

# Pagdiwata Festival

*Date: December 8*

*Location: Puerto Princesa, Palawan*



Celebrated by the Tagbanua people of Palawan, the Pagdiwata Ritual Festival is an annual event of acknowledgement and expression of Palawan people to the deities same time seeking for the deities' help in healing the sick and in need and offer prayers for departed loved ones. People who are in serious health conditions also come to join the event, treated by their family being the medium of healing.

The town proper of Aborlan in Palawan is host to the Pagdiwata Tribal Ritual held every month of December on a full moon. Aborlan is a small municipality that has the mountains and the Sulu Sea surrounding it. It has about 19 barangays and a population of no more than 30,000 people. To get to Aborlan to see the Pagdiwata Tribal Ritual which is about 75 kilometers away from Puerto Princesa, one can either hop on a bus or ride a jeepney which departs from the capital city daily. The ride should be about 2 hours. If one is booked at a hotel in Aborlan, transportation becomes much easier because the hotel picks up its guests upon their arrival at the Puerto Princesa Airport.



The celebration of Pagdiwata is also an opportunity to celebrate bountiful harvest or successful hunting trip.

The Babaylan, or the high priest, lead the ritual, since he is considered the most powerful and influential among the people of Tagbanua. They strongly believe that disrespecting the Babaylan faces severe punishment by the supernaturals.

The festivity includes offering of wine, nuts, wax, food, and many others. Activities such as planting, war/hunting dance, harvesting, tarek, in a nightlong singing and dancing of lively traditional music, and the main feature, the pagsuldan, wherein the Babaylan gets possessed by the spirtis. Observance of the ritual is Tagbanua's family affair to which they express sentiments and is important part of Palawan's culture.

The Tagbanwa, located in north and central Palawan, is the dominant ethnic group in Palawan. There are concentrations in Coron, Aborlan, and Puerto Princesa. The Tagbanwa performs the Pagdiwata ritual to celebrate various occasions including bountiful harvests and weddings. The ritual involves the drinking of rice wine from Chinese stoneware jars through bamboo straws. Like some of the Mangyan, the Tagbanwa have created their own syllabic script based on an ancient Hindic model.



As elsewhere, rice is a ritual food and a divine gift from which the ritual wine is fermented. The Tagbanwa exploit forest resources including copal, rattan, and wax for income; they also craft iron with the double-bellows forge. They are one of the few remaining peoples still using the blowgun. Kinship is reckoned bilaterally, although there is a bias towards matriocality after marriage. Affinal relations are tenuous, and "in-law avoidance" is practiced.

ref.: <http://bestphilippineattractions.com/2011/12/02/best-philippine-festivals-pagdiwata-festival/>

**Look also here: [www.Festivals.PhilippineCulture.ph](http://www.Festivals.PhilippineCulture.ph) and [www.AlternativeHealthCare.PhilippineCulture.ph](http://www.AlternativeHealthCare.PhilippineCulture.ph)**