



## **DESTINATION : TIRAD PASS - SAGADA**

<b>LOCATION</b>	Ilocos Sur and Mt. Province
<b>COORDINATES</b>	N 17.08.43.5 E 120.38.02.4
<b>ELEVATION</b>	Approx 1,300 MASL highest elevation
<b>LEVEL</b>	Major Climb, Level III, Strenuous (Cross Country)
<b>DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS</b>	Historical Climb (retracing the events of the Battle of Tirad Pass)
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	Hiking, Mountain Biking
<b>JUMP-OFF POINT</b>	Candon/Gregorio Del Pilar, Ilocos Sur
<b>AVERAGE DAYS REQUIRED</b>	3 Days (for Tirad Pass - Sagada)
<b>MINIMUM DAYS REQUIRED</b>	2 Days (for Tirad Pass - Sagada)
<b>IT CREATED BY</b>	Long Henson with inputs from Mitz Picardal, Jun Medrano and Chito Razon of PALMC
<b>DATE LAST UPDATED</b>	April 7, 2002

**" THIS ITINERARY IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORIALS OF EMILIO AGUINALDO AND GREGORIO DEL PILAR AND TO THE FILIPINO SOLDIERS WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO OUR COUNTRY"**

*- "I surrender to the terrible destiny that is defeating me and my gallant men, but I rejoice to die for my dear country." - G Del Pilar*

### **● INFORMATION**

Tirad Pass is one of the oldest major trails existing in the Philippines. In fact it was considered as an important gateway to the Cordilleras during the Spanish Era. Through the passage of time and as new roads and highways were built, this trail was relegated to the dustbin of our historical records. But as hiking becomes popular, "adventure promising" places like Tirad Pass are being revisited. In climbing Tirad Pass, the usual destination is Spike's Peak (one of the highest peak of the mountainous region where Tirad Pass is located) which is a two day activity. But the trail system has lot more to offer for it will never be called the

Cordilera's Gateway for nothing. The most promising trail this place has to offer is the Tirad Pass to Sagada Trail. This trail has been published in books like "Action Asia Adventure Book" but most of these hikes originates from Sagada towards Ilocos Sur and not the other way around and only a handful have done it so far. In between, there are hundreds of other trails criss crossing the mountains which is popularly known as the "Cordillera Way." As history tells us, Emilio Aguinaldo and his men "trekked" from Ilocos Sur to Cordillera and further to Isabela where he was captured thus dissecting the Luzon island horizontally from coast to coast. If the Sierra Madre is being eyed as the "Philippine Appalachian;" that will dissect Luzon vertically, then this trail, in its entirety, in the future may be the perpendicular version.

This itinerary can be used for a Tirad Pass only climb or a Tirad Pass to Sagada climb or can even be used as a spring board to other destination within Ilocos, Abra and Mt. Province.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

*(Due to the historical relevance of this place, this section has been added in this Itinerary.)*

Before the Spaniards came, the northwestern part of Luzon was known as Samtoy, as discovered by Juan de Salcedo during his 1572 expedition. Juan de Salcedo decided to establish his headquarters in a settlement along the Mestizo River, then named *Kabigaan* because of the *gabi* like plants abundantly growing by the bank of the river. Later known as Vigan, it also became the seat of the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia and was called *Ciudad Fernandina* in honor of King Ferdinand. The place became one big province named Ilocos (from the Tagalog term for Cove - Looc- Ylocos) under Spanish rule until it was split into Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte by a royal decree in 1818. Abra and Benguet were carved out of Ilocos Sur to form independent provinces in 1846. La Union was later formed by merging the southern part of Ilocos Sur and the northeast portion of Pangasinan in 1854. Ilocos Sur is located along the western coast of Northern Luzon. It is bounded by Ilocos Norte on the north, Abra on the northeast, Mt. Province on the east, Benguet on the southeast, La Union on the south and the China Sea on the west. Its area of 2,579.58 square kilometer occupies about 20.11% of the total land area of Region I. The topography of Ilocos Sur is undulating to rolling with elevations ranging from 10 to 1,700 meters above sea level. Ilocos Sur has 34 municipalities which are subdivided into 764 barangays. They are Alilem, Banayoyo, Bantay, Burgos, Cabugao, Candon, Caoayan, Cervantes, Galimuyo, Gregorio del Pilar, Lidlidda, Magsingal, Nagbukel, Narvacan, Quirino, Salcedo, San Emili San Esteban, San Ildefonso, San Juan, San Vicente, Santa, Santiago, Sta. Catalina, Sta Cruz, Sta. Lucia, Sto. Domingo, Sigay, Sinit, Sugpon, Suyo, Tagudin and Vigan.

Ilocos has played significant role in our history and was historically referred to as the "Land of Revolts" (Ilocos Revolt, Diego Silang Revolt, Laog Uprising of 1788, Basi Revolt) and has produced numerous heroes which includes Diego and Gabriela Silang, Abayas and Guinaldas Clan (organized the Candon Katipunan Chapter- Isabelo Abaya proclaimed the Republic of Candon on 3/25/1898), Gen Manuel Tinio (the youngest general during the revolution- two years younger than Del Pilar) and many others.

But one of the highlights of the Philippine-American War is the Battle of Tirad Pass, where the young general, Gregorio Del Pilar shown his gallantry as he laid down his



General Gregorio Del Pilar

life for our country on December 2, 1899. Story of his last moments were best documented by the following websites (It is advised to read these documents prior to a Tirad Pass Hike) :

- <http://www.boondocksnet.com/centennial/sctexts/rogers9701.html>
- [http://www.filipinoheritage.com/history/death\\_at\\_tirad\\_pass.htm](http://www.filipinoheritage.com/history/death_at_tirad_pass.htm)
- <http://www.bibingka.com/phg/ilocos/default.htm>

## ● LEGENDS

According to old stories, long time ago there lived in northern Luzon a big, brave and handsome man named Andog. Because of his attributes, he was well loved and respected by the villagers. But because he was big, he cannot find a suitable woman within the village to be his wife. As he is well-loved, his friends from the the village, upon learning from him of his desire to marry, have volunteered to look for a suitable woman for him. So they traveled far and wide in search of the perfect match for Andog.

They were lucky though, since after reaching a valley called Amianan, they found the suitable woman from one of the caves in the valley. They found the woman bathing in the stream inside the cave. Andogs friends told the woman their intention and the woman, who introduced herself as Ading Luding, and upon learning that they were representing Andog who is also well known in the place agreed to their proposition but only in one condition - for Andog to create for her a hat made of either a fruit or vegetable of any tree, big enough to fit her head.

Andog was sad upon learning the strange request for he does not know of any fruit that big. He consulted the villagers and an old man named Lupong volunteered to help him. But his help is with one condition- that Andog should never curse the sun, rain or wind during his trip to Ading Luding's cave when he already has the fruit hat. He agreed so they went to get the fruit early the next morning. They made a hat out of it which they called catucong. Feeling jubilant, Andog put on the hat, bade the old man goodbye, and started for the mountain where Ading Luding lived. From his heavenly abode, Bathala saw Andog as the latter went on his way to Ading Luding's place. "I want to test that man's sincerity in keeping his promise," Bathala said. So he ordered the sun to send its hot rays on Andog. The sun followed Bathala's order, and its rays burned Andog's skin. Then the young man cursed the sun. Next Bathala ordered the wind to blow and the rain to fall. The wind and the rain followed Bathala's order and soon there were violent storms and heavy rains. Annoyed and forgetting his promise, Andog held his catucong over his head and shouted a curse at the wind and rain. This angered Bathala. In still another to test out how sincere Andog was in keeping his promise, he ordered earthquakes to break the mountainside near the cave where Ading Luding lived. And Andog cursed the earthquakes. Andog was thinking of a way by which he could reach the cave when, all of a sudden the earth shook and broke loose the ground which he stood. At the same moment the mountain crumbled, covering Andog with a big landslide. Miraculously, his catucong was not harmed.

It is said that the tip of that hat which was left uncovered became the narrow pass which connects one end of the mountain to the other. This cursed mountain trail is now known as Tirad Pass.

## ● WHEN AND HOW TO GO

From Cubao take Farinas Bus to Candon Ilocos Sur which would take about 8 hours. From Candon Plaza, take jeepney bound for Gregorio Del Pilar (2 hours). People from Gregorio Del Pilar are



mountains you can climb at Besao like Mt. Camangingel (2000+ MASL) and at Sagada- Mt. Polis, and Mt. Ampacao (both 1,800 MASL).

## ● SUGGESTED ITINERARY

### DAY 1

23:00	ETD for Candon, Ilocos Sur via Partas or Farinas Bus (284 Php, 2002)
-------	--

### DAY 2

07:00	ETA at Candon, Breakfast, take jeepney at Market Place to Gregorio Del Pilar (30 Php, 2002)
10:00	ETA Gregorio Del Pilar (GDP)
10:15	Courtesy Call at GDP Town Hall
11:00	Early Lunch
12:00	Start Trek to Tirad Pass (5-6 Hrs)
15:00	ETA Gregorio Del Pilar Marker (last water source)
17:00	ETA Campsite. Camp site is between two summits. There is an abandoned ranger station where you could stay and bivouac. The place has good sunset view of the coastal towns of Ilocos Sur and sunrise view of the mountain ranges of Mt. Province and the Abra River.
19:00	Dinner, Socials
22:00	Light's Out

### DAY 3

05:30	Wake-up Call, Breakfast
07:00	Start Trek to back to Del Pilar or to Quirino (recommended 4-5 hrs)
09:00	ETA Crossing (rough road). Follow the road to Quirino at your left. Take an early break at water source before the long dry trek to Quirino town proper.
11:30	ETA Abra River (walk along the river bank)
12:00	ETA Quirino Ilocos Sur, Lunch
	OPTION A (to Cervantes then to Baguio)
13:00	Take jeep to Cervantes, Ilocos Sur
15:00	Take Bus back to Manila or Baguio
00:00	Manila
	OPTION B (Sagada Exploration)
13:00	ETD for Patiakan, Quirino. Last Barangay of Quirino, boundary of Ilocos Sur and Mt. Province. 4-5 hrs walk. Must have a guide. Open trail no water source. You can hire a jeepney to Patiakan - 1.5 hrs ride.
14:00	ETA Patiakan. From Patiakan, you can already see the Pine Trees of Besau Mt. Province. Dialect here is already a mixture of Kankanai and Ilokano. Follow the

	downward road until you reach a river.
15:00	ETA Babasig. At the river, ask for the road to Laylayak, Besau or the trail to Agawa both are uphill climb. (There is a road under construction from Patiakan to Laylayak).
18:00	ETA Laylayak Besau. From here you can hire a jeep to Sagada (2 hrs) or spend the night and take the regular trip the following day.
19:30	ETA Besau Town Proper
20:00	ETA Sagada Mt. Province

## DAY 4 - 6 Sagada

### PICTURES

Photos by :

Picture 1	Picture 2
Picture 3	Picture 4
Picture 5	Picture 6

### CHARTS

GPS DATA by Mitz Picardal

Poblacion, Candon	25 MASL	
Poblacion, GDP	334 MASL	N 17.08.45.6 E 120.36.41.6
Tirad Pass Marker	933 MASL	N 17.08.32.4 E 120.37.46.2
Campsite	1129 MASL	N 17.08.43.5 E 120.38.02.4
Tirad Pass	1380 MASL	N 17.08.52.3 E 120.38.36.2
Poblacion Quirino	342 MASL	N 17.08.09.8 E 120.40.35.3
Patiacan Quirino	832 MASL	N 17.06.36.4 E 120.44.40.7
Babasig Patiacan Quirino	647 MASL	N 17.06.52.4 E 120.45.22.8
Boundary of	616 MASL	N 17.07.10.0

Ilocos Sur and Mt. Province		E 120.45.37.2
Laylaya, Besao Mt. Province	1129 MASL	N 17.05.35.8 E 120.47.24.3
Poblacion Besao	1343 MASL	
Sagada		

## ● SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no permit requirements but courtesy calls to the officials of Gregorio Del Pilar and Quirino is advised. Estimated Budget - 1,500 to 2,000 Php per participant. Here is another suggested Itinerary by Mitz Picardal MMS 2000 :

Other route going to Tirad Pass and back..

1. Take bus Manila to Bitalag, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur (Tagudin is the first town of Ilocos Sur from Manila) (5 hrs)
2. Buy the famous Bitalag Bibingka.
3. Take jeep Bitalag to Cervantes, Ilocos Sur (2hrs)
4. Visit the town mayor or any other town official for a free meal
5. Start Trek Cervantes Town to Bessang Pass (you can ride a jeep to Sagada or Baguio from here) (3hrs)
6. Trek Bessang Pass to Tirad Pass passing by Mt. Monserrat (1763m) (7hrs)
7. Trek down Tirad Pass to town of Gen. G. del Pilar, Ilocos Sur (4 hrs)
8. Look for SB Liwaliw for a free meal
9. Take jeep Del Pilar, Ilocos Sur to Candon, Ilocos Sur (2 hrs)
10. Take bus Candon, Ilocos Sur to San Juan, La Union (1 hr)
11. Enjoy Wave Riding and Body Surfing!!
12. Take Bus San Juan, La Union to Manila (4 -1/2 hrs)

## ● CONTACTS

Helpful Websites :

- <http://www.geocities.com/thetropics/shores/4033/tirad.html>
- [www.geocities.com/thetropics/shores/4033/tiradjan02.html](http://www.geocities.com/thetropics/shores/4033/tiradjan02.html)
- <http://www.ofoto.com/l.jsp?m=74576427203&n=7409827>

**Waiver** : Although the author have tried to make the information in this itinerary as accurate as possible; time changes policies, inflation/cost and even the physical condition of places mentioned here thereby we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person who used this itinerary. You may contact the resources listed in the contacts section of this itinerary or via the directories section of this website to make your trip as more accurate.

We appreciate comments and/or corrections for the updating of this itinerary to make it as accurate as possible. We would also welcome your submissions and contributions of other itineraries not listed in this website for other people to learn and enjoy. Credits will be given to the contributor. Contact e-mail : [long2@rocketmail.com](mailto:long2@rocketmail.com)

All rights reserved. No part of this itinerary may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise except brief extracts for the purpose of review, without the written permission of the copyright owner. Since it is a common practice among mountaineering communities to create written itineraries of activities, special permission will be given for the reproduction of this itinerary for such purpose with the condition of indicating the source: MMS and author: Long Henson as well as the mention of the waiver indicated herein.