

ITINERARY

DESTINATION: MT APO

LOCATION :	Davao City, Davao Del Sur, North Cotabato
ELEVATION :	3,144 meters above sea level
LEVEL :	Major Climb, Level III, Strenuous
JUMP OFF POINTS :	Davao City, Kapatagan Davao Del Sur, Kidapawan Magpet and Makilala North Cotabato
AVERAGE DAYS REQUIRED :	3 Days (including travel time from Davao)
MINIMUM DAYS REQUIRED :	2 Days (including travel time from Davao)
IT CREATED BY :	Long Henson
DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS :	Highest Point in the Philippines, Lake Venado, Sulfuric Vents, Cold and Hot Springs, Spectacular Views
LAST EDITED :	April 26, 2000

INFORMATION

Conquer Mt. Apo, the grandfather of all Philippine Mountains measuring 3,144 meters above sea level. The mountain range extends from Cotabato, Davao Del Sur and Davao City to Agusan and Misamis Oriental in Northern Mindanao covering 72,769 hectares. Mt. Apo is an in-active volcano and is part of the Mt. Apo National Park.

Nowadays, thousands of people from all walks of life scale the mountains especially during Holy Week. The first recorded attempt by the Spanish governor Don Jose Uyanguren in 1859 to reach the summit proved to be fatal wherein 20 of the 27 members of the expedition perished. The first recorded successful ascent was by Don Joaquin Rajal in October 11, 1880 wherein it took six days of trekking. But local tribes have been frequenting the peak since prehistoric times. They give their offerings to their tribal gods in a place with an outcrop rock called Sandawa Altar.

Natural wonders lure outdoor enthusiasts to trek through this tribal god's domain and conquer its towering peak. Starting from the first camp at blue lake Agco, trekkers will see along the way exotic display of nature at it's best - lush tropical forest dotted with hot and cold springs, crystal clear and boiling blue mountain lakes, hidden waterfalls cascading with thunderous roar, sulfuric craters, orchids, pitcher plants and other wild flowers. Truly this is an exceptional display of nature in its primeval state. Hidden in the mountain's vastness, about 2,438 meters above sea level is Lake Venado- a crystal clear and ice-cold expanse of fresh water that mirrors the majestic Twin Peaks of Mt. Apo. Beside the lake is a 15 hectare camping ground that resembles a golf course with greens of wild bermuda grass. On the eastern side, just some few hundred meters below the peak, sweet wild berries and brilliant

sulfur rocks are found along the crater area. Volcanic vents continuously spew sulfuric fumes with jet-like rumbles. Temperature goes down as low as 3 degrees Celsius. From Lake Venado, start downward trek to the jump-off point at Lake Agco campsite which passes through the same winding, knee-deep and swift flowing Marbel River. Hugging the rocks and the boulders, jumping from stone to stone, making a total of 13 exciting crossings for a single river brings you to the first camp. These alone are total adventure and "communing with nature" experience.

◆ LEGENDS

There are several legends concerning Mt. Apo but one of the most popular is that of a noble man named Apong. Apong has a beautiful daughter named Saribu who was admired throughout the land. Two of her avid suitors were warriors Maranaw and Maisug. Saribu however gave her heart to Maisug. Maranaw demanded for a duel between him and Maisug since it is the law of the land even though Saribu opted for Maisug. The duel lasted for hours when Maranaw, a screwed evil man as he is, threw sand in the eyes of Maisug. When he was about to thrust his spear to Maisug's heart, Apong demanded to stop the fighting and went in between the warring warriors. Maranaw didn't heed and struck Apong in the heart. Before dying, he chanted a curse to Maranaw. Saribu buried her dead father at the same spot where he was killed. The next morning, a mountain grew from that same spot. They called it Apong in honor of the dead man, which later was shortened to Apo. One day, Mt. Apo erupted and buried Maranaw and his people with lava which is now the present day Cotabato Valley.

◆ WHEN AND HOW TO GO

If you will be coming from Manila, there are two ways to travel to the jump-off point. The first option is via plane taking the local carriers PAL, Grand Air, Cebu Pacific, and Air Philippines. You can either take Davo City or Cotabato City flights though the former is best advised but either way, time and cost is negligible. The second option is via ship like Super Ferry Liners which has trips to either Davao or Cotabato although the Cotabato route is nearer and cheaper. Apo is best climbed during the summer months though organized climbs are being conducted by the local tourism office usually during Holy Week, October and last week of December. Permits and prior arrangements should be made with the DENR or Tourism Office.

APO CONTACT NUMBERS :

Provincial Government of Davao Del Sur : 5333709
 Municipality of Kidapawan : (63-67) 81831, 81604
 Davao City Tourism Office : (63-82) 2221956
 Department of Tourism Region XI : (63-82) 2216798,
 2216955, 2210070

◆ SUGGESTED ITINERARY

There are six known routes to the Mt. Apo summit, though one of the routes, the Tico - Magpet route has other sub-routes at its lower slopes. It is advisable to take different routes in going up and going down to maximize your visit. But on a regular day, only the

Kidapawan route is advised since other routes are only safe during the peak climbing seasons. Other routes will also require more hours of trekking and not as established as the Kidapawan route. Otherwise, if taking 2 routes, the recommended routes are the Kapatagan and Kidapawan trails especially for mountaineers who are first timers to Apo due to its totally unique environment, very different from each other. Substantial information can be gathered at jump-off points. Listed below are the 6 known trails. The Kidapawan trail can be completed from 1 to 2 days back and forth but listed at the itineraries as a 4 day climb.

Davao City Approach (Davao City Trail) (4.5 day trek)

Day 1

- 08:00 - Leave Davao City for Cabarisan via Toril, Davao City
- 08:30 - At Toril, take a jeepney for Cabarisan, the jump-off point
- 10:00 - At Cabarisan make arrangements with the Barrio Captain for services of porters/guide
- 11:00 - Start Hiking for Todaya lunch along the way (packed lunch)
- 16:00 - At Todaya, pitch tent at school grounds
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 2

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Leave for the falls
- 08:30 - At Todaya falls; stay a while, take a dip
- 09:30 - Start back for the camp
- 10:00 - Proceed to Baclayan; lunch along the way
- 16:00 - At Baclayan, 2nd camp; prepare for early supper/rest
- 17:30 - Supper

Day 3

- 05:30 - Breakfast, prepare packed lunch, snacks
- 06:30 - Start for the peak
- 11:30 - At the peak; take lunch, linger a while; explore
- 13:30 - Start descent to Lake Venado
- 17:30 - At Lake Venado, 3rd Camp
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 4

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Leave for Todaya; following a different route skirting the boulder side of the mountain
- 13:00 - At Baclayan; proceed to Todaya
- 17:00 - Back to Todaya, 4th camp
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 5

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start back for Cabarisan
- 12:00 - At Cabarisan, lunch
- 12:30 - Board jeepney for Davao City
- 14:00 - Back in Davao City

Davao del Sur Approach (Kapatagan Trail) (4 day trek)

Day 1

- 07:00 - Leave for Digos, capital town of Davao del Sur
- 08:00 - At Digos contact any members of Pabungan Tek'dak Association
- 09:00 - Take a jeepney for Kapatagan, jump off point at Estrada terminal
- 12:00 - At Kapatagan, lunch, make arrangements for porters/ guides
- 13:30 - Start hiking for Baclayan
- 16:30 - At Baclayan, 1st camp
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 2

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start hiking for the peak
- 12:00 - At the summit; take lunch, linger a while, explore
- 14:00 - Start down for Lake Venado
- 17:00 - At Lake Venado, 2nd Camp
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 3

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start hiking for Todaya; lunch along the way
- 16:00 - At Todaya, pitch camp at the school grounds
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 4

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start hiking for the falls
- 08:00 - At Todaya or Sambuwangan falls; linger a while, take quick dip
- 09:00 - Start back to camp
- 10:00 - Back at the camp; leave for Kapatagan, lunch along the trail
- 13:00 - At Kapatagan; take ride back to Digos
- 16:30 - At Digos, take bus for Davao City
- 17:30 - Back in Davao City

North Cotabato Approach (Kidapawan Trail) (4 day trek)

Day 1

- 07:00 - Leave Davao City for Kidapawan
- 09:00 - At Kidapawan; proceed for the municipal bldg. for registration and briefing
- 10:00 - Free time
- 11:00 - Lunch
- 12:00 - Take a jeepney to barangay Ilomavis, the jump off point; make arrangement for porters etc.
- 14:00 - Start hiking for the Blue Lake or Agco, 1st camp
- 17:00 - At the log cabin adjoining Lake Agco
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 2

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start for Marbel River, lunch by the river bank
- 13:00 - Follow the trail along the steeper ridge towards Lake Venado passing the hot springs & waterfalls
- 16:00 - At Lake Venado; 2nd camp
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 3

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare for lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start trek on the last lap of the climb towards the peak
- 10:00 - At the summit; linger awhile, explore; lunch at peak
- 11:30 - Start back for Lake Venado
- 13:30 - At Lake Venado; continue the downward trek to the Hot Springs
- 17:30 - At the Hot Springs, 3rd camp
- 18:30 - Supper

Day 4

- 06:00 - Breakfast; prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start hiking; lunch along the trail
- 12:00 - At Ilomavis; take a ride back to Kidapawan
- 13:30 - At Kidapawan; proceed to the bus station for Davao City
- 16:00 - Back in Davao City

North Cotabato Approach (Makilala/ New Israel trail) (4 day trek)

Day 1

- 06:00 - Leave Davao City for Brgy. New Israel. Arrive KM 89 National Hi-way Bulatukan junction

- 08:00 - Expected time of arrival Bulatukan junction
- 09:00 - Arrive New Israel by foot, jeepney or skylab (extended motorcycle)
- 10:00 - Registration and briefing; arrange for porter/guides
- 11:00 - Free time, visit monkey colony at mini forest
- 12:00 - Lunch
- 13:00 - Start trek to Makalangit rest station passing 8 other biblical named resting station
- 16:00 - Arrive at Makalangit, Land of Flowers
- 18:00 - Supper

Day 2

- 06:00 - Breakfast, prepare packed lunch and snacks
- 07:00 - Start hiking for Bama
- 10:00 - Arrive Bama
- 12:00 - Arrive Camp Master Area - Jerusalem City, lunch on the way
- 14:00 - Final ascent to the peak, view of Lake Venado & Jordan, Mt. Matutum

Day 3

- 06:00 - Descent to Makalangit
- 10:00 - Arrive Makalangit
- 11:00 - Lunch
- 12:00 - Leave Makalangit for New Israel
- 15:00 - Arrive New Israel; hike to National Hi-way
- 17:00 - Back in Davao City

North Cotabato Approach (Magpet Trail) (5 day hike)

Day 1

From Davao, take bus to Kidapawan, North Cotabato
Take jeep from Kidapawan to Magpet Municipal Hall
Take jeepney or horseback from Magpet to Magcaalam
Hike from Magcaalam to Manobo Tico - 1 hour 30 minutes
Overnight at Tico campsite

Day 2

Manobo Tico to Mab'bu Falls, 8 hours hike, 2nd camp

Day 3

Mab'bu Falls to Lake Venado, 8 hour hike, 3rd camp

Day 4

Lake Venado to peak, 3 hours hike
Packed lunch at peak

Peak back to Lake Venado, 1 and a half hour
 Lake Venado to Dal'lag, arrive by 4:00, 4th campsite

Day 5

Dal'lag to Magcaalam, 1 hour hike
 Magcaalam to Magpet, 30 minute by jeepney/ horseback
 Magpet to Kidapawan, 15 minutes by jeep
 Kidapawan to Davao City, 2 hours

Tamayong Trail (Davao City)

A newly opened trail, the Tamayong trail promises to be more convenient and breath taking than the traditional path to the Philippines' highest. The trail starts at Barangay Tamayong of Davao City's Calinan district and winds up to seven waterfalls, several rivers, creeks, streams, and host of hot springs, and the beautiful Lake Venado before reaching the summit. The Tamayong trail is a 35 kilometers of gradually inclining slope. It will take climbers 2 days to complete the route with a midway stopover at a designated campsite. The trail is a panorama of wildlife and indigenous edible fruits, features that no longer exist in traditional routes. The world's tallest moss, the dauzonia, is endemic to the area, as well as the vanda sanderania, the popular waling waling. There are hot springs there that are known to have medicinal value where tired and aching limbs may find relief. The natural vegetation is a mixture of medicinal herbs and beautiful flora which would surely amaze botanists and nature lovers. Crystal clear streams still flow along the southeastern slope to invite climbers for a refreshing dip after a long day. Best of all, the trail commands a magnificent view of the entire city, all the way to Mati in Davao Oriental. Fauna endemic to the area are the popular myna bird and the tarababoy, an animal with a body the size of a rodent but with ahead that looks like a boar, complete with tusks.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CLIMBING

If it is your first time to climb Apo, it is advisable to hire guides even though some trails are easy to follow. Important information on water sources, campsites and security are invaluable information you can get from them. Water sources abound Apo but bring filtration devices or purifying tablets. Temperature is cool especially during the months of December.

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