

# Ancient methods

When the Spaniards arrived in our islands in the 16th century, they discovered indigenous peoples that were well-organized into independent villages called the *barangay* (which is still the word we use for the smallest unit of our government). The word comes from the [Austronesian](#) word for sailboat, *balangay* or *balanghais*, a prehistoric wooden sailboat used by many of the island peoples of Southeast Asia and [Oceania](#).



In the 1970s, nine of these *balangay* were discovered off the coast of [Butuan City](#) in the province of [Agusan del Norte](#) by archeologists of the [National Museum](#). Only three have been excavated so far. One is still being reconstructed; the older of the other two, dated at 320 CE, is displayed in a museum in Butuan. This one is the third, dated at 1250, and is in the maritime hall of the [Museum of the Filipino People](#). Only a few pieces of the boat survived its centuries-long immersion but the museum reconstructed a large part of the hull so visitors can better appreciate what it looks like.



Last year, a group of Filipino adventurers from the teams that scaled Mt. Everest in 2006 and 2007 decided to recreate a *balangay* using the same wood and construction methods that our ancestors would have used, and sail it using only the navigation methods available to the earliest mariners. The first voyage will be in Philippine waters, the second will be around Southeast Asia, and the third—the most ambitious of all—will be to sail to [Madagascar](#). They are currently in the middle of the ninth leg of their ten-leg Philippine journey. If you're interested in their adventure, you can visit the [Voyage of the Balangay](#) website or follow them on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

Ref.: <http://manila-photos.blogspot.dk/2010/04/ancient-methods.html>

**Look also [www.heritage-transport.aboutphilippines.ph](http://www.heritage-transport.aboutphilippines.ph)**