Buying a motorbike

Having your own wheels gives you a lot of freedom to get around in the Philippines. There are plenty of motorbike taxis and tricycles about but it always involves waiting for a full load before the driver departs.

At night it is more difficult to find a rides as well because most of the drivers go back home around supper time.

This is more of an issue in the countryside or provinces as they are called. In Cebu City the jeepneys and taxis run all day and night.

In the town of Moalboal on the west side of Cebu island there are at least 3 good sized motorcycle dealerships.

The **Honda dealer** is just across the road from the fisheries school.

Du Ek Sam, handling several brands, is on the other side and there is a China bike dealer just down the street too.

Originally I had planned to get a **HondaXR 200** which is an on-off road bike, 4 stroke, one cylinder, and s really sharp looking.
I had second thoughts for these 3 reasons:

1) With the suspension they have a very high profile which makes them harder to handle and more difficult for passengers to get on the back.

2) The seat is rather short so it is hard for more than 2 or 3 people to ride comfortably. It sounds petty, but here in the Philippines it is not unusual for 5 people to be on one bike.

I am not sure what the law says but anything goes in the country. In Cebu or Dumaguete city there might be tighter restrictions.

3) There is no kick starter – that means that all starts will require using the battery. I like to get out in the province and prefer to have that kick starter as a back up.

These bikes do not push start easily in muddy conditions or on sand. The tire will just slide instead of turn the engine over.
After some deliberation it seemed that the **Honda 155** might fit the bill.

Moto drivers turn these bikes into habal-habal which are the modified cycles used in the mountains with a very long seat rarely carrying less than 5 people.

A guy in Dumaguete tells me that he has carried as many as 9 people on his.

I’ve never seen that many on a two wheeled bike but it does seem believable. They can seat 2 kids on the gas tank and the rest ride behind the driver sandwiched together like a bunch of pigs screwing which can be the literal translation of habal-habal.

![Honda 155 bikes](image1)

The 200XR was around 108,000 pesos which is hard to beat even in the city.

Du Ek Sam had the **Honda 155** for 69,500 pesos including 2 helmets, a shirt advertising Du Ek Sam, 200 pesos fuel, insurance and temporary registration.

The **Honda Wave** – a nice 100 cc runabout goes for around 57,000 peso.

![Honda Wave](image2)

The manager of the Honda dealership was out for the day so I went across the street to Du Ek Sam – a shop that sells appliances, karaoke machines and other misc merchandise in addition to motorcycles.

The staff was friendly but it was hard to get them to take a break from the karaoke singing.
I decided that rather than fight, join them so we sat around singing karaoke for an hour or so before we got down to business.

It doesn’t pay to get into a hurry here because it isn’t going to change anything except for your blood pressure.

The permanent license plate will take a half a year or so anyway. A temporary one is issued several weeks after purchase.

The permanent drivers license takes quite some time too so buying a bike might not be the best option if you are just planning on spending a couple of months.

Rentals are available in some places but the costs are much higher than in Bali or Thailand.

In Palawan 500 pesos is a standard daily fee for a Honda Wave in marginal condition.

On Siquijor Island the costs are 300 to 500 pesos a day. Once I got one there for 200 pesos a day if I took it for 5 days.
Rental in Dumaguete City on Negros is very reasonable averaging around 200 pesos daily. That is a beautiful island for touring.

XR’s in Angeles City rent for around 600 pesos per day. Be sure to wear a helmet, not only for protection but to avoid fines in that area. The police tend to feed of the foreigners and the rules are the rules so no excuses.

I put 500 k on the bike the past few days and haven’t run into any problems yet. It is really nice to be able to go where you want to when you want to.

Update August 2010 – I now have 60,000 plus k on this bike!

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Look also www.transport.aboutphilippines.ph