



Fall in love with the other side of Boracay on the quiet shores of Puka Beach.

The Other Side of Boracay

Paradise extends beyond Boracay's famous White Beach.
By **Anika Ventura** Photos By **Denise Tolentino**

I've heard it one too many times.
"Boracay = crowds. Ugh."

But as with all tourist attractions, there's always the center of the action, and then there are the little-known spots. First allow yourself to be seduced by White Beach's 4-kilometer stretch of soft sand, fresh seafood, and happy hours, but don't spend all your time there. The island is seven kilometers long, and full of surprises.

RELAX

Sometimes, the resort is the destination. Diniview (www.diniviewboracay.com/) is great for those who like native design

but comfortable quarters. Owned by Julia Lervik, the property sits on a hill at Diniwid Beach, a section you can reach by walking further from Station 1 of White Beach.

It's around a seven-minute climb from the beach to the villas, but has one of the most memorable views of Boracay I have ever seen. Even when I would mention I was staying at Diniview, locals would react "wow." Our favorite time of day was breakfast where my roommate Diane and I would eat by the outdoor deck framed by fringes of cogon, bamboo railings, the mini forest Julia cultivated in the property, and the ocean.

Diniview has only five villas that were previously private vacation homes of Julia's friends. I'd recommend this for families and groups of friends, especially for kids who love nature. You'll hear a lot of birds and spot butterflies, grasshoppers, and different flowers around the property.

Down by Diniwid Beach, it's a different scene. There's plenty of sun bed space, nobody trying to sell you island hopping tours, and maybe like me, you'll spot locals playing soccer and meet owners of nearby resorts having cocktails. Enjoy happy hour by Wahine Beach Bar, then come sunset, head to Spider House for its seaside lookout. For dinner, check out



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Diane enjoying the view of the Boracay shoreline from the Diniview Resort balcony (photo by Anika Ventura); Anika atop the Cruising Catamaran “MAHAL” (photo by Diane Camacho); tourists relaxing on the 4-kilometer-stretch Boracay sand (photo by Denise Tolentino)

Mama’s Fish House for yummy tuna steak or the little eateries at the back of Diniwid Beach.

EXPLORE

Boracay is filled with charming native sailboats called *paraws*, but for something more luxurious, go sailing with Lilyan Wei and Steve Broderick onboard their 42-foot Cruising Catamaran named MAHAL (Filipino word for “love”). The yacht has two hulls, making it more stable on the waves. Aboard you can hang out with drinks under the shade or tan atop the yacht’s netted sun beds.

The highlight of our trip was perhaps the

company of Lilyan and Steve themselves who shared their story of how they fell in love with Boracay and traveled the world in search of their dream boat, only to finally find it in Subic Bay.

Trips are available for half the day, during sunset, the whole day, or even longer routes to Coron and Amanpulo in Palawan. You can take the kids with you, too; Lilyan and Steve are both American Sailing Association–certified sailors, so definitely you’ll be in good hands. Onboard MAHAL, ask the couple to show you how to get a free foot massage from the water, take in the views of Boracay’s nearby islands, and sip San Miguel beer. www.boracay-sailing.com



RESTAURANT PICK

Locals swear by the sumptuous selections at Mama’s Fish House in Diniwid Beach. Best sellers include this Tuna Steak on a bed of ratatouille vegetables.



COUNTER-CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Tourists party all night at the not-so-secret "top secret party facility" Area 51 (photos by Denise Tolentino); plant your own rice at Motag Living Museum (photo by Anika Ventura)

SIDETRIP

What was life like around Boracay before bikinis and flip-flops? Get your feet muddy to find out. Boracay (comprising three barangays) is but a small part of the municipality of Malay, which has 14 other barangays. Experience Malay's history at the Motag Living Museum, which offers a fun and educational way to learn about the town's heritage.

Another kid-friendly activity, the museum is a recreation of a traditional farmer's village where you can learn how to plant and harvest rice, try island-old games like hermit crab racing, and taste local sticky rice snacks, among others. The museum is run by barangay captain and windsurfing champion Nenette Graf.

To get here, rent a private *paraw* from White Beach, or as a cheaper alternative, take a tricycle to the Caticlan port from White Beach, then a boat from Caticlan to Motag. Visits must be coordinated a day in advance. www.motaglivingmuseum.com.

Not in the mood to make small talk? Then catch up on your reading at the very quiet Puka

Beach. At 1.3 kilometers, it is Boracay's second longest beach. The sand ranges from fine to grainy because of the puka shells the beach is named after. You can bring your own food or order up from one of the few establishments.

There's not really much to do here, and that's how some people really like it. The fastest way to get here is by tricycle, but if you're island hopping on a boat, include this place in one of your stopovers.

PARTY

Where there's cheap booze, you'll find the locals. Described as "top secret party facility," Area 51 has found the perfect excuse to throw a party by celebrating lunar shifts every Full Moon and Black Moon. This year marks the sixth year of this tradition. The bar is located on Lugutan Beach by the south side of Bulabog Beach, reachable by tricycle from the main road. Don't expect big spectacles like foam and body paint, but do expect to rub elbows with locals. If you're lucky, the local percussions group known as the Jungle Boys will put on a show. In true local fashion, stay past 5 a.m. This is the side of Boracay where the sun rises. ■



PAL flies between Manila and Kalibo three times daily and Manila to Caticlan ten times daily. For more information, call PAL reservations office at (+632) 855 8888 or visit philippineairlines.com.