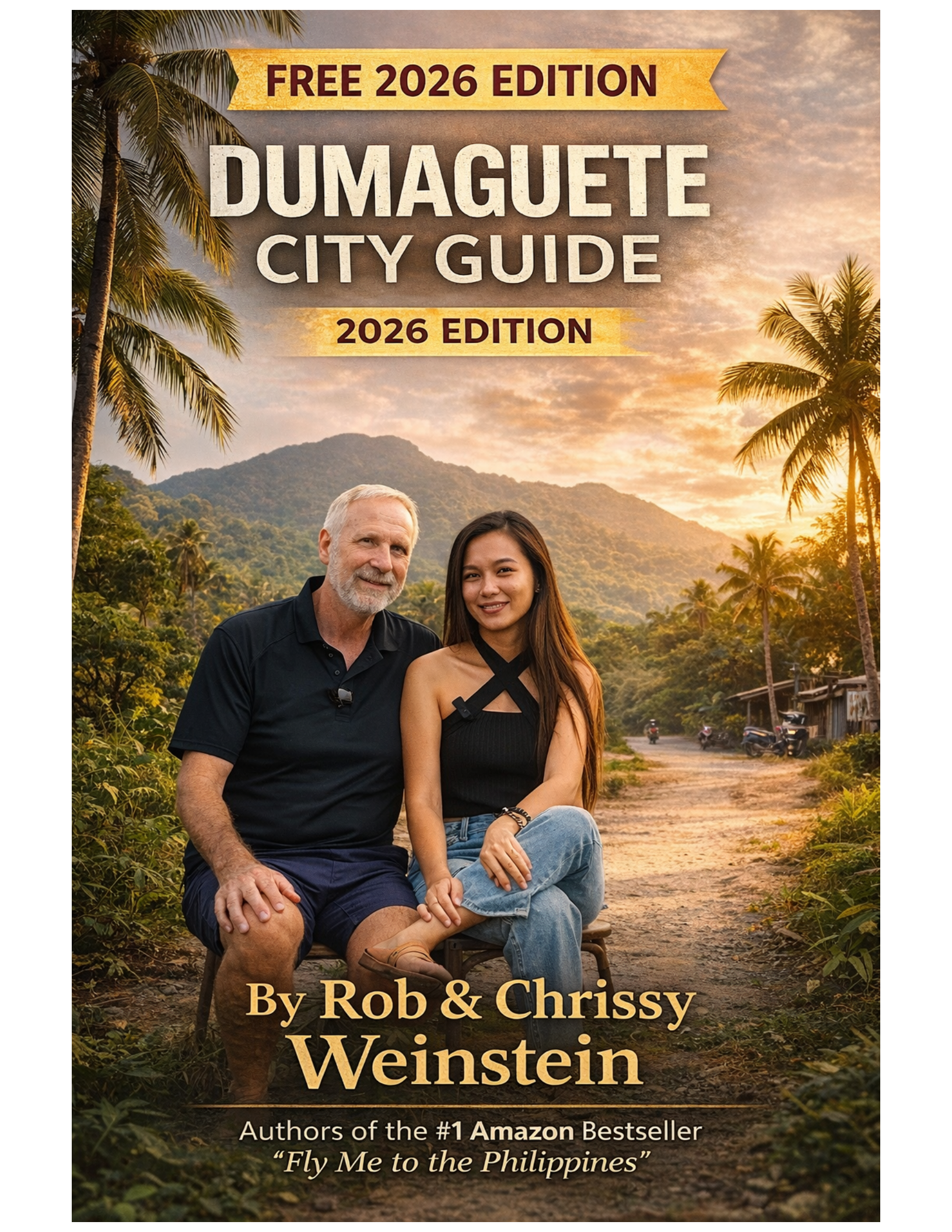




FREE 2026 EDITION

DUMAGUETE CITY GUIDE

2026 EDITION

**By Rob & Chrissy
Weinstein**

Authors of the #1 Amazon Bestseller
"Fly Me to the Philippines"

Dumaguete City Guide for Western Expats – 2026 Edition

By Rob & Chrissy Weinstein

Authors of the #1 Amazon Bestseller [Fly Me to the Philippines](#)

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Dedication

For the men searching for a second chance at love and life.

This guide is written with you in mind — the traveler, the dreamer, the man who has worked hard, faced heartbreak, and is ready to begin again. Dumaguete is a place where the sea meets the mountains, where friendships are easily formed, and where possibilities are renewed.

We dedicate this book to the men who refuse to settle for loneliness, and who are brave enough to look across the ocean for happiness.

— Rob & Chrissy

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Dumaguete

The City of Gentle People

Dumaguete has long carried the title “*City of Gentle People*.” This isn’t just a slogan—it’s something you’ll feel within minutes of arriving. The city runs at a slower pace than Manila or Cebu, and there’s a friendliness here that makes even first-time visitors feel at ease.

For Western men, especially those arriving alone or starting over after divorce or retirement, Dumaguete offers something rare: a community where smiles come easily and conversations are natural. Walk along Rizal Boulevard and you’ll see students laughing over coffee, families gathering in the evening, and a scattering of expats chatting with locals as if they’ve known each other for years.

A Brief History

Founded during the Spanish colonial period, Dumaguete grew around its role as a port and university town. Silliman University, established in 1901 by American Presbyterian missionaries, remains a centerpiece of the city’s identity. Today, Silliman is the oldest American-established university in Asia and a cultural landmark for Dumaguete.

The presence of this academic hub gives the city a youthful energy. Cafés, bookstores, and arts festivals keep the city lively, while the older sections around the Belfry Tower and Cathedral preserve its colonial heritage.

Climate and Seasons

Dumaguete enjoys a tropical climate:

- **Dry season:** November to May — the best time to visit, with warm days and plenty of sun.
- **Wet season:** June to October — rain showers are frequent, but usually pass quickly.

Average temperatures range between **25–32°C (77–90°F)** year-round, with cooling breezes along the coast. Brownouts (power outages) can still happen, especially during stormy months, so it's worth checking whether your accommodation has backup power.

The Expat Community

Dumaguete has earned a reputation as one of the Philippines' most expat-friendly destinations. Western retirees are drawn by the affordable cost of living, English-speaking locals, and easy access to both mountains and sea.

Ages vary, but many expats here are in their **50s to 70s**, often divorced or semi-retired. You'll see them in coffee shops like Tom N Toms, in bars along the Boulevard, or on scooters headed to Valencia's cool hillside retreats. Dumaguete also has one of the most active expat social calendars in the Philippines, from diving groups to volunteer clubs.

Language & Communication

English is widely spoken, especially by younger Filipinos and in business settings. Locals also speak Cebuano (Bisaya), which has its own warmth and rhythm. Picking up a few basic phrases goes a long way in building rapport:

- **Good morning** – *Maayong buntag*

- **How are you?** – *Kumusta ka?*
- **Thank you very much** – *Daghang salamat*
- **Delicious!** – *Lami kaayo!*

Rob's Rule

Don't just stay within the expat bubble. The men who enjoy Dumaguete the most are the ones who build friendships with locals, learn a few Cebuano phrases, and step outside of their comfort zones.

Chrissy's Pick

Take an early morning walk along Rizal Boulevard. Between 5–7 AM, the air is cooler, fishermen unload their fresh catch, and locals exercise along the sea wall. It's the most peaceful way to start your day in Dumaguete.

Chapter 2: Visa and Immigration

Tourist Visa Basics

Western travelers from the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Australia, and most of Europe receive a **30-day visa-free entry** on arrival. This is stamped directly into your passport and can be extended locally.

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) office in Dumaguete is conveniently located along Rizal Boulevard. The office is modest, but efficient enough if you arrive early in the day. Lines can get long, especially on Mondays and after holidays.

Visa Extensions

- **First extension:** Adds 29 days to your stay, for a total of 59 days.
 - **Subsequent extensions:** Available in 1– or 2–month increments, up to a maximum of **36 months** for most Western nationals before an exit and re-entry is required.
- **Fees:** Expect to pay ₱3,000–₱4,000 (\$55–\$70) for the first extension and slightly less for subsequent renewals.

The Special Resident Retiree Visa (SRRV)

For long-term expats, the **SRRV** is a popular option. It is issued through the Philippine Retirement Authority and provides:

- Multiple-entry privileges.
- Exemption from exit clearances.
- Permission to stay indefinitely without frequent extensions.

Requirements:

- Minimum age 50 with pension, or 35 without pension but with higher deposit.

- Bank deposit requirement ranges from **\$10,000–\$20,000**, depending on age and pension.
- Application handled through Manila or Cebu offices, though many expats in Dumaguete use local agencies for assistance.

Other Visa Categories

- **Marriage Visa (13a):** For those legally married to a Filipina, providing permanent residency after approval.
- **Work Visa (9g):** Less common for retirees, but necessary if you plan to be formally employed.
- **Student Visa:** Available through Silliman University and other accredited institutions.

Visa Runs

If you prefer not to extend continuously, **visa runs** are an option.

Common destinations include:

- **Hong Kong** — short flights, easy re-entry.
- **Kuala Lumpur** — popular with expats for affordable connections.
- **Singapore** — pricier, but efficient and reliable.

Budget airlines like Cebu Pacific and AirAsia operate frequent connections out of Cebu and Manila.

Practical Tips

- Bring exact change in pesos when paying BI fees.
- Dress respectfully — collared shirts and pants are appreciated in government offices.
- Keep photocopies of your passport, visa stamps, and receipts.
- Arrive early at BI Dumaguete to avoid long waits.

Rob's Rule

Always plan your visa strategy before you book your flights. Whether you're staying 3 months or 3 years, knowing your options will save you stress and money.

Chrissy's Pick

Use a local fixer or visa assistance service only if you're overwhelmed. Many are reliable, but it's just as easy to handle extensions yourself at the Dumaguete BI office if you stay organized.

Chapter 3: Finding Accommodation

Short-Term Stays

Dumaguete offers a wide range of short-term lodging options suitable for first-time visitors:

- **Hotels:** Rates start around ₱1,500 (\$26) per night for mid-range options like Hotel Essencia or Bethel Guest House.
- **Boutique hotels:** The Henry Resort offers an artsy, stylish experience for about ₱4,500–₱7,500 (\$80–\$130) per night.
- **Airbnb:** Studio units and small apartments are widely available near Silliman University and Rizal Boulevard, averaging ₱1,800–₱3,000 (\$32–\$52) per night.

These short stays are ideal for men who want to explore Dumaguete before committing to long-term rentals.

Long-Term Rentals

Most expats in Dumaguete prefer to rent rather than buy, due to restrictions on foreign land ownership. Options include:

- **Condos:** Marina Spatial, a popular mid-range condo complex near the sea, offers units from ₱15,000–₱25,000 (\$260–\$440) per month.
- **Apartments:** Smaller apartments in the city center run ₱12,000–₱20,000 (\$210–\$350) per month.
- **Houses:** Larger family homes in Dumaguete or nearby Bacong and Dauin can range from ₱25,000–₱50,000 (\$440–\$875) per month.

Expat-Friendly Neighborhoods

- **City Center:** Best for those who want to be near cafés, shops, and the Boulevard.
- **Valencia:** A 20-minute ride uphill, cooler climate and quiet environment. Popular with long-term retirees.

- **Bacong:** South of Dumaguete, offers more space and beachfront options at lower costs.
- **Dauin:** Famous for diving resorts, pricier but with oceanfront living.

What to Expect

- **Brownouts:** Not all rentals have full generator backup. Always ask if air conditioning will work during outages.
- **Furnishing:** Many rentals are furnished, but quality varies. Inspect before signing.
 - **Deposits:** Landlords may ask 2–3 months' deposit; negotiate to avoid overpaying.

Working with Agents vs. Owners

- **Agents:** Helpful if you're new, but expect a 1-month rental commission fee.
- **Direct Owners:** Often more flexible on price, but harder to find without local contacts. Facebook Marketplace is widely used for listings.

Rob's Rule

Never sign a lease before living in the house or neighborhood for at least a weekend. Noise from roosters, karaoke, or traffic can ruin what seemed like a perfect rental.

Chrissy's Pick

Valencia is one of the best places to rent if you want cooler weather and quiet nights. You'll still be close enough to Dumaguete for shopping and social life, but you'll enjoy mountain breezes that make sleeping more comfortable without air conditioning.

Chapter 4: Healthcare and Insurance

Hospitals and Clinics

Dumaguete has several hospitals, the largest being **Silliman University Medical Center (SUMC)**. This private hospital offers Western-standard care in many specialties, with English-speaking staff. Other facilities include:

- **Holy Child Hospital** – Known for pediatrics and general care.
- **Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital** – A government hospital, more crowded and less comfortable, but lower cost.

For most expats, SUMC is the preferred choice due to quality of care.

Doctors and Specialists

Dumaguete has a growing network of Western-trained doctors, many of whom studied or practiced abroad. English is the working language in medicine, so communication is rarely a problem. Common specialties available include internal medicine, cardiology, dermatology, and dentistry. For more advanced cases, many expats travel to **Cebu City** or **Manila**.

Pharmacies and Medication

Pharmacies are plentiful — Watsons, Mercury Drug, and Rose Pharmacy are found in the city. Most Western medications are available, but sometimes under different brand names. Prices are generally lower than in the U.S., but certain imported medications can be more expensive.

Tip: Bring at least one month's supply of your prescriptions when arriving, as not every pharmacy carries the same inventory.

Health Insurance Options

- **PhilHealth:** Government-run insurance, affordable at around ₱17,000 (\$300) per year for foreigners, but limited in coverage. Best used as supplemental.
- **Private International Insurance:** Providers like Cigna, Allianz, or IMG offer expat-tailored plans. Expect to pay \$1,000–\$3,000 annually, depending on age and coverage.
- **Local Private Insurance:** Cheaper than international providers, but with limited hospital networks outside the Philippines.

Emergency Services

Ambulance response can be slow. Many expats arrange with private hospitals directly or rely on personal vehicles or taxis during emergencies.

Rob's Rule

Never rely on PhilHealth alone. It may cover part of your bill, but you'll still need cash upfront. Private or international insurance is worth the peace of mind.

Chrissy's Pick

Silliman University Medical Center is clean, efficient, and comfortable for foreign patients. It's where I'd recommend family and friends go first for care in Dumaguete.

Chapter 5: Banking and Finances

Opening a Bank Account

Foreigners can open bank accounts in Dumaguete, though requirements vary by branch. Typically you will need:

- Passport
- Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR-I Card)
- Proof of local address (lease or utility bill)

Popular banks include **BDO, BPI, Metrobank, and Landbank**. Some foreigners prefer international banks like HSBC, but these usually require travel to Cebu or Manila. NOTE - many foreigners with only a ACR cards have reported success. Others have reported being turned down and based on hundreds of comments on the Facebook group Philippines Expats, it will be hit or miss if a bank manager allows you to open a bank account.

ATMs and Withdrawals

ATMs are plentiful in Dumaguete, especially around Robinsons Mall, downtown, and near Silliman University. Most machines dispense up to ₱10,000–₱20,000 (\$175–\$350) per withdrawal, with a ₱250 (\$4.50) local fee.

Tip: Bring a debit or credit card that reimburses international ATM fees, such as **Charles Schwab** or **Fidelity** (U.S.), or **Wise debit card** for global users.

Money Transfer Services

Western Union, Palawan Pawnshop, and Cebuana Lhuillier offer money remittance. For digital transfers, services like **Wise (formerly TransferWise)** or **Remitly** are widely used by expats for better exchange rates.

Cost of Living Breakdown (Monthly, for One Person)

- **Rent:** ₱15,000–₱25,000 (\$260–\$440) for a decent condo.
- **Utilities:** ₱4,000–₱8,000 (\$70–\$140), depending on aircon use.
- **Food:** ₱12,000–₱20,000 (\$210–\$350), mixing home cooking and restaurants.
- **Transportation:** ₱3,000–₱5,000 (\$50–\$90), if using tricycles or owning a scooter.
 - **Entertainment:** ₱5,000–₱10,000 (\$90–\$175).

Total: **₱40,000–₱65,000 (\$700–\$1,150)** for a comfortable Western lifestyle.

Managing Taxes as an Expat

- **U.S. Citizens:** Must file annual tax returns regardless of residence; Foreign Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE) may apply.
- **Other Westerners:** Rules vary, but many countries have tax treaties with the Philippines.
- **Philippines:** Unless you run a business or earn income locally, foreign pensions and retirement funds are generally not taxed.

Rob's Rule

Always keep a backup debit card and at least ₱20,000 cash in reserve. ATMs sometimes run dry, and brownouts can knock systems offline.

Chrissy's Pick

Robinsons Mall has the most reliable cluster of ATMs in Dumaguete. You can withdraw, shop, and grab a meal in one safe, convenient stop.

Chapter 6: Transportation

Getting Around the City

Dumaguete is compact and easy to navigate. Most daily trips can be handled with:

- **Tricycles:** The most common form of local transport. Fares are ₱15–₱20 (\$0.25–\$0.35) within city limits. Always agree on the fare for longer trips before boarding.
- **Jeepneys:** Colorful shared minibuses that follow set routes. Fare is usually ₱12–₱15 (\$0.20–\$0.25). Less comfortable but cheap and authentic.
- **Motorcycle taxis (habal-habal):** Good for quick trips or uphill rides to Valencia. Negotiate before riding.

Scooters and Motorcycles

Most expats eventually buy or rent a scooter. It's the fastest and cheapest way to move around, especially for reaching Valencia or Dauin.

- **Rental:** ₱5,000–₱7,000 (\$90–\$120) per month.
- **Purchase:** ₱70,000–₱120,000 (\$1,250–\$2,150) for a new unit. Honda and Yamaha are the most popular brands.

Helmet use is legally required, though not always enforced.

Cars and Driving

Owning a car in Dumaguete is optional. Traffic is manageable compared to Manila or Cebu, but streets are narrow, parking is limited, and tricycles dominate the roads.

- **Purchase:** ₱600,000+ (\$10,500+) for new sedans or SUVs.
- **Rental:** ₱1,800–₱3,000 (\$32–\$55) per day for self-drive cars.

Foreigners can drive with their home country license for 90 days, after which you'll need a Philippine license from the LTO (Land Transportation Office).

Ferries and Boats

Dumaguete's port connects to nearby islands:

- **Siquijor:** 1–1.5 hours by fast craft.
- **Cebu:** Overnight ferries available.
- **Bohol:** 2 hours by OceanJet.

Day trips often involve local outrigger boats for island-hopping and diving excursions.

Air Travel

Dumaguete–Sibulan Airport (DGT) is just 15 minutes from the city center. Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines offer multiple daily flights to Manila and Cebu. Average fares range from ₱2,500–₱5,000 (\$45–\$90) roundtrip if booked in advance.

Rob's Rule

Always carry a rain poncho when riding a scooter. Downpours in Dumaguete are sudden and heavy, and you don't want to be caught unprepared.

Chrissy's Pick

If you're staying long-term, choose a scooter over relying on tricycles. It gives you freedom to explore Valencia, Dauin, and other nearby towns on your own schedule.

Chapter 7: Food and Dining

Local Filipino Cuisine

Dumaguete is a food lover's town, with plenty of local specialties:

- **Budbud Kabog** – A sticky rice delicacy wrapped in banana leaves, best paired with hot chocolate (*sikwate*).
- **Silvanas** – Famous frozen cookies from Sans Rival, a must-try dessert.
 - **Chicken Inato** – Similar to grilled chicken barbecue, marinated in local spices.
- **Seafood** – Fresh catch is abundant; try grilled marlin, squid, or shrimp at seaside restaurants.

Meals at small eateries cost as little as ₱80–₱150 (\$1.50–\$3), while mid-range restaurants charge ₱250–₱500 (\$4.50–\$9).

Western Restaurants

Dumaguete has a surprising number of Western options to keep homesickness at bay:

- **Why Not?** – Longtime favorite for Italian dishes and expat nightlife.
- **Casablanca** – Mediterranean and European fusion, with an extensive wine list.
- **Lab-as Seafood** – Fresh seafood prepared Filipino-style, but with Western-friendly service.
- **Gabby's Bistro** – Colorful décor and a menu ranging from pasta to burgers.

Markets and Groceries

- **Public Market:** Offers the freshest seafood, fruits, and vegetables at bargain prices.

- **Robinsons Supermarket:** Good for packaged goods and Western brands.
- **Lee Super Plaza:** A long-standing department store with grocery section.
- **Local Bakeries:** Bread and pastries are cheap and plentiful; Silvanas from Sans Rival are the city's pride.

Street Food

Adventurous eaters can try:

- **Tempura** (fried fish or squid balls) – ₱5–₱10 per stick.
- **Balut** (fertilized duck egg) – ₱25 each, an acquired taste.
- **Banana Cue** – Fried caramelized bananas for ₱10–₱15.

If you're sensitive, stick to cooked items and avoid raw shellfish from roadside stalls.

Coffee Culture

Coffee shops are popular meeting places for expats:

- **Bo's Coffee** – Local chain, reliable Wi-Fi.
- **Tom N Toms** – Spacious Korean café with 24/7 service.
- **Ground Zero** – Small but favored by students and digital nomads.

Expect to spend ₱120–₱180 (\$2–\$3.50) for a cappuccino or latte.

Rob's Rule

Don't rely only on Western restaurants. Half the fun of Dumaguete is discovering local dishes. You'll save money, and your Filipina partner will appreciate your willingness to enjoy her culture.

Chrissy's Pick

Try Sans Rival's famous Silvanas with a cup of hot sikwate. It's Dumaguete's signature dessert experience, and one you'll crave long after you leave.

Chapter 8: Nightlife and Entertainment

Rizal Boulevard Evenings

The heart of Dumaguete's nightlife is **Rizal Boulevard**. As the sun sets, food carts roll out, lights flicker on, and both locals and expats stroll the seaside walkway. Street food, live bands, and the smell of grilled seafood make the boulevard the city's social hub after dark.

Bars and Music Venues

- **Why Not?** – The most famous bar and club in Dumaguete, with a mix of expats, locals, and live DJs.
- **Hayahay Treehouse Bar** – A laid-back seaside spot with live bands, ideal for weekend nights.
- **Tiki Bar** – Known for younger crowds and karaoke, lively until late.
- **Honeycomb Tourist Inn** – Offers acoustic nights, popular with both students and foreigners.

Beer is cheap at ₱60–₱90 (\$1–\$1.60) a bottle, while cocktails run ₱150–₱300 (\$3–\$6).

Movie Theaters and Cultural Shows

Robinsons Mall houses Dumaguete's modern cinemas, screening both Filipino and international films. Ticket prices average ₱250 (\$4.50). Cultural festivals, such as the **Sandurot Festival** and **Buglasan Festival**, feature parades, street dancing, and food fairs that immerse you in local culture.

Sports and Recreation

- **Billiards & Darts:** Popular in smaller bars and expat hangouts.

- **Gyms & Boxing:** Local gyms are affordable; boxing and martial arts classes are easy to find.
- **Golf:** The nearby Ang Tay Golf Course and Apo Golf in Valencia attract enthusiasts.

The Dating Scene

For single Western men, Dumaguete offers a relaxed environment to meet Filipinas. Cafés, malls, and social gatherings are common meeting points. Dating apps like FilipinoCupid and Tinder are also widely used here, often leading to in-person meetups in town.

Rob's Rule

Pace yourself in Dumaguete nightlife. It's easy to fall into the trap of late nights and heavy drinking. Balance your evenings out with mornings spent exploring or enjoying the Boulevard.

Chrissy's Pick

Hayahay Treehouse Bar is my favorite spot for live bands and a cool evening breeze. It has a local vibe but is welcoming to expats, making it a fun and safe place to spend the night.

Chapter 9: Technology and Communications

Internet Providers

Dumaguete has several ISPs, though speed and reliability vary:

- **PLDT Home Fibr** – Widest coverage, speeds up to 200 Mbps in select areas.
- **Globe At Home** – Decent alternative, but some users report inconsistent service.
- **Converge ICT** – Expanding rapidly, often provides faster speeds where available.

Expect to pay ₱1,800–₱3,500 (\$32–\$60) per month for a reliable home fiber plan. In Valencia and other hillside areas, coverage may be weaker.

Mobile Phone Services

The two main carriers are **Globe** and **Smart**. Both offer prepaid SIM cards for as little as ₱40 (\$0.75). Popular prepaid promos include:

- **₱300 (\$5.50) / month** for unlimited calls and texts, plus 10–20 GB of data.
- **₱999 (\$18) / month** for heavier data packages, often marketed toward digital nomads.

SIM registration is now mandatory — bring your passport when buying a SIM.

Coworking Spaces

While Dumaguete doesn't have the density of coworking spaces you'd find in Cebu or Manila, a few standouts exist:

- **Ground Zero** – Café-style coworking with reliable internet.

- **Tom N Toms** – Open 24/7, favored by students and remote workers.
- **Silliman Library** – Public access with day passes, though quieter and more academic.

Tech Shops and Repairs

Computer repair shops and cellphone service kiosks are scattered around Perdices Street and Robinsons Mall. Most issues with laptops, phones, and accessories can be handled locally for a fraction of Western costs.

Digital Privacy

Using a VPN is recommended when banking online or accessing geo-restricted content. **ExpressVPN** and **NordVPN** both work reliably in the Philippines.

Rob's Rule

Never rely on just one internet connection if you're working online. Keep a backup SIM card or pocket Wi-Fi in case your home fiber goes down.

Chrissy's Pick

Globe prepaid promos are simple and affordable. Load ₱300 at a local sari-sari store, and you'll have enough calls, texts, and data for the whole month without worrying about contracts.

Chapter 10: Recreation and Outdoor Activities

Diving and Snorkeling

Dumaguete is one of the Philippines' premier diving destinations. Just 20 minutes south in Dauin, you'll find dozens of dive shops offering trips to world-class sites.

- **Apo Island** – Famous for sea turtles, coral walls, and marine biodiversity.
- **Dauin Coast** – Known for “muck diving,” a paradise for underwater photographers.
- **Snorkeling** – Easy and inexpensive, with gear rentals starting at ₱300 (\$5.50) per day.

Beaches and Day Trips

- **Dauin Beaches** – Black volcanic sand, lined with resorts and dive shops.
- **Siquijor** – White sand beaches and waterfalls, just an hour's ferry away.
 - **Manjuyod Sandbar** – Called the “Maldives of the Philippines,” a popular boat excursion.

Hiking and Mountains

- **Valencia** – Just 20 minutes from Dumaguete, offers cooler air and scenic trails.
- **Casaroro Falls** – A dramatic waterfall reached by a steep but rewarding hike.
- **Mt. Talinis (Cuernos de Negros)** – For serious hikers, this 1,903-meter peak is a challenging climb with rewarding views.

Sports and Fitness

- **Gyms:** Affordable memberships, usually ₱1,200–₱2,500 (\$22–\$45) per month.

- **Tennis & Badminton:** Courts available at Silliman and private clubs.
- **Golf:** Ang Tay Golf & Country Club (near Dumaguete) and Apo Golf in Valencia attract both locals and expats.

Water Sports and Adventure

- **Kayaking & Paddleboarding** – Rentals available at Dauin resorts.
- **Fishing Charters** – Local operators offer half-day and full-day trips for tuna, marlin, and reef fish.
- **Ziplining & ATV Tours** – Found in Valencia and nearby eco-parks.

Rob's Rule

Don't over-plan your stay. The magic of Dumaguete is in the balance — mornings diving or hiking, afternoons at a café, evenings on the Boulevard.

Chrissy's Pick

Casaroro Falls is one of my favorite spots near Dumaguete. The hike is tough, but the view of the falls surrounded by rainforest is unforgettable.

Chapter 11: Building a Social Life

Expats Clubs and Meetups

Dumaguete has one of the most active expat communities in the Philippines. Weekly coffee meetups, diving groups, and volunteer projects make it easy to meet like-minded people. Many expats gather at cafés along the Boulevard, at Why Not?, or in Valencia's hillside restaurants.

Volunteer Opportunities

Foreigners are often welcomed in community projects:

- **Environmental cleanups** along beaches and rivers.
- **Teaching English** or assisting in local schools.
- **Animal welfare groups** that rescue and care for stray dogs and cats.

Giving back is a meaningful way to connect with the local culture.

Language Exchange and Culture

Joining a Cebuano (Bisaya) class or informal language exchange with locals helps bridge cultural gaps. Filipinos are patient teachers, and learning even a little Bisaya earns respect.

Sports and Hobbies

Whether it's joining a scuba diving group, a motorcycle riding club, or a golf foursome, hobbies are a natural way to connect.

Dumaguete's expat community is diverse—some are retired professionals, others digital nomads—but they tend to be open to new friendships.

Church and Faith Communities

For those who are spiritual, Dumaguete has an abundance of Christian churches, including Catholic and Protestant congregations, as well as international fellowships where English is the primary language. Attending services can be another avenue for building relationships.

Rob's Rule

If you isolate yourself, you'll struggle. Join at least one group or activity within your first month—it will transform your experience.

Chrissy's Pick

I love the coffee meetups along Rizal Boulevard. They're casual, welcoming, and a great way for new arrivals to find friends quickly.

Chapter 12: Education and Learning

Silliman University

Founded in 1901 by American missionaries, **Silliman University** is the pride of Dumaguete and one of the most respected universities in the Philippines. Its seaside campus is beautiful and historic, filled with acacia trees and colonial-era buildings. For expats, it's not only a landmark but also a cultural hub, hosting concerts, lectures, and art exhibits open to the public.

International and Private Schools

For expats with children, Dumaguete has several good private schools offering English-based instruction:

- **St. Paul University Dumaguete** – Strong in academics, arts, and sports.
- **Foundation University** – Offers a modern approach with international ties.
- **Negros Oriental Montessori International School** – Small but focused on English and global curriculum.

Tuition fees are significantly lower than Western private schools, averaging ₱60,000–₱120,000 (\$1,000–\$2,200) per year.

Cultural Learning

Expats often take classes in Filipino cooking, local dance, or Bisaya language lessons. Local community centers and private tutors offer informal instruction for very affordable rates (₱200–₱400 per hour, \$4–\$7).

Libraries and Bookstores

- **Silliman University Library** – One of the largest in the Visayas, with English-language collections.

- **Local Bookstores** – Modest, but Robinsons Mall and Lee Super Plaza stock popular titles.
- **Online Shopping** – Lazada and Shopee deliver books and study materials within a week.

Continuing Education

Many retirees and digital nomads use their time in Dumaguete for personal development:

- Online courses via Coursera, Udemy, or university distance programs.
- Short courses in photography, diving certification, or IT skills.

Rob's Rule

Keep your mind active. Retirement isn't the end of learning—it's the beginning of having the freedom to learn whatever you want.

Chrissy's Pick

Visit Silliman's cultural events. The music recitals, art shows, and theater performances are open to the public, inexpensive, and a wonderful way to experience Dumaguete's artistic side.

Chapter 13: Legal Matters

Property Ownership

Foreigners cannot directly own land in the Philippines. Common alternatives include:

- **Long-term lease** – Up to 25 years, renewable. As a practical matter, it's nearly impossible to get anyone to lease you land for more than 10 years however, if you were dating a Filipino and you decide to purchase land, you might put it in her mother's name and she would be more than happy to lease you 25 years with 25 year extension option And as long as you're not married, this has a chance of standing up in court
- **Condo ownership** – Legal for foreigners if no more than 40% of the total units in the building are foreign-owned.
- **Spouse ownership** – If married to a Filipina, property can be in her name, but this requires trust and careful planning.

Always consult a reputable local lawyer before making commitments.

Business Registration

Foreigners may establish businesses, but requirements vary by industry. The **Philippine Board of Investments** outlines foreign ownership rules. Many expats run small-scale ventures (cafés, dive shops, rentals) but need proper registration. Unregistered businesses risk fines or deportation.

Legal Assistance

Several local attorneys in Dumaguete specialize in working with expats. Fees are modest compared to Western standards—around ₱2,000–₱3,500 (\$35–\$65) per consultation. Ensure your

lawyer is licensed with the **Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP)**.

Marriage and Relationships

- **Legal Marriage:** Requires a Certificate of No Marriage (CENOMAR) for your Filipina partner and proof of divorce or annulment if you're previously married.
- **Foreign Divorce Recognition:** If you divorced abroad, your Filipina partner may need to petition a Philippine court to recognize it before remarrying.
- **Annulments:** Lengthy and expensive, often taking 1–3 years.

Wills and Estate Planning

If you plan to retire long-term, draft a will that covers Philippine assets. Without one, local inheritance laws apply, which may favor Filipino heirs. Consider dual wills (one in your home country, one in the Philippines).

Rob's Rule

Don't cut corners on legal matters. What seems like a small shortcut today could cost you your retirement tomorrow.

Chrissy's Pick

If you plan to marry a Filipina, do everything properly and legally. It avoids problems later and shows her family that you respect both her and their culture.

Chapter 14: Health and Wellness

Fitness Centers and Gyms

Dumaguete has several gyms catering to different budgets and styles:

- **Gold's Gym (Robinsons Mall)** – Modern equipment, group classes, air-conditioned.
- **World Gym** – Affordable, no-frills option popular with locals.
- **Silliman University Gym** – Access may be arranged for expats; ideal for sports enthusiasts.

Monthly memberships range from ₱1,200–₱2,500 (\$22–\$45).

Spas and Massage Therapy

Massage therapy is both affordable and widely available. Options include:

- **Hotel Spas** – Upscale services in resorts like Atmosphere or Bahura.
- **Standalone Massage Shops** – Full-body massages for ₱400–₱700 (\$7–\$12).
- **Foot Reflexology** – Common in malls, ₱250–₱400 (\$4.50–\$7).

Mental Health Resources

English-speaking counselors and psychologists are limited but available through Silliman University and private clinics. Online therapy services (BetterHelp, Talkspace) are increasingly popular among expats who want Western-style support.

Traditional Healing Practices

Some locals still visit **herbalists** and traditional healers, particularly in nearby Siquijor. While interesting culturally, foreigners are advised to use these practices as complementary, not primary, health care.

Managing Heat and Tropical Health

The tropical climate can affect expats unused to heat and humidity:

- Stay hydrated — bottled water is inexpensive and widely available.
 - Wear light, breathable clothing.
 - Use mosquito repellent to avoid dengue fever risk.
- Don't underestimate sun exposure, especially during midday.

Rob's Rule

Your health is your most important investment. Cheap massages and low gym fees make it easy to stay active — take advantage of them.

Chrissy's Pick

Treat yourself to a spa day now and then. It's affordable, relaxing, and a wonderful way to recharge while living in Dumaguete.

Chapter 15: Day Trips and Weekend Getaways

Dauin Marine Sanctuaries (30 minutes)

Just south of Dumaguete lies Dauin, famous for shore diving and snorkeling. The protected sanctuaries are filled with marine life.

- Entry Fee: ₱100–₱150 (\$1.75–\$2.60)
- Guide Fee: ₱300–₱500 (\$5.25–\$8.75)
- Equipment Rental: ₱500–₱1,500 (\$9–\$26)

Twin Lakes of Balinsasayao (1 hour)

Set high in the mountains, these twin crater lakes offer kayaking, birdwatching, and hiking.

- Entry Fee: ₱100 (\$1.75)
- Boat Rental: ₱350 (\$6.15) per hour
- Transport from Dumaguete: ₱700–₱1,000 (\$12–\$18) roundtrip

Casaroro Falls, Valencia (45 minutes)

One of Negros Oriental's most dramatic waterfalls, reached by a steep stairway and jungle hike.

- Entrance: ₱30 (\$0.50)
- Guide (optional): ₱300 (\$5.25)

Forest Camp, Valencia (40 minutes)

A popular resort with spring-fed pools, picnic huts, and ziplining.

- Entrance: ₱120 (\$2.10) adults / ₱80 (\$1.40) kids
- Picnic Hut Rental: ₱300–₱500 (\$5–\$9)

Pulangbato Red Rock Hot Springs (1 hour)

Relax in naturally heated pools surrounded by red rock formations.

- Entrance: ₱50–₱100 (\$0.90–\$1.75)

Manjuyod Sandbar (1.5 hours)

Often called the “*Maldives of the Philippines*,” this white sandbar emerges at low tide, surrounded by turquoise waters.

- Boat Rental: ₱3,000–₱4,000 (\$52–\$70) good for groups
 - Best visited early morning

Bais Dolphin Watching (1.5 hours)

Join a boat tour to spot pods of dolphins in the Tañon Strait.

- Tour Packages: ₱3,000–₱3,500 (\$52–\$61) for groups
 - Often combined with a Manjuyod Sandbar trip

Lake Balanan (2 hours)

A mountain lake with bamboo rafts, kayaking, and picnic areas.

- Entrance: ₱50 (\$0.90)
- Boat Rental: ₱300 (\$5.25) per hour

Tambobo Bay, Siaton (1.5 hours)

A peaceful anchorage for yachts and sailboats, with nearby restaurants and mangroves.

Mabinay Caves (2.5 hours)

Known as the *Caving Capital of the Philippines*, Mabinay offers spelunking from beginner to advanced levels.

- Fees: ₱300–₱500 (\$5–\$9) with guide

Rob's Rule

Don't just stick to the city. Dumaguete is your base, but the real treasures are found in the surrounding hills, waterfalls, and islands.

Chrissy's Pick

I love the Twin Lakes for a quiet day surrounded by nature. The air is cooler, and the views are breathtaking.

Chapter 16: Snorkeling and Scuba Diving

Apo Island

One of the most famous dive spots in the Philippines, Apo Island is a must-visit for both snorkelers and divers. Known for its sea turtles, coral walls, and pristine waters, it's accessible by boat from Dauin.

- Boat Trip: ₱1,500–₱2,500 (\$26–\$44) per person
 - Marine Sanctuary Fee: ₱300 (\$5.25)
 - Guide Fee: ₱500 (\$9)
- Equipment Rental: ₱800–₱1,200 (\$14–\$21) per day

Dauin Black Sand Dives

The volcanic black sand coast of Dauin is world-renowned for **muck diving**, where you'll find rare critters like frogfish, seahorses, and nudibranchs. This area is especially popular with underwater photographers.

Oslob Whale Sharks (Day Trip from Dumaguete)

Across the channel in Cebu, Oslob is famous for whale shark encounters. While controversial due to feeding practices, many tourists still take the trip.

- Boat + Van Package: ₱2,500–₱3,500 (\$44–\$61)
 - Best visited early morning

Dive Shops and Certification

Dauin has dozens of dive resorts and PADI/SSI-certified shops offering training and fun dives. Popular operators include

Atmosphere Resort, Pura Vida, and Sea Explorers.

- Fun Dives: ₱1,400–₱1,800 (\$25–\$32) per dive with gear
- Open Water Certification: ₱18,000–₱22,000 (\$315–\$385)

- Advanced Open Water: ₱15,000–₱20,000 (\$260–\$350)

Best Season for Diving

- **November–May:** Best visibility, calmer seas.
- **June–October:** Rainy season can reduce visibility but still diveable.

Marine Conservation

Several dive shops run reef cleanups and conservation programs. Volunteering for a day or two is a rewarding way to give back to the marine environment that makes Dumaguete famous.

Rob's Rule

If you plan to dive regularly, buy your own mask and fins in the Philippines. Rentals are fine, but having your own gear makes every dive more comfortable.

Chrissy's Pick

Apo Island is my favorite. Swimming with sea turtles in crystal-clear water feels magical every time.

Chapter 17: Overnight Destinations

Cebu City (45-minute flight or 6-hour ferry)

Cebu City is the Visayas' largest urban center, offering big-city comforts while staying close to Dumaguete.

- **Flights:** ₱2,500–₱5,000 (\$45–\$90) roundtrip
- **Hotels:** From ₱2,500 (\$45) mid-range to ₱15,000+ (\$260+) luxury
- **Highlights:** Tops Lookout, Temple of Leah, Ayala Mall, Magellan's Cross, nightlife in Mango Square

Siquijor Island (1-hour ferry)

Known as the *Mystic Island*, Siquijor is famous for its beaches, waterfalls, and folklore.

- **Ferry:** ₱350–₱450 (\$6–\$8) one way
- **Hotels:** ₱1,200–₱6,000 (\$20–\$105) per night
- **Highlights:** Cambugahay Falls, Salagdoong Beach, Balete Tree Fish Spa, white sand coves

Bohol (2-hour ferry)

A favorite for eco-tourism and family trips, Bohol is packed with attractions.

- **Ferry:** ₱700–₱900 (\$12–\$16) one way
- **Hotels:** ₱2,000–₱10,000 (\$35–\$175) per night
- **Highlights:** Chocolate Hills, Tarsier Sanctuary, Loboc River Cruise, Alona Beach in Panglao

Panglao Island (part of Bohol)

If beaches are your focus, Panglao is perfect for a weekend retreat.

- **Activities:** Island hopping to Balicasag and Virgin Islands, diving, Hinagdanan Cave
- **Nightlife:** Alona Beach is lively with bars, clubs, and international restaurants

Moalboal & Kawasan Falls (Cebu Island, 3–4 hours by road from Dumaguete via ferry)

Moalboal is famous for the sardine run and abundant sea turtles, while Kawasan Falls offers canyoneering adventures.

- **Hotels:** ₱1,500–₱6,000 (\$25–\$105) per night
- **Activities:** Sardine run snorkeling, canyoneering, diving at Pescador Island

Rob's Rule

Don't try to cram too much into one weekend. Pick one destination—Siquijor for beaches, Bohol for culture, Cebu City for urban fun—and give it your full attention.

Chrissy's Pick

Siquijor is magical. Between the waterfalls, beaches, and island vibe, it's the best quick escape from Dumaguete.

Chapter 18: Air Travel from Dumaguete

Dumaguete–Sibulan Airport (DGT)

Located just 15 minutes north of the city center, this small but busy airport connects Dumaguete to major hubs in the Philippines. The terminal is simple, with limited amenities, but efficient for domestic travel.

Major Routes and Sample Roundtrip Fares

- **Manila:** ₱4,500–₱8,500 (\$80–\$150)
- **Cebu:** ₱2,300–₱5,000 (\$40–\$90)
- **Davao:** ₱5,000–₱10,000 (\$90–\$180)
- **Cagayan de Oro:** ₱4,500–₱9,500 (\$80–\$170)
 - **Iloilo:** ₱4,000–₱7,500 (\$70–\$130)
- **Clark/Angeles:** ₱5,700–₱10,800 (\$100–\$190)
- **Bohol (Tagbilaran):** ₱3,500–₱6,800 (\$60–\$120)
- **Puerto Princesa (Palawan):** ₱6,800–₱12,500 (\$120–\$220)
 - **Boracay (Caticlan):** ₱5,700–₱11,400 (\$100–\$200)
 - **Siargao:** ₱7,400–₱14,300 (\$130–\$250)

(Prices vary depending on season, advance booking, and sales by Cebu Pacific, Philippine Airlines, or AirAsia.)

Luggage and Fees

Budget carriers often charge extra for checked baggage. It's cheaper to book baggage allowance online in advance rather than at the airport.

Booking Tips

- Book **1–2 months ahead** for best prices, especially around Christmas and Holy Week.

- Cebu Pacific frequently runs seat sales where fares drop as low as ₱1,000 (\$18).
- Use apps like **Skyscanner** or **Google Flights** to track deals.

Getting to the Airport

- **Tricycle:** ₱120–₱150 (\$2–\$3) from downtown.
- **Private Car/Taxi:** ₱250–₱400 (\$4.50–\$7).
- **Hotel Shuttle:** Many hotels provide free or paid airport transfer.

Rob's Rule

Always add at least one extra day between your Dumaguete flight and your international departure. Weather delays and cancellations are common for small island airports.

Chrissy's Pick

Fly to Cebu instead of Manila whenever possible. It's closer, more relaxed, and the connections are usually easier for onward travel.

Chapter 19: Dining in Dumaguete

Fine Dining Restaurants

Lab-as Seafood Restaurant

Fresh seafood prepared Filipino-style with Western comfort in mind.

- Price: ₱400–~~₱1,200~~ (\$7–\$21) per person
- Hours: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Casablanca

Mediterranean and European fusion with an extensive wine list.

- Price: ₱500–~~₱1,500~~ (\$9–\$26)
- Hours: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Le Chalet Suisse

Authentic Swiss and European dishes in a cozy setting.

- Price: ₱600–~~₱1,800~~ (\$10–\$32)
- Hours: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Gabby's Bistro

Colorful décor with a wide-ranging menu of pasta, burgers, and Filipino fusion.

- Price: ₱250–~~₱600~~ (\$4.50–\$11)
- Hours: 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Hayahay Treehouse Bar & View Deck

Seaside dining with fresh seafood and live bands.

- Price: ₱300–~~₱800~~ (\$5–\$14)
- Hours: 4:00 PM – Midnight

Mid-Range Favorites

Jo's Chicken Inato

A Dumaguete staple, serving marinated grilled chicken.

- Price: ₱150–₱350 (\$3–\$6)
- Hours: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Mamias Café

Homestyle Filipino meals with friendly service.

- Price: ₱200–₱450 (\$3.50–\$8)
- Hours: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Chin Loong

Traditional Chinese dishes, family-style dining.

- Price: ₱250–₱600 (\$4.50–\$11)
- Hours: 10:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Scooby's

A sports bar atmosphere with American comfort food.

- Price: ₱200–₱500 (\$3.50–\$9)
- Hours: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Adamo

Trendy wood-fired pizza and pasta, with modern Filipino dishes.

- Price: ₱350–₱800 (\$6–\$14)
- Hours: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Cafés and Desserts

Sans Rival Bistro

Famous for its **Silvanas** and **Sans Rival cake**.

- Price: ₱150–₱500 (\$3–\$9)
- Hours: 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM

The Rollin' Pin

American-style bakery and coffee shop.

- Price: ₱120–₱400 (\$2–\$7)
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Ground Zero

Favored by students and digital nomads, with strong coffee and Wi-Fi.

- Price: ₱100–₱300 (\$2–\$5.50)
- Hours: 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Rob's Rule

Mix it up. Splurge on a fine dinner once or twice a week, but enjoy the everyday charm of carinderias and street food. The variety will enrich your experience.

Chrissy's Pick

Sans Rival is a must. Their Silvanas are so unique you'll end up bringing boxes home for friends and family.

Chapter 20: Port of Dumaguete – Ferry Guide

Location and Access

The Port of Dumaguete is located in **Looc**, just 1.5 km from the city center. It's walkable from Rizal Boulevard, but most expats take a tricycle (₱50–₱70 / \$1–\$1.25).

Ferry Companies and Routes

OceanJet

- **Dumaguete–Tagbilaran (Bohol)**
 - 7:00 AM, 9:50 AM, 1:30 PM
 - 2 hours travel time
- Tourist: ₱700 (\$12) | Business: ₱900 (\$16) | Open Air: ₱600 (\$11)
- **Dumaguete–Siquijor**
 - 7:20 AM, 10:20 AM, 2:20 PM, 5:20 PM
 - 1 hour travel time
- Tourist: ₱350 (\$6) | Business: ₱450 (\$8) | Open Air: ₱250 (\$4.50)

FastCat

- **Dumaguete–Dapitan**
 - 7:00 AM, 1:00 PM
 - 3 hours travel time
- Economy: ₱500 (\$9) | Premium: ₱700 (\$12)

Montenegro Lines

- **Dumaguete–Cebu City**
 - 7:00 PM overnight sailing
 - 7 hours travel time
- Tourist: ₱800 (\$14) | Cabin: ₱1,500–₱2,500 (\$26–\$44)

Cokaliong Shipping

- **Dumaguete–Cebu City**
 - 8:00 PM, M/W/F
 - 6–7 hours travel time
- Tourist: ₱750 (\$13) | Cabin: ₱1,400–₱2,200 (\$25–\$39)

Insider Tips

- **Tickets:** Buy 1–2 days in advance during peak season (Dec–May).
 - **Terminal Fee:** ₱20–₱30 (\$0.35–\$0.55).
- **Seating:** Lower deck = less motion for seasickness; Premium = air-conditioned.
- **Timing:** Morning trips are more reliable than late afternoon or evening sailings.
- **Food:** Bring your own snacks; terminal options are limited.
 - **Wi-Fi:** Usually available onboard, but slow.

Rob's Rule

Always carry a light jacket or hoodie. Air-conditioned ferry cabins can feel like refrigerators.

Chrissy's Pick

Siquijor by OceanJet is one of the easiest and most enjoyable day trips. Book an early ferry, spend the day exploring beaches and waterfalls, and return to Dumaguete by sunset.

Chapter 21: Accommodation Guide

Luxury Hotels & Resorts

Atmosphere Resort & Spa (Dauin)

- ₱15,000–₱40,000 (\$260–\$700) per night
- Infinity pools, dive center, spa, gourmet dining
 - 20 minutes south of Dumaguete

The Henry Resort Dumaguete

- ₱4,500–₱7,500 (\$80–\$130) per night
- Boutique, artsy style with large rooms
 - 10 minutes from city center

Bahura Resort & Spa (Dauin)

- ₱7,000–₱20,000 (\$120–\$350) per night
- Multiple pools, beachfront, diving facilities

Antulang Beach Resort (Siaton)

- ₱6,000–₱15,000 (\$105–\$260) per night
- Private beach, cliffside views, infinity pools

Thalatta Resort (Zamboanguita)

- ₱6,500–₱12,000 (\$115–\$210) per night
- Beachfront resort with dive shop and restaurant

Mid-Range Hotels

Hotel Essencia (Downtown)

- ₱2,800–₱4,500 (\$50–\$80) per night
- Centrally located, restaurant, business services

Go Hotels Dumaguete

- ₱1,800–₱3,000 (\$30–\$55) per night
- Affordable chain hotel near Robinsons Mall

Bethel Guest House

- ₱1,600–₱2,800 (\$28–\$50) per night
- Christian-run, clean and quiet, right on Rizal Boulevard

Hotel Palwa

- ₱2,300–₱3,800 (\$40–\$65) per night
- Centrally located, good budget-friendly option

Sierra Hotel

- ₱2,000–₱3,500 (\$35–\$60) per night
- Modern rooms, coffee shop, small business center

Guesthouses & Budget Options

Casa Arrieta

- ₱1,200–₱1,800 (\$22–\$32) per night
- Cozy, family-run, homey atmosphere

Florentina Homes

- ₱1,000–₱1,800 (\$18–\$32) per night
- Swiss-themed guesthouse with pool and café

Flying Fish Hostel

- ₱500–₱1,200 (\$9–\$22) per night
- Popular with younger travelers and backpackers

Pura Vida Hostel

- ₱600–₱1,000 (\$11–\$18) per night
- Budget-friendly, located near dive spots

Long-Term Rentals

- **Condos:** Marina Spatial (₱15,000–₱25,000 / \$260–\$440 per month).

- **Apartments:** ₱12,000–₱20,000 (\$210–\$350) per month near city center.
- **Houses:** ₱25,000–₱50,000 (\$440–\$875) per month in Dumaguete, Bacong, or Valencia.

Rob's Rule

Always check if your accommodation has a backup generator. Brownouts are common, and you'll regret booking a place where only the hallway lights work during an outage.

Chrissy's Pick

Bethel Guest House is my go-to for visitors. It's clean, safe, right on the Boulevard, and has the best views of the sea without breaking the bank.

Chapter 22: Rizal Boulevard Experience

The Iconic Promenade

Rizal Boulevard is the centerpiece of Dumaguete life. This 1.2 km seafront walkway stretches along the coast, shaded by acacia trees and lined with cafés, bars, and restaurants. It's where locals jog in the morning, expats sip coffee in the afternoon, and families gather in the evening.

Morning Vibe (5:00 AM – 9:00 AM)

- Sunrise views over the Tañon Strait with Cebu Island in the distance
 - Joggers and walkers complete laps of the boulevard
 - Fishermen hauling in fresh catch
 - Street-side *painitan* stalls serving:
 - **Sikwate** (hot chocolate) – ₱25–₱40 (\$0.45–\$0.70)
- **Budbud Kabog** (sticky rice rolls) – ₱15–₱20 (\$0.25–\$0.35)
- **Puto Maya** (sweet sticky rice cake) – ₱20–₱30 (\$0.35–\$0.55)

Daytime (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)

- Horse-drawn *kalesa* rides: ₱150–₱300 (\$3–\$5)
- Souvenir stalls selling local crafts, shirts, and food products
 - Shaded benches perfect for people-watching
- Occasional cultural events hosted by Silliman University or the city

Sunset & Evening (4:00 PM – 8:00 PM)

- The most social time of day on the Boulevard
- Street vendors offering grilled squid, pork barbecue, and banana cue
 - Musicians and performers entertaining the crowd
- Families enjoying picnics while children play along the seawall

Nightlife (8:00 PM – Midnight)

The Boulevard transforms into Dumaguete's nightlife strip.

- **Hayahay Treehouse Bar:** Live music Thu–Sun, cover ₱50–₱100 (\$1–\$2)
- **Why Not?:** A mix of disco, restaurant, and karaoke bar—longtime expat favorite
- **Honeycomb Tourist Inn:** Acoustic nights on weekends
- Drinks: Beer ₱60–₱90 (\$1–\$1.60), Cocktails ₱150–₱350 (\$3–\$6)

Insider Tips

- Arrive before 6:00 PM to get a good seat for sunset.
 - Bring small bills for street food vendors.
- After 10:00 PM, tricycles charge ₱70–₱100 (\$1.25–\$2) for rides back to hotels.
- The Boulevard is safe, but keep valuables close in crowded areas.

Rob's Rule

If you only have one evening in Dumaguete, spend it on Rizal Boulevard. It's the soul of the city.

Chrissy's Pick

My favorite time is sunrise with *budbud kabog* and hot chocolate. It's quiet, beautiful, and you feel like part of the Dumaguete rhythm.

Chapter 23: Money Exchange and ATMs

ATM Access

Dumaguete has a good number of ATMs spread across the city. Most machines accept Visa, Mastercard, and international debit cards. Withdrawal limits are usually **₱10,000–₱20,000 (\$175–\$350) per transaction**, with a local fee of about **₱250 (\$4.50)**.

Reliable ATM Locations:

- **Robinsons Mall** – Cluster of BDO, BPI, Metrobank, and Security Bank machines.
- **Lee Plaza / Lee Super Plaza** – Multiple ATMs on site.
- **Perdices Street (Downtown)** – Dozens of bank branches with attached ATMs.
- **Silliman University Area** – Several machines popular with students and expats.

Pro Tip: Use ATMs located **inside banks or malls** to reduce risk of card skimming.

Banks with Expat-Friendly Services

- **BDO (Banco de Oro)** – Large network, widely trusted by expats.
- **BPI (Bank of the Philippine Islands)** – Strong online banking system.
- **Metrobank** – Reliable for both locals and foreigners.
- **Security Bank** – Good customer service, flexible with international clients.

Account opening requires an **ACR-I card, passport, and local address proof**.

Money Exchange Houses

Dumaguete has several money changers offering competitive rates, usually better than banks:

- **Robinsons Mall Forex Counters** – Convenient and reliable.
- **Downtown Perdices Street Exchange Shops** – Small but often give excellent rates.
- **Cebuana Lhuillier / Palawan Pawnshop** – Also handle money remittance and bill payments.

Rates fluctuate daily, but are generally close to Manila's posted forex rates.

Using Digital Transfer Services

Many expats skip physical exchanges entirely by using:

- **Wise (formerly TransferWise)** – Transfers directly to Philippine bank accounts at near-market rates.
- **Remitly** – Fast transfers with cash pickup at pawnshops and banks.
- **PayPal** – Accepted by some locals, but exchange rates are less favorable.

Rob's Rule

Always carry some pesos in cash. ATMs can run dry on weekends and holidays, and many small restaurants and tricycles don't take cards.

Chrissy's Pick

For the best rates, I like the money changers along Perdices Street. They're safe, competitive, and open longer hours than banks.

Chapter 24: Shopping in Dumaguete

Malls and Supermarkets

- **Robinsons Place Dumaguete** – The largest mall in the city, with a supermarket, cinema, clothing stores, pharmacies, and multiple restaurants. Popular with expats for its convenience and reliable ATMs.
- **Lee Super Plaza** – A long-standing department store downtown with groceries, clothing, and household goods.
- **CityMall Dumaguete** – Smaller mall with grocery options and fast-food chains.

Public Markets

The **Dumaguete Public Market** is lively and affordable, offering fresh seafood, fruits, vegetables, meats, and spices. Early mornings are the best time for the freshest catch.

- Fish: ₱150–₱250 (\$3–\$5) per kilo
- Fruits: ₱40–₱100 (\$0.75–\$2) per kilo depending on season
 - Vegetables: ₱30–₱70 (\$0.50–\$1.25) per kilo

Specialty Stores

- **Sans Rival Pastry Shop** – Famous for Silvanas and Sans Rival cake, perfect for gifts.
- **Handicraft Stores** – Sell woven bags, native crafts, and souvenirs, often near Rizal Boulevard.
- **Hardware Stores** – Ace Hardware and local shops carry tools, household items, and construction supplies.

Convenience Stores

7-Eleven, Ministop, and local sari-sari stores are on nearly every corner. They're handy for snacks, SIM loads, and bottled water.

Online Shopping

Shopee and Lazada deliver almost everything, from electronics to furniture. Most expats in Dumaguete use these apps to supplement what isn't available locally. Delivery is usually 3–7 days.

Rob's Rule

Don't overlook the public market. You'll save money, support local vendors, and find fresher produce than in supermarkets.

Chrissy's Pick

Sans Rival is more than just a bakery—it's part of Dumaguete's identity. Bring Silvanas when you visit friends, and you'll always be welcomed with a smile.

Chapter 25: Safety and Security

General Safety

Dumaguete is known as the *City of Gentle People*—and for good reason. Violent crime is rare, and most expats feel safe walking around, even at night. However, like anywhere in the world, petty crime can occur.

Tips:

- Don't flash expensive jewelry or large sums of cash.
 - Keep your phone secure in crowded areas.
 - Use hotel safes for passports and extra cash.

Common Issues

- **Pickpocketing:** Can happen in busy areas like the public market.
- **Scams:** Overcharging tricycle fares or small-time cons aimed at foreigners.
- **Brownouts:** Power outages are inconvenient but not dangerous; carry a small flashlight.

Healthcare Emergencies

Silliman University Medical Center is the go-to for emergencies. Ambulances are available but may be slower than Western standards. Many expats keep the phone number of a reliable taxi or private driver for urgent hospital trips.

Natural Hazards

- **Typhoons:** Less common in Dumaguete than northern Philippines, but possible between June–October.
- **Earthquakes:** The region sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire; mild tremors are not unusual.

- **Mosquito-borne Illnesses:** Dengue is the primary risk—always use repellent.

Police and Emergency Numbers

- **Police:** 166 or 117 (national hotline)
 - **Fire Department:** 160
- **Ambulance:** 16911 (depending on availability)
- **Silliman Medical Center:** (+63) 35-225-0839

Rob's Rule

Don't let your guard down just because Dumaguete feels safe. Stay smart, and you'll avoid the few problems that occasionally catch newcomers off guard.

Chrissy's Pick

Always keep mosquito repellent in your bag. It's inexpensive and can save you from dengue fever, which is a real risk here.

Chapter 26: Festivals and Events

Buglasan Festival (October)

Known as the *Festival of Festivals*, Buglasan showcases the culture, food, and traditions of Negros Oriental. Expect street dancing, parades, live music, and food fairs. It's the most colorful time of year in Dumaguete.

Sandurot Festival (September)

A celebration of Dumaguete's history of welcoming visitors. "Sandurot" means *to fellowship and share*. The festival features parades, historical reenactments, and street dancing.

Silliman Founders Day (August 28)

Silliman University hosts one of the biggest university celebrations in the Philippines. Activities include cultural shows, alumni reunions, sports tournaments, and fireworks. The whole city joins in.

Christmas Season (December)

Christmas is huge in the Philippines, starting as early as September. Dumaguete lights up with decorations, caroling, and nightly food fairs on Rizal Boulevard. Many expats enjoy this season for its warmth and community spirit.

Holy Week (March/April)

Religious processions, reenactments, and church services mark this important holiday. Expect large crowds, and note that many businesses close during Good Friday.

Rob's Rule

Time your visit around Buglasan or Sandurot if you want to see Dumaguete at its liveliest. The entire city comes alive with culture, food, and music.

Chrissy's Pick

Christmas in Dumaguete is magical. The lights along Rizal Boulevard and the joyful atmosphere make it one of my favorite times of the year.

Chapter 27: About Rob & Chrissy

Who We Are

We're Rob and Chrissy, the husband-and-wife team behind the **Fly Me to the Philippines** YouTube channel. Our channel has grown to over **47,000 subscribers**, focused on helping Western men—especially those 55 to 75—explore, retire, and build relationships in the Philippines.

Our story is rooted in our own journey: Rob is a retired American with a background in corporate management and consulting, and Chrissy is a certified Filipino school teacher. Together, we've lived the realities of expat life, age-gap relationships, and navigating both the challenges and the joys of settling in the Philippines.

What We Do

- **YouTube Channel:** Candid conversations, travel guides, and relationship advice aimed at expats and retirees.
- **Books:** We're the authors of the #1 Amazon Bestseller *Fly Me to the Philippines: A Modern Man's Guide to Living, Traveling, and Finding Love in the Philippines*, which held the **top spot in Philippines Travel for ten months**.
- **Consultations:** Rob offers one-on-one video consultations for men seeking tailored advice on dating, travel, and expat life in the Philippines.
- **Open Source Social Media Investigations:** Led by Chrissy, this service helps men vet potential partners through discreet but effective background checks.

Why We Wrote This Guide

We've visited Dumaguete multiple times, stayed in local condos and hotels, eaten at the restaurants, strolled the Boulevard, and

experienced both the charms and frustrations of life here. This guide isn't a brochure—it's a **practical handbook** for men like you who want real, no-nonsense insights before booking a ticket.

We know what a 65-year-old divorced man from America, the UK, or Australia is really looking for: safety, affordability, romance, and a sense of community. Dumaguete can offer all of these—but only if you know where to look and how to navigate the realities.

Our Promise to You

We'll tell you the truth—what works, what doesn't, and what to watch out for. The goal is simple: to help you avoid mistakes, maximize your time, and maybe, just maybe, find love and happiness in Dumaguete.

Rob's Rule

Don't follow the crowd blindly. Expat life works best when you do your research, set realistic expectations, and embrace the adventure on your own terms.

Chrissy's Pick

Always balance fun with caution. Enjoy Dumaguete, but stay smart—whether it's choosing a partner, a hotel, or even a tricycle ride.

Chapter 28: Resources & Next Steps

Recommended Websites

- **Our Amazon Book:** [Fly Me to the Philippines: A Modern Man's Guide](#)
- **Consultation Services:** [Book a one-on-one session with Rob](#)
- **Chrissy's Open Source Investigation Service:** Same consultation link above, select *Open Source Social Media Review*

Expat Forums & Groups

- **Dumaguete Expats Facebook Group** – Daily discussions, housing leads, and community events.
- **Internations.org** – International expat networking platform, active in the Philippines.
- **Philippines Expat Forums** – Broader national coverage with a Dumaguete section.

Local Emergency Numbers

- Police: 166 / 117
 - Fire: 160
- Ambulance: 16911
- Silliman University Medical Center: (+63) 35-225-0839

Rob's Rule

Information is your best safety net. Don't just rely on word of mouth—verify, cross-check, and prepare before you make any big move.

Chrissy's Pick

Join a local expat Facebook group before you arrive. You'll make friends faster, find better housing, and get advice from people already living here.

Closing Thoughts

Dumaguete is more than just a place to pass through—it's a community where Western men have built new lives, found love, and discovered fresh purpose. But it's also a city where patience, adaptability, and cultural understanding matter.

If you come here expecting a mini-America, you'll be frustrated. If you come ready to embrace the Philippines—its people, food, quirks, and beauty—you'll find yourself rewarded in ways you never imagined.

We hope this guide gives you not only the *facts*—where to stay, what to eat, how to get around—but also the *wisdom* of experience.

See you in Dumaguete.

— **Rob & Chrissy**

Appendix A: Sample 7-Day Itinerary for Dumaguete

Day 1 – Arrival & Orientation

- Arrive at Dumaguete–Sibulan Airport
 - Check into your hotel or condo
- Evening stroll along **Rizal Boulevard**, dinner at **Lab-as Seafood**

Day 2 – City Tour

- Morning: **Silliman University** campus tour
 - Lunch at **Gabby's Bistro**
- Afternoon: Visit **Dumaguete Cathedral & Belfry Tower**
 - Dinner at **Casablanca**

Day 3 – Valencia Highlands

- Morning: Trip to **Casaroro Falls**
 - Lunch at **Forest Camp**
- Afternoon: Dip at **Pulangbato Hot Springs**
- Dinner back in Dumaguete at **Sans Rival Bistro**

Day 4 – Dauin Diving & Snorkeling

- Full-day trip to Dauin marine sanctuaries
 - Lunch at a beachfront resort
- Evening: Dinner and live music at **Hayahay Treehouse Bar**

Day 5 – Apo Island Excursion

- Boat trip to Apo Island for snorkeling with turtles
 - Packed lunch or local island eatery
 - Return late afternoon
 - Dinner at **Why Not?**

Day 6 – Siquijor Island Getaway

- Morning ferry to Siquijor

- Explore **Cambugahay Falls** and white sand beaches
 - Late return to Dumaguete
- Light dinner or street food on the Boulevard

Day 7 – Leisure & Departure

- Morning coffee at **Ground Zero** or **Bo's Coffee**
- Souvenir shopping at **Sans Rival** and public market
 - Transfer to airport for departure

Appendix B: Useful Cebuano (Bisaya) Phrases

- **Maayong buntag** – Good morning
- **Maayong hapon** – Good afternoon
 - **Maayong gabii** – Good evening
- **Salamat kaayo** – Thank you very much
 - **Tagpila ni?** – How much is this?
- **Asa ang CR?** – Where is the restroom?
 - **Lami kaayo!** – Very delicious!
 - **Gwapa ka** – You are beautiful

Appendix C: Currency Quick Guide (2026)

- ₱50 ≈ \$0.90
- ₱100 ≈ \$1.75
- ₱500 ≈ \$8.75
- ₱1,000 ≈ \$17.50

Rob's Final Rule

Dumaguete isn't about luxury—it's about lifestyle. If you're here for peace, affordability, and companionship, you'll find it.

Chrissy's Final Pick

Slow down. Enjoy coffee on the Boulevard, a sunset by the sea, and conversations that turn into lifelong friendships. That's the Dumaguete way.

Appendix D: Packing Tips for Dumaguete

Clothing

- **Lightweight shirts & shorts** – Ideal for hot, humid days.
- **Collared shirt & long pants** – Useful for nicer restaurants or meeting family.
- **Rain jacket or poncho** – Essential during the wet season (June–October).
- **Comfortable walking shoes** – City streets are uneven, and you'll walk a lot.
- **Flip-flops (tsinelas)** – Everyday footwear in the Philippines.

Travel Essentials

- **Power adapter** – Philippines uses Type A, B, and C plugs (110/220V).
- **Sunscreen** – Imported brands are expensive locally; bring your own.
- **Insect repellent** – Protects against dengue and mosquito bites.
 - **Reusable water bottle** – Stay hydrated in the tropical climate.
- **Dry bag** – Handy for island trips and sudden rain showers.

Documents

- **Passport with 6 months validity**
- **Printed hotel and flight bookings**
- **Photocopies of ID and credit cards** (keep separate from originals)
 - **Travel insurance certificate**
- **Cash in USD or EUR** (easily exchangeable at Dumaguete money changers)

Health & Medications

- **Basic first aid kit** – Bandages, antiseptic, pain relievers.

- **Prescription meds** – Bring enough supply plus a doctor's note.
- **Electrolyte packets** – Helpful for hot days or stomach issues.
- **Hand sanitizer & wipes** – For travel days and street food adventures.

Appendix E: Expat Cost Snapshot (2026 Estimates)

- **1-BR Condo (Marina Spatial):** ₱20,000 (\$350) / month
- **Utilities (electric, water, internet):** ₱5,000–₱8,000 (\$90–\$140)
 - **Groceries:** ₱12,000–₱18,000 (\$210–\$320)
- **Transportation (scooter fuel & tricycles):** ₱3,500 (\$60)
- **Entertainment/Dining Out:** ₱8,000–₱12,000 (\$140–\$210)

Total: ₱48,500–₱61,500 (\$860–\$1,090) per month for a comfortable lifestyle.

Rob's Rule

Pack light, but pack smart. You can buy almost everything in Dumaguete, but quality shoes, sunscreen, and electronics are cheaper and better abroad.

Chrissy's Pick

Always carry insect repellent and an umbrella. Whether it's mosquitoes or sudden rain, you'll thank yourself later.

Appendix F: Transportation Cost Guide (2026)

Within Dumaguete City

- **Tricycle (short trips downtown):** ₱15–₱20 (\$0.25–\$0.35)
- **Tricycle (longer trips, e.g., airport or Valencia road):** ₱50–₱120 (\$1–\$2.20)
- **Jeepneys:** ₱12–₱15 (\$0.20–\$0.25), but routes can be confusing for newcomers
- **Motorcycle taxi (habal-habal):** ₱50–₱150 (\$1–\$3), especially for trips uphill to Valencia

Rentals

- **Scooter/Motorbike rental:** ₱5,000–₱7,000 (\$90–\$125) per month
- **Car rental (self-drive):** ₱1,800–₱3,000 (\$32–\$55) per day
- **Private van rental with driver:** ₱3,500–₱5,000 (\$60–\$90) per day (good for groups or long day trips)

Fuel Costs

- **Gasoline (2026 average):** ₱75–₱85 per liter (\$1.35–\$1.55 per liter, ~\$5.10–\$5.90 per gallon)

A scooter can run all week for just ₱200–₱300 (\$3.50–\$5.50).

Ferries & Boats

- **Dumaguete–Siquijor (fast ferry):** ₱350–₱450 (\$6–\$8) one way
- **Dumaguete–Bohol (fast ferry):** ₱700–₱900 (\$12–\$16) one way
- **Dumaguete–Cebu (overnight ferry):** ₱750–₱2,500 (\$13–\$44) depending on class
- **Day trip island-hopping boats:** ₱3,000–₱4,000 (\$52–\$70) per group of 6–8

Flights (Roundtrip, 2026 Estimates)

- **Dumaguete–Manila:** ₱4,500–₱8,500 (\$80–\$150)
 - **Dumaguete–Cebu:** ₱2,300–₱5,000 (\$40–\$90)
- **Dumaguete–Boracay (via Manila or Cebu):** ₱6,000–₱12,000 (\$105–\$210)

Rob's Rule

Always negotiate tricycle fares if you're going outside the city center. Have the exact change ready; it saves time and avoids confusion.

Chrissy's Pick

For day trips, rent a scooter instead of relying on tricycles. It's cheaper, faster, and gives you the freedom to explore at your own pace.

Appendix G: Healthcare Quick Guide

Major Hospitals in Dumaguete

- **Silliman University Medical Center (SUMC)**
 - Most modern and trusted hospital in the region
- English-speaking doctors, some with Western training
 - Tel: (+63) 35-225-0839
- **Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital**
 - Government facility, basic but affordable services
- **ACE Dumaguete Doctors Hospital**
 - Private hospital, smaller than SUMC but with modern equipment

Clinics & Specialists

- **Medical Specialists:** Cardiologists, dermatologists, and dentists are available at private clinics near Perdices Street.

- **Dental Clinics:** Cleanings ₱800–₱1,200 (\$14–\$22), crowns and implants at a fraction of Western prices.
- **Vision Care:** Optical shops at Robinsons Mall and Lee Plaza for exams and affordable glasses.

Pharmacies

- **Mercury Drug** and **Rose Pharmacy** dominate the city, with multiple branches downtown and inside malls.
- Many medications are available without prescription but may have different brand names.

Insurance Options

- **PhilHealth** – The government program, affordable but limited coverage.
 - **Pacific Cross, AXA, Allianz** – Private international insurance, recommended for retirees.
- Expect to pay ₱80,000–₱120,000 (\$1,400–\$2,100) annually for mid-tier expat insurance.

Emergency Numbers

- Ambulance: 16911
- Silliman University Medical Center ER: (+63) 35-225-0839

Rob's Rule

Always have a backup plan for emergencies. Know which hospital you prefer, keep taxi or driver contacts handy, and don't assume Western standards of response time.

Chrissy's Pick

Dental care in Dumaguete is excellent and affordable. Schedule a cleaning or checkup—you'll be surprised at the quality for the price.

Appendix H: Essential Contacts in Dumaguete

Government & Services

- **City Hall (Dumaguete)** – (+63) 35-225-0966
- **Bureau of Immigration (Robinsons Mall, Dumaguete)** –
For visa extensions and inquiries
- **Post Office (Perdices Street)** – Local and international mail services

Emergency Contacts

- **Police** – 166 or 117 (national hotline)
 - **Fire Department** – 160
 - **Ambulance** – 16911
- **Silliman University Medical Center ER** – (+63) 35-225-0839

Utilities & Services

- **PLDT Customer Service** – 171 (landline)
- **Globe Telecom** – 211 (mobile inquiries)
- **Smart Communications** – *888 (from Smart mobile)

Transportation

- **Dumaguete–Sibulan Airport (DGT)** – (+63) 35-225-0900
- **Port of Dumaguete (Philippine Ports Authority)** – (+63) 35-225-0489
 - **OceanJet Ferry Office** – (+63) 917-635-7634

Expat & Community Groups

- **Dumaguete Expats Facebook Group** – Active daily community
- **Internations Dumaguete** – Networking events for foreigners
 - **Rotary Club of Dumaguete** – Volunteer and civic opportunities

Rob's Rule

Keep both a digital and printed copy of essential numbers. In a brownout or emergency, your phone battery might not be enough.

Chrissy's Pick

Join the local expat Facebook group even before you arrive. It's the fastest way to find housing, new friends, and answers to everyday questions.

Appendix I: Moving to Dumaguete Checklist

Before You Arrive

-  Passport valid for at least 6 months
-  Confirm return/onward ticket (required for entry)
 -  Research visa options (tourist, SRRV, etc.)
-  Travel insurance covering medical emergencies
-  Copies of important documents (ID, prescriptions, financial info)
-  Contact details for at least one Dumaguete hotel or host

Packing Essentials

-  Lightweight, breathable clothing
 -  Rain jacket & umbrella
-  Comfortable walking shoes and flip-flops
-  Sunscreen, insect repellent, and reusable water bottle
-  Electronics: unlocked phone, laptop, adapters (220V outlets)

-  Prescription medications with doctor's note

On Arrival in Dumaguete

-  SIM card registration at airport or local shops (Globe/Smart)
-  Visit ATM or exchange USD/EUR at a money changer
 -  Confirm hotel/condo has generator for brownouts
-  Register with your embassy (optional but recommended)

Settling In

-  Identify nearest hospital and pharmacy
-  Check internet and backup options (fiber + prepaid SIM)
-  Explore transportation (rent scooter, learn tricycle fares)
 -  Join expat groups and attend local meetups
 -  Scout housing options if staying long-term

Long-Term Considerations

-  Open a local bank account (with ACR-I card)
 -  Consider PhilHealth or private insurance
 -  Learn basic Cebuano (Bisaya) greetings
-  Review property laws before buying/leasing
-  Establish social circle for support and advice

Rob's Rule

Moving isn't just about logistics—it's about mindset. Come with patience, respect, and curiosity, and Dumaguete will reward you.

Chrissy's Pick

Join a volunteer project early. It connects you with locals and expats in a meaningful way, and you'll feel at home much faster.

Appendix J: Quick Reference Guide

Currency & Costs (2026 Averages)

- ₱50 ≈ \$0.90
- Tricycle (short ride): ₱20 (\$0.35)
- Local meal: ₱120–₱200 (\$2–\$3.50)
- Mid-range restaurant: ₱400–₱800 (\$7–\$14)
- Condo rental (monthly): ₱15,000–₱25,000 (\$260–\$440)
- Scooter rental (monthly): ₱5,000–₱7,000 (\$90–\$125)

Top Hospitals

- **Silliman University Medical Center** – (+63) 35-225-0839
- **ACE Dumaguete Doctors Hospital** – (+63) 35-523-1234
- **Provincial Hospital** – Government facility, basic services

Transportation

- Airport: Dumaguete–Sibulan (DGT), 15 minutes from downtown
 - Ferry routes: Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, Dapitan
 - Scooter rentals: ₱350–₱500 (\$6–\$9) per day

Expat Hotspots

- **Rizal Boulevard** – Cafés, nightlife, evening strolls
 - **Why Not?** – Longstanding expat bar/restaurant
- **Ground Zero Café** – Popular for coffee and remote work
- **Sans Rival Bistro** – Famous for cakes and Silvanas

Useful Apps

- **Grab** – Limited in Dumaguete, but handy in Cebu/Manila

- **GCash** – Mobile wallet widely accepted
- **Lazada / Shopee** – Online shopping with delivery to Dumaguete
- **Rome2Rio** – Planning regional transport routes

Emergency Numbers

- Police: 166 / 117
 - Fire: 160
- Ambulance: 16911

Rob's Rule

Keep this cheat sheet in your wallet or phone screenshots. In an emergency, you don't want to be searching online.

Chrissy's Pick

Download GCash as soon as you get a local SIM. You can use it for bills, shopping, and even tricycles in some areas—it makes life so much easier.

Appendix K: Final Thoughts for Western Men

Why Dumaguete?

Dumaguete isn't just another stop in the Philippines—it's a lifestyle. The city combines affordability, safety, and a strong expat community with access to world-class diving and island adventures. For many Western men in their 60s and 70s, it offers a second chance at life, love, and peace of mind.

The Expat Mindset

- **Patience is everything** – Things move slower here. Embrace it.

- **Respect the culture** – Learn a few Cebuano phrases, greet people warmly, and you'll always be welcomed.
 - **Budget realistically** – Life is cheaper, but not free. Overspending or supporting too many people can drain you.
- **Community matters** – Join groups, meet other expats, and avoid isolation.

Relationship Realities

Many expats come to Dumaguete hoping to meet a Filipina partner. Age-gap relationships are common here, but success depends on honesty, respect, and realistic expectations. Don't rush—take the time to know someone before making commitments.

Rob's Final Rule

Dumaguete won't fix your problems—it will magnify them if you bring the wrong attitude. But if you arrive with respect, openness, and humility, it can change your life for the better.

Chrissy's Final Pick

Dumaguete is a place for fresh starts. Whether it's travel, friendship, or love, the city has a way of giving back what you put into it.

Appendix L: Quick Dumaguete Survival Tips

Everyday Life

- **Brownouts:** Carry a flashlight or keep a battery-powered fan handy. Power outages can last hours.
- **Water:** Stick to bottled or filtered water. A 5-gallon jug costs about ₱60–₱80 (\$1–\$1.50).

- **Laundry:** Drop-off laundry services charge ₱35–₱50 (\$0.60–\$0.90) per kilo—cheap, reliable, and faster than doing it yourself.
 - **Weather:** Always keep an umbrella. Sudden tropical downpours are normal.

Social & Cultural

- Smile and say hello. Dumaguete is nicknamed the *City of Gentle People*—and a friendly attitude goes a long way.
- Family is central in Filipino culture. If you're dating a Filipina, expect her family to play an active role.
- Learn to enjoy the slower pace. What feels like inefficiency at first is actually part of the relaxed lifestyle.

Transportation

- Tricycle fares should be agreed upon *before* the ride, especially at night.
- Scooters are the most practical way to get around; just wear a helmet.
- Ferries are affordable but often delayed—plan flexibility into your trips.

Food & Dining

- Eat where locals eat for the best value and authentic flavors.
 - Street food is safe if it's hot and freshly cooked.
 - Don't miss Sans Rival Silvanas—bring a box home.

Rob's Rule

Don't try to make Dumaguete into your home country. Adapt, and you'll love it here. Resist, and you'll always be frustrated.

Chrissy's Pick

Bring small gifts when visiting friends or meeting family. It's a simple way to show thoughtfulness, and it's deeply appreciated in Filipino culture.

Appendix M: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Is Dumaguete safe for foreigners?

Yes. Dumaguete is considered one of the safer cities in the Philippines. Violent crime is rare, though petty theft can happen. Stay alert in crowded areas and don't flaunt valuables.

2. What is the average monthly budget for an expat?

A comfortable lifestyle costs **₱60,000–₱90,000 (\$1,050–\$1,600)** per month, depending on housing, healthcare, and dining habits. Many live on less, but budgeting realistically avoids surprises.

3. Can I buy property in Dumaguete?

- Foreigners cannot directly own land, but you can:
- Buy a condo (up to 40% foreign ownership allowed).
 - Lease land long-term (up to 25 years, renewable).
 - Place property in your Filipino spouse's name (risky without trust and legal safeguards).

4. Are hospitals good enough for major health issues?

For routine care, Dumaguete's hospitals (like Silliman Medical Center) are adequate. For complex surgeries or advanced care, many expats go to Cebu, Manila, or abroad.

5. Do people speak English?

Yes. English is widely spoken, especially in Dumaguete's schools, hospitals, and government offices. However, learning some Cebuano (Bisaya) is appreciated by locals.

6. Is Dumaguete good for meeting women?

Yes, many Western men meet partners here. Dumaguete's university community and nearby provinces mean many young, educated women live in the area. Just be cautious, respect cultural differences, and take your time.

7. How do I extend my visa?

Tourist visas can be extended at the **Bureau of Immigration office inside Robinsons Mall**. Extensions are typically granted in 1–2 month increments, with fees ranging from ₱3,000–₱7,000 (\$55–\$125).

Rob's Rule

Don't assume Dumaguete will solve your problems. It can be paradise, but only if you come prepared and realistic.

Chrissy's Pick

Yes, Dumaguete is gentle and welcoming, but always stay wise—especially in relationships. Trust and time are key.

Appendix N: Helpful Cebuano (Bisaya) Phrases

Learning a few Cebuano (Bisaya) words will instantly endear you to locals in Dumaguete. Even though most Filipinos speak English, trying the local language shows respect.

Greetings

- **Maayong buntag** – Good morning
- **Maayong hapon** – Good afternoon
 - **Maayong gabii** – Good evening
 - **Kumusta ka?** – How are you?
- **Salamat kaayo** – Thank you very much

Everyday Expressions

- **Tagpila ni?** – How much is this?
- **Asa ang CR?** – Where is the restroom?
 - **Lami kaayo!** – Very delicious!
 - **Palihog** – Please
- **Dali lang** – Wait a moment / Slowly

Around Town

- **Asa ta paingon?** – Where are we going?
- **Pwede ko magtan-aw?** – Can I take a look?
 - **Unsa ni?** – What is this?
 - **Hapit na ta** – We're almost there

Relationships & Politeness

- **Gwapa ka** – You are beautiful
- **Gusto tika makaila** – I'd like to get to know you
 - **Ayo-ayo** – Take care / Be well
 - **Amping** – Stay safe

Rob's Rule

Learn just 10 Cebuano phrases and you'll unlock smiles everywhere you go. Locals appreciate the effort more than the accuracy.

Chrissy's Pick

Say "Salamat kaayo" often. Gratitude is deeply valued in Filipino culture, and you'll win hearts with those two simple words

Where to Learn More

 **Read Our Book:** [Fly Me to the Philippines: A Modern Man's Guide](#)

 **Watch Our Channel:** *Fly Me to the Philippines* on YouTube (47,000+ subscribers)

 **Book a Consultation:** Schedule here

 **Chrissy's Open Source Social Media Review:** Available through the consultation link above

Thank You

We hope this guide serves you well. Whether you're planning a short visit or considering Dumaguete for long-term living, remember this: it's not just about the place—it's about the people, the choices you make, and the life you build.

See you in Dumaguete.
— **Rob & Chrissy**