



DESTINATION: MT SEMBRANO

LOCATION:	Rizal-Laguna Province
ELEVATION:	700+ meters above sea level
LEVEL:	Minor Climb, Level II, Moderate
JUMP OFF POINTS:	Pililia and Jalajala Rizal and Pakil, Laguna
AVERAGE DAYS REQUIRED:	2 Days (including travel time from Manila)
MINIMUM DAYS REQUIRED:	1 Day (including travel time from Manila)
IT CREATED BY:	Long Henson
DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS:	Scenic View of Laguna Lake and Talim Island as well as the Southern Tagalog Provinces of Rizal and Laguna
LAST EDITED:	March 2, 2000

• INFORMATION

Mt. Sembrano is one of the climbing destinations that are near Manila. Located along the boundary of Jala-jala Rizal, Pililia Rizal and Pakil Laguna, it is much nearer than Mt. Romelo or Famy and the Tanay hiking destinations, but a bit farther than Mt. Susong Dalaga in Baras Rizal. The mountain summit gives you a view of the Laguna Lake as well as Talim Island and the historic towns of Rizal and Laguna. Below the mountain is the Napocor plant, Pililia that shines bright during the night. Although the place is near Manila, climbing Mt. Sembrano is not that popular to many hikers. The place is also not a national park thereby requiring you to pass by private properties during your trek to the summit. Mt. Sembrano is actually an In-active volcano. Not many knew that such a thing existed in Rizal actually.

Not well known to many who have climbed Sembrano, the other side of the mountain or the Laguna side has hunter trails also going to the summit. This trail is located at Barrio Casinsin, Pakil Laguna. This is different from the Pakil Laguna town itself since this one is located at the other side of the lake since the territory of Pakil spans across the lake. It's a bit interesting since this Barangay is physically separated from Pakil town proper in terms of land territory. It is the place where the fabled "*Bundok ng Susuog Dalaga*" rests. It is actually two huge mounds of cogonal hills resembling the female breast hence its name. But don't be confused since there are lots of "*Bundok ng Susong Dalaga's*" here in the Philippines since local folks are fond of naming identical conical hills as such. Examples include the Bundok ng Susong Dalaga of Baras Rizal, one in Boso-Boso in Antipolo, and

another one in Biak na Bato in San Miguel Bulacan. This one, the "*Sembrano Susuung Dalaga*" is visible when you are in Mt. Romelo, after the first steep assault near the store along the trail, which has a viewpoint overlooking Mt. Sembrano.

Another trail used by locals but doesn't go to the summit is located at Barrio Bagumbong, Jala-jala Rizal. This barrio, like the Casinsin of Pakil is also separated from the Jala-jala town proper itself since it is on the other side of the mountain. But recently, a circumferential road was built to interconnect it to the other side of the mountain. There were proposals before that the barangays located in this part of the mountain be joined and made into one town since they are not connected to their town proper. But it didn't push through. This trail is located at the part of Sembrano where the fabled "Our Lady of Maulawin" was found.

- **LEGENDS**

Sembrano, particularly the Jala-jala side has also been considered as sacred and has some holy sites on it. One of those places is where the icon of Our lady of Maulawin was found. Legends say that a farmer was once in the forest looking for firewood. When he was cutting one tree, he heard a sound of a woman. After he had cut the tree, an image of the Blessed Mother was found imprinted on the trunk. This same icon is now located at the Sta. Cruz Catholic Church in Laguna. Presently a small chapel is standing at that very site in the middle of the forest where the icon was found. You will also notice that there are some tree roots that have been cut along the area by pilgrims in search of a new icon. Another place along the trail is a big boulder called "*simbahan*". Pilgrims usually light candles in this huge boulder. Atop the boulder are small footprint claimed to be imprinted through an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is another "*bakas*" similar to that of Norzagaray, Arayat and Banahaw.

- **WHEN AND HOW TO GO**

For mountaineers, the usual route is the Pililia trail. To go there, ride a jeep at Crossing in EDSA-Shaw Boulevard going to Tanay Rizal. You can actually hire a jeep to take you directly to the jump-off point. At the Tanay public market, catch a ride going to Pililia and ask the jeep to take you to Barangay, Malaya (near the Barangay Hall). From there, you can ask locals for the street going to the jump-off point. There are locals living around the area so you can ask for directions. It's safe to trek Sembrano all year round. There is one major fork after leaving the wide trail coming from the village. Take the right trail.

- **POINTS OF INTEREST**

In going to Sembrano, you will be passing by interesting places in Rizal. In Angono, there are a couple of galleries of known artist like the National Artist, Botong Francisco. It is also home to the oldest man made relic here in the Philippines, the Angono Petroglyphs although Binangonan, Rizal claims it is located on their premises. The rest of the Rizal towns have interesting old churches as well as their share of local delicacies and restaurants.

- **SUGGESTED ITINERARY**

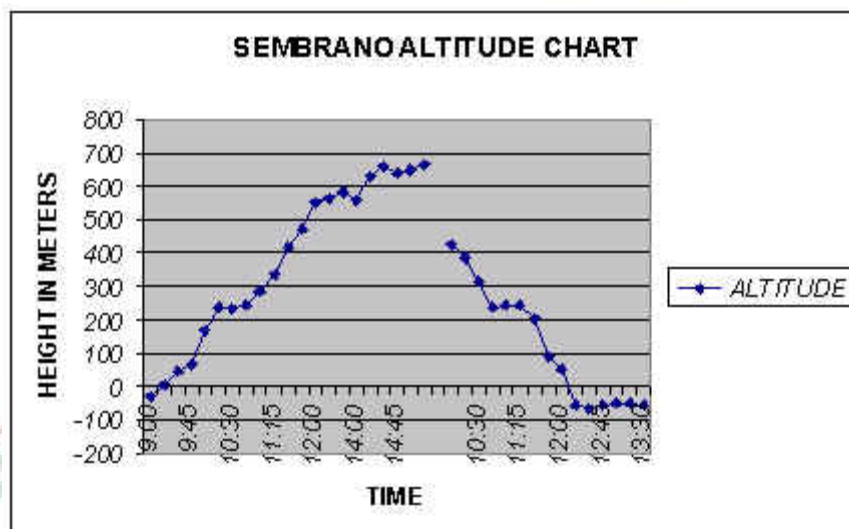
DAY 1

08:30 - Assembly at Shaw Boulevard, Crossing
 09:00 - ETD for Tanay Rizal. You can Hire a Jeepney Straight to the Jump-off Point
 11:00 - ETA Barangay Malaya, Pililia Rizal
 12:00 - Lunch
 12:30 - Start Trek
 14:00 - ETA Manggahan, Water is available 5 minutes down trek to small waterfalls

14:30 - Resume Trek
 16:30 - ETA Summit
 17:00 - Prepare Dinner
 19:00 - Dinner, Socials
 21:00 - Light's Out

DAY 2

06:00 - Wake-up call, Prepare for Breakfast
 07:00 - Breakfast
 08:00 - Exploration, within the Vicinity
 08:30 - Breakcamp, Prepare for Descent
 09:30 - Start Trek Down
 11:30 - Basecamp, Lunch
 12:30 - ETD Barangay Malaya to Manila
 14:30 - ETA Crossing Mandaluyong



- SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CLIMBING**

There is one waterfall along the trail but it is advisable to bring your water requirements than get your water there. No permits are necessary in climbing Sembrano. Summit area is exposed so it's hot during the summer months. Prepare sun-block lotions and other necessary climbing gears for hot weather.

RECENT UPDATES : (As of 7-11, 2003)

Each climber for Sembrano has to register at the Barangay Hall in Malaya. They have this agreement/contract --ii read it through and it looked very legal =) -- and it is indicated that there is a requirement of P20 royalty fee to be paid upon registration. The officer in charge shall issue us an official receipt for the payment made. I read in the agreement that they have the right to go over our backpacks and check for drugs/alcohol/etc (which supposedly aren't allowed) up, but then the official didn't check ours so I guess they trust the climbers to be "responsible mountaineers". ;>

by the way, when we were campsite, a group of hunters came up -- well, they said they were hunting for baboy-ramo. they had dogs with them, and there were rifles slung over their shoulders. we talked a bit, and one of them even introduced himself as a councilor from a barangay (I forgot which). They left us without making any "gulo".

but when another group of climbers came up, they apparently met these same hunters, and one climber was suspicious of them. I don't know what was the basis of his uneasiness..

Again, these hunters did not harm us, but I think we should give fair warning to future climbers. better safe than sorry. those rifles/gun aren't exactly a pretty and reassuring sight.

-joyce g. pacquing

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