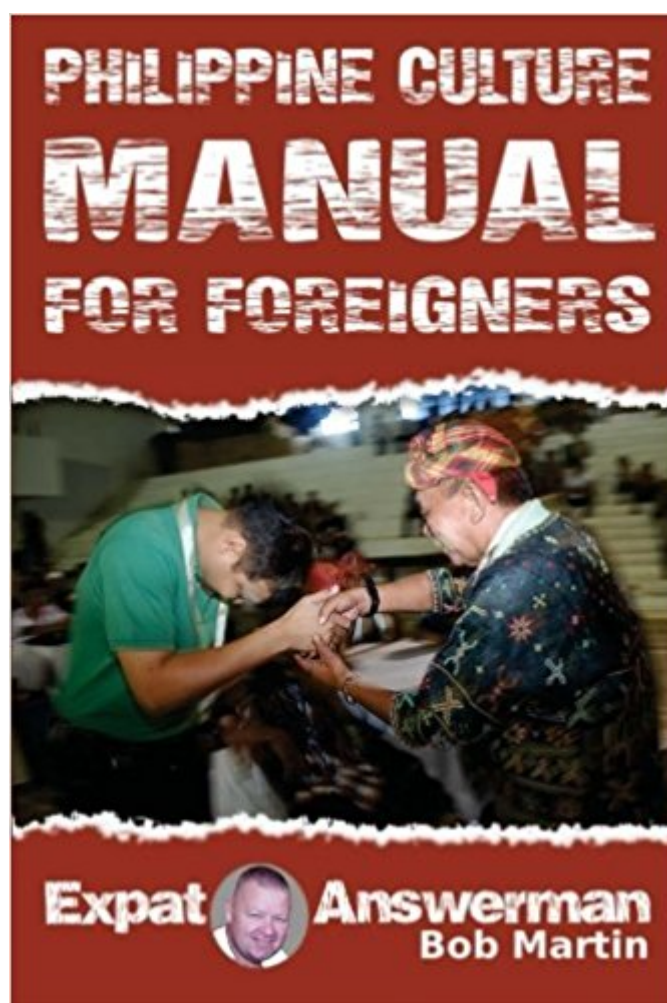




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Philippine Culture Manual For Foreigners: Understanding The Culture Of The Philippines



Synopsis

The culture of the Philippines is very much misunderstood by foreigners. Many people from other countries think that the culture in the Philippines is very similar to western culture. After all, the Philippines was ruled by the Spanish for 400 years, followed by nearly 50 years of American rule. Of course the culture would have been influenced by the west, and thus the Filipino way of thinking and acting would be very western. Wrong. It doesn't take long of living in the Philippines to realize how wrong that thinking is. The fact is that the culture of the Philippines is very complex, and also very different from western cultures. It is not easy for foreigners to understand, even after years of living in the Philippines. At the time of this writing, I have lived in the Philippines for nearly 15 years, and I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of Philippine culture, but it took many years to gain that knowledge. In fact, I was able to gain a lot of understanding of Philippine culture because I had a private tutor who taught me how to speak Bisaya (one of the Philippine languages), and she also spent significant time explaining Philippine culture to me as part of the courses. In this book, I will lay out the tenets of the culture of the Philippines for you. I will also give you some real life examples of Philippine culture at play, and how I dealt with the various real life situations. I truly believe that learning these cultural lessons is a big factor in enjoying a good life in the Philippines. If you try to live in the Philippines without an understanding of the things in this book your life will be a constant series of frustration, misunderstanding in dealing with Filipinos and a general unhappiness with living in the Philippines.

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Customer Reviews

Bob Martin is "The Expat Answerman". Bob is an American who has been living in the Philippines

since 2000. Previously, Bob was also an Expat living in South Africa. Because of Bob's long experience of living in different cultures around the world, Bob offers advice to those who have decided to live abroad. Because of the economics today, many people are deciding to live in other countries. It is possible for people from first world countries (i.e. USA, Britain, Australia, etc) to live in developing countries at a fraction of the cost of living. If you can earn a living from your home country while living in an inexpensive country, you will certainly enjoy a much higher quality of life, and Bob is here to help you achieve that!

This book goes through the basics of Philippine culture, such as the emphasis on the group versus the individual, and the key role of shame and saving of face. I thought the material was well presented but could have used more examples. For instance, he says the key tenets of Philippine culture work together in interesting and possibly deadly ways, but lists few ways in which this happens. The book has important warnings to potential Philippine entrepreneurs. For instance, you need to understand why things are as they are, before assuming that you have the right ideas and trying to change long-standing practices. When I was on Philippine mailing lists, my conclusion was that it's just about impossible to make a living in this country with the wages and prices on offer. If you have a good business idea and it is successful, Filipinos will copy you and undercut your prices, and because any Western person is high overhead, they can drive you out of business effortlessly. You need to be selling something or providing a service appreciated by those in the West. Bob doesn't mention how he makes his money, only that he is a successful entrepreneur, but obviously he makes money through his Philippine guides and web sites. This shows us that he is indeed smart, but not as knowledgeable as one might hope about Philippine business per se. I visited the Philippines for three weeks in 2006, which certainly does not make me an expert. I was a little surprised that some real frustrations I felt when I was there were not covered. For instance, stores are often out of even the simplest things like, in my case, Coke Light, their equivalent of Diet Coke. Furthermore, it tasted funny compared to the US version. Alas, one really important topic was not covered, because he had (and still has) a Filipina wife he met while in the USA. It is briefly mentioned that if you want a date, all you need to do is visit a shopping mall and women will approach you. But that is covered as a hazard, since he assumes you are already married, like him. I suspect the most attractive thing for most guys visiting the country is the abundance of women interested in western men(*). Information, perhaps by guest authors, on how the Philippine dating process works, and how you can best take advantage of the feminine abundance that is available, would be enormously helpful for many men. I enjoyed reading this, but it was perhaps too obviously

a bunch of blog posts combined into a book. The author was always trying to provoke his audience, with phrases like "What do you think of this?" That looks really strange, almost like a cop-out, in a book format where you can't read or write blog comments! In the future, I would hope that when he creates another edition of the book, he takes some of that stuff out and adds some of the best comments and his reaction to them. (*) Or, generally, Filipino men interested in Western women, an increasingly common situation. Or men interested in Western men, women interested in Western women, etc, etc. Let's just say that romance is generally in the air, and although these people initially want you because of your money, if you are a good person, they typically form loving relationships with you where the money is just one factor of their appreciation of you.

Enjoying the author's perspective on moving from America to the Philippines.

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