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THE CROCODILE MYTH

One day, a boy came across a baby crocodile struggling to make his way from the lagoon to the sea. As he was very weak, the boy took pity on him and carried him in his arms to the sea.

The crocodile was very grateful and promised to remember the boy's kindness. He told the boy that should he ever want to travel, he should come to the sea and call, and the crocodile would help him.

After a while, the boy remembered the crocodile's promise, and went to the edge of the sea and called out to the crocodile three times. When the crocodile appeared, they were both very happy to see one another. The crocodile told the boy to sit on his back, and over the years he carried the boy on many, many journeys.

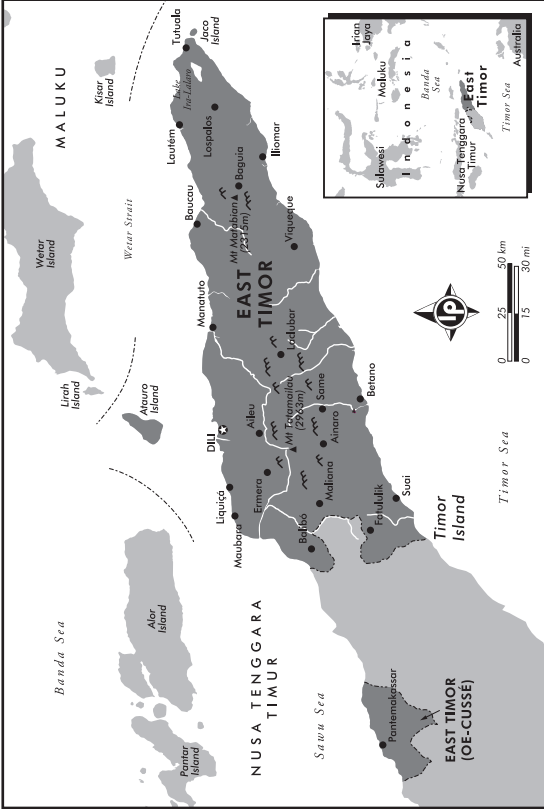
But, although the crocodile and the boy were friends, the crocodile was still a crocodile, and felt an irresistible urge to eat the boy. However, this bothered him, and he decided to ask the other animals for advice. He asked the whale, the tiger, the buffalo and many other animals, who all said, 'The boy was kind to you, you can't eat him'. Finally, he went to see the wise monkey. After hearing the story, the monkey swore at the crocodile and then vanished.

The crocodile felt ashamed, and decided not to eat the boy. Instead, he took the boy on his back and together they travelled until the crocodile grew very old. The crocodile felt he would never be able to repay the boy's kindness, and said to the boy, 'Soon I'm going to die, and will form a land for you and all your descendants'.

The crocodile then became the island of Timor, which still has the shape of the crocodile. The boy had many descendants, who inherited his qualities of kindness, friendliness and a sense of justice. Today, the people of Timor call the crocodile 'grandfather', and whenever they cross a river, always call out, 'Crocodile, I'm your grandchild – don't eat me!'



EAST TIMOR



ABOUT TETUN > introduction

Welcome to East Timor – the world’s newest emerging nation, spread across the eastern half of the island of Timor, the enclave of Oe-Cussé, and the offshore islands of Atauro and Jaco. Although small, it has many different indigenous peoples and languages. And as a result of its long and complicated history, Indonesian and Portuguese have also been added to the list of languages spoken in the country.

One language, Tetun, is more widely understood and spoken throughout East Timor than any other native language. Originally spoken on the south coast of Timor, a form of Tetun was brought to Dili by the Portuguese in the late 18th century. Although Portuguese was nominated East Timor’s official language after East Timor gained independence, Tetun became the national language, with the intention of making it co-official with Portuguese.

Tetun is a living language, used mainly as an oral medium, with no historical tradition of writing to help standardise it. While there’s some variation in the Tetun language, the variety spoken in Dili (also known as Tetun-Dili or Tetun-Prasa) is the most widespread – and is also the focus of this phrasebook.

The other indigenous languages of East Timor haven’t suffered as a result of the spread of Tetun. People continue to speak their local languages, but in most of East Timor, some form of Tetun is used as a second language. The use of Tetun is strongly preferred when people from different parts of the country come together – in the workplace, at the market or on buses.

TIMÓR

The most common way for people in East Timor to refer to their country is simply **Timór**. Longer versions like **Timór Lorosae** and **Timor-Leste** are still pretty much new in everyday conversation. Indonesians refer to East Timor as **Timor Timur**, abbreviated to **Tim-Tim**.

Some form of Tetun is the first language of about 20 percent of the East Timorese population in Dili, in and around Viqueque, and in Suai and much of the East-West Timor border area. The only two areas where Tetun hasn't traditionally been used as a second language is the Oe-Cussé enclave to the west and the Fataluku-speaking area stretching mostly from Lospalos to Tutuala in the extreme east. But even here, the use of Tetun is catching on – especially among younger people and people who have lived and/or worked in Dili.



Portuguese and Indonesian can also be used to communicate in East Timor. Since many visitors to East Timor might also spend time in Indonesia, they're advised to purchase Lonely Planet's *Indonesian Phrasebook*. We've included a short chapter on Portuguese for use in East Timor, as well as a chapter on three indigenous East Timor languages – Fataluku, Makasae and Kemak. (See pages 177 to 180 for the basics in these languages.)

There's no doubt that being able to use even basic Tetun will help make your experience in East Timor something really special, and people will respond with tremendous enthusiasm to those who give Tetun a try.

TETUN OR TETUM?

While the **Tetun** language is spelled with an **n** in Tetun, in Portuguese it's spelled *Tetum* with an *-m*, and this spelling is commonly used in English. The final *-m* is never pronounced 'm' in Portuguese. It's merely a convention to show the final vowel is nasal.

SPELLING

As the East Timorese are yet to agree on a standard orthography for Tetun, the authors have sometimes had to make difficult decisions about the specifics of Tetun. The spelling system adopted here is simple and easy to use, but keep in mind that you might come across other spelling systems while in East Timor. In addition, because native speakers of Tetun often rely on Portuguese (and Indonesian) to fill in gaps in their language, there is great variation for some words. We've tried to cover this kind of variation by listing Portuguese and Indonesian words alongside their Tetun equivalents.

PORTUGUESE INFLUENCE

After centuries of colonial contact, Tetun is characterised by an abundance of Portuguese borrowings, such as **adeus**, 'goodbye', **grupu**, 'group', **governu**, 'government' and **farmásia**, 'pharmacy'. These loanwords can be a tremendous help to speakers of English, French, Italian and Spanish, since they're often the same or similar in each of these languages. When in doubt, use a Portuguese or Indonesian word, and you'll generally be understood.

LEARNING TETUN

Overall, Tetun is a great language for a beginner – verbs are easy, obvious grammatical inconsistencies are relatively few and pronunciation presents no great problems. In addition, the spelling system used here is easy to read. However, like any language, Tetun has its own irregularities, and people may speak very quickly, take short cuts, and mix the language with their own local language variety.

When in doubt, take the initiative and don't be afraid to ask, as often as you need:

Favór ida bele repeti?

Could you repeat that please?

or:

Favór ida koalía neineik?

Could you speak slowly please?

Your East Timorese listener is likely to be only too happy to oblige.

TETUN-DILI & TETUN-TERIK

The type of Tetun used in this phrasebook is sometimes called Tetun-Dili (or Tetun-Prasa) to distinguish it from Tetun-Terik, the traditional rural variety spoken mainly along the south coast and near the border between East and West Timor. Speakers of Tetun-Terik have had much less contact with speakers of Portuguese, and as a result the language shows much less Portuguese influence – in both vocabulary and grammatical structure.

Pronunciation differences aren't too marked. The most important thing to note is the frequent presence of the glottal stop (ʔ) the sound you hear between the words in 'uh-oh', or the 'tt' in Cockney 'bottle' – in rural Tetun, and its complete absence in Tetun-Dili. (For other variations, see Pronunciation, pages 19 to 22.)

	TETUN-DILI	TETUN-TERIK
I	hau (1 syllable, like English 'how')	ha'u (2 syllables)
go up	sa'e (1 syllable, like English 'sigh')	sa'e (2 syllables)

Different words are also used:

	TETUN-DILI	TETUN-TERIK
angry	hirus	krakat
dirty	foer	kadór
far	dok	kdok
fish	ikan	na'an tasi
for	ba	bodik
hate	odi	aran
many	barak	wa'in
medicine	aimoruk	aitahan
no	lae	lale
they	sira	sia
very	los	basu
want	hakarak	ber/hakora
yes	sin/los	he'e

There are also some grammatical differences, the most important of which is the survival of verb conjugation in Tetun-Terik – but only in verbs that begin with an **h-** or a vowel.

Here's the verb **halimar**, 'to play', in both Tetun-Dili and Tetun-Terik. The good news is that in Tetun-Dili, the verb is always the same.

	TETUN-DILI	TETUN-TERIK
I play	hau halimar	ha'u kalimar
you (sg) play	o halimar	o malimar
he/she plays	nia halimar	nia nalimar
we play	ami/ita halimar	ami/ita halimar
you (pl) play	imi halimar	emi halimar
they play	sira halimar	sia ralimar

But don't worry, the Dili variety is the most widely used lingua franca in East Timor, and speakers of all dialects of Tetun will often understand alternative word forms.

POLITE & INFORMAL

The polite pronoun **ita** is used throughout this phrasebook. It can be replaced by alternative forms such as the informal pronoun **o**, the polite titles **Senhór**, **Senhora**, or the even more respectful **Ita bot**, 'big you' (see the chapter on Grammar, pages 23 to 44). Whatever form you use though, there's no change to sentence structure.

MALAE & MELAYU

Malae is the Tetun word for any foreigner. **Melayu** is the Indonesian/Malay word for Malay. To avoid using the word 'Indonesian', many locals now prefer to refer to the Indonesian language as **Melayu** or **Bahasa Melayu**.

ARTHUR OR MARTHA?

Tetun words borrowed from Portuguese may have both masculine and feminine forms. Where the feminine form differs from that of the masculine, the endings are separated with a slash:

engineer **enjinheiru/a** (m/f)

This means that the masculine form is **enjinheiru** while the feminine form is **enjinheira**.

If the masculine and feminine forms of a word do not follow this pattern, both forms are given in full:

doctor **dotór/dotora** (m/f)
Portuguese man/woman **Portugés/Portugeza**

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS PHRASEBOOK

adj	adjective	lit	literally
EMPH	emphasis	m	masculine
excl	exclusive	n	noun
f	feminine	pl	plural
incl	inclusive	pol	polite
Ind	Indonesian	Port	Portuguese
inf	informal	sg	singular

