The Bahay Kubo is the native house of the Philippines and is also considered as its national shelter. Made of indigenous building materials like bamboo and nipa, this pre-Hispanic architecture was constructed to perfectly adapt to the tropical climate of the Philippines and to be easily repaired or rebuilt once damaged by typhoon, flood or earthquake which frequented the country. Its name is said to have originated from the Spanish word, cubo, which means "cube," because of the bahay kubo 's rectangular/cubic shape.

The Architecture

Also known as Nipa Hut, this architecture can still be found along the countryside. It is constructed of indigenous materials that can easily be found in their local surroundings – wood, planks, grass, bamboo and large logs. Normally cubic in shape, this shelter is raised on stilts or posts of one to two meters depending on the area where the said shelter is constructed – it may be on solid ground, on a hillside or mountainside, or in shallow water. Raising the interior from the ground safeguards the shelter's inhabitants from flood, and from snakes and other wild animals.
A typical bahay kubo only has one, large, open, multi-purpose room for dwelling, called bulwagan. It has a cellar, called silong where most household chores are done. This area serves as the area for livestock pens, storage space, workspace and granary. The walls are made of nipa and cogon leaves or sawali or woven bamboo, and there are large windows on all sides, which keep the interior well-ventilated. The windows have tukod or “legs” that hold the swinging shades open during the day, and secure it back in place at night. Another feature of the the bahay kubo is ladder or hagdan which can easily be removed at night or when the owners are out. Likewise, some huts have an open back porch or batalan where household chores are done and where the jars of water are placed.