

Anda

Contributed by Rod Anthony Arriola
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Two years have passed since I first visited Anda with Dr. Toby Panopio and have promised myself I will write about the place for CebuDiver.com. Two years and several visits later, I finally got the time to write about it. We were invited, actually we invited ourselves to Rudy Balbuena's home away from home in Anda. I first heard about Anda through my good buddy Mike Lazaro, who visited the place many times several years before I did. "Anda? Where is that? Is that an island?" was my first question. I still get the same reaction everytime I mention the place. No, the Municipality of Anda is in the Province of Bohol, on the eastern side of the Island of Bohol (9.746°N 124.576°E - go to Google Maps, enter the coordinates in the.. more»

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To get there from Cebu, we brought the van and took the 7PM ferry to Tubigon, Bohol via Lite Shipping. It is about a 3hour trip and cheaper by 50% from the Cebu-Tagbilaran ferry. Rudy's instructions were simple. "Take the left when you get to the main highway from the Tubigon pier. Just take the main road and text me when you get to Candijay." That wouldn't be so hard to follow.

Two hours (probably more) later, we got to Ubay, Bohol. In Ubay, Toby and I saw the most peculiar thing. In the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere in Ubay was a café...Ubay Café, and it was still open and 2 girls were still there waiting for customers. Toby hesitated, but I was sleepy and needed coffee, and it is important to interact with the locals. Besides, I had the wheel. "Do, basig mga ungo na sila!" We'll soon find out. Before Toby can say more, I parked, got out of the van and texted Rudy that we'll be on a 30 minute pit stop. Even Rudy did not know about the café in Ubay. But there it was, and they had coffee. The girls watching the café were very friendly, but it is unusual, not to mention dangerous to be watching over a café in the middle of the night, but they assured us it was safe. They told us what road to take to get to Candijay and then Anda. And after a quick exchange of contact numbers (nah that didn't happen) we were on our way.

Rudy's next instructions were "in Anda, when you see Daguhoy by the chapel, take the next right". Ok. So what does Daguhoy look like? Well, we didn't see Daguhoy that night when we got to Anda, but we saw Rudy's van by the road. We followed his van to his HQ. I was amazed at Rudy's place. Bare necessities is the word, but very comfy. After the usual ghost stories, we prepared our sleeping bags. Toby said I was already snoring barely a minute after I lied down.

The next day, we got up early and went straight for the beach. It was the most beautiful white sand beach I have ever seen. Think Boracay without any people.

We toured the other places in town and saw more beautiful beaches. I hoped the dives were as good as the beach. We also got to see what Daguhoy looked like. Finally, we geared up, rode the Tempest, and were on our way. This was a mini safari. We brought only rice and fresh water on the boat. We will catch our own food. So I prayed. Good thing my prayers were answered.

The dives in Anda were definitely not disappointing. Rudy was right when he told us it is impractical to go deeper than 60 feet. The wall in the 3 dive sites we went to that day was so rich with underwater life. From the boat, we dropped to 30 feet and swam out to the wall which dropped down to 60 feet where it slopes slowly to the deep. Before we got to 60 feet jacks were already playing. A school of tuna passed by. A giant grouper slowly swam back into it's cave, and we were amazed with schools and schools of surgeon fishes and a multitude of parrot fish and other smaller reef fishes.

On our last dive, we went to a site Rudy called the Bumphead Playground. 30 minutes into the dive, we understood why. We dropped to 20 feet and followed Rudy into a small crack just before the wall dropped which opened up to the side of

the wall at about 50 feet or so. We stayed there for several minutes wondering what we were waiting for. Then a small Bumphead Parrotfish passed by, followed by a bigger one, who was followed by 5 more huge car sized ones.

But Anda has more to offer than underwater adventure. There are more activities to do there when not diving. You can go kayaking through mangroves or explore the hills. There is even a cave filled with fresh water that is just a mere 10 minute walk from Dapdap Beach Resort, the place where we stayed in our last 2 visits there, owned and operated by Ms. Grace Lim.

Then there is the usual side trip to sample the local delicacies of Anda. Maruya made of "pao", a rootcrop. Roasted banana, bucayo and when available, squid adobo. Embaw is also abundant in Anda and Sitio Badiang is known for it. Embaw is a clam that thrives in brackish waters that gatherers have to dig for.

There's a lot more to do in Anda, but unfortunately, we usually go there over the weekend, and just for diving. The hills need exploring, and Rudy said, we can do that on our next visit. Next time, we will stay longer. You can't do everything overnight, which is our usual routine everytime we are in Anda. By the way, did I mention regular whale shark sightings there?

Rudy has promised us more adventures, and we always take his word for it.

For inquiries on Anda Adventures, please do drop us a note!