



East of Dili

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- » Pousada de Baucau (p61)
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- » Lakumorre Guesthouse (p73)
- » Com Beach Resort (p68)

Why Go?

You can get lost for a week or more exploring the lands and seas east of Dili. A two-hour drive over good roads brings you to Baucau, a charming old colonial town that is the nation's second city. From here you can head deep into Timor-Leste's interior. These rugged hills cleaved with thundering streams is where Timor-Leste's independence fighters holed up during the Indonesian occupation. To really get a taste of the area, trek up Mt Matebian and the *Jurassic Park*-like Mundo Perdido.

The beaches here are the finest in Timor-Leste and, many would say, Southeast Asia. Of course you'll have to decide for yourself as you'll often be the only person on a kilometre of dreamy white sand. Find paradise at Osolata, near Baucau, or at the eastern tip of Timor on Tutuala Beach and the adjacent Jaco Island.

When to Go

The best time to head east of Dili is in the dry season, from May to November. In the wet season the weather is less variable on the north coast compared with the south. Getting from Dili to Baucau is easy in either season on a good, sealed road. Heading south from Baucau can be problematic in the wet season. The most affected, and often impassable, roads in the wet are those that hug the south coast.

Dili to Baucau

A good sealed road runs east of Dili along the coast to Baucau and beyond. Some twisting stretches climb high above the sea, but for much of the distance the road either winds right by the coast or shoots along dead straight on stretches of flat coastal plain. In the Indonesian era the occasional army trucks that hurtled along at great speed were known by the local people as the *tidak apa apa* ('no problem'), because that was the army attitude if a pedestrian was hit. These days it's wise not to do too much hurtling because of the nasty speed humps around the villages, where a 45km/h speed limit applies. The speed humps are rarely marked, and in a regular car you're likely to bottom out in a shower of sparks.

There are two routes out of Dili. The coast road climbs up above Areia Branca and the Christ Statue at Cape Fatucama before dip-

ping down to sea level again. The alternative departure route is along Rua Quinze de Outubro. This route then climbs steeply over the hills that hem Dili in to the sea, before descending to meet the other route 13km east of the city. Most people use the quicker route above Areia Branca.

Metinaro

The road runs fairly level at first, passing through tiny Metinaro, 23km from Dili. Just past, look for the oft-photographed iconic isthmus, which joins a bulbous rocky outcrop in the ocean to the land via a spine of stone that has beaches on either side. The mangrove forests that extend from Dili fade out around this point and there are several fine beaches and popular diving sites along this stretch. One of the better-known beaches is **Dollar Beach**, 6km beyond Metinaro. Around independence the local villagers



East of Dili Highlights

- 1** Immerse yourself in absolute paradise at **Tutuala Beach** (p72) and **Jaco Island** (p73)
- 2** Explore the 'Lost World' of **Mundo Perdido** (p65), Timor-Leste's version of *Jurassic Park*
- 3** Trek up the former resistance hideout of **Mt Matebian** (p67)
- 4** Get lost in **Baucau's Old Town** (p61) before taking a dip at **Osolata Beach** (p63)
- 5** Stay a while in **Loi Hunu** (p64) exploring caves and taking cooking lessons
- 6** Snorkel, swim and relax at the beach town of **Com** (p68)
- 7** See traditional Fataluku houses around **Desa Rasa** (p68)
- 8** Take in some colonial architecture, reminders of WWII and hot springs around **Veniale** (p64)
- 9** Visit one of Timor-Leste's prettiest towns, **Laleia** (p60)