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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM BORACAY ISLAND: The 3<sup>rd</sup> TOP ISLAND IN ASIA and the Crown Jewel of Philippine Tourism

We've compiled the island community's warm season's greetings and the most fervent hopes for the New Year, from Boracay Island to the world!

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Shot on location along White Beach, Station 1 (Photo by Jack Jarilla)  
Sandcastle by Malvin Lumbo Tucio, Robelyn Francisco, Zenaida Francisco Saron, Ebilyn M. Garcia and Alejo R. Naig

From "It's No Fun" back to "It's More Fun in Boracay," travelers coming to Boracay Island are in for the most pleasurable tourist experiences since the reopening of tourism post-pandemic!

Thanks to the initiative and collaborative efforts of the united stakeholder groups and associations aimed at revitalizing and enhancing Boracay's appeal to foreign tourists, as well as the unwavering support from the Local Government Unit of Malay, the Provincial Government Office of Aklan, the

## CHANGE IS COMING!

**Boracay Island's stakeholders and leaders unite to push for more relaxed rules, to bring the fun back to traveling to Boracay!**

By Freida Dario-Santiago

Municipal Tourism Office of Malay, and the Sangguniang Bayan of Malay, sustainable tourism is about to change and take a more relaxed approach to responsible traveling.

### One Step Back

In recent months, despite claims by the local tourism office that Boracay Island had finally reached its 1.8 million projected tourist arrivals from the month of January this year, the realities on the ground were a far cry. The arrival of some international

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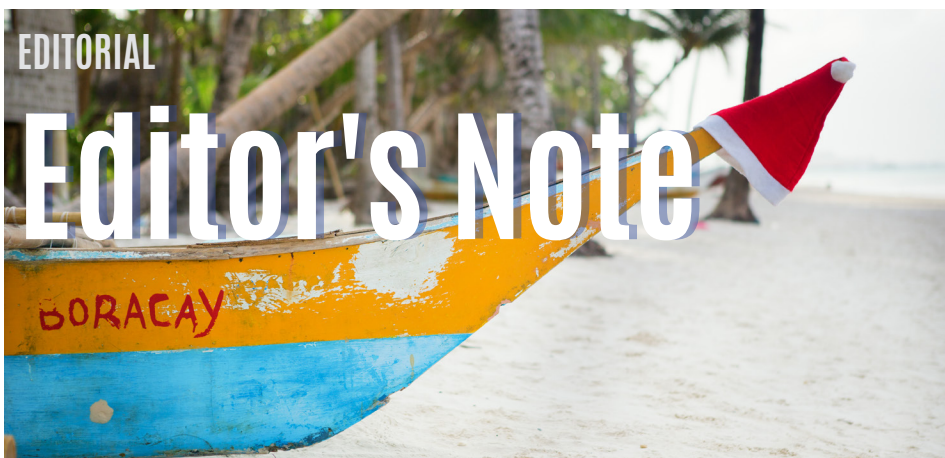
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**Christmas State of Mind**

As we were planning this Christmas special, I must admit that it took a bit of introspection to dig deep and get into the Christmas spirit, in light of everything that's going on in the world (and the unusual lack of activity on the otherwise jampacked island of Boracay during this time of the year).

At some point, I couldn't help but get emotional just realizing that this is our very first Boracay Sun News Christmas Holiday issue, post-pandemic (not to rehash that dark chapter in our rearview mirrors). It's hard to shake off the heaviness from all the unrest in other parts of the world (not to mention tensions with China over the South China Sea, right in our backyard) that leave us white-knuckled, jaws clenched and eyes tightly shut as we surf the news and let out a huge sigh of relief as soon as we enter the Netflix safe zone.

As the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict and the war in Ukraine continue to flood the airwaves, it's sad to hear terminologies on the news 24/7: from "war" to "ethnic cleansing," "genocide," "jihad" to "hate / hate crimes," and "settler colonialism" or any ISM for that matter. As the volatile situation in Israel and Gaza continues to brew, worldwide protests between Muslim and Jewish communities are gaining strength and spreading even more hate with increasing anti-Semitic threats, driving wedges among communities.



**Jimmy Bjerg Jensen**  
June 14 · 🌐  
"War is a place where young people who don't know each other and don't hate each other, kill each other, based on decisions made by old people who know each other and hate each other, but don't kill each other..." - Paul Valéry  
This has now been shared 870,000 times

The scale of destruction, death and loss is staggering. Like everyone else (including the soldiers on the frontlines), all we want for Christmas is world peace. War is stupid. We kill each other for ideals and the retaliations will never end until the world does.

To quote @theslowfactory, "We cannot afford the human, environmental and financial costs of war. The consequences are devastating to people and the planet at every scale. While people are displaced from their homes, we continue to destroy our collective home. We need collective liberation more than ever."

In other news, we are constantly reminded that global warming and other effects of climate change has reached a tipping point, with natural disasters turning more extreme and violent, and closer and closer to home.

In light of all these horrors, conflicts and unrest, what can we do?

We should practice judiciousness (vs. extravagance), conscientiousness towards nature and the environment, and sensitivity (vs. vanity) and kindness towards one

another and oneself, loved ones and our neighbors.

We should tighten our Santa belts and remember what our mothers taught us: put aside money for a rainy day. For thousands of displaced war refugees, that rainy day has come, money (if any) is useless, and it has been a deluge of loss with no end in sight. Then there are the irreversible effects of war on the environment.

In this day and age, you would have thought that humanity has learned and vowed not to go to war, and to solve conflicts with diplomacy. But no. At the end of the day, we can only hope and pray for more humanitarian ceasefires, a significant de-escalation, and a calm pathway to world peace in 2024.

**"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." – Albert Einstein**



**(Photograph by Mikhail Levit is a Soviet-born Israeli photographer and pictorialist)**

With that said, it shouldn't sound too corny to wish for peace on Earth and goodwill towards men (women and gender-binary, they, them, and all of the above), is it?

But perhaps foremost on our minds are concerns over the decline in tourist arrivals to Boracay during the last quarter of the year, which is starting to be felt by businesses across the leading tourism destination. The decline in international flights is another indication of a problem that has stakeholder groups (Boracay Foundation Inc., Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Boracay, MICE and the Korean Residents Organization in Boracay) meeting among themselves as well as in consultative meetings with the local government.

**Ending the year on a high note**



Despite it all, tapping into the Christmas spirit can do us all a world of good! We've come up with an issue that we hope brings joy into your holiday season!



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There's something about the holidays that changes people. It's the time of year when we put our best foot forward, pull all the stops, and truly find happiness—even JOY—in the most hopeless of situations. In spite of all the horrifying things that are happening in the world, the Christmas spirit never fails to lift people's spirits. Not to mention the meditative benefits of many of the repetitive rituals that we do while letting the mind drift such as decorating a tree, stringing the lights, wrapping gifts, and baking!

We have compiled a beautiful spread of season's greetings coming straight from the heart and soul of Boracay's people, that reflects our solidarity and tells us one thing: that despite the challenges that never cease, there is unity in diversity, harmony in disparity, and hope for a better year ahead. Turn to page 10 and see how the Boracay Island community, is one big happy, peace-loving, kind-hearted, and united family—dysfunctional as it seems, just like anybody's family!

This issue hopes to bridge gaps and bring us all to the table, to break bread, share our blessings, lift each other up, and toast to a bright new year! So, let's celebrate everything that we love about Christmas, and summon our inner children to spark the most magical Christmas of all!

**Vibe high, dive deep!**

Come New Year's Eve, we will all

witness another Boracay Island marvel—the magnificent annual fireworks! The most highly-anticipated event is a celebration of hope as the palpable electric energy, the collective good vibes, and the undeniably cathartic experience empower all who witness it, to move on, together as one united human race, bravely stepping into a new year, and a new era of hope, each with a personal resolution, a resolve and commitment that no matter what, we are making a deal with the future to do whatever it takes to make the world a better place than the year before.

And so, to all of our fortunate friends who are on the island on this blessed December or January day, rejoice in the beauty of God's creation, and breathe it all in!

May the season's warmth fill your hearts and homes, from the sunny island of Boracay! Peace, love and joy, everyone!

Peace and good vibes,

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continued from front page



Photo courtesy of SB Member Daligdig Yap Sumdad

cruise ships in November, with thousands of passengers ferried to the island for day trips, once and for all proved that they barely make a dent or a positive outcome on the local economy.

The recorded 65.59 percent decrease in foreign tourist arrivals as of November 8, 2023, compared to 2019, has significantly impacted the purchasing power of tourists, leading to adverse effects on the tourism business. Sluggish tourist arrivals and very low spending turned worrisome. Add to this, a slew of many well-founded consumer complaints about travel experiences (anything from tiresome arrival requirements and endless fees to inconsiderate inconveniences, aggravated by rude treatment) proliferating social media and online chat rooms.

When Nietzsche said, “the devil is in the details,” he surely did not have travel in mind, though the idiom does say it all. The problematic systems and outdated draconian rules that originated during the pandemic lockdown (some beach rules originated as far back as the 2018 six-month closure) that were never amended and had ultimately compounded. In short, too many rules simply stripped the fun out of traveling to the Philippines’ beach capital.

By September, the noise level was steadily rising, just as noticeably and undeniably as the freefall in tourist arrival numbers. Everywhere you went on the island, it was relatively a ghost town. The local hair salon, grocery and pharmacy were eerily reminiscent of the pandemic silence—almost.

The scales have tipped and here we are, with the famed tourism island facing a huge wakeup call and on the verge of another upheaval.

Tourism stands as the cornerstone of livelihood in Boracay. Foremost on the minds of business owners were concerns over the decline in tourism numbers, and the sheer absence of certain travel markets, particularly the spenders that fed the local economy. During the tail end of the final quarter of the year, the crunch was not only felt—it was crushing businesses with massive losses across the leading tourism destination.

**Small Steps, Huge Strides**

The decline in international flights was another indication of a problem that had stakeholder groups Boracay Foundation Inc. (BFI), Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Boracay (PCCI-Boracay), MICE Alliance and the Korean Residents Organization in Boracay (KROB) holding closed-door meetings to thresh out the problem and find mitigating solutions to prevent the economy from hemorrhaging any further, and to assess and arrest the damage.

From a marketing point of view, due to all the bad press circulating on social media

of late, the country’s multi-awarded Crown Jewel’s name and reputation had suffered a crisis of multi-million dollar proportions.

**A United Front**

On November 15, 2023, a highly productive meeting was held at The Tides Hotel in Boracay, hosted by PCCI-Boracay.

Following a collaborative Boracay Island stakeholder meeting spearheaded by the BFI last November 10 at the Henann Regency Resort & Spa with the primary aim of collectively identifying the factors influencing the decline in foreign tourism, and the formulation of effective strategies to propel Boracay’s tourism industry forward, and the submission of a Joint Resolution to the Office of the Provincial Governor of Aklan and the Municipal Mayor Malay by the BFI, PCCI-Boracay, PCCI-Aklan, and Boracay MICE Alliance on proposed strategies to address the sudden decline in tourist arrivals to Boracay Island; a Committee Hearing with the Sangguniang Bayan was held last November 13, at the Malay Activity Center in Poblacion, Malay.

During the five-hour November 15 meeting, the Boracay-Caticlan Sustainable Development Council (BCSDC), co-chaired by Aklan Governor Jose Enrique “Joen” Miraflores and Malay Municipal Mayor Floribar Bautista, with council members: DENR, DPWH, DOT, DILG, DTI, DHSUD Regional, NEDA, DSWD, DOLE, Aklan Police Provincial Office, PCCI-Boracay, BFI, CAB, Coast Guard-Caticlan, LTO-Aklan, TIEZA and the Provincial Prosecutor; along with other stakeholders and government agencies, all united as one, to tackle the concerning issue of declining tourism and negative news surrounding Boracay Island.

The Council members engaged in a confident and constructive discussion, identifying areas of concern regarding the impact of the decrease in tourism on the local community and economy. As a result, the government quickly agreed to take action on several solutions that were brought to the table by the stakeholder council members, for immediate resolution, leaving the Council members and other stakeholders extremely pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

Committed to upholding the quality standards of the Boracay Island visitor experience and its sustainable tourism, of Boracay Island’s tourism, we are happy to announce that the following solutions have been reached as a result of the meeting:

1. Relaxing of tourist requirements. No hotel booking voucher needed at the port of entry
2. Opening of beach. Allowing beach beds and umbrellas for tourists to enjoy
3. Extending night swimming time to 9pm
4. Allowing food and drinks at party boats
5. Suspend 20k fee for foreign tour guides

6. Lastly, the enforcement on local commissioners will be implemented immediately.

Continuous dialogues will be conducted to discuss having a unified ticket at the jetty port in order to improve the tourist arrival procedure.

The BCSDC and stakeholders have set the next meeting for December to discuss other concerns and solutions.

Aklan Governor “Joen” Miraflores wasted no time in eagerly posting about it on his Facebook Page (@SerbisyonJOEN) that evening, and gained over a thousand shares overnight.

Thank you to Governor Miraflores and Mayor Bautista and all government agencies for your swift and decisive actions on the unanimous solutions without hesitation.

The meeting marked a significant synergy between the private sector and the government, where we witnessed such a passionate and positive exchange among such a diverse group of likeminded individuals. In a room full of politicians and business bosses, ego was left at the door, grandstanding was nowhere in sight, and confidence was restored in the institutions that make up our fragile island’s foundations.

This was a strong first step to improve the tourist experience, and to take Boracay Island to the next frontier.

The astounding cooperation witnessed at the BCSDC meeting signals the beginning of fruitful dialogues and great progress. There was a feeling that something significant and historic had transpired there; that a tipping point had been averted and turned around, and the crash used to propel the tourism destination upwards. We learned that despite the imperfections of any tourism destination, as long as honesty and determination prevails over anger and defeat, we can indeed overcome any challenge. Before the meeting was adjourned, its proponents already received the wonderful news of certain International flights returning in December.

We have reached a turning point and a critical junction that could make or break Boracay’s future: it could determine if tourism receipts would continue to decline or if we are able to address the burgeoning needs and win back the love and trust. We’ve done it before with the rehabilitation closure to clean up the environment. With the resilience of the private sector, the workers and Boracay’s community, matched by the political will of its leaders, we can and we will clean up this mess, one face-palm at a time.

And to the fun-loving travelers of the world, come and visit Boracay Island in 2024 because THE BEST JUST GOT BETTER! 🍷

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# BORACAY WHITE BEACH FESTIVAL 2023

By Azenith Resurreccion | Photos by Azenith Resurreccion and Kate Tagua

The very first Boracay White Beach Festival was held last October 16 to 22, 2023.



A beach sportsfest featuring seven sports events namely, Beach Tennis, Beach Volleyball, Spike Ball, Beach Football, Beach Ultimate Frisbee, Paddle Board and Dragon Boat racing have simultaneously taken place along White Beach, Station, from the beachfront of Nigi Nigi Too up to White House Beach Resort.

Organized by the Malay Local Government Unit (LGU), headed by Mayor Frolibar Bautista and the Municipal Tourism Office, the event showcased the beach sports



**All Smiles, All-Stars:** The beach tennis players who made the Boracay Island White Beach Festival unforgettable with their love for the game and their bright spirits



**During the awarding ceremonies** SB Datu Yap Sumndad introduces some of the beach ultimate athletes who were to represent Boracay and the Philippines at the World Beach Ultimate Championship, held last November 1 to 5, in Huntington Beach, CA, USA.

that are popular on the island. The event was participated by athletes and sports teams from Boracay, neighboring provinces, and teams from Manila. A bazaar at Wetland No. 4 by Laketown was participated by members of the Boracay Foundation, Inc.

Municipal Ordinance 516, declares the last Friday and Saturday of October as the Boracay Island White Beach Festival, a new tradition to celebrate the beauty of Boracay's magnificent White Beach, and to honor and pay tribute to its splendor. The said ordinance sponsored by SB Datu Yap Sumndad aims to highlight White Beach through various sports events and festivities.

*"This will be a yearly event and we will make Boracay Island a home for these beach sports as we invite and welcome international teams and athletes in the coming years,"*

SB Sumndad stated in his welcome speech during the opening night of the sportsfest.



From left: Beach tennis; Beach football participated by local teams and sponsored by Boracay Sun News; Two local teams out of the 16 battling it out at the beach volleyball quarterfinals; Boracaynon athletes in the beach ultimate frisbee match; Spike Ball (round net) participants enjoying the game under the heat of the sun!



Dragonboat teams at the Oartoberfest 2023: Bugsay San Carlos from Negros, iPad from Iloilo, Boracay Dragonforce, Shangri-La Flying Foxes and Boracay Allstars (Photo by Hazel Gomez); Dragonboat enthusiasts cheering for their teams; Shangri-La Flying Foxes vs. Boracay Allstars in the men's small boat category

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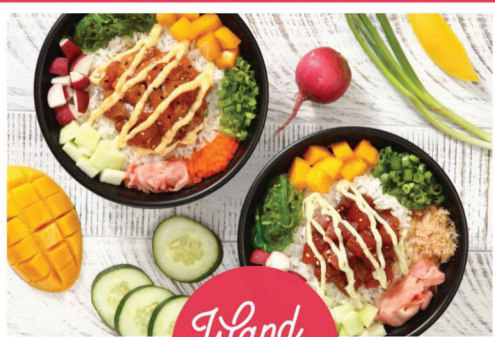
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## ISLAND LIFE

BORACAY FOR NEWBIES  
SELF-CARE WHEN IT GETS TOO “NOISY”

By Abigail Lei

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. 🌿



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GET IN TOUCH

**MANDALA SPA AND RESORT VILLAS**

## BORACAY DIARIES

## BORACAY: A PATHWAY TO HEALING

By Faisal Harder

Trading the concrete jungle of Metro Manila for the tranquil Boracay island life was a transformative experience. The claustrophobic confines of a city condo, the relentless chaos of bustling streets, the oppressive air pollution, and the disheartening sight of garbage littering the streets were replaced by a culture of openness, crystal clear turquoise waters and pristine skies.

In Boracay, personal expression is celebrated, not stifled. The island's culture of acceptance and freedom was a refreshing contrast to the judgment and pressure that often permeates city life. This newfound openness empowered me to embrace my independence, explore the therapeutic practice of journaling, and relish the simple joys of clean air and clear skies.

The island life also offered a treasure trove of activities. From kitesurfing, scuba diving, freediving, open water swimming, beach volleyball, soccer, and even martial arts like boxing and MMA at the local gym—these activities, coupled with the sight of children playing freely on the beach and the harmonious balance between tourists and locals, have all contributed to a profound enhancement of my overall wellbeing.

Boracay's gastronomic scene is as diverse as its activities, with a range of restaurants catering to all budgets. From high-end dining experiences to local eateries serving delicious, affordable meals, the culinary delights added another layer to the island's charm. Yet, the allure of Boracay extends far beyond its vibrant food scene and engaging activities. It's in the island's natural beauty and the lifestyle it fosters that the true magic lies.

Living in Boracay has deepened my connection with nature in unexpected ways. The island's natural beauty is not just a backdrop to my daily life, but an active

participant in it. The ebb and flow of the tides, the gradual transition from day to night, and the chorus of wildlife marking the passage of time have all heightened my sensitivity to the rhythms of nature.

This connection with nature has also



influenced my lifestyle. The constant rush and stress of city life have been replaced by a slower, more mindful pace. I've learned the art of slow living, being mindful and present in every moment, whether engaged in mundane tasks or extraordinary experiences.

Amidst all these experiences, Boracay has become more than just a place of residence for me. It has evolved into a sanctuary, a place where I feel free to openly express my innermost feelings. Here, I've given myself permission to grieve, feel sorrow, feel joy, and make my way through the intricate web of my emotions without fear or condemnation. It hasn't been simple to travel this emotional path. There were times when the suffering seemed unmanageable and I doubted my resolve. But I've

found healing through it all. I've developed a deeper self-awareness, acceptance of my frailties, and a newfound grace and resiliency in dealing with life's difficulties.

Navigating through this emotional journey has also opened doors to healing in other aspects of my life. One of the most profound changes has been in my relationships. The slower pace of life in Boracay has given me the gift of time—time to connect with others, build meaningful relationships,

and self-discovery. I've plunged into the rich tapestry of local culture and history, acquired new skills, and even ventured into new sports. Each new experience has served as a lesson, a stepping stone towards healing, and an opportunity to unravel more layers of my own identity.

Living in Boracay, enveloped by its natural beauty and the warmth of its people, has nurtured a deep sense of gratitude within me. I've come to appreciate the simple joys of life—the laughter shared with friends, the taste of a home-cooked meal, the feeling of sand beneath my feet. I've learned to cherish the opportunities that have come my way, the people who have touched my life, and the experiences that have shaped me. This gratitude has become a cornerstone of my healing, a gentle reminder of the beauty that exists both around me and within me.

As I stand on the threshold of the future, I see my journey in Boracay as an unfolding narrative, a tale that's still being penned. I feel a deep longing to entwine my life more closely with the local community, and to contribute to the vibrant culture that has welcomed me with open arms. I dream of harnessing the wisdom I've gleaned from my experiences and the lessons I've absorbed to make a positive difference on the island and in the lives of its people.

and foster a sense of community. The island's culture of acceptance has also taught me to cultivate healthier, more fulfilling relationships, with others and with myself.

The serene environment of Boracay has not only served as a sanctuary for my emotional healing but has also ignited a creative spark within me. Creativity has become a significant ally in my healing journey. In the peaceful embrace of the island, I've found the freedom to explore my creative passions. Whether it's penning my thoughts, dabbling in painting, or experimenting with local cuisine, these creative outlets have morphed into a form of self-therapy, a unique language to express myself and process my experiences.

Moreover, my healing journey in Boracay has been a voyage of learning

My dreams also extend to the realm of creativity. I aspire to pour my experiences and the healing I've found in Boracay into my writing and art. I fantasize about seeing my own words in print, my own comics shared with the world, and my personal journey reaching out to touch others. I hold a firm belief that our stories have the power to guide others on their paths, to light the way for those embarking on their own journeys of healing and self-discovery.

These experiences and reflections are deeply personal, but I share them in the hope that they might resonate with others. Healing is a journey, and while each person's path is unique, we can find comfort and inspiration in each other's stories.†



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( Next to Army Navy )

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

# MILESTONES & ANNIVERSARIES

By Freida Dario-Santiago

## Lemoni Café & Restaurant Celebrates 18 Years!

Lemoni Café & Restaurant turned 18 last September 25, looking as fresh as the day they first opened, thanks to the recent renovation, to commemorate their debutant year!

*“After 18 years in business, we are just as passionate today about Lemoni Cafe as the day we opened our doors in 2005. We feel so grateful that we survived the 2018 Island closure and the pandemic with our amazing team still intact!”*

*We want to thank all of our wonderful guests over the years especially the locals who have always been so supportive. We hope with our recent renovation (the bakery is brand new) that we can serve you all better for many years to come!”*



The Lemoni Café team since 2005, 18 years strong!

## Happy 18th anniversary to Island Chicken Inasal at D’Mall (August 12)

Drop by their spanking new second branch at One Central Boracay!



## Happy 3rd anniversary to MrSwift Boracay Delivery (September 8)



MrSwift Boracay Delivery owner Cherry Cimene (center) with her MrSwift and Sawadee Massage & Spa teams

## Happy 28th anniversary to Jasper’s Tapsilog & Resto and congratulations on the renovation! (September 27)



## Happy 26th anniversary to Dos Mestizos Boracay (October 31)



**W**e would like to give these beloved Boracay establishments a round of applause on reaching another milestone year, and to thank them for their service excellence, all these years! Mabuhay kayong lahat, and more power in the coming years!

*Cheers and tagay!*

## Discovery Shores Boracay Named as the Philippines’ Leading Beach Resort in the 2023 World Travel Awards



President and COO Jun C. Parreño and Discovery Shores Boracay’s Hotel Manager Erwin Lopez received the prestigious award at the 2023 World Travel Awards Asian and Oceania Gala Ceremony held last September 6 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

For 16 years, Discovery Shores Boracay has made it their mission to be the leading example of hospitality in the Philippines, serving each guest who chooses to call the resort their home away from home. This year, the World Travel Awards named Discovery Shores Boracay as the “Philippines’ Leading Beach Resort” for 2023. “Ever since opening our doors back in 2007, we at Discovery Shores Boracay have dedicated ourselves to curating year-round experiences that give each guest unforgettable moments with us,” shared Erwin Lopez.

“We’re truly excited to bring this award home—it’s a true testament to every team member’s commitment to crafting the best island experience for our guests. We are truly grateful for the award,” said Jun Parreño, of DHC, the managing company of Discovery Shores.

The World Travel Awards is one of the travel industry’s most prestigious award-giving bodies recognizing leaders in all facets of hospitality and tourism, from airlines, airports, hotels, and resorts. Established in 1993, the World Travel Awards brand is recognized globally as the ultimate hallmark of industry excellence.

Visit Discovery Shores Boracay’s website at [www.discoveryshoresboracay.com](http://www.discoveryshoresboracay.com).

## Belmont Hotel Boracay Marks its 4th Anniversary with Giving



In commemoration of their fourth year anniversary last September 23, Belmont Hotel Boracay’s “Walk for a Cause” awarded scholarships to three Boracay Ati beneficiaries.

The Yapak Sunrise Walkathon was a 1.5-kilometer sunrise walk that aimed to make a positive impact by aiding the education of three deserving students from Boracay’s Ati Village, enabling them to pursue their Bachelor of Science in Midwifery (BSW) Related Training Experience (RLE).

The well-attended event was participated by 64 employees of the hotel, as well as 77 guests, including esteemed participants: PCTV GM Astrophel Tabañera, Bonnie Javellona of Southwest, Acting Malay PNP Chief PLTCOL. Dainis Amuguis, Jaena Mae Labao of JML Events, Feliz Hotel Boracay GM Allan Chan and Jayson Tarrosa, Deputy Estate Manager. 🌱



## NEWS CONG. HARESCO URGES TOURISM FRONTLINERS TO COME UP WITH A UNIFIED PLAN TO LURE FOREIGN TOURISTS

By Jun N. Aguirre

**T**ANGALAN, Aklan – Second district Congressman Teodorico Haresco, Jr. urged the tourism sector in Boracay Island to come up with holiday promotional discounts hoping to lure foreign tourists to come to Boracay.

Haresco who co-chairs several economic committees in the lower house said that several businessmen lamented to him about the low turnout of foreign tourists coming to Boracay this year.

“This is apparently because of the high prices our tourism industry offers. Other Asian destinations are offering cheaper prices compared to that of Boracay. Because of this, foreign tourists were attracted to visit the areas which offer cheaper rates,” he added.

“I suggest that our tourism frontliners in Boracay would come together to discuss a united marketing plan for the resort island hoping to lure foreign tourists,” Haresco

said in a press conference in his residence on October 14. According to reports from the Malay Tourism Office, from January to June of this year, East Asian tourists (South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hongkong, Japan) were the top foreign visitors coming to Boracay reaching 116, 906.

North America (Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, US) came in second with a mere 26, 188. The third region having the greatest number of foreign tourists coming to Boracay was Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom) with 14, 096.

The fourth was Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Switzerland) with 13, 032.

In a separate interview, Nenette Graf, a sustainable tourism advocate said that Bulabog Beach could be promoted as an attraction to European tourists. European

tourists are said to be a high spending market, that could boost the economy of Boracay compared to the Asian tourists.

“European tourists usually want a quiet place to stay while on vacation, and Bulabog Beach could be an ideal place for them,” she added.

In a related report, Haresco announced on October 23 that the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) has approved his endorsement of funding the PhP500 million project for the construction of an international cruise ship hub in nearby Nabas, Aklan.

This developed after the Philippines was recently named as the “Best Cruise Destination in Asia.” Aside from Boracay,

the PPA is also developing other tourism areas into cruise ship destinations such as Coron, Camiguin, Siargao and Puerto Galera.

Some areas in Luzon have already built their respective cruise ship hubs through the PPA such as Currimao in Ilocos Norte, Salomague in Ilocos Sur, Manila, El Nido and Tagbilaran.

“The PPA through President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. is supportive of the project. If this is realized, there is an American investor who is willing to allocate another US\$500 million for its improvement in Nabas port. As to its time frame, watch out for that,” he added. 🌱



Congressman Haresco on one of his visits to Boracay Island



NEWS

# A BANNER YEAR FOR BORACAY ISLAND ENDS WITH A BANG!

## The crown jewel of the Philippine islands, Boracay Island is Asia's 3<sup>rd</sup> Top Island at the CONDE NAST TRAVELER Readers' Choice Awards 2023

By Freida Dario-Santiago

**B**ORACAY ISLAND has done it again! Capping 2023 on a high note, we are proud to announce another victory for the Philippines, and another phenomenal honor for Boracay Island, which topped the *Conde Nast Traveler (CNT) Readers' Choice Awards 2023*, as the 3<sup>rd</sup> "Top Island in Asia" with Palawan in 6<sup>th</sup> and Siargao in 10<sup>th</sup> place!



Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards 2023 "Top Islands in Asia" announcement in October

They say that luck comes in threes. This 2023 alone, the famed island of Boracay received three highly-esteemed recognitions from the most sought-after annual international travel surveys.

As early as January, Boracay placed 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.

Then in July, Boracay ranked 10<sup>th</sup> at *Travel + Leisure's (T+L) "World's Best Awards: Top 25 Favorite Islands in the World."* The T+L World Travel Awards is recognized globally as the ultimate hallmark of the travel industry, with winners setting the benchmark to which all others aspire. The only Philippine island on this year's list, Boracay bested Indonesia in third place.

But who's counting? You'll be surprised but the world of travel never sleeps and is constantly watching. This latest accolade has once again catapulted the Philippines at the forefront of world travel, and its number one island destination of Boracay, at the top of everyone's travel bucket list for 2024!

These awards heralded a banner year for this tiny tropical island in the Western Visayas region in the Philippine archipelago of 7,641 islands. To receive such prodigious global esteem and critical acclaim from the ultimate hallmarks of the travel industry is no mean feat, with the "favorite islands" category being among the most coveted in the industry.

For the other world-famous islands on the list, it is just another fancy feather on their caps. But for the country's beach capital, these acknowledgments from real travelers and discriminating readers of the affluent travel digests, mean much more than another gem to its illustrious crown of jewels.

Thanks to these annual reader surveys, the world is reminded of the tiny dog bone-shaped Boracay Island that is approximately seven kilometers long with the narrowest portion being less than one kilometer wide.

### Third Time's A Charm

Generally speaking, the number three is considered good luck. In many cultures, three is seen as a symbol of balance and completeness. The triangle, with its three sides, represents stability and harmony. If we were to consult with The Pythagoreans, an ancient Greek philosophical school, they would concur that, with all its imperfections, Boracay Island is undoubtedly, a model for world-class destinations.

Tourism was among the hardest-hit industries at the height of the global pandemic. And yet, Boracay Island had bounced back from obscurity, with glowing reviews.

Of late, sluggish tourism receipts and a substantial dip during the third quarter can be attributed to several factors such as the annual Habagat season, the uncertainties brought about by the current global conflicts, not to mention the rising cost of energy that translates to a rise in travel costs, the exceptional leanness of the season had gotten many worried. We should also consider that the world is still in its second year of post-pandemic travel.

In light of all the uncertainty, the announcement of CNT's Reader's Choice Awards last October could not have come at a more opportune time, to serve as a vital boost for Boracay Island. Besides, rising up to the occasion is something Boracaynons are good at!

### Early Christmas Present

A staggering half million CNT readers voted in the 2023 Readers' Choice Awards survey wherein Boracay garnered a total of 90.74 points, while Palawan got 89.71, and Siargao with 87.37 in readers' votes from around the world.

For the full list of winners, visit [www.cntraveler.com](http://www.cntraveler.com).

Following the announcement, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco affirmed how the world-renowned Philippine islands continue to mesmerize global travelers: "We welcome the resounding message tourists from around the world say: they love the Philippines! From the charm of our islands, pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, vibrant marine life, lush landscapes, rich heritage and culture, and the excellent hospitality of the Filipino people, the Philippine experience is always one that is filled with love and happy travels."

This holiday season, we have much to celebrate and be grateful for. And what better way to end one year and start a new one than with this early Christmas present that simply affirms the Filipino's and the Boracaynon's unmatched and unparalleled hospitality, that has not gone unnoticed.

Congratulations Boracay Island for your hard and heartfelt work that impacts the lives of Filipinos across the nation, and for putting the Philippines back on the world travel map once again! 🌴

FUN FACTS

# THE HISTORY OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

By Sarah Pruitt (History.Com)



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Year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept to their word, their (pagan) gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year. If not, they would fall out of the gods' favor—a place no one wanted to be.

A similar practice occurred in ancient Rome after the reform-minded emperor Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1 as the beginning of the new year circa 46 B.C. Named for Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backward into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.


For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future.

Despite the tradition's religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are a mostly secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves and focus purely on self-improvement (which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on). According to recent research, while as many as 45 percent of Americans say they usually make New Year's resolutions, only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals. But that dismal record probably won't stop people from making resolutions anytime soon—after all, we've had about 4,000 years of practice. 🌴


**T**he custom of making New Year's resolutions has been around for thousands of years, but it hasn't always looked the way it does today.

The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the new year. During a massive 12-day religious festival known as Akitu, the Babylonians crowned a new king or reaffirmed their loyalty to the reigning king. They also made promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerunners of our New

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**NEWS**

# MALAY FARMERS STRUGGLE TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

By Jun N. Aguirre



**S**everal backyard farmers in Malay, Aklan are struggling to ensure food security especially for Boracay despite the supposed demands of vegetables for tourists.

Neil Flores, executive assistant to Malay Mayor Floribar Bautista told Boracay Sun News in an exclusive interview that in 2023 the latter has been able to meet key officials from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The UNDP has then initiated engagement programs for the Malay farmers helping them through training and collaboration in boosting food security.

The project is dubbed the “Malay Food System Innovation Project.”

“For several years, most of the food being consumed by tourists in Boracay would come from other provinces such as Baguio, Mindoro Island, and

Antique among others. The local farmers hope to cope with the demand,” he said.

Along the way, the local government has been able to connect with the networks of local businessman Boyet Saccalan, to supply the local harvest. Saccalan is said to have at least 10 shops committing to supply the produce.

“But the first batch of the supply also encountered birth pains. Several resorts have a policy of paying supply orders after several months. We are studying how to help the farmers as they also need the cash for their living,” he said.

Among the solutions being eyed is to organize the backyard farmers into a cooperative so that the local government could be able to help them.

Among the food produced were kangkong (river spinach), chili pepper, cucumber and okra (lady’s fingers) among others.

In August, the innovation project earned some Php250,000.

Those involved in the project were around 25 farmers coming from the Sitio Pajo, Poblacion, Barangay Cubay Norte, Barangay Napaan, and Narva Farm in Barangay Nabaoy, Malay Aklan.

**NEWS**

# DEVELOPMENT OF KEY TOURISM INFRA UNDERWAY - MIRAFLORES

By Jun N. Aguirre

**T**he Aklan Provincial Government is doing everything in their power to boost the tourism industry of Aklan, especially Boracay Island, according to Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores.

In a meeting with the business community in Kalibo, Miraflores said that the recent Covid-19 pandemic has stalled the long overdue development of the Kalibo International Airport (KIA) which would supposedly strengthen its operation as an international gateway.

In the said meeting, members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Aklan have reached out to Miraflores to address the lack of foreign tourists coming to Boracay.

“The runway of the KIA is currently being expanded from 2.5 kilometers, soon to reach three kilometers. Once completed, the KIA could cater to more international flights. The Department of Transportation (DoTR) is constantly helping us in this endeavor,” Miraflores said.

It was gathered that an airline company has expressed their interest to cater to direct Bangkok-Kalibo and vice versa flights once the runway expansion has been completed.

Currently, there are direct flights between South Korea and Kalibo, Aklan.

**Tourist arrivals take a dive**

Year-to-date data shows the number of international tourist arrivals rose sharply in 2023 compared to the first two years of the pandemic. Visitor arrivals recorded 351,913 in 2023—a 420 percent increase from 67,697 foreign tourists of 2022. The domestic tourism market also posted 1,296,672 arrivals for the first three quarters or 77 percent of the total visitors.

According to the Malay Tourism Office Boracay Island registered a 29 percent growth to 1,682,586 tourists from January to September as compared to 1,304,115 of the same period last year. In April, the inbound tourists reached 213,736, the biggest volume for the first nine months of 2023.

However, the month of September had the lowest number of tourists with a total of 124,491 tourists.

“We could notice that there are now direct international flights going to Godofredo Ramos International Airport. This is because the flights are under the management of the San Miguel Group of Companies. But we hope in three years, the

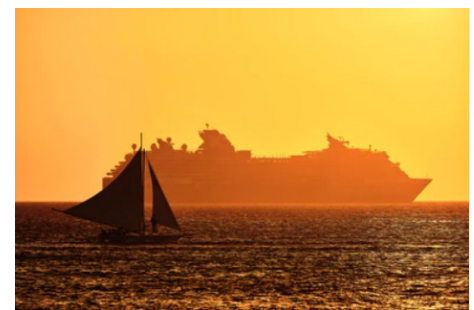
KIA will be bustling with more international tourist arrivals,” Miraflores said.

This resort island has recently been named by Conde Nast Traveler as one of the best islands in Asia followed by Palawan and Siargao indicating that its spark is still alive as a tourist destination especially for foreigners.

Cruise ships slated to return by November

Aside from the expansion and upgrade of the KIA, the province also has plans to upgrade the Caticlan Jetty Port.

“We want the Caticlan Jetty Port to be of international standards where international cruise ships could dock,” Miraflores added. Niven Maquirang, executive assistant to Miraflores added that the cruise ships are set to sail again in November and December of this year.



The cruise travelers are coming from Europe and Asia involving five cruise ships which are expected to carry 10,000 cruisers, and will make port calls to bring back tourists to the island as part of its short-duration Asian cruise service.

Norwegian Cruise Line will deploy MV Norwegian Jewel for a 12-day, one-way cruise from Keelung, Taipei to Singapore. The cruise ship will depart Taipei City on October 30 to Kaohsiung, Taiwan to Salomague Port, Ilocos Sur and Manila.

MV Norwegian Jewel will navigate on November 3 in Boracay Island before departing for Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island; Kota Kinabalu, Borneo Malaysia Sabah; Bandar Seri Begawan, Muara, Brunei; Nha Trang, Vietnam; Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Singapore.

MV Norwegian Jewel returns to Boracay on November 29 via a 10-day all-inclusive cruise in Asia from Laem, Chabang, Thailand and will head to Manila on December 1 via an 11-day Asian cruise of other incredible destinations in South Asia.

Also visiting Boracay Island are the MS Westerdam of Holland America Line on November 7 and Star Breeze on December 2.

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**BUSINESS**

# STAFF TRAINING COURSES - IHTEP

By John Savage



The Boracay Sun News (BSN) organization has recognized during their regular discussions with local hoteliers and restaurant owners the urgent staff training needs on the island.

BSN has partnered with IHTEP Asia to create and deliver a series of first class and cost effective seminars for Boracay businesses.

We need to emphasize that we have many years of front line international training experience working with multi-cultural audiences and achieving outstanding results.

We will be offering clients training seminars either at their own properties or joining public seminars.

IHTEP Asia has over 55 years international hospitality experience having worked in more than 45 different countries and currently working in China, UAE, India, Malaysia and Pakistan.

A full list of the initial Customer Services programmes that will be offered is available upon request.

For more information on how to help train your staff, please contact us at:

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TREASURE TROVE  
BSN's Christmas shopping guide

# CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WITH A CONSCIENCE

Sustainable gift-giving

By Pauline R.



Christmas is a season of giving and joy, but it is also a time to consider the impact that our gift-giving has on the planet. This is where sustainable gift-giving comes in.

It involves offering gifts that are environment-friendly, ethically sourced, and made to last. By doing so, we can help reduce our carbon footprint and support locally-made made. The gifts that we give, and how we give them, represent our values and shape the culture around us. By choosing sustainable and local gifts, we can encourage

others to do the same.

This holiday season, let's all take a step towards a greener, more socially responsible Christmas by purchasing sustainable and locally-made gifts. The impact you can make is immense, and you'll be supporting businesses that are doing their part to make the world a better place. Let's create a Christmas where joy and sustainability coexist!



Here & Now (Photo by Jack Jarilla)

## HERE & NOW

Since 2014, Here & Now has been specializing in exclusive upcycled and handmade items made from factory defect materials, ensuring quality and durability in every product. EcoVie, the flagship brand exclusively distributed by Here & Now, uses a variety of materials such as old kite sails, aluminum cans, and neoprene from old wet suits to create beautifully woven bags, pouches, purses, accessories and other home items that are not only unique but also sustainable. These materials are repurposed to create unique products that make excellent gifts.

The bags, pouches, and purses come in a variety of sizes and designs, catering to every customer's needs. If you want to make a sustainable fashion statement, EcoVie's upcycled bags and accessories are the perfect choice to add to your Christmas list!

Here and Now is located at D'Mall Boracay.

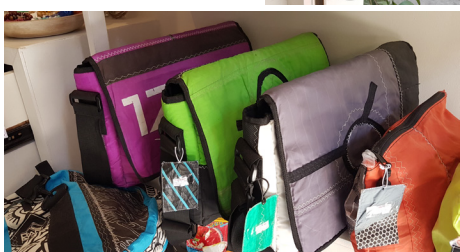


## TROPICAL NOMAD

The brainchild of Bianca and Mikel, Tropical Nomad is a multi-brand Filipino concept store that offers a vast array of products, including jewelry, bags, clothes, beauty products, candles, home living, chocolates and candies, coffee, liquors, and more. All 100 brands featured in the store are owned, crafted or designed in the Philippines, with the aim of showcasing the country's top-quality products.

The couple's vision is to encourage tourists from abroad to take pride in bringing home quality locally-made products and for residents and locals to appreciate the excellence of what is made in the Philippines. With the shop's broad range of impressive products, including brands such as Tropical and Destilera Barako, you are sure to enjoy a unique shopping experience.

Tropical Nomad is located at D'Mall Boracay.



EcoVie bags at Here & Now (Photos by Freida Dario-Santiago)



## TRIBU

The well-known Filipino brand TRIBU was founded by Jason Luengo in 1995. Over the years, the brand has expanded to include three other brands: MISS T, TWEEBU, and KURV. MISS T is the ladies' line that focuses on handbags, belts, shirts, swimwear, and sandals designed exclusively for women. TWEEBU, on the other hand, offers footwear designed for little ones, while KURV is the outdoor fashion line for sports enthusiasts.

One of the unique features of the TRIBU brand is its commitment to environmental preservation. The brand uses recycled garbage bags, cardboard and cloth-based nets as packaging materials, setting an example for the business industry and encouraging customers to join the cause. As a proudly-Filipino brand, TRIBU is known for its outdoor focus.

TRIBU products are available at their new shop at Shoppes at The Station B Mall, Boracay.



## TROPICAL

Tropical is a homegrown Boracay brand that was created by Tong and Charlotte during the pandemic. Their goal was to showcase the culture and lifestyle of the island through their brand. The production process took eight months due to the pandemic and their desire for high-quality materials and cuts. The shirts, made of 40 percent polyester and 60 percent cotton, are produced in Manila for now, with the hope of being able to produce them in Boracay in the future. For the first release, they used banig and straw for the hats to give it an island feel.

You can find Tropical products at Tribu, Tropical Nomad, and at the gift shop of Crimson Resort.

## DALOY

Daloy is a local Filipino brand founded in May by a husband and wife duo who share a deep love for promoting Filipino culture. Mark, who is an avid mountaineer, specializes in creating caps made from



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D\*Mall Boracay, Station 2

abaca from Bicol, as well as tees that reflect the outdoorsy and sporty vibe of the brand. Meanwhile, Lhodie focuses on distributing products made by Filipino tribes, with the goal of educating visitors on the incredible local products available in the Philippines that possess export-worthy quality.

The name "Daloy" means wave or flowing, reflecting the spirit and vision of the brand in promoting the Philippines. From espadrilles from Liliw Laguna to brass products from Tiboli tribes, weaving from Nabas, bags from Bicol, accessories from Ifugao, and loom-woven clothing from La Union, Daloy offers a wide array of Philippine-made items.

Find them at the Community Market in Station X every Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**DESTILERIA BARAKO**



A distillery located in Malay, Aklan, Destileria Barako has been making award-winning liquor since its establishment in 2016. The distillery is proud to showcase Filipino craftsmanship, as well as the international skills of brewing that they possess through their unique and innovative products. One of their most popular products is the Ube Cream Liqueur, which has won multiple awards and is a perfect blend of sweet and creamy. In addition to this, Destileria Barako also produces a range of other spirits reflecting their Filipino pride which is evident in their locally-foraged ingredients.

Desteleria Barako is available at local stores like Sips Happen and Tropical Nomad. Their online shop (www.desteleriaarako.com) allows you to conveniently purchase gift sets that are delivered to Boracay.

**WANDERSKYE**



A small haven for travelers, Wanderskye offers a variety of must-have travel essentials with a touch of artistry. From luggage covers and passport holders to backpacks and packing cubes, their products are designed with functionality and style in mind. What sets them apart is their collaboration with Filipino artists, producing eye-catching designs that capture the essence of Philippine culture, landscapes, and traditions. With a focus on personalization, Wanderskye aims to make travel an even more inspiring and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Gift-giving is a way to show our love and appreciation to the people we care about. However, we don't always have the budget to buy expensive gifts. Instead, offering our time can be just as valuable. Spending time with someone, giving them our undivided attention, and creating memories together can be a wonderful gift as well.

Additionally, if we don't want to gift something material, we can always opt for a wellness or experience gift, such as a massage, a day at the spa, or sharing a meal or an activity together. These types of gifts can be just as meaningful and can create lasting memories for both the giver and the receiver.

**KOREAN COMMUNITY NEWS**

**KOREA-PHILIPPINES EPS PROGRAM CONTRACT SIGNING CEREMONY**

By Soojin Kim-Lee

The Human Resources Development Service of Korea (HRD Korea) and Aklan in the Philippines have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on August 31, 2023.

In Aklan, 245 individuals applied for welding training under the Korea-Philippines EPS program. After completing a two-month education program at the Aklan Training Center (Northwestern Visayan College), 33 individuals successfully passed the final assessment, and among them, 32 were ultimately selected.

These individuals will be registered in the job pool of the Philippine Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and will travel to Korea upon selection by Korean employers.

After months of dedicated work, the MOU signing was successfully concluded as a national project. Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores, Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Bayan members, EPS Korea vice president Kim Sung-jae, selection director Kim Jae-young, EPS Center director Kim Yeon-hong, social integration commissioner Kim Tae-hee, KOICA Aklan president Kim Jonghoon, and myself, the president of KROB (Korean Residents Organization Boracay), all graced the momentous ceremony.

There was a touching moment when the national anthem of Korea echoed in the Aklan Provincial Capital building. The Korean community hopes for further development in this diplomatic endeavor, fostering closer ties between the two communities.



Highlights of the MOA signing ceremony: The writer, KRPB president Soojin Kim-Lee with Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores; Members of the committee with the first batch of trainees under the newly-signed Korea-Philippines EPS program;



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## BORACAY DIARIES BORACAY IS HOME

By Seema Manohar



Photo by Freida Dario-Santiago

“Oh, so you moved back permanently?” Permanence. If there’s one lesson life has taught me, it is that nothing is permanent. I lived in Boracay between 2003 and 2008 for various periods of time; first beginning with a few months and then a few years at a stretch. I left with much sadness every time, thinking it would be the last time. Yet, here I am, 15 years later, unpacking again and settling into my lovely casa in Bulabog. So, another lesson life’s taught me: You never know if the last time you do something is really the last time but no two times will ever be the same.

Boracay has grown up like I have over the years. Our parallel journeys have involved transitions, expansions, closures, cleansing, merging worlds, nostalgic living, modern living, letting go, and letting in. I’m always drawn to places that exist in dualities; because I am dual. In a world that needs definitions, categories, requisites, and logical explanations, this island does not require us to fit into any boxes.

The silent pact we enter into with Boracay when we live here is:

*“Just be yourself, stay curious, stay open, and in turn, Boracay will offer your spirit to experience freedom and an unmatched sense of peace.”*

When asked what is it like to live here, the best analogy in this social-media world is to compare it to the kind of #slowliving #islandlife that IG influencers romanticize about. Except it has always been the island way of life; not for the followers or the reels or the number of likes. The slow mornings, intentional living, tasting our food and feeding our happiness, checking tides to decide which side of the island we swim and which side we kiteboard, and impromptu lunches merging into sunset shenanigans.

Cooking for each other, planting each other’s gardens, caring for each other’s children, sharing tips on carpenters or where to find arugula and avocados, whiskey sour happy hours and late-night ramen cravings, parties at home and yoga on the terrace .... oh, and the constant hunt for the least frequented tourist spot! But let us not deceive you that we are all purely altruistic and removed from the rest of the world!



Boracay living today offers Wi-Fi and hot showers at home, oat milk from Robinsons, Lazada and Shopee deliveries, Netflix weekends, and sharing Spotify playlists. In many ways, the world comes to us and we are spoiled for choices on meeting new people, exploring opportunities, and learning so much about the world without ever really having to leave our cozy island.

Choosing more or choosing if less is more, the beauty lies in the choices we have here and pursuing lifestyles that best suit who we are.

For me, Boracay will always mean three things: beach, community, tranquility.

I still go to White Beach to swim three or four times a week; I distinctly remember how awe-struck I was by the beauty of the beach when I saw it for the first time and its magnetic powers continue to draw me in. I never want to take this beach for granted and recognize what a privilege it is to wake up to this stunning view every day. Swimming in Boracay waters—in Angol, in Diniwid, in Puka, in Bulablog—remains my favorite thing to do on the island, so I go for my afternoon swims, carving out my spots where I know I can swim uninterrupted, just me, white sand, turquoise waters, and a heart full of gratitude.

My community here holds friendships spanning 20 years and they remain the anchor of my Boracay stories. The community continues to expand as we frequently meet an interesting diversity of people who have similarly chosen island living. Also special is being reacquainted with kindred spirits from previous lives because obviously, this is the kind of place where you run into people you met from other lifetimes. So, this is my circle, old friends, new friends, and kindred spirits and they enrich my daily life in subtle, unexpected ways. It’s hard to describe how hours can be spent in such company, sometimes no words exchanged, all of us are just filled with an immense sense of self-awareness and appreciation for the gift of our shared lives on this island.



Island friends-turned -family

The tranquility I experience here comes from my own restless spirit being able to find peace with who I am and who I am not. Boracay has always held me when I needed to heal, helped me find my way when I’ve been lost; and most of all has inspired me to unapologetically be exactly who I am.

For all its magic, Boracay made me discover my magic, teaching me my most important life lesson: The magic cannot leave you when it IS you. And so, it’s home, and why I always come back and why presence over permanence will continue to be a more fulfilling way to live. #boracayishome #boracayismagic 🌴



**Editor’s note:**

An international public health expert in humanitarian emergencies for 22 years, Seema has worked in 18 countries, having been deployed to emergencies from wars in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine, to the Philippines for Typhoon Haiyan and to Liberia during the Ebola outbreak.

As of this writing, Seema, who had just planted roots on Boracay Island, filed this essay (a sequel to her first piece published in our February edition, on her plans to move to Boracay permanently), while addressing humanitarian emergencies in Libya, Morocco, Nagorno-Karabakh, and most recently the earthquake in Afghanistan and the escalation of violence and declaration of war between Israel and Palestine. For now, Seema is remotely working on these emergencies from Boracay by providing technical support to the local teams while securing funding and medical supplies for the continuation of life-saving health services.

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With the holiday season fast approaching, many people are eagerly anticipating the return of our local seafood market. Our weekly Seafood market will offer a wide variety of fresh seafood, including fish, shellfish, and crustaceans. Our guests can choose from a range of different species and preparations, from whole fish to fillets, steaks, and shellfish.



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# Season's Greetings



"What a super year this has been for all of us at Boracay Sun News. The whole team, both in Manila and on Boracay, have had loads of fun bringing to you, our dear readers, advertisers and supporters, every single issue throughout 2023, and look forward to continuing to do so for many years ahead.

It has been a somewhat testing year for our beloved home, but Boracay has such a wonderful community that our Island spirit and nature always brings us together to overcome whatever befalls us. We are all so fortunate to all enjoy this blessing.

Claire, Chelsea and myself would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you on our beautiful island home next year."

— **Victor Jeffery**  
Founder & Publisher, Boracay Sun News  
Jeffery International Media Corporation



**Boracay Foundation, Incorporated Board of Directors and their representatives**  
Front row (from left): Dir. Mike Labatiao, Dir. Leonard Tirol, Pres. Edwin Raymundo, Chairman Dindo Salazar, Diony Salme, Dir. Nenetie Graf  
Back row (from left): Aaron Tan, Serafin Javelona, Dr. Marion Bassig, Dir. Nadine Rosaia, Ophel Tabanera

"Christmas Season's Greetings to the Boracay Island Community!

As we approach the joyous season of Christmas, Boracay Foundation Inc. extends its warmest season's greetings to the entire Boracay Island community and all those who have made this paradise their home. This year has been a challenging one, yet it has also showcased our resilience and strength as a community.

Christmas is a time for reflection, gratitude and togetherness. Let us take a moment to appreciate the beauty of our island and the unity that binds us. It is our shared responsibility to preserve and protect these treasures for generations to come.

As we step into the year 2024, let us collectively commit to a vision for Boracay Island that is sustainable, inclusive and prosperous. We have faced adversity together, and together we will continue to thrive.

Let us continue to prioritize the sustainable development of our island. We pledge to protect our pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters and vibrant marine life. Sustainable tourism practices will be our guiding principle. Collaboration is the cornerstone of our success. We will work closely with local government, organizations and stakeholders to achieve our goals and create a brighter future for Boracay Island.

Let us embrace these hopes and resolutions as a roadmap for a better Boracay Island. By working together with dedication and a shared sense of purpose, we can ensure that our beloved island remains a paradise for generations to come.

May the New Year bring us renewed hope, endless opportunities, and a steadfast commitment to the preservation of Boracay's splendor. Together, we can make 2024 a year of sustainable growth and prosperity.

Wishing you all a joyful holiday season and a prosperous, sustainable New Year ahead!"

— **Dindo Miguel Martin F. Salazar**  
Chairman, Boracay Foundation Incorporated



"On behalf of the Boracay Sun News family, thank you for making us a part of your day, and for allowing us to keep you informed and entertained, and hopefully, to bring some sunshine and cheer to your homes and to our small island community.

To our contributors, suppliers and everyone that helps to get this paper to your homes, businesses, favorite cafes and to your fingertips, thank you. May you never tire of sharing the Boracay Island story and keeping the flame alive.

To all our friends, advertisers, supporters and leaders, we thank you for your dedication. May you be filled with renewed hope and perseverance towards the better good of all, including the sustainability of our island home.

We wish each one of you a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2024! We also wish for peace on earth and goodwill to all!

May the joy and blessings of the season fill your homes (and may your hearts be as full as your bellies!) and be with you throughout the holiday season and in the coming year! God bless you all,

— **Freida and Mark Santiago**  
Editor-In-Chief, Boracay Sun News / VP, PCCI-Boracay



**Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry-Boracay Board of Directors**  
Front row (from left): VP Mark Santiago, Dir. Russell Cruz, VP Djila Winebrenner  
Back row (from left): Pres. Michael Sweeney, Elmar Lina, Dir. Wesley van der Voort, Patrick Florencio

"As we bid farewell to 2023 and welcome the promising year ahead, we would like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the remarkable journey we have had over the last year.

We are profoundly thankful for the positive year of 2023 that has been a year filled with achievements, growth and a sense of unity that has truly defined our community. Together, we have navigated challenges and seized opportunities, emerging stronger and more resilient than ever.

One of the key highlights of this year has been our fruitful cooperation with our community stakeholders. Our collaborative efforts have allowed us to foster a sense of togetherness that is essential for the betterment of Boracay Island. It is through this spirit of collaboration that we have been able to tackle various issues and embark on initiatives that benefit our beloved island and its people.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the members of the PCCI-Boracay. Your unwavering support and dedication have played a big role in our organization, strengthening and enriching the foundation of our community.

Moreover, we cannot overlook the incredible gains of Boracay over the last year, from sustainable tourism initiatives to community development projects, these achievements are a testament to a collective determination of LGU of Malay, the Province of Aklan and also with the co-productive commitment of the business community and the private sector.

As we stand on the threshold of 2024, let us do so with optimism and enthusiasm. The challenges ahead may be significant, but I have no doubt that together, we will overcome and continue to thrive with our shared vision, dedication, and the continued support of our community.

We look forward to another year of collaboration, growth and progress as we embark on this new chapter together. Wishing you all a prosperous and joyful 2024!"

— **Michael Sweeney**  
President, Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry-Boracay



"May love, peace and joy reign in our hearts this Yuletide Season.

May the coming year 2024 bring prosperity not only to all Malaynons but to the whole nation.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!"

— **Mayor Frolibar S. Bautista and family**



"As we approach the end of the year, I wanted to take a moment to extend my warmest season's greetings to each and every one of you. This year, as we celebrate the holiday season and anticipate the arrival of the new year, it's a time for reflection, gratitude and renewed hope.

As the Chief of Police of Malay, I look back with pride on the tireless efforts and dedication of our local police force and the cooperation of the community in maintaining the peace and security that is the foundation of our island's success. Together, we have strived to keep Boracay safe and welcoming for all.

Thank you for your untiring support to our Malay Police Force. Your trust and encouragement fuel our commitment to keeping our island safe and secure. We're grateful for your partnership and we look forward to a brighter future together.

As we enter the new year, my hope is that we continue to work hand in hand to make Boracay Island a shining example of sustainability and responsible tourism. We must always remember our shared responsibility of making our island safe to live, to work, to enjoy and to do business. We must resolve to protect and preserve the natural beauty of our island, which has drawn people from far and wide.

May the New Year bring forth a Boracay that is truly a haven of peace and order, where safety is not just a promise but a way of life. Let us all work together to ensure that every corner of our island remains secure, and that the tranquil beauty of Boracay is enjoyed without fear or disturbance. In unity, we can make 2024 a year of continued safety and serenity for our beloved Boracay.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas filled with love, laughter and cherished moments, and a New Year brimming with hope, success and endless possibilities. Happy Holidays!"

— **PLTCOL. Dainis Ortega Amuguis**  
Acting Chief of Police, Malay Municipal Police Station



To the community of Boracay, the LGU & Provincial Government employees, stakeholders, tourism workers, medical personnel, emergency responders and our law enforcers and peace keepers,

A Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all of you!

As sure as the sun shines in our island paradise of Boracay, your BFRAV emergency responders are here for you, at your service 24/7!"

— **RAdm. Leonard A. Tirol**  
CEO, Boracay Fire Rescue & Ambulance Volunteers (BFRAV) | Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary (PCGA) Board Director, BFI | White House Beach Resort and the Tirol family







**Philippine Red Cross Malay-Boracay Chapter Board of Directors**

**Front Row: Catherine Fulgencio, Astrophel Tabanera, Elena T. Brugger, Chairman Delnora H. Nano, Chapter Administrator Rona Liza Orada, Christine Hope Pagsuguiron and Hannah Fernando**  
**Back row: Douglas Fabilane, Angelo Fabilane, Jessie Flores, Alan Palma Sr. Jojo Tagpis, Gerard Gaitera, Claire Jeffery, Karen Bermejo**

“The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) Malay-Boracay Chapter team, our volunteers and Red Cross Youth would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas! PRC Boracay is always positive, always vibrant and always ready to serve the community.

This Christmas, we wish that happiness multiplies and prosperity manifests for everyone. May you have a joyous Christmas! Let us celebrate the birth of Christ in a joyous manner.”

— **Delnora Nano**

**Chairwoman, Philippine Red Cross Malay-Boracay Chapter**



**Boracay International Dragon Boat Festival, Inc.**

**From left: Nennette Graf, Candy Ledesma, Maria Ronholm, Gigi Piit**

“May this little planet of ours be filled with love, joy and lasting peace this Christmas, and may the New Year brings us new opportunities to grow, just like how dragon boat racing brings communities closer in the spirit of sports and camaraderie.”

— **Boracay International Dragon Boat Festival, Inc.**



**Season's Greetings from the Philippine Kiteboarding Association!**

As we embark on the 9th Season of the Philippine Kiteboarding Tour, we wish to thank all our members and supporters for the successful resumption of the tour after the global pandemic. We are excited to bring the tour back to Boracay on March 1 to 3, 2024.

The kiteboarding community is happy that Bulabog Beach is cleaner than ever and the walkway is completed and brings vibrance to the whole beach!”

— **Philippine Kiteboarding Association**



— **Russell Cruz**  
**President, Boracay Water Sports Association**  
**Board Director, PCCI-Boracay**



**— Soojin Kim**

**President, Korean Residents Organization in Boracay**



“We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a joyful & abundant 2024! Many thanks and best wishes for the upcoming year, as well as for health and happiness.”

— **Desiree Segovia**

**Pinay Boracay / Boracay Women Producers Cooperative**



“Sea Generation Philippines hopes that this year will be one of small gestures and changes to protect Boracay's exceptional marine environment, which we share with nature.”

— **Anne Dubin**

**President, Sea Generation Philippines**



“As we approach this joyous season of giving and togetherness, on behalf of Unisikad Boracay Association, I want to extend my warmest Christmas greetings to each and every one of you. Your unwavering support throughout the year has been the true gift that keeps on giving. Our association thrives because of your dedication and passion for cycling. It warms my heart to see the community grow stronger and closer with every pedal we take.

As we usher in the new year, I kindly ask for your continued support and presence at our upcoming events. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact, promote healthy living, and spread the love for cycling to even more people in our community.

May your holidays be filled with the joy of riding, the warmth of family and friends, and the spirit of giving. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!”

— **Erielyn Gaston**

**President, Unisikad Boracay Association**

“Sending heartfelt Christmas wishes to the wonderful community of Boracay!

Throughout the challenging times of Covid-19, you have all shown incredible resilience and strength. I am truly proud of each and every one of you. May your businesses flourish, and may your families be blessed with health and happiness.

Thank you as well to Korean Residents Organization in Boracay and its 400 plus members. Your collaboration with us is truly appreciated. Thank you for being a part of this community once again.

As we celebrate this Christmas season, may the love and grace of God be with you all. I will keep you in my prayers, wishing for a future filled with joy and prosperity. May God's blessings surround you abundantly.

Merry Christmas!”



**— Aira Boracay**

“Sending you season's greetings and best wishes for a prosperous and joyful year ahead. In the coming new year 2024, we encourage everyone to practice sustainable tourism practices, such as promoting eco-friendly accommodations and reducing the use of single-use plastics. We hope for improved public infrastructures, such as roads, streetlights and transportation, to accommodate the growing influx of visitors while minimizing the environmental impact. Happy Holidays!”



“Wishing you the merriest of holidays from all of us at Jammers Beach Shack! Your unwavering support has made our beachside haven even more special. May your celebrations be filled with love, laughter and cherished moments. Thank you for being a part of our beachside community.”

— **Jammers Beach Shack**



“Warmest regards to our family, friends, business partners and clients. May we be reminded of our blessings throughout this holiday season. Club Galaxy wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May this season bring you the joy of gratitude, the fuzziness of love, and an abundance of laughter.

Every New Year brings with it new challenges and obstacles. May there be more visitors in the coming year, and may there be fewer rules and regulations that make way for a large number of visitors. Our wish for Boracay Island is to have the strength and optimism to overcome all odds, while offering our visitors many more unforgettable memories.

We wish everyone a wonderful and successful year ahead!”

— **Club Galaxy**



“Wishing everyone a reflective and joyful Christmas celebration filled with endless love, happiness and contentment.

May this season bring you and your family many reasons to smile and many opportunities to build lasting memories.

May it remind us of the important things in life and allow us to grow in gratitude, courage and wisdom. As the new year greets us, may it shower Boracay with abundant blessings, great opportunities and a fruitful 2024. We pray that each and every one of us will be an instrument of positive change and efficiency. May we all embrace our duties as stewards of our beloved Boracay Island as we help each other care for the community and environment. Merry Christmas to all!”

— **Erwin Lopez**

**Hotel Manager, Discovery Shores Boracay**





“Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo! May the peace and blessings of Christmas be yours, and may the coming year be filled with happiness.”

— Dos Mestizos Boracay



“Season’s greetings! EPIC Boracay would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and say thank you to our team members for their exceptional hard work and commitment. To all our patrons, we value each and every one of you and cannot express our deep gratitude for your continued support all these years.

We wish everyone a fabulous Christmas filled with happiness, success and good memories. May this season shine light on your blessings and bring new ones this New Year! We will continue to strive to bring you all memorable meals and the best and biggest parties!

Happy holidays from us at EPIC Boracay, the epicenter of world-class dining and partying at the heart of Boracay Island!”

— Epic Boracay



“Season’s Greetings from Ambassador in Paradise Resort! We wish everyone a joyous holiday season and a happy and peaceful New Year! We hope that everyone who visits Boracay in the new year 2024 will have a memorable experience to cherish!”

— Ambassador in Paradise

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 Instagram: [www.instagram.com/ambassadorinparadiseboracay](https://www.instagram.com/ambassadorinparadiseboracay)



“Season’s greetings Boracay friends! We hope 2024 is full of health, happiness, prosperity and joy for you and your family. May 2024 be a year of peace all around the world.”

— Lemoni Cafe and Dinibeach Bar family



“Season’s greetings for a sustainable and prosperous Boracay! May this festive season bring joy, unity and a renewed commitment to preserving the natural beauty of this paradise island. Let’s work together to ensure that Boracay remains a haven for generations to come. Happy holidays!”

— Elke D. de Sullan, Director of Operations and the Mandala Spa & Resort Villas family



“Happy Holidays to the readers of Boracay Sun News and to everyone who calls this beautiful island home! We wish you a festive celebration and a bright new year ahead. May we all experience continued recovery from the challenges of the past few years and continue to build a sustainable future for all of us.”

— The Sunny Side Group



“Happy Holidays from Villa Caemilla Beach Boutique Hotel! May this season be filled with love, laughter, and cherished memories. Reflect on the past, set new goals, and make positive changes for a better future.

As we welcome the New Year, let us reflect on the future and sustainability of Boracay Island, one of the most beautiful destinations in the world. Together, we can make a difference by implementing eco-friendly practices, reducing pollution, and promoting sustainable tourism. By working towards a common goal, we can inspire positive change and preserve the natural beauty of this magical island for generations to come.

We want to express our gratitude for your support throughout the year. Our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May your holidays be filled with joy, peace, and happiness.”

— Wesley Van der Voort  
General Manager, Villa Caemilla Beach Boutique Hotel



“We are grateful to be part of the Boracay community for the 16th year.

Every year we give our best efforts to serve with the freshest ingredients and the biggest smiles.

We wish everyone good health and success for the coming year!

We hope Boracay continues to grow as a tourist destination, and to protect our beaches and our island as a whole.”

— Congas Boracay

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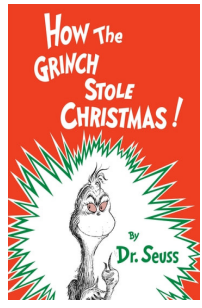
For reservation, you may reach through our mobile numbers:  
 09288191211 for Congas Station 3 and  
 09201068180 for Congas Bulabog.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

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

**CHRISTMAS CLASSICS** By Pauline R.

From tales of love and compassion to stories of hope and forgiveness, Christmas books have a unique power to brighten our hearts and remind us of the true meaning of the season. Here are some of the best Christmas books to add to your reading list this holiday season. So sit back, grab a cup of cocoa, and let's dive into the world of Christmas literature!



**"How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" by Dr. Seuss**

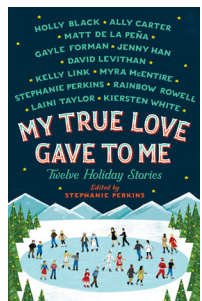
"How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" by Dr. Seuss is a classic children's book that has been enjoyed by generations of readers. The story follows the Grinch, a grouchy and grumpy creature who lives in a cave on a mountain overlooking the town of Whoville. The Grinch is annoyed by the cheerful and joyful Christmas celebrations of the Whos and decides to steal Christmas from them, hoping to put an end to their merriment. The story is told in the fun and playful rhyme famously used by the iconic author, which makes it easy for both children and adults to read and enjoy. The illustrations are colorful and whimsical, showcasing the unique and imaginative style of Dr. Seuss. It is a timeless classic that captures the spirit of Christmas and reminds us to spread joy and cheer to all those around us.

contemporary to paranormal and fantasy genres, and all revolve around the theme of the holiday season. What makes this collection special is the diverse range of authors that have contributed to it. Each story has its own unique voice, style and perspective. Some stories are funny and heartwarming while others are dark and eerie, making it appealing to readers of all ages. It's a perfect read to get you into the holiday spirit, and a great gift for anyone who loves young adult literature.



**"A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens**

"A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens is a timeless classic that tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who hates Christmas and all its joyous festivities. The story starts with Scrooge being visited by the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley. Marley tells Scrooge that he will be visited by three ghosts—the Ghost of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come. The spirits show Scrooge the errors of his ways and the consequences of his selfishness, leading him to finally understand the true meaning of Christmas and to change his ways. The book is a heartwarming tale about redemption and the power of charity and kindness. Dickens masterfully depicts the harsh realities of life for the poor and demonstrates how small acts of kindness can make a significant impact.



**"My True Love Gave to Me: Twelve Holiday Stories" edited by Stephanie Perkins**

"My True Love Gave to Me: Twelve Holiday Stories" is a collection of short stories edited by Stephanie Perkins, with each story written by a different young adult author. The stories range from

**KOREAN COMMUNITY NEWS**

**KROB PRESIDENT SOOJIN KIM HONORED BY KOREAN PRESIDENT**  
**Recognized for Outstanding Service to Korean Residents and Tourists in Boracay** By Jun N. Aguirre

Seoul, South Korea – On October 5, in a grand ceremony held at the Lotte Hotel Cristal Ballroom in South Korea, Soojin Kim, president of the Korean Residents Organization in Malay Aklan (KROB) was bestowed with a remarkable honor.

The distinguished award, presented by Korean President Yun Suk Yeol, recognized Kim's unwavering commitment and exceptional contributions to the Korean community.

The 17th World Korean Days Conference & Awarding Ceremony witnessed a gathering of esteemed guests, including representatives from American provinces, European countries and Asian nations.



Over 500 presidents of Korean community organizations from around the globe were in attendance, making it a truly momentous occasion.

Kim's dedication to serving Korean residents and tourists on Boracay Island for more than three decades has earned her this well-deserved recognition. She has been instrumental in providing invaluable free services, establishing herself as a beacon of support and guidance for the local Korean community.

Notably, she holds the distinction of being the first Korean businesswoman in Boracay, setting an inspiring example for others.

The Korean government, recognizing her outstanding efforts, selected Kim as the epitome of excellence among Korean residents residing outside their home country.

This prestigious award serves as a testament to her invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to fostering a strong Korean community abroad.

Kim's achievement not only brings immense pride to the KROB in Malay, Aklan but also serves as an inspiration for individuals dedicated to serving their communities. Her selfless endeavors have left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of Korean residents and tourists alike, solidifying her place as a true ambassador of Korean culture and values.

As she continues her remarkable journey, her incredible accomplishments will undoubtedly inspire others to follow in her footsteps, ensuring a brighter future for the Korean community worldwide.

**KELANA COASTAL CUISINE**  
BORACAY ISLAND, PHILIPPINES

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

**Enjoy our cocktails, have a delicious meal and kick back to some live music.**

Facebook Page: Kelana Coastal Cuisine  
 E-mail: kelanacoastalcuisineboracay@gmail.com  
 Tel.: 036-288-9873 Mobile: 09274948010

**Isla Pollyanna De Boracay**

**Boracay's Bikini Shop**  
 The Best Little Bikini Shop on White Beach

**Come visit us next door to Nigi-Nigi Beach Bar for all your Your Beach Swimwear WE HAVE A BIG SELECTION OF BIKINIS TO OFFER White Beach Station 2**

# INDULGE BSN's Christmas Dinner & Party Potluck Guide / Directory CHRISTMAS PARTY PLANNING MADE EASY

By Amanda Virrey and Elle Quevedo

**Boracay Sun News (BSN)** scoured the island for the top, tried and tested, and reliable Noche Buena and potluck food suppliers, caterers, and home cooks: from lumpia and empanada, crispy pata, chicken wings, all types of pansit and bilao combos, to lechon suppliers, and of course, pastries and desserts! You will want to save this article and stick it to your fridge because our ultimate guide and directory could make or break Christmas!

**W**hen it comes to yuletide feasts, Filipinos will pull all the stops to top their Christmas Eve dinner or Noche Buena tables with the most sumptuous offerings available!



Traditionally, the Noche Buena feast is composed of a galore of savory dishes, like palabok (Filipino rice noodles topped with seafood, meat and boiled eggs), meatloaf, kesong puti (white goat cheese) or queso de bola (edam cheese), and roasted pig, famously known as lechon. Complementing these are assorted sweet desserts like kakanin (sticky rice cakes) with grated coconut and sugar, fruit salad, leche flan, Brazo de Mercedes, ensaymada, and at least two types of cakes and more.

Then there's the company Christmas party, the barkada (close-knit friends) Christmas dinner, and the family reunion,

all of which require creative potluck contributions.

With this Christmas feast potluck guide, choosing the perfect gift and food contribution that your loved ones will surely enjoy is now made easier with a few clicks of a button. Just remember to order them in advance so you can rest assured that your delicious offerings are already taken care of.

Allow us to guide you on the various food offerings that would be a perfect gift for your loved ones, a delectable offering at your potluck Christmas party, or the pièce de résistance on your Noche Buena table, with a detailed directory and tips on how to order.

## LECHON, FILIPINO SPECIALS & POTLUCK FARE By Elle Quevedo

### Ruth's Lechon and Meat Products (Nerus Online Shop & Delivery Lechãon, Kakanin atbpa.



Ruth Balandra Tubo's home delivery business was established in 2017, but the online store Nerus Online Shop and Delivery Service started in 2019 during the pandemic, at which time online food deliveries kept her store afloat. Thanks to the Boracay Eats Directory Facebook group page, Ruth was able to reach the island community and supply meats and other fresh produce. Ruth coordinated with many other online food sellers to be a part of the Helping Hands and Free Pantry Groups to help the community during those tough two years. Happily, they are still partnering to this day.

- Products** Whole Lechon, Chopped lechon per kilo, Seafood, Pampano fish, seasonal fruits
- Mobile #** (0947) 386 1718 (Smart); (0915) 300 3505 (Globe)
- Facebook/Messenger** Neru's Delivery Service (Ruth Balandra Tubo); Boracay Eats Directory
- Delivery/cancellation** Reserve a few days ahead for whole lechon. Deposit required.

### Zil Cuisine



Located at Cagban Ibabaw near AP Cargo, Zil Cuisine accepts orders through text messaging or via Viber. Order a whole lechon or chopped lechon for your holiday party needs. Check out their Filipino Food combos and many festive desserts that will fill your holiday table. They deliver right to your doorstep.

- Products** Lechon and Bilao Food Combos
- Mobile #/ Viber** (0946) 988 9333
- Facebook/Messenger** Zil Cuisine; Boracay Eats Directory
- Delivery/cancellation** Reserve 1-2 days ahead of time. 50% down payment. No cancellation.

### Lea's Homemade Filipino Delicacies

Lea started her homemade Filipino food delivery in 2016. At first, she delivered many small containers of "ube halaya." Nowadays, she offers a variety of delicious Filipino dishes and desserts for all your party needs.

- Products** Lumpia, Chicken Empanadas, Lasagna, Ginataan Bilo-bilo, Bilao Food Combos, Filipino Desserts
- Mobile #** (0948) 198 4159
- Facebook/Messenger** Alvior Lea Gano; Boracay Eats Directory
- Delivery/cancellation** Reserve 1-2 days ahead of time.

### Pisces and Spices Kitchen Boracay



Guaranteed delicious food combo for your holiday spread. Besides catering many delicious combo meals, they also take pride on having the best samgyupsal meals on the island. Also check out their sit-down offerings at their location at Tindahan It Boracay Market on Tulubhan Road across Angol Road.

- Products** Pancit Bihon, Crispy Pata, Whole Fried Chicken, Pork Sisig, Family Bundle Combos, Seafood Festival Platter
- Mobile #** (0999) 945 0550
- Facebook/Messenger** Pisces & Spices Kitchen, Boracay
- Delivery/cancellation** Text or message them your name, contact number and address between 12 a.m. to 9 p.m. to order. No cancellation 1 day before or on delivery date. 50% down payment via GCash (0999) 945 0550.

### OPC Foodhub Boracay



OPC Foodhub Boracay started during the pandemic. They catered to so many locals who could not otherwise leave their

homes at the time. They have a variety of mixed mini-bilao foods that are hearty and tasty. Perfect for a small party.

- Products** Bilao Food Combos, Chicken Wings, Ice Cream Roll, Takoyaki
- Mobile #** (0963) 869 1070
- Facebook/Messenger** Opc Boracay Foodhub; Boracay Eats Directory
- Delivery/cancellation** Order at least 1 day before. Strictly no cancellation.

### Kolai Mangyan Boracay

One of the island's more established restaurants that offers classic Filipino dishes, their slogan "Good food at a good price," says it all.

- Products** Bulasing, Crispy Pata and Sizzling Pinoy Dishes
- Tel:** (+ 63 36) 288 9616
- Facebook/Messenger** Kolai Mangyan Boracay
- Delivery/cancellation** Call or send them a message for your orders.

### Chichas and Pica

There's truth to their claim to be "the best chicken wings on the island," and they have had many delightful celebrations in their restaurant, but you could also order in for any party delivery needs.

- Products** Chicken Wings, Shawarmas, Nachos
- Mobile #** (0917) 777 6554
- Instagram** @chichasandpica
- Delivery/cancellation** Call or send them a message for your orders.

### Tod's Lomi House and Resto

Tod's is considered a local favorite, serving Filipino cuisine since 2014. Guaranteed delicious Filipino food each time, aside from the bestselling Lomi soup, many other dishes are perfect for your Noche Buena party.

- Products** Lumpiang Shangha, Pancit, Spaghetti, Palabok, Bihon Guisado
- Tel/Mobile #** (036) 288 2571 (0908) 141 2936
- Facebook/Messenger** Tods Lomi House and Resto
- Delivery/cancellation** Reserve at least 1 day before; for small orders, at least 1 hour before.

## PASTRIES & DESSERTS

By Amanda Virrey

### Mahaw-Ta



A business conceived by Beth Milanés and her family during the pandemic, diners are invited to partake in their meal or snack, as a warm gesture reflective of Filipino culture. At their store inside VHub Food Festival and Seafood Market in Station 3, they offer traditional Filipino meals and desserts, as well as a big boodle meals of rice and mixed viands of meat, seafood and veggies on fresh banana leaves.

### Bestsellers:

Brazo De Mercedes (meringue roll followed with egg-based custard); Whole roll (PhP600) or mini cupcakes (PhP15 per piece, minimum of 12 pieces per order) Assorted Kakanin in bilao Kutsinta (sticky rice with coconut grating), Puto Cheese (steamed cake topped with cheese), and Palitaw (sticky rice coated with grated coconut, sugar and sesame seeds); PhP600 pieces per bilao

- Mobile/** (0916) 593 7013
- Facebook/Messenger** Mahaw Ta Boracay
- Instagram** @mahawta\_boracay or via SMS/
- Delivery/cancellation** Order at least 1 to 2 days before; Delivery via Mr. Swift or Boracay Delivery.

### Real Coffee and Tea Boracay



The island's iconic beachfront coffee shop owes its success to their friendly island vibes and to their Original Calamansi Muffins. Conceived by the formidable mother-and-daughter team of Lee and Nadine Rosaia in 1996, Real Coffee has moved to different locations, from where it started near BomBom Bar, to a hidden pocket at Station 1, and currently at Station 2 since 2013.

**Bestseller:**

Real Coffee's Calamansi Muffins boast a zest of sweetness that brings forth fun memories of Boracay; Box of 6 (Php200) or per piece (Php70)

**Tel:** (+63 36) 288 5340

**Facebook/Messenger** Original Real Coffee & Tea Cafe

**Instagram** @realcoffeeboracayoriginal

**Delivery/cancellation** Order at least 1 day before; For pickup or delivery via Mr. Swift or Boracay Delivery.

**Lemoni Cafe and Restaurant**



The realized dream of Boracay old-timers Sarah LeBrooy and Julia Lervik in 2005, their concept of healthy fresh food, an in-house bakery, all-day breakfast, and great service at their spot in D'Mall was the first on the island at the time. Today, in addition to delectable menu, their pastries and desserts have set the bar for the island, and remain to be the go-to place for birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions, especially for Christmas!

**Bestsellers:**

Coconut Brownies (moist chocolate brownies topped with coconut shavings; Whole 8x8 (Php1,450) or per slice (Php60)

Christmas Gingersnaps (spiced cookies decorated with sugar icing); Big (Php50) or small (Php30)

**Tel:** (+63 36) 288 6781

**Facebook/Messenger** Lemoni Cafe & Restaurant, Boracay

**Instagram** @lemonicafe.boracay

**Delivery/cancellation** Coconut Brownies – Order 1 to 2 days before; Minimum order of Php1,000; Christmas Gingersnaps – Available in bulk, order at least 1 week before; Delivery via Mr. Swift or Boracay Delivery.

**Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast**



A hidden gem in Bulabog, Lazy Dog B&B is a homey resort and restaurant with al fresco dining around an age-old Palomar tree. Since 2005, people from all over the world have been coming to this place in order to feel the "old Boracay vibe" where warm smiles open up to great conversations and solid connections over delicious gourmet food, a relaxing environment and a friendly bark from the canine pets of owner, Djila Winebrenner. Nowadays, kitesurfers and digital nomads often hang out here to enjoy a cup of their infamous Vietnamese coffee with a slice of their bestselling Banana Loaf.

**Bestseller:**

Banana Loaf; Whole loaf (Php250) or per slice (Php80)

**Mobile #** (0917) 700 8571

**Facebook/Messenger** The Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast

**Instagram** @lazydogboracay

**Delivery/cancellation** Pre-order at least 1 day before for a whole loaf.

**Oh My Cakes Boracay**



Oh My Cakes is the delicious creation of BSN writer Azenith Resurreccion during the pandemic. After receiving baking lessons from her baker friend online, she began baking cakes for her family and birthday cakes as gifts for friends, who in turn promoted them by word-of-mouth. When she offered them online, her ready-baked and customized cakes flew off the shelves. Azenith's cakes have become synonymous with good quality, intrinsically decorated custom-made cakes for birthdays, weddings and other special occasions, particularly for Christmas.

**Bestsellers:**

Chocolate Overload, Chocolate Moist, Red Velvet with Cream Cheese Filling, Strawberry, Lemon Vanilla and other flavors, with choices of icing (whipped cream, buttercream, ganache or fondant) Available in various sizes: 5"x3" (Php280), 6"x3" (Php450), 8"x3" (Php800); Round customized cakes (from Php1,000) price varies depending on the size, flavor and design

**Facebook/Messenger** Oh My Cakes - Boracay

**Delivery/cancellation** Delivers via Mr. Swift.

**Meninas Oven**



Another delicious creation born during the pandemic. Following her French pastry internship, Boracay-born Kate Tagua felt compelled to apply what she had learned, and started her own line of pastries offering decadent and moist cakes, brownies and cookies. Meninas which translates to "young lady" in Portuguese is Kate's gesture of solidarity to women who are causing a positive shift in the culinary scene.

**Bestsellers:**

Cheesecake: Whole (Php2,155) or per slice (Php190)

Salted Caramel Brownies: Box of 6 (Php490) or box of 9 (Php695)

**Facebook/Messenger** Meninas Oven

**Instagram** @meninasoven

**Delivery/cancellation** Pre-order cakes at least 3 days before; Delivers via Mr. Swift.

**Spoonfull Confections Boracay Pastry Shop**



This new sweet shop in Station 2 doles out a galore of heavenly desserts, including artistic cakes, croissants, danishes, and their must-try donuts and ensaymada.

**Bestsellers:**

Spoonfull Ensaymada Delight flavors: Dulce de Leche with Cheese, Choco Oreo, Cinnamon Roll, Nutella with Walnuts and Creamy Cheesy; Per piece (Php75); Ube Ensaymada (Php80 per piece); Cinnamon Roll with almond (Php85 per piece)

Donuts with rich fillings/toppings: Dark Choco Donut, Caramel Dulce, Blueberry Meringue, Tiramisu, Mango Grahams, Al Capone, Choco Hazelnut, Matcha Vanilla, Strawberry, Lemon Meringue

Box of 6 (Php380), box of 12 (Php760), or per piece Php65

**Mobile #** +63 967 224 1311

**Facebook/Messenger** Spoonfull Confections Boracay

**Instagram** @spoonfullconfections-boracay

**Delivery/cancellation** Pre-order at least 2 to 3 days before.

**Totally Bananas Café**



Born out of the pandemic, Totally Bananas Café is totally bananas in more ways than one: exploiting the business and the versatility of Philippine bananas. Go bananas! This little bananery café with a big heart making delightfully homemade cakes, cookies, sandwiches, milkshakes and some of the strongest coffees on the island. Their yummy banana cookies are just to die for.

**Products:**

Homemade Cakes and Cookies

**Mobile #/WhatsApp** (0919) 813 6342

**Facebook/Messenger** Totally Bananas Café

**Delivery/cancellation** Reserve whole cake orders 1 day before. No cancellation if less than 24 hours' notice. 🍌



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and restaurant

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(036) 288 6781  
+63 977 857 7155

📍 lemonicafe.boracay

**DINI BEACH**  
Bar & Restaurant

Located at Diniwid beach, it's the perfect place to while away your day on the beach and watch the beautiful Boracay sunset. The famous sunset sessions, features local and International DJ's. Specializing in crafted cocktails, bar chow, soul food, seafood and more. Open daily from 10am til 9pm

Diniwid Beach, Boracay Island,  
Malay, Aklan 5608  
(036) 288 9710  
+63 917 717 1246

📍 dinibeachbar

INDULGE

# THE GOLDEN HOUR

## BSN's Guide to the top spots for Sunset Cocktails

By Rica Velasco

Sipping on cocktails while savoring a stunning Boracay sunset is an absolute must. These drinks take the experience of watching the sun sink into the horizon on White Beach to a whole new level.

But it's not just about the drink; it's the places that make this moment extraordinary. We're here to highlight some of the island's top-notch establishments, each with their own unique charm, that transform the sunset cocktail hour into something special. It's a tradition and an incredible way to soak up those tropical island vibes.

Don't worry though if you're in the mood for something alcohol-free, these bars also offer a fantastic selection of mocktails to quench your thirst as you soak in the sunset.

### Peaceful and Chill: VILLA CAEMILLA at Angol Beach

With a serene ambiance and a prime location on the tranquil side of the island, this spot offers the perfect setting to unwind. Their sunset sessions are a delightful touch, with a playlist of beach vibes music to perfectly complement the mood of their guests as they sip their favorite cocktails right by the beach, all while enjoying a breathtaking view of the sunset.

**Highlights:** Take pleasure in their thoughtfully and beautifully crafted cocktails as well as some locally produced craft beer on draft.

- G&T Moroccan mint: TWG Moroccan mint tea, homemade apple shrub, passion fruit and gin
- Moscow mule: Homemade ginger beer, lime, vodka, soda water and homemade bitters



**Promos:** Happy Hour from 12 to 6 p.m. 50% off on selected handcrafted cocktails.

### Classic Boracay Vibes: COCOLOCO BORACAY, Angol Beach

This rustic restaurant bar exudes an unmistakable authenticity, standing the test of time since 1979. Embracing all the quintessential elements of a beach bar, it boasts a billiard table, wooden bar and bar stools, beachside chairs offering prime sunset views, and a music playlist that ranges from 80s hits to rock classics.

**Highlights:** Showcasing and supporting award-winning products made locally in Malay by Destileria Barako.

- Gayuma sa Loco by Destileria Barako is a blend of lychee, lemongrass, vacuum-distilled smoke distillate; mixed with Cointreau, simple syrup and lime juice.



- Ube sa Kanto: Ube Cream Liqueur by Destileria Barako is a mix of Sugar Cane Vodka from Negros, blended with full cream and Filipino Ube with milk and Kanto caramel vodka.

**Promos:** Happy Hour from 3 to 8 p.m. Buy 1, take 1 on selected cocktails and discounted prices on beer.

### Heart of the Action: CHA CHA'S BEACH Café, Station 2

Drawing inspiration from the world's most coveted beach destinations, Cha Cha's envelops you in tropical rhythms as you savor their signature cocktails, basking in the sunset while observing fellow beachgoers passing by.

**Highlights:** Cha Cha's Sundown experience includes relishing cocktails and basking in the breathtaking sunset while enhancing the enjoyment of the jamming sessions with DJs and live music performers.

- Maui Mai Tai: House spiced rum, pineapple juice, dash of cherry syrup
- Calamansi a Go-Go: Rum, muddled fresh calamansi, mint, brown sugar, sugarcane
- Bloody Rita: Mango tequila, fresh lime, house made triple sec, citrus bitters



**Promos:** Happy Hour from 3 to 8 p.m. Buy-1, take 1 on selected cocktails.

### Intimate Wine Bar: SIP HAPPENS, Station 2

When looking for a cozy place to hang out with friends, unwind and enjoy some delicious drinks, look no further than Sip Happens. Whether you're looking to buy in bulk or just grab a bottle to enjoy in-house, their expertly curated wine selection is sure to please. Plus, as the only brewery on the island, they offer a unique and delicious selection of beers.

**Highlights:** They take immense pride in crafting their beer selection, featuring stand-out options like the White Beach Blonde Ale, Puka Beach IPA, and Bulabog Beach Stout. They use only premium liquors for house pours.

- Rosé Spritz: A wine-tail featuring rosé wine and strawberry cider topped with rose buds
- Elderflower Gin Fizz - gin, dry cider and elderflower syrup
- Tom Collins: Their happy lemonade



**Promos:** They come out with special events like Kitchen Takeover, Lokal's Night, and more.

### Epicenter of White Beach: EPIC BORACAY, Station 2

EPIC Boracay offers discerning epicureans an authentic Boracay experience like no other, right in the heart of the dining, shopping, and party district on the island. Lounge in style while sipping your favorite cocktails beachfront and witness the awe-inspiring spectacle of Boracay's sunsets. Their curated playlists range from Chill-out (downtempo, lounge, ambient, acid jazz) to sunset house music. During peak months, enjoy guest and resident DJs at Epic's "Sunset Sessions."

**Highlights:** One of their featured beverages is a non-alcoholic option, but just as thirst-quenching and ideal for beachside enjoyment.

- Epic's Signature Traditional Mojito: A mix of white rum muddled with a choice of fresh fruit (lychee, ripe mango or watermelon), fresh spearmint leaves, raw sugar, limes and a splash of soda
- Lychee Martini
- Chilled Fresh Coconut Juice in a Shell



**Promos:** Buy 2, take 1 on selected local beers and PHP 150 on selected cocktails.

### Charming Beachfront Bistro: TRUE HOME BISTRO, Station 1

True Home Bistro is an Instagram-worthy restaurant with Filipino-inspired decorations and a magnificent view of Willy's Rock. It is renowned as the ideal destination for Gin and Tonic lovers in Boracay. This concept was a perfect match from the beginning, as the restaurant has a small bar area and grows its herbs on the island, which inspired its unique Gin and Tonic selection.

**Highlights:** Customers can choose from the gins they serve, such as Bombay Sapphire, Tanqueray Gin, Hendricks Gin, and Roku Gin from Japan.

- Strawberry & Mint with Nordes Gin, one of Spain's most loved Gin
- Thai Basil Chili Gin & Tonic
- Rosemary & Lime Gin & Tonic



**Promos:** On Fridays, they showcase their herbs, dried citrus fruits, and an array of gins from all corners of the globe.

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INDULGE

# AROUND THE WORLD IN A BOWL!

Boracay Beach Truck is the first Food Truck Concept in Boracay!



From the creators, Juan Elizalde and Paolo Occhionero, of Boracay's best Italian restaurant, Aria Cucina Italiana, comes Boracay's first ever food truck restaurant concept.

**Island Bowls** features a variety of flavorful rice, noodles, and soup bowl options from around the world. Each bowl is a delicious combination of fresh ingredients and flavors, giving customers a taste of different cultures in one convenient rice bowl. Whether you're craving Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Hawaiian, or Japanese cuisine, Boracay Beach Truck has got you covered with their diverse menu options.

**Sunrise Milk Tea** offers a wide selection of refreshing milk tea flavors to start your day. From classic milk tea to unique fruit-infused blends, Sunrise Milk Tea has something for everyone's taste buds. Sip on their creamy and aromatic beverages while enjoying the beautiful views of Boracay Beach.

You'll never miss the **picturesque red food truck** calling you to try our mouthwatering rice bowls and milk tea. Conveniently located on the **Main Road, D'Mall of Boracay, Station 2, Balabag**.

There's first floor alfresco dining and second floor air-conditioned dining with vibrant and colorful murals adding to the beach vibe of the island.

For reservations, delivery, & take-out, you may reach them via the following details: 288-6749 / 0969-1490059, @boracaybeachtruck on Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.

*Photo credits to: Hungry Byaheros & Food. Travel.PH*



# A FOODIES DELIGHT



Aria Cucina Italiana, a two decade old and most-reviewed restaurant, has become a beloved culinary institution on the island of Boracay. Known for its authentic Italian cuisine, beachfront location, and warm hospitality, Aria Cucina Italiana has consistently delighted locals and tourists alike with its extensive menu of authentic Italian dishes made with the freshest ingredients. With a vibrant and inviting atmosphere, Aria Cucina Italiana offers a dining experience that transports guests to the heart of Italy. The restaurant's commitment to quality and attention to detail is evident in every dish, ensuring that each bite is a culinary delight.

This beachfront restaurant is always packed with tourists and locals, so we suggest you make a reservation in advance to secure a table. The restaurant's popularity is a testament to its exceptional food and service, making it a must-visit destination.

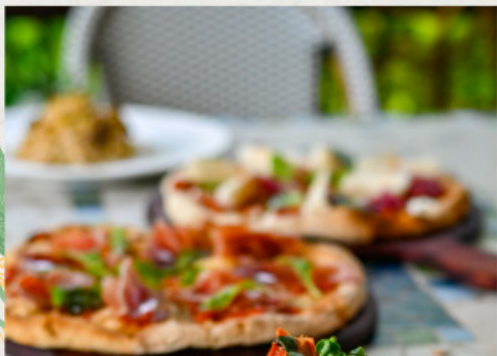
**La Famiglia, one of their best-selling pizzas, is a must-try.** It is almost a metre long pizza, perfect for five to six people, and you can select up to four flavors. When choosing a pasta, Marinara is a popular choice, with its rich tomato sauce and fresh seafood. For the main course, the standout option is grilled rib-eye steak. Additionally, the restaurant offers an extensive wine list featuring a variety of Italian wines that perfectly complement the flavors of the dishes. Whether you're a lover of authentic Italian cuisine or simply looking for a delightful dining experience, Aria Cucina Italiana is sure to exceed your expectations.

Owners Juan Elizalde and Paolo Occhionero surely created a culinary masterpiece with Aria Cucina Italiana.

For reservations, delivery, and take-out, you may reach them via the following details: 777 or 288-5573 or 09984828490 or 0926084695, @ariacucinaitaliana on Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.



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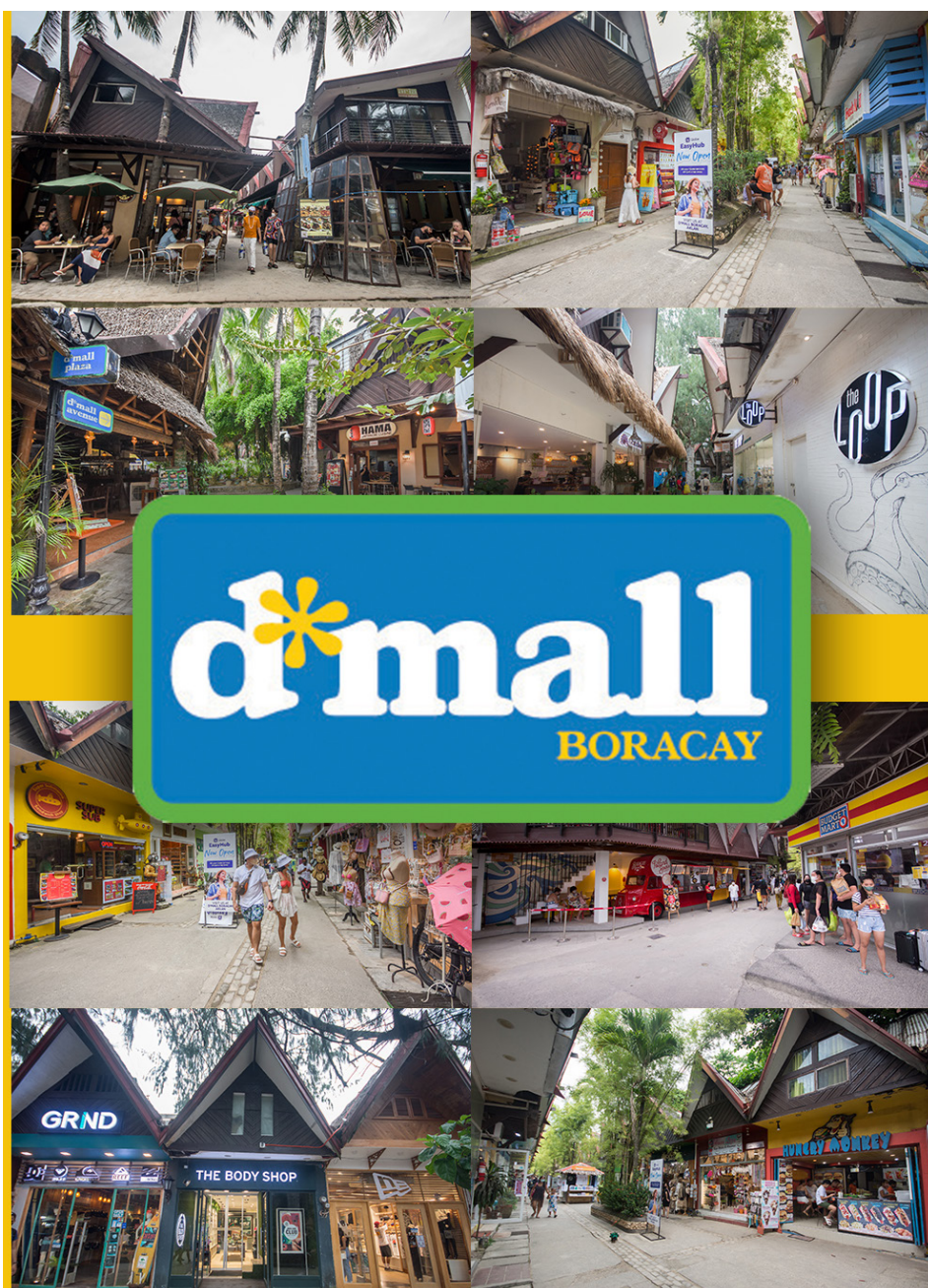


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FOOD ACTIVITIES EVENTS

**Resistor**

**TYANG'S**

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HOME OF THE PINOY-STYLE PALUTO

**PALUTO COOKING SERVICE & SEAFOOD STATION**

For Reservations:

- Station 1, Beside Astoria  
**288-3864**
- Station X, Hue Hotel  
**0917-624-8545**
- Station 3, Front Beach  
**288-1475**

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

Your guide to thriving, not just surviving!

# WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

By Kate Ng-Larrauri, M.D.

This holiday season, remember to be mindful of your health, and particularly, of your eating habits.



It has been an ongoing and long-term dilemma among the pediatric and adult population alike, that obesity is a complex and multifactorial condition that affects the health and wellbeing of millions of people worldwide. Recent statistics worldwide show a disturbingly increasing prevalence among all age groups. It also has negative impacts on the quality of life, mental health and social functioning of individuals.

“We have an obesity epidemic here in the Philippines,” was the statement given by the Department of Health (DOH) officer in charge Dr. Maria Rosario Vergeire in a media forum in March 2023.

**The “O” Word**

Obesity is defined as a complex disease involving having excess body fat, which means having more than the recommended body weight according to one’s height. Obesity isn't just a cosmetic concern, but rather a medical problem that increases the risk of many other diseases which can include heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, liver disease, sleep apnea and certain cancers.

Obesity could also be the strongest risk factor for the development of hypertension early on in childhood until adulthood which in fact, is preventable.

The causes of obesity are not fully understood, but they involve a combination of genetic, environmental, behavioral, and psychological factors. Some of the factors that contribute to obesity include:

- Excess energy intake compared to energy expenditure
- Sedentary lifestyle and lack of physical activity
- Consumption of energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods and beverages (e.g., junk food)
- Increased portion sizes and availability of food
- Lack of access to healthy food options and environments
- Exposure to food marketing and advertising
- Stress, depression, anxiety and other emotional issues
- Hormonal imbalances and metabolic disorders
- Medications that affect appetite or weight
- Genetic predisposition

In diagnosing obesity, body mass index (BMI) is used. This is a mathematical computation based on one’s weight and height (kg/m<sup>2</sup>).

The long-term impact can be associated with poor mental health, which in turn can cause social stigma or discrimination, increased stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as low self-esteem.

The good news is, there are strategies that can help prevent or manage obesity.

**Managing obesity:**

- Involvement of the family
- Behavior strategies using the 5210+ tool (Daily: 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, limited 2 hours or less of screen time, 1 hour or more of physical activity, 0 sugary drinks, + 7 or more hours of sleep)
- Adopting a balanced and nutritious diet that meets the individual’s energy and nutrient needs
- Increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behavior
- Limiting the intake of added sugars, saturated fats, trans fats, salt, and alcohol
- Choosing smaller portions and eating slowly and mindfully
- Drinking plenty of water
- Planning meals ahead and preparing food at home
- Reading nutrition labels and making informed food choices
- Seeking professional advice from a doctor, dietitian, or nutritionist
- Joining a weight management program or support group
- Setting realistic and specific goals and monitoring progress
- Enhancing self-esteem and body image
- Managing stress and coping with emotions in healthy ways

Obesity is a serious public health problem that requires urgent attention and action from individuals, families, communities, healthcare providers, policymakers, and society as a whole.

Change starts within oneself, and the first step is to accept and recognize the problem. Consult regularly with your child’s pediatrician to assess growth patterns, risk stratification and early detection, as well as regular visits with your general practitioner, to manage this global health concern.

As the saying goes, “You are what you eat,” and it goes without saying, that children follow what they see and experience with adults. So, this holiday season, enjoy the festivities while being mindful not to overdo it! Happy Holidays! 🎉

**Dr. Kate Ng-Larrauri** is a Boracay-based pediatrician, a specially trained medical doctor who works with babies, infants, adolescents and young adults. In this section, she shares and debunks the most common misconceptions on child care, and separates fact from fiction, especially for first-time moms.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

# HEALTHY HOLIDAY EATING

By Pauline R.

A healthy and balanced diet should be maintained all year round. However, the joyful and festive holiday season is filled with food, making it easy to overindulge.

During this time, it is essential to find balance and maintain a healthy lifestyle, because overeating during the Christmas and New Year season can easily lead to weight gain, bloating, and discomfort.

Here are a few healthy tips, so that you can enjoy all the delicious holiday treats without overindulging, including effective strategies to help you avoid overeating during this season. These tips will help you feel satisfied, healthy, and energized throughout the holiday season.



### 1. Plan Ahead.

Before attending any holiday event, plan ahead by eating a healthy snack. We hear the phrase "Come hungry!" too often when we are invited to a dinner party. By doing so, we tend to be so hungry by the time we reach dinner time that we eat way too much, way too fast, and we end up feeling heavy and sleepy. Choosing a healthy snack before going to an event will help us make more reasonable choices, while still enjoying the food that will be served.

### 2. Choose Your Foods Wisely.

When indulging in holiday foods, try

to choose healthier options that are low in calories, fat and sugar. Start with vegetables, nuts, lean proteins, healthier carbs and fruits instead of going straight to all the fried and starchy foods. This way, you can control your appetite better. Make sure your plate hits all the food groups and keep watch the portion size.

### 3. Drink Lots of Water!

Water is your best friend when it comes to staying healthy and hydrated. Drink plenty of it throughout the day, especially during meals, to fill up and avoid overeating. Moreover, drinking a glass of water before meals also helps you feel fuller, faster. And if you plan to enjoy your liquor, make sure to drink water in between each glass of alcohol to avoid a hangover in the morning!

### 4. Exercise Regularly.

The hectic holiday season is no excuse to skip exercising. Make sure you stick to your daily fitness routine to burn off excess calories, keep your energy levels up, and help you stay healthy. You can also make it a meaningful family activity by taking a long walk after dinner, enjoying an afternoon on the beach to swim, or going for a biking trip altogether. Keep yourself active and healthy while bonding!

### 5. Get Enough Sleep.

Lack of sleep can lead to overeating, as your body tries to compensate for the lack of energy it needs. Hence, it is essential to get enough sleep to keep your body healthy, your mind sharp, and avoid binge eating.

In conclusion, staying healthy during holidays is entirely within your reach, provided you keep up with your usual fitness regimen, eat mindfully, stay hydrated, and plan ahead. 🌿

FITNESS

# ARE YOU CHRISTMAS PARTY-READY?

Staying fit during the Christmas party season

By Mark Cabrera

I hope you are done with your Christmas shopping so you can focus on the fun part—the parties! But don't forget the pounds you have to lose by January!

Staying fit during the Christmas holidays can be a task due to the abundance of amazing food and festive activities.

Here are some tips to help you stay fit during the holiday season:

**Stay active.** Incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Go for a walk or run in the morning, participate in holiday-themed workouts, or engage in group sports like ultimate frisbee, football or biking. During parties, participate in party games and dance like there's no tomorrow.

**Plan your meals.** Be mindful of your food choices and portion sizes. Fill your plate with a balance of nutritious foods such as lean proteins, vegetables and fruits. Limit your consumption of sugary treats and high-calorie dishes. Plan your snack time and if there's a dinner party tonight, eat less.

**Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Sometimes, thirst can be mistaken for hunger, so staying hydrated can help prevent unnecessary snacking. Soda does not help in healthy hydrating at all so stay away from soft drinks.

**Practice portion control:** Enjoy your favorite holiday treats but be mindful of portion sizes. Get smaller portions and savor the flavors. Avoid overindulging in high-calorie foods and desserts. Go for salads, chicken and fish and eat less lechon, sticky desserts and cakes.

**Stay mindful:** Be mindful of your eating habits. Pay attention to your hunger and fullness cues. Eat slowly and savor each bite.

Avoid mindless eating while socializing or watching TV. Mingle more during parties. And while eating, imagine how the food on your plate will fit your tummy.

**Stay active with the family:** Involve your family and friends in physical activities. Organize fun outdoor games, go for group walks, or participate in holiday-themed fitness challenges together.

**Limit alcohol consumption:** Alcoholic beverages can be high in calories. Limit your alcohol intake and opt for healthier alternatives like sparkling water with a splash of fruit juice or herbal teas.

**Get enough sleep:** Adequate sleep is essential for overall wellbeing. Aim for 7 to 8 hours of quality sleep each night to support your body's functions and maintain energy levels.

**Manage stress:** The holiday season can be stressful. Practice stress management techniques such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, or engaging in activities that help you relax and unwind. You can also lessen stress by avoiding last-minute gift shopping.

**Be flexible:** It's important to enjoy the holiday season and not be too hard on yourself. Allow yourself to indulge in moderation and savor the festive moments. Remember, balance is key. As a form of balance, try doing extra workouts or physical activity before going to a feast and make sure to earn what you will consume first.

Remember, the most important thing is to enjoy the holiday season while maintaining a healthy lifestyle

Happy holidays and stay fit everyone! Cheers to a blessed 2024! 🌿

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The *paraw* is a traditional sailboat and an iconic symbol of Boracay Island. One can see this quintessential and colorful tourist attraction gracefully gliding across the pristine blue waters or resting charmingly on the shores of White Beach. Propelled by the wind, these *paraws* create a captivating image that encapsulates the essence of Boracay's beauty and tranquility. Thanks to the ingenuity of Paraw World, it can now also be brought home as an island keepsake, albeit on a much smaller scale.

Opened in December 2022, shop manager Rovelyn Artienda of Paraw World tells us "Traditional sailing has a significant and long history in the Philippines and continues to be an essential part of life and culture for the people of this archipelago. With the *paraw* representing a visual icon of Boracay, the founders wanted to find a way to celebrate both aspects in a meaningful way and, at the same time, shine a light on local craftsmanship and artistry. Creating the miniature *paraws* and turning them into a canvas for local artists to create beautiful masterpieces seemed the perfect way to do that."

An integral part of the Boracay experience, the *paraw* holds a special place in the hearts of visitors. A sunset cruise aboard these enchanting boats or capturing a picturesque image of them adorning the beach is a must. Yet, the *paraw* holds a more profound significance for the locals. Today, it serves as a vital source of livelihood, facilitating the efficient transportation of goods and people. Remarkably, this practical function echoes its role for their ancestors centuries ago.

Recognizing the lack of artistic and cultural elements in the Boracay tourist experience, the founders of Paraw World embarked on a mission to celebrate the iconic sailboat and its rich stories. Paraw World emerged as a guardian of this vanishing craft, determined to keep it alive.

Paraw World's vessels may be small but faithfully mirror their life-sized counterparts. Like the full-sized *paraws*, these miniatures are carefully crafted by builders of the original *paraws*, using various types of

TREASURE TROVE  
BSN's shopping guide

# PARAW WORLD

Symbolic souvenirs that Highlight Local Craftsmen and Artists and a wonderful Christmas gift idea!

By Rica Velasco



Paraw World regatta showcasing the charming designs by local artists



Art box; They come in two sizes, the regular and the "Baby Paraw."



Art-lover and co-founder Elena Brugger collaborates with local craftsmen that use authentic materials.



wood such as Philippine mahogany, *lawaan*, *basa*, and bamboo. These local experts shape the materials into the *bangka* (main hull), the *katig* (double outriggers on each side), and the *layag* (sails). They carefully carve every bamboo slant and flawlessly proportion the scale of the two sails using handheld tools such as a bolo, sander, and mallet.


One of the founders of Paraw World, Elena Brugger, is an art lover and a prominent island figure who shows an unwavering determination to preserve island traditions and. Many offered their services as soon as word spread that she needed local Aklanon and Boracay artists for this project. Paraw World tries to work with various talented artists representing many different styles. Apart from their permanent studio artists, they also offer other local artists the chance to create a "Limited Edition Paraw" in their unique style, which will be displayed and sold in the shop.

These finished works then become vibrant canvases adorned with exuberant paintings that breathe life into the shape of the sailboat, preserving its legacy for generations to come.

There are several designs of miniature *paraws* to choose from, with prices ranging from PhP1,850 to PhP2,650. One can even get incredibly creative by getting an Art Box, which includes a blank *paraw* canvas sail, among other art materials. Paraw World also offers guided painting classes to help bring out one's inner artist. The latest addition to their miniature family is the Baby Paraw, which also comes in many different designs and has prices ranging from PhP1,100 to PhP1,450.

If there is one authentic souvenir to bring home from Boracay, the miniature *paraw* should be at the top of that list. It symbolizes the culture of Boracay and the Philippine islands, and the shop also promotes sustainability and conservation by employing local craftsmen and artists. They intend to donate five percent of their profits to a local *paraw* conservation project. A local architect also designed their shop, making them an all-Filipino business.

Paraw World is located along the main road, Station 2, Balabag. 📍



Aira Boracay Hotel is a relaxing place far from the noisy frontbeach, which is perfect for couples wanting privacy. Situated at the windy Bolabog Beach, it's also the perfect spot for kitesurfing and windsurfing activities.

📍 Station 2 Bolabog Beach, going to Mt. Luho

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## ISLAND LIFE

# SURVIVING THE HO HO HOLIDAZE

## Life hacks for making the most of your holidaymaking (and hopefully not losing days to a hangover)

By Freida Dario-Santiago

IT'S A GIVEN. Unless you are a total Scrooge, you most likely will be imbibing a bit more alcohol this month, maybe even three or more months' worth of your normal consumption.

And that's what one might call the Christmas spirit!

Nights out in Boracay are LIT-proof—if only you could remember them half the time. But no thanks to social media and CCTV cameras, those #facepalm moments are forever immortalized, adding insult to injury, quite literally for many a party animal (I can almost hear my friends snickering at my saying so!).

Celebrating the festive season on Boracay could be a very wholesome affair, or it could also go sideways and get as toxic as Manila (minus the “kill me now” traffic jams) with the slew of Christmas parties, visiting friends and family that come home from all over the world to converge on the island for the holidays, and the full-on days-to-nights get-togethers leading up to New Year's Eve, not to mention the “first and last night” syndrome that needs no explaining.

So without beating around the bush, let's get down to some tried and tested life hacks that could make or break your holiday season (and could spell the difference between having a jolly time or ending up like road kill before you even reach the road).

Besides, if there was such a thing as a hangover cure, its inventor would surely be richer than Elon Musk. The next best bet is to try to be smart before you get drunk and stupid.

### Ten Commandments for Surviving the HoliDAZE:

Eat, Sleep, Rave, Repeat!

#### 1. Eat

Alcohol is not a meal. We've all “been there, done that” in “forgetting” to have dinner.

Eat a balanced meal before stepping out. Whether it is a dinner party or not, you will most likely have a few sips before getting your turn at the table, and by then, it might be too late. Arm yourself before heading to war by having a slow-burning and balanced meal (some protein, a few carbs, some fat) to regulate your body's alcohol absorption. Red meat is a pretty decent choice because, according to Jason Burke, M.D., creator of *Hangover Heaven*, it has a high concentration of protein and B vitamins, which help process alcohol byproducts in your body.

Another rule of thumb is to nibble as you drink. Go for high-protein food like cheese and nuts.

About that burger & fries before hitting the sack, doctors say that drunk binge eating solves absolutely nothing (except for your guilt for drinking too much, then again, you'll hate yourself the next day for pigging out).

New research suggests that eating after heavy drinking offers no guarantee that you'll be hungover-free the following morning. Instead, embrace your inner Minion and have a “BA-NA-NA!” Potassium depletion is one of the biggest culprits that cause nasty day-after headaches, fatigue, nausea and thirst.

#### 2. Sleep

If you're reading this, you are most likely past your 30s and gone are the good old days when you could party the night away, pass out, get a decent night's sleep, and wake up as fresh as a daisy. As we age, our post-alcohol sleep quality goes downhill.

That's why you've got to plan for the worst by setting yourself up for a good

night's sleep, and hope for the best, that you wake up refreshed (instead of looking fresh from the grave). How? Simply make your bed welcoming for when you get home, and prepare your sleeping environment before heading out. (Think: clean sheets on a made-up bed, blackout curtains, blinds, a sleep mask, ear plugs.)

Elizabeth Kovacs, Ph.D., Director of the Alcohol Research program at Loyola University Chicago, says that getting good sleep each night leading up to that party will reduce the impact one night of drinking will have.

#### 3. Two's company

Everyone has his or her own relationship with, and tolerance for alcohol. But during the excessive BER season punctuated by Christmas parties, you might do well if you have exactly two drinks. If you are a person who has found that zero drinks or one drink is the right number for you, then that is the number to stick with. For everyone else, try two. In any case, knowing is half the battle so count those drinks because each drink counts.



#### 4. Repeat after me: “Water please!”

If you're wondering what the best hangover cure is, unfortunately, we don't have one. The best advice is to hydrate yourself with water throughout the night and before bed. In fact, as you set up your bedroom for the aftermath, be sure to place a glass at your bedside (away from your phone).

As you live it up like it was the last night on earth, dehydration creeps in like a creepy stalker, and if you don't keep it at bay, that sucker will mess up your world and bring on the headache from Hell.

The rule of thumb: alternate between one drink and one glass (not a sip, a glass) of water. Aside from rehydrating, it's a good way to cheat yourself by filling you up with water rather than the equivalent alcohol.

#### 5. Sweat it out

Whether you do this on the dance floor or commit to a fitness goal for the following day, sweat is not only detoxifying, it forces you to rehydrate and replenish your body with much-needed vitamins, minerals and electrolytes. (Think: pedometer / step-counting, running, yoga, swimming.)

#### 6. Cut-off time

Cutting yourself off early is the smartest thing you can do for yourself (and for your friends if you're a bad drunk).

The rule of thumb: A ballpark estimate to cut off from alcohol (so most of the alcohol in your system has been metabolized before you even get home and try to sleep) is at least four hours before you go to sleep. That might seem like a long time to go without a drink at a party, but take into account how much time it takes you to get home, unwind, and then hit the sack, allowing your body ample time to process what you've already enjoyed.

If you still want to have a good time and avoid being a party pooper, cutting off could be knowing when it's time to start nursing your drink (after two maybe?), and slowly tapering off from there the rest of the evening. But if you're an “all or nothing” party troll, set a time, and knock

yourself out until 30 minutes or so before your cut-off time, before you turn back into a pumpkin.

Because by the time 4 a.m. rolls around and you're stumbling through McDonald's ordering vodka on the rocks with fries, it's all over.

#### 7. Clichés are passé

If you believe in drinking clichés such as “liquor before beer, you're in the clear” and “brown before clear,” (or the other way around) will save the day, perhaps because it works for you, you're one lucky fool (could be genetics, or your age). But what it really just comes down to is your body's consistency and tolerance and knowing what works for you, then sticking to it like your life depends on it.

The rule of thumb: Nothing good ever comes from mixing alcohol. Stick to your poison of choice (if it agrees with you and you're not yet on a first-name basis with Jack, Johnny, Jameson and Jose).

#### 8. Exit stage right

So you're drunk, slammed, hammered, sh\*t-faced. The least you could do is to try to save your dignity.

As Nobel Prize novelist and self-confessed alcoholic Ernest Hemingway said, “Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut.”

#### 9. Bedside manners

If you're sober enough to still comprehend what's going on, these before-bed tips will give you the best chance of safely sleeping through the night.

Have one last small glass of water before bed, then fill a glass to keep on your nightstand in case you get thirsty later. Don't drink too much water or you'll just wake up through the night to go to the bathroom, time you could be sleeping.

Go to sleep. (READ: Leave all two-legged

housemates in peace.)

#### 10. Silent mode

Finally, put your phone on silent or on airplane mode so notifications don't wake you. If you can, turn off your alarm and plan to sleep in.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS and party responsibly! 🎉



### Point of no return

Now if you get carried away with all the fun, just get yourself safely back to your hotel or resort. If you don't think you can manage, ask for assistance from the staff or security at the bar or club you find yourself in, or find a safe well-lit spot where you can gather yourself (preferably rehydrating with water), and wait for a security guard or roving beach police that can escort you to the road and help you into an e-trike. If you think you might forget your hotel, take a card with you before leaving your accommodations or write the name and location on a piece of paper, or save it on your phone.



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WORLD AWARENESS DAYS

# DECEMBER HOLIDAYS AND FIESTAS

By Rica Velasco

## HOLIDAYS IN DECEMBER

December is a month not just rich in festive cheer but also marked by a profound sense of global significance. During the busy holiday season, events like World AIDS Day and Human Rights Day command our attention. In December, we celebrate the holiday season and the shared values that unite us as a global community.

### December 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

A special non-working holiday in the Philippines, December 8th is celebrated as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a significant religious holiday in the Roman Catholic tradition. It commemorates the belief that the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin. On this day, Catholic churches hold special Masses and services, drawing worshippers who offer prayers and devotion to Mary. Some communities organize religious processions featuring Mary's statues, while decorations in churches and homes often include flowers, candles and images of the Virgin Mary.

### December 25 Christmas Day

Christmas Day is one of the most celebrated and cherished holidays in the Philippines. Beyond its religious significance as the birth of Jesus Christ, it is a time for Filipino families to come together and strengthen their bonds. The Christmas season in the country starts in September and ends in early January, making it one of the longest holiday seasons in the world. At this time, colorful decorations adorn Filipino homes and streets, especially parols (star-shaped lanterns) and Christmas lights.

Celebrations on Christmas Eve, known as "Noche Buena," are a central part of the holiday. Families gather for a grand feast that often includes traditional Filipino dishes like lechon (roast pig), ham, queso de bola (Edam cheese), and fruit salad. Leading up to Christmas, Filipino churchgoers attend nine consecutive days of pre-dawn Masses called "Simbang Gabi." During the Christmas season, Filipinos showcase their

generosity and hospitality by caroling and giving gifts to less fortunate communities. Christmas Day itself is a time for families to exchange gifts, attend Mass, and enjoy their festive gatherings.

In Boracay, Christmas is a unique blend of tropical paradise and festive traditions, emphasizing family togetherness. The season kicks off early, with the island's streets and resorts adorned with iconic parols and twinkling lights. Resorts play a central role, offering grand Noche Buena buffets with a local twist on traditional Filipino dishes. These feasts bring families and friends closer, fostering strong bonds. Simbang Gabi Masses on the island's tranquil beaches provide a serene religious experience. Christmas Day sees special resort events, combining gift exchanges, Mass services, and beachside activities to strengthen family ties.

### December 31 New Year's Eve

Welcoming the New Year on Boracay Island is an unforgettable experience. The island's fireworks display rivals the city, illuminating the sky and ocean. These colorful fireworks are set up on a barge near the shore, creating a unique spectacle that delights onlookers.

The nightlife in Boracay is lively and entertaining, lasting until the early hours. There are numerous dining options in the resorts that are open until late, offering a wide range of cuisines, including special ala carte menus and large buffet spreads.

Consider reserving a table in advance at one of the large resorts' beachfront dining areas for the best view of the NYE fireworks. As the bright colors light up the night sky, you'll join fellow tourists in celebrating the promising year ahead, creating a moment of pure elation.



## UNESCO WATCH

UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that serves as a global platform to promote peace, sustainable development, and intercultural understanding. UNESCO commemorates specific days throughout the year to raise awareness and promote global action on critical issues within its mandate. Here's a rundown of the celebrated days this month.

### December 1 World AIDS Day

This day sheds light on People Living with HIV (PLHIV), memorializes lives lost to AIDS-related illnesses, and honors those tirelessly working to find an HIV cure and assist PLHIV and their families.

The Philippines is currently experiencing the fastest-growing HIV epidemic in the Asia-Pacific region. According to the HIV and AIDS Registry, new HIV infections increased by 237 percent from 2010 to 2020. Unfortunately, AIDS-related deaths have also dramatically risen by 315 percent over the same period.

In response to the AIDS crisis, the Philippine government formed the Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC), consisting of government agencies and civil society organizations. The Department of Health serves as the chair.

Some HIV/AIDS awareness and support organizations in the Philippines:

#### Love Yourself Inc.

Community centers offer free HIV testing/screening, counseling, hormone therapy services and more.

Website: [www.loveyourself.ph](http://www.loveyourself.ph)

#### The Red Whistle

Human rights and mental health in HIV awareness, education, testing, treatment and more.

Website: [www.theredwhistle.com](http://www.theredwhistle.com)

#### Project Red Ribbon

Addressing HIV among children and the elderly, vaccination, counseling and community engagement. Free HIV screening and self-testing centers in Pasig and Makati/San Andres.

Website: [www.hivphilippines.com](http://www.hivphilippines.com)

#### Positive Action Foundation Philippines Incorporated (PAFPI)

HIV counseling, testing, training, National Consultation Process with PLWHAs and more.

Website: [www.pafpi.org](http://www.pafpi.org)

Support these organizations to make a meaningful impact on HIV/AIDS awareness and care in the Philippines.



### December 10 Human Rights Day

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) marks its 75th anniversary on December 10, 2023. The UN General Assembly's historic 1948 document established fundamental human rights that are universally protected. The Philippines was one of its first signatories. To mark the 75th anniversary of human rights, the Human Rights 75 initiative has been launched, focusing on universality, progress, and engagement over a year.

### 2024 HOLIDAYS

While the year isn't quite finished, it's never too early to begin planning your 2024 holidays and adventures. Here's a sneak peek at the upcoming holidays to get excited about in the year ahead.

#### Regular Holidays

- New Year's Day** | January 1 (Monday)
- Maundy Thursday** | March 28 (Thursday)
- Good Friday** | March 29 (Friday)
- Araw ng Kagitingan** | April 9 (Tuesday)
- Labor Day** | May 1 (Wednesday)
- Independence Day** | June 12 (Wednesday)
- National Heroes Day** | August 26 (Monday)
- Bonifacio Day** | November 30 (Saturday)
- Christmas Day** | December 25 (Wednesday)
- Rizal Day** | December 30 (Monday)

#### Special Non-Working Days

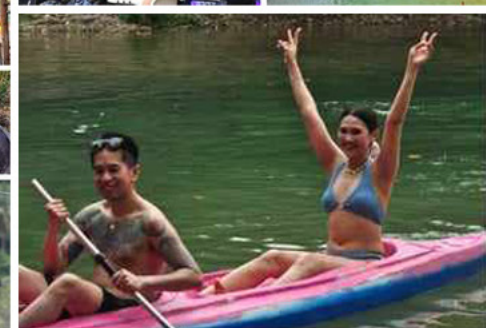
- Ninoy Aquino Day** | August 21 (Wednesday)
- All Saints' Day** | November 1 (Friday)
- Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary** | December 8 (Sunday)
- Last day of the year – December 31 (Tuesday)

#### Additional Special Non-Working Days

- Chinese New Year** | February 10 (Saturday)
- Black Saturday** | March 30 (Saturday)
- All Souls' Day** | November 2 (Saturday)
- Christmas Eve** | December 24 (Tuesday)

Keep an eye out for enticing seat sales and resort promotions that will allow you to book those well-deserved getaways during these holiday periods.

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## ENVIRONMENT

## I'M DREAMING OF A GREEN CHRISTMAS

This holiday season, let's give Mother Nature the gift of being conscientious about reducing rather than adding to the problem.

By Freida Dario-Santiago

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also be a time of waste. From wrapping paper and gift bags to discarded food and broken decorations, the holiday season can generate a significant amount of waste, and single-use plastic consumption. While it's easy to get caught up in the festivities, it's important to remember that there are things we can do to reduce our plastic consumption this holiday season.



Every year over 400 million tons of plastic are produced worldwide. Over half of the total is designed for single use only, and only 10 percent is recyclable. This makes plastic pollution a dangerous global threat, compounded on a grand scale at Christmastime, the world over.

*“Compared to the rest of the year, the amount of waste produced at Christmas is 30 percent higher.”*

The conveniences plastics offer have led to a throw-away culture that reveals the material's dark side: today, single-use plastics account for 40 percent of the plastic produced every year. Many of these products, such as plastic bags and food wrappers, have a lifespan of mere minutes to hours, yet they may persist in the environment for hundreds of years.

By making a few simple changes, we can reduce the amount of Christmas waste produced during the holiday season and help protect the planet. Yet old habits die hard, especially over the holiday season, when we tend to let go and indulge ourselves.

Typically, people hold off until the new year to make positive changes. But you don't have to wait—it's easier than you might think to make small changes now that will reduce your holiday plastic waste, and maybe even start some enjoyable new traditions in your family or household.

#### Knowing is half the battle.

The holidays are synonymous with shopping, food, and gift wrapping, all of which generate tons of plastic bags from the wet market and flea markets, plastic packaging from food deliveries (the bags, utensils, condiment containers and food boxes), from food gifts (cakes & pastries, jamon, queso de bola, and so on), and even from gift bags with plastic handles, and the product packaging for most gifts that we buy

from the stores (toy boxes, beauty product packaging and containers, all of which are ditched upon opening), and don't forget the rolls of sticky tape!

Aside from plastics, one of the biggest sources of waste during Christmas is wrapping paper and gift bags. While these may make presents look nice under the tree, they often end up in the bin after they're opened. To reduce this waste, consider using reusable gift bags or boxes instead of disposable ones. Or, save the bags you receive and use them for the gifts you give next year.

Did you know that if you take all the Xmas wrapping paper that ends up in the bin and lay it out flat end to end it would stretch to 238,855 miles—that's the average distance of the Earth to the Moon!

*“Also, around 50,000 trees are cut down to make the wrapping paper used to wrap Christmas presents.”*

A nifty idea from [www.wastemanaged.co.uk](http://www.wastemanaged.co.uk) is to wrap gifts in newspapers (YES, THIS NEWSPAPER YOU'RE READING WOULD WORK SPLENDIDLY), fabric, or even old maps or comics. These options not only reduce waste but can also add a unique and personal touch to your gifts.



Here are some ways to reduce single-use plastic at Christmas:

- Consider buying presents that don't use plastic packaging, such as items wrapped in cardboard or paper.
- Bring reusable shopping bags when buying groceries and shopping for gifts. If you don't have one, insist on a biodegradable paper or plastic bag.
- Carry a reusable water bottle instead of buying bottled water, and reject plastic straws.
- Choose reusable decorations like fabric ribbons or paper decorations whenever possible.
- If you're hosting a Christmas party, opt for reusable dishes and cutlery rather than disposable plastic ones.

Finally, thinking of updating your Christmas tree as usual, and buying a new one this year? Think again!

Artificial trees can last many years if well cared for, which makes them a sustainable choice, in that sense. But, because most are made with plastic and metal materials, they take a lot of resources to create and their plastic components will exist for thousands of years, polluting our oceans and filling the bellies of sea turtles. This fact alone should make you think twice about buying a Christmas tree every year like they were last year's boy or girlfriend.

*“Often produced and shipped from China, they also have a hefty carbon footprint, to the tune of up to 88 pounds of CO2 per artificial tree.”*

Since we are in the tropics, we don't have sustainable Christmas tree farms that are both the ethical and sustainable choice. So, the next best thing to do is to reuse your Christmas tree for many years to come!

By taking a few simple steps to reduce plastic consumption this holiday season, we can all make a difference in protecting the environment. By choosing to be mindful of our plastic use, we can have a sustainable and joyful Christmas that's more in line with nature. 🌱

#### 10 WAYS TO HAVE AN ECO-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

##### 1. Use sustainable gift wrap.

Most mass-produced wrapping paper and gift bags are printed using unsustainable inks and coated with shiny foils that are not recyclable. Get creative and wrap gifts with materials that you have around the house, like old maps, comics, or paper shopping bags. You can also use any pretty, clean fabric like scarves, bandanas, or dish towels for reusable wrapping. Create your own bows from strips of colorful paper and accessorize with twine, pressed leaves, and pinecones.

##### 2. Prepare an eco-friendly feast.

While preparing all of your favorite holiday dishes, try to support local farmers who grow sustainable meat and produce. Not only will fresh, local ingredients lend an extra vibrancy to your meals, the food will taste better, too.

Read “BSN's Christmas Dinner & Party Potluck Guide / Directory” for a directory of local food (page 20).

##### 3. Switch to LED holiday lights.

While Christmas lights don't use as much electricity as other things, switching to LED lights can save you money on your holiday season energy bills because they use 90 percent less energy. Still not convinced? LEDs release very little heat and last about 200,000 hours, so you won't have to replace them for a long time.

##### 4. GIVE SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Keep your holiday footprint small by purchasing locally crafted gifts from small businesses.

Read “Christmas Shopping with a Conscience” (page 12) for plenty of great ideas!

##### 5. Make sustainable Christmas decorations.

Get creative and use things that you have around the house to create your own unique, adorable Christmas decorations. It's also a great project to keep kids busy when they're on break from school or a crafting party with your friends and family!

##### 6. Send a card that plants trees.

As appreciated as they are, many cards get thrown away once the holidays are over. The solution? Send an eco-friendly holiday greeting card that's made from recycled or recyclable paper or, send an e-card. Have an environmentalist on your list? Consider planting some trees in their name and send them a digital photo!

##### 7. Gift an experience they can look forward to.

Gift something that can be enjoyed in the future, like tickets to a play, a sporting event or a concert; a fun day trip, a spa date, a museum membership, guitar lessons, or even a gift card to a favorite local restaurant or business. You'll be supporting a local business and giving your recipient something to look forward to!

##### 8. Handcraft some awesome DIY gifts.

Try creating a gift basket filled with homemade, homecooked/baked or locally sourced goodies! Add some special touches like homemade ornaments, your favorite gourmet coffee, a favorite bottle of wine, or a book you loved this year, and it's bound to please!

##### 9. Donate to charity.

Having trouble finding something for that certain person on your list that has everything? There are so many awesome nonprofits and charities out there, so find one that resonates, and make a donation in their name. It doesn't have to be a huge donation to be meaningful.

##### 10. Do a gift swap.

In the spirit of the season, sometimes we can get caught up in the excitement of buying what we think is the perfect gift. And perhaps you have a few of those “perfect” gifts hanging around collecting dust. Set some ground rules, and get a group of friends or neighbors together for a gift swap! You'll clear clutter after the holidays and who knows, you just might end up with something that was on your wish list. A Philippine tradition at Christmas is also the Kris Kringle gift exchange, which also takes the stress out of gift giving.

So there you have it! Why dream of a white Christmas when it's more fun (and guilt-free) going green? And remember, the greatest gift of all will cost you absolutely nothing: Give love on Christmas day and have a joyful holiday season!

– Freida Dario-Santiago 🌱



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A B C D E F



# POCO DELI BORACAY NOW OPEN!

Makers of handcrafted gluten-free, nitrate-free, sausages, 100% meat, no MSG for over 15 years.



## OUR STORY



Slow cooking comfort food since 2008.

"Before we opened Poco Deli, we were making gluten-free, nitrate-free, MSG-free, all meat sausages and bacon out of our home kitchen for our family. Cooking and baking had always been passions we shared. Our families were involved in cattle ranching down south in Bukidnon, which exposed us to butchery and charcuterie-making.

The inspiration for what would later be Poco Deli's signature dishes came to us during our travels to France, New York and Napa Valley. We were

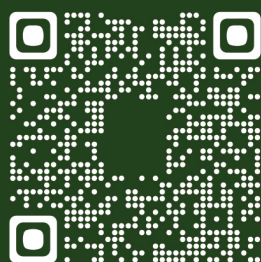
fascinated by the rich history embedded in different cuisines - from the Italian art of curing prosciutto and salami, to the pastrami sandwiches served by the culturally iconic Katz's Deli in New York.

Thus, in October of 2008, we opened the doors to the first Poco Deli restaurant. Our cozy shop tucked in our neighborhood was called "poco" by our Italian suppliers, and somehow the name stuck.

Throughout the years, this identity remained: a quaint neighborhood deli and restaurant, happily serving the community.

Indulge, celebrate, eat healthy!"

- Joy & Sonny de León



## BEST SELLERS

### TO EAT

**Bacon Slab** ✂️ **single 480/ double 680**

Our claim to fame. Thick and hearty French pork belly cured, 8 hour wood-smoked & seared to perfection. With rice & 2 eggs.

**Smoked BBQ Ribs** **590**

French smoky and tender ribs glazed to barbecue perfection. Grilled and slow smoked. Served with homemade BBQ sauce.

**U.S. Steak Tapa** ✂️ **450**

Seasoned U.S. beef tapa. Our classic recipe. Marinated in garlic and peppercorns and served with rice and 2 eggs.

**Cold Cuts & Cheese Platter** **single 950 double 1250**

The finest selection of cold cuts and cheese. The beginning of an incredible meal.

**NY Grass-fed Pastrami** **solo 450 / full 680**

NY style pastrami brined, seasoned & smoked to perfection. Inspired by Katz's Deli. Served on homemade Batard bread.

**Spanish Callos** ✂️ **620**

Beef tripe, chorizo, pancetta, pork knuckles, chickpeas & olives.

**Sausage Sampler** ✂️ **single 850 double 1250**

A platter of our handcrafted and slow smoked sausages. Served with sauerkraut & flat bread.

**Seafood Chowder** ✂️ **300**

A creamy Seattle-inspired medley of shrimp, squid & vegetables. Served w/ garlic bread.

**Black Truffle Mushroom Pasta** ✂️ **560**

A luxurious pasta dish infused with the rich aroma of black truffle and mushrooms.

**Truffle Oil & Mushroom Pasta** ✂️ **550**

Truffle oil and mushrooms, delivering an exquisite and earthy flavor.

**Rockefeller Pizza** **solo 650/full 1000**

Sumptuous Japanese Hokkaido Oysters on Mozzarella. \*Seasonal

**Quattro Formaggi Pizza** ✂️ **solo 450/full 650**

A heavenly pizza with cream & four kinds of European cheese.

### TO DRINK

**Citrus Delight** ✂️ **250**

Our signature sparkling Citrus Delight! A citrus-y masterpiece that dances on your palate.

**Red Fruit Iced Tea** ✂️ **150**

Our house-made iced tea that sparkles with refreshing citrus and the natural sweetness of sun-steeped tea leaves.

**Manila Basil Smash Cocktail** ✂️ **370**

Fresh basil, citrus, and gin; a smashing perfect balance of sweet and herbal flavors sure to invigorate your senses.

## FILIPINO FAVORITES

**Bistek Tapa** **420**

Angus beef marinated in soy & calamansi. Served with onion confit, rice and fried egg.

**Classic Adobo** **420**

The quintessential Filipino comfort dish, featuring succulent meat marinated and simmered in a soy-vinegar sauce.

**Baguio-Style Longganisa** ✂️ **420**

A delightful homemade Filipino sausage blending sweet and savory flavors reminiscent of family road trips.

**Angus Caldereta** ✂️ **420**

A hearty Filipino stew, featuring tender Angus beef, vegetables, and a rich tomato-based sauce.

✂️ **Gluten-free** 🌿 **Vegetarian**

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