

CAGAYAN DE ORO AND CAMIGUIN BEST FOR RUGGED OUTDOORS

Photos by Hannah Reyes



Camiguin's Katibawasan Falls is one of the many natural attractions in this volcanic island of refreshing springs, secluded waterfalls, and abundant marine life.

Known as the gateway to Northern Mindanao, a trip to Cagayan de Oro (CDO) will connect you to its neighboring provinces of Camiguin and Bukidnon. From snorkeling amidst giant clams, and dipping in fresh water springs, to paddling through whitewater rapids—in this region, the action is outdoors.



Suggested Itinerary 3 Nights / 4 Days

Day 1

Best River Ride: Cagayan de Oro

Whitewater Rafting, Night Market, Centrio

Day 2

Best for Island Exploration: Camiguin

Mantigue Island, Sunken Cemetery, Ardent Hot Springs, Sto. Niño Cold Springs, Bura Soda Water Pool

Day 3

Best Marine and Culture Encounters: Camiguin

White Island, Katibawasan Falls, Enigmata Treehouse, Giant Clam Sanctuary

Day 4

Best Side Trip: Bukidnon / Departure

**DAY 1 BEST RIVER RIDE:
CAGAYAN DE ORO**

Get settled at CDO's city center then head to the Cagayan River, around 40 minutes away. This is the site of the area's most popular activity—**white water rafting**—prepare to get drenched and paddle like there's no tomorrow.

End your day by exploring the city center. On weekends, the town's Plaza Divisoria is turned into an **outdoor night market** where you can go thrift shopping, sample grilled snacks, or catch a live band playing. Alternatively, visit the town's **Centrio Mall** for more upscale restaurant and shop options.



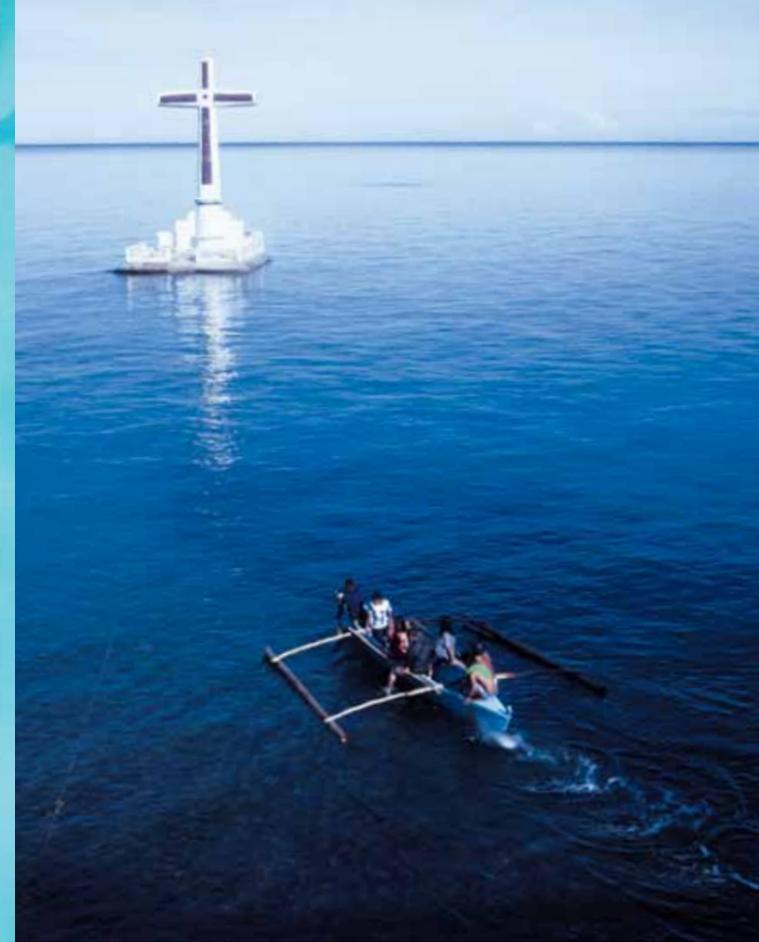
Even young children and seniors can try out white water rafting here. Trained instructors will guide you when to paddle, relax, and even cheer yourself on. Choose from a number of rafting outfitters on site; the pioneer among them is First Rafting Adventure.

DAY 2 BEST FOR ISLAND EXPLORATION: CAMIGUIN

Try to catch the morning ferry to Camiguin, around two and a half hours by sea from CDO. Nicknamed the "island born of fire," it is home to seven volcanoes. *Lonely Planet* once quipped, "drop it down next to Hawaii or Maui and it wouldn't look out of place." The island is easily navigable as its attractions can go from a mere 5 to 30 minutes apart.



Snorkeling in Mantigue Island can yield an amazing close-up with friendly fish



A large white cross commemorates the cemetery swept into sea by Mount Vulcan's catastrophic 1871 eruption



Stop by the Sto. Rosario Church for unique interiors of driftwood chandeliers and woven bamboo walls.



Camiguin's beaches and attractions all show efforts in keeping a clean environment.



A map of Camiguin illustrates the proximity of its many dive spots and activities.

BEST FOR SPENDING THE WHOLE AFTERNOON MANTIGUE ISLAND

Have a picnic under a canopy of trees, go on a trek that leads to the beach, or snorkel to see huge schools of fish that appear.

BEST EERIE HISTORY SUNKEN CEMETERY

A towering white cross marks the former burial grounds of Spaniards who lived here during the colonial period. Only one recognizable tombstone remains in this sunken cemetery but its thriving marine life and eerie backstory still makes for a spine-tingling visit.



Soothe aching muscles in the Ardent Hot Springs.

BEST FOR TAKING A BREATHER

Because of the island's volcanic character, Camiguin's waters are unlike your usual swimming pools. Visit **Ardent Hot Springs** for a warm dip that reaches around 40 degree Celsius, while the **Sto. Niño Cold Springs** gives you a chance encounter with little fish that nibble at your feet. For a bubbly soak, visit the **Bura Soda Water Pool**.

**BEST PLACE TO
LAY DOWN A MAT
WHITE ISLAND**

With no establishments to get in the way of your sun, work on a tan at this white sandbar, which varies in size with the changing tides.



**DAY 3 BEST MARINE AND CULTURE
ENCOUNTERS: CAMIGUIN**

Before returning to CDO, make the most of your day with more sunning and finning, then channel your inner child with a visit to a treehouse.

**BEST WAY TO FEEL A RUSH
KATIBAWASAN FALLS**

You can go for a short swim at this clear waterfall that plunges 75 meters into a rock pool, or have a picnic in the surrounding space amidst orchids and wild ferns. Elsewhere on the island, there's also **Tuasan Falls**, which requires an hour-long hike to get to, but has less visitors and more boulders and pools.



Local girls pose by Enigmata Treehouse's labyrinth made by Mindanao artist Kublai Milan. A walk through this hand-shaped labyrinth symbolizes a celebration of creativity and a return to one's center.



This hut is part of Enigmata Treehouse's main structure, which is built around an acacia tree that is more than 100 years old.

**BEST ART INITIATIVE
ENIGMATA TREEHOUSE**

Enigmata Treehouse is an art camp, gallery, and eco-lodge that looks like a place where Peter Pan's Lost Boys could live. Founder Rosalie Zerrudo gives free art lessons like painting and props making to local children. If you want to watch their plays or dances, inquire in advance.

TIPS FOR TOURING CAMIGUIN

- Some local guides double as drivers—strike a deal that covers both a tour and transportation.
- When visiting sites, prepare small bills to pay for minimal site maintenance fees.
- The ferry ride to Camiguin has minimal legroom and can get noisy. Bring a light carry-on bag, and earplugs if you want to sleep.



**BEST PLACE TO HIDE A TREASURE CHEST
GIANT CLAM SANCTUARY**

If a pirate were looking to hide his loot, this would be the perfect spot. Around 2,500 clams can be found in this sanctuary, whose preservation can be credited to the local government's efforts. To see the clams, one must snorkel down with a guide. As part of a defense mechanism, clams are

extra sensitive to movements and forcefully shut their mouths upon sensing something even as subtle as a shadow. Be alert and just follow your guide; if you get too close, a clam could automatically shut its mouth and take your hand with it. So be careful—no treasure, no hand.



**DAY 4 BEST SIDE TRIP:
BUKIDNON / DEPARTURE**

About an hour by road from CDO, visit Bukidnon for nippy weather and pine trees. Drive by the world's biggest pineapple plantation at Manolo Fortrich en route to visiting **Dahilayan Adventure Park** for horseback riding, picnics, and lots of adventure rides. Nearby is the **Del Monte Golf Club**, popular for its fresh pineapple juice and tender steaks made from pineapple-fed cows.



(Clockwise from left) Ziplines, obstacle courses, and ATV rides amidst pine trees are offered in Dahilayan Adventure Park; steak lunch at Del Monte Golf Club; with an area of 18,000 hectares, Bukidnon is home to the world's biggest pineapple plantation.

