

Travel

The Calaguas Islands: *Where Getting There is an Adventure in Itself*

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Pack your bags, hit the beach, get a tan, go home. You know it perfectly, the routine of summer. But it gets boring before long so it becomes just another summer you spend on the same beach.

But summer's supposed to be fun, right? It's supposed to be the time you spend doing things you don't normally do like wear board shorts or a pair of bikinis when you usually wear corporate clothing 40 hours every week. And you are supposed to be having fun instead of sitting in that lonely cubicle of yours.

THAT is summer.

So forget about going to the usual beaches this summer because there's one beach you definitely have to check out - well before it gets too popular and boring.

The place is called the Calaguas. It's a group of 17 or so islands located northeast of Daet, Camarines Norte. Its beaches have clear blue waters, white sand and doesn't have many people bothering you, if at all. It's a virgin island, if you'd like to call it that. But going to beaches like this has its price of course. It lacks the amenities you expect even from budget resorts. There are no toilets, no stores and no roof over your head. Getting there is a pain. You are on your own. Now that's fun, right? And exciting.

Traveling to the Calaguas is already an adventure itself. You hire a boat from the town of Vinzon's in Camarines Norte and it's a two-hour ride from there to the Calaguas. The waves can be choppy and they aren't for the faint of heart or the unprepared. When you get to the Calaguas, you get to pick which island

you will settle in. There aren't a lot of people on the island except for its less than a hundred residents. But keep in mind that some islands are privately owned so you have to check that out first before you make camp. To be sure, settle at Mahabang Buhangin. The island is not easy to miss because, as its name suggests, it has the longest beach among the islands. Or you could also ask your boatman to take you there if you're not sure where it is.

Again, the Calaguas doesn't even have the most basic amenities that developed beaches have. So make sure you have the necessities like food, water, enough change of clothes, a tent and a sleeping bag. There are no cell sites nor WiFi hotspots in the Calaguas so you can forget about bringing your gadgets with you save for your camera and music player. And don't forget to tell the boatman when he will pick you up. Unless being left here is what you're aiming for. What's next after you get settled?

Enjoy the beach because it has the most pristine waters you will ever find. The white sand is fantastic too. Go there on a sunny day and you'll surely be trigger happy with your camera because the mixture of the blue skies and waters, golden white sand and the green hills means everything is picture perfect. At night, it's only you, the sea and the stars. If you haven't experienced stargazing on a clear sky, now's your chance.

So if you want to hit the beach minus the crowd and the insane accommodation fees, then going to the Calaguas will be your perfect summer getaway. Ever. But don't delay because others might find out before you do.