



FEATURE

GUIUAN: Gateway to Pacific Adventure

Guiuan, Eastern Samar is located at the southernmost tip of the third largest island (Samar) in the Philippine archipelago. It is where Calicoan Island lays, also known as the "Surfer's Paradise". With its rugged landscape, tropical forests, wonderful lagoons, breathtaking white beaches, crystal clear water, and magnificent sunlight, Calicoan is a must see for the nature lover, adventurous traveler, deep-sea fisherman, and intrepid surfer.



History Guiuan is widely known for two significant events in history 423 years apart. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan first set foot on Philippine soil in Homonhon on his way to discover the Philippines for the Western World. In 1944, the American Forces landed on the island of Suluan where they fought their first battle in the Philippine territory three days before Gen. Mac Arthur stormed the beaches of Leyte.

The name of the town originated from its geographical location. The first settlers named the town "Guibang" when they discovered a sharp brake in the mountain range (Tenigbang – part chiseled off) which screens the town from the Pacific Ocean in the East. Subsequently, settlers modified its name to Guiuan.

The occurrence of World War II shook the town and people moved to the mountains to find comfort. In June 28, 1943, several Japanese soldiers set foot on Guiuan soil. Not as fearful and brutal as they were thought of by the local populace, a cordial relation soon existed between the conquered and the conquerors. Evacuees came down from the mountains and resumed a normal urban life.

Except for a few killings of suspected traitors by both Japanese and guerillas, not a drop of blood was shed needlessly. This made Guiuan one of the few places in the islands where World War II did not leave so many tragic memories.

The first sign of liberation of the town came on November 27, 1944 when a US Navy submarine chaser steamed the harbor for reconnaissance duty. On December 1, 1944 a fleet of LCTs, Liberty ships and barges poured into the Guiuan Bay to unload machines that was to transform Guiuan into one of the biggest Naval Base in the Far East that time.

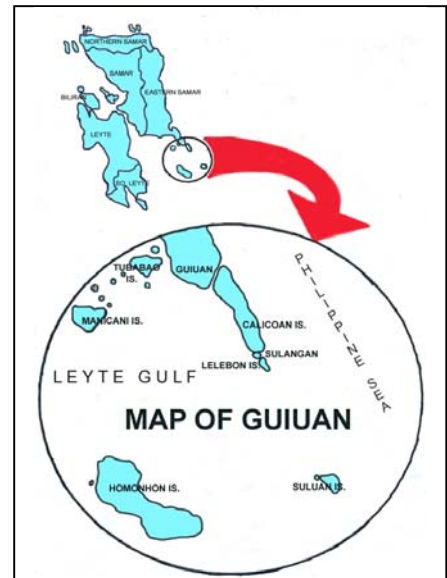
Many years after the American Liberation, Guiuan has slowly progressed from a sleepy town to a bustling municipality.

On November 10, 1978, Proclamation No. 1801 was issued declaring Guiuan, Eastern Samar as a Tourist Zone and Marine Reserve under the administration and control of the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA).

Geography The municipality of Guiuan is located at the southernmost tip of Samar Island. It is bounded on the north by the municipality of Mercedes, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, on the south by the Surigao Strait, and on the west by the Leyte Gulf.

Clustered around the municipality are numerous islands and islets, like Tubabao, Calicoan, Sulangan, Homonhon and Suluan.

Guiuan is 109 kilometers south of Borongan and 154 kilometers from Tacloban. It has a total land area of 175.49 square kilometers. It is composed of sixty (60) barangays and the only town in the province with biggest number of island barangays.



Demography Guiuan recorded a total population of 38,694 in 2000, the second largest population in Eastern Samar with the highest population density of 220 persons per sq. km. among the twenty-three (23) municipalities. Majority or 97.7% of the Guiuananons speak the "Waray" dialect. Less than 3.0% speak Cebuano, Tagalog and Boholano. A large percentage though can converse in the English language.

Socio-Economic Activities Being a fishing community and the only municipality with the most number of island barangays, the town is rich in fishery and aquatic resources. It is considered by the fisheries authorities as the best fishing belt in the region.



The coastal waters offer almost all species of marine life: euchuema, abalone, ornamental fish, lobster and the Golden Cowry (known for its extraordinary golden sheen). They also offer delicacies, shell craft products as well as fresh and processed marine products.

Existing land use indicates a predominance of agriculture use which covers 38.2% of the total land area. Most of the agricultural lands are dominantly planted with coconut trees.

Other major crops include vegetables, rootcrops, palay, corn, banana and other fruit trees, coffee and pineapple.

The municipality is likewise rich in mineral resources. It has an estimated mineral reserve of bauxite, nickel and titaferous magnitie of more than 26.7 million metric tons.

Facilities Guiuan's airport has a 2.8 km. runway which could service light private planes, chartered cargo and military planes.

It also has a municipal and national seaport operational throughout the year.

Telephone companies operating in the municipality includes TELECOM, Globelines and Bayantel. Smart and Globe cellular phone companies are also operational.

In 2004, Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative (ESAMELCO) was able to energize Guiuan, Calicoan Island up to Sulangan covering 37 out of 60 barangays. Island barangays are served with electricity through generator sets either privately-owned or operated by the barangay council.

Financial Resources Guiuan is classified as fourth income class municipality. In 2003, its Total Financial Resources amounted to 33.5 million pesos. Its Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) represents 96.1% of its total financial resources.

Adventure Spot *Calicoan Island* boasts of miles of white sand beaches. With powerful swells rolling in from the Pacific over the 10,000 meters Philippine Deep, Calicoan is a surfer's paradise. The season for the best waves is generally from October to March.



In the middle of the island are six lagoons ringed by forest, the largest being 30 hectares in size.

At the cliffside margin of Calicoan's forests are dozens of caves.

On the northern tip of Calicoan are wetlands like the Everglades, teeming with fish, shrimp, and crabs.

The rich diversity of the area is evident when one sees the exotic species being sold. The surrounding waters support several marine based industries such as fish, seaweed, and pearl farming.

Getting There Calicoan island is readily accessible by land, sea and air. Chartered flights can land in Guiuan's airport, a 5 minute drive from Calicoan. The nearby regional capital of Tacloban is only two to three hours away. Several buses and vans on regular schedules shuttle passengers to Guiuan via a scenic two-lane coastal highway which runs past mountains, steep cliffs, distant rock islands and boat-filled bays. Tacloban is regularly serviced by scheduled flights from Manila. Alternatively, several bus companies have daily trips to Guiuan from Manila. Travel time is approximately twenty-one hours.

Calicoan Island is envisioned to become the surfing capital and a top tourist destination in Eastern Visayas.

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