

List of Different Ethnic Groups in the Philippines

Right since the prehistoric age till recent times, Philippines has been populated by people of various ethnicity. This has resulted in this country to become the home of a large number of different ethnic groups. Read on to know about the ethnic groups in the Philippines...



After man has ensured his safety and survival, the next most important thing for him is a sense of identity. Be it personal or social, a human being needs to be recognized and be able to relate to other human beings. This is where his ethnicity comes into play. Ethnicity is an aspect by which a man identifies with his ethnic group with which he shares cultural, religious, linguistic, behavioral and biological features. An individual's ethnicity ensures a place within his ethnic group, and in turn gives him recognition in the eyes of the world around. The Republic of [Philippines](#) is an archipelago of 7,107 islands in the Western Pacific Ocean. It has an area of around 11,5830 square miles with a population more than 92 million according to the most recent statistics. The people of this nation are known as Filipinos. The population of this country comprises a large number of various ethnic groups in the Philippines.

Ethnic Groups in the Philippines

The Negritos were the first ethnic group to have arrived on the various [islands of the Philippines](#). They were followed by the Austronesian people who sailed in boats across the Taiwan Strait to inhabit the Polynesian Islands, the Malay Archipelago and Madagascar in the prehistoric period. Gradually, these people out-numbered the Negrito population. They remained the only dominant ethnic group in the archipelago till the Chinese settled in parts of the country in the 9th century, and intermarried with the local Austronesians. From the 16th century to the 19th century, as colonists from Spain, United States and Mexico colonized the islands, introduction of foreign ethnic groups started taking place. With the opening of the Suez Canal in the 1800s, Philippines came in contact with other European countries like Britain, Germany and France. Migrations from these countries led to an increase in the list of ethnic groups in the Philippines. With more migrations from other countries in the recent years, Philippines is today a melting pot of about 160 ethnic groups.

List of Different Groups

The list of different ethnic groups in the Philippines could be divided under broad subheads *Indigenous Ethnic Groups* and *Immigrant Ethnic Groups*.

Indigenous Ethnic Groups: These include

- **Visayan:** The Visayan people are mainly found in the Visaya region and also in some parts of Mindanao. The Visayans speak a large number of dialects that they collectively call the Bisaya language. There more than 33 million speakers of these languages and most of them are Christians.
- **Tagalog:** The Tagalog is the most widely spread ethnic group in the Philippines that inhabit Manila, Mindoro, and Marinduque. There are about 22 million speakers of the Tagalog Language that was chosen as the official language of the nation in 1930.
- **Ilocano:** The Ilocanos inhabit the lowlands and the coastal regions of Luzon. There are 8 million individuals of this group. Most of them are Christians.
- **Bicolano:** These are the descendants of the Austronesians who came to the region in the Iron Age. They live in the peninsula of Luzon and speak the Bicol or the Bicolano language. There are about 3.5 million speakers of this language. Most of them are Roman Catholics.
- **Kapampangan:** The Kapampangan people originated from the central plains of Luzon starting from Bataan and extending up to Nueva Ecija. There are more than 2 million members of this group who are known to have been valiant soldiers in the Spanish Colonial Era. Majority of them are Christians.
- **Pangasinense:** This is the ninth largest ethnic group in the Philippines. They were the first people of Philippines to have direct contact with the Chinese through trade.

Other than these major groups, there are other ethnic groups like the Moro (followers of Islam and the largest non-Christian ethnic group of the nation), the Ibanag, the Ivatan, and the Sambal.

The following are the indigenous [tribal groups in the Philippines](#).

- Badjao
- Igorot
- Ilongots
- Lumad
- Mangyan
- Negrito groups
- Palawan tribes

Immigrant Ethnic Groups: A large number of foreign countries have contributed to the diversity of the ethnic groups in the Philippines. The main contributors are the Spanish, Chinese, American, Arab, Indian, Korean, Japanese, Jewish and Mexican.

The various ethnic groups in the Philippines bear testimony to the old and continuous process of migration. With people following different religions and speaking a multitude of [different languages](#), Philippines is a country that provides a true picture of the diversity of the human race.

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