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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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January

The first part of the month is busy on Bali as a fair bit of Australia arrives for Christmas and New Year holidays. Europeans searching for warmth arrive in large numbers.

Garebeg
 Java's three most powerful festivals are held usually in Yogyakarta at the beginning of the year.

February

It's a dry season in the east. This is a good time to hit dive and snorkel sites in Maluku and Papua, where the waters will be especially clear.

Pasola
 Nusa Tenggara's big first festival, vividly dressed teams of horsemen engage in mock, though sometimes bloody, battles in West Timor.

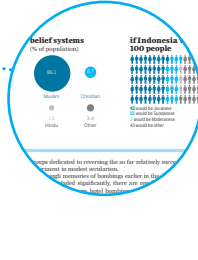
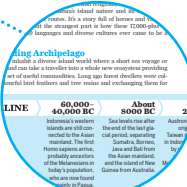
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UNDERSTAND INDONESIA

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you can make sense of what you see

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Adam Skolnick, Iain Stewart, Paul Stiles**

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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Indonesia







OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London, Oakland and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Ryan Ver Berkmoes

Coordinating Author, Bali Ryan Ver Berkmoes first visited Indonesia in 1993. On his visits since, he has criss-crossed the archipelago, trying to make a dent in those 17,000 islands. Recent thrills included finally reaching the amazing Banda Islands after 18 years of trying and finding the perfect flat on Bali. Off-island, Ryan travels the world writing. Read more at ryanverberkmoes.com and on Twitter @ryanvb.



Brett Atkinson

Sumatra After sampling spicy nasi Padang on previous Indonesian journeys from Bali to Flores, finally experiencing the cuisine in its West Sumatran heartland didn't disappoint. Other Sumatran adventures included exploring the remote Mentawai Islands by speedboat, and chilling out in the beautiful Harau Valley. Brett's based in Auckland, New Zealand, and has covered more than 45 countries as a guidebook author and travel and food writer. See www.brett-atkinson.net for what he's been eating recently, and where he's travelling to next.



Celeste Brash

Sulawesi Celeste first visited Indonesia in 1995 after concentrating in Southeast Asian studies at the University of California. Even with the earthquakes, volcanoes and terrible bus rides, the country seduced her and she's since spent many months exploring, from Sumatra to Bali and up through Sulawesi. She currently lives in Portland, Oregon and has contributed to over 40 Lonely Planet titles. Find out more about her at www.celestebrash.com.



Stuart Butler

Sumatra Stuart Butler first hit the shores of Indonesia many years ago at the end of a long trans-Asia surf trip. Not surprisingly it was the highlight of his trip. Today Stuart lives with his wife and son on the beautiful beaches of southwest France. His travels for Lonely Planet and a variety of international surf magazines have taken him across Indonesia and beyond, from the desert beaches of Yemen to the coastal jungles of the Congo. His website is www.stuartbutlerjournalist.com.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

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John Noble

Papua John has been entranced by Indonesia – its multifarious cultures, translucent seas, jungle-fringed sands, lumbering dragons, exhibitionist birds of paradise, above all the fact that every single island is a different world – ever since his first visit during the Suharto era. He has devoted recent trips to remote, restive, untamed Papua, a piece that doesn't really fit the jigsaw, which despite (or because of) its contradictions is probably the most exciting region of all.

Read more about John at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/ewoodrover



Adam Skolnick

Maluku, Nusa Tenggara Adam Skolnick writes about travel, culture, health and politics for Lonely Planet, *Outside*, *Men's Health* and *Travel & Leisure*. He has co-authored 18 Lonely Planet guidebooks to destinations in Europe, the US, Central America and Asia. His 11-week research trip to Nusa Tenggara and Maluku included stops on 37 islands. He hired, hopped or hitched 21 planes, 45 cars, five bemo, 12 buses, 25 motorbikes, 32 boats, six horse carts, one bicycle and one becak.

You can read more of his work at www.adamskolnick.com or find him on Twitter @adamskolnick.



Iain Stewart

Java Iain's been travelling in Indonesia since 1992, journeying between West Sumatra and East Nusa Tenggara in search of wildlife in national parks and the highlife in Jakarta and Bali. He's covered Indonesia seven times for various Lonely Planet guides. He authors books about Vietnam, Central America and Spain and writes for newspapers including the *Independent*, *Guardian*, *Telegraph* and *Times*. He's a keen scuba diver, free diver, hiker and, when circumstances allow,

a weekend warrior (or is that hacker?) on the tennis court of Brighton, UK. Highlights of Iain's trip across Java were hanging out with the Cianjur crew, hiking in Baluran, motorbiking around Batu Karas, munching in Semarang and hooking up with co-author Adam in Gili T.



Paul Stiles

Kalimantan Paul specialises in islands, ecotourism, and adventure travel for Lonely Planet, so Kalimantan was a natural. For this book he completed the entire Cross-Borneo Trek, crossing the Muller Range in five days. His only regret is that he did not have his camera when a rare clouded leopard swam right in front of his boat. Guide: 'I don't know, looks like a wild cat...Oh my god, *macan dahan!*'

Read more about Paul at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/paulwstiles

itineraries

Whether you've got 6 days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for a fantastic Indonesian trip. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



14 to 21 Days

Bali & Lombok

Start in Bali, where you can acclimatise in the resorts, clubs and shops of **Seminyak**. Dose up on sun at the beach, then go exploring the perfect little beaches and surf breaks down the **Bukit Peninsula**.

Head north to immerse yourself in the 'other' Bali – the culture, temples and rich history of **Ubud**. Visit the Unesco-nominated **Gunung Kawi**, an ancient site worthy of Indiana Jones, and the nearby craft villages. Take a cooking course or learn batik, wood-carving or silversmithing. Once you've exhausted your yen for culture, escape to the misty mountains for treks to waterfalls amid coffee plantations in and around **Munduk**.

Next on the agenda is Lombok. Take a ferry from Bali's beachy port town of **Padangbai** to **Lembar**, Lombok's launching pad. Potter through the rice fields and Hindu temples around **Mataram**, then head to **Senggigi** for indulgent resorts, fine beaches and uninterrupted R&R.

From Senggigi take a ferry to the deservedly celebrated **Gili Islands**, where seamless beaches, translucent water and vivid reefs beg for snorkel-clad swimmers. Or if you're short on time, just catch a fast boat direct to the Gilis from Bali.



14 to 30 Days Java Jaunt

Start your journey in **Jakarta** and wrap your senses around the dizzying smells, sounds, sights and people of Indonesia's teeming capital. Linger long enough to binge on Bintang beer and shopping, then head to **Batu Karas** for classic laid-back beach vibes or go for the resorts of nearby **Pangandaran**.

After you've worshipped the sun for a week or so, catch the train to **Yogyakarta**, Java's cultural capital. Dabble in batik, amble through the *kraton* (walled city palace) and part with your rupiah at the vibrant markets. A day trip to majestic **Borobudur** is a must. The longer you look, truly the more you'll see.

From Yogyakarta make your way to the laid-back city of **Solo**, via the enigmatic temples of **Prambanan**. Head into the clouds at awesome **Bromo-Tengger-Semeru National Park**, spending a night on the lip of Tengger crater. From here head to the south-east coast and **Meru Betiri National Park**. You just might see the amazing giant squirrel. Finally follow the coast to **Alas Purwo National Park** where there's leopards and amazing surfing at G-Land.

30 to 60 Days Sumatra

Sumatra is quite huge and you'll have to hustle to fully appreciate it within visa constraints. Start your explorations in **Medan**, which has fab transport connections. Then get right out of town and head to **Bukit Lawang** where you can see the island's most famous residents, the orangutans. It's a short jaunt from here to **Berastagi**, a laid-back hill town set amidst volcanoes.

Travel north to the very tip of Sumatra, but don't stop, definitely don't stop. Sharks, turtles and other large sea creatures live amidst splendid coral at **Pulau Weh Marine National Park** off the coast. Head back south and travel off the west coast to **Banyak Islands**, a surfing and beach paradise. Back ashore, follow the Trans-Sumatra Highway south to **Bukittinggi**, a good base for exploring the cultures and beauty of the **Harau Valley** and **Danau Maninjau**.

There's more surf, sand and underwater joy off the coast in the **Mentawai Islands**. Finally head far south to **Bukit Barisan Selatan** and **Way Kambas National Parks**. The former has a few rhinos and tigers in lowland forests while the latter has elephants. From here it's easy to catch the Java ferry.



30 Days Papua

Papua is the launching pad for this route, which can be done in 30 days with judicious use of flights. Start at the transport hub of **Jayapura**. But you'll only be there long enough to charter a boat to visit the magnificent **Danau Sentani**, a 96.5-sq-km lake with 19 islands perfect for inland island-hopping.

Back on dry land, take to the air to get to the beautiful **Baliem Valley**, rich in culture and trek-worthy mountain scenery. The valley is home to the Dani people, an ethnic group who have eschewed most modern things and live a traditional life. Enjoy mountain views from a thatched hut.

Fly to **Nabire** and spot whale sharks off the coast – you can even swim with them. Now fly up for some idle island time on **Pulau Biak**. Next it's a flight to **Sorong**, a base for trips out to the **Raja Ampat Islands** – a paradise for divers and snorkellers with Indonesia's most abundant and varied marine life. It's also good for birdwatchers and sublime tropical-island scenery.

30 to 60 Days Nusa Tenggara & Maluku

Head east from **Lombok**. Admire the beautiful coastline along **Sumbawa** and look for hidden corners. Make your way to **Flores**, a rugged volcanic island with fishing villages, thriving culture and dramatic terrain. Stop off for some communing with dragons at **Komodo** on the way. Note that you can also do Lombok to Flores by liveaboard boat.

Now take ferries south to isolated and timeless **Sumba**, where some superb beaches are just starting to attract visitors. Ponder this at beautiful beaches around Waikabubak, such as Pantai Nihiwatu. After indulging in sun and isolation, fly to **Kupang** in West Timor. Visit villages in the surrounding areas, then jump over to **Rote** for relaxed coastal vibes.

Fly from Kupang to **Kota Ambon** on Maluku's Pulau Ambon. Pause only briefly, then take a ferry (often frustrating) or plane to the crystalline seas, multicoloured reefs and empty beaches of the historic **Banda Islands**. Make your way back to Ambon and fly to **Ternate**, which is as pretty a tropical island paradise as you'll find. Finally make the jaunt east to the **Kei Islands**, for one perfect beach after another.



30 Days

Indonesia's Island Heart

Start on **Flores** and take a dragon-spotting hike on **Komodo**. Enjoy time in the agreeable port town of **Labuanbajo** and head off-shore for some diving. From here, fly to Makassar on Sulawesi – this may require connecting someplace.

In **Makassar**, pause amid the pandemic for excellent seafood. But don't overdo it, as you want to be fully alive for the elaborate funeral ceremonies in **Tana Toraja**, an eight-hour bus trip from Makassar. From here, another long bus ride (13 hours) takes you to the transport hub of **Poso**. Break your journey at the tidy lakeside town of **Tentena**. A five-hour bus ride from Poso gets you to **Ampana** where you take a ferry to your reward: the amazing, beautiful and beguiling **Togean Islands**. Spend your days island- and hammock-hopping between iconic beaches.

Tearing yourself away, take a boat to **Gorontalo**, then bus it to **Manado** and take a boat to laid-back **Pulau Bunaken**, where you can finish out the time on your visa.

30 to 60 days

Kalimantan

Unassuming **Pangkalan Bun** is the entry point to this excursion – it's the launching pad for trips into glorious **Tanjung Puting National Park**, one of Indonesia's best orangutan haunts. Scan the canopy for their amber bodies from the top of a houseboat as it ambles down the beautiful Sungai Kumai.

Rejoin reality in colourful **Banjarmasin**. Dabble in Kalimantan's most beguiling city – brave a 5am call for the animated floating markets, then cruise the canals and meet the locals at dusk. Begin another classic river adventure by navigating up the Sungai Kahayan to **Palangka Raya**, a hub for yet more orangutan watching. Your boat choices range from the simple to the luxe.

From Banjarmasin, travel overland to **Samarinda** and make an expedition along **Sungai Mahakam**. Several days upstream will land you in the river's western reaches, which are peppered with semitransitional Dayak villages and preserved forests. Travel back to the coast and head north to the offshore underwater wonders of **Pulau Derawan**. This primitive teardrop-shaped island offers fabulous diving and snorkelling.

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