

Cultural Information from Laura Corpuz

Philippine Educational System: The Americans introduced the school system when they occupied the Philippines in the early 19th century. America sent American teachers to the Philippines to teach Filipinos to become teachers.

Before the Americans introduced the school system in the country, schools were run by the Spaniards and religious education was part of the school system. The Philippines were influenced by the Spaniards for 300 years and became westernized when Americans came and made the country its territory. The Philippines became an independent country in 1946.

(From oral history and family stories) Houses that had extra rooms were used as classrooms. I remember my grandparents' ground-level room used as one of the classrooms. Students completing 4th grade were asked to teach in grade schools until some Filipinos were granted authority to teach the Filipino children. Although children attending grades 1-4 went to the village grade schools (multi-grade system), those attending grades 5-6 went to the town's grade schools. Later on many more schools were constructed and children did not go to town anymore for the rest of their elementary education.

Grade school has 40 weeks of classes from June to March. This is/was scheduled so that schoolchildren can help parents during harvest season in March and April. **This June to March class attendance has and will continue to change to follow the same class schedules as in the US.** English is taught in grade school from grade 3 on, although English is taught as a **second language** in grades 1 and 2, with all the classes taught in the province own dialect or vernacular. English is the medium of instruction in the country. There are nursery schools, kindergarten schools, even Montessori schools.

Grade school students graduated in 6th grade. Students entering private/catholic high school must pass a competitive exam or entrance test wherein a scholarship is awarded. Others entering a trade high school must pass a test as well. Some children are not fortunate enough to go to college, so what they learn in grade school may be applied to other jobs in town. The female students are taught Home Economics while the male students are taught trade skills. **Note: Many schools are now starting classes in August and ending in May. There are schools that complete their grade school education in 8 years. Those are the students that started first grade in 2011.**

High School – 4 years. The first 2 years in high school cover general curriculum and the last 2 years prepare the students for college education. Religion is taught in private high schools, and Spanish was a “must” take class, at least during my high school years in the mid-1950's. This is due to the fact that the Philippines was under the Spaniards for more than 300 years until America came and ruled the country. **Note: This is no longer practiced this time.**

When they complete 4 years of high school education the students are able to find a local or trade skilled-type of work. Some professions may require more than 4 years of college education like medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, etc. There are more college-educated Filipinos in the Philippines than jobs available to them, so they go to other countries to practice their professions or do jobs

related to their professions. Intelligent Filipinos were given scholarships as well by the Americans and Philippine governments.

English is taught from nursery school on. While English is taught as a **second language**, all other subjects are taught in the vernacular or local dialect in grades 1 and 2. All subjects are taught in English from grade 3 on. With the numerous dialects in the Philippines – it is very obvious that many people experience difficulty in speaking because their tongues are used to speaking their own dialects with their own accent and pronunciations. Sometimes it sounds like a “tongue twister.”

Are there colleges and universities in the Philippines? Yes, they were constructed during the American regime and many of those colleges and universities were built during the Spanish time. As the days went on, more private and public colleges and universities were built – some of them are being built in the provinces to come closer to those residing in the remote areas.

Note: There are so many more Filipinos that speak Spanish to these days and some of them can still sing the Star Spangled Banner. The “Filipinos are the American’s Little Brown Brothers.” I call it “American’s Little Brown Brothers and Sisters.” We became independent from America in 1946.

Are there nursing homes in the Philippines? Yes, just for those who can only afford to pay the cost.

Scouting: Yes, there are Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies, and Cub Scouts. As a student I was a Girl Scout and a Girl Scout Leader as well.

Extended Family: This is a Filipino culture where parents live with youngest child and most of the time, grandparents live with them as well. There may also be uncles and aunts residing with the family. This is very common among Filipinos. Less expensive for many families.

Youngest child inheriting the ancestral house. It is a custom to give the house to the youngest child of the family. Many families have a compound where all sisters and brothers may construct a house within the same lot. This makes **babysitting very convenient when there’s familial support and dependency upon one’s family circle.**

Cooking:

Who taught you to cook? How old were you when you learned to cook? My mother taught me when I was in first grade and I just watched her cooked. She also taught my 2 sisters how to cook.

Filipinos always cook from scratch so if they are given something instant food e.g. coffee, teabags, creamer, canned goods, they are truly grateful. They brew their own ground coffee, grow their own bean sprouts, etc.

The younger generation that attended high schools, colleges and universities learned to use recipes especially those majoring in Home Economics.

What are the basic ingredients Filipinos use? Filipino kitchens have garlic, onions, ginger, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, shrimp paste, salt, pepper, and fish sauce (patis). **Note:** We did not show “patis” during the demonstration, but this is a Filipino favorite sauce.

What is ‘balut’? “*Balut* is fertilized egg with almost developed embryo, but cooked before it hatches. Usually about 16 or 17 days. It’s nutritious, high in protein, and believed to be healthy food. If the egg is not developing properly at about 11-12 days, it’s separated from the rest of the eggs and cooked to be eaten. It is called “*penoy*.”

How often do you eat rice? Filipinos eat rice 3X a day with snacks in between meals. They also eat “pandesal” with coffee, tea or hot cocoa in the morning before breakfast. Then the mid-morning snack as well as mid-afternoon snack.

Fast Food Restaurants: There are many of this kind of restaurants like here in the US. Many MacDonald restaurants would hire college graduate applicants because there are many tourists going to the Philippines and miss this kind of food. (This is what my relatives told me.) They also deliver to houses, and I know for a fact that Pizza places deliver as well.

“It’s More Fun in the Philippines” is what we are promoting now. We took 2 grandchildren to the Philippines last March and had a great time, they want to go again.

Rate of exchange is 43 pesos to 1 dollar.

Rice Terraces are often used to plant rice. The Ifugao people living in that area use them to plant rice. However, there are other ricefields where Filipinos plant rice with good irrigation systems. We also have glutinous rice that is used in baking.