

# Philippines Pre-Move Checklist

philippinesexpatguide.com

2026 Edition

Everything to handle before you leave — so nothing blindsides you after you land.

## ■ DOCUMENTS & IDENTITY

- ☐ **Passport valid 6+ months past arrival date**
- ☐ Make 5 color photocopies of passport
- ☐ Scan passport + save to cloud (Google Drive/Dropbox)
- ☐ Birth certificate (apostille if required)
- ☐ Marriage certificate if applicable (apostille)
- ☐ Driver's license + International Driving Permit
- ☐ Medical records & prescription list from doctor
- ☐ Vaccination records (especially Hepatitis A/B)

## ■ FINANCES & BANKING

- ☐ Open Charles Schwab account (no ATM fees globally)  
*schwab.com — takes 2–3 weeks to arrive*
- ☐ Set up Wise account for cheap transfers  
*wise.com — link before you leave*
- ☐ Notify current bank of international travel
- ☐ Carry 2 debit cards from different networks
- ☐ Bring \$500–\$1,000 USD cash for first week
- ☐ Know your daily ATM withdrawal limits
- ☐ Set up international card notifications/alerts

## ■ HEALTH & INSURANCE

- ☐ **Get international health insurance — don't skip this**  
*philippinesexpatguide.com/health-insurance*
- ☐ 6-month supply of any prescription medications
- ☐ Dental work done before leaving (save money)
- ☐ Eye exam + extra glasses or contact lenses
- ☐ Confirm vaccines: Hep A/B, Typhoid, Tetanus
- ☐ Get travel insurance for scouting trips

## ■ PHONE & COMMUNICATION

- ☐ **Port US number to Google Voice**  
*Do this BEFORE your number leaves your carrier*
- ☐ Check if phone is unlocked (call carrier)
- ☐ Get an eSIM for data on arrival (try Airalo)
- ☐ Download offline maps — Google Maps / Maps.me
- ☐ Set up WhatsApp — primary messaging in PH
- ☐ Install VPN (ExpressVPN / NordVPN)  
*Essential for US streaming & secure banking*

## ■ VISA & LEGAL

*Most expats enter on a tourist visa — no special prep needed before arrival*

- ☐ Know your visa-on-arrival limit (30 days for most)
- ☐ Understand extension process (Bureau of Immigration)
- ☐ Book first 30-day accommodation before landing  
*Immigration may ask for address on arrival form*
- ☐ Research SRRV if planning to stay 1+ years  
*Requires \$10K–\$20K deposit — plan ahead*

## ■ HOUSING PREP

- ☐ Choose initial city (Cebu vs. Dumaguete?)
- ☐ Book short-term rental or serviced apt for month 1  
*Don't sign a long lease before you've lived there*
- ☐ Research typical rent prices before negotiating
- ☐ Join local expat Facebook group for housing leads
- ☐ Know what utilities are included (A/C costs a lot!)

## ■ FINAL STEPS BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- ☐ Forward or pause mail at home address
- ☐ Alert Social Security / pension of foreign address
- ☐ Set up US tax filing plan (FBAR if >\$10K abroad)
- ☐ Cancel unused US subscriptions
- ☐ Back up all devices to cloud
- ☐ Share itinerary with emergency contact
- ☐ Download PhilAm, MetroDeal, Grab apps