

# Indonesian (Bahasa) Familiarization



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# COUNTRY PROFILE

## Introduction

Located in Southeast Asia, the Republic of Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago country. Its more than 17,000 islands straddle the Equator, sweeping in a vast arc from the Malay Peninsula to the eastern portion of New Guinea. The country is strategically located astride vital sea lanes in the region, and the shallow seas between many of the islands are a significant resource of offshore petroleum, natural gas, and other minerals.

Indonesia's approximately 242 million people make it the world's fourth largest nation. To say that its ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity is great is an understatement. There are about 300 ethnic groups that make up Indonesian society, and again as many languages and dialects.



DoD image  
Children in Aceh

While the majority of Indonesians are Muslim, there are also Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and animists, whose forms of worship, customs, and lifestyles have been influencing each other for centuries. It's no surprise that the country's motto is "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" (Old Javanese/Kawi: "Unity in Diversity").

In recent years, this religious and racial diversity has caused unrest in parts of the country, setting Muslims against Christians in particular. Two of these battles—in the Maluku Islands and on Sulawesi—developed into full-scale civil wars. On Java and other islands, deep-rooted anti-Chinese sentiment surfaced in violence in 1998 and continues to this day. Indonesia has also suffered under the separatist struggles of two of its provinces: Aceh, in North Sumatra, and Papua.

After four decades of authoritarianism, Indonesia held its first direct presidential elections on July 5, 2004. Retired General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won in a runoff a few months later, achieving 60.6% of the vote. 76.6% of voters participated—a total of roughly 117 million people—making Indonesia's the largest and most complex single-day election in the world.

Under President Yudhoyono, the fledgling, popularly-elected government is working to reduce unemployment and poverty, and there are already signs that Indonesia's overall economic picture is improving. Still, Indonesia faces a number of other ongoing challenges, including terrorism, human rights abuses, environmental issues, and piracy.

## Area

Indonesia is bound by Malaysia and the South China Sea to the northwest, Papua New Guinea to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the northeast, and the Indian Ocean to the southwest. The total area of Indonesia is just under 2 million km<sup>2</sup> (736,000 mi.<sup>2</sup>), or about three times the size of Texas. Only about 6,000 of the country's estimated 17,508 islands are inhabited.

The country's five main islands, Sumatra, Kalimantan (60% of Borneo), Java, Sulawesi (Celebes), and Papua, account for 90% of the total land area, and each island has its own coastal and mountain regions. There are also 30 significant smaller islands, such as Bali and Timor.



Courtesy of wikipedia.org  
Indonesian provinces

The Malacca Strait between Sumatra and West Malaysia is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, and it has long been plagued by pirates. About half the world's oil passes through these waters. Since the tsunami of December 2004, which decimated Aceh (northern Sumatra) and killed more than 200,000 people, the incidences of piracy have dropped. Despite this, Indonesia's waters remain the most pirate-infested in the world.

The volcanic nature of the islands has created a landscape of tall, steep mountains covered in the green of rice terraces or rainforest. Notably, Indonesia has the world's second-largest forest area after Brazil, and it accounts for about 10% of the world's remaining tropical forest.

The majority of Indonesia's forests are located on the outer islands, covering about 55% of the country's total land area, but this figure is dropping. Cultivation and logging, both legal and illegal, have reduced Indonesia's forests by 40% since 1950. On Java and Bali, which have the highest population density, only small portions of original forest remain.

## Climate

Indonesia has an equatorial climate: tropical, hot, and humid, though the highlands are more moderate. The country's two seasons are influenced by the surrounding seas and determined by the monsoons. The rainy season runs from November to March, with the heaviest rainfall occurring in the mountains (up to 240 in., or 6,100 mm, a year) and the western coast of Sumatra. Relative humidity averages 80% all year round and thunderstorms are frequent. In Jakarta, the average annual temperature ranges from 23°C (73°F) to 33°C (91°F) all year.

Seismically active, most of the country lies on “the Ring of Fire,” a zone of volcanic activity that accounts for 75% of the world's active and dormant volcanoes. Historically, more destructive eruptions have occurred in Indonesia than anywhere else in the world. Earthquakes are also common. In December 2004, an undersea quake measuring 9.15 in magnitude and lasting nearly 10 minutes, occurred off the coast of western Sumatra, triggering the deadly tsunami that hit Aceh.



© Jan W. Bruggink  
Indonesia has many active volcanoes

## Biodiversity

Indonesia is one of the two most biologically diverse countries on the planet, harboring 11% of the world's plant species, 10% of its mammal species, and 16% of its bird species. With 40,000 species of flowering plants, including 3,000 trees and 5,000 orchids, Indonesia has a greater variety of flora than the tropical regions of Africa or the Americas. The majority of these species live in the country's extensive rainforests.



Courtesy of wikipedia.org  
Wallace Line

The “Wallace Line,” a zoological demarcation between Asian and Australian flora and fauna, divides Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> To the west of this line, the Asian animal community includes the rhinoceros, elephant, tiger, tapir, orangutan, and various species of gibbons and monkeys. To the east, Australian types include various species of cockatoo, birds of paradise, the echidna, and the kangaroo.

Many species are specific to a single island, or group.

The orangutan is found only on Sumatra and Kalimantan; the tiger, on Sumatra and Java; the wild ox, on Java and Borneo; the proboscis monkey, only on Borneo; the elephant, the tapir, and the siamang (black gibbon) are found only on Sumatra. The world's largest lizard, and the national animal of Indonesia, the Komodo Dragon, lives on Komodo Island, in the Lesser Sunda Islands.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107634.html>

## History

By the time of the European Renaissance, the islands of Java and Sumatra had already enjoyed a 1,000-year heritage of advanced civilization spanning two major empires. From the 7<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya flourished on Sumatra. At its peak, the Srivijaya Empire reached as far as West Java and the Malay Peninsula. By the 14th century, the Hindu Kingdom of Majapahit had risen in eastern Java. Gadjah Mada, the empire's chief minister from 1331 to 1364, succeeded in unifying most of what is now modern Indonesia.

The spread of Islam and the rise of the Islamic states along the northern coast of Java brought the Majapahit era to an end by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, began competing with the Portuguese and the English for the archipelago's trade. Exploiting the weakness of the small kingdoms that had developed after the decline of the Majapahit, the Dutch began to colonize Indonesia.

During the 18th century, the Dutch East India Company introduced coffee and other new crops to Java. They also expanded their control to other regions of the archipelago. The only exception was East Timor, which remained under Portugal until 1975. During 300 years of Dutch rule, the Dutch developed the Netherlands East Indies into one of the world's richest colonial possessions.

The Indonesian independence movement gained strength over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1945, a group of nationalists, led by Ahmed Sukarno (later Indonesia's first president) and Mohammad Hatta, proclaimed independence and established the Republic of Indonesia. After four years of conflict, the Dutch transferred sovereignty to the federal Indonesian government. A dispute over the western half of New Guinea (Papua) continued for another 20 years.

Indonesia quickly adopted a new constitution providing for a parliamentary system of government. In 1959, after unsuccessful rebellions on several islands, President Sukarno imposed an authoritarian regime. Over the next six years, he gathered the support of the Indonesian Communist Party, whose influence was growing. Within six years, however, right-wing forces led by Major General Suharto took control of the country in a brutal, year-long campaign.



White House image  
Suharto, 1998

In early 1967, a provisional assembly named him acting president. General Suharto was formally selected a year later by the Indonesian assembly, and he held a tight grip on Indonesia over the next 30 years.

On the heels of the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis that caused riots and protests throughout Indonesia, Suharto stepped down. What followed was a series of democratic reforms, including free elections, a free press, and removing the army from politics.

In 1999, East Timor was allowed to choose between autonomy and independence through a direct ballot. Some 98% of registered voters cast their ballots, voting overwhelmingly for independence over continued integration with Indonesia. In a wave of violence after the referendum, pro-Indonesian militants killed many Timorese. The two countries continue to negotiate boundary issues today. The traumatic separation of East Timor from Indonesia, and subsequent events in East and West Timor, strained Indonesia's relations with the international community.

### **Government**

In 2002, the Indonesian assembly amended the constitution to provide for the direct election, by popular vote, of the president and vice president. Two years later, retired General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won the presidency in a runoff election in which nearly 80% of eligible voters—a total of about 117 million people—participated.

Reformist Yudhoyono is working to alleviate problems facing the country today, including poverty, terrorism, and corruption, while setting in motion plans for improving the investment climate and resolving armed separatist movements. There are signs of success. In August 2005, the Indonesian government signed a peace accord that ended a 30-year, pro-independence insurgency in Aceh, in northwestern Sumatra. There is hope that the treaty signifies a new era of stability and security in the country.

But there is still much to be done. Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population, has been hit by a series of bombings since 2002. The regional terrorist group, *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), which has links to al-Qaeda, and advocates establishing an Islamic state across much of Southeast Asia, is believed to be behind the bombings. In May 2005, the U.S. Department of State issued a travel warning to U.S. citizens, discouraging all “non-essential” travel to the country.

### **Ethnic Groups**

Indonesia ranks as the fourth most populous nation in the world after China, India, and the United States. The total population of Indonesia is 241,973,879 (July 2005 est.) with a growth rate of 1.5 % per year. The population density is 127 people per square km (327 people per sq mi.) (2005 est.)<sup>2</sup>



© Henry Richhardson  
Lani people, West Papua

There are around 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia. The major groups are Javanese (45%), Sundanese (14%), Madurese (7.5%), and coastal Malays (7.5%).<sup>3</sup> Indonesia has over 500 languages and dialects as well. Bahasa Indonesian, used in this guide, is the official language, and it is widely spoken throughout the country.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107634.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107634.html>

## RELIGION



Courtesy of sxc.hu  
Muslim girl

In Indonesia, 88% of the population is Muslim, 5% is Protestant, 3% is Catholic, 2% is Hindu, and 1% is Buddhist. The remainder falls into smaller groups, including traditional indigenous religions, other Christian groups, and Judaism.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of the inhabitants in most parts of Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and North Maluku are Muslim. Christians live in the eastern part of the country, in the areas of North Sulawesi, North Maluku, Papua, and East Nusa Tenggara. There also are significant Christian populations in North Sumatra (mostly Protestant), West Kalimantan (mostly Catholic), Central Kalimantan (mostly Protestant), and Java, particularly in the major cities. Many urban ethnic Chinese citizens adhere to Christian faiths or combine Christianity with Buddhism or Confucianism.

Many of the country's Hindus live in Bali. They account for more than 90% of the population in that region. Buddhists in the country are divided into adherents of the Mahayana (about 70%) and Theravada traditions. Sixty percent of the Buddhists are Chinese.

### Exchange #1: At a religious event

	Transliteration	Indonesian
<b>Soldier:</b> What is this event about?	aada achaara aapa inee?	Ada acara apa ini?
<b>Indonesian:</b> It is <i>haul</i> [the birthday of the late] Kyai Ali.	inee hawl kyaay 'alee.	Ini haul Kyai Ali.
<b>Soldier:</b> May I join in?	boley saaya eekoot?	Boleh saya ikut?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Sure, but you have to dress well.	boley, taapee aanda haaroos berpaakyan raapee.	Boleh, tapi Anda harus berpakaian rapi.

### Going to a Mosque

Muslim men and women pray in the same mosque, but in different sections/parts. The same custom applies to seating at a wedding or party. Men are expected to sit on the male side of the room. The women sit apart from them. It is best to follow Islamic customs when entering a mosque.

Show tolerance to Muslim women and girls who are wearing head scarves or *jilbab*. Do not make fun of them. Although Indonesian Muslims are moderate, of late there has been a tendency for people to be more strict about how they dress.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107634.html>



### Exchange #2: Going to a mosque

<b>Soldier:</b> May I go to Istiqlal Mosque?	aapa saaya boley ke maasjid <i>Istiqlal</i> ?	Apa saya boleh ke masjid <i>Istiqlal</i> ?
<b>Indonesian:</b> You may. Do you want to pray?	boley, aapa anda maw saalaat?	Boleh, apa Anda mau shalat?
<b>Soldier:</b> No, just to look around.	teedak, haanya meleehat-leehat saaja.	Tidak, hanya melihat-lihat saja.
<b>Indonesian:</b> You may, but don't forget to take off your shoes before going into the mosque.	boley, taapee jangan loopa meleppaas sepaatoo kalaw maw maasook maasjid.	Boleh, tapi jangan lupa melepas sepatu kalau mau masuk masjid.

### Exchange #3: Entering a mosque

<b>Soldier:</b> Peace upon you.	as-salaamu 'alaykum.	Assalamu'alaikum.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Where are you going?	aanda maw kumaana?	Anda mau kemana?
<b>Soldier:</b> I am going to enter the ____, may I?	saaya eengeen maasook ____, boleykaa?	Saya ingin masuk ____, bolehkah?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Please, come in.	seelaakaan.	Silakan.

### Discussing Religion

Although atheism possibly exists in Indonesia, do not say that you are an atheist. This may be offensive to Indonesian Muslims. Never try to convert a Muslim to Christianity. The subject of religion is generally best avoided.

If you read the Bible, do so discreetly. You do not want to be seen as someone who wants conflict between Islam and Christianity. If you wear a cross, keep it hidden when you are talking to Muslims.



DoD image  
Villagers in Sumatra

Identification by religion is common and even the government puts the religious affiliation on citizens' IDs.

### Religious Holidays

Religion plays a dominant role in the daily life of Indonesians. Religious instruction begins in elementary school. Many religious feast days belonging to different religions are considered national holidays.

#### Exchange #4: What is the holiday today?

<b>Soldier:</b> Is today a holiday?	aapakaa haaree inee leeboor?	Apakah hari ini libur?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes, today is the? <i>Maulid</i> (the birthday) of the prophet Muhammad.	benar, haaree inee aadala mawlid naabee moohaamad.	Benar, hari ini adalah Maulid nabi Muhammad.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes, today is Easter.	benar, haaree inee aadala paaskaa.	Benar, hari ini adalah Paskah.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes, today is <i>Galungan</i> (a Hindu holy day).	benar, haaree inee haaree raaya galoongan.	Benar, hari ini hari raya Galungan.
<b>Indonesia:</b> Yes, today is <i>Imlek</i> (Chinese new year).	benar, haaree inee tahoon baaroo imlek.	Benar, hari ini Tahun Baru Imlek.

#### Friday Prayers

Fridays are considered holy days. Muslims will go to the mosque to pray. If possible, conduct your business on other days.

People of other religious faiths may attend Muslim religious events, but they must comply with Muslim customs. Women are required to cover their hair with a scarf.



Courtesy of sxc.hu  
Mosque interior, Jakarta

#### Exchange #5: Friday prayers

<b>Soldier:</b> Where are you going?	maw ke maana?	Mau ke mana?
<b>Indonesian:</b> I'm going to Friday prayers.	maw sembaayaang joom'at.	Mau sembahyang Jumat.

#### Mudik

At the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, Indonesian Muslims go home to visit their families and relatives. This busy travel season is called *mudik* in Indonesian. It causes congestion for all types of transportation, whether by land, air, or water. It is considered the second-largest migration of people around the globe annually after the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). Many employers give their staff new clothes and a full month's salary for the time they spend at home.

#### Exchange #6: Mudik

<b>Soldier:</b> Where are you going?	maw pergee ke maana?	Mau pergi ke mana?
<b>Indonesian:</b> I am going to see my relatives back home.	saaya maw moodeek.	Saya mau mudik.
<b>Soldier:</b> Where do your relatives live?	dee maana keluarga anda?	Di mana keluarga Anda?

# TRADITIONS

## Customs and Etiquette

Customs in Indonesia vary from place to place and from one ethnic group to another. It is best to learn from the local inhabitants.

It is customary for Indonesians to greet one another when passing on the narrow streets. At a greater distance, acknowledgment is made with at least a nod.

### Exchange #7: Saying hello to someone

<b>Indonesian:</b> Hello, where are you going?	haalo, maw ke maana?	Halo, mau ke mana?
<b>Soldier:</b> Hello, I am going over there.	haalo, saaya maw ke sana.	Halo, saya mau ke sana.

Instead of the usual greetings like *selamat pagi* (Good Morning) when passing each other, it is also acceptable to ask if someone has eaten.

### Exchange #8: Hello, have you eaten?

<b>Indonesian:</b> Hello, have you eaten?	haalo, soodaa makaan?	Halo, sudah makan?
<b>Soldier:</b> Yes I have. And you?	soodaa. dan anda?	Sudah. Dan Anda?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes I have.	ya, saaya soodaa makaan.	Ya, saya sudah makan.
<b>Soldier:</b> Bye.	ayo, maree.	Ayo, mari.



© Tom Cockrem  
A friendly wave in Yogyakarta

It is customary, and not considered overly friendly, for Indonesians to greet each other with a smile. It establishes good rapport with everyone around you. When you would like to ask a favor of someone, it is advisable to begin with casual conversation for about 10 to 15 minutes, either in person or on the phone. Once an agreeable atmosphere is reached, then it would be appropriate to ask for the favor, followed by an expression of your gratitude. *A direct request is considered rude even if you are in a hurry.*

### Exchange #9: May I ask you a favor?

<b>Soldier:</b> May I ask you for a favor?	beesaakaa anda membaantu saaya?	Bisakah Anda membantu saya?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Sure, what do you need?	oh, beesa, anda perloo aapa?	Oh, bisa, Anda perlu apa?
<b>Soldier:</b> I need to meet the village leader.	saaya perloo bertemoo kepaala deysa.	Saya perlu bertemu Kepala Desa.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Please follow me.	seelaakan, eekutee saaya.	Silakan, ikuti saya.

## Greetings and Shaking Hands

When receiving things or shaking hands, use only your right hand. If left handed, you may use both hands to receive things or to greet someone. While shaking hands, you may greet and ask the name of the other person.

In general, it is best to use your right hand when interacting with people in any way, but especially when handling food. The left hand is considered unclean.

It is okay to shake hands with a woman, but a nod is perhaps better. In certain areas of Indonesia, the men may be very protective of their female relations. Although the Indonesians are more easy-going than Muslims in the Middle East, discretion is advised. In shaking hands with a woman, it is more polite to offer your hand first.



© photos.com  
Muslim girls

### Exchange #10: Handshakes and greetings

<b>Soldier:</b> Good morning sir, how are you? My name is David, and yours? (handshake)	selaamaat paagee, pak, aapa kabaar? naama saaya david, dan aanda?	Selamat pagi, Pak, apa kabar? Nama saya David, dan Anda?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Fine, thanks, my name is Budi.	ba-eek, tereema kaasee, naama saaya boodee.	Baik, terima kasih, nama saya Budi.

Part of the stigma surrounding handshaking between men and women stems from Muslim prayer practices. Before prayers, Muslims go through a rather long cleansing ritual that involves washing the head, ears, face, hands, and legs while reciting quietly some passages from the Quran (Koran). This process is called *wudhu*.

*Wudhu* is performed every time a Muslim is preparing for any of the five daily prayers. When someone has completed a *wudhu*, he or she cannot touch someone of the opposite sex. If they touch accidentally, while exchanging items for instance, they must do the *wudhu* all over again. This does not apply to members of the same sex, nor does it apply to members of other religions in Indonesia.

### Exchange #11: Shaking hands with the opposite sex

<b>Male Soldier:</b> Good afternoon, Ma'am, how are you? (reaches out to shake hands)	selaamaat see-ang, boo, aapa kabaar?	Selamat siang, Bu, apa kabar?
<b>Indonesian Female:</b> Fine, thanks. Sorry, I have done <i>wudhu</i> . (refuses to shake hands)	ba-eek, tereema kaasee. ma'aaf, saaya soodaa woodoo.	Baik, terima kasih. Maaf, saya sudah wudhu!

### Entering a Building

When entering a building or when approaching someone in Indonesia, please remove your sunglasses. It is very rude to wear sunglasses when you are talking to an Indonesian. The Indonesians will perceive you as an evil person who is trying to hide something. This will make them mistrustful and uncooperative.

### Exchange #12: Take off your sunglasses

<b>Indonesian:</b> Take off your sunglasses!	booka kachaamataa heetaamya!	Buka kacamata hitamnya!
<b>Soldier:</b> Sorry.	ma'aaf.	Maaf.



© UNESCO.org  
Men on Sulawesi

### Sitting

When talking to people, try to be at the same level as they are. For example, if the person is standing, you should stand. If the person is seated, you should also sit.

If the people you are trying to approach are sitting on the ground, ask if you can talk to them. If they say it is okay, you should sit down at their level in a friendly manner. If they are sitting on the ground, you should sit on the ground, too.

### Tipping and “Cigarette Money”

It is customary to tip people, especially men who have helped you in some way, by giving them some money, while thanking them by saying “*Terima kasih. Ini uang rokok.*” The second phrase literally means “Here is some cigarette money.” Many people are also glad to be given American cigarettes, although Indonesia boasts fine clove cigarettes called *rokok kretek*. Most Indonesian males (around 90%) are smokers, but you will very seldom find a woman who smokes, except for movie stars and celebrities.

### Exchange #13: Cigarette money

<b>Soldier:</b> Thank you. Here is some cigarette money.	tereema kaasee, pak. inee oo-ang rokok.	Terima kasih, Pak. Ini uang rokok.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Thank you, sir.	tereema kaasee, pak.	Terima kasih, Pak.

### Tipping in restaurants

In most large restaurants, Indonesians tip the waiter, but not always exactly 15% of the bill. Some of the restaurants may include a 10% service tax in your bill. So ask, or read carefully, before you pay.

**Exchange #14: Ordering in a restaurant**

<b>Waiter:</b> Here is the menu, sir.	inee daftar menoo, pak!	Ini daftar menu, Pak!
<b>Soldier:</b> I would like some rice and fried chicken.	saaya maw makaan naasee pootee dan aayam goreng.	Saya mau makan nasi putih dan ayam goreng.
<b>Waiter:</b> What would you like to drink, sir?	menoomya aapa pak?	Minumnya apa, Pak ?
<b>Soldier:</b> A coke with ice.	es dan koka-kola.	Es dan coca-cola.

**Exchange #15: Buying a snack**

<b>Soldier:</b> Do you sell snacks?	aapa anda menjuwaal maakanaan kecheel?	Apa Anda menjual makanan kecil?
<b>Waiter:</b> There are cakes and egg rolls, Sir.	aada koowey dan loompeeya, pak.	Ada kue dan lumpia, Pak.
<b>Soldier:</b> Yes, I want one cake and two egg rolls.	ya, saaya maw, saatoo koowey dan doowa loompeeya.	Ya, saya mau, satu kue dan dua lumpia.

**Exchange #16: Is tax and service included?**

<b>Soldier:</b> The bill, please.	meenta bonya, maas!	Minta bonnya, Mas!
<b>Waiter:</b> Here you are, Sir.	inee, pak!	<i>Ini, Pak!</i>
<b>Soldier:</b> Is the tax and service included?	aapa inee soodaa termasuk pajaak dan servees?	Apa ini sudah termasuk pajak dan servis?
<b>Waiter:</b> Yes, sir!	ya, pak!	Ya, Pak!
<b>Waiter:</b> Not yet, sir!	beloom, pak!	Belum, Pak!

**Does ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes’?**

Sometimes when you are talking with an Indonesian and ask him something like, “Are you a farmer?” he may say “Yes.” when he means “No, I am not.” This “yes” comes from a desire to agree with what you are saying, that is, as a pleasant way to deal with your presence and inquiries. Make sure you are clear about what “yes” really means.



© Tom Cockrem  
Antique dealer in Surabaya

Look at the following exchange. There are two ways of understanding the Indonesian’s “yes.” It could mean that he is the owner of the vehicle, or that he agrees with you that he is not the owner.

**Exchange #17: Yes?**

<b>Soldier:</b> Aren’t you the owner of this vehicle?	aapakaa anda bookaan pemileek kendaara-aan inee?	Apakah Anda bukan pemilik kendaraan ini?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes.	ya	Ya.

## The Arisan

A unique way for people to obtain quick cash is by organizing an *arisan*. This is a monthly social gathering of friends and relatives, most commonly women, who chip in money for a lottery-style prize drawing. The winner gets all the money but has to hold the next *arisan*.

### Exchange #18: Arisan

<b>Soldier:</b> Why are these women gathering here?	mengaapa paara eeboo inee berkumpul dee sinee?	Mengapa para ibu ini berkumpul di sini?
<b>Indonesian:</b> They are attending their monthly meeting called <i>arisan</i> .	mereka sedang bertemo sekaalee seboolaan untook aareesaan.	Mereka sedang bertemu sekali sebulan untuk arisan.
<b>Soldier:</b> Who can participate in an <i>arisan</i> ?	siyaapa boley ikoot aareesaan?	Siapa boleh ikut arisan?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Anyone, usually women.	siyaapa saaja, biyasaanya perempuan.	Siapa saja, biasanya perempuan.



© Bruce Briscoe  
A Balinese family plans a wedding

## Courtship and Weddings

When a young man has found a suitable mate, his whole family will visit the young woman's parents and her relatives to propose marriage. A wedding proposal is a big occasion for everyone involved. This is called *melamar*.

### Exchange #19: Melamar

<b>Soldier:</b> What is the occasion?	aada aapakaa inee?	Ada apakah ini?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Ali's parents are asking Siti to be their daughter-in-law.	orang tuwa 'alee melaamar sitee untook menjaadee menaantoo mereka	Orang tua Ali melamar Siti untuk menjadi menantu mereka.
<b>Soldier:</b> Why doesn't Ali propose to Siti directly?	mengaapa 'alee teedak melaamar sitee sechaara laangsoon?	Mengapa Ali tidak melamar Siti secara langsung?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes, he did. But in tradition, the parents of a groom to be have to propose formally.	ya, sooda. tetaapee daalam traadisee orang tuwa chalon mempalaay preeyaa haaroos melaamar sechaara rasmee	Ya, sudah. Tetapi dalam tradisi, orangtua calon mempelai pria harus melamar secara resmi.

## Perkawinan

An Indonesian wedding (*perkawinan*) always involves a large number of guests. There may be several hundred to a thousand. A family will sell cattle, land, or even crops while still green in order to obtain the money for a big wedding.

### Exchange #20: Wedding

<b>Soldier:</b> What is this tent for?	tenda inee untook aapa?	Tenda ini untuk apa?
<b>Indonesian:</b> For a big wedding tomorrow.	untook perkaaweenaan besaar beysok.	Untuk perkawinan besar besok.
<b>Soldier:</b> Who is getting married?	siyaapakaa yaang aakan meneekaa?	Siapakah yang akan menikah?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Ali and Siti.	'alee dan sitee.	Ali dan Siti.



© Tom Cockrem  
Father and sons in Bintan

## Childbirth

Among the Javanese people, when a woman is seven months pregnant, the family will carry out a *mitoni* (the celebration of the seventh month of the fetus). This ceremony is conducted for the well-being of the unborn. Usually this is done among the women. After taking a shower, the pregnant woman will be dressed in seven layers of different batiks. This is followed by a *selamatan*, which is a ceremonial meal, not a party.

Childbirth is a significant event for an Indonesian family. The afterbirth is very often buried in the front yard and marked with a lit lantern. It is considered sacred, and should be left alone. They believe that the afterbirth is a sister or brother of the baby, therefore should be given a proper burial.

### Exchange #21: Kelahiran

<b>Soldier:</b> What is that light over there?	eetoo laampoo aapa, dee saana?	Itu lampu apa, di sana?
<b>Indonesian:</b> It is where they buried the afterbirth.	eetoo koobooraan aaree-aaree.	Itu kuburan ari-ari.

## Tedak siten

When a Javanese baby touches the ground for the very first time, the women will carry out a *tedak siten* ceremony. The infant will be set on the floor near an array of objects such as a mirror, a comb, a piece of paper, or other small objects. When the infant reaches for one object, a prediction is made about how he or she will make a living as a grown-up. After this ceremony the baby can touch the ground, and the evil eye will not harm it.



## **Ngruwat**

When a Javanese family has only one son, it is imperative that the parents hire a shadow puppet theater performer or *dalang* to perform a *ngruwat* play, to safeguard their only son against the evil eye. The plays for *ngruwat* ceremonies are specific and special.



© photos.com  
Shadow puppets

## **Khitanan**

When an Indonesian Muslim boy turns 11 or 12 years old, he will be circumcised and the ceremony may be a big event in the village or city. The parents will hire a band, and a couple of lambs will be slaughtered for the celebratory meal. After this event, the boy is considered to be a young man. The circumcision can be performed by a physician or by a *dukun sunat*. Sometimes the government will conduct a large scale circumcision ceremony for hundreds of youngsters whose parents cannot afford the expense.

## **Tukang pijat**

The *tukang pijat* is a massage therapist. Almost every Indonesian gets a *pijat* (massage) at least once a month. And it is usually performed for very little money by a very old or blind person in the village, who has no other way of making a living.

## **Dress Code --Male**

Dress decently and do not walk around barefoot. Generally, western clothing is acceptable, but avoid jeans and cutoffs.

## **Dress Code --Female**

It is better to avoid wearing miniskirts, shorts, or low-cut blouses. Do wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Dress conservatively. Wear just a little makeup. You can wear as much jewelry as you want. Avoid talking and laughing too loudly.

Muslims and Hindus consider a woman who is having her period unclean. Try not to enter mosques or Hindu temples when you are having your period.

## Do's and Don'ts

### Things you should do

- Greet people with a smile. When shaking hands, use only your right hand. It is okay to shake hands with a woman, but a nod is better. Discretion is advised since men may be very protective of their female relatives in many areas of Indonesia. When greeting a woman, it is more polite to offer your hand first.
- The accepted way to summon a person is to hold out your right hand and wave your fingers inwards. Use only your right hand for this gesture.
- Sit up straight, with your feet on the floor.

### Things you should not do

- Don't curl your index finger to ask somebody to come to you.
- Showing the fist with thumb protruding between the index and middle fingers is a very offensive sexual gesture. It is also a grave insult, and could start a fight.
- Never whistle at someone to ask them to come to you. By the way, it is considered very rude to whistle at women—even female American soldiers.
- You should never point at anything with your foot, as you might do if your hands are busy holding a box. In this situation, point with your chin instead.
- Indonesians will be offended if you sit so that the soles of your feet are showing. This is considered to be an insult. So don't sit with your legs crossed, and never sit with your feet up on a table. Also, do not slouch when sitting.
- Standing with your hands in your pockets is considered rude. Standing with your hands on your hips is considered arrogant. People will also think you are arrogant if you talk or laugh too loudly.
- Don't swear at people, even in English. People who don't speak much English may still recognize English curse words and be offended.
- Do not show affection anywhere in public. It is acceptable to chat with children up to about nine years old. Be cautious about talking to any female members of an Indonesian family who are above that age. Indonesians are very protective of their female family members.
- It is considered an insult to put your hand on somebody's head. This is true for children too.



© DLIFLC  
This gesture is considered very offensive

## URBAN LIFE

### Street Vendors

Street vendors are the heart of Indonesian society. Without them, the streets would be quiet and deserted. They use certain calls to announce their wares; e.g., sounds like *brood-i* for bread, *yur-yur-yur* for vegetables man, *bloem-bloem* for flowers, *trik-trik-trik* for electrical services, or the sound of a wooden stick hitting a board for noodles. All of these sounds bring color to villages or cities. Street vendors keep the villages and cities alive – day and night.



© UNESCO.org  
Flower vendor

You might encounter a woman carrying a basket with many bottles in it. She is called a *jamu gendong* woman. She sells liquid root juices for medicinal purposes. Not only does she find the roots and leaves herself, she also grinds them every morning and carries them in a heavy basket as delicious herbal drinks, which she then sells to her customers.

In Indonesia there are a lot of pushcart vendors, called *kaki lima*. Literally this means “five legs”—the two wheels and the back stand of the car, plus the two legs of the vendor. Street vendors operate near the traditional markets and also along business streets.

### Shopping and Bargaining

Indonesians are accustomed to bargaining for prices regardless of whether the purchase is small or large. The expression “*boleh tawar*”—“Can I bargain?”—is very common. If the seller wants 1,000 rupiahs, you may want to offer half of that. Then you go up a little and wait for the seller to go down from his initial price. The bargaining may then continue until you both agree on the final price. However, bargaining is not normally done in the bigger stores and department stores.

#### Exchange #22: Shopping and bargaining #1

<b>Soldier:</b> How much is this?	berapa harganya?	Berapa harganya?
<b>Seller:</b> 15,000 rupiah, sir.	leema blaas reeboo roopeeya, pak!	Lima belas ribu rupiah, Pak!
<b>Soldier:</b> Can I bargain?	boleh tawar?	Boleh tawar?
<b>Seller:</b> Fixed price, sir!	harga paas, pak	Harga pas, Pak

### Exchange #23: Shopping and bargaining #2

<b>Soldier:</b> How much is this coca cola?	beraapa harga koka kola inee?	Berapa harga coca cola ini?
<b>Seller:</b> 10,000 rupiah sir.	sepooloo reeboo roopeeya, pak!	Sepuluh ribu rupiah, Pak!
<b>Soldier:</b> Do you have a cold one?	aada yaang, dingeen?	Ada yang dingin?
<b>Seller:</b> Yes, here you are!	aada inee, pak	Ada, ini Pak!

### Exchange #24: Shopping and bargaining #3

<b>Soldier:</b> How much is the blue one?	beraapa harga yaang biroo, eetoo?	Berapa harga yang biru itu?
<b>Seller:</b> 25,000 rupiah, sir.	doowa pooloo leema reeboo roopeeya, pak!	Dua puluh lima ribu rupiah, Pak!
<b>Soldier:</b> Do you have it in large size?	aada yaang ookooraan besaar?	Ada yang ukuran besar?
<b>Seller:</b> Yes, I do, sir!	aada, pak!	Ada, Pak!

### Infrastructure

The urban areas in Indonesia are quite modern, with paved or toll roads connecting them to other cities, with modern infrastructure such as internet cafes and shopping malls. Stores are filled with luxury products, cell phones, computers, radios, televisions, and other electronic gadgets. Supermarkets offer items from fresh fruit to electronic equipment. Most older cities, however, do not follow any zoning system. It can be rather difficult to find someone's address because of the winding roads, but nowadays good maps are available in bookstores for travelers.

### Currency

Check your paper currency. In smaller cities, most banks and tourist currency exchanges will not accept wrinkled bills. (This is not a problem in Jakarta.) They prefer crisp bills of recent issue. Some establishments consider a bill from 1996 to be old, and will refuse to exchange it for *rupiah* (the Indonesian currency).



© Tom Cockrem  
Becaks in Yogyakarta

### Transportation

Indonesia has many kinds of public transportation, such as trains, buses, and airplanes. Ordinary Indonesians use buses and trains to travel from one city to another. Nowadays, middle class Indonesians are able to travel by plane. Most people in the rural areas use *dokar* (horse-drawn carts) to get around. To haul things, they use *pedati*, the slower paced oxen-drawn carts.

For shorter distances and inner city transport there are taxicabs (Bluebird being the most reliable for foreigners), *becak* or *pedicabs*, *bajaj*, and small vans.

**Exchange #25: How long is the flight?**

<b>Soldier:</b> How long is the flight from Jakarta to Medan?	berapa laama penerbaangan daaree jakarta ke medaan?	Berapa lama penerbangan dari Jakarta ke Medan?
<b>Indonesian:</b> This is a one-and-a-half hour flight, sir.	saatoo stengaa jaam terbaang, pak!	Satu setengah jam terbang, Pak!

**Getting Around in Taxis**

Taxis are a very convenient mode of transportation in the city if you are in a rush. But be careful in choosing or calling one. The “Blue Bird” and “Silver Bird” taxi companies have good reputations. Try to call them by phone and they will pick you up wherever and whenever you need them. Other taxi firms may have rude drivers who like to speed and take advantage of you if you do not know the exact way to your destination. The following Indonesian expressions may be useful when dealing with taxi drivers.

**Exchange #26: Taking a taxi**

<b>Soldier:</b> I’d like to go to the US Embassy. How much do you charge?	tolong aantar saaya ke kedoota-aan Amereeka. berapa?	Tolong antar saya ke Kedutaan Amerika. Berapa?
<b>Driver:</b> It depends on the meter, Sir.	tergantung meteraanya, pak	Tergantung meterannya, Pak.
<b>Soldier:</b> Don’t speed, sir. Be careful!	jaangan ngeboot, ya. haatee – haatee!	Jangan ngebut, ya. Hati – hati !

**Exchange #27: How far?**

<b>Soldier:</b> How far from here?	berapa jawoo daaree sinee?	Berapa jauh dari sini?
<b>Driver:</b> Around eight kilometers, sir!	sekeetar delaapaan keelometer, pak!	Sekitar delapan kilo-meter, Pak!

**Downtown Jakarta**

The National Monument or MONAS (abbreviation of *Monumen Nasional*), is right in the center of the Jakarta. It's in the middle of a big square with fountains and lawns. The Merdeka Palace is on the north side of the square, the National Museum is on the west, and Gambir Railway Station and the Istiqlal Mosque are on the east.



Courtesy of sxc.hu  
Jakarta skyline

The United States diplomatic mission to Indonesia is headed by the Ambassador of the United States, who is the personal representative of the President. U.S. Foreign Service posts in Indonesia are the U.S. Mission in Jakarta, the Consulate General in Surabaya, and the Consular Agent in Bali.

### Exchange #28: Arriving at the U.S. embassy by taxi

<b>Soldier:</b> How much do you charge?	berapa?	Berapa?
<b>Driver :</b> Twenty thousand rupiah, Sir.	doowa pooloo reeboo roopeeya, pak	Dua puluh ribu Rupiah, Pak.
<b>Soldier:</b> This is twenty-three thousand rupiah, sir. Keep the change. Thank you!	inee doowa pooloo teega reeboo roopeeya, pak. aambeel kempaaleenya tereema kaasee	Dua puluh tiga ribu rupiah, Pak. Ambil kembalinya. Terima kasih.

### Traffic

Indonesia follows international traffic rules, but no one seems to pay attention to pedestrian crosswalks. So if you want to cross the street, it is better to use a bridge over the street than attempt to cross at the pedestrian crosswalk.

There will be children and panhandlers on every street corner. They may approach your car when you stop at a traffic light. A young man may play a short piece of music on his guitar or flute, just long enough for you to give him some change. It is advisable to always carry change in Rupiah 500 coins for them in a bowl near the driver's seat.

The streets are always noisy and crowded, and do not be surprised if you find yourself caught in a traffic jam. While waiting for traffic to move, peddlers on the streets may offer you bottled water and local snacks for your pleasure, or magazines and newspapers for you to read.



© Tom Cockrem  
Busy street in Yogyakarta

On some regular streets there will be bicyclists, small motorcycles, *bajaj*, and *becak* (a pedicab operated by a man pedaling behind where you sit). Chickens, goats, or ducks may cross your path and of course you are also sharing the street with children and adults who are going in the same direction. School children (both private and public) wear school uniforms, so it is easy to spot them.

### Traffic Jams

In big cities, you can avoid traffic jams by using the toll roads, which are a pleasure to drive on. Everything looks exactly like in the US. There are large green highway signs with white lettering, smooth roads with manned toll booths, and no chicken crossings for miles and miles. That is not yet the case for most roads in Indonesia.

Traffic jams are common in the large cities. Public transportation and motorists find themselves stranded in long lines during rush hours. It is advisable to listen to the local radio, like taxicab drivers do. There are advisories for drivers to avoid certain busy streets and thoroughfares in order to avoid traffic jams, or flooded areas when necessary. If you get in a car accident do not remain at the site. Go to the nearest US consulate and let your driver stay with the car until he settles matters with the police.

**Exchange #29: Traffic jam**

<b>Driver :</b> Traffic jam!	laaloo-leentas maachet!	Lalu-lintas macet!
<b>Soldier:</b> Can we go another route?	beesa chaaree jaalan laayn? <b>or</b> aadaa jaalan teekoos?	Bisa cari jalan lain? <b>or</b> Ada jalan tikus?
<b>Driver :</b> Yes, we can take a toll route. But, we need to pay, sir.	ya, keeta beesa aambeel jaalan tol. taapee haaroos baayar, pak.	Ya, kita bisa ambil jalan tol. Tapi harus bayar, Pak.
<b>Soldier:</b> No problem!	teedak aapa-aapa!	Tidak apa-apa!

**Exchange #30: Stopping at a checkpoint**

<b>Guard:</b> Please pull over! Open your trunk, please! May I see your ID?	staap – berhentee dooloo! tolong booka bagaaseenyaa! boleh saaya leehat taanda pengenaal aanda?	Stop – berhenti dulu! Tolong buka bagasinya! Boleh saya lihat tAnda pengenal Anda?
<b>Soldier:</b> Here you are, sir!	inee, seelaakaa, pak!	Ini, silakan, Pak!

## RURAL LIFE

Modern technology has brought many coveted items such as refrigerators, air conditioning units, large-screen televisions and satellite dishes to the cities. Many of these appliances have found their way into the homes of wealthy villagers as well.



© Bruce Briscoe  
Planting rice, Bali

Through shrewd diversification of their agribusiness, these farmers have also begun to enjoy the pleasures of modern technology. A farmer might build a fishing pond and earn money from anglers who come there to fish. Using that revenue, he would then also build a fish restaurant and a catering service for snacks and cakes in the compound. Overall, his farm would benefit greatly from various business activities.

Despite that, however, village dwellers tend to be more conservative in the way they dress, interact, and decorate their homes. Traditions are observed more carefully in the villages. People tend to help each other more. People respect and are loyal to their village elders, especially the religious elder called the *kyai*.

Women in the rural areas—and in some parts of the cities too—are expected to dress modestly and properly, with long sleeves, long skirts or long pants, and a head covering. Men have more freedom in their choice of clothing. Muslim men very often wear a black velvet hat or *pici* (pronounced peechee), or a white cap called a *songkok putih*.

### Important People in Villages

Older people command respect. This goes for all older people, especially the *kyai* (Muslim religious leader) and the *lurah* (village elder). A *camat* is an official village head. The latter is a government position, and these days it may be held by younger people. A *dukun* is a healer. He also merits respect.

Another person of importance in the society is a *Kepala RT*, or the head of the neighborhood association. He will walk the streets of the neighborhood to find out who has some problem with irrigation, or getting enough drinking water, or electricity for the family.

When you visit rural areas, it is best to find the village elder and ask for his help. You should meet him first and pay your respects. This is what everyone else does, and when people see that you know the rules, they tend to be more friendly.

### Exchange #31: Asking for somebody

<b>Soldier</b> : Is Mr. Ali in?	aapaka pak 'alee dee roomaa?	Apakah pak Ali ada di rumah?
<b>Indonesian</b> : No, he is not in, he is out.	teedak, deeya teedak aada dee roomaa, deeya seedaang keloowaar	Tidak, dia tidak ada di rumah, dia sedang keluar.



**Exchange #32: When will he be back?**

<b>Soldier:</b> When do you expect him to be back?	kapaan deeya aakaan poolaang?	Kapan dia akan pulang?
<b>Indonesian:</b> I do not know.	saaya teedak taahoo	Saya tidak tahu.

**Exchange #33: Asking for somebody**

<b>Soldier:</b> Do you know where he went?	aanda taahoo deeya pergeeke maana?	Anda tahu dia pergi ke mana?
<b>Indonesian:</b> I do not know.	saaya teedak taahoo	Saya tidak tahu.

**Exchange #34: Tell him I came by**

<b>Soldier:</b> Tell him I came by today.	tolong kaatakaan kepadanya, saaya dataang haaree inee	Tolong katakan kepadanya, saya datang hari ini.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Okay.	baayklaa	Baiklah.



© UNESCO.org  
Elderly man on Sulawesi

When you meet an Indonesian official, he may be busy at his job and may delegate someone else to take care of your business. He will give you a piece of paper, which is called *een kattabelletje* - a Dutch expression. In the note the official will have written, "Please escort this person and make sure his visit is worthwhile to him." This signed note tells everyone who reads it that they should take care of your needs immediately, and with the utmost respect and care.

**Staying in Rural Areas**

Life in the rural areas poses some practical problems for foreigners. It may be difficult to convert money from US Dollars into Rupiah, the Indonesian currency. Also, it is hard to find hotels except for local inns, which are called *penginapan* (pengeenaapaan). Sometimes these are called *losmen* (losmen). These provide adequate rooms with a separate community bath outside. You have to buy your own breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the small food stalls or *warung* (waaroung) nearby. Electricity is limited.

**Rural Clinics**

A village has a clinic for everyone called *puskesmas* or *pusat kesehatan masyarakat*. They provide low cost treatment for anyone who is sick. Many *puskesmas* are well staffed and well maintained.

## FAMILY LIFE

### Titles and Respect

Religion permeates all aspects of life for many Indonesians. Its influence plays a role in family interactions. Children are taught to pay special respect to their parents and to all elders. This is reflected in the form of address used for parents and other older people. Indonesians use *pak* (Mr.), *ibu* (Mrs.), *kakak* (elder sister), and *mas* (elder brother) before people's names. It is considered impolite to call an older person by his or her name alone.

### Exchange #35: Asking for somebody's name

<b>Soldier:</b> Are you Mr. Ali?	aapakaa anda pak 'alee?	Apakah Anda Pak Ali ?
<b>Soldier:</b> Are you Mrs. Tuti?	aapakaa anda boo tootee?	Apakah Anda Bu Tuti ?

### Boarding Schools

There are thousands of Islamic boarding schools located in the rural areas (mostly in Java). The headmaster of an Islamic boarding school, or *pondok pesantren*, is called the *kyai* and is the most respected and powerful individual among the villagers. Being in good favor with the *kyai* ensures your acceptance in the community.

### Exchange #36: Asking for the Islamic boarding school's headmaster

<b>Soldier:</b> What is the name of the <i>kyai</i> ?	siyaapa naama kyaayi pengasoohnya?	Siapa nama Kyai pengasuhnya ?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Kyai Ahmad	kyaayi ahmaad	Kyai Ahmad
<b>Soldier:</b> Can I meet pak kyai?	boleyka saaya bertemoo dengaan pak kyaayi?	Bolehkah saya bertemu dengan pak Kyai ?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Sure, you could talk to his staff first.	tentoo, tetaapee anda haaroos beechaara dooloo dengaan staafnya.	Tentu, tetapi Anda harus bicara dulu dengan stafnya.

### Finding Someone's House

When asking directions to find someone's house, it may be helpful to ask a child in the neighborhood, for the directions may be complicated. You might have to walk through other people's yards, two banana trees down, before reaching Mr. So-and-So's house on your right. A child could take you there a lot faster. He knows the man's house, but the house number and street name may not show on the map.



© Tom Cockrem  
A typical house in rural Indonesia

### Exchange #37: Asking the address

<b>Soldier:</b> Hey buddy (to a small boy) where is Mr. Amat's house?	deek, deek, dee maana roomaa pak aamat?	Dik, dik, di mana rumah pak Amat?
<b>Indonesian boy:</b> Over there.	dee saana	Di sana.
<b>Soldier:</b> Can you take me there?	beesaa antar saaya ke saana?	Bisa antar saya ke sana?
<b>Indonesian boy:</b> I can.	beesaa	Bisa
<b>Soldier:</b> Thank you.	tereema kaasee	Terima kasih

### Looking for a House

The house number is on the wall in front of the house, and the RT and RW numbers (the neighborhood association identification numbers) are printed in small numbers and letters somewhere on top of the main door. This is hard to spot from the main road. The house may be nestled under coconut trees, clusters of banana trees, or other plants. There may be an alley in front of the house, not found on the map, meandering through people's yards. If someone passes by while you are visiting, try to at least nod at them. People are very courteous to one another, and it is always good manners for you to follow suit.

### Spending the Night

It is customary for Indonesians to offer a bed for the night to visitors whom they trust. This is not a sexual offer by any means. If you accept, you must be on your best behavior and not trouble anyone in the household.



© Saudi Aramco World  
Dinner time in an Indonesian household

Your hosts will expect you to bathe in the morning and in the afternoon. Indonesians take baths twice a day; everyone does this. This is why you sometimes see babies or small children, their faces white with bath powder that has dried, being fed dinner in front of their houses. They just had a bath and are now being fed.

### Exchange #38: Spending the night

<b>Indonesian:</b> You are welcome to spend the night.	aanda beesaa mengeenaap	Anda bisa menginap.
<b>Soldier:</b> Oh, thank you.	o, tereema kaasee	Oh, terima kasih
<b>Indonesian:</b> We can depart from here at the crack of dawn.	keetaa beesaa berangkat-kaat faajaar daaree seenee	Kita bisa berangkat fajar dari sini.
<b>Soldier:</b> Okay, I will take a bath first.	okey, saaya maw maandee dooloo	Okay. Saya mau mandi dulu.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Go ahead, here is a towel and a soap.	silaakaan, inee handook daan saaboon	Silakan, ini handuk dan sabun.

## Bathing

*Mandi* means “bath.” You get a bucket, draw water from the well, and pour the water over yourself. Then you soap up. You rinse with more water from the well. Pat yourself dry, and then you can proceed to shave, using a bucket of water on a ledge.

In some houses there will be a tall tub (waist high). This is the family’s communal bath water. Do not get in it. You just get some water in a small plastic container, then pour the water over your body and wash with soap. Take more water from the tub with the plastic container and rinse off. Make sure you leave some water for the rest of the family, although someone will fill the tub back with water for the next bather. This tub is not for bathing: it is a reservoir containing the whole family’s bath water.

### Exchange #39: Taking a bath

<b>Soldier:</b> Where can I take a bath? Is there a lavatory?	dee maana saaya beesaa maandee? aapa aadaa kaakoos?	Di mana saya bisa mandi? Apa ada kakus?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Oh, there is – right here.	o, aadaa – dee seenee	Oh ada – di sini.
<b>Soldier:</b> Is there a towel and soap?	aadaa handook daan saaboon?	Ada handuk dan sabun?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes there are.	aadaa	Ada.
<b>Soldier:</b> Thank you.	tereema kaasee	Terima kasih.

## Laundry

Some Indonesians do their laundry by hand, some use machines, but when the electric current is low, that becomes problematic. In the rural areas, some people do their laundry with well water or at the rivers. Most people hang their laundry on a clothesline inside or outside the house.



© Saudi Aramco World  
Laundry drying in front of a house

Most big city Indonesians iron their clothes, or send them to the cleaners which are often called *wasserij* (from the Dutch language). MCK is a government-sponsored program that provides clean water for bathing and doing laundry in villages and rural communities.

### Exchange #40: Laundry

<b>Soldier:</b> I need to get my clothes laundered.	paakaayaan saaya perloo dichoochee.	Pakaian saya perlu dicuci
<b>Indonesian:</b> Okay, I will send them to the cleaners.	baayklaa, saaya aakan membaawaanya ke waasarey	Baiklah, saya akan membawanya ke wasserij.
<b>Soldier:</b> Thank you.	tereema kaasee	Terima kasih.

**Exchange #41: Washing clothes**

<b>Soldier:</b> Where can I wash my clothes?	dee maana saaya beesaa menchoochee paakayaan?	Di mana saya bisa mencuci pakaian?
<b>Indonesian:</b> At the MCK place.	dee em key kaa	Di MCK.



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An Indonesian family

**Socializing**

When visiting an Indonesian household, do not wait to be asked to join them in any social activity in the living room. If the whole family is watching a favorite TV program, ask if you can watch too, even if they are watching a karaoke program and you would rather watch a basketball game.

**Using the Phone**

If you need to make a telephone call, it is okay to ask if you may borrow the family telephone or cell phone, commonly called *handphone* in Indonesia. For overseas calls, you should certainly ask permission and tell them that you will reimburse them.

**Exchange #42: Using the phone**

<b>Soldier:</b> How do I call overseas?	baageymaana saaya menelfon ke loowar negree?	Bagaimana saya menelpon ke luar negeri?
<b>Indonesian:</b> Dial the operator.	tekaan tombol oontook opooraator	Tekan tombol untuk operator.
<b>Soldier:</b> I will pay for this call.	saaya aakaan membayaar beeyaaya tilfon inee	Saya akan membayar biaya tilpon ini.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Okay. No problem.	okey. teedak aapa-aapa	Okay. Tidak-apa-apa.

**Exchange #43: Using a cell phone**

<b>Solider:</b> We need to add the cell phone's air time.	keetaa perloo menaambaa poolsaa telepon geng-gaam inee	Kita perla menambah pulsa telepon genggam ini.
<b>Indonesian:</b> Yes, let's go do it.	ya, maaree keeta pergee ke toko yang joowaal kartoo tilfon	Ya, mari kita pergi ke toko yang jual kartu tilpon.
<b>Soldier:</b> Where can I get a telephone card?	dee maana saaya beesaa mendapaat kartoo telpon?	Di mana saya bisa mendapat kartu telpon?
<b>Indonesian:</b> At the shop in the mall. I will take you there.	dee toko, dee maal. maaree saaya antarkan ke saana.	Di toko, di mall. Mari saya antarkan ke sana.

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE / SELF-ASSESSMENT

Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false. The answers are given on the next page.

1.	Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago country.	True	False
2.	There are no active volcanoes in Indonesia	True	False
3.	The Malays constitute the largest ethnic group in Indonesia.	True	False
4.	The vast majority of the Indonesian people are Muslim.	True	False
5.	Identification by religious affiliation is the norm in Indonesia.	True	False
6.	Indonesian city dwellers use a <i>dokar</i> for inner city transportation.	True	False
7.	<i>Mudik</i> is a busy travel season during which Indonesians go home to visit family.	True	False
8.	An <i>arisan</i> is a sort of monthly social gathering for men.	True	False
9.	It would be very rare to encounter Indonesians bargaining at market places.	True	False
10.	It is impolite to ask an Indonesian to use his <i>handphone</i> .	True	False

## Self-Assessment Quiz Answers

1. **True** - Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago country, consisting of 17,508 islands of which 6,000 are inhabited.
2. **False** - The site of between 100 and 200 *active* volcanoes, Indonesia is a major part of that region of the globe commonly referred to as "the Ring of Fire."
3. **False** - The Javanese, comprising some 45% of the population, form the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, out of about 300 in number. (The coastal Malays represent 7.5 %.)
4. **True** - 88% of Indonesia's populace is Muslim, making the country in fact the largest Muslim country in the world. Approximately 8% of the people are Christian, with smaller percentages of Hindus and Buddhists.
5. **True** - The Indonesian government routinely indicates and places a citizen's religion on IDs, as religion clearly plays a dominant role in the daily life of the people.
6. **False** - The *dokar*, or horse-drawn cart, is predominantly used in the rural areas of Indonesia. Urban people typically make use of taxicabs or small vans for shorter distances and inner city transport.
7. **True** - Indonesian Muslims go home to visit family and relatives during *Mudik*, which comes at the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. Travel is accomplished by land, sea, or air.
8. **False** - The *arisan* is a unique Indonesian tradition to obtain quick, petty cash in a lottery-style prize drawing attended usually by women. Friends and relatives chip in money for the prize.
9. **False** - Indonesians are accustomed to bargaining when they purchase items. It is a very common activity at market places.
10. **False** - It is okay to ask an Indonesian to use his cell phone, commonly called *handphone*.