

Indonesia

Country Specific Information



Recent Embassy Notices for American Citizens



December 14, 2010

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Indonesia is an independent republic consisting of more than 17,500 islands spread over 3,400 miles along the Equator. The main islands are Java, Sumatra, Bali, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sulawesi (Celebes), Papua, Halmahera, and Seram. The capital city of Jakarta lies in the lowlands of West Java, the most populated island. The country has approximately 246,000,000 people and more than 300 ethnic groups.

Indonesia's geographic location and topography make the country prone to natural disasters, especially seismic upheaval due to its location on the "Ring of Fire", an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin. Indonesia is a developing country with a growing economy and severe infrastructure shortcomings. Half of the population lives on under U.S. \$2 per day. However, it has many tourist destinations associated with the country's cultural diversity and natural resources. To have a safe and pleasant stay in Indonesia, U.S. travelers and residents must be aware of their surroundings, take personal responsibility for their wellbeing and be prepared to care for themselves in an emergency. Read the Department of State [Background Notes on Indonesia](#) for additional information.

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SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)/EMBASSY LOCATION: If you are going to live or visit Indonesia, please take the time to tell our Embassy in Jakarta or Consulate in Surabaya about your trip. If you enroll, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. Here's the link to the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

Local embassy information is available below and at the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#).

[U.S. Embassy Jakarta](#) is located at Medan Merdeka Selatan 5, Jakarta 10110; telephone: (62)(21) 3435-9000; fax (62)(21) 385-7189. The most secure international mail address is: U.S. Embassy Jakarta, FPO AP 96520 USA. The [consular section](#) of the Embassy can be reached by e-mail. Instructions on how to receive SMS emergency messages on your cell phone can be found on the [Embassy's FAQ page](#).

[U.S. Consulate General in Surabaya](#) is at Jalan Raya Dr. Sutomo 33; telephone: (62) (31) 295-6400; fax (62) (31) 567-4492, after-hours duty officer (62) (811) 334-183. The consulate can also be reached by [e-mail](#). The consulate should be the first point of contact for assistance to U.S. citizens who are present or residing in the Indonesian provinces of East Java, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Nusa Tenggara Barat, all of Sulawesi and North and South Maluku.

There is a Consular Agency in Bali at Jalan Hayam Wuruk 188, Denpasar, Bali; telephone: (62) (361) 233-605; fax (62) (361) 222-426; or [contact by e-mail](#). The U.S. Consulate in Surabaya is an alternate contact for U.S. citizens in Bali.

The American Presence Post in Medan, North Sumatra, provides only emergency assistance to U.S. citizens and does not offer routine consular services. U.S. citizens needing emergency consular assistance in Sumatra should call (62) (61) 451-9000.

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ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS: You will need a passport valid for at least six months following the date of arrival. Indonesian authorities regularly deny entry to all foreigners who arrive with passports expiring in less than six months. The U.S. Embassy cannot obtain entry permission for U.S. citizens with expiring passports. If you arrive and your passport has less than six months validity, Indonesian authorities will require you to depart Indonesia immediately to obtain a new U.S. passport elsewhere; you will not be allowed to renew your passport here and follow-up later with Indonesian authorities. Also, if your passport does not have the required 6 month's validity remaining on your passport, you may be denied boarding at your point of origin or at a transit point en route. Generally, you should expect to wait two weeks for a U.S. passport to be issued outside of the U.S.

You are required to have a visa to enter Indonesia, obtained either beforehand or, in limited circumstances, on arrival. Tourist passport holders traveling for private purposes may apply for a 30-day visitor visa on arrival at the airports in Jakarta, Bali, Surabaya, Banda Aceh, Medan, Padang, Pekanbaru, Manado, Biak, Ambon, Balikpapan, Pontianak, Kupang, Batam, and South Sumatra. Visas-on-Arrival are also available at a limited number of seaports, including the Batam and Bintan ferry terminals opposite Singapore but are unavailable at any land border crossing.

They are only for private, temporary business or pleasure visits. Travel for other purposes requires the appropriate Indonesian visa **before arrival**. Visas-on-Arrival are valid for 30 days and cost U.S. \$25. A Visa-on-Arrival may be extended one time only. An onward/return ticket is required to apply for a Visa-on-Arrival at these ports of entry. The Indonesian Embassy website indicates that Visas-on-Arrival are unavailable to government travelers who want to enter Indonesia on a diplomatic or official passport for an official purpose or mission. For details on Visas-on-Arrival and other visa information please visit the [Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia](#) website.

If you are entering Indonesia through Bali, you must to have two entirely blank passport pages in your passport. If you are entering through other ports of entry, you must have at least one blank page. Indonesian immigration inspectors do not consider amendment pages in your passport as blank pages. If your passport is nearly full, be sure to obtain extra blank passport pages before you travel - go to [How to Add Extra Pages to Your U.S. Passport](#). If you don't meet Indonesian entry criteria properly, you may be denied entry on the spot with no recourse and put on the next available flight departing Indonesia.

Please be advised that Indonesian entry and visa procedures may be inconsistently applied at different ports of entry, and when faced with making a decision, Indonesian authorities usually make the more conservative, restrictive decision. Entry requirements are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Indonesian authorities, a process over which the U.S. government has no control.

You may apply for a visa at the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, DC, or at an Indonesian consulate elsewhere in the United States. In some cases, you may also apply at Indonesian embassies and consulates in other countries. If you are traveling overseas and wish to apply for an Indonesian visa, you should inquire with the local Indonesian embassy in the country where you are currently traveling. For up-to-date information, travelers may contact the [Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia](#): 2020 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20036, phone: (202) 775-5200, or at [Indonesian Consulates in Los Angeles](#)(213) 383-5126; [San Francisco](#)(415) 474-9571; [Chicago](#)(312) 920-1880; [New York](#)(212) 879-0600; and [Houston](#)(713) 785-1691. Visit the [Embassy of Indonesia website](#) for the most current visa information.

Indonesia strictly enforces its immigration/visa requirements. Travelers who overstay the date stamped in their Visa-on-Arrival are subject to a fine of 200,000 Rupiah, approximately U.S. \$22, per day, and other sanctions. Westerners, including U.S. citizens, have been jailed for visa violations and/or overstays. Violators may also be subject to substantial fines and/or deportation from Indonesia for immigration and visa violations. Immigration officials have also detained foreigners for conducting work, academic, or other non-tourist activities while on visitor status. Even gratis volunteer work with local or international NGOs is not permitted on visitor status. Penalties for such immigration/visa violations have included a prison sentence of up to 5 years and a fine of Rupiah 25 million. Travelers should contact an Indonesian consular office to determine the appropriate visa category before traveling to Indonesia. Please consult the Criminal Penalties section below for further information.

All airline passengers, including children, diplomats, and officials, are subject to a departure tax, which must be paid in Rupiah, cash only. The international departure tax as of February 2010 is 150,000 Rupiah in Jakarta and varies at other international airports. The domestic departure tax in Jakarta is 30,000 Rupiah and also varies elsewhere.

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Indonesia. The Indonesian Government screens incoming passengers in response to reported outbreaks of pandemic illnesses.

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on our website. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information page](#).

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THREATS TO SAFETY AND SECURITY: Since 2005, the Indonesian police and security forces have disrupted a number of terrorist cells, including Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a U.S. government-designated terrorist organization that carried out several bombings at various times from 2002 to 2009 and caused outbreaks of violence elsewhere. In July 2009, JI elements bombed two Western hotels in Jakarta, killing nine Indonesians and foreigners and injuring over 50, including six U.S. citizens. Indonesia's counterterrorism efforts have been ongoing and largely successful, killing JI leader Noordin Top and some of his associates in late 2009. Between November 2009 and November 2010, security forces have arrested 99 individuals on terrorism-related charges. However, violent elements in Indonesia continue to demonstrate a willingness and ability to carry out violent attacks with little or no warning.

Extremists may target both official and private interests, including hotels, nightclubs, shopping areas and restaurants outside of tourist hotels which cater to Muslims during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Whether at work, pursuing daily activities, and/or while traveling, you should be vigilant and prudent at all times. Monitor local news reports, vary your routes and times, and maintain a low profile. Be sure to consider the security and safety preparedness of hotels, residences, restaurants, and entertainment or recreational venues that you frequent.

In November 2009, unknown assailants shot at foreigners in Banda Aceh, North Sumatra, an area that was devastated by the 2004 tsunami and the scene of a long-running separatist conflict that ended in 2005. The gunfire wounded a European development worker. In the same area, a house occupied by U.S. citizen teachers was targeted and hit by gunfire, but there were no U.S. citizen casualties.

Indonesian security forces are engaged in violently suppressing the Free Papua Movement (OPM). However, separatists in Papua continue to conduct occasional, violent attacks against police and civilians in the province that resulted in the deaths of and injuries to local residents and expatriate workers.

Be aware that a real or even perceived offense may generate a violent response from local people. For example, in June 2008, two U.S. citizens in western Sumatra were beaten after they reportedly accused a local man of theft. In the same month, another U.S. citizen in Sumatra was threatened by members of a local mosque when he complained about being awakened from his sleep by the morning call to prayer.

Indonesia's location on the "Ring of Fire" results in often severe seismic events that pose grave threats, and disrupt daily life and regional air travel. There is little warning and Indonesian emergency response capabilities are limited in the best of circumstances. U.S. citizens must constantly prepare for unforeseen emergencies when considering travel near or life in Indonesia.

If you have an Indonesian cell phone you may register to get U.S. Embassy emergency text message alerts by composing a text message on your cell phone utilizing the following format:

REGALRTLASTNAME#FIRSTNAME, e.g. REGALRTBROWN#DAVID;

Send to 9388 from your Indonesian cell phone;

You will receive a text message confirmation of registration;

You will be charged RP1000 per SMS Alert Message.

Please update your passports and important personal papers in case you must depart Indonesia quickly in an emergency. Travel distances, poor communications, and an inadequate infrastructure make it extremely difficult for the Embassy to respond to U.S. citizen emergencies. Many parts of

Indonesia (including many tourist destinations) are isolated and difficult to reach or contact.

Stay up to date by bookmarking our [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well.

You can also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Take some time before travel to improve your personal security - things are not the same everywhere as they are in the United States. Here are some useful tips for [traveling safely abroad](#).

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CRIME: Crime can be a problem in some major metropolitan areas in Indonesia. Crimes of opportunity such as pick-pocketing and theft occur throughout the country. If you are in Jakarta and Surabaya, hire a taxi either at a major hotel or shopping center queue, or by calling or hailing a reputable taxi company, such as Silver Bird, Blue Bird or White Express. If you are arriving at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, use only these taxis obtained at a designated taxi queue or clearly marked taxi stand. Politely decline all offers of help from touts or anyone who approaches you. Major hotels have staff on duty to offer safe meet-and-greet service at airports and can also direct their hotel guests to a reliable taxi. It is best to request meet and greet services from your hotel in advance. Add about 25,000 Rupiah to the metered fare for required airport taxes and toll road fees. Depending on traffic, a minimum metered fare is 150,000-200,000 Rupiah from Soekarno-Hatta airport to central Jakarta. Criminals in Jakarta regularly rob customers in taxis painted to look like taxis from reputable companies; booking taxis by telephone directly from the company or through hotels is the best way to avoid falling victim to this scam.

Indonesian police have noted an upward trend in burglaries and armed robberies in Jakarta, an increase of 25 percent in 2010, particularly in wealthier areas where expatriates tend to live. The best defense is to proactively take personal responsibility for your own security: know the layout of your dwelling, have someone at home at all times, discuss security procedures with your family and household staff, and know your neighborhood.

Claiming to act in the name of religious or moral standards, certain extremist groups have, on occasion, attacked nightspots and places of entertainment. Most of these attacks have sought to destroy property rather than to injure individuals. International news events can sometimes trigger anti-American or anti-Western demonstrations.

Credit card fraud and theft is a serious and growing problem in Indonesia, particularly for Westerners. Travelers should minimize use of credit cards and instead use cash. If used, credit card numbers should be closely safeguarded at all times. There have been many reports of shop, restaurant, and hotel staff writing down the credit card numbers of customers and then making purchases using the credit card number after the card owner has departed the retail location. Travelers should also avoid using credit cards for online transactions at Internet cafes and similar venues. Travelers who decide to use credit cards should monitor their credit card activity carefully and immediately report any unauthorized use to their financial institution. ATM cards have been skimmed and cloned, resulting in bank accounts being drained. If you choose to use an ATM, exercise the same level of caution you would in the United States when using unfamiliar ATM machines and monitor your statements closely. Selecting tour guides, hotels, and business

partners based on their reputation, competence, and ability to help can be very useful when considering a stay in Indonesia.

You are encouraged to carry a copy of your U.S. passport with you at all times so that if questioned by local officials, proof of identity and proof of U.S. citizenship are readily available. If you are arrested or detained, formal notification of the arrest is normally provided in writing to the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, a process that can take several weeks. If detained, telephone the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, or the nearest U.S. consular office immediately.

"Drink-spiking" incidents have been of increasing concern as there have been many reports of males being targeted for this ruse in clubs and nightspots. One drug used in these incidents is believed to be an animal tranquilizer, and its effects are extremely powerful. Besides putting the victim in an unconscious state for a long time, the side effects include memory loss, nausea, headaches, and vomiting. Although most of these incidents involve male victims, it is important to remember that females have been victimized in the past with "Date-Rape" drugs. Local, "home brew" alcoholic drinks may also be spiked. The best advice is: do not go out alone; do not leave drinks unattended; drink brand name beverages; and drink responsibly, in moderation. Even though alcohol in this, the world's largest Muslim nation, is widely available, public inebriation is highly frowned upon.

Maritime piracy in Indonesian waters continues, although incidents have decreased steadily in recent years. The most recent reports are of thefts of valuables or cargo from boats that are in port and not at sea. Regardless, before traveling by sea, especially in the Straits of Malacca between the Riau Province and Singapore and in the waters north of Sulawesi and Kalimantan, review the current security situation with local authorities.

Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootleg items illegal in the United States, if you purchase them you may also be breaking local law.

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VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (see the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#)). If your passport is stolen we can help you replace it. For violent crimes such as assault and rape, we can help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends, and help them send you money if you need it. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime are solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you understand the local criminal justice process and find an attorney if necessary.

The local equivalents to the "911" emergency telephone line in Indonesia are 110 for police, 113 for fire, and 118 for ambulance. While these numbers exist, they are not always answered. It is often more effective to physically go to Indonesian authorities to ask for their help rather than to wait for emergency services to respond to your phone call. There are sets of local direct emergency numbers in each district and you should learn and keep these emergency numbers at hand. However all Indonesian emergency services, police, fire and ambulance, if available at all, are often rudimentary at best.

Please see our [information on victims of crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

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CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in Indonesia, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States, and you can be prosecuted under U.S. law if you buy pirated goods. In Indonesia, you may be taken in for questioning if you don't have your passport with you. It is also illegal to take pictures of certain buildings, and driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime [prosecutable in the United States](#). If you break local laws in Indonesia, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It's very important to know what's legal and what's not where you are going.

Certain areas of Indonesia are under Shariah law; see the section under **Special Circumstances**.

In March 2008, the Indonesian parliament passed a bill criminalizing the access of internet sites containing violent or pornographic material. Anyone found guilty of the new offense could be jailed for up to three years or have to pay a heavy fine.

Engaging in sexual conduct with children, using, and/or disseminating child pornography is a crime prosecutable in the United States regardless of the country where the activity occurs. The Indonesian child protection law imposes up to 15 years in prison for those convicted of engaging in sexual contact with a child, and the anti-trafficking in persons law imposes 15 years in prison for anyone engaging in sex with a victim of trafficking.

Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Indonesia are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. A life sentence or the death penalty can be given in cases of drug trafficking; several foreigners have been sentenced to death in recent years. One U.S. citizen was given a life sentence for drug trafficking. Indonesian prisons are harsh and do not meet Western standards. Many prisoners are required to supplement their prison diets and clothing with funds from relatives. Medical and dental care in Indonesian prisons, while available, is below Western standards, and access to medical testing to diagnose illness as well as medications to treat conditions are often difficult to obtain.

Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in Indonesia, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate of your arrest, and to have communications from you forwarded to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

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SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: The Regional Security Officer of the U.S. Embassy must receive prior notice from U.S. government employees of their travel to Papua, Banda Aceh, Central Sulawesi, and Maluku. Separate pre-travel procedures apply to U.S. Armed Forces personnel who intend to travel to Indonesia for any reason. For further information, please see the [DOD Foreign Clearance Guide](#).

Accessibility: Indonesia enacted laws in 1997, 1998, 2004, 2007, and 2008 regarding accessibility for the disabled. However, except for buildings constructed under international standards, most public places and transportation facilities are not accessible, and applicable laws are not enforced.

Persons with disabilities will face severe difficulties in Indonesia as walkways, road crossings, rest rooms, and tourist and other areas are not equipped with accommodating features.

Shariah law: Shariah law is defined by the Islamic faith. In Indonesia, it is enforced in Aceh, northern Sumatra, by a separate police force. In other areas, it exists unofficially, enforced by local residents. When enforced, Shariah law technically applies to all, but implementation of Shariah law in Indonesia is uneven, processes are opaque, and enforcement can be arbitrary and severe. Shariah authorities rarely confront foreigners about violations of Shariah law, but this has occurred. Visitors to all areas are encouraged to respect local tradition, dress modestly, and seek guidance from local police if confronted by Shariah authorities. Many women, Indonesian and foreign, carry a scarf to drape around their head while traveling in Aceh, although wearing a headscarf is not compulsory, and foreign women are not expected to wear one. Men usually refrain from wearing pants that end above the knee. Muslim women in West Aceh are forbidden to wear pants, but this requirement does not apply to foreign or non-Muslim women. The Shariah concept of 'khalwat' forbids an unmarried man and unmarried woman (who are not close relatives) to be alone together in secluded areas, such as beaches or parks. Unmarried couples should beware of the likely applicability of Shariah law when staying in rural or more conservative areas and should consult local residents to avoid trouble.

Natural Disasters: Many areas of Indonesia are at high risk for natural disasters due to the country's geographic location and topography. If you are planning hikes or other outdoor activities in Indonesia, obtain up-to-date information on local conditions, travel with a reputable local guide, have overseas medical insurance, and carry a local mobile phone. Obey instructions from security and emergency personnel, and do not enter restricted areas. Organized and trained rescue services are rudimentary in populated areas and do not exist in remote areas. If you get into trouble, you may find yourself at great risk even if you can communicate your plight.

Earthquakes and Tsunamis: The Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 killed more than 130,000 people and left over 37,000 missing in Aceh and North Sumatra. Dozens of strong aftershocks were felt, and magnitude 7.8 and 7.1 tremors were recorded during the following two days. In January 2009, a magnitude 7.7 quake struck the north coast of Papua between the cities of Sorong and Manokwari causing deaths and heavy damage. In September 2009, magnitude 7.6 and 7.9 earthquakes struck the towns of Jambi and Padang in Sumatra, causing widespread damage and 700 deaths and many more injuries. Another earthquake in the Mentawai islands on October 25, 2010, caused a tsunami which killed over 450 locals and displaced up to tens of thousands for several weeks. Because of the islands' remoteness, emergency response personnel needed several days to evacuate tourists and bring in emergency relief supplies. In places where tsunamis are a potential threat, you should head inland for high ground immediately when large tremors are felt as tsunami warning systems may not be operable or reports delayed; be sure to establish an escape route beforehand. The city of Jakarta lacks an earthquake plan, according to its own 2010 report, which is a common problem replicated throughout the country.

Volcanoes: Mt. Merapi, a volcano near Yogyakarta, erupted with massive pyroclastic flows from April to early July 2006 and again in late 2010, disrupting air travel as far away as Jakarta and causing hundreds of casualties in the volcano's vicinity. Mount Sinabung in the Tanah Karo Highlands of North Sumatra erupted on August 28, 2010. The eruption caused the evacuation of 30,000 people but only one fatality.

Flooding and Landslides: These frequently follow heavy rains, and travelers should exercise

caution both in and outside of cities. On the roads, be aware of the possibility of land slippage, road washouts, and potholes.

Fires: Fire departments lack modern equipment and training. 70 percent of Jakarta's fire hydrants are inoperative, and the city fire department is only manned at fifty percent of its recommended level. Outside of Jakarta, fire prevention is no better. Occupants of high floors and crowded markets are at great risk, since fire departments are unable to reach those places.

Environmental Quality: Air quality outside of Jakarta and other major cities is acceptable most of the time. However, within Indonesia's major cities, air quality can range from "unhealthy for sensitive groups" to "unhealthy". Some expatriate residents of Jakarta have tested positive for highly elevated levels of carbon monoxide in their blood. The air and water quality in Jakarta is particularly polluted. Individuals susceptible to chronic respiratory illnesses should consult with their doctor before spending significant amounts of time in Jakarta. Open burning of rain forests continues, although to a lesser degree than in the early 2000s. Water is not potable. A 2008 study showed that 100 percent of Jakarta's water is contaminated by fecal coliform bacteria (see below). Only bottled water should be consumed. Sewage and drainage systems are incomplete.

Scuba Diving, Snorkeling and Surfing: Exercise prudence when scuba diving, snorkeling, or surfing and when visiting remote tourist locations. Strong seasonal undercurrents in coastal waters pose a fatal threat to surfers and swimmers; every year, several U.S. citizens drown in unstable water. Surfers and divers should also be aware that local fishermen in coastal waters may use explosives and poisons to catch fish, although this practice is illegal in Indonesia. Rescue services are mostly ad hoc and cannot be relied upon. Dangerous marine life such as cnidaria (jellyfish) and physalia (Portugese Man-O-War) are common, and divers and swimmers should be prepared to provide first aid if encountered. Divers should contact the Divers Alert Network (DAN) and obtain diving medical insurance in the event decompression is required as air evacuation is usually the only way to get to the nearest decompression chamber. DAN has a large network of dive physicians that are available for consultation and emergency response to its members.

Papua: All travelers to Papua, whether traveling as a private citizen or in an official capacity, must obtain prior approval to travel from the Indonesian government. Low-intensity inter-tribal warfare exists in Papua and has caused numerous deaths and injuries. Travelers should strictly avoid situations involving armed tribal members. Anti-government protests have caused numerous deaths and injuries and led to temporary closures of the airport in Timika. In 2009 and January 2010, sniper fire from unknown attackers on the private road from Kuala Kencana to Tembagapura caused several casualties, including deaths, of government forces, local workers, and expatriates.

Mountain Hiking: Hikers on Puncak Jaya or other mountains in Papua and elsewhere in Indonesia should organize their trip through a reputable tour operator and ensure that they have firm, realistic, primary and backup plans for climbing down the mountain. In the past, some local tour operators have abandoned climbers after they reached the summit. Climbers should be aware that transiting private or commercial properties on the way down the mountain is considered trespassing and not a safe or legal alternative to a proper plan. Hikers should assume that they will be completely on their own in case of any emergency. Hikers should be aware that severe seismic events occur frequently and without notice.

Teaching English in Indonesia: If you would like to teach English in Indonesia, carefully review employment contracts before traveling to Indonesia. Most contracts include a monetary penalty for early termination. English schools may hold passports to insure that the employee complies with

the terms of the contract or pays the appropriate penalty. There have been many U.S. citizens who were unable to depart Indonesia after having terminated their employment contracts early because their employer would not release their passports.

Commercial Disputes: If you are involved in commercial or property matters, be aware that the business environment is complex, and formal, regulated, transparent dispute settlement mechanisms are not fully developed. Local and foreign businesses often cite corruption and ineffective courts as serious problems. Business and regulatory disputes, which would be generally considered administrative or civil matters in the United States, may in some cases be treated as criminal cases in Indonesia. It can be challenging to resolve trade disputes. For more information, please refer to the [U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Guide](#) for Indonesia.

Internet Purchases: U.S. citizens frequently may be defrauded when purchasing goods by Internet from Indonesian suppliers whom the buyer has not met personally.

Currency: The widespread use of counterfeit currency causes banks, exchange facilities, and most commercial establishments to not accept U.S. currency that is worn, defaced, torn, or issued before 1996.

Dual Nationality: Indonesian law does not recognize dual nationality for adults over 18 years of age. Because of this law, U.S. citizens who are also documented as Indonesian nationals may experience difficulties with immigration formalities in Indonesia. Holding dual citizenship may also hamper the U.S. Embassy's ability to provide consular protection to dual national U.S. citizens. In addition to being subject to all Indonesian laws affecting U.S. citizens, dual nationals may also be subject to other laws that impose special obligations on Indonesian citizens. In July 2006, the Indonesian Parliament passed new legislation allowing children under age 18 to hold foreign as well as Indonesian citizenship. Parents whose children hold both Indonesian and U.S. citizenship continue to experience difficulties with entry and exit immigration procedures.

Transportation: There has been a rapid rise in all manners of public and private transportation within Indonesia. New private airlines have begun operations over the past several years, as have new bus and ferry lines. Air, ferry, and road accidents resulting in fatalities, injuries, and significant damage are common. While all forms of transportation are ostensibly regulated in Indonesia, oversight is spotty, equipment tends to be less well maintained than that operated in the United States, amenities do not typically meet Western standards, and rescue/emergency response is notably lacking. Travelers by boat or ferry should not board before confirming that adequate personal floatation devices are provided.

Customs Regulations: Indonesian customs authorities strictly regulate the import and export of items such as prescription medicines and foreign language materials or videotapes/discs. You should contact the Embassy of Indonesia in Washington or Indonesian consulates elsewhere in the United States for specific information about customs requirements. Transactions involving such products may be illegal, and bringing them back to the United States may result in forfeiture and/or fines.

Please see our [Customs Information](#).

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MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH CARE INFORMATION: The general level of sanitation and health care in Indonesia is far below U.S. standards. Some routine medical care is available in all

major cities, although most expatriates leave the country for all but the simplest medical procedures. Psychological and psychiatric services are limited throughout Indonesia. Medical procedures requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to locations with acceptable medical care, such as Singapore, Australia, or the United States can cost thousands of dollars. Physicians and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment or sizable deposits before offering medical care. A list of English-speaking doctors and hospitals is available via the [U.S. Embassy Jakarta's](#) website. Many places in Indonesia are inaccessible to the physically handicapped. What sidewalks that exist are uneven and difficult to navigate, and many buildings do not have elevators.

Ambulance services are individually run by hospitals and clinics. Indonesian ambulance attendants lack paramedical training equivalent to U.S. standards, and there is no reliable emergency ambulance service in Indonesia. If you are staying in Indonesia for an extended period, especially if you have known health problems, you are advised to investigate private ambulance services in your area, and to provide family and close contacts with the direct telephone number(s) of their preferred service. Traffic congestion is a significant problem in urban Indonesia and roads are generally in poor condition in rural Indonesia, so ambulance transport, if it exists at all, even over short distances can take hours.

Community sanitation and public health programs are inadequate throughout Indonesia and subject to frequent breakdowns. Water and air pollution and traffic congestion have rapidly increased with the unstructured growth of major cities. Almost all maladies of the developing world are endemic to Indonesia, and immediate treatment is problematic. Residents are subject to water- and food-borne illnesses such as typhoid, hepatitis, cholera, worms, amebiasis, giardia, cyclospora, and bacterial dysentery. Mosquito-borne dengue fever and tuberculosis exist throughout Indonesia and have been serious in Jakarta. Indonesia has the highest incidence of dengue fever in Asia. Multiple drug-resistant strains of malaria are endemic in some parts of Indonesia but not in metropolitan Jakarta, Medan, Surabaya, and Bali; even short stays can be disastrous without malaria prophylaxis. Malaria prophylaxis is highly recommended for travel to malaria-endemic areas outside major cities. Travelers to Sulawesi should be tested for schistosomiasis, whether or not they were exposed to potentially infested waters. Asthma and other respiratory difficulties are common and generally worse in Jakarta than in other areas, exacerbated by the high pollution levels. Skin allergies are also common. Avian (H5N1) and swine (H1N1) influenza are endemic in Indonesia. Rabies is endemic in Indonesia and a particular problem in Bali, where it has caused over 100 deaths from 2008 to 2010. Polio reemerged in Western Java in 2005. Travelers are urged to consult with their personal physicians and to get updated information on prevalent diseases before traveling to Indonesia. Travelers should be current on all recommended immunizations; those planning on traveling extensively should consider the series of three pre-exposure inoculations against rabies. Local pharmacies carry a range of products of variable quality, availability, and cost. Counterfeit pharmaceuticals are a significant risk and U.S. citizens should patronize only reputable pharmacies.

Tap water is not potable. In 2008, Indonesian authorities found that 100 percent of tap water samples from the Jakarta area tested positive for coliform bacteria, as well as high concentrations of toxic chemicals, including lead and mercury. Bottled water should be used for consumption, including for cooking. Factory bottled soft drinks, and juices and milk sold in sealed containers are generally safe. Take extra care preparing fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats. If you cannot see refrigerators, expect that any food, especially street food, is preserved with high concentrations of formaldehyde derivatives. Consider that unprocessed or raw food may be unsafe even in higher end establishments. Washing, soaking, peeling, and/or thoroughly cooking food are mandatory

procedures to minimize insecticide, bacterial, and parasitic contamination. Gastrointestinal disorders are common. A wide variety of foods are available in local markets and supermarkets, and with some care and effort, it is possible to eat a well-balanced diet.

Car and motorcycle accidents are the primary causes of severe injury to foreigners living and traveling in Indonesia. Defensive driving and use of seatbelts are encouraged. Use of motorcycles and bicycling in traffic are both discouraged. Rh negative blood may be difficult to obtain in an area with very few Westerners. Therefore, it is important to know your blood type and recognize that scarcity may be a problem.

Updated information and links to the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are posted on the [U.S. Embassy Jakarta's](#) website.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the [CDC website](#). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the infectious diseases section of the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Indonesia. For further information, please [consult the CDC's information on TB](#).

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MEDICAL INSURANCE: You can't assume your insurance will go with you when you travel. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave whether or not your medical insurance will cover you overseas. You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

- Does my policy cover me when I'm out of the United States?
- Will it cover emergencies such as treatment in a foreign hospital, medical evacuation or an air ambulance?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctor and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy doesn't provide overseas coverage when you travel, it's a very good idea to take out another one for your trip. For more information, please see our [medical insurance overseas page](#).

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TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in Indonesia, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. Traffic in Indonesia is highly dangerous, congested, and undisciplined. Traffic signals are frequently ignored and often in disrepair. The number and variety of vehicles on the road far exceed the capacity of existing roadways. Road conditions vary from good (in the case of toll roads and major city roads) to dangerously poor. Generally, road safety awareness is very low in Indonesia. Buses and trucks are often dangerously overloaded and travel at high speeds. Most roads outside major urban areas have a single lane of traffic in each direction, making passing dangerous. Most Indonesian drivers do not maintain a safe-following distance in a manner familiar to U.S. drivers and tend to pass or maneuver with considerably less margin for error than in the United States. Although traffic in Indonesia moves on the left side of the road, drivers tend to pass on both sides and may use the shoulder for this purpose. It is common for drivers to create extra lanes regardless of the lane

markings on the roads. Nails are frequently sprinkled on roads to cause punctures and create business for tire-repair services.

Throughout Indonesia, there is an overabundance of motorcycles claiming the right of way. Many motorcycle drivers weave recklessly in and out of traffic with complete disregard for traffic regulations and simple safety precautions. Throughout the country, motor vehicles share the roads with other forms of transportation such as pedicabs, horse and ox carts, pushcarts, and domestic animals such as cows, sheep, and goats.

Indonesia requires the use of seat belts in front seats; most Indonesian automobiles do not have seat belts in the rear passenger seats. The use of infant and child car seats is uncommon, and it can be very difficult to rent a car seat. Helmets are required for all motorcycle passengers, the laws for which are inconsistently enforced. Passengers often do not wear helmets. Accidents on rented motorcycles constitute the largest cause of death and serious injury among foreign visitors to Indonesia. Given the poor quality of emergency services, an injury considered to be minor in the United States might result in greater bodily harm in Indonesia.

Accidents between a car and a motorcycle are invariably viewed as the fault of the driver of the car. Groups of motorcycle riders will sometimes threaten the driver of a car who is involved in an accident regardless of who is at fault. Expatriates and affluent Indonesians often use professional drivers. All car rental firms provide drivers for a nominal additional fee. Travelers unfamiliar with Indonesian driving conditions are strongly encouraged to hire drivers.

Driving at night can be extremely dangerous outside of major urban areas. Drivers often refuse to use their lights until it is completely dark, and most rural roads are unlit. Sometimes residents in rural areas use road surfaces as public gathering areas, congregating on them after dark.

When an accident involving personal injury occurs, Indonesian law requires both drivers to await the arrival of a police officer to report the accident. Although Indonesian law requires third party insurance, most Indonesian drivers are uninsured, and even when a vehicle is insured, it is common for insurance companies to refuse to pay damages. Nevertheless, foreigners who plan to drive while in Indonesia should ensure they have appropriate insurance coverage and a driver's license. Ambulance service in Indonesia is unreliable, and taxis or private cars are often used to transport the injured to a medical facility. In cases of serious injury to a pedestrian, the driver of the vehicle could be required to help transport the injured person to the hospital. When an accident occurs outside a major city, it may be advisable, before stopping, to drive to the nearest police station to seek assistance.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. Also, we suggest that you visit [Indonesia's national tourist office](#) online for road safety information.

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AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Indonesian Directorate General of Civil Aviation as not being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Indonesian's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#).

Indonesian air carriers continue to experience air incidents and accidents. U.S. citizens traveling to and from Indonesia should fly directly to their destinations on international carriers from countries whose civil aviation authorities meet international aviation safety standards for the oversight of

their air carrier operations under the FAA's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program.

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CHILDRENS ISSUES: Please see our Office of Children's Issues web pages on [intercountry adoption](#) and [international parental child abduction](#)

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This replaces the Country Specific Information for Indonesia dated March 9, 2010, to update sections on Country Description, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)/Embassy Location, Entry/Exit Requirements, Threats to Safety and Security, Crime, Victims of Crime, Criminal Penalties, Special Circumstances, Medical Facilities and Health Information, Medical Insurance, Traffic Safety and Road Conditions, and Aviation Safety Oversight.

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