



Indonesia Fast Facts

Population:

241,973,879 (July 2005 est.)

Capital:

Jakarta

Currency:

Indonesian Rupiah (IDR)

Religion(s):

Muslim 88%, Protestant 5%,
Roman Catholic 3%, Hindu 2%,
Buddhist 1%, other 1%

Language(s):

Bahasa Indonesia (official, national language),
English, hundreds of local dialects

Major Events:

Independence Day, 17 August (1945)
Religious holidays

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Online Resources

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<http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad>

Indonesian Universities
<http://www.ri.go.id/univerlink.htm>

University of Indonesia
<http://www.ui.ac.id/english/main.php>

Institut Teknologi Bandung
<http://www.che.itb.ac.id/iso/>

Benjamin A. Gilman International
Scholarship Program
<http://www.iie.org/gilman>

National Security Education Program
<http://www.iie.org/NSEP>

Lonely Planet
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

IIE Passport Focus... INDONESIA

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Indonesia at a Glance...

Indonesia is a country of diversity, from its modern capital city of Jakarta and other densely populated areas to the genuine paradise of some of its untouched islands. Beautiful, busy, diverse, and fascinating, Indonesia has much to offer the adventurous students.



Distinguished by its unique geography, Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world. It is situated near the Equator in Southeastern Asia between the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean and is composed of 17,508 islands, some nothing more than tiny outcroppings of barren rock, others as big as California or Spain and covered in dense tropical jungle. Approximately 6,000 of these islands are inhabited, with five main islands and 30 smaller archipelagos serving as home to the majority of the population. Around half of the country's population lives on the island named Java, which is one of the world's most densely populated areas.

The strategic position of Indonesia has led to a fascinating and complex cultural, religious, political, and economic history. From the 7th through 14th centuries, it was dominated by several large kingdoms on the islands of Sumatra and Java. Hinduism and Buddhism were very influential during that time until the collapse of those kingdoms and the introduction of Islam by Arab traders from Gujarat, India. Islam remains the majority religion today, making Indonesia the most populous Muslim-majority nation in the world.

The arrival of the Dutch in the 17th century brought European influence to the islands, which continued through the 20th century. The year 1945 signaled the end of the Second World War in Asia and the start of true independence for Indonesia. With major changes in global consciousness about the concepts of freedom and democracy, Indonesia

proclaimed its independence on August 17 of that same year. Since 1998, the country has experienced some significant steps in its political journey, and today, Susilo Bambang Yudoyono is the President. He was elected in 2004 through the first direct presidential election in the country.

Indonesia is rich in natural resources. It has extensive supplies of crude oil, natural gas, tin, copper, and gold. With its beautiful islands, staggering volcanoes, exquisite beaches, inspiring temples, and unique ethnicity, tourism is also a significant contributor to Indonesia's economy. In recent years a number of steps have been taken to promote and stimulate non-oil exports which include handicrafts, textiles, precious metals, tea, tobacco, cement, and fertilizers, as well as manufactured goods. Unfortunately, parts of Indonesia, particularly the Aceh region, were hard hit by the tsunami of December 2004. Tens of thousands of lives were lost, and the damage was extensive. Students should consult with their advisor to determine any places in the country that may be inadvisable study destinations.

Indonesia's capital city, Jakarta, is a large, bustling and modern metropolis. Located on Java, it is the heart of Indonesia's industry, business, and trade, as well as its political center. This cosmopolitan city also offers some of Indonesia's best shopping and sightseeing and high quality entertainment and cultural attractions. A popular destination for study abroad students is the island of Bali. A predominately Hindu island, Bali offers students a look at the diverse religious and cultural influences that have helped shape Indonesia, and the opportunity to be immersed in the rich cultural and artistic heritage there.

Indonesia is blessed with a rich and diverse mix of traditional cultures and art forms. Social life and rites of passage are steeped in ancient traditions and customs, or "adat" laws, which differ from area to area. Religious influences



on communal life vary from island to island and village to village, depending on local history. Art forms in Indonesia are not only derived from folklore, as in many other parts of the world, but many were also developed in the courts of former

kingdoms, as in Bali, where they are integral elements of religious ceremonies. The famous dance dramas of Java and Bali are derived from Hindu mythology and often feature fragments from the Ramayana and Mahabharata Hindu epics. *Wayang kulit* shadow puppet theater shows also display mythological events which have long been interesting for foreigners.

Studying in Indonesia presents a number of unique opportunities. The country's rich cultural heritage and diverse population make it an excellent place to explore the art, music, history, literature, and culture of the region. Indonesia is home to several excellent institutions including the University of Indonesia, one of the country's oldest universities, which today boasts over 30,000 Indonesian and international students. Also notable is the Institut Teknologi Bandung, which offers a variety of mathematics, science, and engineering degrees and a language center with courses in Bahasa Indonesian.



Indonesia is a challenging yet rewarding study abroad destination whether you are looking to study art, culture, history, religion, or a variety of other areas. Explore the possibilities.

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