

Chinatowns in PH

Planning to visit different Chinatowns in the Philippines? Rappler lists down where you'll see them.

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BUSY STREETS. The streets of Chinatown, Binondo are packed with revelers and festival-goers. Rappler file photo

MANILA, Philippines – Many people across the world – including those who are not Chinese – observe the Spring Festival or the Chinese New Year, celebrated this year on Thursday, February 19.

Festivities not only take place in China but also in Chinese communities spread all over the globe called "Chinatowns."

In history, Chinatowns served as major trading centers between China and foreign countries. Some are still very much alive today, and are guaranteed to give one an authentic taste of Chinese culture and cuisine.

In the Philippines alone, these communities have found their way in the following cities:



Manila

Widely known as the **oldest Chinatown in the world**, this "little China" in Binondo, Manila, was established in 1594 to serve as a home to Chinese settlers during the Spanish regime. Streets and places in Binondo were given different Chinese names, some of which have been kept to this day.

This Chinatown is known to many urban adventurers as a **go-to for good food hunting**. CNNGo, CNN's travel site, even included the Binondo Chinatown on its **list of world's best Chinatowns**.



Quezon City

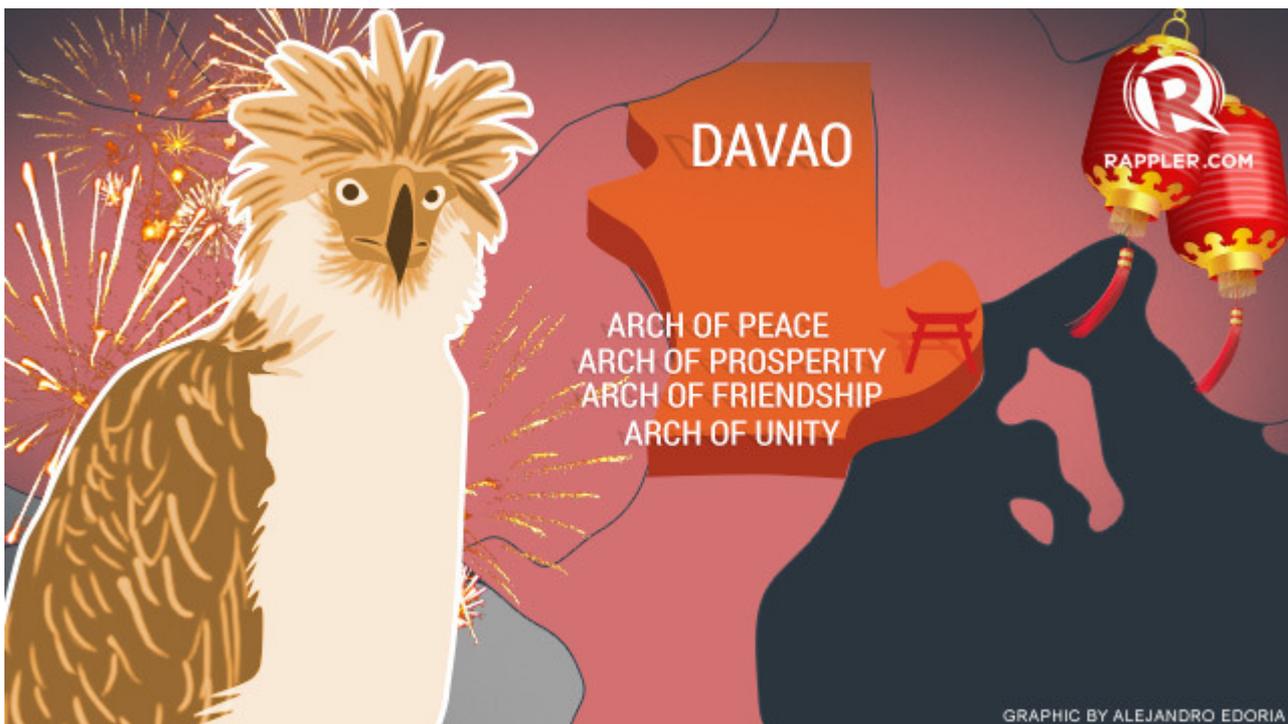
The Chinatown in Quezon City is far younger than its Binondo counterpart. In 2005, **the city council approved the development of Banawe Street** as a special economic growth area, as several Filipino-Chinese businesses have already sprouted there. Two landmark arches were constructed to mark the establishment of the street as a new Chinatown.

A news report says the area used to be an upscale subdivision called Sta Mesa Heights, home to Filipinos with Chinese roots. It has since been absorbed into the mainstream of the city while its Filipino-Chinese residents have spread to neighboring areas.



Iloilo City

The streets of Iznart, J.M. Basa, and Aldeguer in Iloilo City are collectively referred to as the "Chinese Triangle" of the city due to the significant number of businesses run by Chinese-Ilonggos. A Filipino-Chinese Friendship Arch was constructed in the area to "pay tribute to the strong relationship between the city government and Chinese-Ilonggo community."



Davao City

While Manila has the oldest Chinatown, Davao City is said to have the largest Chinatown in the world in terms of land area – approximately 44 hectares spanning at least 4 barangays. It is also said to be the only Chinatown in the Philippines with its own seaport, the Sta Ana Wharf.

Davao Chinatown's entry points are marked by 4 arches: the Arch of Friendship, the Unity Arch, the Arch of Peace, and the Prosperity Arch. This Chinatown was formalized in 2003 through an Executive Order by Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.



Cebu City

Observers have noted that among major cities, Cebu City is the only one with no Chinatown. But former mayor and congressman Tomas Osmeña explained that **the whole city itself is already a big Chinatown.**

"From even the time before Magellan landed in Cebu almost 500 years ago, the Chinese have always been welcomed by the Cebuanos. Cebu was historically the center of trade in the Philippines and because of this, many Chinese families have chosen to make Cebu their home. They integrated themselves into the community – even learned to speak Cebuano – and are now an inseparable part of our culture," Osmeña said.

– research by Reynaldo Santos Jr and MG Mora, Rappler.com

Did we miss an area in our list? Tell us about it in the comment box below, and we'll include it in our story.

Ref.: <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/84416-chinatown-philippines>

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