

BALIKBAYAN PROGRAM FAQs

What is the BALIKBAYAN Program?

The *Balikbayan* Program, as instituted by Republic Act 6768 (amended by Republic Act 9174), was launched by the Philippine Government "to attract and encourage overseas Filipinos to come and visit their motherland."

Former Filipino nationals and their family members **traveling together to visit the Philippines and planning to stay for more than 30 days** may enter the Philippines **visa-free** through the Balikbayan entry 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.

The Balikbayan can claim this privilege **upon arrival at the port of entry in the Philippines. If successful, the Balikbayan's foreign passport will be stamped with an authorized period of stay of one (1) year**

Other benefits and privileges under the Balikbayan Program include:

- Exemption from travel tax;
- Duty-free shopping privilege of up to US\$2,000.00, provided that shopping must be done within two (2) days upon arrival and purchases must be made personally by the Balikbayan.

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 their old Philippine passport, or Philippine birth certificate or RA9225 Identification Certificate upon arrival at any Philippine Port of Entry. In cases that their spouses and/or 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/s for the child/ren; and,
4. Canadian 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. But the balikbayan must request the privilege at the port of entry in the Philippines.

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 (<https://immigration.gov.ph/faqs/>) 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** AND NOT ONLY ONCE A YEAR.

*Please note that only family members of the balikbayan from countries whose citizens enjoy the no-visa entry for 30-/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.