

DESTINATIONS

ASIA | MANILA

Snapshot

MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES

Manila is shedding its reputation as purely a stopover city, writes **Tamara Hinson**

star attraction...



Ortigas Foundation Library

As much as we love the Ayla Museum, this is the standout cultural gem. Created by the Ortigas Foundation to help promote the country's history, art and culture, it's packed with more than 20,000 books, images and documents relating to the Philippines.



we love...



The history

Whether it's Intramuros, the cannon-topped walled city built by the Spanish in 1571, or Binondo, the world's oldest Chinatown, reminders of Manila's colourful history are everywhere. Highlights include Binondo's 16th-century, rust-red Minor Basilica of St Lorenzo Ruiz (Binondo was set aside for Chinese immigrants who converted to Catholicism) and the Ayla Museum, where 1,000 gold artefacts provide an insight into the cultures that existed before western colonisation.



book it...



Premier Holidays offers seven nights' B&B in a Grand Deluxe room at the Manila Hotel from £999 per person in June 2020. The price includes Etihad flights from Heathrow via Abu Dhabi and transfers. trade.premierholidays.co.uk

getting there...



Philippine Airlines flies non-stop from Heathrow to Manila from £614 return (philippineairlines.com). Alternatively, connecting flights are available via hubs such as Hong Kong, Dubai or Kuala Lumpur. BA flies direct to Kuala Lumpur from £453 return, with one-way onward connections to Manila from £60 with Air Asia (airasia.com/en/gb).

where to shop...



SM Mall of Asia

Manila is a place to shop until you drop, and most of its malls are spread across several buildings. The SM Mall of Asia has four buildings connected via walkways, and at Makati's high-end Greenbelt Mall, you'll find parks, a church and a cinema dotted between five inter-connected shopping centres.



PICTURES: Shutterstock, Paola Aseron

make time for...



The nightlife

Start with The Curator Coffee and Cocktails – a coffee-shop-cum-cocktail bar listed in Asia's 50 Best Bars 2019 awards. Head to the Peninsula Manila's Salon de Ning for potent tipples made with local ingredients (pictured). For something more casual, visit Poblacion, a former red-light district now known for its breweries and backpacker bars.

