Introduction to Indonesia
What Do You Already Know About Indonesia? What Do You Want to Learn?

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Location

[Map of Southeast Asia showing countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and others.]
Location

• Indonesia is a archipelago located off the coast of mainland Southeast Asia in the Indian and Pacific oceans.
  • An archipelago is a chain or group of island.
• Located across the Equator, the islands can be grouped into the Greater Sunda Islands, the Lesser Sunda Islands, and a chain of islands that runs eastward through Timor.
  • Greater Sunda Islands: Sumatra, Jawa, Kalimantan (the southern extent of Borneo), and Celebes.
  • Lesser Sunda Islands: Bali.
  • Other Island chains: Moluccas, and Papue (the western extent of New Guinea).
Geography

• As the largest country in Southeast Asia, spanning 3,200 miles from east to west and 1,100 miles from north to south, Indonesia is home to a highly diverse environment.

• It is composed of around 17,500 islands and divided into 30 provinces. Indonesia encompasses a major juncture of Earth’s tectonic plates, spans two faunal realms, and brings together the cultures of Mainland Asia with those of Oceania.

• Indonesia can be characterized by its densely forested volcanic mountains, its rich coastal plains, shallow seas and coral reefs, and deep-sea trenches.
History

Bukittinggi Monument square at West Sumatra
The history of Indonesia has largely been influenced by its connection to the sea. By the early centuries CE, foreign trade and the import of skills were already established as an essential part of life in the Indonesian archipelago, connecting them to China and India.

By the end of the 13th century, two small Muslim trading kingdoms existed at Samudra-Pasai and Perlak. By the 15th century several harbor kingdoms ruled by Muslim princes emerged on the north coast of Java and the main trading routes.
History Continued

• Then end of the 16th century brought an increase of Dutch and British interest in the region. Leading eventually to Dutch rule from 1815 – 1920.

• Indonesia officially gained independence in 1949, after being under Japanese rule followed by a brief period of control under Dutch rule.
Language

• Indonesian is the national language of Indonesia. However there are over several hundred languages spoken on the archipelago.

• Javanese, Sundanese, and Madurese are the three major languages spoken in Java.

• Sumatra has several divisions of language due to dialect. In eastern Indonesia, each island has its own language.

• As a result many Indonesians speak Indonesian along with their second language and dialect!
Food
Food

- Indonesian food is highly affected by its rich cultural history as well as its diverse agriculture. It has influence from several different cultural cuisines, including Indian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern.

- Each ethnic group holds unique recipes for their cultural dishes. One dish can have up to 20 different versions across the region, depending on taste and available ingredients.
  - Padang is known for its chili and spices, whereas Java is known for its production of sugar, creating sweeter dishes.

- One unifying aspect of Indonesian food is rice! Rice is a staple in every meal. The use of a variety of spices, such as galangal and pandan leaves, are also common through the different traditions.
Clothing
Traditional Clothing

• Each of the 30 provinces in Indonesia has a wide array of traditional clothing.

• The three most common examples are attires of the Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese cultures.
  • The **sarong** is a long piece of cloth wrapped around the waist worn by both men and women.
  • For weddings and ceremonies, men pair the sarong with a **batik** shirt. The pattern of which will reflect the tradition of the region.
  • The **kebaya** is worn by women, which is a long sleeve blouse made of silk, cotton, and brocade. The hair would be worn up in a bun with golden pins for decoration.
Holidays

• Because of Indonesians vast diversity, holiday are influenced by the existence of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions varying by region. As a result, Ramadan as well as Easter and Buddha's birthday, are observed holidays in the archipelago.

• Independence Day is one of the major holidays for Indonesia. Every August 17th, parades are thrown along with performances organized by public institutions.
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