

# Travel expo to support global travel for Filipinos year-round

DESTINATIONS like Georgia, the Czech Republic, Papua New Guinea, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Guam will be featured at this year's Travel Madness Expo (TME), made accessible through exclusive travel deals, airline partnerships, and tourist experiences.

TME 2026, a travel trade event that's been running since 2012, aims to champion year-round travel among Filipinos.

The three-day event is set to take place from July 10 to 12 at Halls 1 to 4 of the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City.

"For the past six months, we've been worrying about the Middle East wars," TME chairperson Maria Paz Alberto said at the press conference on June 25. "A lot of airlines will be offering low rates now because the war is over."

The expo invites Filipinos to discover these destinations at the event, which provides opportunities to connect face-to-face with airlines, tourism boards, accredited travel agencies, hospitality providers, and financial institutions.

"There's still a little uncertainty, but definitely people will start planning to travel. More so once you see that the rates being offered at the event are very affordable and very low," Ms. Alberto added.

TME also aims to sustain travel momentum beyond peak periods, which could strengthen the resilience of domestic and international tourism. Malaysia Airlines joins this year's event as the Official Airline Partner, while Philippine Airlines serves as the National Airline Partner.

"We will operate all of our domestic routes and all of our international routes at the TME. Maybe a lot of you are wondering, with the crisis, is it realistic or valid to give a low rate at this time? And are people actually buying? The answer is, 'yes' and 'yes,'" Philippine Airlines regional head Bryan Ang explained.

The Department of Tourism's "Discover More to Love" campaign will also be featured throughout the event, reinforcing efforts to promote both established attractions and emerging destinations across the Philippines.

On the international front, TME welcomes three new participating destinations: Georgia, the



CHURCH of Our Lady before Týn can be found in the Old Town Square of Prague, Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is one of the new participating destinations featured at this year's Travel Madness Expo.



Czech Republic, and Papua New Guinea. They will be among a large lineup of 179 exhibitors, the biggest returning ones including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Guam.

TME also hopes to reflect the evolving mindset of today's travelers, who are moving beyond post-pandemic "revenge travel" toward more intentional, experience-driven journeys.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Alberto said that there will be a lot of freebies at the expo, with Nestlé giving out free ice cream. One of the new participants at the fair, Czech Tourism, will give away chocolates for those who buy tickets or tour packages to Prague.

"VFS will also be at the event, so if you are sending visas to any Schengen country handled by VFS, they will be there to process your visa right at Hall 1," she added.

Her recommendation for an all-season destination would be Guam, which is popular with Filipinos for pilgrimage purposes (because of Saint Pedro Calungsod) and shopping.

"If you spend the New Year there, you could go crazy shop-

ping because they have sales of 70 to 80% off," Ms. Alberto explained. "All of their items are also duty free compared to mainland [USA]."

Meanwhile, Mr. Ang talked about Philippine

Airlines' new destinations: Palau and Saipan, which have biweekly flights and are popular among divers; and Chitose in Hokkaido, offering another side of Japan's northernmost prefecture in addition to Sapporo. PAL is also upping the frequency of US flights to Los Angeles and Chicago.

He noted that an underrated destination is Australia, especially now while it's in its winter season.

"While we're here complaining about how hot it is, you can go to Australia and complain about how cold it is. It's also the best time to actually see the Southern Lights, or aurora australis," Mr. Ang said.

"It can be best seen from Tasmania in Australia, which is very close to Melbourne. If you can go to New Zealand, Queenstown, that would even be better," he added. "In fact, we're seeing an increase in traffic going Down Under, because of people avoiding Europe."

For short-haul local travel, Ms. Alberto recommended Iloilo, Dumaguete, Bacolod, and Davao, where the weather is not as extreme as in Metro Manila at the moment.

"It might be either very hot or raining in Manila, but it's not in other parts. You can check for

LPAs (low pressure areas) in the news, but weather now is so unpredictable. That's just how it is," she cautioned.

Finally, she pointed out that there will be an abundance of hotel deals at the expo, with some of the Philippines' biggest hotel chains offering 50% to 70% off on their properties.

"You might not have plans yet, but many hotels and resorts are offering vouchers [so] that you'll want to make plans," she said. "Those are some of the perks."

## METROBANK DEALS

Metrobank cardholders will get free admission to the fair and enjoy exclusive early access to the Travel Preview Sale from 9 to 11 a.m. on July 10, giving them first priority to selected domestic and international travel packages before the expo opens to the public.

During the event, eligible Metrobank cardholders can also take advantage of the bank's "Book Now, Pay Later" program, allowing them to secure their travel bookings while paying at a later date.

Travel Madness Expo 2026 opens at 11 a.m. on July 10 and continues until July 12. Tickets are priced at P100 for the general public and P70 for students, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens.

For more information, event schedules, and exhibitor updates, visit the official Travel Madness Expo website at <https://www.travelmadnessph.com/> or follow its social media pages. — **Brontë H. Lacsamana**