

Sulawesi

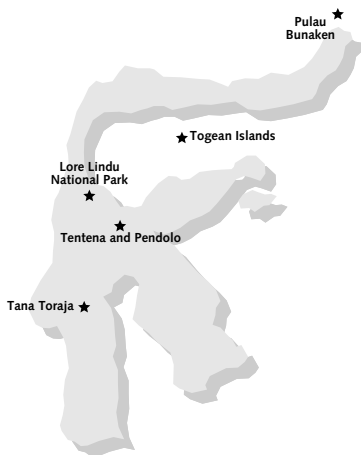


If you think Sulawesi looks crazy on the map, just wait until you see it for real. The massive island's multilimbed coastline is drawn with sandy beaches, fringing coral reefs and a mind-boggling variety of fish. Meanwhile, the interior is shaded by impenetrable mountains and jungles thick with wildlife such as the rare nocturnal tarsiers and flamboyantly colourful maleo birds. Cultures have been able to independently evolve here, cut off from the rest of the world by the dramatic topography. Meet the Tana Toraja with their elaborate funeral ceremonies in which buffaloes are sacrificed and *balok* (palm wine) flows freely; nearby in Mamasa life revolves around the Christian church, and in the far north the Minahasans offer you spicy dishes of everything from stewed forest rat to grilled fish; the coastal regions are mainly inhabited by the Bugis, Indonesia's most famous seafarers.

Most people take the route from Makassar to Tana Toraja, then continue to the Togeian Islands and farther north to Pulau Bunaken, but to do this on a one-month visa you'll need to move fast. The north is the best choice for those on a time budget, since distances are short and you can dive the world's top coral reefs one day, then see jungle critters and rare birds at the Tangkoko Nature Reserve the next. To get way off the beaten track, head to Southeast Sulawesi and its fabulous Wakatobi Marine National Park, to the ancient megaliths and forests of Lore Lindu National Park in Central Sulawesi or to the pristine Sangir-Talaud Islands in the north.

HIGHLIGHTS

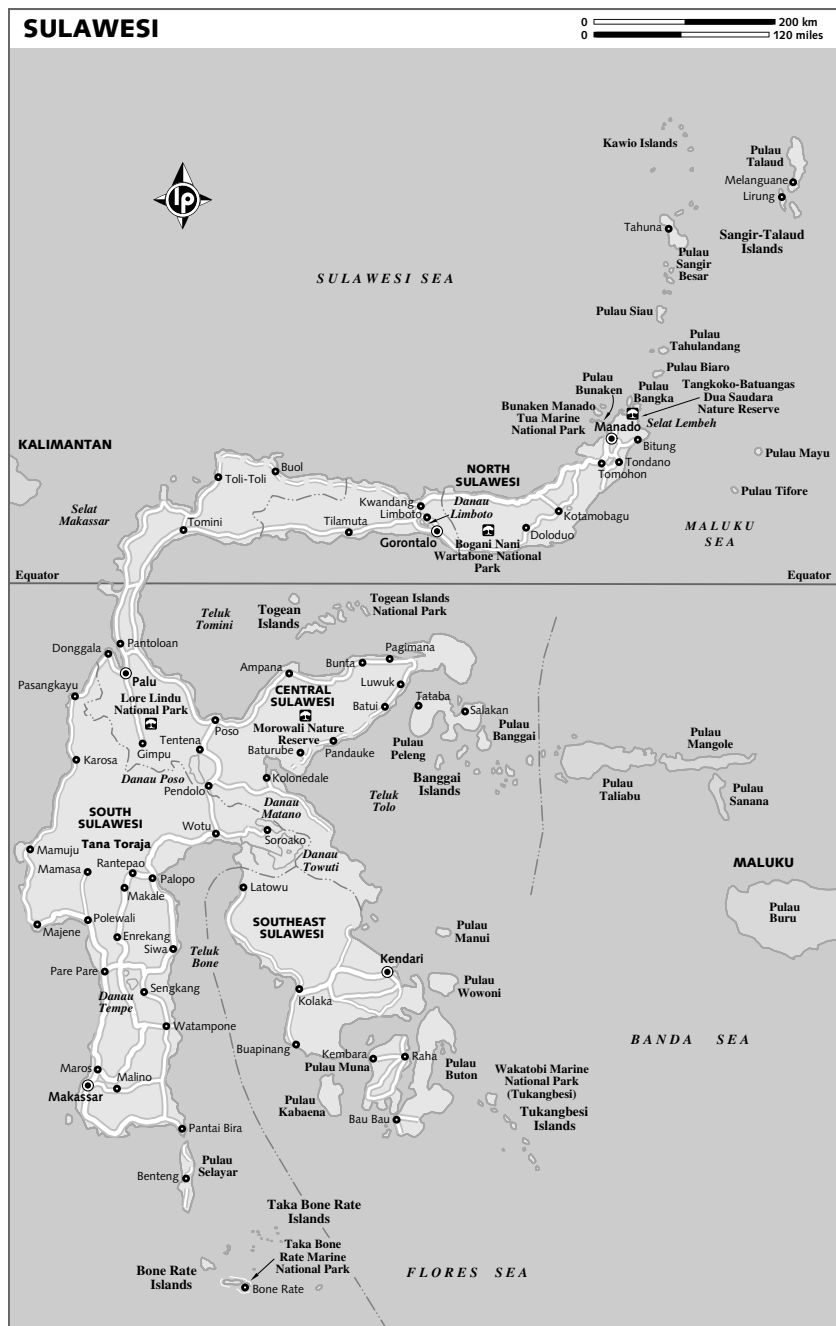
- Snorkelling or diving along unbelievably rich coral drop-offs – some of Asia's best – around chilled-out **Pulau Bunaken** (p710)
- Wondering if you didn't just wander into a cultural documentary when attending an elaborate funeral ceremony in **Tana Toraja** (p672)
- Island-hopping from one outrageous beach to the next in the laid-back **Togeian Islands** (p696), an island paradise
- Feeling the cool air off glistening Danau Poso at the quiet lakeside towns of **Pendolo** (p686) and **Tentena** (p687)
- Spotting sprightly tarsiers and discovering ancient megaliths at **Lore Lindu National Park** (p690)



■ POPULATION: 16 MILLION

■ LAND AREA: 202,000 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST PEAK: GUNUNG RANTEMARIO (3440M)



HISTORY

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

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

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

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

Tragically, the Poso region in Central Sulawesi fell into a cycle of intercommunal violence in 1998 (see boxed text, p688).

CLIMATE

The wettest months along the west coast tend to be late November, December and early January, when northwesterly and westerly winds prevail. Southeasterly winds dump heavy rains along the eastern regions in late April, May and early June. The Palu Valley in Central Sulawesi is one of the driest areas in Indonesia.

Temperatures drop quite considerably going from the lowlands to the mountains. Average temperatures along the coast range from around 26°C to 30°C, but in the mountains the average temperature drops by 5°C. See also the climate chart for Manado, p827.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

DOMESTIC

The three transport hubs are Makassar and Manado, which are well connected with the rest of Indonesia, and Palu, which offers connections to Balikpapan in Kalimantan. It is possible to arrange direct flights to Java, Bali,

THE WALLACE LINE

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

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

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

Kalimantan, Maluku and Papua, but you'll need transit for connections to Sumatra or Nusa Tenggara. Merpati Nusantara Airlines and Lion Air are the main carriers, but Batavia Air, Garuda Indonesia, Sriwijaya Air and Wings Air also service Sulawesi. See the individual Getting There & Away sections for details about all domestic flights.

INTERNATIONAL

Silk Air flies between Manado and Singapore four times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday) for US\$335 (one way). Wings Air flies between Manado and Davao in the southern Philippines once a week for US\$150 one way. This is useful for a visa run, but it is important to note that you need an onward ticket before you can enter the Philippines.

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

Sea

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

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

Bukit Siguntang To East Kalimantan and Nusa Tenggara.

Ciremai To Maluku, Papua and Java.

Ganda Dewata To Jakarta.

Kelimutu To Java, Bali, Nusa Tenggara and Maluku.

Kerinci To East Kalimantan.

Labobar To Java and Papua.

Lambelu To Java, Maluku and Northern Maluku.

Sirimau To Nusa Tenggara, Java and East Kalimantan.

Tilongkabila To Nusa Tenggara.

GETTING AROUND

Air

Merpati and Lion Air are the main carriers within Sulawesi, but Batavia Air and Sriwijaya also operate selected routes. See the individual Getting There & Away sections for details of flights around Sulawesi.

Boat

The few Pelni ships that link towns within Sulawesi are a comfortable alternative to long and rough bus trips. Every two weeks the following boats sail from Makassar: the *Kerinci* and *Bukit Siguntang* go to Balikpapan; at least

six ships go to Bau Bau and onto various destinations including Ambon and Bitung (for Manado). The *Lambelu* and *Labobar* go to Surabaya; the *Labobar* goes to Sorong and the *Sirimau* goes to Larantuka.

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

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

Bus, Bemo & Kijang

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

SOUTH SULAWESI

South Sulawesi (Sulawesi Selatan; often shortened to Sul-sel) is immense, and in Sulawesi big equals diverse. Makassar in the far south is the capital of the island and is fittingly tumultuous and surprisingly cosmopolitan. Stop here a day or two to get your last chance for nightlife plus feast on some of the best seafood on the island. From here you could head farther south to Bira, which has the sleepy feel of a Greek isle with its dry climate and goats aplenty, or do what most people do and go directly to Tana Toraja to experience a dizzying blend of mountains carved with rice paddies, outlandish funeral ceremonies involving animal sacrifices and some of the



craziest local-style architecture in Asia. In between these places there are plenty of buzzing towns and ports not used to seeing visitors, where you could stop awhile and soak in the culture. On the long bus rides in between you'll pass coastal salt farms and coffee, cotton and sugarcane plantations inland.

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

History

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

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

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

The Makassarese and Bugis are staunchly Islamic and independent-minded – revolts against the central Indonesian government

again occurred in the 1950s. Makassar and Pare Pare are still the first to protest when the political or economic situation is uncertain.

MAKASSAR

☎ 0411 / pop 1.6 million

The metropolis of Makassar is thick with honking horns, strong smells and general pandemonium, but it maintains a nearly backwater charm thanks to its friendly people and delicious, down-home seafood warungs (food stalls). The city's seething mass is expanding in every direction, with new suburbs everywhere. Tanjung Bunga looms to the southwest of the city and may become the centre one day, while Panukkekung to the east is chock-a-block with mighty, modern shopping malls. Not surprisingly, Makassar has the liveliest night scene this side of Surabaya.

As the gateway to eastern Indonesia for centuries, it was from Makassar that the Dutch controlled much of the shipping that passed between the west and the east. Today it's still a thriving port and important transport hub. Fort Rotterdam, once an ancient Gowanese fort, is Makassar's main tourist attraction and stands as a reminder of the Dutch occupation.

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

Orientation

Makassar is *huge*, but you'll only need to venture into the eastern suburbs to catch a bus or go to the airport. The port is conveniently located in the northwest part of the city; Fort Rotterdam is in the centre of the older commercial hub.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

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

MAKASSAR



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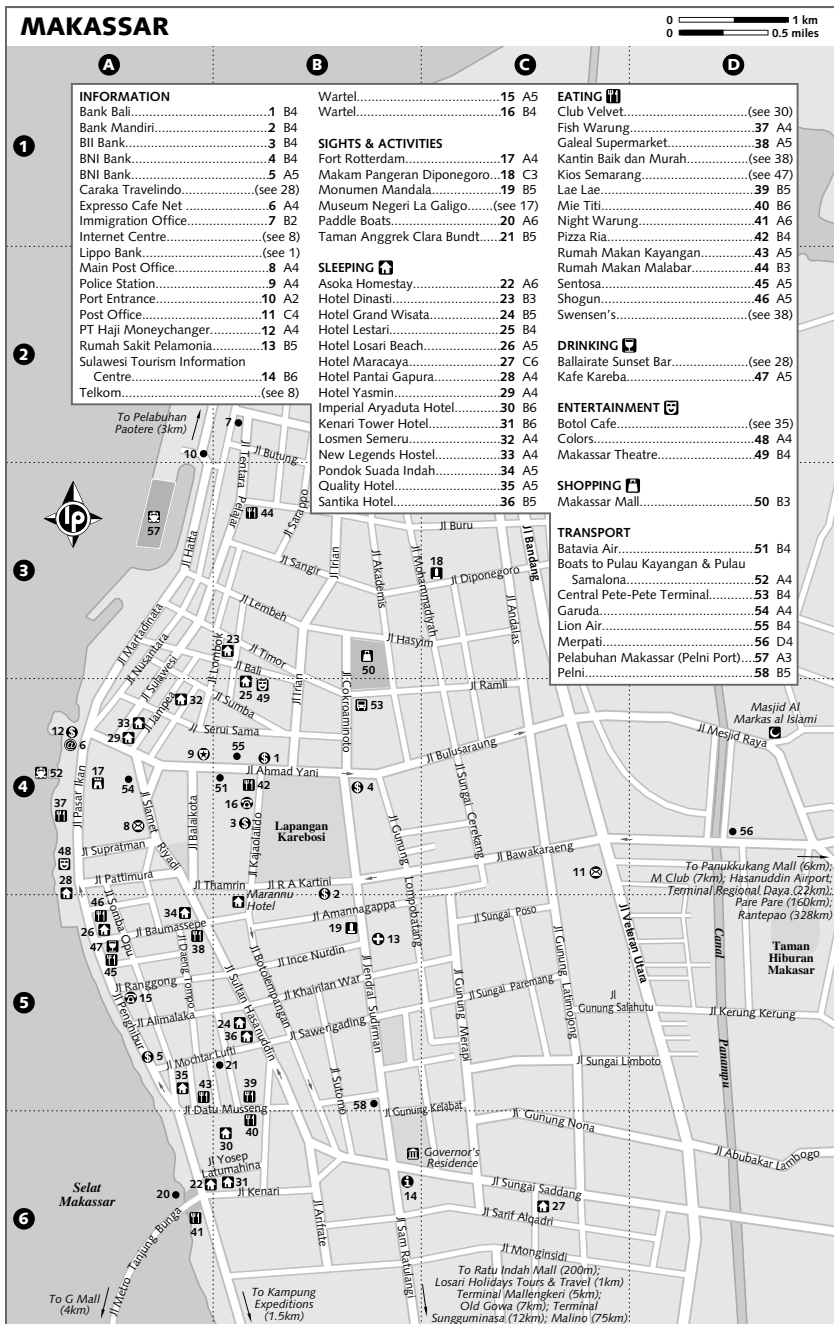
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To G Mall (4km)

To Mulojau Tanjung Bunga

To Kampung Expeditions (1.5km)

To Ratu Indah Mall (200m);
Losani Holidays Tours & Travel (1km)
Terminal (Mallejengki) (5km);
Old Gawa (7km); Terminal
Sungguminasa (12km); Malino (75km);To Panukkukang Mall (6km);
M Club (7km); Hasanuddin Airport;
Terminal Regional Daya (22km);
Pare Pare (160km);
Rantepao (328km)

Taman Hiburan Makassar

Information**EMERGENCY****Police station** (☎ 110; Jl Ahmad Yani)**IMMIGRATION****Immigration office** (Jl Tentara Pelajar) Has a reputation of being difficult with visa extensions.**INTERNET ACCESS & POST**

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

Expresso Cafe Net (cnr Jl Pasar Ikan & Jl Ahmad Yani; ☎ 8am-12am) Clean private booths and fast connections.**Main post office** (Jl Slamet Riyadi; ☎ 8am-9pm) Has a post restante service, a Telkom office and an internet centre.**MEDICAL SERVICES****Rumah Sakit Pelamonia** (☎ 324 710; Jl Jendral Sudirman) The most convenient and well-equipped hospital.**MONEY**

The streets surrounding Lapangan Karebosi are loaded with banks and ATMs that accept all major credit cards. Most are on Jl Ahmad Yani and can also change cash and travellers cheques. At the airport several moneychangers offer slightly lower rates than in the city, and some of the ATMs there accept credit cards.

TELEPHONE

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

TOURIST INFORMATION**Sulawesi Tourism Information Centre** (☎ 872 336; cnr Jl Sam Ratulangi & Jl Sungai Saddang; ☎ 8am-4pm) There is little on offer here, but the staff are helpful and friendly. Take any *pete-pete* travelling south along Jl Jendral Sudirman to get here.**TRAVEL AGENCIES**

There are travel agencies through which you can book flights and Pelnis ship voyages all around Makassar and at many hotels.

Just about everyone in Makassar wants to take you on a tour of Tana Toraja. Recommended tour agencies to destinations all over Sulawesi include the following:

Caraka Travelindo (☎ 318 877; www.sulawesi-indonesia.com; Hotel Pantai Gapura) Dutch-run and one of the biggest.**Kampung Expeditions** (☎ 582 639; www.kampungx.com; Jl Palapa VI 129) Has Japanese and Australian partners and runs tours all over South Sulawesi.**Losari Holidays Tours & Travel** (☎ 506 3884; Jl Mappanyukki 1) The agent for Operation Wallacea projects in Sulawesi (see p723).**Nell Tours** (☎ 852 445; www.nelltours.com; Jl Cendrawasih 103)**Sights****FORT ROTTERDAM**One of the best-preserved examples of Dutch architecture in Indonesia, **Fort Rotterdam** (Jl Pasar Ikan; entry by donation, suggested 10,000Rp; ☎ 7.30am-6pm) continues to guard the harbour of Makassar. A Gowanese fort dating back to 1545 once stood here, but failed to keep out the Dutch. The original fort was rebuilt in Dutch style after the Treaty of Bungaya in 1667. Parts of the crumbling wall have been left untouched and provide a comparison with the restored buildings, but really the fort isn't anything spectacular.Inside the fort are two **museums** (admission 1700Rp; ☎ Tue-Sun) which have an assortment of exhibits, including rice bowls from Tana Toraja, kitchen tools, musical instruments and various costumes. It's hardly riveting, but at this price who can complain? The museums seem to keep the same hours as the fort.

Guides approach you at the fort's entrance and charge 50,000Rp for worthwhile though lengthy (count on two hours) historic tours of the grounds and museums. Avoid visiting on Sunday when schoolchildren and English students swarm the place.

MAKAM PANGERAN DIPONEGOROPrince Pangeran Diponegoro of Yogyakarta led the Java War (1825-30), but his career as a rebel leader came to a sudden halt when he was tricked into going to the Dutch headquarters to negotiate peace, was taken prisoner and then exiled to Sulawesi. He spent the last 26 years of his life imprisoned in Fort Rotterdam. His tomb and monument can be seen in a small **cemetery** (Jl Diponegoro; entry by donation).**OLD GOWA**Remnants of the former kingdom of Gowa, 7km from town on the southeastern outskirts of Makassar, include **Makam Sultan Hasanuddin** (Jl Pallantiang, off Jl Sultan Hasanuddin), which memorialises the ruler of Gowa from the mid-17th

century. Outside the tomb compound is the **Pelantikan Stone**, on which the kings of Gowa were crowned.

Benteng Sungguminasa (Jl Kh Wahid Hasyim; admission free; ☎ 8am-4pm), a fort that was once the seat of the sultan of Gowa, is 5km further south at Sungguminasa. The former royal residence, now known as **Museum Balla Lompoa**, houses a collection of artefacts, including gifts from Australian Aborigines of Elcho Island, who have a history of trade with the Bugis. Although the royal regalia can be seen only on request, the wooden Bugis-style palace itself is the real attraction.

To go to Old Gowa and Sungguminasa, take a *pete-pete* marked 'S Minasa' from Makassar Mall to the turn-off for the 1km walk to the tomb. A *becak* (bicycle-rickshaw) from there to the fort should cost around 9000Rp. Another *becak* will take you to Mallengkeri Terminal, from where *pete-pete* return to central Makassar; the *pete-pete* should cost about 4000Rp.

OTHER SIGHTS

Pelabuhan Paotere (Paotere Harbour; admission 500Rp), a 15-minute *becak* ride north of the city centre, is where the Bugis sailing ships berth and is arguably the most atmospheric part of the city. There is usually lots of activity on the dock and in the busy **fish market** a few streets south.

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

The towering **Monumen Mandala** (Jl Jendral Sudirman; admission 5000Rp; ☎ 8am-4pm) is a smaller version of Jakarta's Monas (National Monument), and celebrates the 'liberation' of Irian Jaya (now known as Papua).

Activities

Top-end hotels such as Hotel Pantai Gapura and Imperial Aryaduta Hotel have **swimming pools** which the public can use for 20,000Rp, although they get crowded on Sunday. Comedic fish-shaped **paddle boats** (15,000Rp per hr; ☎ 11am-9pm) are available for hire near the night warungs (food stalls) for a sunset paddle.

Makassar isn't known for diving, but Kapoposang and islands off the coast do offer

abundant marine life and some of the largest wrecks off the Sulawesi coast. In mid-2009 there was no dive centre in Makassar, but you can charter a speedboat from Pelabuhan Paotere (about 500,000Rp; two hours) to go on your own, or contact the **Makassar Dive Club** (☎ 411326056), which is not a dive centre but a small organisation of local divers, for information about any upcoming chartered dive trips.

Sleeping

The most pleasant area to stay is along the waterfront south of the port (which also has the best nightlife), while choices a few blocks away from the sea or around Jl Ahmad Yani are central and a short walk to the action. Unless noted otherwise, all of the following prices include breakfast. All places listed here have Western-style bathrooms.

BUDGET

New Legends Hostel (☎ 313 777; Jl Jampea 5G; dm 65,000Rp, r 90,000-125,000Rp; 🍷) Catering to backpackers, this clean and very helpful place has an upstairs cafe where you can meet other travellers over breakfast or movies at night. The rooms and dorms, however, are small, windowless and box-like. Cheaper rooms are fan-only and have shared bathrooms.

Losmen Semeru (☎ 318 113; Jl Jampea 28; r 70,000Rp; 🍷) This long-running budget stalwart still offers some of the best basic crash pads in town. Rooms are minuscule but have TVs, attached *mandis* and air-con. The atmosphere isn't exactly glamorous but service is friendly. No meals are served.

Hotel Grand Wisata (☎ 324 344; grandwisat@yahoo .co.id; Jl Sultan Hasanuddin 36-38; r 100,000-265,000Rp; 🍷) This is a sprawling place with options ranging from fan-cooled cheapies with shared bathrooms to larger though worn-looking rooms with all the mod cons. A skinny courtyard with palms and some potted plants adds some light and a feeling of space.

Hotel Lestari (☎ 327 337; Jl Savu 16; r 145,000-200,000Rp; 🍷) Freshly painted rooms, all with satellite TV, minibar, hot water and air-con, are among the best deals in Makassar. There's not much character but for friendly service, a clean comfy bed and a good night's sleep it's hard to do better than this.

Pondok Suada Indah (☎ 317 179; fax 312 856; Jl Sultan Hasanuddin 12; r from 175,000Rp; 🍷) One of Makassar's more interesting options, this

place is set in a spacious, old colonial-era house that feels far from the city's hubbub just out the front door. Rooms are huge and are decorated with a tatty mix of heavy antiques and cheap modern furniture; some have age-worn bathtubs and all have little TVs with local channels.

MIDRANGE

Our pick Asoka Homestay (☎ 873 476; Jl Yosep Latumahina; r 200,000-300,000Rp) An oasis just steps from the waterfront, this charming family-run place has five rooms surrounding an immaculate flowery courtyard. Everything from the little breakfast tables draped in pink lace to the large and airy rooms is tended with love. The one 'super' room has a small terrace and kitchen and is a good option for families.

Hotel Maracaya (☎ 876 787; JCO808@yahoo.co.id; Jl Kijang 2; r 200,000-330,000Rp; 📶) You'll have to pay the high end of the price range to get a window, but all the rooms at this newish hotel are sparkling clean, with uncommonly big beds draped in crisp sheets. Enjoy your HBO after a hot shower.

Hotel Dinasti (☎ 325 657; hotel_dinasti@yahoo.com; Jl Lombok 30; r from 330,000Rp; 📶 🚿) The Dinasti takes its Chinese theme seriously, from bell-boys in silk caps with a fake braid hanging down the back, to the rather elegant rooms all decorated with traditional Chinese furniture. The welcome is very friendly and all rooms include satellite TV and fridge. There is also a whirlpool hot tub available for guests.

Hotel Yasmin (☎ 328 329; yasminmakassar@yahoo.co.id; Jl Jampea 5; r from 336,000Rp; 📶 🚿) Victorian patterned wallpaper and upholstered chairs add a little decadence to this bustling business hotel. Rooms are small but in good shape and the staff are formally professional. There's a cafe-restaurant and karaoke-dance bar on site.

Hotel Losari Beach (☎ 326 062; los-htl@indosat.net.id; Jl Penghibur 10; r from 400,000Rp; 📶 🚿) Boasting a great location overlooking the seafront, the bland rooms are a bit disappointing for the price. Prices rise rapidly for a premium sea view.

Kenari Tower Hotel (☎ 874 250; hotelkenari@yahoo.co.id; Jl Yosep Latumahina 30; r from 500,000Rp; 📶 🚿) Muted lighting, a beige-and-mauve colour scheme and minimalist Bali-style decor make this brand-new hotel the most stylish place in town. A stone's throw from the seafront, even some standard rooms have sea views, and the

rooftop terrace restaurant is a prime location for sunset cocktails. Chill out afterwards in the jacuzzi or the on-site spa.

Santika Hotel (☎ 332 233; www.santika.com; Jl Sultan Hasanuddin 40; r from 525,000Rp; 📶 🚿) The second most chic hotel in Makassar, after Kenari Tower, the Santika isn't as well located for views, but the rooms are luxurious and have a calming beige-and-white decor.

Quality Hotel (☎ 333 111; www.qualityhotelmakassar.com; Jl Somba Opu 235; r from 525,000Rp; 📶 🚿) The liveliest hotel in Makassar. Staff here are young and fun and there's a happening nightspot in the basement (see p665). Rooms (request a sea view) are modern, very comfy and excellent value. There's a lovely jacuzzi with ocean panoramas, plus a sauna and steam room.

TOP END

Both these places offer frequent promotions, with discounts between 10% and 25%.

Hotel Pantai Gapura (☎ 325 791; www.pantaigapura.com; Jl Pasar Ilkan 10; r 600,000Rp, cottages from 1,000,000Rp; 📶 🚿) The closest thing you'll find to a resort in the city centre, Hotel Pantai Gapura is a bit kitsch but the ocean views, swimming pool, palm trees and water gardens do feel like a holiday. Rooms are poor value but the giant Bugis-style over-the-water cottages are truly special. There is also a sunset bar-restaurant in a funny old cargo boat.

Imperial Aryaduta Hotel (☎ 870 555; www.aryaduta.com; Jl Somba Opu 297; r from 1,200,000Rp; 📶 🚿 🚿) This is *the* place to see and be seen with the ritzy Asian business elite. Huge rooms with amazing sea views would be better if the carpets weren't stained, but you could easily forget about this at the spa, the seaside pool or by holding your nose at any of the several smoky bars.

Eating

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

Hundreds of night warungs just off Jl Metro Tanjung Bunga serve up fresh and cheap Indonesian and Chinese meals for around 15,000Rp, and you can (just about) see Makassar's famous sunset.

Just as good are the string of makeshift fish warungs set up every night on the foreshore

opposite Fort Rotterdam that serve some of the tastiest, cheapest seafood in town (about 15,000Rp per fish, baked, grilled or fried). Roaming buskers provide tableside entertainment.

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

Sentosa (☎ 326 062; Jl Penghibur 26; soup 6000Rp) Locals flock to this basic cafe with sea views (across the street) and delicious wonton soup.

Mie Titi (Jl Datu Museng; small/large noodles 15,000/16,000Rp; ☎ 10am-2am) Makassar institution for its *mie kering* (dry noodles) – deep fried thin noodles that stay crunchy under a rich sauce of greens, dough, *bakso* and precisely one shrimp per portion. Ask for extra garlic and try the pickled chillis.

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

ourpick! Lae Lae (☎ 334 326; Jl Datu Musseng 8; fish from 20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) A very basic dining hall jam-packed with food-frenzied locals, this place is as social as the seafood is good. Servers lead you to the ice box where you choose your fish (or squid, crab or just about any other sort of sea critter) that gets grilled while you make friends at your table. Wash up, roll up your sleeves and dive into the flaky fish, sambal (chilli sauce) and sauces hands-first.

Rumah Makan Kayangan (☎ 325 273; Jl Datu Musseng 20; fish from 20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Kayangan is a slightly more upmarket affair than Lae Lae, with tablecloths and air-con. The fish is fresh, the service swift and the Bintangs are ice-cold.

Rumah Makan Malabar (☎ 319 776; Jl Sulawesi 264; curry 20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) Run by a second-generation Keralan, Malabar is a little slice of the Indian subcontinent, serving up flaky naan and tender *kare kambing* (goat curry).

Pizza Ria (cnr Jl Kajaolalido & Jl Ahmad Yani; pizza from 20,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) The atmosphere here is a little cheesy, but the pizzas are surprisingly good and a few have a spicy Indonesian twist.

Shogun (☎ 324 102; Jl Penghibur 2; sushi & sashimi platters from 95,000Rp; ☎ lunch & dinner) The only authentic Japanese restaurant in town is right

next door to Hotel Losari Beach. The sushi is excellent, but portions are small in comparison to the hefty price tag. There are also teppanyaki sets (from 128,000Rp), yakitori, sate and steaks.

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

If the hot weather is just too much, duck into Swensen's for an ice cream. Upstairs in the same food court, above the well-stocked **Galea Supermarket** (Jl Sultan Hasanuddin), is Kantin Baik dan Murah turning out good, cheap Indonesian food at affordable prices.

Drinking

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

Further south on Jl Penghibur, there are several lively places. The aforementioned Kios Semarang is definitely *the* watering hole in town.

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

Ballarate Sunset Bar (Hotel Pantai Gapura; Jl Pasar Ikan 10) Built on stilts over the sea, this is the best-located bar in town. Walk right through the hotel to discover draft Bintang by the pitcher and a perfect view of the sunset. Sundays are a bad idea as the Makassar jet-ski crowd strut their stuff on the water here.

Entertainment

CINEMAS

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

Makassar Theatre (Jl Bali) Hidden away in the back streets near many of the budget hotels.

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

NIGHTCLUBS

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

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

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

M Club (admission incl 1st drink from 25,000Rp) On the eastern edge of town, this warehouse club is one of the biggest in Sulawesi. The music is tech-no prisoners and the lighting strobe-heavy, but if you want the Makassar experience, this is an essential stop. Foreigners often get in free. All taxi drivers know the place – a ride should cost about 30,000Rp.

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

Shopping

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

G Mall The massive centrepiece of the new Tanjung Bunga development.

Makassar Mall A sprawling mess and more like a market than a mall – go here to experience Makassar at its craziest.

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

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

Getting There & Away

AIR

Makassar is well connected to the rest of Indonesia, as many flights between Java and the easternmost islands call here en route. Shop around and check for the current prices with airlines and agents.

Batavia Air (☎ 365 5255; Jl Ahmad Yani 35) offers flights three to four days a week to and from Gorontalo, Luwuk, Manokwari and Jayapura (via Manokwari) and daily flights to Kendari.

Garuda (Garuda Indonesia; ☎ 365 4747; Jl Slamet Riyadi 6) flies directly to and from Manado, Denpasar, Jakarta, Jayapura and Biak every day of the week.

Lion Air (☎ 327 038; Jl Ahmad Yani 22) flies daily to and from Manado, Kendari, Gorontalo, Palu, Jakarta, Surabaya and Denpasar.

Merpati (☎ 442 892; Jl Bawakaraeng) connects Makassar to Jakarta, Balikpapan, Kendari, Surabaya, Luwuk and Palu. There is also a handy daily Yogyakarta service.

Sriwijaya Air (☎ 424 800; Jl Boulevard Raya 23) flies to Surabaya, Palu, Gorontalo, Kendari and Ambon.

BOAT

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

Useful services include the *Kerinci* and *Tidar* to Balikpapan (economy/1st class 146,000/407,000Rp), the *Sirimau* to Larantuka in Flores (309,000/886,000Rp), and the *Tilongkabila* to Bau Bau and then up along the east coast to Kendari (181,000/465,000Rp), Kolonedale, Luwuk, Gorontalo and Manado.

The **Pelni office** (☎ 331 401; Jl Sam Ratulangi; ☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Sat) is efficient and computerised. Tickets are also available at any Pelni agency around town. The chaotic Pelabuhan Makassar port, which is used by Pelni boats, is only a short becak ride from most hotels.

BUS & KIJANG

Makassar has numerous terminals but three are most useful. Terminal Daya is in the eastern suburbs on the road to the airport, where there are buses and Kijangs to all points north, including Pare Pare (24,300Rp, three hours), Sengkang (38,000Rp, four hours) and Rantepao (51,600Rp, eight hours). Kijangs often take shorter routes than the buses and are worth the slightly more expensive tickets. VIP **Bintang Prima** (☎ 47728) buses are the most comfortable choice for Rantepao, although **Litha Bus** (☎ 324 847) is a close second. Both cost 80,000Rp and offer better leg room than business class on an aeroplane – no kidding. To get to Terminal Daya, catch any *pete-pete* (3000Rp, 30 minutes) marked 'Daya' from Makassar Mall or from along Jl Bulusaraung.

Terminal Mallengkeri is about 10km south-east of the city centre. From here, buses and Kijangs go to places southeast of Makassar, including Bulukumba (32,000Rp, three hours) and Pantai Bira (55,000Rp, four hours). For Pantai Bira, you may have to change in Bulukumba.

Terminal Sungguminasa has regular *pete-pete* services to Malino (14,000Rp, 1½ hours). To get to Mallengkeri or Sungguminasa, take a *pete-pete* marked 'S Minasa' from Makassar Mall or from along Jl Jendral Sudirman. Ask to be dropped at Mallengkeri, or continue on to Terminal Sungguminasa.

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

If you're arriving by plane, buses to Pare Pare, Toraja and all points north can be flagged down on the Makassar–Maros road, 300m from the terminal (there's a free shuttle), saving a trip into town. However, you may need to wait a while for an empty seat.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Hasanuddin Airport is 22km from the centre of Makassar. Prepaid taxis are easy to arrange at the arrivals area. There are three fares from 75,000Rp to 95,000Rp, depending on the destination, but most hotels are in the centre, which costs 85,000Rp. To the airport, a metered taxi is about 80,000Rp.

For public transport from the airport to central Makassar, free shuttles run from the basement level of the airport to the main road (about 500m from the terminal) about every 15 minutes; that's where you can flag down a *pete-pete* into town (although you'll probably have to change to another *pete-pete* at Terminal Daya). From central Makassar to the airport, catch a *pete-pete* from Makassar Mall to Maros (8500Rp) and tell the driver to let you out at the airport. If you're lucky, the shuttle will be there and take you to the terminal, or you'll have to walk the 500m.

It's also possible to get an *ojek* (motorcycle taxi) to the airport for around 60,000Rp.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Makassar is hot, so using a becak, *pete-pete* or taxi can be a relief. The friendly old crooks that are the becak drivers like to kerb-crawl, hoping you'll succumb to their badgering

and/or the heat. The going rate is 5000Rp around town, but you inevitably have to bargain for this. The main *pete-pete* terminal is at the Makassar Mall, and the standard fare around town is 3000Rp. Air-conditioned taxis have meters and are worth using; it works out at about 4500Rp a kilometre.

AROUND MAKASSAR

Pulau Samalona

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

To get here you will have to charter a boat for about 250,000Rp one way or return from the special jetty in Makassar and pre-arrange to be picked up later. On Sunday you can probably share a boat with some day-trippers.

Pulau Kayangan

This tiny island is cluttered with strange tourist attractions and is not great for swimming (although plenty of locals do it). It's very busy on Sunday, but almost completely empty for the rest of the week. Some of the restaurants around the island are positioned over the water, and many are perfect for sunsets. If you feel like staying here, **Wisata Bahari Pulau Kayangan** (☎ 0411-315 752; r 180,000-450,000Rp) has somewhat overpriced rooms, although the deluxe options are huge and include satellite TV and air-con.

Boats travel from the special jetty in Makassar every 15 minutes (per person return 20,000Rp, on Sunday 30,000Rp) until 10pm – perfect for a sunset cruise followed by a meal on the island.

Bantimurung

Air Terjun Bantimurung (admission 10,000Rp), 42km from Makassar, are waterfalls set amid lushly vegetated limestone cliffs. Looking up, it's straight out of Jurassic Park, but then you scan the ground level and it's a classic *objek wisata* (tourist object). That translates as crowded with day-trippers on weekends, and peppered with litter and creative concrete, but it remains a wonderful and pic-

turesque retreat from the heat of Makassar. Upstream from the main waterfall there's another smaller waterfall and a pretty, but treacherous, pool. However, you will need a torch to make it through the cave en route. Bantimurung is also famous for its beautiful **butterflies**. The naturalist Alfred Wallace collected specimens here in the mid-1800s. However, numbers are plummeting as locals trap them to sell to visitors, so try not to encourage the trade.

Catch a Damri bus or *pete-pete* (8500Rp, one hour) to Maros from Makassar Mall in Makassar, and a *pete-pete* to Bantimurung (5000Rp, 30 minutes).

Gua Leang Leang

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

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

Malino

☎ 0417

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

Hotel Pinang Mas (☎ 21173; Jl Karaeng Pado; r from 170,000Rp) is the place for huge views, but the prices are equally huge given the standard of the rooms. It's on the main road, about 150m above the muddy market.

Resort Celebes (☎ 21300; Jl Hasanuddin 1; r from 280,000Rp) is a must for those with a sense of history, as many an important political agreement has been hammered out here. All rooms

include satellite TV and hot water. It's a very peaceful place.

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

Terminal Sungguminasa has regular *pete-pete* services to Malino (14,000Rp, 1½ hours). Make sure you leave early before Malino's infamous rain sets in.

PANTAI BIRA

☎ 0413

Goats outnumber vehicles in the charmingly lethargic beach village of Bira, and it's a particularly inexpensive spot for backpackers to take off their packs and chill out. The powdery white-sand beach gets spacious at low tide and there's great snorkelling a short swim from the shore. There are several more remote beaches, hiking and a few caves with freshwater pools to explore in the surrounding area. The diving here is very good, with more fish than you'll find at Bunaken or in the Togeans, but strong currents make it suitable only for experienced divers.

Orientation & Information

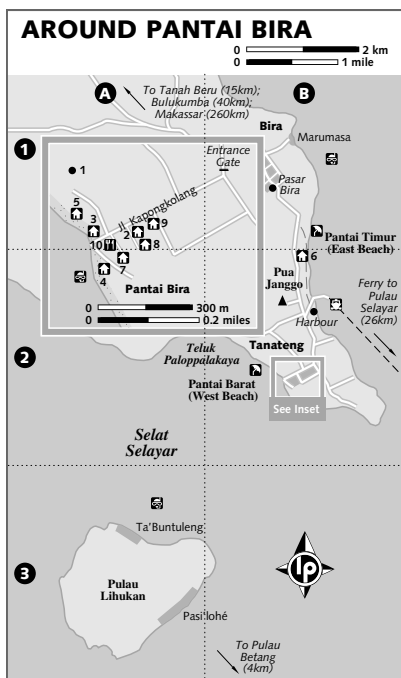
Almost everything is located along a small section of the road into Pantai Bira, Jl Kapongkolang. Foreign tourists must pay 5000Rp per person at the toll booth when they first enter 'town'. The Bira Beach Hotel has a wartel, which also acts as a postal agency, Pelni agency and moneychanger. At the time of research there was no internet and no bank in Bira.

Sights

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

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

A short hike from the road near Pantai Timur takes you to the top of **Pua Janggo**, a small hill with great views. Staff of all the hotles and guest houses can tell you how to get to caves and some deserted beaches nearby by public transport.



Activities

DIVING & SNORKELLING

The waters off Bira are particularly popular with sharks, rays and huge groupers, plus there is superb coral at several drop-offs. May to June is whale shark season although you'd be lucky to see one. The best spots are around Pulau Selayar, Marumasa, northern Pulau Lihukan, and southern and eastern Pulau Betang.

The only dive centre in Bira is **South Sulawesi Diver** (☎ 82125; www.south-sulawesi-diver.com), based at Anda Bungalows. It's run by a German instructor who has been exploring the waters for a few years. Fun dives are available, but the price depends on numbers and the centre is only open six months a year.

Snorkelling is also impressive off Bira and it's worth chartering a boat to get to the best spots. A trip around Pulau Lihukan and Pulau Betang will cost about 250,000Rp per day. The beach in front of Bira View Inn is good, but don't venture too far because the currents can be surprisingly strong and people have drowned. Equipment can be rented for about 50,000Rp per day from several hotels, including Riswan Guest House, Bira View Inn and Bira Beach Hotel.

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Hotel Sapolohe.....	5 A1
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Nini's Place.....	7 A2
Riswan Guest House.....	8 A1
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EATING

Food & Drink Stalls.....	10 A1
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SWIMMING

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

Sleeping

Places are close together so you can shop around before deciding where to stay – a good idea since most are not very well kept.

Salassa Guest House (☎ 081 2426 5672; r 60,000Rp)

A family-run place, Salassa has basic rooms with an Indonesian-style shared bathroom in a wooden house on stilts. The owners are very helpful, speak English and can direct you to some great off-the-beaten-track locations around Bira. You can join the family meals on request.

Riswan Guest House (☎ 82127; r 75,000Rp) Rooms here are simple but very clean and have attached bathrooms. Host Riswan is friendly and knowledgeable and the family atmosphere is simply charming. You can also get a room including all meals (which are served with the family) for 150,000Rp; rooms with breakfast only are 100,000Rp.

our pick Nini's Place (☎ 0813 5541 5379; nini.bone@hotmail.com; r with breakfast 90,000Rp) Perched up on a hill with ocean views, American-Indonesian-run Nini's has a fresh coat of

paint, a wonderful communal terrace with sea breezes, a convivial atmosphere and is easily the best-tended place in Bira. Comfy rooms in a big wooden house have spotless shared bathrooms.

Bira View Inn (☎ 82043; fax 81515; cottages 100,000-200,000Rp; 🍷) Barbed wire, a few semidestroyed bungalows and graffiti makes this place look abandoned, but there's still a snoozing receptionist in the main office and a few of the big bungalows with terraces are in surprisingly good shape on the inside. It's a heart-breaker because the seafront location here is fantastic.

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

Bira Beach Hotel (☎ /fax 83522; bungalows 150,000-250,000Rp; 🍷) This is hands-down the busiest place in town, although all the rooms are pretty rickety. Only the high-end 'sea-view' rooms are worth staying in, but this is because of the happy yellow decor, not because of the minuscule view. The restaurant here is one of the best in Bira. Prices go up 20% in July and August.

Hotel Sapolohe (☎ /fax 82128; r 245,000-510,000Rp; 🍷) While this hotel has a good location on the beach, the rooms are worn, musty and

overpriced. The most expensive rooms have OK sea views and all have hot water. Rates go through the roof during holidays.

Anda Bungalows (☎ 82125; fax 85033; bungalows 250,000-350,000Rp; 🍷) All the bungalows here have air-con and are set around a lovely landscaped garden away from the sea; the new cement bungalows are by far the most comfortable in Bira. Cheaper wooden bungalows aren't as posh but are still OK value and the big restaurant here has lots of choices.

Eating

Most guest houses serve family-style meals while the hotels have more expensive restaurants. The Bira Beach Hotel is by far the best place for a sunset Bintang followed by a meal; expect to pay around 20,000Rp for a main course.

There is also a couple of local Indonesian restaurants along the main drag for cheap eats.

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

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The harbour at Pantai Timur has daily services to Pulau Selayar (two hours, 60,000Rp). Every Sunday night, there is a direct boat to Labuanbajo (150,000Rp) in Flores, but it's a slow ride, taking almost two days.

SULAWESI SEAFARERS

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

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

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

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

BUS, BEMO & KIJANG

From Makassar (Terminal Mallengkeri), a few Kijangs go directly to Pantai Bira for 55,000Rp. Alternatively, catch a Kijang or bemo to Bulukumba, and another to Pantai Bira (transport from Bulukumba to Pantai Bira stops at around 3pm).

Direct Kijangs from Pantai Bira to Makassar (55,000Rp) can sometimes be booked through your hotel the day before; otherwise get a *pete-pete* from Pantai Bira to Bulukumba and take a Kijang to Makassar from there; the price also works out to 55,000Rp.

PULAU LIHUKAN & PULAU BETANG

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

PULAU SELAYAR

☎ 0414

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

Selayar's main attractions are its sandy **beaches** and picturesque scenery. The snorkelling near small **Pulau Pasi**, opposite Benteng, is good, but you will have to charter a boat.

Stay at **Selayar Island Resort** (☎ 21750; www.se-layarislandresort.com; cottages per person €40-70; 🏠 📶), a relatively new place perched on a rocky outcrop next to its own beach. There's a range of comfortable rooms as well as a dive centre that leads dives to some extraordinary, little-visited sites.

There are daily ferries (two hours, 60,000Rp) from Pantai Timur harbour near Pantai Bira to/from Pamatata on Selayar. The hotel should know the current schedule or can ar-

range private transport. Buses leave Terminal Mallengkeri in Makassar each morning to link with the ferry from Pantai Bira.

TAKA BONE RATE

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

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

WATAMPONE

☎ 0481 / pop 84,000

Known more simply as Bone (bone-eh) by locals, Watampone is a small town with a good range of hotels. The only reason most foreigners come here is to go to/from Kolaka in Southeast Sulawesi from the nearby port of Bajoe.

While in town, visit **Museum Lapawawoi** (Jl Thamrin; admission free; 🕒 7am-4pm), a former palace housing one of Indonesia's most interesting regional collections, including an odd array of court memorabilia and dozens of photographs of state occasions.

If you do end up staying overnight, try **Wisma Bole Ridie** (☎ 21412; Jl Merdeka 6; r 45,000Rp, s/d 60,000/80,000Rp), a former royal residence, built in the Dutch colonial style. The cheaper rooms are rather small and located out the back, while in the main building there are huge, charming, yet dusty rooms. **Hotel Wisata Watampone** (☎ 21362; fax 22367; Jl Jendral Sudirman 14; r from 150,000Rp; 📶 📺) is the best hotel in town, and the big rooms have satellite TV, hot water and air-con.

There is a cluster of simple *rumah makan* (local restaurants) in the market area, and night warungs and Padang-style *rumah makan* along the main shopping street, Jl Ponggawae.

The BNI bank on Jl Sukawati has one of the only ATMs in town, and you can try to find internet connections at the Telkom office on Jl Monginsidi.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

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

Three ferries (eight hours) leave every evening at 5pm, 8pm and 11pm from Bajoe for Kolaka, the gateway to the southeastern peninsula. Tickets are 55,000/70,000Rp for deck/business class.

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

BUS & BEMO

Several Kijangs and buses travel to Bulukumba (45,000Rp, three hours) for connections to Bira and Makassar (55,000Rp, five hours). Buses also run to Palopo and Pare Pare. The terminal is 2km west of town, so take an *ojek* or bemo from Jl Sulawesi. Kijangs to Sengkang (25,000Rp, two hours) leave from Jl Mangga in the centre of Watampone.

If you're heading to Rantepao (55,000Rp), get a connection in Palopo. Several bus agencies along Jl Besse Kajuara, on either side of the bus terminal, sell tickets for the through trip to Kendari (120,000Rp).

SENGKANG

☎ 0485

Sengkang is a small yet traffic-clogged town with a nearby scenic lake and a traditional hand-woven silk industry. **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Ahmad Yani) has an ATM and can change money. For telephone calls, there is a Telkom office on Jl Pahlawan.

Sights & Activities

DANAU TEMPE

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

There are no organised boat tours, but the guest houses can help you arrange a charter boat for about 80,000Rp for two hours (100,000Rp

with a guide), in which time you can speed along **Sungai Walanae**, visit **Salotangah village** in the middle of the lake, go across to **Batu Batu village** on the other side, and come back. A boat trip is particularly charming at dusk.

You could try to haggle for a cheaper rate on your own at the longboat terminal opposite the sports field on Jl Sudirman.

SILK WEAVING

Sengkang's other attraction is its *sutera* (silk) weaving industry. **Silk-weaving workshops** are found around 5km out of town, while the nearest **silkworm farms** are about 15km from Sengkang. Ask the staff at your hotel to recommend some workshops, and charter a *petepete* from the terminal. Alternatively, just walk around the **market** in Sengkang, where silk scarves and sarongs are on sale.

Sleeping

All room prices include breakfast.

Hotel Al Salam II (☎ 21278; fax 21893; Jl Emmi Saelan 8; r 50,000-170,000Rp) This is the busiest hotel in town, with friendly, helpful service and a range of large rooms with attached bathrooms. Unfortunately, mattresses are musty and there is plenty of dust in the room corners. There's also a little restaurant and bar on the premises.

Hotel Apada (☎ /fax 21053; Jl Nangka 9; r 100,000-150,000Rp; 🍷) Formerly owned by a princess, this large, rambling hotel has smart rooms that include attached bathrooms. The hotel can also organise traditional Bugis dinners and will lend you fancy sarongs to dress for the occasion.

Pondok Eka (☎ /fax 21296; Jl Maluku 12; r 165,000-220,000Rp; 🍷 🍷) If you want clean, head here, although the ambiance isn't as lively as at the Al Salam II. Rooms, surrounding a sparkling courtyard with a murky pool, are huge and all have air-con and HBO. It's family-run and helpful.

Getting There & Away

Sengkang is readily accessible from Pare Pare (25,000Rp, two hours) by bus or Kijang. If you're travelling to/from Rantepao (six hours), take a bemo to Lawawoi (20,000Rp) and catch a bus from there (40,000Rp); alternatively you can go through Palopo. There are plenty of buses and Kijangs along the road to Watampone (25,000Rp, two hours) and Bajoe. There are regular buses to/from Terminal Daya in Makassar (38,000Rp, six hours), but Kijangs and bemos (55,000Rp, four hours) take a shorter route.

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

PARE PARE

☎ 0421 / pop 114,000

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

Orientation & Information

The town is stretched out along the waterfront. At night, the esplanade turns into a lively pedestrian mall with warungs. Most of what you might need is on the streets running parallel to the harbour. The major banks change money and internet can be found at the main post office on Jl Karaeng Burane.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Gandarial I (☎ 21093; Jl Bau Massepe 395; s/d with fan 40,000/70,000Rp) A friendly, family-run spot which has good-value rooms. There's a second location, with the same prices, on Jl Samporaja.

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

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

Getting There & Away

BOAT

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

Every one or two days, several passenger boats travel between Pare Pare and Samarinda and Balikpapan (both 125,000Rp, 22 hours) and Nunukan (266,000Rp, two nights), but these boats are far less safe than the Pelni ships (in January 2009 one of these passenger boats sank, killing 180 people). Details and book-

ings are available from agencies near the port and just north of Restaurant Asia.

BUS

Plenty of buses and Kijangs go to Makassar (24,300Rp, three hours) and Rantepao (35,000Rp, five hours). Most buses travel through Terminal Induk several kilometres south of the city, but it's often easier to hail a bus as it flies through town. Kijangs to Polewali (21,000Rp, two hours) leave from Terminal Soreang, 3km northeast of town.

PALOPO

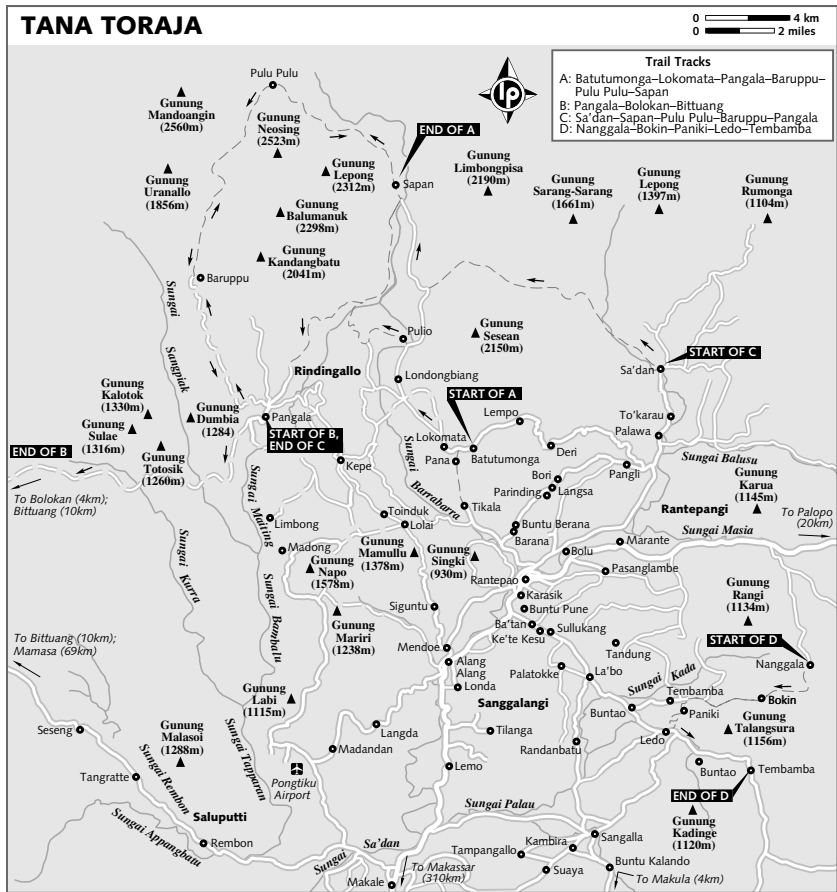
☎ 0471 / pop 93,000

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

Palopo is a sprawling town with an inordinate number of becak. There is no reason to come here except to catch public transport. Vehicles regularly leave from just outside Terminal Bolu in Rantepao for the very winding trip to Palopo (24,000Rp, two hours). Plenty of buses and minibuses go from Palopo's organised terminal to Rantepao, Pare Pare, Makassar and Watampone.

TANA TORAJA

A trip to Tana Toraja is like a cultural documentary brought to life. Sweeping and elaborately painted houses with boat-shaped roofs dot terraced rice paddies where farmers work the fields alongside their doe-eyed buffalo. It's an island hemmed in by mountains on all sides and rich with traditional culture. Life for the Toraja revolves around death, and their days are spent earning the money to send away their dead properly. Funeral ceremonies bring together families who may have dispersed as far as Papua or even Australia. Buffalo and pigs are sacrificed, there is a slew of traditional dances and enough food and drink for everyone who can make it to the party. High-class Toraja are entombed in cave graves or hanging graves in the steep cliffs, which are guarded over by *tau tau* (life-sized



wooden effigies) carved in their image – you'll find these eerie yet beautiful cliff cemeteries scattered throughout the region.

The biggest funerals (see boxed text, p676) are usually held in the dry-season months of July and August, but there are funerals (even big ones) year-round. During July and August the tourist numbers swell to uncomfortable proportions and prices soar. Outside these months, you'll share this cool countryside with the locals and only a handful of foreign travellers. While most people consider attending a funeral a highlight, Tana Toraja also offers some great do-it-yourself trekking opportunities where you can explore the fresh and clean outdoors and meet some of the most hospitable people you'll ever encounter.

RANTEPAO

☎ 0423 / pop 45,000

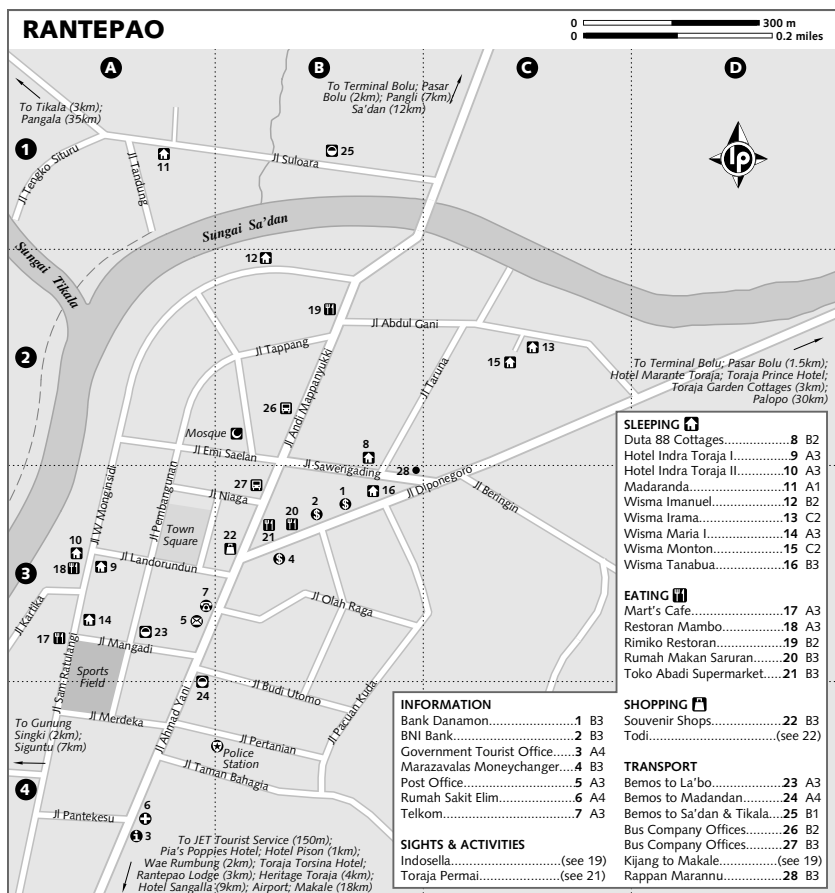
Rantepao is an easy-to-manage place that's in striking distance of most of the major sites and has a good range of accommodation and restaurants. It's the largest town and commercial centre of Tana Toraja, but traffic isn't too heavy and the wide streets are fringed by greenery. It's the obvious place to base a trip to the region. Nights can be cool and there is rain throughout the year – even in the dry season.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS & POST

There are internet cafes all over town and the cheaper ones charge 5000Rp per hour.

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



MAPS

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

MEDICAL SERVICES

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

MONEY

The best exchange rates are available from moneychangers.

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

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Diponegoro) Another popular ATM.

Marazavalas (Jl Diponegoro) Moneychanger with reasonable rates.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Government tourist office (☎ 21277; Jl Ahmad Yani 62A) The friendly staff here can provide accurate, independent information about local ceremonies, festivals and other activities as well as arrange guides. It's just south of the hospital.

TELEPHONE

There are several wartel in town, and many hotels offer international calls from rooms.

Telkom (Jl Ahmad Yani; ☎ 24hr) Next door to the post office.

Sights

Rantepao's main market, Pasar Bolu, is held every six days (but operates in a reduced capacity

daily). The main market is a very big, social occasion that draws crowds from all over Tana Toraja. Ask around Rantepao for the exact day, or seek out other markets in the area. There is a 10,000Rp charge to enter the livestock market, where the leading lights from the buffalo community are on parade. Many cost more than a small car. Pasar Bolu is 2km northeast of town and easily accessible by bemo.

Activities

Most of the activities lie in the hills beyond (see p679). However, most of the hotels that have **swimming pools** allow nonguests to swim for a fee of about 10,000Rp.

Tours

See p679 for information on independent guides to the countryside around Rantepao.

There are also several reliable, long-running agencies in Rantepao, which can arrange more luxurious tours (including trekking and cultural tours), vehicles and guides: **Indosella** (☎ 25210; www.sellatours.com; Jl Andi Mappanyukki 111)

JET Tourist Service (☎ 21145; fax 23227; Jl Pontingku 31)

Toraja Permai (☎ 21785; fax 21236; Jl Andi Mappanyukki 10)

Sleeping

Prices in Rantepao usually rise in the tourist season (June–August), when some private homes also accept guests. Most budget and midrange places include breakfast in their prices, but they don't offer air-conditioning or a fan, as the nights are cool.

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

BUDGET

Wisma Maria I (☎ 21165; adesapasakal@yahoo.com; Jl Sam Ratulangi 23; s/d 50,000/80,000Rp, with hot water 120,000/150,000Rp) At our favourite rock-bottom cheapie in the town centre, welcoming mama bakes fresh bread for breakfast while her grown-up kids rent out scooters (60,000Rp per day) and bicycles (30,000Rp per day) and suggest itineraries. Rooms are plain but good-sized, bright and very clean. It's all set around a large garden.

Wisma Irama (☎ 21371; Jl Abdul Gani 16; r from 60,000Rp) On a quiet road, the ageing rooms here surround a grassy courtyard with a traditional rice barn in the centre. It's not as friendly as some of the other places in town but rooms are a good deal.

Wisma Tanabua (☎ 21072; Jl Diponegoro 43; r without/with attached bathroom 60,000/80,000Rp) A friendly, family-run central spot that has basic rooms and doubles as a beauty salon. You can get a one-hour massage for 100,000Rp.

our pick Pia's Poppies Hotel (☎ 21121; s/d 66,000/88,000Rp) Pia's is the type of place where you can settle in, relax and be pampered after some long days on the road. Rooms have some quirky details like stone bathrooms and each terrace overlooks a languorous garden. Sheets are changed daily, everything is spotless, there's hot water and you're even served a welcome fruit juice on arrival. The service here is better than at most of Sulawesi's business hotels. Plus the charming cafe serves the best food in the region – don't miss the Torajan specialties ordered a few hours in advance. Breakfast is not included in the price and it's about a five- to 10-minute walk (or short becak ride) to the town centre.

Wisma Imanuel (☎ 21416; Jl W Monginsidi 16; r 80,000-100,000Rp) Set in a large house backed by the river (but there's no access), the rooms here are a generous size and the more expensive include hot-water showers. Big balconies out front offer views over the garden and street action beyond.

Wisma Monton (☎ 21675; Jl Abdul Gani 14A; r 80,000-125,000Rp) Hidden away down a side lane, this three-storey establishment has clean and comfortable rooms with hot water. Almost deserted when we visited, the building is speckled with Toraja decoration and there's a rooftop restaurant with fine views.

Hotel Pison (☎ 21344; s/d 85,000/100,000Rp) Literally opposite Pia's, the bland but good-value Pison has 32 rooms, each with a clean bathroom and minibalcony with mountain views. All rooms come with hot water.

Toraja Garden Cottages (☎ 23336; fax 25397; cottages incl breakfast 100,000Rp) This place was closed for the low season when we passed, but the big cottages are in a very pretty hillside-forest setting on the road towards Palopo. The thoughtful design includes a verandah with countryside views, and both TV and hot water are available.

THE TORAJA

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

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

Beliefs

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

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

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

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

Traditional Houses

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

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

Duta 88 Cottages (☎ 23477; Jl Sawerigading 12; r 120,000Rp) A slight step up in rupiah from the rest of the budget choices gets you a lovely *tongkonan*-style (traditional Torajan) cottage, set around a verdant little garden. It's a friendly oasis that feels far from the action though it's right in the centre of things. The immaculate cottages with terraces are large, have attached bathrooms and even little dressing areas. All come with hot water and satellite TV. Rates include breakfast.

Hotel Indra Toraja (☎ 21163; fax 21547; Jl Landorundun 63; standard/deluxe r 180,000/216,000Rp; 🍴) Right in the centre of Rantepao, the Indra has two annexes opposite each other. The riverside option was undergoing major remodelling at the beginning of 2009 and was already looking quite flashy. Rooms at the streetside location are still in good shape and have terraces overlooking a common courtyard area. All are clean, have hot water and HBO and the service is stellar.

MIDRANGE

Many of the midrange places are strewn throughout the buffalo-infested valleys, which is great for those with transport, but not so straightforward for those without it. To get to these places, either hop in a bemo or take a becak.

Rantepao Lodge (☎ 23717; fax 21248; r 200,000-300,000Rp; 🍴) At this sprawling compound near the Toraja Torsina Hotel, the deluxe rooms are the draw. They have private balconies with a view over the rice fields, TV, fridge and hot water. The standard rooms are pretty basic for the money. There is also a swimming pool here.

Madaranda (☎ 23777; Jl Sadan 21; d 250,000Rp) The huge, modern and clean rooms inside Torajan-style houses are great value for the money. In low season you can easily bargain for better rates – this place was empty when we passed. Staff is friendly and the grounds are pleasant, central to town and shady.

Funerals

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

The Toraja generally have two funeral ceremonies, one immediately after death and an elaborate second funeral after preparations have been made. The bigger ones are usually scheduled during the dry months of July and August, but there are funerals year-round.

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

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

Visitors attending a funeral should wear black or dark-coloured clothing and bring gifts of sugar or cigarettes for the family of the deceased.

Graves & Tau Tau

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

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

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

Books

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

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

Toraja Prince Hotel (☎ 21430; www.torajaprincehotel.com; r 300,000–350,000Rp; ♿ ♿) A few kilometres from town on the road to Palopo, the Prince was nearly deserted when we passed but the colonial-style rooms are in good shape. There's an old 1970s-style swimming pool and lots of lush garden space, so this isn't a bad choice for families with transportation. The staff we met spoke no English.

Toraja Torsina Hotel (☎ 21293; s/d from US\$30/40; ♿) Set in the rice fields near the turn-off to Ke'te Kesu, the rooms here are clean and comfortable and worth the rupiah considering the swimming pool.

TOP END

Hotel Marante Toraja (☎ 21616; www.marantetoraja.com; deluxe r US\$60, cottages US\$78; ♿) Cement cottages with Torajan-style roofs look great from the outside but are far more bland on the inside. Rooms have the same interiors as the cottages and could use a coat of paint. Fortunately, the staff is exuberant and helpful.

Heritage Toraja (☎ 21192; www.torajaheritage.com; r US\$90–135; ♿ ♿) The Heritage is by far the swankiest place in town, with many of the elegant rooms set in huge *tongkonan*-style houses. Standards are high (with some odd details like a fresh flower in the toilet bowls) and there are lush gardens and a lagoon-like pool. Rooms in the more ordinary block are just as nice as the ones inside the Torajan-style houses but are less expensive. Ask for a top-floor room with a view. It's about 3km from town towards Ke'te Kesu.

Eating

Going to ceremonies or local restaurants offers a great opportunity to sample Torajan food. The best-known dish is *pa'piong* (meat stuffed into bamboo tubes along with vegetables and coconut). If you want to try it in a restaurant, order several hours in advance because it takes time to cook. The following places are all open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Rumah Makan Saruran (Jl Diponegoro 19; mains around 15,000Rp) Indonesian-style Chinese food is served at this hopping restaurant that's popular with young travelling Indonesians. The atmosphere is basic but the food is good and cheap.

Mart's Cafe (Jl Sam Ratulangi 44; dishes 15,000-45,000Rp) The best tourist trap in town, Mart's gets lively in the evenings when the resident guides start crooning and strumming their guitars. The food is bland but OK and includes Western fare, Indonesian staples and Torajan specialties (order in advance). The Bintang flows and it's almost like a real night out.

Rimiko Restoran (Jl Andi Mappanyukki; dishes from 20,000Rp) This place serves the best food of the tourist-oriented restaurants and has a few Torajan specialties on the menu that don't require ordering in advance. It's two doors down from the Indosella office.

Restoran Mambo (Jl Sam Ratulangi; dishes from 20,000Rp) Geared towards tourists, this place has a long menu including everything from an interesting interpretation of a burrito (40,000Rp) to buffalo meat (40,000Rp).

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

NEVER MIND THE BALOKS

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

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

Shopping

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

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

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

Getting There & Away

AIR

Rantepao has an airstrip, but in mid-2009 no airlines were servicing the town.

BUS & BEMO

Most long-distance buses leave from the bus company offices along, or just off, Jl Andi Mappanyukki. There's also a small shop for **Rappan Marannu** (☎ 23537; 6 Jl Sawerigading) that sells bus tickets to Poso, Palu and points between. The most comfortable buses (with slightly higher prices to match) are Bintang Prima and Litha. Try to book the ticket a day or so in advance.

There are plenty of buses heading north to Pendolo (80,000Rp, eight hours), Tentena (110,000Rp, 10 hours), Poso (120,000Rp, 12 hours) and Palu (150,000Rp, 20 hours). Even more buses head south to Pare Pare (35,000Rp, five hours). To Terminal Daya in Makassar (52,000 to 80,000Rp, eight hours), buses often run at night, and prices vary ac-

ording to speed and the level of comfort and space. Various companies also have services to Mamuju via Polewali, from where there are connections to Mamasa. The only direct bus between Tana Toraja and Mamasa leaves from Makale (see p684).

From Terminal Bolu, 2km north of Rantepao, there are regular vehicles to Palopo. From outside Rimiko Restoran, Kijangs leave every minute to Makale (5000Rp, 20 minutes). See right for more details about transport between Rantepao and other places in Tana Toraja. Plenty of bemos travel between Rantepao and Terminal Bolu.

Getting Around

Rantepao is small and easy to walk around. A becak should cost around 5000Rp in town.

MAKALE

☎ 0423

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

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

Sleeping & Eating

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

Rumah Makan Idaman (Jl Merdeka; meals 5000-25,000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) The only real restaurant in town is a small, friendly place that serves the usual Indonesian fare, as well as tasty baked fish. It is next door to Makale's *mesjid* (mosque).

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

Getting There & Away

From dawn to dusk, Kijangs race between Rantepao and Makale (5000Rp, 20 minutes) – just flag one down. Most of the bus companies

based in Rantepao also have offices near the corner of Jl Merdeka and Jl Ihwan Rombe in Makale. Buses will pick up prebooked passengers in Makale for any destination from Rantepao (see opposite). The only direct bus connection between Tana Toraja and Mamasa is with Disco Indah several times a week (98,000Rp, 10 hours).

See below for regional public transport details from Makale.

AROUND TANA TORAJA

To really experience all that Tana Toraja has to offer, you'll need to spend a few days – or, even better, a few nights – in this tantalising countryside. Stunning scenery, cascading rice fields, precipitous cliff graves, other-worldly *tau tau*, hanging graves, soaring *tongkonan* and colourful ceremonies – this is the wild world of Tana Toraja and it lies just a short walk or ride away from Rantepao.

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

A few areas such as Londa, Lemo, Tampangallo, Ke'te Kesu and, to a lesser extent, Palawa have become a bit like tourist traps with lots of stalls selling trinkets and a jaded welcome, but it happened because these places are exceptionally beautiful. There are still plenty of less-visited gems to get to, especially if you take off on foot far from the tour-bus circuit.

GUIDES

Guides will approach you everywhere and charge 200,000Rp for an all-day circuit by motorbike, including a funeral if there's one on. You can also hire a guide with a car (for up to four people) for 275,000Rp per day, but much of the Toraja region is only accessible on foot or by motorbike so this is a limiting option. All-inclusive two-day treks cost around 1,000,000Rp for two people.

CHOOSING A GUIDE

In this region, many guides hold a government-approved licence, obtained by undertaking a course in culture, language and etiquette, and being fluent in the local language. Nevertheless, there are competent guides with no certificate (and incompetent licensed guides). The best way to choose a guide is to sit down and talk through a trip before committing. There is often a lively discussion about Toraja's better guides on the Thorn Tree forum at www.lonelyplanet.com. For more on hiring guides, see boxed text, p823.

Hiring a guide can be useful to help you get your bearings, learn about the culture and cover a lot of ground quickly, but if you have a sense of direction, a decent map (see p674 for map recommendations), know a few relevant phrases of Bahasa Indonesia and are not going too far off the beaten track, you won't go too wrong travelling without one. Many people hire a guide for one day, then set out on their own the next. For a list of agencies in Rantepao offering organised tours of the region, see p675.

ACTIVITIES

Trekking

This is the best way to reach isolated areas and to really get a feel for the countryside and the people. Always take good footwear; a water bottle and food; a strong torch (flashlight) in case you walk at night, stay in villages without electricity or want to explore caves; and an umbrella or raincoat – even in the dry season, it's more likely than not to rain. If you're taking advantage of Torajan hospitality, bring gifts (1kg sacks of sugar and cigarettes are favourites) or pay your way.

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

Batutumonga–Lokomata–Pangala–Baruppu–Pulu Pulu–Sapan Three days of superb scenery. Batutumonga to Pangala is on a motorbike-accessible road, while the rest is more serious uphill-trail hiking.

Bittuang–Mamasa Three days; see p685.

Pangala–Bolokan–Bittuang Two days on a well-marked trail through pristine villages.

Sa'dan–Sapan–Pulu Pulu–Baruppu–Pangala

Three days; tough and mountainous – a real mountain trek.

For an overview of these trekking routes, check out the Tana Toraja map (Map p673).

Rafting

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

A cheaper and more minimalist approach is to hire an independent guide (they usually do not have insurance or good equipment – ask first) for around 120,000Rp per day per person without an overnight stay.

ENTRANCE FEES

Most of the tourist sites around Tana Toraja have an entry fee of 10,000Rp. There is usually a ticket booth at each place, complete with the odd souvenir stall...or 10 or more in the case of Lemo and Londa.

GETTING AROUND

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

Local public transport leaves from central Rantepao and Makale, as well as from the scruffy and muddy Terminal Bolu north of Rantepao; there are regular bemos and Kijangs to all main villages, but the vehicles are poorly signed so you may have to ask around the terminal. See the Rantepao map (Map p674) for where to catch bemos in central Rantepao heading to La'bo, Madandan, Sa'dan and Tikala.

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

Bittuang For treks to Mamasa, only leaves from Makale.

La'bo Via Ke'te Kesu.

Lempo Useful for hiking up to Batutumonga.

Pangala Via Batutumonga.

Sa'dan Usually via Tikala.

Sangalla Only leaves from Makale.

Batutumonga

One of the easiest places to stay overnight and also one of the most beautiful, Batutumonga occupies a dramatic ridge on the slopes of Gunung Sesean, with panoramic views of Rantepao and the Sa'dan Valley, and stunning sunrises. Located about 20km north of Rantepao via Deri, you could also day-trip here for some hiking and a local lunch.

SLEEPING & EATING

The last two sleeping options are right on the roadside before Batutumonga.

Mama Siska's Homestay (☎ 0813 4253 2534; r ind all meals per person 75000Rp) This place is as homey and friendly as you can find, but the two rooms (which can sleep four people) in a bamboo hut with basic shared *mandis* are very rustic. It's between Lempo and Batutumonga and is signposted; it's about a 500m walk from the main road.

Mama Rina's Homestay (☎ 0852 5592 5540; r ind breakfast & dinner per person 75,000Rp) Another very rustic family affair, this place has rooms in a *tongkonan* with saggy mattresses and grotty bamboo walls, but it's a warm, friendly ambience and the views are stunning.

Mentirotik (☎ 081 142 2260; bed per person 75,000Rp, r with views 220,000Rp) With commanding views across the valley below, this place has very authentic traditional *tongkonan* crash pads – as in, there are three mattresses squashed together in a space about the size of a small elevator. There are also large modern rooms with bathroom. The rather classy restaurant serves basics from 15,000Rp and traditional Toraja dishes for around 27,000Rp. It's all clean and the grounds are charming.

Coffee Shop Tinimbayo (tea 5000Rp) Located a few kilometres east of Batutumonga, this little cafe has a killer location, perched on a hairpin bend with infinite views over the cascading rice fields. Basic meals are possible, but most people stop for tea or a cold drink.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Simply take a bemo (10,000Rp) to Batutumonga from Terminal Bolu in Rantepao. Sometimes

the bemo only goes as far as Lempo (2km downhill), but the walk from Lempo to Batutumonga is pleasant.

North of Rantepao

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

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

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

Beyond Gunung Sesean is **Pangala** (35km from Rantepao; 20,000Rp by bemo), one of the biggest villages in the region – it has a few streets and a little *ayam goreng* (fried chicken) stall – that's famous for being the hometown of Pongtiku, a fearless warrior who fought against the Dutch. Pongtiku's tomb and a cement statue of the warrior can be seen just at the edge of the village. From here it's a lovely 10km trek to **Baruppu**, a village noted for its dancers.

Losmen Sando (r per person 80,000Rp), Pangala's accommodation, looks abandoned from the outside but has surprisingly comfortable rooms, and a spacious restaurant overlooking a coffee plantation. Aply named Merry (the owner) offers good advice about local trekking.

The traditional village of **Palawa**, east of Batutumonga, is similarly attractive but less popular than Ke'te Kesu, and has *tongkonan* houses and rice barns. In the dry season you can walk southwest, fording a river and walking

through rice fields to **Pangli**, with its *tau tau* and house graves, and then to **Bori**, the site of an impressive *rante* (ceremonial ground) and some towering megaliths. About 1km south of Bori, **Parinding** has *tongkonan* houses and rice barns. From here you can walk back to Rantepao or on to Tikala.

Further north is the weaving centre of **Sa'dan** (12km north of Rantepao; take a bemo from Terminal Bolu for 6000Rp), where local women set up a market to sell their woven cloth. It's all handmade on simple looms, but not all is produced in the village.

West of Rantepao

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

The 3km walk from Siguntu to the Rantepao–Makale road at Alang Alang is also pleasant. Stop on the way at the traditional village of **Mendoe**. From Alang Alang, where a covered bridge crosses the river, head to Londa, back to Rantepao, or remain on the western side of the river and continue walking south to the villages of **Langda** and **Madandan**.

South of Rantepao

Many popular cultural sights are in this region and most are accessible by car, so it's not a great region for walking – but it is for a motorbike day tour. Tour buses love this area for the easy access but also because the sights are simply stunning.

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

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

was returned to Tana Toraja and buried at the hill to the north of Buntu Pune.

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

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

Londa (6km south of Rantepao) is a very extensive burial cave at the base of a massive cliff face. The entrance to the cave is guarded by a balcony of *tau tau*. Inside the cave is a collection of coffins, many of them rotted away, with the bones either scattered or heaped in piles. A local myth says that the people buried in the Londa caves are the descendants of Tangdilinoq, chief of the Toraja when they were pushed out of the Enrekang region and forced to move into the highlands.

It's mandatory to take a guide (who will be a family member of the deceased) to take you through the cave with an oil lamp (20,000Rp). The guides speak excellent English (and a few other languages) and are happy to answer all your questions. If you're thin, and don't suffer from claustrophobia, squeeze through the tunnel connecting the two main caves, past some interesting stalactites and stalagmites. A bemo between Rantepao and Makale will drop you off at the turn-off, about 2km from the cave. Visit in the morning for the best photos.

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

Lemo (10km south of Rantepao) is the best-known burial area in Tana Toraja. The sheer rock face has a whole series of balconies

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

East of Rantepao

Marante is a fine traditional village, just north of the road to Palopo. Near Marante there are stone and hanging graves with several *tau tau*, skulls on the coffins and a cave with scattered bones. From Marante you can cross the river on the suspension bridge and walk to pretty villages set in rice fields.

About 7km off the Palopo road to the south is the traditional village of **Nanggala** (16km from Rantepao); take a bemo from Terminal Bolu for 4000Rp, but you may have to walk from the Palopo road. The village has a particularly grandiose traditional house and an impressive fleet of 14 rice barns. The rice barns have a bizarre array of motifs carved into them, including soldiers with guns, Western women and cars. Keep an eye out for a colony of huge black bats hanging from trees at the end of the village.

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

East of Makale

South of Sangalla are the Kambira baby graves, and even farther south are the hot springs at **Makula**, well signposted from the Rantepao–Makale road. At Makula, you can

stay at the upmarket **Hotel Sangalla** (☎ 0423 24112; rfrom 150,000Rp; 📶). The public can use the hot-springs swimming pool for 10,000Rp.

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

MAMASA VALLEY

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

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

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

MAMASA

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

Sleeping & Eating

Mantana Lodge (Jl Emmy Saelan 1; s from 50,000Rp, d 95,000-140,000Rp) The most sophisticated digs in town, the rooms are bright, with attached bathroom. The restaurant here is arguably the best in town and has cold beer. You might catch a spirited church service downstairs.

Losmen Mini (Jl Ahmad Yani; s/d 60,000/75,000Rp) A sort of creaky old mountain lodge in the heart of town. The rooms upstairs are a lot brighter than the dark offerings down below.

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

Other options:

Guest House Gereja Toraja (Jl Demmatande 182; r 75,000Rp) Reasonable rooms in an old house.

Mamasa Guest House (off Jl Buntu Budi; r 75,000Rp) Tucked away down a side street but offers good views.

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

Getting There & Away

On a map, Mamasa looks tantalisingly close to Rantepao, but there's no direct transport because the road is so bad. You can travel from Makale to Bittuang by Kijang or bemo, but from Bittuang you'll have to walk (see opposite). A new road is under construction, but due to the tough terrain it may take several years to complete. At the time of writing, jeeps were running from Mamasa to Ponding for 80,000Rp every day, where you can hook up with a horse on to Bittuang for about 150,000Rp.

The only direct connection between Tana Toraja and Mamasa is the bus (98,000Rp, 10 hours), three times a week from Disco Indah Bus in Makale. Otherwise, from Tana Toraja (or anywhere else), catch a bus towards Majene or Mamuju and get off at Polewali. From here lots of creaky minibuses go to Mamasa (45,000Rp, three hours) along a rough road, often prone to mudslides. Start early as services dry up in the afternoon.

AROUND MAMASA

The countryside surrounding Mamasa is strikingly beautiful. You can hire motorbikes around town for a negotiable 100,000Rp per day. You can charter a bemo or Kijang along the valley's couple of main roads, but footpaths and very slender suspension bridges are the only access to most villages.

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

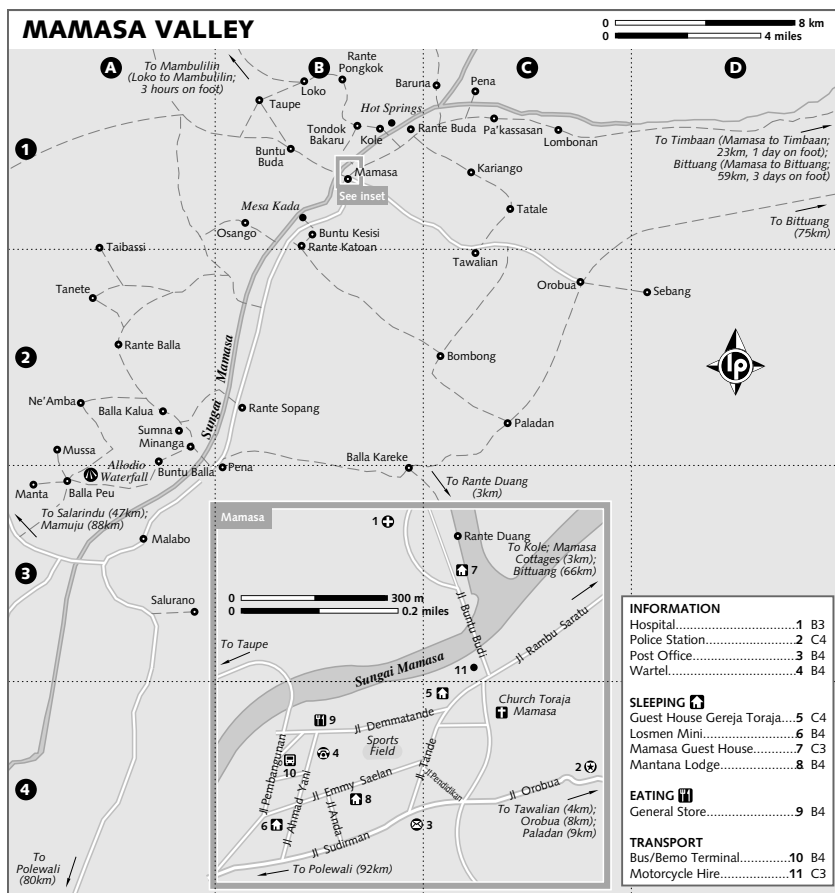
North of Mamasa

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

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

South of Mamasa

Rante Sopang (12km) is a busy centre for weaving and retailing crafts. The path up the hill from the roadside craft shop leads to a few workshops, where women weave long strips of heavy cloth for Mamasa's distinctive, colourful blankets.



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

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

Buntu Balla (15km) has beautiful views, traditional weaving and *tedong-tedong* burial sites. Close to Buntu Balla there's a waterfall at **Allodio**, a traditional village at **Balla Peu**, megalithic remains at **Manta** and views along the

whole valley from **Mussa**. Further south, **Malabo** (18km) has *tedong-tedong* burial sites.

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

Mamasa to Bittuang

This route is the only direct way between the Mamasa Valley and Tana Toraja. The 59km hike takes three days, but with an early start and legs of steel you can make it to Pongand in one and to Bittuang the next day. The track is easy to follow, and there are plenty of villages along the way for food and accommodation. Bring appropriate gifts – or pay your way – in return for any hospitality if you don't stay

or eat at a losmen (basic, often family-run accommodation). You may be able to hire a horse, with a guide, some of the way for around 150,000Rp per day – ask at hotels in Mamasa or around Bittuang. The area is chilly at night and rain can hit anytime, so come prepared. As the new road nears completion, it may be that more traffic starts to use this route and that other trekking routes will be developed by guides and companies in Rantepao and Mamasa. An up-and-coming route takes in Salurea and Bulo Sandana, but takes four days to complete.

The most popular route:

Day 1 – Mamasa to Timbaan (23km, about eight hours) Rante Buda (4km from Mamasa)–Mama (3km)–Pa'kassasan (2km)–Lombonan (3km)–Tadokalia summit (4km)–Timbaan (7km). The walk is easy uphill but rises sharply at Lombonan. At the summit Tadokalia offers great views across both valleys. There's a simple stall here serving gritty coffee and packet noodle soup. The trail then winds its way down to Timbaan, where there are three losmen offering beds and meals for around 60,000Rp.

Day 2 – Timbaan to Paku (20km, about six hours) Mawai (4km from Timbaan)–Tabang (4km)–Ponding (5km)–Paku (7km). The path undulates its way past rice fields, through villages and over rivers. At Ponding you can stay at Homestay Papisado; or continue to Paku and stay at Mountain Homestay, both for 60,000Rp (with meals).

Day 3 – Paku to Bittuang (16km, about three hours) It's easier to walk, but there is an irregular jeep service from Ponding and Paku to Bittuang for 30,000Rp, which will shake your fillings loose. There are three simple losmen at Bittuang, but you're better off catching a bemo or Kijang to Makale (25,000Rp, two hours), from where there are Kijangs to Rantepao.

CENTRAL SULAWESI

Nearly abandoned by tourism during and after a period of religious violence spanning over eight years (see boxed text, p688), Central Sulawesi is finally back on the itinerary for travellers who are moving up or down between the Togeian Islands and Tana Toraja. The refreshing towns on the vast Danau Poso are an ideal place to stop awhile or break up a long bus ride, but there's much, much more to this province and it's simply begging to be explored. Tranquil Tentena is the easiest place to arrange treks into the Lore Lindu National Park, which is filled with mysterious megaliths and has a wildlife-rich jungle; those with lots of time and a nose for anthropology should

head to the adventurous Morowali Nature Reserve to seek out the Wana people; divers and beach bums can laze around on the white sands of Tanjung Karang near Palu.

It's a vibrant and extremely varied region scarred by its recent history and still a little shaky, but the people here want their foreign visitors back. While it's unlikely tensions will flare again soon, it is still wise to check the current situation before visiting this area.

History

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

Between 1998 and 2006 this area was a hotbed for religious violence (see boxed text, p688).

PENDOLO

Pendolo is a dusty, sparse strip of a village right on the southern shore of Danau Poso. There's not much going on here beyond swimming at some of the area's surprisingly lovely white-sand beaches – it's this calm as well as the connection with the charming locals what draws in the few visitors that stop here.

There's a strip of decent and cheap *rumah makan* along the main road that cater to stopping long-distance buses. You can stay at **Pendolo Cottages** (Jl Ahmad Yani 441; r 60,000Rp, bungalow s/d 55,000/80,000Rp), right next to the boat landing, about 1km east of the village centre, which is a rustic place that gets good traveller reviews on service and ambience. More upmarket is **Mulia Poso Lake Hotel** (Jl Pelabuhan Wisata 1; r from 100,000Rp, cottages from 150,000Rp), the smartest place in Pendolo which also has an elegant restaurant.

Getting There & Away

Pendolo is on the main Palopo–Poso highway, but there is no bus terminal. To go north, the best option is to catch a bemo to Tentena (45,000Rp), then transfer there. If you're going south, see if your hotel can help you reserve a seat on one of the many long-distance buses that blaze through town. You could also try



your luck flagging one down from the main road (heading to destinations such as Poso, Palu and Rantepao) – but many are full.

In mid-2009 there was no public boat between Pendolo and Tentena, but with some determination you could charter one for around 350,000Rp for the three-hour trip.

TENTENA

☎ 0458

Tentena is a town of white picket fences and churches, cool breezes from the lake and lots of wonderfully strange things to eat. Surrounded by clove-covered hills, it's a peaceful and very easy-to-manage town with several good places to stay, an interesting market and some natural treasures to

explore nearby. There are no beaches in Tentena itself, but it's easy to hire a motorbike or an *ojek* to get to some.

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

Information

There are only a handful of guides in Tentena but they all organise treks to Lore Lindu National Park and Morowali Nature Reserve. All guides speak English and know the area well. As soon as you arrive in town, they'll find you and offer their services – they are helpful

CENTRAL SULAWESI'S TROUBLED PAST

It's been pretty quiet around Central Sulawesi since late 2006, but for eight years prior the region was torn apart by Christian versus Muslim violence. The big trouble began in 1998 when a drunken brawl between Christian and Muslim youths sparked clan fighting in Poso. By 2000 paramilitary groups called the Red Force (backing the Christians) and the Laskar Jihad (backing the Muslims) were engaged in full warfare against each other, armed with machetes and bows and arrows as well as homemade bombs and heavy artillery. Christians grouped in predominantly Christian Tentena, while Muslims stood their ground in Poso and Palu. The Indonesian government stepped in in 2001 by organising the Malino Peace Treaty, signed in 2002 by both sides, which produced a decline in the violence but did not stop it. By the end of 2006, more than 1000 people had been killed, houses had been burned, markets bombed and children beheaded. Tourists were never targets but the region was, for obvious reasons, best avoided.

It's still debated what caused these communities to start fighting each other after generations of living peacefully together. Some analysts believe this was just another arm in the fighting that had been going on between Muslim and Christian communities in the Maluku Islands (see p726). The more common belief is that the influx of Muslim immigrants from Java under President Suharto's transmigration program abruptly shifted the Christian majority and power in the region.

Today locals chat easily about this dark time and about how happy they are it's over. As one Poso Muslim told us, 'Nowadays I go on vacation to Tentena but before I was afraid I'd get killed if I even went near there.'

and pleasant even if you don't plan on taking a trip with them.

There's a tourist office at the market, but it was closed when we visited and by local reports it does not offer English-speaking service or much help. There are no banks or internet in Tentena.

Sights & Activities

Most of the things to do and see are around Tentena. The best way to spend a day is to either rent a motorbike (full/half-day 70,000/60,000Rp – ask at your hotel) or hire an *ojek*. With wheels you can visit **Air Terjun Salopa** (entrance fee 10,000Rp), a waterfall about 15km from Tentena from where you can hike through the forest and up alongside the falls for a few kilometres. The forest is clean and shady and the falls are a spectacular place for a swim. From here drive another 5km to Siuri Cottages (right), where you can swim in the lake at the white-sand **beach** and have lunch. An *ojek* to get to these two spots for a half-day should cost about 80,000Rp.

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

Chartering a boat to explore the lake can be surprisingly difficult – the asking rate is 100,000Rp for two hours.

Sleeping

All prices include breakfast.

Hotel Victori (☎ 21392; Jl Diponegoro 18; r 65,000-150,000Rp; 🚽) It's a bit scruffy but the price is right, service is good and the rooms are clean. Only the higher-end rooms have air-con. This is a good spot to meet guides.

Losmen Tropicana (☎ 21224; r 80,000Rp) The small rooms here have real spring mattresses and the semioutdoor cafe in front has some flair from the bright paintings on the walls. It's almost directly across the street from the bridge and the market.

Hotel Pamona Indah Permai (Jl Yos Sudarso 25; r from 110,000Rp) This place doesn't take any advantage of its lakeside location, but the rooms are bright and tidy and the restaurant here is the best in town.

Hotel Intim Danau Poso (☎ 21345; fax 21488; Jl Yos Sudarso 22; r 175,000Rp) The rooms are dark and the staff speak little English, but this is the only place in town that's posh enough to have hot-water showers. The rooms on the 2nd floor have OK lake views.

Siuri Cottages (☎ 0813 4116 7345; s/d 215,000/225,000Rp) Twenty kilometres from Tentena on the road to Pendolo, these big,

well-kept but simple cottages are lined up along a sparkling white, lakeside beach with views that take in all the size and splendour of Danau Poso. The owner speaks English and there's a basic restaurant for meals, but note that this place is completely isolated. To get here from Tentena, you can catch an afternoon bemo for 15,000Rp; from Pendelo a bemo should cost 30,000Rp. The owner can help you rent a canoe to explore the lake, but you'll have to haggle for the price.

Eating

The local speciality is *sugili* (eel) and *ikan mas* (goldfish). For these specialties as well as spicy bat dishes, pull up a chair at one of the riverside *rumah makan* at the market near the bridge – the best is **Rumah Makan Kawana** (meals around 1000Rp). After dinner don't miss trying the tasty *pisang molen* (banana fried in a sweet pastry) at stalls in front of the eastern part of the bridge.

The only real restaurant in town is at the **Hotel Pamona Indah Permai** (meals from 15,000Rp), which has an extensive menu offering everything from nasi goreng to both *sugili* (45,000Rp) and *ikan mas* (30,000Rp) in a variety of sauces.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Public local boats travel to nearby villages, but in early 2009 there were no public boats to Pendolo. Chartering a boat to Pendolo (three hours) can be difficult to arrange but should cost around 350,000Rp.

BUS & BEMO

You'll need to catch an *ojek* (6000Rp) to/from Tentena's bus and bemo terminal, 3km from

town centre. There are plenty of buses and bemos that make the run to Poso (20,000Rp, 1½ hours) and on to Palu. For longer distances, such as the trip to Rantepao, you can book tickets at the bus offices around Tentena; ask at your hotel. Bemos to Pendolo run in the afternoon and cost 45,000Rp.

JEEP

The availability and price of jeeps to Gintu in Lore Lindu National Park depends on the condition of the road. The price should be around 100,000Rp per person by public jeep, and up to 800,000Rp to charter one.

POSO

☎ 0452 / pop 47,000

Poso is the main town, port and terminal for road transport on the northern coast of Central Sulawesi. It's a spread-out, noisy place and there's little reason to stay other than to use an ATM, check your email or change buses.

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

Poso is the last chance for Togeans- and Tentena-bound travellers to change money; the best option is BNI bank, with an ATM, near the port about 2km from town centre – take an *ojek*. Internet access is at the **Telkom office** (Jl Yos Sudarso; per hr 7000Rp), which is 1km or an easy *ojek* ride (2000Rp) from town centre.

If you're just changing buses, stay at **Losmen Alugoro** (☎ 21336; Jl Sumatera 20; s/d 40,000/55,000Rp, d with air-con 110,000-175,000Rp; 🍽️), a reliably decent but characterless place that's central for the bus offices and restaurants on Jl Sumatera. For something more interesting, try **Rumah Makan & Losmen Lalang Jaya** (☎ 22326; Jl Yos Sudarso; r 75,000Rp), right next to the port and the BNI bank. This rickety place perched over the sea looks like somewhere Popeye would have lived had he been Indonesian. There's also a basic seafood restaurant here.

Getting There & Away

From the bus terminal, about 5km out of town, there are buses to Kolonedale (eight hours, 90,000Rp), Rantepao (13 hours, 120,000Rp), and Manado (30 hours), as well as regular minibuses to Tentena (1½ hours, 25,000Rp).

DANAU POSO

Indonesia's third-largest lake, Danau Poso, covers an area of 32,300 hectares and reaches an average depth of 450m. The lake is 600m above sea level – so the evenings are pleasantly cool without being too cold. With mountains on all sides and mist hovering over the calm waters in the early morning, it's a breathtaking spot.

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

From the terminal it's a 3000Rp bemo ride into central Poso.

For Palu (six hours, 65,000Rp) and Ampana (five hours, 60,000Rp), it's best to catch comfortable minibuses that leave from offices along Jl Sumatera – sometimes these minibuses fish for customers at the bus terminal as well. Bemos to nearby villages and beaches leave from a terminal next to the market.

AROUND POSO

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

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

LORE LINDU NATIONAL PARK

As if the lush jungle filled with butterflies larger than a human hand, impressive hornbills and shy tarsiers weren't enough, Lore Lindu is also home to several indigenous tribes and is famous for its megalithic remains – giant freestanding stones. Covering an area of 250,000 hectares, this remote national park (a Unesco Biosphere Reserve) has been barely touched by tourism. It's a wonderful area for trekking and the perfect place to seek out an of-the-beaten-path adventure.

Information

The main national park office, rangers station and visitor centre are about a 1km walk from Kamarora village. You can buy permits here (20,000Rp), as well as at the small field offices (which have no accommodation) at Kulawi and Wuasa, and at the **Balai Taman Nasional Lore Lindu office** (☎ 0451-457 623; Jl Prof Mohammad Yamin SH).

Sights

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

Activities

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

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

The roads around Lore Lindu have improved in recent years and now many of the old trekking routes are used by buzzing motorbikes. The best place to get into the jungle, free of motor noise but rich in wildlife, is the trail between Doda and Gimpu (a two-day walk), but there aren't any megaliths on this route. Megalithic remains are found mostly along the motorbike road between Tonusu and Gimpu, via Tuare and Moa, or Doda and Hangirah. There are also megaliths to see along the road between Doda and Wuasa that is accessible by car. For trekking, take a public (or chartered) bemo to Tonusu, Doda or Gimpu, and then tackle the trail like this:

Tonusu–Bomba From Tonusu, walk for two days, sleeping under covered bridges. You'll need to carry food and water-purification tablets. You could also charter a motorbike the whole way, stopping to look for the Bomba, Bada and Sepe megaliths. At Bomba, stay at the friendly Ningsi Homestay.

Bomba–Doda It's 10km to Gintu, from where you begin the trek towards Doda. Along this trail you'll be rewarded with views over the two valleys, but it's a tough hike that is better tackled in two days and there's no official losmen along the way – there is a losmen in Doda. This road is accessible by motorbike, so that is another option.

Doda–Gimpu From here you are really in the jungle, so take all the necessary precautions. This is a two-day walk and there is a sleeping hut halfway through, although you might need a guide to find it. From Gimpu you can hike into the Besoa Valley, or travel back by public (or chartered) transport to Palu.

GUIDES

For long-distance trekking a guide is compulsory, and also necessary if you're intent on finding the megaliths. An organised trek from Tentena will cost around 3,700,000Rp for two people for five days, including food,

transport and accommodation. The guides from Tentena speak English.

If travelling independently, arrange a guide at the visitor centre (Kamarora), the two field offices (Kulawi or Wuasa), or the tourist office or national park office in Palu. Guides start at 200,000Rp per day but rarely speak English.

Food is readily available in the villages, but it's wise to bring other necessities, such as mosquito repellent and sunblock lotion, plus gifts to repay any hospitality. If trekking, you may have to sleep under roofs of covered bridges, which can get cold. Conversely, during the day it can get very hot, so the wildlife will be resting in the forest and is often difficult to spot. See boxed text, p822 for more information on safe and responsible trekking.

Getting There & Away

There are three main approaches to the park, one from Tentena and two from Palu. From Palu buses run all the way to Gimpu and Doda twice a day from Terminal Petobu. From Tentena you'll need to take a jeep; they run according to demand and road conditions to Bomba or Gintu.

From Gimpu, Doda and Bomba you should be able to hire *ojeks* that can tackle the tracks between Gintu and Gimpu via Moa and from Gintu to Doda. You can also hike this scenic route, but you will have motorbikes buzzing by you. The track between Doda and Gimpu can only be done on foot.

PALU

☎ 0451 / pop 282,000

Palu, the capital of Central Sulawesi, is characterless but loaded with banks and ATMs, cheap internet, travel agencies, supermarkets and, oddly, pharmacies (all along Jl Emmi Saelan). It's a good place to do errands when arriving from or heading out by ship to Kalimantan or treks to Lore Lindu National Park. Nearby is the rarely visited yet wonderfully quaint village of Dongalla and beach area of Tanjung Karang (see p693). Situated in a rain shadow for most of the year, Palu is one of the driest places in Indonesia.

There's not much in the way of sights apart from the large **Museum Negeri Propinsi Sulawesi Tengah** (☎ 422 290; Jl Sapri 23), which features interesting traditional art and other geological and archaeological items but is inconveniently located. The best part of town to wander around is the busy Jl Hasanuddin II area.

Information

EMERGENCY

Police station (☎ 421 015; Jl Sam Ratulangi)

INTERNET ACCESS, POST & TELEPHONE

Warnet (internet stalls) are everywhere in Palu and generally charge 4000Rp per hour.

Main post office (Jl Prof Mohammad Yamin SH 161) Inconveniently located.

Telkom (Jl Ahmad Yani)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Rumah Sakit Umum Propinsi Undata (☎ 421 270; Jl Suharso) Large and reasonably well-equipped hospital.

MONEY

Palu has banks and ATMs at every corner. The BNI banks are the best and most convenient for changing money.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Balai Taman Nasional Lore Lindu office (☎ 457 623; Jl Prof Mohammad Yamin SH) No English is spoken but they do their best to help and can set you up with Indonesian-speaking guides.

Tourist office (☎ 455 260; Jl Dewi Sartika 91) Inconveniently located and hard to find; has some information about Lore Lindu National Park.

Sleeping & Eating

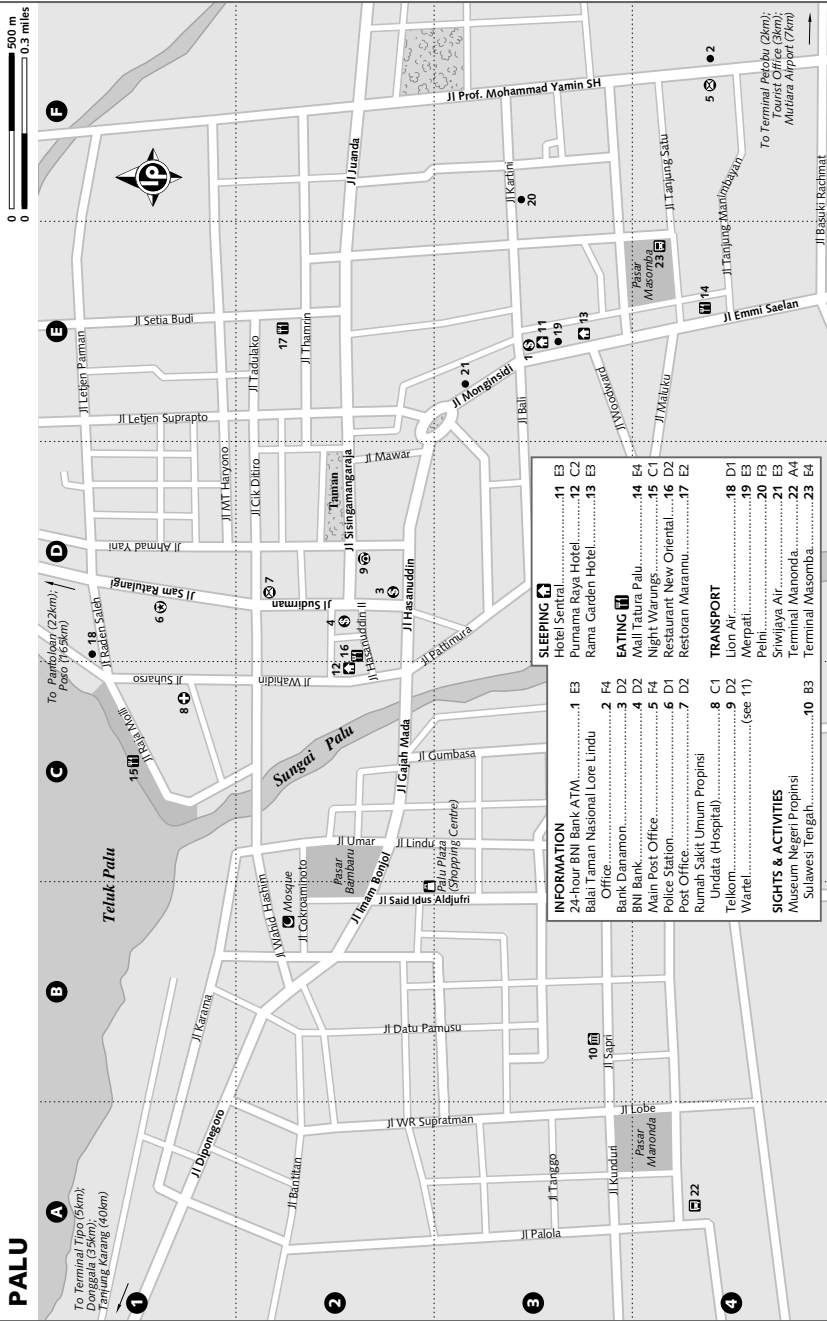
All rates include breakfast.

Purnama Raya Hotel (☎ 423 646; Jl Wahidin 4; s/d 40,000/50,000Rp) This is a family-run place that has a village feel even though it's in the heart of Palu. Rooms with attached Indonesian-style bathrooms are clean but can be a little noisy from the traffic outside. Some English is spoken (which is a big deal for Palu) and the family is helpful with arranging guides to Lore Lindu and other onward travel.

Hotel Sentral (☎ 422 789; Jl Kartini 6; r 150,000-650,000Rp; ☎ ☎) Even the cheapest rooms here have satellite TV and air-con, and it's a smiling, friendly place. There's a travel agent and warnet here as well.

Rama Garden Hotel (☎ 429 500; Jl Monginsidi 81; r 165,000-440,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) It looks like nothing from the outside, but this place is a garden of tranquillity inside, with winding paths, lots of plants and mini-lawn areas, plus a pool and a terrace dining area. Take a swim, order room service and watch a movie on HBO.

There are plenty of night warungs along the breezy seafront esplanade, Jl Raja Moili. **Mall Tatura Palu** (Jl Emmi Saelan) has a good food court



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PALU

To Terminal Tiga (6km): Donggala (35km): Tanjung Karang (40km)

To Terminal Patobu (2km): Mulana Airport (7km)

on the top level, as well as a few more upmarket restaurants and cafes and a supermarket.

Restoran Marannu (Jl Setia Budi; mains 20,000-40,000Rp; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) At one of the smarter spots in town, the menu includes tasty seafood and Chinese cuisine.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are flights to Makassar with **Merpati** (☎ 423 341; Jl Monginsidi), **Sriwijaya Air** (☎ 428 777; 37 Jl Monginsidi) and **Lion Air** (☎ 428 777; Jl Raden Saleh 1). Merpati also flies from Palu to Kendari, Sriwijaya has services to Balikpapan, while Lion Air flies to Manado.

BOAT

Travelling by boat is one way to avoid long and uncomfortable bus rides through Central Sulawesi. Palu is also well connected to East Kalimantan.

Every two weeks, the Pelni liner *Tidar* sails to Balikpapan, the *Dobonsolo* sails to Makassar, the *Tidar* also goes to Pare Pare, and the *Dorolonda* goes to Bitung. These boats dock at Pantoloan, 22km north of Palu, which is accessible by shared taxi from Terminal Manonda in Palu, or by metered taxi (about 40,000Rp). The **Pelni office** (☎ 421 696; Jl Kartini) in Palu is efficient; there's another one at Pantoloan.

BUS & SHARED TAXI

Buses and minibuses to Poso (75,000Rp, six hours), Ampana (125,000Rp, 11 hours), Rantepao (150,000Rp, 19 hours) and Manado (24 hours) all leave from bus-company offices inconveniently dotted around the suburbs of Palu.

Kijangs to Donggala (for Tanjung Karang) leave from Terminal Tipu, about 5km north-west of Palu, but it's easier to take an *ojek* – see p694. There are buses to Gimpu and Doda (for Lore Lindu National Park) that leave twice a day from Terminal Petobu, about 2km east of Palu.

Getting Around

Mutiara Airport is 7km east of town. Public transport is difficult to find, so take a metered taxi for about 45,000Rp from the city centre.

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

DONGGALA & TANJUNG KARANG

☎ 0457

Donggala is an old-fashioned country town that's full of colourful houses, small flower gardens, a few dirt roads and lots of interesting local characters. From here it's a short *ojek* ride to Tanjung Karang's slice of white sand studded with rickety beach bungalows, buffalo roaming around and a decent dive centre.

Although it's hard to believe, Donggala was once the administrative centre under the Dutch and was briefly the most important town and port in Central Sulawesi. When the harbour silted up, ships used the harbours on the other side of the bay, and Palu became the regional capital.

Activities

The main attractions are sun, sand and water at Tanjung Karang (Coral Peninsula), about 5km north of Donggala. The reef off Prince John Dive Resort is good for **snorkelling** and beginner-level **diving**. Individual dives cost around €35 and PADI courses are also run here. Diving and snorkelling equipment is available.

Sleeping & Eating

There's nowhere to eat at Tanjung Karang, so you'll be relying on what's served at your homestay or resort.

Kaluku Cottages (cottages per person incl meals 75,000Rp) You'll have to ask around to see if you can find the owner and get him to open this place up, but it's worth it to get a bungalow here on Tanjung Tuluku, a few kilometres north of Tanjung Karang, and its better beach. There is great coral off the coast and free coconuts are on offer throughout the day. Ask an *ojek* driver to take you from Donggala.

Harmoni Cottages (☎ 71573; cottages incl meals per person 175,000Rp) This place is absurdly overpriced for how rustic it is (a small shack with a terrace, mattress on the floor and a mosquito net), but the beach location, friendly welcome and the delicious food might make you want to pay the price anyway. The helpful owner speaks English and can help arrange tours to Lore Lindu National Park.

Prince John Dive Resort (☎ 71104; www.prince-john-diveresort.de; bungalows for 2 people incl meals from 380,000Rp) For almost the same price as Harmoni, you can stay at this resort in a comfortable varnished-wood bungalow with a large bathroom and a sea view. The only dive

resort in the Palu area, it has bungalows spread out on a well-planted hillside and there's a small beach with a few umbrellas for rent for nonguests, as well as a restaurant.

Getting There & Away

Kijangs to Donggala (15,000Rp) leave when full from Terminal Tipu, about 5km outside Palu – you'll have to flag down a bemo from anywhere in Palu to take you to the terminal (3500Rp). From Donggala you can catch an *ojek* to Tanjung Karang (5000Rp). It works out to be almost the same price (and takes half the time) to take an *ojek* directly from Palu to Tanjung Karang (30,000Rp).

KOLONEDALE

☎ 0465

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

There is a small post office behind the main mosque, and a **Telkom office** (☎ 24hr) up the hill from the Pelni office.

Sleeping & Eating

Most accommodation, shops and the market are adjacent to the main dock.

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

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

There are basic warungs around the bus terminal and the market.

Getting There & Away

The intersection in front of the market serves as the bus and bemo terminal. Several buses a day travel between Kolonedale and Poso (eight hours) via Tentena. From the south, cross Danau Matano by boat from Soroako to Nuha, rent a motorbike or jeep to Beteleme, then wait for a bus to Kolonedale.

The Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* stops at Kolonedale about once a week on its way to Gorontalo (economy/1st class 52,000/189,000Rp, eight hours) or Kendari. *Perahu* (traditional outrigger boats) leave the main dock most days at about 11pm for the overnight trip east to Baturube and Pandauke, from where there are buses to Luwuk (five hours).

TELUK TOMORI

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

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

MOROWALI NATURE RESERVE

This 225,000-hectare nature reserve was established in 1980 on the northern shore of Teluk Tomori after Operation Drake, a British-sponsored survey of the endangered species in the area. The reserve includes islands in the bay, accessible lowland plains and densely vegetated peaks up to 2421m high.

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

Trekking

You will need at least four days to properly visit the park, plus a few extra to get there and back, and the going is tough. Treks can be organised with guides in Tentena (see p687) for about 3,700,000Rp for two people, includ-

ing transport, food and accommodation, for a five- to six-day trek.

However, you can also wait to find a guide (which is necessary to see the wildlife) until you reach Kolonedale. In Kolonedale guides may approach you in the street, you can organise one through your hotel, or you can visit the KSDA (National Parks) office – where you must register and buy a permit (20,000Rp per day). A good source of independent advice and a good place to organise guides is **Friends of Morowali** (Sahabat Morowali; ☎ 0465-21124; Penginapan Sederhana, Jl Yos Sudarso 64), a local environmental group based in Kolonedale.

From Kolonedale it's a two-hour boat trip across Teluk Tomori and up Sungai Morowali to drop-off points for hikes to **Kayu Poli**, a small Wana settlement. You can stay in a local home there or at another village, and spend some time with the Wana people. West of Kayu Poli (three hours) is the eerily silent **Danau Rahu**, which takes about five hours to cross by canoe. You can leave the park via Sungai Rahu and return to Kolonedale by boat.

LUWUK

☎ 0461 / pop 48,000

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

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

Maleo Cottages (☎ /fax 324 068; www.maleo-cottages.com; Jl Lompobattang; s/d incl breakfast 100,000/120,000Rp) is by far the best place to stay in the Luwuk area, about 16km from town. There are rooms in the main house and three atmospheric cottages. Meals are available at 35,000Rp. This is the base for **Wallacea Dive Cruise** (www.wallacea-divecruise.com), so it's a good place to arrange diving in the Banggai Islands or liveaboard to the Togeang Islands. The hotel also offers treks to some remote forest regions nearby.

Merpati (☎ 21523; Jl Sam Ratulangi 50) has daily flights to/from Manado, and **Batavia Air** has three or four flights a week to Makassar.

Every week the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* links Luwuk with Kolonedale (economy/1st class 57,000/189,000Rp, eight hours) and Gorontalo (65,000/204,000Rp, 11 hours); it is an excellent way to travel to this remote part of Sulawesi. There's a **Pelni office** (☎ 21888; Jl Sungai Musi 3) in town.

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

BANGGAI ISLANDS

With a *lot* of time and patience you can visit the wild and remote Banggai Islands. It's a superb area for **swimming, diving** and viewing **marine life** such as whales and dugongs. Alfred Wallace called the area 'the mother of all living coral reefs'. Boats can be chartered from most villages, but it is easiest to arrange diving and snorkelling trips through Maleo Cottages near Luwuk (see left).

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

There is a daily ferry between Luwuk and Tataba. Once every two weeks the Pelni ship *Sinabung* visits Banggai from Makassar, then travels onward to Ternate.

TANJUNG API NATIONAL PARK

The 4246-hectare Tanjung Api (Cape Fire National Park) is home to *anoa*, *babi rusa*, crocodiles, snakes and maleo birds, but most people come to see the burning coral cliff fuelled by a leak of natural gas. To get here you need to charter a boat around the rocky peninsula from Ampana (from there it's 24km east). It's more interesting at dusk.

AMPANA

☎ 0464

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

Note that the sole ATM in town only takes MasterCard and maximum withdrawals are 500,000Rp per day. **Friends Internet** across from Losmen Irama is often not open, so try **Frenzy Net** (Jl P Talataka 15; per hr 7000Rp; ☎ 9-12am) about 300m inland.

Orientation

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

Sleeping & Eating

Losmen Irama (☎ 21055; Jl Kartini; r 60,000Rp, with air-con 110,000Rp; 🍴) Catering mostly to locals, this basic place has clean rooms with Indonesian-style bathrooms.

Oasis Hotel (☎ 21058; Jl Kartini; dm 60,000Rp, r from 90,000Rp; 🍴) Run in conjunction with the Kadidiri Paradise Resort in the Togeans, this place has clean rooms and dorms, but don't expect to sleep till the karaoke shuts down at 11pm. The most expensive rooms include air-con and hot water.

Marina Cottages (☎ 21280; cottages 90,000Rp) Perched on a very rocky beach, the cottages boast a seafront setting and friendly service, and are in a perfect location for boats to Bomba. They are in Labuhan village, a 10-minute *bendi* (horse-drawn cart) ride from Ampana. The restaurant is worth visiting for the sunsets alone.

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

Getting There & Away

Several minibuses travel each day to Luwuk (100,000Rp, six hours), Poso (60,000Rp, five hours) and Palu (125,000Rp, 11 hours).

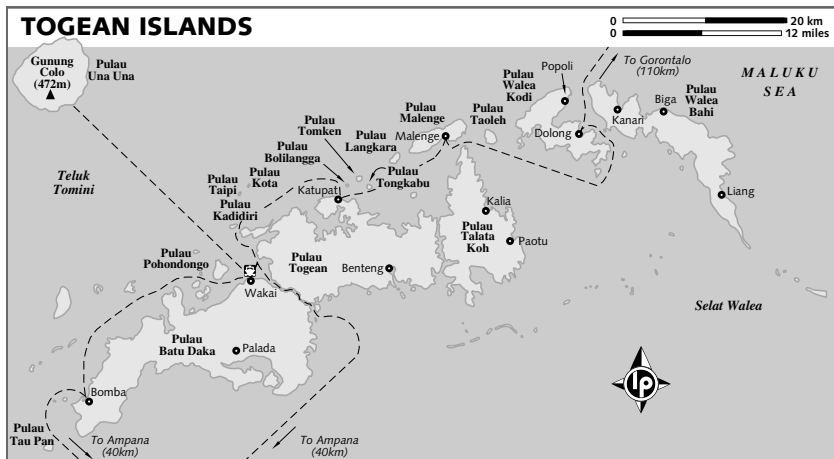
A chartered car to Pagimana (four to five hours) for the ferry to Gorontalo costs about 600,000Rp.

Boats to Poso, Wakai in the Togeans Islands and beyond leave from the main boat terminal at the end of Jl Yos Sudarso, in the middle of Ampana. Boats to Bomba in the Togeans leave from a jetty in Labuhan village, next to Marina Cottages. See opposite for more details.

TOGEAN ISLANDS

Yes, it does take some determination to get to the Togeans Islands, but believe us, it takes much more determination to leave. Island-hop from one forested golden-beach beauty to the next, where hammocks are plentiful, the fish is fresh and the welcome is homey. Most islands, such as Pulau Tomken, Bolilanga, Malenge and Togeans have only one or two family-run guest houses that can accommodate just a few people, while popular Kadidiri has a small but lively beach scene with night-time bonfires and cold beers all around. The surrounding sea of Teluk Tomini is still recovering from its past brushes with cyanide and dynamite fishing, but the corals are coming back and most divers and snorkellers are thrilled with the rich diversity of marine life they find.

When you decide to pull yourself out of the water, there's a surprising variety of wildlife to look for in the undisturbed and wild jungles, as well as other remote beaches to find and even an active volcano to climb on Una Una



DIVING & SNORKELLING AROUND THE TOGEANS

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

The mix of coral and marine life is spectacular and unusually diverse, although many reefs were badly damaged by dynamite and cyanide fishing (see boxed text, p698). The more conspicuous residents include brightly marked coral lobsters, a colony of dugong, schools of a hundred or more dolphins, the occasional whale, commercially important species of trepang (sea cucumber), and natural pearls.

Snorkelling gear is available at most homestays for about 25,000Rp, but it's always better to bring your own. **Diving** can be arranged at a number of places, including **Black Marlin** (p699) and **Kadidiri Paradise** (p699) on Pulau Kadidiri, **Island Retreat** (p699) near Bomba and the upmarket **Walea Dive Resort** (p701) on Pulau Walea Kodi. Prices start from €24 per dive and PADI courses are also available.

(by day trip). Seven or so ethnic groups share this region, but all are happy see visitors and are exceptionally hospitable.

While there are no five-star resorts in the Togeans, there are some very comfortable options as well as your standard basic beach huts. Most of the rooms are in wooden cottages and right on the beach. Most have a mosquito net but no fan because the sea breezes keep everything cool. Bathroom facilities range from communal and rustic to private and porcelain. All prices quoted in this section are per person and all rates include local meals. It is a good idea to bring along some snacks and treats. Beer, soft drinks and mineral water are available from shops and homestays. Bring plenty of cash as there are no banks in the islands.

Getting There & Away

Representatives from resorts and hotels will usually meet the ferries at each stop and shuttle you to their accommodation free of charge, or for a small fee if you don't end up staying with them.

The quickest way to get to the Togeans is to fly from Manado to Luwuk and travel by road from there to Ampana (six hours) – you'll have to stay overnight, then catch the ferry the next morning. Alternatively, you could fly to Palu and take a minibus from there to Ampana (11 hours). Otherwise, if you can get the boat schedule right, you can fly to Gorontalo from Manado, then catch the overnight ferry to the Togeans. Overland travellers often make their way up from Tana

Toraja to Ampana, while plenty of people also take the bus from Manado to the port in Gorontalo.

AMPANA

The bulk of transport to the Togeans leaves from Ampana. Every Monday morning the *Puspita* ferry makes the 15-hour journey from Ampana to Gorontalo via Wakai (40,000Rp, three hours), Katupat (one hour from Wakai), Malenge (45 minutes), Dolong (one hour), then on through to Gorontalo (110,000Rp, nine hours from Dolong). The ferry schedule tends to chop and change, so don't plan flight connections around it.

More reliable are the three local Ampana ferries that depart at 10am every day except for Thursday and Sunday to Wakai (40,000Rp, three hours), then to Katupat, Malenge and Kalia on Pulau Talata Koh before returning to Ampana. You can usually pay the captain an extra 40,000Rp to stop at Bomba, but don't count on it. To go direct to Bomba it's better to take small local boats that leave from a jetty in Labuhan village, next to Marina Cottages, at 9.30am on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday and cost about 25,000Rp.

GORONTALO

Every Wednesday evening the *Puspita* ferry makes the return 15-hour trip (110,000Rp) to Ampana via Dolong, Malenge, Katupat and Wakai. On Friday the larger, steel *Tuna Tomini* travels direct to Wakai, then on to Ampana (110,000Rp), making the return trip on Saturday morning.

CONSERVATION OF THE TOGEANS

Home to over 500 types of coral, 600 reef fish species and an estimated 500 mollusc, Teluk Tomini around the Togeans Islands is one of the richest reef areas in all of Indonesia. In 2004 the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry signed a bill that turned 362,000 hectares of this fragile area into a national park – great news to conservation groups – but some local NGOs claim national-park status restricts local livelihoods and leaves the region open to other types of exploitation. It will take time to find out the real impacts.

The Togeans' shaky ecological record really started when cyanide and dynamite fishing was introduced to the islands in the early 1990s. While this boosted the local catch, it also caused untold damage to fragile reef ecosystems. By the early 2000s locals (often with help from local NGOs and the dive centres) began to understand the destructiveness of these practices and many went back to traditional fishing techniques. Some villages even began creating their own protected areas, and a guardhouse was completed in 2006 to patrol certain regions against illegal fishing practices. Today, islanders are hailing larger fishing yields closer to home and healthy coral beds – proof that reef protection works.

But the Togeans are relatively poor islands and the fishing ain't what it used to be. The fishing of valuable Napoleon fish (for foreign Chinese restaurants) has all but wiped this fish out of these waters and resulted in a catastrophic increase in the number of crown-of-thorns starfish, which destroy coral at an alarming rate.

Luckily, as the water quality has improved, some families are starting seaweed farms. Seaweed farming's potential twice-yearly harvest and a stable market price offer another lucrative option.

The only other option is the overnight, non-stop *Baronang* ferry to Pagimana (140,000/85,000Rp A/B class, 10 hours, once a week), which is a five-hour drive east of Ampana, from where you can catch regular ferries (see p697).

MARISA

Anyone who is loaded with rupiah (about 2,000,000Rp) can charter a speedboat between Marisa (about 150km west of Gorontalo) and Wakai or Kadidiri. Both Black Marlin Dive (opposite) and Kadidiri Paradise (opposite) can arrange boat charters.

BUNTA

Few people go this way, but it's one of the fastest routes to the Togeans. Take a morning flight from Manado to Luwuk, charter a car to Bunta (800,000Rp, four hours) and then charter a boat to Kadidiri (1,000,000Rp). It quickly adds up, but is not a bad option for a small group.

Getting Around

Allow plenty of time to get around, because transport within the Togeans is infrequent. Schedules for public boats bend and break, but you can usually fall back on chartering something.

Charters are not hard to arrange in Wakai, Bomba and Kadidiri, but are far more difficult to arrange in smaller settlements be-

cause there are simply not many boats around. You'll often have to accept anything that's available. The rates should be negotiable but are often fairly standard among the cartel of local operators (250,000Rp from Wakai or Kadidiri to Bomba on a speedboat).

Ask your homestay or anyone around the village about the current timetables for boats to other islands, or further on to Ampana and Gorontalo. The locals rely heavily on these boats, so they always know what is going where and when.

PULAU BATU DAKA

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

Bomba

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

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

Poya Lisa Cottages (cottages 125,000Rp) is located on a pretty beach on its own little island. The friendly owners drop you there then bring you

meals four times per day. The same family runs **Losmen Poya Lisa** (r 90,000Rp) in the village, where guests stay their first night if they arrive late in the day on the boat.

Island Retreat (www.togian-island-retreat.com; r per person US\$15-28) is run by an expat Californian woman and her band of friendly dogs. Set on the beautiful beach at Pasir Putih, the 20 cottages are very well cared for and the cheapest ones have shared bathrooms. Some guests rave about the professionalism and relative luxury of this place, while others complain it lacks the family-style ambience available elsewhere in the Togeans – everyone, however, loves the internationally inspired food. There's a dive centre here, plus snorkelling gear. Boat charters can be arranged from Ampana and Marisa.

To leave Bomba to get to the other islands, you can sometimes flag down one of the ferries coming from Ampana or you can hire an *ojek* for the bumpy ride to Wakai (100,000Rp, three hours). For transport to Ampana, see p697.

Wakai

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

PULAU KADIDIRI

This is definitely the island to go to if you're feeling social, but during the low season you could still potentially wind up on your own here. Just a short boat trip from Wakai, the three lodging options here (all right next to each other) are on a perfect strip of sand with OK snorkelling and swimming only metres from the door and superb diving beyond.

COCONUT CRABS

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

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

Activities

A range of activities are on offer on Kadidiri. Apart from diving, snorkelling gear can be rented for about 25,000Rp per day and you can hike around the island on a series of complicated trails (bring something along to mark your path as some visitors got *very* lost). There are treks around volcanic Pulau Una Una (500,000Rp for up to eight people), and visits to other nearby islands for snorkelling (from around 150,000Rp). All the accommodation places have a small book exchange, which is great because you'll do a lot of reading.

Sleeping

Pondok Lestari (cottages 75,000Rp) Stay with a charming Bajo family who take their guests on free daily snorkelling trips and fishing excursions where you can catch your own dinner. The older bamboo bungalows are very rustic, but a few newer wooden ones were under construction when we stayed here. All share a *mandi* bathroom.

Black Marlin Cottages (☎ 0435-831 869; www.blackmarlindive.com; cottages from 145,000Rp) This is arguably the liveliest place on Kadidiri and is home to British-run Black Marlin Dive. Cottages are large, wooden, well decorated and have particularly good bathrooms, but water is in short supply during certain hours of the day. Travellers from the three hotels tend to amass on the pontoon here for sunsets, and if Ali is around be prepared for a night of drinking *arak*, the local fermented beverage. Visa and MasterCard are accepted but sometimes the machine doesn't work – bring cash anyway.

Kadidiri Paradise Resort (☎ 0464-21058; www.vitkadidiriparadise.com; r per person €16-27) On the same stretch of beach as Black Marlin (although the two places don't get along), this resort on stunning planted grounds nearly surrounded by water is Kadidiri's poshest option. Rooms are huge and all have generous decks and big stone bathrooms. The dive centre here is particularly well run – don't miss the sea horses right off the dive centre's dock. Credit cards are accepted here too, but again, the machine doesn't always work. You can always pay in Ampana.

THE BAJO

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

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

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

Getting There & Away

The public boats don't stop on Kadidiri, so you must go to Wakai first (see p699). Hotel representatives will usually meet the ferry and take you to Kadidiri for free. Once or twice a day a boat delivers fresh water and supplies to Kadidiri from Wakai; ask your homestay in Kadidiri or Wakai about the schedules. You can also charter a boat between Wakai and Kadidiri for about 50,000Rp one way.

PULAU UNA UNA

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

A public boat leaves Wakai about twice a week, but there is nowhere to stay on Una Una. The bigger homestays and resorts on Kadidiri and at Bomba can organise guided treks up the volcano, plus snorkelling stops along the way.

PULAU TOGEAN

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

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

PULAU TOMKEN & PULAU BOLILANGGA

These two islands are a five-minute boat ride from Katupat. **Fadhila Cottages** (cottages from 125,000Rp) on Pulau Pangempa has so-so food, but it's clean and has superb snorkelling (lots of lionfish). **Bolilangga Cottages** (cottages from 80,000Rp) on Pulau Bolilangga only opens up on demand but is perfect if you're looking for a secluded hideaway.

PULAU MALENGE

Malenge is remote and secluded, with wonderful **snorkelling** just offshore from the village. Some locals, with the aid of NGOs, have established excellent **walking trails** around the mangroves and jungles to help spot the particularly diverse fauna, including macaques, tarsiers, hornbills, cuscuses and salamanders.

The best place to stay is **Lestari Cottages** (r 80,000Rp, cottages 100,000Rp) run by friendly Rudy who offers rooms at the boat jetty in Malenge village and cottages on a secluded beach about 1km away by boat. Also near the jetty, **Malenge Indah** (cottages 80,000Rp) is attractively situated over the water.

PULAU WALEA KODI

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

On an island just off Walea Kodi is the stunning Italian-run **Walea Dive Resort** (www.walea.com). Package deals, including cottage, three meals (including Italian cuisine), transport and three dives a day, start from €173 per person per day.

NORTH SULAWESI

Northern Sulawesi has lots to offer in a relatively condensed space. You can dive over some of the world's best coral reefs at Bunaken one day, climb a volcano near Tomohon the next and visit the lowland Tangkoko-Batuangas Dua Saudara Nature Reserve and its wildlife the next. With cheap flights linking Manado to major destinations of Southeast Asia with quick connections to Europe, and easy transport between attractions, it's no wonder Indonesia is pushing this region as a major tourist destination. Economic prosperity from tourism and agriculture (mostly cloves and coconuts) means that North Sulawesi is the most developed province on Sulawesi and prices are higher here than elsewhere on the island.

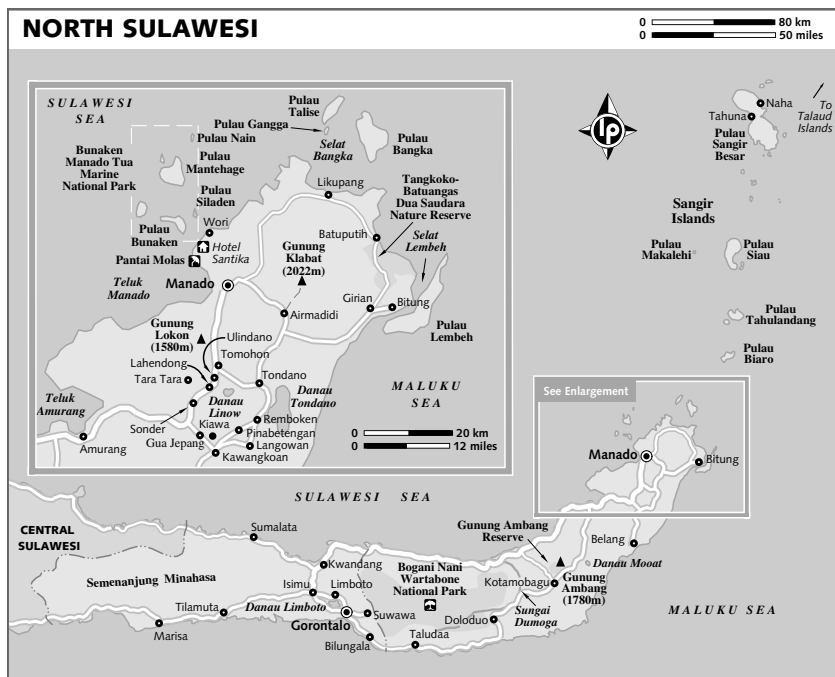
The two largest distinct groups in the region are the Minahasans and the Sangirese, but there are many more subgroups and dialects. The kingdoms of Bolaang Mongondow, sandwiched between Minahasa and Gorontalo, were also important political players. The Dutch have had a more enduring influence on this peninsula than anywhere else in the archipelago: Dutch is still spoken among the older generation, and well-to-do families often send their children to study in the Netherlands.

The Sangir-Talaud island group forms a bridge to the Philippines, providing a causeway for the movement of peoples and cultures. As a result, the language and physical features of Filipino peoples can be found among the local Minahasans.

History

A group of independent states was established at a meeting of the linguistically diverse Minahasan peoples around AD 670 at a stone now known as Watu Pinabetengan (near Kawangkoan).

At the time of the first contact with Europeans in the 16th century, North Sulawesi



had strong links with the sultanate of Ternate (North Maluku) and Bugis traders from South Sulawesi. In 1677 the Dutch occupied Pulau Sangir and, two years later, a treaty with the Minahasan chiefs saw the start of Dutch domination for the next 300 years.

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

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

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

GORONTALO

☎ 0435 / pop 150,000

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

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

Orientation & Information

Although spread out, most of the hotels, shops and other life-support systems are concentrated in a small central district. Many streets are ambiguously named, which can cause confusion. The main post office is a useful landmark. Note that Gorontalo banks are particularly fussy about exchanging only crisp new bills.

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

Black Marlin (☎ 831 869; Jl Kasuari 9A) The office for Black Marlin on Pulau Kadidiri in the Togeang Islands.

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

Telkom (Jl Parman; ☎ 24hr) Efficient.

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

Activities

Diving is available in Gorontalo area with **Miguel's Diving** (www.miguelsdiving.com; Jl Agus Salim 29) at the Gorontalo Oasis Hotel next door to the Yulia Hotel, but it is only seasonal, from November to April.

Sleeping

Melati Hotel (☎ 822 934; avelberg@hotmail.com; Jl Gajah Mada 33; r 80,000-175,000Rp; ☺ ☑) The friendly Melati is the long-time backpacker favorite. It's based around a lovely home, built in the early 1900s for the then harbour master (current owner Pak Alex's grandfather). The rooms in the original house are basic but atmospheric; the newer rooms are set around a pretty garden and are well furnished.

Hotel Karina (☎ 828 411; Jl Jend Ahmad Yani 28; s 110,000Rp, d 132,000-176,000Rp; ☺) A new, spotless place with good nasi-goreng breakfasts and TVs.

Yulia Hotel (☎ 828 395; fax 823 065; Jl Jend Ahmad Yani 26; s/d from 181,500/203,500Rp; ☺) One of the smartest hotels in town with a good central location. All rooms have satellite TV and hot water.

Eating & Drinking

The local delicacy is *milu siram*, which is a corn soup with grated coconut, fish, salt, chilli and lime. You'll find it at the stalls around the market at night. The night market has a vast number of warungs selling cheap and tasty food.

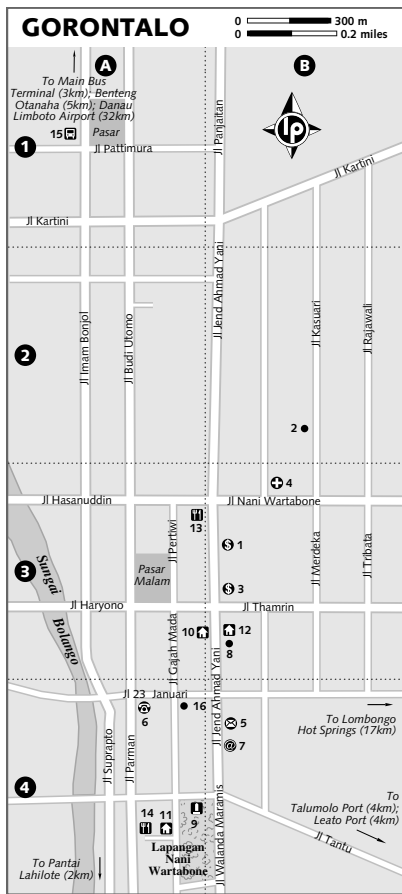
If you're craving a sweet treat, head to **Rumah Makan Brantas** (Jl Hasanuddin) for the best selection of cakes and pastries this side of Manado.

Rumah Makan Viva (off Jl Gajah Mada) is handy for some hotels, and turns out reliable Indo favourites like gado gado and fried chicken.

Getting There & Away

AIR

You can travel to/from Manado with **Lion Air** (☎ 830 035; Jl Rachmat 15) and **Batavia Air** (☎ 823 388; Jl Di Panjaitan 233), each offering service once a week. From Makassar there are daily flights



divided between the carriers **Lion Air**, **Sriwijaya** (☎ 827 878; Jl Agus Salim 18) and **Batavia Air**. All airlines have offices at the airport, or tickets can be bought at agencies around town.

BOAT

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

Every two weeks the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* links Gorontalo with Bitung (for Manado). The **Pelni office** (☎ 821 089; cnr Jl 23 Januari & Jl Gajah Mada) is efficient and convenient.

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Once a week the stable *Baronang* crosses the gulf from Gorontalo to Pagimana (A/B class 140,000/85,000Rp, 10 hours) and returns the next day. It leaves both places at about 9pm, and arrives at about 6am.

Direct boats also connect Gorontalo to the Togeans; see p697 for more details. You can book tickets at the office for **Black Marlin** (☎ 831 869; Jl Kasuari 9A).

BUS

The main bus terminal is 3km north of town and accessible by bemo, *bendi* or *ojek*. There are direct buses to Palu (110,000Rp, 17 hours) and Manado (regular/air-con 65,000/80,000Rp, 10 hours), departing every hour. Most people make the Manado trip by minibus or in 4WD Toyotas. Seats are priced by how close they are to the front: 100,000Rp to 150,000Rp.

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

Getting Around

The airport is 32km north of Gorontalo. For 50,000Rp a share-car can be booked at the taxi desk inside the terminal, and you'll be taken to your requested address. To get to the airport, book the same service through the airline, travel agency or your hotel.

AROUND GORONTALO

On the outskirts of Gorontalo, on a hill at Lekobalo overlooking Danau Limboto, is **Benteng Otanaha**. The fort was probably built

by the Portuguese and supposedly used by Gorontalo kings as a bastion against the Dutch when relations soured. Today there are the remains of just three towers. Take a *bendi* or *mikrolet* from the *mikrolet* terminal to a path at the foot of the hill.

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

KOTAMOBAGU

☎ 0434

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

Orientation & Information

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

Bogani Nani Wartabone National Park office

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

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

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Ramayana (☎ 21188; Jl Adampe Dolot 50; s/d 50,000/85,000Rp) This hotel has clean, quiet accommodation, and is the best all-rounder in town.

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

Getting There & Away

The main Bonawang bus terminal is a few kilometres from Kotamobagu, in the village of Monglonai, and accessible by *mikrolet*. There

are regular buses to Manado (three hours) and Gorontalo (eight hours).

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

BOGANI NANI WARTABONE NATIONAL PARK

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

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

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

For Kosinggolan, take a regular *mikrolet* to Doloduo from the Serasi terminal in Kotamobagu. Then walk about 2km west (or ask the *mikrolet* driver to continue) to the ranger station at Kosinggolan, just inside the park, where you must register and pick up a compulsory guide for 60,000Rp per short hike (more for longer trips).

MANADO

☎ 0431 / pop 500,000

With an overabundance of bland shopping malls and cavernous holes in the sidewalk exposing the city's litter problem, Manado doesn't usually register as one of North Sulawesi's highlights. It's a well-serviced and friendly place, however, with more than its share of comfortable hotels and some good

places to eat. Around the city are nearby adventures at Bunaken, Tomohon, the Lembah Strait and Tangkoko-Batuangas Dua Saudara Nature Reserve, and to get to these places most travellers will have to spend one night or more in Manado.

History

In 1844 Manado was levelled by earthquakes, so the Dutch redesigned it from scratch. Fourteen years later the famous naturalist Alfred Wallace visited and described the city as 'one of the prettiest in the East'. That was 150 years ago and time hasn't been kind to the place.

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

The Japanese occupation of 1942–45 was a period of deprivation, and the Allies bombed Manado heavily in 1945. During the war of independence that followed, there was bitter division between the nationalists and those favouring Dutch-sponsored federalism, and the city was bombed by Indonesian military in 1958.

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

Orientation

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

Information

EMERGENCY

Main police station (☎ inquiries 852 162, emergencies 110; Jl 17 Agustus)

IMMIGRATION

Immigration office (☎ 841 688; Jl 17 Agustus)

INTERNET ACCESS & POST

The best internet places in town can be found at the IT Center mall across from the Mega Mall.

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

MEDICAL SERVICES

Rumah Sakit Umum (☎ 853 191; Jl Monginsidi; Malalayang) The general hospital is about 4.5km from town and includes a decompression chamber.

MONEY

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

BCA bank (Bank Central Asia; Jl Sam Ratulangi) Has good rates and provides cash advances of up to 3,000,000Rp on Visa and MasterCard.

BII bank (Bank Internasional Indonesia; Jl Sam Ratulangi)

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

TELEPHONE

Numerous wartel around town offer competitive long-distance rates.

Telkom (Jl Sam Ratulangi; ☎ 24hr)

TOURIST INFORMATION

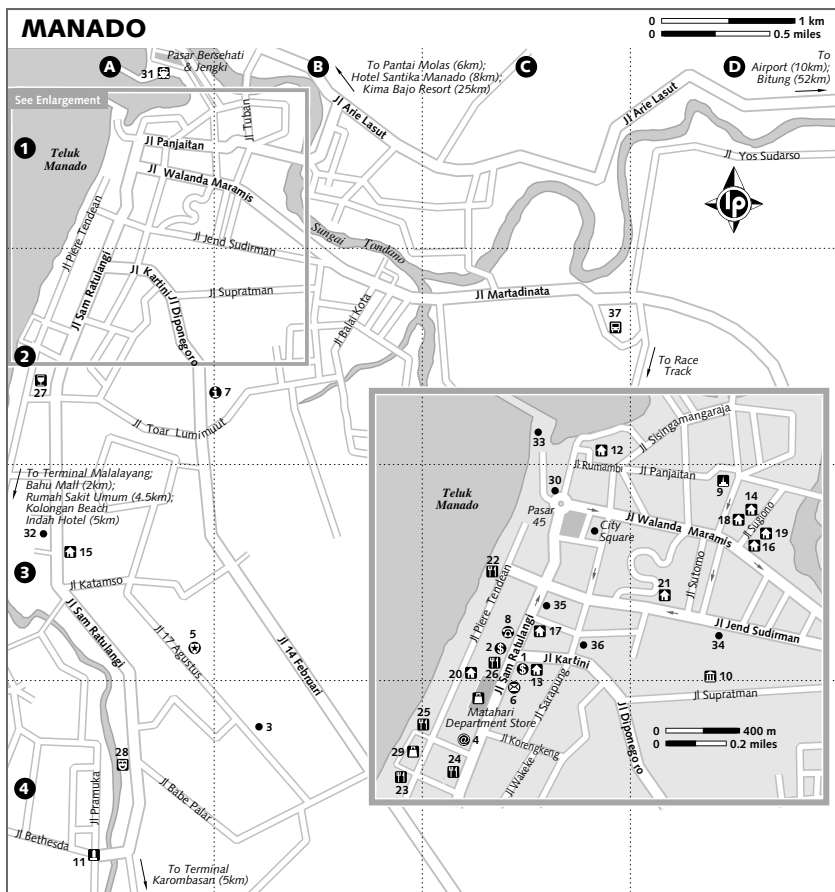
North Sulawesi Tourism Office (☎ /fax 852 723; Jl Diponegoro 111; ☎ 8am–2pm Mon–Sat) You can get a map and sign the guest book, but that's about it.

Tourist information (☎ 0812 4403 7100) At the airport and only open for international arrivals, this glass booth has very helpful service. If you arrive on a domestic flight you can call the number above for any questions you might have.

Sights

Most of the main sights lie beyond the city; however, the **Public Museum of North Sulawesi** (Museum Negeri Propinsi Sulawesi Utara; ☎ 870 308; Jl Supratman 72; admission 1000Rp; ☎ 8am–4pm Mon–Thu, 8–11.30am Fri, 9am–2pm Sat) is a possible diversion. It features a large display of traditional costumes and housing implements, with captions in English.

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



Activities

For relief from the incessant heat or an escape from the buzz of *mikrolet*, nonguests can use the **swimming pool** at Hotel Sahid Kawanua for 10,000Rp. At the Mega Mall there's a **Superbowl** on the top floor if you're craving some bowling, and **Tikal Shitsu** (☎ 340 525; 1hr massage 90,000Rp; ⌚ 9am-12am) to work out the kinks afterwards.

Festivals & Events

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

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

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

Traditional horse races Second week of August.

Sleeping

Hotels near and on Jl Sam Ratulangi are an easy walk to food and shopping but can be noisy from the traffic. Places a little farther from the city centre are more peaceful and you can easily hop on one of the ubiquitous *mikrolet* to get wherever you need to go.

BUDGET

The better budget places fill quickly with Indonesian business people, so reserve in advance.

Rex Hotel (☎ 851 136; fax 867 706; Jl Sugiono 3; s 35,000-50,000Rp, d 75,000-90,000Rp; 📶) These are the best budget rooms in town: all are clean and have windows letting in natural light. Shared-bathroom economy rooms are microscopic,

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Telkom.....8 C3	Sintesa Peninsula Hotel.....21 D3				
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		EATING 🍴		SHOPPING 🛍️	
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but standards with private bathrooms are quite comfortable.

New Angkasa Hotel (☎ 864 062; Jl Sugiono 10; r with fan/air-con from 60,000/85,000Rp; 📶) This place is always full because of its good-value though basic rooms.

Hotel Anggrek (☎ 851 970; Jl Kartini 5; r 90,000-150,000Rp; 📶) There are plans to turn this place, recently purchased by an Italian-Indonesian couple, into a bona fide backpackers' pad. When we passed it had the most character of the town's cheapies (fish tank in the lobby, plenty of people milling about etc) but the matchbox-sized dark rooms were pretty scruffy.

Hotel Angkasa Raya Inda (☎ 862 039; Jl Sugiono 12A; r from 100,000Rp) Lives off the overflow from its better-value neighbours, but not half-bad if you're in a bind.

Hotel Wisata (☎ 860 908; wisatahotel_mdo@yahoo.com; Jl Sam Ratulangi 7; r 180,000-300,000Rp; 📶) Rooms here are priced according to size, but all have new double beds and are bright and comfortable. The sweeping spiral staircase in the lobby adds a little pizzazz, and the staff are helpful and speak decent English. It's the best deal in the city centre.

Hotel Regina (☎ 855 0091; Jl Sugiono 1; r from 190,000; 📶) Bland but big rooms here are spotless and very plush for the price. The hearty Indonesian breakfasts are another perk.

our pick **Hotel Minahasa** (☎ 862 559; minahasa.hotel@hotmail.com; Jl Sam Ratulangi 199; r with fan/air-con from 195,000/320,000Rp; 📶 🚶) Manado's answer to a boutique hotel has flower-filled grounds stretching up the hill to a luxurious pool and fitness centre with city views. Fan rooms are basic and OK value if you consider the facilities, though you'll be tempted to upgrade to

a much more elegant, superior room with a terrace and a view. The staff are uncommonly helpful, breakfasts are copious and there are lots of little touches like umbrellas on lend and welcome fruit juice.

MIDRANGE

Hot water and included breakfasts are standard at all the midrange places.

Celebes Hotel (☎ 870 425; hotelcelebesmdo@yahoo.com; Jl Rumbami 8A; r 210,000-400,000Rp; 📶) As this place towers over the port area, ask for a room on either the 4th or 5th floors for big vistas over the water. All rooms are spotlessly clean and include air-con and hot water. The rooftop restaurant has great views over the action below and is a fine spot for a sundowner.

Kolongan Beach Indah Hotel (☎ 853 001; Jl Walter Monginsidi; r 260,000Rp; 📶) Out in Malalayang, this is a quiet, attractive alternative to Manado, and is very handy for the Malalayang bus terminal, about 100m away. The smart rooms have air-con, hot water and satellite TV, and the restaurant is a good spot to wait for a bus.

Ritzky Hotel (☎ 855 555; www.ritzkymanado.com; Jl Piere Tendean; s/d from 560,000/1,665,000Rp; 📶 🚶) Spacious rooms have giant windows that make the best of the city or sea views. There's a near-constant 'special rate' here of 550,000Rp for a double.

Hotel Santika Manado (☎ 858 222; www.santika-manado.com; r from 650,000Rp; 📶 🚶) This place feels like a world away from Manado, with a large swimming pool and walkway access through mangroves to the sea. While the dive centre gets rave reviews, the rooms are definitely past their prime.

TOP END

At the time of research, seven upmarket hotels were under construction to accommodate visitors at the five-day World Ocean Conference 2009.

Sintesa Peninsula Hotel (☎ 855 008; www.sintesapeninsulahotel.com; Jl Jend Sudirman; r from US\$110; 🍷 🍷 🍷) A gleaming new, white fortress on a hill in the middle of town, the Sintesa has all bases covered from the marble-clad lobby to its fitness centre, free internet and a big swimming pool. Great service and security. Promotional rates as low as 450,000Rp can sometimes be found on their website.

Kima Bajo Resort (☎ 860 999; www.kimabajo.com; r from US\$180; 🍷 🍷) The leading boutique resort in the Manado area (it's about a 30-minute drive to the city), Kima Bajo offers indulgent rooms in a choice of bungalows and villas, plus there's a good dive centre here. The Mayana Spa is the place to unwind after a week of diving.

Eating

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

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

Hidden behind the massive Mega Mall on Jl Piere Tendean is an excellent stretch of surprisingly chic seafood warungs open every night. The price, variety and sunsets are unbeatable. **Blue Terrace** (sheesha pipe 35,000Rp) is the hippest and doubles as a candlelit sheesha bar, while **Piglet** (mains from 15,000Rp) is the best stop for Minahasan food.

There is another stretch of warungs behind the Bahu Mall, on Jl Walter Monginsidi, 2km south of the town centre. Live bands sometimes play on a stage here.

Singapura Bakery (Jl Sam Ratulangi 22; pastries from 5000Rp) Has a mind-boggling array of baked goods, fresh juices and shakes, plus a popular cheap cafe next door serving yummy Javanese fare.

Raja Sate (Jl Pierre Tendean 39; sate from 10,000Rp) Just south of the Mega Mall. Chose from a tasty array of sate, curries and even New Zealand steaks.

Rumah Makan Green Garden (Jl Sam Ratulangi; lunch 19,000Rp) Looks a bit funky but the food here is really good. Try the tofu dishes and fresh juices.

Famili Cafe (Jl Pierre Tendean; mains 20,000-50,000Rp; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Excellent grilled-fish lunch specials that include rice, greens and sambal.

Drinking

The drinks of choice are *saguer*, a very quaffable fermented sago wine, and Cap Tikus (literally, Rat Brand), the generic name for distilled *saguer*. Cap Tikus is sold as No 1, No 2 or No 3, referring to its strength (No 1 is the strongest!). It is best diluted and served over ice.

The best option for a sunset drink is to head to one of the seaside warungs behind the Mega Mall. Stick around and sink some drinks here, as the price rises rapidly in the clubs.

Gacho (Jl Piere Tendean) One of the best of the pool bars, just south of Mega Mall.

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

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

Be very wary of places promoting karaoke. These are usually dark dens of iniquity, with overpriced drinks and working girls.

Entertainment

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

CINEMAS

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

NIGHTCLUBS

Ha Ha Cafe (entry incl 1 drink 50,000Rp) The leading club in town, this place is on the top floor of the Mega Mall. It is so vast that it looks like an aircraft hangar and only really fills

up on Wednesday (ladies' night), Friday and Saturday. Once the smuggled flasks of Cap Tikus are drained, the crowds loosen up and mob the dance floor.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Manado is well-connected by air internationally and with other parts of Indonesia.

Merpati (☎ 842 000; Jl Jend Sudirman 111) has daily flights to Jakarta and three flights a week to/from Makassar.

Garuda (☎ 877 737; Jl Sam Ratulangi) flies daily to/from Makassar, Balikpapan and Denpasar, with connections to Jakarta.

Lion Air (☎ 847 000; Mega Mall) flies daily to/from Makassar, Jakarta, Denpasar, Ternate, Sorong and Singapore, five days a week to Kuala Lumpur and once a week to/from Gorontalo.

Wings Air (☎ 847 000; Airport) has flights to/from Davao, Philippines once a week.

Silk Air (☎ 863 744; Jl Sarapung) offers services to/from Singapore six days a week.

Air Asia (☎ 2150-505 088; Airport) has flights to Kuala Lumpur three days a week that link up with European flights.

Batavia Air (☎ 386 4338; Mega Mall) offers flights to/from Balikpapan, Gorontalo, Surabaya and Jakarta.

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

See p657 for more details about international flights to/from Manado. The international departure tax is 150,000Rp.

BOAT

All Pelni boats use the deep-water port of Bitung, 55km from Manado. Several of the Pelni liners call by once or twice every week: the *Sangiang* goes to Ternate (economy/1st class 436,000/1,473,000Rp), the *Lambelu* goes to Namlea (111,000/317,000Rp) and Ambon (233,000/617,000Rp), the *Dorolonda* to Sorong (228,000/695,000Rp) and Fak Fak, and the *Tilongkabila* to Luwuk (168,000/442,000Rp) and other ports along the southeastern coast.

There's no Pelni office in Manado – the nearest one is in Bitung – but **PT Virgo Ekspres** (☎ 858 610; Jl Sam Ratulangi 5) is a reliable Pelni agent for checking information and purchasing tickets.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon the **Ratu Maria** (☎ 855 851) makes the overnight trip to Pulau Siau (75,000Rp) and Tahuna (115,000Rp) in the Sangir-Talaud Islands.

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

BUS

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

From Terminal Karombasan, 5km south of the city, buses go to Tomohon (6000Rp), Tondano (7000Rp) and other places south of Manado. From the far-southern Terminal Malalayang, very regular buses go to Kotamobagu (20,000Rp) and Gorontalo (70,000Rp, eight hours).

From Terminal Paal 2, at the eastern end of Jl Martadinata, varied public transport runs to Bitung (7000Rp) and the airport (3500Rp).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Mikrolet from Sam Ratulangi International Airport go to Terminal Paal 2 (3500Rp), where you can change to a *mikrolet* heading to Pasar 45 or elsewhere in the city, for a flat fee of 2300Rp. Fixed-price taxis cost 85,000Rp from the airport to the city (13km).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Manado's *mikrolet*, literally clog up Manado's streets so that finding one with a spare seat is a matter of waiting a second or two. *Mikrolet* heading south on Jl Sam Ratulangi with 'Wanea' on the window sign will go to Terminal Karombasan. Most *mikrolet* heading north go through Pasar 45 and past the Pasar Jengki fish market, but some go directly to Terminal Paal 2 along Jl Jend Sudirman. *Mikrolet* heading to Terminal Malalayang go down Jl Piere Tendean. The fare for any destination around town is 2300Rp.

Private taxis circle the city but very few drivers are willing to use the meter, so negotiate before setting off.

PULAU BUNAKEN

☎ 0431

This tiny, coral-fringed isle is North Sulawesi's top tourist destination but (so far) it's managed to avoid becoming resort-land and maintains a rootsy island soul. Tourist accommodation is spread out along two beaches – other than that, the island belongs to the islanders; these friendly folk have a seemingly endless reserve of authentically warm smiles. There are no hassles here, just laid-back beachy bliss.

However, most people come to Bunaken for the diving. The marine biodiversity is extraordinary, with more than 300 types of coral and 3000 species of fish, so when you first get your head in the water and see the abundant corals, sponges and phenomenally colourful life all around you, it's a life-shaking experience. The 808-hectare island is part of the 75,265-hectare **Bunaken Manado Tua Marine National Park** (Taman Laut Bunaken Manado Tua), which includes: Manado Tua (Old Manado), the dormant volcano that can be seen from Manado and climbed in about four hours; Nain and Mantehage islands; and Pulau Siladen, which has some more accommodation options.

With the developing and expanding city of Manado right next door, Bunaken is becoming more and more accessible. Within two hours of arriving to Manado from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur or most parts of Indonesia, you can be in a bamboo beach shack on Bunaken watching the sunset. Unfortunately, this proximity also means that the huge amounts of garbage generated by the city can sweep onto Pantai Liang, turning the picturesque tropical beach into a refuse heap. The scarcity of fresh water has limited the island's development, and villagers must import their drinking water from Manado. Washing water is drawn from small, brackish wells.

Many tourists who come to Bunaken are on short vacations from Europe and elsewhere, so prices from accommodation to a Bintang are much higher than in mainland Sulawesi. It also means some of the resorts actively discriminate against nondivers, either by charging higher accommodation prices or turning them away.

Orientation

There is a concrete and dirt path connecting Pangalisang and Liang, about a 30-minute walk. Pangalisang is connected to Bunaken

village by a new paved road used by scooters, while Liang has a complicated network of forest footpaths towards the main village (hint: stay on the overgrown paved part and keep going straight). A third village, Alung Banua at the northwest of the island, is rarely visited by tourists.

Information

In an attempt to finance conservation activities, rubbish disposal, mangrove rehabilitation, local education program and the policing of any illegal fishing practices, the Bunaken Manado Tua Marine National Park charges an entry fee of 50,000Rp (for a day pass) to 150,000Rp (if you stay any longer; good for one year). Pay at your hotel or dive centre. If no one asks you to pay, go to the national park headquarters on Pantai Liang to pay yourself since the money truly goes to a good cause. The plastic-tag permit should be worn while within the park boundaries.

There's an informative diorama-style museum about the flora and fauna of Bunaken at the national park headquarters with helpful information.

Activities

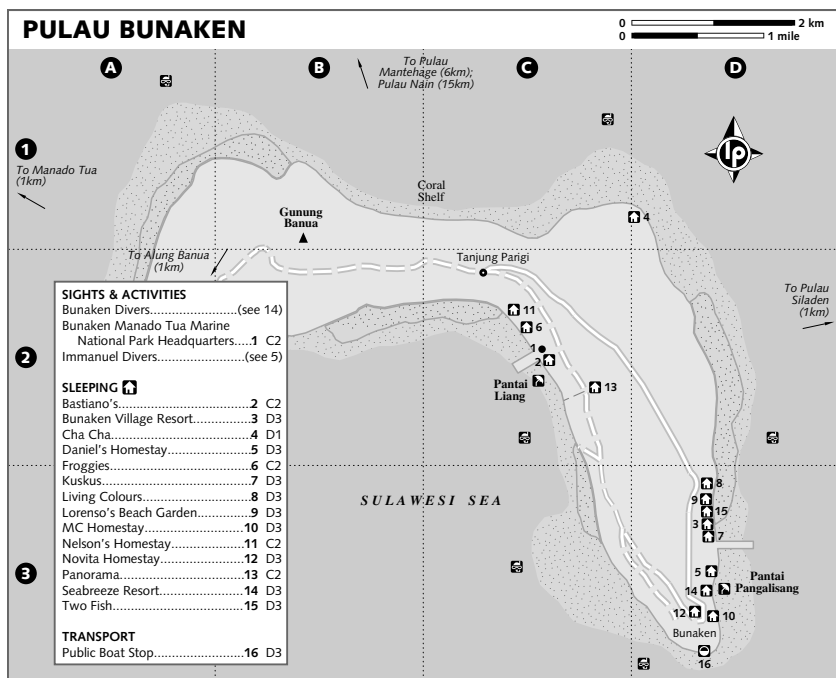
Most people go to Bunaken to dive or snorkel, but it's a lovely island to walk around, with very friendly villages and beautiful scenery.

If you're on the island during the second to third week of September, you'll be able to catch the **Bunaken Festival** which features arts and cultural performances by all the ethnic groups around North Sulawesi.

For those with less time and more money, some of the dive operators and hotels can organise day trips to Bunaken from Manado.

Sleeping & Eating

There are plenty of budget and midrange resorts on Bunaken, but no luxurious hideaways, so if you want serious comfort, stick with the mainland resorts or go to Pulau Siladen. Most rooms include at least a fan and a mosquito net and most places throw in transfers to and from the jetty in Bunaken village, in some cases to the mainland. Consider bringing some snacks and treats from the mainland, as there is not much available on the island beyond the set meals. All prices quoted below are per person and include three meals per day.



PANTAI PANGALISANG

Pantai Pangalisang is a stretch of white sand tucked behind the mangroves with some outrageous snorkelling just beyond. The beach all but disappears at high tide.

Budget

Novita Homestay (r 125,000) Right in Bunaken village (at the northern end), these spotless rooms with shared bathrooms in a charming family home are the place to stay for an authentic local experience.

Lorenzo's Beach Garden (☎ 0852 5697 3345; www.lorenzo-bunaken.com; r 125,000Rp, bungalows 175,000-250,000Rp) Lorenzo's has no-frills bamboo huts plus two cheaper rooms with a shared *mandi*-style bathroom and a social atmosphere. Meals invariably involve lots of fresh fish, and some of the island's best snorkelling is just through the mangroves.

Daniel's Homestay (☎ 813 143; daniels@indostat.net.id; bungalows from 150,000Rp) There has to be at least 20 friendly workers and their family milling around at this flower-filled outfit. Wood cottages are very basic but spacious. Pay a little more for a seafront cottage.

Two Fish (☎ 081 143 2805; www.twofishdivers.com; r €12-25; ☑) This is a big, impersonal place with a handful of small cheapies with shared bathroom and some larger but still plain 'superior' rooms with attached bathrooms. All options are on the shabby side, making only the budget rooms worth the money.

Seabreeze Resort (☎ 081 143 9558; www.bunakendivers.com; cottages €13-25) A large, sprawling resort, it has quite a few different types of bungalows, so shop around before committing. Attractions include a verdant garden, good beach access and very cold beers thanks to the Aussie owner.

Kuskus (☎ 081 3400 37657; www.bunakenkuskusresort.com; bungalows €15) Excellent-value, big wood bungalows are nestled in a particularly lush garden. Cross the small road to the restaurant on the beach. The ambience and the food here get fantastic reviews from travellers.

Midrange

MC Homestay (www.mcdivebunaken.com; bungalows €20) Located on the northern edge of Bunaken village, this homestay is just above the best beach on Bunaken and has solid, cement bungalows.

DIVING & SNORKELLING AROUND PULAU BUNAKEN

Bunaken's unique situation of being surrounded by deep water with strong, nutrient-laden currents, plus having a mangrove ecosystem that protects much of the beaches and subsequently the corals from erosion, makes it one of the best diving and snorkelling spots in the world. Beyond drop-offs you'll find caves and valleys full of brightly coloured sponges, thriving corals and fish – it is also common to see turtles, rays, dolphins and sharks. The most accessible site is the flat coral off Pantai Liang, which takes a dramatic 90-degree turn less than 100m offshore, plummeting from 1m to 2m depths into dark oblivion.

The best snorkelling and diving sites are marked on maps in most homestays on Bunaken. Well-worn snorkelling equipment can be rented from most homestays for about 50,000Rp per day, but it is often worth paying a little more to rent some quality equipment from one of the dive centres. The best option is to put in near Lorenzo's Beach Garden and exit at Two Fish. The closer you get to Bunaken Village, the less thriving the reef becomes.

Trips around Bunaken and nearby islands will cost from €45 for two dives (there's nearly always a two-dive per trip minimum – for one dive you'll have to wait out the second dive on the boat) and around €375 for PADI courses. Equipment rental is extra and costs around €15 per day for scuba gear, fins, mask and snorkel. Snorkellers can go along with the dive boats for around €5 per person.

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

The places that charge more per dive usually do so because they invest in better equipment. Check out the state of what's on offer and ask about the centre's safety procedures before you commit.

Bastiano's (☎ 0431-853 566; www.bastianos.com; Bastiano's) Caters mainly to European dive tourists on packages.

Bunaken Divers (☎ 0431-330 6034; www.bunakendivers.com; Seabreeze Resort) Friendly Australian-run outfit that has been around a while.

Bunaken Village Resort (☎ 081 3407 57268; www.bunakenvillage.com; Bunaken Village Resort) Small and competitively priced.

Cha Cha Divers (☎ 081 2430 1356; www.bunakenchacha.com; Cha Cha) Small operator with the emphasis on a personal touch.

Froggies Dive Centre (☎ 0431-850 210; www.divefroggies.com; Froggies) Pioneers of the famed lazy dive where the current does the work.

Immanuel Divers (☎ 0431-813 143; www.divedaniels.com; Daniel's Homestay) Intimate and cheap.

Living Colours (☎ 081 2430 6063; www.livingcoloursdiving.com; Living Colours) Has some of the best equipment on the island and is very professionally run.

Two Fish Divers (☎ 081 143 2805; www.twofishdivers.com; Two Fish) Popular English-run operation that does small groups with no time limits.

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

Barracuda (☎ 0431-854 279; www.barracuda-diving.com) Based at their own bungalow resort on Pantai Molas, northeast of Manado.

Eco Divers (☎ 0431-824 445; www.eco-divers.com) Based at the charming Tasik Ria Resort, about 20km south of Manado.

Gangga Island Resort & Spa (☎ 0413-889 4009; www.ganggaisland.com; r per person incl meals US\$165-225; 📶 📺 🛁) Live on remote Pulau Gangga that has access to the dive sites at Bunaken and the Lembeh Strait. Service and room quality are excellent as is the safety and equipment of the dive center. This posh place even has satellite TV and a spa.

Lumba Lumba Diving (☎ 0431-826 151; www.lumbalumbadiving.com) Promoting personal service, this homely dive centre and resort has a loyal following. It's about 20km south of Manado.

Murex (☎ 0431-826 091; www.murexdive.com) One of the longest-running dive operators in the area, with a resort to the south of Manado and liveboards roving further afield.

Nusantara Diving Centre (☎ 0413-863 988; www.ndcmanado.com) The daddy of dive operators around Bunaken, with its own impressive resort on Pantai Molas, northeast of Manado.

Odyssey Divers (☎ 0431-860 999; www.odysseadivers.com) Based at the luxurious Kima Bajo Resort on the mainland.

For more on diving the Lembeh Strait, see p715.

Service can be iffy though, and standards are dependent on whether or not the owners are there.

Bunaken Village Resort (☎ 081 3407 57268; www.bunakenvillage.com; cottages from €30; 📶) With a chic dipping pool, a fabulously friendly welcome and a refreshing Javanese-Balinese style, this is one of Bunaken's most comfortable options and is a good choice for families.

Ourpick Living Colours (☎ 081 2430 6063; www.livingcoloursdiving.com; cottages from €35; 📶) By far the most upmarket choice on this main strip of beach, this Finnish-run place has wooden bungalows with enormous terraces, stylish furniture clad in drapy white fabrics and spacious hot-water bathrooms. It's perched up on a little hill and both the food and service get excellent traveller reviews.

Cha Cha (☎ 081 3560 03736; www.bunakenchacha.com; cottages from US\$60; 📶) In splendid isolation on the northeastern tip of the island, 'The Last Resort' as it is sometimes nicknamed, has an intimate atmosphere thanks to just seven bungalows. The menu is more varied than most, with Italian and Japanese to complement the local meals. Everyone who stays here raves about it.

PANTAI LIANG

The beach at Pantai Liang has suffered from considerable erosion (it was destroyed by a storm in early 2009) and rising sea levels, and has thus become a svelte though pleasant strip of white sand. Bungalows are closer together and there's more beachside action here (such as seaside food and trinket vendors), as well as a higher likelihood of impromptu beach parties. However, it's a sorry sight when the rubbish washes in from Manado.

The beach just south of Pantai Liang is a protected turtle nesting ground, so keep off of it even though it looks inviting.

Budget

Panorama (☎ 01340830872; ester_kasehung@hotmail.com; cottages from 125,000Rp) Tucked in corner up on a hillside, the basic wood bungalows with terraces and commanding views are the best budget deal on the island. It's a friendly, family-style place; some more upmarket bungalows (under Dutch management) were under construction when we visited.

Nelson's Homestay (☎ 0431856288; cottages 175,000Rp) These basic huts are built on the cliffs and have bay views and an OK stretch of beach below.

Midrange

Bastiano's (☎ 853 566; www.bastianos.com; r €18-25) The cheaper rooms at this sprawling hotel are basic for the price, but the more expensive ones have skylights and some pretty terracotta *mandi* bathing jugs in the bathrooms. It's on a long stretch of beach and the service is great. Food is not as good as you might hope for at an Italian-run place.

Froggies (☎ 081 2430 1356; www.divefroggies.com; cottages €25-35) Very professionally run, this was one of the first dive centres on the island and it's still going strong. It has a good beach-front location, rooms are well decorated and spotless, and the interesting restaurant area feels a bit like the bat cave. Nondivers are not welcome.

PULAU SILADEN

Siladen Resort & Spa (www.siladen.com; r from €250) A beautiful resort on Siladen, with 15 cottages that are sumptuously furnished and have a great reputation. Facilities include a lagoon pool, an indulgent spa and dive centre.

Tanta Moon (r 130,000Rp) Basic, friendly and clean, this place gets points for its good, fresh food.

Getting There & Away

Every day (except Sunday) at about 3pm, a public boat (50,000Rp, one hour) leaves the harbour, near Pasar Jengki fish market in Manado, for Bunaken village and Pulau Siladen. You'll have to walk from the boat landing in Bunaken village to your homestay. The boat leaves Bunaken between 7am and 8am daily (except Sunday), so it's not possible to day-trip from Manado using the public boat.

The more upmarket options on Bunaken offer on-demand boat shuttles to/from Manado for their clients for around €5 each way per person – you can also usually hop on these services if you've been diving with the place. Otherwise, most guest houses can help you charter a boat (often small and rickety) for around 200,000Rp each way for the whole boat. When conditions are rough the public boat stops running, but private boats will usually make the shorter, half-hour crossing between Bunaken and either the **Hotel Santika** (see p707; about one hour from Manado) or the town of Wori (two hours from Manado). Bear in mind that conditions are sometimes too choppy for any boats to make the crossing.

At the beginning of 2009 a second, larger pier was under construction at Bunaken village, with goals of welcoming a regular tourist-calibre ferry to/from Manado that might also connect Bunaken to Gangga and Bangka islands.

TOMOHOH

☎ 0431 / pop 30,000

Tomohon is a pleasant, cool respite from Manado, with a stunning setting below Gunung Lokon volcano. It's popular with city folk on weekends; for travellers, it's a possible (though spread-out) alternative to Manado, and an ideal base from which to explore the many nearby attractions.

Sleeping

If you plan on climbing Gunung Lokon stay at Volcano Resort which is right at the base. To get here, get out at 'Gereja Pniel', about 3km before Tomohon from Manado. From here you'll have to walk or catch an *ojek* the remaining 500m towards the mountain.

To get to Onong's Palace or Highland Resort, get off the *mikrolet* from Manado at 'Kinilow', about 5km before Tomohon, and walk the 300m signposted from the main road.

All of the following places have restaurants, and breakfast is included in the price.

Volcano Resort (☎ 352 988; cottages 100,000-150,000Rp) Spread out around a grassy garden, these clean, wooden bungalows are a great deal, plus the staff are helpful and speak English. There are also some budget rooms with shared bathroom at 80,000Rp.

Onong's Palace (☎ 315 7090; www.tomohon-onong.com; r 250,000Rp) The chic bungalows here are perched along an exceptionally lush and shady hillside. All have big decks, massive windows, artistic bamboo Bali-style details and hot water. There's a reasonably good on-site restaurant.

Highland Resort (☎ 353 333; www.highlandresort.info; r €30-80) A tidy place with all the staff in matching red T-shirts, Highland Resort has a huge collection of plain but clean wooden rooms of varying sizes. Lots of tours and tour information are on offer, and there are nice views over the jungle. There's also a full spa.

Gardenia Country Inn (☎ 353 333; www.gardeniacountryinn.com; r/chalets from US\$60/80) An oasis in beautifully manicured gardens. The chalets here are like a Balinese hideaway. Discounts available.

TOMOHOH'S MACABRE MARKET

It's said that the Minahasan people will eat anything on four legs, apart from the table and chairs, and nowhere is this more evident than at Tomohon's daily market. Visiting the market (which is right next to the *mikrolet* terminal) is a slaughterhouse-like experience, with dead and alive dogs, pigs, rats and bats all on display. The most radical moments are when yelping dogs are pulled out of their cages and killed by a bludgeon on the back of the head. The market is at its 'best' on Saturday morning when the snake butchers come to town.

Eating

Minahasan adventurous cuisine is served in a string of restaurants on a cliff overlooking Manado, just a few kilometres before Tomohon. The food at **Pemandangan** (meals 15,000-45,000Rp) is as impressive as the spectacular views, with great seafood plus Indonesian staples. The bus from Manado to Tomohon will drop you off at any restaurant, but buses back to Manado are often full.

Getting There & Around

Mikrolet regularly travel to Tomohon (6000Rp, 40 minutes) from Terminal Karombasan in Manado. From the terminal in Tomohon, *mikrolet* go to Manado, and *mikrolet* and buses go to Tondano and various other towns.

There are a few *bendi* around town, but a good way to see local sights in little time is to charter a *mikrolet* or a more comfortable, but expensive, taxi. The taxis line up opposite the *mikrolet* terminal.

AROUND TOMOHOH

Gunung Lokon (1580m) contains a simmering crater lake of varying hues, which takes about three hours to reach (and another hour to the peak) from Tomohon. Before climbing any volcano in the area, report to the **vulcanology centre** (Kantor Dinas Gunung Berapi; ☎ 351 076; Jl Kakashashen Tiga). The centre can provide advice about the hike. Happy Flower Homestay and Volcano Resort in Tomohon can help arrange this and other hikes in the area, for guests.

You can drive almost all the way to the top of **Gunung Mahawu**, where you'll be rewarded with views over the whole region and into a

180m-wide, 140m-deep sulphuric crater lake. There's no public transport but lots of tours go here. This place gets swarmed by locals on the weekends.

There are numerous other places to explore from Tomohon, and all are accessible by *mikrolet*. **Danau Linow**, a small, highly sulphurous lake that changes colours with the light, is home to extensive birdlife. Take a *mikrolet* to **Sonder**, get off at **Lahendong** and walk 1.5km to the lake. From Danau Linow you can hike 8km to Danau Tondano, but you'll need to ask directions.

DANAU TONDANO

This lake, 30km south of Manado, is 600m above sea level. It's a beautiful area for **hiking**, and is popular with Manado's upper class especially on weekends. Just before Remboken village, along the road around the lake, **Objek Wisata Remboken** has a swimming pool, a mediocre restaurant overlooking the lake and some gardens to wander around. There are also several decent seafood restaurants along the road around the lake.

Mikrolet regularly leave for Tondano village (7000Rp) from Terminal Karombasan in Manado, or you can get there by *mikrolet* from Tomohon (2500Rp). From Tondano, catch another *mikrolet* to Remboken, and get off anywhere you like along the road around the lake.

AIRMAIDIDI

Airmadidi (Boiling Water) is the site of mineral springs, but the real attraction are the odd little **pre-Christian tombs** known as *waruga*. Corpses were placed in these carved stone boxes, in a foetal position, with household articles, gold and porcelain, but most have been plundered. There's a group of these tombs at Airmadidi Bawah, a 15-minute walk from the Airmadidi *mikrolet* terminal.

Mikrolet to Airmadidi leave from Terminal Paal 2 in Manado (4000Rp), and there are connections between Airmadidi and Tondano and Bitung.

Gunung Klabat

Gunung Klabat (2022m) is the highest peak on the peninsula. The obvious path to the crater at the top starts behind the police station at Airmadidi, where you must register and take a guide. The climb (about four hours to the top, two for the descent) goes through

rainforest where you can see superb flora and fauna, but it's a tough hike.

It's best to camp overnight near the top and be there for the sunrise and the stupendous views across the whole peninsula. Your guide should be able to provide a tent. Try to avoid Sunday, when the mountain can be crowded with local hikers.

BITUNG

☎ 0438 / pop 137,000

Bitung is the chief regional port and home to many factories. Despite its spectacular setting, the town is unattractive, so most travellers make for Manado or beyond as soon as possible.

Regardless of what time you arrive by boat in Bitung, there will be buses going to Manado, but if you need to leave Bitung by boat early in the morning, it may be prudent to stay overnight. Be vigilant around the docks, as plenty of pickpockets turn up to greet the Pelni liners.

Hotel Nalendra (☎ 32072; Jl Samuel Languyu 5A; r from 150,000Rp) has been recommended by readers who have been stranded in Bitung over the years. The clean rooms include hot water, TV and air-con.

There are plenty of basic *rumah makan* in the town centre and near the port.

Getting There & Away

All sorts of vehicles leave regularly from Terminal Paal 2 in Manado (7000Rp, one hour). The driver stops at Terminal Mapalus, just outside Bitung, from where you have to catch another *mikrolet* (10 minutes) to town or the port.

See p709 for details about boats to Bitung. The port is in the middle of Bitung, and the **Pelni office** (☎ 35818) is in the port complex.

PULAU LEMBEH & THE LEMBEH STRAIT

Lembah is known almost exclusively for its diving and has emerged as the critter capital of Indonesia. For the uninitiated, welcome to an alien world on our very own planet. Critters are the weird and wonderful creatures that inhabit the murky depths and are much admired by underwater photographers. However, this is muck diving and not for beginners thanks to strong currents. If it's coral you are after, you're better off around Bunaken.

Sleeping & Eating

As Lembeh's fame grows, so does the number of dive resorts, and most have a sister operation on either Bunaken or around Manado. All are set in their own secluded bays, but without transport it is near-impossible to travel between them. Packages that include diving are usually available, but the following prices are for room and board only per person.

Bastiano's (☎ 0431-332 5678; www.bastianoslembeh.com; r €18-23, cottages €26-38; 🍷 🍴 🍷) One of the newer resorts, Bastiano's has good-value rooms, but the cottages are much nicer.

Divers Lodge (☎ 081 2443 3754; www.diving-on-sulawesi.com; cottages €30) One of the more popular options in the Lembeh area has good food and even better service.

Kungkungan Bay Resort (www.divekbr.com; cottages US\$115-180; 🍷 🍴 🍷) This small, elegant resort is intimate and very well run.

Lembeh Resort (☎ 0438-30667; www.lembehresort.com; cottages US\$125-175; 🍷 🍴 🍷) This is a lovely Balinese-style resort that gets many returning customers.

TANGKOKO-BATUANGAS DUA SAUDARA NATURE RESERVE

With 8800 hectares of forest bordered by a sandy coastline and offshore coral gardens, Tangkoko is one of the most impressive and accessible nature reserves in Indonesia. The park is home to black macaques, cuscuses and tarsiers, maleo birds and endemic red-knobbed hornbills, among other fauna, and rare types of rainforest flora. Tangkoko is also home to a plethora of midges, called *gonones*, which bite and leave victims furiously scratching for days afterwards. Always wear long trousers, tucked into thick socks, and take covered shoes and plenty of insect repellent.

Sadly, parts of the park are falling victim to encroachment by local communities, but money generated from visitors might help stave that off.

Bring plenty of cash as the nearest ATM, in Girian, often runs dry.

Sights & Activities

Most people arrive at the park entrance at Batuputih in the afternoon, take a guided night walk into the park to see the tarsiers (when sightings are nearly guaranteed), and then another guided walk the next morning to see lively troupes of black macaques. Guided walks cost 85,000Rp per person. It's worth staying longer to enjoy the gorgeous beach setting and friendly folk at Batuputih and to take a variety of other tours including **dolphin-spotting boat tours** (full day up to 4 people 300,000Rp), that also include a visit to nearby hot springs, and **birdwatching** or **fishing tours** (half-day up to 4 people 200,000Rp). All tours and walks can be arranged at your guest house, which will invariably be swarming with guides.

Sleeping & Eating

There are several basic lodges in Batuputih village which all include three meals in their prices.

Tarsius Homestay (☎ 0813 5622 5545; r 150,000-200,000Rp) One of a few cheaper but less lively places down the road towards the beach from Mama Roos, this place has clean rooms with attached bathrooms in a big house.

Mama Roos (☎ 0813 4042 1454; mamaroos@eudoramail.com; r 250,000-300,000Rp) This is the most popular option and it's bright and friendly.

Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort (☎ 0431-838 185; www.pulisanresort-sulawesi.com; bungalows per person incl meals from €22-40) Located just to the north of

TARSIERS

If you're visiting Sulawesi's Tangkoko-Batuangas Dua Saudara Nature Reserve or Lore Lindu National Park, keep your eyes peeled for something looking back at you: a tiny nocturnal primate known as a tarsier. These creatures are recognisable by their eyes, which are literally larger than their stomachs, so big in fact that they cannot rotate them within their sockets. Luckily, their heads can be rotated nearly 360 degrees, so their range of vision isn't compromised. Tarsiers also have huge, sensitive ears, which can be retracted and unfurled, and disproportionately long legs, which they use to jump distances 10 times their body length. They use their anatomical anomalies and impressive speed to catch small insects. Tarsiers live in groups of up to eight, and communicate with what sounds like high-pitched singing. They are found only in some rainforests of Indonesia and the Philippines.

the nature reserve. Dive into pristine waters, go birdwatching, hike or just take it easy. Boat trips to the national park are available and there is a beautiful stretch of sand here.

Getting There & Away

To get to Batuputih from Manado, take a bus to Bitung, get off at Girian and catch a *mikrolet* or pick-up truck to Batuputih. Some of the dive centres and hotels in and around Manado also run day trips to the park, but you'll miss most of the animal action if you go on these.

SANGIR-TALAUD ISLANDS

☎ 0432

Strewn across the sea between Indonesia and the southern Philippines are the volcanic island groups of Sangir and Talaud. There are 77 islands, of which 56 are inhabited. The main islands in the Sangir group are Sangir Besar and Siau; the main islands in the Talaud group are Karakelong, Salibabu and Kaburuang. The capital of the group is Tahuna on Sangir Besar; the other major settlement is Lirung on Pulau Salibabu.

The islands offer dozens of unspoilt sandy beaches, a few crumbling **Portuguese forts**, several **volcanoes** to climb, many caves and waterfalls to explore, and some superb **diving** and **snorkelling** (bring your own gear). But like most wonderfully pristine places, the islands are not easy to reach.

There's a **tourist office** (☎ 22219; Jl Tona) in Tahuna.

Sleeping & Eating

Penginapan Chindy (s/d 30,000/45,500Rp) and **Penginapan Sederhana** (s/d 30,000/45,500Rp) are both in Lirung, but don't expect too much luxury or privacy.

Hotel Nasional (☎ 21185; Jl Makaampo 58, Tahuna; s/d with fan 50,000/75,000Rp, with air-con from 90,000/120,000Rp; 🍽️) Head here for a range of decent rooms, plus it has the best restaurant in Tahuna.

Rainbow Losmen (r 55,000Rp) Located further south along the coast from Tahuna in nearby Tamoko, this is a simple, friendly establishment in a pretty village.

Hotel Victory Veronica (☎ 21494; Jl Raramenusu 16, Tahuna; r with fan/air-con 60,000/90,000Rp; 🍽️) The smartest place anywhere on the islands. It also has the decent Deniest Coffee Shop.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Once a week, Merpati flies from Manado to Naha, which is about 20km from Tahuna, and on to Melanguane, which is near Lirung in the Talaud group. There's a **Merpati office** (☎ 21037; Jl Makaampo) in Tahuna.

BOAT

Travelling by boat will give you a look at the stunning set of volcanic islands along the way. From Bitung, the Pelni liner *Sangiang* stops at Tahuna and Lirung once every two weeks. Pelni boats are far more comfortable than the other options, such as the *Pulo Teratai* and the *Agape Star*, which sail between Manado and Lirung (15 hours), often stopping in Tahuna (11 hours), every one or two days. Book at the boat offices near the port in Manado.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon the **Ratu Maria** (☎ 0431-855 851) makes the overnight trip from Manado to Siau (75,000Rp) and Tahuna (115,000Rp).

Also from Manado, small, slow and uncomfortable boats leave every day or two for Tahuna and Lirung. Tickets are available from the stalls outside the port.

The seas can get quite rough during the high wind from October to April.

SOUTHEAST SULAWESI

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

History

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

The region's most powerful pre-colonial kingdom was Buton, based at Wolio, near Bau Bau. Its control and influence over other regional states was supported by the Dutch



colonialists. Buton came under direct Dutch rule after the fall of Makassar in 1669, and was granted limited autonomy in 1906.

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

The civil strife of the 1950s and 1960s was a time of extreme hardship for the people of the province. Farms and villages were plundered by rebel and government forces alike, decimating the region's agricultural sector. Today Southeast Sulawesi is supported by mining, agriculture and timber plantations

and is a centre for transmigration (see p57), which has boosted its population to almost two million.

KOLAKA

☎ 0405

Kolaka is readily accessible by boat from Bajoe, and is the major gateway to Southeast Sulawesi province. The centre of town is the bus terminal, about 500m north of the ferry terminal. You can change money at **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Repelita), not far from Hotel Family.

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

Hotel Family (☎ 21350; Jl Cakalang 6; r 30,000-40,000Rp), a quiet spot 150m southwest of the

bus terminal, is the best place to stay. It has airy, clean rooms and the more expensive ones include an attached bathroom.

Getting There & Away

All day and night, plenty of buses, bemos and Kijangs travel between Kolaka and Kendari (65,000Rp, six hours). While you are on the ferry you may be able to find a spare seat on a bus going directly to Kendari or Makassar – just check with the bus drivers.

Three ferries travel overnight from Kolaka to Bajoe (60,000/75,000Rp deck/business class, eight hours), the main port on the eastern coast of the southwest peninsula. The ferries leave at 5pm, 8pm and 11pm, and are all timed to connect with services for a convenient arrival in Makassar.

KENDARI

☎ 0401 / pop 235,000

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

Orientation

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

Information

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

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Sudirman)

Hospital (☎ 321 773; Jl Sam Ratulangi) A reliable public hospital, 6km west of town.

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

Telkom office (Jl Ahmad Yani; ☎ 24hr)

Tourist office (☎ 326 634) Inconveniently located and of limited use.

Festivals & Events

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

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Cendrawasih (☎ 321 932; Jl Diponegoro 42; r with fan/air-con 66,000/110,000Rp; ♿) A long-running place, just off the main road, with friendly staff and good service. The fan rooms are ageing these days, but have balconies. The air-con rooms are in better shape.

Kendari Beach Hotel (☎ /fax 321 988; Jl Hasanuddin 44; r 100,000-150,000Rp; ♿) This is located on a small hill; take advantage of the private balcony to enjoy the views and breezes. All rooms come with satellite TV, while the more expensive options come with hot water and better views. There is also a restaurant overlooking the bay with an extensive menu at affordable prices.

Hotel Kartika Kendari (☎ /fax 321 484; Jl Parman 84; r from 160,000Rp; ♿) This large hotel has smart rooms with satellite TV and hot water. You may have to pester staff to get the hot water working. Discounts available.

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

The night warungs lining the esplanade along Jl Bung Tomo are a popular hang-out in the evening.

Getting There & Away

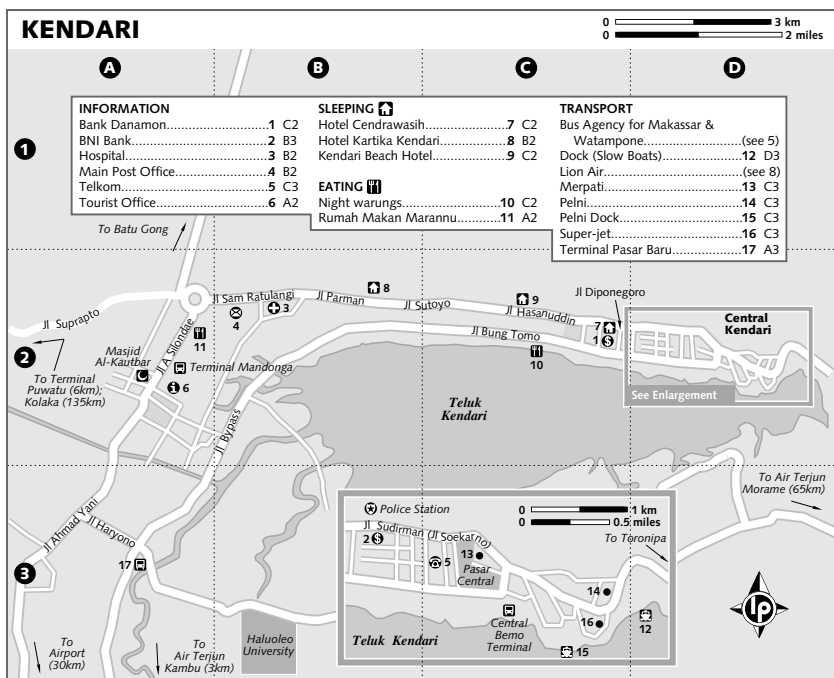
AIR

Merpati (☎ 322 242; Jl Sudirman) and **Lion Air** (☎ 329 911; Jl Parman 84) connect Kendari and Makassar, and Merpati also flies to Palu. Don't forget to ask the staff about transport to the remote airport.

BOAT

Adjacent to a church on top of a hill, the **Pelni** (☎ 321 915) office is just up from a roundabout, and not far from the Pelni dock.

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



The Super-jet *kapal cepat* (fast boat) leaves the Pelni dock at Kendari at about 7.30am and 1pm daily for Raha (75,000Rp, 3½ hours) and Bau Bau (100,000Rp, five hours). You can buy your ticket directly from the **Super-jet** (☎ 329 257; Jl Sukowati 8) office near the Pelni dock.

BUS, BEMO & KIJANG

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

Getting Around

Contact the airline office about transport to the airport, which is 30km southwest of Kendari – both airlines usually run a bus with certain pick-up points in town. From

the airport, you can jump in a shared vehicle or if you don't mind the extra cost, charter one.

Kendari is *very* spread out. For short distances, take a becak; for anything along the main road, take a *pete-pete*; to anywhere else, catch an air-conditioned taxi.

AROUND KENDARI

Air Terjun Kambu

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

Air Terjun Morame

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

Take a bus from Terminal Pasar Baru (one hour), or charter a boat (about two hours) from near the Pelni dock in Kendari. If you have a boat, arrange a slight detour to **Teluk Lapuko**, a

great spot for **swimming** and **snorkelling**, with white-sand beaches and clear water.

Pulau Hari

This tiny island, 18km off the Kendari coast, is a **nature reserve** with white-sand beaches and opportunities for **snorkelling** and **walking**. Get a group together, and charter a boat from near the Pelni dock in Kendari. It should cost about 200,000Rp for the day, but bring your own snorkelling gear.

RAHA

☎ 0403

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

Sleeping & Eating

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

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

Hotel Ilham (☎ 21070; Jl Jati 16; r with fan 66,000Rp, with air-con 175,000Rp; 🍴) One of the few places in town to offer an air-con escape during the hot season, this is a friendly operation.

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

Getting There & Away

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

Every two weeks the Pelni liner *Tilongkabila* stops at Raha on its way up (via Kendari)

and down (via Bau Bau) the east coast of Sulawesi. The **Pelni** office is at the end of the causeway.

AROUND RAHA

Napabale

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

Pantai Melerua

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

Gua Mabolu

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

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

Latugho

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

BAU BAU

☎ 0402 / pop 83,000

With comfortable accommodation, great views from the well-preserved citadel walls and some decent beaches within easy *ojek* range, Pulau Buton's prosperous main town of Bau Bau is a great place to await a boat connection to Maluku, North Sulawesi, or the diving paradise of Tukangbesi.

Orientation & Information

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

The best internet cafe is a block inland from the main mosque. Around 1.5km east of the main port is a second harbour, with the offices for the **tourist department** (☎ 23588), Telkom and Pelni. The **BNI bank** (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl Kartini) has an ATM that shouldn't be relied upon, as well as exchange.

Sights & Activities

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

Sleeping & Eating

Wolio Homestay (☎ 040 226 999; 16 Jl Mayjen Sutoyo; r 35,000Rp) About 200m from the harbour. The owner here speaks English and the price includes breakfast.

our pick Hillhouse Resort (☎ 21189; r with breakfast 100,000Rp) This little place has one of the most spectacular settings anywhere in Sulawesi. It's about half a click above Pusat Kebudayaan Wolio, set amid a hilltop flower garden with outstanding panoramic views of the bay and

beyond. The rooms are simple, with mosquito nets and shared bathroom. Be sure to call ahead to alert staff of your arrival and to order any meals (35,000Rp) in advance; there are no shops or eateries nearby.

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

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

Getting There & Away

The fast Super-jet boat takes 1½ hours to Raha (55,000Rp) and five hours to Kendari (100,000Rp), and leaves at 7am and 12.30pm daily. Demand can often be greater than supply, so book ahead (from 5pm the day before) at the **Super-jet** (☎ 22497) office, which is opposite Warung Pangkep, about 500m west of the port.

Every two weeks the Pelni liners *Umsini*, *Ciremai*, *Lambelu*, *Sinabung*, *Tilongkabila* and *Kelimutu* link Bau Bau with Makassar (economy/1st class 112,000/365,000Rp), and most also go to Ambon, southern Maluku and/or Papua. Every two weeks the *Tilongkabila* goes up and down the east coast of Sulawesi, stopping off at Kendari and Bitung (for Manado), among other places.

TUKANGBESI ISLANDS

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

Sleeping

All accommodation except Wakatobi Dive Resort are on Pulau Hoga. It is also possible to arrange informal homestays on this island for

about 50,000Rp including meals. Some basic snorkelling equipment is available, but bring your own if you want to be sure.

Hoga Island Resort (diving@sulawesi-indonesia.com; bungalow per person from 50,000Rp) A Dutch-run place on the beach catering to backpackers.

Island Garden (☎ 0815 819 4119; <http://home.arcor.de/islandgarden>; bungalow per person 100,000Rp) Has a good reputation and comfortable bungalows.

Operation Wallacea (www.opwall.com) This British-based NGO organises pre-booked 'volunteer' programs in marine conservation. The organisation has a study centre on Pulau Hoga and may be able hook people up with a homestay during busy periods.

Wakatobi Dive Resort (www.wakatobi.com; one-week packages from US\$3125) On Pulau Onemobaa, this ultra-exclusive hideaway offers beautiful

bungalow accommodation and one of the most celebrated house reefs in Indonesia. Packages include diving, full board and charter flights from Bali. It is also the base for the elegant liveaboard **Pelagian** (www.pelagian.wakatobi.com).

Getting There & Away

Getting to Hoga is the big headache. From Bau Bau, take the daily boat to Wanci on Pulau Wangiwangi (about 100,000Rp; eight hours), which usually leaves in the evening and arrives very early the next day. Wait around for another boat, or more likely charter one, to Hoga (count on 100,000Rp). Once every four weeks the Pelni liner *Kelimutu* travels from Makassar to Bau Bau then on to Ambon via Wanci.

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