

[Experiencing History at Museo Ilocos Norte](#)

Places that have a deep sense of history, and pride in that history, often have museums. I could be wrong, of course, but that's how I see it. We have the the more serious [National Museum](#) and the meant-to-be-experienced [Museong Pambata](#). We also have museums dedicated to a specific person, like the Marcos Museum (Batac), Crisologo Museum (Vigan) and the [Syquia Mansion Museum](#) (Vigan).



Facade of Museo Ilocos Norte

Then we have a museum about a place, something which we don't often see in other parts of the Philippines — the Museo Ilocos Norte.

Ilocos is at least 8 hours drive from Manila. You'll get up to [Vigan](#) with that time. Add another 5 hours and you'll hit Laoag. These are the suggested pit stops in an Ilocos road trip. Drive all the way to Laoag on the first leg, staying overnight (we stayed at Balay de Blas) after dropping by a number of tourist sites. Drive all the way up to [Pagudpud beach](#) in the morning, then rest for the night in Vigan. Perhaps we'd have a separate article for an Ilocos trip itinerary.

[Read [VisitPinas Itinerary for a 3-day Ilocos Trip](#)]

You need not enter a museum when taking a road trip to [Ilocos](#). Just look around, while on the road and going through the towns and cities, and you'll see landmarks and places of significant historical value. For instance, you'll pass by the place where Gabriela Silang was publicly hanged by the Spanish authorities. You'll see

the [churches](#) that survived from the Spanish time, part of the declared UNESCO World Heritage sites. You'll see [lighthouses](#), old houses in [Vigan's Calle Crisologo](#), and other relics of the past beautifully preserved for future generations to see, and more importantly, to experience.

Should you be interested in taking a glimpse of Ilocos history (and escaping the humid heat outside) under one roof, drop by **Museo Ilocos**, a few minutes from the **Tobacco Monopoly** monument and the **Ilocos Norte provincial capitol**.



More displays at Museo Ilocos

The unpretentious building blends perfectly with the Spanish-influenced architecture of Ilocos. The roof is bare, with exposed trusses. On both sides of the brick-floored corridors are neatly-labeled tools and utensils, weapons and everyday objects, of old Ilocos.

Now, let's have a little *alin-ang-naiiba* game. Which one does not belong among these Ilocos artifacts? No, it's not the gantilla (a square measure for grains; eight gantilla is equivalent to one cavan). See the bottle partly hidden by the Sanga Gudua? Every Filipino knows what that is — the one and only Ginebra San Miguel (ahh, I wish they'd have another championship that brings back the time of Coach Jawo, Bal "the flash" David, Noli "the tank" Locsin, Vince "the prince" Hizon, Pido Jarencio, the twin towers Marlou Aquino and EJ Feihl, Benny Cheng and the rest of the gang). Why would a bottle of Ginebra San Miguel be there?

I don't know. Maybe one of you knows. Please tell us why. I'm thinking of two possibilities. One, maybe the guard had a drinking session the previous night and forgot to hide the evidence. Or maybe it's related to the **Basi Revolt** — an Ilocano uprising triggered by the Spaniards' oppressive decree expropriating the manufacture and sale of *basi* in their favor. *Basi* is local wine. Get our liquor and we'll give you a revolution. Ilocanos are known as fierce warriors. I didn't even bother to touch the bottle of Ginebra. I wanted to get our of Ilocos alive. I didn't want to trigger one more revolt.



Displays at Museo Ilocos



Gantilla at Museo Ilocos



Classroom setting at Museo Ilocos

There's a replica of the typical mestizo house during Spanish era. The two-floor replica is complete with furniture and equipment, fully functional for the visitors to enjoy. I was pleasantly surprised that many displays are intended to be used and experience by guests.

The area we enjoyed the most was the old-school setting of a classroom. As you can see from the photo, it's not really the desks and chairs used during the Spanish

time. These chairs were used during the 70's and many are still being used until today (if you were around in the 50's and 60's, please tell us if those desks were already around).

Museo Ilocos is a place to be experienced. You've seen the photos and you've read how to get there. It's time I stop blabbing. It's time you experience it yourself.

Look also www.museums.aboutphilippines.ph