

## Tribes in the Philippines

Philippines, basically an archipelago, has a variety of ethnic groups inhabiting its land. The languages spoken by these ethnic groups are Austronesian in origin.



The [culture](#) of Philippines has been influenced by many different cultures of the world, including the Spanish and American. Today, [Philippines](#) is roughly divided into upland ethnic groups known as the 'Igorot' and the lowland Filipinos, who embraced the modern lifestyle. Quite a large number of indigenous tribes in the Philippines have accepted [Islam](#) as their religion. These people are known as Moros.

### Tribes in the Philippines

Let's try to understand the culture and traditions of some of the numerous tribes of the Philippines.

- **B'laan:** One of the many tribes in the Philippines, the B'laan people come from the Sarangani region, the southeastern part of Davao. People of this tribe are also identified by names such as Bira-an, Baraan, Vilanes and B'laan. These people are known for the beadwork, n'talak weave and brasswork. They wear embroidered costumes and jewelry made from brass.
- **Bontocs:** The tribes living in the Mountain province of Philippines and falling in today's Bontoc municipality are called as Bontocs. The Bontoc region today, is divided into 16 subdivisions called barangays and its total population is 24,798.
- **Ibaloi:** The Ibaloi is an agricultural community, which cultivates rice in terraced fields. One of the communities living in the mountains of the Cordillera Central, the Ibaloi people are 55,000 in number today. The Ibaloi people practiced mummification in the olden days. The process of mummification involved dehydrating the dead body completely, with the help of smoke. The Ibaloi language they speak comes under the family of Austronesian languages.
- **Lumad:** These people come from southern Philippines. In the Cebuano language the word Lumad means 'native'. Lumads are further subdivided in 18 ethnolinguistic groups.
- **Mangyan:** It is a common name used to refer to eight ethnic tribes in Philippines. The Mangyan people come from the Mindoro islands and their population is around 100,000. The Mangyan people practice subsistence agriculture and they cultivate a number of varieties of the sweet potato along with taro and rice. They follow a [religion](#) called Animism.

- **Maranao:** Primarily known for their sophisticated weaving and artwork, the Maranaos come from the island of Mindanao. They are also known as the 'People of the Lake', since, they inhabited the region around the Lake Lanao. Maranaos come under a bigger group of Filipinos, the 'Moros' who follow the Muslim religion. To put it in a nutshell, all Muslims in Philippines are Moros. An ancient form of instrumental **music**, the 'kulintang' holds great importance in Maranao culture.
- **Negrito:** The term Negrito is a Spanish word, a diminutive of the word Negro. In this case, Negritos refers to a large group of indigenous tribes in Philippines. It includes the subgroups called the Agta, Aeta, Ati, Ayta, Dumagat and 25 more tribes from the Philippines. Although the Negritos of the Philippines possess some physical similarities with the pygmies of Africa, they are completely unrelated in terms of genetics.
- **Tagbanua:** Inhabiting the northern and central region of Palawan, Tagbanua is one of the oldest tribes in Philippines. Tagbanuas live in tiny villages that are compact with only 45 to 500 people living in a single village. They speak the Palawano language and worship four deities, known as 'Nagabacaban' or 'Mangindusa', 'Polo', 'Sedumunadoc' and 'Tabiacoud'. The family structure of Tagbanuas is a 'nuclear' one. They live in houses made of bamboo.
- **Tausug:** One of the indigenous tribes in the Philippines falling under a larger ethnic group, Moro, the Tausug community comes from the Sulu Archipelago. The Sulu Archipelago is a group of **islands** in the southwestern parts of Philippines. Earlier, the Tausug people governed a bigger kingdom known as the 'Sulu Sultanate', which covered the modern day provinces of Palawan, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

The first humans to have inhabited the Philippines were the 'Tabon Man'. Negritos who appear similar to the tribals of Andaman islands followed later and settled in Philippines. There are a large number of tribes in Philippines. In spite of enduring years of colonization, the descendants of the original inhabitants have been able to preserve the culture of Philippines. The great diversity in **language**, arts, music and traditions provide us with an idea about the richness of this archipelago, the Philippines.

By **Shashank Nakate**

Ref.: <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/tribes-in-the-philippines.html>