こくさいタイムズ in English 第２号 JAN. 16th, 2026 中井中学校 国際教室

「フィリピン」特集 vol.2　　A Special Feature on the Philippines, Vol.2

Continuing from the first issue, the second issue also features "The Philippines: A Country You Might Not Know as Well as You Think." This is the second part of the geography section.

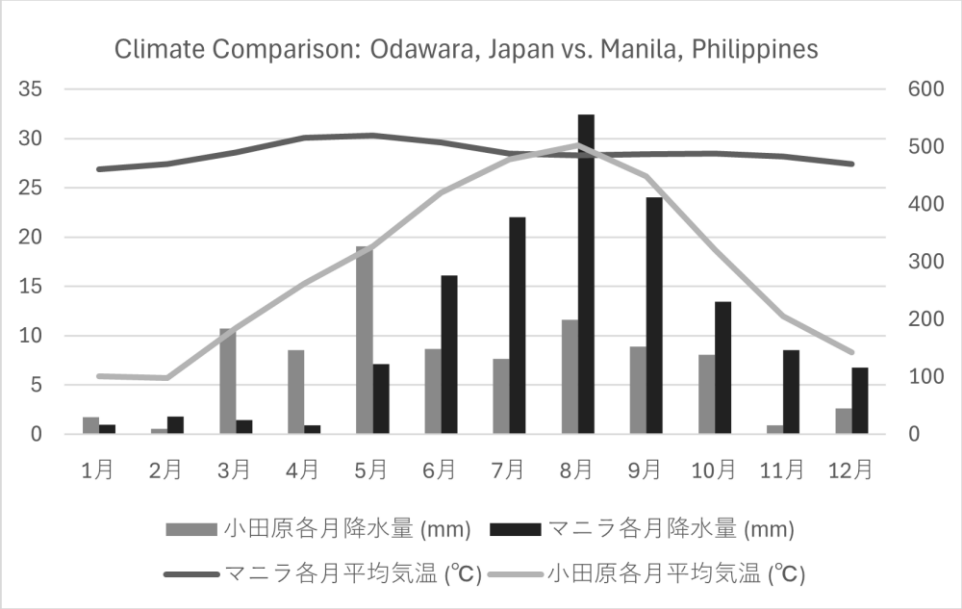
フィリピンの気候 The Climate of the Philippines

As you learned in your first-year geography class, Japan's climate is classified as a "Humid Subtropical Climate" within the temperate zone, characterized by four distinct seasons. Between the pleasant spring and autumn, we have summer with the highest average temperatures and winter with the lowest. (Although lately, with many years seeing temperatures near 30°C through the end of October, it feels as if autumn is slowly disappearing...)

On the other hand, because the Philippines is located far south of Japan—near the equator—its climate is classified as "Tropical." The tropical zone is further divided into "Tropical Rainforest" and "Tropical Savanna" climates. Except for northern Luzon, almost the entire country belongs to the Tropical Rainforest climate. Consequently, temperatures remain high year-round, and the year is divided into wet and dry seasons.

In the capital, Manila, the annual average temperature is 28.5°C. The seasons consist of the "Rainy Season" (June to November), the "Cool Dry Season" (November to February), and the "Hot Dry Season" (March to May). The average temperature in May, the hottest month, is 30.3°C, while in January, the coolest month, it is 26.9°C. This means the temperature variation throughout the year is only about 3.5°C.

[Source: Japan Meteorological Agency website, "Climatological Normal Data/Graphs by Location"]



「各月降水量（mm）」＝ Monthly Rainfall

「各月平均気温（℃）」＝ Average Monthly Temperature

主食は米！！ Rice is the Staple Food!!

The food culture of the Philippines today reflects the influence of various countries, including China—due to its geographical proximity and long history of trade—as well as Spain and the United States, which both formerly ruled the islands. Popular dishes for special occasions include Lechon (whole roasted pig, said to have Chinese roots), Adobo (meat stewed in vinegar, soy sauce, and garlic; the name comes from the Spanish word ‘adobar’, meaning "to marinate"), and Fried Chicken (an American favorite). Since the Philippines is a predominantly Christian country, some might imagine bread to be the staple, but it is traditionally rice. However, unlike the sticky "Japonica rice" found in Japan, they eat "Indica rice," a long-grain variety that is light and fluffy.

As mentioned in the climate section, the year-round warmth allows for "triple-cropping" rather than just two harvests a year. This means rice can be harvested three times a year—theoretically every four months. It is even possible to see farmers harvesting rice in one field while planting seedlings in the one right next to it! Although the rice self-sufficiency rate has declined compared to the past, it still remains around 80%.

And of course, we can't forget tropical fruits! Bananas, pineapples, and mangoes are famous Philippine specialties that are very familiar to us in Japan. Coconuts, the raw material for the uniquely textured dessert Nata de Coco, are also a major agricultural product. Additionally, while production has decreased due to past over-logging, timber such as Mahogany and Lauan (used for musical instruments and furniture) remains an important export for the country.

日本人には unbelievable な、フィリピンの人たちの「あたりまえ」？！

Unbelievable for us Japanese! Just a "Normal" Part of Life in the Philippines?!

As mentioned in the first issue, the Philippines is an island nation like Japan, made up of over 7,600 islands. In Japan, someone from Aomori and someone from Kagoshima might sound very different, but we call those "dialects" of the same language. In the Philippines, however, people don’t just use different dialects—they use entirely different languages.

These are not just variations of one language; they are as distinct as English is from Japanese. For Filipinos, it’s perfectly normal to feel that "people on the next island speak a completely different language."

While Tagalog (the language of the Manila area) is the national language, Visayan (also known as Cebuano) is spoken in the central Visayas and southern Mindanao regions. There are many other regional languages too, such as Ilocano, Ilonggo, Bicol, and Waray.

Furthermore, because of the history of American rule, English is widely used and serves as an official language alongside Tagalog. In elementary and junior high schools, while many textbooks are in Tagalog, some subjects are taught using English textbooks. English is also common in TV broadcasts and newspapers.

Take someone from Mindanao, for example. They might speak Visayan with their family, watch the news or read the paper in English, and chat with friends from Manila in Tagalog. By default, they are already trilingual! How unbelievably amazing they are!!