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Manila Festivals - Fiesta of the Black Nazarene by Lek Boonlert

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If you get the opportunity to stay at a hotel in Manila during the month of January, specifically around January 9th, you will be able to witness a unique Filipino festival known as the Fiesta of the Black Nazarene, or also as the Feast of the Black Nazarene. It is best to book an accommodation in Manila close to the Quiapo Church to witness the event first-hand, because this is where it takes place every year. The Nazarene statue was a dark hardwood statue originally crafted in Mexico in the 18th century, and on its journey back to the church was blackened after a shipboard fire occurred. Witnessing the event while staying at a hotel in Manila is a treat, because it only happens once a year and literally thousands of individuals crowd the streets of the city. Every accommodation in Manila is filled to the brim with locals and foreigners alike, present to catch a glimpse of this image, and hopefully touch it themselves for a blessing.

This statue is placed on a gilded carriage that is then pulled through the streets by the male devotees of the church. They throw towels to people who use them to rub the statue, and everyone remains barefoot. The hope for everyone staying at a hotel in Manila is that touching the statue will provide them with health and cleansing of their sins. It is the largest festival to take place in January, and is absolutely unique to the Philippines.

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