

# welcome to Indonesia



## Rich Diversity

The world's fourth most populous country – 245 million and counting – is a sultry kaleidoscope that runs along the equator for 5000km. It may well be the last great adventure on earth. From the western tip of Sumatra to the eastern edge of Papua, this nation defies homogenisation. It is a land of so many cultures, peoples, animals, customs, plants, features, artworks and foods that it is like 100 (or is it 200?) countries melded into one. And we're talking differences that aren't just about an accent or a preference for goat over pork; we are talking about people who are as radically different from each other as if they came from different continents. No man may be

an island but here every island is a unique blend of the men, women and children who live upon it. Over time deep and rich cultures have evolved, from the mysteries of the spiritual Balinese to the utterly non-Western belief system of the Asmat people of Papua.

## Beaches & Volcanoes

Venturing through the islands of Indonesia you'll see a land as diverse and unusual as those living upon it. Look at Sulawesi on a map and you'll save yourself the cost of a Rorschach test. Or view Sumatra from the air and be humbled by a legion of nearly 100 volcanoes marching off into the distance, several capable of blowing at



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*Indonesia's numbers astound: 17,000 islands (or is it 20,000?), of which 8000 are inhabited (or is it 11,000?), 300 languages spoken (or is it 400?). Yet it's all one country with myriad adventures.*

(left) Gunung Agung as seen from Nusa Lembongan (p241), Bali  
(below) Surfer with longboard, Java



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any time. Dramatic sights are the norm. There's the sublime: an orangutan lounging in a tree. The artful: a Balinese dancer executing precise moves that would make a robot seem loose-limbed. The idyllic: a deserted stretch of blinding white sand on Sumbawa set off by azure water and virescent jungle hills. The astonishing: the mobs in a cool and glitzy Jakarta mall on a Sunday. The humbling: a woman bent double with a load of firewood on Sumatra. The solemn: the quiet magnificence of Borobudur.

## Great Adventure

This ever-intriguing, ever-intoxicating land holds some of the last great adventures on

earth. Sitting in the open door of a train whizzing across Java, idling away time on a ferry bound for Kalimantan, hanging on to the back of a scooter on Flores or simply trekking through wilderness you're sure no one has seen before – you'll enjoy endless exploration of the infinite diversity of Indonesia's 17,000 islands.