

# Indonesia



- Capital:** Jakarta
- Population:** 222 million (approx)
- Religion:** Islam is the principal religion of Indonesia; Muslims constitute about 88% of the population. Other prominent religions are Christianity (5%), Roman Catholic (3%) Buddhism (1%), Hinduism (2%) and other (1%).
- Government:** Republic. Indonesia is a unitary state, headed by an executive president who is elected for a five year term, together with a vice president, by a 1000 member People's Consultative Assembly.
- Ethnic Groups:** Include (by island group): the Minangkabaus, Aceh and Bataks in Sumatra, the Javanese and Sundanese in Java, the Madurese in Madura, the Balinese (Bali), the Sasaks in Lombok, the Torajas, Minakas, menadonese and Buginese in Sulawesi, the Kalimantan Dayaks, the Irianese in Irian Jaya, the Timorese in Timor Timur, the Moluccan Ambonese.
- Language:** Bahasa Indonesia (based on Malay, Bahasa Melayu) is the official language. Of the other Indonesian/western languages (some 583 languages and dialects in the entire archipelago), Javanese is spoken by 69 million people, Sundanese by 26 million and Balinese, Banjarese, Batak, Bugi, Madurese and Minang by a further 25.5 million. English is the most widely spoken foreign language.
- Currency:** The unit of currency is the rupiah (IDR).
- Located between the South East Asian and Australian mainlands, the Indonesian archipelago consists of some 13,667 islands. 930 of these islands are inhabited. Most are rugged, sometimes volcanic and covered with rain forest. The larger islands - Sumatra, Java, Southern Borneo, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya - contain the majority of the population.
  - Indonesia's cultural origins date back to the 7th century AD. In the 13th century, the ruling kingdoms introduced Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam (Muslim) arrived from India in the 14th century. The area was settled over the centuries by the Portugese, Spanish, Dutch and British. The Dutch had control until the Japanese invasion of 1942. Indonesia retained its independence in 1945.
  - Indonesia is the fifth most populated country in the world, and has a larger population than Russia, Japan, or Germany. Three fifths of the people are concentrated on the islands of Java, Madura and Bali, which together account for only 7% of the land area. 40% of its people are aged under 15.
  - The economic challenge is to reduce dependency on primary products and bring much of the population out of poverty.

## Business and Social Etiquette

- As a foreign business person, you are expected to be on time for all business appointments. This is especially true when you are meeting someone with a higher social standing than yourself. Everyone has a social ranking in Indonesia. It is the prerogative of the person of higher rank to make a person of lower standing wait. However the Indonesian term jam karet (rubber time) refers to the indigenous casual attitude toward time. Only a true emergency will impel most Indonesians to haste or punctuality.
- A slight bow of the head and a handshake is the normal form of greeting. Most Indonesian handshakes are more like handclasps; they are rather limp and last for some 10-12 seconds. Let Indonesian women initiate a handshake.
- Business cards should be printed in English. They should be presented with both hands, and given to each person present. Give your card to the recipient with the print facing her or him. Never put a business card in your back pocket, and do not let the person see you writing on her or his card.
- Indonesians do business only with people they know and like. Establishing this personal relationship will take time, but it is vital for success.
- The pace of business negotiations in Indonesia is far slower than that of the United States. Be patient and do not rush.
- Politeness is one of the most important attributes for successful relationships in Indonesia. Since it is impolite to disagree with someone, Indonesians rarely say 'no'. Any time an Indonesian says 'yes, but...' it means 'no'.
- In Indonesia, one who expresses anger in public has shamefully lost face. A person who loses her or his temper is considered unable to control herself or himself. Such a person will not be trusted or respected.
- Show respect toward elders. In business meetings, defer to the most senior person.
- Being embarrassed publicly (losing face) is known as malu.
- Indonesians of all ethnic groups are comfortable with silence, in both business and social settings. A silent pause allows time for thought; it does not necessarily signal either acceptance or rejection.
- Speak in quiet, gentle tones. Always remain calm.
- Avoid using the left hand to give or receive.
- Avoid pointing with the forefinger, and never touch a person's head.
- The left hand is considered unclean by Muslims and Hindus. Do not use your left hand to eat, touch anyone, point or to give or receive objects to a Muslim or Hindu.
- Footwear should be removed before entering a home or a place of worship.
- It is considered impolite to sit with legs crossed or stand with hands in pockets or on the hip.

- Gift giving is a traditional part of Indonesian culture. Although gifts may be small, they are often given. Food makes a good gift for most occasions.
- Take advantage of any invitation to social events. Establishing a successful business relationship hinges on establishing a social relationship as well. Be patient and let the Indonesians make the first invitation. You cannot successfully host a social event until you have been a guest at an Indonesian event.
- Understand that there is little conversation while eating. Do not be upset by a silent meal.

## Language

- Some Indonesians only have one name, whilst others may have two or more. Javanese people in general have no family name, only first and middle names. Indonesians often shorten their names and use nicknames. Many Chinese have adopted Indonesian names.
- Use 'bapak' and 'ibu' to address older and/or high status men and women respectively.
- Indonesian women keep their own family names when they marry.

English	Bahasa Indonesia	Phonetics
Hello	Selamat datang	Suh-lah-maht da-tahng
Good morning	Selamat pagi	Sul-lah-maht pah-gee
Good night	Selamat sore	Suh-lah-maht so-ray
Good bye	Selamat malam	Suh-lah-maht mah-lahm
Yes	Ya	Yah
No	Tidak	Tee-dahk
Please	Silakan	See-lah-kahn
Thank you	Terima kasih	Teh-ree-mah cah-see
You're welcome	Kembali	Kem-bah-lee
I don't understand	Saya tidak mengerti	Sah-ya tee-dahk mengehr-tee

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