

TARLAC

Melting Pot of Central Luzon

OVERVIEW

Tarlac is the most multicultural of the Central Luzon provinces. A mixture of four district groups, the Pampangos, Ilocanos, Pangasinenses, and Tagalogs, share life in the province.

Tarlac is best known for its fine foods and vast sugar and rice plantations. That it has fine cooking to offer is due largely to the fact that it is the melting pot of Central Luzon. It offers some of the best cuisines from the places of ancestry of its settlers, the provinces of Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Pangasinan, and the Ilocos Region.

Historical sites, fine food, vast plantations, a beautifully landscaped golf course, and so many other attractions – all these make the province of Tarlac one of the best of the places to visit in Central Luzon.

CLIMATE

Like the rest of Central Luzon, the province has two distinct seasons: dry from November to April and wet for the rest of the year.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Principal crops are rice and sugarcane. Other major crops are corn and coconut; vegetables such as eggplant, garlic, and onion; and fruit trees like mango, banana, and calamansi.

Because the province is landlocked, its fish production is limited to several fishponds. On the boundary with Zambales in the west, forestlands provide timber for the logging industry. Mineral reserves such as manganese and iron can also be found along the western section.

Tarlac has its own rice and corn mills as well as sawmills and logging outfits. Other firms service agricultural needs such as fertilizer. Among its cottage industries, ceramics making has become important because of the abundant supply of clay.

It is also in Tarlac City where the Hacienda Luisita can be found that has the Central Azucarera de Tarlac and the Luisita Business and Industrial Park. Various malls and supermarkets are also found in the city center such as the Metrotown Mall, EZ Mart, Magic Star Mall, and recently established SM Tarlac City Mall located along the Mc Arthur Highway.

HISTORY

Tarlac was originally a part of the provinces of Pangasinan and Pampanga. It was the last Central Luzon province to be organized under the Spanish regime in 1874.

During the Philippine Revolution of 1896, Tarlac was one of the first eight provinces to rise in arms against Spain. It became the new seat of the first Philippine Republic in March 1899 when Emilio Aguinaldo abandoned the former, Malolos, Bulacan. This lasted only for a month as the seat was moved to Nueva Ecija in Aguinaldo's attempt to elude the pursuing Americans.

On October 23, 1899, Gregorio Aglipay, military vicar general of the Revolutionary Forces, called the Filipino clergy to a conference in Paniqui. There, they drafted the constitution of the Philippine Independent Church. They called for the Filipinization of the clergy, which eventually led to a schism in the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines.

Tarlac was captured by American forces in November 1899. A civil government was established in the province in 1901.

During the World War II, Camp O'Donnell in Capas became the terminal point of the infamous "Death March,"

involving Filipino and American soldiers who surrendered in Bataan on April 9, 1942. The camp was so overcrowded that many allied prisoners who survived the grueling march died here of hunger and disease.

Tarlac is the home province of former Philippine President Corazon C. Aquino and her husband, Benigno Aquino, whose assassination at the Manila International Airport in 1983 started the protest movement against the Marcos dictatorship, which culminated in the EDSA Revolution of 1986. Tarlac is the hometown of the newly-elected President of the Republic of the Philippines, Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III.

Geography

The province is situated at the center of the Central Plains of Luzon, landlocked by four provinces: Nueva Ecija on the east, Pangasinan on the north, Pampanga on the south, and Zambales on the west. Approximately 75% of the province is plain while the rest is hilly to mountainous.

Political Subdivision

Tarlac is divided into three congressional districts with 17 towns and 1 city with an aggregate of 510 barangays.

Language/Dialect

Ilocano is spoken by half of the population followed by Pampango spoken by 41%. Everybody understands the Tagalog language.

SITES TO SEE:

1. Mt. Pinatubo crater via Sta. Juliana, Capas, Tarlac.

After its eruption in 1991, the world-famous volcano has become a renowned tourist destination. The adventure begins in the quiet community of Sta. Juliana, Capas, Tarlac, where 4x4 jeeps are readily available for the hour-long ride. After which, a 45 minute hike to the crater presents an opportunity for everyone to enjoy the lahar landscapes along the river.

2. Capas National Shrine

The Capas National Shrine is found in Brgy. O' Donnell, Capas, Tarlac where an obelisk stands as a reminder of the Filipino and American soldiers who attend perished during the infamous "Death March" during the second world war. The "Wall of Heroes" was also put up around the obelisk to commemorate all the soldiers who died during the last world war.

3. The Reliquary of the True Cross of Jesus Christ

Found some 300 meters above sea level, along the mountain ranges of the town of San Jose. The relic of the True Cross of Jesus Christ has found a home in a small chapel in Brgy. Lubigan, alongside the Monasterio De Tarlac and the Eco-tourism park. The relic, the only one in Asia, arrived in the province in 2005

4. The San Sebastian Cathedral

The San Sebastian Cathedral is found at the heart of Tarlac City. It was once the site of the Revolutionary Congress. The highest Filipino seat of learning, the "Literario-Scientifico" Universidad of Malolos in Bulacan was transferred here when the cathedral was formerly the Tarlac Catholic Convent in the late 1880's.

5. The Tarlac Provincial Capitol

The highest seat of political power of the province is located at a hill in Brgy. San Vicente, Tarlac City. The present structure was finished in 1909. During the Japanese occupation, the provincial capitol was vacated and used as the provincial headquarters of the Imperial Army. The capitol suffered great damages during the second world war, but afterwards, in 1946, the United States of America helped rebuild and improve its structure.

6. Tarlac National High School

The Tarlac National High School is the oldest public high school in the country. It first opened in September 1, 1902 under the supervision of Mr. Frank R. White who was also the Deputy Division Superintendent for the province. All the equipment used for the school was imported from the United States of America.

7. Lubigan Eco-tourism Park

Less than an hour's drive away from Tarlac City is the Lubigan Eco-Tourism park in Sitio Padlana, Brgy. Lubigan, San Jose. Located at an altitude of 300 meters above sea level, the park boasts of cooking sheds, comfort rooms and an activity center such as wall climbing, parallel bars and other obstacle courses.

8. Timangguyob Falls

The province is not known for falls and rivers given the "central plains" monicker of the region, but in Sitio Dueg, Brgy. Maasin, San Clemente a 50 foot water falls has recently been discovered. It's name comes from a local expression which means carabao's horns, as its water falls slides through rock formations in the shape of the horns. Currently, a trail has already been established which takes about an hour and a half to reach. While the local government has already planned a second trail which leads up to the peak of the falls where a campsite could be put up for weekend warriors and hikers who plan to stay overnight.

9. Museo ng Probinsya ng Tarlac

Aiming to promote Tarlac's art and artists, the Museo ng Probinsya ng Tarlac

Was put up in cooperation with the private sector, in particular, the Tarlac Heritage Foundation for that goal. Given the success of the first ever Belen-making competition in the country, the winning entries of the personal and diorama category are currently housed in the museum.

10. Home of Ninoy Aquino

National hero Ninoy Aquino is a known son of Tarlac. Born in the quiet town of Concepcion, Ninoy Aquino resided at this old house which still holds the charm of a humble family. The house still holds pictures of Aquino's family, furniture and other artifacts. Found just within the poblacion of the municipality, it is just a walking distance from the town hall.

For more details, see the following websites:

http://www.lakbaypilipinas.com/travel_tarlac.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarlac_City

GETTING THERE

From the **Ninoy Aquino International Airport** (NAIA) in Pasay City, take a taxi cab to drop you to any of the following bus stations:

- Victory Liner
- Five Star
- Partas
- Farinas
- Genesis
- Philippine Rabbit
- GV Florida, etc.

All buses from Manila going to the Ilocos Region and Baguio City pass through Tarlac. Most of these buses make rest stops along the highway at the town's many restaurants. Tarlac City is the typical bus stop for commuters plying the Ilocos Region and Cordillera provinces. From the SIESTA BUS STATION, you may take a jeepney or a tricycle to drop you at the TSU MAIN CAMPUS.

From the **Diosdado Macapagal International Airport** (DMIA) inside Clark Airbase, you may choose from these options:

Route 1.

- Take a jeepney to drop you at the Clark Main Gate.
- From the Main Gate, take another jeepney to drop you at the DAU MABALACAT BUS STATION.
- From there, take any of the NORTHBOUND BUSES mentioned above that will take you to the SIESTA BUS STATION. You may take a jeepney or a tricycle going to the TSU Campus.

Route 2.

- Take a cab or jeepney to drop you directly to the DAU MABALACAT BUS STATION
- From there, take any of the NORTHBOUND BUSES mentioned above that will take you to the SIESTA BUS STATION. You may take a jeepney or a tricycle going to the TSU Campus.