



TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS TO INDONESIA

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INDONESIA: A BRIEF PROFILE

The Indonesian archipelago of more than 17,000 islands (6,000 inhabited) is usually grouped into three main regions: the Greater Sundas (Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan and Sulawesi); the Lesser Sundas (Bali to Timor) and the Moluccas (north of the Lesser Sundas and east of Sulawesi). The whole region covers about 1,010,000 square kilometres and has a population of over 220 million, the fourth largest in the world - you will sense the population pressure immediately in Jakarta, which is the highly centralised administrative, political and business hub of the nation.

POPULATION, INDUSTRY & RELIGION

The literacy rate in 2005 is about 87.9% (defined as people over the age of 15, who can read and write) due to strong emphasis on education by the government since independence. During the 1980s and the early 1990s, there was an increase in general economic standards. However, the economic crisis in the second half of the 1990s had a very negative effect on the economy and on school-retention rates, which may result in problems in the future. The tiny elite class, however, remain extremely wealthy by international standards.

Major industries include oil, coal, textiles, vehicle assembly, cement and plywood, while rice is still the most important crop. Another industry which is a major player in the economy is kretek (clove cigarette) production. On arrival at the airport, you will notice immediately that the air is mixed with both diesel fuel and clove-scented tobacco. The effects of the financial crisis were evident when comparing the expected GDP expected growth rate of 7% in 1994 with a real GDP growth of -13.6% in 1998 and 0.1% in 1999. This has now turned around and in 2005 the expected GDP growth is 5.4%.

Every major world religion is represented in Indonesia, but the majority are Muslim (many nominally). Bali remains strongly Hindu. There is a significant Christian population, especially in Eastern Indonesia and among ethnic Chinese. Over the last decade many people who were previously nominal Muslims have adopted a more public practice of their faith (observing the fast month and the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca). Nevertheless, the casual traveller in Java usually does not receive the impression of travelling in a strongly Islamic society. Religious tolerance has been highly valued in Indonesia, however, the last decade has seen a rise in religious tensions and violence.

MODERN HISTORY

Indonesia is a young nation with an old culture, which had to grapple with European colonial forces for nearly 400 years. Its modern history has been turbulent. As Japan's military empire in Southeast Asia collapsed in 1945, Indonesia declared its independence. Holland, the dominant colonial power since the late 1600s, then attempted to recover its lost Asian possessions and a traumatic revolutionary war followed, resulting in a formal transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia under UN auspices in late 1949. Soekarno, the radical nationalist leader who had led the struggle against Dutch colonial rule, was confirmed as Indonesia's first president.

After almost a decade marked by unstable parliamentary rule and regional rebellions, Soekarno assumed direct rule by declaring a return to Indonesia's original revolutionary constitution. Under this constitution, which continues to apply (although significantly amended post-Soeharto), Indonesia is a unitary republic, ruled by a Presidential executive with wide powers. The legislative, or DPR, now contains only elected members. The MPR, the highest source of laws below the constitution, comprises a joint sitting of the DPR with the new DPD (Council of Regional Representatives), also an elected body.

The period of 'Guided Democracy' was marked by a swing to the political left, the proliferation of Soekarno's idiosyncratic political ideology, international isolation and increasing economic disintegration. Eventually, rivalry between the PKI (Indonesia's communist party, then the third largest in the world) and the armed forces (who have always claimed a right of socio-political intervention by reason of their role in the revolution against the Dutch) led to a violent confrontation on the night of 30 September 1965, the circumstances of which remain unclear. In the aftermath, the military, in partnership with Islamic political groups, was able to destroy the PKI and hundreds of thousands of its supporters were killed. General Soeharto emerged as the leader of the right and, by 1968, toppled Soekarno, who died under house arrest in 1970.

Soeharto's government became known as the 'New Order', to contrast with Soekarno's 'Old Order'. The state ideology, the 'Pancasila', five broad ideas originally devised by Soekarno to reconcile diverse political groupings, was used by the New Order as a part of a programme of de-politicisation to enhance governmental control. Soeharto's rule was marked by a commitment to the Western alliance, enormous economic development and a dramatic general rise in living standards. Increasingly, however, the New Order faced criticism internationally in relation to human rights abuses (especially in relation to East Timor which it annexed in 1975). Human rights abuses were also criticised domestically, as was the large-scale corruption seen as arising from elite and military domination of big business. President Soeharto resigned in May 1998, after he found himself unable to form a cabinet by reason of riots (caused in part by the downturn in the economy and the stringent measures imposed by the IMF), large scale student demonstrations, demanding democratisation and the end of Soeharto's Presidency and tensions within the military.

Vice-President, BJ Habibie, then became Acting President. Despite his short term of office, Habibie instituted a number of reforms, not the least of which was the granting of a referendum to the East Timorese, which led to a vote for independence of the forcibly-annexed province. In 1999 there was a general election, with a strong emphasis on openness and credibility.

This was followed later in the year by a Presidential election (the President was, at that point, still elected by MPR members) in November 1999.

The next President, KH Abdurrahman Wahid (commonly known as 'Gus Dur') was impeached and was replaced by his Vice-President, Megawati Soekarnoputri in July 2001.

At the following elections in 2004, a new voting system was introduced with the President no longer being voted for by the MPR, but directly by the people in two rounds of voting.

Head of State (President):	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
Vice-President:	Jusuf Kalla
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	Hassan Wirajuda

Indonesia is now finding its way through a complex and difficult process of democratisation and accompanying social and political reform.

BAHASA INDONESIA: THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

The national language is 'Bahasa Indonesia', which nearly everyone speaks as a second language. Indonesian does not use a special script and is a relatively simple language to learn. It is a variant of Malay, which has been widely spoken in Southeast Asia for centuries as a *lingua franca*. Nationalist politicians hoping to bridge ethnic differences as they attempted to create a unified state in an archipelago where at least 300 distinct languages are spoken, deliberately chose it as the national language well before the Second World War.

This means that most Indonesians speak Bahasa Indonesia as their second language, although it is gradually displacing other regional languages as people's first language, due to education in Bahasa Indonesia from primary school. English is frequently used in business circles and older, upper class Indonesians educated before 1945 often speak Dutch.

Indonesian does not use a special script and is a relatively simple language to learn. A phrase book (easily available in hotels and airports in Indonesia, along with dictionaries) is a good investment and attempts at speaking Bahasa

Indonesia will be appreciated. Be alert, though, that it is better to pronounce a few words (and particularly) names correctly, rather than a lot of words badly. Ask someone to correct your pronunciation.

Vowels

- a** as in 'army' or 'hut'
- e** as in the first syllable of 'potato' or as in 'French'
- I** as in 'eat' but shorter and sharper
- o** as in 'sock' or as in 'low'
- u** as in 'put' and it is short and sharp

Consonants

Indonesian consonants are pronounced similarly to those of English, with the exception of:

- c** is pronounced as the 'ch' in 'much'
- r** is rolled
- t** and **d** are less aspirated than the English 't' and 'd'

Common phrases

How are things (with you)? *Bagaimana kabarnya?/ Apa kabar?*

Very well *Baik-baik saja*

Good morning/(early) afternoon *Selamat pagi/siang*

Good (late) afternoon /evening *Selamat sore/malam*

Note: Greetings such as 'Good morning!' are more common amongst those who have been influenced through contact with Westerners. A common question to ask someone on greeting them is where they have come from.

Where have you come from? *Dari mana?*

Note: This can be used both for where you have just left and for your country of origin, which can cause confusion.

Where are you going to? *Mau ke mana?*

Thank you *Terima kasih*

Warning! 'Terima kasih' is often used as 'No, thank you.' If you are offered a plate with snacks and asked if you would like one and say 'Terima kasih!', the plate may well be taken away, without you getting one! Thanking, in general, is less common amongst close friends in Indonesian.

Already *Sudah / 'dah*

Note: This can also mean 'done (completed), no, not necessary'.

Yes *Ya*

Warning! Yes does not always mean yes. It can also mean, 'maybe; I'm listening to you (but not necessarily agreeing); I'm saying yes to be polite.'

No *Tidak*

Warning! Indonesians don't think it polite to say no, so they may say what they think will please you or avoid the issue.

Not yet *Belum*

NOTE: *Belum* should be used in preference to *tidak* in many situations, where you *might* do something in the future.

NAMES & FORMAL TITLES

Many Indonesians have only one name, although it is becoming more common to adopt a second name, especially among business people, who find it easier to operate internationally with two names. The 'main' name may be either the first or the second - there is no consistency because of the great variety of traditions - so it is important to try to find out which name to use with Mr (*Bapak/Pak*) or Ms (*Ibu/Bu*), especially because while some Indonesians adopt a family name, most do not and family links usually cannot be identified simply from a name. *Bapak* also means 'father' and *ibu* means 'mother', however as terms of address, these are used for adults of a mature age and status irrespective of whether they are married or have children. Indonesians usually ask each other, upon meeting for the first time, which name is the appropriate one to address a person by.

Note: Indonesians prefer to use your name and a title in conversation, rather than 'you' (*saudara, kamu, engkau*), which is a little blunt - in keeping with their own customs, Indonesians tend to address foreign visitors by a single name and to attach a respectful title, so you may find yourself called 'Miss Veronica' or 'Mr. Mal', for example, even when being paged in hotels or airports!

<i>Bapak/Pak</i>	Mr/Sir
<i>Ibu/Bu</i>	Mrs/Ms/Madam

Some Academic Titles:

<i>Dekan</i>	Dean
<i>Direktur</i>	Director
<i>Dosen</i>	Lecturer
<i>Drs</i>	Doctorandus
<i>Dra</i>	Doctorandra - female of <i>Drs</i> (Doctorandus was a five-year degree, derived from the Dutch academic system. The system has changed recently to one like Australia's.)
<i>Ins</i>	<i>Insinyur</i> (Engineer - a qualification loosely equivalent to BSc)
<i>Kepala</i>	Head
<i>Ketua</i>	Chairperson
<i>Rektor</i>	Rector, Vice-Chancellor, Chancellor
<i>Sekretaris</i>	Secretary
<i>SH</i>	<i>Sarjana Hukum</i> (Bachelor of Laws - a common qualification in government circles)
<i>SM</i>	<i>Sarjana Muda</i> (Bachelor, not including an Honours year)
<i>Wakil</i>	Deputy, also <i>Muda</i>

GENERAL ADVICE ON BEHAVIOUR

Although Indonesian cultures vary markedly from island to island and from ethnic group to ethnic group, the Javanese by force of sheer numbers (60%) dominate and you will probably deal with many Javanese if you visit Jakarta. Java is the world's most densely populated island and a culture has developed which emphasises politeness, reticence, toleration and good humour for obvious reasons. Qualities of deference, humility, elegance, subtlety and refinement are much valued and often seen as signs of authority and power, by contrast to their standing in many Western cultures. A person who displays these qualities is 'halus'. One who appears rough, aggressive and 'uncultured' is 'kasar' and should be afforded less respect.

Accordingly, you should always try to be as courteous and reticent as possible. For example, do not push past people, do not yell in public and try to avoid pointing with your index finger and not to 'barge around.'

Indonesians will often wait quite a long time to respond to a remark because they want to be sure they are not interrupting, so it's a good idea to wait longer for someone to respond than you normally would. Silences are OK in Indonesia and don't have to be filled instantly.

On the other hand, Indonesians' farewells on leaving a friend or a group, or if they are excusing themselves from conversations in public places, may sometimes seem quite abrupt. This is not necessarily considered ill-mannered.

Speak softly, especially when doing business. When Indonesians get serious, they may drop their voices.

It's considered childish to show irritation. People strive for a philosophical detachment from minor inconveniences.

Remember that many of the Indonesians you meet both formally and informally will have met many visitors from overseas, if not having travelled themselves, so they may seem very much like Australians. Indeed they display a relaxed, friendly nature similar to that of the average Australian. Furthermore, Indonesia is an extremely multicultural society, and all Indonesians are used to getting along with people of other cultures on a daily basis. They are not quick to take offence; in fact they are among the most friendly and tolerant of people - so if you do commit a social faux pas, simply apologise. Indonesians and Australians generally get along well together.

Formal meetings

Behaving with restraint and politeness is particularly important in a business context. Indonesians regard a personal relationship as a necessary precursor to a business relationship, so you must establish that you are worthwhile, trustworthy and compatible, before you can 'do a deal'. Relationships take time and effort and you must show reciprocal generosity to your hosts, so, be patient. Body language is an important part of showing your bona fides in a business context.

When Australians want to seem relaxed they will often stretch out, cross their legs and even put their arms behind their heads. These actions seem strange to Indonesians, who you will notice are often more controlled, graceful and closed in their body movements. Polite Javanese will often perch on the edge of their seats and look at the floor at meetings, to show their respect for 'superiors'. It's a good idea to watch the Indonesians you meet with and try to follow the way they sit and avoid sprawling in your seat or flinging out your arms. In particular, it is considered offensive to sit with your legs stretched out so that the soles of your feet face other people.

When transacting business, try to avoid holding eye contact too strongly. People may think you are glaring.

A Typical Meeting

When a group of Australian delegates meet with a group of Indonesian delegates, it is important for everyone involved to know whom they are meeting and for what purpose. Most meetings begin with an exchange of business cards and an explanation of who people are and their positions. Indonesians feel uncomfortable if they don't know your status and thus how to address you and how to behave towards you.

Choose a spokesperson to introduce your group. The spokesperson should spend a few minutes introducing each person individually - their names, their status (Professor, Director, Head, etc), their field, their current projects. Each person should make him/herself known, for example, by standing and perhaps making a slight bow or nod. The spokesperson may then make a short formal address, speaking about what your group (representing an institution) has to offer this group. This will allow Indonesians to assess whether or not they will be able to help you. Only then, make your case for what kind of help you seek.

At the beginning or end of the meeting a formal presentation of a gift to the head of the Indonesian group is appropriate. Normally photos are taken of handshakes, exchanging of gifts, for posterity - newsletter, display on the wall. Your gift should be wrapped and is presented to the most senior person present with a brief word of thanks. 'Australiana' souvenirs are popular, as are 'luxury' items, or your own most recently published book (signed!) but the most favoured gifts are ones that can be 'put on display', for example, plaques, ties, coasters, badges, testimonials, commemorative books, jewellery with insignia - or your book!

An informal session may follow, with private or group discussions over a light meal, to allow personal relations to develop. Before talking about anything serious, Indonesians will generally spend quite a long time chatting about families, children, mutual friends - anything. They don't like to start any serious discussions until they feel quite comfortable.

The Indonesian group will have a carefully planned agenda for the meeting and it is considered rude to leave early or cut the agenda short due to lack of time. Their agenda may consist of attending a meal, touring the institution or being presented with a cultural programme of music and dance, aside from the formal speeches, negotiations and gift-giving.

JAM KARET: 'RUBBER TIME'

Perhaps due to the hot weather (and, in Jakarta, the traffic jams), time is more flexible in Indonesia than it seems in Australia and many Indonesians don't have the same sense of time as many Australia. This was certainly true in the past but now that more and more Western norms are being adopted, punctuality is becoming more important, especially in Jakarta. However, while you should always be punctual don't be surprised if someone arrives late, or if a meeting begins late, or if a short meeting stretches out for several more hours than you had originally planned. Occasionally *jam karet* will also work in reverse and people may arrive earlier. As the visitor, you will usually be expected to be punctual.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Indonesians will often ask you surprisingly personal questions or make personal comments. For example you may be asked how much your suit cost or told that you could get a much better dress at the local shop. Try not to be irritated. You don't have to respond if you don't feel like it; just make some excuse like 'I've forgotten the price, I bought it in Singapore;' or 'I'd like to have a look at that shop.' They will understand and won't mind. They don't mean any harm; Indonesians are extremely curious.

Indonesians also like to discuss family details and will ask whether you are married, have children, where you live, etc, so it's a good idea to bring along photographs of your family, your home, etc. 'Personal' questions can be a polite way of 'breaking the ice' by showing interest in you and will often include questions as to your marital status and even your religion. Many Indonesians consider it incomprehensible or threatening that someone might be an atheist (which has often been equated with Communism or opposition to Islam), although are at ease with the idea of a nominal belief so it may be wise to 'adopt' a nominal religion if you are an atheist or agnostic.

HAGGLING

You ARE expected to haggle (*tawar-menawar*) when purchasing (or doing a deal) unless there is a sign showing that prices are '*harga pas*', or fixed price. But remember that haggling is an art, not a sport or a competition - you are trying to negotiate an agreement, not win a fight. It is impolite to refuse to haggle, but it is equally impolite to harass.

GENERAL BODY LANGUAGE

If you walk in front of someone, it is polite to turn towards them and to bend forward as you walk, to show respect - especially at meetings.

The right hand is regarded as the 'nice' or 'sweet' hand, so avoid using your left hand in general, but especially when eating, shaking hands or handing anything to anyone.

Avoid standing with your hands on your hips or crossing your arms, as either can be seen as a sign of aggression.

Avoid blowing your nose if possible (unless you have a bad cold). Sniffing is acceptable. Your handkerchief should be kept folded and used for discreetly mopping your brow.

The way we normally point looks rude and arrogant in Indonesian body language. If you need to indicate direction, point with your thumb.

Tousling the hair of a charming toddler is out. It is usually not considered culturally appropriate to touch another person's head.

People of the same sex will touch or hold each other in public quite unselfconsciously but you will seldom see physical contact between members of the opposite sex in public. Often in a formal context, an Indonesian of your sex will hold your hand, take your arm as you walk or put an arm around your waist. This is simply an expression of friendship - and a sign that the business relationship is progressing well. It is uncommon for members of the opposite sex (even married couples) to make affectionate or intimate physical contact in public.

A common formal handshake in Indonesia consists of extended hands placed between the extended hands of the other person, palm-to-palm, then drawn together over the other person's hands and the right hand is then drawn back to touch your chest. Many Muslims will quickly touch their hand to their heart after a conventional handshake. This is becoming standard in Jakarta. Ask a friend to demonstrate both forms.

Always take your shoes off when entering a mosque or any other religious building. It is often polite to do so when entering a private house as well - follow your host's lead.

DRESS & LUGGAGE

Indonesians enjoy formal occasions and many wear uniforms to work. It is not appropriate to wear even neat, casual 'holiday' clothes and gym-shoes, etc. to meetings in Indonesia. Men attending formal meetings during the day may wear a lightweight suit, or at least, a long-sleeved shirt and tie, suit trousers and business shoes. Alternatively, the national dress of an open necked, long sleeved 'safari-suit'-style batik shirt can be worn - and is much more suitable for the climate! If you are invited to any evening function or to a private house, men should definitely wear a batik shirt.

For women, cool and comfortable clothing is essential as the climate is very hot and humid. Legs are bare. Sleeveless dresses or blouses should be avoided. Skirts should not be short. Trousers are acceptable on many occasions although it is often appropriate to wear a suit or skirt to business meeting, and these may be batik. It is always in good taste to be modestly dressed, particularly in strongly Islamic areas or among some more remote communities, where immodest dress may sometimes be seen as a sign of sexual availability.

Although many Indonesians expect Westerners to dress indiscreetly, you will always make a better impression by dressing neatly and conservatively and keeping beach-wear for the beach. Shorts are usually considered vulgar in public. Thongs should also not be worn in public.

Indonesians bathe twice a day and change their clothing twice a day, and you will quickly notice the hot, humid climate requires that. You will perspire far more than usual, so take more changes of clothing than you would normally need and take light, natural-fibre fabrics - synthetic fabrics are uncomfortable, can cause irritation in the heat and quickly become smelly!

Some suggestions for your luggage follow:

Recommended

- for men: a light suit and tie, for business meetings (women should take equivalent light but formal business clothing)
- sunglasses (perhaps a hat as well)
- UV sunblock, etc.
- extra changes of underwear, socks, etc.
- several cotton handkerchiefs (particularly if you perspire easily)
- thongs (useful in bathrooms etc but not to wear in public)
- bathers (most international hotels have good swimming pools)
- a light jumper or jacket may be useful if you are likely to visit any hill areas, especially at night

Consider

- a light portable umbrella or a light raincoat, especially if you are travelling November - March, when the monsoon means that it will rain briefly but heavily almost every afternoon
- 'Wet Ones' or similar pre-moist towelettes can be very useful
- a torch, especially if you are travelling outside major cities (street lighting is poor and the power supply in many areas unreliable)
- a money bag or belt for valuables. All major hotels have secure safe deposit boxes but a money belt will give you extra security if you are travelling in remote areas or for an extended time.
- Men may wish to buy a batik shirt in Indonesia for formal wear. If so, a formal shirt *must* be long-sleeved and show be worn with *black* trousers and shoes.

EATING & DRINKING

Being invited to someone's home

If invited to someone's home, you may bring a gift, but don't be disconcerted if it is not opened in your presence - that would be considered unrefined. It will be opened and examined with appreciation later by the family.

If you are a visitor you will invariably be served a drink, often with a snack, when you arrive. Don't touch them until you are asked to. It is very rude for a guest to drink first. Resign yourself to waiting quite a long time. It's considered harmful to drink anything very hot, so your host will wait until the drinks are nicely (to the Indonesian way of thinking) tepid. It is even more polite to wait until you have been asked a second or a third time before you drink.

Indonesians eat using a fork and spoon or their fingers, as most of the food is cooked in such a way as to break up easily. Follow your host's example. Rice is the staple food and is served on plates. Weak black tea, water or orange juice are the usual drinks, although plain bottled water is becoming increasingly common.

Most Indonesian meals are presented like a Chinese meal or buffet- style, so you can feel free to choose what you fancy. Australians have a tendency to take largish helpings, however; and this looks rather gross to Indonesians. Just take a spoonful. This is to ensure everyone present will get served. Don't worry about getting enough to eat, because it is regarded very favourably if you go back for seconds - and even more so if you go back for thirds!

Indonesians take endless trouble with food preparation and favourable comments on the cooking will be received with great pleasure.

Crossing your fork and spoon, reverse side up, in front of you on the plate means you are finished.

At a restaurant

Most Indonesians are at least nominal Muslims, and strict Muslims do not drink any alcohol. However, many Indonesians do drink occasionally. Generally, Indonesian women do not drink beer or spirits - and sometimes not even coffee! - as they are considered masculine. Australian women, however, can feel free to drink these things if they like; no one will mind. Not drinking alcohol is largely a matter of individual preference with Indonesians: it seems that most of them are non-drinkers because alcohol simply doesn't appeal much to them. Beer is widely available in Indonesia. Wine is imported and now widely available in Jakarta, but less available outside the capital city.

Places that are used to foreigners will serve tea and coffee the way we are used to, especially international hotels. Indonesians commonly serve tea and coffee to each other already sweetened, however, if this happens to you it may be better to resign yourself to it than to confuse everyone by trying to get them to do it differently. '*Tanpa gula*' (or '*teh pahit/kopi pahit*') means 'without sugar', '*pakai susu*' or '*dengan susu*' means 'with milk'. It is rude to eat (eg. an ice-cream) in the street, unless you are sitting at a roadside stall.

HYGIENE

Food

If you are careful (for at least the first week) you should be able to avoid gastric illness in Indonesia, even on your first visit. Obvious rules of commonsense apply. Unless you have travelled frequently in Asia, it is best to take great care to restrict your diet to cooked or processed foods and drinks.

Some people eat yoghurt every day for about two weeks before departure and drink a small yoghurt drink (easily available in Indonesia) every day while in Indonesia, in order to keep benign bacteria levels high.

In particular:

- avoid salads and other uncooked food, including fruit, unless you peel it yourself (a pocket knife may be useful).
- any recently cooked food (ie. sate, etc.) is usually safe, but food that has been left to stand (ie. 'Padang' food or gado-gado) may be risky.
- try and restrict your drinks to tea and coffee or bottled drinks such as mineral water (ie. 'Aqua', which is widely available), soft-drinks, beer, etc. Water purification tablets etc. are unnecessary due to the wide availability of bottled mineral water (if you are really worried, or in a very remote area, take a packet of straws, to avoid drinking from the neck of bottles).
- don't take ice in your drinks unless you are confident it has been boiled first. Most international hotels boil the water for their ice and provide guests with a bottle or jug of boiled water in their room.

FIRST AID

Medical care is reasonably good in Indonesia, but it is a good idea to take a small First Aid kit, especially if you are going to remote areas. It might include:

- extra toilet paper and tissues
- talcum powder (anti-tinea powder may also be useful)
- anti-diarrhoea medicine. Kao-Magma and other clay-based preparations that 'block it up' are a best first choice (a widely available local medication is known as 'Entrostop'). If these treatments are unsuccessful, follow up with Lomotil and other more devastating treatments that paralyse the gut. Many stomach complaints in Indonesia are simply a reaction to different water and foods, etc. and tend to resolve themselves in about 3 days. If you have persistent diarrhoea with blood and mucous, however, you should seek medical help immediately
- antiseptic lotion
- Sapoderm, Clearasil or similar antiseptic wash may be useful, particularly if you suffer from heat irritation
- bandaids
- headache tablets
- mosquito repellent ('Rid' in lotion form seems to work the best)

You should seek medical advice before departure, especially regarding vaccinations generally, anti-hepatitis treatments and the world-wide resurgence of malaria (severe in some parts of Indonesia, but not a major problem in Java and Bali). It is a good idea to cover up as much of your body as possible after sundown when the Anopholes mosquito is about.

TRAVEL PRACTICALITIES

Passport & air travel

Visas are available on arrival for Australians entering Indonesia for less than two months, but your passport must be valid for six months from the date of entry.

If you are travelling for work purposes – attending a conference, doing research or paying formal visits to colleagues – you should obtain either a business visa or a Socio-Cultural visa. Details of these (conditions, paperwork, charges) can be found on the website of the Indonesian embassy or consulate in your state. These are obtained prior to departure and you should allow ten days for processing of the visa.

There is a tax payable on all flights within and from Indonesia, the amount of which varies.

Domestic air flights sometimes miss connections, so do not rely on a tight itinerary.

Travel insurance is recommended.

Travellers' cheques, credit, banks etc.

Travellers' cheques in US currency are universally accepted in Indonesia, as are Australian currency travellers' cheques in tourist areas like Bali and Jakarta. It may be useful to take some small denomination cheques, while you work out the most favourable exchange rates. It is often difficult to change travellers' cheques outside the major cities, but Australian cash is easily exchanged in most cities.

There are reasonably priced moneychangers and safe-deposit boxes at all international airports and most hotels. If you are worried about security and will be away from major hotels for some of your trip, you may wish to take a money belt.

Credit cards can usually be used to pay many bills, such as airline tickets or hotel accommodation in large cities. Mastercard and Visa are more widely accepted than Amex. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) can be found in major cities in Java and Bali. Some banks allow you to use your Australian card to make cash withdrawals from particular ATMs. You should check with your bank before you leave about which network your own bank is attached to. (The major ones are Cirrus and Maestro – see if the logo appears on your card.)

Telephones

Note that one of the dial tones is different in Indonesia to that of Australia. When a phone rings, the dial tone is a short tone followed by a longer pause. The engaged signal is on then off for equal periods of no longer than one second (similar to Australian engaged tone).

Most Australian mobile phones can be used in Indonesia, however you may need to talk to your service provider about obtaining a 'roaming facility'. It is also possible to buy pre-paid cards for mobile phones in Indonesia. You can find extensive information about mobile phones on the following website <<http://www.expats.or.id/info/handphones.html>>. The Indonesians use the word *handphone* (pronounced 'hanpon' or, more often 'h.p.', pronounced 'ha-pay') for mobile phone.

Electricity

Electricity is usually 220V, 50 cycles AC (as in Australia) but in some towns still use the older 110V wiring. Sockets are similar to European ones, and have two round holes. If you are planning on using your own electrical appliances, it is advisable to buy an adaptor in Australia before departure. Adaptors are usually sold at the airport if you postpone the preparation for your trip until the last minute.

Luggage

Luggage seems to feel heavier when it is hot, so travel light!

Although Indonesia is rapidly developing, millions live in great poverty. Although few travellers are robbed in Indonesia, expensive or eye-catching luggage may tempt people to steal, as will expensive jewellery, watches, cameras, etc.

Cameras

If you are worried about theft, it may be useful to take a small, inconspicuous bag, rather than anything that is obviously for camera equipment. Unless you are prepared to lug it in the heat, it is best to avoid heavy and bulky equipment.

Print film is easily processed throughout Indonesia and it costs about the same in Indonesia as it does here. It is hard to find slide film or have it developed anywhere in Indonesia.

Useful Websites

You may also like to check the following websites for general information about Indonesia:

<<http://www.indonesiatourism.com>>

<<http://www.tourismindonesia.com>>

<<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/id.html#geo>>

<<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/sea/indonesia/index.html>>

<<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/eaag/index.html>>

<<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fs>>

Indonesian Consulate in Melbourne: <<http://www.kjri-melbourne.org/>>

Indonesian Embassy in Canberra: <<http://www.kbri-canberra.org.au/>>

Information for expatriates living (or doing business in Indonesia) can be found on the following website:

<<http://www.expats.or.id/info/handphones.html>>

Recommended Reading

The general travel section of guidebooks such as Periplus or Lonely Planet have useful travel tips.

A FINAL THOUGHT

Few things are valued in Indonesia as highly as self-control, calm and patience. In a developing nation as vast and as heavily populated as Indonesia things will go wrong. When they do, remember you will only aggravate the situation by showing anger, aggression and rudeness. Not only will Indonesians be reluctant to have anything to do with a person who has lost balance and self-control but they may even not wish to help you, feeling that you may well deserve your lot because you have no self-control. On the other hand, a person who keeps calm and displays patience and politeness in adversity will win respect and, in most cases, assistance.

Remember the Golden Rule: **BE PATIENT**

Tim Lindsey & Julia Read, 1994
Revised by Helen Pausacker & Tim Lindsey, 2000 and 2005