History

Indonesia is a young country and even the idea of a single nation encompassing all of its territory is barely a century old. The word Indonesia itself was little known until the 1920s, when colonial subjects of the Dutch East Indies seized on it as the name for the independent nation they dreamed of. Their dream was realised in 1949 after a long, hard battle to throw off colonial rule. Since then independent Indonesia's growing pains have encompassed rebellions, religious strife, three decades of military dictatorship, much bloodshed, extremes of wealth and poverty, and expansionist adventures into neighbouring territories. Today, economic development has come a long way and Indonesia is maturing as a multi-party democracy, though not without its problem areas.

The name Indonesia was coined in the 1850s by a Scot, James Logan (editor of the Singapore-published *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*) as a shorter equivalent for the term Indian Archipelago.

Before Indonesia, there was the Dutch East Indies – itself an idea that mutated repeatedly over three centuries as hundreds of disparate island states came one by one under the umbrella of a colonial administration. And before that, there were thousands of islands with connections of commerce and culture, some of which were sometimes grouped together under the same ruler, while others were often not even united within themselves.

The story of how Indonesia became is a colourful dance of migrants and invaders, rebels and religions, kingdoms and empires, choreographed by Indonesia's island nature and its location on millennia-old Asian trade routes. It's a story full of heroes and villains, victors and victims, but the strangest tale of all is just how these 17,000-plus islands with their 739 languages and diverse cultures ever came to be a nation at all.

THE TRADING ARCHIPELAGO

Indonesians inhabit a diverse island world where a short sea voyage or journey inland can take a traveller into a whole new ecosystem providing a different set of useful commodities. Long ago forest dwellers were already collecting colourful bird feathers and tree resins and exchanging them for turtle shells or salt from people who lived by the sea. Some of these goods would find their way to nearby islands, from which they then reached more distant islands, and so on. By about 500 BC, routes sailed by Indonesian islanders began to overlap with those of sailors from mainland Asia. So it was that, 2000 years ago, bird-of-paradise feathers from Papua could be depicted on beautiful bronze drums cast by the Dong Son people of Vietnam, and some of the drums then ended up in Java, Sumatra and Bali.

Simple iron tools, such as axes and plough tips, arrived from China around 200 BC, spurring Indonesians to find their own metal deposits and make their own knives, arrowheads, urns and jewellery.

Indonesia's main western islands – Sumatra, Kalimantan and Java – lie in the middle of the sea routes linking Arabia, India, China and Japan. Indonesia

TIMELINE

60,000–40,000 BC

Indonesia's western islands are still connected to the Asian mainland. The first Homo sapiens arrive, probably ancestors of the Melanesians in today's population, who are now found mainly in Papua.

About 8000 BC

Sea levels rise after the end of the last glacial period, separating Sumatra, Borneo, Java and Bali from the Asian mainland, and the island of New Guinea from Australia.

About 2000 BC

Austronesian people originating from Taiwan, ancestors of most of today's Indonesians, start to arrive, probably by sea routes. They absorb or displace Melanesians. The earliest evidence of settlements dates from the 6th century BC.

was destined to become a crossroads of Asia, and trade has been its lifeblood for at least 2000 years. It has brought with it nearly all the biggest changes the archipelago has seen through the centuries – new people, new ideas, new crops, new technologies, new religions, new wars, new rulers.

INDIAN INFLUENCE & SRIWIJAYA

Contact between Indonesia and India goes back a long way. Pepper plants, originally from India, were spicing up western Indonesian food as early as 600 BC. Indonesian clothing got a lot smarter when boats from Indonesia reached India by the 2nd century BC and brought back cotton plants. In the early centuries AD, Hindu traders from southern India started to settle along the coast of mainland Southeast Asia. From there they found their way to early coastal trading settlements in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan. The Indians brought jewellery, fine cloth, pottery, as well as Hindu and Buddhist culture.

Sriwijaya sailors travelled to Kalimantan riverside towns for gold, diamonds and beeswax, which they bought with rice, salt, iron tools and textiles.

From the 4th century AD, Chinese travellers too arrived in Indonesian ports, and in the 7th century Chinese reports started mentioning the port state of Sriwijaya. Buddhist Sriwijaya, in the Palembang-Jambi area of south-east Sumatra, may have been a grouping of ports or a single kingdom whose capital sometimes changed location. It was a powerful state, and its sailors were able to collect pepper, ivory, resins, feathers, turtle shells, mother of pearl and much more from Sumatra and ports around the Java Sea, and carry them to China, from which they brought back silk, ceramics and iron. An entrepôt for Indian, Indonesian, Arab, Southeast Asian and, eventually, Chinese traders, Sriwijaya remained important until the 14th century.

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

TRADERS FROM ARABIA

The first Muslim traders from Arabia appeared in Indonesian ports within a few decades of the death of the Prophet Mohammed in AD 632. Arabian ships bound for China, carrying spices and rare woods or Indian cloth, would call in at Sumatra or other Indonesian islands to add local products such as aromatic woods, resins and camphor to their cargoes. By the 13th century, Arabs had established settlements in major Indonesian ports. Sulaiman bin Abdullah bin al-Basir, ruler of the small north Sumatran port of Lamreh in the early 13th century, was the first Indonesian ruler known to have adopted Islam and taken the title Sultan.

MAJAPAHIT

The first Indonesian sultanates came into being while the greatest of Indonesia's Hindu-Buddhist states, Majapahit, was flourishing in eastern Java. Like the earlier Sriwijaya, Majapahit's success was trade-based. Its powerful fleets exacted tribute from ports spread from Sumatra to Papua (disobedient states were 'wiped out completely' by the Majapahit navies,

The Majapahit kingdom reached its zenith during the reign of King Hayam Wuruk (1350–89) who was ably assisted by his prime minister and brilliant military commander Gajah Mada. Their names mean, respectively, Rotting Chicken and Rutting Elephant.

500–1 BC

Local trade routes mesh with mainland Asia's. Chinese iron tools, large Vietnamese bronze drums and Indian glass beads reach Indonesia. Local products such as tree resins, feathers, spices and shells reach India and China.

5th Century AD

Under influence from India, some Indonesian trading ports have turned from animism to Hinduism or Buddhism. Indonesia's earliest known inscriptions, in the Indian learned language Sanskrit, are carved in west Java and near Kutai, Kalimantan.

7th–13th Centuries

Buddhist Sriwijaya in southeast Sumatra dominates in western Indonesia, with a trading network stretching at least as far as India and China. It may have been a collection of ports or a single state.

THE CHINESE IN INDONESIA

As Indonesian trading states grew richer and more complex they came increasingly to rely on their growing numbers of Chinese settlers to oil the wheels of their economies. Indonesia's first recorded Chinese settlement was located at Pasai, Sumatra in the 11th century. By the 17th century, Chinese were filling a whole spectrum of roles as middlemen, artisans, labourers, tax-collectors, businessmen, financiers, farmers and keepers of shops, brothels and opium dens. Today ethnic-Chinese Indonesians own many of the country's biggest and most profitable businesses. For centuries they have also been the subject of jealousy and hatred, and the victims of repeated outbreaks of violence, including during the shocking 1998 Jakarta riots.

according to court poet Prapanca), and enabled its traders to dominate the lucrative commerce between Sumatran ports and China. Prapanca reported that traders in Majapahit ports came from Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. He also claimed, less credibly, that Majapahit ruled a hundred foreign countries. Majapahit was eventually conquered by one of the newly Islamic north Java ports, Demak, in 1478.

Jean Gelman Taylor's *Indonesia: People and Histories* is a fascinating telling of Indonesian history, from both Indonesian and outsiders' perspectives, covering the lives of ordinary folk and rulers.

SPICES & THE PORTUGUESE

As Islam continued to spread around the archipelago, another new breed of trader arrived – Europeans. With advanced ship design and navigation technology, European sailors could now cross oceans in search of wealth. Portuguese ships crossed the Indian Ocean from southern Africa to India and then pushed on eastward. In 1511 they conquered Melaka, key to the vital Strait of Melaka between Sumatra and Malaya, and set up bases strung across Indonesia. They also established settlements in mainland ports from India to China and Japan.

The prize that drew the Portuguese to Indonesia was three little plant products long prized in Europe, China, the Islamic world and Indonesia itself: cloves, nutmeg and mace. All three, in high demand because they made food taste more interesting, were native to Maluku, the Spice Islands of eastern Indonesia. Cloves (the sun-dried flower buds of a type of myrtle tree) were produced on a few small islands off the west coast of Halmahera. Nutmeg and mace, both from the nut of the nutmeg tree, came from the Banda Islands. The sultans of the small Maluku islands of Ternate and Tidore controlled most of the already valuable trade in these spices.

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

Portuguese traders joined western Indonesians in buying spices in Maluku. They brought exotic new things to the islands such as clocks, firearms, sweet potatoes and Christianity. Clove and nutmeg cultivation was stepped up to meet their demand. After they fell out with the Ternate sultan Babullah and were expelled in 1575, they set up on nearby Pulau Ambon instead.

8th–9th Centuries

The Buddhist Sailendra and Hindu Sanjaya (or Mataram) kingdoms flourish on Java's central plains, creating the huge Borobudur and Prambanan temple complexes respectively.

1294–1478

The Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit kingdom, based in eastern Java, monopolises trade between Sumatra and China and exacts tribute from settlements across Indonesia. The splendid Majapahit court is imitated by many later Indonesian states.

13th–15th Centuries

Influenced by Arab merchants, two north Sumatran towns, Pasai and Lamreh, adopt Islam, followed later by Melaka on the Malay peninsula, the eastern island of Ternate and northern Java ports including Demak, which conquers Majapahit.

The Portuguese also traded at Aceh (north Sumatra) and Banten (northwest Java), where the principal product was pepper, which had also been used for many centuries to liven up taste buds in Europe, China and elsewhere.

In the 17th century the Portuguese were pushed out of the Indonesian condiment business by a more determined, better armed and better financed rival. The newcomers didn't just want to buy spices, they wanted to drive other Europeans out of Asian trade altogether. They were the Dutch (p38).

FROM ANIMISM TO ISLAM

The earliest Indonesians were animists – they believed animate and inanimate objects had their own life force or spirit, and that events could be influenced by offerings, rituals or forms of magic. Indonesia's scattered prehistoric sites, and animist societies that have survived into modern times, provide evidence that there was often a belief in an afterlife and supernatural controlling powers, and that the spirits of the dead were believed to influence events. Megaliths, found from Pulau Nias (p395) to Sumba (p577) and Sulawesi's Lore Lindu National Park (p690), are one manifestation of ancestor cults. Some megaliths may be 5000 years old, but in Sumba animist religion is still alive and well, and concrete versions of megalithic tombs are still being erected.

Banten's rise to importance began both when the Portuguese took Melaka, and Muslim traders started to sail down the west coast of Sumatra instead of through the Strait of Melaka.

HINDUISM & BUDDHISM

It was contact with the comparatively wealthy cultures of India in the first few centuries AD that first led Indonesians to adopt new belief systems. Indian traders who settled in Indonesia continued to practice Hinduism, or its offshoot Buddhism. Some built their own temples and brought in priests, monks, teachers or scribes. Impressed local Indonesian rulers started to use the Indian titles Raja or Maharaja or add the royal suffix *varman* to their names. It was a short step for them to cement their ties with the Indian world by adopting the Indians' religion or philosophy too. The earliest records of Indianised local rulers are 5th-century stone inscriptions in Sanskrit, found in west Java and near Kutai (now Tenggarong), Kalimantan. These record decrees and tales of the glorious deeds of the kings Purnavarman and Mulavarman, respectively.

In the 1650s and 1660s Banten's Sultan Ageng Tirtajasa decreed that all men aged 16 or over must tend 500 pepper plants.

The major Indonesian states from then until the 15th century were all Hindu or Buddhist. Sriwijaya, based in southern Sumatra, was predominantly Buddhist. In central Java in the 8th and 9th centuries, the Buddhist Sailendra kingdom and the predominantly Hindu Sanjaya (or Mataram) kingdom constructed the great temple complexes of Borobudur (p171) and Prambanan (p194) respectively. They sought to recreate Indian civilisation in a Javanese landscape, and Indian gods such as Shiva and Vishnu were believed to inhabit the Javanese heavens, though this did not obliterate

An Empire of the East by Norman Lewis visits Indonesia's hot spots from the distant and more recent past in travelogue form.

1505

Portuguese ships reach Indonesian waters. Interested in Indonesian spices, the Portuguese go on to establish trading settlements across the archipelago, joining Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Malays and islanders in the pan-Asian sea trade.

16th –17th Centuries

Islam continues to spread around Indonesian ports. The Islamic Mataram kingdom is founded (1581) in the lands of the old Hindu Sanjaya kingdom in central Java by a general from Demak's successor state Pajang.

1595

Four small Dutch ships under Cornelis de Houtman reach the pepper port Banten in northwest Java, and sign a friendship treaty. Despite setbacks, the expedition returns home with enough spices to make a small profit.

traditional beliefs in magical forces or nature spirits. In the 10th century, wealth and power on Java shifted to the east of the island, where a series of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms dominated till the late 15th century. The greatest of these was Majapahit (1294–1478), based at Trowulan (p228). Javanese Indian culture also spread to Bali (which remains Hindu to this day) and parts of Sumatra.

ISLAM

Majapahit was eventually undone by the next major religion to reach Indonesia – Islam. Muslim Arab traders had appeared in Indonesia as early as the 7th century. By the 13th century Arabs had established settlements in major Indonesian ports, and it was then that the first local rulers, at Lamreh and Pasai in north Sumatra, adopted Islam. Gradually over the next two centuries, then more rapidly, other Indonesian ports with Muslim communities switched to Islam. Their rulers would become persuaded by Islamic teachings and, keen to join a successful international network, would usually take the title Sultan to proclaim their conversion. Melaka on the Malay Peninsula, controlling the strategic Strait of Melaka, switched to Islam in 1436 and became a model for other Muslim states to emulate.

In Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi, some Muslim states spread Islam by military conquest. The conversion of several north Java ports in the late 15th century meant that Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit was hemmed in by hostile states and it was one of these, Demak, that conquered Majapahit in 1478.

Islam was a focus for resistance to the Dutch in the Diponegoro War in Java (1825–30) and the Padri War (1810–37) and Aceh War (1873–1903) in Sumatra.

Indonesian Islam has always had a 'folk religion' aspect in that legends of Islamic saints, holy men and feats of magic, and pilgrimages to sites associated with them, have played an important part in Muslim life. Tradition has it that Islam was brought to Java by nine *wali* (saints) who converted local populations through war or feats of magic.

The greatest of the Indonesian Muslim kingdoms, Mataram, was founded in 1581 in the area of Java where the Sailendra and Sanjaya kingdoms had flourished centuries earlier. Its second ruler, Senopati, was a descendant of Hindu princes and helped to incorporate some of the Hindu past, and older animist beliefs, into the new Muslim world.

CHRISTIANITY

The last major religion to reach Indonesia was Christianity. The Catholic Portuguese made some conversions among Islamic communities in Maluku and Sulawesi in the 16th century, but most reverted to Islam. The Protestant Dutch, who gradually took control over the whole archipelago between the 17th and 20th centuries, made little effort to spread Christianity. Missionaries active in the 19th and 20th centuries were steered to regions where Islam was weak or nonexistent, such as the Minahasa and Toraja areas of Sulawesi, the Batak area of Sumatra, and Dutch New Guinea (now Papua).

1602

Holland merges competing merchant companies into the VOC (United East Indian Company). It aims to drive other European nations out of Asian trade, especially in spices, with a mixture of warfare and exclusive trading deals.

1611–1700

From its headquarters at Batavia (now Jakarta), the VOC expands its control through deals, alliances and battles with Indonesian sultans. A chain of Dutch-controlled ports leads to the Spice Islands and around Asia.

1670–1755

VOC involvement in Mataram's internal turmoils eventually brings it control of the kingdom. In 1755 it splits Mataram into two kingdoms, with capitals at Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo). The Dutch now effectively control all Java.

RAJAS & SULTANS

The Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim states of Indonesia were not charitable organisations dedicated to their subjects' welfare. The great majority were absolute monarchies or sultanates, whose rulers claimed to be at least partly divine. Their subjects were there to produce food or goods which they could pay as tribute to the ruler, or to do business from which they could pay taxes, or to fight in armies or navies, or to fill roles in the royal entourage from astrologer to poet to tax collector to concubine. Land was generally considered to belong to the ruler, who permitted the subjects to use it in exchange for taxes and tribute. Slaves were an integral part of the scene well into the 19th century.

Other states could pay tribute too and the largest kingdoms or sultanates, such as the Java-based Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit (1294–1478) and Muslim Mataram (1581–1755), built trading empires based on tribute from other peoples whom they kept in line through the threat of a military bashing. Majapahit lived on in the memory of later Indonesian states for the fine manners, ceremony and arts of its court, and because some of its princes and princesses had married into the ruling families of Muslim sultanates. Many later rulers would assert their credentials by reference to family connections with the Majapahit kingdom.

Shared religion was no bar to belligerence. Sultan Agung of Mataram had no qualms about conquering neighbouring Muslim states in the 1620s when he wanted to tighten control over the export routes for Mataram's rice, sugar and teak. Nor did past loyalty or even blood ties guarantee personal favour. In the first year of his reign, Agung's successor Amangkurat I massacred at least 6000 subjects, including his father's advisers and his own half-brothers and their families, to remove any possible challenges to his authority.

The coming of Europeans in the 16th and 17th centuries introduced new ways for Indonesian states and contenders to get one over on their rivals. They could use the Europeans as trading partners or mercenaries or allies, and if the Europeans became too powerful or demanding, they expected they could get rid of them. In Maluku, the Muslim sultanate of Ternate a small but wealthy clove-growing island, drove out the Portuguese, its former trading partners, in 1575. It later awarded the Dutch a monopoly on the sale of its spices and used the revenue to build up its war fleet and extract tribute from other statelets. Ternate eventually controlled 72 tax-paying tributaries around Maluku and Sulawesi.

Ternate's sea power was built on its *kora-kora* war boats, powered by 200 rowers.

Such agreements, and alliances and conquests, eventually gave the Dutch a hold over much Indonesian trade and territory. Their involvements in the endless internal feuds of the powerful Javanese Mataram kingdom won them such a stranglehold over the region that in 1749 the dying king Pakubuwono II willed them control over his kingdom. In 1755 the Dutch resolved yet another Mataram succession dispute by splitting it into two kingdoms, with

1795–1824

In the Napoleonic Wars, Britain takes several Dutch possessions in the East Indies. An 1824 agreement divides the region into Dutch and British spheres of influence, similar to the territories of modern Indonesia and Malaysia.

1800

The now overstretched, corrupt and bankrupt VOC is wound up. Its territories pass to the Netherlands crown, converting a trading empire into a colonial one, the Netherlands East Indies.

1825–30

Prince Diponegoro, supported by many Muslims, the poor and some fellow Javanese aristocrats, rebels against Yogyakarta's King Hamengkubuwono V and his European and Chinese backers. 200,000 Javanese die, most from famine and disease.

capitals at Surakarta (Solo) and Yogyakarta. Both royal families later split again, so that by the early 19th century there were four rival royal houses in this tiny part of central Java.

So long as local rulers and aristocrats cooperated, the Dutch were content to leave them in place, and these traditional rulers eventually became the top rank of the 'Native' branch of the colonial civil service, continuing to run their kingdoms under the supervision of a sprinkling of Dutch administrators.

The Dutch introduced coffee to Indonesia in 1696. United East India Company (VOC) officials got west Java nobles to instruct their farmers to grow coffee bushes, paying with cash and textiles for the harvested beans.

DUTCH DOMINATION

When the Dutch first arrived at Banten in 1595 and set up the United East Indian Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC) to conduct all their business in the East Indies in 1602, they did not plan to end up running the whole of what came to be Indonesia. They just wanted to drive other European powers out of the lucrative spice trade in Indonesia. Their strategy was to sign exclusive trade agreements with local rulers where possible, and to impose their will by military force where necessary. Their powerful fleets and effective soldiers made them a potent ally for local strongmen, and in return the Dutch could extract valuable trading rights.

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

MOVING IN

In the beginning the Dutch concentrated primarily on the spice trade. In 1605 they drove the Portuguese out of Ambon. They then set up their own chain of settlements in Muslim ports along the route to the Spice Islands, with their headquarters at Jayakarta, a small vassal port of Banten in northwest Java. When Banten, with English help, tried to expel them in 1619, the Dutch beat off the attack, rebuilt the town and renamed it Batavia. Today it's called Jakarta.

By varied means the Dutch took control of Banda in 1621, Melaka in 1641, Tidore in 1657, Makassar in 1669, and then several Javanese ports. In Banda they exterminated or expelled almost the whole population in the 1620s and replaced them with slave-worked nutmeg plantations.

Makassar fleets visited the northern Australian coast for centuries, fishing for trepang and introducing Aborigines in the area to metal tools, pottery and tobacco, until they were banned around 1900. This legacy is acknowledged in Makassar's Museum Balla Lompoa.

The Javanese Mataram kingdom tried unsuccessfully to drive the Dutch out of Batavia in 1628 and again in 1629. In the 1640s, Mataram's King Amangkurat I, facing a host of internal challenges, decided it was wiser to make peace with the VOC. He went further and gave it the sole licence to carry Mataram goods.

While Chinese, Arabs and Indians continued to trade in Indonesia in the 17th and 18th centuries, the VOC ended up with all the best business. Asian traders carried rice, fruit and coconuts from one part of the archipelago to another; Dutch ships carried spices, timber, textiles and metals to other Asian ports and Europe.

1820s–1910

Holland takes control of nearly all the archipelago through economic expansion, agreements with local aristocrats and warfare. Many aristocrats become representatives of the Dutch administration. Resource-rich Aceh wages guerrilla resistance.

1830–70

The Cultivation System: two million Javanese peasants have to grow and pay tax in export crops (coffee, tea, tobacco, indigo, sugar). Holland is saved from bankruptcy, some peasants prosper, but others suffer hardship and famine.

1845–1900

The Liberal period: private (European) enterprise is encouraged, forced cultivation is wound down. Roads, ports, shipping services are improved; railways are built. Notoriously brutal rubber and tobacco plantations develop on Sumatra.

THE CULTIVATION SYSTEM

The VOC's trading successes brought it an ever larger and costlier web of commitments around the archipelago. By 1800 it controlled most of Java and parts of Maluku, Sulawesi, Sumatra and Timor. It was overstretched, and corrupt – and bankrupt. The Dutch crown took over the company's possessions but then lost them (first to France, then to Britain) during the Napoleonic Wars. Control was restored to the Dutch in 1816 following the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814.

Progress in the Dutch colony was further delayed by the devastating Diponegoro War in Java (1825–30). After this, Holland desperately needed to make the East Indies profitable. Its answer was the new Cultivation (or Culture) System. Up to two million Javanese peasants were obliged to grow the export crops of coffee, tea, tobacco, indigo or sugar, and pay a proportion of their crop in tax, and sell the rest to the government at fixed prices. This saved Holland from bankruptcy, and while some villagers prospered, the cultivation system also resulted in famines, loss of rice-growing lands, poverty and corruption.

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

LIBERAL PERIOD

As the 19th century progressed, the Cultivation System was scaled back, and European private enterprise was encouraged to take over export agriculture. Privately owned rubber and tobacco plantations, both of which featured brutal working conditions, helped to extend Dutch control into eastern Sumatra. The colonial administration concentrated on creating a favourable investment climate by the construction of railways, improving roads and shipping services, and quashing unrest. They also waged military campaigns to subjugate the last non-compliant local statelets. The Banjarmasin sultanate in Kalimantan came under direct Dutch rule in 1863 after a four-year war; resource-rich Aceh in northern Sumatra was finally subdued in 1903 after 30 years of vicious warfare; southwest Sulawesi was occupied from 1900 to 1910; and Bali was brought to heel, after several attempts, in 1906. Some Balinese aristocrats killed their families and retainers and committed suicide rather than submit to the Dutch. In the late 19th century Holland, Britain and Germany all agreed to divide up the unexplored island of New Guinea.

During the 19th century, the Dutch set up plantations of the cinchona tree, the bark of which contains quinine: the most effective antimalarial of the time.

THE ETHICAL POLICY

The end of the 19th century saw the rise of a new Dutch awareness of the problems and needs of the Indonesian people. The result was the Ethical Policy, launched in 1901, which aimed to raise Indonesians' welfare and purchasing power through better irrigation, education, health and credit, and with a decentralised government. The Ethical Policy's immediate effects were mixed, and its benefits often accrued to Europeans rather than Indonesians.

1901

The Ethical Policy is introduced to raise Indonesian welfare through better irrigation, education, health and credit. Implementation is patchy: Europeans benefit most. But education and the growth of cities spawn a new Indonesian middle class.

1912

Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union) emerges as a Javanese Muslim economic assistance group, with anti-Christian and anti-Chinese tendencies. Linking with other groups, it grows into a million-member anticolonial movement active throughout the colony.

1920

The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) is founded as a splinter from Sarekat Islam. A pro-independence party with support from urban workers, it is sidelined when uprisings in Java (1926) and Sumatra (1927) are suppressed by the Dutch.

An increase in private land ownership increased the number of locals without land. Local revolts and strikes were fairly frequent. But the colony's trade continued to grow. By the 1930s the Dutch East Indies was providing most of the world's quinine and pepper, over one-third of its rubber and almost one-fifth of its tea, sugar, coffee and oil.

Clove-impregnated *kretek* cigarettes, popular throughout Indonesia today, were first marketed by Nitisemito, a man from Kudus, Java, in 1906. His Bal Tiga (Three Balls) brand grew into one of the biggest Indonesian-owned businesses in the Dutch East Indies.

BREAKING FREE

The longer-term effects of the Ethical Policy were truly revolutionary. Wider education spawned a new class of Indonesians aware of colonial injustices, international political developments and the value of their own cultures. These people were soon starting up diverse new political and religious groups and publications, some of which were expressly dedicated to ending Dutch colonial rule.

THE FIRST NATIONALISTS

The 1860 novel *Max Havelaar* by Multatuli (Edward Douwes Dekker), revealing the nefarious effects of the Cultivation System, was one of the main reasons for the emergence of the Ethical Policy, through its profound effect on Dutch opinion.

Today Indonesians look back to 1908 as the year their independence movement began. This was when Budi Utomo (Glorious Endeavour) was founded. Led by upper-class, Dutch-educated, Indonesian men, Budi Utomo wanted to revive monarchy and modernise Javanese culture for the 20th century. It was soon followed by more radical groups. Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union), which emerged in 1912, began as a Javanese Muslim economic mutual-help group, with a strong anti-Christian and anti-Chinese streak. Linking with other groups, it grew steadily into a million-member anticolonial movement trying to connect villagers throughout the colony with the educated elite.

In 1920 the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which had operated within Sarekat Islam, split off on its own. A pro-independence party with support from urban workers, it launched uprisings in Java (1926) and Sumatra (1927) but was neutralised when these were quashed by the Dutch, who imprisoned and exiled thousands of communists.

A key moment in the growth of nationalist consciousness came in 1928 when the All Indonesia Youth Congress proclaimed its historic Youth Pledge, establishing goals of one national identity (Indonesian), one country (Indonesia) and one language (the version of Malay called Bahasa Indonesia). Meanwhile the Indonesian National Party (PNI), which emerged in 1927 from the Bandung Study Group led by a young engineer, Sukarno, was rapidly becoming the most powerful Indonesian nationalist organisation – with the result that in 1930 the Dutch jailed its leaders.

The Australian National University's Asian Studies Virtual Library (http://coombs.anu.edu.au) is a great resource with heaps of links on Indonesian history and issues

Nationalist sentiment remained high through the 1930s, but even when Germany invaded the Netherlands in 1940, the Dutch colonial government was determined to hold fast.

1927

The Indonesian National Party (PNI) emerges from the Bandung Study Group led by a young engineer, Sukarno. It grows quickly into the most powerful pro-independence organisation. In 1930 its leaders are jailed.

1942

Japan invades Indonesia with little resistance. European military and civilians are sent to prison camps. Indonesians initially welcome the Japanese as liberators, but sentiment changes as the harshness of the occupation becomes apparent.

1942–45

The Japanese collaborate with nationalist leaders such as Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta because of their anti-Dutch sentiments, and establish an Indonesian militia that later forms the backbone of the anti-Dutch resistance after WWII.

WWII

Everything changed when Japan invaded the Dutch East Indies in 1942 and swept aside Dutch and Allied resistance. Almost 200,000 Dutch and Chinese civilians and Allied military were put into prison camps, in some of which 30% of the inmates would die. Many Indonesians at first welcomed the Japanese as liberators, but feelings changed as they were subjected to slave labour and starvation. The 3½ year Japanese occupation did however strengthen the Indonesian nationalist movement, as the Japanese used anti-Dutch nationalists to help them run things and allowed them limited political activity. Sukarno was permitted to travel around giving nationalist speeches. The Japanese also set up Indonesian home-defence militias, whose training proved useful in the Indonesians' later military struggle against the Dutch.

As defeat for Japan loomed in May 1945, the Investigating Agency for Preparation of Independence met in Jakarta. This Japanese-established committee of Indonesian nationalists proposed a constitution, philosophy (Pancasila; see p46) and extents (the whole Dutch East Indies) for a future Indonesian republic.

Yogyakarta's Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX (1912–88) was one Indonesian aristocrat who sided with the nationalists against the Dutch. He later held a series of Indonesian cabinet posts, including as Suharto's vice-president in the 1970s.

THE REVOLUTION

When Japan announced its surrender on 15 August 1945, a group of *pemuda* (radical young nationalists) kidnapped Sukarno and his colleague Mohammed Hatta and pressured them to declare immediate Indonesian independence, which they did at Sukarno's Jakarta home on 17 August (you can see the text of their proclamation on the 100,000Rp banknote). A government was formed, with Sukarno president and Hatta the vice-president.

British and Australian forces arrived to disarm the Japanese and hold the Indonesian nationalists until the Dutch could send their own forces. But Indonesians wanted independence. Some, like Sukarno and Hatta, favoured a negotiated path to freedom; others wanted to fight to get it as fast as possible. The early months of the revolution were a particularly chaotic period: with massacres of Chinese, Dutch and Eurasian civilians and Indonesian aristocrats; attempted communist revolutions in some areas; and clashes between Indonesian struggle groups and the British and Japanese. In the bloody Battle of Surabaya in November 1945, thousands died: not just from British bombing and in street fighting with the British, but also in nationalist atrocities against local civilians. In December the nationalists managed to pull diverse struggle groups together into a republican army.

By 1946, 55,000 Dutch troops had arrived. They soon re-captured major cities on Java and Sumatra. Ruthless tactics by Captain Raymond Westerling in southern Sulawesi saw at least 6000 Indonesians executed (40,000 by some accounts). The first of two big Dutch offensives – called 'police actions' – reduced republican territory to limited areas of Java and Sumatra in August 1947, with its capital at Yogyakarta.

Anyone interested in the WWII campaigns in Indonesia, and the sites and relics that can be found there today, should check out the fascinating Pacific Wrecks (www.pacificwrecks.com).

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

Aug 1945

Japan surrenders on 15 August. Indonesian nationalist students kidnap Sukarno and Hatta and pressure them to declare immediate independence, which they do on 17 August. A government is formed, with Sukarno president and Hatta vice-president.

Sep–Nov 1945

Allied troops disarm the Japanese and hold Indonesian nationalists. Sukarno wants independence through diplomacy, but other nationalists want to fight. The Battle of Surabaya between British and nationalist forces leaves thousands dead.

1946–49

With the arrival of Dutch troops to regain control, the nationalists organise struggle groups into a Republican Army. Despite Dutch offensives and rifts between Sukarno's government, Muslim movements and the Communists, resistance continues.

The first *becak* (tricycle rickshaws) appeared on the streets of Batavia (Jakarta) in 1936.

Differences among the Indonesian forces erupted viciously. In Madiun, Java, the republican army and Muslim militias fought pro-communist forces in August 1948, leaving 8000 dead. The second Dutch 'police action' in December 1948 won the Dutch more territory, and they captured Sukarno, Hatta and their prime minister Sutan Syahrir. But the independence forces kept up a guerrilla struggle, and international (especially US) opinion turned against the Dutch. Realising that its cause was unwinnable, the Netherlands finally transferred sovereignty over the Dutch East Indies (apart from Dutch New Guinea) to the Indonesian republic on 27 December 1949. At least 70,000, possibly as many as 200,000, Indonesians had lost their lives in the revolution, along with 700 Dutch and British troops and some thousands of Japanese troops and European, Chinese and Eurasian civilians.

'BUNG' KARNO

Independent Indonesia had a troubled infancy. Tensions between Muslims and communists persisted, with the secular nationalists like Sukarno and Hatta trying to hold everything together. The economy was in a sorry state after almost a decade of conflict, and a drop in commodity prices in the early 1950s made things worse.

At the entrance to a neighbourhood or village you may see an arch with the words 'Dirgahayu RI' painted across it. This translates as 'Long live the Republic of Indonesia' and the arch has been built to celebrate Independence Day, 17 August.

EARLY DIVISIONS

There were some who wanted Indonesia to be an Islamic republic, and there were some who didn't want their home territories to be part of Indonesia at all. The western-Java-based Darul Islam (House of Islam) wanted a society under Islamic law. It linked up with similar organisations in Kalimantan, Aceh and south Sulawesi to wage guerrilla war against the republic, which lasted until 1962 in western Java. In Maluku, Ambonese former soldiers of the Dutch colonial army declared an independent South Moluccas Republic in 1950. They were defeated within a few months.

GUIDED DEMOCRACY

Sukarno's anti-Western tendencies also saw him ban Hollywood movies and rock 'n roll music.

Coalition governments drawn from diverse parties and factions never lasted long, and when the much-postponed parliamentary elections were finally held in 1955, no party won more than a quarter of the vote. In 1956, after a visit to communist China, Sukarno began to expound his ideas on a more appropriate political system for Indonesia. He wanted to replace Western-style democracy, which he derided as rule by '50 per cent plus one', with something more in the Indonesian village tradition of achieving consensus through discussion. The outcome was 'Guided Democracy', effectively an uneasy coalition between the military, religious groups and communists, with increasing power concentrated in the hands of the president (ie himself). In

1949

Faced with an unwinnable war and hostile international opinion, the Netherlands transfers sovereignty over the Dutch East Indies (apart from Netherlands New Guinea) to the Indonesian republic.

1950–62

Armed movements challenge the republic. Darul Islam (House of Islam) wages guerrilla war in several islands, continuing until 1962 in western Java. Regionalist rebellions break out in Sumatra and Sulawesi (1958).

1955

The PNI, regarded as Sukarno's party, tops the polls in much-postponed parliamentary elections, but no clear winner emerges. Short-lived coalition governments continue. The economy struggles following a drop in commodity prices.

NATION CREATION

The founders of independent Indonesia knew they had to forge some kind of national conscious if the post-colonial state was to hold together. The Dutch East Indies, though under one administration, had remained a rather disparate collection of kingdoms and sultanates. Indonesian nationalists in the early 20th century looked back to the mightiest kingdoms within the archipelago from past eras, such as Sriwijaya and Majapahit, as evidence of earlier powerful 'Indonesian' empires. Once independence was achieved, the nationalists created a set of national heroes, most of whom were awarded this status for their anti-Dutch activities. Indonesian street names and banknotes still perpetuate the memory, or myths, of many of these people:

Diponegoro, Pangeran (1785–1855) This Muslim prince from Yogyakarta rebelled against his own king and the Dutch in the Diponegoro War (or Java War) of 1825–30.

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

Imam Bonjol (1772-1864) Leader of a central Sumatran fundamentalist Islamic rebellion in the Padri War (1810-37), he initially rose up against the local Minangkabau rulers and ended up fighting the Dutch who came to their aid.

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

Pattimura (Thomas Matulessy; 1783–1817) Matulessy led a short-lived anti-Dutch uprising in Maluku in 1817; for sparing the life of a six-year-old Dutch boy he gained the nickname Pattimura (Big-Hearted).

Sisingamangaraja (1849–1907) The last of a long line of Batak kings who had ruled since the 16th century, Sisingamangaraja became a leader of anti-Dutch resistance. Shot in error while trying to surrender, he still managed to gasp out 'Ay, Sisingamangaraja' as he expired.

Subroto, Gatot (1907–62) Fought for Indonesian independence in the 1940s and helped quell the communists in 1948. He became military governor of Surakarta and helped found Indonesia's national defence academy.

Sudarso, Yos (1925–62) Deputy chief of the Indonesian navy staff, Sudarso was one of those killed when his motor torpedo boat was sunk by the Dutch during the 'liberation' of Papua.

Sudirman (1915–50) A leader of the resistance against the Dutch, General Sudirman was chosen as the first commander-in-chief of the Indonesian army in 1949.

Syahrir, Sutan (1909–66) Syahrir was a nationalist leader in Java in the 1930s. During WWII he refused to cooperate with the Japanese. Prime minister from 1945 to 1947, he led Indonesia's attempt to negotiate independence from the Dutch.

Thamrin, Mohammed (1894–1941) A nationalist leader and politician in the 1920s and '30s, Thamrin died in jail after being arrested by the Dutch for his links to the Japanese.

Yani, Ahmad (1922–65) Hero of the military struggle against the Dutch, who became army chief of staff and was among those killed in the attempted coup of 1 October 1965.

1959 Sukarno also took on the job of prime minister for good measure. The elected legislature was dissolved in 1960, and of the political parties only the PKI continued to have any clout.

Sukarno's growing accumulation of power was one factor behind regional rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi in 1958, led by senior military and civilian

1957

Sukarno proclaims 'Guided Democracy', supposedly in the village tradition of achieving consensus through discussion. A military-Muslim-communist coalition replaces Western-style democracy. The army becomes the bedrock of national unity.

1961–63

With the economy in the doldrums, Sukarno adopts an increasingly aggressive posture towards Netherlands New Guinea. Indonesia takes control there in 1963. Subsequent opposition from the local Papuan people is brutally put down.

1963–66

Sukarno stages *konfrontasi* (confrontation) with the newly formed Malaysia. Fighting takes place along the Indonesia-Malaysia border in Borneo. The communist party (PKI) organises land seizures by hungry peasants in Java and other islands.

figures. The rebels, who had backing from the CIA, were also opposed to the increasing influence of the communists, the corruption and inefficiency in central government, and the use of export earnings from the outer islands to import rice and consumer goods for Java. The rebellions were smashed within a few months and in response Sukarno forged a new alliance with Indonesia's army.

One of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's earlier books, *Tales from Djakarta,* gives readers a backstreet view of the capital during the rocky early days of independence and the rise of military control.

MONUMENTS & CONFRONTATIONS

Unable to lift the economy from the doldrums, Sukarno built a series of ostentatious nationalist monuments as substitutes for real development – such as Jakarta's National Monument (Monas, also dubbed 'Sukarno's last erection'; p105) and Mesjid Istiqlal (p106). He diverted Indonesians' attention outward with a lot of bluster and aggression towards the supposedly threatening remnants of Western imperialism around Indonesia, Dutch New Guinea and Malaysia.

The Asia-Africa Conference staged at Bandung in 1955 launched the Non-Aligned Movement, comprising countries that wanted to align with neither the USA nor the USSR. It also gave birth to the term Third World, originally meaning countries that belonged to neither Cold-War bloc.

The New Guinea issue had already led Indonesia to seize all Dutch assets in the country and expel 50,000 Dutch people in 1957–58 after the UN rejected Indonesian claims to Dutch New Guinea. Bolstered by Soviet military backing, Indonesia finally took control of the territory in 1963 after a few military sorties and, more importantly, US pressure on the Netherlands to hand over. Subsequent opposition from the local Papuan population was brutally put down.

From 1963–66 Sukarno staged *konfrontasi* (confrontation) with the recently formed Federation of Malaysia, which he considered a British puppet. Intermittent fighting along the Indonesia–Malaysia border in Borneo never seriously threatened Malaysia's survival.

COUP & ANTI-COMMUNIST PURGE

Meanwhile back in the heartland, the PKI was encouraging peasants to seize land without waiting for official redistribution, leading to violent clashes in eastern Java and Bali. By 1965 the PKI claimed three million members, controlled the biggest trade union organisation and the biggest peasant grouping, and had penetrated the government apparatus extensively. Sukarno saw it as a potential counterweight to the army, whose increasing power now had him worried, and decided to arm the PKI by creating a new militia. This led to heightened tensions with the regular armed forces, and rumours started to circulate of a planned communist coup.

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

On 1 October 1965, military rebels shot dead six top generals in and near Jakarta. General Suharto, head of the army's Strategic Reserve, quickly mobilised forces against the rebels and by the next day it was clear the putsch had failed. Just who was behind it still remains a mystery (see opposite), but there's no mystery about its consequences. The armed forces under Suharto, and armed anti-communist civilians, took it as a cue to ruthlessly target both

1964–65

Worried by the military's growing power, Sukarno decides to arm the communist party by creating a new militia, heightening tensions with the regular forces. Rumours of a planned communist coup circulate.

1965

On October 1, military rebels shoot dead six top generals in and near Jakarta. General Suharto, head of the army's Strategic Reserve, mobilises forces against the rebels and by next day it is clear the coup has failed.

1965–1966

The armed forces, under Suharto, and armed anti-communist civilians take the attempted coup as a cue to slaughter communists and supposed communists. Around 500,000 are killed, chiefly in Java, Bali and Sumatra.

WHOSE COUP?

Some things about the 1965 attempted coup have never quite added up. Six of the country's top generals were killed by a group of officers who included members of Sukarno's palace guard and who said they were acting to save Sukarno's leadership – presumably from the threat of a plot. If that was really what they were doing, it was a very botched job.

These rebels appear to have made no effort to organise support elsewhere in the armed forces or the country. Both Sukarno and the communist leader DN Aidit visited the rebels at Halim air base near Jakarta but kept their distance from events – Sukarno leaving for the mountains in a helicopter and Aidit instructing his party to take no action and remain calm. If the officers expected the armed forces simply to fall into line under Sukarno's leadership, or the communists to rise up and take over, they miscalculated fatally.

The biggest question mark hangs over why they didn't also eliminate General Suharto, who was at least as senior as several of the generals they did kill. There is even a theory that Suharto himself might have been behind the attempted coup. Given his manipulatory talent and inscrutability, this can't be ruled out, though no evidence to confirm it has ever come to light.

communists and supposed communists. By March 1966, 500,000 or more people were killed, chiefly in Java, Bali and Sumatra. The anti-communist purge provided cover for settling all sorts of old scores.

SUKARNO PUSHED ASIDE

Sukarno remained president but Suharto set about manoeuvring himself into supreme power. On 11 March 1966, Suharto's troops surrounded Sukarno's presidential palace, and Sukarno signed the 11 March Order, permitting Suharto to act on his own initiative to restore order. Sukarno loyalists in the forces and cabinet were soon arrested, and a new six-man inner cabinet including Suharto was established. After further anti-Sukarno purges and demonstrations, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) named Suharto acting president in March 1967. A year later, with Sukarno now under house arrest, the MPR appointed Suharto president.

Sukarno died of natural causes in 1970. An inspirational orator and charismatic leader, he is still held in great affection and esteem by many Indonesians, who often refer to him as Bung Karno – *bung* meaning 'buddy' or 'brother'. He was a flamboyant, complicated and highly intelligent character with a Javanese father and Balinese mother, and was fluent in several languages. His influences, apart from Islam, included Marxism, Javanese and Balinese mysticism, a mainly Dutch education and the theosophy movement. He had at least eight wives (up to four at once) at a time when polygamy was no longer very common in Indonesia. Throughout his political career he strove to unite Indonesians and, more than anyone else, he was the architect and creator of Indonesia.

Peter Weir's gripping *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), based on the eponymous novel by Australian Christopher Koch (1978), stars Mel Gibson as a young Australian reporter caught up in Indonesia's 1965 upheavals. Mel's best movie?

The film and novel title *The Year of Living Dangerously* is that of a major 1964 speech by Sukarno, which was drawn from Italian leader Mussolini's slogan 'Live Dangerously', which itself was originally penned by 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche!

1966–1968

When Suharto's troops surround his palace, Sukarno signs the 11 March Order (1966), permitting Suharto to act independently. After anti-Sukarno demonstrations and purges of loyalists, the MPR names Suharto president (March 1968).

1967

Suharto's 'New Order', supported by the West, holds Indonesia together under military dictatorship for the next 30 years. The economy develops, dissent is crushed and corruption rages.

1971

The army party Golkar wins 236 of the 360 elective seats in the MPR, which now also includes 276 military and 207 Suharto appointees. A veneer of pseudo-democracy is maintained throughout the Suharto years.

PANCASILA – THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

In government buildings and TV broadcasts, on highway markers and school uniforms you'll see the *garuda,* Indonesia's mythical bird and national symbol. On its breast are the five symbols of the philosophical doctrine of Indonesia's unitary state, Pancasila (which means Five Principles in Sanskrit and Pali, the sacred languages of Hinduism and Buddhism). Pancasila was first expounded by Sukarno in 1945 as a synthesis of Western democracy, Islam, Marxism and indigenous village traditions. Enshrined in that year's constitution, it was raised to the level of a mantra by Suharto's New Order regime. Suharto's successor BJ Habibie annulled the requirement that Pancasila must form the basic principle of all organisations, but it remains an important national creed. The five symbols:

Star Represents faith in God, through Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism or any other religion.
Chain Represents humanitarianism within Indonesia and in relations with humankind as a whole.
Banyan tree Represents nationalism and unity between Indonesia's many ethnic groups.
Buffalo Symbolises representative government.
Rice and cotton Represents social justice.

If he developed megalomaniac tendencies, they were perhaps in part a product of his high ambitions for the country. In some ways he acted like a Javanese puppet master on a grand scale – trying to keep the balance by playing off competing factions and movements against each other. In the end the puppets took over the show.

Two great history books have the same name: *A History of Modern Indonesia*. MC Ricklefs offers a very readable account with extra focus on Java, while Adrian Vickers draws on the life of Pramoedya Ananta Toer to help tell the nation's story.

'PAK' HARTO

Once the dust had settled on the killing of communists and supposed communists, and a million or so political prisoners had been put behind bars, the 31 years of Suharto's rule were really one of the duller periods of Indonesian history. Such a tight lid was kept on opposition, protest and freedom of speech that there was almost no public debate. Under the New Order, as Suharto's regime was known, everybody just had to do what he and his generals told them to, if they weren't already dead or imprisoned.

CAREER SOLDIER

Whereas Sukarno had led with charisma, Suharto's speeches seemed designed to stifle discussion rather than inspire. 'Enigmatic' was one of the kinder epithets used in his obituaries when he died in 2008. The normally restrained *Economist* magazine called him a 'kleptocrat' and 'a cold-war monster', behind whose 'pudgily smooth, benign-looking face lay ruthless cruelty'. Suharto wielded a supreme talent for manipulating events in his own interests and outwitting opponents of all kinds.

1975

Indonesia invades and annexes former Portuguese colony East Timor, where left-wing party Fretilin has won a power struggle. Fretilin wages guerrilla war for over 20 years. At least 125,000 die in fighting, famines and repression.

1979–84

The government's transmigration program, started by Sukarno, reaches its peak with almost 2.5 million people moving to outer islands from overpopulated Java, Bali and Madura during these years. The program is finally ended in 2000.

1989

The Free Aceh Movement (GAM), founded in 1976, reemerges as a guerrilla force, fighting for independence for the conservatively Islamic Sumatran region of Aceh. An estimated 15,000 people die in an insurgency lasting till 2005.

Born in Java in 1921, he was always a soldier, from the day he joined the Dutch colonial army in his late teens. He rose quickly up the ranks of the Indonesian army in the 1950s, and was involved in putting down the South Moluccas and Darul Islam rebellions. He was transferred to a staff college after being implicated in opium and sugar smuggling in 1959, but in 1962 Sukarno appointed him to lead the military campaign against Dutch New Guinea. At the time of the attempted coup in 1965 he was the most senior army man not targeted by the rebels.

THE NEW ORDER

The New Order did give Indonesia stability of a sort, and a longish period of pretty steady economic development. Whereas Indonesians had thought of Sukarno as Bung Karno, Suharto was never more than the more formal Pak (Father) Harto, but he liked to be thought of as Bapak Pembangunan – the Father of Development. Authoritarianism was considered the necessary price for economic progress.

Suharto and his generals believed Indonesia had to be kept together at all costs and this meant minimising political activity and squashing any potentially divisive movements – be they Islamic radicals, communists or the separatist rebels of Aceh, Papua (former Dutch New Guinea) and East Timor.

The armed forces considered themselves the indispensable protectors of Indonesian unity and it was during the Suharto years that their 'dual function' *(dwifungsi)* of supervising Indonesia's internal governance as well as defending the country became most deeply entrenched. Suppression of dissent was the norm, and censorship kept the populace ignorant of anything the regime wanted kept quiet.

In 1975 the industrial empire Pertamina, a personal fiefdom of General Ibnu Sutowo that controlled Indonesia's oil production and much more, crashed with debts greater than the national budget and was bailed out by the government.

SUHARTO INC

Near absolute power allowed the forces and Suharto's family and business associates to get away with almost anything. The army was not just a security force, it ran hundreds of businesses, legal and illegal, supposedly to supplement its inadequate funding from government. Corruption went hand-in-hand with secrecy and most notorious was the Suharto family itself. Suharto's wife Ibu Tien (nicknamed Madam Tien Per Cent) controlled the state monopoly on the import and milling of wheat; his daughter Tutut won the 1987 contract to build the Jakarta toll road; his son Tommy gained a monopoly on the cloves used in Indonesia's ultra-popular *kretek* cigarettes in 1989.

In 1995 Indonesia was ranked the most corrupt of all the 41 countries assessed in the first-ever Corruption Index published by Transparency International (TI). In 2004 TI placed Suharto at the top of its all-time world corruption table, with an alleged embezzlement figure of between US$15 billion and US$35 billion from his 32 years in power.

Indonesia's most prominent and worthwhile English-language newspaper is the long-running daily *Jakarta Post* (www.thejakartapost.com). Coverage can be a little patchy, but it does give a reasonable picture of what's happening in the country.

1990s

NGOs, many of them started by young middle-class Indonesians, emerge as a focus of dissent, campaigning on issues from peasant dispossessions to destructive logging and restrictions on Islamic organisations.

1997–1998

The Asian currency crisis savages Indonesia's economy, sparking riots. After troops kill four students at a Jakarta demonstration in May 1998, rioting and looting cause an estimated 1200 deaths. Suharto steps down on 21 May.

1998

Vice-president BJ Habibie becomes president. He releases political prisoners and relaxes censorship, but the army kills at least 12 in a Jakarta student protest. Christian/Muslim violence erupts in Jakarta and elsewhere, especially Maluku.

DEMOCRATIC VENEER

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

Whereas Sukarno had rejected US aid in favour of support from the USSR and China, Suharto's anti-communism and Indonesia's mineral wealth won him support from Western nations. The US and Japan built the biggest stakes in the country's oil, mineral and other resources.

The New Order always maintained a superficial veneer of elections and democracy. 'Functional groups' (*golongan karya,* or *golkar* for short) such as civil servants, the military, and the employed and employers (who together formed one group), became the basis of social and political organisation. In the 1971 elections to the MPR, more than half the seats were allocated to the military and Suharto's personal appointees. Of the remaining elective seats, the Golkar political entity (not officially considered a party) won well over half. Golkar continued to dominate elections throughout the Suharto period amid widespread allegations of bribery, violence and threats by the regime. In 1973, other parties were compulsorily merged – the four Muslim parties into the Development Unity Party (PPP), and all the rest into the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). Political activity in the villages was banned altogether.

EXTENDING INDONESIA

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

Suharto's regime saw to it that the former Dutch New Guinea stayed in Indonesia by staging a travesty of a confirmatory vote in 1969. Just over 1000 selected Papuan 'representatives' were pressured into voting unanimously for continued integration with Indonesia, in what was named the Act of Free Choice.

In 1975 the left-wing party Fretilin won a power struggle within the newly independent former Portuguese colony East Timor. The western part of Timor island, a former Dutch possession, was Indonesian. Horrified at the prospect of a left-wing government in a neighbouring state, Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor. Fretilin kept up a guerrilla struggle and at least 125,000 Timorese died in fighting, famines and repression over the next 2½ decades.

THE END OF THE NEW ORDER

When the Cold War ended, the West became less ready to turn a blind eye to both human rights abuses and the absence of democracy in Indonesia. In response to simmering discontent, the regime launched a period of freer political discussion known as 'Openness' in 1989. Openness closed abruptly in 1994 when the press became too rude about the regime.

The end of the New Order was finally precipitated by the Asian currency crisis of 1997, which savaged Indonesia's economy. Millions lost their jobs and rising prices sparked riots. Suharto faced unprecedented widespread calls for his resignation. Antigovernment rallies spread from universities

1999

Habibie agrees to a referendum in East Timor: resulting in a 78% vote for independence. Militias backed by Indonesian military conduct a murderous terror campaign before and after the vote. East Timor finally achieves independence in 2002.

Jun–Oct 1999

Following Indonesia's first free election since 1955, Abdurrahman Wahid of the country's largest Islamic organisation, Nahdatul Ulama (Rise of the Scholars), becomes president as leader of a multi-party coalition.

1999–2001

Wahid tries to reform government, tackle corruption, reduce military power, bring Suharto to justice and address the grievances of Aceh and Papua. But his efforts are hamstrung by military, Suhartoist and Islamic opponents.

to city streets, and when four students at Jakarta's Trisakti University were shot dead by troops in May 1998, the city erupted in rioting and looting. An estimated 1200 were killed. Hardest hit were the Chinese, whose businesses were looted and destroyed, with shocking tales of rape and murder emerging afterwards. Even Suharto's own ministers were now calling for his resignation, and he finally resigned on 21 May.

THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY

Suharto's fall ushered in a period known as *reformasi* (reform), three tumultuous years in which elective democracy, free expression and human rights all advanced, and attempts were made to deal with the grievances of East Timor, Aceh and Papua. It was an era with many positives and some disasters. *Reformasi* ground to a halt when Megawati Sukarnoputri, Sukarno's daughter, became president in 2002. Since 2004, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (known as SBY), a retired general with moderately liberal leanings, has pursued a cautious, undramatic style of governing which has steered Indonesia free of serious troubles, produced some reforms and kept the economy afloat. SBY was re-elected for a second presidential term with an increased share of the vote in 2009. Though survivors from the Suharto era still dominate politics, the 2009 elections, peaceful and without major corruption scandals, showed that Indonesian democracy had put down roots.

In *Madness Descending,* British journalist Richard Lloyd Parry gives a first-hand account of the upheavals precipitated by the end of the Suharto regime in 1998.

THE HABIBIE PRESIDENCY

Suharto's vice-president BJ Habibie stepped up as president when Suharto resigned. Habibie released political prisoners, relaxed censorship and promised elections, but he still tried to ban demonstrations and reaffirmed the political role of the unpopular army. When students marched on parliament in November 1998, demanding immediate elections, the army killed at least 12 and injured hundreds. Tensions between Christians and Muslims in some parts of Indonesia also erupted into violence – especially Maluku, where thousands died in incidents between early 1999 and 2002 (see p726).

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

Habibie agreed to a UN-organised referendum in East Timor, where human rights abuses, reported by Amnesty International among others, had blackened Indonesia's name internationally. In the September 1999 vote, 78% of East Timorese chose independence. But the event was accompanied by a terror campaign by pro-Indonesia militia groups and Indonesian security forces, which according to Amnesty International killed an estimated 1300 people, and left much of East Timor's infrastructure ruined. Order was only restored by the arrival of a UN peacekeeping force. East Timor finally gained full independence in 2002.

2001

Violence erupts in Kalimantan between indigenous Dayaks and Madurese migrants. Over a million people are displaced by conflicts in East Timor, Maluku, Kalimantan and elsewhere. The MPR dismisses Wahid for alleged corruption and incompetence.

2001–04

Vice-president Megawati Sukarnoputri, Sukarno's daughter, leading the PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle) and supported by many conservative elements, succeeds Wahid.

2002

A bomb attack in Kuta, Bali, kills 202, mainly foreign tourists. The Islamic militant group Jemaah Islamiah is blamed. Several of its members are jailed in the following years, and three are executed in 2008.

UNHAPPY EXTREMITIES

Two regions at opposite ends of Indonesia have failed to fall in line with the notion of a unitary state, encompassing all the former Dutch East Indies, that has been espoused by all leaders of independent Indonesia.

The conservatively Islamic, resource-rich region of Aceh was only brought under Dutch rule by a 35-year war ending in 1908. After the Dutch departed, Aceh wasn't happy about Indonesian rule either. The Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka; GAM), founded in 1976, gathered steam after 1989, waging a guerrilla struggle for Acehnese independence. The 1990s saw Aceh under something close to military rule, with the population suffering both atrocities by the Indonesian army and intimidation by GAM. Extended peace talks began in 2002, but when these collapsed in 2003, Aceh was placed under martial law and the Indonesian army launched its biggest assault since the 1975 invasion of East Timor.

Everything changed with the tsunami on 26 December 2004, which wrought its biggest devastation on Aceh, killing some 170,000 people and leaving about 500,000 homeless. The government was forced to allow foreign aid organisations into Aceh and to restart negotiations with GAM. A peace deal in August 2005 formally ended three decades of armed struggle which had cost an estimated 15,000 lives. GAM agreed to become an unarmed political movement and the government agreed to withdraw its troops from Aceh, give the province greater autonomy, allow Islamic law and let it keep a greater share of its oil and gas revenues. A former GAM commander, Irwandi Yusuf, was elected as provincial governor in direct elections in December 2006.

Whether this will prove a lasting solution for Aceh still remains to be seen. Much distrust lingers between the Indonesian authorities and ex-GAM members. Indonesian troops returned to Aceh (as reconstruction workers) and pro-Indonesian militias in the interior did not disband. Ex-GAM members have been accused of intimidation and extortion. Most observers agreed that the year 2009, when most of the post-tsunami aid programmes were due to end, was likely to be key to future prospects.

THE WAHID & MEGAWATI PRESIDENCIES

Indonesia's first free parliamentary elections for 44 years took place in June 1999. No party received a clear mandate, but the MPR elected Muslim preacher Abdurrahman Wahid president as leader of a coalition. The eccentric Wahid, from the country's largest Islamic organisation, Nahdatul Ulama (Rise of the Scholars), was blind, had suffered two strokes and disliked formal dress and hierarchies. He embarked on an ambitious program to rein in the military, reform the legal and financial systems, promote religious tolerance, tackle corruption, bring Suharto to justice, and resolve the problems of Aceh and Papua. He even apologised to the victims of the 1965–66 massacres. Unsurprisingly, all this upset everybody who was anybody, and in July 2001 the MPR dismissed Wahid over alleged incompetence and corruption. Further ethnic violence erupted that year in Kalimantan, where indigenous Dayaks turned on migrants from the island of Madura.

Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia's reformist president from 1999–2001, is universally known as Gus Dur – Gus being a Javanese familiar title and Dur a short form of Abdurrahman.

Mar 2004

Anticorruption group Transparency International puts Suharto at the top of its all-time world corruption table, with an alleged embezzlement figure of between US$15 billion and US$35 billion from his 32 years in power.

Oct 2004

In Indonesia's first direct presidential elections, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) of the new Democratic Party, a former general regarded as a liberal, wins a run-off vote against Megawati.

Dec 2004

Over 200,000 Indonesians die in the 26 December tsunami that devastates large areas of Sumatra, especially Aceh. SBY restarts peace talks with the GAM rebels there, leading to a peace deal in 2005.

Like Aceh, Papua wasn't brought into the Dutch East Indies until late in the colonial period and has always shown a strong distaste for Indonesian rule. Papuan people are culturally distinct from other Indonesians, being of dark-skinned Melanesian stock and having had very limited contact with the outside world until the 20th century. Today most of them are Christian. Resistance to Indonesian rule has continued ever since Sukarno's takeover in 1963, in the form of sporadic guerrilla attacks by the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Organisation; OPM), which is armed chiefly with bows, arrows and spears, and in non-violent forms such as demonstrations and raisings of the banned Papuan independence flag, the Morning Star. The Indonesian security forces have generally responded with disproportionate force to any type of resistance, including at times aerial attacks on villages.

Papua is a resource-rich region seen by many Indonesians as ripe for exploitation. It has about 1% of Indonesia's population on about 22% of Indonesia's land area. It has timber, fish, oil, and the world's biggest seams of gold and copper. Added to these reasons why Jakarta wouldn't want to let it go are the more than one million Indonesians who have migrated to Papua in the past 40 years, and now make up nearly half the region's population.

During the *reformasi* (reform) period following Suharto's fall in 1998, many Papuans hoped that independence might be on the cards. A congress of 2500 Papuans meeting in Jayapura in the year 2000 declared that Papua no longer recognised Indonesian rule, and consequently set out to seek a UN-sponsored referendum on Papuan independence. But the security forces soon had the movement's leaders either in jail or dead, and moved to quash popular independence protests.

Papua's economy and administration are dominated by non-Papuans, fuelling the indigenous people's grievances and making an Aceh-type autonomy solution impossible. Security-force abuses in Papua – torture, murder, rape – continue to be reported by human rights organisations. Pro-independence sentiment among Papuans remains high, and an end to Papua's troubles seems as far away as ever.

Vice-president Megawati of the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (PDI-P) took over as president in Wahid's place. Supported by many conservative, old-guard elements, Megawati had none of her father's flair or vision and did little for reform in her three years in office. Corruption, human rights abuses and military abuse of power continued, and this, along with terrorist bombings in Bali and Jakarta, helped to discourage foreign support and investment.

Golkar's share of the vote fell from 70% to 20% in the first post-Suharto elections in 1999.

SBY IN CHARGE

The year 2004 saw Indonesia's first-ever direct popular vote for president. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), leading the new Democratic Party (formed as his personal political vehicle), won in a run-off vote against Megawati. A popular and pragmatic politician, SBY quickly won favour by making sure foreign aid could get to tsunami-devastated Aceh and sealing a peace deal with Aceh's GAM rebels (see opposite).

2004–09

SBY's presidency sees progress against B-list corruption. The army is edged away from politics and compelled to divest most of its business enterprises. But many human-rights abusers continue to be leniently treated.

2006

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

2007

SBY orders a review of Indonesia's transport system after a series of air, ferry and rail disasters. The EU bans Indonesian airlines from Europe. Transport disasters continue.

SBY's unspectacular but stable presidency saw the military forced to divest most of their business enterprises and edged away from politics (they lost their reserved seats in parliament in 2004). There was also progress against corruption. A former head of Indonesia's central bank, an MP, a governor of Aceh province and a mayor of Medan were all among those jailed thanks to the Corruption Eradication Commission, established in 2002. But no really big fish were netted – Suharto, for example, managed to cheat justice all the way to his death in 2008. The courts also continued to deal surprisingly leniently with many human rights abusers. No convictions of army leaders believed to have orchestrated the 1999 violence in East Timor have been upheld.

Of 18 people tried by an Indonesian human-rights court for abuses in East Timor in 1999, only militia leader Eurico Guterres was convicted. His conviction for a massacre of 12 people was quashed by the Indonesian Supreme Court in 2008.

Fears of an upsurge in Islamic radicalism, especially after the Bali and Jakarta terrorist bombings of 2002 to 2005, proved largely unfounded. Despite isolated attacks on Indonesian Christians, the existence of hardline organisations such as the vigilante group Islam Defenders' Front (FPI), and the Jakarta hotel bombings of July 2009 that killed nine (which police believed was the work of an offshoot of Jemaah Islamiah, the organisation blamed for the 2002 Bali bombing), the great majority of Indonesian Muslims are moderate. Islamic parties receive a sizeable share of the vote in elections and can influence government policies, but they can only do so by remaining in the political mainstream.

Indonesians clearly appreciated the stability and non-confrontational style of SBY's presidency, and his successful handling of the economy, for they re-elected him for another five years, with over 60% of the vote, in 2009. The scale of his victory over Megawati Sukarnoputri and Jusuf Kalla of Golkar was such that only one round of voting was needed.

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

Interestingly neither religion nor ethnicity played a major part in determining how people voted, suggesting that many Indonesians valued democracy, peace and economic progress above sectarian or regional issues. Indonesia's two largest Islamic organisations, Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which together have over 50 million members, both publicly supported the candidacy of Jusuf Kalla, yet SBY won a majority of votes from members of both organisations.

The size of SBY's election victory gave him a great chance to take decisive action to spur economic progress and step up the pace of reform. He vowed to intensify the anticorruption campaign and efforts for good governance. With Indonesia handling the world recession better than other Southeast Asian countries – it was still expecting growth of 4% in 2009 while some neighbouring countries were slipping into recession – the country was also well placed to take advantage of the hoped-for upswing in the world economy.

2009

SBY is re-elected president with over 60% of the vote. Indonesia is weathering the world recession relatively well and SBY promises to step up reform and the anticorruption campaign.

Sept 17th 2009

Terrorist leader Nordin M Top is killed in a shootout with police on the outskirts of Solo, Java. Top was alleged to be the mastermind in a string of major terrorist attacks in Indonesia from 2002 to 2009 resulting in the death of over 200 people.

Sept 30th 2009

Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra, is rocked by an earthquake that strikes 57km southwest of Pariaman. Measuring 7.6 in magnitude, the earthquake completely destroys many buildings, and kills many as 5000 people.

The Culture

THE NATIONAL PSYCHE

Indonesia comprises a massively diverse range of societies and cultures; the differences between, say, the Sumbanese and Sundanese are as marked as those between the Swedes and Sicilians. Even so, a strong national Indonesian identity has emerged, originally through the struggle for independence and, following that, through education programs and the promotion of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. This is despite the fact that Indonesia continues to be stretched by opposing forces: 'strict' Islam versus 'moderate' Islam, Islam versus Christianity versus Hinduism, outer islands versus Java, country versus city, modern versus traditional, rich versus poor, the 21st century versus the past.

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

The Jakarta – Indonesia – Urban Blog (http://tbelfield.wordpress.com) is a terrific collage of information, opinions and links on Indonesian arts, culture and society.

A cultural element that bridges both the regional and the national is religion – the Pancasila principle of belief in a god holds firm (see boxed text, p46). Though Indonesia is predominantly Islamic, in many places Islam is interwoven with traditional customs, giving it unique qualities and characteristics. Some areas are Christian or animist and, to leaven the mix, Bali has its own unique brand of Hinduism. Religion plays a role in the everyday: mosques and *musholla* (prayer rooms) are in constant use, and the vibrant Hindu ceremonies of Bali are a daily occurrence, to the delight of many visitors.

Mobile phones, SUVs, ATMs, shopping malls, house- and techno-driven nightclubs and other facets of international modernity have found purchase in Indonesia. But while the main cities and tourist resorts can appear technologically rich, other areas remain untouched by the mod cons many city dwellers take for granted. And even where modernisation has taken hold, it's clear that Indonesians have a very traditionalist heart. As well as adherence to religious and ethnic traditions, social customs are maintained. Politeness to strangers is a deeply ingrained habit throughout most of the archipelago. Elders are still accorded great respect. When visiting someone's home, elders are always greeted first, and often customary permission to depart is also offered. This can occur whether in a high-rise in Medan or a hut in the Baliem Valley.

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

LIFESTYLE

Daily life for Indonesians has changed rapidly in the last decade or two. These days, many people live away from their home region and the role of women has extended well beyond domestic duties to include career and study (see p61). Nevertheless, the importance of the family remains high. This is evident during such festivals as Lebaran (the end of the Islamic fasting month), when highways become gridlocked with those returning home to loved ones. Even at weekends, many travel for hours to spend a day with their relatives. In many ways, the notions of family and regional identity have become more

pronounced: as people move away from small-scale communities and enter the milieu of the cities, the sense of belonging becomes more valued.

Beyond family, the main social unit is the village. Half the population still lives in rural areas where labour in the fields, the home or the market is the basis of daily life. So, for younger Indonesians, is school – though not for as many as might be hoped. Nine out of 10 children complete the five years of primary schooling, but only six out of 10 get through secondary school. Kids from poorer families have to start supplementing the family income at an early age.

The village spirit isn't restricted to rural areas: the backstreets of Jakarta, for example, are home to tightknit neighbourhoods where kids run from house to house and everyone knows who owns which chicken. A sense of community may also evolve in a *kos* (apartment with shared facilities), where tenants, far from their families, come together for meals and companionship.

Villages can also act as something of a welfare system during tough times. They operate a grassroots system of mutual help called *gotong-royong*. But as more and more people move to large cities, this social safety net has thinned, which, in turn, has increased the prevalence of begging or crime.

For the many Indonesians who still live in their home regions, customs and traditions remain a part of the everyday: the Toraja of Sulawesi continue to build traditional houses due to their social importance (see boxed text, p676); the focus of a Sumbanese village remains the gravestones of their ancestors due to the influence they are believed to have in daily happenings (see p580). These aren't customs offered attention once a year – they are a part of life. And even where modernity has found purchase, age-old traditions can still underpin life: Bali, for example, still scrupulously observes its annual day of silence, Nyepi (Balinese Lunar New Year), when literally all activity stops and everyone stays at home (or in their hotels) so that evil spirits will think the island uninhabited and leave it alone.

Life for women in Indonesian society is, like so many other things, full of contradictions. While many are well educated and well employed, and women in cities can enjoy bars and clubbing just like men, traditional family roles are still strong (see p61). The pressures of conservative Islam (p59) make many women wary that recently gained freedoms may be eroded.

SMALL TALK

One thing that takes many visitors by surprise in Indonesia is what may seem overinquisitiveness from complete strangers. *Dari mana?* (Where do you come from?) and *Mau kemana?* (Where are you going?) are questions you'll be asked by people you simply pass on the street. They may be quickly followed by *Tinggal dimana?* (Where are you staying?), *Jalan sendiri?* (Are you travelling alone?) or even *Sudah kawin?* (Are you married?). Visitors can find these questions intrusive or irritating, and in tourist hotspots they may just be a prelude to a sales pitch, but more often they are simply polite greetings and an expression of interest in a foreigner. A short answer or a Bahasa Indonesia greeting, with a smile, is a polite and adequate response. If you don't want to say exactly where you're going, just *Jalan-jalan* (Walking around) or *Makan angin* (literally 'Eating wind', ie 'Walking') is fine.

If you get into a slightly longer conversation, it's polite to ask some of the same questions in return. Indonesians like to be asked about their family and, if they are married, *Anak-anak ada?* (Do you have children?) is always a good question. When you've had enough chatter, you can answer the question 'Where are you going?' even if it hasn't been asked.

A smile goes a very long way in Indonesia. It's said Indonesians have a smile for every emotion, and keeping one on your face even in a difficult situation helps to avoid giving offence. Indonesians generally seek consensus rather than disagreement, so maintaining a sense of accord, however tenuous, is a good idea in all dealings. Anger or aggressive behaviour is considered poor form.

TRAVELLER TACT

Understanding a few basic Indonesian courtesies and customs not only helps you avoid gaffes but also enriches your own travel experience. For a larger discussion of how you can minimise your impact while travelling, see p21.

Dress & Etiquette

Skimpy beach attire, exposing large areas of skin in public, and open displays of affection are alien to most Indonesians. They may be tolerated in tourist resorts but elsewhere it's wise to adapt to local norms. Even shorts on men are considered bizarre by many people, although they don't usually attract open disapproval.

In places of worship it's essential to dress and behave respectfully. In mosques you must be well covered and women must don headscarves, but everyone must remove their shoes. In Bali you should tie a sash or *selandang* (traditional scarf) around your waist before entering temples – some have them for hire.

It's also customary to take off your shoes when entering many people's homes.

Never pass anything to someone with your left hand only. To show added respect, use both hands. Standing with hands on hips can be interpreted as aggressive, and sitting with the soles of your feet pointed towards someone is a sign of disrespect.

Visiting Villages

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

Some villages that are used to visitors have a visitors' book, where you sign in and make a donation (10,000Rp is usually sufficient). In more remote villages, it's best to go with a guide, especially if language difficulty is likely. A guide can make the introductions, teach you protocol and explain points of interest.

For tips on visiting longhouses, see boxed text, p604.

Contradictions also run through the status of gays in Indonesian society. Plenty of Indonesians of both sexes are actively gay, and except in some very conservative areas such as Aceh, active repression is absent. But so is positive recognition of gay identity or gay rights. *Waria* (transgender or transvestite) performers and prostitutes have quite a high profile. Otherwise gay behaviour is, by and large, accepted without being particularly approved. Bali, with its big international scene, and some Javanese cities have the most open gay life.

ECONOMY

Indonesia's economy is big. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), at US$511 billion in 2008, is almost half as big as India's and more than double that of its neighbour Malaysia. When you break that down per person, however, a more revealing picture emerges. Indonesia's GDP per person of US$2150 in 2008 was more than double India's – but Malaysia's was four times as big and Australia's 22 times as big.

Despite a big advance in the past four decades, Indonesia remains a poor country. The average school teacher earns the rupiah equivalent of just over US$100 a month; a typical shop worker gets about half that. The glitzy shopping malls that have sprung up in cities, and the obvious prosperity of an urban minority, belie the fact that about one in every two Indonesians still lives on less than US$2 per day. Some 100 million still live without electricity. And the overall national figures hide big differences between regions. People in oil-rich East Kalimantan have about 12 times as much to live on every month as people in undeveloped East Nusa Tenggara.

During the Suharto years Indonesia enjoyed impressive economic growth (averaging 7% a year) but it was slammed by the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, which contributed to Suharto's downfall. In 1998, Indonesian GDP fell by a huge 13%, and it took half a decade to get back to where it had been before the crisis. By 2008 GDP was again growing at 6%, only for the economy to be hit again by the world recession of 2009. At the time of writing, GDP growth was expected to be back above 3% by 2011. Unemployment was already running at around 9% before 2009, and an estimated further 30% are underemployed.

Four of the banks from whose ATMs travellers withdraw cash are government-owned: Bank Mandiri, Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI), Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) and Bank Tabungan Negara (BTN).

The economy is market-based but with over 100 state-owned companies. Oil and gas, found in several parts of Indonesia including Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua, are Indonesia's most valuable products, worth around US$25 billion in exports (22% of the total) for 2007. Minerals and electrical equipment rank next in value. Japan is the biggest market for Indonesian products, followed by the USA, Singapore and China. Nearly half the workforce is still engaged in agriculture.

Oil and gas, in which foreign companies have large investments, are also the biggest contributors to government revenue (about one-third in 2008). A new mining law passed in 2008 was intended to attract more foreign investment in mining, through a more secure investment environment, and help Indonesia take better advantage of China's growing thirst for minerals. One of the Yudhoyono government's priorities since 2004 has been to tackle corruption, unpredictable tax administration, inefficient customs services and other problems that discourage private investment in business and industry.

POPULATION

Indonesia, with an estimated 240 million people in 2009, is the world's fourth most populous nation, after China, India and the USA, and Java alone has some 130 million people. Yet population growth has slowed to little over 1% as a result of family-planning programs such as the appointment of village coordinators who advise on contraception, monitor birth rates and promote such national campaigns as *Dua Anak Cukup* (Two Children is Enough). Large families are commoner in rural areas, where children are seen as 'insurance' for the parents' old age.

Indonesia's population currently increases by about 2.5 million people per year.

Indonesia's population is very unevenly distributed. The overall national density is 126 people per sq km but in Java it's more than 1000 people per sq km (2.6 times that of England, which is almost exactly the same size), while in Papua it's under seven per sq km. Meanwhile, Jakarta and other cities continue to grow, as people move in to try their luck in these economic hubs. Slightly over half the population now lives in towns and cities, compared with 20% in 1975.

MULTICULTURALISM

Indonesia is a country of literally hundreds of cultures. Every one of its 700-plus languages denotes, at least to some extent, a different culture. They range from the matrilineal Minangkabau of Sumatra and the artistic, Hindu Balinese, to the seafaring Bugis and buffalo-sacrificing Toraja of Sulawesi and Papua's penis gourd–wearing Dani, to name but a few. Indonesia's island nature and rugged, mountainous terrain have meant that groups of people have often developed in near-isolation from each other, resulting in an extraordinary differentiation of culture and language across the archipelago. Even in densely populated Java there are distinct groups, such as the Badui, who withdrew to the western highlands as Islam spread through the island and have had little contact with outsiders.

While 28% of Indonesians in 2005 were under 15 years old, the figure is expected to be 25% by 2015. Over-65-year-olds constituted 5.5% in 2005 but are expected to approach 7% by 2015.

The notion that all these peoples could form one nation is a relatively young one, originating in the later part of the Dutch colonial era. Indonesia's 20th-century founding fathers knew that if a country of such diverse culture and religion was to hold together, it needed special handling. They fostered Indonesian nationalism and a national language (Bahasa Indonesia, spoken today by almost all Indonesians but the mother tongue for only about 20% of them). They rejected ideas that Indonesia should be a federal republic (potentially centrifugal), or a state subject to the law of Islam, even though this is the religion of the great majority. Today most Indonesian citizens (with the chief exceptions of many Papuans and some Acehnese) are firmly committed to the idea of Indonesia, even if there is a lingering feeling that in some ways the country is a 'Javanese empire'.

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

In terms of broad 'racial' distinctions, the great majority of Indonesians are Austronesian – that is, they are members of a group of peoples inhabiting Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Madagascar, some Pacific islands and small parts of the Southeast Asian mainland, who are thought to have started spreading out from Taiwan perhaps 6000 years ago. The other main 'racial' group is the darker-skinned, fuzzier-haired Melanesians, who were probably already in Indonesia when the Austronesians started arriving, then were absorbed or displaced by them. Today Melanesians are found chiefly in Papua and a few islands of Maluku.

The chief pressures on peaceful coexistence between Indonesia's multiple ethnic groups have come from religion and internal migration. From the 1960s to the late 1990s the Suharto dictatorship kept a tight lid on any potential unrest from these causes, but after Suharto's fall tensions between Muslims and Christians broke out in terrible cycles of violence in which thousands were killed. These were worst in Maluku, central Sulawesi and Kalimantan. They were in many cases exacerbated by the effects of *transmigrasi* (transmigration), the government-sponsored program of migration from Indonesia's more overcrowded islands (Java, Bali and Madura) to less crowded ones such as Kalimantan, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Papua. Over eight million people were relocated between 1950 and 2000. The program was then drastically scaled down and now only about 70,000 people a year are being relocated.

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

In some cases official *transmigrasi* was accompanied by large numbers of 'spontaneous' migrants – people who moved under their own steam to areas of perceived greater opportunity (as some Indonesians have done throughout history). It is not hard to see how ill-judged decisions about the locations of transmigration settlements, and the effects of migration on local life and economy, could anger existing local populations. The late 1990s violence in Kalimantan took place chiefly between indigenous Dayaks and migrants from Madura. In troubled Papua, official and spontaneous migration have introduced a number of non-Papuans now almost equal to the number of indigenous Papuans, and the migrants have taken a hold of most of Papua's economy and administration.

The one sizeable group in Indonesian society that is neither Austronesian nor Melanesian is the Chinese, who number about two million, chiefly concentrated in cities of Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Many of Indonesia's biggest and most successful businesses are Chinese-owned (though there are also plenty of poor Chinese and plenty of successful non-Chinese businesses). Chinese settlers already occupied important roles in business, trade and government administration in many Indonesian states by the 16th century. Down the centuries the Chinese have repeatedly been the focus of resentment and violent attacks by other Indonesians. Chinese were accorded higher status than other Indonesians by the Dutch, who

used them to some extent as intermediaries in their dealings with the rest of the population. Chinese success in business also fuelled resentment, and Presidents Sukarno and Suharto enacted several pieces of anti-Chinese legislation. In the name of 'assimilation', Suharto banned public Chinese spiritual practice and Chinese script, closed down Chinese newspapers and compelled Chinese to take Indonesian-sounding names. Chinese were the worst victims of the Jakarta riots of 1998, when hundreds were killed and/or raped. Many Chinese fled Indonesia after 1998, although anti-Chinese legislation was soon repealed. Confucianism can now be practised freely, and the Chinese New Year has even become a public holiday since 2003.

MEDIA

Indonesia has about a dozen commercial TV networks in addition to the state-run TVRI and local government–run regional stations. Most have limited current-affairs coverage except for TVRI's TV1 and the commercial Metro TV. These two are considered to give pretty impartial coverage even though Metro TV is owned by a senior figure in the Golkar Party, Surya Paloh.

John Thayer Sidel's *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad* connects Indonesia's terrorist bombings from 2002 to 2005 with religion-related violence of the preceding decade.

Tight censorship was enforced by the Suharto dictatorship, but censorship laws were repealed soon after Suharto's fall. The media have had to continue struggling for full freedom, but today they operate largely without restriction and express a wide range of views. One big step forward came in 2007 when the so-called 'hate-sowing' laws were declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. Under these laws 'public expression of feelings of hostility, hatred or contempt toward the government' had been banned, and journalists and others had been sentenced under them even after Suharto's fall.

Journalists in Indonesia were victims of 31 cases of violence or intimidation from election candidates, state officials or police in 2008, according to the US State Department.

It seems Indonesia is still not ready for full discussion of its own history, however. In 2007, the Attorney General's Office banned 13 history textbooks from schools and universities for not conforming to the view that the 1965 attempted coup (see boxed text, p45) was caused solely by the Indonesian Communist Party. The Supreme Court approved the decision, stating that the books could cause public disorder.

Nor is there full media freedom over the troubled region of Papua. Foreign journalists, parliamentarians and NGO workers are still required to obtain government permission to visit Papua, which is sometimes refused.

RELIGION

Indonesia's constitution affirms that the state is based on a belief in 'the One and Only God'; yet it also, rather contradictorily, guarantees 'freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief'. In practice, this translates into a requirement to follow one of the officially accepted 'religions', of which there are now six: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

Islam is the predominant religion, with followers making up about 86% of the population. In Java pilgrims still visit hundreds of holy places where spiritual energy is believed to be concentrated. Christians make up about 9% of the population, in scattered areas spread across the archipelago. Bali's Hindus comprise nearly 2% of the population.

Nevertheless, old beliefs persist. The earliest Indonesians were animists who practised ancestor and spirit worship. When Hinduism and Buddhism and, later, Islam and Christianity spread into the archipelago, they were layered onto this spiritual base. Fascinating elements of animism, mostly concerned with the spirits of the dead or fertility rituals, survive alongside the major religions all over Indonesia today – especially among peoples

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

The Suharto dictatorship kept a very tight lid on religious militancy, but Suharto's fall in 1998 let loose some suppressed intercommunal tensions which resulted in horrific outbreaks of violence, chiefly between Muslims and Christians and especially in Maluku and parts of Kalimantan and Sulawesi. The violence did, however, have other catalysts apart from religion, including ill-conceived *transmigrasi* (transmigration; a government-sponsored scheme to encourage settlers to move from overcrowded regions to sparsely populated ones) policies and unequal distribution of wealth.

Today the violence has largely subsided, although some incidents do occur. In 2007, for example, 10 Muslim radicals were jailed for attacks on Christians in Sulawesi. The great majority of Indonesians place a high value on their country's pluralist constitution which guarantees freedom of worship, and they do not want to see a recurrence of the horrors from the turn of the 21st century.

such as the Bataks (see boxed text, p390), the Mentawaians (see boxed text, pp428-9) and the Niassans (p395) of Sumatra; the Toraja of Sulawesi (see boxed text, p676); the Dayaks of Kalimantan (see boxed text, p622); many Papuan peoples including the Dani (see boxed text, p803) and the Asmat (see boxed text, p815); and the Sumbanese (p579) and many other peoples of Nusa Tenggara.

Islam

Islam arrived in Indonesia with Muslim traders from the Arabian Peninsula and India as early as the 7th century AD, within decades of the Prophet Muhammed receiving the word of Allah (God) in Mecca. The first Indonesian rulers to convert to Islam were in the small North Sumatran ports of Lamreh and Pasai in the 13th century. Gradually over the following two centuries, then more rapidly, other Indonesian states adopted Islam. The religion initially spread along sea-trade routes, and the conversion of Demak, Tuban, Gresik and Cirebon, on Java's north coast, in the late 15th century was an important step in its progress. The first Indonesian rulers to adopt Islam chose to do so from contact with foreign Muslim communities. Some other states were converted by conquest. Java's first Islamic leaders have long been venerated and mythologised as the nine *walis* (saints). Many legends are told about their feats of magic or war, and pilgrims visit their graves despite the official proscription of saint worship by Islam.

Today Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world and the role Islam should play in its national life is constantly debated. Mainstream Indonesian Islam is moderate. Muslim women are not segregated nor, in most of the country, do they have to wear the *jilbab* (head covering), although this has recently become more common. Muslim men are allowed to marry two women but must have the consent of their first wife. Even so, polygamy in Indonesia is very rare. Many pre-Islamic traditions and customs remain in place. The Minangkabau society of Sumatra, for example, is strongly Islamic but remains matrilineal according to tradition.

Likely upcoming Ramadan periods:

11 Aug-9 Sep 2010

1-30 Aug 2011

20 Jul-18 Aug 2012

Islam requires that all boys be circumcised, and in Indonesia this is usually done between the ages of six and 11. Muslims observe the fasting month of Ramadan (a time when visitors should be sensitive about eating in public during the day, and when travel can become difficult as Muslims journey home to celebrate Lebaran at the end of the month). Friday afternoons are officially set aside for believers to worship, and all government offices and many businesses are closed as a result. In accordance with Islamic teaching, millions of Indonesians have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

An attempt by some Islamic parties to make sharia (Islamic religious law) a constitutional obligation for all Indonesian Muslims was rejected by the national parliament in 2002. Sharia was firmly outlawed under the Suharto dictatorship, but elements of it have since been introduced in some cities and regions. Aceh was permitted to introduce strict sharia under its 2005 peace deal with the government. In Aceh gambling, alcohol and public affection between the sexes are all now banned, some criminals receive corporal punishment, and the *jilbab* is compulsory for women. Public displays of intimacy, alcohol and 'prostitute-like appearance' are outlawed in the factory town of Tangerang on Jakarta's outskirts, and the *jilbab* is obligatory in Padang, Sumatra.

Islam in Indonesia by Giora Eliraz relates Indonesian Islam to international trends.

Indonesia's several Islamic political parties do, between them, get a sizeable share of the vote in parliamentary elections (35% in 2004) and they do influence governments through their participation in coalitions. Secular parties usually feel the need to make a nod towards Islamic interests, but the evidence of recent elections is that the great majority of Muslims are moderates and do not want an Islamic state. Neither of Indonesia's two biggest Muslim organisations (neither of which is a political party) – the traditionalist Nahdatul Ulama (Rise of the Scholars) and the modernist Muhammadiyah, which have about 30 million members each – now seeks an Islamic state. Militant Islamist groups that have made headlines with violent actions speak for only small minorities. Jemaah Islamiah was responsible for the 2002 Bali bombings which killed 202 people, mainly foreign tourists. Three of its members were executed for their part in that atrocity in 2008, although Jemaah Islamiah has not been banned and is still involved in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. A vigilante group called the Islam Defenders' Front has been behind several violent incidents including assaults in 2007 on bars and cafes in Bogor, Java, which it deemed to have violated Ramadan. In 2008 its leader, Rizieq Shibab, was jailed for attacking a Jakarta interfaith rally.

If you've ever wondered why some hotel rooms have a small arrow pointing in a seemingly random direction on the ceiling, it's actually indicating the direction of Mecca for Muslims who want to pray but can't get to a mosque.

Christianity

The Portuguese introduced Roman Catholicism to Indonesia in the 16th century. Although they dabbled in religious conversion in Maluku and sent Dominican friars to Timor and Flores, their influence was never strong. The Dutch introduced Protestantism but made little effort to spread it. Missionary efforts came only after the Dutch set about establishing direct colonial rule throughout Indonesia in the 19th century. Animist areas were up for grabs and missionaries set about their work with zeal in parts of Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, Kalimantan, Papua, Sumatra and Sulawesi. A significant number of Chinese Indonesians converted to Christianity during the Suharto era.

Protestants (about 6% of the population) outnumber Catholics, largely because of the work of Dutch Calvinist and Lutheran missions and more recent Evangelical movements. The main Protestant populations are in the Batak area of Sumatra, the Minahasa and Toraja areas of Sulawesi, Timor and Sumba in Nusa Tenggara, Papua, parts of Maluku and in Dayak areas of Kalimantan. Catholics comprise 3% of the population and are most numerous in Papua and Flores.

Hinduism & Buddhism

These belief systems of Indian origin have a key place in Indonesian history but are now practised by relatively small numbers. Arriving with Indian traders by the 5th century AD, Hinduism and Buddhism came to be adopted by many kingdoms, especially in the western half of Indonesia. All of the most powerful states in the archipelago until the 15th century – such as Sriwijaya,

THE PORN LAW

One of the issues that has aroused most emotion in Indonesia in recent years is the 'anti-pornography' law finally passed by parliament and signed into law by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in 2008. Promoted by Islamic parties, the law has a very wide definition of pornography that covers virtually every kind of visual, textual or sound communication or performance, and even conversations and gestures, that could incite obscenity or sexual exploitation or violate moral ethics. It also allows for a public role in preventing the production, distribution and use of pornography.

Opponents of the law include some mainstream political parties as well as women's, human rights, regional, Christian, artists' and performers' groups and tourism industry interests. They argue that the law could be used by Islamic militants against many types of artistic, media and cultural expression (including for example Balinese dancing and the representation of naked figures) and forms of dress. (The wearing of bikinis on tourist beaches was, however, exempted from the law.) Soon after the law was passed, the governor of Banten province in Java ordered the region's Jaipongan dancers (see p62) to refrain from provocative movements or sexy costumes.

Opponents of the 'porn law' also feared it could be a step towards more general application of sharia (Islamic religious law) in the country. At the time of writing a broad-based group from Bali was preparing to challenge the law in Indonesia's Constitutional Court.

based in southeast Sumatra, and Majapahit, in eastern Java – were Hindu, Buddhist or a combination of the two, usually in fusion with earlier animist beliefs. Indonesian Hinduism tended to emphasise worship of the god Shiva, the destroyer, perhaps because this was closer to existing fertility worship and the appeasement of malevolent spirits. Buddhism, more a philosophy than a religion, shunned the Hindu pantheon of gods in its goal of escaping from suffering by overcoming desire.

Though Islam later replaced them almost everywhere in Indonesia, Hinduism and Buddhism left a powerful imprint on local culture and spirituality, most obvious today in the continued use of stories from the Hindu Ramayana and Mahabharata epics in Javanese and Balinese dance and theatre – as well as in major monuments like the great Javanese temple complexes of Borobudur (p171; Buddhist) and Prambanan (p194; Hindu). Bali survived as a stronghold of Hinduism because nobles and intelligentsia of the Majapahit kingdom congregated there after the rest of their realm fell to Islam in the 15th century.

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

Most Buddhists in Indonesia today are Chinese. Their numbers have been estimated at more than two million, although this may come down at the next count following the reinstatement of Confucianism as an official religion in 2006. Confucianism, the creed of many Chinese Indonesians, was delisted in the Suharto era, forcing many Chinese to convert to Buddhism or Christianity.

WOMEN IN INDONESIA

For Indonesian women, the challenges of balancing traditional roles and the opportunities and responsibilities of the modern era are most pronounced. Many are well educated and well employed; women are widely represented in the bureaucracy and business, and a record 100 women were elected to 18% of the seats in parliament in 2009. Yet many of the same women still see roles such as housekeeping and child rearing as their domain. Two-income households are increasingly common and often a necessity.

As a predominantly Islamic society Indonesia remains male-oriented, though women are not cloistered or required to observe *purdah* (the practise of screening women from strangers by means of a curtain or all-enveloping

clothes). The *jilbab* has become more common, but it does not automatically mean that women who wear it have a subservient personality or even deep Islamic faith. It can also be a means of deflecting unwanted male attention.

Despite the social liberation of women visible in the big cities, there are those who see the advances made by conservative Islam in the past decade as a threat to women. Pressure on women to dress and behave conservatively comes from elements of sharia law that have been introduced in some areas, and from the 'antipornography' law of 2008 (see boxed text, p61). An attempt to reform family law in 2005 and give greater rights to women never even got to be debated in parliament after Islamic fundamentalists threatened those who were drafting it. Women still cannot legally be heads of households, which presents particular problems for Indonesia's estimated six million single mothers. Some organisations such as the Indonesian Women's Coalition (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia; KPI) are working to promote the role of women, both in the workplace and in general society.

Women and the State in Modern Indonesia by Susan Blackburn explores the roles women have taken in Indonesia and the changes they have achieved.

In traditional rural societies, the divisions of labour are very well defined and social organisation is male-dominated, but a few societies are matrilineal, notably the Minangkabau of Sumatra (see boxed text, p420).

ARTS

Indonesians are very artistic people. This is most obvious in Bali, where the creation of beauty is part of the fabric of daily life, but it's apparent throughout the archipelago in music, dance, theatre, painting and in the handmade artisanry, of which every different island or area seems to have its own original form – see the Crafts section (p66) for more on woodcarving, textiles and other folk arts.

Theatre & Dance

Drama and dance in Indonesia are intimately connected in the hybrid form that is best known internationally – Balinese dancing (p264). The colourful Balinese performances, at times supremely graceful, at others almost slapstick, are dances that tell stories, sometimes from the Indian Ramayana or Mahabharata epics. Balinese dance is performed both as entertainment and as a religious ritual, with an important part in temple festivals.

Java's famed *wayang* (puppet) theatre (see p92) also tells Ramayana and Mahabharata stories, through the use of shadow puppets, three-dimensional wooden puppets, or real people dancing the *wayang* roles. It too can still have ritual significance. Yogyakarta (p176) and Solo (p198) are centres of traditional Javanese culture where it's easy to see a *wayang* performance. Although condensed versions are performed for tourists, traditional *wayang* can go on for a whole night and it's not expected that the audience sit still and quiet for the whole show!

A carefully selected list of books about art, culture and Indonesian writers, dancers and musicians can be found at www.ganeshabooksbali.com.

Yogyakarta and Solo are also the centres of classical Javanese dance, a more refined, stylised manner of acting out the Hindu epics, performed most spectacularly in the Ramayana Ballet at Prambanan (p197).

Many other colourful dance and drama traditions are alive and well around the archipelago. The Minangkabau people of West Sumatra (see boxed text, p420) have a strong tradition of *randai* dance-drama at festivals and ceremonies, which incorporates *pencak silat* (a form of martial arts). The Batak *sigalegale* puppet dance (see boxed text, p393) sees life-size puppets dancing for weddings and funerals. Western Java's Jaipongan is a dynamic style that features swift movements to rhythms complicated enough to dumbfound an audience of musicologists. It was developed out of local dance and music traditions after Sukarno banned rock 'n' roll in 1961. Central Kalimantan is home to the Manasai, a friendly dance in which tourists are welcome to

participate. Kalimantan also has the Mandau, a dance performed with knives and shields. Papua is best known for its warrior dances, easiest seen at annual festivals at Danau Sentani (p793) and in the Baliem Valley (see boxed text, p811) and Asmat region (p815).

Music

Gamelan orchestras dominate traditional music in Java (see p93) and Bali (see p266). Composed mainly of percussion instruments such as xylophones, gongs, drums and *angklung* (bamboo tubes shaken to produce a note), but also flutes, gamelan orchestras may have as many as 100 members. Balinese gamelan is more dramatic and varied than the refined Javanese forms, but all gamelan music has a hypnotic and haunting effect. It always accompanies Balinese and Javanese dance, and can also be heard in dedicated gamelan concerts. Similar types of ensemble are also found elsewhere, such as the *telempong* of West Sumatra.

Another ethereal traditional music is West Java's serene *kacapi suling,* featuring the *kacapi* (a harplike instrument) and *suling* (a bamboo flute).

As for more contemporary music, Indonesia has a massive scene that spans all genres. *Dangdut*, highly popular among the less sophisticated, is a melange of traditional and modern, Indonesian and foreign musical styles that features instruments such as electric guitars and Indian tablas, and rhythms ranging from Middle Eastern pop to reggae or salsa. The result is sexy, love-drunk songs sung by heartbroken women or cheesy men, accompanied by straight-faced musicians in matching suits. The beats are gutsy, the emotion high, the singing evocative and the dancing often provocative. The writhings of *dangdut* star Inul Daratista, a sort of Indonesian Shakira, were one reason behind the introduction of Indonesia's controversial recent 'antipornography' legislation. Ironically, one of the prime movers of the legislation was the former 'King of Dangdut', Rhoma Irama.

You'll hear plenty of saccharine-toned Indonesian pop music on your travels, but Western musical genres such as hip hop, new wave and especially punk have also taken root here. Superman is Dead (SID), from Bali, and Blackboots, from Yogyakarta, are two of the biggest punk acts. SID, with antiestablishment lyrics and a name referring to the fall of Suharto, fill stadiums with their fans. Meanwhile, house and techno DJs like Romy play to thousands in Jakarta's ecstasy-fuelled clubs. There's also a range of regional pop to be found around the country, sung in local languages such as Batak or Sundanese with a mix of Western and regional musical styles.

The glossy monthly English-language magazine *Jakarta Java Kini* contains interesting articles on what's hot in the arts and entertainment, with a Jakarta focus.

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

Literature

The art of writing goes back a long way in Indonesia. The 17th century saw a flowering of narratives called *hikayat* – which might be Islamic folk tales, histories or tellings of Hindu epics – usually written by court writers in the Malay language, and also of *babad* (chronicles of Islamic holy men) written to be sung, in Javanese. Until the 20th century the main literary forms remained traditional, including *hikayat* and the narrative poems known as *syair*.

Novels and Western-style drama and poetry, in Bahasa Indonesia, began to appear in the 1920s and '30s. The 1940s and '50s saw the emergence of writers such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006), Chairil Anwar and Mochtar Lubis, whose lives and works were informed by the struggle for independence. Toer, who later spent more than 14 years in jail under the Suharto government, still stands head and shoulders above other Indonesian writers for his quartet of novels, *This Earth of Mankind*. Toer paints a canvas of Indonesia under Dutch rule and the emergence of nationalist feeling among Indonesians, through the life of a fictional Javanese intellectual, Minke.

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

The Suharto dictatorship stamped out much originality and creativity, although some writers such as poet and playwright WS Rendra did have work published that spotlighted the negative side of Suharto's New Order. The major writer to emerge since Suharto's fall is Ayu Utami, who has been translated into English and explores different levels of Indonesian society and touchy issues such as sex, politics and religion in her books *Saman* and *Larung*.

The annual Ubud Writers & Readers Festival (www.ubudwritersfestival.com) in Bali, held around October, showcases both local and international writers.

Painting

Galleries in the wealthier neighbourhoods of Jakarta are the epicentre of Indonesia's contemporary art scene, which has mushroomed in the past decade with a full panoply of installations, sculptures, performance art and more, and which can be either extremely original, eye-catching and thought-provoking, or the opposite. Jakarta and Yogyakarta both hold big biennale art events; at the time of writing the next ones were due in early 2011 and early 2010 respectively.

Traditionally, painting was an art for decorating palaces and places of worship, typically with religious or legendary subject matter. Foreign artists in Bali in the 1930s inspired a revolution in painting there: artists began to depict everyday scenes in new, more realistic, less crowded canvases. Others developed an attractive 'primitivist' style. Much Balinese art today is mass-produced tourist-market stuff, though there are also talented and original artists working there. Indonesia's most celebrated 20th-century painter was the Javanese expressionist Affandi (1907–90; see p181), who liked to paint by squeezing the paint straight out of the tube.

A good place to check in on the contemporary art scene in Indonesia is Universes in Universe (www.universes-in-universe.de/english.htm).

Architecture

Indonesia is home to a vast and spectacular variety of architecture, from religious and royal buildings to traditional styles of home-building which can differ hugely from one part of the archipelago to another. Indian, Chinese, Arabic and European influences have all added their mark to locally developed styles.

The great 8th and 9th-century temples of Borobudur, Prambanan and the Dieng Plateau, in Central Java, all show the Indian influence that predominated in the Hindu-Buddhist period. Indian style, albeit with a distinctive local flavour, persists today in the Hindu temples of Bali, where the leaders of the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit kingdom took refuge after being driven from Java in the 16th century.

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

For their own homes Indonesians developed a range of eye-catching structures whose grandeur depended on the family that built them. Timber construction, often with stilts, and elaborate thatched roofs of palm leaves or grass are common to many traditional housing forms around the archipelago. The use of stilts helps to reduce heat and humidity and avoid mud, floods and pests. Tana Toraja in Sulawesi, Pulau Nias off Sumatra, and the Batak and Minangkabau areas of Sumatra exhibit some of the most spectacular vernacular architecture, with high, curved roofs.

Royal palaces around Indonesia are often developments of basic local housing styles, even if far more elaborate as in the case of Javanese *kraton* (walled palaces). Yogyakarta's *kraton* is effectively a city within a city inhabited by over 25,000 people.

The Dutch colonists initially built poorly ventilated houses in European style but eventually a hybrid Indo-European style emerged, using elements such as the Javanese *pendopo* (open-sided pavilion) and *joglo* (a high-pitched roof). International styles such as art deco started to arrive in the late 19th century as large numbers of factories, train stations, hotels, hospitals and other public buildings went up in the later colonial period. Bandung in Java has one of the world's largest collections of 1920s art deco buildings.

Early independent Indonesia had little money to spare for major building projects, though President Sukarno did find the funds for a few prestige projects such as Jakarta's huge and resplendent Mesjid Istiqlal (p106). The economic progress of the Suharto years saw Indonesia's cities spawn their quota of standard international high-rise office blocks and uninspired government buildings, though tourism helped to foster original, even spectacular hybrids of local and international styles in some hotels in Bali and elsewhere.

BALINESE ARCHITECTURE

The basic feature of Balinese architecture is the *bale* (pronounced 'ba-lay'), a rectangular, open-sided pavilion with a steeply pitched roof of palm thatch. A family compound will have a number of *bale* for eating, sleeping and working. The focus of a community is the *bale banjar,* a large pavilion for meeting, debate, gamelan practise and so on. Buildings such as restaurants and the lobby areas of hotels are often modelled on the *bale* – they are airy, spacious and handsomely proportioned.

Like the other arts, architecture has traditionally served the religious life of Bali. Balinese houses, although attractive, have never been lavished with the architectural attention that is given to temples. Even Balinese palaces are modest compared with the more important temples. Temples are designed to fixed rules and formulas, with sculpture serving as an adjunct, a finishing touch to these design guidelines.

MOSQUES IN INDONESIA

It's generally no problem for travellers to visit mosques, as long as appropriately modest clothing is worn – there is usually a place to leave shoes, and headscarves are often available for hire. Mosque interiors are normally empty except for five main features: the *mihrab* (a wall niche marking the direction of Mecca); the *mimbar* (a raised pulpit, often canopied, with a staircase); a stand to hold the Koran; a screen to provide privacy for important worshippers; and a water source for ablutions. There are no seats and if there is any ornamentation at all, it will be verses from the Koran.

TOP 5 CLASSICAL MOSQUES

Indonesia's most revered mosques tend to be those built in the 15th and 16th centuries in Javanese towns that were among the first to convert to Islam. The 'classical' architectural style of these mosques includes tiered roofs clearly influenced by the Hindu culture that Islam had then only recently supplanted. They are curiously reminiscent of Hindu temples still seen on Bali today. During the Suharto era in the late 20th century, hundreds of standardised, prefabricated mosques were shipped and erected all around Indonesia in pale imitation of this classical Javanese style. Java's top five classical mosques:

- Mesjid Agung, Demak (p214)
- Mesjid Al-Manar, Kudus (p215)
- Mesjid Agung, Cirebon (p164)
- Mesjid Agung, Banten (p119)
- Mesjid Besar, Yogyakarta (p181)

The Yogyakarta mosque was built in the 18th century but is very much in the tradition of the other, earlier ones. Kudus also has a highly unusual brick minaret that may have been the watchtower of an earlier Hindu temple.

All mosques are primarily places of prayer, but their specific functions vary: the *jami mesjid* is used for Friday prayer meetings; a *musalla* is Sunday to Thursday; and the *mashad* is found in a tomb compound.

Cinema & Television

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

Hit by a big growth in imported foreign films and in piracy during the 1990s, the Indonesian film industry has made a comeback since 2000. Independent films addressing contemporary issues such as sexuality (notably Nia Dinata's *Arisan!* with its openly gay hero), peer pressure, religion and politics are appearing, alongside successful horror movies (such as *Bangsal 13* and *Jelangkung*) and romance flicks like Hanung Bramantyo's *Brownies* (2005). They still face heavy competition from Hollywood and Bollywood blockbusters. Successful independent directors such as Riri Reza – who made *Eliana Eliana* (2002) and *Gie* (2005) – started their careers by directly approaching cinemas themselves and bypassing a reluctant distribution system.

Indonesian films rarely have English subtitles but can still offer travellers an insight into Indonesian culture (and the audience reactions can be entertaining).

Much Indonesian TV is dominated by *sinetron* (fictional series including soaps), comedy, music, game shows and sport. The Trans 7 channel focuses on pop, fashion and youth culture.

Riri Reza's *Gie,* the story of Soe Hok Gie, an ethnic Chinese antidictatorship activist, was submitted for consideration in the Best Foreign Film category of the 2006 Academy Awards.

CRAFTS

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

Traditions of animism and ancestor worship form the basis of many Indonesian crafts, particularly in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Papua.

The wave of Indian – and to a lesser extent Indo-Chinese – culture brought by extensive trading contacts created the Hindu-Buddhist techniques and styles reflected in Javanese and Balinese temple carvings, art forms, and crafts.

Ayat-Ayat Cinta (Verses of Love), released in 2008, was another Hanung Bramantyo-directed romantic melodrama but its Islamic theme attracted more Muslim viewers than ever before to Indonesian cinemas.

The third major influence, Islam, only modified existing traditions, in fact actively employing arts and crafts for dissemination of the new religion. The highly stylised floral motifs on Jepara woodcarvings, for example, reflect Islam's ban on human and animal representation.

Though the religious significance or practical function of many traditional objects is disappearing, the level of craftsmanship remains high. The sophistication and innovation of the craft industry is growing throughout the archipelago, driven by more discerning tourist tastes and by a booming export market. Javanese woodcarvers are turning out magnificent traditional panels and innovative furniture commissioned by large hotels, and Balinese jewellers influenced by Western designs are producing works of stunning quality.

Tourist centres are fostering an increasing cross-fertilisation of craft styles: the 'primitive' Kalimantan statues, so in vogue in Balinese art shops, may well have been carved just up the road in Peliatan.

Woodcarving

Though the forests are vanishing, woodcarving traditions are flourishing. Often woodcarving is practised in conjuction with more practical activities such as house building. All traditional Indonesian dwellings have some provision for repelling unwanted spirits. The horned lion heads of Batak houses,

GIFTS: HIGH

Amidst the endless piles of tourist tat, Indonesia has truly extraordinary items that make perfect gifts. The secret is finding them. Here are a few ideas:

- West Timor, Alor and Sumba have some spectacular naturally dyed ikat for sale. The best of the best can be found at **Ama Tukang** (p582) in Waingapu.
- Maubesi in Nusa Tenggara is home to a fab textile market. **Maubesi Art Shop** (p574) has a terrific selection of local ikat, antique masks, statues, and carved beams, reliefs and doors from old Timorese homes.
- On South Sumatra, **Tanjung Tunpung** (p466), near Palembang, has ceremonial *songket* sarongs that are used for marriages and other ceremonies. They can take a month to make.
- Dayak rattan, *doyo* (bark beaten into cloth), carvings and other souvenirs from Kalimantan can be world-class. **Fitriah Souvenir Shop** (p640) in Samarinda has the best of the best.
- Street vendors in **Bandaneira** (p760) sell scrumptious *kenari*-nut brittle, a treat found only on the Banda Islands.
- Intricate and beautiful rattan items made in an ancient village in Bali are sold by **Ashitaba** (p283) in Seminyak, where you can shop for exquisite and artful goods for days on end.

the water buffalo representations on Toraja houses, and the serpent carvings on Dayak houses, all serve to protect inhabitants from evil influences.

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

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

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

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

Balinese woodcarving is the most ornamental and elaborate in Indonesia. The gods and demons of Balinese cosmology populate statues, temple doors and relief panels throughout the island. Western influence and demand for art and souvenirs has encouraged Balinese woodcarvers to reinvent their craft, echoing the 1930s revolution in Balinese painting (see p263) by producing simpler, elongated statues of purely ornamental design with a natural finish.

In Java, the centre for woodcarving, especially carved furniture, is Jepara. The intricate crafts share Bali's Hindu-Buddhist tradition, adjusted to reflect Islam's prohibition on human representation. Another Javanese wood-carving centre is Kudus, where elaborate panels for traditional houses are produced.

The most favoured and durable wood in Indonesia is *jati* (teak), though this is getting increasingly expensive. Sandalwood is occasionally seen in Balinese carvings, as is mahogany and ebony (imported from Sulawesi and

Kalimantan). Jackfruit is a common, cheap wood, though it tends to warp and split. Generally, local carvers use woods at hand: heavy ironwood and *meranti* (a hard wood) in Kalimantan, and *belalu* (a light wood) in Bali.

Textiles

IKAT

The Indonesian word 'ikat', meaning 'to tie' or 'to bind', signifies the intricately patterned cloth of threads that are painstakingly tie-dyed before being woven together. Ikat is produced in many regions, most notably in Nusa Tenggara.

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

MAKING IKAT

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

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

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

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

ORIGINS & MEANING OF IKAT

Ikat technique was most likely introduced 2000 years ago by Dongson migrants from southern China and Vietnam.

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

MOTIFS & PATTERNS

Some experts believe that motifs found on Sumba, such as front views of people, animals and birds, stem from an artistic tradition even older than

IKAT SEASONS

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

CHOOSING IKAT

Unless you are looking for inexpensive machine-made ikat, shopping is best left to the experts. Even trekking out to an 'ikat village' may be in vain: the photogenic woman sitting at a wooden loom may be only for show. But if you insist, here are some tips on recognising the traditional product:

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

Dongson, whose influence was geometric motifs like diamond and key shapes (which often go together), meanders and spirals.

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

Songket

Songket is silk cloth interwoven with gold or silver threads, although imitation silver or gold is often used in modern pieces. *Songket* is most commonly found in heavily Islamic regions, such as Aceh and among the coastal Malays, but Bali also has a strong *songket* tradition.

Batik

The technique of applying wax or other dye-resistant substances (like rice paste) to cloth to produce a design is found in many parts of the world, but none is as famous as the batik of Java. Javanese batik dates from the 12th century, and opinion is divided as to whether batik is an indigenous craft or imported from India along with Hindu religious and cultural traditions.

The word 'batik' is an old Javanese word meaning 'to dot'. Javanese batik was a major weapon in the arsenal of social status competition in the royal courts. The ability to devote extensive resources to the painstaking creation of fine batik demonstrated wealth and power. Certain designs indicated courtly rank, and a courtier risked public humiliation, or worse, by daring to wear the wrong sarong.

The finest batik is *batik tulis* (hand-painted or literally 'written' batik). Designs are first traced out onto cloth, then patterns are drawn in hot wax with a *canting*, a pen-like instrument. The wax-covered areas resist colour change when immersed in a dye bath. The waxing and dyeing, with increasingly darker shades, continues until the final colours are achieved. Wax is added to protect previously dyed areas or scraped off to expose new areas to the dye. Finally, all the wax is scraped off and the cloth boiled to remove all traces of wax.

A great resource on Balinese culture and life is www.murnis.com. Click on Culture for explanations on everything from kids' names to what one wears to a ceremony and the weaving of the garments.

During the mid-19th century, as the demand far outstripped the supply, came the technical innovation of *batik cap,* in which the wax pattern is applied with a metal stamp. Most *batik cap* fabrics feature repeated geometric patterns, often with fine details finished by hand. *Batik cap* is regarded as true batik, not to be confused with screen-printed cloth which completely bypasses the waxing process and is often passed off as batik.

Batik painting, an odd blend of craft and art that all-too-often is neither, remains popular in Yogyakarta, where it was invented as a pastime for unemployed youth. Though most batik painting is tourist schlock, there are a handful of talented artists working in the medium.

Batik was a dying art until the 1960s, when several innovative artists and designers, notably Harjanogoro of Surakarta and Iwan Tirta of Jakarta, revitalised the tradition by blending the staid court designs with vibrant motifs from Java's north coast, and using batik in fashion and interior design. The court cities of Yogyakarta and Solo remain major batik centres.

Ceramics

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

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

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

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

Basketwork & Beadwork

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

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

Indonesian Primitive Art by Irwin Hersey is an illustrated guide to the art of the outer islands.

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

Kris

No ordinary knife, the wavy-bladed traditional dagger known as a kris is a mandatory possession of a Javanese gentleman; it's said to be endowed with supernatural powers and to be treated with the utmost respect. A kris owner ritually bathes and polishes his weapon, stores it in an auspicious location, and pays close attention to every rattle and scrape emanating from the blade and sheath in the dead of the night.

Some think the Javanese kris (from *iris,* meaning 'to cut') is derived from the bronze daggers produced by the Dongson around the 1st century AD. Bas-reliefs of a kris appear in the 14th-century Panataran temple complex

TOPENG – MASKS

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

in East Java, and the carrying of the kris as a custom in Java was noted in 15th-century Chinese records. The kris remains an integral part of men's ceremonial dress.

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

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

Puppets

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

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

Metalwork

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

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

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

Jewellery

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

Balinese jewellery is nearly always handworked and rarely involves casting techniques. Balinese work is innovative, employing both traditional designs

GIFTS: LOW

Looking to show close friends and relatives just how deep you plunged into Indonesian culture? Then give them a penis gourd.

Papua is the sweet spot for Indonesian penis gourds; in one stroke you can come up with a gift that will literally keep giving. Traditionally used by indigenous men in the province's highlands, they are attached to the testicles by a small loop of fibre. Sizes, shapes and colours vary across cultural groups but you can pick one up for around 5000Rp to 60,000Rp. A good place to check out the merchandise is **Wamena** (p805). Remember: bargain hard as competition is stiff.

If you'd rather not give something as intimate as a penis gourd, then perhaps you should do just the opposite and give the prized possession of head-hunters everywhere: a mandau from Kalimantan. Once the Dayak weapon of choice, this indigenous machete is still slung from the hips of most men in the Kalimantan interior. You can purchase traditional pieces for around 100,000Rp to 250,000Rp. A good place to shop is in the longhouse village of Tanjung Isuy (p643).

Obviously, you'll need to check a bag to get a *mandau* home, but you can probably simply wear your new gourd.

and those adapted from jewellery presented by Western buyers. The traditional centre for Balinese jewellery is Celuk.

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

SPORT

Soccer and badminton are the national sporting obsessions. Indonesian badminton players – many of them ethnic Chinese – regularly win Olympic gold medals and the Thomas Cup (the world men's team championship), and you'll see courts set up almost anywhere there's space. Indonesian soccer teams are abysmally unsuccessful in international competitions, but that doesn't stop the game being hugely popular. The Indonesia Super League comprises 18 teams from Sumatra to Papua, all with their fanatical followers and most with confusingly similar names beginning with 'Persi…' (from Persatuan Sepakbola Indonesia, meaning 'Indonesian Football Club').

The easiest place to find out which soccer club is from where is Wikipedia's Liga Indonesia page.

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

Jakartacasual (http://jakartacasual.blogspot.com) is a great English-language source for Indonesian soccer news. You can check the schedule *(jadwal)* at www.antvsports.com or www.bli-online.com.

Pencak silat, Indonesia's own form of martial arts, is most popular in Java and Sumatra. It takes different forms from place to place and is practised both as a form of self-defence and as artistic performance with musical accompaniment. It uses not only hands and feet but also some weapons, including sticks and swords.

Many regions, particularly those with a history of tribal warfare, stage traditional contests of various kinds to accompany weddings, harvest festivals and other ceremonial events. Mock battles are sometimes staged in Papua, *caci* whip fights are a speciality in Flores and men fight with sticks and shields in Lombok, but the most spectacular ceremonial fight is Sumba's *pasola* (see boxed text, p589), where every February and March horse riders in traditional dress hurl spears at each other.

Environment

THE LAND

It makes sense that Indonesians call their country Tanah Air Kita (literally, 'Our Land and Water'), as it's the world's most expansive archipelago. Indonesia's land area of 1,920,000 sq km is speckled along the equator for 5000km, from Sabang off the northern tip of Sumatra, to a little beyond Merauke in Papua. The official count of islands has tended to change over the years, with different surveys producing varying results. However, it is likely there are over 18,000 bits of land rising above the high-tide mark, of which about 6000 are inhabited.

On most of the main islands, the landscape is dominated by volcanic cones, most long dormant, others very much active. Some of these volcanoes have erupted with such force that they have literally made history. The ash clouds from the cataclysmic 1815 eruption of Gunung Tambora in Sumbawa modified the global climate for a year, causing massive crop failures in Europe. The 1883 eruption of Krakatau between Java and Sumatra, which generated tsunamis that killed tens of thousands, was the first global media event, thanks to the newly completed global telegraph network.

Indonesia is home to no fewer than 129 active volcanoes, the most of any nation. See p131 for details.

The archipelago's ubiquitous volcanoes play a pivotal role in most Indonesian cultures. In Bali and Java, major places of worship grace the slopes of prominent volcanic cones, and eruptions are taken as demonstrations of divine disappointment or anger.

On most islands, all land below the lifeless craters of active volcanoes is – or was – covered in dense forest. The high rainfall and year-round humidity means that Indonesia has it all: from cloud and high alpine forests to the world's second largest expanse of tropical rainforest. However, most of this is disappearing at an alarming rate as timber, agricultural and mining companies continue to plunder the region's resources (see p76).

Indonesia also boasts extensive – and endangered – stands of mangrove (p76), particularly along the east coast of Sumatra, the Riau Islands, the southern coast of Kalimantan and Papua.

First published in 1869, *The Malay Archipelago* by Alfred Russel Wallace is a classic account of this famous naturalist's wanderings throughout the Indonesian islands.

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

Equatorial Climate

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

WILDLIFE

From tiny tarsiers to massive stinking flowers, the range of natural attractions in Indonesia is phenomenal. In 2006, the discovery of several new species of wildlife in Papua's Foja mountain range highlighted the archipelago's

astounding biodiversity. Unfortunately, discoveries are lagging far behind destruction of natural habitats, meaning that much of Indonesia's rich biological heritage will pass unrecorded into extinction.

Animals

The Greater Sunda islands, comprising Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan and Bali, were once highland regions of a land mass, now called the Sunda Shelf, that extended from the Asian mainland. Some large Asian land animals still survive in this area, including tigers, rhinoceroses, leopards and sun bears. Despite frequent claims of sightings, the Javan tiger is probably extinct. The Sumatran tiger is fighting for survival, literally, as there have been several incidents of tigers killing loggers trespassing in protected habitats. Leopards (the black leopard, or panther, is more common in Southeast Asia) are rare but still live in Sumatra and in Java's Ujung Kulon National Park (p133). This park is also home to the rare, almost extinct, one-horned Javan rhinoceros. Rhinos have not fared well in Indonesia and the two-horned variety, found in Sumatra, is also on the endangered list.

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

Perhaps the most famous, and most endangered Indonesian animal is the orangutan (literally, 'man of the forest'). These long-haired red apes are found only in Sumatra and Kalimantan. For more on these fascinating creatures, see the boxed text, p379. Various species of the graceful gibbon also exist throughout the region, as do other primate species.

Sumatran elephants are another celebrity endangered species, being driven into overcrowded, underfunded refuges as their forest habitats are cleared for plantations and farming. Kalimantan also has a few wild elephants in the northeast at Sebuku Sembakung (p651), but they are very rare and the species is most probably introduced.

Small Fry

Lying across the centre of Indonesia are the islands of Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara and Maluku, all of which have long been isolated from the continental land mass, and make up part of the Wallecea transition zone between Asian and Australian species. Animals in this region have always been much smaller than those in the west. There's no rhinos or tigers here. Rather, look for intriguing species such as Sulawesi's *anoa* (dwarf buffalo), a wallowing animal that looks like a cross between a deer and a cow and stands only about 80cm high. Also in Sulawesi is the *babi rusa* (deer pig), with great curving tusks that come out the side of the mouth and through the top of the snout. The bulbous beaked hornbills are found across west Indonesia, but the *enggang Sulawesi* (Buton hornbill), with its brightly coloured beak and neck, is one of the most spectacular of the species. One hard-to-see animal is the tarsier, a tiny, nocturnal primate of North Sulawesi that looks, for all the world, like a mythical gremlin.

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

Maluku shows similarities with Sulawesi, but with fewer wildlife species. The *babi rusa* and smaller mammals are here, as are some primates, but it seems most of the migratory waves bypassed Maluku. However, it is noted for its butterflies – Pulau Seram has reported some enormous species – and bird life, particularly the *nuri raja* (Amboina king parrot), a large, magnificently coloured bird.

From Lombok eastwards, the fauna of Nusa Tenggara reflects the more arid conditions of these islands (see p656). Large Asian mammals are nonexistent, though there is fossil evidence that pygmy elephants once lived here. Asian bird species diminish further east and Australian birds are found on the eastern islands. Nusa Tenggara has one astonishing and famous animal, the

Komodo dragon, the world's largest lizard, found only on Komodo (p530) and a few neighbouring islands.

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

A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Indonesia by Morten Strange is a good bird identification guide.

There are also Australian reptiles such as crocodiles and frilled-neck lizards. Then there's Papua's extraordinary birdlife: the area is home to over 600 species, the most famous being the cassowary and bird of paradise.

Plants

The clock is ticking for many of Indonesia's endemic plant species, but sufficient expanses of natural rainforest remain to experience some of the archipelago's floral and arboreal wonders. See p126 for details.

NATIONAL PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS

Despite a constant nipping at the edges by illegal loggers and settlers, Indonesia still has large tracts of protected forest and national parks. The parks are managed by the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA or KSDA). Many new national parks have been proclaimed in recent years. National parks receive greater international recognition and funding than nature, wildlife and marine reserves, of which there are also many in Indonesia. For more on the national parks, see p132.

Keeping birds has been a part of Indonesian culture for centuries. It's common to see caged songbirds and they are sold in most markets.

TOP 10 NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES

Park	Location	Features	Activities	Best time to visit	Page
Gunung Leuser	Sumatra	biologically diverse conservation area, rivers, rainforest, mountains; tigers, rhinoceroses, elephants, orangutans, primates such as the white-breasted Thomas leaf monkey	orangutan viewing, wildlife spotting, bird watching; trekking, rafting	Dec-Mar	p417
Tanjung Puting	Kalimantan	tropical rainforest, mangrove forest, wetlands; macaques, proboscis monkeys, diverse wildlife	orangutan viewing, bird watching	May-Sep	p614
Kelimutu	Nusa Tenggara	coloured lakes	vulcanology, short walks	Apr-Sep	p548
Gunung Rinjani	Nusa Tenggara	volcano	trekking, volcano climbing	Apr-Sep	p506
Ujung Kulon	Java	lowland rainforest, scrub, grassy plains, swamps, sandy beaches; one-horned rhinoceroses, otters, squirrels, leaf monkeys, gibbons	jungle walks; wildlife spotting	Apr-Oct	p133
Gunung Bromo	Java	volcanic landscape	crater climbing	Apr-Oct	p245
Pulau Bunaken	Sulawesi	coral fringed islands	snorkelling, diving, island lazing	Jun-Jan	p710
Kerinci Seblat	Sumatra	mountainous rainforest, one of Sumatra's highest peaks	trekking; wildlife spotting, bird watching	Dec-Mar	p442
Komodo	Nusa Tenggara	Komodo dragon	snorkelling, diving; being chased by wildlife	Apr-Sep	p529
Bali Barat	Bali	low hills, grasslands, coral fringed coasts	snorkelling, diving; wildlife spotting	year round	p347

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

From the perspective of a Jakarta-based bureaucrat, Indonesia has full environmental-responsibility credentials, with stringent land-use and environmental impact regulations, and tracts of forest lands set aside for conservation. In the field, the picture is markedly different. A wilful disregard of regulations, generally with the collusion of the newly empowered regional authorities, make official environmental policies mere words on paper. However, there is an increasing political will to enforce the rules, often through programs to provide economic benefit to locals who protect rather than exploit forest lands.

The National Parks and Other Wild Places of Indonesia by Janet Cochrane is a coffee-table book with beautiful photos to enjoy before and after your trip.

That said, forests continue to be cleared at an horrific rate, both through illegal logging and conversion to palm-oil plantations. Greenpeace estimates that 50% of Indonesia's 150 million hectares of forests have been cleared, and the government itself allows an average 1.8 million hectares a year in additional clearance. Furthermore, upwards of 70% of Indonesia's mangrove forests have been damaged according to the US-based Mangrove Action Project. It's a double tragedy given the important role mangroves play in filtering the country's ever-more-polluted waters.

The side effects of deforestation are felt across the nation and beyond: floods and landslides wash away valuable topsoil, rivers become sluggish and fetid, and haze from clearing fires blankets Malaysia and Singapore every dry season. The problems flow right through to Indonesia's coastline and seas, where over 80% of reef habitat is considered to be at risk by the UN.

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

The rampant consumerism of the burgeoning middle class is straining the nation's wholly inadequate infrastructure: private vehicles clog urban streets, creating massive air pollution; waste removal services have difficulty coping with household and industrial garbage; and a total lack of sewerage disposal systems makes water from most sources undrinkable without boiling, putting further pressure on kerosene and firewood supplies.

Local Action

But it must be noted that many Indonesians are not just idly standing by to the threats to the nation. There is a burgeoning environmental movement across the nation. One good example is the good work being done by Yayasan Orangutan Indonesia (Yayorin; Indonesia Orangutan Foundation; www.yayorin.org; p615) in Kalimantan, which aims to teach people to protect orangutans and their environment.

One hawksbill sea turtle that visited Bali was tracked for the following year. His destinations: Java, Kalimantan, Australia (Perth and much of Queensland) and then back to Bali.

Another group which wins plaudits is the SOS Sea Turtles campaign (www.sos-seaturtles.ch), which spotlights turtle abuse. Its successes include spotlighting the illegal poaching of turtles at Wakatobi National Park in Sulawesi for sale in Bali. Together with groups like Profauna (www.profauna.or.id), concerned locals have made real progress in the conservation of sea turtles in Indonesia.

Local Issues

Meanwhile there is much to be done to try to protect Indonesia's magnificence, a matter important to all the world. There are many pressing issues across the archipelago.

JAVA

Deforestation and rampant development causes massive flooding in Jakarta and other cities, including Semarang every rainy season, causing mass social upheaval and choking surviving coastal mangroves.

TRAVELLER TACT: ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

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

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

See p21 for a list of ways you can help protect Indonesia's environment during your visit. Also see p821 for ways to responsibly trek on land and p820 for ways to responsibly dive underwater. See p840 for groups active in preserving Indonesia's environment.

BALI

This beautiful island is its own worst enemy: it can't help being popular. Walhi, the Indonesian Forum for Environment (www.walhi.or.id), estimates that the average hotel room accounts for 3000L of water used by and for guests. The typical golf course needs 3 million litres a day. Hence, a place fabled for its water is now running short in some areas. In addition, rice fields are being converted to commercial land at a rate of about 600 to 1000 hectares a year. Just recently Bali stopped being self-sufficient for rice. On the plus side there is a nascent recycling movement.

SUMATRA

Deforestation is a massive problem, threatening the jungle and all its inhabitants.

According to a report released by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2008: 'The resulting average annual CO2 from forest loss, degradation, peat decomposition and fires between 1990–2007 in Riau province alone was 0.22 gigatons – higher than that of the Netherlands, or equivalent to 58% of Australia's total annual emissions, or 39% of the UK's annual emissions'. Sumatran tigers and elephants are being hardest hit by this. The elephant population in Riau has decreased by 84% from an estimated 1,067 to 1,617 in 1984 to possibly as few as 210, and tigers have decreasing by 70% in 25 years, from 640 to 192.

Every year smoke and haze from fires, used to clear farmland and plantations, choke the skies over the island and its neighbours. At times Singapore seems to be under a permanent haze. In 2009, headlines were made worldwide when a huge pulp company announced plans to log right up to the borders of Bukit Tigapuluh National Park, where a quarter of Sumatra's orangutans survive.

On the plus side, scientists have been amazed at the speed with which reefs are recovering from the 2004 tsunami.

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

NUSA TENGGARA

In the Gili Islands off Lombok it's no secret that the beaches have suffered from erosion in recent years. Factor in the El Nino coral bleaching from several years back, and it seems that the Gilis are especially sensitive to climactic change and rising seas.

On southern Lombok, the upcoming US$600-800 million Dubai development in Kuta (p512) is certain to impact beaches, bring more sewage, traffic and pollution. But the developers are not required to disclose their plans to the public so nobody knows what to expect or if there are environmental-mitigation plans in place.

Elsewhere, overfishing and poaching by locals is an on-going concern in Komodo National Park.

KALIMANTAN

Preserving forests is the most pressing issue, and one where progress has been made. This is thanks in part to UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007 which set the stage for paying Indonesia and other countries not to cut down their forests. Anecdotally people say that illegal logging has decreased significantly; whether this is a long-lasting trend or a temporary phenomenon due to high demand for coal (alternative fuel for income) remains to be seen. Also, preserving forests conflicts with the government's goal of increasing palm-oil production. But things are far more hopeful on this front than a few years ago.

Stick insects measuring over half a metre have been found in Kalimantan.

Still, even recent bad decisions have had a huge impact. In 2002, for example, the East Kalimantan administration built a 60km road through Kutai National Park. New villages were soon built in very sensitive orangutan habitat. An official park census shows that the numbers of orangutans has dropped sharply from 600 in 2004 to 60 in 2009.

SULAWESI

In the Togean Islands, dynamite fishing was disastrous but now anti-dynamite and -cyanide fishing laws are being enforced with some inspiring backing from the local Bajo community. With education and a chance to see both the horrors of their practices and the benefits from new sustainable ways, the locals support the new laws. Otherwise Sulawesi is bedevilled by a problem that virtually every nation shares (and which some have mitigated through public education): litter.

MALUKU

Maluku also has a major rubbish disposal problem. Although taking ferries is considered ecologically preferable, boats regularly dump enormous amounts of rubbish into the once-pristine waters of these isolated islands.

PAPUA

Papua is still about 75% covered in forest and is a target for rogue loggers. The government has supposedly clamped down on this but a WWF report in 2006 said: 'As commercial stands of timber in Sumatra and Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) are increasingly exhausted, the logging industry has shifted eastwards to New Guinea… In Papua Province, vulnerable tree species such as merbau are cut illegally and exported to China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam, despite a logging ban imposed in 2001'.

According to Indonesia's Ministry of Forestry, over 7 million cubic metres of timber is smuggled out of Papua annually, which means that 70% of the total volume of timber that leaves each year is illegal.

Poaching is also a problem. The WWF reports that birds of paradise continue to be smuggled out of Papua. Although banned by the Indonesian government since 1990, trading in the feathers of the birds of paradise is still ongoing.

Food & Drink

By eating in Indonesia you savour the essence of the country. The abundance of rice reflects Indonesia's fertile landscape, the spices are reminiscent of a time of trade and invasion, and the fiery chilli echoes the passion of the people. Indonesian cuisine is really one big food swap. Chinese, Portuguese, colonists and traders have all influenced the ingredients that appear at the Indonesian table, and the cuisine has been further shaped over time by the archipelago's diverse landscape, people and culture.

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

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

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

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

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

Chinese food is easily the top 'foreign' food eaten in Indonesia (although fast-food chains are sprouting in cities). Generations of Chinese immigrants opened what were often the first restaurants in towns.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Java

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

In West Java, the Sundanese love their greens. Their specialities include *karedok* (salad of long beans, bean sprouts and cucumber with spicy sauce), *soto Bandung* (beef-and-vegetable soup with lemon grass) and *ketupat tahu* (pressed rice, bean sprouts and tofu with soy and peanut sauce). Sundanese sweet specialities include *colenak* (roasted cassava with coconut sauce) and *ulen* (roasted sticky rice with peanut sauce), both best eaten warm. Bandung's cooler hills are the place for *bandrek* (ginger tea with coconut and pepper) and *bajigur* (spiced coffee with coconut milk).

Central Javan food is sweet, even the curries like *gudeg* (jackfruit curry). Yogyakarta specialities include *ayam goreng* (fried chicken) and *kelepon* (green rice-flour balls with a palm-sugar filling). In Solo, specialities include

WE DARE YOU

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

- It's not a staple, but dog is eaten in North Sulawesi and the Batak region of Sumatra. They are, however, surreptitious about canine consumption and you'll never see the word *anjing* (dog) advertised. The Bataks call dog *B1* (pronounced beh *sah*-tuh), as dog in the local language is *biang,* which has one 'b'. They call *babi* (pig) *B2*. In North Sulawesi, Fido is known as *rw* (pronounced *err*-weh), in which 'r' stands for *rintek* (soft) and 'w' stands for *wu'uk* (fur).
- The durian has a serious public image problem. This fruit's spiky skin looks like a Spanish Inquisition torture tool; opening it releases the fruit's odorous power. Many claim that durian is an acquired taste, but there is no record of anyone 'acquiring' a taste for this 'King of Fruits'. You develop either an abiding disgust, or an insatiable passion, from the first contact.
- Balinese specialities are readily available in Denpasar and other towns. Look for warung advertising *siobak* (minced pig's head, stomach, tongue and skin cooked with spices). A pig's head (a real one) in the display case indicates *babi guling* (spit-roasted pork).
- Avocado juice: take an avocado, blend with ice and condensed milk (or chocolate syrup) and serve. Indonesians don't consider this strange, as the avocado is just another sweet fruit.

nasi liwet (rice with coconut milk, unripe papaya, garlic and shallots, served with chicken or egg) and *serabi* (coconut-milk pancakes topped with chocolate, banana or jackfruit).

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

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

Bali

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

Balinese specialities are increasingly easy to find, as tourist-oriented restaurants and cafes offer high-quality Balinese dishes, with several options of spiciness. Many restaurants offer the grandest Balinese dish, *babi guling* (spit-roast pig stuffed with chilli, turmeric, garlic and ginger) on a day's notice. Also popular is *bebek betutu* (duck stuffed with spices, wrapped in banana leaves and coconut husks, and cooked in embers). The local sate, *sate lilit,* is made with minced, spiced meat pressed onto skewers. Spicy, fleshy dishes like *lawar* (salad of chopped coconut, garlic and chilli with pork or chicken meat and blood) are generally only available outside of tourist areas.

Sumatra

In West Sumatra, beef is used in *rendang* (beef coconut curry). The region is the home of Padang cuisine (see p423), and the market in Bukittinggi is a great place to sample *nasi Kapau* (cuisine from the village of Kapau). It's similar to Padang food but uses more vegetables. There's also *ampiang dadiah* (buffalo yoghurt with palm-sugar syrup, coconut and rice) and *bubur kampiun* (mung-bean porridge with banana and rice yoghurt).

In North Sumatra, the Acehnese love their *kare* or *gulai* (curry). The Bataks have a taste for pig and, to a lesser extent, dog (see boxed text, above). Pork features in *babi panggang* (pork boiled in vinegar and pig blood, and then roasted).

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

Nusa Tenggara

In dry East Nusa Tenggara you'll eat less rice (although much is imported) and more sago, corn, cassava and taro. Fish remains popular and one local dish is Sumbawa's *sepat* (shredded fish in coconut and mango sauce).

The Sasak people of Lombok like spicy *ayam taliwang* (roasted chicken served with a peanut, tomato, chilli and lime dip) and *pelecing* sauce (made with chilli, shrimp paste and tomato). Also recommended is *sate pusut* (minced meat or fish sate, mixed with coconut, and grilled on sugar-cane skewers). Nonmeat dishes include *kelor* (soup with vegetables) and *timun urap* (cucumber with coconut, onion and garlic).

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

Kalimantan

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

Sulawesi

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

The Toraja people have their own distinct cuisine (see p678) with a heavy emphasis on tastes of indigenous ingredients, many of them odd to Western palettes.

If a North Sulawesi dish has the name *rica-rica,* it's prepared with a paste of chilli, shallots, ginger and lime. Fish and chicken are two versions (also look out for dog). Things get very fishy with *bakasang* (flavouring paste made with fermented fish), sometimes used in *bubur tinotuan* (porridge made with corn, cassava, rice, pumpkin, fish paste and chilli).

Cradle of Flavor by James Oseland (the editor of *Saveur* magazine) is a beautiful tome covering the foods of Indonesia and its neighbours.

Maluku

A typical Maluku meal is tuna and *dabu-dabu* (raw vegetables with a chilli and fish-paste sauce). Sometimes fish is made into *kohu-kohu* (fish salad with citrus fruit and chilli). Sago pith is used to make porridge, bread and *mutiara* (small, jelly-like 'beans' that are added to desserts and sweet drinks). Boiled cassava (*kasbi*) is a staple in peoples' homes as it's cheaper than rice. For more, see (p747).

Papua

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

FRUITY DELIGHTS

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

- *Belimbing* (star fruit) is cool and crisp; slice one to see how it gets its name.
- Durian is the spiky fruit people either love or hate (see boxed text, p80).
- *Jambu air* (water apple) is a pink bell-shaped fruit with crisp and refreshing flesh.
- *Manggis* (mangosteen) is a small purple fruit with white fleshy segments and fantastic flavour.
- *Nangka* (jackfruit) is an enormous, spiky fruit that can weigh over 20kg. Inside are segments of yellow, moist, sweet flesh with a slightly rubbery texture. The flesh can be eaten fresh or cooked in a curry.
- *Rambutan* is a bright-red fruit covered in soft spines; the name means 'hairy'. Break it open to reveal a delicious white fruit similar to lychee.
- *Salak* is recognisable by its brown 'snakeskin' covering. Peel it off to reveal segments that resemble something between an apple and a walnut.
- *Sirsak* (soursop or zurzak) is a warty, green-skinned fruit with a white, pulpy interior that has a slightly lemonish taste.

DRINKS

Tea

Indonesia's most popular brew is black tea with sugar. If you don't want sugar ask for *teh pahit* (bitter tea), and if you want milk buy yourself a cow. Various forms of ginger tea are popular, including *bandrek* (ginger tea with coconut and pepper) and *wedang jahe* (ginger tea with peanuts and agar cubes slurped from a bowl).

Coffee

Indonesian coffee, especially from Sulawesi, is of exceptional quality, though most of the best stuff is exported. Warungs serve a chewy concoction called *kopi tubruk* (ground coffee with sugar and boiling water). Most urban cafes and restaurants offer quality coffee, and gourmet brands are available in most supermarkets.

Ice & Fruit Drinks

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

Alcoholic Drinks

Islam may be the predominant religion in Indonesia, but there's a range of alcohol available, including *tuak* (palm-sap wine), *arak* (rice or palm-sap wine) and Balinese *brem* (rice wine). Of the domestic breweries, iconic Bintang, a clean, slightly sweet lager, is the most preferred choice of beer for many. Note that bureaucratic snafu has made it hard to import alcoholic beverages into Indonesia. While not an issue in Maluku, it does mean that you will be hard-pressed to find Australian wine or British gin on Bali. You'll also need to be careful when buying *arak* as there have been cases where it has been adulterated with chemicals that have proved deadly in recent times.

CELEBRATIONS

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

Muslims

For Muslims, the largest celebrations are Ramadan (the fasting month, which ends with the Lebaran holiday; see p831) and Idul Adha. Each day of Ramadan, Muslims rise before sunrise to eat the only meal before sunset. It may sound like a bad time to be in Indonesia – you may have to plan meals and go without lunch – but when sunset comes, the locals' appreciation of a good meal is contagious. The first thing Indonesians eat after fasting is *kolak* (fruit in coconut milk) as a gentle way to reacquaint the body with food. Then, after prayers, the evening meal begins with aplomb. In some areas, such as in Bukittinggi, cooks set out food on the street. People gather to savour and enjoy their food as a community. Foreign guests are always made welcome.

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

Seventy days after Lebaran is Idul Adha, marked by the sight of goats tethered to posts on both city streets and rural pathways throughout the archipelago. Individuals or community groups buy these unfortunate animals to sacrifice in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son at divine command. This is one of Indonesia's most anticipated festivals, as the sacrificial meat is distributed to the poor in each community.

Balinese

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

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

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

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

As Indonesia's middle class grows, the warung is also going upmarket. In urban areas, a restaurant by any other name advertises itself as a 'warung', and serves simple, local dishes. These 'flash' warung can be a good deal for

travellers, as the full kitchens and proper water supplies raise hygiene levels – in most cases.

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

For information on business hours, see p823. For tips on healthy eating, see p859.

Quick Eats

As many Indonesians can't afford fine service and surrounds, the most authentic food is found at street level. Even high rollers know this, so everyone dines at stalls or gets their noodle fix from roving vendors who carry their victuals in two bundles connected by a stick over their shoulders: a stove and wok on one side, and ready-to-fry ingredients on the other.

Then there's *kaki lima* (roving vendors) whose carts hold a work bench, stove and cabinet. '*Kaki lima*' means 'five legs': two for the wheels of the cart, one for the stand and two for the legs of the vendor. You'll find any and every type of dish, drink and snack sold from a *kaki lima*. Some have a permanent spot, others roam the streets, calling out what they are selling or making a signature sound, such as the 'tock' of a wooden *bakso* bell. In some places, sate sellers operate from a boat-shaped cart, with bells jingling to attract the hungry.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

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

EATING WITH KIDS

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

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

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

INDONESIA'S TOP FIVE

Our authors pick their favourite meals.

Cak Asm (p297) The *cumi cumi* (calamari) with *telor asin* sauce is a heavenly mixture of eggs and garlic. The resulting buttery, crispy goodness may be the best dish you have in Bali. And proof that you can eat superbly in a local joint and spend about US$1. *Ryan Ver Berkmoes*

Warung Opera (p187) Run by a very extrovert Indonesian host called Donny, who was taught to cook by his mother (her portrait gazes at you approvingly while you dine…). Food is superb homestyle Indonesian – the humble nasi goreng takes on a different meaning here. Donny broke off half-way through our meal to sing hymns with his Catholic brethren in the back of the warung, the night air filled with vocal harmonies. *Iain Stewart*

Jenny's Restaurant (p393) I asked Jenny what the most traditional Batak dish was. I was informed that at weddings and parties they always cooked *saksang* as the celebration dish. Myself and a few other travellers ordered some up and feasted on the rich and tasty stew with pig's blood dripping down our faces like we were Batak royalty-cum-vampires. You'll need to order a day in advance. *Guyan Mitra*

Lombok Lounge (p514) It looks and feels like a standard issue backpacker haunt, but I ignored their scrolls of Western 'classics' (chicken cordon bleu anyone?) because the waitress assured me that their chilli crab was not to be missed. Good advice. Sweat poured, as I sucked out every last sliver with Zen-like intensity, destroying countless napkins and a few Bintang in the process. *Adam Skolnick*

Duta Café (p791) This Jayapura warung only opens in the evenings and serves unbeatable *ikan bakar* (fish grilled over open coals) with five different sambals lined up on your table. Perfect with a long *es jeruk*. *John Noble*

HABITS & CUSTOMS

With a population of over 245 million, you'd expect a little variety in Indonesia's culinary customs. There will be no surprises if you are eating at a restaurant, apart from the lack of a menu. However if eating at someone's house, see the boxed text, p86 for suggestions on fitting in – or at least not offending, especially if someone invites you into their home for a meal.

MSG is widely used in Indonesia. In warungs, you can try asking the cook to hold off on the *ajinomoto*. If you get a look of blank incomprehension, well, hey, the headache only lasts for a couple of hours.

COOKING COURSES

If you want to carry on enjoying the tastes of Indonesia after you go home after your holiday, Bali has several cooking schools where you can learn everything from how to shop in the markets to the basics and on to advanced cooking techniques. Best of all though is that you get to eat what you make!

Two of the best:

Bumbu Bali Cooking School (p295) Long-time resident and cookbook author Heinz von Holzen runs a cooking school from his excellent South Bali restaurant.

Casa Luna Cooking Courses (p313). Part of Ubud empressario Janet De Neefe's empire, half-day courses cover cooking techniques, ingredients and the cultural background of the Balinese kitchen.

EAT YOUR WORDS

Want to buy mangoes at a market or eat *rendang* at a restaurant? Don't be left speechless; check out the Language chapter on p865 for pronunciation guidelines.

TRAVELLER TACT – DINING

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

- When food or drink is presented, wait until your host invites you to eat.
- Indonesians rarely eat at the table, preferring to sit on a mat or around the lounge room.
- Don't be surprised if, when invited to a home, you're the only one eating. This is your host's way of showing you're special, and you should have choice pickings. But don't eat huge amounts, as these dishes will feed others later. Fill up on rice and take a spoonful from each dish served.
- While chopsticks are available at Chinese-Indonesian eateries, and a fork and spoon in restaurants, most Indonesians prefer to eat with their hands. In a warung, it is acceptable to rinse your fingers with drinking water, letting the drops fall to the ground. Use only your right hand. If left-handed, ask for a spoon.
- In Islamic areas, be sure not to eat and drink in public during Ramadan. Restaurants do stay open, though they usually cover the door so as not to cause offence.
- Though antismoking regulations are becoming common, smoking remains acceptable anywhere, anytime.
- Men and women dining together is the norm. An invitation to a meal from (or for) the opposite sex may be considered an 'expression of interest', as it is in most countries.

Useful Phrases

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

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

Food Glossary

acar	pickle; cucumber or other vegetables in a mixture of vinegar, salt, sugar and water
air	water
arak	spirits distilled from palm sap or rice
ayam	chicken; fried chicken is *ayam goreng*

babi	pork; since most Indonesians are Muslim, pork is generally only found in market stalls and restaurants run by the Chinese, and in areas where there are non-Muslim populations, such as Bali, Papua and Tana Toraja on Sulawesi
bakar	barbecued, roasted
bakso/ba'so	meatball soup
bandrek	ginger tea with coconut and pepper
brem	rice wine
bubur	rice porridge
cassava	known as tapioca in English; a long, thin, dark brown root which looks something like a shrivelled turnip
colenak	roasted cassava with coconut sauce
daging kambing	goat
daging sapi	beef
es buah	combination of crushed ice, condensed milk, shaved coconut, syrup, jelly and fruit
gado gado	very popular dish of steamed bean sprouts and various vegetables, served with a spicy peanut sauce
gudeg	jackfruit curry
ikan	fish
jajanan	snacks
karedok	salad of long beans, bean sprouts and cucumber with spicy sauce
kelepon	green rice-flour balls with a palm-sugar filling
ketoprak	noodles, bean sprouts and tofu with soy and peanut sauce
ketupat tahu	pressed rice, bean sprouts and tofu with soy and peanut sauce
kopi	coffee
krupuk	shrimp with cassava flour, or fish flakes with rice dough, cut into slices and fried to a crisp
lombok	chilli
lontong	rice steamed in a banana leaf
martabak	a pancake-like dish stuffed with meat, egg and vegetables
mie goreng	fried wheat-flour noodles, served with vegetables or meat
nasi	rice
nasi campur	steamed rice topped with a little bit of everything – some vegetables, some meat, a bit of fish, a *krupuk* or two; usually a tasty and filling meal
nasi goreng	fried rice
nasi liwet	rice with coconut milk, unripe papaya, garlic and shallots, served with chicken or egg
nasi uduk	rice cooked in coconut milk, served with meat, tofu and/or vegetables
nasi putih	white (*putih*) rice, usually steamed
pecel	peanut sauce
pecel lele	deep-fried catfish served with rice and *pecel*
pempek (empek-empek)	deep fried/grilled fish and sago balls (from Palembang)
pisang goreng	fried banana fritters
roti	bread; nearly always white and sweet
sambal	a hot, spicy chilli sauce served as an accompaniment with most meals
sate	small pieces of various types of meat grilled on a skewer and served with peanut sauce
sayur	vegetables
serabi	coconut-milk pancakes topped with chocolate, banana or jackfruit
soto	meat and vegetable broth; soup
soto Bandung	beef-and-vegetable soup with lemon grass
soto Betawi	beef soup
soto Madura	beef soup with lime, pepper, peanuts, chilli and ginger
tahu	tofu or soybean curd
teh	tea; tea without sugar is *teh pahit*
telur	egg
tuak	palm-sap wine
udang	prawns or shrimps
ulen	roasted sticky rice with peanut sauce