



Indonesia

62 / POP 251 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Beaches

- ➔ Kuta Beach, Lombok (p227)
- ➔ Gili Air (p231)
- ➔ Komodo National Park (p238)
- ➔ Pulau Ai (p291)
- ➔ Raja Ampat, Papua (p296)

Best Places for Cultural Connections

- ➔ National Museum (p157)
- ➔ Dance, Ubud (p214)
- ➔ Funeral rites, Ubud (p243)
- ➔ Banda Islands (p290)
- ➔ Tribal culture, Papua (p291)

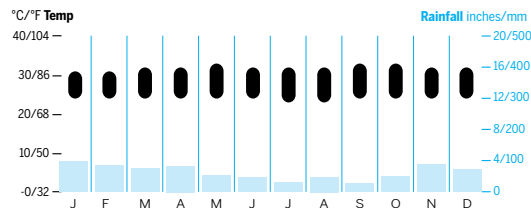
Why Go?

Indonesia defines adventure: the only limitation is how many of its 17,000 islands you can reach before your visa expires. Following the equator, Indonesia stretches between Malaysia and Australia in one long intoxicating sweep. The nation's natural diversity is staggering, alluring and inspiring, from the snow-capped peaks in Papua, sandalwood forests in Sumba, dense jungle in Borneo and impossibly green rice paddies in Bali and Java. Indonesian reefs are a diver's fantasy while the surf breaks above are the best anywhere.

But even as the diversity on land and sea run like a traveler's fantasy playlist, it's the mash-up of people and cultures that's the most appealing. Bali justifiably leads off, but there are also Papua's stone-age folk, the many cultures of Flores, the artisans of Java, mall-rats of Jakarta and much more. Whether it's a dreamy remote beach, an orang-utan encounter or a Bali all-nighter, Indonesia scores.

When to Go

Jakarta



Sep–Mar Wet season; starts later in the southeast. Rain everywhere in January & February.

Apr–Jun Dry days & highs that aren't withering. Hill towns such as Bali's Ubud can be chilly at night.

Aug High season. Prices peak on Bali & the Gilis; book ahead. Remote spots may also fill up.

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ **Currency** Rupiah (Rp); 100,000Rp notes can be hard to break
- ➔ **Language** Bahasa Indonesia; English in tourist areas
- ➔ **Money** ATMs in major centres; carry rupiah for remote islands
- ➔ **Visas** Complicated!
- ➔ **Mobile phones** SIMs (around 30,000Rp) sold everywhere; cheap call/text rates

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Area** 1.92 million sq km
- ➔ **Capital** Jakarta
- ➔ **Emergency** Ask the nearest local for advice

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	10,500Rp
Euro Zone	€1	15,955Rp
Malaysia	RM1	3530Rp
Singapore	S\$1	9180Rp
UK	£1	19,355Rp
USA	US\$1	11,620Rp

Set Your Budget

- ➔ **Budget room** 150,000Rp
- ➔ **Meal** 30,000Rp
- ➔ **Beer** 15,000Rp
- ➔ **Two-tank dive** US\$80
- ➔ **Long-distance bus** 100,000Rp

Entering the Country

Fly into Jakarta or Bali; flights to Sulawesi, Lombok etc also available. Ferries to Sumatra from Malaysia and Singapore are popular.

Don't Miss

With so many islands, it would be a shame not to get a sense of this vast archipelago by limiting your visit to only one or two; rather, see as many as possible. Ferries – never luxurious, often a bit squalid – provide myriad links and truly adventurous island-hopping. Shorten distances with flights on any of the many discount airlines and connect overland dots with buses bombing down the middle of the road at breakneck speeds.

ITINERARIES

One Week

This is a tough one, but Bali is the obvious choice. Spend a couple of days in the south, possibly partying in Seminyak and/or surfing and chilling on the Bukit Peninsula. Head up to Ubud for rice-field walks and intoxicating culture. Catch a fast boat to/from the nearby Gili Islands for a heaving travellers' scene.

One Month

Include your week on Bali and the Gilis, but start on Java and cross through the cultural city of Yogyakarta and the Unesco treasure of Borobudur. From Lombok catch ferries and buses across Sumbawa to Flores with stops at beaches and dragon-filled Komodo. Optionally finish your time following the spine of Sulawesi or head further east for Maluku's idyllic Banda Islands or track down orang-utans on Kalimantan or Sumatra.

Essential Outdoor Activities

- ➔ **Diving & Snorkelling** Diving highlights include western Flores and Komodo, the Gili Islands, Pulau Menjangan in Bali, Pulau Bunaken and the Togean Islands in Sulawesi, Pulau Weh in Sumatra, the Banda Islands in Maluku and the incredible Raja Ampat Islands in Papua.
- ➔ **Spas & Treatments** Bali leads the way, with a multitude of salons and spas in all the main travellers' centres.
- ➔ **Surfing** All the islands on the southern side of the Indonesian archipelago – from Sumatra to Timor – get reliable, often exceptional, and sometimes downright frightening surf. Many start at the legendary breaks of Bali's Bukit Peninsula, such as Ulu Watu.
- ➔ **Trekking** In Java, organised trekking centres on some spectacular volcano hikes such as Gunung Merapi. There's more variety in Bali, the location of the wonderful Gunung Batur region and the hills around Munduk, which offer walks amid cool hillside forests, spice plantations and waterfalls. Gunung Rinjani on Lombok is a dramatic and rewarding trek. On Sumatra, try the jungles of Bukit Lawag. The Baliem Valley in Papua is popular and Tana Toraja has fabulous trekking opportunities through Sulawesi's spectacular traditional villages.