



Visiting Senior Travel Writer PJW, Las Vegas NV: Manila is the beautiful capital city of the Philippines, with historic architecture, parks, restaurants, friendly people and many other attractions. However, while tourism flourishes in Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, Manila is still virtually ignored by American and other world travelers.

During my World War II Navy time, I spent a year in Manila back in 1945. As the 70th anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific is celebrated, the city should attract its fair share of American visitors. How to Get There: Philippine Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines offer direct flights to Manila's Ninoy Aquino Airport from various U.S. airports. Other airlines servicing Manila include Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines, Delta, Air China, Qantas JAL, KLM and others.

My first accommodations in Manila were in tents at the USN Fleet Landing by the city's Pasig River. I dined in a makeshift chow hall in the basement of the Manila Hotel, where General MacArthur occupied the penthouse high above us.

Hyatt Hotel and Casino: A current favorite is the five-star Hyatt, one the city's most luxurious hotels, close to the downtown business district, restaurants, historic and cultural centers. The hotel's casino, the largest in the Philippines, offers attractive diversions for travelers.

Hyatt Hotel and Casino, 1588 Pedro Gil, Manila, Philippines 1004, manila.casino@hyatt.com, rates from \$200.

Cafe Ilang Ilang At The Manila Hotel: The 100-year-old hotel still stands today. On a recent visit, I had to return to chow down there again. I had dinner at Ilang Ilang, the posh buffet restaurant on the main floor.

The name means flower of flowers in the traditional Tagalog language. The large restaurant offers six fresh-cooked stations with Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Italian and Spanish food.

Cafe Ilang Ilang, Manila Hotel, One Rizal Park, 0913, Manila, Philippines, chynGREYES.com. \$50 for the dinner buffet.

University of Santo Tomas and Intramuros: Because my long-ago Navy living quarters was a tent next to the walled city called Intramuros, I visit the historic area when in Manila. Santo Tomas was built by the Spanish in 1611. During the Japanese occupation from 1942-45, it was used as a prison for American civilian internees. Today, its classical buildings and tree-lined lawns and walkways are quiet reminders of the past.

Manila Bay: This now peaceful oceanfront has been part of Philippine history since the Spanish landed in 1646. In 1898, U.S. Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet and claimed the islands for America. In 1942, the island of Corregidor in the Bay became famous as the last holdout of American forces before the Japanese occupation.

In 1945, as World War II was ending, my Navy underwater demolition team (UDT is now SEALs) brought up gold bullion that had been stored there to prevent the Japanese from taking it. On several visits since, I've enjoyed riding along Dewey Boulevard's the shoreline and watching the spectacular Pacific Ocean sunsets.