

# Indonesian Facts

**People of Indonesia** - Indonesia has a population of about 250 million and it is the fourth most populous country in the world. According to the last census the total Muslim population is approximately 88% of total population, making Indonesia the largest Muslim society in the world. Indonesian population consists of many ethnicities- 45% Javanese, 14% Sudanese, 7.5% Madurese and 26% other ethnic groups.

There are about 583 languages and dialects spoken in the Indonesia. They normally belong to the different ethnic groups of the population. Some of the distinctly different local languages are: Acehnese, Batak, Sundanese, Javanese, Sasak, Tetum of Timor, Dayak, Minahasa, Toraja, Buginese, Halmahera, Ambonese, Ceramese, and several Irianese languages. To make the picture even more complex and colorful, these languages are also spoken in different dialects.

Bahasa Indonesia is the national language, which is akin to Malay, written in Roman script and based on European orthography. In all the tourist destinations English is the number one foreign language. In big cities Dutch is still spoken, while popularity of French is increasing at good hotels and restaurants.

**Indonesian Currency rupiah** - The local currency of Indonesia is Rupiah (Rp) and 1Rp = 100 sen. Bills come in denominations of Rp 1000, 2000, 5000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000 and 1,00,000. Coins come in denominations of Rp 100, 200, 500 and 1000.

Foreign currencies, either banknotes or travellers cheques, are easily exchanged at banks and moneychangers in major tourist destinations. Credit cards are accepted at most hotels and restaurants in main cities. It is advisable to carry sufficient amounts of Rupiah when traveling to smaller towns or outer provinces.

**Flights to Indonesia** - Indonesia is a well connected destination with more than 209 airports serving domestic and international passengers. Regular flights operate to and from Indonesia, connecting it with major destinations around the world. The airports at Jakarta and Denpasar (Bali) are busiest in the country with numerous flight schedules on daily basis. All the international airports throughout the world have regular flights to and from Indonesia. There are various international airlines serving direct and stop over flights to Bali and Jakarta in Indonesia. More than 1000 International flights depart from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta.

**Indonesia Time Zone** - There are three Standard Time Zones in Indonesia:

- Sumatra, Java and West & Central Kalimantan are 7 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+7)
- Bali, Nusa Tenggara, South & East Kalimantan and Sulawesi are 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+8)

Irian Jaya and Maluku are 9 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+9)

**Indonesia Visa Rules** - There are several types of Indonesia visas such as Tourist Visa, Business Visa, Multiple-entry Visa (for business trips only) and Transit Visa. All travelers to Indonesia must possess passports, valid for at least six months after arrival, and proof of onward passage out of the country.

## Visa Guidelines

Visas are not required for tourists who are nationals of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, The Philippines, Hong Kong Special Administration Region (SAR), Macao Special Administration Region (SAR), Chile, Morocco, Peru, and Vietnam.

Countries and districts eligible for a visa on arrival are: United States of America, Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, United Arab Emirates, Finland, Hungary, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Germany, Canada, South Korea, Norway, France, Poland, Switzerland, New Zealand, and Taiwan.

**These visas can be obtained from the following airports on arrival:**

Polonia (Medan), Sultan Syarif Kasim II (Pekan Baru), Tabing (Padang), Soekarno - Hatta (Jakarta), Juanda (Surabaya), Ngurah Rai (Bali), Samratulangi (Manado).

\*NOTE: The information supplied here is meant as a guide only and is subject to change without warning. Therefore all travelers should check the visa and immigration details with the local Indonesian Embassy or Consulate.

**Food & Cuisine of Indonesia** - Rice is the staple food in most parts of Indonesia though some variation is found in some of the islands in eastern Indonesia where staple food ranges from corn, sago, cassava to sweet potatoes. But things are changing fast and here also rice is catching them up in popularity. Nasi goreng (fried rice), mie goreng (fried noodles) and gado-gado (vegetables topped with peanut sauce and sliced boiled egg) are some of the typical Indonesian dishes.

As Indonesia is an archipelago, fish is one of the favorite food items and various types of fish feature prominently in the diet. Seafood is found in abundance and has great variety such as lobster, oyster, prawns, shrimp, squid, crab, etc. Coconut is ubiquitously available and apart from being used as cooking oil its milk and pulp is used as an ingredient in many dishes. Beef and chicken are widely available; pork is only found in Chinese restaurants or in non-Muslim regions. Coconut, chilli, soy sauce and peanut sauce are common flavorings.

Some of the major fruits found in Indonesia are jackfruit, durian, starfruit, papaya, pineapple and mango.

Besides traditional Indonesian food, Chinese and Continental dishes are also hugely popular in Indonesia. Many popular fast food joints have also established their chains in major cities of Indonesia.

**Travel Tips for Indonesia** - For a pleasurable and convenient trip to Indonesia follow these useful travel tips:

**Health:** Immunization against hepatitis A is recommended for all travelers. Depending on length of stay and itinerary, vaccination for Japanese encephalitis, rabies, typhoid and hepatitis B may be needed. Malaria and dengue fever exist in many parts of the country. Therefore take adequate protection mosquito bites and keep anti-malarial medicine with yourself. Drink water only from sealed bottles, and avoid swimming in freshwater lakes or streams as disease-causing organisms such as schistosomiasis may be present. Take precautions against heat and humidity. Wear sunscreen and a hat and drink lots of water.

**Dress Code:** In business circles, wearing a suit is the norm for both men and women. For formal occasions, either a suit or a long-sleeved, good quality, batik shirt are recommended for men, whilst evening or cocktail dresses are suitable for women. As Indonesia is primarily a Muslim country, modesty in dress is advised; remember to cover up if you intend visiting a mosque.

**Local Customs:** Indonesia has a high Muslim populace and it is important to understand and respect the local beliefs. Scanty clothing is not advisable in public places in deference to local customs. Shorts are not allowed in mosques and women should have their arms and head covered.

**Offices:** Most government offices are open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Commercial offices and businesses are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for Saturdays. Hours for businesses and commercial offices are staggered.

**Electricity:** Cities run on 220 volts, 50 cycles AC system. Rural areas may only be able to provide 110 volts.