



choice
TRAVEL

Destination Guide: Indonesia

What to know before you go
Essential preparation and planning tips
Accommodation and transport

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Who is CHOICE? Set up by consumers for consumers, **CHOICE** is the [consumer advocate](#) that provides Australians with information and advice, free from commercial bias.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

OVERVIEW

Best time to go, culture, language, health, safety, laws, watchouts, scams, emergency contacts and more.

Travel-size tips

- › Indonesia doesn't really have a summer or a winter, just a dry season and a wet season.
- › [Flights](#) to Bali can be as short as three hours from Darwin, or up to six-and-a-half hours from Sydney.
- › Indonesia is one of the cheapest places to travel in South-East Asia.

Know before you go

- › While most areas of the country are relatively safe, some islands do experience conflict. Check with smartraveller.gov.au before venturing off the tourist path.
- › Drugs are not tolerated in Indonesia. Some Australian [prescription medications](#) are even considered illegal narcotics in Indonesia.
- › You may need [vaccinations](#), depending on your health status and the area of the country you're travelling to. Speak to your doctor as early as possible before you travel.

Best time to go

Dry season: May to September

Wet season: November to April

Unless you love a good tropical storm every day, the dry season is generally considered the best time to visit Indonesia. However, many Australians take their holidays there during the wetter months of December and January.

Check the average [rainfall and temperature](#) for your dates and destination.

- › Although Christmas falls in the middle of the low season, it's usually a busy time.
- › Accommodation and transport can book up when locals take their holidays during Eid al-Fitr, at the end of Ramadan (dates change each year).
- › During Ramadan, many Indonesians fast throughout the day. It's disrespectful to eat, drink or smoke in very public places, such as on the street. For that reason, street food will be hard to come by and many cafes and restaurants may be closed during the day. Bali is mostly unaffected.

- Bali celebrates its lunar New Year, [Nyepi](#) (dates change each year), with a day of silence and inactivity. Tourists are expected to observe this custom as well – so that means staying in your hotel room and doing (and saying) nothing.
- The peak season can get extra crowded at the end of the school year (June/July) when Indonesian high school students celebrate a far less rowdy version of Schoolies, taking bus excursions to local tourist attractions.
- There's an increased risk of severe smoke haze emanating from Sumatra and Kalimantan from June to October due to slash and burn practices.

Culture

- Around 85% of Indonesians are Muslim, although almost 85% of Balinese are Hindu. Visitors should respect local customs and dress conservatively. In popular tourist areas like Bali, wearing a swimsuit on the beach might not raise many eyebrows, but it's best to cover up for visiting villages, towns,

mosques and temples. In mosques, shorts are not allowed, and women should wear long sleeves and a head scarf.

- Aceh Province is far more conservative than the rest of the country and enforces some aspects of [Sharia law](#), including punishments for extramarital sex, homosexuality, drinking alcohol and even dressing inappropriately.
- During the holy month of [Ramadan](#) (dates change each year) Muslims fast during the day. It's disrespectful to eat, drink or smoke in public places.
- Eating (or giving and receiving things) with your left hand is considered extremely rude.
- Putting your hands on your hips is considered rude, as is pointing using your finger and touching a person (even a child) on the head.
- Tipping isn't mandatory, but it is customary, particularly as the minimum wage in Indonesia is very low. 5-10% of the bill is appropriate in restaurants.



Official language: Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia)

People working in hotels, airports, and service jobs in tourist areas generally speak English, but most Indonesians on the street will only know a few words. You may have trouble finding a taxi driver who can speak English. Have your destination written down so you can show them (literacy rates are high, so they should have no trouble reading it).

Indonesian is written in the same alphabet as English, so you'll be able to read signs and place names.

Health and safety

- Tap water in Indonesia is not safe to drink. Stick to bottled or boiled water and ask for drinks with no ice.
 - Indonesian hospitals are generally not up to the standard of Australian hospitals, however Bali and Jakarta do have English-speaking [private hospitals](#) and clinics that cater to western tourists at higher prices. The Indonesian health care system has no reciprocal deals with Australia, which means if you get sick, you'll have to pay your own bills.
 - Some hospitals will insist on upfront payment or proof of [travel insurance](#) before treating foreign patients. If you're extremely sick, you may be evacuated to Australia or Singapore at a cost of \$100,000 or more, so it goes without saying that travel insurance is a must.
 - Traveller's diarrhoea, 'affectionately' known as Bali Belly, is the most common malady affecting visitors to Indonesia. Consider packing an anti-diarrhoeal and a rehydration solution in case you get sick. To minimise your risk, avoid tap water, wash your hands regularly and choose freshly cooked foods rather than raw.
 - Mosquito-borne illnesses such as malaria and dengue fever are prevalent in parts of Indonesia, including Bali, **so remember to cover up and use repellent.**
 - Rabies is a problem throughout the country, and Bali has experienced a serious outbreak in recent years. Avoid contact with dogs, cats and monkeys, and consider a [rabies shot](#) before you go.
 - Beware of buying over-the-counter medication in Indonesia as it's often poorly stored, past its use-by date or sometimes even counterfeit.
 - For the latest warnings on risks including terrorism, natural disasters, violent crimes and drink spiking, visit smartraveller.gov.au
- Tip:** Have you registered your travel plans with smartraveller.gov.au and checked the latest safety advice on the region you're travelling to?
- [Do I need vaccinations to travel to Indonesia? > Page 9](#)



Laws and watchouts

Laws

Drugs are highly illegal in Indonesia. Punishments are severe and include the death penalty.

Some Australian **prescription medications** (including strong painkillers such as morphine and codeine, sleeping pills and medications for ADHD) are considered [illegal narcotics](#) under Indonesian law. Other medications such as paracetamol, antidiarrhoeals and antibiotics won't be a problem but if you're at all concerned about your medication, check with the [Indonesian embassy](#). For a fee, they can write you a Certified Letter of Approved Medicines, however their website warns: "The letter is neither for legality purpose nor providing guarantee that you will be exempted from any checks and legal consequences that may arise."

- The legal drinking age is 21.
- Gambling is illegal in Indonesia.
- By law, you must carry identification at all times.
- Indonesian law does not criminalise homosexuality, but it isn't widely accepted culturally.
- Aceh Province enforces some aspects of [Sharia law](#) relating to gambling, drinking alcohol, prostitution, standards of dress and homosexual and extramarital sex. Foreigners are not exempt from the rules.

For road rules, see [Driving in Indonesia > Page 16](#).



Tip: No matter where you travel, you should carry all medications (even vitamins) in their original packaging, along with their original prescription. It's also a good idea to carry a letter from your doctor explaining what the medications are (using generic names), what they're for, and dosage instructions.

Watchouts

- Always ask your taxi driver to switch on their meter. If you try to negotiate a fare, you could end up getting ripped off.
- Watch out for pickpockets, bag snatchers and other petty thieves.
- The Indonesian Rupiah has very high denominations so it's easy to get confused when changing money, paying for items or receiving change – and unscrupulous locals may take advantage of this. Be sure you can spot the difference between a Rp 10,000 note and a Rp 100,000 note, for example.
- Hagglng with street sellers is normal, but be careful you don't get confused by the currency. If a seller says something costs "30", that generally means Rp 30,000. However, they may try to trick you after you agree to the sale by claiming they meant \$US30.
- Scammers are always coming up with new ways to swindle tourists. For examples of common scams, see our article on [tourist traps](#), or check Tripadvisor's ever-growing list of [Bali scams](#).

Making a complaint

If you fall victim to theft, call the police (numbers on page 7).

Indonesia has consumer protection laws in place, but unfortunately they may not be as readily enforced as they are in Australia. If you have a dispute with an accommodation, transport or tour provider, or any other local service, you can make a formal complaint to the **Indonesian Consumer Protection Agency**:

Badan Perlindungan Konsumen Nasional

bpkn.go.id

Alamat Gedung I Kementrian Perdagangan, Jl. M.I
Ridwan Rais No. 5 Lt 8, Jakarta
+61 21 348 33819 / Call centre: 153 (operators may not speak English)
Email: setbpkn@bpkn.go.id

If your gripe is with an Australian tour operator, airline, or booking site, check choice.com.au for the [usual procedures](#) for making a complaint or seeking compensation.



Emergency contacts

Emergency numbers (operators may not speak English):

Some of these numbers may not work if you're calling from an Australian mobile phone. Remember to insert the country code (+62) and the local [area code](#) (eg. 36 for Bali, 21 for Jakarta).

International emergency number: 112

Police: 110 / 112 (SMS 1717)

Ambulance and Rescue: 118

Fire: 113

Medical emergencies: 119

Tourist Police (Bali): (0361) 754 599 / (0361) 224 111

Tourist Police (Jakarta): (021) 526 4073

[bali.com](#) has a full list of numbers you may need during an emergency in Bali.

Private hospitals/clinics with English-speaking staff:

BIMC Hospital - Bali

[bimcbali.com](#)

Kuta: Jalan Bypass Ngurah Rai 100X, Kuta, Bali 80361, Indonesia

+62 361 761 263 (24-hour emergency line)

Nusa Dua: Kawasan BTDC Blok D, Nusa Dua, Bali 80363, Indonesia

+62 361 3000 911 (24-hour emergency line)

International SOS Clinics - Bali and Jakarta

[internationalsos.com](#)

Bali: Jalan By Pass Ngurah Rai 505X, Kuta 80221, Bali
+ 62 361 720 100 (clinic appointments) / +62 361 710 505 (24-hour emergency line)

Central Jakarta: Menara Prima, 2nd Floor, Jl. DR. Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung Blok 6.2, Kawasan Mega Kuningan, Jakarta 12950
+62 21 5794 8600

South Jakarta: Jl. Puri Sakti No. 10, Cipete - Antasari, Jakarta 12410

+62 21 750 5980 (clinic appointments) / +62 21 750 6001 (24-hour emergency line)

See the Australian Embassy website for a full list of hospital and medical services in [Bali](#) and [Indonesia](#).

Australian Embassy in Jakarta

[indonesia.embassy.gov.au](#)

Jalan H.R. Rasuna Said Kav C 15-16, Jakarta Selatan 12940

+62 21 2550 5555

Email (general enquiries):

public-affairs-jakt@dfat.gov.au

Australian Consulate-General in Bali

[bali.indonesia.embassy.gov.au](#)

Jalan Tantular, No. 32, Renon, Denpasar, Bali 80234

+62 361 241 118

24-hour Australian Consular Emergency Centre:

+61 2 6261 3305 (from overseas)
or

1300 555 135 (within Australia)
or SMS +61 421 269 080



WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Visas, vaccinations, phone, internet, power adapters, money, travel insurance, handy apps and more.

Visas and passports

30 days visa-free

As of March 2016, Australian tourists no longer need a visa to visit Indonesia for up to 30 days.

- › Your day of arrival counts as day one of the 30 days.
- › Your day of departure also counts as a full day.
- › The 30-day period is not extendable.
- › You'll still need an up-to-date passport to enter Indonesia.
- › Cruise ship passengers arriving in Benoa will still need to apply for a visa on arrival as there is no visa-free facility at the port.

Staying for longer than 30 days?

- › If you plan to stay longer than 30 days, apply to the Indonesian embassy in advance for a 60-day tourist visa.
- › Alternatively, you can pay for a 30-day visa on arrival in Indonesia (this is not to be confused with entering the 30-day visa-free period) then apply to extend it your visa for an extra 30 days.
- › If you want to stay for just a little longer than 30 days you could apply for a 30-day visa then opt to pay the fine of IDR 300.000 per day for overstaying your visa.

Visa rules and prices may change. For up-to-date information check the Indonesian embassy website: kemlu.go.id

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccines depend on your health status, which part of Indonesia you're travelling to, and how long you plan to stay. Website traveldoctor.com.au recommends you make sure your standard vaccinations are up to date, and consider shots for rabies, Japanese encephalitis, typhoid and hepatitis A and B. See its [Indonesia fact sheet](#) or [Bali fact sheet](#) for advice, and speak to your doctor.

Tip: Some vaccinations need to be given four to six weeks before departure, so get in early.

Phone and internet

Global roaming and coverage

Australian mobile phones should work in cities and towns using Indonesia's GSM networks, but the global roaming costs (and in particular the data roaming costs) are likely to be astronomical.

Check with your telco for roaming prices.

› [Telstra](#)

› [Vodafone](#)

› [Optus](#)

› [Virgin](#)

Tip: Switch off data roaming on your phone before you leave Australia. Likewise, switch off your voicemail and ask friends and family to text you rather than calling (you'll be charged if you answer incoming calls).

Local SIM

Local SIMs are a much cheaper option

if you can't live without a phone and you don't mind having a different number while you're overseas. Indonesia's main GSM carriers are Telkomsel (Simpati), Indosat, XL and 3. Avoid Smartfren, Esia, and Flexi as they run on the CDMA standard and are incompatible with Australian GSM handsets. To check that your handset will be compatible, read the WhistleOut [guide to taking your phone overseas](#).

You can buy a SIM pre-loaded with credit from a convenience store or kiosk - look for the word 'pulsa' (credit) on shop signs. Set-up is simple and doesn't require ID or creating an account - simply pop the SIM into your phone and you're good to go as long as your phone is unlocked. To top up your credit, look for that pulsa sign again, pay the vendor and give them your mobile number - they'll send the credit to your phone.

Tip: 50,000 Rp of credit should be enough to last you a week or two, but if you use the internet or make international calls you'll need to top up your pulsa more often.



Travel SIM

Pre-paid travel SIMs are another option, particularly if you're travelling to a number of countries or you like to be organised before you go. Rates are unlikely to be as cheap as on a local SIM.

Remember: Your phone will need to be unlocked to accept a SIM from another network.

[Beat global roaming bill shock](#) – our guide to unlocking your phone and changing your global roaming settings.

Wi-Fi

An internet connection is fairly easy to find in tourist areas. Many coffee shops and hotels in Bali and Jakarta offer free Wi-Fi, although connection speeds may be slow. In rural areas, however, you'll be lucky to get a phone signal, let alone access to the internet.

Check [wificafespots.com](#) for maps showing free Wi-Fi hotspots in Indonesian towns and cities, or download an app such as [WeFi](#) (Android or PC) or [Wi-Fi Finder](#) (Apple or Android).

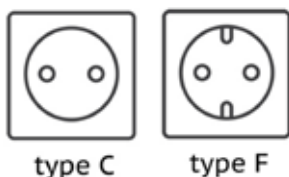
Power plugs

Standard voltage: 230V

Frequency: 50 Hz

Indonesia's voltage and frequency is the same as Australia's, which means you can use Australian appliances safely without a power converter or transformer (i.e. they won't catch on fire or melt!).

Power sockets:



Indonesia's power sockets and plugs are different to Australia's, so you will need a power adapter. Since the country uses two different types of socket, a universal adapter is recommended.

Money

Currency: Indonesian Rupiah (RpIDR)

Check [xe.com](#) for the latest exchange rates.

Important: Tell your bank about your travel plans two weeks before you leave. Card activity in a foreign country could be mistaken for fraud and you could find your account frozen.



Credit cards and ATMs

Pack your credit card, but you'll probably only be able to use it in the more high-end hotels, shops and restaurants. Most businesses prefer to deal in cash.

ATMs are common in towns and cities, and you'll have no trouble finding them in Bali. When ATMs detect a foreign card, they'll offer you the choice of instructions in English or Indonesian. Remember that you'll be charged a foreign exchange fee and a withdrawal fee for every transaction – which can add up to as much as \$20.

Money changers

You'll have no trouble finding money changers in

tourist areas. Most will exchange Australian dollars, US dollars and Euros for Indonesian Rupiah. Once you go off the beaten path, your options become more limited so you'll need to make sure you have plenty of Rupiah already on you (hide it well).

Banks and official exchange outlets are your best bet. Avoid changing money at the airport, as it's unlikely you'll get a good rate. Avoid changing money with shopkeepers – your chances of being fleeced are much higher.

Travellers' cheques are becoming a thing of the past and you'll have trouble finding many places in Indonesia that will cash them. If you're concerned about money security, you could consider a pre-loaded [travel money card](#).

For more advice, see our [Travel money guide](#).

Tip: Carry at least two credit/debit cards and more than one currency (Australian, US, and the currency of your destination). Split your money and cards between separate bags. That way if you lose one, you have a back-up.



Travel insurance

Travel insurance is essential – don't leave it until the last minute. Buy insurance at the same time as you book your trip; that way you'll be covered if you have to cancel for some reason before you go.

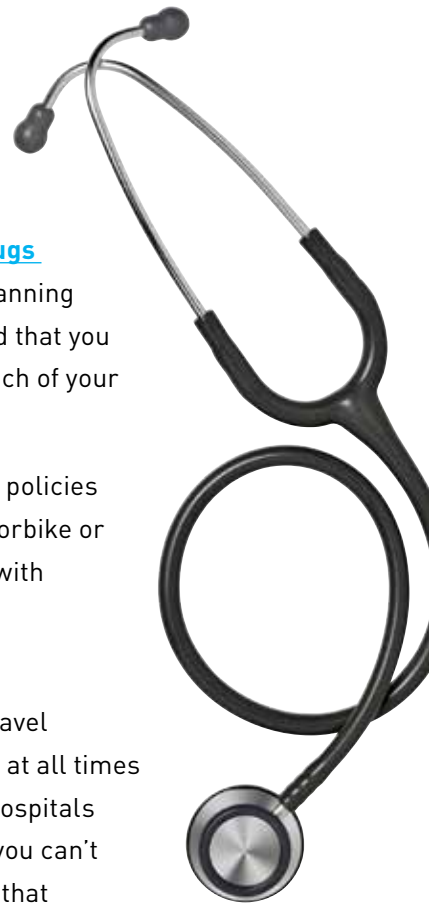
To choose the best cover, see CHOICE's travel insurance [reviews and comparisons](#).

Common exclusions:

- Most travel insurance policies won't pay out if you make a claim for something that happened while you were [under the influence of drugs or alcohol](#). So, if you're planning a Bali bender, bear in mind that you may not be insured for much of your holiday.
- Standard travel insurance policies may not cover you for motorbike or scooter accidents. Check with your insurer.

Tips:

- Keep a print-out of your travel insurance details with you at all times while on your trip. Some hospitals may refuse to treat you if you can't pay upfront or show proof that you're insured.
- Share your insurance details with family or friends before you leave.



Handy links and apps

Consider adding these links and apps to your phone, tablet or laptop before you go.

Tip: If possible, choose apps that work offline so they won't chew up your [mobile data](#) or stop working when you're in remote places.

- [Triposo Indonesia app](#) (Apple or Android) includes offline maps, attractions, mini-guides for day trips, and the ability to create your own travel log.
- [The Bali Bible app](#) (Apple or Android) includes food, shopping and nightlife recommendations, as well as a wellness guide and advice for families.
- Search for more [Indonesia travel apps](#).
- [Currency conversion apps](#) help you work out costs in Australian dollars.
- [Translation apps](#) help with communication.

Tip: To save a map onto your mobile device for offline use, select the area on Google Maps then select 'Save offline map' from the menu and follow the directions

on the screen. Your GPS positioning will still work on the saved map, even if you don't have internet access.

Alternatively, download the [Google Maps app](#), go to 'Offline maps' in the menu and select a city. Search for free Wi-Fi hotspots on [wificafespots.com](#), or download an app such as WeFi (Android or PC) or Wi-Fi Finder ([Apple](#) or [Android](#)).

Websites

- [indonesia.travel](#) – Indonesia's official tourism website
- [kemlu.go.id](#) – Australia's Indonesian embassy
- [smartraveller.gov.au](#) for the Australian government's latest advice on the safety of the region you're travelling in.
- [lonelyplanet.com/indonesia](#)
- [tripadvisor.com.au/indonesia](#)
- [virtualtourist.com](#)
- [wikitravel.org/en/indonesia](#) for crowd-sourced information on history, culture, travel tips and more (may not always be accurate).



ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT

GETTING THERE AND AROUND

Flights to Bali, Jakarta and beyond, airport guides, key destinations, transport, car hire, accommodation, tours and more.

Flights

Flight time from Australia: 3–8 hours

- **Direct flights** depart from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to Jakarta and Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and Darwin to Jakarta and Bali.
- Jetstar operates a flight between Perth and Lombok.
- Virgin Australia operates a flight between Port Hedland and Bali.
- The main airlines that fly directly between Australia and Indonesia are [Garuda Indonesia](#), [Virgin Australia](#), [Qantas](#), [Jetstar](#), [AirAsia](#) and [Etihad](#).
- Other airlines, including budget carriers [AirAsia](#), [Scoot](#) and [Tigerair](#), fly indirectly via Kuala Lumpur or Singapore.
- You can compare fares on airline booking sites such as [expedia.com](#), [skyscanner.net](#), [kayak.com](#) or with a travel agent. See our tips on [booking flights](#).

At the airport

The first thing Australian citizens need to do after stepping off the plane in Indonesia is queue for a visa (if you haven't already arranged one). Don't make the mistake of joining the long immigration queue if you don't already have a [visa](#).

Most Australians will arrive in Indonesia via Jakarta or Bali.

Jakarta - Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (CGK)

- 25km west of the CBD.
- There are taxi ranks outside all three terminals. It's recommended you catch an official, metered taxi to avoid inflated fares. Companies include Blue Bird, Silver Bird, Golden Bird and Gamy. A small airport surcharge will apply and you will be expected to pay for any tolls.
- Buses run to the city, stopping at major train and bus stations. The main service is DAMRI airport bus. Smaller shuttle services include X-Trans and Cipaganti Travel, and Primajasa (which runs directly

to the city of Bandung).

- Airport website: jakartaairportonline.com

Bali - Denpasar/Ngurah Rai International Airport (DPS)

- 13km south of Denpasar and 2.5km from Kuta.
- If catching a taxi, you can [pre-pay your fare](#) at the airport taxi counter. This is by far the best way to avoid paying too much.
- Bus services are infrequent, but mini buses run to some of the popular spots.
- Many hotels provide a courtesy shuttle bus or private driver (check with your hotel before you arrive).
- Airport website: bali-airport.com

Airport transfers are relatively easy to book through your hotel or through a private car service. Extras such as child car seats may be available if you enquire in advance.

Departure tax of Rp 200,000 per person must be paid in Rupiah (other currencies are not accepted) at the airport, so make sure you have the correct amount set aside before you get to the airport.

Key destinations and their airports

Bali	Popular tourist destination island, includes Kuta, Seminyak, Sanur, Ubud	Denpasar (Ngurah Rai) International Airport (DPS)
Jakarta	The nation's capital, situated on the island of Java	Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (CGK)
Sumatra	Indonesia's largest island	Medan Kuala Namu International Airport (KNO) Padang Minangkabau International Airport (PDG)
Lombok	Bali's island neighbour	Lombok (Bandar Udara) International Airport (LOP)

Getting around

Tip: Check if you need to pre-book any tickets.

Although many visitors prefer to stay put by the pool in Bali, there are plenty of transport options for those who wish to venture further afield.

Ferries

Ferries and boats run between many of Indonesia's islands, and from Jakarta to Singapore and Malaysia.

Pelni (pelni.co.id), the main passenger line, has up to six classes, from an ensuite cabin to sitting on-deck. Pelni doesn't have an online booking system and doesn't sell tickets more than 21 days prior to departure, so your best bet is to buy tickets once you're in the country. If you're travelling during a peak time or you're worried about availability, a travel agent or hotel may be able to help with advance booking. Plenty of smaller ferry and boat services also operate between islands. There are many regular services running between Bali and Lombok, including express boats.

Tip: Many boat owners don't follow safety regulations and often overload their vessels at peak times. Tragedies at sea happen quite regularly. The state-

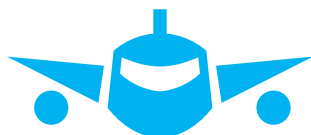


owned Pelni ferries maintain proper safety standards.

Domestic flights

Flights also connect Indonesia's islands and are a faster (and potentially safer) option than ferries.

Tickets can be booked at [tiket2.com](https://www.tiket2.com), [nusatrip.com](https://www.nusatrip.com) and flights.indonesiamatters.com. You can try booking directly via the airline's website (which is often cheaper) but most won't accept foreign credit cards.



Buses

Buses are the most common form of transport in Indonesia, although they can sometimes get quite hot and crowded. Clean, air conditioned coaches operate on major routes for those willing to pay a higher fare. Booking a bus journey online isn't usually possible, but buying a ticket once you're in the country should be easy enough. Look for reservation offices or tourist information centres, ask hotel staff to book for you, or simply turn up at the bus station. Cheap public buses operate on loose schedules and often wait until they're full before setting out. Luxury coaches should be more reliable with their schedules.

In Bali, Perama Tour & Travel ([peramatour.com](https://www.peramatour.com)) is the main shuttle bus and tour operator.



Trains

Trains only run on the islands of Java and Sumatra. A train service in Java connects with the ferry to Bali. [Kerata-api.co.id](https://www.kerata-api.co.id) is the official website where you can check timetables, but it's tricky to navigate (tip: a Chrome browser can translate foreign sites into English for you) and it only accepts Indonesian credit cards. An



easier option is to pay a little extra and book via the tourist-friendly sites [tiket.com](https://www.tiket.com) or flights.indonesiamatters.com/train-tickets. If you aren't travelling during peak times (for example during Eid al-Fitr) then you should be OK to buy a ticket at the station. You'll need your passport to buy a train ticket.

Car hire

Car hire is available in major cities and airports, but it's not a very popular option for travellers.

If you do decide to hire a car, be aware that Indonesian roads can be quite chaotic. You must have your Australian driver's licence as well as an [international licence](#) to be properly insured (and to avoid fines from police). It's best to book with a major international car hire company (Avis and Europcar both operate in Indonesia), as local businesses may not rent to foreigners or may be difficult to deal with if something goes wrong.

See our tips on [driving in Indonesia](#) on page 16.

If you like the idea of having your own transport for day trips, consider **a private driver or a taxi** – it may be a cheaper and easier option than a hire car. Hotel staff should be able to book a reliable driver for you.



Motorbike and scooter hire

Getting around on two wheels is a popular option for travellers, but it's also a risky one. You'll need an international motorcycle licence as well as your Australian motorcycle licence, but it's unlikely the person who hires you the bike will tell you, much less check. This, of course, could bring you major pain if you have a crash or get stopped by the police. By law you'll also need a helmet. Be aware that standard travel insurance policies may not cover motorcycle or scooter accidents.

Short distances around towns and cities are best done on foot, by bicycle, by taxi, by bajaj (a three-



wheeled motorbike taxi) or becak (bicycle rickshaw taxi).

Transport tips:

- rome2rio.com is a great resource for working out how to get from A to B by any means of transport, anywhere in the world.
- Seat61.com/Indonesia also has detailed advice on train, bus and ferry bookings and schedules.

Driving in Indonesia

- Vehicles drive on the left.
- The blood alcohol limit is 0. There is zero tolerance for drink driving.
- Motorcycle and scooter riders and passengers must wear a helmet. Even though many locals ignore this law, police often issue on-the-spot fines (especially to cashed-up tourists).
- You may also be fined if caught driving without an [international licence](#), as well as your regular licence.
- Motorcycle and scooter riders must have an international motorcycle licence.
- Always carry your regular licence, international licence, passport and documents such as the rental contract and the vehicle's registration papers with you in the car. Police may ask to see them.
- No more than two people can ride on a motorcycle or scooter (by law, that is - you'll regularly see families of four breaking this rule).
- Seat belts must be worn in cars.
- Using a mobile phone while driving is illegal.
- The unofficial rule of the road is that smaller vehicles give way to larger ones, so watch out for trucks and buses.
- Roads can be extremely hectic, with many drivers speeding and breaking the rules. Driving in Indonesia is not for the faint-hearted!



Accommodation and tours

Tip: Have you booked accommodation for at least the first night?

Accommodation can vary from basic hostels to five-star resorts. If you're looking for the luxury hotel experience at a cheap rate (or at least a cheaper rate than you could ever find in Australia) then Indonesia is a great place to find a bargain.

Plenty of Indonesian accommodation providers accept reservations through online booking sites, or through their own websites. Hotels, resorts and hostels are easy enough to book using sites such as wotif.com, lastminute.com and hostels.com (check customer reviews on tripadvisor.com before you book) but if you're looking for bespoke accommodation like homestays, beach shacks or B&Bs, it's less likely you'll find them easily online.

Check airbnb.com for homestay options, as well as guide books and review sites such as tripadvisor.com and lonelyplanet.com. Sometimes you'll find great recommendations that won't show up at all in booking site searches.

Tip: Homosexuality is legal in Indonesia, but it's not widely accepted. Same-sex couples can search for gay-friendly hotels using filters on wotif.com and lastminute.com or on travel sites such as travelgayasia.com. Gay couples should avoid Aceh Province, where homosexuality is banned.

Tours can be booked through a travel agent or online through a major tour operator before you go (try intrepidtravel.com and geckosadventures.com or look for recommended tours on tripadvisor.com), but if you're from the follow-your-nose school of travel or if you're just interested in day trips, you'll have more choice if you wait until you're on the ground. You'll probably get a better rate, too. If crowded tour buses aren't your thing, consider hiring a private driver for a day or two - it may cost less than you think, particularly if you're travelling in a group and can split the cost. Hotel staff can usually organise a reliable driver.

Packages to Bali, and other popular tourist spots, are a low-stress option for travellers who don't want to organise their flights and accommodation separately. For package deals, check airline sites, as well as expedia.com, tripadvisor.com and travel agents. ■

