

Know Before You Go...

The Philippines

QUICK KNOWLEGDE...

A must-read for anyone heading to the Philippines and/or Solitude One for the first time

- The official **language** of the Philippines is Tagalog, but English is also the working language of the country
- **Time Zone:** GMT +8
- **Climate:** Tropical Climate with an annual mean temperature of 28°C (82°F). Rain is frequent between the months of July and October.
- **Water Temperature**, like most tropical countries, varies between 27°C and 29°C (81°F - 84°F) with thermoclines due to the ocean trenches that surround the Philippines.
- **Currency is in Philippine Pesos (PHP)**. Credit cards are widely accepted in resorts, hotels and upscale business services. Solitude One **DOES NOT** have **credit card** facilities to accept payments on board for any incidentals incurred during your stay. We can only accept PHP or USD. You are strongly encouraged to bring adequate cash to pay for your onboard incidentals AND Permit Fees.
- On land, **electricity and plug sockets** are the same as in the USA (Single phase 60 cycles, 220volts AC). However, universal sockets (EU, USA, AUS, UK, CN, etc) are used on board Solitude One including USB charging outlets (1Amp) – see image.
- **Duty-Free Allowance** – 2 bottles (maximum 1 litre each) of alcohol and no more than 400 sticks of cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250g (8.8 ounces) of tobacco.
- **Postal service** is provided by PhilPost – www.phlpost.gov.ph. Do note that all inbound items sent by couriers (DHL, FedEx, UPS) or national postal services are subject to Customs and Duties. Other than documents, the chances are high in which you would have to pay customs fees (admin, duties. etc) in order for them to release your shipment. We strongly discourage you from sending anything such as your diving equipment or accessories to the Philippines by courier.



On your **Philippines Immigration arrival form**, indicate “MV Solitude One” as your address in the Philippines.

What Do I Need To Pay On Board?

Your cruise package essentially excludes Equipment Rentals, Satellite Communications, EANitrox, Alcohol, Laundry Service, Marine Park Fees & Taxes and Local Barangay (district administration) permits. Marine Park Fees and Local Barangay permits will be collected on check-in. You will pay the other incidental expenses at check-out. **Only Mode of Payment is in CASH (PHP or USD)**.

- ⚡ Tubbataha Marine Park Fee: 3000PHP per person
- ⚡ Sumilon Island: 350PHP per person (500PHP if using photo/video equipment)
- ⚡ Oslob Whaleshark Sanctuary: 1500PHP per person
- ⚡ Apo Island (off Dumaguete): 500PHP per person/per day

Applicable fees are dependent on your cruise itinerary if the mentioned region is visited.

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Do we have WIFI? Is there internet? *Yes We DO!*



Solitude One provides internet access on board via Satellite using FELCOM500 Fleet Broadband Services. To access the internet, our guests may pre-purchase data packages and log in via our WIFI Network on board.

Available Data Packages are 25USD/50Mb, 50USD/100Mb and 100USD/250Mb. You are strongly recommended to manage your device settings (our crew will be able to assist) whilst using satellite internet to ensure that you do not waste precious data traffic, as you can already expect that the charges for satellite internet are significantly costlier than what you would be accustomed to paying for the internet.

As connectivity can be affected by weather and is also reliant on a 3rd party service provider (Inmarsat), Solitude One, her crew and management are NOT responsible for any inconveniences and/or loss of income, data or information which may arise due to the lack of the service, partially or completely.

Local SIM Card? Can I get Mobile Data? *Yes, You Can*



Pre-Paid SIM cards are easily accessible! In fact, they are available as soon as you exit from the baggage collection at the airport! There are 2 major mobile telecoms providers – GLOBE and SMART. Both are as good as the other in our opinion and both are affordable. Upon purchasing, you can have the sales person advise you and set you up with your chosen package.

That said, mobile data is reliant on the mobile signal of your chosen provider and obviously being out at sea, especially in Tubbataha. You can expect that mobile signal may be sporadic or absent for days depending on where we are and how close we are to shore.

Phone Calls, SMS and Emails

If you are just concerned with sending important messages to someone and want to otherwise just be “disconnected” – we can take care of that as well with our Inmarsat satellite communications, the cost is minimal.

See the next section for more information.

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Satellite Communications – Phone, SMS or Email

When out of local GSM coverage, Solitude One's onboard Inmarsat satellite communication system will be your only option if the need to make or receive calls/messages/emails is urgently required.

Guests will be charged for all calls and messages received and/or calls and messages made or sent: US \$3 per 60 seconds block, US \$2 per SMS/email (140 characters limit).



Voice Call OR SMS: +8707 7399 2644 (non-standard IDD charges, please check with your Telco provider for calls and SMS to Iridium numbers)



Email: 870773992644@message.inmarsat.com (this of course will not cost you anything more than what you are using to connect to the internet to send your email). For more information, please visit www.inmarsat.com



Tips on using satellite Simple Email/Messaging

Keep your messages short, within 140 characters. Use short hand, or acronyms. Messages longer than 140 characters will be split into multiple messages. ie. 145 chars will be sent as 2 messages (1 of 140 chars + 1 of 5 chars). More messages = more cost.

Please note that the satellite communications are an additional facility provided by an external source. Solitude is not responsible for any consequences resulting from the use or the lack of use of satellite communications including hardware failure.

Entertainment



Our WIFI SSID on board is also used for our media entertainment library (Powered by PLEX Media Server) from which you will be able to stream/download what we have in our library to watch/listen to. Install PLEX app (RECOMMENDED : Android, Windows and IOs) or [any popular UPNP media player](#) app that will read/discover DLNA devices and you are all set!

Do you have Nitrox? Yes, We Have!



Although the standard mix for EAN is 32%, on most dives we have made an educated decision to provide in the proximity of EAN30 instead, to allow a safer M.O.D. EAN 30% would provide some degree of depth buffer if you are caught especially in a down current, but will still allow ample extended length of bottom time (compared to normal air). EANitrox prices are as follows: US \$8 per dive OR US \$135 for 7 days/6 nights Philippines itinerary, with subsequent additional use US \$20 per day.

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Travelling to Puerto Princesa (For Tubbataha Cruise Itinerary)

Puerto Princesa (IATA Code: PPS) is located on the island of Palawan and is where the main airport is located, which translates to multiple airlines with at least thrice daily flights with each airline especially from Manila or Cebu (as they are 2 of the main international airports). If you are entering the Philippines via any other international airport or sea port, you should also be able to find flights to Puerto Princesa.

The main airlines servicing Puerto Princesa are

- ⚡ Philippines Airlines/PAL Express - www.philippineairlines.com
- ⚡ Cebu Pacific Air - www.cebupacificair.com
- ⚡ AirAsia - www.airasia.com
- ⚡ Tiger Airways - www.tigerair.com



Philippines

Special Mention: Manila Airport

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport is a challenging airport to transit. Unlike most international airports, ease of moving between terminals can be an exasperating task in Manila.

Check which terminals in Manila you are arriving in or leaving from.

If you find yourself arriving and needing to switch terminals to catch your domestic flight to Puerto Princesa (or Cebu), here are some options for you:

1. **RECOMMENDED** – Taxi. Look for the yellow taxi (metered & airport accredited) counter and inform the counter staff that you are going to Terminal 1. Terminal 3 is the furthest from Terminal 1 and depending on traffic, it can take you between 60mins to 90mins (30mins is norm). Terminal 2 is the closest but can also take 30mins to 60mins due to traffic. Depending on traffic and which terminal you are travelling from, your taxi fares can vary (yellow taxi meters are a little more expensive than the regular white taxis) but generally it should not be more than 250PHP - make sure they have their meter ON! If you are travelling in groups, be prepared to only fit 2 of you in one taxi with your luggage.
2. Airport Terminal Transfer Buses – Not recommended but still an option. It is not free (20PHP per person) and the bus schedule is not reliable. Follow the signs if you see it, if not; ask anyone in uniform where the waiting area for the inter-terminal bus transfers is. It is also challenging to figure out which bus is the airport terminal bus as they are not distinctly recognisable. Make sure you ask the driver to ensure that you are on the right



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bus. Loading and unloading your luggage (especially a travelling diver's) is not convenient either. Travelling time is almost the same as by taxi, if not a little longer. It is not worth saving the taxi fare to take this option as the reliability is extremely poor.

Airport Passenger Terminal Fees/Taxes

- Manila International Airport Terminal Fee (550PHP per person);
- Manila Domestic Airport Terminal Fee (250PHP per person);
- Cebu International Airport Terminal Fee (750PHP per person);
- Cebu Domestic Airport Terminal Fee (250PHP per person);
- Puerto Princessa Airport Terminal Fee (150PHP per person).

Excess Check-In Luggage Charges (Domestic Sectors Only)

Most of the Airlines charge in the region of 200PHP per KG. Please check with the airlines on their respective websites to obtain the most current information.

For More Information

- ⚡ [Solitude One Vessel Data Sheet](#) - More details about the vessel, cabins, facilities and amenities.
- ⚡ [Solitude One Quick Fact Sheet](#) - Just the technical and summarised specs.
- ⚡ [Solitude One General Arrangement](#) - Basic Layout where you can see what is located where on Solitude One.
- ⚡ [Solitude One Cabin Types](#) - Which cabin is where on Solitude One.
- ⚡ [Tubbataha Dive Site Itinerary and a little common sense](#) - Where we plan to dive and your understanding...



Forms

- ⚡ [Registration Form \(English\)](#) - Also known as Form A - Compulsory for all guests
- ⚡ [General Liability Release Form \(English\)](#) - Also known as Form C - compulsory for all guests

... With these tips, we hope we have helped you better prepare yourself to travel more comfortably. If you have any other questions, please feel free to emailus@solitude-liveboards.com

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