



## **Balikbayan Privilege**

The Balikbayan Program, as instituted by Republic Act 6768 (amended by Republic Act 9174), was launched by the Philippine Government "under the administration of the Department of Tourism to attract and encourage overseas Filipinos to come and visit their motherland. This is in recognition of their contribution to the economy of the country through the foreign exchange inflow that they generate."

Former Filipino nationals and their family members traveling together to visit the Philippines and planning to stay for more than 21 days may enter the Philippines without visas through the Balikbayan visa-free privilege. They may visit the Philippines several times (multiple entry) within a year or they may stay in the Philippines for a maximum of one (1) year.

### **Who falls under the BALIKBAYAN program?**

#### **By legal definition, a balikbayan is:**

- a Filipino citizen who has been continuously out of the Philippines for a period of at least one (1) year from the date of last departure;
- a Filipino overseas worker; or
- a former Filipino citizen with foreign passport and members of his/her family. The term "family" shall mean the spouse and the children of the balikbayan (who are not balikbayan in their own right) who are travelling to the Philippines with the balikbayan.

#### **What are the documents to be presented to show proof of BALIKBAYAN status?**

Former Filipino nationals who wish to avail of the program must present proof of former Philippine citizenship such as old Philippine passport or Philippine birth certificate upon arrival at any Philippine Port of Entry. In cases that their spouses and minor children travel together with them, they must present the following:

1. Old Philippine passport or Philippine birth certificate for the key claimant;
2. Marriage certificate for the spouse;
3. Birth certificate for the child; and,
4. Australian passport with a validity of at least six (6) months beyond the intended stay in the Philippines.

#### **How much do I pay for the Balikbayan stamp?**

There is no fee for the Balikbayan stamp.

#### **Who else can avail of the BALIKBAYAN Program?**

Family members of the balikbayan can go to the Philippines without having to apply for a visa, provided they are travelling together with the balikbayan, pay immigration fees, and

observe and comply with immigration rules and regulations. In addition to showing their foreign passport, a family member must present:

- Birth Certificate (with English translation), in case of children;
- Marriage Certificate (with English translation), in case of spouse; and
- Adoption papers (proof of adoption), in case of legally adopted children.

According to the Bureau of Immigration, the Balikbayan Privilege can be availed of by the foreign member of a balikbayan's family EVERY TIME they enter the Philippines with the balikbayan (former Filipino/dual citizen) AND NOT ONLY ONCE A YEAR.

Please note that only family members of balikbayans from countries whose citizens enjoy the no-visa entry for 21-day stay may avail themselves of the balikbayan privilege and be able to stay in the Philippines for a period of one year without having to apply for a temporary visitor's visa. All other nationals must secure entry visas prior to their travel to the Philippines.

If a balikbayan has used his/her privilege and stayed in the Philippines for one year, he/she may apply for an extension of stay for multiples of two months up to one additional year by paying the appropriate fees at the nearest Bureau of Immigration office.