

# INDONESIA

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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Indonesia is a diverse country with something for everyone, whether you are planning a relaxing beach getaway, revel in adventure or are in search of a unique cultural experience. At Khiri Travel, we are pleased to provide you with some useful tips and practical information on traveling in this beautiful country.



## FAST FACTS

### OFFICIAL NAME

Republic of Indonesia

### CAPITAL CITY

Jakarta

### AREAS

Land – 1,811,569 Km<sup>2</sup>

Water – 93,000 Km<sup>2</sup>

Total – 1,904,569 Km<sup>2</sup>

### CURRENCY

Indonesia Rupiah (IDR)

### LANGUAGE

Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) and more than 700 regional languages

### POPULATION

265 million

### RELIGION

Muslim 88%, Christian (Protestant and Catholic) 8%, Hindu 2%, Buddhist 1%, Other 1%

### TIME ZONE

GMT +6 / +7 / +8

### INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODE

+62

### ELECTRICITY

220V AC 50 Hz

### DRIVING

Left hand side

## VISA

Inhabitants of 169 countries will receive a 'free-visa' when arriving in Indonesia. This visa is valid for 30 days and CANNOT be extended. Should you wish to stay longer than 30 days please do apply for the 'visa on arrival', which cost \$35 USD and is also valid for 30 days. However this Visa can be extended in Indonesia at an immigration office.

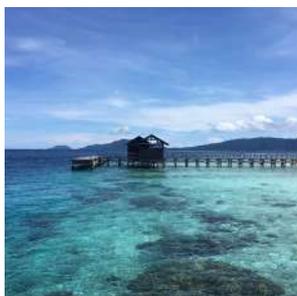
## MONEY

Cash and traveler's checks can be exchanged at the bank, however it is easier to do this at a Money Exchange; in addition, these often provide a better exchange rate than the bank. Always use a Money Exchange that is reliable, and remember to count your money carefully before you leave – there are many tricks to deceive unsuspecting travelers. Although not common, one known scam follows this narrative: the cashier counts out your money and puts it down in front of you; then they let you count it; taking the cash back in their hands, they re-count it and this is when money can be sneakily removed. Never let the cashier touch the money after you have counted it, or be sure to re-count it once given back. When searching for a Money Exchange, look for one with more permanent-style text rates displayed, rather than rates written by hand; generally speaking these are more legitimate, particularly in Bali.

The currency in Indonesia is the Indonesian rupiah (IDR). Although constantly changing, the exchange rate for 1 EUR currently amounts to around 16,000 IDR, and for 1 USD it's 14,000 IDR. Coins come in 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 rupiah. Notes come in denominations of 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000 and 100,000 rupiah. Make sure you carry a good supply of rupiah in small denominations with you (For example, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000 and 20,000). Often people struggle for change if you pay with a 50,000 note or more. Most major towns have ATMs. Remember that exchange rates can fluctuate greatly from month to month, so be sure to check the latest rates before you travel.

## BARGAINING

In small shops and markets it is very common to bargain ('tawar'). It is difficult to indicate how much you have to bargain; it's something you develop a feel for with practice! The best place to start is to think of a price that is reasonable for you. Sometimes it helps leaving the shop; if you are lucky the seller will come after you with a better price. While bargaining the most important thing is to keep smiling!



# HEALTH

Health risks in Indonesia include: cholera, dengue fever, hepatitis, Japanese encephalitis, malaria, rabies and typhoid. We strongly recommend you visit either your personal physician or a travel health clinic 4-8 weeks before departure. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination for certain diseases; this is a discussion to have with a health care professional.

Medical facilities with Western standards are limited in Indonesia depending on the island. Many doctors have been educated abroad but have limited access to modern medicines and limited updated knowledge on medicine.

The aforementioned risks should not be a reason to avoid traveling to Indonesia. Proper planning prior to departure and then taking the necessary precautions during the course of your trip will greatly mitigate health risks. It's about being aware and proactive!



# CLIMATE

## SUMATRA

The best traveling period is in the dry season between May and September. The sun shines 12 hours per day, as Sumatra is situated close to the equator.

## PAPUA

Papua has its wettest months from December until March. January and February have the heaviest rains. Dry season in Papua is from April until November, making this the best time to travel.

## JAVA

The wet season on Java is from October until March, but it is possible to go to Java all year round. During the wet season, there is greater chance of heavier rain in comparison to other times of the year. If you wish to avoid the rain, the best time to travel is from April until October.

## LOMBOK & SUNDA ISLANDS

The best time to travel to Lombok and the Sunda Islands is in the dry period from April/May until October.

January and February are the wettest months on the Sunda Islands, but even during monsoon season it doesn't rain for the entire day.

## BALI

Bali has a similar climate as East Java and has therefore, apart from the mountainous regions, low rainfall during the dry season (April to November). Bali is also an island that you can visit at any time of the year, however during the wet season you can expect more rain.



# CLIMATE

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## SULAWESI

The best time to travel to Sulawesi depends on the area you wish to visit. Sulawesi lies on the separation line between the monsoons; the southern part of the island has the opposite season to the northeast part. Wet season runs from October until March. The temperature on Sulawesi is between 25 and 34 degrees Celsius (77 to 93 degrees Fahrenheit). The sun shines 12 hours per day, because Sulawesi lies on the equator.

In the mountains in the middle of Sulawesi it is possible to have rain during the summer months. The mountains catch the clouds and it often rains in the late afternoon for one or two hours.

The northern part of Sulawesi has its wettest season during the summer months. The coastal areas have oppressive heat for the whole year – only a little sea breeze will cool you down. In the mountains it is more pleasant, however in the evenings it can get very cold.

## KALIMANTAN

Kalimantan has a lot of rainfall in its tropical forests. The center of the mountains is the wettest area and the southern part of the island is the driest. In November and December the south and the west receive the most rain. Rainy season is from October until June, while the dry period is from July until September. In dry season it is still possible to have rain, but only in the late afternoon for around an hour or so. The sun shines 12 hours per day.

## TIPPING

In a country where most people have an income of less than 150 euro per month, tipping for good service is very much appreciated. You can give a porter carrying your bag 7,500 - 10,000 IDR. In a hotel or restaurant you can leave a tip of 5-10%. Guides and drivers also appreciate something extra. A reasonable amount for a driver and/or guide is 100,000-150,000 IDR per day. When visiting a village, local house or temple it is customary to leave a donation.

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Every culture has its unique set of unwritten rules, as does Indonesia. When you visit, try to adapt to the culture as much as possible. Here are some examples of rules visitors should try to obey:

- When greeting someone, a soft handshake is generally the norm. After the handshake, usually the person will touch their hand to their heart as a sign of respect; it's nice to do the same if you remember.
- Slightly bow your head upon greeting a guest or host.
- Avoid touching people's heads.
- When pointing, use more of a generalized motion of the hand, rather than one finger.
- When sitting, keep your feet on the floor rather than cross your legs.
- Expect little personal space, as this is not an important

concept. Being close in conversation is a sign of friendliness.

Avoid using your left hand if possible when touching or passing money or food, or shaking hands, as this hand is considered dirty by many.

Dress conservatively when possible. You will find despite the tropical temperatures, most locals wear long pants and shirts.

Indonesians have a different concept of time and things are often slow or late. Punctuality is rare, so be patient.

It's always better to stay calm and cheery when discussing your frustrations, as people are then more likely to want to help you out. Speak softly, without anger or aggressiveness. Be calm and subtle whenever possible, despite whatever frustration you may be experiencing.

# FOOD & DRINK

When in Indonesia, all water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. Water used for drinking or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilized. Bottled water is available throughout the country; however try to limit the use of plastic bottles where possible as they are an environmental hazard.

Avoid dairy products that are likely to have been made from raw milk.

Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled. Remember this key phrase in eating: boil it, peel it or forget it!

Indonesian food is traditionally eaten with steamed rice using either the fingers or a spoon and fork (chop sticks are sometimes used for Chinese food or noodles). In the countryside, people will all eat in family style; that is, sitting on the floor sharing a few dishes.

Rice (*nasi*) is the staple across the country as it is across most of Asia, and is often eaten three times a day. Noodles (*mie*) are quite popular as well. Given Indonesia is composed of thousands of islands, seafood is found almost everywhere. Because of the Muslim culture, chicken, goat, and beef are the main meats. However, the Hindu people of Bali and Christian people of East Nusa Tenggara have more pork options. Also, vegetarians can find tofu (*tahu*), tempeh, and an assortment of vegetables throughout the country.

## SOME OF INDONESIA'S FAVORITE DISHES

- **Sate** is delicious skewers cooked over coals ranging from chicken, goat, mutton, or rabbit. "Sate Madura" is a popular version served with some additional vegetables.
- **Nasi Goreng** is considered by many to be Indonesia's national dish; *Nasi* means rice and *goreng* means fried. This fried rice is usually cooked with a sweet, thick soy sauce and served with cucumbers and carrots.
- **Gado-Gado** is a great vegetarian option that is mix of boiled long beans, potato, spinach, egg, bean sprouts, tofu, tempeh, and chili. It comes covered in the country's classic peanut sauce. This is an Indonesian style salad.
- **Bakso** is a meatball noodle soup sold mostly from street-vendors' pushcarts. The meatballs are made from chicken, beef, pork, or a mixture of them all. The broth also contains a mix of cabbage, bean sprouts, friend shallots and celery.
- **Ayam Bakar** (grilled chicken) is char-grilled spiced chicken served with rice, tempeh and tofu.
- **Ayam Goreng** (fried chicken) is deep-fried spiced chicken served with rice, tempeh and tofu.
- **Soto Ayam** is a tasty soup consisting of broth, chicken, shallots, rice, onions and other ingredients depending on the region.
- **Nasi Padang** is a very popular dining option where up to a dozen dishes are placed on your table. Feel free to eat whatever looks appealing! Don't feel the need to finish it, as you are only charged based on your consumption.



## DRESSCODE

Indonesia is an Islamic country and therefore dressing accordingly is appreciated. Shirts should cover shoulders and trousers/skirts should cover the knees. Shorts and tops are accepted at the beach. Often locals will go swimming in pants and shirts. Bali is the most liberal place in the country; however, there are other beach communities throughout the country that are familiar with Western tourists and their styles. Please just be respectful and use your best judgment as to what is appropriate dress. At temples you may be asked to cover up or put on a sarong that will be provided.

# SAFETY

Indonesians are generally very nice and helpful to tourists, quick to smile and happy to lend a helping hand. However, in tourist hotspots such as Bali, please be careful when traveling on motorbikes as people have been victimized by bag snatchers who pull people off their bike. At night, it is wise to be with others rather than traveling alone.

As a precaution it is of course always better not to leave money or valuable goods laying around in your hotel room or elsewhere, and instead either carry your money with you or to

store it in the safe in your hotel. Besides the normal precautions, avoid getting involved in any political activities in the country.

There have been reported deaths from drinking local homemade spirit – known as “arak” – in Java, Bali, and Lombok. Poorly made batches can lead to lethal methanol poisoning, so it’s always best to watch your drink being poured and make sure you sight the bottle it comes from.

## READING

Before visiting Indonesia it is good to read some more about the history, culture and politics of the country. Different authors have different point of views, so always keep in mind that any book written about Indonesia generally describes a personal opinion.

For those looking for a book to read on the plane, some recommendations are:

- *The Year of Living Dangerously* by Christopher Koch
- *This Earth of Mankind* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer
- *Asta's Ogen* by Eveline Stael (in Dutch)



## LANGUAGE

Bahasa Indonesia, literally meaning Language of Indonesia, is the national language. It was recognized as the official language in 1945 in Indonesia’s constitution, as the country emerged from control by Japan near the end of WWII. It is spoken throughout the country along with around 700 other languages and dialects! Given the separation of people from island to island, local languages vary greatly, even if islands are only 50 km apart. There may also be several languages spoken within the same island. Since Bahasa Indonesia is relatively new as the national language, only being implemented 70 years ago, keep in mind that some of the older rural population may not be able to speak it.

Travelers generally don’t have too many problems in basic communication, as there is always somebody near who is willing to help (and find somebody who speaks English) or somebody who is eager to meet foreign visitors. And if you can’t find someone who speaks English? Well, it’s surprising how much can be relayed via body language, even when two people don’t share the same language!

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