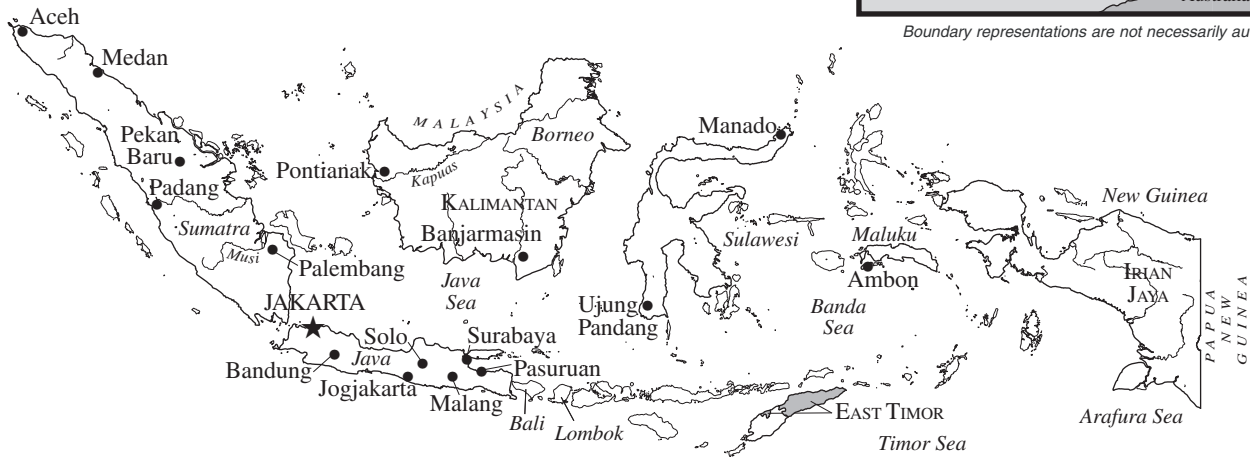


Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.



▶ ASIA

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Indonesia's 13,670 islands stretch 3,200 miles (4,800 kilometers) along the equator south, east, and west of Malaysia. The Kalimantan provinces share the island of Borneo with Malaysia and Brunei. Irian Jaya shares New Guinea with Papua New Guinea. The largest of Indonesia's unshared islands include Sumatra, Java, and Sulawesi. Six thousand islands are inhabited. Covering an area of 741,096 square miles (1,919,400 square kilometers), the chain of volcanic islands is about one-fifth the size of the United States. Indonesians consider the waters that separate the islands to be integral to their territory, calling their country Tanah Air Kita ("Our Land of Air and Water").

Indonesia is home to tigers, elephants, monkeys, tropical birds, small deer, Komodo dragons, abundant marine life, and a variety of tropical plants and flowers. Some species are threatened by logging and other dangers. Slightly less than two-thirds of Indonesia is covered by rain forest; around 40 percent of the forests are in danger of development.

Indonesia has a tropical climate; heavy monsoon rains fall from November to March. Coastal areas are hot and humid all year. Mountains on the larger islands are cooler, and there are some arid regions. Indonesia's position on the equator gives it a fairly even climate throughout the country. Temperatures average 72°F to 84°F (22–29°C) year-round, though the north coastal plains may reach 94°F (34°C) during the dry season. Indonesia has more than one hundred active volcanoes.

History. Great Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms based in Indonesia once ruled the South Seas. One such kingdom, Sriwijaya, prospered in the eighth century. Inland empires warred with coastal shipping kingdoms until the 11th century, when King Airlangga split his empire in East Java between his two sons.

Their two grand empires, Majapahit and Singasari, began a golden era of trade, scholarship, and art. Weakened by internal conflicts, the empires fell to a new Islamic state (Demak) in the 15th century. Portuguese traders arrived in the 16th century and the islands' spices became a source of conflict between various European nations during the 17th century. Indonesia was a Dutch colony from 1816 until 1942, when Japan occupied the islands during World War II.

Upon Japan's defeat in 1945, Indonesia proclaimed independence (acknowledged by the Netherlands in 1949) and established a fledgling multiparty democracy. The republic's first president, Sukarno, replaced the system in 1960 with a policy of "guided democracy" to balance tensions between various factions, including the military, Communists, Islam, and ethnic groups.

Sukarno was deposed in 1966 by General Suharto, who had put down an attempted 1965 coup. Suharto conducted a bloody anti-Communist purge and was elected president in 1968. In the 1970s, Suharto's New Order government embraced a national philosophy called *pancasila* (five principles): belief in one God, humanism, unity of the state, consensus, and social justice. Emphasizing the need to sacrifice political freedom for economic stability and development, Suharto tightly controlled the political system and its three legal parties for nearly 30 years.

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 after Portugal granted it independence (West Timor was already part of Indonesia). The violent invasion, subsequent famine, and ongoing suppression took the lives of many thousands of people. Under international pressure and after Suharto's government fell, Indonesia agreed to a UN-sponsored referendum in August

Indonesia

1999 on East Timor's future. When voters clearly chose independence, pro-Indonesian militias rioted, burned villages, and began killing residents. Indonesia's government accepted the vote, and international peacekeepers restored a measure of calm. In 2002, East Timorese elected their first president, and the country completed the transition to full independence.

Discontent with Suharto surfaced in the 1990s as a rising middle class sought greater press and political freedoms to go with economic prosperity. Escalating corruption, economic crisis, and attempted suppression of opposition party leaders nearly caused the economy to collapse in 1998. Large student demonstrations culminated in a devastating riot, and Suharto resigned in disgrace.

Vice President Habibie took office; he lifted bans on labor unions and political parties, released political prisoners, and scheduled elections. In the 1999 parliamentary elections, none of the 48 parties involved gained a majority, but Megawati Sukarnoputri (Sukarno's daughter) and her Indonesia Democratic Party for Struggle (PDIP) received the most votes (about 34 percent). The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), consisting of parliament and two hundred provincial representatives, elected Muslim cleric Abdurrahman Wahid as president and Megawati as vice president. In 2001, Wahid was forced to resign amid charges of corruption. Megawati took over as president, inheriting an array of challenges that include economic uncertainty, Islamic militancy, and a number of violent separatist movements.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Indonesia's population of 234.9 million, growing annually at 1.5 percent, is the fourth largest in the world. Indonesia is home to 350 distinct ethnic groups; many have their own language and most have their own customs and heritage. Yet Indonesia's motto is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Diverse yet unified). The nation's largest groups are the Javanese (45 percent), Sundanese (14), Madurese (8), Coastal Malays (8), and Chinese (2). The remaining 23 percent belong to smaller groups.

The largest cities are Jakarta (more than 12 million), Surabaya, and Bandung. Java is the most densely populated island, holding more than half of the country's people. A New Order government transmigration program attempted to resettle Javanese people to less populated areas like Irian Jaya. Of the millions moved, few found success; many found themselves in unsuitable areas or without necessary farming skills. Their presence created ethnic tensions that erupted into violence beginning in 1998. Hundreds of thousands of Indonesians have become internal refugees as they flee violence.

The Javanese are predominantly Muslim and are known for their dedication to strong social and spiritual values. Coastal Muslim traders have a high regard for Islamic learning and law. Chinese merchants live mostly in urban areas and control much of Indonesia's private economy. Some northern areas and East Timor are predominantly Christian. The tribes on Kalimantan and Papuans in Irian Jaya maintain tight kinship bonds, practice animistic religions or Christianity, and have a clan-oriented economic and social life. The people on Bali are mostly Hindu and belong to traditional kin groups.

Language. The official national language is *bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian). It uses the Roman alphabet and has a simple grammatical structure. Related to Malay but continually developing, Indonesian incorporates words from Javanese, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Hindi, Sanskrit, English, and

other languages. More than 100 million people speak Javanese, but relatively few of them can actually read its Hindi script or have mastered its complex multilevel grammar. Most people speak some Indonesian and their native tongue; there are more than three hundred languages or dialects. English is the leading international language and is taught as a third language in school (after Indonesian and the main ethnic language of the area).

Religion. Most Indonesians (88 percent) are Muslim. Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population; the majority consider themselves only moderately religious. Indonesians have largely adapted the religion to their culture—Hinduism, Buddhism, and paganism have influenced beliefs and practices. Islamic scripture is the *Qur'an* (Koran), which Muslims believe *Allah* (God) revealed to the prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. Devout Muslims express their faith by professing the name of *Allah* and Muhammad as his prophet; praying five times daily; fasting during the holy month of *Ramadan*; donating to the poor; and making a pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, if they can afford it. They do not drink alcohol or eat pork.

Eight percent of the population is Christian (mostly Protestant) and 2 percent is Hindu. Many Chinese are Buddhists. While freedom of religion is guaranteed and religious tolerance is practiced, minor personal conflicts, even if not directly related to religion, can quickly erupt into violent riots leaving Christian, Hindi, or Buddhist places of worship, as well as Chinese shops, destroyed.

General Attitudes. Indonesians value loyalty to family and friends. They are friendly and quick to smile, even at strangers. They rarely disagree in public and prefer to say *belum* (not yet) instead of *tidak* (no). Punctuality, while important, is not emphasized at the expense of personal relations. A quiet voice, an unassuming attitude, patience, and discretion are appreciated. To embarrass someone is a terrible insult. Indonesians often view Westerners as too quick to anger, too serious about themselves, and too committed to the idea that "time is money."

Urban lifestyles and goals are very different from those in rural areas. Urban parents strive to provide their children with as much education as possible; rural parents, however, consider education beyond elementary school to be a luxury since they often rely on their children for farm labor. The urban consumer class prefers the pursuit of material possessions to traditional rural values. Most adults want their children to marry someone of the same social status and religion.

Personal Appearance. Cleanliness and modest dress are hallmarks of an Indonesian's appearance. Indonesians bathe at least twice daily. During *sore* (just before evening), when temperatures cool and the day's work is done, people bathe and dress in traditional attire to relax or visit.

Designer fashions are popular among urban youth. Businessmen wear a shirt and tie; factory workers, teachers, and store employees wear uniforms. Village men wear a shirt with shorts or a *sarong* (a long cloth wrapped around the waist). Village women wear a blouse with a *sarong*. Urban women wear Western dresses for daily activities, reserving traditional attire for special occasions such as weddings and religious celebrations. For men and women, traditional clothing includes a *sarong* made of *batik* (fabric printed by wax-coating the areas not to be dyed). Authentic *batik* is made by hand; mass-produced *batik* is more common since it is cheaper.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. Indonesians usually shake hands when they greet; the style of handshake may vary by region. Muslim men may follow a handshake by touching their right palm to their heart in a show of friendship. Women often brush cheeks. When meeting someone for the first time, a person may shake hands and state his or her name. Otherwise, the most common verbal greeting is *Assalamu alaikum* (Peace be upon you); the reply is *Wa'alaikum salaam* (And peace be upon you). Some people say *Bagaimana kabarnya?* (How is your news?). The next question nearly always is *Dari mana?* (Where are you coming from?).

Older individuals are addressed respectfully as *ibu* (mother) or *bapak* (father) alone or followed by their first name. Most Indonesians, especially the Javanese, are addressed by their first names, even in formal situations. Professional or religious titles follow the name if appropriate.

Gestures. It is polite to beckon (waving all fingers with the palm facing down) only to children, close friends, or *becak* (pedicab) drivers. To otherwise get someone's attention, people wait to be noticed, clear their throat, or clap their hands—depending on their status or the situation. Indonesians never touch the head of another person. They do not use the left hand to touch others, point, eat, or give or receive objects. To point at something, many people use the thumb instead of a finger. Standing with one's hands in the pockets or on the hips is a sign of defiance or arrogance. Crossing the legs usually is inappropriate, but if crossed, one knee should be over the other (not an ankle on the knee). The bottom of one's foot may not point toward another person. Yawning in public is avoided.

Visiting. Indonesians believe visits bring honor to the host, and they warmly welcome all guests. Unannounced visits between friends and relatives can occur at any time. Reciprocal visits are very important. It is polite for guests to remove their footwear when entering a home or a carpeted room.

Visitors sit when invited to, and they rise when the host or hostess enters the room. Hosts often serve tea or coffee and crackers or cookies. Guests wait to eat until urged several times or until the hosts eat. Gifts are not expected of guests, although people often take food to their hosts. More Westernized Indonesians also appreciate flowers. Hosts accept gifts graciously because it is impolite to refuse them, but they do not open wrapped gifts in the giver's presence.

Eating. Indonesians eat three meals and several snacks throughout the day. Breakfast is usually rice or noodles, while the midday meal features rice, vegetables, and meat. The family tries to eat together for the midday meal. Leftovers are eaten for dinner. Depending on the food and family, Indonesians may eat with the right hand, use a spoon alone, or use a spoon and fork. Chinese use chopsticks also. The mother often supervises the meal and feeds the children; she eats later. The father takes the first portion of food, and then all others can take what they want, beginning with the oldest. People wash their hands in a bowl of water before and after eating such finger foods as fried chicken. Conversation is minimal.

Indonesians purchase some portion of their daily meals at a *gerobak jualan* (mobile eatery), from vendors called *kaki lima* ("five feet," meaning two of a man and three of a cart). Housewives might send a child or family servant (even the poorest family can have servants) to a *gerobak jualan* to buy chicken, vegetables, or shredded fruit.

LIFESTYLE

Family. Indonesians families are traditionally large, but a "two (children) is enough" campaign is catching on with young families. The father is head of the family, but the mother has considerable authority in the household. If grandparents live in the home, they offer advice and consider it their duty to remind the parents of their religious and social obligations. If it is the parents who have moved in with the grandparents, the grandfather is head of the family and has ultimate authority. Children are taught to respect and obey their elders. Parents will sacrifice much to provide materially for their children, but they are mostly intent on raising moral, polite, and religious individuals. A child is considered an adult when he or she marries. Adult children are expected to visit their parents often and support them if necessary.

Urban women often are educated and have jobs outside the home; many hold positions in government. Indonesian women generally have more property and inheritance rights than women in other Muslim countries.

Dating and Marriage. Western-style dating is uncommon. Even in the city, a young man must visit a young woman's home several times to get acquainted with the family before the two can go on a date. If the young woman does not want to go, she may tell the young man to stop coming to the home. Arranged marriages have given way to marriages of individual choice in urban areas, but they are still common in rural areas. Rural women often marry by the time they are 20. Although polygamy is legal, few men have more than one wife. The Muslim wedding binds together not only the bride and groom but also their families. In the ceremony, the groom signs a marriage contract promising to provide well for the woman and listing how much "wedding gold" or money he is giving her as her own. A woman can divorce a man who fails to live up to the specific contract promises. A feast or grand reception follows the wedding. Physical relationships outside of marriage are not tolerated in most regions.

Diet. Rice is the main staple of the Indonesian diet. Beef and chicken are popular, and common vegetables include carrots, green beans, potatoes, and cabbage. Coconut milk is used to cook many dishes. *Rendang Padang* (a spicy meat dish cooked in garlic, shallots, ginger, chilies, lemongrass, and coconut milk), *sop bening* (vegetable soup), *gado-gado* (vegetables and tofu topped with peanut sauce), and *sambal* (any foods fried with chilies) are typical in most areas. People enjoy seafood, tofu, corn, *kecap manis* (a sweet dark sauce), and *nasi campur* (Javanese vegetable dishes with white rice, noodles, and chicken). Dessert is often fresh fruit.

Recreation. Indonesian men and women participate in or watch sports of all types. Men especially like soccer. Many urban women do aerobics. Indonesians are among the best in the world at badminton. They also enjoy volleyball, tennis, martial arts, cycling, basketball, and walking. Watching television is a common leisure activity. Families enjoy picnics. Rural people have less leisure time and engage in fewer sporting events. Both rural and urban people enjoy making and flying kites.

The Arts. Indonesians are skilled in native dance, crafts, music, and drama. Gongs and drums are prominent in folk music. *Gamelan*, traditional music ensembles, also include such instruments as the *rebab*, a bowed instrument, and the *saron demung*, similar to a xylophone. Puppet theater, especially with shadow puppets (*wayang kulit*), is popular. Some common dances are mask dances (*wayang topeng*), in which

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dancers act out legends and stories; trance dances; and the *baris gede*, a warrior dance.

Batik-printing, carving, painting, and weaving are other developed arts. In remote areas, legends and myths are preserved through a rich oral history.

Holidays. Indonesians celebrate International New Year's Day (1 Jan.), Easter, Ascension, *Lebaran* or *Idul-Fitri* (a feast at the end of *Ramadan*), Independence Day (17 Aug.), *Idul-Adha* (Feast of the Sacrifice, honoring Abraham), and *Maharram* (Muslim New Year). During *Ramadan*, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sundown but eat a family meal in the evening and before sunrise. The nation celebrates *Waisak* (a Buddhist holiday) and *Nyepi* (Hindu New Year). Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter. A variety of festivals common to certain islands or ethnic groups are held throughout the year.

Commerce. Businesses are open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturday morning. Banking hours are weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Some businesses close for Friday's mid-day prayers, and most are closed on Saturday and Sunday. Indonesians buy spices, meat, fish, fruit, tofu, and vegetables on a daily basis in open-air markets or from street vendors. They obtain rice, cooking oil, and toiletries from small neighborhood stores. Women and servants do most of the shopping. Urban residents have access to modern malls and stores.

SOCIETY

Government. Indonesia is a democratic republic headed by a president (currently Megawati Sukarnoputri) as chief of state and head of government. The president and vice president (currently Hamzah Haz) are elected to five-year terms by the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*), a body that includes 195 members in addition to the 500 members of Indonesia's unicameral parliament, the House of Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*). Members of the House of Representatives are elected to five-year terms. The government is often a coalition of several small parties that frequently disagree. However, all parties must accept the *pancasila* philosophy. Indonesians who are married or 17 and older are eligible to vote.

Economy. Indonesia is rich in natural resources, but many of them remain undeveloped. Agriculture employs roughly 45 percent of the labor force. Primary crops include rice, rubber, soybeans, copra, tea, cassava, palm oil, coffee, and peanuts. Forestry and fishing are also important. Petroleum, liquid natural gas, and manufactured goods account for the bulk of export earnings. Cottage industries produce consumer items such as clothing and shoes for the global market. The number of employees per enterprise is relatively small. The economy is hindered by the slow pace of privatization and a lack of foreign investment. The currency is the Indonesian *rupiah* (IDR).

Transportation and Communications. Middle-class Indonesians have private cars, but others use public transportation: trains, taxis, buses, and pedicabs. A passenger agrees with the driver on the fare before getting into a cab. Buses are crowded and roads outside urban areas are not very good. Traffic jams and accidents are common. Ferries connect islands. Rural people travel by motorcycle, bicycle, or on foot. Traffic moves on the left side of the road.

DEVELOPMENT DATA

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Human Dev. Index* rank | 112 of 175 countries |
| Adjusted for women | 91 of 144 countries |
| Real GDP per capita | \$2,940 |
| Adult literacy rate | 92 percent (male); 83 (female) |
| Infant mortality rate | 38 per 1,000 births |
| Life expectancy | 64 (male); 68 (female) |

Phones are more common in cities than in rural areas. Four of the country's five television stations are privately owned. Strict media censorship was abolished in 1998 to allow for a free press.

Education. Education is compulsory for students between ages six and fifteen, although facilities in rural areas often are not adequate to allow all students to attend. Still, around 80 percent of pupils complete elementary school. About half of them go on to secondary schools, which are divided between junior and senior levels, each lasting three years. The adult literacy rate is steadily improving. Each of Indonesia's provinces has at least one university.

Health. Medical facilities are best in urban areas, but improvements have been made to rural clinics. Health insurance is neither free nor mandatory. Still, most infants are immunized. Health concerns include malnutrition, diseases such as cholera and malaria, lack of extensive prenatal care, pollution, poor sanitation, and unsafe drinking water. Thousands of internal refugees regularly lack water, food, and medical supplies. Forest fire hazes caused by large logging companies and ash clouds formed by active volcanoes hang over many areas; respiratory ailments are common and worsening.

AT A GLANCE

Events and Trends.

- Abu Rusdan, a leader of the Islamic group Jemaah Islamiyah, was sentenced by an Indonesian court to a jail sentence of three and a half years in February 2004. He was charged with hiding one of the men who carried out a bombing in Bali that killed 202 people, most of them Western tourists, in October 2002. About 30 people, many with suspected ties to Jemaah Islamiyah, have been convicted for their roles in the Bali attack. Three have been sentenced to death. Jemaah Islamiyah has alleged links to al-Qaeda and has also been blamed for the bombing of a Jakarta hotel that killed 12 people in August 2003.
- The Indonesian government signed a peace treaty with the separatist Free Aceh Movement in December 2002. Though intended to end nearly three decades of violence in the northeastern province of Aceh, negotiations broke down in May 2003. The government declared martial law in Aceh and began a massive offensive against separatist rebels. The conflict is ongoing.

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