This 6th edition of Lonely Planet’s *Indonesian phrasebook* is based on the previous edition by the Lonely Planet Language Products Team and translator Laszlo Wagner, who provided the translations and pronunciation guides as well as cultural advice. Laszlo left a life of teaching English to spend a decade or so in much of Asia, where he became captivated especially by the diversity and hospitality of Indonesia and the fascinating wealth of native languages spoken in the region.

Laszlo would like to thank all those involved in the creation of this book, especially Ukirsari Manggalani Brodjokaloso; Mark, Kemal and Sarah for assistance with some *bahasa daerah*; and Said Samad, who not only taught him more Indonesian than anyone else but also patiently introduced him to his wonderfully difficult native Galelarese.

Thanks also to the Lonely Planet Language Products crew who produced the 5th edition of the Indonesian phrasebook on which this one is based:

Ben Handicott, Yukiyoshi Kamimura, Jodie Martire, Annelies Mertens, Wayne Murphy, Jacqui Saunders, Branislava Vladislav-ljevic, and last but not least, Kusnandar for additional language and cultural advice.
make the most of this phrasebook ...

Anyone can speak another language! It’s all about confidence. Don’t worry if you can’t remember your school language lessons or if you’ve never learnt a language before. Even if you learn the very basics (on the inside covers of this book), your travel experience will be the better for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort.

finding things in this book

For easy navigation, this book is in sections. The Basics chapters are the ones you’ll thumb through time and again. The Practical section covers basic travel situations like catching transport and finding a bed. The Social section gives you conversational phrases, pick-up lines, the ability to express opinions – so you can get to know people. Food has a section all of its own: gourmets and vegetarians are covered and local dishes feature. Safe Travel equips you with health and police phrases, just in case. Remember the colours of each section and you’ll find everything easily; or use the comprehensive Index. Otherwise, check the two-way traveller’s Dictionary for the word you need.

being understood

Throughout this book you’ll see coloured phrases on each page. They’re phonetic guides to help you pronounce the language. You don’t even need to look at the language itself, but you’ll get used to the way we’ve represented particular sounds. The pronunciation chapter in Basics will explain more, but you can feel confident that if you read the coloured phrase slowly, you’ll be understood.

communication tips

Body language, ways of doing things, sense of humour – all have a role to play in every culture. ‘Local talk’ boxes show you common ways of saying things, or everyday language to drop into conversation. ‘Listen for …’ boxes supply the phrases you may hear. They start with the language (so local people can point out what they want to say to you) and then lead in to the pronunciation guide and the English translation.
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ABOUT INDONESIAN

official language
Indonesian, or Bahasa Indonesia as it’s known to the locals, is the official language of the Republic of Indonesia. It’s used in administration, education, business and the media, although less than 10 per cent of the population claim it as their mother tongue. For the majority of speakers it’s actually the second language, but as such it represents a uniting force for the hundreds of ethnic groups scattered across the world’s largest archipelago.

Indonesian, and its closest relative Malay, both developed from Old Malay, an Austronesian language spoken in the kingdom of Srivijaya on the island of Sumatra. The earliest written records of this Buddhist kingdom date from the 7th century AD. Over time Malay became the principal language of trade in the archipelago, a lingua franca for traders from China, India and Arab nations. The Arab traders also brought Islam to the archipelago, and Malay was the language which disseminated it throughout the islands. Alongside Bazaar Malay, the language spoken by common Indonesians, a variety called Classical Malay held sway as the court language in the Muslim sultanate of Malacca and was prized as the language of literature.

The Dutch and British colonisers, the most successful of the European traders who arrived in the 16th century, consolidated the influence of Malay by using it to
communicate with indigenous populations. These contacts, together with the distinctions that emerged during the evolution of the language, ultimately resulted in the development of two separate modern forms – Indonesian (influenced by Dutch) and Malay (which borrowed more from English).

At the start of the 20th century, a modified version of Persio-Arabic script (in use since the 14th century) was replaced by the Latin alphabet under European influence. The term Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) was first introduced in 1928 by the nationalist movement which aimed for the language’s official recognition. Finally, with the Declaration of Independence in 1942, Indonesian was proclaimed the country’s official language.

In addition to the vocabulary Indonesian adopted from its foreign interactions – such as istana (Sanskrit for ‘palace’), hakim (Arabic for ‘judge’), meja (Portuguese for ‘table’), mie (Chinese for ‘noodle’), kantor (Dutch for ‘office’) and otomatis (English for ‘automatic’) – it continues to be influenced by Indonesia’s hundreds of languages known as bahasa daerah (local languages). For more information, see local languages on page 45.

Indonesian is usually described as an easy language to learn, thanks to its phonetic spelling, simple pronunciation and the fact that verbs don’t change for tense and nouns don’t change for singular or plural. It’s also often said that it takes a lifetime to master, as you’ll probably understand when you get into its plethora of affixes and infinite exceptions to rules.

As a starter, though, this book gives you the practical phrases you need to get by, as well as the fun social phrases that lead to a better understanding of Indonesia and its people. The contacts you make through speaking Indonesian will make your travel experience unique. Local knowledge, new relationships and a sense of satisfaction are on the tip of your tongue, so don’t just stand there, say something!