



Timor-Leste

📍 670 / POP 1.17 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Colonial Relics

- ➔ Pousada de Maubisse (p802)
- ➔ Pousada de Baucau (p800)
- ➔ Maubara Fort (p801)
- ➔ Balibo Fort (p798)

Best Places for Cultural Connections

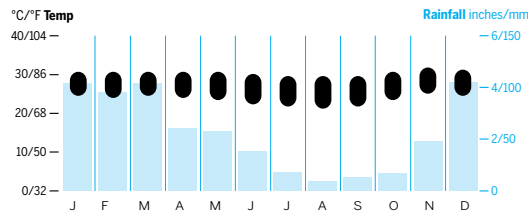
- ➔ Australia Flag House (p801)
- ➔ Resistance Museum (p795)
- ➔ Santa Cruz Cemetery (p795)
- ➔ Chega! Exhibition (p794)

Why Go?

With mountains to climb and untouched reefs to dive, Asia's newest country, Timor-Leste, is a winner. It's home to a youthful population and a diverse international presence that adds just the right amount of spice. Its capital, Dili, has all the bright lights, but venture out for wild cultural experiences. Stay in a grand Portuguese *pousada* (traditional Portuguese lodging) on a misty hilltop, or at a quiet island ecolodge. Get rowdy dancing the night away at a Timorese wedding, journey down roads alongside herds of buffalo, then wind up through rainforests dotted with coffee plants. Keep an eye out for whales as you grip the cliffs along the north-coast road. Photogenic white-sand beaches with aqua waters tempt swimmers, and for those who want to delve deeper, Dili-based dive companies have spent the past decade discovering world-class dive sites. Trailblaze your way through this amazing country; it's adventure with a smile.

When to Go

Dili



May–Aug Dry season – there's little rainfall and good weather – though Dili gets a little dusty.

Sep–Oct As the heat builds up it's whale-watching season in Timor.

Nov–Mar Heavy rain makes the landscape lush but some roads are impassable in the districts.

DON'T MISS

Even if you're not a scuba diver, getting under the water in Timor-Leste is a must. Grab a snorkel and ask around for the best spot for **snorkelling**. You won't believe your eyes.

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Area** 15,007 sq km
- ➔ **Capital** Dili
- ➔ **Emergency** police ☎121, ☎333 1283, ambulance ☎110, fire ☎115, ☎333 1031

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	US\$0.90
Euro Zone	€1	US\$1.37
Indonesia	10,000Rp	US\$0.86
Singapore	S\$1	US\$0.79
UK	UK£1	US\$1.66

Set Your Budget

- ➔ **Dorm bed** US\$15–20
- ➔ **Local restaurant meal** US\$3–\$10
- ➔ **Snorkelling** US\$10

Entering the Country

- ➔ **Nicolau Lobato International Airport** Taxi to centre US\$10, airport transfer \$10 (five minutes). *Microlet* (local bus) from main road US\$0.25.
- ➔ **Dili Seaport** In central Dili, taxis around the city US\$2.

At a Glance

- ➔ **Currency** US dollars. Anything under US\$1 can be paid for in East Timorese Centavos (cv).
- ➔ **Language** Tetun and Portuguese (official languages), Bahasa Indonesian, other local languages.
- ➔ **Money** International ATMs in Dili only. Expensive hotels take credit cards.
- ➔ **Visas** Visa on arrival at Dili airport or seaport; US\$30 for 30 days. Most nationalities need a visa in advance for land border arrivals.
- ➔ **Mobile Phones** Good coverage throughout major population centres. Timor Telecom, Telkomsel and Digicel SIM cards can be used in unlocked phones.

ITINERARIES

One Week

From Dili it's off to the eastern end of the island, stopping along the spectacular coast before overnighting in Baucau. Head to Ossu and trek to Mundo Perdido (The Lost World) before spending the night by a surging river at Hotel Wailakurini. Next, to Com for lunch then onto Tutuala, from where you can reach the sacred Jaco Island the next day for magnificent snorkelling. Return to Dili to explore museums and markets and cap off your trip by heading out to Atauro Island for a night.

One Month

As above, then head west to Liquiçá for luxury camping at Caimeo Beach. Head to the Indonesian border then turn inland to reach Balibo for a slice of history. Stay in Maliana and visit the enchanting Marobo hot springs. The next day head south via Bobonaro to Suai, with its pretty villages and beach, then turn east and head back into the mountains via either Ainaro or Same to Hatubuilico to climb Mr Ramelau. Next stop is Maubisse with its old Portuguese *pousada*, then back to Dili.

Essential Outdoor Activities

- ➔ **Diving & snorkelling** Visit the sacred Jaco Island to snorkel and swim in turquoise waters, or trek through Atauro Island's remote villages to Adara for magical snorkelling.
- ➔ **Trekking, Mt Ramelau** Watch the sunrise from Timor-Leste's highest peak; on a clear day you can see both coasts.