



# EL NIDO-TAYTAY

## MANAGED RESOURCE PROTECTED AREA

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### General Information

Looking at the small fishing village nestled at the foothill of black limestone cliffs, the visitor understands why El Nido, the nest, was given such name. In 1991, the Government of the Philippines proclaimed Bacuit Bay as a marine reserve. Due to its marvelous landscape, its crystal-clear waters and the establishment of tourist and air transport facilities, El Nido became a prime tourist destination. In 1998, the protected area was expanded to include terrestrial ecosystems and portions of the municipality of Taytay. It is now known as El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area. Located in the northwestern part of Palawan, it covers over 36,000 hectares of land and 54,000 hectares of marine waters. It boasts towering limestone cliffs, beautiful beaches, mangroves, clear waters, unique forests over limestone and neat farmlands.

It is home to five (5) species of mammals, including the Malayan Pangolin and 16 bird species endemic to Palawan including the threatened Palawan Peacock Pheasant, the Palawan Hornbill and Palawan Scops Owl.

Bacuit bay is also home to the dugong, dolphins and marine turtles, many of which are threatened species. Colorful coral reef fishes are found here. Some of these are the: butterflyfishes, parrotfishes, wrasses, triggerfishes, angelfishes, surgeonfishes, damselfishes, emperors, snappers, groupers and rabbitfishes.

The population within the Protected Area is close to 17,000. Most of the residents are engaged in farming and fishing. Some derive their income from tourism. Major cash crops are rice, cashew, mango, coconut and banana. Marine products include grouper, sweetlip, lobster, mud crab and squid. A seasonal activity is the gathering of edible swift's nests commanding high market prices.



The Ten Knots Development Corporation has been the first commercial entity to tap El Nido's potential as a tourist paradise. It established exclusive resorts on Miniloc, Pangulasian and Langen Islands. Other developers, either residents in the area or tourism entrepreneurs, have followed suit.

### Reaching El Nido

One can reach El Nido using any of the following routes:

*Traveling by air.* Visitors can fly daily from Manila to El Nido via A. Soriano Aviation. [02.8320948/ 8040408] with office in Andrews Avenue, Pasay City or Sea Air [02.8918709-10] located in Domestic Airport Terminal one). A. Soriano sells roundtrip tickets for P 7,400.00 for residents of the Philippines and PhP 9,200 for foreigners. Sea Air has flights twice a week. A roundtrip ticket with stop-over in Busuanga costs P 7,760.

Then from the airport to the town proper, tricycle rides cost P150.00. Some resorts organize boat pick-up of visitors at the airport.

*Traveling by air and land.* A cheaper but longer way to reach El Nido is via Puerto Princesa. Philippines Airlines [02.8150054] or [02.8150074] and Air Philippines [02.8437770] ply the route. Round trip tickets cost from P 5,000 to P 5,500.

From the City to El Nido, one can either travel by bus on a 13-hour bone-breaking and adventurous rough road which costs P350.00.

*Traveling by air and sea.* From Puerto Princesa, take a bus or jeepney ride to Sabang. From here, one reaches El Nido by taking a pumpboat. Fare costs P850.00.

*Traveling by sea.* Adventurous travelers may reach El Nido directly from the Manila South Harbor. San Nicho-

las Shipping Line [02.2434595-96] has a boat sailing once a week to El Nido. One way, costing P550.00 lasts for 36 hours. Accommodation on the boat is very basic. No air-conditioning is provided.

### Protected Area and Tourism Offices

The Protected Area Office [0919-4226974] located in El Nido Poblacion takes charge of administration, law enforcement, training of community rangers, information campaigns and resource management of the protected area. The local tourism office shares the same premises. Visitors are advised to register at the Office upon arrival and have a comprehensive view of the Protected Area as exhibited by the three-dimensional relief model displayed in the Office.

### Local Ecotourism Destinations and Cultural Activities

El Nido-Taytay has many scenic places for hiking, picnic, diving and/or snorkeling:

*Hiking, island hopping and/or general sightseeing:*

- Do not light fires.
- Makinit Hot spring located at Barangay Bucana. From the town proper, one can reach the place after a 30-minute tricycle/motorcycle ride, or a 1-hour pumpboat ride inclusive of a 15-minute hike.
- Bulalacao Falls in Barangay Pasadeña. It is approximately a 45-minute tricycle/motorcycle ride from the town proper and an hour and a half to 2 hours hike up the trail that goes through a dense forest.
- Cadlao Terrestrial Trail in the northeast side of Cadlao Island. It is a 20-minute pumpboat ride from the mainland.
- Elli Caves in Barangay New Ibajay can be reached by taking an approximately 45-minute tricycle/motorcycle ride and an hour and a half hike from the town proper
- Big and Small Lagoons both located in the northwestern side of Miniloc Island. The Big Lagoon can be reached by taking a 30-45 minute pumpboat ride from the mainland. It has deep blue waters, surrounded by cliffs grown with trees. The Small Lagoon can be reached by pumpboat but only up to its entrance. The interior can only be reached by swimming.

*Picnics and sunbathing:*

El Nido is known for its white sand beaches:

- Commando Beach along the mainland, 20-minute boat ride from El Nido proper. A portion of the beach is closed during Turtle nesting season. Inquire from



the Protected Area Office.

- Snake Island is located in Sitio Vigan. The beach is shaped like the zigzag body of a snake with an islet serving as its head. It can only be seen during low tide. It takes a 45-minute boat ride to get there from the mainland.
- Simizu Island is at the south part of Miniloc Island. It takes a 40-minute boat ride to get there from the mainland. Cozy pocket of white sand beach, nestled between steep limestone formations.
- Pangulasian Island is approximately 45 minutes away by boat from the mainland. Picnickers need permission from Miniloc resort.
- Dilumacad Island is at the southwest part of Cadlao Island. It can be reached by a 20-minute boat ride from the mainland. Beautiful beach backed by a cashew plantation.
- Cadlao Beach is at the southwest of the island, approximately 25 minutes boat ride from El Nido proper. White sand beach with snorkeling opportunities.

*Diving* (travel time refer to travels starting from El Nido Poblacion):

- Miniloc Island Dive Trail is located at the southeastern side of the island, approximately 40 minutes boat ride. It is a marked trail established by the University of Edinburgh, ranging between 40 and 80 feet depth, and featuring beautiful foliose corals and overwhelming schools of fish.
- Destacado Rocks is located at the west of South Guntao Island, about 75 minutes boat ride. It is the deepest dive (90-150 feet) in Bacuit Bay, and the closes to the open sea, where one can spot pelagic fishes.
- Dilumacad Island is located at the southwest of Cadlao Island, approximately 20 minutes boat ride. Visitors can do some cave diving at 50-80 feet.
- The south tip of Pangulasian Island is 50 minutes boat ride. Rich coral life and reef fishes at 40-60 feet.
- Jip Rocks is located at the west of Pangulasian and is about 45 minutes boat ride, coral formations at around 40 to 60 feet. Portion damaged by blast fishing. Admire the beauty!
- Tres Marias is located at the northwest of Miniloc Island, about 45 minutes boat ride. If you are lucky you can see marine turtles and manta rays. The dive may lead you to up to 80 feet.
- Entalula Island is at the north of Pangulasian Island and is about 40 minutes boat ride. Rich coral life and reef fishes at 40-60 feet.
- Tapiutan Island is at the northernmost part of the island and is about 45 minutes boat ride.

*Snorkeling:*

- Nice corals and colorful reef fishes can be spotted in the waters in front of Dolarog beach, around Malapacao Island and in front of Cagbatang along the mainland. These sites are all located 30-minutes away by boat from El Nido proper.

*Rock Climbing:*

- Anywhere along the steep cliffs.

### Protected area conservation fee

Fees (P20 per day\*person) are collected by the tourist

establishments on behalf of the Protected Area Management Board. A maximum fee of P 200.00 is set for stays exceeding 10 days.

### Best time to Visit

The best time to visit the protected area is during the summer months of March to May, when the sea is calm and underwater visibility is good. This is also the favorable time to reach the area by ship plying the Manila-Coron-Liminangcong route. June to November is rainy season, while December to February, although cooler, is not as rainy.

### Accommodations

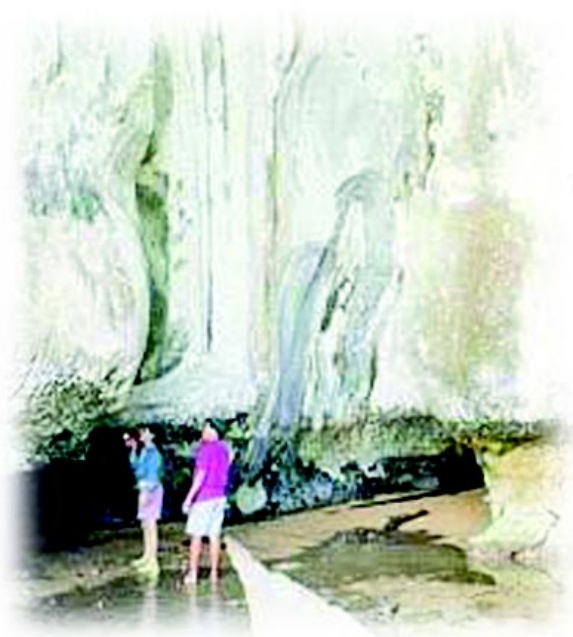
There are a lot of resorts and cottages with shared or single occupancy rooms, or single detached units. Prices of accommodation vary according to season, quality and location. The following are some of the choices:

Establishment	No. of Buildings	No. of rooms	Rates PhP	Total capacity (no. pax)
Lally and Abet Beach Cottages [02.7134019; 7153890]	9	32	400-1,200	64
El Nido Cliffside Cottage	6	12	250-450	30
El Nido Plaza Cottages	4	10	200-350	21
Rico's Beach Cottages	2	6	250-600	20
Marina Garden Beach Cottages	4	9	250-500	19
Lualhati Cottages	3	9	100-250	19
New Bayview Inn	1	11	150-300	15
Tandikan Cottages	4	5	250-500	12
Beachside Inn	1	4	300-600	12
Ric Son's Lodge	1	6	200-250	12
Rosanna Cottages	3	4	350-700	11
Hadeffe Cottage	3	3	75-250	10
Dara Faye Beach Cottages	1	4	250-500	8
Tia Bodin Guest House	1	2	150-350	8
Magos Cottage & Bungalows	1	4	100-200	8
Gloria's Beach Cottages	1	3	250-400	6
Austria's Lodging House	1	5	150-250	6
Tia Bodin Cottage	1	2	500-600	4
Ann's Cottage	1	1	150-350	3

Source: El Nido Tourism Office, 2000

Resorts located on small islets or on the coast outside the poblacion:

- Ten Knots Corporation runs two exclusive resorts located on small islands within Bacuit Bay. Miniloc Island Resort offers Water Cottages built on stilts; Garden Cottages and Cliff Cottages nestled in the hillside. Unique to Miniloc are the Seaview Rooms, also built over water, and connected by a long verandah. The cottages at Miniloc are built with thatched roofs, and furnished using local Filipino handicrafts and materials. Facilities include a restaurant, a pavilion bar, a meeting room for 20 persons and a marine sports center. Packages for residents in the Philippines inclusive of accommodation, buffet meals and use of various amenities vary from P 7,250 to 5,750 per person per day. Langen Island Resort has 51 rooms comprised of 18 water cottages, 9 beachfront cottages, 20 forest rooms and 4 suites; Packages go for P 11,000 to P 9,000 per night per person. Information and price



updates on both resorts may be obtained at El Nido Resorts Reservation & Inquiry Office; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Builders Center Building; 170 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati City [Tel: 632.8945644]; [Fax: 632.8103620]; [<http://www.elnidoresorts.com/>].

- Dolarog Beach Resort in Dolarog, Corong-corong, 10 cottages, 1 club house-restaurant offering excellent Italian cuisine; [cell no 0919-3219986]; [<http://www.dolarog.com/>]. The resort offers packages that include cottage accommodation, 3 meals (excluding drinks), boat transfer from El Nido airport to Dolarog and vice versa, island hopping, windsurf, snorkeling, paddle-boat for US\$ 60 per person per day. The same package including two dives goes for 95 US\$ per day.
- As explained on [<http://www.malapacao.com/>], Malapacao Island Retreat (MIRA) hosts quiet, nature-loving non-smokers. Packages that include accommodation, food, transfer to and from the retreat and island hopping go for \$40-70 per person per day. It's a Robinson Crusoe place, best with only 15-20 adults, who prefer to stay a week or two, in simple, open, tastefully decorated cottages or rooms, right on the water. Guests with kids under 6 are not encouraged unless they can be well managed and quiet. Children between 6 to 10 and teenagers are accepted as long as the resort's quiet harmony will appeal to them.

### Food

In El Nido proper, there are also lots of restaurants offering a wide range of culinary options, from local delicacies to international cuisine. Food is reasonably priced at about P 70.00 per meal, but costs a little more during the rainy season, since a lot of food has to be brought in from Manila or Puerto Princesa City. Squid and other seafood specialties are abundant during the months of March to May, the fish harvest season. **S**

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