in the hospitality industry for 25 years. Rica is a passionate lover of movies, music, and the ocean. She enjoys snorkeling and swimming whenever she can. Her love for Boracay is evident in her writings, with a particular emphasis on showcasing the local community. Rica champions the cause of the small business proprietors and hardworking residents who constitute the lifeblood of Boracay. Over the years, she has actively participated in organizing and supporting various advocacies which she shares on these pages regularly.



### Kate Ng-Larrauri

Fondly called Dr. Kate by her (mostly waist-tall) patients and their parents, she has been a frequent visitor to Boracay since 2011. Smitten by its charm, she found herself staying longer each time, eventually seeing areas of improvement in health care which ultimately became the deciding factor in making the move and answering her calling to serve the island's youth as a pediatrician by profession. She says, "Putting a smile back on their little faces is what drives me every single day." Her passion to serve and her love for the ocean and simple living are what drove her here, where she now lives the best of all worlds, indeed.

**SHOUT OUT:** Calling on writers, photographers, artists and graphic designers. If you're interested in joining the dream team, send us a 300-word essay on any of these subjects: Restaurant review, Boracay activity, or personality profile; or a link to a portfolio of your photographs, on our Facebook Messenger @boracaysunnews or via email.



### Pauline R.

Originally from France, Pauline graduated with a bachelor's degree in mass communication before moving to Boracay in 2007. A freelance yoga teacher and mother of two girls, she loves traveling, exploring other cultures, music, food, reading and wellness. She is thrilled to return to *BSN* to share her passions in the island community paper.



### Jun N. Aguirre

Proudly Akeanon by birth, Jun has been a freelance journalist for more than a decade. A contributing writer for several international and local news agencies such as *Mongabay* and *Rappler*, he is one of the pioneering writers of *BSN*, reporting the news and traveling all the way from Kalibo to Boracay to cover a story or to interview a subject. He was recognized at the Mobile Journalism Congress in Asia 2022 for best practices in journalism. Last May, he was named Honorary Reporter of the Korea Culture and Information Service (KOCIS) by the government of South Korea, and was a finalist at the Globe Excellence Awards 2023, for community feature writing.



### Mark Cabrera

Coach Mark is a self-confessed aquaholic, culinarian, art lover and a tree hugger. He has been living on the Island since 2004 and is active in the hospitality, sports, and electric vehicle industries as well as with enviro-humanitarian movements. He's been penning for *BSN* since 2012, mostly writing about sports, gastronomy, island personalities, events and community projects. He co-directs the Boracay Swimming Club, Luntian Solutions, Cabsons Trading, Zavory Plus, Meok Motors Philippines and Unisikad Boracay Association. Always on the go, you'll find him swimming, snorkeling, e-biking, appreciating music and visual arts, food-tripping, or on a volunteer mission.



### Jack Jarilla

Jack who goes by the handle @boracayphotographer is exactly that, 100 percent. Often seen all over the island with his camera and tripod, the indefatigable lensman has covered every special occasion under the sun, moon and stars. It goes without saying that he has been *BSN's* photographer from the old days to this day, and for many years to come. His photographs have graced the pages of countless glossies and dailies, including *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *Mega*, *Tatler*, and *Cosmopolitan* magazines. He is a member of the Boracay Photographer Association Inc. and the photographer of *The Complete Guide to Boracay Island*, published by the BFI.



### Sigmund Torre

"I draw comics and paint murals. @sigmundtorre Look out for my latest comic book, Amboys! @dirbagstudios Check out some murals! @complimentarycolorsart" Thank you all for your tireless dedication and passion! May the Boracay Sun News shine even brighter, and our sun's rays reach even farther, and bring the community closer with warmth and light under the same glorious sun!

Oh and do I sound like a bot? Right! You can rest assured that there's no way that AI takes over this publication in this lifetime! Move over chatbots! 🤖

ISLAND LIFE

# Learn Something New in Boracay!

By Pauline R.

**L**earning a new skill has many benefits and can improve your life incredibly. From reducing stress to increasing your confidence and giving you the opportunities to socialize, it is also a great way to take time for yourself in a fun way.

For vacationers, taking time to learn something new while on holiday gives you (and your partner, family and friends) much more than awesome photos from your Boracay trip.

We have listed some fulfilling classes and workshops to consider.

**Boracay Dojo** (which means “school” in Japanese) is a beautiful space hidden in a small street in Angol, Station 3. It originally opened last January, to pass on and preserve the art of Shaolin Hung Fut Kung Fu, taught by Sifu, who was master trained by a line of Grandmasters. Master Sifu also offers weapons training and QiGong Flow.



Boracay Dojo

Passionate about promoting wellness and positivity in the community, the owners tailor monthly schedules offering various classes and workshops such as Yoga, Pilates, dance and art, with monthly full moon circles and art fairs. Monthly passes are available. Check out their one-of-a-kind space and a book class with them via Instagram @boracaydojo.

Visual multi-media artist **Eric Egoalada** holds regular art workshops he calls “Bonding Moments” at the Boracay Grace Hotel in Station 3, every Thursday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

For only PhP1,600 per student per session, the art materials and snacks are included in the class. To book, call (0920) 492 1700.



Art workshops with Eric Egoalada

If Yoga and Pilates are more your wellness path, checkout Boracay Yoga located on the roof deck of Lanterna Hotel in Bulabog, or at Eat Play Heal in Station 1, beachfront. You can try a range of different styles of yoga, healing sessions and workouts from Power Flow to Pilates and even Reiki or meditation. You may contact them for their weekly schedule, and book via Instagram @boracay\_yoga and @eatplayheal\_boracay.

Hungry on a Sunday? Head over to the colorful Rainbow Café & Lounge for some Pizza Making classes! Every Sunday, Rizi welcomes kids and kids at heart from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. inside Nigi Nigi Too Resort in Station 2. Choose your toppings and indulge on a Sunday afternoon for



Yoga and Pilates classes at Eat Play Heal

only PhP350 per person. It is best to book in advance through Facebook @rainbow.cafe.lounge.

Boracay Racquet Club is a group of badminton enthusiasts that welcome those interested to try the sport and play with them. The court is located at CityMall and private training sessions can be booked with Coach Alie. If you are looking for socializing and having fun,



Pizza making at Rainbow Cafe & Lounge

you can message the Boracay Racquet Club on Facebook or visit the court to know their schedule, built around the players’ availabilities. The club also organizes tournaments open to all levels, bringing together the Panay Island Badminton community.

## Looking for children's activities? Here are some awesome options that can be joined on a regular basis.

By Pauline R.

**T**he Boracay Beach Tennis Summer Kids Camp is a fun way to teach children coordination while having fun on the beach. This dedicated team patiently teaches children of all ages the drills and coaches them on how to hit the ball over a net at the beach tennis court set-up on in Angol. For more information, you may send a message to Boracay Beach Tennis on Facebook or find them on Instagram @boracaybeachtenisph.

The Dojo offers Kung Fu classes for children thrice a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Perfectly designed to balance fun and discipline, the classes will enhance your children’s balance, coordination, flexibility and stamina while learning all sorts of animal poses and defense techniques.

swimming pools, so the locations vary.

The coaches teach everyone from toddlers and up, even those who are scared of the water or experienced a traumatic experience. Programs offered include learning to swim, intermediate swimming, competitive swimming, and water safety. They also offer personalized private lessons for persons with special needs.

All the instructors are experienced swimmers, water safety instructors, and lifeguards. You may contact them at (0920) 982 9840 or via Facebook @Boracay Swimming Club.



Boracay Swimming Club's Toddler Program

The Boracay Taekwondo Club offers classes and private training for children either at CityMall or in Manocmanoc, depending on their age and level. The coach is a 2nd Dan Black Belt and an affiliated licensed gym member of the Philippine Taekwondo Association. Summer Clinics are also available. You may contact them at (0907) 828 2005 or at (0945) 736 1743 or via Facebook: Boracay Taekwondo Club.

**Station X**, the famous food hub at Hue Hotel and Resorts Boracay offers regular affordable activities for children, from arts and crafts to simple and fun cooking activities such as cupcake decorating. During special holidays, you can always count on them to have your back with activities, while parents can enjoy a snack and a coffee on the bean bags.

Their monthly schedule is posted on their Facebook page @StationXBoracay.



Kids bow before and after class starts as a sign of respect to the teacher, each other and oneself.

A crucial skill to learn when one grows up on an island is swimming. Since 2005, Mark Cabrera, swimming coach to generations of Island swimmers, is behind the Boracay Swimming Club and Swimming Camp. The classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday, at 3 p.m. and on Saturdays at 8 a.m. The club has numerous partnerships with hotels and resorts around the island for the use of their



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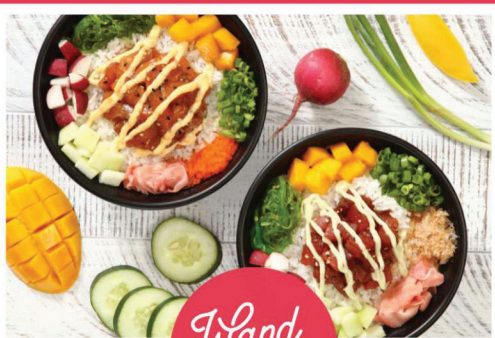


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INDULGE

# Bistro des Amis

By Charlie Greene

“What’s the difference between a bistro and a restaurant?” I once asked a chef who was a good friend of mine.

People go to a restaurant to dine, some will have a glass or two of wine, then they mostly leave. But a bistro is a place where one goes to eat, drink and have fun, oftentimes staying for several hours or more, sharing a few bottles of different beverages and picking at a wide variety of different dishes. It’s a social meeting place for friends to hang out, much like a club.

So, what better place to open a bistro than on Boracay’s White Beach. Who doesn’t love hanging out by the beachfront all day? Especially when the bistro offers some of the finest food available and good



Oli with his speciality beers

wines on the island.

Bistro des Amis was opened just this year and is operated by Belgian national Oli Stassen.

Oli first visited our shores seven years ago and after traveling around for a couple of years, he returned home to Belgium but realized how much he missed the Boracay lifestyle. He was determined to make his dream of owning a place where he could import and sell Belgium beers, which was a longtime family business, so he returned to Boracay in search of the ideal property.

The times of Covid were a nightmare for most, but Oli saw an opportunity in a vacant property and decided it could be the ideal place for him and his family to



The Irish Coffees are pretty good



An excellent selection of food

open their dream beachfront bistro.

Belgium is quite famous for its beer industry. And Oli’s family had been in the business for a long, long time. His great-grandfather had a cider brewery but sold it, however, his father decided to buy it back again and expand.

At the time, their main business hubs were in Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium, but such was the popularity and quality of their brews that they now sell to high-end establishments in Japan and Korea.

And you can guess where they will be selling their brews next ... that’s right—in Bistro des Amis on Boracay. It won’t be long, Oli assured me.

But until then, they still serve a fine selection of wines, of course, all local beers and spirits, and the staff has been professionally trained to extremely high standards—something that we unfortunately lack here sometimes. Excellent service and ambiance, great food and beverages, all in a fabulous beachfront bistro.

What a way to spend your days! 🌴



Our mission is simple:

Provide high-quality meals and a relaxed dining experience. Our culinary inspirations include French and Belgian offerings that you can enjoy with a stunning beach view. Our service is warm and inviting, and our cocktails our second to none.



When you're here, you're home.



Drinks & Menu



Social Media



Reservations

TAGAY

## Boracay Community

Queen B (Claire A. Cruz) did it again with Delia Werner. I guess we have to call Claire the best player that plays at the Boracay bocce international tournaments at the moment - congratulations.

Those 2 played amazing. And, Lily (Li Ly Smith) had to sneak into the photo as she was used to being in the winners one all the time (Just arrived back from Australia).

I am sure she will be back there soon. Thanks for all the fun everyone. Also, thanks to Finn Ronne for the pic.

Life’s good... 🌴



## Winners

Our way of saying “Cheers,” Tagay salutes the island’s unsung heroes and achievements.

## Boracay Community

Congratulations to the Boracay Football Club for placing 3rd place in the Iloilo soccer tournament!

Although they don’t have the opportunity on Boracay to play on a grassy pitch, this resilient team had played their best and made us proud!

Thank you to all the people that helped them get to the tournament in Iloilo, and to Finn Ronne and Kalid Macalanggan for all the training, support and assistance.

Life’s good! 🌴



**FUN FACTS**

# Understanding the Amihan and Habagat Seasons on Boracay Island

By Rica Velasco

**T**he tropical paradise island of Boracay has two distinct seasons: Amihan and Habagat. These two weather patterns not only influence the island's climate but also shape the experiences and activities available to visitors. Let us delve into the enchanting world of Boracay's two seasons and discover the unique charms they bring.

The Amihan season graces Boracay with its presence from November to April, bringing cool and gentle winds from the northeast. The word "amihan" is derived from the Filipino language, specifically from the Tagalog dialect. The term "amihan" is commonly used to describe the weather pattern and the season that it represents.

This season is characterized by dry weather, making it the ideal time for beach lovers and water sports enthusiasts to indulge in various activities. The skies are often painted with brilliant shades of blue, creating a stunning backdrop for sunbathing and enjoying the island's natural beauty.

During amihan, the sea is calm and clear, making it perfect for swimming, snorkeling, and diving. The waters teem with vibrant marine life, offering divers a kaleidoscope of colors beneath the

surface. White Beach is also strewn with watersports activities which include island-hopping, banana boat rides, paraw sailing rides, and parasailing.

Windsurfing and kiteboarding enthusiasts flock to Boracay during amihan. The consistent winds provide optimal conditions for these exhilarating water sports, particularly on Bulabog Beach, located on the eastern side of the island. Skilled athletes gracefully glide across the waves, demonstrating their prowess and bringing a touch of excitement to the island's environment as beginners practice these sports in the shallow and flat waters. Beach sports activities are also abundant during the amihan months. Enjoy watching or partaking in beach volleyball, beach tennis, beach football, or frisbee scrimmages on the sand.

From May to October, Boracay transitions into the Habagat season, influenced by the southwest monsoon. This season brings abundant rains, and while the weather may be more unpredictable, it offers its own unique charm and opportunities.

It is important to note that the intensity and duration of the habagat season can vary from year to year, depending on atmospheric conditions and other factors. The habagat plays a crucial role in the



**White Beach during the Amihan season**  
(Photo by Rica Velasco)

agricultural sector of the Philippines, as the ample rainfall it brings supports the growth of crops and contributes to the country's overall water supply.

The habagat season invites surfers to ride the waves that crash onto Boracay's White Beach, while watersports activities are moved to the calmer waters of Bulabog Beach.

The rainy weather also adds a touch of tranquility to the island. The lush greenery comes alive, transforming Boracay into a tropical paradise brimming with life. For those that prefer lesser crowds, this is the ideal time to visit Boracay.

Regardless of the season, Boracay's charm extends beyond weather patterns.



**White Beach during the Habagat season**  
(Photo by Bianca Macasaet)

Mother nature always manages to impress, showcasing spectacular sunsets on White Beach throughout the year, while exhibiting beautiful sunrises and moonrises on Bulabog Beach.

The island also consistently boasts a vibrant nightlife and a diverse culinary scene year-round. Visitors can indulge in delicious seafood feasts, sample local delicacies, dance to their hearts' content in the vibrant bars, and experience the warm hospitality of Boracay locals.

The amihan and habagat seasons in Boracay provide tourists with distinctive experiences. This idyllic island offers both relaxation and action throughout the year. 🌴

## Delicious Spanish fare and refreshing concoctions





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# CHIRINGUITO

BY BARCINO

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Canyon Hotels and Resorts,  
Boracay



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**COMMUNITY NEWS**

Talk of the Town  
The hot topic of the moment

# What You Need to Know About RBIM

Text & photos by  
Azenith Resurreccion

Early April this year, locals' entry lanes or the "Non-Tourist" lanes at the Caticlan Jetty Port were jam-packed with residents and workers waiting in line at the ID checking booths.

As it turns out, Boracay residents now have to be verified for their residency status upon entering the Island. Previously, you just needed to show your Barangay IDs for entry at the jetty port to board the motor bancas.

All Aklan citizens have a separate entrance to the jetty port to give way to tourists since Aklan ID-holders are exempted from paying the environmental and terminal fees.

Upon entry, all Boracay ID-holders are validated based on the consolidated Barangay databases, for the implementation of the RBIM ordinance (read on to learn more). Many were not aware of the new mechanism of checking and had to go through long lines during peak hours of the day. Some could not help but complain about the sudden delay of travel, especially workers who arrived at their workplace late, who then expressed their annoyance online.

Upon checking on their data, bonafide residents are asked to proceed and some are advised to validate their IDs at their respective barangay offices. The clerk then proceeds to place a call to the respective barangay offices to verify the ID holder before allowing passage.

**What is RBIM?**

The Commission on Population and Development (PopCom) launched the RBIM or Registry of Barangay Inhabitants and Migrants (formerly known as the Local Migration Information System) in 2017 with the goal of tracking the internal movements of people from one barangay or municipality to another. It is being implemented in several municipalities nationwide to track internal migration on the barangay level.

This national mechanism is instated for purposes of development planning and policy formulation which will serve as a helpful demographic and socioeconomic database at the community level that can be utilized to plan programs, projects and interventions. Census is used to identify people and collect demographic information such as nationality, religion, ethnicity, education, economic activities, health data, socio-civic data, and migration data. The program could provide small and large-scale databases for communities, biometrics, ID-system readiness and data management and analysis.



Long lines at the Caticlan Jetty Port's "Non-Tourist" lane on the first week of April



The lines for entry have eased in the month of May

In the municipality of Malay, the establishment of RBIM is seen to be very useful to address concerns and issues with overpopulation and other related issues. Municipal Ordinance 395 was introduced, mainly as the migration and development policy and mechanism known as the RBIM ordinance, authored by Caticlan barangay captain and Malay LGU legal president Ralph Tolosa and SK president Christine Hope Pagsuguiron for the purpose of regulating the influx of migrants particularly on Boracay Island.

According to Carlo B. Yabut, PopCom Program Officer 3 of Malay, they conducted the census for the RBIM survey in 2017 together with the provincial and regional PopCom offices to address the population concerns. In the years prior, Boracay was often described as "overcrowded" with both tourists and migrants, in which all other problems arise such as competition in opportunities of residents in the labor force, overall community health, infrastructures (uncontrolled sprouting of illegal boarding houses), garbage management and peace and order.

Mr. Yabut determines that during their survey and upon doing the checking of the identities of migrants in a specific (undisclosed) area, they found questionable individuals and suspected members of a known hostile group from Mindanao who were sheltered in a particular community on the island. Some possessed barangay IDs and moved from one barangay to another.

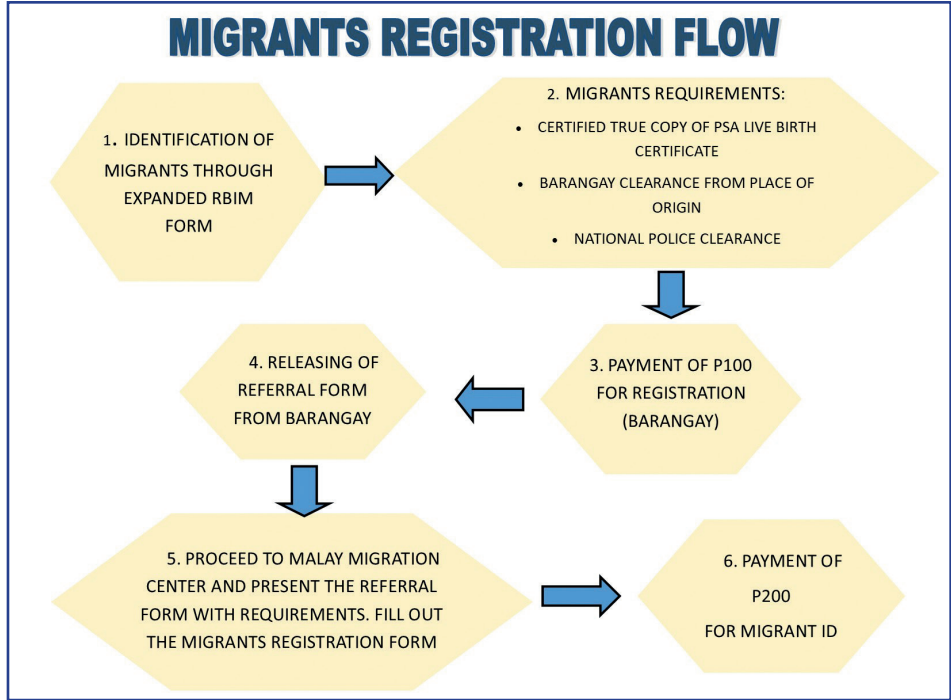
He emphasizes that issuing "Migrant IDs" to individuals who are "new" residents and requiring them to comply with necessary documentation is a great help in addressing these concerns. "We need to know if the migrant is an "asset" in the community, that we know where they come from, require them necessary clearances from authorities, to know if they can contribute to the workforce; and if they are educated and have acquired skills that go with the demand in the hospitality industry of the municipality."

**Classification of Residents of Malay**

The dynamic socio-economic status of Boracay Island, the lifestyle and high demand for workers have been very inviting for all sorts of citizens, both Filipinos and foreigners to settle, if not permanently, as transient residents of the island.

All barangays of the Municipality of Malay, most specifically the three barangays of the island, namely Manocmanoc, Balabag and Yapak have become homes of many migrants and have issued IDs in the past decades with the classifications: residents, transients, or workers.

Boracay Island's original inhabitants (also referred to now as *Tumandok Boracaynon*), property owners, and longtime residents who have consecutive COMELEC voting records in the municipality are identified as "residents" while "transients" are those who are long-term lessors, or long staying tourists who do not have a permanent residence on the island.



Be guided by this RBIM Migrants Registration Flow Chart: From Barangay Center to the Malay Migration Center (Located in the same building as the Malay Health Office along the road before reaching the Malay Municipal Hall square)

**RBIM Registration for Migrants**

With the RBIM ordinance, issuing "transient" IDs is discouraged since they are now classified as "migrants" and they need to register in the barangay and the Malay Migration Center (MMC) to get their Migrant IDs. Worker IDs are issued in accordance with the Public Employment and Service Office or PESO.

Those that need to apply for a Migrant ID should follow this procedure:

The Malay Population Office issued 35 migrant IDs from January to April 2023 and they are calling on new migrants to register in their office. For long-staying guests, the ID is renewable after six months. Landlords of long-staying guests will be the "guarantor" of their temporary residency with requirements such as lease contracts, and business permits. The Migrant IDs will be the basis of probation for migrants if they intend to stay for good. They can apply for residency along with another set of requirements.

**Resident IDs**

Yabut said that they are still in the process of updating and verifying the issued Resident ID holders manually. According to him, the barangay captains are committed to improving the system and are looking at issuing IDs with RBIM bar codes so they can just install a scanner at the port for faster passage.

Please note that RBIM verification at the jetty port is for those who have valid Boracay IDs that need to prove they are really residents of Boracay or are a "verified resident." Since migrants need to have a Migrant ID, RBIM is also the mechanism for documenting all migrants.

To be clear, Boracay residents and Aklanon with the following valid IDs may proceed to the "Non-Tourist" lane and present their ID at the RBIM window for verification:

- Barangay-issued Resident IDs, to be validated by the issuing barangay with validity indicated upon issuance or as indicated in the IDs
- Migrant ID issued by the Municipal Population Office or Malay Migration Center
- PESO-issued Worker ID
- Other IDs issued in Aklan province

From the "Non-Tourist" lane, if you are holding any of the valid IDs listed above and your address is in Aklan, or if your address is in Boracay (you should be in their database), you will be asked to proceed to the "Same Day Transaction" window.

If you are not in their database, you will be advised to verify in the Barangay center. If you are proven not really a Boracay resident and you possess a Boracay ID, they will confiscate this. 🌿

## FAQs:



**Are residents with barangay-issued Resident IDs required to present their IDs at the jetty port's RBIM window?**

Yes, All ID holders entering the "locals" gates are subject to RBIM verification.

**Are government-issued IDs valid in place of Resident IDs?**

(NOTE: Many residents do not have barangay IDs since their government IDs have been enough to allow them entry at the "Aklan/Residents" gates.)

Government IDs are valid and accepted if your address of residency is verified or validated at the RBIM window.

**Are Tumandoks and their migrant family members required to apply for RBIM?**

If you are a Boracay resident and have additional family members from other places who plan to stay for an indefinite period of time, they are required to register as "migrants" and apply for a Migrant ID. Be guided by the flow chart in this article.



**Is it true that if you don't have the IDs listed above, or it's expired, you're better-off entering as a tourist and just paying the fees, as long as you have a Hotel Voucher?**

If you do not have any Boracay or Aklan ID you can enter Boracay as a tourist. If you plan to stay long and cannot renew your Boracay barangay ID, you will be advised to registered as a "migrant."



ENVIRONMENT

# UNESCO WATCH: International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

## Discover the Wonders of Boracay's Mangroves

By Rica Velasco

The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem is celebrated yearly on July 26. The day was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2015 to promote solutions for the protection, sustainable management and utility of mangrove ecosystems and to raise awareness on the vital role they play as unique and sensitive ecosystems.

Mangroves are unique and highly productive ecosystems that occur in tropical and subtropical coastal areas. They are composed of various species of trees and shrubs that are specially adapted to thrive in saline or brackish water environments.

Boracay implemented a reforestation project in 2012 within Sitio Lugutan, Barangay Manocmanoc, focusing on the well-established and resilient mangrove trees, known as "bakawan" in Filipino. The primary objective of this initiative is to shield the Boracay coastline from erosion.

Mangrove reforestation stands as a highly effective method to safeguard coastal soil against erosion, particularly in the face of powerful waves. By preventing soil erosion and providing protection during storms and from the "Amihan" season's strong winds, the natural allure and landscape of Sitio Lugutan can be



Lugutan Mangrove Park

(Photos by Jack Jarilla)

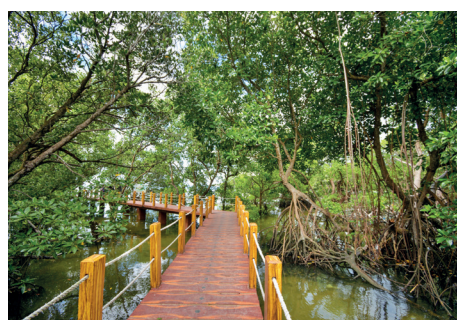
preserved.

Here are some key ways in which mangroves help the ecosystem:

**Coastal protection:** Mangroves act as a natural barrier, protecting coastlines from erosion, storm surges, and tsunamis. Their intricate root systems trap sediments and reduce the force of incoming waves, providing a buffer against coastal hazards.

**Biodiversity and habitat:** Mangroves serve as important habitats and nurseries for a wide range of marine and terrestrial species. They provide shelter, breeding grounds, and food sources for various fish, crustaceans, birds, and other organisms. Many commercially important fish species rely on mangroves during their life cycles.

**Carbon storage:** Mangrove forests are highly efficient at sequestering and storing carbon dioxide (CO2) from the atmosphere.



The trees and sediments in mangroves accumulate large amounts of organic carbon, making them potent carbon sinks. Their preservation is crucial for mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Water quality improvement:** Mangroves play a significant role in improving water quality. Their roots filter out pollutants and trap sediments, preventing them from

entering coastal waters. This filtration process helps maintain water clarity and promotes healthier marine ecosystems.

**Erosion control and sediment stabilization:** The extensive root systems of mangroves anchor coastal sediments, preventing erosion and the loss of land. They also aid in trapping sediments, which contributes to the formation and maintenance of coastal landforms.

**Nutrient cycling:** Mangroves contribute to the recycling and retention of nutrients in coastal areas. They extract nutrients from the water and sediments, promoting nutrient cycling within the ecosystem. This nutrient enrichment supports the productivity of adjacent marine environments.

**Climate resilience:** Mangroves can help mitigate the impacts of climate change by serving as natural buffers against rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Their ability to trap sediments and build up land can counteract the effects of coastal subsidence and promote the adaptation of coastal communities.

These are just some of the crucial roles that mangroves play in maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems. Conserving and restoring mangrove forests is essential for the wellbeing of both marine and terrestrial species, as well as for the overall ecological balance of coastal regions.

Boracay Island's mangroves face various challenges, including urban development, pollution, and unsustainable tourism practices. However, efforts are being made by local organizations, communities and government agencies to conserve and protect these valuable ecosystems. It is important to promote sustainable tourism practices, raise awareness about the importance of mangroves, and implement measures to ensure their long-term conservation.

When exploring Boracay, consider supporting responsible eco-tourism activities that allow you to appreciate and learn more about the mangroves and their conservation efforts. 🌿

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PEOPLE OF BORACAY

# Blind Masseurs: Our Island Treasures

## Unveiling the Extraordinary Lives of Boracay's Blind Masseurs

By Rica Velasco

**B**lind masseurs, often referred to as blind massage therapists, possess a remarkable ability to provide a healing touch and therapeutic relief with their hands, despite their visual impairment. Their unique skill sets and their dedication to their craft have made them an integral part of the massage industry worldwide. Combining heightened sensitivity, intuitive touch, and extensive training, blind masseurs offer a truly extraordinary massage experience that extends beyond the physical realm.

A remarkable group of individuals has emerged as a unique highlight of the island's activities—blind masseurs. In this article, People of Boracay invites you to delve into the lives of these extraordinary individuals who have made a lasting impact on the island's massage industry.

At the forefront of this remarkable group is **Abe Lamida**, a well-beloved and admired figure who has become synonymous with blind massage on Boracay. Having relocated to the island in 1997, Abe, a resident of Carles, Iloilo, tragically lost his sight at the tender age of three due to measles. Originally a fisherman who started going out to sea with his family when he was 10 years old, Abe's journey into the world of massage therapy began when a fellow blind individual recommended him to a Department of Social Welfare and

Development worker in Roxas City.

**Colin Hermanes** is a 58 year old native of Culasi Antique. Originally a Marine Engineer, Colin's life took an unexpected turn when an accident with a metal shrapnel left him blind in both eyes. Determined to overcome adversity, he transitioned into massage therapy, having been recruited and trained by Abe after visiting here with his relatives.

Abe's career path led him from being an employee to establishing his own licensed massage therapy business called **Abe Blind Massage**. In the past, his massage beds graced Angol Beach, attracting numerous passers-by eager to experience his expertise. At the peak of his success, Abe had a team of up to eight therapists under his guidance, having up to 13 clients per day and at times working from 8 a.m. until 12 midnight.

Specializing in a fusion of shiatsu, Swedish and reflexology massages, Abe's services garnered glowing reviews on TripAdvisor. One review from Kathryn of Manila states: "The massage was fantastic. He used his sense of touch to locate muscles and knots in need of more work, rather than the usual followed routine by most massage therapists in the Philippines. He made me feel very comfortable. I would highly recommend his service."

However, ever since the island's rehabilitation, massage beds are no longer permitted on the famed White Beach. Presently, Abe and Colin are the last remaining blind masseurs on the island. They rely on referrals, displaying their

services on a tarpaulin, and partnerships with affiliated resorts to attract clients. Although they are still fortunate to have an average of three clients per day, there are times when they have none. To adapt, they offer room service and occasionally rent space from a nearby resort.

To supplement their income, Abe and his wife opened a *carinderia* (canteen) near the Auhana entrance, catering to local employees and residents. Despite the challenges they face in acquiring clients, Abe and Colin express gratitude for the improvements brought about by the rehabilitation efforts. Abe appreciates the improved roads, making it safer and easier for them to navigate the sidewalks. Colin admires the cleanliness of the beach and the freedom for beachgoers to station themselves anywhere they please without restrictions.

For Abe and Colin, the convenience of walking is a major advantage of working on the island. Instead of relying on public transportation, their nimble feet carry them to their destinations whenever possible, ensuring not only their own safety but enhancing their physical fitness as well.

Despite the many challenges, they remain steadfast in their commitment to their craft and the opportunity to serve clients on this tropical haven.

Amidst their dedication and perseverance, Abe and Colin continue to embrace their disabilities, even using them to enhance their skills. Their unwavering work ethic and genuine hearts make



Island treasures: Colin Hermanes and Abe Lamida are the last remaining blind masseurs on the island.

them true island treasures. Supporting these hardworking individuals guarantees tourists an exceptional and memorable holiday experience, while enriching their lives.

The next time you need a massage, take a moment to seek out Abe and Colin and indulge in a massage that goes beyond the physical. Discover the beauty of their craft and become part of their remarkable journey in this tropical paradise. 🌴

Abe Blind Massage can be reached via mobile numbers (0963) 986 2251 and (0906) 163 5204.



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# ISLAND EYE

Caught on camera! This month's snapshots of sightings that deserve to be acknowledged or called out for action

By Freida Dario-Santiago

## THUMBS UP

**U**nparalleled professional TV coverage by the production team of Paradise Cable Television Network Inc. (PCTV) during the Love Boracay festival opening ceremony at the beachfront of EPIC Boracay!



**Above & beyond:** Free drinking water courtesy of the Boracay Island Water Company (BIWC) drinking station during the Love Boracay festival opening ceremony at the beachfront of EPIC Boracay!

We felt it was such a thoughtful idea and a brilliant reminder for everyone to hydrate in the scorching heat!



## A friendly reminder from Lemoni Café & Restaurant at D'Mall!

Framed nonchalantly above the water closet in the guest restroom: "It's just 1 straw, said 8 billion people" #saynotoplastic

Sometimes, all it takes are little reminders to make things right in the world!



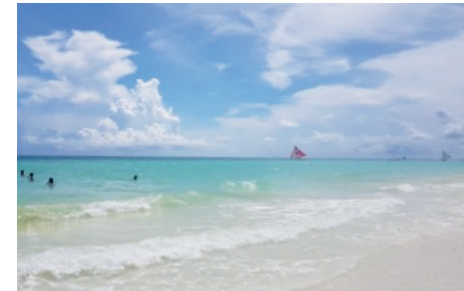
## HEADS UP

**D**isturbing the peace: Since when have paraws been allowed to have corporate advertisements on their sails again?

It will be recalled that paraw sailboat ads were big business until these were banned due to the pervasive corporate advertisements that incessantly disrupted the otherwise picturesque sea and sunset views. A local ordinance prohibits paraws to have sails other than the prescribed blue and white sails which were widely contested by paraw owners and island locals as this put a stop, not only to the commercial sails but to the iconic and resplendent Boracay trademark that

showcased local art, especially during the paraw regatta season.

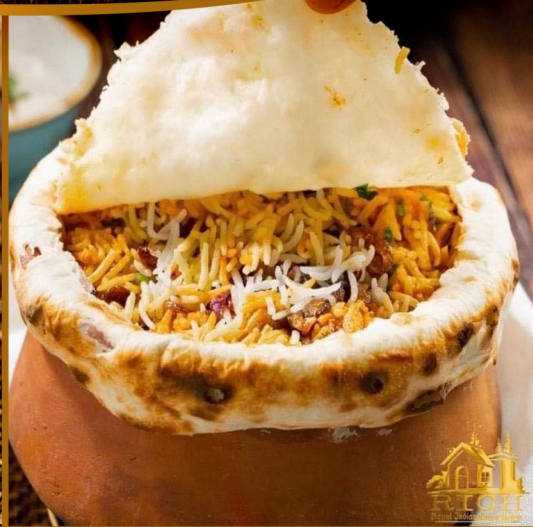
All the more reason why we found ourselves scratching our heads when we saw the logos of some famous brands crossing the White Beach horizon. Special permits perhaps? Just a heads up, because before you know it, the exceptions might become the rule.



### It takes a village!

Send us your snapshots via Facebook Messenger @boracaysunnews or via email to fvds.boracaysunnews@gmail.com and include the date and short description.

Address: Royal Indian Curry House, Station 1 Lot 483 PT B Beach Front, Balabag, Boracay ( Next to Army Navy )  
Tel.: 0917 775 0102  
rich.dnjb boracay@gmail.com



OFF THE ISLAND

# Mega Paraw Resort

By Charlie Greene

If you fancy a short trip off the Island to experience some of the beautiful areas just close by, head over to the mainland and take a 10 minute trike ride from Caticlan Jetty Port to Nabaoy.

There's a lovely freshwater river that ambles its way through the forestry surroundings which you will find is scattered with charming little resorts alongside the river banks.

One such one that we discovered was Mega Paraw Resort. I was quite surprised to discover the amount of activities they provide for the many guests that make the short trip across from Boracay.

The main focal point and attraction is the crystal clear and cool river. Swimming in the fresh waters is an ideal way to cool off from the summer heat. And there's lots more to entertain yourself with: Cliff jumping off the 13 foot ramp into the river is great fun. As is the Splash Slide and Monkey Zipline. All three activities end up with you paddling around in the refreshingly cool river waters.

There's also paddle boarding and kayaking available, and for safety measures, all of the above activities provide you with life jackets.

At the entrance to the resort there's also an ATV track where you can hire the vehicles and race around the surrounding area, but this was a bit too fast and bumpy for my old bones. Great fun if you're younger...

Something else that I certainly never



fancied doing, quite the opposite in fact, was sitting in a large metal frying pan and letting someone light a fire underneath you... Some must enjoy it I guess - the people taking part certainly seemed to be having fun. Strange world...

The variety and quality of the food was excellent, as was the music from their afternoon live band.

Cold refreshments are available and the native style bar and restaurant all add to the great atmosphere and vibe of this charming resort.

All in all, everything made for a lovely day out for a change... 🌴



 The advertisement for Kelana Coastal Cuisine features a central logo with a mermaid and the text "KELANA COASTAL CUISINE" and "BORACAY ISLAND, PHILIPPINES". Below the logo is a large plate of seafood, including crabs and prawns. There are also smaller images of various dishes, including a bowl of seafood and a plate of fried items.
 

**KELANA is a newly opened Bar and Restaurant located at Station 2 in front beach, serving the best coastal cuisine in the island.**

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## INDULGE

# Boracay Bucket List BSN's Guide to Good and Budget-Friendly Grub

By Amanda Virrey

**D**o you know where you can find good food for a very good price in Boracay? You can't go wrong with our top picks!

If you are traveling on a budget and you want to stretch your funds so you can enjoy more fun stuff on the island, *Boracay Sun News'* Bucket List is here to the rescue!

As your local insider Boracay Island guide, we recommend that you try these six delicious bargain spots, which are favorites among locals and tourists alike.

The island-style ala carte eatery called **Smoke Resto** is a great spot to pause for a good meal in-between a jam-packed itinerary on the island, as it is right at the center of D'Mall's bustling wet market lane. Here, you could savor bestselling rice meals like Beef and Mushroom, Lechon Kawali, Chicken or Fish Salpicao, or vegetarian favorites, such as Spicy-Garlic Kangkong, Ginataang Gulay and Pakbet and other Filipino and Asian dishes inclusive of a drink from PhP150 to 180 only. Try it!



Located along the Main Road at the entrance to D'Mall's wet market, you can't miss one of Boracay's most popular and iconic fast food restaurants known as **Jaspers' Tapsilog**. For less than PhP100, you can instantly enjoy a sufficient portion of a ready-cooked Filipino dish of your choice, from the Jaspers' trademark Tapsilog dishes or egg and fried rice ensembles like the ones with honey-cured pork Tocino, beef Tapa or local sausage Longganiza, or assorted burgers, local mixed noodles like Pancit Palabok and Pancit Canton, or warm rice porridges, called Lugaw and Arroz Caldo. As you will see for yourself, the selection of food at Jaspers varies often to cater to its growing supporters of budget diners.

Not too far from D'Mall is **Tod's Lomi House and Resto**. This modest dining area along the newly-paved Circumferential Road at the side of Bulabog specializes in thick rice noodle bowls, locally known as Lomi. Here you could take comfort in a hefty serving of Lomi with chicken, beef, pork or seafood, or its special version with mixed meat, and add a piece of boiled egg away from the crowd. You could also opt for any of their ready-cooked Filipino dishes such as Chopsuey, Adobo, Pancit Bihon, Batchoy and more, each costing less than PhP100. To complete your budget island meal, why not have them blend a fresh fruit shake of your choice?

For a taste of sumptuous barbecued food that are very reasonably priced, be sure to try **JT's Manukan Grille**. For a taste of sumptuous barbecued food



JT's Manukan Grille

that are very reasonably priced, be sure to try JT's Manukan Grille. Located at Tindahan-it Boracay in Tulubhan, this food grille offers a variety of barbecue grubs, each deeply marinated to render a remarkable flavor to please your gut's content. From a price range of PhP 50 to 255, you may order a variant of pork or chicken barbecue, or Chicken Inasal, Pork Dinuguan, Pork Liempo, Sisig or Boneless Bangus. Add a cup of steamed white rice to it to satisfy your inexpensive Filipino meal. As they like to say in Ilonggo, "*Namit gid!*" (Delicious!).

When you're up for authentic Japanese food, then head on to the southern part of White Beach and indulge in **Nagisa Boracay Cafe and Japanese Food's** surprisingly delectable bargain. The relaxed open-air dining area is the perfect setting to enjoy a satisfying serving of maki or sushi at PhP135 or less, Tuna or Salmon Sashimi at PhP235, or a warm bowl of your preferred ramen at PhP315. Other bestselling dishes that frequent diners rave about for the PhP110 deals are the French fries, cabbage salad, kimchi chige (soup), tamago (egg), agedashi tofu



and gyoza. There are plenty more dishes on the menu, cooked upon your order, while you wait and bathe in the sea just right in front.

If you are craving for Mediterranean flavors, **Meze Wrap** is conveniently located on the Main Road right across from Lake Town. You can't go wrong with any other wraps, such as the Beef or Chicken Shawarma, Beef or Chicken Mozzarella, Beef or Chicken Turmeric Rice or Kofta Hummus at a price range of PhP230 to 320 only. You may also opt for their Tofu, Beef or Chicken Kebab for a slightly higher price. Nonetheless, with the robust ingredients assembled in each dish, you are sure to stay full and satisfied for hours on end..



Ultimately, when you are on an island that is inhabited by creative and adventurous people that enjoy eating and dishing-up good food like Boracay, you are likely to stumble upon several dining spots that perfectly suit your cravings and your budget! 🌴

## ISLAND NEWS

# Densing Sees No Need for BIATF Comeback

By Jun N. Aguirre

**F**ormer Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Epimaco Densing has said there is no need, for now, to continue the incomplete rehabilitation of Boracay saying that they had already completed their efforts to restore its environment.

Densing was among the key players of the infamous Boracay rehabilitation after former President Rodrigo Duterte declared Boracay a cesspool back in February 2018. Duterte then signed Executive Order Number 53-2018 which created the Boracay Island Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF).

Then Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu led the task force, the members of which were representatives of the DILG, the Department of Tourism, and the Department of Public Works and Highways among others.

The said task force ended its term on May 8, 2021.

"To date, I have not heard of any plans of President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr. to complete the Boracay rehab. We have completed around 85 to 90 percent of the rehabilitation work. If I were to be asked, the BIATF is not needed in this resort island anymore since I saw the efforts of the local government in ensuring the environmental sustainability of Boracay," he said during a press conference in Tangalan, Aklan on May 14, 2023.

"I would rather see the BIATF blueprint be replicated in other tourism destinations in the country which have similar waste problems like what beleaguered Boracay in the past," he added.

Densing is currently serving as an undersecretary of the Department of Education, specializing in building academic infrastructures all over the country. 🌴



Undersecretary Densing speaks at a recent press conference in Tangalan, Aklan

ISLAND EVENTS

# Toni Pons: The Original Spanish Espadrille Brand is Now in Boracay

Text & photos by Danah Gutierrez

**T**oni Pons, the original Spanish espadrille brand, opened their third national branch on Boracay Island. The grand launch happened last May 20, hosted by Danah Gutierrez, with corporate teams from Toni Pons Philippines and Spain, Hue Hotels Boracay, and the owner himself,

Jordi Pons, grandson of original founder, Antonio "Toni" Pons.

The event was attended by local influencers, including former beauty queen Miriam Quiambao-Roberto, with Etiko Boracay as the main performer, providing upbeat sounds with percussions and festive singing.

The fresh and vibrant retail store features a wide range of Toni Pons' signature espadrilles and other stylish



Miriam Quiambao-Roberto arrives at the Toni Pons store at Station X with husband Ardy Roberto

footwear, as well as bags, belts, and traditional hand fans. The store boasts an airy and contemporary design, with an espadrille wall that catches the eyes of customers and passersby.

"We always saw Southeast Asia having more links to our culture, with similar weather and landscapes, so when we received news from our partners that the Philippines wants to carry our stores, we were so happy. This project appears to be great for the brand," Jordi shared in an exclusive interview.

Dubbed as the "shoes with Mediterranean soul," Toni Pons has preserved their way of hand-crafting espadrilles since 1946. "My grandfather made shoes the traditional way, in a small town called Osor. In the Mediterranean, our shoes have been a part of the people's way of life, and from producing designs to how we do things, the Mediterranean character stands out" Jordi explained, when I asked about their brand tagline.

As for sustainability, Toni Pons is all for it. "We only use natural leather and textiles; the espadrille's sole is made from

natural fibers. We also use recycled felt for our winter slippers. We do our best pursuing sustainable practices when producing shoes. We have a mindset that wants to be respectful to the environment," Jordi said.

"We want to keep being an honest brand that is socially responsible, and fight the stigma that fashion has to be uncomfortable." Toni Pons aims to continue their legacy of quality and comfortable shoes as they open more branches in the Philippines.

Follow @tonipons\_ph on Instagram for updates.



(From left) Roy Chua, Marnie Chua, Tessie Yao, Danah Gutierrez, Jordi Pons, Antonio Valero and Ivan Yao



Toni Pons' airy, bright and inviting interiors at StationX

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SPECIAL FEATURE - ISLAND GUIDE

# Take A Walk on the B-Side

(Photo by Freida Dario-Santiago)

## Discover the flipside of Boracay Island's world-famous White Beach: the laidback gem of Bulabog Beach

By Freida Dario-Santiago

Illustrated map by Sigmund Torre

**BULABOG Beach a.k.a Back Beach is a 2.5-kilometer beach on the eastern side of the island.**

On the more tranquil side of the tourism island, the coastline is fringed with boutique hotels, condotels and private residences, that have somehow preserved the “old Boracay” character while integrating fresh yet understated modernity. Moreover, thanks to the tight-knit Bulabog community that has survived unimaginable upheavals (quite literally) by supporting one another as a family during the government-imposed six-month island rehabilitation closure back in 2018, the unique laidback and free-spirited Bulabog vibe remains steadfast.

This neighborhood raised me. It has given me a sense of place and has felt like home from Day 1. I believe that it is this symbiotic relationship that continues to organically preserve and sustain the magic of Bulabog—a place like no other.

I have lived here from the moment I moved to the island back in 2003, and I have never left, nor have I ever looked elsewhere. Aside from the obvious: the sights and sound of the sunrise as the sky's muted colors fade into the picturesque views; the equally stunning monthly moonrise that I will not even attempt to describe, it's the intangible things that inspire curiosity and awe, and give Bulabog its remarkable charm. And then, just when you thought you've been smitten enough, you meet the denizens!

Comprised of a unique “trail mix” breed of interesting characters, the Bulabog bunch are probably the most easygoing, chilled out people you would meet. Be ready to be disarmed with the warmest of welcomes, where you will never feel like you've overstayed the welcome.

Having earned the distinction as the **Number One Kiteboarding Beach in Asia**, Bulabog plays host as the destination of

choice for discriminate windsurf and kiteboard enthusiasts worldwide for its flat and shallow reef-protected water and ample wind during the *Amihan* season (October to May).

When the *Habagat* or southwest monsoon season rolls in (June to September), all roads lead to Bulabog Beach yet again, as it becomes the wonderland for all sorts of water activities. Like clockwork, the wind shifted on the last week of May, and the island-hopping and leisure boats, *paraw* sailboats, and all the other water activities made Bulabog their center of operations. The pontoon was assembled, the registration tents pitched, and the tourists started coming in droves. This was our cue that it was time to take a walk on the B-Side!

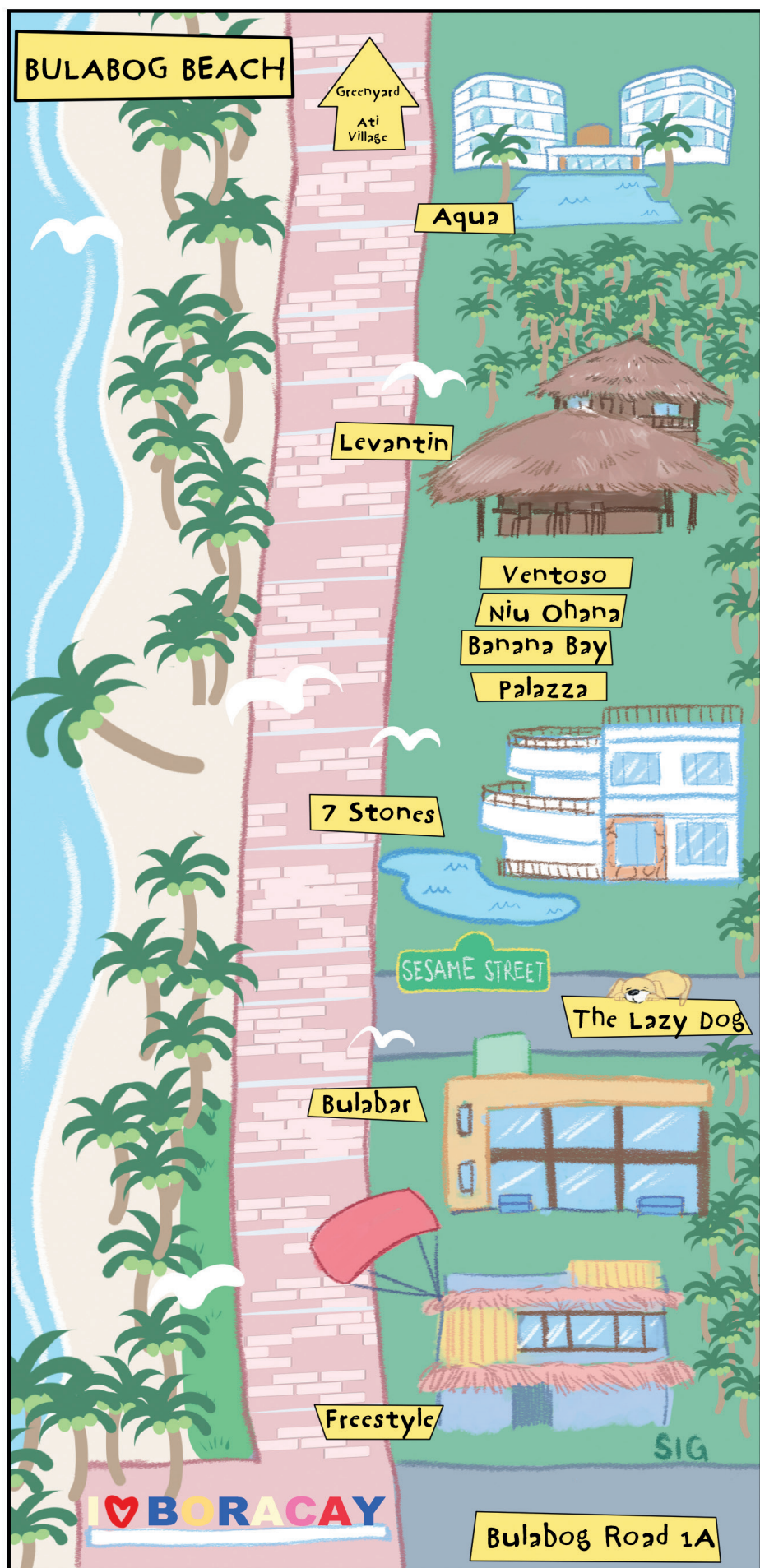
Boracay Island's less known and modest beach (and she's perfectly cool about that), perhaps second in popularity to White Beach, Bulabog (some spell it with an “o” as in Bolabog), runs parallel to its celebrity counterpart White Beach, somewhere in the waistline of the island.

Philippine news channel *ANC (ABS-CBN News Channel)* rightly called Bulabog “the kiteboarding capital of the Philippines.” For many wind sport athletes that descend on the island for the annual sporting events (usually in the month of March), Bulabog is the beach they know best. For them, White Beach is for tourists!

If you really want to get to know Boracay Island at its core, leave your tourist self in your hotel room, and be a fun traveler! Forget booking a land tour (which allots too little time to sit, relax and take in the scenery – do that another time) and just head over to the marrow—the heart & soul of Boracay, which is a place unto itself. Immerse in the subdued tropical subculture and emerge in-touch with the other parts of yourself you never even know existed. Too deep? Yeah, I was just messing with you!

To sell the idea, we've asked Boracay artist Sigmund Torre to create an illustrated map that we hope helps to lure you away from the tourist traps, past the main roads and thoroughfares, and entices you to navigate the intricacies of White Beach's soulful sister.

So yeah, is the incessant wind on



continued on next page



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(Photo by Joyce Manahan)

**Bulabog Boulevard by night**

White Beach getting tiresome? Jumping the waves getting old? There's a perfectly good reason why windbreakers are built during this time of the year. It's a sign that you should venture off and discover something new!

This rough guide is meant to simply point you in the right direction and to suggest places and experiences that most Island visitors miss, even with a tour guide. At-a-glance, you can see for yourself that there is no way you'd get lost (although we can't assure that you won't lose yourself (in conversation/ indulgences that is!). The great thing about this neighborhood is that everyone is friendly, and you can conquer it on any given day (although you will surely want to continue exploring day after day), and in no particular order.

By nightfall, a cozy "BulaVard" emerges, softly illuminated by the warm glow emanating from the few places that stay open for dinner and an early night cap (closing between 9 to 10 p.m.), as well as from the newly-installed solar-powered lamps, adding to the charm and safety of the neighborhood.

**Getting there:**

- Tell your driver to take you to Bulabog Beach by Hangin Kite Center or simply say "I ❤️ Boracay" sign on Bulabog Beach.
- Take the Hop On, Hop Off bus and get off right at the corner of Bulabog Beach.
- It is a five-minute walk from D'Mall, or a 10 to 15-minute walk from White Beach. On foot, look for the "Boracay" sign across the street from D'Mall, cross the LakeTown promenade, and walk down Bulabog Road 1A (to the left of the lake) all the way to the beach where you'll see the "I ❤️ Boracay" sign.

To the right would be the terracotta brick-paved Bulabog Boulevard we will fondly nickname the "BulaVard" rolled out for you in *Boracay Sun News'* ultimate insider's guide!



**Bulabog Boulevard**

(Photo by Jack Jarilla)

**Insider's Guide**

Pedestrians would be happy to know that motorized vehicles and e-trikes are not allowed to ply the boulevard, save for the occasional beach police patrol vehicles. Aside from bicycles, the second most common wheels are e-bikes which are allowed, followed by the four-wheelers: strollers and wheelchairs, that is.

Although there are no roses to smell, be sure to take a leisurely walk, and to make as many stops as possible, taking your sweet island time, particularly at these homegrown spots.

After the obligatory photo op at the newly erected "I ❤️ Boracay" sign, it's time to take that walk!

You have arrived: Bulabog Road 1A corner with "I ❤️ Boracay" sign (Photo by Jack Jarilla)

**Freestyle Academy Kitesurfing**

Serving the island and its guests since 2009, Freestyle Academy is a kitesurfing school that offers lessons for beginners to advanced students. Locally owned and operated, their team of kitesurfing instructors are highly-skilled and experienced to make sure you have a great experience on the water. Kitesurfing lessons start at Php2,333 per hour one-on-one or Php2,000 per hour for two persons.

During the month of July, actual kitesurfing lessons are on White Beach, Sinagpa area (rightmost end if you're facing the sea), but it's best to inquire and enroll at the shop where you can enjoy a perfectly good cup of coffee.



**Kiteboarding on White Beach**  
Kitesurfing champ Ken Nacor kitesurfing on White Beach with his son Rider

**Welcome to the flipside of Paradise!**

Here are a few things to know (so you don't stick out like a tourist, although believe me, nobody cares!):

**Insider Tips:**

- Motorized vehicles and e-trikes are not allowed to ply the boulevard but e-bikes are allowed.
- Pet-friendly, but don't forget to bring poop bags. Also, garbage bins are few and far between so take your trash with you and dispose of it properly.
- The locals have found fun uses for the green AstroTurf spaces, from occasional sidewalk mini-bazaars to private yoga and kickboxing sessions, and even trampoline and weekend playground setups for the kiddos.
- If you're there early enough, try to catch an awe-inspiring sunrise in all its visual and sensory glory.
- Aside from the monthly full moon, Bulabog dwellers have a perfectly good excuse to celebrate: the moonrise. A natural occurrence during the early evenings immediately following a full moon, the moon appears above the horizon. What makes it so special is that the moon appears to be larger and closer than it really is, and it appears to be yellowish near the horizon—somewhat like a sunset, but not! And then there's the moon's reflection on the sea—breathtaking!
- Fond of fresh sea urchin or uni in Japanese? Head over as early as 6 a.m. and if you're lucky, you can buy them freshly caught for only Php25 a pop!
- So far, vendors (most commonly taho, sunglasses and crystal kayak peddlers) are not yet so pesky here, and they make an effort to keep a distance. Please don't encourage them to approach tourists, by approaching them yourself.



**Sunrise**

(Photo by Joyce Manahan)

Why stop here? Whether you're interested to learn kitesurfing or not, stop by for coffee and chitchat with Neri who will convince you to give the sport a shot! Did we mention great vibes?

Must-try: The coffee shop only serves coffee, but you're in for a real treat. Bestsellers: Cappuccino and Iced Caramel Cappuccino

or

**What is so special about Bulabog Beach that you chose this location?**

“Bulabog Beach is known as the best kitesurfing spot in Asia.

We chose to operate our school here as it offers perfect conditions for kitesurfing from October to April and attracts water sports enthusiasts from around the world.”

– Ken Nacor, owner

Open daily, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Mobile/WhatsApp: (0915) 559 3080  
Facebook: @freestyleacademy  
Instagram: @freestyleboracay  
Email: info@freestyle-boracay.com  
Website: www.freestyle-boracay.com

A few other kitesurfing/kiteboarding schools likewise hold sessions on White Beach but most shops are closed and operate online. One such school/shop is **Hangin Kiteboarding Center** (located across the street corner of Bulabog Road 1A and the beach road) which accepts bookings from walk-ins, referrals and online bookings (Facebook: @kiteboarding.boracay; Instagram: @hanginkitecenter). **Hangin** (the bar) is legendary. However, like a few other establishments in the area, they are not fully open during the lean season. Coming to their Wednesday night foosball tournaments is a must and rite of passage, especially for hardcore kites that stay for the entire season (think “play hard, party harder!”). Be sure to check them out when the Amihan season comes around.



**Bulabar Boracay**

Serving the island and its guests since July 8, 2022 (Happy Anniversary guys!), Bulabar is the newest restaurant bar on the block and it's hard to miss. It will stop you in your tracks with its inviting modern al fresco design, making it the perfect spot to sit back and get your bearings, and more importantly, to people-watch as you dine.

Who knew that watching kids play could be so therapeutic? At the risk of sounding like a real estate pitch, watching the picture-perfect scene of kids on their bikes, old people holding hands, and dogs running freely makes you feel warm and sentimental, triggering happy childhood memories and driving home so many clichés.



**Always easy as Sunday morning at Bulabar**

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If this was a reel, your parents might use Burt Bacharach's "Close to You" as the background track, whereas you & I would use "Beautiful Day" by U2! Get the picture?

**Why stop here?**

Aside from the irresistible urge to do so, the delicious food and decadent cocktails (four kinds of mojitos, mango margarita), the bar serves fresh and healthy concoctions such as their detox juice of beetroot, watermelon, apple, lemon and ginger. Yes, we all need it. And for every PhP1,000 worth of food and drinks, you get a free dessert of the day!

Stay for: High-speed Wi-Fi, a scenic mezzanine, a roof deck for private events, and an amazing view of Bulabog Beach  
 Best time to come: Brunch, sunset cocktails, dinner

Happy hour: Aperol for PhP300 on Sundays; buy one take one on local cocktails every Tuesday and Thursday (2 to 7 p.m.)

Must-try: British classics such as fish and chips and sausage roll, Beef Bulabog (beef slow-cooked in red wine served with carrots, mushrooms and French beans over mashed potatoes), Cottage pie, Twice Cooked Adobo (boneless chicken thigh, tomato salsa, boiled egg, sautéed beans and black rice served with adobo sauce on the side), Salad Niçoise, Whipped Ricotta



**Detox juice**

*What is so special about Bulabog Beach that you chose this location?*

“The sunrise and the community.”  
 – Joyce Manahan, owner

Open Tuesdays to Sundays (closed on Mondays), 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
 Mobile: (0916) 613 4559, (0906) 596 6754  
 Facebook: @BulabarBoracay  
 Instagram: @bulabar\_boracay

**The Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast**

Serving the island and its guests since November 2007, The Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast's name says it all: it's the perfect place for a lazy day and a relaxing stay, dining and lounging to your heart's



content. A short walk takes you to the beach, but it's also secluded and private enough for those looking for a relaxing spot away from the action. The four-legged inhouse brand ambassadors Chili and Miel will instantly put you at ease and keep you company as you while away the time.

Lazy Dog (or LD for short) is also the headquarters for "the people in the neighborhood" called Sesame Street!

Not its real name as most Boracay side streets are unnamed, its residents gave their street its endearing nickname back in 2008 that aptly depicts this soulful neighborhood and its fascinating characters. Djila, Lazy Dog's owner/innkeeper even put-up an actual street sign a few years back (which is gone now).

Just like the beloved children's TV show that was first broadcast in 1969, "Sesame Street" got its catchy name from an allusion to The Arabian Nights' fabled command "Open, Sesame!" that suggested excitement and adventure.

Why stop here? Aside from the 26 rustic accommodations, open-air restaurant and lounge built around a century-old tree and garden, they're never short of excellent vibes!

Stay for: Just doggin' around amidst the lush greenery! They're obviously pet-friendly but keep your pets leashed.

They have stable Wi-Fi which is saying a lot, and the low tables are equipped with power outlets so you can very well work or pretend to work all day long, but please be considerate enough to spend and tip nicely.

Best time to come: Breakfast/brunch, merienda; and anytime you need a break



**Must-try: Bistek Tagalog**

from the sweltering sun.  
*What is so special about Bulabog Beach that you chose this location?*

“It's the other way around. Bulabog chose us.”

– Djila Winebrenner, chief innkeeper & dog handler

Open daily, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
 Find or reach them for inquiries or bookings:  
 Mobile: Kitchen: (0920 945 4845; Hotel: (0917) 700 8571  
 Facebook/Instagram: @lazydogboracay

If you're taking the back road towards the main road, you'll come across Mr. D La Bettola Boracay which serves reasonably priced Italian pasta and brick fire oven pizzas. Check them out on Facebook: @MrD-La-Bettola-Boracay.

**7 Stones Boracay Suites**

Centrally located along the coastline, 7Stones Boracay Suites is a four-star rated self-service aparthotel with a collection of 28 modern suites that offer luxurious and exclusive accommodations, featuring an outdoor swimming pool and a sunken pool bar, right on its beachfront.

Facebook: @7StonesBoracay  
 Website: www.7stonesboracay.com

Tourists that go on day tours are very



**7 Stones Boracay Suites**

(Photo courtesy of My Boracay Guide)



(Photo by Jack Jarilla)

**Don't miss the photo op at the famous Bulabog coconut tree by 7Stones**

familiar with 7Stones, but not exactly the apartments, but more so with the famous so-called "7Stones coconut tree" landmark! Since you're here already, you might as well get do it for the bragging rights!

Other private and exclusive residences in the area offer a wide range of accommodations and prices to suit various needs and budgets. Checkout the following: Palassa Private Residences: @PalassaPrivateResidences, Banana Bay Boracay: @bananabayboracay, Niu Ohana East Bay: @niuohanaboracayph and Ventoso Residences: @ventosoresidences.

**Niu Ohana East Bay**

Niu Ohana East Bay has been serving the island and its guests since 2009, with 20 rustic private residences and a charming beachfront restaurant and bar. Ask about their ongoing promos on direct room bookings.



**Why stop here?**

The family-owned and run self-catering hotel is known for its all-day comfort dishes and relaxing views.

Stay for: Aside from the food, they've got good Wi-Fi, a scenic mezzanine, and a roof deck with 360-degree views available for private events.

Happy hour: All day "Happy Hour" on selected cocktails; Buy one take one on Tequila Sunrise and Rum Coke

Must-try: Their famous Pancit Palabok, Pasta Negra (squid-ink pasta), Bilao Series (mixed meat and seafood, good for sharing)



**Frozen Margarita**

*What is so special about Bulabog Beach that you chose this location?*

“Niu Ohana has been in business for as long as the island has been on the map.

We've witnessed Boracay from an unknown primitive island to the world-class destination that it is now.”

– Susan dela Cruz, owner

Open daily, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
 Mobile: (0930) 8295 318  
 Landline: (+63 36) 288 4067  
 Facebook: Niu Ohana East Bay  
 Instagram: @niuohanaboracay

**Levantin Boracay**

You know you are at the mid-section of Bulabog Beach (also considered "downtown") when you get to Levantin Boracay, which has been serving the island and it's guests since June 2010. The resort offers 15 rooms of various room types, all very spacious and with all the creature comforts and access to the beach.

The beach restaurant and bar is never

continued on next page



**Levantin Boracay Resort**

empty and plays a vital role as Bulabog’s informal community center, and where you will find and get to meet a cross-section of locals any time of the day, on any given day.

**Why stop here?**

People come for the laidback beach vibes, great music selection, and local and international food and drinks at unbeatable prices, including their al-fresco beach breakfast. Another good reason is they always have ice-cold beer!

Stay for: Super-fast Wi-Fi, al fresco dining on the beach, and to meet the locals and get first dibs on what’s going on in and around the island!

Best time to come: Sunrise, late afternoon for cold beers and sunset cocktails, and for an early dinner. Check out their social media pages for weekend specials and monthly pizza specials.



**Levantin's Al fresco breakfast**

*What is so special about Bulabog Beach that you chose this location?*

“Because we are water sport enthusiasts and also like it a little more quiet but still close to everything.”

– Dian Tobes, owner

Open daily, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
 Mobile: (0939) 805 2564  
 Landline: Restaurant: (+63 36) 288 9621;  
 Hotel (+63 36) 288 2763  
 Facebook: @Levantin.Boracay  
 Instagram: @levantinboracay

**Aqua Boracay**

Located on the tranquil Bulabog Beach, Aqua Boracay is a beachfront



**Aqua Boracay boasts two lavish pools; Aqua Boracay’s Ibiza Suite**

property offering a new wave of luxury.

Aqua has been serving the island and its guests since April 18, 2019, offering 131 elegant and spacious rooms and suites with a contemporary design, overlooking the stunning sea and pool views. Aside from the exquisite accommodations, the amenities and facilities include two stunning pools, a bar, a state-of-the-art fitness center, and a spa that offers a variety of treatments. What’s more, they boast of two award-winning restaurants: Sea.food by Chele Gonzalez and Qtchn Restaurant, all just 15 minutes away from White Beach, with access from Bulabog Beach. Guests enjoy hourly complimentary shuttle services to and from D’Mall.

**Why stop here?**

Experience culinary excellence at the two award-winning restaurants. Qtchn, their all-day dining restaurant is renowned for its signature must-try dishes. For an extraordinary fine dining experience, Sea.food by Chile Gonzalez awaits. This restaurant has garnered recognition from Tatler Dining as one of the finest establishments in the Philippines, setting the bar high as a destination for seafood lovers. Spearheaded by the team behind the world-renowned restaurant Gallery by Chele, the result is a collaboration of known culinary talents: Chef Chele Gonzalez of Gallery by Chele, Jericson Co of the Curator, Cyril Addison of Advice F&B Solutions. Every detail has been meticulously crafted to create an unforgettable experience.



**Seafood by Chele Gonzalez**



**Don't Forget The Photo Opportunity Here**

Stay for: Day passes with a seasonal promotion rate of PhP1,000 per person are inclusive of consumable food and drinks and complimentary pool access.

Special season offer: They currently offer 20% off for food and beverage at the Coral Bar, QTCHN, and Mist Spa, available for both in-house and walk-ins.

*What is so special about Bulabog Beach that you chose this location?*

Aqua Boracay wanted to be a game-changer, being the only resort offering 5-star accommodations in the Bulabog area. Bulabog Beach offers a quieter and more serene environment than White Beach.

“A visit to Aqua Boracay is a peaceful retreat amidst the serene environment of Bulabog Beach.”

– Aqua Boracay

Open daily to serve guests, operation hours are as follows:

Sea.food by Chele Gonzalez: Tuesdays to Sundays, 1 p.m. to 11 p.m.  
 Qtchn Restaurant: Daily, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
 Mist Spa: 1 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
 Fitness Center: 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
 Pools: 7 a.m. to 10/11 p.m.  
 Coral Bar: 1 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Mobile: (0917) 871 6154  
 Landline: (+63 36) 288 1536  
 Facebook: @theaquaboracay  
 Instagram: @aquaboracay

Although the brick boulevard continues much further, this is pretty much the end of the road tour.

If you find yourself with time on your hands to explore even further, there are still a few other gems beyond, such as Greenyard Kite Center (@Greenyardboracay) and Kape Mano (@kapemano) – a co-working space that serves a variety of gourmet coffees & teas with an incredible view, located above Greenyard, open daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Further down is the Boracay Ati Tribal Community Village and Heritage Center, but access is via the Circumferential road entrance in Sitio Lugutan, Call ahead at (+63 36) 288 2623 or drop by for some culture, fresh organic vegetables (in season), and for some of the Ati tribe’s handmade soaps and beaded accessories from their livelihood center.

Watch for “Part 2: Bulabog Beach: Off the Strip” in our August 2023 issue. For now, this guide should keep you busy, and whet your appetite for more salty & sultry B-Side indulgences! 🌴

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## HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS

# BSN's Guide to the Top Island Activities

## Unleash Your Adventure

By Rica Velasco

**B**oracay offers a wide array of experiences and exhilarating activities that cater to all different kinds of tourists. With so many activities being offered, it can be challenging to decide which ones to choose.

We hope that you'll find our insider's island guide to Boracay's island activities helpful as you plan your adventure-filled getaway.

### Top Activities for Solo Travelers:

- **Crystal Kayak:** Paddle across crystal-clear waters with a glass bottom kayak to glimpse vibrant marine life and colorful reefs, a popular activity for stunning photos.
- **Motag Living Museum Tour:** This immersive cultural journey showcases traditional farming, traditional crafts-making, native cuisine, and Malayanon folk song performances. Located on the mainland of Aklan, just a 30-minute journey from Boracay.
- **Stand-Up Paddle:** Glide across the water's surface and feel the exhilaration of Stand-Up Paddle Boarding.
- **Guided Day Tour:** Book yourself a guided island exploration with a personal tour guide that is knowledgeable in the finest dining spots, shopping destinations, and must-try activities.

### Top Activities for Couples:

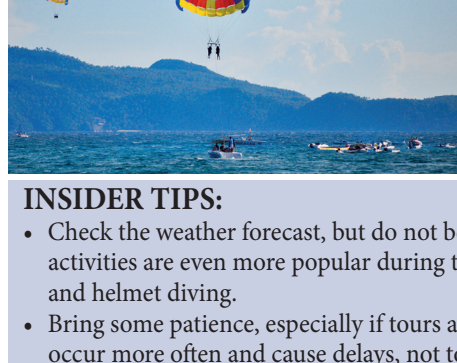
- **Helicopter Tour:** Soar above Boracay on a thrilling helicopter tour. Choose from a 10-minute ride for stunning aerial views; a 15-minute Island Tour to discover Tambisaan Reef; or enjoy the 20-minute VIP Tour for panoramic vistas of Boracay, Carabao Island and Crocodile Island.
- **Massage:** Indulge in the ultimate relaxation with a soothing Boracay massage, where expert therapists knead away stress and tension, leaving one refreshed and rejuvenated.
- **Wedding Proposal Assistance:** Create an unforgettable and unique proposal moment with options such as a helicopter proposal, a romantic beach dinner with a ring on the dessert plate, or an adventurous underwater scuba diving proposal.

### Top Activities for Families with Children:

- **Horseback Riding:** Located on private property, enjoy this a scenic horseback riding adventure through secluded beaches, jungles, and forests on horseback definitely a unique way to explore Boracay.
- **Sunset Cruise:** Cruise along White Beach while enjoying snorkeling, mermaiding, paddleboarding, kayaking, and relaxing in a water hammock. Complete with live music and a culmination of watching the sunset from the best seat on the island.

### Top Activities for Friends and Groups:

- **Banana Boat:** A popular water activity suitable for all ages, enjoy speed-induced fun on a banana-shaped inflatable and panoramic island views off Boracay's White Beach.
- **Cliff Jumping:** Travel to Magic Island, which features five thrilling levels of cliff jumping and a sumptuous barbeque feast. Onlookers are more



than welcome to enjoy as well.

- **Mainland Adventures:** Explore nature-filled offerings on the mainland. Discover caves, trek through scenic trails, enjoy tubing, cliff diving, or simply relax by the riverside.

### Top activities for All Kinds of Tourists (Solo, Couple, Families, Friends):

- **Boracay Land Tour:** Discover the island's other extraordinary beaches and coves, including Puka Beach, Diniwid Beach, Ilig-Iligan Beach and Bulabog Beach.
- **Buggy Car or ATV Adventure** – Get a buzz out of riding the upgraded Boracay Buggy Car or ATV rides, now eco-friendlier with all-electric vehicles.
- **Helmet Diving:** An immersive activity where one can walk on the ocean floor to enjoy the colorful marine life, while wearing a specialized helmet that provides a continuous supply of air, it's the ultimate Instagrammable activity for the bragging rights.
- **Island-Hopping:** These boat tours feature pristine beaches and natural wonders that can only be reached by boat while seeing incredible snorkeling and swimming spots with provided gear, lunch may be included in one of the stops. Choose between private island hopping for large groups and families, or group island hopping for solo travelers, couples, and small groups looking to join others and make new friends.
- **Jet Skiing:** Experience the thrill of zooming across the turquoise waters of Boracay with this exhilarating water activity that promises excitement and adrenaline.
- **Kiteboarding:** With its shallow waters, powerful winds, and stunning reef, Bulabog Beach is hailed as Asia's top kiting destination and is the optimal playground for kite surfers of all levels, from beginners to seasoned pros. During the Habagat season, kiteboarders get to enjoy the sport on world-famous White Beach.
- **Parasailing:** Enjoy the thrill of soaring above the island while basking in the panoramic vistas of beautiful White Beach and its azure waters.
- **Paraw Sailing:** A traditional sailboat ride with two outriggers and two sails, paraw sailing is a legendary Boracay Island activity and a must-try especially around sunset time for the best photo opportunities.
- **Scuba Diving:** With excellent visibility and rich biodiversity, Boracay's scuba diving scene guarantees unforgettable encounters and cherished underwater memories for beginners and experienced divers alike.
- **Windsurfing:** A thrilling water sport that combines sailing and surfing, windsurfing allows one to harness the power of the wind as one rides the waves. 🌴

### INSIDER TIPS:

- Check the weather forecast, but do not be dissuaded by gloomy weather. Water sports activities are even more popular during the Habagat season, especially island-hopping and helmet diving.
- Bring some patience, especially if tours are assigned on Bulabog Beach, as low tides occur more often and cause delays, not to mention long queues.
- Wear comfortable clothing, wear (and bring) sunblock if sunny or umbrellas if rainy.
- For non-swimmers, do not be afraid of the water because life jackets are provided.
- Booking island activities can be done through hotel partners and their assigned activity coordinators, travel and tour agencies, or through licensed coordinators who can be found on White Beach.
- For something different, try some of the more underrated but adventurous activities like kiteboarding, diving and free diving.

Whether one seeks adventure, relaxation, or cultural immersion, Boracay has it all. Take advantage of the diverse range of activities available and create unforgettable memories in this tropical paradise.

*Photos courtesy of My Boracay Guide*

HEALTH & WELLNESS

# HOW TO GET RID OF ANXIETY?

By Shiela Jimenez

**S**o, you now meditate to drain away your anxieties instead of self-distracting through comfort food or video games. Good for you. But let's face it: even meditation can be just another form of temporary escape if we don't fix the underlying cause of our anxiety. In order to do that, mental health experts say the next step is something that sounds counterintuitive. Instead of denying, avoiding, ignoring or trying to control the discomfort, we should welcome it with open arms.

**Proactive Therapy**

The strategy is part of an intervention called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) which was developed by American clinical psychologist Steven C. Hayes in the 1980s. Designed to help individuals understand that emotional discomfort is just part and parcel of being human, ACT is used in the treatment of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, workplace stress, chronic pain and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

For Hayes, the key is to understand that feeling bad isn't bad at all. Negative emotions per se are not problems that need to be fixed or avoided but are just part of the range of emotions that we all experience for a whole life. We cannot cherry pick what to feel. When someone crosses us, we feel angry. When we lose a loved one, we feel sad and lonely. When there is a deadly virus on the loose, we feel anxious. When faced with a difficult task, we feel intimidated. There is nothing wrong with all of that. Negative emotions are normal reactions that should be acknowledged, not avoided nor denied. In other words, we have to "get comfortable in being uncomfortable" for only then can we figure out what to do about the underlying cause and be able to move on with life.

**Paradigm Shift**

For sure, it's a tough ask. No one wants to feel sad, scared, lonely, anxious, unappreciated, angry, jealous, disappointed, exasperated, intimidated or bored. We normally try to get away from such feelings as far as we can. Our brains are wired to avoid pain and hardship and to stay well within the confines of our comfort zones. Accepting life's many difficulties, big and small, real or exaggerated (as they often turn out to be) and making room for discomfort in our lives is the healthier way to go. The more willing we are to experience difficult or painful thoughts and feelings, the less power they have over us. By merely accepting that, "it is what it is," our mind instantly undergoes an almost magical transformation. It ceases to see things as a threat, and when it does, we not only defang the fear, pain or anxiety hounding us, but also give our mind the space it needs to come up with solutions or changes that are needed to resolve the problem.

**All In**

Accepting what we find naturally aversive takes a veritable leap of faith. It requires complete and unconditional commitment, as half-measures will not work. If we are anxious about attending a zoom meeting, for instance, we can't tell ourselves that it's okay as long as we stay in the background. The anxiety will still be around as we now wonder when somebody will notice us being so quiet. Be it the fear of trying something new, the ambivalence of meeting someone for the first time, the intimidation of an extremely difficult and important task, or just the tedium of going to work, the only way to dissipate such emotions is to jump right in and immerse ourselves. When we make space for bad as well as good experiences, in time, we will be able to welcome any hardship that life throws at us and learn from them what we can.

**Dos And Don'ts**

First, mindset. It is not a matter of tolerating or trying to endure anxiety, but of welcoming it with open arms. Putting on a brave face and enduring anxiety might seem heroic, but it doesn't solve anything. Neither does tolerance of anxiety work. When we tolerate something, it means we are still seeing it as an enemy and should be avoided or escaped from the first chance we get. Try telling someone you love that you tolerate them and see what happens. Acceptance means embracing difficulties like a loved one with all of their imperfections, come hell or high water. Only with such a mindset will we have power over our emotions and not the other way around.

Second is commitment. We have to be all in, we either jump off the cliff or we don't. We cannot put up conditions or say we'll try and see how it feels first. If we tell ourselves that we'll "try," we give ourselves an out or a prefabricated excuse. If we do so, we might as well be setting ourselves up to fail.

**Beyond Positive Thinking**

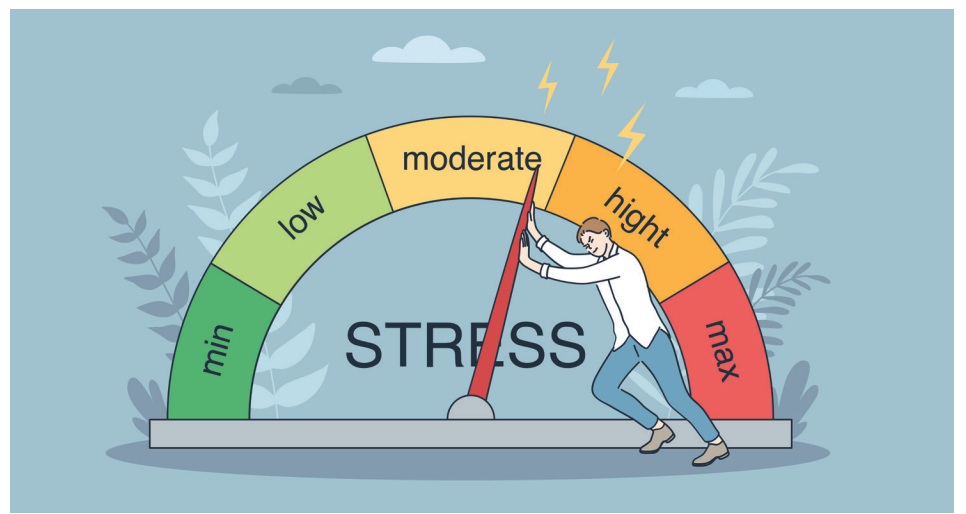
Telling ourselves "We can do it" or such other affirmation statements can serve as a first step, but making the leap is an entirely different matter. It is not about convincing ourselves that we are the master of our fears or anxieties, but about having the willingness to experience distress or discomfort for what they are and whatever comes next

wholeheartedly. It is not about conquering our fears, but of living life fully in spite of them.

Trying to control anxiety through positive thinking or by whatever means still implies that what we feel is alien or abnormal and that whatever the task is at hand should not be done in the first place. We must recognize that pain and hardship are just a part of life, and therein lies the difference. There are also some who might think that mindfulness can be used to control anxiety. While meditation and other mindfulness practices do lower stress levels, relief is only temporary and doesn't solve anything.

**Execute, Execute, Execute**

We all experience varying degrees of anxiety due to one thing or another because let's face it: Life isn't exactly easy. Getting a job promotion is not easy, nor is nurturing a relationship, raising our kids, mastering a sport, battling a disease, living through a pandemic or losing a loved one. There is much joy in life, but there will always be suffering attached—it's just the way it is. The key is to change the narrative in our mind around the challenges that we face in life—that difficulty is not a paralyzing event but rather a challenge or opportunity for growth. As one of my friends who suffered for years said, "Nothing great in this world comes without a little bit of adversity. Nothing amazing happens inside our comfort zone." Take care of yourselves and enjoy life. 🌱





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## ISLAND LIFE

# Learn the Art of Kung Fu at Boracay Dojo

By Mark Cabrera

Photos courtesy of Boracay Dojo

I have been a fan of Jackie Chan and his movies since I was a child. I'm amazed by the precision of his stunts and his martial arts skills. He could transform ordinary objects around him into deadly weapons. When I was young, I would imitate the training exercises shown in his Kung Fu films. I would even act out movie fight scenes with my young playmates.

Now, my kids have the opportunity to study and train in Kung Fu through a formal Kung Fu class. Enter the Dragon ... I meant Boracay Dojo!

Boracay Dojo offers Kung Fu classes for kids, teens and adults. I heard about Boracay Dojo when Roanna invited me and my boys to try out the Kung Fu classes. Wanting to learn more about their project, I visited their website and this is what I learned:

**Boracay Dojo** is a passion project of husband and wife, RedG and Roanna

Jamir, current residents of Boracay Island. Roanna, having been a practitioner of Shaolin Hung Fut Kung Fu herself since 2009, has always dreamed of sharing her love for martial arts with those who will find the techniques and practices beneficial for them as well.

As founders of Boracay Dojo, the couple's mission is to not only help preserve the ancient art form of Shaolin Hung Fut (particularly from the generation that has grown in decades from the Philippines), but to also share the craft.

RedG and Joanna believe that Kung Fu with its multidimensional aspect is a great art form with elements that can be applied to a variety of health and fitness endeavors and goals, from basic stretching to breathing exercises similar to Tai Chi and the more in-depth and advanced learning methods of traditional Shaolin Kung Fu that originated from the Shaolin monks centuries ago.

rom basic stretching to breathing exercises similar to Tai Chi and the more in-depth and advanced learning methods of traditional Shaolin Kung Fu that originated from the Shaolin monks centuries ago.

## What is Hung Fut?

Hung Fut is a hybrid system of Kung Fu with numerous styles and forms incorporating animal movements as a fighting style and form of exercise. Most importantly, like other styles of Kung Fu, Hung Fut is also a martial art that focuses on discipline, patience and humility.

Unlike contact sports focusing on combat skills that attack the opponent, Hung Fut's teaching is primarily targeting self-defense techniques and body conditioning and internal and external strength exercises. In Hung Fut, the only opponent is the weaker and less healthy version of yourself prior to beginning your Hung Fut Kung Fu journey. This just reminded me of the movie "Kung Fu Panda."

## Boracay Dojo Instructor Sifu Ronald

Just like the Kung Fu movies I watched, Boracay Dojo also has its resident Kung Fu Master. Meet Sifu Ronald.

Resident instructor Sifu Ronald is a certified instructor of Shaolin Hung Fut Kung Fu Association Philippines (SHFKAP), under the guidance of Grandmaster Chua Kai Soon. He has been practicing Hung Fut since 1997 and has participated in various national and



Boracay Dojo's RedG and Roanna with their children, Zuli and Rocket.



Sifu Ronald is seen grabbing 3 kilo sand bags to develop Tiger Claw and Iron Fist.

international competitions. He has also trained under Master Ho Wai Lun, the sixth generation successor of Hung Fut lineage.

Sifu Ronald is passionate about sharing his knowledge and skills with anyone who is interested in learning Hung Fut. He is patient, friendly and encouraging to his students, regardless of their age or level. He believes that Hung Fut can help anyone improve their physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

## Kung Fu Classes

Kung Fu classes are available for beginners, intermediate and advanced levels, as well as for kids and adults. You will learn the basics of Hung Fut, such as stances, punches, kicks, blocks and forms. You will also learn how to use traditional weapons such as staffs, swords, spears and fans. You will enjoy the benefits of improved flexibility, balance, coordination, endurance and strength.

Hung Fut is more than just a martial art. It is a way of life that can enrich your mind, body and spirit. It can also help you connect with other like-minded people who share your passion for Kung Fu.

I personally like Kung Fu among the other martial arts I have tried. I like the discipline, the physical exercise and the philosophy Kung Fu teaches as a form of martial arts. My boys have been training under Sifu Ronald for a while now. Somehow, I feel safe walking in the dark when I'm with my boys now. Come try it out for yourself now!



Sifu Ronald teaching the kids proper footwork with the helps of rings and cups

Boracay Dojo is located at the Hidden Dragon House in Angol, Barangay Manocmanoc, Boracay Island.

## Class Schedules:

For Teens: Mondays and Fridays at 3 p.m.

For Kids: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 4:30 p.m.

For Adults: Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m. On Tuesdays, there are weapons exercises at 3 p.m. followed by Qigong Flow sessions at 5 p.m.

Bring water, a towel, optional gloves and wraps. It is recommended to wear comfortable or gym clothes during the Kung Fu sessions. Ask about bulk class rates to get a huge discount.

Find them on Facebook and Instagram @BoracayDojo. 🌿



Kids being taught to meditate and practice stillness



My sons, the Cabrera boys learning power training methods to develop Iron Fist and Tiger Claw

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PEOPLE OF BORACAY

# From Boardroom to Classroom to Burger Joint: A Couple's Boracay Journey

By Mark Cabrera

If you are looking for a delicious and satisfying burger in Boracay, you should definitely check out Back Beach Burgers. This restaurant is located three flights up, right in front of the most famous landmark of Boracay Island known as "Willy's Rock," along White Beach, Station 1.

Back Beach Burgers has only been serving their mouth-watering burgers since December 20, 2022, and yet they have already gained a loyal following of locals and tourists alike.

*Boracay Sun News* gets to know the awesome twosome behind the beachfront burger joint and finds out the secret to their success.

### Their Story

Back Beach Burgers was conceived during the pandemic by a lovely couple, Jaz Mara and Winney Dittrich, both teachers of the Boracay European International School (BEIS) at the time. Jaz was a homeroom teacher in BEIS for six years and Winney was a Physical Education teacher for seven years before they hung up their teaching hats and focused on Back Beach Burgers.

Before embarking on their teaching careers, Jaz was in the advertising industry and Winney worked in the industrial machinery industry in Germany. Jaz also taught ballet while Winney was organizing sports activities and was active in football and boxing. And like everyone else who set foot on the island, the couple fell in love with Boracay and left their corporate lives behind.

### The Burger Journey

In the beginning, the couple would cook burgers for their friends and family in their outdoor kitchen in Bulabog "Back Beach" where they used to live, thus the name "Back Beach Burger" for what was just a burger project back then. When they moved to their current spot on White Beach (or front beach), they decided to keep the name since so many people already knew the name.

The couple would eventually sell the burgers to the Boracay community on weekends since they were both still teaching in BEIS. Winney was the one who



The Big Boy Burger with jalapeños for the win!.

would experiment with the recipe and cooking procedures while Jaz would be in charge of delivery. They used to sell only 20 burgers a day and delivery was done on a bicycle. When orders started coming in from around the island—mostly online through Instagram and private Facebook groups like Boracay Eats Directory among others. Jaz had to take a two-day German-style motorbike driving crash course from Winney because she would be delivering the burgers herself using their motorbike.

In one of the several pop-up events that they participated in, a Korean customer loved their burgers so much that he offered the couple their first stall at the Zetro Adventures Amusement Park and Food Hub. This wonderful opportunity did not only bring blessings but challenges as well. Jaz and Winney set up and operated the stall all by themselves, and this being their very first venture in the restaurant industry, was a baptism in fire. They would go to the market early in the morning to buy fresh ingredients, prepare the sauces, and run the shop all day.

Jaz and Winney excitedly shared how they survived the many obstacles that came along their burger joint journey. They eventually hired a delivery guy but there was a time that their delivery motorbike broke down so they had to improvise.

And then the onion crisis hit, teaching them a tough lesson since onions were a key ingredient in their burger recipes. Thankfully, a loyal German customer-turned-friend surprised them with a bag of onions from his three-day trip to Carabao Island. It was the last place to still have

onions at that time.

They also recalled cooking in the dark with candles and cellphone lights because of the island's all-day brownout. They also shared about their ordeals of running out of gas and other key ingredients in the middle of serving orders.

Eventually, they were able to learn restaurant management and survived the challenges while trying to keep a smile on their faces.

Fast forward to the current Back Beach Burger shop in Station 1. They are currently taking a master class in putting up a restaurant from the university of life! The couple practically built the restaurant by themselves—no contractors, architects or interior designers were involved. Jaz designed the dining area similar to her previous classrooms. She made sure that the seating arrangements could accommodate all kinds of customers: kids, teens, adults, and even senior citizens. The other shop features like the minibar were strategically placed within the limited space. The shop can conveniently accommodate 35 diners but they've been able to serve 50 intimately-seated guests. Aside from being the purchaser and handyman during the shop's construction, Winney expanded the menu by offering a variety of sandwiches, drinks and side dishes.

### The Menu

Back Beach Burgers offers a variety of burgers to suit every taste and preference.

You can choose from their classic burgers, such as the "Classic A" with cheddar cheese, fresh vegetables, caramelized onions and a tangy burger sauce, or the "Bacon Mushroom Melt" with bacon strips, glazed onions and a cheesy mushroom sauce.

If you are feeling adventurous, you can try their signature burgers, such as the "Smash Burger" with smashed patties, double cheddar cheese, pickles, tomatoes and a slightly spiced sauce. For chicken lovers, try the "Glazed Chicken Burger" with crispy chicken breast fillet glazed in either Korean or buffalo sauce, coleslaw and tomatoes. They also have vegetarian burgers, such as the "Veggie Cream Cheese Jalapeno." The patty is made with fresh veggies, and topped with glazed onions, pickled jalapenos and garlic cream cheese sauce. All their burgers are made with fresh and quality ingredients.

You can also customize your burger by ordering add-ons such as bacon strips, beef patty, jalapeno, cheddar cheese, onions, and fries on the side. To wash it all down, you can choose from their selection of drinks, such as sodas, juices, beers or shakes. Cocktails like the Mango Caipiroska and Calamansi Margarita are the perfect choice for sunset lounging.

Back Beach Burgers is not only a great place to enjoy a tasty burger, but also a great place to relax and enjoy the view. Thanks to Jaz, the restaurant now has simple but cozy decor, with wooden tables and chairs, colorful cushions and wonderful light fixtures. You can sit at the balcony table, overlooking the sunset and ocean views. They now have trained staff that are friendly and attentive, and who will surely make you feel welcome and comfortable.

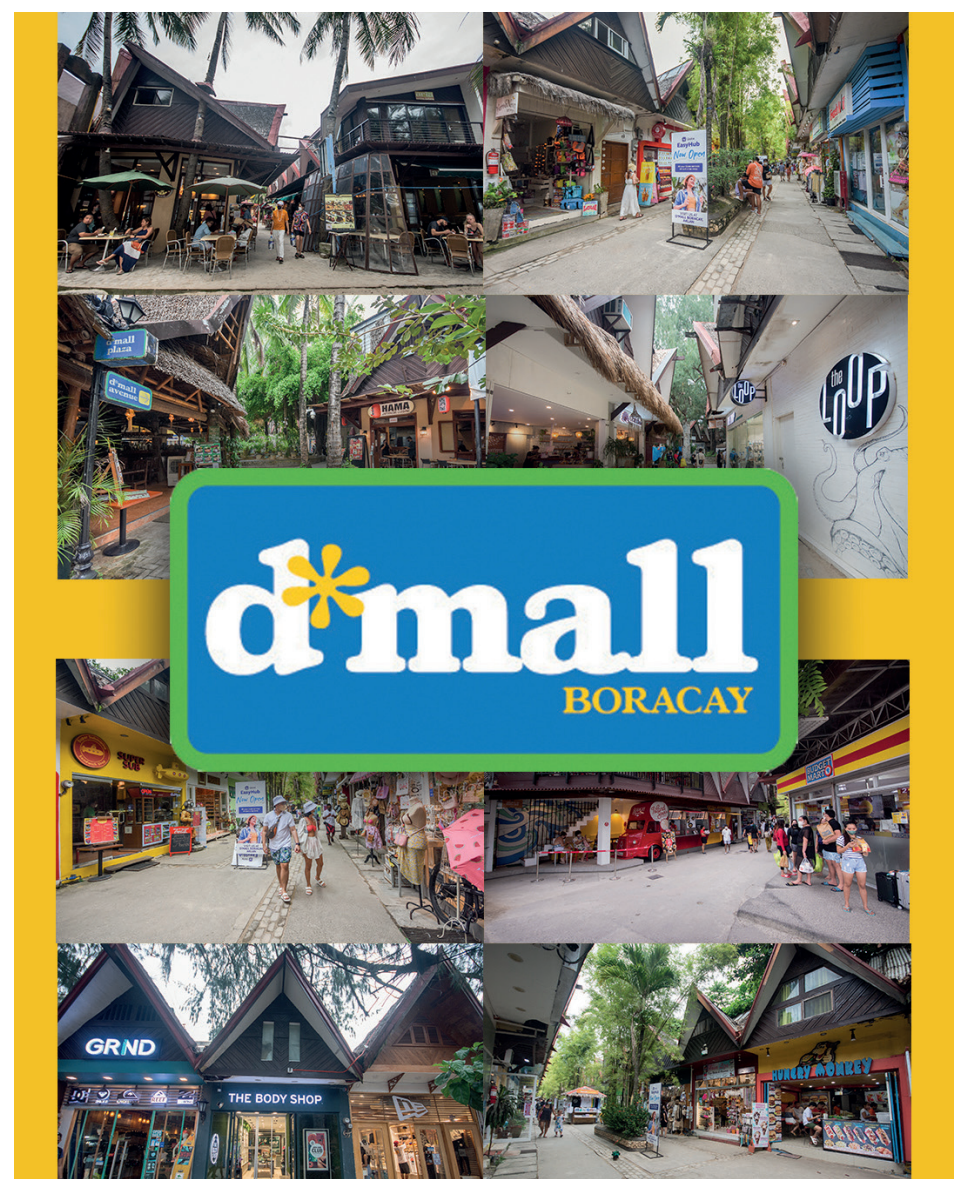
Back Beach Burgers is open from 12 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. daily. You can also order online for delivery or takeout. Some arriving guests have tried ordering in advance from work-from-home community channels

even before they stepped foot on the island. Looking for a burger fix? Give Back Beach Burgers a try!

Find them on Facebook and Instagram: @backbeachburgers 🌿



Awesome twosome Jaz and Winney



## ISLAND LIFE

# Boracay for Newbies

## Part 3: Island Skincare Essentials

By Abigail Lei



**A**fter visiting various beach destinations, and getting tired of city life, I finally settled here in Boracay, for the second time, and this time, for longer. And just because I thought I was already acquainted with the island life doesn't mean I didn't get a few surprises when I moved back. So let me help you out with essentials you must have, or at least consider investing in, should you decide to have a taste of beach living.

For this issue, I'd like to share four of my favorite island skincare essentials, as well as the things I do to keep myself sane amidst the demands of work and socials.

First, sunscreen, of course. There's a broad range of options for everyone, and it might take a few trial and error before you find the one sunscreen for you. Consider your lifestyle, skin type, even how often you get into the water, or sweat up, and your non-negotiable requirements. For example, collagen or vitamin E. Most times, we may need two kinds of sunscreen, depending on what we are tackling for the day. Are you simply lounging by the shore, or are you off to have a frisbee or kite session?

A personal favorite is one that is also a tinted moisturizer, but non-greasy at the same time. Take your time before you tie the knot with your perfect match, or exchange reviews with your friends about brands they've tried. This will save you time better spent on beach-bumming. And switching brands is always a yes.

A mosquito or insect repellent is an absolute must. I have a skin type or scent (a blood type, more correctly) that mosquitoes almost everywhere, and at any time, find more irresistible than others, so I always carry a bottle in my purse. My go-to item is Human Nature's Skin

Shield because it's Deet-free, and also the citronella smells amazing and helps me to relax. This isn't an endorsement, FYI, but it also works against sand mites (at least for me) when I go sunbathing or just reveling in the sunset while I am sprawled on the shore. If you're bringing along kids, patches work great but do not provide full coverage. You're better off with bug repellent lotions that are skin-friendly for the tots. And as opposed to the mosquito coil, sandalwood incense sticks are so cheap and more human- and pet-friendly.

Always remember, it's a good tan before nine, but after 10 it's "Hello skin cancer." After a sunbathing session for your dose of natural vitamin D, it's great to have an after-sun lotion, stick or gel, handy. Even with sunscreen on, your skin has been under brutal sun rays, and the after-sun relief is a "hallelujah" to your skin. Aloe vera gel works amazingly, and a local brand on the island is Lawiswis (which I have yet to find again!) which boasts of a combination of several natural soothing ingredients (can't give away trade secrets!). An alternative is a combination of cucumber and aloe-infused in water in a spray bottle, to spritz yourself whenever you require it.

Last on my skincare list is body oil, which I prefer over lotion. Moisturize as many times as you need, to keep your skin smooth and supple against the salty, humid air that comes with island living. Simply massage onto every inch, especially your feet, knees, elbows, and wherever needs some loving. Be generous to your skin!

And lastly: Hydrate! Always bring a water bottle, because having a tangible reminder works wonders for achieving your daily intake goals. And it also serves as your conscience to have it refilled instead of buying sugary drinks. More health, less cost, see? And stock up on foods that are naturally beneficial to the

skin, like fatty fish, avocado, tomatoes, broccoli, dark chocolate, green tea, etc.

Remember, you are what you eat.

The transition from city to island life comes with the price of having little or no friends or family you can absolutely trust or rely on in the beginning. The challenge is greater, especially when you are experiencing down days, when you just can't seem to function or think, or when you're sick or simply exhausted.

We all have different ways to love and care for ourselves, and I'm sharing mine, as we can learn from one another, I believe. When I'm all stressed out and can no longer focus on my tasks, the topmost thing I do is walk all the way to Angol Beach, undisputedly my favorite spot on the entire island.

It could be the release of happy hormones that come with exercise, the music I listen to on my way there, or just

the sight of the ocean (it is believed that we humans actually need to see a body of water every day to calm our nerves), or the reset I get when I unplug and leave behind the to-do's for a little while, but it's just such a basic and pure thing to do that costs nothing (well, not unless I stop for a meal or drink, that is!).

Now, others may find that sports or any physical activity is the best way for them to recharge and get ready for more work, or simply to have a mini-break. Or perhaps what you need is to challenge yourself by learning a new hobby, one you never thought you would or could do (like a workout session at King Fisher, a Kung Fu lesson with Boracay Dojo, or a Scuba diving experience), be it merely a diversion to a tired, occupied mind. This may also mean you just might need a good boost of circulation before resuming your daily routine. Your body and mind will surely thank you for it when you do.

Some, if not all, really would need a change of scenery. Or a change of crowd. The world can get so noisy sometimes, and it may come from the people we surround ourselves with as we can get overwhelmed with differences in beliefs, personalities, or standards. If you find yourself in this predicament, it may be wise to remove yourself, albeit quietly and gracefully for a little time, or even permanently. And remember, you are in no way obliged to explain your side. You do you. What's best for you is always the priority, even when it means you get a smaller, but more quality, circle. This will also show you who really are "your people"—those who genuinely celebrate you and with you, and those who remain even in the storms.

Lastly, I date myself almost every week. It could be as simple as dinner out, a movie, a Netflix marathon, or a photo-walk session. Never forget that we cannot pour from an empty cup, so love and look after yourself, so you can radiate and pass on the kindness you have for yourself to others.

When it all gets too much, remember there is a helpline you can always call. And you have friends who might simply be waiting for you to reach out or open up. There is no shame in going through difficult times and not being able to handle them by yourself. Help others help you.

I've come from a heavy place recently and I'm more than grateful for the island life that serves as my free therapy, and my "bestest" friends who never fail to understand me, even in my silence, and becoming my third leg whenever I lose one of my two, and doing so while highly respecting my privacy. They, in turn, of course, have earned my respect, too! Salamat!

Island life has its ups and downs, for sure, but still, no man is an island, even when we have been raised and have adapted to become very independent and self-reliant. 🌿



ISLAND NEWS

# Mayor Bautista Awaits Implementation of Proposed Boracay Bridge

By Jun N. Aguirre

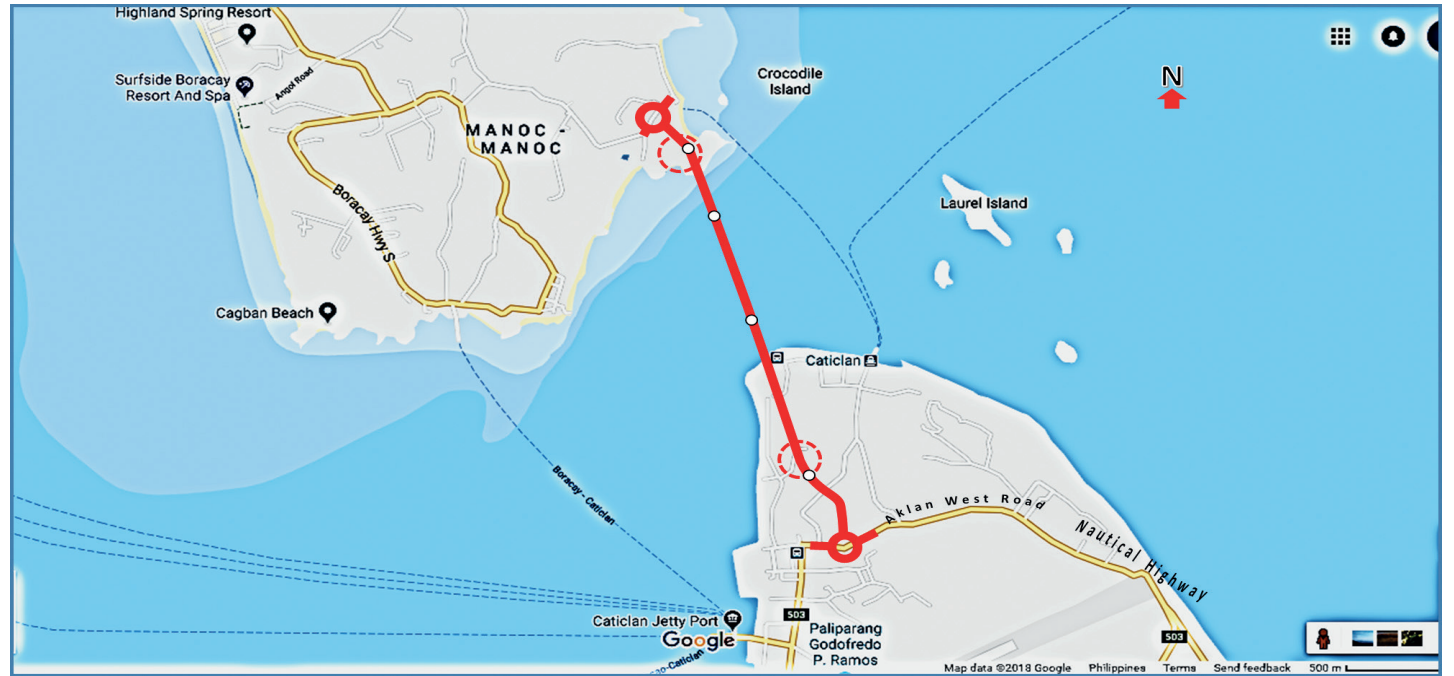
**M**alay Mayor Floribar Bautista said he is looking forward to the construction of the controversial Boracay Bridge project.

This developed after the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) announced that a super typhoon with the international name Betty has entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) albeit it has no direct effect on the resort island.

“From what I know, the bridge project has already gained approval from the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA). As to its commencement, I do not have any knowledge for now. But I hope it will push through,” Bautista told the Boracay Sun News in an exclusive interview.

Sometime in 2018, San Miguel Corporation (SMC) offered an unsolicited proposal to build the bridge connecting the mainland of Malay to Boracay Island. SMC initially allocated PhP5.5 billion for its construction.

“My main concern is that every time we are hit by a major typhoon, many tourists are stranded both in Caticlan and Boracay because the Philippine Coast Guard has to suspend boat operations going to and from Boracay. If the bridge materializes, the boat stranding will not



SMC's proposed Boracay Bridge

(Courtesy of the DPWH)

be a problem anymore,” the Mayor adds.

According to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the bridge is a 1.2 kilometers-limited infrastructure project. The project reportedly aims to provide a public transport access system, carriage of power, telecommunication, water supply, and sewer utility lines including transport of solid waste and cargo-authorized trucks.

The DPWH also claimed that among its benefits were to manage the

environmental capacity of Boracay, to open new all-weather access to the public, and free-up Boracay from pressures due to overcrowding and overuse of existing facilities, which ultimately produces adverse environmental impact.

Already, several environmental groups have been vocal in opposing the said project.

“While the construction of the bridge from the mainland to Boracay Island could bring potential benefits, it

is important to consider and mitigate the potential environmental and social impacts of the project through planning with foresight and consultation with all stakeholders. A comprehensive environmental impact assessment and cost-benefit analysis must be conducted before proceeding with the construction,” said Ritchel Casidsid of the Aklan Trekkers, an Aklan mountaineering group that advocates environmental sustainability. 🌿

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## HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS

Your guide to thriving, not just surviving!

*Disclaimer: This article is for general informational purposes only. It is best to consult with your healthcare professional for personalized care and treatment.*

# Surviving Flu Season

## A simple guide to preventing and managing the common flu

By Kate Ng-Larrauri, MD

**A**s we enter the Habagat or the southwest monsoon season which is characterized by strong and gusty winds and pockets of rain, it is safe to say that we are in the thick of “flu season.” These changes in the weather patterns on the island can trigger the onset of the common flu.

Here’s what you need to know in order to protect yourself and your household,

some prevention tips, and the immediate steps to take.

It would be wise to remember what Benjamin Franklin said nearly 300 years ago: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Although he was referring to house fire prevention, this saying is certainly applicable to disease prevention.

### Influenza a.k.a. The Common Flu

The influenza virus, also known as the common flu, is a viral infection that affects the respiratory system (nose, throat, lungs). It can cause mild symptoms such as fever, cough, sore

throat, and muscle aches; to severe symptoms such as tachypnea (fast breathing), cyanosis (**bluish, grayish, or purplish discoloration of the skin, lips, or nails**), and **persistent vomiting or loose stools**.

These symptoms usually manifest acutely and can last for a few days to two weeks. However, it varies on a case-to-case basis. Other symptoms also include runny or stuffy nose, nasal congestion and headache.

The usual flu can be mild or severe, depending on the age and health of the person infected. These groups are known to be at higher risk: 1) children younger than two years, being vulnerable to more complications such as ear infections, pneumonia, and sepsis; 2) pregnant; 3) adults over age 65 who are immunocompromised. Flu can also worsen chronic conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease.

### How do we catch it?

The common flu is caused by three types of influenza viruses: A, B and C, which can explain the seasonality and severity, as well as high recurrence rates. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Nelson’s Textbook of Pediatrics, on average, it is reported that children and adults alike experience the flu six to eight times annually.

The common flu is spread through respiratory droplets that are released when an infected person coughs or sneezes; subsequently, it can be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching one’s eyes, nose, or mouth. Several external factors are also contributory to acquiring the flu like frequent changes in the environment, recent travel history, fatigue, or exhaustion



that renders the immune system low and susceptible to this virus.

### Prevention and Treatment

Due to the commonality of the virus, it is easily preventable by frequent washing of hands, avoiding contact with sick people and covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and use of (at least) 60 percent isopropyl alcohol (when hand washing is not available).

### Get vaccinated!

Getting the yearly influenza vaccine, though not 100 percent effective, is the best way to lower one’s risk of acquiring it or developing serious complications and hospitalizations. It is consistently being improved to cover the newer strains of Influenza and usually takes up to two weeks to build immunity after the shot. However, you can benefit from the vaccine even if you don’t get it until after the flu season starts. Overall, getting the shot is safe and effective.

Although not routinely recommended, the common flu can be treated with antiviral drugs that can shorten the duration and severity of the illness if taken within 48 hours of symptom onset. Other treatments include rest, an increase in oral fluid intake, and over-the-counter medications to relieve symptoms. Most people recover from the common flu within a week or two, but some people may develop complications that require medical attention.

### Monitoring

Children with flu should stay home from school and refrain from strenuous activities until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications.

Parents should be aware of the signs and symptoms of the flu and seek medical attention if their child has trouble breathing, has persistent high-grade fever (38-40 degrees Celsius), has chest pain, and decrease in the frequency of urination.

In the adults, disease duration may be shorter as compared to pediatrics, owing to the maturity of the innate system of the former. Supportive management is usually key to faster recovery, with adequate intake of nutrient-dense food (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nonfat and low-fat dairy, fish and seafood, unprocessed food, nuts and legumes).

Remember, a healthy gut and a healthy mind go hand in hand! 🌱



Dr. Kate with one of her waist-tall patients, tells Boracay Sun News: “Putting a smile back on their little faces is what drives me every single day.”





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PHOTO OF THE MONTH

We Loved Your Post! Here Is This Month's Top Choice:



Photo by Tinton Larrauri @tintonlarrauri

**B**ORACAY ISLAND took the second spot among "The 50 Most Instagrammable places in the World 2022," according to global travel website Big 7 Travel's annual survey.

"With so many options to choose from, it can be tough to decide where to go and what to share on Instagram and TikTok. That's why we've compiled a list of the 50 most Instagrammable places in the world for you to visit in 2023. These destinations offer an abundance of opportunities for capturing stunning photographs and

videos that are sure to impress your followers and inspire your next adventure." (www.enjoytravel.com) Ranking 39th this year, according to the travel website, "The Philippines cannot be left off this list. The island of Boracay has a total of 804,525,339 hashtags on Instagram and TikTok. The island is known for its beautiful beaches and crystal-clear waters." To be featured, tag us @BORACAYSUNNEWS #BORACAYSUNNEWS #BORACAY #BORACAYISLAND

BOOK REVIEWS

Finally, the perfect leisure holiday destination where you can read that book!

Summer Reading

By Pauline R.

**S**ummer is season filled with social events, live concerts, gatherings and nights out. It is also synonymous with longer days, lazing around on the beach, or sitting at a cafe with a cold drink to beat the unrelenting Boracay heat. And a book is always one of the best items you can carry around in your bag, on your phone, or on your e-book while unwinding with some well-deserved alone time or while waiting to meet up with friends. Here are three books that are easy to read and to put down for later. 🌿

"Almond" by Sohn Won-Pyung

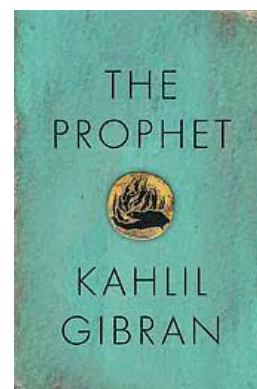
**A**lmond is a novel about a teenage boy, Yunjae, who was diagnosed with alexithymia, a condition involving the inability to express or identify one's emotions. The protagonist's amygdala, an almond-shaped structure in the brain responsible for triggering the "fight or flight" response is underdeveloped, making it hard for him to be understood and find his place in the world. The short chapters, told through his eyes, make it an easy book to comprehend while the reader discovers what it is like to go through life for someone who needs to study and interpret 🌿

everything, rather than live. Relationships and fate are at the center of this interesting and engaging book.



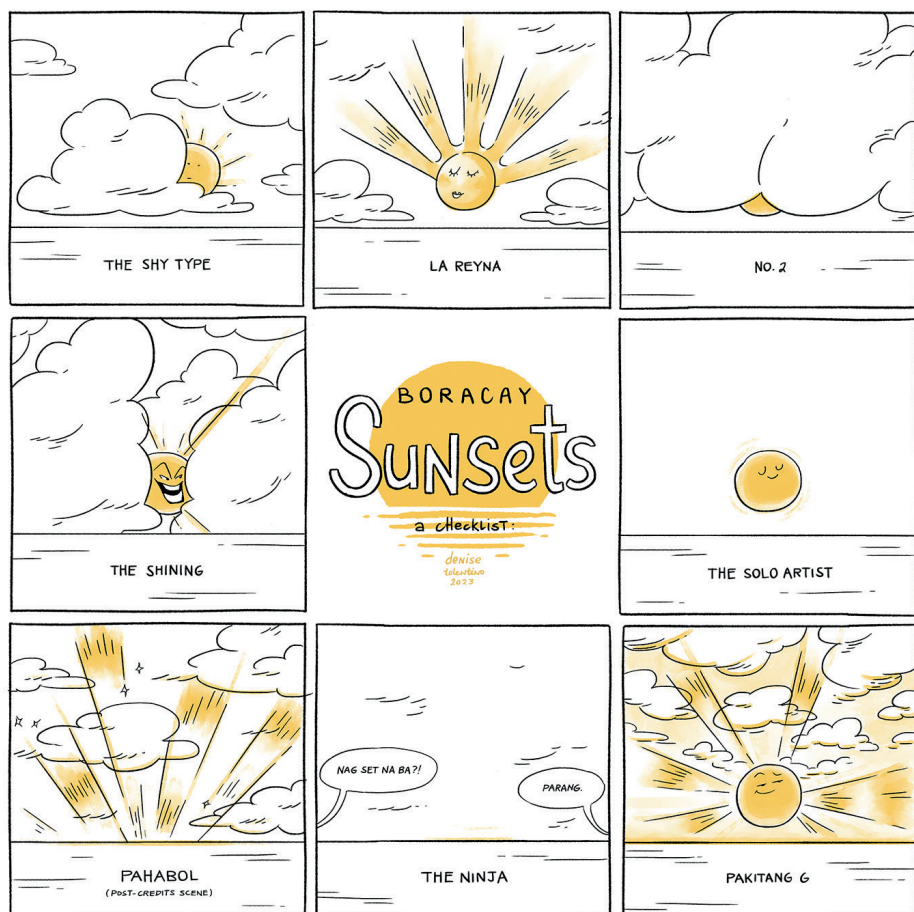
"The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran

**I**f you are looking for inspiration and life lessons, *The Prophet* is one of those classics that you would want to have in your library. Written by Lebanese author and poet Kahlil Gibran, the book consists of 26 prose poetry fables, that each focuses on a different subject. Love, giving, children, pain, teaching, friendship—there is something for everyone in this wonderful literary masterpiece that became one of the most translated books in history. You can read one chapter of your choice and put it down for later when you need it. A must-have book to cherish, and to share with your loved ones! 🌿



Lightening-up the day with a perky dose of humor

By Denise Tolentino



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ISLAND EVENTS

# Cosmopolitan Summer Party

Photos by Jack Jarilla

**B**oracay Sun News joined the girly fun at the 2023 Cosmopolitan Summer Party last May 20, at Hola Chula by Alegria along the White Beach pathway, Station 2. The all-day affair was all about sharing the renowned global brand's commitment to empowering Filipinas to live their best fun, fearless, and forward lives.

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Cosmo Girls enjoyed "supersized" fun activities and played exciting games at the booths, with special surprises for the guests including awesome summer freebies, courtesy in part, of their co-presenter Dove and major sponsors POND's, Vaseline, and Skin by BYS. But the fun didn't stop there! The after-party ensued from 9 p.m. onwards, with early birds getting the VIP treatment. The first 15 guests to arrive enjoyed VIP access to the event.

If you're feeling FOMO, here's everything that went down at the 2023 Cosmopolitan Summer Party! 🌴



This Cosmo girl came prepared with a cute hat to protect her scalp from the sun and guests also got a chance to win an exclusive drink from Dove.



Cosmo Girls struck a pose at the Cosmo Booth and captured Instagrammable moments by the Cosmo Paraw.



Not to be missed were the influencers, models and content creators in full force at the after-party!



It looks like everyone had a fun & fearless time under the sun!



The Cosmo paraw



The floor was \*lit\* as everyone took a moment to dance their hearts out to the music of Boracay's DJ Ace.



Isn't the Pineapple Serum from the Skin by BYS' Tropical Line too cute for words?



The Instagrammable crystal kayak was a popular photo prop for event attendees.

This year's Cosmo Summer Party was definitely bigger (and better) than ever!

Visit [www.cosmo.ph](http://www.cosmo.ph) and follow them on your favorite social media platforms for more: @cosmopolitan\_philippines on Instagram, @cosmopolitanph on TikTok, @Cosmopolitan.ph on Facebook, and @cosmo\_ph on Twitter. 🌴

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

Your guide to thriving, not just surviving!

*Disclaimer: This article is for general informational purposes only. It is best to consult with your healthcare professional for personalized care and treatment.*

# Identifying Jellyfish Stings and First Aid Treatment

By Dr. Maria Cristina Teotico

**Know the Signs and Take Action to Ease the Sting**

Jellyfish stings can be an unwelcome surprise during a fun day at the beach. Understanding the telltale signs of a jellyfish sting and knowing how to administer initial first aid treatment can help alleviate discomfort and prevent further complications.

In this brief guide, we will discuss the common signs of a jellyfish sting and provide recommended first aid steps to take before seeking medical attention.

**Identifying a Jellyfish Sting**

- **Immediate pain:** A jellyfish sting typically causes immediate pain upon contact with the skin. The intensity of the pain can vary depending on the species of jellyfish, the area affected and an individual's sensitivity.
- **Skin redness and swelling:** The affected area may become red, swollen and irritated. There may also be a visible rash or raised welts in some cases.
- **Itching and burning sensation:** Itching and a burning sensation may accompany the sting. Depending on the person and the jellyfish species, these sensations can range from mild to severe.
- **Raised, linear tentacle marks:** Many jellyfish species have long, thin tentacles that leave visible marks on the skin. These marks often appear as a pattern of red, raised and sometimes wavy lines.

**First Aid Treatment for Jellyfish Stings**

- **Rinse with seawater.** Immediately after being stung, rinse the affected area with seawater. Avoid using freshwater, as it can worsen the sting by releasing more venom from the jellyfish.
- **Remove tentacles.** Carefully remove any tentacles that may be present on the skin. Use a pair of tweezers or wear gloves to prevent further stings. Do not use your bare hands.
- **Vinegar application.** Applying vinegar to the affected area can help neutralize the venom and alleviate pain. Soak a clean cloth or gauze pad in vinegar and

gently dab it onto the sting for about 30 seconds.

- **Hot water soak.** If vinegar is unavailable, soaking the affected area in hot water (not scalding) for 20 to 45 minutes can also provide relief. The water should be around 45-50°C (113-122°F).

**When to Seek Medical Attention**

While most jellyfish stings can be treated with first aid measures, it is crucial to seek medical attention in the following situations:

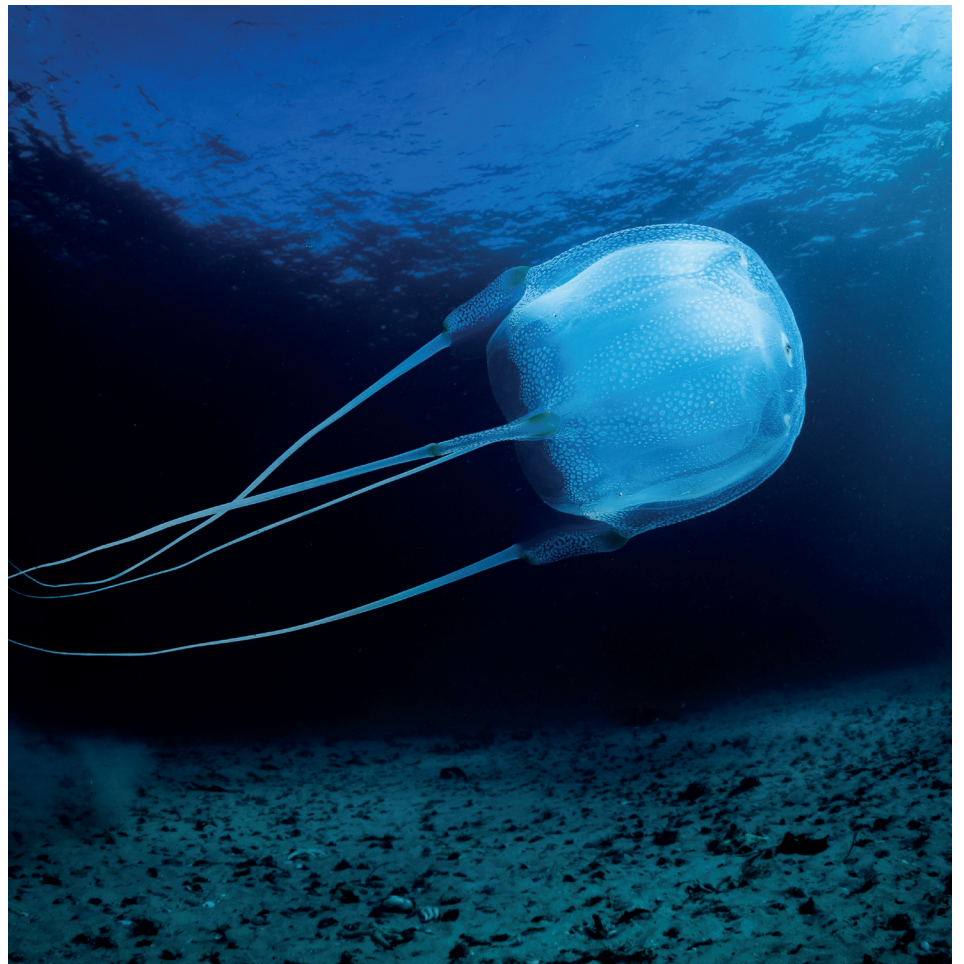
- **Severe allergic reactions:** If you experience difficulty breathing, chest pain, dizziness, or severe swelling beyond the affected area, seek immediate medical help.
- **Box Jellyfish sting:** Box jellyfish stings can be life-threatening. If stung by a box jellyfish, call emergency services immediately and carefully follow their instructions.
- **Sting by unknown or dangerous species:** If you are unsure about the jellyfish species that stung you or if you know it belongs to a particularly dangerous or venomous species, it is wise to consult a medical professional.

This article provides general advice for jellyfish stings. By being aware of the telltale signs of a jellyfish sting and following the recommended first aid steps, you can effectively manage the initial discomfort and ensure your safety at the beach.

If you or someone you know experiences a jellyfish sting, it's important to seek medical attention if necessary. A healthcare professional can assess the severity of the sting and provide appropriate treatment based on individual circumstances.

Stay informed, stay safe, and enjoy your time in the water! 🌴

Dr. Teotico can be reached at MedExpress Medical and Diagnostic Center  
 Main Road, Balabag, Boracay Island  
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ISLAND LIFE

# Living A Digital Life in Boracay (Part 2)

By Pauline R.

Last month, we introduced a few of Boracay Island's digital nomads, who gave us a glimpse into the digital lifestyle. A huge part of this lifestyle is being nomadic, which makes finding a good space an integral factor.

With the growing digital community among Boracay residents and travelers visiting the island, finding a quiet place to work, with good internet is a must. Some of us may find working from home more comfortable while some people see their productivity grow when they are in a different space.

In this issue, we navigate the digital nomad world on the island and reveal our favorite places.

**Musyon:** Local vibe with an office-like touch

Musyon, an Aklanon expression for "let's go!" is a small coffee shop in Bulabog, specifically designed as a co-working space.

Opened early this year by Katie and Toni, the small and quiet office-like space offers two long tables to share, air-conditioning, fast Internet, and a generator. Created to bring the community together and create a digital community network, Musyon will soon offer creative and skilled-based workshops.



They are serving single-origin coffee sourced in the Philippines, and infusions as an option to non-caffeine drinks. The space can fit six to eight persons comfortably so it is encouraged to book ahead (which can be done online).

Open Mondays to Fridays (24-hours/day), and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The coffee shop closes in the evening, but unlimited brewed coffee is available in the co-working space.

Rates:  
 Half day: PhP350  
 Full day: PhP500 (for 8 hours between 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)  
 Full night: PhP600 (for 8 hours between 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.)

Find them near the corner of Two Brown Boys along Bulabog Road 1A.

Facebook/Instagram: @workfrommusyon

**Kape Mano:** Beachfront and versatile

The farthest co-working space from the hustle and bustle of Boracay, Kape Mano located above Greenyard Kite Surfing School at the far end of the Bulabog Boulevard, is a quiet haven with an incredible view.

Surrounded by nature, the rooftop co-working space offers an incredible variety of drinks on the menu. Very notable is the originality of Kape Mano's coffee menu that offers dairy, non-dairy, and specialty coffee (Thai, coconut and strawberry latte); with variations from pour-over to espresso, French press or AeroPress; and an extensive selection of beans. For tea drinkers, there are Matcha tea infusions and table options.



Pastries and snacks are available as well. The charming food truck set up on the side called Maui's, also offers healthy food options.

You can find sockets all around and the Internet is fast and reliable. But what really sets Kape Mano apart from other places is the layout of the space itself. Depending on your work style and what helps your productivity, you can set your computer up on one of the high chairs at the bar-style tables, on the office-type table, get comfortable inside one of their daybed nooks or work from their one-of-a-kind large hammock.

You can take a break and swim in-between meetings during Habagat or go for a kiting session before clocking in again. Ambient music is playing in the background, so bring your earphones if you like to work in a quiet bubble.

Open daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Instagram: @kapemano

**Villa Caemillia:** Beach Boutique Hotel: Comfortable space with a sunset view

Although not a co-working space per se, Villa Caemillia is a favorite among residents of Station 3 to clock in a few hours of work.

With large tables that can comfortably fit your laptop and other gadgets, this beachfront boutique hotel has been one



of the pandemic saviors for many digital nomads in Boracay, when they offered co-working day passes. Not only is their Wi-Fi is fast, but you can also rely on their standby generator. Their menu is great, offering some beach bites, Filipino favorites, healthy options, pizza and some of Boracay's best cocktails! The staff is amazing and makes you feel welcome and right at home. Beware during weekends, you might see your working day shortened around sunset when friends and residents gather around for a couple of great drinks!

Facebook: @villacaemilla  
 Instagram: @villa\_caemilla  
[https://www.instagram.com/villa\\_caemilla/](https://www.instagram.com/villa_caemilla/)



**Lazy Dog:** Bed & Breakfast: Laid-back in a natural setting

Another favorite of many, the Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast is famous for its laidback vibes, and comforting food.

Nestled among greeneries, you can choose a long table or sit on a pillow at the low coffee tables and set up your work station. Sockets can be found around the low tables and the Internet speed is fairly good. Their Vietnamese coffee will surely perk you up, and their selection of food will make you want to come back. Make sure to try their adobo flakes and their amazing pancakes!

Situated in a quiet street of Bulabog close to the beach, the Lazy Dog is pet-friendly and a great place to make new connections! They also offer affordable rooms and dormitory options.

Facebook/Instagram: @lazydogboracay

Check them out. 🌿



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# Tablas Strait

## Boracay Island

### Hotels & Resorts Spas, Bars & Restaurants

We are constantly updating the map. Should you wish to assist by suggesting other names be listed. Please contact [info@boracaysunnews.com](mailto:info@boracaysunnews.com)



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