



Where are the world's largest super malls? Most would guess they're at big cities of New York, Beijing, Moscow, Tokyo or Minneapolis. However, on one respected list, the top 11 include three in an unexpected location: Manila.

Forbes Magazine ranked the trio of malls located within 10 miles of downtown Manila, Luzon. The Mall of Asia in Pasay City is listed as 4th; 8th is Megamall in Mandaluyong City; and 11th is North EDSA in Quezon City.

Connections With Manila: Your travel4seniors.com editor first came to Manila in April 1945 as a 19-year-old member of a U.S. Navy advance team. The once-beautiful city lay in ruins as American and Filipino GIs were in the final stages of retaking the islands after three brutal years of Japanese occupation.

I've since returned many times over the decades for business, vacations, on cruises and to visit old friends. Fortunately, Manila has been entirely rebuilt and is again one of the most attractive and vital cities in the world.

Where To Stay In Manila: From the long-ago days when I chowed down in the hotel's underground garage with the Navy Underwater Demolition Team, I've visited the historic, century-old Manila Hotel several times.

As World War II was winding down, the hotel was the HQ of General Douglas MacArthur, who lived in the penthouse. In the years since, other guests of the elegant Manila Hotel have included Bob Hope, John Wayne, Marlon Brando, the Beatles, as well as Presidents Johnson and Eisenhower.

Manila Hotel, Bonifacio Drive, One Rizal Park, Manila 0913, www.manila-hotel.com.ph. Current room rates from \$150.

Manila's Most Magnificent Mall: If I had to make the difficult decision to choose a favorite, it

would be the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. There are many reasons to enjoy this enormous shopping center. (smmallofasia.com)

Pasay City: It's five miles south from downtown Manila along the Philippine Sea coastline. The nation's largest and busiest, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, is located near the mall.

Exploring The SM Mall of Asia: Jose Diokno Blvd., Pasay City 1300, Philippines, smmallofasia.com. Within the 4.2 million square feet mall are scores of local and international name-brand retail outlets, restaurants and theaters. An example is Uniqlo, a branch of the Japanese clothing chain, offering many varieties of casual clothing for adults and children. (uniqlo.com)

Other facilities at the mall include a sports arena, ice skating rink, bowling alleys, convention center, amusement park and scores of other attractions. It's estimated that 200,000 people visit the mall daily. Two six-story parking structures offer 5,000 spaces for cars.

Eating: There are over 100 restaurants and fast food shops at the mall, many specializing in native Filipino dishes. Others range from Spanish, French, Japanese, Italian, Indonesian, Chinese, Thai and more.

An excellent example is Egun, located at GF Theater Mall. A favorite is Bulalong Baka Mais. Translation from the native Tagalog: buffalo beef with corn. Prices from \$35.