

Sulawesi

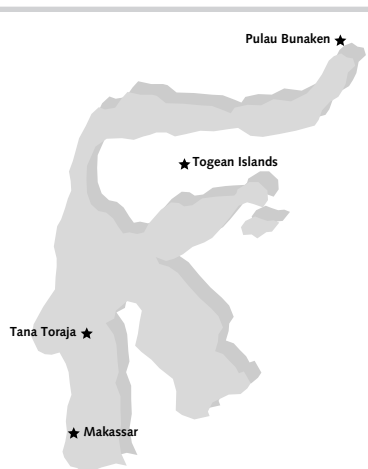


The first thing everyone notices about Sulawesi is its strange shape. There must have been some serious tectonic action in this region to produce an island so bizarre. But bizarre is beautiful and in its contortions are its character, with an incredible diversity of people, cultures and landscapes spread across its length and breadth. Great seafarers like the Minahasans and the Bugis helped to shape modern Indonesia as they took to the seas in trade and conflict, but it is the land-locked cultures of the island that are most mysterious. Tana Toraja is spellbinding, home to a proud people hemmed in by magnificent mountains on all sides. The scenery of volcanoes and rice fields is stunning. However, the Toraja's elaborate death rituals are something else. Cave graves, *tau tau* (carved wooden effigies of the dead), a buffalo cult, houses shaped like boats and the dead treated like the living – a visit here is out of this world.

Known to the Portuguese as the Celebes, the island's most popular overland route is Makassar–Tana Toraja–Danau Poso–Togean Islands–Manado–Bunaken, and there are also plenty of rewarding side trips to be made throughout the region. Sulawesi is full of natural attractions. The leading national parks see few visitors and include such diverse draws as ancient megaliths in Lore Lindu and bug-eyed tarsiers in Tangkoko. However, it is the waters of Sulawesi that harbour its real treasures. Just offshore is some of the best diving and snorkelling in Indonesia, if not the world. Pulau Bunaken and the Lembeh Strait take top billing, but for those prepared to venture off the trail, there are the beautiful beaches of the laid-back Togean Islands in Central Sulawesi and the incredible Wakatobi Marine National Park in the far southeast.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Snorkelling or diving into some of Asia's most dramatic drop-offs around the island hideaway of **Pulau Bunaken** (p739)
- Experiencing life after death in **Tana Toraja** (p687) by joining one of the elaborate funeral ceremonies
- Letting time pass you by on the pristine beaches of the **Togean Islands** (p725), an island paradise
- Sampling the finest seafood in the mighty metropolis of **Makassar** (p671), then hitting the town for the biggest night this side of Java
- Enjoying life in the slow lane aboard a Peln liner on an **east-coast cruise** (p679) from Makassar to Manado

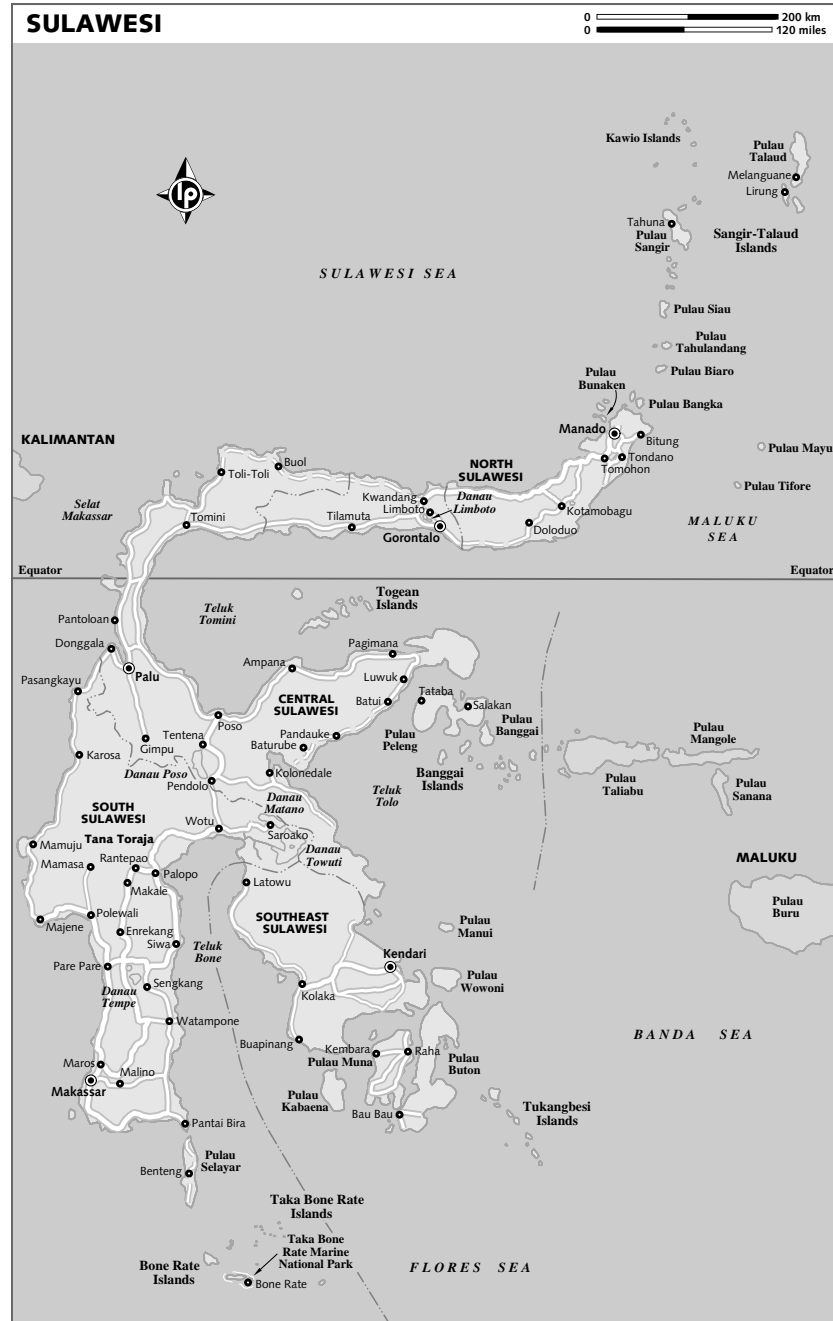


■ POPULATION: 15.5 MILLION

■ LAND AREA: 202,000 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST PEAK: GUNUNG RANTEMARIO (3440M)

SULAWESI



HISTORY

The interior of the island provided a refuge for some of Indonesia's earliest inhabitants, some of whom preserved elements of their rich cultures well into the 20th century. The Makassarese and Bugis of the southwest peninsula, and the Christian Minahasan of the far north, are the dominant groups of Sulawesi. The unique traditions, architecture and ceremonies of the Toraja people make the interior of South Sulawesi a deservedly popular destination.

Other minorities, particularly Bajo Sea nomads, have played an integral role in the island's history. The rise of the kingdom of Gowa – Sulawesi's first major power – from the mid-16th century was partly due to its trading alliance with the Bajo. The Bajo supplied valuable sea produce, especially the Chinese delicacy trepang (sea cucumber), tortoiseshell, birds' nests and pearls, attracting international traders to Gowa's capital, Makassar.

Makassar quickly became known as a cosmopolitan, tolerant and secure entrepôt that allowed traders to bypass the Dutch monopoly over the spice trade in the east – a considerable concern to the Dutch. In 1660 the Dutch sunk six Portuguese ships in Makassar harbour, captured the fort and forced Gowa's ruler, Sultan Hasanuddin, into an alliance in 1667. Eventually, the Dutch managed to exclude all other foreign traders from Makassar, effectively shutting down the port.

Even after Indonesia won its independence, ongoing civil strife hampered Sulawesi's attempts at post-war reconstruction until well into the 1960s. A period of uninterrupted peace delivered unprecedented and accelerating development, particularly evident in the ever-growing Makassar metropolis.

CENTRAL SULAWESI TRAVEL WARNING

Travel to parts of Central Sulawesi remains potentially risky at the time of writing, due to continued unrest and violence. There were bomb attacks in Palu and Tentena in 2005 and continued troubles in the Poso area. Double check the latest situation before travelling through the region. See the Central Sulawesi section on p715.

Tragically, the Poso region in Central Sulawesi fell into a cycle of inter-communal violence in 1998 and troubles linger on today. The situation in the region remains tense at the time of writing.

CLIMATE

Although temperatures are relatively constant all year, Sulawesi's mountainous terrain plays havoc with local rainfall patterns. The wettest months along the west coast tend to be late November, December and early January, when northwesterly and westerly winds prevail. Southeasterly winds dump heavy rains along the eastern regions in late April, May and early June. The Palu Valley in Central Sulawesi is one of the driest areas in Indonesia.

Temperatures drop quite considerably going from the lowlands to the mountains. Average temperatures along the coast range from around 26°C to 30°C, but in the mountains the average temperature drops by 5°C. See also the climate chart for Manado, p848.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

AIR DOMESTIC

The three transport hubs are Makassar, Manado, and Palu, which offers connections to Balikpapan in Kalimantan. It is possible to arrange direct flights to Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Maluku and Papua, but you'll need to transit for connections to Sumatra or Nusa Tenggara. Merpati Nusantara Airlines and Lion Air are the main carriers, but Adam Air, Batavia Air, Bouraq, Garuda Indonesia, Mandala, Sriwijaya Air and Wings Air also service Sulawesi. See the individual sections and the Sulawesi Airfares map (p669) for details about all domestic flights.

INTERNATIONAL

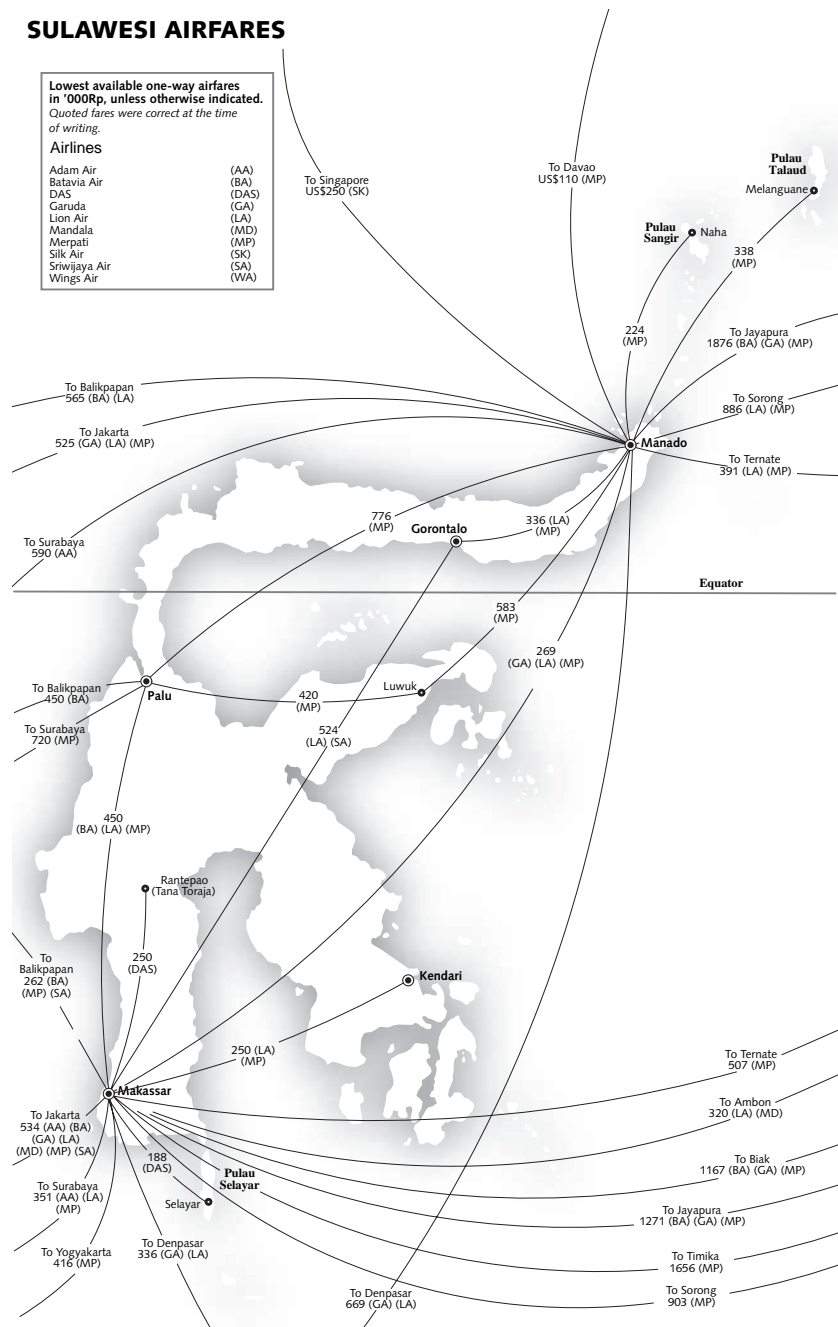
Silk Air flies between Manado and Singapore four times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday) for US\$250/375 (one way/return). Bouraq and Merpati fly between Manado and Davao in the southern Philippines once a week for US\$110/200. This is useful for a visa run, but it is important to note that you need an onward ticket before you can enter the Philippines.

SULAWESI AIRFARES

Lowest available one-way airfares in '000Rp, unless otherwise indicated. Quoted fares were correct at the time of writing.

Airlines

Adam Air	(AA)
Batavia Air	(BA)
DAS	(DAS)
Garuda	(GA)
Lion Air	(LA)
Mandala	(MD)
Merpati	(MP)
Silk Air	(SK)
Sriwijaya Air	(SA)
Wings Air	(WA)



Tickets for all international flights from Makassar and Manado are often cheaper through travel agencies.

Sea

Sulawesi is well connected, with more than half Pelni's fleet calling at Makassar, Bitung (the seaport for Manado), Pare Pare and/or Toli-Toli, as well as a few other minor towns.

Some of the more important boats that stop at Makassar and/or Bitung (Manado) include:

Agoa Mas To East Kalimantan.

Awu To Nusa Tenggara, Bali and East Kalimantan.

Bukit Siguntang To southern Maluku, Banda, Papua and Java.

Ciremai To Northern Maluku, northern Papua and Jakarta

Kambuna To Java and East Kalimantan.

Kelimutu To northern Papua and East Kalimantan.

Lambelu To Java and southern and Northern Maluku.

Rinjani To southern Maluku, southern and northern Papua, and Java.

Sirimau To Nusa Tenggara, Java and East Kalimantan.

Tilongkabila To Nusa Tenggara and Bali.

Umsini To Java, East Kalimantan and Northern Maluku.

GETTING AROUND

Air

The recent growth of domestic air carriers has made internal flights cheaper and more frequent. Merpati and Lion Air are the main carriers within Sulawesi, but Batavia Air, Bouraq and DAS also operate selected routes.

See the individual Getting There & Away entries and the Sulawesi Airfares map (p669) for details of flights around Sulawesi.

Boat

The few Pelni ships that link towns within Sulawesi are a comfortable alternative to long and rough bus trips. Every two weeks the following boats sail from Makassar: the *Kambuna* and *Kerinci* go to Pantoloan (for Palu); the *Bukit Siguntang*, *Lambelu* and *Rinjani* go to Bau Bau; the *Ciremai* goes to Bau Bau, the Banggai Islands and Bitung (for Manado); the *Lambelu* goes to Bitung; and the *Sirimau* goes to the remote islands of Bone Rate.

The most useful service is the *Tilongkabila*, which sails every two weeks from Makassar to Bau Bau, Raha and Kendari; up to Kolonedale, Luwuk, Gorontalo and Bitung; across to Tahuna and Lirung in the Sangir-Talaud Islands; and returns the same way to Makassar.

Elsewhere along the coast, and to remote islands such as the Togeang and Banggai, creaky old passenger ships, or *kapal kayu* (wooden boats), are the normal mode of transport, although speedboats are also occasionally available for charter. Around the southeastern peninsula, the *kapal cepat* (fast boat) or 'super-jet' is the way to go.

Bus, Bemo & Kijang

Regions around Makassar and the southwest peninsula, and around Manado and

the northeast peninsula, have good roads and frequent, comfortable buses (and less comfortable bemo, known in Sulawesi as *mikrolet* or *pete-pete*). Elsewhere, roads are often rough, distances are long, and public transport can be crowded and uncomfortable. Allow plenty of time to travel overland in Central Sulawesi, especially in the wet season. On the southeast and southwest peninsulas, sharing a Kijang (a type of 4WD taxi) is a quick, but not necessarily more comfortable, way of getting around.

SOUTH SULAWESI

Long the gateway to Sulawesi, the south is home to the island's only metropolis, Makassar, as well as one of Indonesia's most memorable destinations, timeless Tana Toraja. Makassar may not be the most charming city in the country, but it is sophisticated and self-confident and a good place to hit the town before heading into the interior. Tana Toraja is beautiful and beguiling, and home to some of the most elaborate ceremonies in Indonesia. Cliff graves littered with skulls and bones, puppet effigies of the deceased, dead people that are treated like the living and mass buffalo sacrifice; this isn't a movie, but real life for the warm and welcoming people of Toraja. Beyond these two great destinations lie some fine beaches on the southern tip and some quiet country backwaters where the land is lush and the people warm and friendly.

The province of South Sulawesi (Sulawesi Selatan; often shortened to Sul-sel) is a lush, mountainous region of caves, waterfalls and large lakes. Irrigated-rice agriculture is widely practised, and coffee, cotton and sugar cane are also important crops.

The estimated nine million inhabitants include the Bugis (who make up two-thirds of the population), the Makassarese (a quarter) and the Toraja. The Makassarese are concentrated in the southern tip, mainly around Makassar. The Bugis (centred around Watampone) and Makassarese have similar cultures; both are seafaring people who for centuries were active in trade, sailing to Flores, Timor and Sumba, and even as far afield as the northern coast of Australia. Islam is the dominant religion, but both retain vestiges of traditional beliefs.

History

The leading powers of the south were long the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa (around the port of Makassar) and the Bugis kingdom of Bone. By the mid-16th century, Gowa had established itself at the head of a major trading bloc in eastern Indonesia. The king of Gowa adopted Islam in 1605 and Bone was soon subdued, spreading Islam to the whole Bugis-Makassar area.

The Dutch United East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC) found Gowa a considerable hindrance to its plans to monopolise the spice trade. They found an anti-Gowa ally in the exiled Bugis prince Arung Palakka. The Dutch sponsored Palakka's return to Bone in 1666, prompting Bone to rise against the Makassarese. A year of fighting ensued, and Sultan Hasanuddin of Gowa was forced to sign the Treaty of Bungaya in 1667, which severely reduced Gowa's power. Bone, under Palakka, then became the supreme state of South Sulawesi.

Rivalry between Bone and the other Bugis states continually reshaped the political landscape. After their brief absence during the Napoleonic Wars, the Dutch returned to a Bugis revolt led by the queen of Bone. This was suppressed, but rebellions continued until Makassarese and Bugis resistance was finally broken in the early years of the 20th century. Unrest lingered on until the early 1930s.

The Makassarese and Bugis are staunchly Islamic and independent minded – revolts against the central Indonesian government again occurred in the 1950s. Makassar and Pare Pare are still the first to protest when the political or economic situation is uncertain.

MAKASSAR

% 0411 / pop 1.6 million

Gateway to eastern Indonesia for centuries, Makassar is the most important city in Sulawesi. Like many of the nation's dynamic metropolises, Makassar might appear oversized and out of control at first glance. However, linger a little and you will be rewarded with some of the best seafood anywhere in the archipelago, the liveliest night scene this side of Surabaya and some striking sunsets from the seafloor.

From Makassar, the Dutch controlled much of the shipping that passed between

THE WALLACE LINE

Detailed surveys of Borneo and Sulawesi in the 1850s by English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace resulted in some inspired correspondence with Charles Darwin. Wallace was struck by the marked differences in wildlife, despite the two islands' proximity and similarities in climate and geography. His letters to Darwin, detailing evidence of his theory that the Indonesian archipelago was inhabited by one distinct fauna in the east and one in the west, prompted Darwin to publish similar observations from his own travels. The subsequent debate on species distribution and evolution transformed modern thought.

Wallace refined his theory in 1859, drawing a boundary between the two regions of fauna. The Wallace Line, as it became known, divided Sulawesi and Lombok to the east, and Borneo and Bali to the west. He believed that islands to the west of the line had once been part of Asia, and those to the east had been linked to a Pacific-Australian continent. Sulawesi's wildlife was so unusual that Wallace suspected it was once part of both, a fact that geologists have since proven to be true.

Other analyses of where Australian-type fauna begin to outnumber Asian fauna have placed the line further east. Lydekker's Line, which lies east of Maluku and Timor, is generally accepted as the western boundary of strictly Australian fauna, while Wallace's Line marks the eastern boundary of Asian fauna.



western and eastern Indonesia, and today the city is still a thriving port and important transport hub. The impressive Fort Rotterdam stands as a reminder of the Dutch occupation. Walk inside its walls and you have a little slice of old Amsterdam. Makassar is also the last resting place of Sultan Hasanuddin and of the Javanese prince Pangeran Diponegoro.

But that is old Makassar and today the city is expanding in every direction with new suburbs everywhere. Tanjung Bunga looms large on the horizon to the southwest of the city and may well become the new centre one day. To the east is Pannakkang and its mighty malls.

In the area surrounding Makassar are the palace of the Gowanese kings, waterfalls where the naturalist Alfred Wallace collected butterflies, and cave-paintings left by the first inhabitants of Sulawesi.

Orientation

Makassar is *huge*, but you'll only need to venture into the eastern suburbs to catch a bus or go to the airport. The port is conveniently located in the northwest part of the city; Fort Rotterdam is in the centre of the older commercial hub; and the Hotel Makassar Golden dominates the beachfront. If you get disoriented, remember that the sun sets over the ocean, or look for two major landmarks: the Monumen Mandala (Mandalala monument) and the Marannu Hotel.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Gramedia (Ratu Indah Mall) The best place to pick up English-language books, newspapers and magazines.

EMERGENCY

Police station (☎ 110; Jl Ahmad Yani)

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

From the early 1970s until 1999 the official name of Makassar was Ujung Pandang, then during his final days as president, Habibie made the popular decision to change the name back to Makassar. In reality both names are still used, as they have been for centuries, and neither title is politically charged. It seems people preferred the name Makassar for its historical resonance.

IMMIGRATION

Immigration office (Jl Tentara Pelajar) Near the port.

INTERNET ACCESS & POST

Internet centres are springing up across the city, most charging 7000Rp per hour.

Cybernet (cnr Jl Kajaolalido & Jl Ahmad Yani) Above Plaza Ria, boasts almost 50 terminals.

Main post office (Jl Slamet Riyadi; 7-8am-9pm) Has a poste restante service, a Telkom office and an internet centre.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Rumah Sakit Pelamonia (☎ 324710; Jl Jendral Sudirman) The most convenient and well-equipped, hospital.

MONEY

Lapangan Karebosi is literally surrounded by banks with ATMs that accept all major credit cards, including Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI), Bank Central Asia (BCA), Bank Internasional Indonesia (BII), Lippo Bank and Bank Mandiri. Most are on Jl Ahmad Yani. These places can also change cash and travellers cheques. At the airport, several moneychangers offer slightly lower rates than in the city and some of the ATMs there accept credit cards.

TELEPHONE

Wartel are everywhere, so it is easy enough to make calls from almost anywhere in town. There are international telephones at the airport.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Sulawesi Tourism Information Centre (☎ 872336; cnr Jl Sam Ratulangi & Jl Sungai Saddang; 7-8am-4pm) There is not much on offer here, but the staff are helpful and friendly. Take any red *pete-pete* (a type of mikrolet or bemo) travelling south along Jl Jendral Sudirman to get here.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Losari Holidays Tours & Travel (☎ 5063884; www.losari-tours.com; Jl Mappanyukki 1) The agent for Operation Wallacea projects in Sulawesi (see p174). Ticketing, car hire and a good source of information on travelling to the remote Tukangbesi Islands which make up Wakatobi Marine National Park.

Nell Tours (☎ 852445; www.nelltours.com; Jl Cendrawasih 103) A long-running travel agency specialising in trans-Sulawesi trips. Car hire, guides and full itineraries from Makassar to Manado and all points in-between.

MAKASSAR (UJUNG PANDANG)

0 1 km
0 0.5 miles

INFORMATION	SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	EATING
Bank Bali.....1 B4	Fort Rotterdam.....16 A4	Candy Bakery.....36 B5
Bank Mandiri.....2 B4	Makam Pangeran Diponegoro.....17 C3	Fish Warung.....37 A4
BIJ Bank.....3 B4	Masjid Al Markas al Islami.....18 D4	Gala Supermarket.....38 A5
BNI Bank.....4 B4	Monumen Mandala.....19 B5	Kantin Baik dan Murah.....(see 38)
BNI Bank.....5 A5	Museum Negeri La Galigo.....(see 16)	Lae Lae.....39 B5
Cybernet.....(see 41)	Paddle Boats.....20 A6	Night Warung.....40 A6
Immigration Office.....6 B2	Taman Anggrek Clara Bundt.....21 B5	Phinisi.....(see 27)
Internet Centre.....(see 7)		Pizza Ria.....41 B4
Lippo Bank.....(see 1)		Rumah Makan Kayangan.....42 A5
Main Post Office.....7 A4		Rumah Makan Malabar.....43 B3
Police Station.....8 A4		Shogun.....44 A5
Port Entrance.....9 A2		Swensen's.....(see 38)
Post Office.....10 C4		
PT Haji Moneychanger.....11 A4		
Rumah Sakit Pelonomia.....12 B5		
Sulawesi Tourism Information Centre.....13 B6		
Telkom.....(see 7)		
Wartel.....14 A5		
Wartel.....15 B4		

SLEEPING	DRINKING	ENTERTAINMENT
Hotel Citra Wisata.....22 B5	Ballairate Sunset Bar.....(see 27)	Botol Cafe.....(see 34)
Hotel Dinasti.....23 B3	Kafe Karefa.....45 A5	Colors.....46 A4
Hotel Lestari.....24 B4	Kios Semarang.....(see 45)	Makassar Theatre.....47 B4
Hotel Losari Beach.....25 A5		Pharos.....48 B4
Hotel Makassar Golden.....26 A5		
Hotel Pantai Gapura.....27 A4		
Hotel Ramayana Satrya.....28 D4		
Hotel Surya Berlian.....29 B5		
Hotel Yasmin.....30 A4		
Imperial Aryaduta Hotel: Club Velvet.....31 A6		
Losmen Semeru.....32 A4		
Pondok Suada Indah.....33 A5		
Quality Hotel.....34 A5		
Wisata Inn.....35 B5		

SHOPPING	TRANSPORT
Makassar Mall.....49 B3	Boat to Pulau Kayangan & Pulau Samalona.....50 A4
	Central Pete-Pete Terminal.....51 B4
	Garuda.....52 A4
	Lion Air.....53 B4
	Lion Air.....54 A4
	Mandala Airlines.....55 B4
	Merpati.....56 D4
	Pelabuhan Makassar (Pelni Port).....57 A3
	Pelni.....58 B5

TOURIST INFORMATION

To Panukukang Mall (6km); M Club (7km); Hasanuddin Airport (22km); Terminal Regional Daya (22km); Arafat Hotel (22km); Terminal Panakikang (22km); Pare Pare (160km); Rantepaig (328km)

To G. Mall (4km)
To Nell Tours (2km)
To Hotel Sahid Jaya (200m); Ratu Indah Mall (200m); Losari Travel (1km); Terminal Mallengeri (5km); Old Gowa (7km); Terminal Sungguminasa (12km); Milano (75km)

Sights

FORT ROTTERDAM

One of the best-preserved examples of Dutch architecture in Indonesia, **Fort Rotterdam** (Jl Pasar Ikan; entry by donation, suggested 10,000Rp; 7.30am-6pm) continues to guard the harbour of Makassar. A Gowanese fort dating back to 1545 once stood here, but failed to keep out the Dutch. The original fort was rebuilt in Dutch style after the Treaty of Bungaya in 1667. Parts of the crumbling wall have been left untouched, and provide an interesting comparison to the restored buildings.

Inside the fort, **Museum Negeri La Galigo** (admission 1700Rp; 7.30am-12.30pm Tue-Sun) has an assortment of exhibits, including rice bowls from Tana Toraja, kitchen tools, musical instruments and various costumes. It's hardly riveting, but at this price who can complain? In practice, the museum seems to keep the same hours as the fort.

MAKAM PANGERAN DIPONEGORO

Prince Diponegoro of Yogyakarta led the Java War (1825-30), but his career as a rebel leader came to a sudden halt when he was tricked into going to the Dutch headquarters to negotiate peace, was taken prisoner and then exiled to Sulawesi. He spent the last 26 years of his life imprisoned in Fort Rotterdam. His tomb and monument can be seen in a small cemetery (Jl Diponegoro; entry by donation).

OLD GOWA

Remnants of the former kingdom of Gowa, 7km from town on the southeastern outskirts of Makassar, include **Makam Sultan Hasanuddin** (Jl Pallantiang, off Jl Sultan Hasanuddin), which memorialises the ruler of Gowa in the mid-17th century. Outside the tomb compound is the **Pelantikan Stone**, on which the kings of Gowa were crowned.

Benteng Sungguminasa (Jl Kh Wahid Hasyim; admission free; 7.30am-4pm), a fort that was once the seat of the Sultan of Gowa, is 5km further south at Sungguminasa. The former royal residence, now known as **Museum Balla Lompoa**, houses a collection of artefacts, including gifts from Australian Aborigines of Elcho Island, who have a history of trade with the Bugis. Although the royal regalia can be seen only on request, the wooden Bugis-style palace itself is the real attraction.

To go to Old Gowa and Sungguminasa, take a red *pete-pete* marked 'S Minasa' from Makassar Mall to the turn-off for the 1km walk to the tomb. A *becak* (bicycle-rickshaw) from there to the fort should cost around 8000Rp. Another *becak* will take you to Mallengeri Terminal, from where *pete-pete* return to central Makassar; the *pete-pete* should cost about 3000Rp.

OTHER SIGHTS

Pelabuhan Paotere (Paotere Harbour; admission 500Rp), just a short becak ride north of the city centre, is where the Bugis sailing ships berth. There is usually lots of activity on the dock, and in the busy fish market a few streets south.

Taman Anggrek Clara Bundt (Clara Bundt Orchid Garden; Jl Mochtar Lufti 15; entry by donation) is a sanctuary hidden behind the Bundt family home. It contains exotic hybrids (some up to 5m high). There's also a verdant fruit orchard and an extensive shell collection.

The towering **Monumen Mandala** (Jl Jendral Sudirman; admission 5000Rp; 7.30am-4pm) is a smaller version of Jakarta's Monas (National Monument), and celebrates the 'liberation' of Irian Jaya (now known as Papua).

Activities

Top-end hotels such as Hotel Pantai Gapura and Imperial Aryaduta Hotel have swimming pools the public can use for 20,000Rp, although they get crowded on Sundays. Comedic fish-shaped **paddle boats** (15,000Rp per hr; 7.30am-9pm) are available to hire near the night warungs (food stalls) for a sunset paddle.

Makassar may not be as famous as other parts of Sulawesi when it comes to diving, but the small islands off the coast do offer abundant corals, a range of marine life and some of the largest wrecks off the Sulawesi coast, including a submarine, a gunship and cargo boat, all accessible to advanced divers. For more details, contact **Marlin Dive** (☎ 858762; www.marlindive.com).

Sleeping

Pickings are slim at the budget end of the spectrum. Life at the top can be good, however, as the smarter hotels in town are aggressive discounters.

BUDGET

A couple of budget favourites have closed in recent years, but there are some cheap hotel

deals if you shop about. Some of the mid-range hotels also offer budget fan rooms.

Losmen Semeru (% 318113; Jl. Jempea 28; r 45,000Rp; a) This long-running budget stalwart still offers the best-value cheapies in town. The rooms are on the somewhat small side but include TV and air-con that (through creative carpentry) is shared between the rooms.

Hotel Ramayana Satrya (% 442478; fax 442479; Jl. Bawakaraeng 121; economy 60,000Rp, VIP s/d 120,000/132,000Rp; a) Despite being a fair walk from the action, this hotel is quite popular for its range of rooms. The fan rooms are basic, but those with air-con are a good deal and the VIP rooms are like little suites with a sofa set. Breakfast is extra.

Afiat Hotel (% 553024; Jl. Bandara Hasanuddin 1; r 65,000-120,000Rp; a) Strategically located on the corner of the airport access road, this hotel is a little on the shabby side. Even the so-called diamond and emerald rooms hardly sparkle. However, it might do at a push for those with an early flight out of Makassar.

Hotel Lestari (% 327337; Jl. Savu 16; r 110,000-176,000Rp; a) Up near the port end of town, this unassuming façade in the backstreets conceals some of the best-value rooms in town. All have satellite TV, minibar, hot water and air-con, while the deluxe rooms from 150,000Rp include – get this – a DVD player.

Hotel Surya Berlian (% 327208; fax 331252; Jl. Amannagappa 7; s/d 156,000/168,000Rp; a) It promises the finest service and familiar staff. Not the finest service and the staff are only likely to be familiar if you have stayed here before, but it's good value, with air-con, TV, fridge and 'bath tube'.

MIDRANGE

The choice of midrange hotels in Makassar is excellent. All rooms have air-con, satellite TV and include breakfast, unless otherwise stated.

Pondok Suada Indah (% 317179; fax 312856; Jl. Sultan Hasanuddin 12; s/d from 114,000/138,000Rp; a) If Makassar ever becomes popular enough to justify a boutique hotel, this could be it. Set in a gracious, spacious old colonial-era house, it feels a long way from the modern metropolis right outside. All rooms are a decent size and the more expensive options include hot water and bath tubs.

Wisata Inn (% 324344; fax 312783; Jl. Sultan Hasanuddin 36; s/d from 175,000/205,000Rp; a) This central hotel is deservedly popular thanks to a good-value range of rooms and the friendly staff. Rooms come in all shapes and sizes, including some bargain fan-cooled rooms from just 50,000Rp. The air-con rooms are large and include TV and hot water showers.

Hotel Citra Wisata (% 311018; fax 325154; Jl. Botolempangan 28; s/d from 180,000/216,000Rp; a) Another central option set along a tree-lined boulevard, the Citra deserves recognition for not raising its rates much over the years. All rooms include hot water.

Hotel Dinasti (% 325657; fax 325758; Jl. Lombok 30; r from 280,000Rp; a) Tucked away in the back streets near the port area is a little slice of China. Enter through the temple doorway and 'feel the oriental touch' as they say. Rooms are well equipped and include satellite TV and fridge. There is also a whirlpool hot tub available for guests.

Hotel Losari Beach (% 326062; los-htl@indosat.net.id; Jl. Penghibur 10; s/d from 309,000/329,000Rp) Boasting a great location overlooking the seafront, this modern business hotel has good-value rooms featuring all mod cons. Prices rise rapidly for a premium sea view.

Hotel Yasmin (% 328329; fax 328283; Jl. Jempea 5; r from 336,000Rp; a) Located near the main Jl. Ahmad Yani strip, this three-star business hotel is popular with Indonesian sales folk. Rooms feature a tidy trim and 40% discounts are possible if you forgo the forgettable breakfast.

TOP END

There are plenty of top-end hotels in town and discounts are available on published rates, although not quite the bargains of years gone by.

Hotel Makassar Golden (% 333000; mghupp@indosat.net.id; Jl. Pasar Ikan 50; r from 500,000Rp; a s) A short stroll south of the Hotel Pantai Gapura, this hotel is an old landmark with a similar mix of rooms and cottages with sea or city views. Discounts of 25% are common.

Hotel Sahid Jaya (% 875757; www.sahidhotels.com; Jl. Sam Ratulangi 33; r from 650,000Rp; a s) Another contender for best hotel in Makassar, this 220-room place is a little way south of the action, but convenient for the nearby Ratu Indah Mall. With a swimming pool,

fitness centre, and wi-fi internet access, the only drawback compared with the Imperial is the lack of a sea view.

Quality Hotel (% 333111; www.qualityhotel makassar.com; Jl. Somba Opu 235; s/d with ocean view 800,000/900,000Rp; a s) Built as a Radisson, the rates have plummeted in the years since the chain pulled out. It's a good deal for its sea views and central location.

Hotel Pantai Gapura (% 325791; www.pantai gapura.com; Jl. Pasar Ikan 10; r 650,000Rp, cottages from 1,000,000Rp, a s) It looks pretty forlorn from the front, but venture through to the back and this is one of the most atmospheric properties in town. Forget the rooms and make a date with a cottage, built on a series of solid walkways over the sea. Sea views cost more, but make sure you negotiate on any room. There is also a popular swimming pool, a lush garden, a sunset bar and kitsch boat-shaped restaurant.

Imperial Aryaduta Hotel (% 870555; www.aryaduta.com; Jl. Somba Opu 297; r from 1,200,000Rp; a s) The leading address in town, the 230 rooms are equipped to an international four-star standard. All rooms include a safety deposit box and wi-fi internet access. There is a plush pool, a fitness centre and several bars. Discounts available.

Eating

For many it's the food that makes Makassar a great destination. There's an abundance of delicious seafood, excellent Chinese dishes, local 'specialities' such as *coto makassar* (soup made from buffalo innards), and a few international surprises.

Scoring a spectacular own goal, Makassar's famous seafront dining strip was shunted south onto Jl. Metro Tanjung Bunga. The 'world's longest restaurant', as we once famously called it, is sadly no more. Nevertheless the hundreds of night warungs serve up fresh and cheap Indonesian and Chinese meals for around 15,000Rp, and you can still (just about) see Makassar's famous sunset.

A string of makeshift fish warung set up every night on the foreshore opposite Fort Rotterdam and serve some of the tastiest, cheapest seafood in town (about 15,000Rp per fish baked or fried). Roaming buskers provide tableside entertainment.

Jl. Timor, in the heart of the Chinese quarter, is where you'll find restaurants serving delicious *mie pangsit* (wonton soup).

Most of the hotels have restaurants that are popular with well-to-do locals.

Kios Semarang (Jl. Penghibur; mains 15,000-35,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) The closest thing to a Makassar institution, keep on climbing the stairs to the 3rd floor where you will be rewarded with a rowdy crowd, good seafood and cheap beer. Start with a sunset and a Bintang or two before trying the fresh squid or shrimp.

Lae Lae (% 334326; Jl. Datu Musseng 8; fish from 15,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) Quite simply, the spot in town for fresh fish and seafood. If you approach from the seafront, no, don't worry, it's not closed; keep walking and enter via the sizzling barbecue. Peer into the huge ice boxes and enter fish heaven. The staff can recommend something if the choice is overwhelming. The décor may be simple, but the fish with *cobek-cobek* (sauce made with chilli, lime and shrimp paste) is anything but.

Rumah Makan Kayangan (% 325273; Jl. Datu Musseng 20; fish from 20,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) Along the same street as Lae Lae, Kayangan is a slightly more upmarket affair with tablecloths and air-con, the latter particularly welcome at lunchtime. The fish is fresh, the service swift and the Bintang are ice-cold. What more could you want?

Rumah Makan Malabar (% 319776; Jl. Sulawesi 264; curry 20,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) Run by a second-generation Keralan, Malabar is a little slice of the subcontinent, serving up flaky naan and tender *kare kambing* (goat curry). The choice is limited but the flavours more than make up for it.

Pizza Ria (cnr Jl. Kajaolalido & Jl. Ahmad Yani; pizzas from 20,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) It's not quite as much of a chain as Pizza Hut, so is worth a dip if you are craving cheese.

Shogun Restaurant (% 324102; Jl. Penghibur 2; sushi & sashimi platters from 60,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) The only authentic Japanese restaurant in town is right next door to Hotel Losari Beach. The prices are high for Makassar, but very reasonable compared with the average Japanese bill. Makassar's abundant fish makes sashimi an excellent choice.

Club Velvet (Imperial Aryaduta Hotel, Jl. Somba Opu 297) An evening jazz lounge that offers sumptuous platters for two with all sorts of flamboyant flavours.

Phinisi Restaurant (Hotel Pantai Gapura, Jl. Pasar Ikan 10) Shiver me timbers, this is set aboard a

full-size schooner. It's kitsch, but so is the menu, with international favourites such as 'Chicken Gordon Blue'.

Candy Bakery (Jl Baumassepe) Just around the corner from the massive Marannu Hotel, this little bakery has a good range of basic cakes and pastries.

If the hot weather is just too much, duck into Swensen's for an ice-cream, although be warned it doesn't taste like the real deal. Upstairs in the same food court above the well-stocked Galeal Supermarket (Jl Sultan Hasanuddin) is Kantin Baik dan Murah turning out good, cheap Indonesian food at an affordable price.

Drinking

A lot of the bars around the port area are little more than brothels disguised as karaoke bars and are best avoided by all but the proverbial drunken sailor. You really want to know how bad it is? Locals call it Vagina St.

Further south on Jl Penghibur, there are several lively places. The aforementioned Kios Semarang is definitely *the* watering hole in town. On Friday, the small band of Hash House Harriers gather here to eat, drink and be merry before their Saturday fun run.

Kafe Kareba (Jl Penghibur) On the corner opposite the Losari Beach Hotel, this outdoor beer garden features live bands and the drinks flow. They also have a pretty extensive menu of food for those wanting entertainment while they eat.

Ballairate Sunset Bar (Pantai Gapura Hotel) Built on stilts over the sea, this is the best located bar in town. Walk right through the hotel to discover draft Bintang by the pitcher and a perfect view of the sunset. Sundays are a bad idea as the Makassar jet-ski crowd strut their stuff on the water here.

Entertainment NIGHTCLUBS

Drinking at nightclubs can be prohibitively expensive, as this is how they rake in the cash. It is best to warm-up at a bar before delving into the dance zone. Most of the clubs rumble on until about 3am.

Many of the top-end hotels house nightclubs with pricey drinks and bands playing MTV hits. Entry costs 30,000Rp to 50,000Rp, which usually includes a soft drink or beer.

Colors (Jl Pasar Ikan; admission variable) Housed in the old Benteng Theatre, this is currently the 'in' club in town. DJs and bands from Jakarta, ladies night on Wednesday and expensive drinks all round, this is where the hipsters hang out.

Pharos (Jl Nusakam Bangan 2; admission free for foreigners) Another Egyptian-themed club, which were all the rage in Asia a few years ago, this place is a veritable labyrinth. Wander through the video arcade and a maze of corridors and you'll find yourself in the hard house world of the new Indonesia.

M Club (admission incl 1st drink from 25,000Rp) On the edge of town, this warehouse club is one of the biggest in Sulawesi. The music is tech-no prisoners and the lighting strobe-heavy, but if you want the Makassar experience, this is an essential stop. Foreigners often get in free. It's on the east side of town – all taxi drivers know the place. A taxi there should cost about 25,000Rp.

Botol Cafe (Quality Hotel, Jl Somba Opu 235) By far the most popular of the hotel nightclubs, this is tucked away rather uninvitingly in the basement car park.

CINEMAS

There are several modern multiscreen cinemas showing current Western films in their original language (with Indonesian subtitles):

Studio 21 (Jl Sam Ratulangi) On the top floor of the Ratu Indah Mall complex.

Makassar Theatre (Jl Bali) Hidden away in the back streets near the port.

Shopping

Jl Somba Opu has plenty of shops with great collections of jewellery, 'antiques' and souvenirs, including crafts from all over Indonesia, such as Kendari filigree silver jewellery, Torajan handicrafts, Chinese pottery, Makassarese brass work, and silk cloth from Sengkang. Shopping centres are the place to be for most Makassarese:

G Mall The massive centrepiece of the new Tanjung Bunga development, it is still finding its feet, as it's a fair way from town.

Makassar Mall The oldest in town, a sprawling mess and more like a market than a mall.

Panukkukang Mall Bigger than an Indonesian village, this is a popular mall in the affluent eastern suburbs.

Ratu Indah Mall (Jl Sam Ratulangi) The best of the more central malls, this could be anywhere in the world.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Makassar is well-connected to the rest of Indonesia, as many flights between Java and the easternmost islands call here en route. Shop around and check for the current prices with airlines and agents. For details on current fares, see the airfares map, p669.

Adam Air (☎ 4660999; Jl Andi Pangeran Pettarani 33) flies daily to and from Jakarta and Surabaya.

Batavia Air (☎ 3655255; Jl Ahmad Yani 35) flies daily to and from Palu, Balikpapan, Jakarta, Biak and Jayapura.

DAS (☎ 555774; Hasanuddin Airport) makes the scenic trip to and from Rantepao every Tuesday and Friday. It also serves Palau Selayar on Monday and Friday.

Garuda (Garuda Indonesia; ☎ 3654747; Jl Slamet Riyadi 6) flies directly to and from Manado, Denpasar, Jakarta, Jayapura and Biak every day of the week.

Lion Air (☎ 327038; Jl Ahmad Yani 22) flies daily to and from Manado, Kendari, Gorontalo, Palu, Jakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar and Ambon.

Mandala Airlines (☎ 322947; Jl Cokroaminoto 7) flies daily and directly to and from Jakarta and Ambon.

Merpati (Merpati Nusantara Airlines; ☎ 442892; Jl Bawakaraeng) connects Makassar and Jakarta, Balikpapan, Kendari, Surabaya, Biak, Jayapura, Manado, Palu, Ternate and Timika. There is also a handy Yogyakarta service four times a week.

Sriwijaya Air (Hasanuddin Airport) flies to Jakarta and Gorontalo.

BOAT

More than half the Pelni fleet stops in Makassar, mostly on the way to Surabaya and Jakarta, East Kalimantan, Ambon and Papua.

Useful services include the *Umsini* and *Kelimutu* to Balikpapan (economy/1st class 116,000/357,000Rp); the *Awu* and *Sirimau* to Kupang in Nusa Tenggara (249,000/786,000Rp); and the *Tilongkabila* to Bau Bau and then up the east coast to Kendari (131,000/405,000Rp), Kolonedale, Luwuk, Gorontalo and Manado.

The Pelni office (☎ 331401; Jl Sam Ratulangi; 11am-2pm Mon-Sat) is efficient and computerised. Tickets are also available at any

Pelni agency around town. The chaotic Pelabuhan Makassar port, which is used by Pelni boats, is only a becak ride from most hotels.

BUS & KIJANG

Makassar has numerous terminals but three are most useful. Terminal Panaikang is in the eastern suburbs on the road to the airport, where there are regular buses to all points north, including Pare Pare (22,000Rp, three hours), Sengkang (33,000Rp, four hours) and Rantepao (45,000Rp, eight hours). **Litha Bus** (☎ 324847) has a twice daily VIP air-con service to Rantepao (75,000Rp) at 10am and 10pm. This is the bus of choice to Tana Toraja, as it offers better leg room than business class seats on an aeroplane, no kidding. There are also Kijang services to towns across South Sulawesi and buses to the rest of Sulawesi. To get to Panaikang (2000Rp, 30 minutes), catch any blue *pete-pete* marked 'Daya' from Makassar Mall or from along Jl Bulusaraung.

Terminal Mallengkeri is about 10km southeast of the city centre. From here, buses and Kijangs go to places southeast of Makassar, including Bulukumba (28,000Rp, three hours) and Pantai Bira (35,000Rp, four hours). For Pantai Bira, you may have to change in Bulukumba.

Terminal Sungguminasa has regular *pete-pete* services to Malino (10,000Rp, 1½ hours). To get to Mallengkeri or Sungguminasa, take a red *pete-pete* marked 'S Minasa' from Makassar Mall or from along Jl Jendral Sudirman. Ask to be dropped at Mallengkeri, or continue on to Terminal Sungguminasa.

Buses run all day but are most frequent in the morning so it's good to get to the terminals no later than 8am.

Arriving by plane, buses to Pare Pare, Toraja and all points north can be flagged down on the Makassar-Maros road, 300m from the terminal, saving a trip into town. However, you may need to wait a while for an empty seat.

Getting Around TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Hasanuddin Airport is 22km from the centre of Makassar. Prepaid taxis are easy to arrange at the airport booth outside arrivals. There are three fares from 64,000Rp

to 86,000Rp, depending on the destination, but most hotels are in the centre which costs 75,000Rp. There is also a small toll fee of 1500Rp for the short cut. To the airport, a metered taxi is about 70,000Rp.

Pete-pete from Makassar Mall to Maros (4000Rp) pass the airport. The Damri bus to Maros (see right) also passes the entrance to the airport (which is 500m from the terminal).

Pete-pete and Damri buses to the city stop outside the main gate, although you may need to change to another *pete-pete* at Terminal Daya or Panaikang to get to the centre.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Makassar is hot, so using a becak, *pete-pete* or taxi can be a relief. The friendly old crooks that are the becak drivers like to kerb-crawl, hoping you'll succumb to their badgering and/or the heat. They want anything from 10,000Rp and up; locals pay about 5000Rp around town. The main *pete-pete* terminal is at the Makassar Mall, and the standard fare around town is 2000Rp. Air-conditioned taxis have meters and are worth using; it works out at about 4000Rp a kilometre and can be cheaper, and much faster, than becaks.

AROUND MAKASSAR

Pulau Samalona

A tiny speck just off Makassar, Pulau Samalona is popular for fishing and snorkelling, particularly on Sunday. Otherwise, there's nothing much to do – it takes a full two minutes to walk around the island. If you ask around, you can buy cold drinks and fresh fish meals. Snorkelling gear is also available. Compared to Makassar harbour, the water's pretty clear!

To get here you will have to charter a boat for about 200,000Rp one way or return from the special jetty in Makassar and pre-arrange to be picked up later. On Sunday you can probably share a boat with some day-trippers.

Pulau Kayangan

This tiny island is cluttered with strange tourist attractions and is not great for swimming (although plenty of locals do). It's very busy on Sunday, but almost completely empty for the rest of the week. Some of the restaurants around the island are

positioned over the water, and many are perfect for sunsets. If you feel like staying here, **Wisata Bahari Pulau Kayangan** (☎ 0411-315752; r 150,000-350,000Rp) has somewhat overpriced rooms, although the deluxe options are huge and include satellite TV and air-con.

Boats travel from the special jetty in Makassar every 15 minutes (per person return 10,000Rp; on Sunday 15,000Rp) until 10pm – perfect for a sunset cruise followed by a meal on the island.

Bantimurung

Air Terjun Bantimurung (admission 10,000Rp), 42km from Makassar, are waterfalls set amid lushly vegetated limestone cliffs. Looking up, it's straight out of Jurassic Park, but then you scan the ground level and it's a classic *objek wisata* (tourist object). That translates as crowded with day-trippers on weekends (get your photo taken with strangers!), and peppered with litter and creative concrete, but it remains a wonderful and picturesque retreat from the heat of Makassar. Upstream from the main waterfall, there's another smaller waterfall and a pretty, but treacherous, pool. However, you will need a torch to make it through the cave en route. Bantimurung is also famous for its beautiful butterflies. The naturalist Alfred Wallace collected specimens here in the mid-1800s. However, numbers are plummeting as locals trap them to sell to visitors, so try not to encourage the trade.

Catch a Damri bus or *pete-pete* (5000Rp, one hour) to Maros from Makassar Mall in Makassar, and a *pete-pete* to Bantimurung (3000Rp, 30 minutes).

Gua Leang Leang

A few kilometres before Bantimurung is the road to these caves, noted for their ancient paintings. The age of the paintings is unknown, but relics from nearby caves have provided glimpses of life from 8000 to 30,000 years ago. There are 60 or so known caves in the Maros district, as the limestone karsts here have more holes than a Swiss cheese.

Catch a *pete-pete* from Maros (see above) to the 'Taman Purbakala Leang-Leang' turn-off on the road to Bantimurung, and then walk the last couple of kilometres. Alternatively, charter a *pete-pete* from Maros, and combine it with a trip to Bantimurung.

Malino

☎ 0417

Malino is a hill resort once famous as the meeting place of Kalimantan and East Indonesian leaders who endorsed the Netherlands' ill-fated plans for a federation. More recently, peace agreements have been struck for Maluku and Poso in the Resort Celebes. There are many scenic walks, and **Air Terjun Takapala** is a spectacular waterfall set amid rice fields 4km east of town. Look for the 'Wisata Alam Lombasang Malino' sign as you come into town for the waterfall turn-off.

Resort Celebes (☎ 21300; Jl Hasanuddin 1; r from 254,000Rp) is a must for those with a sense of history, as many an important political agreement has been hammered out here. All rooms include satellite TV and hot water. It's a very peaceful place.

Hotel Pinang Mas (☎ 21173; Jl Karaeng Pado; r from 126,000Rp) is the place for huge views, but the prices are equally huge given the standard of the rooms. It's on the main road about 150m above the muddy market.

Both of the hotels have popular restaurants; otherwise you can eat at hole-in-the-wall warungs.

Terminal Sungguminasa has regular *pete-pete* services to Malino (10,000Rp, 1½ hours). Make sure you leave early before Malino's infamous rain sets in.

PANTAI BIRA

☎ 0413

Bira is the number one beach destination in South Sulawesi, but fear not, this is a world away from costa del Kuta in Bali. Fishing, boat building and weaving are the primary commercial activities here, but the powdery white-sand beaches are drawing some travellers off the main Makassar–Tana Toraja tourist trail. Divers are also discovering the area in small numbers, as Bira offers some rich rewards for the experienced. During the week Pantai Bira is a relaxed spot, where goats outnumber vehicles and, more often than not, tourists.

Orientation & Information

Almost everything is located along a small section of the road into Pantai Bira, Jl Kapongkolang. Foreign tourists must pay 5000Rp per person at the toll booth when they first enter 'town'. The Bira Beach Hotel

has a wartel, which also acts as a postal agency, Pelni agency and moneychanger. Internet is available at **Muhlis Warnet** (Jl Kapongkolang) at a hefty 20,000Rp per hour. Electricity and the connection aren't that reliable, so it is best to wait until Makassar.

Sights

Boat builders use age-old techniques to craft traditional ships at Marumasa near Bira village and at Tanah Beru on the road to Bulukumba. Boats of various sizes can be seen at different stages of construction.

Weavers gather under raised houses to work and gossip. You can hear the click-clack of their looms as you walk along the streets in Bira village. There is a small market (*pasar* Bira) held in the village every two days.

A short hike from the road near Pantai Timur takes you to the top of Pua Janggo, a small hill with great views. Near the Pantai Bira hotels there are some caves with plenty of frisky monkeys; ask for directions from hotel staff.

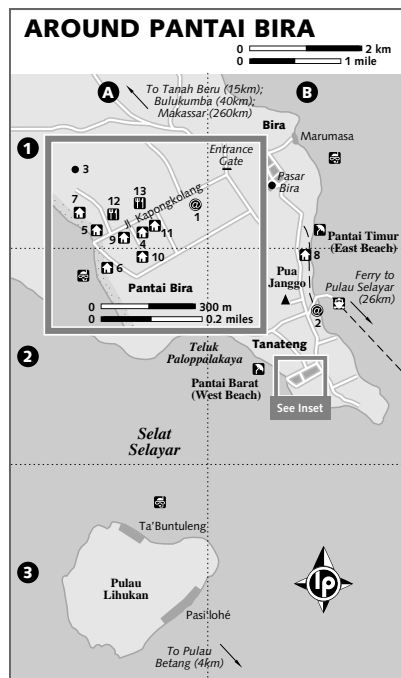
Activities

DIVING & SNORKELLING

Experienced divers say that the diving around Pantai Bira is impressive, but as the currents are often strong, the emphasis really is on experience. The waters off Bira are particularly popular with sharks, rays and huge groupers, plus there is superb coral at several drop-offs. The best spots are around Pulau Selayar, Marumasa, northern Pulau Lihukan, and southern and eastern Pulau Betang.

The main dive centre in Bira is **South Sulawesi Diver** (☎ 82125; www.south-sulawesi-diver.com), based at Anda Bungalows. Run by a German instructor who has been exploring the waters for a few years, 10-dive packages start from €300. Fun dives are available, but the price depends on numbers. Diving is also available through the Bira Beach Hotel, but nobody was able to give us any information during our stay.

Snorkelling is also impressive off Bira, but it is worth chartering a boat to get to the best spots. A trip around Pulau Lihukan and Pulau Betang will cost about 150,000Rp per day. The beach in front of Bira View Inn is good, but don't venture too far because the currents can be surprisingly



strong and people have drowned. Equipment can be rented for about 40,000Rp per day from several hotels, including Riswan Guesthouse, Bira View Inn and Bira Beach Hotel.

SWIMMING

The tides can be severe, but Pantai Barat (West Beach) is a perfect stretch of beach, about 100m northwest of Bira Beach Hotel. You can hire huge inflatable rubber tyres, and enjoy the serenity – except on Sunday, when the place is usually crawling with day-trippers from Makassar. Pantai Timur (East Beach) is more your serene, coconut-fringed affair. Bear in mind that the locals are fairly conservative around here, so topless bathing for women should be considered a no-no.

Sleeping

Most accommodation is in small cottages with private bathrooms and verandas, but it pays to shop around, as some places are showing their age. Very few have genuine sea views and many are cluttered around

INFORMATION	
Moneychanger.....	(see 5)
Muhlis Warnet.....	1 A1
Pelni Agency.....	(see 5)
Postal Agency.....	(see 5)
Wartel & Internet Office.....	2 B2
Wartel.....	(see 5)
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
Dive Centre.....	(see 5)
Monkey Caves.....	3 A1
South Sulawesi Diver.....	(see 4)
SLEEPING	
Anda Bungalows.....	4 A1
Bira Beach Hotel & Restaurant.....	5 A1
Bira View Inn.....	6 A2
Hotel Sapolohe.....	7 A1
Kaluku Kafe.....	8 B2
Nusa Bira Indah Cottage.....	9 A1
Riswan Guesthouse.....	10 A2
Salassa Guesthouse.....	11 A1
EATING	
Rumah Makan Melati.....	12 A1
Rumah Makan Sederhana.....	13 A1
TRANSPORT	
Harbour.....	(see 2)

'gardens' of dead coral. Other places are set back from the beach, clustered around the only road in town.

Bira View Inn (☎ 82043; fax 81515; cottages 100,000-200,000Rp; a) The best rooms here are set in wooden cottages on a cliff overlooking the bay. Each has its own porch with a genuine sea view and they are in a slightly better state of repair than the nearby Bira Beach. This is the only hotel to really exploit its location.

Bira Beach Hotel (☎ /fax 83522; bungalows 125,000-200,000Rp; a) One of the first hotels here, it needs a bit of tender loving care to bring it up to speed. 'Sea view' is a somewhat abstract notion here, as the design of the cottages means the balcony faces the garden. Rooms are large, if threadbare, and air-con bungalows start from 150,000Rp. The restaurant here is one of the best in Bira.

Hotel Sapolohe (☎ /fax 82128; r 125,000-250,000Rp; a) The best of the beachfront hotels, few of the rooms take advantage of the sea view. The more expensive deluxe rooms are set in an elegant wooden stilt house and are veritable suites, with decent bathrooms, satellite TV and air-con. Cheaper rooms are in clean, comfortable bungalows out the back. Rates go through the roof during holidays.

Salassa Guesthouse (r 40,000-60,000Rp) A small, family-run place that has been recommend-

ed for its homely atmosphere. Two cheaper rooms have shared *mandi*, while two more include attached bathroom. The owners have a good knowledge of the local area and meals are available on request.

Riswan Guesthouse (☎ 82127; r incl all meals 70,000Rp) Set in a dominant position on a bluff overlooking the sea, this rambling old stilt house is the most welcoming home in town. Host Riswan is friendly and knowledgeable and all meals are taken communally. The rooms are basic and include shared facilities (shower and squat toilet), but touches such as a private locker show some thought.

Kaluku Kafe (www.kalukukafe.com; d in bungalow/cottage 120,000/280,000Rp) The only choice on Pantai Timur, Kaluku Kafe has a pristine setting amid palm trees. There is one bungalow, and the owner has recently added a cottage that can take up to six people. There is also a beachfront restaurant and craft shop, making it easy to lose days here.

Nusa Bira Indah Cottage (☎ /fax 0411-83519; r with fan/air-con 100,000/175,000Rp; a) The large rooms here are in better shape than some and the air-con options include a breezy porch. However, the location is a letdown with no views to soak up and not much of a garden.

Anda Bungalows (☎ 82125; fax 85033; bungalows with fan/air-con 150,000Rp/300,000Rp; a) The smartest rooms in town are found at the Anda...if only it had a beachside setting. All the bungalows are set around a lush garden and the new air-con bungalows are creatively decorated. The bathroom is almost Balinese style,

with a separate sink and the place smacks of attention to detail, something that can't be said for the competition.

Eating

Most of the hotels have simple restaurants, but only the Bira Beach Hotel and Bira View Inn offer sunset views over the sea. Both serve seafood, a range of Indonesian and Western dishes and, mercifully, cold beer. The restaurant at the Nusa Bira Indah is well regarded and breezy. The restaurant at Anda Bungalows is the cleanest of the lot and has more of a Western selection than most. Most of the places charge around 20,000Rp for a main course.

There are a couple of local Indonesian restaurants along the main drag for cheap eats, including Rumah Makan Melati and Rumah Makan Sederhana.

Opposite the Bira Beach Hotel there is a cluster of food and drink stalls and a couple of nameless warungs serving cheap Indonesian fare and freshly grilled fish.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The harbour at Pantai Timur services Pulau Selayar. Twice a month, there is a direct boat to Labuanbajo (92,000Rp) in Flores, but it's a slow ride, taking almost two days.

BUS, BEMO & KIJANG

From Makassar (Terminal Mallengkeri), a few Kijang go directly to Pantai Bira for 35,000Rp.

SULAWESI SEAFARERS

The Bugis are Indonesia's best-known sailors, trading and carrying goods on their magnificent wooden schooners throughout Indonesia.

The Bugis' influence expanded rapidly after the fall of Makassar, resulting in a Diaspora from South Sulawesi in the 17th and 18th centuries. They established strategic trading posts at Kutai (Kalimantan), Johor (north of Singapore) and Selangor (near Kuala Lumpur), and traded freely throughout the region. Bugis and Makassarese *pinisi* (schooners) are still built along the south coasts of Sulawesi and Kalimantan, using centuries-old designs and techniques. You can see boats being built at Marumasa and Tanah Beru, both near Bira.

The Bajau, Bugis, Butonese and Makassarese seafarers of Sulawesi have a 500-year history of trading and cultural links with the Australian Aborigines and their ships are featured in pre-European Aboriginal cave art in northern Australia. British explorer Matthew Flinders encountered 60 Indonesian schooners at Melville Bay in 1803; today many more still make the risky (and illegal) journey to fish reefs in the cyclone belt off the northern coast of Australia.

Many Minahasans of North Sulawesi, relative newcomers to sailing folklore, work on international shipping lines across the world. Like their Filipino neighbours, the Minahasans' outward-looking culture, plus their language and sailing skills, make them the first choice of many captains.

Alternatively, catch a Kijang or bemo to Bulukumba, and another to Pantai Bira (transport from Bulukumba to Pantai Bira stops at around 3pm).

Direct Kijangs from Pantai Bira to Makassar (40,000Rp) should be booked through your hotel the day before; otherwise get a *pete-pete* from Pantai Bira to Bulukumba (8000Rp) and take a Kijang to Makassar (28,000Rp) from there.

PULAU LIHUKAN & PULAU BETANG

Weavers at Ta'Buntuleng make heavy, colourful cloth on hand looms under their houses. On the pretty beach west of the village there is an interesting old graveyard, and off the beach there are acres of sea grass and coral, but mind the currents and sea snakes. To see the best coral, which is further out, you'll need a boat. In fact, you'll need to charter a boat to visit Lihukan and the nearby, uninhabited Pulau Betang, also known as Pulau Kambing.

PULAU SELAYAR

% 0414

This long, narrow island lies off the southwestern peninsula of Sulawesi and is inhabited by the Bugis, the Makassarese and the Konjo. Most reside along the infertile west coast and in Benteng, the main town. Like Pantai Bira, Selayar's long coastline is a repository of flotsam from nearby shipping lanes, perhaps accounting for the presence of a 2000-year-old Vietnamese Dongson drum, kept in an annex near the former Benteng Bontobangun (Bontobangun Fort), a few kilometres south of Benteng.

Selayar's main attractions are its sandy beaches and picturesque scenery. The snorkelling near small Pulau Pasi, opposite Benteng, is good, but you will have to bring your own equipment (or rent some in Pantai Bira) and charter a boat.

Hotel Berlian (% 21129; Jl Sudirman, Benteng; r with fan 44,000Rp, with air-con & private bathroom 65,000-125,000Rp; a) offers the beds of choice for most visitors, thanks to a range of decent rooms and a reliable restaurant. The highest prices deliver satellite TV and hot water.

Ferries (2½ hours) leave Pantai Bira harbour for Pamatata (17,000Rp) around 10am and 3pm and from Pamatata around the same times. Hotels should know the current schedules. Buses leave Terminal Mal-

lengkeri in Makassar each morning to link with the ferry from Pantai Bira.

TAKA BONE RATE

Southeast of Pulau Selayar, and north of Pulau Bone Rate, is the 2220-sq-km Taka Bone Rate, the world's third-largest coral atoll. The largest, Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, is just 20% bigger. Some of the islands and extensive reefs in the region are now part of Taka Bone Rate Marine National Park (Taman Laut Taka Bone Rate), a marine reserve with a rich variety of marine and bird life.

There is no official accommodation on the islands, but if you manage to get here you can stay with villagers if you ask the *kepala desa* (village head) at Bone Rate on Pulau Bone Rate. Alternatively, take a tent and camp on a beach. Boats leave irregularly from Selayar. Most visitors are divers travelling on liveaboard trips.

WATAMPONE

% 0481 / pop 84,000

Known more simply as Bone (bone-eh) by locals, Watampone is a small town with a good range of hotels, but few foreigners end up staying here. Watampone was the capital of Bone, a semi-autonomous state under the overlordship of Gowa, the strongest anti-Dutch power in the East Indies. The authoritarian ruler Prince Arung Palakka and his followers returned from exile in 1666 and rallied the local Bugis for a long overland campaign, forcing Gowanese sultan Hasanuddin to cede territory, including Watampone.

Information

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Sukawati) One of the only ATMs in town.

Main post office (Jl Thamrin; h 8am-9pm)

Prima Warnet (Jl Sukawati) Internet access at 15,000Rp per hr.

Telkom office (Jl Monginsidi)

Sights & Activities

A statue of Prince Arung Palakka dominates the square. South of the town centre is **Pusat Kebudayaan Bola Soba** (Jl Sukawati), a huge Bugis house built in 1881 and now used sparingly for cultural events.

Museum Lapawawoi (Jl Thamrin; admission free; h 7am-4pm) is a former palace housing one of Indonesia's most interesting regional col-

lections, including an odd array of court memorabilia and dozens of photographs of state occasions.

Sleeping & Eating

Wisma Bolaridie (% 21412; Jl Merdeka 6; small r 35,000Rp, s/d 50,000/70,000Rp) Believe it or not, this is a former royal residence, built in the Dutch colonial style. The cheaper rooms are rather small and located out the back, while in the main building there are huge, charming, yet dusty rooms.

Hotel Wisata Watampone (% 21362; fax 22367; Jl Jendral Sudirman 14; r from 120,000Rp; a s) The best hotel in town, the big rooms have satellite TV, hot water and air-con. There is a large swimming pool at the back of the hotel, but the water isn't that inviting.

Rumah Makan Ramayana (Jl Ponggawae; meals 10,000-25,000Rp; h breakfast, lunch & dinner) The best place in town, with spicy barbecued chicken one of the leading lights on the local menu.

Dynasty Restaurant (Jl Thamrin; meals 15,000-30,000; h breakfast, lunch & dinner) A short stroll southeast of the museum, the massive menu here is longer than its karaoke song list and that is saying something in Sulawesi. Chinese is king here, but there are a few Indonesian favourites.

There is a cluster of simple *rumah makan* (eating houses) in the market area, and night warung and Padang *rumah makan* (eating houses serving Padang food) along the main shopping street, Jl Ponggawae.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Four ferries ply the route between the nearby port of Bajoe and Kolaka in Southeast Sulawesi (see right).

BUS & BEMO

Watampone is not a major transport junction, but several Kijangs and buses travel to Bulukumba (25,000Rp, three hours) for connections to Bira, and Makassar's Terminal Panaikang (30,000Rp, five hours). Buses also run to Palopo and Pare Pare. Try to get to the inconvenient and oversized terminal early to avoid long waits. It's 2km west of town, so take an *ojek* (motorbike taxi) or bemo from Jl Sulawesi. Kijangs to Sengkang (18,000Rp, two hours) leave from Jl Mangga in the centre of Watampone.

If you're heading to Rantepao (45,000Rp), get a connection in Palopo. Several bus agencies along Jl Besse Kajuara, either side of the bus terminal, sell tickets for the through trip to Kendari (95,000Rp).

AROUND WATAMPONE

Bajoe

Bajoe is the major regional port, 8km from Watampone, for connections to Kolaka.

Three ferries (eight hours) leave every evening at 5pm, 8pm and 11pm from Bajoe for Kolaka, the gateway to the southeastern peninsula. All departure and arrival times are for the benefit of those travelling to/from Makassar or Kendari. Tickets are 40,000/50,000Rp for deck/business class.

From Watampone, bemos go to Bajoe every few minutes from a special stop behind the market. From the bus terminal at the end of the incredibly long causeway in Bajoe, buses head off to most places, including Makassar and Rantepao, just after the ferry arrives. Get off the ferry and jump on an *ojek*, bus or bemo to Watampone.

SENGKANG

% 0485

Sengkang is a small riverside town with a nearby scenic lake, a traditional handwoven silk industry and several good hotels. **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Ahmad Yani) has an ATM and can change money. For telephone calls, there is a Telkom Office on Jl Pahlawan.

Sights & Activities

DANAU TEMPE

Danau Tempe is a large, shallow lake fringed by wetlands, with floating houses and magnificent birdlife. Geologists believe the lake was once a gulf between southern Toraja and the rest of South Sulawesi. As they merged, the gulf disappeared and geologists believe the lake will eventually disappear too...silt from deforestation is speeding up the process.

There are no organised boat tours, so make for the longboat terminal (at the end of a laneway marked 'Setapang 7', opposite a sports field along Jl Sudirman) and charter a boat for about 40,000Rp for two hours (80,000Rp with a guide), in which time you can speed along Sungai Walanae, visit Salotangh village in the middle of the lake, go across

to Batu Batu village on the other side, and come back. A boat trip is particularly charming at dusk. Staff at the hotels can also arrange trips and recommend places to visit.

SILK WEAVING

Sengkang's other attraction is its *sutera* (silk) weaving industry. You can visit the silk workshops, but most are located in remote villages, with little or no reliable public transport. Ask the staff at your hotel to recommend some workshops, and charter a *pete-pete* from the terminal. Alternatively, just walk around the market in Sengkang, where silk scarves and sarongs are on sale.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Al Salam II (☎ 21278; fax 21893; Jl Emmi Saelan 8; r 50,000-100,000Rp) Tucked away just off the Jl Sudirman main drag, this hotel has a range of reasonable rooms. It also has an informal restaurant and bar and this is pretty much the only eatery serving Bintang in town.

Pondok Eka (☎ /fax 21296; Jl Maluku 12; s/d with fan 50,000/65,000Rp, with air-con from 125,000/175,000Rp; a) Set around an attractive courtyard, this friendly, family-run place has well-tended rooms. The deluxe rooms include satellite TV and hot-water showers.

Hotel Apada (☎ /fax 21053; Jl Nangka 9; r 100,000-125,000Rp; a) Formerly owned by a princess, this large, rambling hotel has smart rooms that include attached bathrooms.

Restoran Tomudi (☎ 21885; Jl Andi Oddang 32; mains 15,000-25,000Rp; h breakfast, lunch & dinner) One of the few real restaurants in town, there is a hearty menu of Indonesian and Chinese staples. It doesn't serve alcohol, like most restaurants in Sengkang.

Getting There & Away

Sengkang is readily accessible from Pare Pare (15,000Rp, two hours) by bus or Kijang. If you're travelling to/from Rantepao (six hours), you may need a connection in Palopo. There are plenty of buses and Kijangs along the road to Watampone (18,000Rp, two hours) and Bajoe, and very regular buses to/from Terminal Panaikang in Makassar (33,000Rp, four hours).

Bemos to local destinations leave from the bus terminal behind the market on Jl Kartini. Agencies for long-distance buses, Kijangs and Pelni boats are a few metres south of the terminal.

PARE PARE

☎ 0421 / pop 114,000

Pare Pare is a smaller, greener version of Makassar, and a quiet stopover between Tana Toraja or Mamasa and Makassar. It's also the second-largest port in the region, with many Pelni services and boats to Kalimantan.

Orientation & Information

The town is stretched out along the waterfront. At night, the esplanade turns into a lively pedestrian mall with warungs and stalls. Most of what you need is on the streets running parallel to the harbour. The major banks change money.

Haji La Tunrung moneychanger (Jl Sultan Hasanuddin) Competitive rates.

Main post office (Jl Karaeng Burane) Has internet access.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Gandaria I (☎ 21093; Jl Bau Massepe 395; s/d with fan 40,000/70,000Rp) A friendly, family-run spot which has good-value rooms.

Hotel Gandaria II, (☎ 21093; Jl Samporaja 4; s/d with fan 40,000/70,000Rp) This is the Hotel Gandaria I's second location.

Hotel Kenari Bukit Indah (☎ 21886; Jl Jendral Sudirman 65; s/d from 163,000/200,000Rp; a) This hotel is a little way out of town, but for those with transport it is worth it for the superb sea views and a well-regarded restaurant. The rooms are some of the most comfortable in Pare Pare, with air-con, TV and hot water.

Restaurant Asia (Jl Baso Daeng Patompo; meals 10,000-25,000Rp; h breakfast, lunch & dinner) A monster menu of Chinese and Indonesian food, plus a wide selection of delicious seafood.

Warung Sedap (Jl Baso Daeng Patompo; meals 15,000-30,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) Next door to Restaurant Asia, this warung specialises in *ikan bakar* (baked fish), but check the price before you order your fish.

There are several small *rumah makan* along Jl Baso Daeng Patompo, in the vicinity of Hotel Siswa. At night, warungs line the esplanade, each with exactly the same choice of rice and noodle dishes.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The main reason to come to Pare Pare is to catch a ship to East Kalimantan. Every two weeks, Pelni (☎ 21017; Jl Andicammi) runs the *Agoa Mas* to Nunukan in Kalimantan; *Kerinci* to Balikpapan and the *Binaiya* to

Samarinda. The *Awu* goes to Tarakan and on to Nunukan.

Every one or two days, several decent passenger boats travel between Pare Pare and Samarinda and Balikpapan (both 112,000Rp, 22 hours) and Nunukan (236,000Rp, two nights). Details and bookings are available from agencies near the port and just north of Restaurant Asia.

BUS

Pare Pare is on the main road between Makassar and Rantepao, and plenty of buses and Kijangs go to Terminal Panaikang in Makassar (22,000Rp, three hours) and Rantepao (25,000Rp, four hours). Most buses travel through Terminal Induk several kilometres south of the city, but it's often easier to hail a bus as it flies through town. Kijangs to Polewali (18,000Rp, two hours) leave from Terminal Soreang, 3km northeast of town.

PALOPO

☎ 0471 / pop 93,000

This Islamic port on the east coast of the peninsula is the administrative capital of the Luwu district. Before the Dutch, it was the centre of the old and powerful Luwu kingdom. The former palace is now the tiny Museum Batara Guru (Jl Andi Jemma), which is opposite the police station, and contains relics of the royal era. On the waterfront is a Bugis village, and a long pier where you can get a closer look at the fishing boats.

Palopo is a sprawling town with an inordinate number of becak. There is no reason to come here except to catch public transport. Vehicles regularly leave from just outside Terminal Bolu in Rantepao for the very winding trip to Palopo (20,000Rp, two hours). Plenty of buses and minibuses go from Palopo's organised terminal to Rantepao, Pare Pare, Makassar and Watampone. The road between Palopo and Watampone (six hours) is initially good, but disappears into huge potholes for the last two hours.

TANA TORAJA

Tana Toraja is quite simply unique. A cultural island, hemmed in by mountains on all sides, the Toraja prove there is life after death with their elaborate ceremonies. Take the beauty of Bali, the houses of the Bataks

in Sumatra and the megalithic cultures of Sumba and you're still not even close. Cave graves, hanging graves, *tau tau* (life-sized wooden effigies) of the dead and buffalo carnage every summer; it's macabre but mesmerising. This is a world unto itself.

Tana Toraja is undoubtedly the most popular destination in Sulawesi. It's a vast, pretty and mostly unspoilt area of traditional villages, unique architecture and fascinating cultures. The funeral season is usually during July and August (see p691), when Toraja working throughout Indonesia return home for celebrations, tourists come in numbers and Rantepao hotel prices peak. However, in recent years, visitor numbers have been pretty low, so it doesn't hurt to time a visit with the funeral season to see the elaborate ceremonies in full swing.

RANTEPAO

☎ 0423 / pop 45,000

Rantepao is the most popular base for exploring the stunning countryside around Tana Toraja. It is in striking distance of most of the major sites and has a good range of accommodation and restaurants. It is the largest town and commercial centre of Tana Toraja and a far better option than the provincial capital of Makale. Rantepao has cool evenings and rain throughout the year – even in the dry season.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS & POST

Post office (Jl Ahmad Yani; h 8am-4pm Mon-Sat)

A small place in town.

Warnet Petra (Jl Andi Mappanyukki 46; per hr 8000Rp; h 8am-7pm) Rantepao's only internet centre.

MAPS

If you're doing some serious hiking, pick up a copy of the detailed *Tana Toraja* (1:85,000) map, published by Periplus.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Rumah Sakit Elim (☎ 21258; Jl Ahmad Yani) The main hospital in town. If anything serious should befall you in Toraja, make for Makassar, as facilities here are basic.

MONEY

The best rates of exchange are available from moneychangers.

Bank Danamon (Jl Diponegoro) Has an ATM; also offers heftier cash advances.

THE TORAJA

Inhabiting the vast, rugged landscape of the South Sulawesi highlands are the Toraja, a name derived from the Bugis word *toraja* that had negative connotations similar to 'hillbilly' or 'bumpkin'.

Torajan life and culture for centuries had survived the constant threat from the Bugis from the southwest, but in 1905 the Dutch began a bloody campaign to bring Central Sulawesi under their control. The missionaries moved in on the heels of the troops, and by WWII many of the great Torajan ceremonies (with the exception of funeral celebrations) were disappearing.

Beliefs

Prior to the arrival of Christianity, the Toraja believed in many gods, but worshipped Puang Matua as the special god of their family, clan or tribe. Christianity undermined some traditional Torajan beliefs, but the ceremonies are still a vital part of life.

Torajan mythology suggests that their ancestors came by boat from the south, sailed up Sungai Sa'dan (Sa'dan River) and dwelled in the Enrekang region before being pushed into the mountains by the arrival of other groups.

Buffaloes are a status symbol for the Toraja, and are of paramount importance in various religious ceremonies. The buffalo has traditionally been a symbol of wealth and power – even land could be bought with buffaloes. Sought-after albino buffaloes can change hands for more than US\$8000.

Despite the strength of traditional beliefs, Christianity in Toraja is a very active force. One of the first questions asked of you will be your religion, and Protestants are given immediate approval.

Traditional Houses

One of the most noticeable aspects about Tana Toraja is the size and grandeur of *tongkonan* (traditional houses). It is the meeting place for family gatherings, and may not be bought or sold.

The towering roof, rearing up at either end, is the most striking aspect of a *tongkonan*. Some believe the roof represents the horns of a buffalo; others suggest it represents the bow and stern of a boat. The more buffalo horns visible, the higher the household's status.

Location and views are often the selling points for midrange places. Plenty of these midrange hotels are located along the roads from Rantepao to Makale or Palopo. They cater almost exclusively for tour groups with their own transport, but individuals are welcome, and rates are pretty negotiable during the long, quiet low-season.

BUDGET

Wisma Tengko Situru (☎ 23985; fax 21855; Jl Tengko Situru 5; r 30,000Rp) All the rooms here are set in a rambling wooden house on stilts. It is in a quiet part of town, but it's a bargain deal for a large room with attached toilet and mandi.

Wisma Irama (☎ 21371; Jl Abdul Gani 16; downstairs s/d 30,000/40,000Rp, upstairs with hot water 50,000/75,000Rp) Close to the Monton, the larger rooms here have king-size beds and a spacious bathroom. The cheaper rooms

are slightly on the small side. The staff are friendly and prices include breakfast and, sometimes, hot water.

Wisma Monton (☎ 21675; fax 21665; Jl Abdul Gani 14A; ground-/top-fl r 50,000/100,000Rp) Hidden away down a side lane, this smart establishment is one of the biggest of the budget places. Almost deserted when we visited, the rooms remain in fine shape, and include hot water. The top level has a rooftop restaurant with fine views.

Pia's Poppies Hotel (☎ 21121; s/d 50,000/60,000Rp) Located about 1km south of town, almost in the countryside, Pia's Poppies is deservedly popular for its charming rooms. There are plenty of individual touches on show, including creative bathrooms and some aquariums. The friendly owners look after their lush garden and there is a small bar here.

Hotel Pison (☎ /fax 21344; s/d 50,000/60,000Rp) Literally opposite Pia's, the Pison has 32

Funerals

Of all Torajan ceremonies, the most important is the *tomate* (funeral; literally 'deceased'). Without proper funeral rites the soul of the deceased will cause misfortune to its family.

The Toraja generally have two funerals, one immediately after death and an elaborate second funeral after preparations have been made. This is usually scheduled during the dry months of July to September.

Before the second funeral, the deceased remains in the family house. An invitation to visit the deceased is an honour. If you accept, remember to thank the deceased and ask permission of the deceased when you wish to leave... as you would a living host.

The second funeral can be spread over several days and involve hundreds of guests. Torajans believe that the souls of animals should follow their masters to the next life, hence the importance of animal sacrifices.

Visitors attending a funeral should wear black or dark-coloured clothing.

Graves & Tau Tau

The Toraja believe that you can take possessions with you in the afterlife, and the dead generally go well-equipped to their graves. Since this led to grave plundering, the Toraja started to hide their dead in caves.

These caves were hollowed out by specialist cave builders. Coffins go deep inside the caves, and sitting on balconies in the rock face in front of the caves are *tau tau* – wooden effigies of the dead.

You can see *tau tau* carvers at work at Londa. There are many *tau tau* at Lemo and a few elsewhere, but it's becoming increasingly difficult to see them in Tana Toraja. So many have been stolen that the Toraja now keep them in their homes.

Books

In the souvenir shops and supermarkets in Rantepao there are a few decent locally produced guides: *A Guide to Toraja* by AT Marampa is available in English, German and French, and lists dances, ceremonies and some local walks. *Toraja – An Introduction to a Unique Culture* by LT Tangdilintin and M Syafei is written in their unique style. *Life and Death of the Toraja People* by Stanislaus Sandarupa is readable and informative.

rooms, each with a clean bathroom and mini-balcony with mountain views. All the rooms come with hot water, but some are showing their age more than others.

Wisma Maria I (☎ 21165; Jl Sam Ratulangi 23; s/d 45,000/70,000Rp, with hot water 95,000/110,000Rp) The well-tended rooms here are set around a large garden. It's a friendly set-up, rates include breakfast and it's a stone's throw from the popular Mart's Café. Don't try testing the stone theory, as you might get barred.

Wisma Imanuel (☎ 21416; Jl W Monginsidi 16; r 80,000Rp) Set in a large house overlooking the river, the rooms here are a generous size and include hot-water showers. Big balconies out front offer views over the garden and street action beyond.

Duta 88 Cottages (☎ 23477; Jl Sawerigading 12; r 80,000Rp) All the cottages here are *tongkonan*-style (in the style of a traditional Torajan

house), set around a verdant little garden. The rooms are atmospheric and good value, as all come with hot water and satellite TV. Rates include breakfast.

If times are busy during the summer season, there are several other recommended options:

Homestay Rainbow Pelangi (☎ 21753; Jl Pembangunan 11A; r 70,000Rp) Amiable place offering basic rooms with attached bathroom.

Pondok Wisata (☎ 21595; Jl Pembangunan 23; r 60,000Rp) Smart, clean rooms with bathroom and good views to the mountains beyond.

Wisma Tanabua (☎ 21072; Jl Diponegoro 43; r from 50,000Rp) A friendly, central spot that doubles as a beauty salon.

MIDRANGE

Many of the midrange places are strewn throughout the buffalo-infested valleys, which is great for those with transport, but

not so straightforward for those without. To get to these places, either hop in a bemo or take a becak.

Toraja Garden Cottages (☎ 23336; fax 25397; cottages incl breakfast 100,000Rp) Almost opposite the Toraja Prince Hotel, these wooden cottages are very good value. The thoughtful design includes a veranda with countryside views and both TV and hot water are available. Next door is the abandoned Toraja Cottages, a sad statement on the tourism slump.

Marannu Hotel (☎ 22221; fax 22028; Jl Pongtiku 116; r from 150,000Rp; ☎) Located on the road to Makale, the rooms here are a little threadbare these days, but the large swimming pool is refreshing.

Toraja Torsina Hotel (☎ 21293; s/d 120,000/180,000Rp; ☎) Set in the rice fields near the turn-off to Ke'te Kesu, the rooms here are clean and comfortable and worth the rupiah given the swimming pool.

Rantepao Lodge (☎ 23717; fax 21248; r 150,000-250,000Rp; ☎) A sprawling compound near the Toraja Torsina Hotel, the deluxe rooms are the draw here. They have private balconies with an aspect over the rice fields, TV, fridge and hot water. The standard rooms are pretty basic for the money. There is also a swimming pool here.

Hotel Indra Toraja (☎ 21163; fax 21547; Jl Landorundun 63; standard/deluxe 180,000/216,000Rp) The only midrange option in the centre of Rantepao, the Indra has two annexes opposite each other. The rooms are similar in both, but most guests prefer the riverside option. Deluxe rooms include bath tubs and satellite TV, and all are set around a blooming garden. The riverside restaurant is not bad and features a singer most nights.

Hotel Sangalla (☎ /fax 24485; r 250,000Rp) Located on the road to Makale, the rooms here are all set in Torajan *tongkonan* houses. Bamboo and wood furnishings predominate and the bathrooms are spotlessly clean. Check the rates before you commit, as US\$85 is the optimistic walk-in price.

Toraja Prince Hotel (☎ 21430; www.torajaprincehotel.com; s/d 300,000/360,000Rp; ☎) A few kilometres from town on the road to Palopo, the Prince is arguably the best-value midrange option on offer. All rooms feature a smart three-star trim and there is a small swimming pool. Published rates are more like US\$70 and up, so check that discounts are available.

TOP END

Hotel Marante Toraja (☎ 21616; www.marantetoraja.com; deluxe r US\$60, cottages US\$78; ☎) Another huge hotel, this time on the road to Palopo. The cottages have smarter bathrooms, but are slightly smaller than rooms in the main building. All are well-kitted out and overlook the swimming pool.

Heritage Toraja (☎ 21192; www.torajaheritage.com; r from US\$85; ☎) The swankiest hotel in Tana Toraja, this striking property was first built as a Novotel during the boom years. Most rooms are set in huge Torajan *tongkonan*-style houses in a lush garden with a lagoon-like pool. Facilities include satellite TV, minibar and safety deposit box. It's an atmospheric place, but all too often empty. It's about 3km from town towards Ke'te Kesu.

Eating

Going to ceremonies or local restaurants offers a great opportunity to sample Torajan food. The best-known dish is *pa'piong* (meat stuffed into bamboo tubes along with vegetables and coconut). If you want to try it in a restaurant, order several hours in advance because it takes time to cook – order dinner while having lunch. Less popular with the average visitor is dog, which is eaten in some parts of Tana Toraja. The following places are all open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Two of the longest-running restaurants are near the Hotel Indra Toraja on Jl Sam Ratulangi.

Mart's Café (Jl Sam Ratulangi 44; dishes 15,000-25,000Rp) This little restaurant has a good mix of Torajan specialities, Indonesian favourites and some simple Western fare. Good guacamole is available here, with prawn crackers. It's a cheap and sometimes lively place for a Bintang, but be prepared for a lot of local guides trying to sell their services.

Riman Restoran (Jl Andi Mappanyukki 113; mains from 15,000Rp) This centrally located eatery has a good mix of local delicacies and Asian favourites. This is a good place for white-water rafters to trade tales, as it is right next door to the Indosella office.

Restoran Mambo (Jl Sam Ratulangi; dishes around 20,000Rp) Just up the road from Mart's Café, this little canteen punches above its weight when it comes to the menu, including Torajan, Indonesian, Chinese and Western fare.

(Continued on page 701)

(Continued from page 692)

NEVER MIND THE BALOKS

Rantepao and Makale markets have whole sections devoted to the sale of the alcoholic *balok* (palm wine, also known as *tuak* and *toddy*). *Balok* is sold in huge jugs around town and comes in a variety of strengths, colours (from clear to dark red, achieved by adding bark) and flavours (sweet to bitter).

Coffee is Toraja's other famous brew, an excellent antidote to a night of *balok*-tasting.

Rachmat Restoran (Jl Ahmad Yani; mains around 20,000Rp) This huge restaurant blows hot and cold, as it traditionally caters to tour groups. That means it's busy for a few months and quiet the rest of the time. The menu has an impressive selection of Indonesian, Chinese and Asian greatest hits.

Wae Rumbung (Jl Pongtiku; mains around 25,000Rp) Set in a wooden pavilion overlooking the rice fields, this restaurant is popular with visiting Indonesians. The menu includes something for everyone and cold beers are available. It is right opposite the turn-off for Ke'te Kesu.

Toko Abadi (Jl Andi Mappanyukki) For trekkers and self-caterers, this is the best-stocked supermarket in town, although for fruit and veg, make for the market.

Entertainment

Errr...what entertainment? The only options are some pretty dire karaoke bars that double up as local pick-up joints. The woe-fully named **Cancer Karaoke** (Jl Andi Mappanyukki), near Riman Restaurant, is a good example of how bad these places can be, but if you still want more, there are plenty on the road to Makale.

Shopping

Woodcarving, weaving and basketry are the main crafts of Tana Toraja – some villages are noted for particular specialities, such as Mamasan boxes (used to store magic, salt, betel nuts), huge horn necklaces and wooden figurines. Woodcarvings include trays, panels and clocks, carved like the decorations on traditional houses. The carvers

at Ke'te Kesu and Londa are renowned for the quality of their work.

The hard part is separating the quality from the tat. Artefacts sold in souvenir shops, especially around the market building in town, include mini replicas of Torajan houses with exaggerated overhanging roofs; Toraja weaving (especially good in Sa'dan); and the longer cloths of the Mamasan Valley. Necklaces made of seeds, chunky silver, and amber or wooden beads festoon the gift shops, but the orange-bead necklaces are the authentic Torajan wear. Black-and-red velvet drawstring bags are popular with tourists, much to the amusement of locals who use them for carrying betel nuts to funerals.

Todi (Jl Andi Mappanyukki 25) The leading ikat (cloth in which the pattern is produced by dyeing the individual threads before weaving) gallery in Tana Toraja. The stunning showroom is upstairs and there are some fine pieces available. Prices are high and an optimistic sign says no bargaining.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Flying – especially *into* Tana Toraja – provides a dramatic look at the landscape and architecture of traditional villages. The only carrier, DAS, flies from Makassar at 10.30am on Tuesday and Friday for 250,000Rp, returning around 11.40am. However, most locals consider this an unreliable service. Tickets can be booked through **Toraja Permai** (☎ 21785; Jl Andi Mappanyukki 10) or at hotels around town.

BUS & BEMO

Most long-distance buses leave from bus company offices along, or just off, Jl Andi Mappanyukki. The most comfortable buses (with slightly higher prices to match) are Litha, Batutumonga and Alam Indah. Try to book the ticket a day or so in advance.

There are plenty of buses heading north to Pendolo (70,000Rp, eight hours), Tentena (90,000Rp, 12 hours), Poso (110,000Rp, 13 hours) and Palu (135,000Rp, 20 hours). Even more buses head south to Pare Pare (25,000Rp, five hours). To Terminal Panai-kang in Makassar (45,000 to 75,000Rp, eight hours), buses often run at night, and prices vary according to speed and the level of comfort and space. Various companies

also have services to Mamuju via Polewali, from where there are connections to Mamasa. The only direct bus between Tana Toraja and Mamasa leaves from Makale, see p707.

From Terminal Bolu, 2km north of Rantepao, there are regular vehicles to Palopo. From outside Rachmat Restoran, Kijangs leave every minute to Makale (4000Rp, 20 minutes). See Around Tana Toraja (right) for more details about transport between Rantepao and other places in Tana Toraja. Plenty of bemos travel between Rantepao and Terminal Bolu.

Getting Around

From the airport, squeeze into whatever vehicle is available – usually a Kijang (20,000Rp per person), which goes to Rantepao, via Makale, and will drop you off anywhere in between. To the airport, tee up transport with the Toraja Permai office when you reconfirm your flight or charter a bemo or Kijang.

Rantepao is small and easy to walk around. Becak should cost around 4000Rp in town.

MAKALE

☎ 0423

Makale is the administrative capital of Tana Toraja, but has very few of the amenities of Rantepao. It's a small town built around an artificial lake and set amid cloud-shrouded hills. The town also boasts whitewashed churches sitting atop each hill and a busy market. Makale is well connected to most of Tana Toraja by bemo.

Sights

Makale's market (Jl Pasar Baru) is a blur of noise and colour. On the main market day, held every six days, you'll see pigs strapped down with bamboo strips for buyers' close inspection, buckets of live eels, piles of fresh and dried fish, and a corner of the market is reserved just for *balok* sales.

Sleeping & Eating

In all honesty, it is far more sensible to stay in Rantepao, which has a good selection of hotels to suit every budget.

Rumah Makan Idaman (Jl Merdeka: meals 5000-20,000Rp; 🍽 breakfast, lunch & dinner) The only real restaurant in town is a small, friendly place that serves the usual Indonesian fare, as

well as tasty baked fish. It is next door to Makale's *mesjid* (mosque).

When the market's pumping, you'll find local dishes for sale at warung, such as *pa piong*, seasonal fruit and *kueh* (cakes).

Getting There & Away

See p701 for information about flights to Tana Toraja.

Every minute from dawn to dusk, Kijangs race between Rantepao and Makale (4000Rp, 20 minutes) – just flag one down. Most of the bus companies based in Rantepao also have offices near the corner of Jl Merdeka and Jl Ihwang Rombe in Makale. Buses will pick up pre-booked passengers in Makale for any destination from Rantepao (see p701). The only direct bus connection between Tana Toraja and Mamasa is with Disco Indah several times a week (80,000Rp, 10 hours).

See Around Tana Toraja (below) for regional public transport details from Makale.

AROUND TANA TORAJA

Stunning scenery, cascading rice fields, precipitous cliff graves, other-worldly *tau tau*, hanging graves, soaring *tongkonan* and colourful ceremonies – this is the wild world of Tana Toraja and it lies just a short walk or ride away from Rantepao.

Most of the places in this section can be reached on day trips from Rantepao, but longer trips are possible, staying overnight in villages or camping out. Public transport, organised tours, motorbike or mountain-bike rental, vehicle rental with a driver-cum-guide or, best of all, walking – anything is possible. The roads to major towns, such as Makale, Palopo, Sa'dan, Batutumonga, Madandan and Bittuang, are paved, but many other roads around Tana Toraja are constructed out of compacted boulders – vehicles don't get stuck, but your joints get rattled loose. Walking is often the only way to reach the remote villages.

GUIDES

In this region, many guides hold a government-approved licence, obtained by undertaking a course in culture, language and etiquette, and being fluent in the local language. Nevertheless, there are competent guides with no certificate (and incompetent licensed guides). The best way to choose a

guide is to sit down and talk through a trip before committing.

Guides are useful if you have a common language, but if you have a sense of direction, a decent map (see p687 for map recommendations), know a few relevant phrases of Bahasa Indonesia and are not going too far off the beaten track, you won't go too wrong travelling without one. The main purposes of guides are facilitating visits to remote and traditional villages, and working as an informative and culturally sensitive go-between. Official licensed guides costs from 200,000Rp per day – plus their transport, food and accommodation. A car should cost 300,000Rp per day, perhaps 350,000Rp for a newer air-con vehicle. Official and unofficial guides and porters can be hired around Rantepao (you'll definitely be approached in the street and in restaurants); from the tourist office and agencies in Rantepao; from hotels; or ask around villages along the way. For a list of agencies in Rantepao offering organised tours of the region, see p689.

ACTIVITIES

Trekking

This is the best way to reach isolated areas and to really get a feel for the countryside and people. Always take good footwear; a water bottle and food; a strong torch (flashlight) in case you walk at night, stay in villages without electricity or want to explore caves; and an umbrella or raincoat – even in the dry season, it's more likely than not to rain. If you take advantage of Torajan hospitality, bring gifts or pay your way.

If you prefer a professional trekking company, contact **Indosella** (☎ 0423-25210; www.sellatours.com; Jl Andi Mappanyukki 111, Rantepao). Shorter hikes are mentioned in the individual sections later in this chapter, but a few of the popular longer treks include the following:

Batumonga–Lokomata–Pangala–Baruppu–Pulu Pulu–Sapan Three days.

Bittuang–Mamasa Three days; see p708.

Pangala–Bolokan–Bittuang Two days; a well-marked trail.

Sa'dan–Sapan–Pulu Pulu–Baruppu–Pangala Three days; tough and mountainous.

For an overview of these trekking routes, check out the Tana Toraja map (p688).

Rafting

Sungai Sa'dan has 20 rapids, including a few that are Class IV (read pretty wild). Rafting trips, including transport to/from your hotel (anywhere in Tana Toraja), equipment, guide, insurance and food, cost €50 for one day on Class II to III rapids, or €155 for two days on Class III to IV rapids, with an overnight stay in local rest huts. Contact **Indosella** (☎ 0423-25210; www.sellatours.com; Jl Andi Mappanyukki 111, Rantepao) for more details.

ENTRANCE FEES

Most of the tourist sites around Tana Toraja have an entry fee of 10,000Rp. There is usually a ticket booth at each place, complete with the odd souvenir stall...or 10 in the case of Lemo and Londa. Sometimes there is no one about, but someone will usually track you down in the end and ask you to enter your name in the visitor book.

GETTING AROUND

Motorbikes and mountain bikes are available through hotels and some agencies. Remember that roads out of Rantepao and Makale are good, but often windy, steep and narrow, so they are more suitable for experienced bikers. Bikes can be used along some walking trails, but the trails are often too rocky.

Local public transport leaves from central Rantepao and Makale, as well as from the scruffy and muddy Terminal Bolu east of Rantepao; there are regular bemos and Kijangs to all main villages, but the vehicles are poorly signed so you may have to ask around the terminal. See the Rantepao map (p689) for where to catch bemos in central Rantepao heading to La'bo, Madandan, Sa'dan and Tikala.

Some of the more useful services head to the following destinations from Rantepao and Makale:

Bittuang For treks to Mamasa, only leaves from Makale. La'bo Via Ke'te Kesu.

Lempo Useful for hiking up to Batutumonga.

Pangala Via Batutumonga.

Sa'dan Usually via Tikala.

Sangalla Only leaves from Makale.

Batumonga

Batumonga occupies a dramatic ridge on the slopes of Gunung Sesean, with panoramic views of Rantepao and the Sa'dan

Valley, and stunning sunrises. Located about 20km north of Rantepao via Deri, it is possible to stay here, or day trip from Rantepao for some hiking and a local lunch.

SLEEPING & EATING

The first two places are on the only road through Batutumonga.

Mentirotik (☎ 081 1422260; r per person 60,000Rp, r with views 170,000Rp) With commanding views across the valley below, this place has crash-pad dorms with mattress in traditional *tongkonan*, as well as large rooms with bathroom. Prices are absurdly high for such a basic place. Try halving them! The restaurant has basic meals, including a 30,000Rp set dinner.

Mama Rina's Homestay (r incl breakfast & dinner per person 60,000Rp) This simple family affair has great views. The accommodation is just a mattress on the floor in a *tongkonan*, but the setting is superb.

Coffee Shop Tinimbayo (Bintang 20,000Rp) Located a few kilometres east of Batutumonga, this little café has a killer location, perched on a hairpin bend with infinite views over the cascading rice fields. Basic meals are possible, but cold drinks are easier to arrange.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Simply take a bemo (8000Rp) to Lempo from Terminal Bolu in Rantepao, and walk 2km (uphill); sometimes the bemo goes through to Batutumonga, but if you're out of luck the walk from Lempo to Batutumonga is pleasant.

North of Rantepao

From Batutumonga, a scenic walk west takes you to Lokomata, a village with cave graves hewn into a rocky outcrop, and outstanding scenery. Backtrack and take the well-marked trail down the slopes to Pana, with its ancient hanging graves, and some baby graves in nearby trees. You can see tiny villages with towering *tongkonan*, women pounding rice, men scrubbing their beloved buffalo and children splashing happily in pools. The path ends at Tikala and, from there, regular bemos return to Rantepao.

Alternatively, backtrack through Lempo to Deri, the site of rock graves, walk down to the Rantepao–Sa'dan road and catch a bemo back to Rantepao. This is a very pleasant downhill walk (five hours) through some of the finest scenery in Tana Toraja.

At 2150m above sea level, **Gunung Sesean** is not the highest peak on Sulawesi, but one of the most popular for trekking. The summit is accessible via a trail from Batutumonga. The return trip to the summit takes five hours. A guide is a good idea if you're inexperienced or speak no Bahasa Indonesia.

Beyond Gunung Sesean, the sleepy village of **Pangala** (35km from Rantepao; 17,000Rp by bemo) is noted for its fine dancers, as is nearby **Baruppu**.

Losmen Sando (r per person 70,000Rp), Pangala's main accommodation, is a surprisingly elegant place with comfortable rooms, and a spacious restaurant overlooking a coffee plantation. Staff offer good advice about local trekking.

The traditional village of **Palawa**, east of Batutumonga, is similarly attractive but less popular than Ke'te Kesu, and has *tongkonan* houses and rice barns. In the dry season you can walk southwest, fording a river and walking through rice fields to **Pangli**, with its *tau tau* and house graves and then to **Bori**, the site of an impressive *rante* (ceremonial ground) and some towering megaliths. About 1km south of Bori, **Parinding** has *tongkonan* houses and rice barns. From here you can walk back to Rantepao or on to Tikala. The walk is easy enough to do without a guide – just ask for directions along the way.

Further north is the weaving centre of **Sa'dan** (12km north of Rantepao; take a bemo from Terminal Bolu for 5000Rp), where local women set up a market to sell their woven cloth. It's all handmade on simple looms, but not all is produced in the village.

West of Rantepao

About 2km west across the river from Rantepao, **Gunung Singki** (930m) is a steep hill. There's a slippery, overgrown hiking trail to the summit, which has panoramic views across Rantepao and the surrounding countryside. Return to the road to **Siguntu** (7km from Rantepao), which offers more superb views of the valleys and Rantepao.

The walk (3km) from Siguntu to the Rantepao–Makale road at Alang Alang is also pleasant. Stop on the way at the traditional village of **Mendoe**. From Alang Alang, where a covered bridge crosses the river, head to Londa, back to Rantepao, or remain

on the western side of the river and continue walking to the villages of **Langda** and **Madandan**.

South of Rantepao

On the outskirts of Rantepao, just off the road to Makale, is **Karasik**, with traditional-style houses arranged around a cluster of megaliths. The houses may have been erected some years ago for a single funeral ceremony, but some are now inhabited.

Just off the road to Ke'te Kesu is **Buntu Pune**, where there are two *tongkonan* houses and six rice barns. According to local legend, one of the two houses was built by a nobleman named **Pong Marambaq** at the beginning of the 20th century. During Dutch rule, he was appointed head of the local district, but planned to rebel and was subsequently exiled to Ambon (Maluku), where he died. His body was returned to Tana Toraja, and buried at the hill to the north of Buntu Pune.

About 1km further along from Buntu Pune is Ke'te Kesu (5km from Rantepao), renowned for its woodcarving. The village has been preserved for visitors thanks to its traditional *tongkonan* and rice barns and offers some great photo opportunities. One of the houses in the village has several *tau tau* on display. On the cliff face behind the village are some cave graves and very old hanging graves. The rotting coffins are suspended on wooden beams under an overhang. Others, full of bones and skulls, lie rotting in strategic piles.

From Ke'te Kesu you can walk to **Sullukang**, which has a *rante* marked by a number of large, rough-hewn megaliths, and on to **Palatokke**. In this beautiful area of lush rice paddies and traditional houses, there is an enormous cliff face containing several cave graves and hanging graves. Access to the caves is difficult, but the scenery makes it worthwhile. From Palatokke, there are trails to **La'bo** and **Randanbatu**, where there are more graves, and on to Sangalla, Suaya and Makale.

Londa (6km south of Rantepao) is a very extensive burial cave at the base of a massive cliff face. The entrance to the cave is guarded by a balcony of *tau tau*. Inside the cave is a collection of coffins, many of them rotted away, with the bones either scattered or heaped in piles. Other coffins hold the

bones of several family members – it's an old Toraja custom that all people who have lived together in one family house should also be buried together in a family grave. A local myth says that the people buried in the Londa caves are the descendants of **Tangdilinoq**, chief of the Toraja when they were pushed out of the Enrekang region and forced to move into the highlands.

Kids hang around outside the Londa caves with oil lamps to guide you around (about 20,000Rp). Unless you've got a strong torch, you really do need a guide with a lamp. Inside the caves, the coffins and skulls have been placed in strategic locations for the benefit of sightseers. If you're thin, and don't suffer from claustrophobia, squeeze through the tunnel connecting the two main caves, past some interesting stalactites and stalagmites. Londa is also famous for its wood carvers. A bemo between Rantepao and Makale will drop you at the turn-off, about 2km from the cave. Visit in the morning for the best photos.

Further south, 2km (east) off the Rantepao–Makale road, is **Tilanga** (10km from Rantepao), a lovely, natural cool-water swimming pool. You can swim in the pool, but don't be surprised if some friendly eels come to say hello.

Lemo (10km south of Rantepao) is the best-known burial area in Tana Toraja. The sheer rock face has a whole series of balconies for *tau tau*. According to local legend, these graves are for descendants of a Toraja chief who reigned over the surrounding district hundreds of years ago and built his house on top of the cliff into which the graves are now cut. Because the mountain was part of his property, only his descendants could use it. The chief himself was buried elsewhere because the art of cutting grave caves had not yet been developed. The biggest balcony has a dozen figures with white eyes and black pupils and outstretched arms like spectators at a sports event. It's a good idea to go before 9am for the best photos. A Rantepao–Makale bemo will drop you off at the turn-off to the burial site, from where it's a 15-minute walk to the *tau tau*.

East of Rantepao

Marante is a fine traditional village, just north of the road to Palopo. Near Marante there

are stone and hanging graves with several *tau tau*, skulls on the coffins and a cave with scattered bones. From Marante you can cross the river on the suspension bridge and walk to pretty villages, set in rice fields.

About 7km off the Palopo road to the south is the traditional village of Nanggala (16km from Rantepao); take a bemo from Terminal Bolu for 3000Rp, but you may have to walk from the Palopo Rd. The village has a particularly grandiose traditional house and an impressive fleet of 14 rice barns. The rice barns have a bizarre array of motifs carved into them, including soldiers with guns, Western women and cars. Keep an eye out for a colony of huge black bats hanging from trees at the end of the village.

From Nanggala you can walk south to Paniki, a tough hike (five hours) along a dirt track up and down the hills. The trail starts next to the rice barns, and along the way are coffee-plantation machines grinding away. From Paniki walk (two hours) to Ledo and Buntao (15km from Rantepao), which has some house graves and *tau tau*. Alternatively, catch a bemo from Paniki to Rantepao. About 2km from Buntao is Tembamba, which has more graves and is noted for its fine scenery.

East of Makale

Sangalla has the simple Homestay Kalemang Indah (r per person 70,000Rp); rates include meals. South of Sangalla are the hot springs at Makala, well signposted from the Rantepao-Makala road. At Makula, you can stay at the upmarket Hotel Sangalla (% 24112; r from 125,000Rp; \leq). The public can use the hot springs swimming pool for 10,000Rp.

There are more than 40 *tau tau* at Tampangallo, between Sangalla and Suaya. The graves belong to the chiefs of Sangalla, descendants of the mythical divine being Tamborolangiq, who is believed to have introduced the caste system, death rituals and agricultural techniques into Torajan society. The former royal families of Makale, Sangalla and Menkendek all claimed descent from Tamborolangiq, who is said to have descended from heaven on a stone staircase. Take a Kijang from Makale to Sangalla, get off about 1km after the turn-off to Suaya, and walk a short distance (less than a kilometre) through the rice fields to Tampangallo.

MAMASA VALLEY

Another area of outstanding natural beauty in Sulawesi, the Mamasa Valley is often referred to as West Tana Toraja, but this overplays the connection between Mamasa and Tana Toraja. Mamasan *tongkonan* have heavy, wooden roofs, which are quite different from the exaggerated boat-shaped bamboo roofs to the east. Torajan ceremonies and funerals survive in the Mamasa Valley, but on the whole these are far less ostentatious affairs than those around Tana Toraja.

Mamasans have embraced Christianity with unfettered enthusiasm: choir groups regularly meet up and down the valley, flexing their vocal chords in praise of God. *Sambu* weaving is a craft that still thrives in the hills around Mamasa village. These long strips of heavy woven material are stitched together to make blankets, which are ideal insulation for the cold mountain nights.

Like Tana Toraja, the best way to explore the valley is on foot. The paths tend to follow the ridges, giving hikers stunning views of the mountainous countryside. There are few roads, and many paths to choose from, so you'll need to constantly ask directions, or hire a guide. The other source of confusion is that village districts, such as Balla, cover broad areas and there are few villages within them. Even centres within the village area, such as Rante Balla, Balla Kalua and Buntu Balla, are very spread out.

MAMASA

Mamasa is the only large village in the valley. The air is cool and clean, and the folk are hospitable. The rhythm of life has a surreal, fairytale quality for those used to the hustle of Indonesia's big cities. The highlight of the week is the market every Monday, where hill people trade their produce. Look for locally made woven blankets, a must for those cold mountain nights. While walking through hill villages, trekkers will also be offered plenty of fine-looking blankets direct from weavers, so take money or gifts, such as condensed milk, chocolate, sugar or *kretek*, to barter with.

Sleeping & Eating

Losmen Mini (Jl Ahmad Yani: s/d 50,000/65,000Rp) A sort of creaky old mountain lodge in the heart of

town, the rooms upstairs are a lot brighter than the dark offerings down below.

Mantana Lodge (Jl Emmy Saelan 1; s from 46,000Rp, d 87,000-120,000Rp) The most sophisticated digs in town, the rooms are bright and have attached bathroom. The restaurant here is arguably the best in town, with cold beer. You might catch a spirited church service downstairs.

Mamasa Cottages (s/d US\$40/46) Built over hot springs at Kole, 3km north of Mamasa. It offers lovely rooms for a negotiable price. Hot spring water flows to every bathroom.

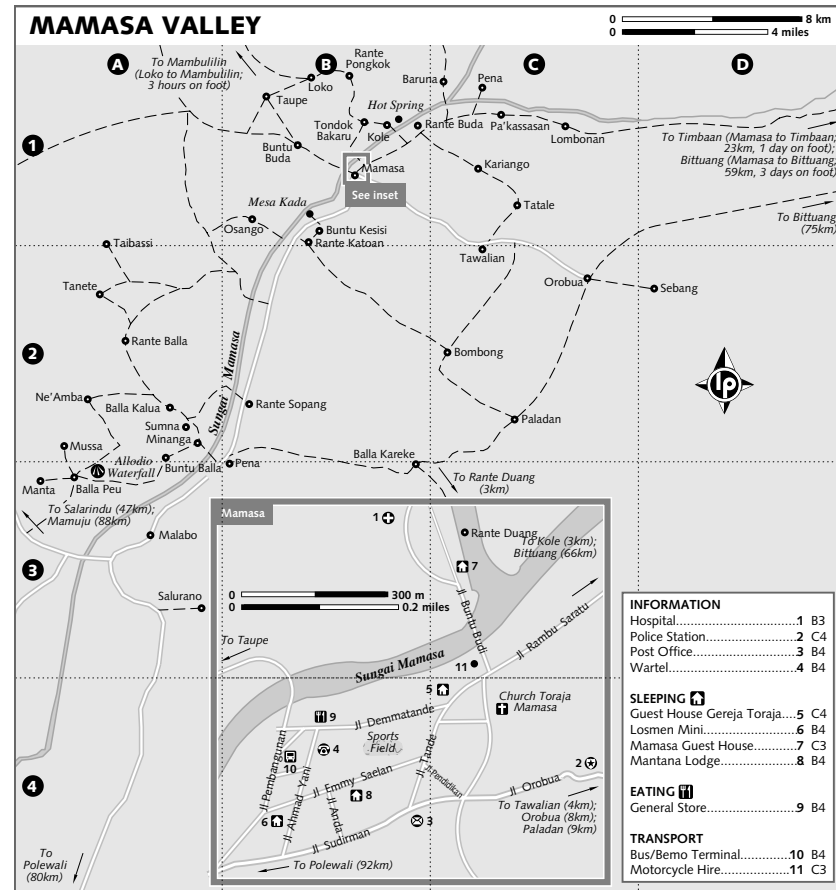
Other options:
Mamasa Guest House (just off Jl Buntu Budi; r 60,000Rp) Tucked away down a side street but offers good views.

Guest House Gereja Toraja (Jl Demmatande 182; r 60,000Rp) Reasonable rooms in an old house.

There aren't any real restaurants in Mamasa and most visitors end up chowing down in their guesthouse. Basic supplies are available in local shops, and there's a good selection of fresh produce in the market.

Getting There & Away

On a map, Mamasa looks tantalisingly close to Rantepao, but there's no direct transport because the road is so bad. You can travel from Makale to Bittuang by Kijang or bemo, but from Bittuang you'll have to walk (see p708). A new road is under construction, but due to the tough terrain it may take several



years to complete. Currently, jeeps are running from Mamasa to Pongding for 60,000Rp every day, where you can hook up with a horse on to Bittuang for about 150,000Rp.

The only direct connection between Tana Toraja and Mamasa is the bus (80,000Rp, 10 hours), three times a week from Disco Indah Bus in Makale. Otherwise, from Tana Toraja (or anywhere else), catch a bus towards Majene or Mamuju and get off at Polewali. From here lots of creaky minibuses go to Mamasa (30,000Rp, three hours) along a rough road, often prone to mudslides. Start early as services dry up in the afternoon.

AROUND MAMASA

The countryside surrounding Mamasa is strikingly beautiful. You can hire motorbikes around town for a negotiable 80,000Rp per day. You can charter a bemo or Kijang along the valley's couple of main roads, but footpaths and very slender suspension bridges are the only access to most villages.

The following places (with distances in kilometres from Mamasa in brackets) are easy to reach from Mamasa, but take warm clothes and gifts for your hosts if you plan to stay overnight. As most people grow their own coffee here, in return for any hospitality bring condensed milk, chocolate, sugar, *kretek*, and other goods from town.

North of Mamasa

Rante Buda (4km) has an impressive 25m-long *tongkonan* building known as Banua Layuk (High House), an old chief's place with colourful motifs. This *tongkonan* is one of the oldest and best preserved in the valley, built about 300 years ago for one of five local leaders, the chief of Rambusaratu. A donation (about 5000Rp) is expected.

Kole (3km) has hot springs, tapped for the guests at Mamasa Cottages. Loko (4km) is a traditional village with old houses, set in the jungle. The only way there is to hike via Kole or Tondok Bakar. Hardy hikers can continue from Loko up the steep hill to Mambulilin Sarambu (Mambulilin Waterfall), and on to the peak of Gunung Mambulilin (9km). Taupe (5km) is a traditional village with jungle walks and panoramic views.

South of Mamasa

Rante Sopang (12km) is a busy centre for weaving and retailing crafts. The path up

the hill from the roadside craft shop leads to a few workshops, where women weave long strips of heavy cloth for Mamasa's distinctive, colourful blankets.

Osango (3km) is the site of *tedong-tedong* (burial houses), supposedly up to 200 years old. There are lots of paths and the village is very spread out, so ask for directions along the way. Mesa Kada (2km) are hot springs, which are suitable for a swim.

Tanete (8km) has mountain graves under a cave. Tanete and nearby Taibassi are also centres for traditional weaving and carving. Rante Balla (12km) has big beautiful *tongkonan*, and woven blankets and baskets.

Buntu Balla (15km) has beautiful views, traditional weaving and *tedong-tedong* burial sites. Close to Buntu Balla there's a waterfall at Allodio; a traditional village at Balla Peu; megalithic remains at Manta; and views along the whole valley from Mussa. Further south, Malabo (18km) has *tedong-tedong* burial sites.

Southeast of Mamasa, Orobu (9km) has a fine old *tongkonan*, one of the best in the area. There are more sweeping views from Paladan further south.

Mamasa to Bittuang

This route is the only direct way between the Mamasa Valley and Tana Toraja. The 59km hike takes three days, but with an early start and legs of steel you can make it to Pongding in one and to Bittuang the next day. The track is easy to follow, and there are plenty of villages along the way for food and accommodation. Bring appropriate gifts – or pay your way – in return for any hospitality if you don't stay or eat at a losmen. You may be able to hire a horse, with a guide, some of the way for around 150,000Rp per day – ask at hotels in Mamasa or around Bittuang. The area is chilly at night and rain can hit anytime, so come prepared. As the new road nears completion, it may be that other trekking routes will be developed by guides and companies in Rantepao and Mamasa. An up-and-coming route takes in Salurea and Bulu Sandana, but takes four days to complete.

The most popular route:
Day 1 – Mamasa to Timbaan (23km, about eight hours) Rante Buda (4km from Mamasa)–Mama (3km)–Pa'kassasan (2km)–Lombonan (3km)–Tadokalua

summit (4km)–Timbaan (7km). The walk is easy uphill but rises sharply at Lombonan. Tadokalua at the summit offers great views across both valleys. There's a simple stall here serving gritty coffee and packet noodle soup. The trail then winds its way down to Timbaan, where there are three losmen offering beds and meals for around 50,000Rp.

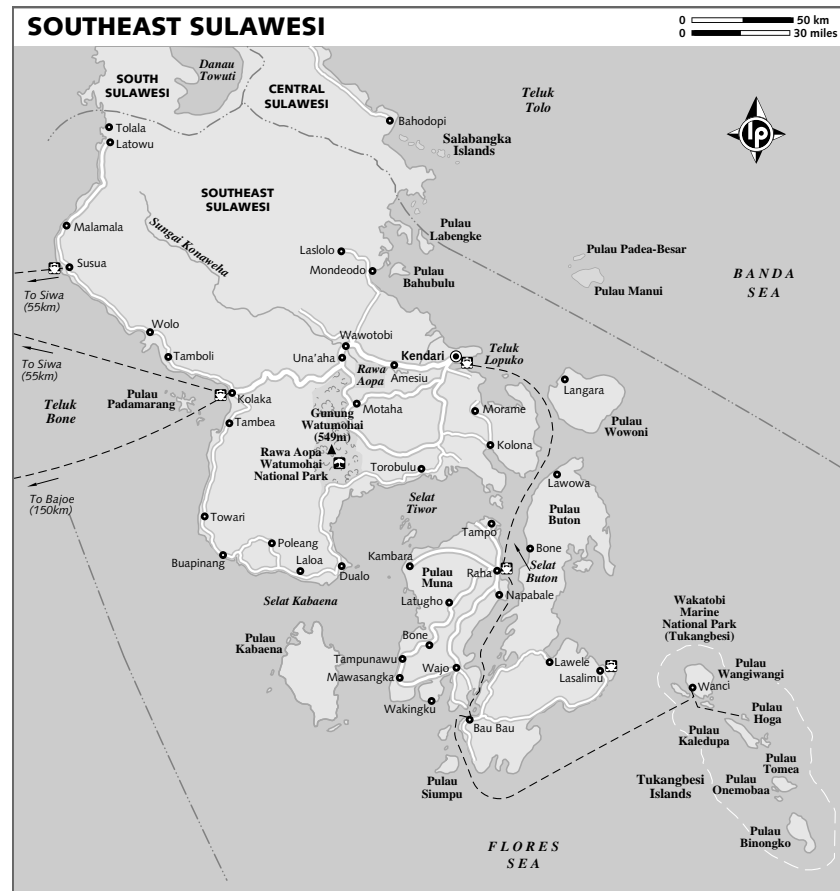
Day 2 – Timbaan to Paku (20km, about six hours) Mawai (4km from Timbaan)–Tabang (4km)–Pongding (5km)–Paku (7km). The path undulates its way past rice fields, through villages and over rivers. At Pongding you can stay at Homestay Papasado; or continue to Paku and stay at Mountain Homestay, both for 50,000Rp (with meals).

Day 3 – Paku to Bittuang (16km) It's easier to walk (three hours), but there is an irregular jeep service from Pongding and Paku to Bittuang for 20,000Rp, which will shake your fillings loose. There are three simple losmen at Bittuang, but you're better off catching a bemo or Kijang

to Makale (15,000Rp, two hours), from where there are Kijangs to Rantepao.

SOUTHEAST SULAWESI

Few visitors make it to Southeast Sulawesi, but the handful of travellers that are prepared to venture a little off the beaten track will find themselves rewarded with some striking scenery and hospitable cultures, and surprisingly good transport links. The top attraction here is Wakatobi Marine National Park, located in the remote Tukangbesi Islands off the southern tip, offering some of Indonesia's best snorkelling and diving.



History

Some of the earliest records of life in Southeast Sulawesi are depicted in prehistoric paintings on the walls of caves near Raha. The red ochre paintings include hunting scenes, boats and warriors on horseback.

The region's most powerful pre-colonial kingdom was Buton, based at Wolio, near Bau Bau. Its control and influence over other regional states was supported by the Dutch colonialists. Buton came under direct Dutch rule after the fall of Makassar in 1669, and was granted limited autonomy in 1906.

Other local trading centres maintained a low profile, probably for reasons of self-preservation. Kendari was one of the busiest, but the island of Bungkutoko at the mouth of Kendari harbour hid the town so well it was not really 'discovered' by the Dutch until 1830.

The civil strife of the 1950s and 1960s was a time of extreme hardship for the people of the province. Farms and villages were plundered by rebel and government forces alike, decimating the region's agricultural sector. Today Southeast Sulawesi is supported by mining, agriculture and timber plantations and is a centre for transmigration (see p60), which has boosted its population to almost two million.

KOLAKA

☎ 0405

Kolaka is readily accessible by boat from Bajoe, and is the major gateway to Southeast Sulawesi province. The Pomalaa nickel mine northwest of Kolaka was once a major regional industry, but these days cocoa, cloves and other agricultural produce are the primary sources of income.

The centre of town is the bus terminal, about 500m north of the ferry terminal. Next to the bus terminal is a huge empty space, which once housed the market. You can change money at **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Repelita), not far from Hotel Family.

There are not many facilities in town, so try to carry on to Kendari or Bajoe.

Hotel Family (☎ 21350; Jl Cakalang 6; r 30,000-40,000Rp), a quiet spot 150m southwest of the bus terminal, is the best place to stay. It has airy, clean rooms and the more expensive ones include an attached bathroom.

Getting There & Away

All day and night, plenty of buses, bemos and Kijangs travel between Kolaka and Kendari (45,000Rp, six hours). While you are on the ferry you may be able to find a spare seat on a bus going directly to Kendari or Makassar – just check with the bus drivers.

Three ferries travel overnight from Kolaka to Bajoe (40,000/50,000Rp deck/business class, eight hours), the main port on the eastern coast of the southwest peninsula. The ferries leave at 5pm, 8pm and 11pm, and are all timed to connect with services for a convenient arrival in Makassar.

KENDARI

☎ 0401 / pop 235,000

The capital of Southeast Sulawesi province has long been the key port for trade between the inland Tolaki people and seafaring Bugis and Bajo traders. Little was known of Kendari's history before its 'discovery' by a Dutch explorer in 1830, and its isolation continues to cushion it from dramatic developments elsewhere. Kendari is a bustling town with little to recommend it except the range of decent accommodation that makes it a good place to break the long haul from Makassar to Wakatobi.

Orientation

Kendari begins in a tangle of lanes in the old *kota* (city) precinct adjacent to the original port in the east, and becomes progressively more modern as each era has added another suburb to the west. The one very, very long main road has most of the facilities, except the bus terminals. The main road's many names are confusing, especially at the *kota* end where Jl Sudirman and Jl Soekarno are used interchangeably.

Information

Bank Danamon (Jl Diponegoro) The best place to change money.

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Sudirman)

Hospital (☎ 321773; Jl Sam Ratulangi) A reliable public hospital, 6km west of town.

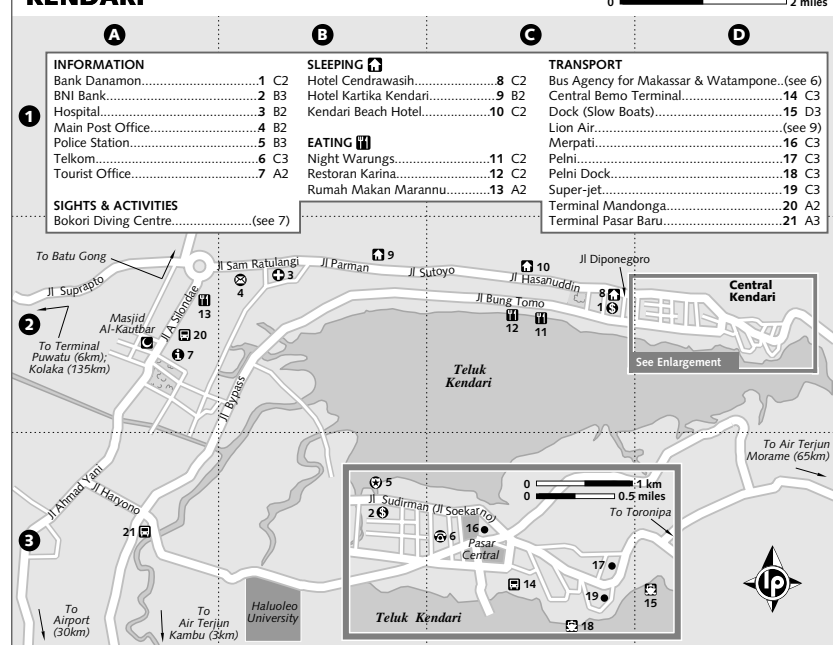
Main post office (Jl Sam Ratulangi) Also has an internet centre.

Police station (☎ 321461; Jl Sudirman)

Telkom office (Jl Ahmad Yani; 17 24hr)

Tourist office (☎ 326634) Inconveniently located and of limited use.

KENDARI



Festivals & Events

Festival Teluk Kendari (Kendari Bay Festival) is held each April and is the highlight of the social calendar, with dragon-boat races, traditional music and plenty of partying.

Sleeping

Hotel Cendrawasih (☎ 321932; Jl Diponegoro 42; r with fan/air-con 66,000/110,000Rp; a) A long-running place, just off the main road, with friendly staff and good service. The fan rooms are ageing these days, but have a balcony. The air-con rooms are in better shape.

Kendari Beach Hotel (☎ /fax 321988; Jl Hasanudin 44; r 100,000-150,000Rp; a) This is located on a small hill; take advantage of the private balcony to enjoy the views and breezes. All rooms have satellite TV, while the more expensive options come with hot water and better views. There is also a restaurant overlooking the bay with an extensive menu at affordable prices.

Hotel Kartika Kendari (☎ /fax 321484; Jl Parman 84; r from 160,000Rp; a) This large hotel has smart rooms with satellite TV and hot

water. You may have to pester staff to get the hot water working. Discounts available.

Eating

The night warung lining the esplanade along Jl Bung Tomo are a popular hang-out in the evening. They offer cheap Indonesian food, and excellent (free) views of the bay. Another group of warung about 200m further west specialise in tasty baked fish.

Restoran Karina (Jl Bung Tomo; mains 20,000Rp; 17 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Near the warungs, this eatery is good value for such a desirable location and has a good range of Indonesian food's greatest hits.

Rumah Makan Marannu (Jl A Silondae; mains 25,000-40,000Rp; 17 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Some of the best Chinese food in town, but watch the weight on the seafood, as it adds up quickly.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Merpati (Merpati Nusantara Airlines; ☎ 322242; Jl Sudirman) and **Lion Air** (☎ 329911; Jl Parman 84) connect Kendari and Makassar. Don't forget to

ask the staff about transport to the remote airport. See the airfares map (p669) for more details.

BOAT

Adjacent to a church on top of a hill, the Pelni office (☎ 321915) is just up from a roundabout, and not far from the Pelni dock.

Kendari is not well serviced by Pelni, but is relatively close to the major port of Bau Bau. Every two weeks the *Tilongkabila* heads up the coast to Kolonedale (economy/1st class 85,000/258,000Rp, 12 hours), and then goes on to Luwuk, Gorontalo and Bitung for Manado; and to Raha, Bau Bau and Makassar (131,000/405,000Rp, 22 hours).

The super-jet *kapal cepat* (fast boat) leaves the Pelni dock at Kendari at about 7.30am and 1pm daily for Raha (75,000Rp, 3½ hours) and Bau Bau (100,000Rp, five hours). You can buy your ticket directly from the Super-jet office (☎ 329257; Jl Sukowati 8) near the Pelni dock.

BUS, BEMO & KIJANG

The main terminal is at Puwatu, about 10km west of town. From there, plenty of buses, Kijangs and bemos go to Kolaka (45,000Rp, six hours). It's more convenient to book a ticket (and board the bus) at one of the agencies in town. Most buses leave Kendari at about 1pm to link with the 8pm ferry (which means arriving in Bajoe at about 4am). The fare to Watampone/Makassar is 95,000/120,000Rp, and includes the ferry trip in deck class, but you can upgrade to business class.

Getting Around

Contact the airline office about transport to the airport, which is 30km southwest of Kendari – both airlines usually run a bus with certain pick-up points in town. From the airport, you can jump in a shared vehicle or if you don't mind the extra cost, charter one.

Kendari is *very* spread out. For short distances, take a becak; for anything along the main road, take a *pete-pete*; to anywhere else, catch an air-conditioned taxi. *Pete-pete* link the *kota* end of town with Terminal Mandonga and the market every few seconds, and many continue on to Terminal Puwatu.

AROUND KENDARI

Air Terjun Kambu

The closest attraction to Kendari is this waterfall at the foot of Gunung Kambu, 3km upstream from the campus at Haluoleo University. Walk from the university, or charter a *pete-pete*.

Air Terjun Morame

This impressive waterfall is 100m of tumbling water set amid ebony, teak and banyan trees on Sungai Kali Oseno, 65km south of Kendari. There is a deep pool at the base of the falls, which is excellent for swimming.

Take a bus from Terminal Pasar Baru (one hour), or charter a boat (about two hours) from near the Pelni dock in Kendari. If you have a boat, arrange a slight detour to Teluk Lapuko, a great spot for swimming and snorkelling, with white-sand beaches and clear water.

Pulau Hari

This tiny island, 18km off the Kendari coast, is a nature reserve with white-sand beaches and opportunities for snorkelling and walking. **Bokori Diving Centre** (☎ 326634; fax 327435), based at the tourist office in Kendari, runs diving and snorkelling trips to Hari and other nearby islands. Alternatively, get a group together, and charter a boat from near the Pelni dock in Kendari. It should cost about 150,000Rp for the day, but bring your own snorkelling gear.

RAHA

☎ 0403

Raha, the main settlement on Pulau Muna, is a quiet backwater about halfway between Kendari and Bau Bau. Raha is famous for its horse fighting, cave paintings and lagoons. You can change money at **Bank Danamon** (Jl Sutomo) and **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Sukawati), but don't (ahem) count on it.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Alia (☎ 21218; Jl Sudirman 5; r from 65,000Rp) Convenient for its proximity to the causeway, this quiet hotel has basic but clean rooms or you can become a VIP for just 125,000Rp. There is also a small restaurant that is open to all comers.

Hotel Ilham (☎ 21070; Jl Jati 16; r with fan 66,000Rp, with air-con 175,000Rp; a) One of the few places

in town to offer an air-con escape during the hot season, this is a friendly operation.

Hotel Permata Sari (☎ 21164; Jl A Yani 67; s/d 65,000/75,000Rp) Conveniently located opposite the bus/bemo terminal, and still reasonably quiet. It has large, clean rooms.

Rumah Makan Cahaya Pangkep (Jl Sudirman; meals 10,000-25,000Rp; 𠄎 breakfast, lunch & dinner) The best option in Raha, with excellent baked fish, but bear in mind this is not the culinary capital of Indonesia.

Getting There & Away

Raha is the only stop between Kendari and Bau Bau on the fast super-jet. Purchase tickets the day before departure from the Super-jet office (☎ 22018; Jl Dewantara) in Kendari. These boats are scheduled to leave for Kendari (75,000Rp, 3½ hours) at 8.30am and 1.30pm; and for Bau Bau (50,000Rp, 1½ hours) at about 10am and 3.30pm. Be ready for the onboard scramble to claim a seat.

Every two weeks the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* stops at Raha on its way up (via Kendari) and down (via Bau Bau) the east coast of Sulawesi. The Pelni office is at the end of the causeway.

AROUND RAHA

Napabale

Raha's main attraction is Napabale, a pretty lagoon at the foot of a hill. The lagoon is linked to the sea via a natural tunnel, so you can paddle through when the tide is low. It is a great area for hiking and swimming, and you can hire boats to explore the lake. Napabale is a scenic ride (15km) from Raha. You can reach it by *ojek*, or by regular *pete-pete* to Lohia village, from where the lagoon is another 1.5km walk, at the end of the road. There are usually a couple of food stalls, and often a few more on Sunday, when it's generally crowded. On other days you may have this idyllic place to yourself.

Pantai Melerua

Not far from Napabale, Melerua beach has superb scenery and unusual rock formations. Although you can swim and snorkel (bring your own gear), there isn't a sandy beach as such. Take the regular *pete-pete* towards Lohia and ask the driver to drop you off at the unmarked turn-off. From here, walk (or take an *ojek*) about 7km until the very rough path finishes.

Gua Mabolu

The solid 10km walk from Mabolu village to Gua Mabolu (Mabolu Caves), through plantations and pretty walled gardens, is probably more interesting than the caves themselves. The caretakers can take you to a selection of the best caves, starting with Liang Metanduno, which has paintings of a horse with two riders, headless warriors and some boats.

It is 12km from Raha to Mabolu village, so catch (or charter) a *pete-pete* to Mabolu and ask the driver to drop you off at the path to the caves. The paths are not clear, so you'll need someone from Mabolu to show you the way to the caves, and to the caretakers who live nearby.

Latugho

Festival Danau Napabale is held each June at the village of Latugho, 30km inland from Raha. The festival features horse combat, as well as the more gentle spectacle of kite flying. Horse fighting is a Muna tradition with a robust following – it's not for the tender-hearted.

BAU BAU

☎ 0402 / pop 83,000

Pulau Buton's prosperous main town, Bau Bau was the seat of the former sultanate of Wolio, which reigned over scattered settlements on Buton and neighbouring islands. With comfortable accommodation options, great views from the unusually well-preserved citadel walls and some decent beaches within easy *ojek* range, Bau Bau is a great place to await a boat connection to Maluku, North Sulawesi, or the diving paradise of Tukangbesi.

Orientation & Information

The terminal, main mosque and market are about 500m west of the main Pelni port, along Jl Kartini, which diverges from the seafront esplanade, Jl Yos Sudarso. Jl Kartini crosses a bridge then curves south past the post office towards the *kraton* (walled city palace).

The best internet café is a block inland from the main mosque. Around 1.5km east of the main port is a second harbour, with the offices for the tourist department (☎ 235888), Telkom and Pelni. The **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Kartini) has an ATM that shouldn't be relied upon, as well as exchange.

Sights & Activities

Banking steeply behind the town centre is the Kraton, the Wolio royal citadel with impressively long and well-preserved 16th-century walls that offer great views over the town and its north-facing bay. Amid trees and flowers within the walls are timeless semi-traditional homes and the old royal mosque. Some 500m beyond the citadel's south gate is Pusat Kebudayaan Wolio, a cultural centre and museum in a restored old mansion-palace, which is the focal point of Bau Bau's Festival Kraton each September. Eleven kilometres southwest of Bau Bau, the nearest white-sand beach is the attractively palm-lined Pantai Nirwana, though there is a certain amount of rubbish. Locals prefer Pantai Batauga, 10km beyond, for swimming.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Lilyana (☎ 21197; Jl Kartini 18; r 95,000Rp) One of the smarter central hotels, it was given a facelift a few years ago and is still in good shape.

Hillhouse Resort (☎ 21189; r with breakfast 100,000Rp) This little place has one of the most spectacular settings anywhere in Sulawesi. It's about half a klick above Pusat Kebudayaan Wolio, set amid a hilltop flower garden with outstanding panoramic views of the bay and beyond. The rooms are simple, with mosquito nets and shared bathroom. Be sure to call ahead to alert staff of your arrival and to order any meals (35,000Rp) in advance; there are no shops or eateries nearby.

Hotel Ratu Rajawali (☎ 22162; Jl Sultan Hasanudin 69; r from 195,000Rp; a s) Right opposite the Pelni office, 2km east of the port, this hotel is a real gem. The well-appointed rooms include air-con and TV, plus small balconies that overlook the gardens and swimming pool towards the sea beyond. This is the preferred hotel of the Operation Wallacea teams (see right) when transferring to and from Pulau Hoga in Wakatobi.

You'll find restaurants and warungs (many set up at night) along the esplanade, a few hundred metres west of the port.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The fast super-jet boat takes 1½ hours to Raha (55,000Rp) and five hours to Ken-

dari (100,000Rp), and leaves at 7am and 12.30pm daily. Demand can often be greater than supply, so book ahead (from 5pm the day before) at the Super-jet office (☎ 22497), which is opposite Wangung Pangkep, about 500m west of the port.

Every two weeks the Pelni liners *Bukit Siguntang*, *Ciremai*, *Lambelu*, *Rinjani* and *Kelimutu* link Bau Bau with Makassar (economy/1st class 92,000/285,000Rp), and most also go to Ambon, southern Maluku and/or Papua. Every two weeks the *Tilongkabila* goes up and down the east coast of Sulawesi, stopping off at Kendari and Bitung (for Manado), among other places.

TUKANGBESI ISLANDS

According to Jacques Cousteau, the Tukangbesi Islands offered 'possibly the finest diving in the world' when he surveyed the area in the 1980s. Most of the islands are now part of Wakatobi Marine National Park (Taman Laut Wakatobi). Positioned remotely off the far southeast coast, the islands are difficult to reach, but they do offer superb snorkelling and diving, a blaze of corals and marine life, isolated beaches and stunning landscapes.

The only place really geared up to travellers is Pulau Hoga. **Island Garden Resort** (bungalow per person 100,000Rp) has four bungalows here. For more details, contact **Hillhouse Resort** (☎ 0402-21189) in Bau Bau. It is also possible to arrange informal homestays on the island for about 50,000Rp including meals. Some basic snorkelling equipment is available, but bring your own if you want to be sure.

The British-based NGO, **Operation Wallacea** (www.opwall.com), organises 'volunteer' programmes for those interested in marine conservation. The public are welcome, but trips must be pre-booked and are expensive. The organisation has a study centre on Pulau Hoga and may be able hook people up with a homestay during busy periods.

Be aware that prices for charter boats and the like are higher on Hoga, as the locals have got used to working with Operation Wallacea.

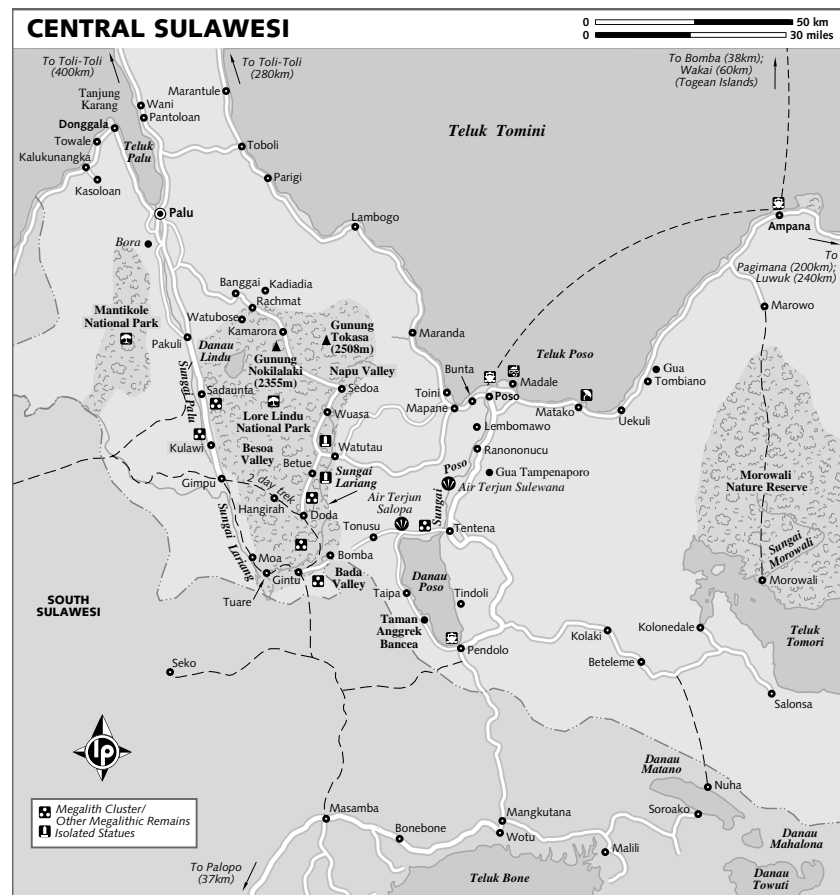
The only other option is **Wakatobi Dive Resort** (www.wakatobi.com) on Pulau Onemobaa. This ultra-exclusive hideaway offers beautiful bungalow accommodation and one of the most celebrated house reefs in Indone-

sia. One-week packages including diving, full board and charter flights from Bali start at about US\$2000. It is also the base for the elegant liveaboard the *Pelagian* (www.pelagian.wakatobi.com).

Getting to Hoga is the big headache. Unless you are fortunate enough to be staying at the Wakatobi Dive Resort, then it takes about two days in each direction to Makassar. From Bau Bau, take the daily boat to Wanci on Pulau Wangiwangi, which usually leaves in the evening and arrives very early the next day. Wait around for another boat, or more likely charter one, to Hoga. The smoothest option is to time your arrival with the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* from Makassar.

CENTRAL SULAWESI

The leading lights in this region are the megaliths around Bada and Besoa Valleys and the tranquil Danau Poso, but the rugged landscape and hospitable highland cultures throughout Central Sulawesi make a detour worthwhile. Few other places in Indonesia can boast such an interesting and accessible pick 'n' mix of nature, culture, history and landscapes. Most of Central Sulawesi's population lives in the province's coastal towns; as a result, the 63,000-sq-km hinterland is sparsely populated. But it's these mountains, lakes and valleys that attract most visitors, though numbers have



CENTRAL SULAWESI TRAVEL WARNING

Travel to Palu, Poso and the surrounding districts remains potentially risky at the time of writing. Violent incidents continue to occur, including a bomb in Tentena in May 2005 which killed 22 people and a bomb in Palu on Christmas Day 2005 which killed eight. Add to that the random beheading of three schoolgirls in October 2005 and things are far from stable. While violence against foreigners is unlikely, travellers should double check the latest situation before travelling through the area and avoid crowded public places like bus terminals and markets. Police checkpoints are common and travelling by private vehicle is considered safer than by public transport.

been hard hit by the violence around the region and once-popular places are now very quiet.

History

Undated remains from a cave near Kolonedale indicate a long history of human settlement. The most spectacular prehistoric remains are the Bronze Age megaliths found throughout Central Sulawesi, but no one knows who was responsible for their creation. The highest concentration is along Sungai Lariang in the Bada Valley, and there are others throughout the region, down to Tana Toraja in South Sulawesi.

Since 1998, the Poso district has suffered from unpredictable violence. Drawn along religious lines, the violence has left more than 1000 people dead and many more displaced. Many buildings were destroyed during the clashes, which have since died down, but random bombings remain a real concern.

DANAU POSO

Indonesia's third-largest lake, Danau Poso, covers an area of 32,300 hectares and reaches an average depth of 450m. The lake is 600m above sea level – so the evenings are pleasantly cool without being too cold.

Danau Poso is the main reason to stop at Tentena or Pendolo. You can hike in the countryside around the lake, or take boat trips, but chartering boats is surprisingly hard

to arrange in either town. There's a handful of narrow beaches around Tentena, but these disappear when the tide is high. The beaches near the jetty at Pendolo are better.

Sights

The lake is famous for its wild orchids, especially in **Taman Anggrek Bancea** (Bancea Orchid Garden). It is accessible on foot (about 11km), by chartered vehicle, or by irregular bemos to Taipa from Pendolo.

Air Terjun Salopa, near Tentena, is a crystal-clear series of pools, cascades and falls amid unspoiled forest. A path to the left of the falls leads to upper levels and some pristine swimming holes. Take a bemo heading west across the bridge from Tentena, ask to be dropped off at the turn-off and walk 3km through rice fields. A chartered bemo from Tentena will cost around 80,000Rp return.

Air Terjun Sulewana is a sunken gully of steaming white water, 10km from Tentena. Take any bemo heading north from Tentena and walk 3km west from the sign.

Festivals & Events

The undisputed highlight of Central Sulawesi's social calendar is the annual **Festival Danau Poso** held in Tentena in late August. Villagers from far afield gather for a colourful celebration of culture, with dancing, songs and traditional sports.

PENDOLO

Pendolo is a sleepy village on the southern shore of Danau Poso. It is a charming spot, and the beaches around the jetty are great for swimming, but Pendolo has far fewer facilities than Tentena.

Sleeping & Eating

Pendolo Cottages (Jl Ahmad Yani 441; r 50,000Rp, bungalow s/d 40,000/60,000Rp) Right next to the boat landing, about 1km east of the village centre, this rustic place has proved popular over the years. The bungalows are a better option than the rooms, but both include a hearty breakfast.

Homestay Masamba (r from 60,000Rp) Located at the end of Jl Pelabuhan, overlooking the lake, this place has a great reputation. Rooms are large and clean, plus there's an old jetty for some sun action.

Mulia Poso Lake Hotel (Jl Pelabuhan Wisata 1; r from 100,000Rp, cottages from 150,000Rp) Just to the

east of Pendolo Cottages, the Mulia is the smartest place in Pendolo. Once popular with tour groups, hard times can mean generous discounts. There is also an elegant restaurant with reasonable prices.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Most people take the Pendolo–Tentena boat (25,000Rp, three hours) to enjoy the views and fresh air – but it's no fun in rough weather. The boat leaves Pendolo daily at 8am from the jetty, near the Mulia Poso Lake Hotel, and is more reliable and scenic than the bus.

BUS & BEMO

Pendolo is on the main Palopo–Poso highway, but there is no bus terminal as such. Getting onward transport is normally a matter of hailing down a passing bus, but many are full. Between Pendolo and Tentena, take the boat; if heading further north, take the boat to Tentena, from where there are regular buses to Poso and Palu. See the Tentena Getting There & Away section (right) for more details.

From Rantepao you could charter a bemo for about 500,000Rp. Split among a few people, this is not unreasonable – it cuts hours off the journey, and you can see the mountains of the pretty Wotu–Pendolo stretch in daylight hours.

TENTENA

☎ 0458

Tentena, at the northern end of the lake, is larger and prettier than Pendolo, and is surrounded by clove-covered hills. Tentena has excellent accommodation and a varied cuisine, but lacks Pendolo's fine beaches. The Festival Danau Poso is held here in late August.

Information

Organised treks to Lore Lindu and Morowali parks can be arranged in Tentena. Most hotels double as local tour operators and trekking agencies: **Pondok Wisata Ue Datu** and **Hotel Victori** are reliable for providing good guides for Morowali, and travel advice about Lore Lindu and the Togeang Islands. **PT Wisata Gautama Putra Indah** (☎ 21356), near Natural Cottages, is somewhere to meet guides and mull over trekking itineraries.

Sights & Activities

Tentena's pretty, covered 210m bridge marks where the lake ends and Sungai Poso begins its journey to the coast. V-shaped eel traps north of the bridge snare the 2m monsters for which Tentena is famous. Live specimens are available for inspection and sale at warungs in the centre of town.

Sleeping

Hotel Victori (☎ 21392; Jl Diponegoro 18; r 65,000–150,000Rp; a) A popular option, it offers big, breezy rooms, although not even the more expensive ones have air-con and hot water. There is also a book exchange, advice and guides for local tours and trekking, and a relaxed outdoor sitting area.

Hotel Intim Danau Poso (☎ 21345; fax 21488; Jl Yos Sudarso 22; s/d 125,000/150,000Rp) Probably the smartest hotel in town, it also boasts the best lake views. The economy rooms are good value and some have lake views. The more expensive rooms have 'mountain' and 'sea' views and are a good size.

Hotel Pamona Indah Permai (Jl Yos Sudarso 25; r 100,000–200,000Rp) Conveniently located next to the jetty, the more expensive rooms have satellite TV, fan and hot water.

Eating

The local speciality is *sugili* (eel). You could buy a few to take home, but it's a little easier to try it at local restaurants. You can buy tasty *pisang molen* (banana fried in a sweet pastry) at stalls in front of the eastern part of the bridge.

Hotel Pamona Indah Permai (meals 15,000–35,000Rp; r breakfast, lunch & dinner) Has a restaurant offering lake views and breezes, and fresh baked fish as well as plenty of other dishes. It's the best place to have lunch while waiting for the boat.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Every day at 11am a boat chugs across the lake to Pendolo (25,000Rp, three hours) from Tentena. The boat is more scenic and reliable than the bus for travel between Tentena and Pendolo.

BUS & BEMO

There are plenty of buses and bemos that make the bumpy run to Poso (15,000Rp, two hours) and Palu. They leave from the

terminal at the fork of the roads to Pendolo and Poso (2km north of Tentena), and sometimes from the market in central Tentena on Jl Yos Sudarso. For longer distances, such as the trip to Rantepao, you can also book tickets at the bus offices around Tentena.

JEEP

The availability and price of jeeps to Gintu in Lore Lindu National Park depends on the condition of the road. The price should be around 80,000Rp per person by public jeep, and up to 500,000Rp to charter one.

POSO

☎ 0452 / pop 47,000

Poso is the main town, port and terminal for road transport on the northern coast of Central Sulawesi. For most travellers it's a transit point and somewhere to change money. Many folk head for the beaches or continue to Ampana to catch the boat to the Togeang Islands. Poso has been hit hard by internal conflict, the scars of which will remain for a long time.

Orientation & Information

The northern part of Poso, around Jl Haji Agus Salim, is more like a small village – it has limited shops and restaurants. Most facilities are along, or near, Jl Sumatera.

Poso has a friendly **tourist office** (☎ 21211; Jl Kalimantan 15), but limited resources. Poso is the last chance for Togeang- and Tentena-bound travellers to change money; the best option is BNI bank, with an ATM, near the port.

Sleeping & Eating

Losmen Alugoro (☎ 21336; Jl Sumatera 20; s/d 40,000/55,000Rp, d with air-con 110,000Rp; ☎) One of the smarter losmen in town; the cheapies are quite pokey, but the air-con rooms are worth the money.

Losmen Lalang Jaya (☎ 22326; Jl Yos Sudarso; r 65,000Rp) Some rooms have ocean views, which gives the place more atmosphere than most. Conveniently located next to the port. It also has a good restaurant built over the sea.

Rumah Makan Pelangi (Jl Tadulako; meals 10,000-25,000Rp; 🍽 breakfast, lunch & dinner) One of the most reliable restaurants in the older part of town.

Every afternoon, night warung are set up along the breezy esplanade, Jl Pattimura, east of the port.

Getting There & Away

From the bus terminal, about 800m north of the post office, there are regular buses to Ampana (five hours), Kolonedale (eight hours), Rantepao (13 hours, 110,000Rp) and Manado (30 hours). From the terminal, minibuses also regularly go to Tentena (two hours, 15,000Rp).

Most buses for Palu (six hours), leave from offices along Jl Sumatera. It's worth paying a little more for the executive-class buses, as the stretch from Toboli to Palu is very rough. From the terminal, next to the market, bemos go to nearby villages and beaches.

AROUND POSO

There are plenty of good places for swimming and snorkelling around Poso. **Pantai Madale** is a snorkelling spot 5km east of Poso; **Pantai Matako** is a white-sand beach about 20km further east; and **Pantai Toini**, 7km west, has a few *rumah makan* for great seafood. All three can be reached by bemo from the terminal near the market in Poso.

Lembomawo, 4km south of Poso, is renowned for its ebony carving. Take a bemo from the terminal at the market in Poso.

LORE LINDU NATIONAL PARK

Covering an area of 250,000 hectares, this large and remote national park has been barely touched by tourism. It's a wonderful area for trekking – the park is rich in exotic plant and animal life, including butterflies larger than a human hand, impressive hornbills and shy tarsiers. It's also home to several indigenous tribes, and famous for its megalithic remains – giant freestanding stones around Gintu and Doda.

Information

The main national park office, rangers station and visitors centre are about a 1km walk from Kamarora village. You can buy permits here (20,000Rp), as well as at the small field offices (which have no accommodation) at Kulawi and Wuasa, and the **Balai Taman Nasional Lore Lindu office** (☎ 0451-457623; Jl Tanjung Manimbayan 144, Palu) where you

can ask the staff questions and check out the detailed map on the wall.

Sights

Attractions in the park include ancient megalithic relics, mostly in the **Bada, Besoa and Napu Valleys**; remote peaks, some more than 2500m; bird-watching, including hornbills, around Kamarora; and the 3150-hectare lake, **Danau Lindu**.

Activities

For trekking, the rangers at Kamarora can show you the start of several short trails, which don't require a guide – such as the 10m-high **waterfall** about 2km from Kamarora, and the hot water springs at **Kadidia** (3km), where you can bathe. To reach the summit of the 2355m **Gunung Nokilalaki** (6km), you'll need a guide.

Other longer hikes (with a guide) include **Rachmat** and **Danau Lindu** (six hours one way) and **Sadaunta** and **Danau Lindu** (four hours one way). An exciting alternative is to go on horseback; horses and handlers are available from 100,000Rp per day at **Watu-tau** and **Gimpu**.

The main trekking trail is **Tonusu** to **Gimpu**, via **Tuare** and **Moa**, or **Doda** and **Hangirah** – or vice versa. Unless you're planning to return to your starting point, send all nonessential gear ahead by car or bus – get a taxi driver to deliver it, or put it on a bus and pick it up from the bus office. To start, take a public (or chartered) bemo to **Tonusu** or **Gimpu**, and then tackle the trail like this:

Tonusu–Gintu From Tonusu, walk for two days, sleeping under covered bridges. You'll need to carry food and water-purification tablets. You could shorten the hike, and charter a motorbike to **Peatua** (26km) and walk to **Malei** bridge (six hours). The next day, hike from **Malei** to **Bomba** (18km), and look for the **Bomba, Bada** and **Sepe** megaliths. At **Bomba**, stay at the friendly **Ningsi Homestay**. From there it's about 10km to **Gintu**, where you can stay at **Losmen Merry**. **Gintu–Moa** It's an easy three-hour walk to **Tuare**, where you can stay with the *kepala desa*. **Moa** is four hours further on, over two difficult rivers. **Moa's kepala desa** also takes guests. There is a path from **Gintu** to **Doda**, a lesser centre for megalithic remains, where you can stay at the **Losmen Rindu Alam**.

Moa–Gimpu It's a strenuous eight-hour hike over two rivers with poor bridges, to **Gimpu**, where you can stay at the pleasant **Losmen Santo**. From **Gimpu** you can hike into the **Besoa Valley**, or travel back by public (or chartered) transport to **Palu**.

GUIDES

For long-distance trekking, a guide is compulsory, and also necessary if you're intent on finding the megaliths. You can organise a guide in Tentena or Pendolo, but agencies prefer to sell all-inclusive trips. An organised trek from Tentena will cost around 600,000Rp to 1,000,000Rp and up per person (depending on group size) for four to five days, including food, transport and accommodation.

If travelling independently, arrange a guide at the visitors centre (Kamarora); the two field offices (**Kulawi** or **Wuasa**); the tourist office in **Poso**; or the tourist office or national park office in **Palu**. Guides start at 200,000Rp per day.

Food is readily available in the villages, but it's wise to bring other necessities, such as mosquito repellent and sunblock lotion, plus gifts to repay any hospitality. If trekking, you may have to sleep under roofs of covered bridges, which can get cold. Conversely, during the day it can get very hot, so the wildlife will be resting in the forest and is often difficult to spot. See p843 for more information on safe and responsible trekking.

Getting There & Away

There are three main approaches to the park. Firstly, there's the trekking trail from **Tonusu** to **Gintu**. Secondly, there's the road from **Palu** to **Gimpu** (100km) – charter a vehicle or take the twice-daily bus from **Terminal Masomba** (p722). The road between **Palu** and **Gimpu** is paved, but deteriorates into a muddy track south of **Gimpu**. Lastly, there's the paved road (with irregular public transport) from **Palu** to **Betue**, via **Rachmat**, **Kamarora**, **Wuasa**, **Sedoa** and **Watutau**. Be warned that south of **Betue**, the road is terrible.

Roads within the park consist chiefly of mud and holes, and transport is by jeep, horseback and foot. Some of the walking trails have recently been overused by motorbikes, as locals criss-cross the park.

PALU

☎ 0451 / pop 282,000

Palu, the capital of Central Sulawesi, only came to prominence during the Japanese occupation in WWII. Situated in a rain shadow for most of the year, it's one of

Makassar; and the *Kerinci* goes to Toli-Toli, Tarakan and Nunukan. These boats dock at Pantoloan, 22km north of Palu, which is accessible by shared taxi from Terminal Manonda in Palu, or by metered taxi (about 30,000Rp). The Pelni office (☎ 421696) in Palu is efficient; there's another at Pantoloan.

BUS & SHARED TAXI

Buses to Poso (six hours), Ampana (eleven hours), Rantepao (135,000Rp, 19 hours) and Manado (24 hours) all leave from Terminal Masomba. A few others also leave from inconvenient bus company offices dotted around the distant suburbs of Palu.

Minibuses and shared taxis to places like Pantoloan (for Pelni boats) and Donggala (for Tanjung Karang) leave from Terminal Manonda.

Getting Around

Mutiara Airport is 7km east of town. Public transport is awkward to arrange, so take a metered taxi for about 30,000Rp from the city centre.

Transport around Palu is by bemo. Routes are not signed and are flexible, so flag down one that looks like it's going your way. Taxis are cheap and air-conditioned and drivers generally use the meters.

DONGGALA & TANJUNG KARANG

☎ 0457

As the administrative centre under the Dutch, Donggala was briefly the most important town and port in Central Sulawesi. When the harbour silted up, ships used the harbours on the other side of the bay, and Palu became the regional capital. Today Donggala is a quiet backwater – somewhere to pass through on the way to Tanjung Karang.

Activities

The main attractions are sun, sand and water at Tanjung Karang (Coral Peninsula), about 5km north of Donggala. The reef off Prince John Dive Resort is good for snorkellers and beginner divers. Individual dives cost around €30 and PADI courses are also run here. Diving and snorkelling equipment is available.

Sleeping & Eating

Kaluku Cottages (cottages per person incl meals 75,000Rp) Highly recommended by travellers,

this friendly spot has a nicer beach than at Tanjung Karang. There is great coral off the coast and free coconuts are on offer throughout the day. Ask an *ojek* driver to take you the 15km or so from Donggala.

Harmoni Cottages (☎ 71573; cottages incl meals 150,000Rp) The cottages here are very basic, with communal bathrooms, but good views and friendly service make up for the lack of comfort. Right at the end of the road on the beach.

Prince John Dive Resort (☎ 71104; www.prince-john-diveresort.de; bungalows incl meals €30-50) The only dive resort in the Palu area, this is just off the start of the road to Tanjung Karang. The bungalows have a striking setting, but the beach gets a little scruffy at weekends when the Palu posse turn up in numbers.

Getting There & Away

Shared taxis leave regularly from Terminal Manonda in Palu for the pretty ride to Donggala (about 6000Rp, 30 minutes). Alternatively, charter a creaky old Toyota Corolla to Donggala for about 30,000Rp, or a newer Kijang for about 40,000Rp. From Donggala terminal to Tanjung Karang it's a pleasant half-hour walk or you can charter a vehicle from Donggala terminal or directly from Palu.

KOLONEDALE

☎ 0465

Kolonedale is a small tangle of long, dusty streets set on the stunning Teluk Tomori, and is the gateway to Morowali Nature Reserve. Rainfall in the bay area is heavy and constant, and the best time to visit is from September to November.

Orientation & Information

Most accommodation, shops and the market are adjacent to the main dock. The intersection in front of the market serves as the bus/bemo terminal. There is a small post office behind the main mosque, and a Telkom office (☎ 24hr) up the hill from the Pelni office.

Sleeping & Eating

Losmen Jungpandang (☎ 21091; Jl Yos Sudarso; r from 25,000Rp) Handy for the dock, the rooms are very basic with shared bathroom. The attached restaurant offers simple Indonesian fare.

Penginapan Sederhana (☎ 21124; Jl Yos Sudarso 64; r 20,000-115,000Rp) Formerly just another basic budget crashpad, this little guesthouse has added several smarter rooms in the past few years, making it the best all-rounder in town. It is managed by the local environmental group, Sahabat Morowali (Friends of Morowali), so has top information on Morowali Nature Reserve.

There are basic warungs around the bus terminal and market.

Getting There & Away

Several buses a day travel between Kolonedale and Poso (eight hours), via Tentena. You may also find a Kijang in Kolonedale going as far as Poso. From the south, cross Danau Matano by boat from Soroako to Nuha, rent a motorbike or jeep to Beteleme, and then wait for a bus to Kolonedale.

The Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* stops at Kolonedale about once a week on its way to Luwuk (economy/1st class 37,000/119,000Rp, eight hours) or Kendari. *Perahu* (traditional outrigger boats) leave the main dock most days at about 11pm for the overnight trip east to Baturube and Pandauke, from where there are buses to Luwuk (five hours).

TELUK TOMORI

Most visitors to Kolonedale head straight to Morowali, so they miss much of the stunning beauty of the islands and inlets around Teluk Tomori, where limestone cliffs plunge into emerald waters, and unbroken forests cover islands and surrounding hills. To properly explore the bay, rent a boat from Kolonedale: for around 100,000Rp or so per day, you can charter a small 'Johnson' (dugout canoe with an outboard motor), or for about 300,000Rp, a larger boat holding up to 10 people.

Sights include a limestone cliff across the water from Kolonedale with faint painted outlines of prehistoric handprints and fossils embedded in the rock; the oddly shaped 'mushroom rock'; tiny fishing villages; and some fine beaches on uninhabited islands at the mouth of the bay. There are also coral reefs with plenty of marine life, but the visibility can be poor.

MOROWALI NATURE RESERVE

This 225,000-hectare nature reserve was established in 1980 on the northern shore of Teluk Tomori after Operation Drake, a

British-sponsored survey of the endangered species in the area. The reserve includes islands in the bay, accessible lowland plains and densely vegetated peaks up to 2421m high.

Morowali is home to about 5000 Wana people who live mostly by hunting and gathering, and through shifting agriculture. The park is rich in wildlife, such as *anoa* (pygmy buffalo), maleo birds, *babi rusa* (wild deer-like pig) and the world's tiniest bat, but dense jungle is often all you'll see.

Trekking

You will need at least four days to properly visit the park, plus a few extra to get there and back, and the going is tough. Treks can be organised through travel agencies in Tentena (p717) for about 600,000Rp and up per person (depending on group size), including transport, food and accommodation, for a five- to six-day trek.

However, if you want to travel independently, and you need a guide (which is necessary to see the wildlife), wait until you reach Kolonedale. In Kolonedale, guides may approach you in the street; or you can organise one through your hotel; or visit the KSDA (National Parks) office – where you must register and buy a permit (20,000Rp per day). A good source of independent advice, and a good place to organise guides, is **Friends of Morowali** (☎ 0465-21125; Penginapan Sederhana, Jl Yos Sudarso 64), a local environmental group based in Kolonedale.

From Kolonedale it's a two-hour boat trip across Teluk Tomori and up Sungai Morowali to drop-off points for hikes to Kayu Poli, a small Wana settlement. You can stay in a local home there or at another village, and spend some time with the Wana

THE MALEO

One of Sulawesi's endemic, and most endangered, birds is a local chicken. The maleo (*Macrocephalon maleo*) has a black-and-white crest and an orange beak, but otherwise it is the same size, and has the same characteristics, as an ordinary chicken. The maleo lay huge eggs in nests in the ground near hot springs, but the eggs are often collected by locals for ceremonies and food.

people. West of Kayu Poli (three hours) is the eerily silent **Danau Rahu**, which takes about five hours to cross by canoe. You can leave the park via Sungai Rahu, and return to Kolonedale by boat.

LUWUK

☎ 0461 / pop 48,000

Luwuk is the biggest town on Sulawesi's isolated eastern peninsula, and the stepping-off point for the remote Banggai Islands. Nearby attractions include **Air Terjun Hengahenga**, the 75m-high waterfall 3km west of Luwuk; and the **Bangkiriang Nature Reserve**, which is 80km southwest of Luwuk and home to Central Sulawesi's largest maleo bird population.

Ramayana Hotel (☎ 21502; Jl Danau Lindu; s/d from 75,000/90,000Rp) is the best of the town's few hotels. The rooms are clean and the seaside restaurant attracts a breeze. VIP rooms run to 325,000Rp if you are feeling very important.

Maleo Cottages (☎ /fax 324068; www.maleo-cottages.com; Jl Lombobattang; r incl breakfast 100,000Rp, cottages incl breakfast 120,000Rp) is by far the best place to stay in the Luwuk area, about 16km from town. There are rooms in the main house and three atmospheric cottages. Meals are available at 35,000Rp. This is the base for **Wallacea Dive Cruise** (www.wallacea-dive-cruise) so is a good place to arrange diving in the Banggai Islands or liveaboard to the Togeans.

Merpati (Merpati Nusantara Airlines; ☎ 21523; Jl Sam Ratulangi 50) has daily flights to/from Manado and several flights a week to Palu. See map p669 for more details.

Every week the Pelni liner **Tilongkabila** links Luwuk with Kolonedale (economy/1st class 37,000/119,000Rp, eight hours) or Gorontalo (134,000/45,000Rp, 11 hours), and is an excellent way to travel to this remote part of Sulawesi. There's a Pelni office (☎ 21888; Jl Sungai Musi 3) in town.

There are also buses to Pagimana, Poso and Bunta for connections to Ampana.

BANGGAI ISLANDS

With a lot of time and patience you can visit the wild and remote Banggai Islands. It's a superb area for swimming, diving and viewing marine life such as whales and dugongs. Alfred Wallace called the area 'the mother of all living coral reefs'. Boats can be

chartered from most villages, but it is easiest to arrange diving and snorkelling trips through Maleo Cottages near Luwuk.

The largest and most populous island is **Pulau Peleng**, with the main settlements at Tataba and Salakan. There is still no accommodation on the islands, but you can stay at a local home in any village if you check with the *kepala desa* first.

There is a daily ferry between Luwuk and Tataba. The Pelni liner **Ciremai** links Tataba with Makassar or Bitung (for Manado).

TANJUNG API NATIONAL PARK

The 4246-hectare Tanjung Api (Cape Fire National Park) is home to *anoa*, *babi rusa*, crocodiles, snakes and maleo, but most people come to see the burning coral cliff fuelled by a leak of natural gas. To get here you need to charter a boat around the rocky peninsula from Ampana. It's more interesting at dusk.

AMPANA

☎ 0464

The main reason for travellers to come to Ampana is to catch a boat to/from the Togeans, but it's a laid-back, pleasant town and a good stopover while you recover from, or prepare for, an assault on the Togeans.

Orientation

The main Poso–Luwuk road goes through Ampana, and is called Jl Hatta. Many hotels are along Jl Kartini, which heads towards the sea from Jl Hatta. The main dock, market and bus terminal are all close to Jl Kartini.

Sleeping & Eating

Losmen Irama (☎ 21055; Jl Kartini; s/d 40,000/55,000Rp, with air-con 110,000Rp; a) A reliable cheapie, this place has been around for a long time. It offers comfortable, if uninspiring, rooms.

Oasis Hotel (☎ 21058; Jl Kartini; dm 30,000Rp, r 70,000–115,000Rp; a) Run in conjunction with the Kadidiri Paradise Resort in the Togeans, this is the best choice in town. Cheap dorms and a good range of rooms keeps the punters happy. The most expensive rooms include air-con and hot water.

Marina Cottages (☎ 21280; cottages 77,000Rp) Perched on a very rocky beach, the cottages boast a seafront setting and friendly service,

and are in a perfect location for boats to Bomba. They are in Labuhan village, a 10-minute *bendi* (horse-drawn cart) ride from Ampana. The restaurant is worth visiting for the sunsets alone.

Rumah Makan Bakar (Jl Kartini; mains 15,000Rp) A good place for some cold beer and baked fish.

Getting There & Away

Ampana is on the road between Poso and Luwuk. Several buses travel each day to Poso (five hours), often continuing to Palu (11 hours). To get to Luwuk, catch a bemo from the terminal, opposite the main dock in Ampana, to Bunta and then another to Luwuk.

Boats to Poso, Wakai on the Togeans and beyond leave from the main boat terminal at the end of Jl Yos Sudarso, in the middle of Ampana. Boats to Bomba on Pulau Batu Daka leave from a jetty in Labuhan village, next to Marina Cottages.

TOGEAN ISLANDS

If you dreamt of an Indonesia with blissful beaches, plentiful coral and a place to live the life of a lotus eater, the Togeans fit the bill. This archipelago of beautiful coral and volcanic isles in the middle of Teluk Tomini is a riot of blue, gold and green. The undisturbed jungle shelters a variety of wildlife. The islands' reefs support a

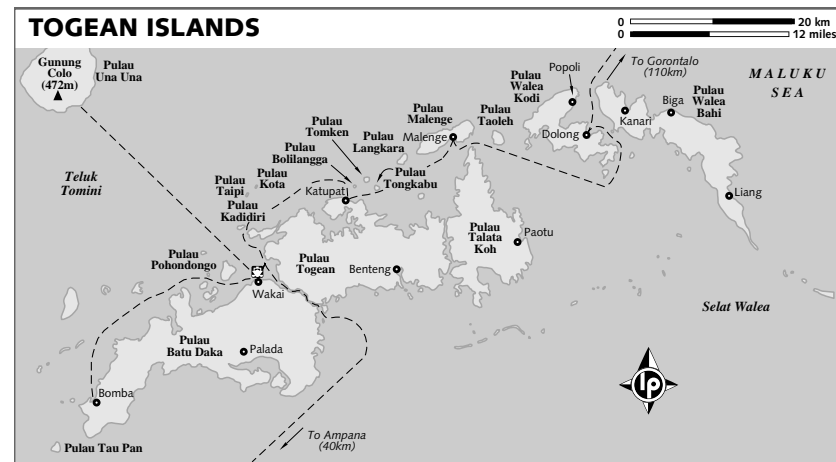
rich diversity of marine life, and the people of the seven or so ethnic groups sharing this place are hospitable. Although the islands are difficult to reach, and the facilities are basic, many travellers fall in love with the Togeans and their lifestyle – and often end up staying a lot longer than they anticipated. However, like many parts of Indonesia, the coral has suffered at the hands of local fisherfolk over the past decade.

Most of the rooms on the islands are in wooden cottages, on or near a beach. Most have a mosquito net but no fan because the sea breezes keep everything cool. Bathroom facilities range from communal and rustic to private and porcelain. All prices quoted are per person, and all rates include local meals. It is a good idea to bring along some snacks and treats. Beer, soft drinks and mineral water are available from shops and homestays.

Some of the local homestays are in a perpetual state of hibernation, as they see few visitors. They may not be inclined to open for just one or two guests, so ask around before committing yourself to one of the more remote islands.

Information

The Togeans were the *in-place* to be in the late 1990s, but the downturn in tourists that has affected much of Sulawesi has slowed the pace of development in recent years, probably a good thing for the fragile ecosystem here. There are bungalow resorts



DIVING & SNORKELLING AROUND THE TOGEANS

The Togeans are the only place in Indonesia where you can find all three major reef environments – atoll, barrier and fringing reefs – in one location. Two atolls and their deep lagoons lie to the northwest of Pulau Batu Daka. Barrier reefs surround many islands at the 200m depth contour (5km to 15km offshore), and fringing reefs surround all of the coasts, merging with the sea grass and mangroves. There is also a sunken WWII B-24 bomber plane, which is a 30-minute trip by speedboat (or one hour by normal boat) from Kadidiri.

The mix of coral and marine life is spectacular and unusually diverse, although many reefs have sadly been badly damaged by bomb and cyanide fishing. The more conspicuous residents include brightly marked coral lobsters, a colony of dugong, schools of a hundred or more dolphins, the occasional whale, commercially important species of trepang (sea cucumber), and natural pearls.

Snorkelling gear is available at most homestays for about 25,000Rp, but it's always better to bring your own. **Diving** can be arranged at a number of places, including **Black Marlin** (p728) and **Kadidiri Paradise** (p728) on Pulau Kadidiri, **Island Retreat** (opposite) near Bomba and the upmarket **Walea Dive Resort** (p729) on Pulau Walea Kodi. Prices start from US\$25 per dive and PADI courses are also available.

and homestays spread throughout the islands and nobody knows where they all are. The best source of current information about homestays, transport and activities is obviously other travellers, but it's also worth asking staff at hotels in Ampana and Gorontalo. Bring plenty of cash, as there are no banks on the islands.

Take care not to leave valuables in the room, as break-ins have been known to occur, particularly when people are out diving all day.

Getting There & Away

The Togeans are better serviced from Ampana than from Gorontalo. Representatives from resorts and hotels will usually meet the ferries at each stop and shuttle you to their accommodation free of charge, or for a small fee if you don't end up staying with them. Be warned that by chartering your own boat to get to the Togeans you can end up getting less than you pay for. Locals lured by the income have used unsuitable vessels to make the journey, which has ended in the loss of a vessel (but no lives) at least once.

One of the quickest ways to get to the Togeans is to fly from Manado to Luwuk and travel by road from there to Ampana (six hours). Many overland travellers opt to charter a private vehicle from Tana Toraja to Ampana, stopping the night in Pendolo or Tentena. At the time of writing, locals from Central Sulawesi considered

travelling by public transport around Poso to be risky.

AMPANA

The *Puspita* ferry travels between Ampana and Gorontalo once a week, but the schedule often chops and changes, so don't plan flight connections around it. Every Monday morning it makes the 15-hour journey from Ampana to Gorontalo via Wakai (45,000Rp, four hours); Katupat (one hour from Wakai); Malenge (45 minutes); Dolong (one hour); then through to Gorontalo (90,000Rp, nine hours from Dolong).

Local boats depart 'almost daily' at 10am as far as Wakai (25,000Rp, three to five hours to Wakai, sometimes longer) then return to Ampana. All ferries stop irregularly at Bomba, but don't count on it; you can charter a boat from Wakai to Bomba for about 250,000Rp. Local boats to Bomba leave from a jetty in Labuhan village, next to Marina Cottages, and cost about 15,000Rp.

GORONTALO

Every Wednesday evening the *Puspita* ferry makes the return 15-hour trip (90,000Rp) to Ampana via Malenge, Dolong, Katupat and Wakai. Tickets are available from the office at the relevant terminal in Gorontalo.

The only other option is the overnight ferry to Pagimana (110,000/65,000Rp A/B class, 10 hours, every two days), which is five hours east of Ampana, from where you can catch connecting boats (see above).

MARISA

Anyone who is loaded with rupiah (about 1,500,000Rp) can charter a speedboat between Marisa (about 150km west of Gorontalo) and Wakai or Kadidiri. Both Black Marlin Dive (p728) and Kadidiri Paradise (p728) can arrange boat charters.

BUNTA

This is the key link in the fastest route to the Togeans. Take a morning flight from Manado to Luwuk, charter a car to Bunta (500,000Rp, four hours) and then charter a boat to Kadidiri (800,000Rp). It quickly adds up, but is not a bad option for a small group.

Getting Around

Allow plenty of time to get around, because transport within the Togeans is infrequent. Regardless of where you stay, you need boats to get there and away and to reach swimming and snorkelling spots. Schedules for public boats bend and break, so chartering something is a good way to get around.

Charters are not hard to arrange in Wakai, Bomba and Kadidiri, but are far more difficult to arrange in smaller settlements because there are simply not many boats around. You'll often have to accept anything that's available, from a nifty speedboat to a ponderous wooden trawler. The rates should be negotiable but are often fairly standard among the cartel of local operators (250,000Rp from Wakai or Kadidiri to Bomba on a speedboat).

Ask your homestay, or anyone around the village, about the current timetables for

boats to other islands, or further on to Ampana and Gorontalo. The locals rely heavily on these boats, so they always know what is going where and when.

PULAU BATU DAKA

The largest and most accessible island is Pulau Batu Daka, which is home to the two main villages, Bomba and Wakai.

Bomba

Bomba is a tiny outpost at the southwestern end of the island, which most travellers sail past on the way to and from Wakai (for Pulau Kadidiri). Bomba is an appealing alternative to Kadidiri, as the coral is in much better shape here and it sees fewer visitors.

It's a pleasant walk to the bat caves in the hills behind Bomba, but you'll need a guide and a torch (flashlight).

In the village, **Losmen Poya Lisa** (r 90,000Rp) is easy to spot, as it is built over the water, but the rooms are pretty basic.

Poya Lisa Cottages (cottages 80,000-120,000Rp) is located on a pretty beach on its own little island, and is a friendly place that has proved popular with travellers over the years. No electricity, but bathrooms have been added.

Island Retreat (www.togian-island-retreat.com; r per person US\$10-22) is set on the beautiful beach at Pasir Putih and has 20 cottages. The cheaper cottages have shared bathrooms, so it is worth the extra money to have a sea view and attached ablutions. There is good international food, including Mexican and pizzas. Diving is available here, plus

CONSERVATION OF THE TOGEANS

The Togeans are pristine and popular, but are under threat from local fishing practices and pearl farms, not to mention by-products of tourism such as rubbish and sewage.

The fishing of valuable Napoleon fish (for foreign Chinese restaurants) has resulted in a catastrophic increase in the number of crown-of-thorns starfish, which are destroying the coral around the Togeans at an alarming rate. Add to this extreme fishing methods like the use of explosives and cyanide, and in some places like Pulau Kadidiri the coral is really suffering.

Japanese pearl farms in the region have reduced access to traditional fishing areas and have not compensated local fishermen, nor provided grants to promote local community development, as initially promised.

Various groups have been lobbying the Indonesian government to declare the Togeans a protected marine national park over the years, but the wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly. Attention is now switching to secure local marine reserve status, which would allow much more local control over development and revenues. The money could be used to finance conservation activities, rubbish disposal, education programmes and the policing of illegal fishing practices.

THE BAJO

Nomadic Bajo 'sea gypsies' still dive for trepang, pearls and other commercially important marine produce, as they have done for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. The Bajo are hunter-gatherers who spend much of their lives on boats, travelling as families wherever they go.

There are several permanent Bajo settlements around the Togeans Islands, and even some stilt villages on offshore reefs, but the itinerant character of Bajo culture still survives. Newlyweds are put in a canoe and pushed out to sea to make their place in the world. When they have children, the fathers dive with their three-day-old babies to introduce them to life on the sea.

The rare intrusions from the outside world can sometimes result in tragedy. When Bugis and Chinese traders introduced air compressors to enable the Bajo to dive longer and deeper for trepang, the lethal nature of caisson disease (the bends) was rarely explained properly. Around 40 men were killed, and many more crippled, in one area alone. These days the Bajo divers' only concessions to modernity are goggles fashioned from wood and glass, and handmade spear guns. Land-loving Indonesians tend to look down on the Bajo, in much the same way Gypsies were discriminated against in Europe.

snorkelling gear. Boat charters can be arranged from Ampana and Marisa.

Wakai

The largest settlement in the Togeans, Wakai is mainly used as the departure point for boats to Pulau Kadidiri, but there are several well-stocked general stores. A small waterfall, a few kilometres inland from Wakai, is a pleasant hike – ask directions in the village.

PULAU KADIDIRI

Long considered the place to be in the Togeans, the beach on Pulau Kadidiri is just a short boat trip from Wakai. It offers a perfect strip of sand; a good range of accommodation; snorkelling and swimming only metres from the door; and superb diving beyond. However, a word of caution: the reefs off Kadidiri have been severely damaged by bomb and cyanide fishing in the past decade and aren't what they once were.

A short walk west of the beach brings you to a series of craggy coral cliffs, home to coconut crabs the size of small footballs. Put your hand into any hole in the sand and you may never see it again!

Activities

Kadidiri is the most popular destination in the Togeans, and a range of activities are on offer. Apart from diving, snorkelling gear can be rented for about 25,000Rp per day and hikes around the island can be arranged with staff at the resort. There are

treks around Pulau Una Una and boat hire for about 150,000Rp per day to visit the nearby islands, and for snorkelling. Many places have a small book exchange, which is just as well because you'll do a lot of reading.

Sleeping

Black Marlin Cottages (Gorontalo % 0435-831869; www.blackmarlindive.com; cottages 85,000-150,000Rp) The base for popular British-run dive outfit Black Marlin Dive, these attractive cottages occupy a prime strip of beachfront. The smarter cottages include Western-style bathrooms. Visa and MasterCard are accepted, so you can bundle your accommodation in with your dives.

Pondok Lestari (cottages 125,000Rp) One of the oldest places in the area, it has recently upgraded its cottages and it occupies a fine stretch of sand, making it pretty good value.

Kadidiri Paradise Resort (% in Ampana 0464-21058; www.kadidiri-paradise.com; r per person US\$10-25) On the same stretch of beach as Black Marlin, although there is no love lost between the two places, this attractive resort has 25 cottages. The cheaper rooms have shared bathroom or a mandi, while the pricier options have Western-style bathrooms and beachfront balconies. A friendly place with a good reputation.

Getting There & Away

The public boats sail tantalisingly close to Kadidiri, but don't stop, so you must go to Wakai first (see p726). Hotel representa-

tives will usually meet the ferry and take you to Kadidiri for free. Once or twice a day a boat delivers fresh water and supplies to Kadidiri from Wakai; ask your homestay in Kadidiri or Wakai about the schedules. You can also charter a boat between Wakai and Kadidiri for about 50,000Rp one way.

PULAU UNA UNA

The Togeans are part of an active volcanic belt. Pulau Una Una, which consists mostly of **Gunung Colo** (472m), was torn apart in 1983 when the volcano exploded for the first time in almost 100 years. Ash covered 90% of the island, destroying all of the houses, animals and most of the crops. Thankfully, Una Una's population had been safely evacuated. These days you can trek to the top of the volcano (three hours), and admire the awesome lava landscapes all around the island.

A public boat leaves Wakai about twice a week, but there is nowhere to stay on Una Una. Black Marlin and Kadidiri Paradise on Pulau Kadidiri can organise guided treks up the volcano, plus snorkelling stops along the way.

PULAU TOGEAN

The main settlement on this island is the very relaxed Katupat village, which has a small market and a couple of shops. Around the island there are magical beaches, and some decent hikes for anyone sick of swimming, snorkelling and diving.

Losmen Melati (r 90,000Rp), near the boat jetty in Katupat, offers the traveller simple accommodation.

PULAU TOMKEN & PULAU BOLILANGGA

These two islands are a five-minute boat ride from Katupat. **Fadhila Cottages** (cottages from 125,000Rp) on Pulau Pangempa offers excellent food and superb snorkelling. The friendly family are happy to arrange a local dance for guests. **Bolilangga Cottages** (cottages from 80,000Rp) on Pulau Bolilangga is similarly good.

PULAU MALENGE

Malenge is remote and secluded, with wonderful snorkelling just offshore from the village. Some locals, with the aid of nongovernmental organisations, have established excellent walking trails around the

COCONUT CRABS

Coconut crabs, the world's largest terrestrial arthropods, once lived on islands throughout the western Pacific and eastern Indian oceans, but unsustainable human exploitation has reduced stocks to a handful of isolated islands, including the Togeans. Mature crabs weigh up to 5kg, and their large-clawed legs can span 90cm.

Despite popular myth, there is little evidence to support stories of crabs climbing trees to snip off coconuts, removing the husk and then carrying the nut up again to drop from a great height. However, there is evidence that humans are eating these crabs to the edge of extinction, so please make a more sustainable choice from the menu.

mangroves and jungles to help spot the incredibly diverse fauna, including macaques, tarsiers, hornbills, cuscus and salamanders.

Near the jetty in Malenge village, **Malenge Indah** (cottages 70,000Rp) is attractively situated over the water.

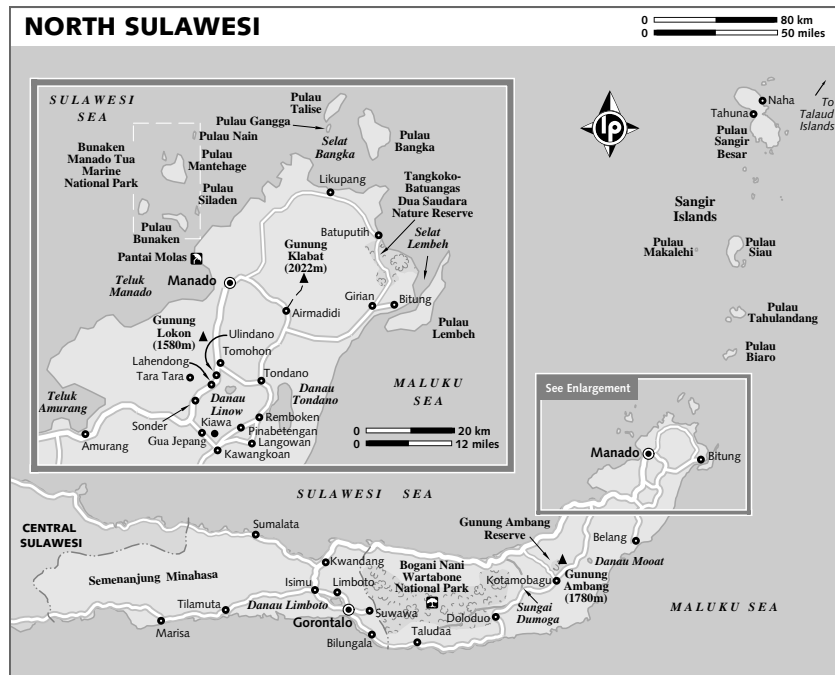
PULAU WALEA KODI

Dolong is a busy fishing village, and the only settlement on the island. Facilities are basic, transport is limited, and the island doesn't offer the picturesque beaches and snorkelling found elsewhere.

On an island just off Walea Kodi is the Italian-run **Walea Dive Resort** (www.walea.com). Package deals, including cottage, three meals (including Italian cuisine), transport and three dives a day, start from US\$120 per person per day.

NORTH SULAWESI

North Sulawesi is world famous for its underwater action. Pulau Bunaken has an amazing array of marine life just a stone's throw from the shore and for more experienced divers, there is the lure of the Lembeh Strait. However, there is life above the water as well, with secluded bays and beaches around the Manado peninsula and some spectacular volcanoes brooding in the background. Make for the highlands if the heat gets too much and explore the beautiful countryside.



North Sulawesi is the most developed province on the island, and its people have a long history of trade and contact with the outside world. The Sangir-Talaud Island group forms a bridge to the Philippines, providing a causeway for the movement of peoples and cultures. As a result, the language and physical features of Filipino peoples can be found among the local Minahasans.

The two largest distinct groups in the region are the Minahasans and Sangirese, but there are many more dialects and subgroups. The kingdoms of Bolaang Mongondow, sandwiched between Minahasa and Gorontalo, were also important political players.

The Dutch have had a more enduring influence on this isolated northern peninsula than anywhere else in the archipelago: Dutch is still spoken among the older generation, and well-to-do families often send their children to study in the Netherlands.

History

A group of independent states was established at a meeting of the linguistically di-

verse Minahasan peoples around AD 670 at a stone now known as Watu Pinabetengan (near Kawangkoan).

At the time of the first contact with Europeans in the 16th century, North Sulawesi had strong links with the sultanate of Ternate (Northern Maluku) and Bugis traders from South Sulawesi. In 1677 the Dutch occupied Pulau Sangir and, two years later, a treaty with the Minahasan chiefs saw the start of Dutch domination for the next 300 years.

Although relations with the Dutch were often less than cordial, and the region did not actually come under direct Dutch rule until 1870, the Dutch and Minahasans eventually became so close that the north was often referred to as the '12th province of the Netherlands'.

Christianity became a force in the early 1820s, and the wholesale conversion of the Minahasans was almost complete by 1860. Because the school curriculum was taught in Dutch, the Minahasans had an early advantage in the competition for government jobs and positions in the colonial army.

The Minahasan sense of identity became an issue for the Indonesian government after independence. The Minahasan leaders declared their own autonomous state of North Sulawesi in June 1957. The Indonesian government then bombed Manado in February 1958, and, by June, Indonesian troops had landed in North Sulawesi. Rebel leaders retreated into the mountains, and the rebellion was finally put down in mid-1961.

GORONTALO

☎ 0435 / pop 150,000

The port of Gorontalo has the feel of an overgrown country town, where all the locals seems to know each other and everyone is super-friendly. The town features some of the best-preserved Dutch houses in Sulawesi and still retains a languid colonial feel.

Gorontalo's local hero is Nani Wartabone, an anti-Dutch guerrilla, and there is a large statue of him in Lapangan Nani Wartabone adjacent to the Melati Hotel.

Orientation & Information

Although spread out, most of the hotels, shops and other life-support systems are concentrated in a small central district. Many streets are ambiguously named, which can cause confusion. The main post office is a useful landmark.

Bank Danamon (Jl Jend Ahmad Yani) ATM machines, plus cash advances.

Black Marlin (☎ 831869; Jl Kasuari 9A) The office for Black Marlin on Pulau Kadidiri in the Togeang Islands. A good place for travel information.

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Jend Ahmad Yani) ATM and currency exchange.

Telkom office (Jl Parman; ☎ 24hr) Efficient.

W@rsinet (Jl Jend Ahmad Yani 14A) Internet access available.

Activities

Diving is now available in the Gorontalo area with **Miguel's Diving** (www.miguelsdiving.com), but it is only seasonal from November to April. It's a good way to pass some time if stuck waiting for a boat to the Togeang Islands.

Sleeping

Hotel Saronde (☎ 821735; Jl Walanda Maramis 17; s/d 55,000/88,000Rp; r with air-con & satellite TV 132,000Rp;

a) Just across the field from the Melati, this hotel is great value, and offers some useful travel information in the foyer. The newer wing houses the smarter, more expensive rooms.

Melati Hotel (☎ 822934; avelberg@hotmail.com; Jl Gajah Mada 33; r 60,000-140,000Rp; a i) The friendly Melati has been extending a warm welcome to travellers for many years now. It's based around a lovely old home, built in the early 1900s for the then harbour-master (current owner Pak Alex's grandfather). The rooms in the original house are basic but atmospheric; the newer rooms are set around a pretty garden and are well furnished.

Yulia Hotel (☎ 828395; fax 823065; Jl Jend Ahmad Yani 26; s/d from 181,500/203,500Rp; a) One of the smartest hotels in town with a good central location. All rooms have satellite TV and hot water.

Eating & Drinking

The local delicacy is *milu siram*, which is a corn soup with grated coconut, fish, salt, chilli and lime. You'll find it at the stalls around the market at night, or try it at Cikia (Jl Tribata 37; meals 10,000-20,000Rp), a no-frills eatery well known for its local cuisine. The night market has a vast number of warung selling cheap and tasty food.

If you're craving a sweet treat, head to Rumah Makan Brantas on Jl Hasanuddin for the best selection of cakes and pastries this side of Manado.

Just off Jl Gajah Mada, Rumah Makan Viva is handy to some hotels, and turns out reliable Indo favourites like *gado-gado* and fried chicken.

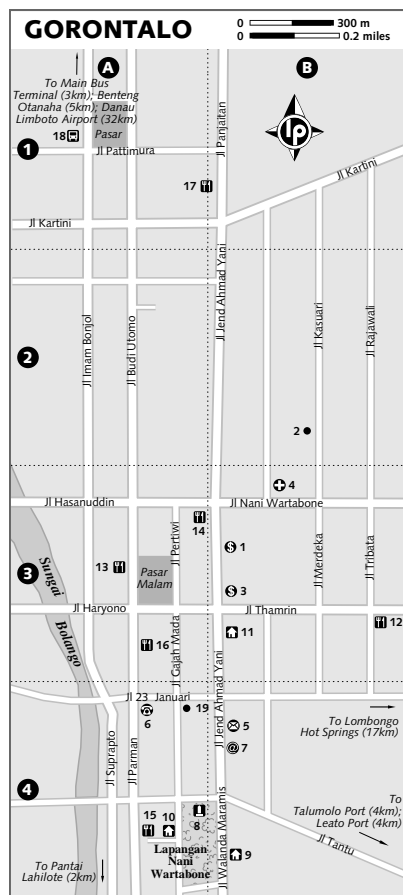
If heading directly to the Togeang Islands by boat, stock up on life's necessities at either the Santika or Citra supermarkets, both on Jl Parman.

Sasando Cafe (Jl Panjaitan) is one of the many karaoke cafés that have sprung up in town. Save the nightlife until Manado or Makassar!

Getting There & Away

AIR

You can travel to/from Manado with **Merpati** (Merpati Nusantara Airlines; ☎ 828397; Yulia Hotel), which has services three times a week. **Lion Air** (☎ 830035; Jl Rachmat 15) flies to Gorontalo once a week for a similar price, as well as to



Makassar. Sriwijaya Air also flies to Makassar. All airlines have offices at the airport, or tickets can be bought at agencies around town. See the map on p669 for prices.

BOAT

Gorontalo has two ports, both about 4km from the town centre: Tulumolo port for the Togeans and Leato port for Pagimana and Pelni ferries. Both are easily accessible by *mikrolet* (small taxi) along Jl Tantu. Tell the driver your boat's destination and he'll drop you at the right place.

Every two weeks the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* links Gorontalo with Bitung (for Manado). The Pelni office (☎ 821089; cnr Jl 23 Januari & Jl Gajah Mada) is efficient and convenient.

INFORMATION	
Bank Danamon.....	1 B3
Black Marlin Office.....	2 B2
BNI Bank.....	3 B3
Hospital.....	4 B3
Post Office.....	5 B4
Telkom.....	6 A4
W@rsinet.....	7 B4
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
Nani Wartabone Statue.....	8 A4
SLEEPING	
Hotel Saronde.....	9 B4
Melati Hotel.....	10 A4
Yulia Hotel.....	11 B3
EATING	
Ciklia.....	12 B3
Citra Supermarket.....	13 A3
Rumah Makan Brantas.....	14 A3
Rumah Makan Viva.....	15 A4
Santika Supermarket.....	16 A3
Sasando Cafe.....	17 A1
TRANSPORT	
Merpati.....	(see 11)
Mikrolet Terminal.....	18 A1
Pelni.....	19 A4

Every two days a large, stable ferry crosses the gulf from Gorontalo to Pagimana (A/B class 55,000/38,000Rp, 10 hours) and returns the next day. It leaves both places at about 9.30pm, and arrives at about 6am. This ferry is a more comfortable and regular (but more time-consuming) way of travelling between Gorontalo and the Togeans Islands.

Direct boats also connect Gorontalo to the Togeans; see p726 for more details. You can book tickets at the office for Black Marlin (☎ 831869; Jl Kasuari 9A).

BUS

The main bus terminal is 3km north of town, and accessible by bemo, *bendi* or *ojek*. There are direct buses to Palu (90,000Rp, 17 hours) and Manado (normal/air-con 60,000/75,000Rp, 10 hours), departing every hour.

From the terminal, next to the market, *mikrolet* go in all directions to regional villages.

Getting Around

The airport is 32km north of Gorontalo. For 40,000Rp a share-car can be booked at the taxi desk inside the terminal, and you'll be taken to your requested address. To get to the airport, book the same service through the airline, travel agency or your hotel.

AROUND GORONTALO

On the outskirts of Gorontalo, on a hill at Lekobalo, overlooking Danau Limboto, is Benteng Otanaha. The fort was probably built by the Portuguese and supposedly used by Gorontalo kings as a bastion against the Dutch when relations soured. Today there are the remains of just three towers. Take a *bendi* or *mikrolet* from the *mikrolet* terminal to a path at the foot of the hill.

Pantai Lahilote is a white sandy beach 2km south of Gorontalo, and accessible by *bendi* or *mikrolet*. Lombongo hot springs, 17km east of Gorontalo, at the western edge of Bogani Nani Wartabone National Park, has a swimming pool filled with hot spring water. A nicer spot is the swimming hole at the foot of a 30m waterfall, which is a 3km walk past the springs. To get to the springs, take the *mikrolet* marked 'Suwawa' from in front of the hospital in Gorontalo.

KOTAMOBAGU

☎ 0434

Kotamobagu (or 'Kota') was once the seat of power for the pre-colonial Bolaang Mongondow kingdoms, but is now a prosperous market town in a fertile valley of towering coconut plantations. There's little to do, but it's a useful stopover between Manado and Gorontalo, and the gateway to the Bogani Nani Wartabone National Park.

Orientation & Information

The main road from the Bonawang bus terminal is Jl Adampe Dolot. This turns into Jl Ahmad Yani through the centre of town, and has several well-stocked supermarkets and a BNI branch (which changes money).

Bogani Nani Wartabone National Park office

(☎ 22548; Jl AKD) Along the road to Doloduo, about 5km from central Kotamobagu. Permits, maps and helpful trekking tips.

Tourist office (Jl Ahmad Yani 188) Not much in the way of spoken English or handouts.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Ramayana (☎ 21188; Jl Adampe Dolot 50; s/d 38,000/55,000Rp) This hotel has clean, quiet accommodation, and is the best all-rounder in town.

There aren't all that many contenders, but Rumah Makan La Rose is probably the nicest restaurant in town.

Getting There & Away

The main Bonawang bus terminal is a few kilometres from Kotamobagu, in the village of Monglonan, and accessible by *mikrolet*. There are regular buses to Manado (three hours) and Gorontalo (eight hours).

From the central Serasi bemo terminal (Jl Borian), Kijangs go to Manado and bemo head to Doloduo.

BOGANI NANI WARTABONE NATIONAL PARK

About 50km west of Kotamobagu, this national park (193,600 hectares) has the highest conservation value in North Sulawesi, but it's mostly inaccessible. The park (formerly known as Dumoga-Bone) is at the headwaters of Sungai Dumoga and is a haven for rare flora and fauna, including black-crested macaque (*yaki*), and a species of giant fruit bat only discovered in 1992. Finding rare fauna requires patience and luck, but you should see plenty of hornbills and tarsiers.

Visit the **Bogani Nani Wartabone National Park office** (☎ 0434-22548; Jl AKD), on the road to Doloduo, about 5km from central Kotamobagu. At this office you can buy permits (20,000Rp per visit), pick up useful tips, look at decent trekking maps and ask lots of questions. You can also enter the park, and buy a permit at Limboto, near Gorontalo, but this is a long way from the main hiking trails.

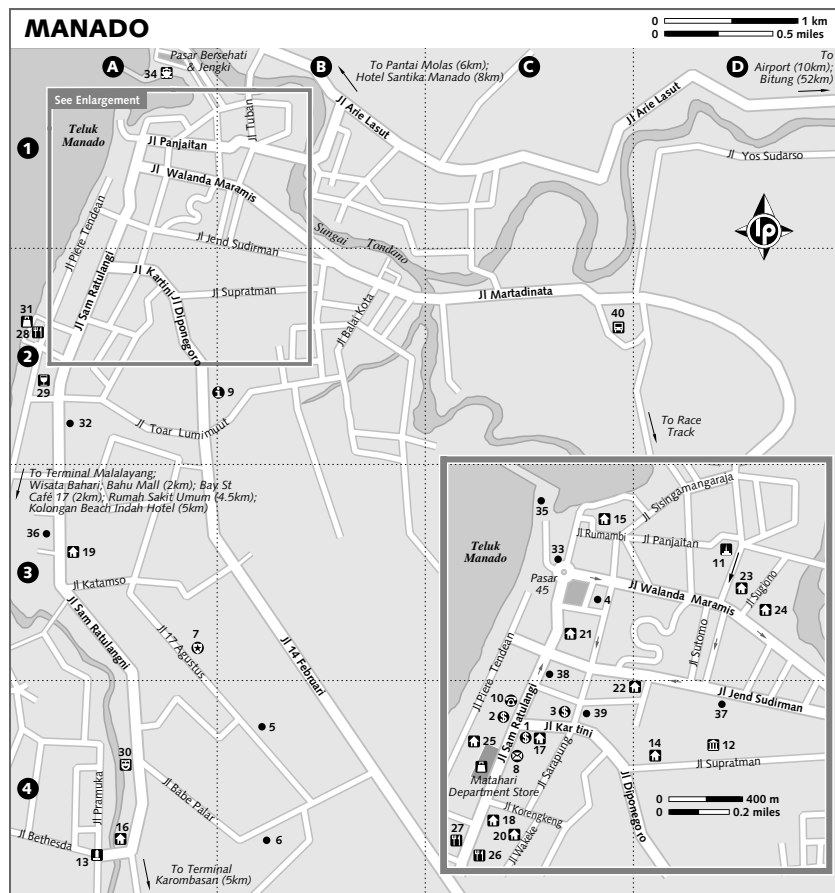
You could day trip from Kotamobagu with private transport, but it's best to base yourself in the park in order to appreciate the scenery and spot wildlife while hiking at dawn and/or dusk. The area around the park entrance at Kosinggolan village has several trails, lasting from one to nine hours, and there are various options for overnight jaunts through the jungle if you have camping equipment.

To Kosinggolan, take a regular *mikrolet* to Doloduo from the Serasi terminal in Kotamobagu. Then walk about 2km west (or ask the *mikrolet* driver to continue) to the ranger station at Kosinggolan, just inside the park, where you must register and pick up a compulsory guide for 40,000Rp per short hike (more for longer trips).

MANADO

☎ 0431 / pop 500,000

In 1844 Manado was levelled by earthquakes, so the Dutch redesigned it from scratch. Fourteen years later the famous naturalist



Alfred Wallace visited, and described the city as 'one of the prettiest in the East'. That was 150 years ago and time hasn't been kind to the place. Vestiges of the colonial period have succumbed to a swarm of *mikrolet* and the superb coast has been swallowed by shopping malls. Unattractive though it may be, Manado is a well-stocked base from which to visit the surrounding Minahasan region and islands to the north. It boasts the best wining and dining in North Sulawesi and locals hit the town on weekends.

History

Rice surpluses from Minahasa's volcanic hinterland made Manado a strategic port for European traders sailing to and from the

'Spice Islands' (Maluku). The Dutch helped unite the diverse Minahasan confederacy. By the mid-1800s, compulsory cultivation schemes were producing huge crops of cheap coffee for a Dutch-run monopoly. Minahasans suffered from this 'progress', yet economic, religious and social ties with the colonists continued to intensify. Elsewhere, Minahasan mercenaries put down anti-Dutch rebellions in Java and beyond, earning them the name *anjing Belanda* (Dutch dogs).

The Japanese occupation of 1942–45 was a period of deprivation, and the Allies bombed Manado heavily in 1945. During the war of independence that followed, there was bitter division between the nationalists and those favouring Dutch-sponsored

INFORMATION	SLEEPING	ENTERTAINMENT
BCA.....1 C4	Biteya City Hotel.....14 D4	Ha Ha Café.....(see 31)
BII Bank.....2 C4	Celebes Hotel.....15 C3	Studio 21 Cinema.....30 A4
BRI Bank.....3 C4	Gran Puri Hotel.....16 A4	
City Square.....4 C3	Hotel Anggrek.....17 C4	SHOPPING
Cybernet Café.....(see 8)	Hotel Central Manado.....18 C4	Mega Mall.....31 A2
Immigration Office.....5 B4	Hotel Minahasa.....19 A3	
KSDA (National Parks) Office.....6 B4	Hotel New Queen.....20 C4	TRANSPORT
Main Police Station.....7 A3	Hotel Sahid Kawana.....21 C3	Adam Air.....32 A2
Main Post Office.....8 C4	Manado Bersehati Hotel.....22 D4	Batavia Air.....(see 31)
North Sulawesi Tourism Office.....9 B2	New Angkasa Hotel.....23 D3	Boat Ticket Offices.....33 C3
Telkom.....10 C4	Rex Hotel.....24 D3	Boats to Pulau Bunaken.....34 A1
	Ritzzy Hotel.....25 C4	Garuda.....(see 31)
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		Lion Air.....(see 31)
Kienteng Ban Hian Kong....11 D3	EATING	Manado Port.....35 C3
Museum Negeri Propinsi Sulawesi Utara.....12 D4	Dolphin Donats.....26 C4	Mandalala.....36 A3
Sam Ratulangi Monument.....13 A4	Rumah Makan Green Garden.....27 C4	Merpati.....37 D4
	Seafood Warungs.....28 A2	PT Virgo Ekspres.....38 C3
		Silk Air.....39 C4
	DRINKING	Terminal Paal 2.....40 C2
	Gacho.....29 A2	

federalism, and the city was bombed by Indonesian troops in 1958.

Today, the development of Bitung's deep sea port, and direct air links with the Philippines and Singapore, have helped to promote Manado's trade and tourism.

Orientation

Along Jl Sam Ratulangi, the main road running north-south, there are upmarket restaurants, hotels and supermarkets. The 'boulevard', Jl Piere Tendean, is a monstrous thoroughfare with hotels and half-finished shopping malls; it has limited coastal access.

Information

EMERGENCY

The emergency number for ambulances is % 118.

Main police station (% inquiries 852162, emergencies 110; Jl 17 Agustus)

IMMIGRATION

Immigration office (% 863491; Jl 17 Agustus)

INTERNET ACCESS & POST

Cybernet Café (h 8am-10pm) Internet access at the main post office.

Informatics (h 8am-10pm) Fastest access in town; on the 4th floor of the Mega Mall.

Main post office (Jl Sam Ratulangi 23; h 8am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat & Sun)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Rumah Sakit Umum (% 853191; Jl Monginsidi; Malalayang) The general hospital is about 4.5km from town and includes a decompression chamber.

MONEY

Manado is overflowing with banks, and it's the best place in the region to exchange money. ATMs can be found at the banks along Jl Sam Ratulangi, plus out at the airport.

BCA bank (Bank Central Asia; Jl Sam Ratulangi) Probably has the best rates, and quickly provides cash advances of up to 3,000,000Rp on Visa and MasterCard. ATMs available.

BII bank (Bank Internasional Indonesia; Jl Sam Ratulangi) Accepts Visa, MasterCard, Alto and Cirrus cards for cash advances, and has an ATM.

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia) ATM and cash advances available at the airport.

TELEPHONE

Numerous wartel around town offer competitive long-distance rates.

Telkom office (Jl Sam Ratulangi; h 24hr)

TOURIST INFORMATION

KSDA office (National Parks office; % 862688; fax 864296; Jl Babe Palar) For informative brochures and advice about trekking in Tangkoko-Batuangas Dua Saudara Nature Reserve, visit this national parks office.

North Sulawesi Tourism Office (% /fax 852723; Jl Diponegoro 111; h 8am-2pm Mon-Sat) You can get a map and sign the guest book, but that's about it.

Tourist information counter Out at the airport, this is far more useful, with good maps on the wall, and plenty of hotel brochures with current rates.

Sights

Most of the main sights lie beyond the city, however the **Museum Negeri Propinsi Sulawesi Utara** (% 870308; Jl Supratman; admission 1000Rp;

IN THE BEGINNING...

The original Minahasans are said to have descended from Lumimuut, who rose from the sea and gave birth to Toar. After many years' separation, mother and son met again. Not recognising each other, they married and their descendants populated the region. Minahasan lands and languages were divided by the god Muntu Untu at Watu Pina-betengan (Dividing Stone), a carved rock near Kawangkoan.

h 8am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, 8am-noon (Fri) is a possible diversion. It features a large display of traditional costumes and housing implements, with captions in English.

The 19th-century Kienteng Ban Hian Kong (Jl Panjaitan) is the oldest Buddhist temple in eastern Indonesia and has been beautifully restored. The temple hosts a spectacular festival in February (dates vary according to the lunar calendar).

Activities

For relief from the incessant heat or an escape from the buzz of *mikrolet*, nonguests can use the swimming pool at Hotel Sahid Kawanua for 10,000Rp. There is also a Superbowl on the top floor of the Mega Mall for those looking to strike out.

Festivals & Events

Minahasans love an excuse to party. Watch out for these main festivals:

Tai Pei Kong festival Held at Kienteng Ban Hian Kong in February.

Pengucapan Syukur A harvest festival that can take place any time from June to August.

Traditional horse races Second week of August.

Sleeping

Manado has a good range of accommodation to suit all budgets, although most people push on through to Pulau Bunaken or dive resorts in the Manado and Lembeh area – see the Pulau Bunaken entry (p739) or the boxed text on p740 for more details.

BUDGET

Rex Hotel (☎ 851136; fax 867706; Jl Sugiono 3; s 55,000-70,000Rp, d 65,000-85,000Rp; a) This small, friendly hotel is not too far from the action.

It is worth paying a couple of bucks extra for smarter rooms with TV and bath tub.

Manado Bersehati Hotel (☎ 855022; fax 857238; Jl Sudirman 20; s/d from 42,500/67,500Rp, r with air-con & TV from 95,000Rp; a) Signposted from bustling Jl Sudirman, this Minahasan-style building has a big range of small rooms. The self-proclaimed VIP rooms are larger. The hotel flyer includes a handy pocket-sized map of Manado.

Hotel Anggrek (☎ 851970; Jl Kartini 5; r 80,000-120,000Rp; a) The most central of the budget places in town, it is far enough from Jl Sam Ratulangi to deliver a peaceful sleep. It is worth investing in the air-con as the rooms can heat up.

Other reliable budget options:
New Angkasa Hotel (☎ 864062; Jl Sugiono 10; r with fan 50,000Rp, with air-con from 75,000Rp; a) Some of the best-value budget beds in town.
Biteya City Hotel (☎ 866598; Jl Supratman 11; r with fan/air-con/ste 55,000/100,000/185,000Rp; a) Comfortable hotel near the museum with large, well-furnished rooms.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Minahasa (☎ /fax 862559; minahasahotel@hotmail.com; Jl Sam Ratulangi 199; r with fan from 100,000Rp, with air-con from 180,000Rp; a) This friendly, family-run hotel sprawls up the hillside, with large air-con rooms set around a flourishing garden. TV is not satellite, but the rooms include hot water. Work was underway on a swimming pool and spa during our stay, so prices may rise.

Celebes Hotel (☎ 870425; hotelcelebesmdo@yahoo.com; Jl Rumambi 8A; r 120,000-230,000Rp; a) Towering over the port area, ask for a room on the 4th or 5th floor for big vistas over the water. All rooms are spotlessly clean and include air-con and hot water. A word of warning, however, make sure you are clear about the type of room you are getting, as the morning we were here another traveller was caught out when the price changed at check-out time. There are also some budget rooms with shared bath for just 50,000Rp. The rooftop restaurant has great views over the action below and is a fine spot for a sundowner.

Kolongan Beach Indah Hotel (☎ /fax 853001; Jl Walter Monginsidi; r 160,000Rp; a) Out in Malalayang, this is a quiet, attractive alternative to Manado, and is very handy to the Malalayang bus terminal, about 100m away. The smart rooms have air-con, hot water and

satellite TV, and the restaurant is a good spot to wait for a bus.

Hotel Central Manado (☎ 864049; Jl Sam Ratulangi 33; s/d from 150,000/170,000Rp; a) Formerly the Jeprinda Hotel, this property has had a recent makeover. The standard rooms lack hot water, but the deluxe rooms from 180,000Rp are a good deal with air-con, satellite TV and a hearty breakfast.

Hotel New Queen (☎ 855551; fax 853049; www.newqueen-manado.com; Jl Wakeke 12; s/d from 192,000/264,000Rp; a) This hotel is very proud of the fact that it once won the Governor's trophy for 'cleanest midrange hotel in Manado'. Regularly full, thanks to well-appointed rooms and solid service.

Hotel Sahid Kawanua (☎ 867777; sahidkawanua@telkom.net.id; Jl Sam Ratulangi 1; s/d from 300,000/350,000Rp; a s) This hotel was built in the '70s and the rates here reflect the ageing interior. Popular for conferences, it's not bad value and has a large swimming pool.

TOP END

Gran Puri Hotel (☎ 822888; www.granpuri.com; Jl Sam Ratulangi 458; s/d from 450,000/500,000Rp; a s) The other contender for leading business hotel in Manado. The location is not great, but the rooms are sophisticated. The GPs Club is a popular basement bar.

Hotel Santika Manado (☎ 858222; www.santika-manado.com; r from 600,000Rp; a s) Part of the Santika chain, this major resort has luxurious rooms, a large swimming pool and walkway access through mangroves to the sea. Just 8km from town, this place feels like a world away from Manado. It is also the base for the Thalassa Dive Centre (www.thalassa.net).

Ritz Hotel (☎ 855555; www.ritzmanado.com; Jl Piere Tendean; s/d from 550,000/605,000Rp; a s) This immense landmark was originally built as a Novotel. The four-star rooms are good value at these discounted prices. Request a sea view.

Kimba Bajo Resort (☎ 860999; www.kimbajoreort.com; r from US\$135; a s) The leading boutique resort in the Manado area, Kimba Bajo offers indulgent rooms in a choice of bungalows and villas. The Mayana Spa is the place to unwind after a week of diving.

Eating

Adventurous Minahasan cuisine can be found around Manado, especially at the

stalls that open up at night on Jl Piere Tendean. Get a taste for *rica-rica*, a spicy stir-fry made with *ayam* (chicken), *babi* (pork) or *r.w.* (pronounced air weh – dog!). *Bubur tinotuan* (corn porridge) and fresh seafood are local specialities worth looking out for.

Most of the malls have extensive food courts on their upper floors. Best are those at Mega Mall and Bahu Mall, but even the smaller shopping centres have cheap eats. Choose from Indonesian, Chinese, Italian and more.

Hidden behind the massive Mega Mall on Jl Piere Tendean is an excellent stretch of seafood warungs that kicks off every night. The price, variety and sunsets are unbeatable. Not all serve alcohol, so shop around if you are in the market for a drink with dinner.

There is a similar stretch of warungs behind the Bahu Mall, Jl Walter Monginsidi, just south of the town centre. Live bands sometimes play on a stage here, so it is better to choose a stall at a safe distance.

Bay St Café 17 (meals 10,000-30,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) Has some of the best pork ribs in Sulawesi, as well as good selection of fresh fish and cold Bintang.

Rumah Makan Green Garden (Jl Sam Ratulangi; mains 15,000-30,000Rp; h breakfast, lunch & dinner) This Chinese-Indonesian restaurant is popular for its lengthy seafood menu. However, the seafood's not fresh but frozen, which is a tad disappointing. There are also lots of cheap noodle-based dishes which make a good lunch or snack.

Dolphin Donats (Jl Sam Ratulangi 5; meals 15,000-35,000Rp; h breakfast, lunch & dinner) Almost opposite the Green Garden, this place predictably specialises in doughnuts and cakes, but there's a surprisingly large range of Indonesian, Chinese and Western food, such as steaks and burgers. Staff are friendly and service is swift.

Wisata Bahari (Jl Wolter Monginsidi; mains 20,000-50,000Rp; h lunch & dinner) Right next to the Bahu Mall is this huge restaurant built on stilts over the sea. Seafood is priced by weight and it's popular with high rollers from Manado.

Drinking

The drinks of choice are *saguer*, a very quaffable fermented sago wine, and Cap Tikus (literally, Rat Brand), the generic name for

distilled *saguer*. Cap Tikus is sold as No 1, No 2 or No 3, referring to its strength (No 1 is the strongest!). It is best diluted and served over ice...with fresh fruit juice for a DIY cocktail.

There aren't many out and out bars in Manado. The best option for a sunset drink is to head to one of the seaside warungs behind the Mega Mall. Stick around and sink some drinks here, as the price rises rapidly in the clubs.

As the evening wears on, the most popular option for locals are the pool bars opening up all over town.

Gacho (Jl Piere Tendean) One of the best of the pool bars, just south of Mega Mall. Pitchers of Bintang are steep at almost 100,000Rp, probably to help subsidise the live band.

Styx (Bahu Mall) Even more sophisticated, and straight out of New York or London.

Corner (Bahu Mall) A couple of floors above Styx, this is a huge sports bar, but it is pretty quiet during the week, only picking up late on Saturdays. Bands from Jakarta sometimes play here and attract a cover charge of 25,000Rp or more. A glass of Bintang costs 25,000Rp.

Be very wary of places promoting karaoke. These are usually dark dens of iniquity, with overpriced drinks and working girls. Regular ruses include sitting at your table for five minutes and adding a hefty charge to the bill.

Entertainment

Music is a way of life for the Minahasans. They love jazz, and there are always small concerts and backroom gigs happening, so ask around.

NIGHTCLUBS

Ha Ha Café (entry incl 1 drink 50,000Rp) The leading club in town, this place is on the top floor of the Mega Mall. It is so vast that it looks like an aircraft hangar and only really fills up on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Once the smuggled flasks of Cap Tikus are drained, the crowds loosen up and mob the dance floor.

CINEMA

Studio 21 Cinema (Jl Sam Ratulangi; entry 17,500Rp) The most sophisticated cinema in Manado, it features recent Western releases with Indonesian subtitles.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Manado is well-connected by air with other parts of Indonesia. See map p669 for a guide to prices for flights listed below.

Merpati (Merpati Nusantara Airlines; % 842000; Jl Sudirman 111) has daily flights to Jakarta and Luwuk, and also Jayapura via Sorong; four flights a week to/from Gorontalo, as well as Makassar; three per week to/from Ternate; three a week to Palu; and twice weekly to the Sangir-Talaud islands towns of Melanguane and Naha.

Garuda (Garuda Indonesia; % 877737) flies daily to/from Makassar, with same-day connections to Denpasar and Jakarta.

Adam Air (% 8880999) flies daily to/from Surabaya.

Lion Air (% 8880022) flies daily to/from Makassar, Jakarta, Denpasar, Ternate and Sorong, and once a week to/from Gorontalo.

Batavia Air (% 3864338) offers daily flights to/from Balikpapan and Jakarta.

Tickets for domestic flights often cost slightly less at travel agencies, and agencies often sell international tickets at substantial discounts.

See p668 for details about international flights to/from Manado on Bouraq, Merpati and Silk Air (% 863744). The international departure tax is 100,000Rp.

BOAT

All Pelni boats use the deep-water port of Bitung, 55km from Manado. Several of the Pelni liners call by once or twice every week: the *Umsini* goes to Balikpapan (economy/1st class 376,000/1,173,000Rp) and Pantoloan; the *Lambelu* goes to Ternate (111,000/317,000Rp) and Ambon (173,000/517,000Rp); the *Kelimutu* to Sorong (228,000/695,000) and Fak Fak; and the *Tilongkabila* to Luwuk (128,000/372,000Rp) and other ports along the southeastern coast.

There is no longer a Pelni office in Manado; the nearest one is in Bitung. However, PT Virgo Ekspres (% 858610; Jl Sam Ratulangi 5) is a reliable Pelni agent for checking information and purchasing tickets.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon the Ratu Maria (% 855851) makes the overnight trip to Pulau Siau (55,000Rp) and Tahuna (93,000Rp) in the Sangir-Talaud Islands.

Small, slow and uncomfortable boats leave Manado every day or two for Tahuna and Lirung, also in the Sangir-Talaud Islands; and to Mangole, Sanana, Tobelo and Ambon in Maluku. Tickets are available from the stalls outside the port. From Bitung, four overnight ferries a week also travel to Ternate in Northern Maluku.

BUS

There are three reasonably orderly terminals for long-distance buses and the local *mikrolet*.

From Terminal Karombasan, 5km south of the city, buses go to Tomohon (4000Rp), Tondano (5000Rp) and other places south of Manado. From the far southern Terminal Malalayang, very regular buses go to Kotamobagu (17,000Rp) and Gorontalo (60,000Rp, eight hours).

From Terminal Paal 2, at the eastern end of Jl Martadinata, varied public transport runs to Bitung (5500Rp) and the airport (2000Rp).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Mikrolet from Sam Ratulangi International Airport go to Terminal Paal 2 (2000Rp), where you can change to a *mikrolet* heading to Pasar 45 or elsewhere in the city, for a flat fee of 1500Rp. Fixed-price taxis cost 70,000Rp from the airport to the city (13km).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

It seems that Manado's *mikrolet*, if put bumper to bumper, would wrap around the city 75 times. On the bright side, finding one with a spare seat is a matter of waiting a second or two. They're not too hard to work out: look for the sign on top of the vehicle, check the direction it's going in and double-check the tiny sign on the window. *Mikrolet* heading south on Jl Sam Ratulangi with 'Wanea' on the window sign will go to Terminal Karombasan. Most *mikrolet* heading north go through Pasar 45 (with a few traffic jams along the way), and past the Pasar Jengki fish market, but some go directly to Terminal Paal 2 along Jl Sudirman. *Mikrolet* heading to Terminal Malalayang go down Jl Piere Tendean. The fare for any destination around town is 1500Rp.

Private taxis circle the city and the air-conditioning can be a relief on a hot day.

However, very few drivers are willing to use the meter, so negotiate before setting off.

PULAU BUNAKEN

% 0431

The incredible shapes and colours of the fringing coral off the small island of Bunaken have earned it celebrity status among divers and snorkellers around the world. The marine biodiversity here is extraordinary, with more than 300 types of coral and 3000 species of fish. Drift along the reefs and enjoy the ultimate underwater epic. The 808-hectare island is part of the 75,265-hectare Bunaken Manado Tua Marine National Park (Taman Laut Bunaken Manado Tua), which includes: Manado Tua (Old Manado), the dormant volcano that can be seen from Manado, and climbed in about four hours; Nain and Mantehage islands; and Pulau Siladen, which has some more accommodation options.

The nearby city of Manado is both a blessing and a curse for Bunaken. It's a blessing as it has an airport offering connections with Singapore and most parts of Indonesia and is the supply base for the island, but ultimately it is proving a curse, as huge amounts of garbage are generated by the city and westerly winds often sweep mounds of the stuff onto Pantai Liang, turning the picturesque tropical beach into a refuse heap overnight.

Most of Pulau Bunaken's residents live in Bunaken village at the southern tip. The scarcity of fresh water has limited the island's development, and villagers must import their drinking water from Manado. Washing water is drawn from small, brackish wells. Pantai Liang is the most developed part of the island for tourism, but the rubbish problem means that many prefer to stay around Pantai Pangalisang on the east side of the island. There is a concrete path connecting Pangalisang and Liang, about a 30-minute walk, and both beaches are also connected by path to Bunaken village. The best beach is actually just to the north of Bunaken village, close to MC Homestay.

Many of the tourists who come to dive around Bunaken are on short vacations from Europe and elsewhere. This tends to mean higher prices on Bunaken than the mainland when it comes to things like Bintang beer. It also means some of the resorts

DIVING & SNORKELLING AROUND PULAU BUNAKEN

Bunaken boasts some of the world's most spectacular and accessible coral drop-offs, caves and valleys, full of brightly coloured sponges and fish – it is also common to see turtles, rays, dolphins and sharks. The most accessible site is the flat coral off Pantai Liang, which takes a dramatic 90-degree turn less than 100m offshore, plummeting from 1m to 2m depths into dark oblivion.

The best snorkelling and diving sites are marked on maps in most homestays on Bunaken, and any decent boatman will know where to take you. **Pantai Liang** and **Pantai Pangalisang** are good, accessible spots for those not chartering a boat. Well-worn snorkelling equipment can be rented from most homestays on Bunaken for about 40,000Rp per day, but it is often worth paying a little more to rent some quality equipment from one of the dive centres. The snorkelling is effortless, as currents carry you along the reef. A good option is to put in near Lorenzo's Beach Garden and exit at Two Fish. The only disappointment for snorkellers is the sheer number of plastic bags floating by; just as you think you have seen a graceful ray, damn, it's another bag. Divers are at a real advantage, as they can leave behind any surface scum.

The rates for dive trips do vary, but it's obviously very important to use a qualified centre with well-maintained equipment. Trips around Bunaken and nearby islands, including most equipment, transport, lunch and a guide, will cost about US\$60 for two dives; US\$20 for subsequent dives; and US\$300 to US\$400 for PADI courses. Some places charge in euros rather than US dollars.

It is worth checking whether companies are members of the **North Sulawesi Watersports Association** (NSWA; www.divenorthsulawesi.com), which promotes conservation activities and local community initiatives. This organisation has almost 20 members and keeps on growing.

There are several reliable dive centres based on Pulau Bunaken and it is possible to shop around before committing.

Bastiano's (☎ 853566; www.bastianos.com; Pantai Liang) Caters mainly to European dive tourists on packages.

Bunaken Divers (☎ 3306034; www.bunakendivers.com; Pantai Pangalisang) Friendly Australian-run outfit that has been around a while.

Cha Cha Divers (☎ 081 24301356; www.bunakenchacha.com; Pantai Pangalisang) Small dive operator with the emphasis on a personal touch.

Froggies Dive Centre (☎ 850210; www.divefroggies.com; Pantai Liang) Pioneers of the famed lazy dive where the current does the work.

Living Colours (☎ 081 24306063; www.livingcoloursdiving.com; Pantai Pangalisang) One of the newer centres which has quickly made a name for itself.

Sulawesi Dive Quest (☎ 863023; www.sulawesi-dive-quest.com; Pantai Liang) Another operator concentrating on short-stay dive tourists from afar.

Two Fish Divers (☎ 081 1432805; www.twofishdivers.com; Pantai Pangalisang) Popular English-run operation that operates small groups and with no time limits.

There are also several operators based at resorts on the mainland and other islands that offer fully inclusive dive packages for five days or more:

Barracuda (☎ 854279; www.barracuda-diving.com) Based at their own bungalow resort on Pantai Molas, northeast of Manado.

Celebes Divers (☎ 826582; www.kudalaut.com) Operating from Italian-run Mapia Resort, about 8km south of Manado.

Eco Divers (☎ 824445; www.eco-divers.com) Based at the charming Tasik Ria Resort about 20km south of Manado.

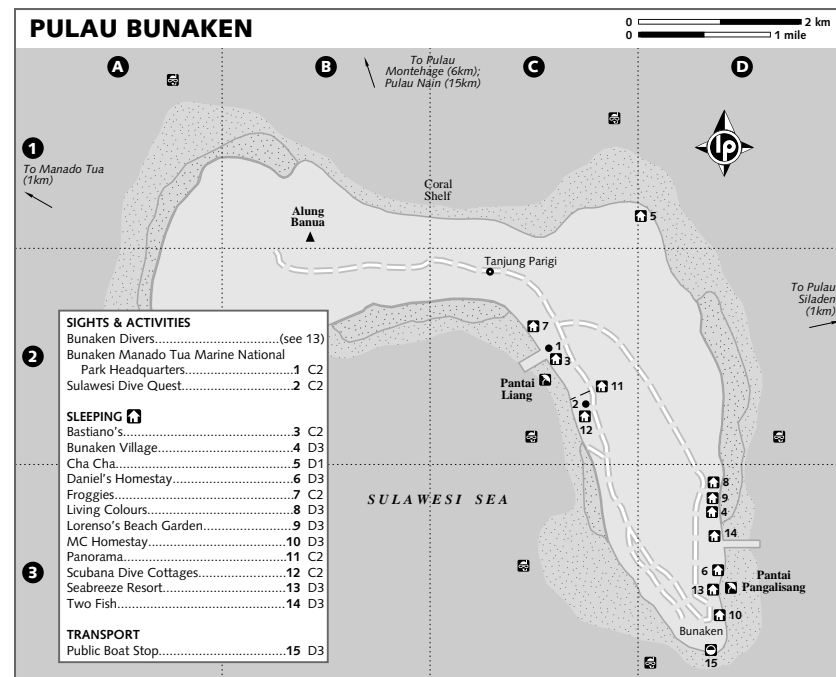
Lumba Lumba Diving (☎ 826151; www.lumbalumbadiving.com) Promoting personal service, this homely dive centre has a loyal following. It's about 20km south of Manado.

Murex (☎ 826091; www.murexdive.com) One of the longest-running dive operators in the area, with a resort to the south of Manado and liveboards roving further afield.

Nusantara Diving Centre (☎ 863988; www.ndcmanado.com) The daddy of dive operators around Bunaken, with its own impressive resort on Molas Beach, northeast of Manado.

Odyssey Divers (☎ 860999; www.odysseydivers.com) Based at the luxurious Kima Bajo Resort on the mainland.

For more on diving the Lembeh Strait, see p743.



actively discriminate against nondivers, either by charging higher accommodation prices or turning them away. Diving is where the real money is made on this island.

Information

In an attempt to finance conservation activities, rubbish disposal, mangrove rehabilitation, local education programmes and the policing of any illegal fishing practices, an entrance fee system has been introduced for visiting Bunaken Manado Tua Marine National Park. The fee is 50,000Rp per day or 150,000Rp for one year, payable at the national park headquarters just off Pantai Liang on Bunaken or through tourism operators. The permit, in the shape of a plastic tag, should be worn while within the park boundaries.

Activities

BOAT TRIPS

For those with less time and more money, some of the dive operators and hotels can organise day trips to Bunaken on yachts, glass-bottom boats and pseudo-submarines.

Sleeping & Eating

There are more than a dozen resorts scattered around Bunaken and all prices quoted include three meals per day. There are plenty of budget and midrange resorts, but no luxurious hideaways, so if you want serious comfort, stick with the mainland resorts or try Pulau Siladen. Most rooms include at least a fan and a mosquito net and most places throw in transfers to and from the jetty in Bunaken village, in some cases to the mainland. Consider bringing some snacks and treats from the mainland, as there is not much available on the island beyond the set meals.

PANTAI PANGALISANG

The homestays at Pantai Pangalisang mostly overlook the mangroves, but are only metres from some extraordinary snorkelling sites and are very close to the island's best beach at Bunaken village.

Lorenzo's Beach Garden (www.lorenso-bunaken.com; bungalows 80,000-120,000Rp) Run by lifelong islander Lorenzo, these basic bungalows have a nice setting by the water. The bigger

bungalows are a better choice, as the cheapies are showing their age. Hearty meals are served here, including great fish.

Daniel's Homestay (per person from 100,000Rp) It doesn't look much from the path, but venture in and you'll find some spacious cottages set around a green garden. Pay a little more for a seafront cottage.

MC Homestay (bungalows per person 100,000-150,000Rp) Located on the northern edge of Bunaken village, this homestay is just above the best beach on Bunaken. The newer bungalows are worth the extra. Good food is another drawback.

Two Fish (www.twofishdivers.com; per person US\$15-30) Now in two locations, the easy way to remember is old fish, new fish. The new cottages are very smart and there are also large rooms with shared bathroom in the main house. Old fish is creaking around the edges, but the cottages will soon be upgraded. There's a lively beach bar at the old location.

Seabreeze Resort (www.bunakendivers.com; per person for divers US\$20, nondivers US\$30) A large, sprawling resort, there are quite a few different types of bungalow here, so shop around before committing. Attractions include a verdant garden, good beach access and very cold beers thanks to the Ozzie owner.

Bunaken Village (www.bunakenvillage.com; cottages from €20; Ⓢ) A small, new place with very well-appointed cottages. The Western bathrooms are a delight and there is even a small swimming pool for a cooling dip.

Living Colours (www.livingcoloursdiving.com; per person €25; j) The bungalows here are beautifully set on a hillside above the sea. Tasteful furnishings include coconut wood beds, rattan chairs and Balinese drapes, and the bathrooms are spotless. The best all-rounder on the island.

Cha Cha (www.bunakenchacha.com; per person from US\$50) In splendid isolation on the north-eastern tip of the island, 'The Last Resort' as it is sometimes nicknamed, has an intimate atmosphere thanks to just six bungalows. The menu is more varied than most, with Italian and Japanese to complement the local meals.

PANTAI LIANG

The homestays at Pantai Liang are closer together on a good stretch of sand, which means impromptu beach parties are more

likely. However, it's a sorry sight when the rubbish washes in from Manado.

Panorama (per person from 80,000Rp) Set high up on a cliff above Liang, the basic bungalows here have commanding views. It's accessible from a signposted trail from the beach south of the jetty, but this stretch of sand is scruffy.

Bastianos (☎ 853566; www.bastianos.com; per person US\$20, nondivers US\$30) Occupying a serious stretch of Pantai Liang, this all-wood resort has a series of cottages and rooms with balconies overlooking the water. Food is not as good as you might hope for an Italian-run place.

Froggies (☎ 081 24301356; www.divefroggies.com; per person €25-35) One of the longest-running places on Liang, the bungalows here are well-furnished and include verandas. Good beachfront location, but the restaurant area feels a bit like the bat cave. Nondivers not welcome.

Scubana Dive Cottages and Sulawesi Dive Quest (www.sulawesi-dive-quest.com) were both closed for the low season during our visit, but also offer cottages above the beach.

PULAU SILADEN

Pulau Siladen Martha Homestay (r 80,000Rp) Located in the fishing village in nearby Pulau Siladen, it offers a basic but friendly alternative to Bunaken.

Siladen Resort & Spa (www.siladen.com; r from US\$120) A beautiful new resort on Siladen, the 15 cottages here are sumptuously furnished. Facilities include a lagoon pool, an indulgent spa and dive centre.

Getting There & Away

Every day at about 3pm, except Sunday, a public boat (25,000Rp, one hour) leaves the harbour, near Pasar Jengki fish market in Manado, for Bunaken village and Pulau Siladen. The boat doesn't normally stop at Liang or Pangalisang, so you'll have to walk from the boat landing in Bunaken village (near the huge church) to your homestay, or charter something directly from Manado to the jetties at Liang or Pangalisang beaches. The boat leaves Bunaken between 7am and 8am daily (except Sunday), so it's not possible to day-trip from Manado using the public boat.

Most travellers charter a boat. Boatmen will approach you when you walk along the

DIVING THE LEMBEH STRAIT

Lembeh has emerged as the critter capital of Indonesia. For the uninitiated, welcome to an alien world on our very own planet. Critters are the weird and wonderful creatures that inhabit the murky depths and are much admired by underwater photographers. However, this is muck diving and not for beginners thanks to strong currents. If it is coral you are after, you are better off around Bunaken. As Lembeh's fame grows, so do the number of dive resorts catering to visitors. All are set in their own secluded bays, but without transport it is nigh on impossible to travel between them. Packages usually include accommodation and meals, all dives and transfers from and to Manado airport. Some popular resorts:

Divers Lodge (☎ 081 24433754; www.diving-on-sulawesi.com) One of the more affordable options in the Lembeh area.

Gangga Island Resort (☎ 082 4313809; www.ganggaisland.com) OK, so it's not really Lembeh, but midway between here and Pulau Bunaken, but it deserves a mention. Elegant bungalows, a beautiful pool, clear seas – it's a real paradise.

Kungkungan Bay Resort (www.divekbr.com) The first resort to open in the Lembeh area, it has recently been renovated with a pool added. Diving with Eco Divers.

Lembeh Resort (☎ 0438-30667; www.lembehresort.com) Expensive Balinese-style resort in a private bay on Pulau Lembeh. Diving with Murex (see p740).

Two Fish Divers (☎ 081 1432805; www.twofishdivers.com) Affordable new resort, run by the popular Bunaken dive operator Two Fish (see p740).

road towards Pasar Jengki; in Bunaken, ask around the beach or your homestay. Prices vary based on the size of the boat. Cheapest are the outriggers, but these aren't that stable on choppy waters. Expect to pay 100,000 to 150,000Rp. Next are the small covered speedboats that can take four to six people and these are around 200,000 to 250,000Rp one way. Finally there are bigger boats able to take a dozen or more people that cost about 350,000 to 400,000Rp. Bear in mind that conditions are sometimes too choppy for any boats to make the crossing.

TOMOHON

☎ 0431 / pop 30,000

Tomohon is a pleasant, cool respite from Manado, with a stunning setting below Gunung Lokon volcano. It's popular with city folk on weekends; for travellers, it's a possible alternative to Manado, and an ideal base from which to explore the many nearby attractions. Tomohon's market offers a culinary adventure.

Sleeping

There are several excellent budget homestays clustered together at the foot of Gunung Lokon volcano. To get to Lokon Valley Homestay, Happy Flower Homestay or Volcano resort, catch the Manado-Tomohon bus, and get out at 'Gereja Pniel',

a few kilometres before Tomohon. There is a sign pointing to Lokon Valley Homestay.

Lokon Valley Homestay (☎ 354262; r 80,000Rp) This super-friendly homestay has some of the best traveller information on offer anywhere in Sulawesi. The rooms are clean and include Western bathroom. The family enjoy promoting local cuisine; meals should be ordered in advance as all food is freshly prepared.

Happy Flower Homestay (☎ 352780; cottages 85,000Rp) Set in a pretty garden, the bungalows here were recently renovated and include hot water and a balcony. There is a central dining area on stilts, plus a pool table under the main house.

Volcano Resort (☎ 352988; cottages 85,000Rp) The cottages are great value, as they are virtual suites with a big bed, sofa and Western bathroom. There are also some budget rooms with shared bathroom at 40,000Rp.

Kawanua Cottages (☎ 352060; cottages from 110,000Rp; Ⓢ) Set around an immaculate garden with a swimming pool, the bungalows here are well equipped but beginning to show their age. It's about 4km south of Tomohon, on the road to Sonder.

Hotel Wawo (☎ 352449; r 165,000Rp) On the road to Uluindano, this three-room hotel is more like a homestay. Rooms come with hot water and satellite TV and the family suite is a virtual house in itself.

Highland Resort (☎ 3533333; www.highlandresort.info; r from US\$20) Located about 5km outside Tomohon near the road to Manado, this all-wooden resort has a healthy selection of bungalows. Amenities include satellite TV and hot water.

Gardenia Retreat (☎ 3533333; gardenia@indosat.net.id; r from US\$58, chalets from US\$84) An oasis in beautifully manicured gardens, the chalets here are like a Balinese hideaway. Discounts available.

Eating

Minahasa's extraordinary cuisine is served in a string of restaurants on a cliff overlooking Manado, just a few kilometres before Tomohon. The food at *Pemandangan* (meals 15,000-45,000Rp) is as impressive as the spectacular views, with great seafood plus Indonesian staples. The bus from Manado to Tomohon will drop you off at any restaurant, but buses back to Manado are often full. Some of the hotels in Tomohon have restaurants open to the public, and there are plenty of simple *rumah makan* around town, especially at Tomohon's market.

Getting There & Around

Mikrolet and minibuses regularly travel to Tomohon (4000Rp, 40 minutes) from Terminal Karombasan in Manado. From the terminal in Tomohon, based around an abandoned petrol station along the main road, buses go to Manado, and *mikrolet* go to Tondano and various other towns.

There are a few *bendi* around town, but a good way to see local sights in quick time is to charter a *mikrolet*, or a more comfortable, but expensive, taxi. The taxis line up opposite the *mikrolet* terminal.

AROUND TOMOHON

Gunung Lokon volcano (1580m) contains a constantly simmering crater lake of varying hues, which takes about three hours to reach (and another hour to the peak) from Tomohon. Before climbing any volcano in the area, report to the **volcanology centre** (Kantor Dinas Gunung Berapi; ☎ 351076; Jl Kakashashen Tiga) in Tomohon. The centre can provide advice about the hike, and it also has spectacular photographs of other volcanoes. Lokon Valley Homestay in Tomohon can help arrange this, and other hikes in the area, for guests.

There are numerous other places to explore from Tomohon, and all are accessible by *mikrolet*. Danau Linow, a small, highly sulphurous lake that changes colours with the light, is home to extensive birdlife. Take a *mikrolet* to Sonder, get off at Lahendong and walk (1.5km) to the lake. From Danau Linow, you can also hike (8km) to Danau Tondano, but you'll need to ask directions.

DANAU TONDANO

This lake, 30km south of Manado, is 600m above sea level. It's a beautiful area for hiking, and is popular with Manado's upper class, who flock here for Sunday lunch. Just before Remboken village, along the road around the lake, Objek Wisata Remboken has a swimming pool, a wonderful restaurant overlooking the lake and some gardens to wander around. There are also several decent restaurants along the road around the lake, where fresh fish is, naturally, the speciality.

Mikrolet regularly leave for Tondano village (5500Rp) from Terminal Karombasan in Manado, or you can get there by *mikrolet* from Tomohon (2000Rp). From Tondano, catch another *mikrolet* to Remboken, and get off anywhere you like along the road around the lake.

AIRMADIDI

Airmadidi (Boiling Water) is the site of mineral springs. Legend has it that nine angels flew down from heaven on nights of the full moon to bathe and frolic here. One night a mortal succeeded in stealing a dress belonging to one of the angels – unable to return to heaven, she was forced to remain on earth.

Airmadidi's real attraction is the odd little pre-Christian tombs known as *waruga*. Corpses were placed in these carved stone boxes, in a foetal position, with household articles, gold and porcelain, but most have been plundered. There's a group of these tombs at Airmadidi Bawah, a 15-minute walk from the Airmadidi *mikrolet* terminal.

Mikrolet to Airmadidi leave from Terminal Paal 2 in Manado (3000Rp), and there are connections between Airmadidi and Tondano and Bitung.

GUNUNG KLABAT

Gunung Klabat (2022m) is easily the highest peak on the peninsula. The obvious path to the crater at the top starts behind the police

station at Airmadidi, where you must register and take a guide. The climb (about four hours to the top, two for the descent) goes through rainforest where you can see superb flora and fauna, but it's a tough hike.

It's best to camp overnight near the top and be there for the sunrise and the stupendous views across the whole peninsula. Your guide should be able to provide a tent. Try to avoid Sunday, when the mountain can be surprisingly crowded with local hikers. This area was the last hideout for the anti-Indonesian rebels in the late 1950s and early '60s, and it's easy to see how they evaded capture for so long.

BITUNG

☎ 0438 / pop 137,000

Sheltered by Pulau Lembeh, Bitung is the chief regional port, and home to many factories. Despite its spectacular setting, the town is unattractive, so most travellers make for Manado or beyond as soon as possible.

Regardless of what time you arrive by boat in Bitung, there will be buses going to Manado, but if you need to leave Bitung by boat early in the morning it may be prudent to stay overnight. Be vigilant around the docks, as plenty of pickpockets turn up to greet the Pelni liners.

Hotel Nalendra (☎ 32072; Jl Samuel Languyu 5A; r from 120,000Rp) has been recommended by readers who have been stranded in Bitung over the years. The clean rooms include hot water, TV and air-con.

There are plenty of basic *rumah makan* in the town centre and near the port.

Getting There & Away

Bitung is connected to other towns by a surfaced racetrack along which *mikrolet*

drivers often attempt to break land speed records. All sorts of vehicles leave regularly from Terminal Paal 2 in Manado (5500Rp, one hour). The driver stops at Terminal Mapalus, just outside Bitung, from where you have to catch another *mikrolet* (10 minutes) to town or the port.

See p738 for details about boats to Bitung. The port is in the middle of Bitung, and the Pelni office (☎ 35818) is in the port complex.

TANGKOKO-BATUANGAS DUA SAUDARA NATURE RESERVE

Tangkoko is one of the most impressive and accessible nature reserves in Indonesia, and includes some coastline and coral gardens offshore. About 30km from Bitung, the 8800 hectares are home to black macaques, cuscus and tarsiers, maleo birds and endemic red-knobbed hornbills, among other fauna, and rare types of rainforest flora. Tangkoko is also home to a plethora of midges, called *gonones*, which bite and leave victims furiously scratching for days afterwards. Always wear long trousers, tucked into thick socks, and take covered shoes. Sadly, parts of the park are falling victim to encroachment by local communities.

To enter the park, you need a permit from the KSDA (National Parks) field office in Batuputih, which costs 20,000Rp. The office can organise knowledgeable guides to lead you along designated hiking trails (about 6km each) to view wildlife, and boat trips to nearby islands to see the preserved nesting grounds of maleo. The KSDA office (National Parks office; ☎ 0431-862688; fax 864296; Jl Babe Palar) in Manado is a good source of information, and worth visiting before heading to Tangkoko.

TARSIERS

If you're visiting Sulawesi's Tangkoko-Batuangas Dua Saudara Nature Reserve or Lore Lindu National Park, keep your eyes peeled for something looking back at you: a tiny nocturnal primate known as a tarsier. These creatures are recognisable by their eyes, which are literally larger than their stomachs, so big in fact that they cannot rotate them within their sockets. Luckily their heads can be rotated nearly 360 degrees so their range of vision isn't compromised. Tarsiers also have huge sensitive ears, which can be retracted and unfurled, and disproportionately long legs, which they use to jump distances 10 times their body length. They use their anatomical anomalies to catch small insects. Tarsiers live in groups of up to eight, and communicate with what sounds like high-pitched singing. They are found only in some rainforests of Indonesia and the Philippines.

You could take a day trip from Manado with your own transport, but it's worth staying in, or near, the park so you can hike at dawn and/or dusk – easily the best times to see the wildlife. There are several basic losmen in Batuputih village – the best is probably **Mama Roos** (mamaroos@eudoramail.com; r incl meals 100,000Rp). Inside the park you can stay at **Ranger Homestay** (r 75,000Rp). If you have a tent, you can camp on the black-sand beach.

The **Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort** (☎ 0431-838185; www.pulisanresort-sulawesi.com; s/d bungalows incl meals from €27/35), located just to the north of the Tangkoko nature reserve, is an idyllic base to explore the region, dive into pristine waters, go bird-watching, hike or just take it easy. Boat trips to the national park are available and there is a beautiful stretch of sand here.

The main entrance is at Batuputih. From Manado, take a bus to Bitung, get off at Girian and catch a *mikrolet* to Batuputih. Some of the dive centres and hotels in and around Manado also run day trips to the park.

SANGIR-TALAUD ISLANDS

☎ 0432

Strewn across the sea between Indonesia and the southern Philippines are the volcanic island groups of Sangir and Talaud. There are 77 islands, of which 56 are inhabited. The main islands in the Sangir group are Sangir Besar and Siau; the main islands in the Talaud group are Karakelong, Salibabu and Kaburuang. The capital of the group is Tahuna on Sangir Besar; the other major settlement is Lirung on Pulau Salibabu.

There's a **tourist office** (☎ 22219; Jl Tona) in Tahuna.

Sights

The islands offer dozens of unspoilt sandy beaches; a few crumbling Portuguese forts; several volcanoes to climb; many caves and waterfalls to explore; and some superb **diving and snorkelling** (bring your own gear). But like most wonderfully pristine places, the islands are not easy to reach.

Sleeping & Eating

Rainbow Losmen (r 55,000Rp) Located further south along the coast from Tahuna in nearby Tamoko, this is a simple, friendly establishment in a pretty village.

Hotel Nasional (☎ 21185; Jl Makaampo 58; Tahuna; s/d with fan 50,000/75,000Rp, with air-con from 90,000/120,000Rp; a) Head here for a range of decent rooms, plus the best restaurant in Tahuna.

Hotel Victory Veronica (☎ 21494; Jl Raramenusa 16; Tahuna; r with fan/air-con 60,000/90,000Rp; a) The smartest place anywhere on the islands. It also has the decent **Deniest Coffee Shop**.

Penginapan Chindy (s/d around 30,000/45,500Rp) and **Penginapan Sederhana** (s/d around 30,000/45,500Rp) are both on Lirung, but don't expect too much luxury or privacy.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Twice a week, Merpati flies from Manado to Naha, which is about 20km from Tahuna; and on to Melanguane, which is near Lirung in the Talaud group. There's a **Merpati office** (Merpati Nusantara Airlines; ☎ 21037; Jl Makaampo) in Tahuna.

BOAT

Travelling by boat will give you a look at the stunning set of volcanic islands along the way. From Bitung (near Manado), the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* stops at Tahuna and Lirung once every two weeks. Pelni boats are far more comfortable than the other options, such as the *Pulo Teratai* and the *Agape Star*, which sail between Manado and Lirung (15 hours), often stopping in Tahuna (11 hours), every one or two days. Book at the boat offices near the port in Manado.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon the **Ratu Maria** (☎ 0431-855851) makes the overnight trip from Manado to Siau (55,000Rp) and Tahuna (93,000Rp).

Also from Manado, small, slow and uncomfortable boats leave every day or two for Tahuna and Lirung. Tickets are available from the stalls outside the port.

The seas can get quite rough during the high wind of October to April.

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