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History

IN THE BEGINNING

The life of Indonesia is a tale of discovery, oppression and liberation, so it's both impressive and perplexing to see the nation's history displayed in a hokey diorama at Jakarta's National Monument (p107). The exhibit even includes Indonesia's first inhabitant, Java Man *(Pithecanthropus erectus),* who crossed land bridges to Java over one million years ago. Java Man then became extinct or mingled with later migrations. Indonesians today are, like Malaysians and Filipinos, of Malay origin and are the descendants of migrants that arrived around 4000 BC. The discovery in 2003 of a small skeleton, nicknamed 'the hobbit', in Flores added a new piece to Indonesia's – and, indeed, the world's – evolutionary jigsaw (p552).

The Dongson culture, which originated in Vietnam and southern China around 1000 BC, spread to Indonesia, bringing irrigated rice-growing techniques, husbandry skills, buffalo sacrifice rituals, bronze casting, the custom of erecting megaliths, and ikat weaving methods. Some of these practices survive today in the Batak areas of Sumatra, Tana Toraja in Sulawesi, parts of Kalimantan, and Nusa Tenggara. By 700 BC, Indonesia was dotted with permanent villages where life was linked to rice production.

These early Indonesians were animists, believing all objects had a life force or soul. The spirits of the dead had to be honoured, as they could still help the living and influence natural events, while evil spirits had to be placated with offerings and ceremonies. As there was a belief in the afterlife, weapons and utensils were left in tombs for use in the next world.

By the 1st century AD, small kingdoms, little more than collections of villages subservient to petty chieftains, evolved in Java. The island's constant hot temperature, plentiful rainfall and volcanic soil was ideal for wet-field rice cultivation. The organisation this required may explain why the Javanese developed a seemingly more feudal society than the other islands. (Dry-field rice cultivation is much simpler, requiring no elaborate social structure to support it.)

How Hinduism and Buddhism arrived in Indonesia is not certain. The oldest works of Hindu art in Indonesia (statues from the 3rd century AD) were found in Sulawesi and Sumatra. One theory suggests that the developing courts invited Brahman priests from India to advise on spirituality and ritual, thereby providing occult status to those in control.

Tempo Interactive (www.tempointeractive.com) is one of Indonesia's most respected magazines and provides good news-articles in English.

Trade, established by south Indians, was another likely religious inroad. By the 1st century AD, Indonesia's location on the sea routes between India and China was proving integral to trade development between these two civilisations. Though Indonesia had its own products to trade, such as spices, gold and benzoin (an aromatic gum valued by the Chinese), it owed its importance to its geographical position at the crossroads of sea trade.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

The reign of King Hayam Wuruk (literally meaning 'Rotting Chicken') and Prime Minister Gajah Mada (literally 'Rutting Elephant') of the Majapahit kingdom is usually referred to as a 'golden age' of Indonesia. As well as controlling strategic regions of the archipelago, the kingdom is said to have maintained relations internationally. One account, by the court poet Prapanca, claims the kingdom maintained regular relations with China, Cambodia, Annam (now part of Vietnam) and Siam (now Thailand).

EARLY KINGDOMS

The Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Sriwijaya rose in Sumatra during the 7th century AD. It was the first major Indonesian commercial sea power able to control much of the trade in Southeast Asia by virtue of being located on the Strait of Melaka. Merchants from Arabia, Persia and India brought goods to Sriwijaya's coastal cities in exchange for goods from China and local products.

The Buddhist Sailendra dynasty and the Hindu Mataram dynasty flourished in Central Java between the 8th and 10th centuries. While Sriwijaya's wealth came from trade, Javanese kingdoms like Mataram (in the region of what is now Solo) had far more human labour at their disposal and developed as agrarian societies. These kingdoms absorbed Indian influences and left magnificent structures such as the Buddhist monument at Borobudur (p167) and the Hindu temples of Prambanan (p190).

At the end of the 10th century, the Mataram kingdom mysteriously declined. The centre of power shifted from Central to East Java and it was a period when Hinduism and Buddhism were syncretised and when Javanese culture began to come into its own. A series of kingdoms held sway until the 1294 rise of the Majapahit kingdom, which grew to prominence during the reign of Hayam Wuruk from 1350 to 1389. Its territorial expansion can be credited to brilliant military commander Gajah Mada, who helped the kingdom claim control over much of the archipelago, exerting suzerainty over smaller kingdoms and extracting trading rights from them (see boxed text, above). After Hayam Wuruk's death in 1389, the kingdom began a steady decline.

ISLAM

The first Islamic inscriptions found in Indonesia date from the 11th century, and there may have been Muslims in the Majapahit court. Islam really first took hold in northern Sumatra, where Arab traders had settled by the 13th century.

From the 15th and 16th centuries, Indonesian rulers made Islam the state religion. It was, however, superimposed on the prevailing mix of Hinduism and animism to produce the hybrid religion that is followed in much of Indonesia today.

In 1292, Marco Polo visited Aceh and noted that the inhabitants had already converted to Islam.

By the 15th century, the trading kingdom of Melaka (on the Malay Peninsula) was reaching the height of its power and had embraced Islam. Its influence strengthened the spread of Islam through the archipelago.

By the time of the collapse of the Majapahit kingdom in the early 1500s, many of its satellite kingdoms had already declared themselves

TIMELINE

1 million BC	4000 BC	1st century AD	7th century
Indonesian archipelago already inhabited by 'Java Man'	Malay people begin to migrate from Southeast Asia	Small kingdoms established in Java	Sumatran Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Sriwijaya begins its rise

independent Islamic states. Much of their wealth came from being transhipment points for the spice trade, and Islam followed the trade routes across the archipelago.

By the end of the 16th century, a new sea power had emerged on Sulawesi: the twin principalities of Makassar and Gowa, which had been settled by Malay traders and whose commercial realm spread well beyond the region. In 1607, the explorer Torres met Makassar Muslims on New Guinea.

Makassar fleets visited the northern Australian coast over centuries, introducing Aborigines in the area to metal tools, pottery and tobacco. This legacy is acknowledged in Makassar's Museum Balla Lompoa.

PORTUGUESE ARRIVAL

Marco Polo and a few early missionary travellers aside, the first Europeans to visit Indonesia were the Portuguese, who sought to dominate the valuable spice trade in the spice islands of Maluku. Vasco da Gama had led the first European ships around the Cape of Good Hope to Asia in 1498. The Portuguese had captured Goa in India by 1510, Melaka in 1511, and the following year they arrived in Maluku. Their fortified bases and superior firepower at sea won the Portuguese strategic trading ports stretching from Angola to Maluku.

Soon the Spanish, Dutch and English sent ships to the region in search of wealth. Although they had taken Melaka, the Portuguese soon could not control the growing volume of trade. Banten in West Java became the main port of the region, attracting merchants away from Melaka.

Nathaniel's Nutmeg by Giles Milton offers a fascinating account of the battle to control trade from the Spice Islands.

DUTCH DAYS

Of the newcomers, it was the Dutch who would eventually lay the foundations of the Indonesian state, though their initial efforts were pretty shoddy: an expedition of four ships led by Cornelius de Houtman in 1596 lost half its crew, killed a Javanese prince and lost a ship in the process. Nevertheless, it returned to Holland with enough spices to turn a profit.

Recognising the great potential of East Indies trade, the Dutch government amalgamated competing merchant companies into the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC; United East India Company). This government-run monopoly soon became the main competitor in the spice trade.

The government's intention was to bring military pressure to bear on the Portuguese and Spanish. VOC trading ships were replaced with armed fleets instructed to attack Portuguese bases. By 1605 the VOC had defeated the Portuguese at Tidore and Ambon and occupied the heart of the Spice Islands.

The VOC then looked for a base closer to the shipping lanes of the Melaka and Sunda Straits. The ruler of Jayakarta (now Jakarta) in West Java granted the VOC permission to build a warehouse in 1610, but he also granted the English trading rights. The VOC warehouse became a fort, relations between the VOC and English deteriorated, and skirmishes resulted in a siege of the fort by the English and the Jayakartans. The VOC retaliated, razing the town in 1619. They renamed their new headquarters Batavia.

The founder of this corner of the empire was the imaginative but ruthless Jan Pieterszoon Coen. Among his 'achievements' was the near total extermination of the indigenous population of the Banda Islands

800–1000
Buddhist Sailendra and Hindu Mataram dynasties flourish in Central Java; Borobudur and Prambanan temples are built

1294
Majapahit, the last great Hindu kingdom, founded in East Java

in Maluku. Coen developed plans to make Batavia the centre of intra-Asian trade from Japan to Persia, and to develop spice plantations using Burmese, Madagascan and Chinese labourers.

Although these more grandiose plans failed, he was instrumental in obtaining a VOC monopoly on the spice trade. In 1607 an alliance with the sultan of Ternate in Maluku gave the VOC control over the production of cloves, and the occupation of the Bandas from 1609 to 1621 gave them control of the nutmeg trade.

VOC control grew rapidly: it took Melaka from the Portuguese in 1641, quelled attacks from within Java, secured the Sumatran ports and defeated Makassar in 1667. The VOC policy at this stage was to keep control of trade while avoiding expensive territorial conquests. An accord was established with the king of Mataram, the dominant kingdom in Java. (Despite having the same name, this Islamic kingdom had nothing to do with the Hindu Mataram dynasty.) This accord allowed only VOC ships (or those with permission) to trade with the Spice Islands.

The British, keen to profit from the spice trade, kept control of Pulau Run until 1667. Then they swapped it for a Dutch-controlled island: Manhattan.

Unwillingly at first, but later in leaps and bounds, the VOC progressed from being a trading company to being a colonial master. From the late 1600s Java was beset by wars as the Mataram kingdom fragmented. The VOC was only too willing to lend military support to contenders for the throne, in return for compensation and land concessions. The Third Javanese War of Succession (1746–57) saw Prince Mangkubumi and Mas Said contest the throne of Mataram's King Pakubuwono II. This spelled the end for Mataram, largely because of Pakubuwono II's concessions and capitulation to VOC demands.

In 1755 the VOC divided the Mataram kingdom into two states: Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo). These and other smaller Javanese states were only nominally sovereign; in reality they were dominated by the VOC. Fighting among the princes was halted, and peace was brought to East Java by the forced cessation of invasions and raids from Bali. Thus Java was finally united under a foreign trading company whose army comprised only 1000 Europeans and 2000 Asians.

Despite these dramatic successes, the fortunes of the VOC were soon to decline. After the Dutch–English War of 1780, the VOC spice-trade monopoly was finally broken by the Treaty of Paris which permitted free trade in the East. In addition, trade shifted from spices to Chinese silk and Japanese copper, as well as coffee, tea and sugar, over which it was impossible to establish a monopoly.

An Empire of the East by Norman Lewis visits Indonesia's hot spots (past and present) in travelogue form.

Dutch trading interests gradually centred more on Batavia. The Batavian government became increasingly dependent on customs dues and tolls charged for goods coming into Batavia, and on taxes from the local Javanese population.

Smuggling, illicit trade by company employees, the mounting expense of wars in Java and the cost of administering additional territory acquired after each new treaty all played a part in the decline of the VOC. The company turned to the Dutch government at home for support, and the subsequent investigation of VOC affairs revealed corruption, mismanagement and bankruptcy. In 1799 the VOC was formally wound up, its territorial possessions seized by the Dutch government, and the trading empire became a colonial empire.

16th century
Traders from Portugal start trade in the Spice Islands

1596
Dutch arrive, then return to Holland with lucrative spices

Around 1830, Dutch control was at a crossroads. Trade profits were in decline, the cost of controlling conflicts continued, and when the Dutch lost Belgium in 1830, the home country itself faced bankruptcy. Any government investment in the East Indies now *had* to make quick returns, so the exploitation of Indonesian resources began.

A new governor general, Johannes van den Bosch, fresh from experiences with slave labour in the West Indies, was appointed to make the East Indies pay their way. He succeeded by introducing an agricultural policy called the Culture System. This was a system of government-controlled agriculture or, as Indonesian historians refer to it, Tanam Paksa (Compulsory Planting). Instead of paying land taxes, peasants had to either cultivate government-owned crops on 20% of their land or work in government plantations for nearly 60 days of the year. Much of Java became a Dutch plantation, generating great wealth for the Netherlands. For the Javanese peasantry, this forced-labour system brought hardship and resentment. They were forced to grow crops such as indigo and sugar instead of rice, and famine and epidemics swept through Java in the 1840s. In strong contrast, the Culture System was a boon for the Dutch and the Javanese aristocracy. In the ensuing years, Indonesia supplied most of the world's quinine and pepper, over a third of its rubber, a quarter of its coconut products and almost a fifth of its tea, sugar, coffee and oil. The profits made Java a self-sufficient colony and saved the Netherlands from bankruptcy.

Indonesian farmers were forced to cultivate the indigo plant so the Dutch could sell the extracted dye in Europe, where it fetched a high price.

Public opinion in the Netherlands began to decry the deplorable treatment of Indonesians under the colonial government. In response, the Liberal Period was initiated. From 1870, farmers no longer had to provide export crops, and the Indies were opened to private enterprise, which developed large plantations. As the population increased, less land was available for rice production, thereby bringing further hardship. Meanwhile, Dutch profits grew dramatically. New products such as oil became a valuable export due to Europe's industrial demands. As Dutch commercial interests expanded throughout the archipelago, so did the need to protect them. More and more territory was taken under direct control of the Dutch government.

During the 1800s, the Dutch set up plantations of the Cinchona tree, the bark of which contains quinine: the most effective antimalarial of the time.

A new approach to colonial government, known as the Ethical Period, was introduced in 1901. Under this policy it was the Dutch government's duty to further programmes of health, education and other societal initiatives. Direct government control was exerted on the outer islands. Minor rebellions broke out everywhere, from Sumatra to Timor, but these were easily crushed and the Dutch took control from traditional leaders, thus establishing a true Indies empire for the first time.

BATTLEGROUND INDONESIA

From the time the first Dutch ships arrived in 1596 to the declaration of independence in 1945, Dutch rule was tenuous. Fighting continuously flared up in both Java and Sumatra, as well as elsewhere in the archipelago. Between 1846 and 1849, expeditions were sent to Bali in the first attempts to subjugate the island. In southeastern Borneo, the violent Banjarmasin War (1859–63) saw the Dutch defeat the reigning sultan. The longest and most devastating war was in Aceh, lasting 35 years from the Dutch invasion in 1873 until Aceh's guerrilla leaders surrendered in 1908. Even into the 20th century, Dutch control remained incomplete. They only took control of southwestern Sulawesi and Bali in 1906, and Bird's Head Peninsula of West New Guinea didn't come under Dutch administration until 1920 (see Indonesia's Separatist Conflicts, p54).

New policies were implemented, including the *transmigrasi* (transmigration) of farmers from heavily populated Java to lightly populated islands. There were also plans for improved communications, agriculture, industrialisation and the protection of native industry. Other policies aimed to give greater autonomy to the colonial government and lessen control from the Netherlands, as well as give more power to local governments within the archipelago.

These humanitarian policies were laudable but ultimately inadequate: public health funding was simply not enough, and while education opportunities for some upper and middle class Indonesians increased, the vast majority remained illiterate. Though primary schools were established and education was theoretically open to all, by 1930 only 8% of school-age children received an education. Industrialisation was never seriously implemented and Indonesia remained an agricultural colony.

'By 1930 only 8% of school-age children received an education'

BRITISH OCCUPATION & THE JAVA WAR

France occupied Holland during the Napoleonic Wars and in 1811 the British occupied parts of the Dutch East Indies, including Java. Control was restored to the Dutch in 1816 and a treaty was signed in 1824 under which the British exchanged Bengkulu in Sumatra for Dutch-controlled Melaka on the Malay Peninsula. While the two European powers may have settled their differences, the Indonesians were far from happy with European control. There were a number of wars and insurrections during this time; the most prolonged struggles were the Paderi War in Sumatra (1821–38) and the Java War (1825–30) led by Pangeran (Prince) Diponegoro. The eldest son of the sultan of Yogyakarta, Diponegoro had recently been passed over for succession to the throne, in favour of a younger claimant. Having bided his time, Diponegoro eventually vanished from court and in 1825 launched a guerrilla war against the Dutch. The courts of Yogyakarta and Solo largely remained loyal to the Dutch, but many members of the Javanese aristocracy supported the rebellion. Diponegoro had received mystical signs that convinced him he was the divinely appointed future king of Java. News spread among the people that he was the long-prophesied Ratu Adil (the Just King) who would free them from colonial oppression.

The rebellion ended in 1830 when the Dutch tricked Diponegoro into a peace negotiation, arrested him and then exiled him to Sulawesi. The five-year war had cost the lives of 8000 European and 7000 Indonesian soldiers of the Dutch army. At least 200,000 Javanese died, most from famine and disease. Diponegoro is commemorated throughout Indonesia by having a major street in most cities and towns named after him.

INDONESIAN NATIONALISM

Although the Ethical Period failed to deliver widespread education, it did provide a Dutch education for the children of the Indonesian elite, and with that came Western political ideas of freedom and democracy.

1746–57
Third Javanese War of Succession brings an end to Mataram dynasty

1799
Dutch government establishes colonial power over Indonesia

1821–38
Paderi War fought in Sumatra

1825–30
Java War fought by Diponegoro

However, the first seeds of Indonesian nationalism were sown by Islamic movements.

Sarekat Islam (SI), an early nationalist movement founded in 1909 by Islamic traders, rallied Indonesian Muslims under the banner of Islam, initially to combat Chinese influence in the batik trade but soon widening its agenda to take a more radical anticolonial stance.

The Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia; PKI) began as a splinter group within SI. However, its members were expelled by SI and soon developed the PKI into Indonesia's first fully fledged pro-independence party inspired by European politics. It was formed in 1920 and found support among workers in the industrial cities. In 1926 the PKI attempted an uprising, carrying out isolated insurrections across Java and West Sumatra. The outraged Dutch government arrested and exiled thousands of communists, effectively putting them out of action for the rest of the Dutch occupation.

'The first seeds of Indonesian nationalism were sown by Islamic movements'

Despite Dutch repression, the nationalist movement was finding a unified voice. In a historic announcement in 1928, the All Indonesia Youth Congress proclaimed its Youth Pledge, adopting the notions of one national identity (Indonesian), one country (Indonesia) and one language (Bahasa Indonesia). In Bandung in 1929, Soekarno founded the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI). It became the most significant nationalist organisation and was the first secular party devoted primarily to independence.

Soekarno was educated in East Java and Europe before studying at the Bandung Institute of Technology. Bandung was a hotbed of political intellectualism and Soekarno was widely influenced by Javanese, Western, Islamic and socialist ideals. He blended these influences towards a national ideology.

Soekarno was soon arrested and a virtual ban placed on the PNI. Nationalist sentiment remained high during the 1930s, but with many nationalist leaders in jail or exiled, independence seemed a long way off. Even when Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, the colonial government in exile was determined to hold fast.

All was to change when the Japanese forces stormed through Southeast Asia. Following the fall of Singapore, many Europeans fled to Australia, and the Dutch colonial government abandoned their colony.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION & THE BATTLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

The Japanese Imperial Army marched into Batavia on 5 March 1942, carrying the red and white Indonesian flag alongside that of the Japanese rising sun. The city's name was changed to Jakarta, Europeans were arrested and all signs of the former Dutch masters eliminated.

Though the Japanese were greeted as liberators, public opinion turned against them as the war wore on and Indonesians were expected to endure more hardships for the war effort.

The Japanese gained a reputation as cruel masters, but they also gave Indonesians more responsibility and – for the first time – participation in government. The Japanese also gave prominence to nationalist leaders, such as Soekarno and Mohammed Hatta, and trained youth militias to defend the country. Apart from instilling in Indonesia a military psyche

1840s
Famine and epidemics sweep Java

1883
Krakatau erupts 26 August

STREET NAMES & INDONESIAN HEROES

In every city, town and village in Indonesia, streets are named after Indonesian heroes who helped fight the Dutch. Here are some of the more well known:

Bonjol, Imam (1772–1864) An important West Sumatran Islamic leader, he inspired resistance against the Dutch in the Paderi War of 1821–38.

Diponegoro, Pangeran (1785–1855) This prince from Yogyakarta was a leader in the Java War (1825–30) against the Dutch.

Gajah Mada (d 1364) Prime minister in the Javanese Majapahit kingdom in the 14th century, Gajah Mada was also a brilliant military commander. He helped defeat rebels who fought King Jayanegara (but later arranged the king's murder because he took Gajah Mada's wife!).

Hatta, Mohammed (1902–80) A Sumatran, Hatta was arrested in 1927 for promoting resistance against the Dutch. On 17 August 1945 he declared Indonesian independence with Soekarno and served as vice president and/or prime minister from 1945 to 1956.

Monginsidi, Wolter (1925–49) During the revolution, the Dutch captured and shot 24-year-old Monginsidi who had inspired the youth of Sulawesi to fight the colonialists.

Sisingamangaraja (1849–1907) The last of a long line of Batak kings who had ruled since the 16th century; Sisingamangaraja's ancestors were spiritual leaders, but he became a leader of the resistance against the Dutch, which cost him his life.

Subroto, Gatot (1907–62) This hero fought for Indonesian independence in the 1940s and helped quell communist rebels in 1948. He became military governor of Surakarta, then a general, and later helped found Indonesia's national defence academy.

Sudarso, Yos (1925–62) A senior naval officer, Sudarso died when his ship was sunk by the Dutch during the 'liberation' of Irian Jaya (now Papua).

Sudirman (1916–50) Between 1945 and 1950 General Sudirman led the resistance against the Dutch and was Indonesia's first commander in chief.

Syahrir, Sutan (1909–66) Syahrir was a leading nationalist leader against the Dutch in Java in the 1930s. During WWII he refused to cooperate with the Japanese. He served as prime minister from 1945 to 1947 and led Indonesia's delegation in negotiating independence from the Dutch.

Thamrin, Mohammed (1894–1941) This hero was a nationalist leader and politician in the 1920s and '30s.

that has endured in Indonesian politics, these militias gave rise to the *pemuda* (youth groups) of the independence movement, many of whom would later join the Republican army.

As the war ended, Soekarno and Hatta were by far the most popular nationalist leaders. In August 1945 they were kidnapped and pressured by radical *pemuda* to declare independence before the Dutch could return. On 17 August 1945, with tacit Japanese backing, Soekarno proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, from his Jakarta home.

Revolt In Paradise by Scottish-American author K'tut Tantri is a gripping portrayal of her involvement in Indonesia's fight for independence. Timothy Lindsey's *The Romance of K'tut Tantri and Indonesia* offers great background to the original.

Indonesians rejoiced, but the Netherlands refused to accept the proclamation and still claimed sovereignty over Indonesia. British troops entered Java in October 1945 to accept the surrender of the Japanese. Under British auspices, Dutch troops gradually returned to Indonesia and it became obvious that independence would have to be fought for.

Clashes broke out with the new Republican army and came to a head in the bloody Battle for Surabaya. The situation deteriorated when British Indian troops landed in the city. When General Mallaby, leader of the British forces, was killed by a bomb, the British launched a bloody retribution. On 10 November (now celebrated as Heroes Day) the British

1920
The Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia; PKI) is formed

1942
Japanese Imperial Army marches into Batavia on 5 March

PANCASILA – THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

In government buildings, on highway markers, at the end of TV broadcasts and on school uniforms you'll see the *garuda,* Indonesia's mythical bird and national symbol. On its breast are the five symbols of the Pancasila (five principles), the philosophical doctrine of Indonesia, which was first expounded by Soekarno in 1945:

Star Represents faith in God, whether Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu or any other religion.
Chain Represents humanity within Indonesia and its links to humankind as a whole.
Banyan tree Represents nationalism and promoting unity between Indonesia's many ethnic groups.
Buffalo Symbolises representative government.
Rice and cotton Represents social justice.

began to take the city under cover of air attacks. Thousands of Indonesians died, the population fled to the countryside, and the poorly armed Republican forces fought a pitched battle for three weeks. The brutal retaliation of the British and the spirited defence of Surabaya by Republicans galvanised Indonesian support and helped turn world opinion.

The Dutch dream of easy reoccupation was shattered, while the British were keen to extricate themselves from military action and broker a peace agreement. The last British troops left in November 1946, by which time 55,000 Dutch troops had landed in Java. Indonesian Republican officials were imprisoned, and bombing raids on Palembang and Medan in Sumatra prepared the way for the Dutch occupation of these cities. In southern Sulawesi, Dutch Captain Westerling was accused of pacifying the region – by murdering 40,000 Indonesians in a few weeks. Elsewhere, the Dutch were attempting to form puppet states among the more amenable ethnic groups.

In Jakarta the Republican government, with Soekarno as president and Hatta as vice president, tried to maintain calm. Meanwhile, *pemuda* advocating armed struggle saw the old leadership as prevaricating and betraying the revolution.

Outbreaks occurred across the country, and Soekarno and Hatta were outmanoeuvred in the Republican government. A Sumatran socialist, Sultan Syahrir, became prime minister and, as the Dutch assumed control in Jakarta, the Republicans moved their capital to Yogyakarta. Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, who was to become Yogyakarta's most revered and able sultan, played a leading role in the revolution.

Inside Indonesia (www.insideindonesia.org) provides excellent articles covering everything from power plays within the army to art-house films.

The battle for independence wavered between warfare and diplomacy. Under the Linggarjati Agreement of November 1946, the Dutch recognised the Republican government and both sides agreed to work towards an Indonesian federation under a Dutch commonwealth. The agreement was soon swept aside as war escalated. The Dutch mounted a large offensive in July 1947, causing the UN to step in.

During these uncertain times, the main forces in Indonesian politics regrouped: the communist PKI, Soekarno's PNI, and the Islamic parties of Masyumi and Nahdatul Ulama. The army also emerged as a force, though it was split by many factions. The Republicans were far from united, and in Java civil war threatened to erupt when in 1948 the PKI staged rebellions in Surakarta (Solo) and Madiun. In a tense threat to the revolution, Soekarno galvanised opposition to the communists, who were massacred by army forces.

In February 1948 the Dutch launched another full-scale attack on the Republicans, breaking the UN agreement and turning world opinion. Under pressure from the USA, which threatened to withdraw its postwar aid to the Netherlands, and a growing realisation at home that this was an unwinnable war, the Dutch negotiated for independence. On 27 December 1949 the Indonesian flag was raised at Jakarta's Istana Merdeka (Freedom Palace) as power was officially handed over.

1945 Soekarno proclaims independence of the Republic of Indonesia on 17 August

1949 Indonesian flag raised at Jakarta's Istana Merdeka; power officially handed over

ECONOMIC DEPRESSION & DISUNITY

In the first years of independence, the threat of external attacks by the Dutch helped keep the nationalists united. However, with the Dutch gone, divisions in Indonesian society began to appear. Soekarno had tried to hammer out the principles of Indonesian unity in his Pancasila speech of 1945 (see opposite) but while these, as he said, may have been 'the highest common factor and the lowest common multiple of Indonesian thought', divisions could not be swept away by a single speech. Regional differences in customs, morals, traditions and religion, the impact of Christianity and Marxism, and fears of political domination by the Javanese all contributed to disunity.

At the entrance to a neighbourhood or village you may see an arch with the words 'Dirgahayu RI' painted across it. This translates as 'Long live the Republic of Indonesia' and the arch has been built to celebrate Independence Day.

Various separatist movements battled the new republic. They included the militant Darul Islam (Islamic Domain), which proclaimed an Islamic State of Indonesia and waged guerrilla warfare in West Java and south Sulawesi from 1948 to 1962. In Maluku, Ambonese members of the former Royal Dutch Indies Army tried to establish an independent republic.

Against this background lay the sorry state of the conflict-battered economy and divisions in the leadership. The population was increasing but food production was low and the export economy was damaged, as many plantations had been destroyed during the war. Illiteracy was high and there was a dearth of skilled workers. Inflation was chronic and smuggling was costing the government badly needed foreign currency.

On top of this, political parties proliferated and there were continuous deals brokered between parties for a share of cabinet seats. This resulted in a rapid turnover of coalition governments: 17 cabinets over 13 years.

GRASS ROOTS GOVERNANCE

Below the president, Indonesia's government hierarchy involves governors, district heads and sub-district heads. But for many Indonesians the most relevant government representation is at the village level. Here, local affairs are handled by an elected *lurah* or *kepala desa* (both words mean 'village chief'), though often the position of *lurah* is hereditary. The *lurah* is the person to see if you wander into a village and need to spend the night, or resolve a problem.

The village is the main social unit, providing welfare, support and guidance. If fire destroys a house, or a village needs a new well, then everyone pitches in. This grass-roots system of mutual help is called *gotong-royong*. The main local community organisation is the *rukun tetangga* (neighbourhood association). Among other tasks, it registers families and organises neighbourhood security. A *pos kamling* (security post), which doubles as an informal meeting point, can be found at the centre of most villages – just look for a raised platform and wooden drum.

1958 Rebellions, backed by the CIA, UK and Australia, break out in Sumatra and Sulawesi

1963 Irian Jaya (Papua) formally made a province of Indonesia

Frequently postponed national elections were finally held in 1955 and the PNI – regarded as Soekarno's party – narrowly topped the poll. There was a dramatic increase in support for the PKI but no party managed more than a quarter of the votes, and so short-lived coalitions continued.

SOEKARNO'S RULE

By 1956 President Soekarno was openly criticising parliamentary democracy, stating that it was 'based upon inherent conflict'. He sought a system based on the traditional Indonesian village system of discussion and consensus, which occurred under the guidance of village elders. He proposed the threefold division – *nasionalisme* (nationalism), *agama* (religion) and *komunisme* (communism) – be blended into a cooperative Nas-A-Kom government, thereby appeasing the main factions of Indonesian politics: the army, Islamic groups and the communists.

In February 1957, with military support, Soekarno proclaimed 'guided democracy' and proposed a cabinet representing all the political parties of importance (including the PKI). For the next 40 years, Western-style, party-based democracy was finished in Indonesia, though the parties were not abolished.

Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), starring Mel Gibson and Sigourney Weaver, is set in Jakarta during the tumultuous Soekarno years.

In 1958, rebellions backed by the CIA, with support from the UK and Australian governments, broke out in Sumatra and Sulawesi. These were a reaction against Soekarno's usurpation of power, the growing influence of the PKI and the corruption and mismanagement of the central government. They were also a reaction against Java, whose leaders and interests dominated Indonesia despite the fact that other islands provided most of the country's export income.

The rebellions were put down by mid-1958, though guerrilla activity continued for three years. Rebel leaders were granted amnesty but their political parties were banned. Some of the early nationalist leaders, such as former prime minister Syahrir, were discredited or arrested.

Soekarno now set about reorganising the political system to give himself *real* power. In 1960 the elected parliament was dissolved and replaced by a parliament appointed by, and subject to the will of, the president. The Supreme Advisory Council, another non-elected body, became the chief policy-making body. A national front, set up to 'mobilise the revolutionary forces of the people', was presided over by the president and became a useful adjunct to government in organising 'demonstrations'.

Soekarno had set Indonesia on a course of stormy nationalism. His speeches were those of a romantic revolutionary, which held his people spellbound. He united them against a common external threat, and *konfrontasi* became the buzz word as Indonesia confronted Malaysia (and its imperialist backer, the UK), the USA and, indeed, the whole Western world.

Soekarno believed that Asia had been humiliated by the West and that Indonesia remained threatened by the remnants of Western imperialism: the British and their new client-state of Malaysia, the hated Dutch who continued to occupy Irian Jaya (now Papua) and the Americans and their military bases in the Philippines.

First on the agenda was Irian Jaya, which Indonesia had always claimed on the basis that it had been part of the Dutch East Indies. An arms agreement with the Soviet Union in 1960 enabled the Indonesians to begin a diplomatic and military confrontation with the Dutch over the disputed territory, though it was US pressure on the Dutch that finally led to the Indonesian takeover in 1963.

In the same year, Indonesia embarked on *konfrontasi* with the new nation of Malaysia. The northern states in Borneo, which bordered on Indonesian Kalimantan, wavered in their desire to join Malaysia. Indonesia saw itself as the rightful leader of the Malay peoples and supported an attempted revolution in Brunei. The Indonesian army mounted offensives along the Kalimantan–Malaysia border and the PKI demonstrated in the streets in Jakarta.

The West became increasingly alarmed at Indonesia's foreign policy. Foreign aid dried up after the USA withdrew its assistance because of *konfrontasi*. The cash-strapped government abolished many subsidies, leading to massive increases in public transport, electricity, water and postal charges. Economic plans had failed miserably and inflation was running at 500%.

Despite achieving national unity, Soekarno could not create a viable economic system to lift Indonesia out of poverty. What's more, great funds were spent on symbols designed to celebrate Indonesia's identity, including Jakarta's National Monument and the massive Mesjid Istiqlal. Unable to advance from revolution to rebuilding, Soekarno's monuments became substitutes for real development.

As *konfrontasi* alienated Western nations, Indonesia came to depend more on support from the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, from communist China. Meanwhile, tensions grew between the Indonesian Army and the PKI.

In 1965, Indonesia's PKI was the largest communist party in the world outside the Soviet Union and China.

With the PKI and its affiliate organisations claiming membership of 20 million, Soekarno realised he had to give the communists recognition in his government. Increasingly, the PKI gained influence ahead of the army, which had been the main power base of Indonesian politics since independence.

'Guided Democracy' under Soekarno was marked by an effort to give peasants better social conditions, but attempts to give tenant farmers a fairer share of their rice crops and to redistribute land led to more class conflict. The PKI pushed for reforms and encouraged peasants to seize land without waiting for decisions from land reform committees. In 1964 these tactics led to violent clashes in Central and East Java and Bali.

SOEKARNO'S CULT OF PERSONALITY

Soekarno, popularly referred to as '*bung* (older brother) Karno', was a man of the people who carried the dreams and aspirations of his nation and dared to take on the West. Soekarno is best remembered for his flamboyance and his contradictions. He was a noted womaniser, a practising Muslim and a Marxist, yet he was also very much a mystic in the Javanese tradition. He somehow held these elements together, as well as Indonesia's inherent cultural differences, through the force of his oratory and personality.

Soekarno often spoke as if he held absolute power, but his position depended on his ability to maintain a balance between the nation's main political players, primarily the army and the PKI.

1965 Six generals executed in an attempted coup; hundreds of thousands of communists and sympathisers are slaughtered or imprisoned

1968 Soeharto 'elected' as president

1969 Papua becomes part of Indonesia after a controversial UN-certified referendum

1970 Soekarno dies

Tension continued to grow between the PKI and the army. In a visit to Jakarta in April 1965, Zhou Enlai (premier of China) proposed the government build an armed people's militia, independent of the armed forces. Soekarno supported this proposal to arm the communists, the army opposed it, and rumours of an army takeover became rife.

On the night of 30 September 1965, six of Indonesia's top generals were taken from their Jakarta homes and executed in an attempted coup. Led by Colonel Untung of the palace guard and backed by elements of the armed forces, the insurgents took up positions around the presidential palace and later seized the national radio station. The group claimed they had acted against a plot organised by the generals to overthrow the president.

This exercise appears to have had little or no coordination in the rest of the country. Within a few hours of the coup, General Soeharto, head of the army's Strategic Reserve, was able to mobilise army forces to undertake counteraction. By the following evening it was clear the coup had failed.

Exactly who had organised the coup or what it had set out to achieve remains shrouded in mystery. The Indonesian army asserted that the PKI plotted the coup and used discontented army officers to carry it out. Another theory claims it was an internal army affair led by younger officers against the older leadership. Certainly, civilians from the PKI's People's Youth organisation accompanied the army battalions that seized the generals, but whatever the PKI's real role in the coup, the effect on its fortunes was devastating.

Soeharto orchestrated a countercoup, and an anticommunism purge swept Indonesia. Hundreds of thousands of communists and their sympathisers were slaughtered or imprisoned, primarily in Java and Bali. The party and its affiliates were banned and its leaders were killed, imprisoned or went into hiding.

Following the army's lead, anticommunist civilians went on the rampage. In Java, where long-simmering tensions between pro-Islamic and pro-communist factions erupted in the villages, both sides believed that their opponents had drawn up death lists to be carried out when they achieved power. The anticommunists, with encouragement from the government and even Western embassies, carried out their list of executions. On top of this uncontrolled slaughter there were violent demonstrations in Jakarta by pro- and anti-Soekarno groups. Also, perhaps as many as 250,000 people were arrested and sent without trial to prison camps for alleged involvement in the coup.

There are two great history books with the same name: *A History of Modern Indonesia*. One is by MC Ricklefs and offers a very readable account with extra focus on Java. The other, by Adrian Vickers, draws on the life of Pramoedya to tell the nation's story.

Estimates of the post-coup death toll vary widely. Adam Malik, who was to become Soeharto's foreign minister, said that a 'fair figure' was 160,000. Independent commentators estimate the figure to be closer to 500,000.

Soeharto took over leadership of the armed forces and set about manoeuvring Soekarno from power. Despite the chaos, Soekarno continued as president, and as he still had supporters in the armed forces it seemed unlikely that he would voluntarily resign. However, on 11 March 1966, after troops loyal to Soeharto surrounded the Presidential Palace, Soekarno signed the 11 March Order giving Soeharto the power to restore order. While always deferring to the name of Soekarno, Soeharto rapidly consolidated his power. The PKI was officially banned. Pro-Soekarno soldiers and a number of cabinet ministers were arrested. A new six-man inner cabinet, which included Soeharto and two of his nominees, Adam Malik and Sultan Hamengkubuwono of Yogyakarta, was formed.

Soeharto then launched a campaign of intimidation to blunt any grass-roots opposition. Thousands of public servants were dismissed as PKI sympathisers, putting thousands more in fear of losing their jobs.

By 1967 Soeharto was firmly enough entrenched to finally cut Soekarno adrift. The People's Consultative Congress, following the arrest of many of its members and an infusion of Soeharto appointees, relieved Soekarno of all power and, on 27 March 1968, it 'elected' Soeharto as president.

1975 Indonesia invades East Timor

1975 Taman Mini Indonesia (Jakarta's leisure park) opens

SOEHARTO & THE NEW ORDER

With Soekarno's 'Guided Democracy' no more; the governing label became 'The New Order'. Soeharto set to mending rifts with the West by changing tack on foreign policy and attracting foreign investment. Democracy was paid lip service in the 1971 general elections with Soeharto's Golkar Party a sure bet: other parties were banned, candidates disqualified and voters disenfranchised. Predictably, Golkar swept to power. The new People's Consultative Congress included 207 Soeharto appointments and 276 officers from the armed forces.

Soeharto then enforced the merger of other political parties. The four Islamic parties were amalgamated into the Development Unity Party (PPP) and the other parties were formed into the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).

The English-language press is limited mostly to the daily *Jakarta Post*. Coverage can be a little thin, but it does give a useful rundown of events in Jakarta.

With the elimination of the communists and the establishment of a more repressive government, political stability returned to Indonesia. A determined effort to promote national rather than regional identity was largely successful, but often it was at considerable cost to the population. Infamous examples were the 1975 invasion of East Timor and the brutal treatment of separatist guerrillas in Aceh and Irian Jaya. Smaller scale dissent was also managed through a culture of intimidation and imprisonment.

Thanks mainly to an oil boom and new strains of rice ('the Green Revolution'), the lot of many Indonesians improved considerably under Soeharto. But while life became more tolerable for the poor, the rich became much richer. Corruption was rife at all levels of society, and Indonesian business culture came to revolve around kickbacks and bribes. The most obvious recipients of the new wealth were Soeharto's business associates and his family. They acquired huge business empires, along with prime government contracts.

The Invisible Palace by Jose Manuel Tesoro is a investigative account of the 1996 murder of a journalist. The gripping novel also examines ancient Javanese belief systems that are still prevalent today.

Grass-roots grumblings increased along with disparity of wealth. The political opposition, particularly the PDI, grew in stature and popularity. So much so that in 1996 the government helped engineer a split in the PDI, resulting in its popular leader Megawati Soekarnoputri (Soekarno's daughter) being dumped. PDI supporters rioted in Jakarta, but it was only a taste of things to come.

An ageing Soeharto made noises about retirement, but without an obvious successor (and with the local and international business community

1983–84 Nearly 10,000 killed as part of the government's anticrime initiative

1991–93 Demonstrators killed in Dili; Xanana Gusmao captured; Irian Jaya rebel leader Marthen Luther Prawar killed

ARMED FORCES

Whether celebrated or abhorred, Indonesia's military has played in integral part in forging Indonesia's identity. The military's psyche developed during WWII, when the Japanese organised village militias to fight in the event of reoccupation. When the Dutch returned, independence was gained only after a bloody war waged by these village armies united under the banner of the new republic.

The leaders of Indonesia's new army became heroes: their achievements are endlessly retold in schools and their names now adorn Indonesian streets (p43). Indonesia's history has become a military one, and even obscure leaders of ancient, easily crushed peasant rebellions have become national heroes. The military has been a part of the political process since independence, and it hardly regards itself as having usurped power that somehow 'rightfully' belongs to civilians.

Under Soekarno, powers and aspirations of the military intensified. In 1958 General Nasution expounded the doctrine of *dwifungsi* (dual function) to justify an expanded military role in government. This stated that it not only played a security role, it also had a social and political role as 'one of the many forces in society'.

Following the 1965 coup, the military became not just one of many forces in society, but a dominant one. Its support was now necessary for power. As well as having automatic representation in parliament, the military was involved in local government right down to the village level.

The military may now have lost political representation, nevertheless political leaders continue to show it deference. Criticism of military influence continues, especially from student groups who have often borne the brunt of the military's law-and-order campaigns. Others consider it the only force that can keep Indonesia together in the face of disintegration. It's a position the military has been seen to exploit: evidence often arises implicating the military in inciting (then quelling) violence so as to justify its prominent position.

so used to Indonesia's brand of crony capitalism) the government reaffirmed his leadership.

THE FALL OF SOEHARTO

All was to change when the 1997 Asian currency crisis spilled over into Indonesia, savaging the country's economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) pledged financial backing in return for reforms such as the abolition of government subsidies on food and fuel, the deregulation of monopolies (such as the clove monopoly controlled by Soeharto's son, Tommy) and the abandonment of grandiose government-sponsored industries, many of which were also controlled by 'Soeharto Family Inc'.

Rising prices resulted in sporadic riots as the people, already hard hit by the monetary crisis, looted shops owned by the minority ethnic Chinese, a significant business class that became the scapegoat for this sudden loss of faith in the economy.

Foreign debt and inflation continued to skyrocket, many banks collapsed, companies faced bankruptcy and millions lost their jobs. The swiftness and scope of the human tragedy is difficult to comprehend. Substantial progress in reducing poverty – for so long the pride and excuse of authoritarian government – was rapidly reversed. In just one year the number of Indonesians living below the poverty line jumped from 20 million to 100 million (nearly 50% of the populace).

1997

Financial markets savage the rupiah during Asian currency crisis

1998

Soeharto re-elected as president; antigovernment rallies resume; Soeharto resigns; Habibie becomes third president

At the same time, Soeharto was up for re-election. This was a foregone conclusion but, as never before, critics from the Islamic parties, opposition groups and especially student demonstrators demanded that he step down.

Soeharto's re-election in February 1998 seemed to at least promise political certainty, and the government moved towards fulfilling IMF demands. The rupiah stabilised but demands for political reform continued as students demonstrated across the country. Initially, these demonstrations were confined to campuses, but in April violent rioting erupted in the streets of Medan, then other cities. Adding to the hardship and furthering unrest, the government announced fuel and electricity price rises, as demanded by the IMF.

The word *sembako* refers to Indonesia's nine essential ingredients: rice, sugar, eggs, meat, flour, corn, fuel, cooking oil and salt. When any of these become unavailable or more costly, repercussions can be felt right through to the presidency.

Throughout the turmoil the army reiterated its support for the government. Tanks and army trucks appeared on the streets, but demands for Soeharto's resignation increased. Student demonstrations would not go away and on 12 May, with Soeharto away on a visit to Cairo, soldiers swapped rubber bullets for live ammunition and shot dead four students at Trisakti University in Jakarta.

Jakarta erupted – in three days of rioting and looting, over 6000 buildings in the city were damaged or destroyed and an estimated 1200 people died. Law and order collapsed. The army was often ineffectual as soldiers looked on, trying to portray the army as the people's ally. Hardest hit were the Chinese, whose businesses were looted and destroyed – shocking tales of rape and murder emerged after the riots. Mounting evidence pointed to General Prabowo, Soeharto's son-in-law, as having used military goon squads to spearhead attacks on Chinese shops and Chinese women. He did this to create a situation where Soeharto could once more 'save the nation'. However, Prabowo's plan backfired and, following Soeharto's fall, he was dismissed from the army and sent into exile for a few years.

Sidelines by *Tempo* editor Goenawan Mohamad offers readers intriguing vignettes of daily life in an often tumultuous country.

The riots subsided but anti-Soeharto demonstrations increased while the army threatened to shoot on sight. The country looked on, fearing massive bloodshed. Still Soeharto clung to the presidency, but with the writing on the wall, some of his own ministers called for his resignation. Soeharto finally stepped down on 21 May, ending 32 years of rule.

THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY

In May 1998 Vice President BJ Habibie was sworn in, and quickly set about making the right noises on reform by releasing political prisoners and promising elections. Habibie tried to cultivate an image of himself as a man of the people, but as a long-standing minister and close friend of Soeharto, his credentials were always going to be questioned.

The economy was still in tatters and the rupiah plumbed new depths, but Indonesia embraced a new era of political openness. The government talked about *reformasi* (reform), but at the same time tried to ban demonstrations and reaffirmed the role of the army in Indonesian politics.

The army's reputation was severely tarnished. Not only had it started the riots by shooting students, then failed to contain the rioting, evidence emerged that military factions had indeed incited the rioting. The newly vocal press also exposed army killings in Aceh and the abduction and murder of opposition activists.

1999

Indonesian government relinquishes claim to East Timor after referendum and violence

1999

Abdurrahman Wahid named as president, Megawati as vice president

IMF money flowed into Indonesia but hardship ensued. Some people sold their meagre possessions to buy food while others simply stole what they needed. Old grudges resurfaced during these uncertain times and the Chinese continued to suffer as scapegoats.

In November 1998 the Indonesian parliament met to discuss a new election. Student demands for immediate elections and the abolition of military appointees to parliament were ignored. Three days of skirmishes peaked on 13 November when students marched on parliament. Clashes with the army left 12 dead and hundreds injured. Then disturbances took on an even more worrying trend: a local dispute involving Christians and Muslims resulted in churches being burned in Jakarta. Throughout Indonesia Christians were outraged, and in eastern Indonesia Christians attacked mosques and the minority Islamic community. Riots in West Timor were followed by prolonged Muslim-Christian violence in Maluku and Kalimantan. Instability was also renewed in the separatist-minded regions of Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor.

In early 1999, after continuous refusal to grant East Timor autonomy or independence, President Habibie did an about-turn and prepared a ballot. Despite such a laudable move, pro-Indonesian militia launched a bloody campaign of intimidation, with the tacit backing of the army. Nevertheless, 78.5% of East Timorese voted in favour of independence. Celebrations soon turned to despair as militia groups, orchestrated by elements of the Indonesian military, unleashed a reign of terror that killed up to 2000 unarmed civilians, displaced much of the population and devastated 80% of the country's infrastructure. Three weeks later, an international peacekeeping force entered East Timor to restore order. Thousands of expatriate advisers and soldiers were flown in on massive salaries and allowances while the poverty-stricken Timorese looked on. The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) did bring stability to East Timor, and independence was officially celebrated on 20 May 2002.

Despite the ongoing instability, Indonesia's June 1999 elections were largely a joyous celebration of democracy. In the first free election in over 40 years, Megawati Soekarnoputri was the popular choice for president, but her PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle) could muster only a third of the vote. The Golkar party, without the benefit of a rigged electoral system, had its vote slashed from over 70% to just over 20%.

Although Megawati received more votes, a coalition of other parties had the numbers to deny her the presidency, so on 20 October the People's Consultative Assembly voted in Abdurrahman Wahid as the new president and Megawati as vice president. As head of Nahdatul Ulama (Indonesia's largest Islamic organisation), Wahid already commanded widespread support. However, his moves to reform the government, address corruption and quell conflict in outlying provinces were continually hamstrung by those who opposed such reform. Wahid's effort to bring Soeharto to justice were hindered by a corrupt and timid judiciary, and claims that Soeharto was too ill to stand trial. Wahid's effort to bring peace to such areas as Aceh, Irian Jaya (which he renamed Papua) and Maluku were not helped by an army that seemed to use the conflict as a justification of a continuation of their influence and political presence. Not helped by his failing health, Wahid's 21-month presidency may be seen as a time when the wheels of reform began to turn, but were too often punctured by the powerful few who were set to lose so much as a consequence.

With a unanimous vote in parliament, Megawati Soekarnoputri was sworn in as the fifth president on 23 July 2001. Although stability was restored at the presidential level, her strategy of not rocking the boat meant corruption, human rights abuses and abuse of military power remained widespread. This, along with the threat to security reflected in the Bali, Marriott, and embassy bombings, hindered the prospect of foreign support and investment.

Indonesia's first direct presidential elections were held in October 2004. Candidates continued to promise political reform and a crackdown

SOEHARTO'S GREATEST HITS (1968–98)

In many ways Indonesia is still reeling from Soeharto's 30 years of rule. His culture of collusion, corruption and nepotism reached deep into the nation's fabric. Here are some memorable Soeharto moments:

1968 Soeharto 'elected' as president.

1969 Government officials banned from joining any political party other than Soeharto's Golkar party. Flour mills part-owned by Ibu Tien (Soeharto's wife) are granted a milling and distribution monopoly.

1978 Bandung Institute of Technology students criticise the government. Troops occupy the campus.

1982 Security forces fire on antigovernment rallies. Press coverage of the incident is banned. Censorship laws are increased, widening the power to shut down not only publications that criticise the government but also any businesses affiliated with those publications.

1983–4 Nearly 10,000 killed as part of government's anticrime initiative.

1984 Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport opens. Soeharto's son allegedly skims more than US$75 million from the construction budget.

1985 Crackdown on alleged PKI (Indonesian communist party) members. Many members already serving prison sentences are executed.

1987 Tutut (Soeharto's daughter) wins bid to build Jakarta toll road.

1989 Government founds publication censorship board, with intelligence officers included as members. Cigarette companies forced to buy cloves from distributor run by Soeharto's son, Tommy.

1991 Tutut starts up TV station without incurring fees for using state-owned telecommunication infrastructure.

1993 New 50,000 rupiah banknote minted, depicting image of Soeharto.

1994 Tommy Soeharto opens supermarket chain with a massive loan that is never repaid. *Tempo* magazine's publishing licence is revoked by the government, who claimed the magazine's reports would cause national instability.

1996 Politician Sri Bintang Pamungkas sentenced to jail for nearly three years for insulting the president.

1997 Ari Sigit Soeharto (Soeharto's grandson) plans a project whereby all school students would be required to buy shoes manufactured by his company.

1998 Soeharto re-elected as president; antigovernment rallies resume; Soeharto resigns; Habibie becomes third president.

One of Pramoedya's earlier books, *Tales from Djakarta*, gives readers a backstreet view of the capital during the rocky early days of independence and the rise of military control. Many of his other books draw on Javanese culture to tell stories with contemporary relevance, such as *The King, the Witch and the Priest*.

2001 Wahid ousted from presidency, Megawati sworn in as fifth president

2002 Two bombs explode in Kuta, Bali, killing over 200 people

2003 Martial law imposed in Aceh after peace talks reach an impasse

2004 Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono wins first direct presidential election

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INDONESIA'S SEPARATIST CONFLICTS *John Martinkus*

To the people of Aceh and Papua, Indonesia has, since independence from the Dutch, been a Javanese empire. The exploitation of resources – gold from Papua and natural gas and oil from Aceh – by the bureaucracy in Jakarta, backed up by a repressive military, has been the major factor in keeping these separatist conflicts continuing into the 21st century.

In Aceh it's no coincidence that the declaration of Acehnese independence in 1976 came just as the Exxon Mobil Arun plant was reaching full production. It was this declaration that led to the establishment of the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka; GAM) and to the guerrilla war and the brutal Indonesian military response that ensured GAM recruits for the next 29 years of conflict. It is well reported that Exxon-Mobil pays the Indonesian military to protect the plant. In 2001, 11 Acehnese took the company to court in the US for the 'abuses including genocide, murder, torture, crimes against humanity and sexual violence' that had been conducted by troops in the employ of Exxon-Mobil. The US state department eventually had the case thrown out of court.

In Papua is the world's largest gold mine and Indonesia's largest single taxpayer, the US owned Freeport-McMoran mine in Tembagapura. It is the reason why Papuan independence will never be considered by the Indonesians. The concession for the mine was granted two years before the 1969 UN-sponsored 'Act of Free Choice' officially handed over sovereignty of Papua from the Dutch to the Indonesians. That said a lot about the Indonesians' confidence in predicting the outcome of a plebiscite in which 1026 delegates selected by themselves voted on behalf of the 814,000 Papuans registered. In 2001 one of the UN staffers involved told Associated Press, 'It was just a whitewash.' Whitewash though it was, the Act of Free Choice did put the UN stamp of approval on the integration of Papua into Indonesia and, unlike East Timor, whose 1975 takeover was never recognised by the UN, the plebiscite set back the cause of independence for West Papua and is still quoted by Indonesian authorities as the legitimisation for their often brutal rule. Internal Freeport documents reveal annual payments of US$11 million to the Indonesian military. The first recorded Indonesian military killing of civilians in the area was in 1972. In 1977 the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) sabotaged Freeport, forcing a halt in production; attacks on local communities increased. No human rights investigators have ever been allowed into the area.

When Soeharto was finally removed from power in May 1998, East Timor, Aceh and Papua all began to campaign for independence. Demonstrations in East Timor and international pressure led President Habibie to allow the UN to enter the country and conduct a referendum. The Indonesian military responded by forming militias and conducting its own campaign of killing. The territory voted for independence – but not before the Indonesian military had burnt and looted all major towns and driven the population to the mountains or across the border into West Timor, killing thousands. In Aceh the calls for a referendum led a million people onto the streets of the capital in 1999. The Indonesians responded with more troops, more operations, more massacres and, finally, martial law in 2003 that closed the province to journalists and aid workers entirely; they conducted operations and widespread arrests.

Again, thousands were killed away from view, until the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami devastated the province and forced the Indonesian government to allow foreign aid back in and to resume the peace process with GAM. The Indonesian military, which had been profiting from the implementation of martial law in Aceh since May 2003, realised there was more money to be made in allowing the aid dollars to flow into Aceh rather than continue the war against GAM. For its part, GAM was simply exhausted from the struggle (particularly the harsh martial-law period from May 2003 to Boxing Day 2004) and agreed to disarm and transform itself into a peaceful political movement. At the time of writing, the peace process was on track but the Indonesian military's decision to redeploy 10,000 extra troops to the province for 'reconstruction' was greeted with suspicion by Acehnese who had experienced many well publicised but phoney troop withdrawals as ceasefires have come and gone in the past.

In Papua the foundation of the Papuan Presidium Council led by Theys Eluay promised a broad-based coalition to push for independence. The Indonesian Special Forces responded by killing him in November 2001. Independence supporters, human rights workers, indeed anyone connected with the brief exercise of free speech in Papua, was either arrested or killed or forced into exile. Foreign journalists were once again banned and the most senior posts in the military and police in Papua taken up by the very same officers who carried out the violence in East Timor and Aceh. Despite detailed investigations by the UN and a host of human rights organisations, no senior officers have been punished for crimes in Indonesia's three separatist wars and the perpetrators are still in business in Papua. East Timor could separate from Indonesia – it was, after all, the poorest province in the country. Unfortunately, for the Papuans and the Acehnese that option is not so easy. Their abundance of natural resources means the Indonesian military, once again supported by the US and Australia, will continue to commit human rights abuses to ensure their access to these resources. That is why to the people in Aceh and Papua the Indonesian nation is still the Javanese empire.

John Martinkus began working as a freelance reporter in East Timor in the mid-'90s. He has extensively covered the conflicts in Aceh and West Papua, and has worked in Iraq, the Philippines, Afghanistan and on the Thailand–Burma border.

on corruption, as well as making new promises to stamp out terrorism. The election became a battle between Megawati and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), the latter winning the final vote and becoming the sixth president of Indonesia. Although fronting the newly formed Democratic Party, SBY was already well known to voters. As a long-serving general, he had been regarded as a military reformist, but was also directly involved in the East Timor occupation. He was also Minister for Security and Political Affairs in both the Wahid and Megawati governments.

During Indonesia's first direct presidential election (20 October 2004) over 115 million people cast their vote, making it the world's largest ever one-day election.

Under SBY, corruption remains endemic, terrorism remains a threat and the military, although no longer having automatic representation in government, still holds great sway over society. Despite some reforms and freedoms, political activism and dissent remains a risky pursuit as was shown when Munir, a human rights activist, was poisoned on a Garuda flight in 2005.

After the 2003 tsunami, SBY won favour by making sure foreign aid could get to the affected areas (including Aceh, which was still under martial law). He also took the initiative to restart talks with Acehnese rebels, which resulted in a peace deal in 2005. Whether these efforts have a lasting effect is uncertain (see boxed text, opposite).

But even almost 10 years after his downfall, it's still apparent that Soeharto's network of corruption, collusion and nepotism still lingers. Attempts to bring corrupt officials to justice have rarely eventuated in convictions, often because the implications of a serious crackdown would reach far into the current power structure. A 35-year, multibillion dollar web of state-supported corruption is a hard thing to untangle.

2004 Over 200,000 die across Sumatra in December tsunami

2005 October suicide bombings in Bali kill 23

2005 Acehnese rebels and Indonesian government sign peace deal

2006 Bantul, near Yogyakarta, Central Java, is hit by an earthquake on 27 May – 6000 die and 200,000 are left homeless across the region

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The Culture

THE NATIONAL PSYCHE

Indonesia comprises a massively diverse range of societies and cultures; the differences between, say, the Sumbanese and Sundanese are as marked as those between the Swedes and Sicilians. Even so, a national Indonesian identity has emerged, originally through the struggle for independence and, following that, through education programmes and the promotion of Bahasa Indonesia as a national language. This is despite the fact that Indonesia continues to be stretched by opposing forces: 'strict' Islam versus 'moderate' Islam, Islam versus Christianity versus Hinduism, country versus city, modern versus traditional, rich versus poor.

These differences may challenge social cohesion and have at times been used as an excuse to incite conflict, but the nation still prevails. And, with notable exceptions like Papua, the bonds have grown stronger, with the notion of an Indonesian identity overlapping rather than supplanting the nation's many pre-existing regional cultures. The national slogan, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), has been widely adopted by Indonesians, who function across widely varying ethnic and social standpoints. Perhaps this is why Indonesians are often keen to strike up a conversation with a traveller: everyone has their own story and perspective.

A cultural element that bridges both the regional and the national is religion – the Pancasila principle of belief in a god holds firm. Though Indonesia is predominantly Islamic, in many places Islam is interwoven with traditional customs, giving it unique qualities and characteristics. In terms of area rather than population, most of Indonesia is, in fact, Christian or animist. And to leaven the mix, Bali has its own unique brand of Hinduism. Religion plays a role in the everyday: mosques and *musholla* (prayer rooms) are in constant use, and the vibrant Hindu ceremonies of Bali are a daily occurrence, to the delight of many visitors.

Mobile phones and other facets of modernity have found purchase in Indonesia. But while Java and Bali can appear technologically rich, other areas remain untouched by the mod cons many city dwellers take for granted. But even where modernisation has taken hold, it's clear that Indonesians have a very traditionalist heart. As well as adherence to religious and ethnic traditions, social customs are maintained. For example, elders are accorded great respect. When visiting someone's home, elders are always greeted first, and often customary permission to depart is also offered. This can occur whether in a high-rise in Medan or a hut in Merauke.

Jakarta Inside Out by Daniel Ziv is a candid and colourful profile of the megalopolis.

LIFESTYLE

Daily life for Indonesians has changed rapidly over the years. These days, many people live away from their home region and the role of women has extended well beyond domestic duties to include career and study (see p64). Nevertheless, the role of the family remains strong. This is evident during such festivals as Lebaran (the end of the Islamic fasting month), when highways become gridlocked with those returning home to loved ones. Even at weekends, many travel for hours to spend a day with their relatives. In many ways, the notion of family or regional identity has become more pronounced: as people move away from small-scale communities and enter the milieu of the cities, the sense of belonging becomes more valued.

Beyond family, the main social unit is the village. This is obvious in rural areas but can also be seen in the cities: the backstreets of Jakarta, for example, are home to tightknit neighbourhoods where kids run from house to house and everyone knows who owns which chicken. A sense of community may also evolve in a *kos* (apartment with shared facilities), where tenants, far from their families, come together for meals and companionship.

Villages can also act as something of a welfare system during tough times. But as more and more people move to large cities, this social safety net has thinned, which, in turn, has increased the prevalence of begging or crime.

For the many Indonesians who still live in their home region, customs and traditions remain a part of the everyday: the Toraja of Sulawesi continue to build traditional houses due to their social importance (see p690); the focus of a Sumbanese village remains the gravestones of their ancestors due to the influence they are believed to have in daily happenings (see p590). These aren't customs offered attention once a year – they are a part of life. And even where modernity has found purchase, age-old traditions can still underpin the everyday: in Bali, for example, you'll see flashy buses blessed in the Hindu tradition before they hurtle down the highway.

POPULATION

Indonesia, with over 242 million people, is the world's fourth most populous nation after China, India and the USA, and Java alone has a population of over 130 million. Yet population growth has slowed to 1.45% as a result of family-planning programmes such as the appointment of coordinators in villages who advise on contraception, monitor birth rates and promote such national campaigns as *Dua Anak Cukup* (Two Children is Enough). In rural areas, large families are still common, as children are seen as 'insurance' for the parents' old age.

Indonesia: An Introduction to Contemporary Traditions by Ian Chalmers covers everything from language to the struggle for democracy.

Overpopulation is largely a Javanese problem. The total area of Java, including Madura, is 132,000 sq km (which is just over half the area of the UK), while Java's population density is over 1000 people per sq km (four times that of the UK).

Population in Indonesia is very unevenly distributed and the national population density figure is 126 people per sq km (in Papua, it drops to under 10). A programme of transmigration tried to alleviate the population density issue, with mixed results (see p60). Meanwhile, Jakarta and other cities continue to grow, as people move in to try their luck in these commercial hubs.

MULTICULTURALISM

Indonesia's rugged, mountainous terrain, and the fact that the country is made up of many islands, has separated groups of people from each other, resulting in an extraordinary differentiation of language and culture across the archipelago.

Ethnic Groups

MALAYS & MELANESIANS

Most Indonesians are Malays, descended from peoples who originated in China and Indochina and spread into Indonesia over several thousand years. The other major grouping is the darker skinned, fuzzy-haired Melanesians who inhabit much of easternmost Indonesia.

Despite the Malay predominance, the languages and customs of Indonesians vary widely. Some more distinct groups include the Kubu tribe of

South Sumatra, thought to be descendants of settlers from Sri Lanka, who were barely known to outsiders until guerrillas fighting the Dutch came into contact with them. There are also the Dani people of the Baliem Valley in Papua, and the inhabitants of Borneo's interior, who are collectively known as the Dayaks but comprise many ethnic groupings. Even

TRAVELLER TACT

Tourism provides much-needed income and on the whole it's encouraged; however, it can have a negative impact that you can help lessen. If you respect Indonesia's culture, customs, environment and, most importantly, the people you meet, not only will your own travels be more rewarding, so will the experience of your hosts.

Customs & Culture

Learn something of Indonesia's religious, family and social values, and avoid behaviour that contradicts those values. Brief beach attire, public displays of affection and aggressive behaviour are considered poor form in Indonesia. They may be tolerated in tourist resorts such as Kuta in Bali, but that doesn't mean they are acceptable.

Tourist Economy

Staying in family-owned hotels, eating at food stalls and travelling on local transport means your money flows more directly into the local economy. You'll also meet locals and gain a wider knowledge of Indonesian society. That said, staying in swanky hotels, travelling 1st class or taking tours contributes just as much, if not more, to the economy.

Bargaining is an essential social skill and you'll gain more respect if you're aware of local prices and can bargain for goods. At the same time, while overcharging becomes annoying after a while, remember that tourism is a luxury item that attracts a premium – for rich Indonesians as well as foreign tourists.

Visiting Villages

Some villages receive bus-loads of visitors and are almost tourist theme parks, but in general wandering into a village is like wandering into someone's home, and a few rules of etiquette apply. It's polite to first introduce yourself to the *kepala desa* (village head) or another senior person.

Those villages that are used to visitors often have a visitors book, where you sign in and make a donation – 10,000Rp is usually sufficient. In more remote villages, bring a guide, especially if language difficulty is likely. A guide can make the introductions, teach you protocol and explain points of interest.

Making Contact

For a visitor to Indonesia, many customs are not initially evident; it's everyday behaviour that's most apparent. Probably the most noticeable Indonesian characteristic is their forwardness. Whether they want to practise English, sell you some Chanel No 5, chat about politics or invite you for a meal, most Indonesians won't think twice about breaking the ice. Many travellers tire of such attention, so it's worth remembering that 99% of the time an Indonesian's interest comes with genuine friendliness.

Indonesians are generally extremely courteous; criticisms are not spoken directly and they'll often agree with you rather than offend. They may also prefer to say something rather than appear as if they don't know the answer. They mean well, but when you ask for directions, you may find yourself being sent off in the wrong direction.

The other habit which may take visitors by surprise is touching between those of the same gender. Indonesians may hold your knee for balance as they get into a bemo (and basically sit on you so more can squeeze in), or reach out and touch your arm while making a point in conversation. All this is considered friendly; in a nation of over 200 million people, there's sometimes not much personal space.

STOPPING CHILD-SEX TOURISM IN INDONESIA

Unfortunately, Indonesia has become a destination for foreigners seeking to sexually exploit local children. A range of socio-economic factors render many children and young people vulnerable to such abuse and some individuals prey upon this vulnerability. The sexual abuse and exploitation of children has serious, life-long and even life-threatening consequences for the victims. Strong laws exist in Indonesia to prosecute offenders and many countries also have extraterritorial legislation which allows nationals to be prosecuted in their own country for these intolerable crimes.

Travellers can help stop child-sex tourism by reporting suspicious behaviour. In Bali, call the **Women and Children Care Unit** (☎ 0361-226 783 ext 127) of the Bali police. Elsewhere in Indonesia, reports can be made to the **Anti-Human Trafficking Unit** (☎ 021 721 8309) of the Indonesian police. If you know the nationality of the individual, you can contact their embassy directly.

For more information, contact the following organisations:

ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking; www.ecpat.org) A global network working on these issues, with over 70 affiliate organisations around the world. Child Wise (www.childwise.net) is the Australian member of ECPAT.

PKPA (Center for Study and Child Protection; ☎ 061 663 7821 in Medan, Sumatra) An organisation committed to the protection of Indonesia's children and the prevention of child-sex tourism.

in densely populated Java there are distinct groups, such as the Badui of West Java, who withdrew to the highlands as Islam spread through the island and have had little contact with outsiders. Other groups, like the Balinese and Javanese, have preserved their traditions despite intense contact with other cultures.

Indonesia's population currently increases by about 3.5 million people per year.

CHINESE

Of all the ethnic minorities in Indonesia, none has had a larger impact on the country than the Chinese. Although comprising less than 3% of the population, the Chinese are the wealthiest ethnic group in the country, leading to much anti-Chinese resentment (even though only a small percentage of the Chinese population holds great wealth and there are many wealthy non-Chinese Indonesians).

The Chinese in Indonesia have long suffered repression and even slaughter. Under Dutch rule, the role of the Chinese in society was predominantly entrepreneurial – their roles included running businesses and working as intermediaries in trade – but colonial authorities restricted Chinese settlement and land ownership. As far back as 1740, anti-Chinese sentiment erupted in a massacre of the Chinese in Batavia. In the early 20th century, frustration with colonialism often resulted in attacks, not on the Dutch but on the Chinese. After independence, the Chinese were seen as a privileged group and their culture was discriminated against by law: written Chinese was banned, Chinese schooling forbidden and noncitizen Chinese repatriated to China. Whenever there's unrest in Indonesia, the Chinese are often singled out. In 1965 they were killed for being communists; more recently, during the 1998 riots, it was because they were capitalists.

Indonesians comprise approximately 300 ethnic groups that speak some 365 languages and dialects.

Though many Chinese fled Indonesia after 1998, the majority stayed and many have returned. Indonesia is home to them, as it has been for many generations, and even if they wanted to leave, many Chinese Indonesians cannot afford to, and have nowhere else, to go.

The current government has taken steps to eradicate anti-Chinese discrimination, and Chinese Indonesians are now represented in government. The ban on Chinese-language press has been lifted and cities such as Jakarta have Chinese-language TV, radio and printed media. Imlek (Chinese New Year), banned under Soeharto, is now held openly and has been proclaimed a national holiday.

Transmigration

Throughout Indonesia's history, no other factor has changed the nation's cultural make-up more than *transmigrasi,* a programme aimed at taking pressure off heavily populated areas, particularly Java and Bali, by moving people out to less populated islands like Sumatra, Kalimantan, Papua and Maluku.

Transmigrasi was initiated in 1905 by the Dutch, who moved some 650,000 people, mostly from Java, to Sumatra. Since the peak period of 1984 to 1989, when approximately 3.2 million people were resettled, *transmigrasi* has slowed. Birth control programmes proved to be much more effective at reducing population growth.

Most government-sponsored transmigrants are not experienced farmers; two-thirds of transmigrants are landless peasants and another 10% are homeless city dwellers. Up until 1973, Jakarta's urban poor were often virtually press-ganged into moving out of Java – they turned out to be the least successful transmigrants, often returning to the towns they came from. Inexperienced farmers tended to attempt wet-rice cultivation in unsuitable areas and ended up as subsistence farmers no better off than they were before.

Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia by Jacques Bertrand investigates the reasons behind the violence in areas like Maluku and Kalimantan.

Transmigration also takes its toll on the natural environment, through destruction of forest, loss of topsoil and degradation of water supplies. Also, tension has arisen due to what has been seen as a 'Javanisation' of other regions. Horrific violence has erupted between transmigrants and the local community, as was the case in Kalimantan in 1997, when conflict between Madurese transmigrants and the Dayaks resulted in hundreds being killed and many more displaced.

Transmigration from South Sulawesi to Ambon had a similar result. Religious differences were cited as the catalyst for conflict, but other factors such as economic stresses and military influence could not be ignored as triggers.

Mass transmigration is all but over in Indonesia. The government still supports population mobility and there's now more sensitivity to agricultural suitability, employment growth, demographic balance and the rights of locals, but the programme has been markedly reduced.

MEDIA

The freedoms experienced by the press after Soeharto's fall were one sign that reform was taking place. They were, however, short-lived. Although the press remains much freer than it was before 1998, the government and influential individuals are now able to use the Criminal Code against the media. In one case, the editor of *Rakyat Merdeka* newspaper was given a six-month suspended sentence for 'intentionally insulting' the then president Megawati. The application of this law, which was used by Soeharto, does not bode well for press freedom, as those convicted more than once can be barred from practising journalism. The English-language *Tempo* magazine and its affiliated publications have been hit hard by similar lawsuits. Other press-stymieing actions have included barring journalists from Aceh during the 2004 conflicts, and international journalists and academics being refused entry visas.

RELIGION

The early Indonesians were animists who practised ancestor and spirit worship. When Hinduism and Buddhism spread into the archipelago, they were layered onto this spiritual base, and there are areas where animism survives, including West Sumba and parts of Papua.

AMAZING GRAIN

Indonesia's verdant rice fields create a landscape of exceptional beauty. But behind the beautiful terraces is a rich history, complex production and a lot of hard work. Indonesia's most fertile soils are in Bali and most of Java as well as a few small patches across the archipelago.

In the less fertile, sparsely populated areas of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and West Java, where the peasants moved from one place to another, a form of shifting cultivation known as *ladang* developed. In *ladang,* the jungle is burned off to speed up the process of decomposition and to enrich the soil in preparation for planting, but the soil quickly loses fertility. Farmers must move to another site, as settled agriculture is impossible without the continuous addition of fertilisers.

On the other hand, the rich volcanic soils of most of Java, Bali and western Lombok are suitable for *sawah* (wet-rice) cultivation in flooded rice fields. Rice cultivation in terraced fields has been practised for over 2000 years. The system has continually been refined and developed and is widely seen as a contributing factor to the development of civilisations in Java and Bali. The development of the fields required great organisation, either at a cooperative village level or through the suppression of a peasant workforce. The wonder of this method of agriculture is that *sawah* fields can produce two or even three crops a year, year after year, with little or no drop in soil fertility. This is due not solely to the fertility of the soil; this astonishing ecosystem depends on water to provide nutrients and bacteria. Other nutrients are provided by the remains of previous crops and by adding extra organic material.

After each rice harvest, the stubble from the crop is ploughed back into the field. Small carpets of the best rice seed are planted and, when ready, seedlings are prised apart and laboriously transplanted in rows across a flooded field. The level of the water is crucial in the life cycle of the rice plant – the water depth is increased as the plant grows, and is reduced in increments until the field is dry at harvest time. The field may also be drained during the growing period in order to weed the field or aerate the soil.

Rice production requires both gruelling effort and constant fine tuning, but the result of this toil fuels a nation – according to the majority of Indonesians, a meal isn't complete without the humble grain.

Islam is the predominant religion, with followers making up 88% of the population. Nevertheless, old beliefs persist: in Java there are hundreds of holy places where spiritual energy is said to be concentrated. Pilgrims flock to these areas and to the graves of saints, despite the proscription of saint worship by Islam.

Indonesia's eastern regions and the Kalimantan interior are inhabited mostly by Christians, who make up 8% of the population, and animists (1%). Bali's Hindus comprise 2% of the population, and Buddhists make up the remaining 1%.

Hinduism & Buddhism

HINDUISM

Hinduism is a complex religion, but its core principle is the belief that the physical world is an illusion and until this is realised through enlightenment, the individual is condemned to a cycle of reincarnations. Brahma is the ultimate god and universal spirit, though Hinduism has a vast pantheon of gods. The two main gods after Brahma are Shiva the destroyer and Vishnu the preserver. Shivaism, which represents a more esoteric and ascetic path, generally found greater acceptance in Indonesia, perhaps because it was closer to existing fertility worship and the appeasement of malevolent spirits. Vishnuism places greater emphasis on devotion and duty, and Vishnu's incarnations, Krishna and Rama, feature heavily in Indonesian art and culture.

BUDDHISM

Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince, founded Buddhism in the 6th century BC. His message is that the cause of life's suffering is desire, and that by overcoming desire we can free ourselves from suffering. The ultimate goal is nirvana: escape from the cycle of birth and rebirth.

Buddhism is essentially a Hindu reform movement. The big difference is that Buddhism shunned the Hindu pantheon of gods and the caste system. It was initially not so much a religion but a philosophy, free from the priestly Brahman hierarchy.

HINDUISM & BUDDHISM IN INDONESIA

Many ancient Hindu and Buddhist shrines, statues and inscriptions have been found across the archipelago, the oldest dating back to the 5th century AD. The two religions were often intertwined and fused with older religious beliefs.

Historically, both religions have greatly influenced Indonesia's royal courts and governments. One theory is the emerging kingdoms of Indonesia invited Brahman priests from India to assist in creating a religion-based power structure, so that royal rule would have 'divine' justification.

Outside India, Hindus predominate only in Nepal and Bali, yet the Hinduism of Bali is far removed from that of India.

The Sumatran-based Sriwijaya kingdom, which arose in the 7th century, was the centre of Buddhism in Indonesia. Indonesia adapted Hinduism and Buddhism to its needs, and events recorded in epics like the Ramayana have even been shifted out of India to Java.

Bali's establishment as a Hindu enclave dates from the 17th century, when the Javanese Hindu kingdom of Majapahit, in the face of Islam, evacuated to the neighbouring island (a few pockets of Hinduism remain, notably the Tengger people around Gunung Bromo). The Balinese probably already had strong religious beliefs and an active cultural life and the new influences were simply overlaid on the existing practices.

Most Buddhists in Indonesia are Chinese, though their version of Buddhism also acknowledges tenets of Taoism, Confucianism and ancestor worship.

Islam

In the early 7th century in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammed received the word of Allah (God) and called on the people to submit to the one true God ('Islam' is the Arabic word for submission). This profession of faith is the first of the Five Pillars of Islam, the tenets that guide Muslims in daily life. The other four advocate praying five times a day, giving alms to the poor, fasting during the month of Ramadan and making the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

In its early days, Islam suffered a major schism resulting in two branches – the Sunni (or Sunnite) and Shiite – after a struggle to take over the caliphate. The Sunni comprises the majority of Muslims today, including most Muslims in Indonesia.

ISLAM IN INDONESIA

Indonesia's first contact with Islam came through Muslim traders, primarily from India, who introduced a less orthodox form of Islam than in Arabia. The region of Aceh adopted Islam near the end of the 13th century, then it spread through to Java and further east in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Centres of Islamic studies along the northern coast of Java played an important role in disseminating the new religion. Javanese tradition

holds that the first propagators of Islam in Java were nine holy men, the *wali songo,* who possessed a deep knowledge of Islamic teaching as well as exceptional supernatural powers. Another theory holds that Islam was adopted by the rulers of trading ports, who broke with the Hindu kingdoms of the interior that claimed suzerainty over the north. The common people followed suit in much the same way as Europeans adopted the religions of their kings, and these Islamic kingdoms supplanted the Hindu centres of power.

Customs in Indonesia often differ from those of other Islamic countries. Muslim women in Indonesia are not segregated, nor do they have to wear head coverings (although recently they have become more popular). Muslim men are allowed to marry two women but must have the consent of their first wife. Even so, polygamy in Indonesia is very rare. Many pre-Islamic traditions and customs remain in place. The Minangkabau society of Sumatra, for example, is strongly Islamic but remains matrilineal according to tradition.

Islam requires that all boys be circumcised, and in Indonesia this is usually done between the ages of six and 11. They also observe the fasting month of Ramadan, a time when visitors should be sensitive about eating in public during the day. Also, travel can become difficult at the end of this month when Muslims journey home to celebrate Lebaran. In accordance with Islamic teaching, millions of Indonesians have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Islam not only influences routine daily living but also Indonesian politics. It was with the Diponegoro revolt in the 19th century that Islam first became a rallying point. Early in the 20th century, Sarekat Islam became the first mass political party. Its philosophy was derived from Islam and its support from the Muslim population. In post-independence Indonesia it was an Islamic organisation, Darul Islam, that launched a separatist movement in West Java. Former president Wahid headed Nahdatul Ulama, Indonesia's – and, indeed, the world's – largest Islamic organisation.

Likely upcoming Ramadan periods:

13 Sep-12 Oct 2007

2 Sep-1 Oct 2008

22 Aug-20 Sep 2009

11 Aug-9 Sep 2010

Christianity in Indonesia

The Portuguese introduced Christianity to Indonesia in the 16th century. Although they dabbled in religious conversion in Maluku and sent Dominican friars to Timor and Flores, their influence was never strong. For the Dutch, trade was paramount and interference in religion was avoided. Missionary efforts came only when the Dutch set about establishing direct colonial rule in the rest of Indonesia at the end of the 19th century. Animist areas were up for grabs and missionaries set about their work with zeal in east Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, Kalimantan, Papua and parts of Sumatra and Sulawesi. Thus Christianity is a relatively new religion in Indonesia. Protestants form a slight majority because of the work of Dutch Calvanist and Lutheran missions, but Catholics are also numerous, especially in Flores.

Religious Conflict

Indonesia's religious communities generally coexist in harmony and religious leaders from all faiths persistently stress tolerance, but violence continues to flare up in pockets of Indonesia, recently in Kalimantan, Maluku and Central Sulawesi. Although violence has been defined as playing along religious lines, there are other catalysts that cannot be ignored: ill-conceived transmigration policies, unequal distribution of wealth and even deliberate provocation by the government have all been cited as the real sparks behind the violence.

INDONESIAN MOSQUES

As Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population, it's no surprise that the country is home to literally thousands of *mesjid* (mosques). Although all mosques are primarily places of prayer, they can be differentiated according to specific function: the *jami mesjid* is used for Friday prayer meetings; the *musalla* is used for prayer meetings Sunday to Thursday; the 'memorial mosque' is for the commemoration of victorious events in Islamic history; and the *mashad* is found in a tomb compound. There are also prayer houses that are used by only one person at a time, often found in large hotels and transport hubs.

The oldest mosques in Indonesia – such as those in Cirebon and Palembang – have rooms with two, three or five storeys. It's thought these multistorey rooms were based on Hindu shrines, similar to those in Bali.

Today's mosques are often built with a high dome over a prayer hall. Inside are five main features: the *mihrab* (a niche in a wall marking the direction to Mecca); the *mimbar* (a raised pulpit, often canopied, with a staircase); a stand to hold the Koran; a screen to provide privacy for important worshippers; and a water-source for ablutions. Outside the building there is often a *menara* (minaret) from which the muezzin summons the community to prayer. Apart from these items, the interior of the mosque is empty. There are no seats and no decorations. If there is any ornamentation at all, it will be quotations of verses from the Koran.

Friday afternoons are officially set aside for believers to worship, and all government offices and many businesses are closed as a result. All over Indonesia you'll hear the call to prayer from the mosques, but the muezzin of Indonesia are now a dying breed – the wailing is now usually pre-recorded and broadcast – as many visitors soon discover – at significant volume.

There's usually no problem with visiting a mosque, as long as appropriately modest clothing is worn – there is usually a place to leave shoes, and headscarves are often available for hire. As well as providing a chance to see an intrinsic part of Indonesian culture, visiting a mosque can provide welcome relief from the tropical heat – on a hot afternoon, a contemplative rest in a cool, quiet mosque can reinvigorate both body and soul.

Militant Islamic groups exist in Indonesia, as do fanatics on the fringes of many religions across the world. But despite what is reflected in the media, such extremism in Indonesia remains in the absolute minority. Most Indonesians, Muslim and non-Muslim, are very suspicious of extremist groups, and see their activities as counterproductive, to say the very least. This is especially the case since many Indonesians have suffered directly from the Bali bombings and other acts of violence. Calls to ban such groups, notably Jemaah Islamiyah, are often considered ineffective, as such action may simply push militant organisations further underground, making their nefarious plans harder to monitor.

In the Shadow of Swords by Sally Neighbour investigates the rise of terrorism in Indonesia and beyond, from an Australian perspective.

WOMEN IN INDONESIA

For Indonesian women, the challenge of balancing traditional roles and the responsibilities of the modern era have been most pronounced. Some women may have the same work and study opportunities as men – all the way to the presidency – yet many still see roles such as housekeeping and child rearing as their domain.

Indonesia is a predominantly Islamic society and is very male oriented. However, women are not cloistered or required to observe purdah, although head coverings have become more common in recent years. Whatever one's opinion of the *jilbab* (head covering), it does not automatically mean the women who choose to wear it have a subservient, passive personality. Female circumcision does occur in some Islamic areas. In Java, it's typically done soon after birth; a small incision is made, the intention being to draw a few drops of blood, not to remove the clitoris.

Sexual politics are rarely on the agenda. However, there are a number of organisations whose agenda is to promote the role of women, both in the workplace and in general society.

Many Indonesian women still undertake traditional roles but are also well educated and gainfully employed; two-income households are increasingly common and often a necessity. Women are widely represented in the bureaucracy and industry. In traditional rural societies, the divisions of labour are very well defined and social organisation is male dominated, but women are not excluded and some societies are matriarchal, notably the Minangkabau of Sumatra.

Women and the State in Modern Indonesia by Susan Blackburn explores the role women take in the nation and the changes they have achieved.

ARTS

Indonesian art is impossible to ignore: you'll see it in wood carvings lining the shops of Ubud; you'll stumble over piles of batik sarongs in a Yogyakarta market. And no travel documentary on Indonesia is complete without scenes of a Balinese dance or a shadow-puppet performance, performed to the mesmerising gongs of a Javanese or Balinese gamelan orchestra. Yet Java and Bali offer only part of Indonesia's vast range of dance, music and crafts (p68).

Claire Holt's *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* is an excellent introduction to the arts of Indonesia, focusing on traditional dance, *wayang* and literature.

Theatre

Javanese *wayang* (plays), performed by people, shadow puppets or wooden marionettes, have their origins in the Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Although condensed versions are performed for tourists, traditional *wayang* can go for hours and it's not expected that the audience sit silent for the whole show (see p94).

Dance

If you spend much time in Jakarta or Kuta, you could be forgiven for thinking disco was Indonesia's traditional folk dance. But beyond the clubs throbbing to Madonna remixes, you'll find Indonesia has a rich heritage of traditional dance styles. Java is home to *wayang* dance-

SMALL TALK

Dari mana? (Where do you come from?) You'll be asked this question frequently, along with many other things like *Sudah kawin?* (Are you married?) and *Mau kemana?* (Where are you going?). Visitors can find these questions intrusive, irritating and even infuriating, but Indonesians regard them as polite conversation; a way to start a chat or simply acknowledge someone walking through their village. Indonesians may ask foreign visitors such questions in English (it may be their only English) and you should not get annoyed – a smile, a hello, or an Indonesian greeting is a polite and adequate response.

If the questions continue, which is likely, you'll need to take a different approach, as one new arrival in Indonesia found out. The newcomer met a young man who immediately began asking her many personal questions: Where did she come from? Was she married? Where was she staying? Did she like Indonesia? Anxious to be friendly and polite, she tried to answer every question, while becoming increasingly dubious about his motives. But he never seemed to be satisfied with her responses and he seemed to become more morose with each exchange. Finally, and with utter despondency in his voice, the young man announced, 'I have five children.'

The message is that you don't really have to answer every question, but you should ask some questions yourself to show a polite interest in the other person. If the questioning becomes too nosy, try responding with an equally nosy question and you might be surprised at the warmth of the response. When you've had enough chatter, you can answer the question 'Where are you going?' even if it wasn't asked.

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dramas. Yogyakarta has dance academies and is a good place to see performances of the Ramayana. Solo is also a centre of dance study. Wonosobo (Central Java) has its Lengger dance, in which masked men dress as women. Jaipongan, a modern dance from West Java, is a dynamic style that features swift movements to rhythms complicated enough to dumbfound an audience of musicologists. Central Kalimantan is home to the Manasai, a friendly dance in which tourists are welcome to participate. Kalimantan also has the Mandau dance, performed with knives and shields. Some of the most colourful performances of all, including the Barong, Kecak, Topeng, Legong and Baris dances, are found in Bali (see p272).

Author Djenar Maesa Ayu rocked Indonesia's literary scene with her candid portrayal of the injustices tackled by women. Her books include *They Say I'm a Monkey* and *Nyala*.

Literature

Probably the best place to find books by Indonesian authors is at the Gramedia bookstore chain, however English translations are sometimes hard to come by.

The late Pramoedya Ananta Toer, a Javanese author, is Indonesia's most well-known novelist. Toer spent more than 14 years in jail because of his political affiliations and criticism of the government. His famous quartet of novels set in the colonial era includes *This Earth of Mankind, Child of All Nations, Footsteps* and *House of Glass*. The quartet charts the life of Minke, a Javanese intellectual who must reconcile his Javanese beliefs with the colonial world around him.

The annual Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, held around September/October, showcases both local and international writers. Its website (www.ubudwritersfestival.com) offers information about local authors.

Other Indonesian authors translated into English include the cutting and courageous Djenar Maesa Ayu, and Ayu Utami, who explores touchy issues including sex, politics and religion in her two books *Saman* and *Larung*.

Cinema & TV

Despite the pressures of a fragile economy and the popularity of Hollywood and Bollywood blockbusters, Indonesia still produces a healthy amount of its own films. Many horror films (including *Bangsal 13*) and a swag of romance flicks (like *Arisan* and *Brownies*) have been churned out recently and are eagerly received by local audiences. But there's also a steady stream of films that portray contemporary social themes such as peer pressure and social tussles.

Director Riri Reza and other film-makers started their careers by directly approaching cinemas themselves and bypassing a reluctant distribution system. Indonesian films rarely have English subtitles but can still offer travellers an insight into Indonesian culture (and the audience reactions can be entertaining).

Riri Reza's *GIE*, the story of Soe Hok Gie, a Chinese Indonesian national activist, was submitted for consideration in the Best Foreign Film category of the 2006 Academy Awards.

Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982) remains the most well-known film based in Indonesia. It was recently televised in Indonesia, but with scenes of the military killing civilians edited out.

Indonesian TV is dominated by live sitcoms, game shows and current-affairs programmes. Locally made *sinetron* (soap dramas), complete with love affairs and zoom-ins on expressions of incredulity, are churned out.

Music

Indonesian music spans everything from thousand-year-old traditional music to high-powered punk pop.

Probably the best-known Indonesian music form is gamelan. Traditional gamelan orchestras are found primarily in Java and Bali. The orchestras are composed mainly of percussion instruments, including drums, gongs, xylophones and *angklung,* bamboo tubes shaken to produce a note (see p96).

Other traditional music forms include *kacapi suling:* serene music featuring the *kacapi* (harplike instrument) and *suling* (wooden flute) as well as singing.

The Jakarta International Film Festival, held around December, features local and international movies. Its website (www.jiffest.org) lists the schedule and gives information about local films.

Indonesia has a massive contemporary music market that spans all genres, from indie rock to schlock. MTV broadcasts to much of Asia from Indonesia, regularly featuring local acts, reflecting the strength of the scene. As is the case anywhere, bands come and go, but some of the more popular recent outfits include Peterpan and Radja.

Dangdut music is a melange of traditional and modern music that originated in Indonesia but it features instruments such as Indian tablas and flute. The result is sexy, love-drunk songs sung by heartbroken women or cheesy men, accompanied by straight-faced musicians in matching suits. *Dangdut* music is like no other – the beats are gutsy, the singing evocative and the emotion high.

Love it or hate it, karaoke remains a part of Indonesia's aural landscape. From beachside dives to blinging bars, you'll find folk eager to belt out their best Whitney Houston.

Rock legend Iwan Fals has been around for decades but still packs stadiums. His anti-establishment bent has caused him to be arrested several times.

SPORT

Soccer and badminton are the national sporting obsessions. Indonesians regularly hold the world badminton titles, and you'll see courts set up anywhere there's space. The Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) comprises teams from across the country, each with their own fanatic followers. The schedule *(jadwal)* can be viewed at www.pssi-online.com.

Volleyball is played in villages everywhere, and you may also see people playing *sepak takraw* (also known as *sepak raga*). Played with a rattan ball, it's a cross between volleyball and soccer and, except when serving, only the feet are used, resulting in amazing acrobatics.

Pencak silat, Indonesia's own form of martial arts, is most popular in West Java and West Sumatra. This form of fighting uses not only hands and feet but also some weapons, including sticks and swords. Many regions, particularly those with a history of tribal warfare, also stage traditional contests to accompany weddings, harvest festivals and other ceremonial events. Mock fighting ceremonies are sometimes staged in Papua; *caci* whip fights are a speciality in Flores; men fight with sticks and shields in Lombok; but the most spectacular ceremonial fight is Sumba's *pasola,* where every February and March horse riders in traditional dress hurl spears at each other.

Other sports are male oriented and often associated with illegal gambling. You may see cockfighting in Bali and Kalimantan. Bull racing, horse racing and even ram head-butting are staged around the country and are usually designed to improve the breed.

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Indonesian Crafts

History, religion, custom and modern influences are all reflected in Indonesia's vastly diverse range of craftwork. Broadly speaking, there are three major craft groupings.

The first is that of 'outer' Indonesia – Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Papua – which has strong animist traditions. Crafts such as carving, weaving and pottery have developed from the tribal art of this region.

For an overall guide to Indonesian crafts, *Arts and Crafts of Indonesia,* by Anne Richter, is detailed and beautifully illustrated.

The second grouping is that of 'inner' Indonesia – Java and Bali – which has been the most influenced by Hindu-Buddhist tradition. The techniques and styles used to create the Borobudur temple, Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata, and that form the basis for *wayang* (traditional Javanese theatre) are still a major influence on arts and crafts.

The third influence is Islam, which not so much introduced its own artistic tradition as modified existing traditions. Its more rigid style and ban on human and animal representation led to existing artistic traditions becoming more stylised, evident today in the woodcarvings of Jepara in Java.

These days the religious significance or practical function of many traditional objects is disappearing. For example, the *sahan* (Batak medicine holders made from buffalo horn) in craft shops around Danau Toba are now crafted simply for their sale value. While traditional meaning and methods are diminishing, the tourist trade is not destroying traditional crafts. The sophistication and innovation of the craft industry is growing. Batak carvers now produce bigger, more intricately carved *sahan* – designs have changed to suit the market because small, simple *sahan* just don't sell.

Made in Indonesia: A Tribute to the Country's Craftspeople, by Warwick Purser, provides great photos and background information on the crafts of the country.

Many trinkets made for the tourist trade are of poor quality and there's an increasing cross-fertilisation of craft styles: the 'primitive' Kalimantan statues, so in vogue in Balinese art shops, may well have been carved just up the road in Peliatan. On the other hand, Javanese woodcarvers are turning out magnificent traditional panels and innovative furniture commissioned by large hotels, and Balinese jewellers influenced by Western designs are producing works of stunning quality.

WOODCARVING

In what was such a heavily forested nation, it's no surprise woodcarving took hold across the archipelago, with each culture developing its own style. Often woodcarving is interwoven with practical skills such as house building. In some regions, a house not only provides protection, but also repels unwanted spirits. Artistic evidence of this can be seen in the horned lion heads that protect Batak houses, the water buffalo representations that signify prosperity on Toraja houses, and the serpent carvings

TOPENG – MASKS

Although carved masks exist throughout the archipelago, the most readily identifiable form of mask is the *topeng,* used in *wayang topeng,* the masked dance-dramas of Java and Bali. Dancers perform local tales or adaptations of Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata, with the masks used to represent different characters. Masks vary from the stylised but plain masks of Central and West Java to the heavily carved masks of East Java. Balinese masks are less stylised and more naturalistic than in Java – the Balinese save their love of colour and detail for the masks of the Barong dance, starring a mythical lion-dog creature who fights tirelessly against evil.

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on Dayak houses. The serpent is a spirit that will protect the house. An offering is often given to this spirit so that it remains benevolent.

On the outer islands, woodcarvings and statues are crafted to represent the spirit world and the ancestors who live there. Woodcarving is an intrinsic part of the Toraja's famed funerals: the deceased is represented by a *tau-tau* (a life-sized wooden statue), and their coffin is adorned with carved animal heads. In the Ngaju and Dusun Dayak villages in Kalimantan, *temadu* (giant carved ancestor totems) also depict the dead.

Perhaps Indonesia's most famous woodcarvers are the Asmat of southwest Papua. Shields, canoes, spears and drums are carved, but the most distinctive Asmat woodcarvings are *mbis* (ancestor poles). These poles show the dead, one above the other, and the open carved 'wing' at the top of the pole is a phallic symbol representing fertility and power. The poles are also an expression of revenge, and were traditionally carved to accompany a feast following a head-hunting raid.

There are *mbis* on permanent display at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In many regions, everyday objects are intricately carved. These include baby carriers and stools from Kalimantan, lacquered bowls from South Sumatra, bamboo containers from Sulawesi, doors from West Timor and horse effigies from Sumba.

Balinese woodcarving is the most ornamental and intricate in Indonesia. Statues, temple doors and relief panels are intricately decorated with the gods and demons of Balinese cosmology. Western influence and demand for art and souvenirs has seen a revolution in woodcarving akin to that in Balinese painting (see p271). Balinese woodcarvers began by producing simpler, elongated statues of purely ornamental design with a natural finish. Nowadays Bali produces its own interpretations of Asmat totems or Kalimantan fertility statues, as well as unique modern statues.

Bali Style, by Barbara Walker & Rio Helmi, is a lavishly photographed look at Balinese design, architecture and interior decoration. In the same series is *Java Style.*

In Java, the centre for woodcarving is Jepara. The intricate crafts produced here are of the same tradition as the Balinese, but Islamic influence has seen human representation replaced by carved and stylised motifs. Carved furniture is the main business in Jepara. Another Javanese woodcarving centre is Kudus, where intricate panels for traditional houses are produced.

The most favoured and durable wood in Indonesia is *jati* (teak), though this is getting increasingly expensive. Sandalwood is occasionally seen in Balinese carvings, as is mahogany and ebony (imported from Sulawesi and Kalimantan). Jackfruit is a common, cheap wood, though it tends to warp and split. Generally, local carvers use woods at hand: heavy ironwood and *meranti* (a hard wood) in Kalimantan, and *belalu* (a light wood) in Bali.

TEXTILES

Ikat

The Indonesian word ikat means to tie or bind, but is also the name for the intricately patterned cloth of threads that are painstakingly tie-dyed before being woven together. Ikat is made in many regions, from Sumatra to West Timor, but it's in Nusa Tenggara that this ancient art form thrives.

Ikat garments come in an incredible diversity of colours and patterns: the spectacular ikat of Sumba and the intricately patterned work of Flores (including *kapita,* used to wrap the dead) are the best known.

MAKING IKAT

Although some factory-made threads are utilised, ikat is usually made of cotton, and hand-spun. The whole process of ikat production – from planting the cotton to folding the finished product – is performed by women. Once the cotton is harvested, it is spun with a spindle. The thread is strengthened by immersing it in baths of crushed cassava, rice or maize, then threaded onto a winder.

Traditional dyes are made from natural sources. The most complex processes result in a rusty colour known as *kombu* (it's produced from the bark and roots of the *kombu* tree). Blue dyes come from the indigo plant, and purple or brown can be produced by dyeing the cloth deep blue and then dyeing it again with *kombu*.

Any sections that are not coloured are bound together with dye-resistant fibre. Each colour requires a separate tying-and-dyeing process. The sequence of colouring takes into consideration the effect of each application of dye. This stage requires great skill, as the dyer has to work out – before the threads are woven – exactly which parts of the thread are to receive which colour in order to create the pattern of the final cloth. After the thread has been dyed, the cloth is woven on a simple hand loom.

In Tenganan (Bali) a cloth called *gringsing* is woven using a rare method of double ikat in which both warp and weft threads are pre-dyed.

ORIGINS & MEANING OF IKAT

The technique for making ikat was probably brought to Indonesia over 2000 years ago by migrants, who were of the Dongson culture, from southern China and Vietnam.

Ikat styles vary according to the village and the gender of the wearer, and some styles are reserved for special purposes. In parts of Nusa Tenggara, high-quality ikat is part of a bride's dowry. Until recently on Sumba, only members of the highest clans could make and wear ikat textiles. Certain motifs were traditionally reserved for noble families (as on Sumba and Rote) or members of a specific tribe or clan (as on Sabu or among the Atoni of West Timor). The function of ikat as an indicator of its wearer's role or rank has since declined.

MOTIFS & PATTERNS

Some experts believe that motifs found on Sumba, such as front views of people, animals and birds, stem from an artistic tradition even older than Dongson, whose influence was geometric motifs like diamond and key shapes (which often go together), meanders and spirals.

One strong influence was *patola* cloth from Gujarat in India. In the 16th and 17th centuries these became highly prized in Indonesia, and one characteristic motif – a hexagon framing a four pronged star – was copied by local ikat weavers. On the best *patola* and geometric ikat, repeated small patterns combine to form larger patterns, like a mandala. Over the past century, European styles have influenced the motifs used in ikat.

IKAT SEASONS

There are traditional times for the production of ikat. On Sumba the thread is spun between July and October, and the patterns bound between September and December. After the rains end in April, the dyeing is carried out. In August the weaving starts – more than a year after work on the thread began.

CHOOSING IKAT

Not so easy! Books on the subject aren't much use when you're confronted with a market trader telling you that yes, this cloth is definitely hand-spun and yes, of course the dyes are natural. Taking a look at the process is informative: you can see women weaving in many places, and at the right time of year you may see dye-making, thread-spinning or tie-dyeing. Ikat made in villages is nearly always hand-spun and hand-woven. Here are some tips on recognising the traditional product:

- Thread – hand-spun cotton has a less perfect 'twist' to it than factory cloth.
- Weave – hand-woven cloth, whether made from hand-spun or factory thread, feels rougher and, when new, stiffer than machine-woven cloth. It will probably have minor imperfections in the weave.
- Dyes – until you've seen enough ikat to get a feel for whether colours are natural or chemical, you often have to rely on your instincts as to whether they are 'earthy' enough. Some cloths contain both natural and artificial dyes.
- Dyeing method – the patterns on cloths which have been individually tie-dyed using the traditional method are rarely perfectly defined, but they're unlikely to have the detached specks of colour that often appear on mass-dyed cloth.
- Age – no matter what anybody tells you, there are very few antique cloths around. There are several processes to make cloth look old.

Songket

Songket is silk cloth with gold or silver threads woven into it, although these days imitation silver or gold is often used. *Songket* is most commonly found where Islam has had the most impact, such as Aceh and among the Malays of coastal Kalimantan, but can also be seen in parts of Bali.

Batik

The technique of applying wax or other dye-resistant substances (like rice paste) to cloth to produce a design is found in many parts of the world, but none is as famous as the batik of Java. The Javanese were making batik as early as the 12th century, but its origins are hard to trace. Some think the craft was brought from India, others that the Javanese developed the technique themselves. The word 'batik' is an old Javanese word meaning 'to dot'.

The tradition of wearing gaudy garb at Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings began when Bill Clinton and cohorts donned batik shirts in Bogor in 1994.

Batik's development is usually associated with the flowering of the creative arts around the royal courts – it's likely that certain motifs were the preserve of the aristocracy. The rise of Islam probably contributed to the stylisation of batik patterns and to the absence of representations of living things.

The oldest method of making batik is known as *batik tulis* (hand-painted or literally 'written' batik). Designs are first traced out onto cloth, then patterns are drawn in hot wax with a pen-like instrument.

The wax-covered areas resist colour change when immersed in a dye bath. The waxing and dyeing, with increasingly darker shades, continues until the final colours are achieved. Wax is added to protect previously dyed areas or scraped off to expose new areas to the dye. Finally, all the wax is scraped off and the cloth boiled to remove all traces of wax.

From the mid-19th century, batik production was increased by applying the wax with a metal stamp called a *cap*. The *cap* technique can usually be identified by the repetition of identical patterns, whereas in *batik tulis*, even repeated geometric motifs vary. Some batik combine the two techniques with *batik tulis* used for fine detail. It's worth noting that *batik cap* is true batik; don't confuse it with screen-printed cloth which completely bypasses the waxing process and is often passed off as batik.

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Java is the home of batik and each district produces its own style. The court cities of Yogyakarta and Solo are major batik centres, and Solo is also a major textile centre. Traditional court designs are dominated by brown, yellow and indigo blue. These days both cities produce a wide range of modern and traditional batik.

Batik from the north coast of Java has always been more colourful and innovative in design – as the trading region of Java, the north coast came in contact with many influences. Pekalongan is the other major north-coast batik centre, producing traditional floral designs which are brightly coloured and show a Chinese influence. Some of Indonesia's most interesting batik, including that which incorporates bird motifs, comes from Pekalongan. Cirebon also produces very colourful and fine traditional *batik tulis*.

CERAMICS

Indonesia's position on the trade routes saw the import of large amounts of ceramics from China, making it a fertile hunting ground for antique Chinese ceramics dating back to the Han dynasty. The best examples of truly indigenous ceramics are the terracottas from the Majapahit kingdom of East Java.

Indonesian pottery is usually unglazed and handworked, although the wheel is also used. It may be painted, but is more often left natural. Potters around Mojokerto, close to the original Majapahit capital, still produce terracottas, but the best known pottery centre in Java is just outside Yogyakarta at Kasongan, where intricate, large figurines and pots are produced.

In the Singkawang area of west Kalimantan, the descendants of Chinese potters produce a unique style of utilitarian pottery.

Lombok pottery has an earthy, primitive look, with subtle colouring. Balinese ceramics show a stronger Western influence and are more inclined to be glazed.

BASKETWORK & BEADWORK

Some of the finest basketwork in Indonesia comes from Lombok. The spiral woven rattan work is very fine and large baskets are woven using this method; smaller receptacles topped with wooden carvings are also popular.

In Java, Tasikmalaya is a major cane-weaving centre, often adapting baskets and vessels to modern uses with the introduction of zips and plastic linings. The Minangkabau people, centred around Bukittinggi, also produce interesting palm leaf bags and purses, while the lontar palm is used extensively in weaving on West Timor, Rote and other outer eastern islands. The Dayak of Kalimantan produce some superb woven baskets and string bags.

Some of the most colourful and attractive beadwork is made by the Toraja of Sulawesi. Beadwork can be found all over Nusa Tenggara and in the Dayak region of Kalimantan. Small, highly prized cowrie shells are used like beads and are found on Dayak and Lombok works, though the best application of these shells is as intricate beading in Sumbanese tapestries.

KRIS

The kris (wavy-bladed traditional dagger) is no ordinary knife. In Java it is said to be endowed with supernatural powers. *Adat* (traditional law) requires that every father furnish his son with a kris upon his reaching manhood – preferably an heirloom kris enabling his son to draw on the powers of his ancestors (which are stored in the sacred weapon).

Some think the Javanese kris (from iris, meaning 'to cut') is derived from the bronze daggers produced by the Dongson around the 1st century AD. Bas-reliefs of a kris appear in the 14th-century Panataran temple complex in East Java, and the carrying of the kris as a custom in Java was noted in 15th-century Chinese records. Today, the kris is still an integral part of men's formal dress on ceremonial and festive occasions.

Before the arrival of Islam, Hindu-inspired images were quite often used to decorate the wooden hilts – the *garuda* (mythological man-bird) was a popular figure. After the spread of Islam such motifs were discouraged, but were often preserved in stylised forms – the origins and symbolism of the kris lay too deep in Javanese mysticism to be eradicated completely.

Distinctive features, the number of curves in the blade and the damascene design on the blade are read to indicate good or bad fortune for its owner. The number of curves in the blade has symbolic meaning: five curves symbolise the five Pandava brothers of the Mahabharata epic; three represents fire, ardour and passion. Although the blade is the most important part of the kris, the hilt and scabbard are also beautifully decorated.

Although the kris is mostly associated with Java and Bali, larger and less-ornate variations are found in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi.

Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, was often described as the great *dalang* (puppet master) due to his ability to keep opposing forces in check, like a *dalang* does in a Javanese shadow-puppet show.

PUPPETS

The most famous puppets of Indonesia are the carved leather *wayang kulit* puppets. These intricate lace figures are cut from buffalo hide with a sharp, chisel-like stylus, and then painted. They are produced in Bali and Java, particularly in Central Java. The leaf-shaped *kayon* representing the 'tree' or 'mountain of life' is also made of leather and is used to end scenes during a performance.

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Wayang golek are three-dimensional wooden puppets found in Central and West Java. The *wayang klitik* puppets are the rarer flat wooden puppets of East Java.

METALWORK

The bronze age in Indonesia began when metalwork was introduced by the Dongson culture, and it peaked with the Hindu-Buddhist empires of Java. Brassware was mostly of Indian and Islamic influence. Today, some of the best brass workmanship is that of the Minangkabau in Sumatra, but brassware is also produced in Java, South Kalimantan and Sulawesi.

The most important ironwork objects are knives and swords such as the Javanese kris and the *parang* of Kalimantan. *Parang* are sacred weapons used in everything from clearing jungle to – at one time – head-hunting. Scabbards for ceremonial *parang* are intricately decorated with beads, shells and feathers.

JEWELLERY

The ubiquitous *toko mas* (gold shop) found in every Indonesian city is mostly an investment house selling gold jewellery by weight – design and workmanship take a back seat. However, gold and silverwork does have a long history in Indonesia. Some of the best gold jewellery comes from Aceh, where fine filigree work is produced, while chunky bracelets and earrings are produced in the Batak region.

The best-known jewellery is the silverwork of both Bali and the ancient city of Kota Gede within the city boundaries of Yogyakarta.

Balinese jewellery is nearly always handworked and rarely involves casting techniques. Balinese work is innovative, employing both traditional designs and those adapted from jewellery presented by Western buyers. The traditional centre for Balinese jewellery is Cleek.

Kota Gede in Yogyakarta is famous for its fine filigree work. Silverware from here tends to be more traditional, but new designs are also being adapted. As well as jewellery, Kota Gede produces a wide range of silver tableware.

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Environment

THE LAND

It makes sense that Indonesians call their country Tanah Air (literally, 'Earth and Water') as it is the world's most expansive archipelago. Indonesia's land area of 1,920,000 sq km is speckled along the equator for 5000km, from Sabang off the northern tip of Sumatra, to a little beyond Merauke in Papua. It's so extensive that the actual number of islands making up Indonesia is contentious. Officially the number is 17,508, but others estimate the number to be above 18,000 (perhaps when the tide's out).

Indonesia's landscape is a crumpled terrain of peaks and valleys – in Papua there are mountains so high they're snowcapped year-round – and in most other parts of Indonesia volcanoes dominate the skyline. They dot down the western coast of Sumatra, continue through Java, Bali and Nusa Tenggara, and then loop around through Maluku to Sulawesi.

Some of these volcanoes have erupted with such force it's no wonder they hold such a strong place in Indonesian culture: to many Balinese people the 1963 eruption of Gunung Agung was a sign of the wrath of the gods; in East Java the Tenggerese people still offer a propitiatory sacrifice to the smoking Bromo crater, which dominates the local landscape.

Indonesia is home to no fewer than 129 active volcanoes, the most of any nation.

High rainfall and year-round humidity mean that nearly two-thirds of Indonesia is covered in tropical rainforest – most of it in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua. Most of the forests of Java disappeared centuries ago as land was cleared for agriculture. Today the rest of Indonesia's rainforest, which in terms of area is second only to Brazil's, is disappearing at an alarming rate as local and foreign timber, agricultural and mining companies continue to plunder the region's resources (see p79).

Along the east coast of Sumatra, the southern coast of Kalimantan and Papua, and much of the northern coast of Java, there is swampy, low-lying land often covered in mangroves. There are also a few areas of Sulawesi and some of the islands closer to Australia – notably Sumba and Timor – that are considerably drier.

Indonesia's diverse vegetation, mountainous terrain and widely scattered islands have been integral in shaping the nation's history and astoundingly diverse culture. Looking at the big picture, this country has served as a crossroad between India, China and beyond – it was a convenient midway point where cultures crossed over, and merchants met and exchanged goods. However, difficult travel *within* Indonesia, due to seas and rough terrain, resulted in the nation's distinct cultural entities.

The regular climate in most of the country means that the rhythm of life for many Indonesian farmers is based less on the annual fluctuations of the seasons than on the growth patterns of their crops. In areas with heavy rainfall and terraced rice-field cultivation, there is no set planting season or harvest season but a continuous flow of activity, where at any one time one hillside may demonstrate the whole cycle of rice cultivation, from ploughing to harvesting. Such intense agricultural activity has fuelled kingdoms and continues to feed the densely populated regions.

GUNUNG API – FIRE MOUNTAINS

If you have the urge to ascend spectacular peaks, watch the sun rise through the haze of steaming craters and peer into the earth's bubbling core, you've come to the right place. Indonesia is *the* destination for volcano enthusiasts. This is thanks to the fact that it lies on a significant segment of the Pacific 'Ring of Fire', where two large crustal plates (the Indian Ocean and western Pacific) are forced under the massive Eurasian plate, where they melt at approximately 100km beneath the surface. Some of the magma rises and erupts to form the string of volcanic islands across Indonesia. Indonesia's volcanoes do erupt, sometimes with shocking consequences (see Krakatau p127). With tectonic activity comes devastating earthquakes and tsunamis, as happened so tragically on Boxing Day in 2004.

TOP VOLCANOES

Java

- Gunung Bromo (p244) – journey to Bromo, a sacred and eerie peak surrounded by the desolate Sea of Sands
- Gunung Merapi (p188) – tackle the lush, jungle-covered slopes of Merapi, an almost-perfect conical volcano dominating the cultural heartland of Java
- Gunung Krakatau (p126) – take a boat trip to see the remnants, and new beginnings, of one of the world's A-list volcanoes
- Kawah Ijen (p249) – spend the night at a peaceful coffee plantation before climbing this volcano to view its remarkable turquoise sulphur lake

Bali

- Gunung Agung (p333) – take one of the numerous routes up and down Bali's tallest and most sacred mountain; include seldom-visited temples in your journey

Sumatra

- Gunung Sibayak (p395) – enjoy an easy and rewarding day hike a few hours' bus ride from Medan
- Gunung Merapi (p446) – climb Sumatra's most restless volcano in the middle of the night for a sunrise view from the top
- Gunung Kerinci (p451) – brave this challenging ascent up into the heavens on Sumatra's highest peak

Nusa Tenggara

- Gunung Rinjani (p519) – join pilgrims at the summit of this sacred peak, which has a huge crater lake overlooked by the active cone of Gunung Baru
- Kelimutu (p561) – wonder at the ethereal scenery atop this volcano, with its three differently coloured crater lakes and lunaesque landscape
- Wawo Muda (p557) – climb the summit of this cone in Flores, which only emerged in 2001, and view several small lakes of a rusty-red hue

Maluku

- Gunung Api Gamalama (p783) – catch the view from Ternate of lovely Tidore and its string of offshore volcanoes
- Gunung Api (p770) – scramble up this volcano in the Banda Islands to experience the awesome sunrise views

WILDLIFE

From tiny tarsiers to massive stinking flowers, the range of natural attractions in Indonesia is phenomenal. In 2006, the discovery of never-before-seen species of wildlife in Papua's Pegunungan Foja (the Foja mountain range) highlighted just how rich Indonesia's natural environment is. It also emphasised the value of what is being destroyed for limited gain (see p79).

Animals

The fact that Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan and Bali (all part of the Sunda shelf) were once linked to the Asian mainland is reflected in the animals roaming the region. Some large Asian land animals still survive in this area, including tigers, rhinoceroses, leopards and the sun bear. A few places in Java claim to be the last refuge of the tiger, but tigers in Indonesia are now only known to exist in Sumatra. Leopards (the black leopard, or panther, is more common in Southeast Asia) are rare but still live in Sumatra and in Java's Ujung Kulon National Park. This park is also home to the rare, almost extinct, one-horned Javan rhinoceros. Rhinos have not fared well in Indonesia and the two-horned variety, found in Sumatra, is also on the endangered list.

Perhaps the most famous Indonesian animal is the orang-utan (literally, 'forest man'), the long-haired red apes found only in Sumatra and Kalimantan. The Bohorok Orang-utan Viewing Centre in North Sumatra provides easy access to orang-utans in their natural setting, as does the centre at the Tanjung Puting National Park in Kalimantan. Kalimantan is also home to the proboscis monkey, named for its pendulous nose. Various species of the graceful gibbon also exist throughout the region, as do other primate species.

Elephants are not numerous, but they still exist in the wild in Sumatra and can be seen at the Way Kambas National Park in Sumatra's Lampung province. Kalimantan also has a few wild elephants in the northeast, but they are very rare and the species is most probably introduced.

Wildlife at the eastern end of the nation has a closer connection to that which scurries around Australia, as Papua and the Aru Islands were both once part of the Australian landmass and lie on the Sahul shelf. Papua is the only part of Indonesia to have marsupials such as tree kangaroos, bandicoots and ring-tailed possums, all marsupials found in Australia.

A long-beaked echidna and a golden-mantled tree kangaroo were just two of the discoveries in Papua's Pegunungan Foja. There are also Aussie reptiles including crocodiles and frilled lizards. Then there's Papua's extraordinary birdlife: the area is home to over 600 species, the most well known being the cassowary and bird of paradise.

Lying across the centre of Indonesia are the islands of Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara and Maluku, all of which have long been isolated from the continental land mass. Endemic to Sulawesi is the *anoa* (dwarf buffalo), a wallowing animal that looks like a cross between a deer and a cow and stands only about 80cm high. The *babi rusa* (deer pig) has great curving tusks that come out the side of the mouth and through the top of the snout. The bulbous beaked hornbills are found across west Indonesia, but the *enggang Sulawesi* (Buton hornbill), with its brightly coloured beak and neck, is one of the most spectacular of the species. One hard-to-see animal is the tarsier, a tiny, nocturnal primate of North Sulawesi.

Maluku shows similarities with Sulawesi, but with fewer wildlife species. The *babi rusa* and smaller mammals are here, as are some primates, but it seems most of the migratory waves bypassed Maluku. However, it is

Two good illustrated books on Indonesian wildlife are *The Wildlife of Indonesia* by Kathy MacKinnon and *Wild Indonesia* by Tony and Jane Whitten.

The Birds of Java and Bali by Derek Holmes and Stephen Nash is one of the best birding guides available. *The Birds of Sulawesi* by Derek Holmes and Karen Phillipps is also worthwhile.

The Malay Archipelago by Alfred Russel Wallace is an 1869 classic account of this famous naturalist's wanderings throughout the Indonesian islands.

noted for its butterflies – Pulau Seram (Seram Island) has reported some enormous species – and bird life, particularly the *nuri raja* (Amboina king parrot), a large, magnificently coloured bird.

From Lombok eastwards, beyond the Wallace Line, the fauna of Nusa Tenggara reflects the more arid conditions of these islands (see p670). Large Asian mammals are nonexistent and mammal species in general are smaller and less diverse. Asian bird species diminish further east and Australian birds are found on the eastern islands. Nusa Tenggara has one astonishing and famous animal, the Komodo dragon, the world's largest lizard, found only on Komodo Island and a few neighbouring islands.

Stick insects measuring 546mm have been found in Kalimantan.

And of course Indonesia's waterways are home to a kaleidoscopic array of sea creatures. Sea horses, dolphins, turtles and stretches of coral attract snorkellers and divers to popular spots like Sulawesi's Bunaken and Togean Islands, and the wrecks and reefs off Bali.

Plants

What makes Indonesia's rapid clearing of rainforest areas all the more disheartening is that these areas are home to more types of flora than could be listed in this guide – from tiny moss species and spectacular orchids, to massive mangrove systems and the world's tallest flower (with the testosterone-charged name *amorphohallus titanium)*. Then there's one of the world's most infamous plants: the rafflesia (see below). Environmental degradation may be severe, but Sumatra and Kalimantan still present some of the best opportunities in the world to explore rainforest environments.

NATIONAL PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS

Although environmentalists have been critical of Indonesia's government for its history of environmental neglect, it's only fair to mention that the past decade has seen a rapid increase in the number of national parks, nature reserves and historical sites. While it's true that loggers, farmers and hunters ignore national park boundaries, there has been a sincere effort to enforce the rules – no easy task in a country with so much sparsely inhabited jungle. Local opinion on land protection of course varies widely. Many appreciate their country's natural beauty, many make a living indirectly or directly from its demise, and many have more pressing issues to contend with, such as abject poverty.

Indonesian national parks are managed by the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA or KSDA). Many new national parks have been proclaimed in recent years. National parks receive greater international recognition and funding than nature, wildlife and marine reserves, of which there are also many in Indonesia.

Most of Indonesia's national parks are very isolated and have minimal facilities. Exploring the country's magnificent wilderness areas requires time, endurance and usually a guide. Some parks have huts where visitors can stay, but most have no visitor facilities. If the wilderness is your main reason for visiting Indonesia, bring a good tent, sleeping bag and kerosene stove. As a general rule, park staff spend little time in the parks and more time in the office, which will be located in the nearest town or city. Call into these offices before heading to the park to check the latest conditions.

BLOOMIN' STINKY

Of all Indonesia's flora, the most spectacular is the *rafflesia arnoldi*. Considered the world's largest flower (it's actually a parasite) the rafflesia grows up to 1m in diameter, weighs as much as 7kg and unfurls inch-thick petals. The plant blooms between August and November, and in doing so emits a perfume of rotting flesh to attract insects necessary for pollination – it's not recommended for a romantic gift. The rafflesia is found primarily in Sumatra, but smaller versions are found in Kalimantan and Java.

TOP 10 NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES

Park	Location	Features	Activities	Best time to visit	Page
Gunung Leuser	Sumatra	biologically diverse conservation area, rivers, rainforest, mountains; tigers, rhinoceroses, elephants, orang-utans, primates such as the white-breasted Thomas Leaf monkey	orang-utan viewing, wildlife spotting, bird watching; trekking, rafting	Dec-Mar	p427
Tanjung Puting	Kalimantan	tropical rainforest, mangrove forest, wetlands; macaques, proboscis monkeys, diverse wildlife	orang-utan viewing, bird-watching	May-Sep	p631
Kelimutu	Nusa Tenggara	coloured lakes	volcanology, short walks	Apr-Sep	p561
Gunung Rinjani	Nusa Tenggara	volcano	trekking, volcano climbing	Apr-Sep	p519
Ujung Kulon	Java	lowland rainforest, scrub, grassy plains, swamps, sandy beaches; one-horned rhinoceroses, otters, squirrels, leaf monkeys, gibbons	wildlife spotting, jungle walks	Apr-Oct	p128
Gunung Bromo	Java	volcanic landscape	crater climbing	Apr-Oct	p244
Pulau Bunaken	Sulawesi	coral fringed islands	snorkelling, diving, island lazing	Jun-Jan	p739
Kerinci Seblat	Sumatra	mountainous rainforest, one of Sumatra's highest peaks	wildlife spotting, bird-watching; trekking	Dec-Mar	p451
Komodo	Nusa Tenggara	Komodo dragon	being chased by wildlife; snorkelling, diving	Apr-Sep	p541
West Bali	Bali	grasslands, coral fringed coasts	wildlife spotting; snorkelling, diving	year round	p356

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Indonesia's environmental record is a sorry read. Years of unregulated logging, waste mismanagement and rampant development have all left their scars and continue to create new ones. Even when environmental protection programs are put in place they are often poorly funded and enforcement, when attempted at all, is difficult.

Forest continues to be cleared at an horrific rate, and with much of it done on the sly, it could be well above 3 million hectares per year. Over 70% of Indonesia's forests have been destroyed, and the impact on flora and fauna has been catastrophic – there are more endangered species in Indonesia than anywhere else in the world.

The side effects of deforestation is felt across the nation and beyond: floods and landslides wash away valuable topsoil, rivers are used as dumping grounds for mine tailings and smoke from burning off is so severe it cloaks Malaysia and Singapore on an annual basis (around August). The government blames shifting 'slash-and-burn' cultivators, but

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TRAVELLER TACT: ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Environmental issues often seem to be alien in Indonesia, and Indonesians are wont to say to Europeans: 'We are a poor country that needs to exploit our natural resources. How can you tell us not to cut down our forests when you have already cut down all your own?' That said, Indonesia has a growing environmental awareness and environmental laws, even if they are poorly enforced. You can lecture all you like and even report violations to the local authorities, but the best you can hope for is to avoid adding to environmental degradation.

Hikers should follow the maxim that is posted in every Indonesian national park: 'take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints'. Minimise disposable waste and take it with you, even if the trails are already littered.

Avoid buying goods with excess packaging – go for food wrapped in banana leaf rather than polystyrene.

Re-use water bottles – many hotels let you refill bottles with *air putih* (drinking water).

Snorkellers and divers should never stand on coral and should avoid touching or otherwise disturbing living marine organisms (see p843).

There are laws to protect endangered species, but you still see such creatures for sale in local bird markets. Many souvenirs are made from threatened species: turtle shell products, sea shells, snakeskin, stuffed birds and framed butterflies are readily available in Indonesia. Not only does buying them encourage ecological damage, but import into most countries is banned and they will be confiscated by customs. See the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species** (CITES; www.cites.org) for more information.

outside experts say the fires are triggered by the waste wood and debris left by loggers, setting off peat and coal fires beneath the ground which burn for months. The problems flow right through to Indonesia's coastline and seas, where over 80% of reef habitat is considered to be at risk.

Of course the people most affected are those who live closest to, or within, the forested areas. Evictions from, restricted access to, and loss of land has seen many local communities lose their lifeline and spill into ever-spreading urban areas with ever-increasing populations living below the poverty line.

Walhi, the Indonesian Forum for Environment, is working to protect Indonesia's environment. Find out more and offer your support at www.walhi.or.id.

As Indonesia becomes more urbanised – over 30% of Indonesians now live in cities compared with 15% in 1970 – more strains are put on the urban environment. Although it stalled during the economic crisis, the wealth of the middle classes continues to grow, as does the number of new motor vehicles which add to the haze that hangs over the cities. Waste removal services have difficulty coping with household and industrial garbage, but the worst threat to living standards is the lack of decent sewerage systems. Very few cities have sewerage systems and so rely on septic tanks, or dispose effluent through the canals and river systems. This is a major source of pollution of water resources: most Indonesians are not supplied with safe drinking water and must boil it before use.

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Food & Drink

By eating in Indonesia you imbibe the essence of the country, as no other nation is so well represented by its cuisine. The abundance of rice reflects Indonesia's fertile landscape, the spices are reminiscent of a time of trade and invasion, and the fiery chilli echoes the passion of the people. Indonesian cuisine is really one big food swap. Chinese, Portuguese, colonists and traders have all influenced the ingredients that appear at the Indonesian table and the cuisine has been shaped over time by the archipelago's diverse landscape, people and culture.

Indonesians eat simple but delicious meals. Eating only becomes grand at celebrations. For everyday eating, in the morning most households prepare plain rice, three or four dishes and *sambal* (chilli sauce), which are left covered on the table and can be eaten throughout the day. The dishes on the table constitute the entire meal, as Indonesian meals aren't served in courses.

Apart from rice, which is kept warm, most meals are eaten at room temperature. This may be disconcerting if you feel food is only safe to eat if it's cooked in front of you, but the cooking methods help keep food edible for the day. It's important to remember that rice (or another staple such as sago) is the filler while the accompanying dishes provide the flavour. Filling up on rice also helps to keep down the cost of feeding a family, or guest.

Rice in the field is called *padi;* rice grain at the market is called *beras;* cooked rice on your plate is called *nasi.*

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

Indonesian cooking is not complex and the tastes stay separate. Coriander, cumin, chilli, lemon grass, coconut, soy sauce and palm sugar are all important flavourings; *sambal* is a crucial condiment. Fish is a favourite and the seafood restaurants are often of a good standard. Indonesians traditionally eat with their fingers, hence the stickiness of the rice. Sate (skewered meat), *nasi goreng* (fried rice) and *gado gado* (vegetables with peanut sauce) are some of Indonesia's most famous dishes.

Jajanan (snacks) are sold everywhere – there are thousands of varieties of sweet and savoury snacks made from almost anything and everything: peanuts, coconuts, bananas, sweet potato etc.

Queen Victoria once offered a reward to anyone able to transport a still-edible mangosteen fruit back to England.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Java

The cuisine of the Betawi (original inhabitants of the Jakarta region) is known for its richness. *Gado gado* is a Betawi original, as is *ketoprak* (noodles, bean sprouts and tofu with soy and peanut sauce; named after a musical style, as it resembles the sound of ingredients being chopped). *Soto Betawi* (beef soup) is made creamy with coconut milk. There's also *nasi uduk* (rice cooked in coconut milk, served with meat, tofu and/or vegetables).

In West Java, the Sundanese love their greens. Their specialities include *karedok* (salad of long beans, bean sprouts and cucumber with spicy sauce), *soto Bandung* (beef-and-vegetable soup with lemon grass) and *ketupat tahu* (pressed rice, bean sprouts and tofu with soy and peanut sauce). The West Javan town of Sumedang is home to the world's best tofu. Sundanese sweet specialities include *colenak* (roasted cassava with coconut sauce) and *ulen* (roasted sticky rice with peanut sauce), both best eaten warm. *Dodol,* a toffee-like sweet, is the culinary offering of Garut.

Bandung's cooler hills are the place for *bandrek* (ginger tea with coconut and pepper) and *bajigur* (spiced coffee with coconut milk). Cirebon's offerings include e*mpal genton* (beef and turmeric soup) and *tahu gejrot* (tofu swimming in spiced soy sauce).

Central Javan food is sweet, even the curries, like *gudeg* (jackfruit curry). Yogyakarta specialities include *ayam goreng* (fried chicken) and *kelepon* (green rice-flour balls with a palm-sugar filling). In Solo, specialities include *nasi liwet* (rice with coconut milk, unripe papaya, garlic and shallots, served with chicken or egg) and *serabi* (coconut-milk pancakes topped with chocolate, banana or jackfruit). Other Javanese specialities include *pecel* (peanut sauce with spinach and bean sprouts), *lotek* (peanut sauce with vegetable and pressed rice), *opor ayam* (chicken in pepper and coconut curry) and *rawon* (dark beef stew).

There's a lot of crossover between Central and East Javan cuisine. Fish is popular, especially *pecel lele* (deep-fried catfish served with rice and *pecel*). The best *pecel* comes from the town of Madiun.

Two very popular Madurese dishes are *soto Madura* (beef soup with lime, pepper, peanuts, chilli and ginger) and *sate Madura* (skewered meat with sweet soy sauce).

Bali

Balinese specialities are hard to find as many tourists don't seem to like spicy, fleshy dishes like *lawar* (salad of chopped coconut, garlic and chilli with pork or chicken meat and blood). More popular is *bebek betutu* (duck stuffed with spices, wrapped in banana leaves and coconut husks and cooked in embers). The local sate, *sate lilit,* is made with minced, spiced meat pressed onto skewers. The grandest Balinese dish is *babi guling* (spit-roast pig stuffed with chilli, turmeric, garlic and ginger).

Indonesian Regional Food & Cookery by Sri Owen interweaves recipes with cultural insight.

Sumatra

In North Sumatra, the Acehnese love their *kare* or *gulai* (curry). The Bataks have a taste for pig and, to a lesser extent, dog (see boxed text, p84). Pork features in *babi panggang* (pork boiled in vinegar and pig blood then roasted). Another bloody delicacy is *ayam namargota* (chicken cooked in spices and blood). Bataks often use a local, mouth-numbing pepper called *lada rimba*.

In West Sumatra, the buffalo, a symbol of the region, is used in *rendang* (buffalo coconut curry). The region is the home of Padang cuisine (see p435), and the market in Bukittinggi is a great place to sample *nasi Kapau* (cuisine from the village of Kapau). It's similar to Padang food but uses more vegetables. There's also *sate Padang* (skewered meat with pressed rice and a smooth peanut sauce), *ampiang dadiah* (buffalo yogurt with palm-sugar syrup, coconut and rice) and *bubur kampiun* (mung-bean porridge with banana and rice yogurt).

The culinary capital of South Sumatra is Palembang, famous for *pempek* (deep-fried fish and sago dumpling; also called *empek-empek*). South Sumatra is also home to *pindang* (spicy fish soup with soy and tamarind), *ikan brengkes* (fish in a spicy, durian-based sauce), *tempoyak* (sauce of shrimp paste, lime juice, chilli and fermented durian) and *sambal buah* (chilli sauce made with fruit). Palembang's sweetie is *srikaya* (green custard of sticky rice, sugar, coconut milk and egg).

FRUITY DELIGHTS

It's worth making a trip to Indonesia just to sample the tropical fruits:

- *Belimbing* (star fruit) is cool and crisp; slice one to see how it gets its name.
- Durian is the spiky fruit people either love or hate (see boxed text, p84).
- *Jambu air* (water apple) is a pink bell-shaped fruit with crisp and refreshing flesh.
- *Manggis* (mangosteen) is a small purple fruit with white fleshy segments and fantastic flavour.
- *Nangka* (jackfruit) is an enormous, spiky fruit that can weigh over 20kg. Inside are segments of yellow, moist, sweet flesh with a slightly rubbery texture. The flesh can be eaten fresh or cooked in a curry.
- Rambutan is a bright red fruit covered in soft spines; the name means 'hairy'. Break it open to reveal a delicious white fruit similar to lychee.
- *Salak* is recognisable by its brown 'snakeskin' covering. Peel it off to reveal segments that resemble something between an apple and a walnut.
- *Sirsak* (soursop, or zurzak) is a warty, green-skinned fruit with a white, pulpy interior that has a slightly lemonish taste.

Nusa Tenggara

In dry East Nusa Tenggara you'll eat less rice and more sago, corn, cassava and taro. Fish remains popular and one local dish is Sumbawa's *sepat* (shredded fish in coconut and mango sauce). The Sasak people of Lombok like spicy *ayam Taliwang* (roasted chicken served with a peanut, tomato, chilli and lime dip) and *pelecing* sauce (made with chilli, shrimp paste and tomato). Nonmeat dishes include *kelor* (soup with vegetables), *serebuk* (vegetables mixed with coconut) and *timun urap* (cucumber with coconut, onion and garlic).

Kalimantan

Dayak food varies, but you may sample *rembang,* a sour fruit that's made into *sayur asem rembang* (sour vegetable soup). In Banjarmasin, the Banjar make *pepes ikan* (spiced fish cooked in banana leaves with tamarind and lemon grass). Kandangan town is famous for *ketupat Kandangan* (fish and pressed rice with lime-infused coconut sauce). The regional soup, *soto Banjar,* is a chicken broth made creamy by mashing boiled eggs into the stock. Chicken also goes into *ayam masak habang,* cooked with large red chillies. Sugar freaks will love Banjarmasin's many little sweeties, known as *ampar tatak* (literally meaning 'cut plate').

Sulawesi

South Sulawesi locals love seafood, especially *ikan bakar* (grilled fish). Another local dish is *coto Makassar* (soup of beef innards, pepper, cumin and lemon grass). For sugar cravers, there's *es pallubutun* (coconut custard and banana in coconut milk and syrup).

The Toraja people have their own distinct cuisine (see p692).

If a North Sulawesi dish has the name *rica-rica,* it's prepared with a paste of chilli, shallots, ginger and lime. Fish and chicken are two versions (also look out for dog). Things get very fishy with *bakasang* (flavouring paste made with fermented fish), sometimes used in *bubur tinotuan* (porridge made with corn, cassava, rice, pumpkin, fish paste and chilli). Minahasans have a few surprises: are you up for some *kawaok* (fried forest rat) or *keluang* (fruit bat)?

Maluku

A typical Maluku meal is tuna and *dabu-dabu* (raw vegetables with a

WE DARE YOU

Everyday eating in Indonesia can be strange and there are some specialities that make for a real culture shock:

- It's not a staple, but dog is eaten in North Sulawesi and the Batak region of Sumatra. They are, however, surreptitious about canine consumption and you'll never see the word *anjing* (dog) advertised. The Bataks call dog *B1* (pronounced beh *sah*-tuh), as dog in the local language is *biang*, which has one 'b'. They call *babi* (pig) *B2*. In North Sulawesi, Fido is known as *rw* (pronounced *err*-weh), in which 'r' stands for *rintek* (soft) and 'w' stands for *wu'uk* (fur).
- The durian has a serious public image problem. This fruit's spiky skin looks like a Spanish Inquisition torture tool; opening it releases the fruit's odorous power. Many hotels ban the fruit from their premises so as to avoid offending guests with its 'aroma'. If you can keep close you'll see five segments of custard-like flesh surrounding large seeds. These are the jewels in the king's crown. Some say the glorious taste overrides the stench; others say 'Run away!' Yes, durian is an acquired taste.
- Balinese specialities are often difficult to find, but ask around and you might find *lawar* (salad of chopped coconut, garlic and chilli with pork or chicken meat and blood) or *siobak* (minced pig's head, stomach, tongue and skin cooked with spices).
- Avocado juice: take an avocado, blend with ice and condensed milk (or chocolate syrup) and serve. Indonesians don't consider this strange, as the avocado is just another sweet fruit.

chilli and fish-paste sauce). Sometimes fish is made into *kohu-kohu* (fish salad with citrus fruit and chilli). Sago pith is used to make porridge, bread and *mutiara* (small, jelly-like 'beans' that are added to desserts and sweet drinks).

Papua

Lonely Planet's *World Food Indonesia*, by Patrick Witton, looks at the history and culture of Indonesian cuisine.

In the highlands of Papua the sweet potato is king. The Dani people grow around 60 varieties, some of which can only be eaten by the elders. Other plants, such as sago palms, are also cultivated. The locals eat the pith of the sago palm and also leave the plant to rot so they can collect and eat beetle grubs. On special occasions, chickens and pigs are cooked in earth ovens.

DRINKS

Tea

Indonesia's most popular brew is black with sugar. If you don't want sugar ask for *teh pahit* (bitter tea), and if you want milk buy yourself a cow. Bandung's hills are the place for *bandrek* (ginger tea with coconut and pepper).

Coffee

Indonesian coffee, especially from Sulawesi, is of exceptional quality. Indonesians drink a chewy concoction called *kopi tubruk* (ground coffee with sugar and boiling water).

Ice & Fruit Drinks

Indonesia's *es* (ice drinks) are not only refreshing, they are visually stimulating, made with syrups, fruit and jellies. There are plenty of places serving *es jus* (iced fruit juice) or cordial-spiked *kelapa muda* (young coconut juice).

Alcoholic Drinks

Islam may be the predominant religion in Indonesia, but there's a range of alcohol available, including *tuak* (palm-sap wine), *arak* (rice or palm-sap wine) and Balinese *brem* (rice wine). Two domestic breweries, Bintang and Anker, produce a clean, slightly sweet brew.

CELEBRATIONS

Eat Smart in Indonesia, by J & D Peterson and SV Medaris, is a good, well-illustrated introduction to Indonesian dishes and their ingredients.

Whether a marriage, funeral or party with friends, food – and lots of it – is essential. Celebratory meals can include any combination of dishes, but for special occasions a *tumpeng* is the centrepiece: a pyramid of yellow rice, the tip of which is cut off and offered to the VIP. Meat is always served, often a speciality such as Sumatran *rendang* or Balinese *babi guling*. Once formalities are over (Indonesians love speeches) it's time for guests to dig in.

For Muslims, the largest celebrations are Ramadan (the fasting month, which ends with the Lebaran holiday) and Idul Adha. Each day of Ramadan, Muslims rise before sunrise to eat the only meal before sunset. It may sound like a bad time to be in Indonesia – you may have to plan meals and go without lunch – but when sunset comes, the locals' appreciation of a good meal is contagious. The first thing Indonesians eat after fasting is *kolak* (fruit in coconut milk) as a gentle way to re-acquaint the body with food. Then, after prayers, the evening meal begins with aplomb. In some areas, such as in Bukittinggi, cooks set out food on the street. People gather to savour and enjoy their food as a community.

After Ramadan, many travel to celebrate Lebaran with their families. During Lebaran, *ketupat* (rice steamed in packets of woven coconut fronds) are hung everywhere, like Christmas bells and holly.

Seventy days after Lebaran is Idul Adha, the festival commemorating Abraham's devotion. Allah ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son, but ended up sparing him as Abraham's devotion to him was soon obvious. In the boy's place, a ram was sacrificed. This is repeated across the Islamic world; in Indonesia a sheep or goat is the victim, and you'll know it's close to Idul Adha when you see the unfortunate animals sold everywhere.

The Balinese calendar is peppered with festivals including Kedaso (the 10th full-moon festival) and Penampahan (a purification festival). Such celebrations are always observed with a communal meal, sometimes eaten together from one massive banana leaf piled with dishes.

Festivals aside, every day in Bali you'll see food used to symbolise devotion: rice in woven banana-leaf pockets are placed in doorways, beside rice fields, at bus terminals – wherever a god or spirit may reside. Larger offerings studded with whole chickens and produce are made to mark special occasions such as *odalan* (birthday of a temple). You'll see processions of women gracefully balancing offerings on their heads as they make their way to temple. Bali's offerings are made by female-only collectives called *anyaman*, which also have a social aspect. At an *odalan*, men may prepare an *ebat* (five-dish feast).

The Javanese Mitoni celebration marks the seventh month of pregnancy. Mitoni involves a feast that includes a *tumpeng* surrounded by six smaller dishes, and seven hard-boiled eggs. If the feast looks beautiful, it's a girl. If it looks ordinary, a boy's in the making.

Another celebration occurs when a child is 35 days old: their head is shaved and a meal is prepared with dishes of beef (representing the child's ability to walk), fish (to swim) and chicken (to fly).

With so many cultures, there's a wide variety of ways Indonesians celebrate marriage. Some Indonesian weddings include an animal sacrifice, others include karaoke. Some probably have both. But there's always a

massive meal. At Javanese weddings, the bride feeds the groom by hand, symbolising her responsibilities. At the reception, the food served can be anything, as long as there's lots of it.

A funeral is another celebration that varies depending on where you are. In some areas, such as Tana Toraja and Sumba, funerals are massive occasions involving the whole community, as well as some unlucky animals.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

There are a few choices for dining out in Indonesia. Warungs are simple, open-air eateries providing a small range of dishes. Often their success comes from cooking one dish better than anyone else. *Rumah makan* (eating house) or *restoran* refers to anything that is a step above a warung. Offerings may be as simple as from a warung but usually include more choices of meat and vegetable dishes, and spicy accompaniments.

'Indonesia's markets are wonderful examples of how food feeds both the soul and the stomach'

Indonesia's markets are wonderful examples of how food feeds both the soul and the stomach. There's no refrigeration, so freshness is dependent on quick turnover. You'll also find a huge range of sweet and savoury snacks. Supermarkets are also common.

For information on business hours see p845.

Quick Eats

As many Indonesians can't afford fine service and surrounds, the most authentic food is found at street level. Even high rollers know this, so everyone dines at stalls or gets their noodle fix from roving vendors who carry their victuals in two bundles connected by a stick over their shoulders: a stove and wok on one side; ready-to-fry ingredients on the other. Then there's *kaki lima* (roving vendors) whose carts hold a work bench, stove and cabinet. *Kaki lima* means 'five legs', for the three wheels of the cart and the two legs of the vendor. You'll find any and every type of dish, drink and snack sold from a *kaki lima*. Some have a permanent spot, others roam the streets, calling out what they are selling or making a signature sound, such as the 'tock' of a wooden *bakso* bell. In some places, sate sellers operate from a boat-shaped cart, with bells jingling to attract the hungry.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians will be pleased to know that *tempe* and *tahu* (tofu) are in abundance, sold as chunky slabs of *tempe penyet* (deep-fried *tempe*), *tempe kering* (diced *tempe* stir-fried with sweet soy sauce) and *tahu isi* (deep-fried stuffed tofu). Finding fresh vegies requires more effort. Look for Chinese establishments; they can whip up *cap cai* (mixed vegetables). Vegetarian fried rice or noodles can be found at many other eateries. A huge number of places, including Padang restaurants, offer *nasi campur* (rice with a choice of side dishes). Here you can avoid meat and go for things like tofu, *tempe*, jackfruit dishes, egg dishes and leafy vegies. If meat is in a dish it's usually pretty obvious, but ask about hidden things like *terasi* (fish paste), often used in *sambal* (chilli sauce). Vegans should be wary of condensed milk – often added to juices and pancakes. Vendors with blenders mix up some fine fresh fruit concoctions. And there's fantastic fruit available at the local market (see p82).

EATING WITH KIDS

There's always the fear that a hidden chilli is going to make your child explode. But most Indonesian children dread chilli attacks, so a proprietor will often warn you if a dish is spicy. In any case, you can always ask *'Pedas tidak?'* ('Is it spicy?') or *'Makanan tidak pedas ada?'* ('Are there nonspicy dishes?').

Children may enjoy *nasi goreng* (fried rice), *mie goreng* (fried noodles), *bakso* (meatball soup), *mie rebus* (noodle soup), *perkedel* (fritters), *pisang goreng* (banana fritters), sate, *bubur* (rice porridge), fruit and fruit drinks. Indonesia's sugar-rich iced drinks are useful secret weapons for when energy levels are low. All of these are available at street stalls and restaurants. Not available, however, are highchairs and kiddy menus. That's not to say children aren't welcome; in fact, they'll probably get more attention than they can handle.

If your little fella yearns for familiar tastes, supermarkets stock Western foods; and fast food places are around, if that's really what your child wants. Be warned that heat can hit hard, so make sure children are getting enough fluids.

INDONESIA'S TOP FIVE

- Horizontal Bar & Lounge (p515) is so stylish it gives the Med a run for its money. This sophisticated lounge bar on Gili Trawangan serves superior tapas, mod-Oz cuisine and Indonesian favourites with a contemporary twist. It all goes down much better with a dishy cocktail.
- Jimbaran (p182), a pagoda-style restaurant in a languid setting just north of Yogyakarta, dishes up spectacular seafood, all sold by the ounce. Sound tough? Wait till you have to choose between the couldn't-be-fresher-unless-it-was-swimming crab, lobster and prawns.
- Floridas (p786) on Maluku is a modest terraced eatery that serves some of the finest seafood in Indonesia, particularly the *ikan woku kenari* (fish in hot almond sauce roasted in a banana leaf), all in front of a sublime panorama.
- Deli Cat (p320), a Balinese deli in Ubud, is laden with character, delightfully cheap vino and delectable comfort grub.
- Lae Lae (p677) is where Makassar's freshest seafood is barbecued in fragrant and spicy sauces (get a load of the *cobek-cobek* sauce made with chilli, lime and shrimp paste) and served in modest and friendly surrounds. The bonus is it's cheap enough to eat there three times a day.

HABITS & CUSTOMS

With a population of over 245 million, you'd expect a little variety in Indonesia's culinary customs. There will be no surprises if you are eating at a restaurant, apart from the lack of a menu. Things may change, however, if you are invited to a home. Often dishes for a meal will be prepared earlier and set out buffet style, and you'll be implored to help yourself. Be sure not to engorge yourself – take a little of everything, and fill up on rice.

COOKING COURSES

If you want to learn some local kitchen tricks, Ubud in Bali has a number of cooking schools ready to take you through the finer points of curry creation and sate sizzling. If you have a favourite dish, they'll teach you to make that, too.

At **Bumbu Bali** (% 0361-774502; www.balifoods.com; Jl Pratama) long-time resident and cookbook author Heinz von Holzen runs a cooking school from his excellent South Bali restaurant (p302). Classes start at US$65.

Another option is the Balinese cooking courses held by creative cuisine pioneer Janet De Neefe at the **Casa Luna Cooking School** (www.casalunabali

TRAVELLER TACT – DINING

In Indonesia hospitality is highly regarded. If you're invited to someone's home for a meal, you'll be treated warmly and social hiccups will be ignored. Nevertheless, here are some tips to make the experience more enjoyable for everyone:

- When food or drink is presented, wait until your host invites you to eat.
- Indonesians rarely eat at the table, preferring to sit on a mat or around the lounge room.
- Don't be surprised if, when invited to a home, you're the only one eating. This is your host's way of showing you're special, and you should have choice pickings. But don't eat huge amounts, as these dishes will feed others later. Fill up on rice and take a spoonful from each other dish.
- Indonesia isn't a nation of chopstick users; this is fork and spoon country. Many prefer eating with their hands (if you're worried about hygiene, remember that only you can be sure where your fingers have been). Only use your right hand (ie for eating, passing things, anything); the left hand is for 'other duties'.
- Your host will implore you to eat more than is humanly possible, but the best approach is to eat as much as a restaurant would serve. And – not that you'll need prompting – be sure to praise the food.
- In Islamic areas, be sure not to eat and drink in public during Ramadan. Restaurants do stay open, though they usually cover the door so as not to cause offence.
- Smoking seems to be acceptable everywhere, anytime. But perhaps wait until after a meal before lighting up, unless everyone else is puffing away.
- Men and women dining together is the norm. An invitation to a meal from (or for) the opposite sex may be considered an 'expression of interest', as it is in most countries.

.com). The half-day courses (250,000Rp) are held five days a week at the Honeymoon Guesthouse (p319) and are highly recommended. They cover ingredients, cooking techniques and the cultural background of the Balinese kitchen. Excellent gourmet tours are also held on the weekend (300,000Rp).

EAT YOUR WORDS

Want to buy mangoes at a market or eat *rendang* at a restaurant? Don't be left speechless; check out the Language chapter. For pronunciation guidelines see p888.

Useful Phrases

Knowing these basic phrases will help make ordering a meal easier.

Where is a (cheap) restaurant?	*Di mana ada rumah makan (murah)?*
I want ...	*Saya mau ...*
to eat	*makan*
to drink	*minum*
Can you please bring me ...?	*Bisa minta ...?*
a knife	*pisau*
a fork	*garpu*
a spoon	*sendok*
(some) water	*air minum (lagi)*
I can't eat ...	*Saya tidak mau makan ...*
eggs	*telur*
meat	*daging*
peanuts	*kacang tanah*
Not too spicy, please.	*Jangan terlalu pedas.*
What's that?	*Apa itu?*
What are they eating?	*Mereka makan apa?*
That was delicious!	*Ini enak sekali!*

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Food Glossary

acar	pickle; cucumber or other vegetables in a mixture of vinegar, salt, sugar and water
air	water
arak	rice wine; also known as *brem*
ayam	chicken; fried chicken is *ayam goreng*
babi	pork; since most Indonesians are Muslim, pork is generally only found in market stalls and restaurants run by the Chinese, and in areas where there are non-Muslim populations, such as Bali, Papua and Tana Toraja on Sulawesi
bakar	barbecued, roasted
bakso/ba'so	meatball soup
bubur	rice porridge
cassava	known as tapioca in English; a long, thin, dark brown root which looks something like a shrivelled turnip
daging kambing	goat or mutton
daging sapi	beef
es buah	combination of crushed ice, condensed milk, shaved coconut, syrup, jelly and fruit
gado gado	very popular Indonesian dish of steamed bean sprouts and various vegetables, served with a spicy peanut sauce
ikan	fish
kopi	coffee
krupuk	shrimp with cassava flour, or fish flakes with rice dough, cut into slices and fried to a crisp
lombok	chilli
lontong	rice steamed in a banana leaf
martabak	a pancake-like dish stuffed with meat, egg and vegetables
mie goreng	fried wheat-flour noodles, served with vegetables or meat
nasi	rice
nasi campur	steamed rice topped with a little bit of everything – some vegetables, some meat, a bit of fish, a *krupuk* or two; usually a tasty and filling meal
nasi goreng	fried rice
nasi putih	white (*putih*) rice, usually steamed
pempek (empek-empek)	deep fried/grilled fish and sago balls (from Palembang)
pisang goreng	fried banana fritters
roti	bread; nearly always white and sweet
sambal	a hot, spicy chilli sauce served as an accompaniment with most meals
sate	small pieces of various types of meat grilled on a skewer and served with peanut sauce
sayur	vegetables
soto	meat and vegetable broth; soup
tahu	tofu or soybean curd
teh	tea; tea without sugar is *teh pahit*
telur	egg
tempe	made from whole soybeans which are fermented into a cake
udang	prawns or shrimps

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