

QUICK KNOWLEDGE...

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 also accepts **credit card** (Visa/Master Only, Applicable Facility Fee) payments on board for any incidents incurred during your stay. Please inform the cruise directors at least one night before your disembarkation that you would like to pay these expenses with a credit card.

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 (1A mp) – 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 international postal services are subject to Customs and Duties. We strongly discourage you from sending anything such as your diving equipment or accessories to the Philippines by courier.

Diving – We have Enriched Air Nitrox, and support side-mount too. Please refer to page 4 for more information.



On your **Philippines Immigration arrival form**, indicate “M V 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. **Mode of Payment is in CASH (PHP or USD) or Credit Card Visa/Master Card** (Online with Applicable Facility Fee). An overview of some of the regions' fees (subject to change)

- ⚡ Tubbataha Marine Park Fee: 5000PHP 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.

Do we have WIFI? Do you have internet? Yes We Do!

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



Available Data Packages are USD20/50Mb, USD40/100Mb, USD70/200Mb and 100USD/300Mb.

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.



Tips on using satellite internet with your devices

Keep your messages short. Use short hand, or acronyms. A longer message means more data.

Disable Auto-Updates, Auto Sync on your devices.

If your device has such a setting, mark our on board WIFI SSID as metered (or similarly referred to as metered so that your device knows that although you are on WIFI, your data is precious and limited)

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.

As connectivity can be affected by weather and is also reliant on a 3rd party service provider (VSAT K-Band), 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.

Phone Calls, SMS and Emails

When out of local mobile signal coverage, Solitude One's on board VSAT satellite communication system will be your only option if the need to make or receive calls is urgently required.

Guests will be charged for all incoming/outgoing calls and messages: US \$3 per 60 seconds block.



Voice Call: **+65 67158903** (even though it is a Singapore land line, the system is still using a VSAT Satellite band to relay the phone calls)

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 be sure that there is no mobile signal.

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: USD8 per dive OR USD135 for 7 days/6 nights Philippines itinerary, with subsequent additional use USD20 per day.

DIN or International? We have both.

15L/100cuft Scuba Cylinders?

Yes we have. It is an additional US \$8 per cylinder per diving day.

Side-mount Diving?

Additional 12L/80cuft cylinder with air: US \$10 per cylinder per diving day

Additional 12L/80cuft cylinder with EANitrox: US \$28 per cylinder per diving day. Whole trip use of 10% discount applies.

Rebreather Diving? Twins?

Yes, we do support Rebreather Diving but we do not have Twin-Tanks. Our support is only on oxygen filling (US \$0.06 per litre) with a booster pump on board. Your dive profile must also follow with the other recreational divers in consideration for other guests' comfort and safety. Complete support (including Twin Tank configurations) can be accommodated for full charters. For full charters, profiles are of course not limited to our standard recreational limits. Do note that the price of helium, if required, can be costly.

Drone/UAVs

Tubbataha Marine Office (since 2016 season) does not allow Drone/UAV flights unless permission is granted. If you would like to bring your drone and fly it in Tubbataha Atoll, you will need to write in to request permission. The contact details of Tubbataha Management Office (TMO) are as follow

Tel/Fax: +63 (48) 434 5759

E-mail : tmo@tubbatahareef.org

*We are unable to request on your behalf as the responsibility and ownership of the permission, if granted, belongs to the person who requested it and also, TMO may have (very likely) questions to ask the requestor.

* Do note that there have been reports circulating on internet forums that Drones/UAV may subject to "import duties" by the Philippines Customs authority officers at the airport on arrival. If you would like to avoid such predicament, you should probably not bring your Drone/UAV while travelling into Philippines. For more advice or information, please search on the internet (especially on forums but don't restrict to diving forums).



Travelling to Puerto Princesa (For Tubbataha Cruise Itinerary)

If you are to arrive on the same day as your cruise embarkation date, the ideal time to arrive is between 1400Hrs to 1700Hrs.

Puerto Princesa (IAA 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

Recommended (As of 08 February 2017) Arrival Flights into Puerto Princesa from Manila are: Cebu Pacific 643, Philippines Airlines 2785 and AirAsia 430. Please refer to the latest schedule offered by the airlines at time of your booking.

Recommended (As of 08 February 2017) Departure flights from Puerto Princesa to Manila are: Cebu Pacific 644, Philippines Airlines 1198 /2786 and AirAsia 431. Please refer to the latest schedule offered by the airlines. Please refer to the latest schedule offered by the airlines at time of your booking.

Meeting with the Crew on Arrival (between 1400Hrs to 1800Hrs on Embarkation Day): Once you have picked up your luggage and leaving the passenger area to the public area, please look out for the SOLITUDE LIVEABOARDS paging board by a member of our Crew (we do not use 3rd party representatives). In case you do not see our crew, please call Gerard Ogang (Solitude Philippines Manager): +63 918 7817056 or the boat directly +65 67158903



Embarkation

Embarkation starts from 1400hrs. The harbour where Solitude One will be embarking and disembarking is the Puerto Princesa Port (location: <https://goo.gl/maps/YCmF3qeCZF62>). For guests that are arriving earlier than 1400hrs, the rendezvous location for pick up is Acacia Tree Garden Hotel's restaurant. Identify yourself to the staff of Acacia Tree Garden Hotel as a guest of Solitude waiting for your transfer, and you will be greeted with a welcome drink while you wait for Solitude One's crew.

Our crew will arrive just after 1400hrs at the Acacia Tree Garden Hotel to pick every guest that has been listed to meet at this hotel.

Hotel Suggestion in Puerto Princessa

If you are planning to arrive earlier or stay a day later due to flight constraints, here are some suggested hotels (in no particular order)

[Acacia Tree Garden Hotel](#) - **Recommended** as it is the pick-up location (besides the airport) at 1400hrs

The Legend hotel Palawan

Blue Lagoon Inn and Suites

Princesa Island Garden Resort Spa

Hotel Fleuris

Grande Vista Hotel

Empire Suites Hotel

Solitude is **unable** to assist in booking hotels. You can book through your dive travel agent or the wide variety of on-line hotel booking websites.

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** – There is a NEW service call the Terminal Transfer Service (Bus). Please ask for directions if you do not see the sign to where you should go to take that transfer bus which is free of charge. This bus though not a short frequent service (30mins interval) is your best way to get to your terminal. Do queue because the bus is limited space missing one will mean a 30 minutes wait. Make sure you ask the warden or bus driver to
2. 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 (for what should be a 30minute drive). 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

costs 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.

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 (750 PHP per person);
- Cebu Domestic Airport Terminal Fee (250PHP per person);
- Puerto Princessa Airport Terminal Fee (200PHP 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.