**Philippine Events**

1. Sinulog Festival (January 11)
Every 3rd week of January, millions of people gather in Cebu City to celebrate the grandest and perhaps the most important festival in the country. This festival is held to honor Sto. Niño (Baby Jesus).

The festival is done by a dance ritual, in which it tells the story of the Filipino people.

Sinulog is a local term which means “movements of the river” or “river current”. The word “Sinulog” means a graceful dance– a rhythmic and beautiful forward and backward motion that represents the “sulog” (or current).

2. Panagbenga Festival (February 3)

It is a month-long annual flower occasion in Baguio City. The festival, held in February, was created as a tribute to the city's flowers and as a way to rise from the devastation of the 1990 Luzon earthquake.
Panagbenga means the “Season of Blooming”
The festival includes floats that are covered mostly with flowers. The festival also includes street dancing, presented by dancers clad in flower-inspired costumes.

3. Moriones Festival (March 1st)

The Moriones Festival is a popular and vibrant religious event held annually during Holy Week in the Philippines

This unique festival is celebrated primarily in the province of Marinduque, attracting thousands of locals and tourists alike.

The festival is known for its distinct feature – men and women wearing intricately crafted masks and costumes depicting the Roman soldiers known as “Moriones.”

The festival remembers the suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

At the heart of the festival is panata, translated as vow or commitment.

4. Holy Week (April 2-9)

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country where we have Holy Week, which leads to Easter Sunday. It is a time for devout religious practices, family gatherings, and unique cultural traditions.

Visita Iglesia is a tradition where Catholics visit seven different churches on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday.

This practice is a form of pilgrimage and penance, with prayers and reflections offered at each church.

Many churches in the Philippines are beautifully illuminated and decorated during Holy Week, making them popular destinations for visitors.

On Palm Sunday (Linggo ng Palaspás, Domingo de Ramos, “Branches Sunday”), worshipers bring a palaspas (coconut palms) to church for blessing by the priest before or after the day's Mass. These are often brought home to be put in altars, doors, or windows, in the belief that these can ward off demons, and prevent both fires and lightning.

5. Flores de Mayo (May 1-31)

Flores de Mayo (Spanish for "flowers of may") is a festival held in the Philippines in the month of May.

It is one of the May devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary and lasts for the entire month.

It is a tribute to the Virgin Mary, who gives rain when farmers ask for it, and the celebration for it represents the farmers’ unwavering gratitude. Stories say it makes various flowers bloom and grow new crops for food.

The Santacruzan (from the Spanish santa cruz, "holy cross") is the ritual pageant held on the last day of the Flores de Mayo.

5. Aurora Music Festival (April 6-7)

The AURORA Music Festival (also referred to as the Clark Hot Air Balloon Music, Arts and Food Festival) is an annual music and arts festival featuring live music, food, art installations, and hot air balloons held in Clark Global City in Pampanga, Philippines over the course of two days.

6. San Juan Festival (June 24)

The San Juan Festival in the Philippines is also known as the Wattah Wattah Festival or Basaan Festival.

It is held every 24th of June to celebrate the Feast day of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of San Juan, Metro Manila, and of many other communities throughout the Philippines. The festival is traditionally observed in San Juan through “wet and wild” street parties.

7. Pagoda Festival July 7

Pagoda festival is held annually on the first Sunday of July.
The pagoda is led by a procession of colorful bancas (small boats). The said procession serves as a crucial part of a nine-day novena. During the novena, participants feast and celebrate the fabled retrieval of the Holy Cross from the Bocaue River. Hundreds, if not thousands of people take part in the event.

8. Kadayawan Festival (August 11)

The Kadayawan Festival is an annual festival in the city of Davao in the Philippines. The festival is a celebration of life, a thanksgiving for the gifts of nature, the wealth of culture, the bounties of harvest and serenity of living.

Kadayawan Festival was celebrated from 10 to 17 August.

One of the highlights of the Kadayawan Festival is the Indak-Indak sa Kadalanan, which translates to street dancing. This is a showcase of the diverse indigenous cultures of the region. The festivities feature different communities in Mindanao dancing in vibrant costumes that highlight their indigenous heritage

9. Tuna Festival (September 1-5)

The Tuna Festival is normally opened by the colorful Tuna Float parade and Parada sa Dagat with festive and ocean-themed floats that depict the richness of the city’s culture.

10. Halloween

Halloween, more known as “Undas”, is a major holiday in the Philippines. The government offices and some private establishments declare the afternoon of October 31 as holiday to give people time to prepare for the celebration. Filipinos look forward to Undas because they have the opportunity to travel back to their home provinces due to work holidays.

One of the most significant Filipino Halloween traditions is visiting the cemetery, usually from October 31st to November 2nd. Families gather at the gravesites of their deceased relatives, lighting candles, flowers, and offering food. They clean, repaint, and decorate the tombs, creating an atmosphere that blends solemnity and festivity.

Lighting of candles outside the door on the evening of November 1 and 2 is said to help the deceased find their way back home to their loved ones.

11. Higantes Festival (November 22-23)

Higantes Festival means “a giant celebration”.

Higantes Festival is a month-long artistic, cultural, and religious festival held in the town of Angono, Rizal.

This celebration is a thanksgiving for good harvest,

it is known for its grand fluvial parade in Laguna Lake and colorful giant puppets made out of paper machie.

12. Christmas Day

People in the Philippines like to celebrate Christmas for as long as possible! The playing of Christmas carols in shops can start in September! The formal Christmas celebrations start on 16th December when many people go to the first of nine pre-dawn or early morning masses. The last mass is on Christmas day. The Christmas celebrations continue to the First Sunday in January when Epiphany or the Feast of the Three Kings is celebrated.

In the Philippines the early masses held before Christmas are called the 'Misa de Gallo' or 'Simbang Gabi' in Filipino.

Most Filipinos are Christians with about 80% of people being Catholics. It's the only Asian country with so many Christians. Because of this, Christmas is the most important holiday in the Philippines. December is actually one of the 'cooler' months of the year in the Philippines. The Philippines only has two real seasons, wet (June to October) and dry (April and May). December is one of the months in between the wet and dry seasons.

They also have their own Christmas traditions such as the 'parol' which is a bamboo pole or frame with a lighted star lantern on it. It's traditionally made from bamboo strips and colored Japanese paper or cellophane paper and represents the star that guided the Wise Men. It is the most popular Christmas decoration in the Philippines.

Christmas Eve is very important in the Philippines. Many people stay awake all night into Christmas day! During Christmas Eve evening, Christians go to church to hear the last 'simbang gabi' or the Christmas Eve mass. This is followed by a midnight feast, called Noche Buena.

The Noche Buena is a big, open house, celebration with family, friends and neighbors dropping in to wish everyone a Merry Christmas!