

Sugba Lagoon, Siargao



GETTING TO AND AROUND

Domestic air carriers serve the island from Cebu, Davao and Manila daily, taking about 1hr, 1hr 40mins and 2hrs 30mins respectively. If you're on a very tight budget and have time to spare, there are also indirect ferries from Cebu (11hrs, including transfers). Most people hire a moped or motorbike to explore, although there are also multi-person *habal-habal* motorcycle-taxis, tricycle-taxis or self-drive or chauffeured mini-multicabs.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Siargao's focal point for visitors is **General Luna** (GL), while the island's main town, **Dapa Town**, has grocery shops, a pharmacy, restaurants and cafés. Outside these, the island remains largely untouched by tourism.

"We are happy that the International Surfing Cup has continued right here where the most perfect waves in the planet are and the WSL is honoured to be part of it."

— **World Surf League (WSL)**
Asia General Manager Steve Robertson

WHERE TO STAY

Most visitors stay in and around **General Luna**, where you'll find most of the bars, restaurants and boat-trip departure points, along with more than 100 hotels, hostels and homestays. **Pacifico Beach** and **Del Carmen** are quieter options. There are no global hotel chains here and most properties have banned single-use plastic.

SIARGAO



CLIMATE

Tropical climate – very warm (28-31°C) and humid year-round, with considerable rainfall. July to November is the best time to surf.

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SIARGAO



Cloud 9, General Luna
Gaps Sabuero

IT'S MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES

WELCOME TO SIARGAO

Swathed in coconut palms, this tropical island in the southern Philippines – named Best Island in Asia by *Condé Nast Traveler* in 2019 – is a dream for surfers and kitesurfers. But life here is not just about catching the nation's best waves – there's also kayaking, paddle-boarding, cliff jumping, cave swimming, island-hopping and plenty more besides, plus lots of eco-friendly accommodation.

"Siargao feels like Bali might have done 30 years ago. However, this unspoilt island is less than a tenth of the size, can be scooted around in five hours and is home to about 160,000 residents rather than more than four million."

– *Monocle* magazine

WHY IT'S MORE FUN IN SIARGAO

Named after a native mangrove, the surf capital of the Philippines is perfect for lovers of the great outdoors, whether you embrace adrenaline-fuelled adventure sports or gentler pursuits such as swimming in rock pools and caves. Life is centred on the white-sand beaches, so there's also plenty of scope to lie back and relax.

FOOD

Attracting adventurous travellers from around the world – many on a tight budget – Siargao has an eclectic dining scene embracing international cooking, vegan and other healthy cuisine, and local recipes with or without a modern twist.

Filipino favourites not to miss include the seafood boodle fight at Daku Island and the unique surfboard-shaped bread, *Pan de Surf*.

CULTURE

Siargao has a lively nightlife scene focused on different bars on different nights of the week, so chatting to locals is the best way to find out where to head. Regular venues include Bravo, RumBar, Viento and the Jungle Shack.

Another way to get to know locals is through their love of karaoke, both in their own homes and in dedicated bars.

TOP 10 FOODIE EXPERIENCES

- Street food including BBQ chicken, pork, marlin and *isaw* (skewered intestines).
- Healthy and vegan cuisine such as acai bowls, smoothies and cold-pressed juices.
- Seafood grills.
- Filipino dishes – traditional such as *sisig* (spicy Kapampangan pig's head and chicken liver) or *kinilaw* (raw fish marinated in vinegar), or with a modern twist
- Fusion food, blending global influences such as Filipino, French, Basque and Moroccan.
- Spanish, especially tapas and paella.
- Japanese, including sashimi, sushi and tatakai.
- Other international, from pizza or pulled pork to falafel.
- Cocktails, sometimes made using local rum or own-brewed kombucha tea.
- Locally grown Fair Trade coffee – perhaps in the form of chilled coconut water with an espresso dropped in.

TOP EVENTS & FESTIVALS

- **Siargao International Game Fishing Tournament, April.**
- **Siargao International Marathon, July.**
- **Siargao International Surfing Cup, September** – part of General Luna's yearly fiesta – the island's biggest, with two weeks of parades, parties, live bands and discos.
- Other fiestas include **Dapa** in January, **San Benito** in March, **San Isidro** in May, **Socorro** in June, **Del Carmen** and **Burgus** in July, **Santa Monica** in August, **Pilar** in October.



Sugba Lagoon



Kinilaw (raw fish) coconut bowl



Naked Island

TOP 10 ACTIVITIES

- Grab a board. For beginners, there's Jacking Horse with its many surf schools; for pros, the thick, hollow 'barrels' at **Cloud 9** have earned it a place among the world's top 10 waves.
- Alternatively, admire the action – and watch the sun rise or set, or stargaze – from Cloud 9 boardwalk with its viewing area.
- Go island-hopping to **Guyam, Daku** and **Naked Island**.
- Head for mountain-rimmed **Sugba Lagoon**, where you'll find a floating hut with a diving board plus SUP paddleboard and wooden-raft hire.
- Go cliff jumping and explore the caves and coves of **Magpupungko Rock Pools**, or try the **Tarzan Jump** on the **Maasin River**. Stop by the Maasin viewpoint to see the incredible sight of the island's coconut plantation
- Go caving at **Tayangban Cave Pools**, swimming and floating by torchlight while bats flit around you.
- Journey to **Taktak Waterfall**, for more cliff jumping, tree jumping and exploring, and to see the sun set from Santa Monica Pier or bask in the sun at the Alegria white-sand beach.
- Explore **Bucas Grande's** lagoon with non-sting jellyfish, and do sea kayaking or cliff diving. Enjoy the water bungalow resorts in the island.
- Get off the beaten track at pristine **Pacifico Beach** with its small surf-town feel and sprinkling of resorts and homestays. On Sundays, join in with beach clean-ups in aid of disadvantaged children
- Shop at **LOKAL Tabo**, a community market where local farmers and artisans sell their produce and crafts.



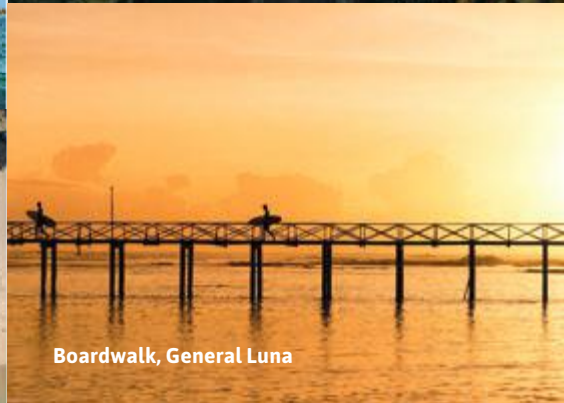
Guyam Island



Coconut plantation



Daku Island



Boardwalk, General Luna

