

Dumaguete 90-Day Survival Guide

The City of Gentle People

0. City Overview & Quick Facts

Attribute	Detail
Country	Philippines
Province	Negros Oriental
Region	Negros Island Region
Population (2024)	142,171
Area	33.62 km ²
Elevation	183 m average; 0 m lowest, 1,844 m highest
Coordinates	9°18 37 N 123°18 29 E
Currency	Philippine peso (PHP)
Exchange rate used	58 PHP = 1 USD
Languages	Cebuano, Magahat, Tagalog/Filipino; English widely spoken
Time zone	UTC+8 (PST)
Calling code	+63 (0)35
Climate	Tropical, wet and dry seasons
Airport	Sibulan Airport (DGT / RPVD), 3 km north of downtown
Ferry port	Dumaguete Port, north of downtown
Tourist visa-free	30 days for many passports
First extension	+29 days; ~PHP 3,030
Subsequent extensions	1, 2, or 6 months
Emergency	911

Dumaguete in one sentence: A small, walkable, English-friendly university city on the southeast coast of Negros — cheap living, excellent diving nearby, and a relaxed pace that attracts retirees and nomads.

1. Landing — First 72 Hours

Airport to City Centre

Option	Cost	Time	Best For
Airport taxi / Grab	PHP 200–400	15–25 min	Door-to-door
Airport tricycle	PHP 100 (official fixed route)	15 min	Solo budget
Public jeepney	PHP 12–20	20–30 min	Very local

The airport is in Sibulan, just north of the city. Tricycles queue at the airport exit; the official fixed fare to downtown Dumaguete is around PHP 100 per trip. Walk 100 m outside the airport if you want a shared jeepney for PHP 12–20.

Cash on Landing

Cash dominates outside malls and hotels. ATMs are located at Robinsons Place, Lee Plaza, and banks downtown. Convert a small float at the airport if needed; withdraw the rest from bank ATMs for better rates.

First Hotel

Area	Vibe	Typical Price
Rizal Boulevard / downtown	Walkable, restaurants, seafront promenade	\$22–40/night
Bantayan / E Rovira area	Budget guesthouses, quieter, residential	\$15–28/night
Dauin coast	Beach and dive resorts, 15 km south	\$40–120/night

Rule: Do not sign a 30+ day rental sight-unseen. Walk the street at night and test the Wi-Fi before committing.

Local SIM Card Registration

Under the Philippines SIM Registration Act (RA 11934), all SIM cards are sold deactivated and must be registered with a verified identity before use.

- Telcos: Globe, Smart, DITO. Tourist SIMs cost ~PHP 150–300.
- Passport required: yes.

- Tourist registration usually requires: physical passport, proof of local address, and a return/onward ticket.
- Validity for tourist-registered SIM is typically 30 days; extend alongside visa extensions.
- Buy at official carrier booths at the airport or mall outlets (e.g., Robinsons Place Dumaguete) for in-person help.

Move-In Checklist

- AC cold-test in every room for 10 minutes.
- Hot water shower test.
- Internet speed test — minimum 50 Mbps for video calls.
- Water pressure check.
- Window seals against heavy tropical rain.
- Security / keyed access / working deadbolts.
- Written lease + transparent deposit return terms.

2. Visa & Immigration

Item	Detail
Visa-free entry	30 days for many passports
First extension	+29 days; ~PHP 3,030
Subsequent extensions	1, 2, or 6 months
ACR I-Card	Required once staying beyond 59 days; ~\$50
Overstay fine	Additional ~PHP 500/month; possible blacklist risk — avoid it

Where to Process Extensions

Office	Address / Contact	Notes
Bureau of Immigration – Dumaguete Field Office	Door 8, Lu Pega Building, 38 Dr V. Locsin St., Dumaguete City; (035) 225 4401; dumaguete.fo@immigration.gov.ph	Mon–Fri 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Set phone reminders 7 days and 2 days before each deadline. Keep every BI receipt.

3. Money & Banking

Cards work at major hotels and chain restaurants; smaller local vendors want cash. Bring a backup card and keep it separate.

Bank / ATM	Notes
BDO	Widespread
BPI	Common downtown
Metrobank	Reliable
Landbank	Government bank

Use Wise or Revolut for mid-market exchange rates. Local bank accounts are difficult as a tourist; usually require a long-stay visa, local address proof, and sometimes employment documentation.

4. Neighborhoods & Housing

Neighborhood	The Vibe	1BR / Month	Best For	Safety Context
Rizal Boulevard / Downtown	Walkable, restaurants, seafront	\$350–650	Walkability and dining	Highest petty-crime zone; crowds and bars attract pickpockets and nighttime street scams
Bantayan / E Rovira Area	Budget guesthouses, residential, quieter	\$250–450	Digital nomads and budget stays	Generally safer; poorly lit side streets need caution at night
Dauin Coast	Beach community, dive-resort access	\$400–900	Divers and beach lovers	Very safe, low crime; watch unattended gear on dark beaches
Piapi / Junob	Mid-range residential	\$300–550	Long-term renters	Quiet, local feel

Neighborhood	The Vibe	1BR / Month	Best For	Safety Context
Taclobo / Mangnao	Outskirts, cheaper	\$200–400	Budget long-stayers	Sparse at night; plan transport

Move-In Checklist

- AC cold-test in every room for 10 minutes.
- Hot water shower test.
- Internet speed test — minimum 50 Mbps for video calls.
- Water pressure check.
- Window seals against heavy tropical rain.
- Security / keyed access / working deadbolts.
- Written lease + transparent deposit return terms (typically 2 months' advance + 2 months' deposit).

5. Transport

Mode	Cost	Notes
Tricycle	Shared PHP 8–15; special ride PHP 30–100	Always negotiate/confirm fare before boarding
Habal-habal	PHP 20–100	Motorbike taxi for quick trips and steep hills
Jeepney	PHP 12–20	Fixed public routes; keep bags in front of you
Bus / Van	PHP 30–100	Long-distance south/north routes
Scooter rental	PHP 300–500/day	Helmet legally required; cash deposit needed
Ferry	PHP 234–1,500+	Dumaguete to Siquijor, Bohol (Tagbilaran), Cebu

Tricycle Reality

Dumaguete has ~2,500 registered tricycles. The official per-head rate is PHP 8–15 for short shared rides. A “special ride” (private hire) costs roughly 2–4× the shared fare. Airport-to-downtown fixed routes run ~PHP 100. From the airport to Dauin expect PHP 300; to Valencia ~PHP 150. Have small bills ready; drivers often claim “no change.”

Ferry Safety Protocol

- Never board if a Coast Guard weather warning is active.
- Don't board an overcrowded ferry; book reputable lines in advance.
- Locate emergency exits, lifeboats, and life jackets immediately.
- Waterproof your passport, tech, and wallet in a dry bag.
- On overnight ferries, never leave luggage unattended.

6. Food & Dining

Eat where locals eat; look for high turnover.

Meal / Item	Where	Cost
Local rice meal (carinderia)	Market or side street	PHP 80–150 (\$1.40–2.60)
Seafood plate	Rizal Boulevard / Lab-as	PHP 250–450 (\$4.30–7.80)
Café breakfast	Bo's Coffee / Café Laguna	PHP 150–300 (\$2.60–5.20)
Western / bistro meal	Gabby's / Moon Cafe	PHP 250–450 (\$4.30–7.80)

Must-Try Local Specialties

- Silvanas — frozen cashew meringue cookie from Sans Rival
- Budbud — sticky rice cake with coconut milk and chocolate
- Sutukil — grilled, soup, and raw vinegar-cured seafood combo
- Lechon — whole roasted pig
- Kinilaw — fresh raw fish cured in vinegar and calamansi
- Balut — fertilized duck egg, common night snack on the boulevard
- Torta — traditional Visayan sponge cake

7. Groceries, Markets & Meat

Place	What it offers
Robinsons Place Dumaguete	Modern mall, supermarket, cinema, ATMs
Lee Super Plaza	Downtown mall with basement supermarket and food court
Dumaguete Public Market	Cheap fresh produce, meats, dried fish, household goods
Sibulan Public Market	Smaller, less congested market near the airport

Meat & Produce Norms

- Wet markets are cheaper for meat and vegetables than supermarkets.
- Supermarkets are better for imported items, dairy, and packaged goods.
- Bottled water is standard; tap water is not commonly drunk even by locals.

8. Remote Work & Coworking

- **Internet:** 30–100 Mbps fibre common in city-center condos and modern cafés.
- **Coworking spaces:** very limited dedicated spaces; nomads rely on cafés.
- **Laptop cafés:** Bo's Coffee, Café Laguna, Hayahay.
- **Power grid:** stable downtown, but rural areas get brownouts. Keep a power bank charged.

Place	Location	Day Rate	Notes
WorkIn Coworking Space	2/F NST Commercial Building, Daro, Dumaguete City	PHP 50/hr range	24/7, Wi-Fi, pantry
Co2 Coffee + Co-Working Space	Dumaguete City	Contact for rates	Coffee + workspace
MJ Coworking Space	Hibbard Ave., Looc, Dumaguete	Contact for rates	Japandi-style flex space

Verify current rates and opening hours before committing income-critical work. Test any location with a speed test before a video call.

9. Healthcare

Purchase travel insurance covering outpatient services, emergency dental, and medical evacuation.

Facility	Address / Phone	Notes
Silliman University Medical Center (SUMC)	Aldecoa Dr., Dumaguete City; (035) 420 2000, 0917 107 7415	Premier private hospital; 24/7 ER
ACE Dumaguete Doctors, Inc.	F. Cimafranca St., Brgy. Daro, Dumaguete City; (035) 523-5957, 0923 116 6478	Modern private hospital

Facility	Address / Phone	Notes
Holy Child Hospital	Bishop Epifanio Surban St., Dumaguete City; (035) 420 0991	Full-service private facility
Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital	North National Highway, Dumaguete City; (035) 225 0950	Public hospital; expect waits

Emergency Hotlines

Service	Number
General Emergency	911
Police	117 or 166
Bureau of Fire Protection	160
Silliman Medical Center ER	(035) 420 2000

Practical Notes

- Generics pharmacies (The Generics Pharmacy, Generika, Mercury Drug, South Star Drug) are common.
- Antibiotics are often available without prescription; use responsibly.
- Bring temperature-sensitive meds; cold chain can be unreliable outside major hospitals.
- Medical evacuation insurance is recommended for stays over 30 days.

10. Dental

Dental tourism is a major draw. Prices are low, but most travel insurance excludes it.

Procedure	Typical Price (USD)
Routine Cleaning + Checkup	\$25–50
Standard Filling	\$30–70
Porcelain Crown	\$250–600
Dental Implant	\$700–1,300

Quality varies, so verify sterilization standards and dentist credentials. Named clinic clusters exist in Dumaguete; search current listings and reviews before booking.

11. Crime & Safety

Dumaguete is known as the “City of Gentle People” and is generally very safe, but vigilance against petty crime matters.

Area	Risk Level	Notes
Downtown / CBD	Moderate	Property crime clusters around congested shopping areas
Rizal Boulevard at night	Moderate	Pickpocketing and phone snatching near bars and transport hubs
Dauin beach areas	Low	Very safe; don’t leave dive gear unattended
Residential barangays	Low	Normal precautions

Hot Times for Crime

Crime patterns spike May–October, clustering on weekends, late evenings, and early dawn near bars, late-night markets, and transport hubs.

Street Smart Protocols

- Don’t count large cash bundles in public.
- Don’t use your phone right at the curb to avoid scooter-snatchers.
- Leave expensive jewelry and watches in a secure lockbox.
- For marine rentals in Dauin, take timestamped photos of equipment before use; a common scam hides pre-existing damage with tape and blames the tourist.
- Ensure Apo Island operators are accredited.

12. Environmental Safety & Emergency

Dumaguete’s main environmental risks are typhoons, flooding, and ferry accidents.

- Typhoon season is June–November; heavy rain can flood low-lying streets quickly.
- The city sits on the coast; storm surge is a risk during strong typhoons.
- Ferry travel is generally safe, but weather cancellations are common July–October.
- Keep emergency supplies: water, non-perishable food, flashlight, power bank, first-aid kit.

13. Weather by Month

Month	Temp Range	Rainfall	Season	Notes
January	24–31°C	Low	Peak	Sunny, calm seas, best diving visibility
February	24–31°C	Low	Peak	Dry, comfortable
March	24–32°C	Low	Shoulder	Heating up, mostly dry
April	25–33°C	Low	Shoulder	Hot, clear water
May	25–33°C	Moderate	Shoulder	Rain begins late month
June	25–32°C	High	Low	Wet season starts, typhoon risk
July	24–31°C	High	Low	Heavy rains, street flooding possible
August	24–31°C	High	Low	Peak typhoon month
September	24–31°C	High	Low	Continued rain, lowest rates
October	24–32°C	Moderate–High	Low	Rains taper
November	24–32°C	Moderate	Shoulder	Transition month
December	24–31°C	Low	Peak	Dry season returns, holiday crowds

Best 90-day window: Arrive October–November or March–April for the best

balance of weather and pricing. Avoid June–August unless you are budget-prioritizing and don't mind indoor days.

14. Language & Local Etiquette

- **Cebuano** is the local language; **Tagalog/Filipino** is the national language; **English** is widely spoken.
- Filipinos are generally hospitable but indirect; raise concerns politely.
- Tipping is appreciated but not mandatory; 10% at restaurants is standard.
- Dress modestly at religious sites and government offices.
- The local “come here” gesture is palm down, fingers sweeping downward.

Purpose	Cebuano	Tagalog
Yes	Oo	Oo
No	Dili	Hindi
Thank you	Salamat	Salamat
How much?	Tagpila?	Magkano?
Friend	Amigo/a	Kaibigan

15. History & Culture Snapshot

Dumaguete is the capital of Negros Oriental and one of two regional centers of the Negros Island Region (the other is Bacolod). The city is a university town — Silliman University, founded in 1901, is the oldest American-established university in Asia.

Key cultural notes:

- Nicknamed “City of Gentle People.”
- Sandurot Festival celebrates the city's welcoming spirit.
- Dumaguete Cathedral and the Belfry are central landmarks.
- The city is a staging point for diving in Dauin and Apo Island.

16. Tourism & Day Trips

Destination	Transport	Cost	Notes
Apo Island	Boat charter from Malatapay + sanctuary fees	PHP 1,500–3,000+ / person	World-class sea-turtle snorkeling and wall diving

Destination	Transport	Cost	Notes
Dauin Marine Sanctuaries	Trike / habal-habal from Dumaguete	Sanctuary fees ~PHP 50–200	Macro muck diving and coral snorkeling
Pulangbato Falls	Trike/habal-habal to Valencia	Small entrance fee	Red-rock waterfall
Casaroro Falls	Trike/habal-habal to Valencia	Small entrance fee ~PHP 30	Tall narrow waterfall; steep staircase; local guide recommended
Twin Lakes Balinsasayao	Trike/habal-habal to Valencia	Entrance ~PHP 35; motorbike shuttle ~PHP 300	Crater lakes with hiking and paddle boats
Silliman University Anthropology Museum	Walkable downtown	Small donation	Regional cultural collections
Rizal Boulevard	Walkable	Free	Bayfront evening stroll and street food
Siquijor Island	Ferry from Dumaguete Port	PHP 234+ one-way (OceanJet)	Mystical mountainous island; motorbike tours
Bais City	Bus/van north	Varies	Dolphin-watching and sandbar trips

17. Master Links

Resource	URL / Contact	Use For
Bureau of Immigration Philippines	https://immigration.gov.ph/	Visa rules and extensions
BI Dumaguete Field Office	(035) 225 4401; du-maguete.fo@immigration.gov.ph	Extensions in Dumaguete
Silliman University	https://su.edu.ph/	Campus schedules, medical center
Dumaguete City Government	https://dumaguete.gov.ph/	Local ordinances and hotlines

Resource	URL / Contact	Use For
OceanJet Ferries	https://www.oceanjet.net/	Dumaguete–Siquijor/Cebu/Bohol schedules
Wikivoyage Dumaguete	https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Dumaguete	Unofficially sourced travel info
Wikipedia Dumaguete	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumaguete	History and demographics
Dumaguete.com	https://dumaguete.com/	Local transport and cost references

18. Final Budget Table

Monthly cost-of-stay estimates for Dumaguete, in USD, assuming **58 PHP per USD**. Figures are derived from the rent ranges, transport notes, food prices, and verified 2026 sources.

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Room	\$300 (fan room / budget guesthouse outside downtown)	\$500 (private studio / mid-range condo downtown)	\$900 (upscale condo or beachfront resort apartment in Dauin)
Food	\$200 (carinderias, market cooking, local eats)	\$380 (mix of local + café/restaurant meals)	\$700 (daily restaurants, imported groceries, weekend seafood)
Transport	\$60 (jeepneys, shared trikes, occasional habal-habal)	\$120 (regular trike private hire + ferry day trips)	\$280 (scooter rental + frequent ferries/private transport)
Coworking	\$0 (cafés / home Wi-Fi)	\$60 (day passes ~2×/week)	\$140 (dedicated desk or private office)
Insurance	\$50 (basic travel insurance)	\$100 (travel insurance with outpatient cover)	\$180 (comprehensive nomad insurance + evacuation)
Visa	\$60 (first 29-day extension + amortised fees)	\$80 (extension fees + ACR I-Card spread over stay)	\$120 (extensions, ACR I-Card)

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Entertainment	\$80 (occasional dive/snorkel, local beers, one tour)	\$250 (weekly Apo/Dauin trips, dining out)	\$650 (daily activities, casino trips, high-end dining)
Buffer	\$50	\$110	\$230
TOTAL / month	\$800	\$1,600	\$3,200
90-DAY TOTAL	\$2,400	\$4,800	\$9,600

19. Glossary of Local Terms

Term	Meaning
Budbud	Sticky rice cake with coconut milk and chocolate
Carinderia	Small local eatery
Dauin	Coastal town south of Dumaguete, known for diving
Habal-habal	Motorbike taxi
Jeepney	Colorful shared public transport
Kinilaw	Fresh raw fish cured in vinegar and calamansi
Lechon	Whole roasted pig
Sandurot Festival	Dumaguete festival celebrating hospitality
Sans Rival	Local bakery famous for silvanas
Silvanas	Frozen cashew meringue cookie
Sisig	Sizzling chopped pork dish
Sutukil	Grilled, soup, and raw seafood combo
Trike	Tricycle taxi

20. Sources & Credits

- Bureau of Immigration Philippines — visa fees and office directory: <https://immigration.gov.ph/> and <https://immigration.gov.ph/contacts/>
- Wikipedia — Dumaguete facts, history, climate, demographics: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumaguete>
- Wikivoyage — Dumaguete travel info: <https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Dumaguete>
- Dumaguete.com — tricycle rates and local transport: <https://dumaguete.com/trikes-tricycle-rates-dumaguete/>
- Silliman University Medical Center: <https://su.edu.ph/>
- ACE Dumaguete Doctors, Inc.: <https://www.aceddi.com/>
- Holy Child Hospital: <https://www.doktor.ph/doctor/holy-child-hospital>
- OceanJet Ferries: <https://www.oceanjet.net/>

- Lee Super Plaza: <https://www.leeplazashopping.com/lee-super-plaza.html>
- Cost-of-living references: Wise Cost of Living Dumaguete 2026, Live and Invest Overseas Dumaguete 2026

PDF field guide verified July 2026. Confirm visa and hospital details directly with official sources before travel.