



Balikbayan Privileges

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Republic Act No. 6768 was enacted in November 1989 to attract and encourage overseas Filipinos to visit the Philippines as a balikbayan. It was amended by Republic Act No. 9174 on 22 July 2002 by providing additional benefits and privileges to the balikbayan.

Note: The Philippine Embassy continues to await the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9174 that will make possible the law's implementation. These include guidelines on the implementation of the kabuhayan privileges stated below and the extension of the duty-free shopping privileges to 15 days and beyond.

Who is a Balikbayan

- Filipino citizens and their spouses and children who are traveling with them (per BI Memorandum Order dated 01 July 2008);
- Former Filipino citizens holding foreign passports, including their spouses and children traveling with them;
- Filipinos who have continuously been out of the Philippines for at least one (1) year.
- Filipino overseas workers.

Benefits

1. Travel tax exemption as provided under PD 1183, EO 283 and other allied laws.
2. Visa-free stay in the Philippines for a period of one (1) year for foreign passport holders.

The family members of a Filipino or former Filipino citizen are allowed this privilege provided they are accompanied by the Filipino / former Filipino parent or spouse upon entry into the Philippines.

The family members of a Filipino or former Filipino who are Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Danish citizens or citizens of the Baltic states may avail themselves of this privilege. However, this privilege is not accorded to family members who carry travel documents and who are restricted nationals.

In admission and documentation, a special balikbayan stamp is used in processing the entry of a balikbayan.

3. Duty-free shopping privilege of up to USD 2,500 (USD 1,500 as arriving balikbayan and USD 1,000 as arriving passenger) with the following limitations -

- Shopping must be done within fifteen (15) days from date of arrival. Balikbayans who are senior citizens and/or are handicapped are allowed to enjoy the privilege within one (1) year from the date of arrival in the country.

- Duty-free shopping privilege can be availed of only once a year.
- Purchases must be made personally by the balikbayan. However, a balikbayan who has gone back abroad may avail himself of the kabuhayan shopping privilege within a maximum period of one year from date of arrival in the Philippines whereby the immediate family members of the balikbayan may claim the kabuhayan tools purchased provided the purchases were made personally by the balikbayan.
- With proof of remittance, an OFW may also opt to endorse in writing the kabuhayan shopping privilege to his/her immediate family members within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity residing in the Philippines. The shopping privilege may be endorsed only once within 2 years from the effectivity of and during the duration of OFW's contract.

Requirements

The following documents are to be presented as evidence of balikbayan status:

1. For Filipino citizens who have been continuously out of the country

- Valid Philippine passport showing date of last departure

2. For OFWs

- Valid Philippine passport
- Any of the following -
 - POEA-approved contract of employment
 - Certificate of employment by the foreign employer
 - Certificate of employment by the Philippine Embassy / Consulate
 - Prior year's income tax return to prove gainful employment abroad
 - Contract worker stamp on passport
 - Seaman's service record book
- Evidence of remittance, if availing of the kabuhayan shopping privilege

3. For Foreign Passport Holders

- Valid passport
- Any of the following -
 - old Philippine passport or birth certificate
 - Foreign naturalization papers to show former Philippine citizenship
 - Certification from adopted country

4. For Family Members of a Balikbayan

- Valid passport
- Any of the following -
 - birth certificate in the case of the children
 - marriage certificate in case of spouses
 - adoption papers in case of legally-adopted children

Ref.: <http://www.philembassy.se/tourist-information/balikbayan-privileges>