

[Hanging Coffins of Sagada : A dying Igorot tradition](#)

[Travel Tips](#) — By [melo](#) on May 4, 2009 7:02 pm

The Hanging Coffins of Sagada is definitely one of the most popular tourist spot in Mountain Province. **Visiting** this old world burial site only involves a short hike but one thing more interesting is you will have to pass by an American influenced cemetery which is located on a hilltop called Echo Valley.

Trekking to the hilltop was a chilly and easy journey but seeing a Globe Telecom Cell Cite right at the back of the Calvary replica was rather disappointing. After just a short walk down to the place called Echo Valley, the disappointment we had was eased after seeing the magnificent view of Sagada's rocky village and the jaw-dropping view of the Hanging Coffins.



Sagada Hanging Coffins

The path was not paved and the soil is naturally sticky and slippery so everyone decided not to continue the trek down to the nearest Hanging Coffin's view point, instead everyone enjoyed shouting and cam-whoring in the valley. The place was not called Echo Valley for nothing, Its one of the few places in this world where shouting is allowed and apparently.... enjoyed.

I was not able to get a decent photo of the hanging coffins but seeing them from afar was totally a different experience. Hanging coffins are coffins which have been placed on Mountain cliffs as part of the Igorot indigenous culture and burial tradition. It may not be unique in the Philippines since these old tradition is also being done in some parts of Indonesia and China.



Modern Cemetery

Coffins are made of hollowed out log normally carved by the elderly Igorots before they die, each cadaver were smoked throughout the 5-day pre-burial feast to avoid fast decomposition. Hanging the coffins in a high elevated cliffs is the traditional way of burying a qualified individual which also involves pushing the bodies into the tight spaces of the coffin for them to fit into the coffin space made from Pine tree logs.



Rocky Hill Sagada

This ancient practice in Sagada was already more than 2,000 year old tradition. Although it was no longer a common practice for locals of Sagada, the latest **addition** to the hanging coffins of Sagada was placed there last June 2008.



Sagada Parish Center

The Igorot ancestors in Sagada believed that the higher your body is laid – the close they are to ‘heaven’. Another reason was to protect the bodies from natural disasters like earthquakes and floods and also to keep the corpses away from wild animals.



Sagada Parish Church

The way how they managed to settle the coffins in this high elevated cliffs was still a mystery for me, In this world of never ending discovery and new technology, the old way of doing everything seems more appealing to me. The ancient way of burying the dead in Sagada have been slowly disappearing but their descendants are still continuing other traditions and I believe the Igorot hospitality is part of it.



Hanging Coffins

My Sagada experience is more than just a road trip and gastronomic adventure, It was also a short cultural immersion and the best way to commune with **nature**. More than its mystique **charm**, Sagada's best attraction is its friendly people. Just like the Ivatan's of Batanes, Igorots of Mountain Province are one the friendliest people Ive ever met during my **travels**.

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