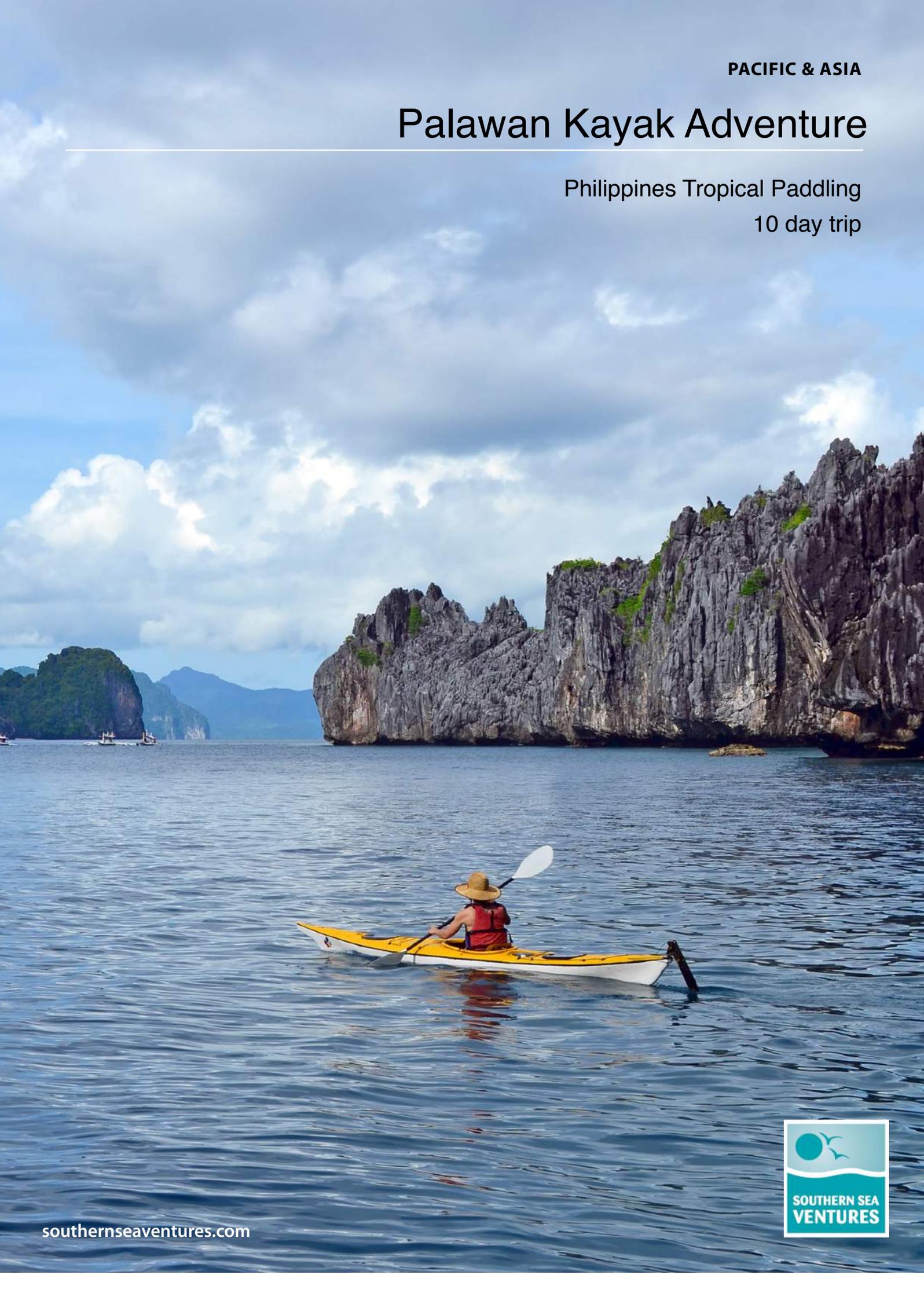


PACIFIC & ASIA

# Palawan Kayak Adventure

Philippines Tropical Paddling  
10 day trip



# Palawan: Philippine Paradise



## 10 day trip 8 days kayaking

The volcanic Philippines are a cluster of more than 7000 islands lying north of the Malay Peninsula in South East Asia. The narrow archipelago of Palawan province is located between the South China Sea and the Sulu Sea. Dubbed the 'Last Frontier' because of the thousands of kilometres of unexplored forests and coastlines, Palawan province has been designated a fish and wildlife sanctuary since 1967, preserving the incredible biodiversity of the area. Using a local Bangka boat as a support vessel, paddlers will explore the islands, villages and incredible reefs that abound in this amazing archipelago.

## A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Arrive El Nido, Palawan Island. Pre trip briefing. Hotel accommodation.

**Days 2-4:** Exploring the Bacuit Bay area. Camping. B • L • D

**Days 5-6:** Kayaking through the northern Palawan archipelago. Camping. B • L • D

**Days 7-8:** Exploring islands between Palawan and Linapacan. Camping. B • L • D

**Day 9:** Paddling northern Linapacan Island. Transfer to El Nido. Hotel. B • L

**Day 10:** Trip concludes. B

## Meeting Place and Time

We meet at our group hotel in El Nido at 5pm on Day 1. Hotel details will be confirmed closer to your trip departure.

## How to Get There (and Back)

Air Swift flies up to five times a day from Manila to El Nido and v.v.. The direct flight takes just over an hour and can be booked on the airline website <http://air-swift.com>

From El Nido airport, there are motorised tricycles ready to transport travellers into town. The cost is around 200 Pesos (AU\$6.00/US\$4.00) and it takes about 20 minutes from the airport to the group hotel. These trikes are the only transport in El Nido due to the narrowness of the streets and the congestion. The trikes take two passengers, are covered and have room for luggage.

## Sea Kayaking

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Previous paddling experience can be useful. The degree of difficulty of the trip will depend on the weather we encounter. The sea and weather conditions are predominantly stable but in windier conditions we may require a full day's paddling. An "average" paddling day will range from 3–4 hours and we mix in as much snorkelling and exploration walking as possible. We ask that all participants feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and control and ideally suited for this remote trip. They are very forgiving and are suited for beginners to experts. We use a combination of double and single kayaks, all with rudders, some with open cockpit (not sit-on top but sit in with open cockpit), others closed with spray skirts.

Our guides are highly experienced and professional. On Day 2 you will be given a thorough briefing on all aspects of sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with the kayaks. We generally limit our group size to a maximum of 6-8 clients, plus two guides.

In general, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling, so it's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming well before the trip. If you have not paddled before, we highly recommend some kayak tuition before your trip and may be able to suggest a local operator near your home.

## Proposed Itinerary

**The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Please note that weather and local conditions can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

**Day 1:** Arrive El Nido. Make your way to the group hotel. Meet your guide for a trip briefing at 5pm. Dinner tonight is not included in the trip cost but your guide can make a recommendation and perhaps the group can dine together.  
MEALS NOT INCLUDED / HOTEL

**Day 2:** After breakfast, we head to the water for an introductory paddle and safety session. The adventure begins as we take to our kayaks and paddle into Bacuit Bay. In the afternoon we'll find a lovely beach for our first overnight camp. Our crew on the support boat (called a bangka) will meet up with us today.  
B • L • D / CAMPING

**Days 3-4:** Our explorations of Bacuit Bay continue as we head north. We'll paddle into hidden bays, along tropical beaches and under vertical cliffs. Lagoon snorkelling and lush coral gardens tempt us throughout our two days.

B • L • D / CAMPING

**Days 5-6:** With the assistance of our bangka and crew, we'll paddle north to explore the northwest and northeast coasts of Palawan, away from any signs of tourist boats. The marine life is incredible with lush coral gardens just metres from our campsites. Above water, we are treated to excellent bird watching including Palawan hornbills, white-vented shama, peacock pheasants, edible nest swiftlets, sea eagles and stork-billed kingfishers. The 600 species of butterflies and a large assortment of mammals add to our viewing. We plan to visit a local village called Diapila, an interesting stop full of colour and energetic children!

B • L • D / CAMPING

**Days 7-8:** Many small islands and inlets are located between the main Island of Palawan and Linapacan. We will explore these beautiful Island gems, walk on deserted beaches and snorkel with thousands of fish. On day 8 we will have another opportunity to visit a local village. San Miguel on Linapacan Island has clean swept streets, schools, churches, shops and parks to explore.

B • L • D / CAMPING

**Day 9:** Our last day of paddling will find us exploring the northern portion of Linapacan Island. We will find ourselves among caves, cliffs and beautiful azure seas. The afternoon sees us heading back to El Nido on our Bangka boat. We'll transfer to the group hotel in El Nido. Dinner is not included tonight.

B • L / HOTEL

**Day 10:** Farewell your guide and if flying out today, make your way to the airport.

B / END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS

## Luggage

If you have extra luggage not required on the kayak trip, it can be left in the hotel baggage room in El Nido, where we return on Day 9 of the itinerary.

**Please pack your trip gear in drybags or a waterproof duffel and take that on the kayaking trip. Luggage can get wet on the boat and therefore needs to be waterproof.**

## The Country and its People

The Philippines is made up of more than 7,000 islands, lying between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean and boasts 36,289 kilometres of coastline. The population is around 100 million and as far as religion is concerned, it's about 94% Christian, mostly Roman Catholic. In 1521 Ferdinand Magellan claimed the Philippines for Spain, which ceded the islands to the U.S. in 1898. Independence came in 1946, after the Japanese occupation ended. Fifty two million people in the Philippines speak English, making it the fifth largest English-speaking nation. Lastly, a random fact: the Philippines is the world's leading producer of coconuts!

## Climate

Palawan is generally typhoon free. Hot weather (and little rain) prevails from February to June. Air temperatures range from lows of 24 to 33 deg C while the water ranges from 24 to 29 deg C. The humidity is always high and a temperature of 33 deg C can feel very hot. Be prepared for tropical conditions. Heavy rainfall is experienced during July through September, accompanied by the Southwest monsoon.

## Trip Organisation

The sun sets quickly in the tropics so paddling days will start early to take advantage of cooler temperatures. It's a good idea to pack your dry bags before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and take down your tents so that loading for departure can be organised. On a paddling day we'd like to be on the water before 9:00 am and arrive into camp in the early afternoon. It's important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members.

On arrival in camp you will be expected to unload your boat and set up tents. Swimming and snorkelling are great activities to enjoy during the midday heat, as long as you take sunburn precautions. The group will often take advantage of cooler conditions in the late afternoon and enjoy some exploratory paddles.

## The Bangka

We'll use the Bangka as a support vessel to carry our gear, food and water and to shuttle the group from one amazing location to the next. The boat is an authentic Filipino, two outrigger style craft. It has a shallow draft, allowing the boat to safely travel through reefs and is very stable in windy conditions.

There is no toilet on the boat.

Please ensure all your gear is packed in waterproof bags- either dry bags, a large dry duffel bag or garbage bags. Heavy showers can occur which can drench the boat and even though luggage is stored under tarps, it can still get wet.

There are usually three boat crew: the captain, first mate and cook.

## Expedition Staff

There will be one professional western kayak guide accompanied by a local Philippine guide to ensure expert knowledge and guidance throughout the trip. The guides' role is to co-ordinate the expedition and ensure the safety of the group. They will answer questions and inform you of the objectives and progress of the trip. They will decide on safety matters, administer the medical kit and liaise with the local villagers on your behalf. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

## Travel Arrangements

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures or partners, Expedition Engineering, are not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport



difficulties. Please understand that in this part of the world, delays and waiting are commonplace and whilst we do our best to keep to schedule, it is not always possible. We are sure you will appreciate this and accept it as part of the whole Philippine island experience.

## **Travel Insurance**

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to weather or other reasons, and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

## **Time & Communication**

El Nido is two hours behind Australian Eastern standard time and 15 hours ahead of California. Mobile coverage is sometimes patchy in the islands. It's possible to buy a Philippine Sim card for an overseas phone but may take some time to organise.

## **Accommodation**

The hotel in El Nido is modern, provides breakfast and located close to the downtown area. Rooms are based on twin share but single rooms can be arranged for a supplement. When camping, 2-3 person size tents, air mattresses, air pillows and light blankets (with covers) are supplied.

## **Food & Water**

El Nido has a variety of restaurants and bars serving international style food.

On the kayaking trip, the food is mostly traditional Filipino using fresh vegetables, seafood, fruit and rice. The meals are hearty and healthy. Food is purchased directly from the villages and fisher folk as we move through the islands. The cook will prepare three meals per day and snacks are available in between meals. For vegetarians and those who have special dietary requirements, we are happy to make the necessary arrangements. However, if you require a special food product, such as gluten-free cereal, it would be best to bring your own as this may be difficult to purchase in Palawan. Please note your dietary requirements on your medical form.

## **Cultural Considerations**

It is very important to behave in a respectful way towards both the people and their land. It is desirable to try to respect local customs and beliefs. Do not argue or criticise. Avoid public scenes.

Simple courtesy and a bit of sensitivity will satisfy most of the customs of village life. Although English is widely spoken, it should not be assumed that everyone understands or speaks it, particularly in remote villages. Some basic practices you should observe are:

- ask the locals if they mind being photographed.

- only wear bathing suits on beaches.
- accept that time flows at a different pace and that patience is often rewarded.

## Conservation

It has always been our motto that “we take only photographs and leave only footprints”. We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc. Your guides will further advise you on these matters.

## Photography

The humidity is always high in Palawan and as we are paddling in a salt water environment, the delicate electronics in cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries as there is little opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity during our island stay. It is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged.

## Money Matters

### **Your tour cost includes:**

- Two nights twin share hotel accommodation in El Nido.
- Bangka support boat and crew.
- Double and single expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Two or three person tents.
- Air mattresses and pillows.
- All meals while kayaking.
- Group first aid kit.
- Expert leadership and support personnel.

### **Your tour cost *does not* include:**

- Meals in El Nido (except breakfast supplied by the hotel).
- Snorkelling gear.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Travel insurance.
- Flights.
- Items of a personal nature such as wifi charges, laundry, soft drinks & snack food.

## Money to Bring With You

You won't need a great deal of money on the trip, but you should take enough for souvenirs, drinks, tips and incidental items. We recommend that participants bring around US\$300.00 in pesos. If you're looking at doing souvenir shopping, you may like to bring more.

The Philippine peso is standard currency with the US\$ the most recognised international currency.

Take cash in small denominations.



At the time of writing, there are **no cash machines in El Nido**. Travellers should arrive in El Nido with sufficient cash.

## Currency

The exchange rate is approximately AU \$1 = 35 pesos and US\$1 = 50 pesos.

## Visas

There are 151 countries that are allowed entry into the Philippines without a visa for a stay of a maximum of 30 days. This includes citizens of Australia, Canada, USA and the UK. Passports should be valid for at least six months beyond the period of stay and travellers must present an outbound ticket. Please consult your local Philippine consulate for up to date information.

## Tipping

Tipping may be expected by the local people for services such as baggage handling, taxis or in restaurants. It is customary to tip the camp and boat staff that have assisted you on the trip. Your trip leader will give you more guidelines on tipping the staff and all tipping is, of course, at your own discretion and you are under no obligation to tip. A rough guideline would be between US\$7-10 per day per person.

## Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline voucher and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. Theft is a consideration in the Philippines (like at home) so it is always a good idea not to leave things unattended when in the towns or villages. Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet. You may also like to look up the contact details of your country's consulate in the Philippines.

## Medical Matters

Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know of any drugs to which you are allergic as well as noting this on your medical

form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

Participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

### **Hygiene**

Be conscious of hygiene. Regularly wash your hands, be wary of uncooked food and wash fruit or preferably peel it (with clean hands!).

### **Vaccinations**

For entry into Palawan there are no statutory vaccinations at the time of writing. However, you should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information including advice on avoiding insect born diseases such as malaria. Standard recommended immunisations currently are: Yellow Fever (if you come from an infected area), Typhoid, Tetanus, Hepatitis A and Polio. We suggest you carry your International Certificate of Vaccinations with your passport as proof.

### **Dental**

Due to the remoteness of the trip, it is advisable to have a checkup before departure.

### **Mosquito Borne-Diseases**

Malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases do occur in the Philippines but are not common. **Please consult a doctor or traveller's medical centre regarding medication and prevention.** Please note that some malaria medication can affect people while scuba diving and increase the risk of sunburn.

We advise participants to use insect repellent during the day and night and wear long sleeves, long trousers and socks in the evenings.

### **Medical Supplies**

On our trips into more isolated areas we carry a comprehensive medical kit. However, it is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require. In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SP30).
- Lip protectant.
- Band-aid strips.
- Insect repellent (containing DEET) - this is important for preventing insect-borne diseases.
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness.
- A mild antiseptic soap/liquid hand wash.

## **Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring**

This trip should be considered as a remote tropical kayaking and camping journey. You will be exposed to sun, wind and salt water. We carry everything with us, so it's important to keep personal gear to a minimum and be mindful of the weight restrictions between Manila and the islands. When kayaking, your clothing and personal items are stored on the boat and should be packed in your own dry bags or a waterproof duffle. You may like to bring a couple of garbage bags for wet or damp clothing. We will carry our own drinking water but it may be several days before we can wash with fresh water instead of salt.

## Gear List

### Essential Items:

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- A wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, e.g. straw hat with a strap to put under your chin is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck can be useful too.
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water.
- Light weight rain jacket or spray jacket.
- One long sleeve lightweight synthetic shirt. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin. A lightweight capilene or polypropylene top may be suitable.
- Two or three T-shirts and a long sleeved shirt for insect protection in camp.
- A lycra sun top is useful for snorkelling.
- One pair of light-weight, quick drying, full length trousers for camp.
- Two pairs of shorts and swimwear.
- Sarong (this can double up as a second sheet).
- A sweatshirt is sufficient for extra warmth in the evening. It is too warm for a fleece.
- Sleeping sheet.
- 1 pair of sport shoes. Teva style sandals are fine if you are used to wearing them in wet conditions.
- Lightweight socks to wear with your sport shoes if the sand is irritating your feet. Socks provide good ankle protection from insects.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal, or a medium sized hand towel).
- Toiletries (a bio-degradable soap that will lather in salt water is useful).
- A headlamp or small torch and batteries (batteries can be expensive and difficult to obtain in the islands).
- Battery operated camping fan for your tent.
- One or two 1-litre water bottles—the type used by cyclists are fine and inexpensive.
- Seat cushion for the kayak seat to ensure greater comfort.
- Watertight bags for your personal gear.
- A small dry bag is good for holding things like sun screen, glasses, water bottle, etc. (try and avoid day packs with metal zips as they will corrode).
- Lightweight gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling and protect fingertips from sunburn.

**Optional items:**

- Paddles supplied are basic. If you're partial to your own paddle, then bring.
- Camera with waterproof container ( if the camera is not waterproof).
- Book.
- 10 metres of lightweight clothesline.
- Binoculars.
- Talcum powder to prevent salt water rash.

**Delays or Problems**

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287.

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