

# EXPERIENCE FILIPINO FESTIVE SPIRIT

Christmas traditions, recipes, and travel trends for 2026

From dawn masses to rice cakes fresh off the charcoal grill, Christmas in the Philippines is a celebration of faith, flavor, and community. I'm **Ray Samonte, RateHawk Country Manager Philippines**, and I'm sharing my favorite Filipino festive recipe — Bibingka — a cherished Simbang Gabi tradition, as well as the travel trends I see for 2026, so you and your fellow superagents can empower your client conversations with deeper local knowledge and insight.



**Ray Samonte**

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## Festive recipe: Savor the classic Filipino Bibingka

One of my favorite festive treats is **bibingka** — a beloved **Filipino Christmas rice cake** made from powdered glutinous rice, coconut milk, eggs, sugar, and margarine. Traditionally cooked over charcoal in a clay pot lined with banana leaves, it has a unique smoky flavor and soft texture. You'll often find it being sold outside churches during Simbang Gabi. Try [this recipe](#) to bring an authentic Filipino touch to your holiday season.



## Explore Simbang Gabi: The Filipino dawn mass tradition

A beloved Filipino festive tradition is **Simbang Gabi** — a series of dawn masses leading up to Christmas Eve. Families gather to celebrate faith and community, making it a key part of the country's festive spirit. After mass, treats like bibingka are enjoyed, adding warmth and flavor to each early morning celebration.



## Travel trends 2026: From Europe to local gems

Looking ahead to 2026, Filipino travelers are expected to continue favoring **European destinations** such as Italy, France, Switzerland, and Spain. Nearby countries — including Japan, China, Thailand, and Singapore — remain popular choices for short trips.

Domestically, beloved destinations like Boracay, Cebu, and Manila remain top vacation destinations. Suggest these escapes to your clients now—or keep it in mind for the next year.

**Print this checklist and share it with your fellow travel pros. Maligayang Pasko!**

