

Java



The heart of the nation, Java is an island of megacities, mesmerising natural beauty, and complex, profound traditions in art, dance, spiritualism and learning.

Generally the cities are pretty uninspiring: pollution levels are high and they're plagued by environmental issues. That said, personal security is rarely an issue, and it's perfectly safe to explore most Javanese towns at night, snacking with locals on the street. And this is the one corner of Indonesia (Bali excepted) with vibrant nightlife and an exciting music scene, so the big cities are good places to catch a new indie band or local DJ.

Leaving the cities you'll find a Java of bewitching landscapes – iridescent rice paddies, villages of terracotta-tiled houses, bubbling streams and patches of dense jungle-clad hills. Verdant and fecund, this is one of the most fertile regions on earth, with three annual crops possible in some areas. And with over 40 volcanoes forming a spiky backbone, almost every journey in Java passes a succession of giant, often smoking cones.

Transport is better than in most parts of Indonesia. By road it can be slow going, though, unless you're on one of the new toll roads. The rail network is reliable and frequent, with trains ranging from dirt-cheap trundlers to fairly swift air-conditioned services.

Javanese people tend to be the best-educated and most worldly in the country, so it's an excellent place to really get to grips with Indonesia and learn what makes it tick. Switched-on young Javanese have set up several excellent new community tourism initiatives, which present an ideal opportunity for travellers to hook up with locals.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experiencing the magnificent temple of **Borobudur** (p171) at sunrise, when early-morning mist clings to the surrounding necklace of hills
- Gazing over the vast, ethereal caldera of **Bromo** (p245) and Semeru from the lofty lookout of Gunung Penanjakan
- Hiking mountain trails to the sublime crater lake of **Kawah Ijen** (p250) along with an army of strong-armed sulphur miners
- Time-travelling to Java's golden age in the cultural capital of **Yogyakarta** (p176)
- Getting off the beaten path and exploring Java's magnificent national parks: **Ujung Kulon** (p133), **Meru Betiri** (p253), **Alas Purwo** (p254) and **Baluran** (p256)



■ POPULATION: 134 MILLION

■ LAND AREA: 132,007 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST PEAK: GUNUNG SEMERU (3676M)

HISTORY

Java has a history of epic proportions and a record of human habitation that extends back 1.7 million years to when 'Java Man' (see the boxed text, below) roamed the river banks of Sungai Bengawan Solo in Central Java. Waves of migrants followed, moving down through Southeast Asia.

Early Javanese Kingdoms

Blessed with exceptional fertility from its mineral-rich volcanic soil, Java has long played host to intensive *sawah* (wet rice) agriculture, which required close cooperation between villages. Out of village alliances, small principalities emerged, including the Hindu Mataram kingdom, founded by the ruler Sanjaya, in the 8th century. Mataram's religion centred on the god Shiva, and produced some of Java's earliest Hindu temples on the Dieng Plateau (p169).

The Sailendra dynasty followed, overseeing Buddhism's heyday and the building of Borobudur (p171). But Hinduism and Buddhism continued to coexist and the massive Hindu Prambanan complex (p194) was constructed within a century of Borobudur.

Mataram eventually fell, perhaps at the hands of the Sumatra-based Sriwijaya kingdom. The Javanese revival began in AD 1019 under King Airlangga, a semi-legendary figure who formed the first royal link with Bali and divided his territory into two kingdoms, which he gave to his sons Janggala and Kediri.

Early in the 13th century the legendary commoner Ken Angrok briefly succeeded in uniting much of Central and East Java, defeating Kediri and bringing Janggala under his control. Javanese culture flourished brightly, and striking Shiva-Buddhist temples were built (see p238). However, much of West Java still remained under the influence of the Sriwijaya kingdom at this time.

The emergence of an expansionist new power, the much-celebrated Majapahit kingdom, pushed aside the Sriwijaya and Singosari kingdoms. Ruling from Trowulan (p228), it became the first Javanese commercial kingdom, with its own ports and shipping lanes, trading with China and most of Southeast Asia, and growing to claim sovereignty over the entire Indonesian archipelago. Today its influence endures as a representation of a Javanese golden age, its royal colours of scarlet

JAVA MAN

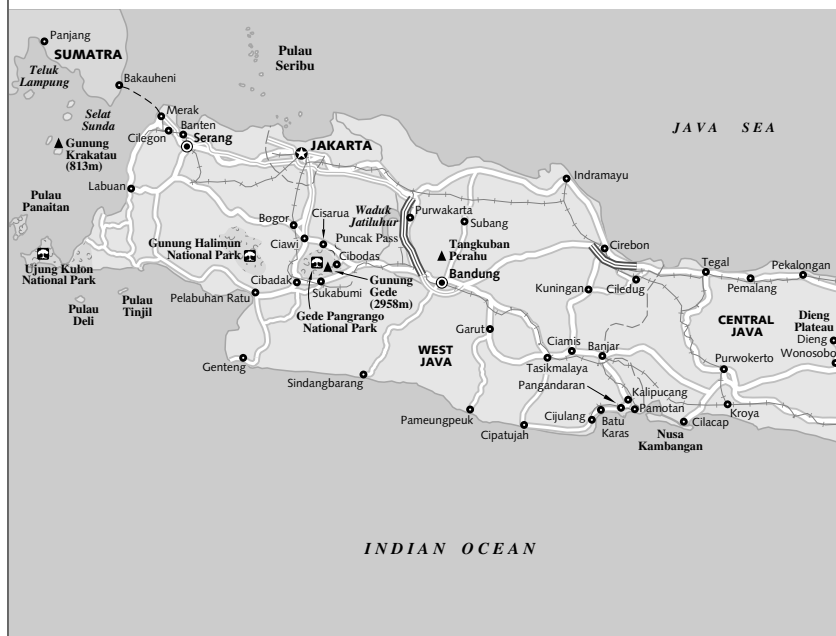
Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) spawned a new generation of naturalists in the 19th century, and his theories sparked acrimonious debate across the world. Ernst Haeckel's *The History of Natural Creation* (1874) expounded Darwin's theory of evolution and surmised that primitive humans had evolved from a common ape-man ancestor, the famous 'missing link'.

One student of the new theories, Dutch physician Eugene Dubois, went to Java in 1889 after hearing of the uncovering of a skull at Wajak, near Tulung Agung in East Java. Dubois worked at the dig, uncovering other fossils closely related to modern humans. In 1891 at Trinil in East Java's Ngawi district, Dubois unearthed an older skullcap, along with a femur and three teeth he later classified as originating from *Pithecanthropus erectus*, a low-browed, prominent-jawed early human ancestor, dating from the Middle Pleistocene epoch. His published findings of 'Java Man' caused such a storm in Europe that Dubois even reburied his discovery for 30 years.

Since Dubois' findings, many older examples of *Homo erectus* (the name subsequently given to *Pithecanthropus erectus*) have been uncovered in Java. The most important and most numerous findings have been at Sangiran, where in the 1930s Ralph von Koenigswald found fossils dating back to around one million BC; in 1936, at Perning near Mojokerto, the skull of a child was discovered and was purported to be even older. Most findings have been along Sungai Bengawan Solo in Central and East Java.

Geochronologists have now dated the bones of Java's oldest *Homo erectus* specimens at 1.7 million years, but also postulate that the youngest fossils may be less than 40,000 years old. This means that *Homo erectus* existed in Java at the same time as *Homo sapiens*, who arrived on the island some 60,000 years ago, and reignites the debate about whether humankind evolved in Africa and migrated from there, or whether humans evolved on several continents concurrently. Those interested in learning more should pick up a copy of Carl Swisher, Garniss Curtis and Roger Lewin's extremely readable book *Java Man*.

JAVA



and white used on the Indonesian flag and its name invoked by nationalists.

Islamic Kingdoms

Islamic influence grew in Java as the Majapahit kingdom faded, and by the 15th and 16th centuries Muslim kingdoms such as Demak (p214), Cirebon (p162) and Banten (p119) were on the ascent.

Demak's military incursions into East Java forced many Hindu-Buddhists eastwards to Bali, and in 1524 it took the port of Banten and then Sunda Kelapa (now Jakarta), before later overrunning Cirebon. But by the end of the 16th century the Muslim kingdom of Mataram (p180) had risen to control huge swaths of Central and East Java. Banten still remained independent, however, and grew to become a powerful maritime capital, holding sway over much of West Java. By the 17th century, Mataram and Banten were the only two powers in Java left to face the arrival of the Dutch.

Dutch Period

The arrival of the Dutch and their eventual domination of Java is summarised in the

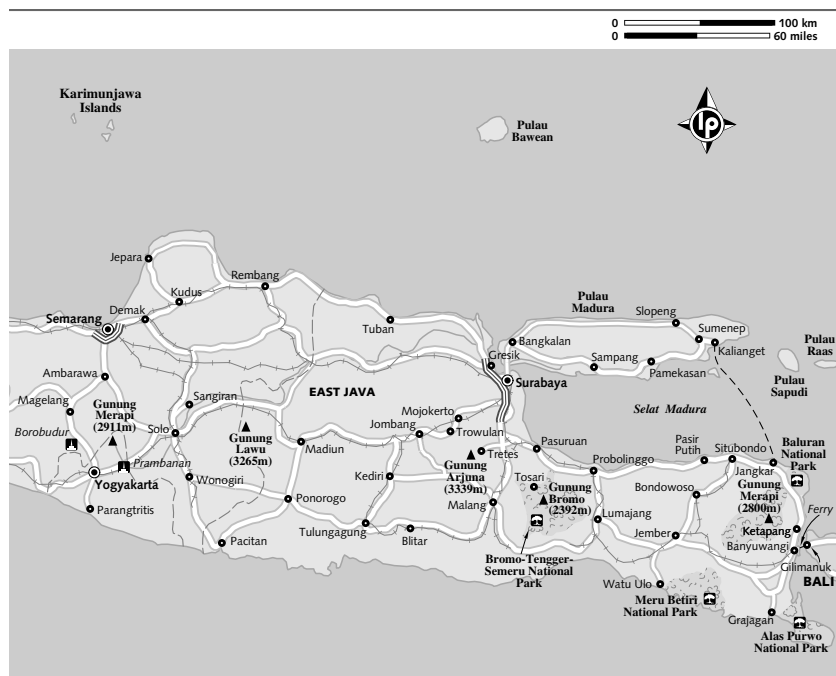
History chapter (p38); a snapshot of Javanese resistance follows.

As the Dutch set up camp in Batavia (Jakarta), Banten remained a powerful force under Sultan Agung, but unfortunately civil war within the royal house led to Dutch intervention and its eventual collapse.

The Mataram kingdom was another matter. As the power of the Dutch grew, the empire began to disintegrate, and by the 18th century infighting was taking its toll. The first two Javanese Wars of Succession were resolved by the treaty of 1743 (restoring the ruler Pakubuwono II to his battered court), but the price of concessions to the colonial power was high.

Pakubuwono II established a new court at Solo (Surakarta; p198), but rivalry soon re-emerged, resulting in the third Javanese War of Succession in 1746. The Dutch rapidly lost patience and split the kingdom in three, creating the royal houses of Solo and Yogyakarta (p176), and the smaller domain of Mangkunegaran (p200) within Solo.

Resentment and resistance to Dutch influence continued to simmer, erupting in the



anti-Dutch Java War of 1825–30 as the rebel Prince Pangeran Diponegoro challenged but ultimately failed to defeat the colonists. Subsequently Javanese courts became little more than ritual establishments concentrating on traditional ceremonies and artistic patronage, overseen by a Dutch *residen* (governor), but with very limited political clout.

Java Today

For Java's, and Indonesia's, struggle for independence from the Dutch and the subsequent growing pains, see the History chapter (p38).

Java still rules the roost when it comes to political and economic life in Indonesia. It has the bulk of the country's industry, is easily its most developed island, and has over the years received the lion's share of foreign investment.

The economic crisis of the late '90s hit hard, when huge numbers of urban workers lost their jobs and rioters targeted Chinese communities in cities including Solo (p198) and Jakarta (p99). But Java bounced back relatively quickly, and enjoyed a period of comparative

stability and growing prosperity in the early 20th century. Glittering shopping malls and a new interisland expressway network are the most obvious signs of Java's steady (if unspectacular) modernisation.

Bali apart, Java is the most outward-looking island in Indonesia, and its literate, educated population is the most closely connected to the rest of the world. Extraneous influences matter here, and Java is both the most Westernised island in the country and also the corner of the nation most influenced by radical pan-Islamic ideology. Whilst most Javanese are moderate Muslims, there's an increasingly vocal conservative population (as well as tiny numbers of fanatics prepared to cause death and destruction in the name of *jihad*). The Bali bombers all came from Java, and Java-based terrorists targeted foreign investments in Jakarta in 2003 and 2004, as well as several international hotels in 2009.

But when it comes to the ballot box, the Javanese as a whole have consistently favoured secular rather than religious political parties: in the 2009 elections Islamist parties saw their share of the vote drop slightly.

CULTURE

Javanese culture is an exotic and incredibly rich mix of customs that date back to animist beliefs and Hindu times. Ancient practices are fused with endemic Muslim traditions, which retain mystical *sufi* elements beneath more obvious orthodox and conservative Islamic culture.

The Javanese cosmos is composed of different levels of belief stemming from older and more accommodating mysticism, the Hindu court culture and a very real belief in ghosts and numerous benevolent and malevolent spirits. Underneath the unifying code of Islam, magic power is concentrated in amulets and heirlooms (especially the Javanese dagger known as the *kris*), in parts of the human body, such as the nails and the hair, and in sacred musical instruments. The *dukun* (faith healer and herbal doctor or mystic) is still consulted when illness strikes. *Jamu* (traditional medicine) potions are widely taken to do everything from boost libido to cure asthma.

Refinement and politeness are highly regarded, and loud displays of emotion, coarseness, vulgarity and flamboyant behaviour are considered *kasar* (bad manners; coarse). *Halus* (refined) Javanese is part of the Hindu court tradition, which still exists in the heartland of Central Java. In contrast to Islam, the court tradition has a hierarchical world view, based on privilege and often guided by the gods or nature spirits.

Indirectness is a Javanese trait that stems from an unwillingness to make others feel uncomfortable. It is impolite to point out mistakes and sensitivities, or to directly criticise authority.

Java has three main ethnic groups, each speaking their own language: the Javanese of Central and East Java (where *halus* is taken very seriously); the Sundanese of West Java; and the Madurese from Pulau Madura (who have a reputation for blunt-speaking and informality). Small pockets of Hindus remain, including the Tenggerese of the Bromo area and the Badui of West Java, whose religion retains many animist beliefs. Even metropolitan Jakarta identifies its own polyglot tradition in the Betawi, the name for the original inhabitants of the city.

Arts

Javanese culture is a cocktail of pre-Hindu, Hindu and Islamic influences.

WAYANG

Javanese *wayang* (puppet) theatre has been a major way of preserving the Hindu- Buddhist heritage in Java.

Wayang Kulit

Wayang kulit is the art of theatre performances using shadow puppets. Perforated leather figures are manipulated behind an illuminated cotton screen to retell stories, which are usually based on Hindu epics the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Unsurprisingly, *wayang kulit* owes much to Indian tradition.

In a traditional performance, a whole night might be devoted to just one *lakon* (drama). Many *wayang kulit* figures and stories have a specific mystical function; certain stories are

TOP FIVE READS

Armchair travellers and those who like to read up on background knowledge before travelling should consider picking up one or more of the following.

- *Jakarta Inside Out* by Daniel Ziv. A collection of humorous short stories tackling the vibrant underbelly of Indonesia's capital.
- *Krakatoa* by Simon Winchester. An excellent, if a tad exhausting, historical account of the build-up to the largest bang ever recorded on planet earth.
- *Java Man* by Garniss Curtis, Carl Swisher and Roger Lewin. One of the most thorough offerings on the continuing debate over the prehistoric skulls found in Central Java in 1936.
- *The Religion of Java* by Clifford Geertz. A classic book on Javanese religion, culture and values. It's slightly dated (it was based on research done in the 1950s) but is nonetheless fascinating reading.
- *Javanese Culture* by Koentjaraningrat. One of the most comprehensive studies of Javanese society, history, culture and beliefs. This excellent reference book covers everything from Javanese toilet training to kinship lines.

JAVA AMBASSADORS

Several excellent new community tourism initiatives have recently emerged in Java, all run by passionate and committed young Javanese eager to show travellers the best of their island. There's no better way to get to grips with the zeitgeist of the world's most populous island than sharing a day or two (and a laugh) with a local. Alongside sightseeing, other possibilities include school visits, volunteer work opportunities, cooking classes and visits to home industries like tofu kitchens.

In Cianjur (see the boxed text, p147) there's a great home stay program. Borobudur's Jaker community tourism network (p174) will enlighten you about life and customs in rural Java, while in nearby Yogyakarta Rumah Guides (p182) is a well-informed bunch of young local guides. And over in East Java you'll find the Malang Tourism Ambassadors (p235), the perfect hosts for that region.

performed to protect a crop, a village or even individuals.

By the 11th century, *wayang* performances with leather puppets flourished in Java, and by the end of the 18th century *wayang kulit* had developed most of the details we see today. The standardisation of the puppet designs is traditionally attributed to King Raden Patah of Demak, a 16th-century Islamic king.

The creation of a puppet is an art form in itself. First, an outline is cut using a knife, then the fine details are carved out using small chisels and a hammer. When the carving is finished, the movable arms are attached and the puppet is painted. Lines are drawn in and accentuated with black ink before the *cempurit*, the stick of horn used to hold the puppet upright, is attached.

The leaf-shaped *kayon* represents the 'tree' or 'mountain of life', and is used to end scenes or to symbolise wind, mountains, obstacles, clouds or the sea.

The characters in *wayang* are brought to life by a single *dalang* (puppeteer), who might manipulate dozens of figures during a performance. The *dalang* must be a linguist, capable of speaking both the language of the audience and the ancient Kawi language of the aristocratic protagonists of the play. He must also be able to reproduce the different voices of the characters, as well as be responsible for directing the accompanying gamelan orchestra (see right).

Wayang Golek

Three-dimensional wooden puppets, *wayang golek* have movable heads and arms, and are manipulated in the same way as shadow puppets. They are most popular in West Java.

First used in north-coast towns as a vehicle to facilitate the spread of Islam, *wayang golek* is a popular, robust parody of the stylised, aristocratic *wayang kulit* play. In the early 19th century, a Sundanese prince of Sumedang had a set of wooden puppets made to correspond exactly to the *wayang kulit* puppets of the Javanese courts and was therefore able to perform the Hindu epics.

Wayang golek uses the same stories as the *wayang kulit*, but also has its own set, inspired by Islamic myths.

Sometimes a *wayang golek* puppet is used at the end of a *wayang kulit* play to symbolise the transition back from the world of two dimensions.

Other Wayang

Wayang klitik or *kerucil* is popular in East Java and uses flat wooden puppets carved in low relief. This type of *wayang* is performed without a shadow screen. *Wayang orang* (also known as *wayang wong*) is a dance-drama in which real people dance the part of the *wayang* characters.

Wayang topeng is similar to *wayang orang*, only dancers don masks.

GAMELAN

A gamelan is a traditional orchestra of some 60 to 80 musical instruments, consisting of a large percussion section – which includes bronze 'kettle drums', xylophones, and gongs – accompanied by spike fiddles and bamboo flutes.

The sound produced by a gamelan can range from harmonious to eerie (but always hypnotic), with the tempo and intensity of sound undulating on a regular basis. Expect to hear powerful waves of music one minute

SUNDANESE MUSIC & DANCE

Sundanese instrument makers are highly innovative and are capable of producing a sweet sound from just about anything. Of their better-known designs, the *kecap* (a type of plucked lute) is the most idiosyncratic and is often accompanied by the *suling*, a soft-toned bamboo flute that fades in and out of the long, vibrating notes of the *kecap*. The *angklung* is more ungainly in appearance and consists of a series of bamboo pieces of differing length and diameter, loosely suspended from a bamboo frame. When shaken, it produces an unlikely echoing sound.

Another traditional form is *gamelan degung*. This is played like Central Javanese gamelan, by a small ensemble, but with the addition of a set of small, suspended gongs (*degung*) and an accompanying *suling*. The music produced exists in the hinterland and has a sound somewhere between the soporific Central Javan and livelier Balinese styles of gamelan.

The best-known contemporary West Javan dance form, Jaipongan, is a whirlwind of fast drumming and erotic movement, interspersed with a good dose of *pencak silat* (Indonesian martial arts) and a flick of New York-style break dancing. Jaipongan is a recent mutation of a more traditional Sundanese form called Ketuktilu, in which a group of professional female dancers (sometimes prostitutes) dance for male spectators.

Other dance forms include Longser, Joker and Ogel. Longser and Joker involve the passing of a sash between two couples. Ogel is a slow and exhaustive form, featuring measured movements and a rehearsal regime that many young performers simply lack the time or patience for.

and a single instrument holding court the next.

More often than not gamelan music can be heard at *wayang* performances, but gamelan concerts are also quite common throughout Java.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Jakarta (p115) is Indonesia's busiest international arrival point and has numerous international connections on national and low-cost airlines to destinations throughout Asia and beyond. International flights to regional Javanese airports have increased greatly in recent years, offering useful alternative routes that allow you to bypass Jakarta completely. Surabaya (p226) has a few international flights, as do Solo (p203), Bandung (p149), Yogyakarta (p189) and Semarang (p212).

Domestic flights have dropped in price in recent years and are now a very convenient way to get around Indonesia. Book early during holiday season. You can get to anywhere in Indonesia from Jakarta, and all the main regional airports are offering an expanding network of connections through the archipelago.

Sea

Jakarta is the main hub for Pelni passenger ships (see p115) that run all over Indonesia,

but no international connections exist. It's possible (but slow going) to get to/from Singapore by using the ferries that run between Pulau Bintan in the Riau archipelago (off the Sumatran coast) and Singapore. From Pulau Bintan there are Pelni boats to/from Jakarta.

BALI

Ferries run round the clock between Banyuwangi/Ketapang harbour in East Java (p256) and Gilimanuk in Bali. From Ketapang, numerous buses and trains travel to the rest of Java. An easier alternative is to take a through-bus from Denpasar to any major city in Java – these buses include the ferry journey.

SUMATRA

Ferries shuttle between the Javanese port of Merak (p121) and Bakauheni in southern Sumatra, 24 hours a day. From both ports, regular buses head for the main centres of their respective islands. Long-distance buses run from Jakarta (p116) to all the main cities in Sumatra. Work on a new bridge across Selat Sunda (Sunda Strait) linking Sumatra and Java is scheduled to begin in 2012 (and finish by 2025).

The long bus journeys in Sumatra can take their toll, and as most points of interest are in North Sumatra, most travellers prefer to fly there.

GETTING AROUND

The traditional east–west route across Java is Jakarta–Bogor–Bandung–Pangandaran–Yogyakarta–Solo–Surabaya–Gunung Bromo and on to Bali. However, new flight connections mean that there are now many more potential points of entry (and exit), such as flying into Semarang and heading down to Yogyakarta from there.

Air

Domestic flight routes in Java are expanding rapidly and can be very inexpensive. Surabaya–Jakarta is very popular and covered by AirAsia and five other airlines. Flight information is listed throughout the chapter and in the Transport chapter (p847).

Boat

Ferries and boats sail to the island groups Pulau Seribu (p119) and Karimunjawa (p218). Krakatau (p123) can only be reached by boat.

Bus

Buses are the main form of transport in Java. The normal practice is simply to front up at a bus terminal and catch the first one out; you shouldn't have to wait more than half an hour on the main intercity routes. Services range from hot economy-class buses to smart air-conditioned luxury coaches.

Tickets for buses are purchased on board, although tickets for *patas* (express) and luxury buses can be bought in advance at bus terminals, bus agents in the city centres, and sometimes hotels.

Small minibuses that cover shorter routes and back runs are commonly called *angkot* and shouldn't be confused with very useful door-to-door minibuses (*travel*). The latter are air-con minibuses that travel all over Java and pick you up at your hotel and drop you off wherever you want to go in the destination city.

Many terminals (in Jakarta, Surabaya and Bandung, for instance) are located a long way from the centre of town. In these cities, the train is usually a better alternative.

Car & Motorcycle

Driving in Java is not for the faint-hearted; most big cities are constantly *macet* (gridlocked) and main routes can be hellishly clogged. Accidents often result in large pay-

offs or pricey lawsuits and a number of drivers are killed every year by angry crowds exacting mob justice following an accident.

Self-drive car hire is rarely available in Java. It's far more common (and a much better option) to hire a car and driver, which saves a lot of hassle. Rates start from as low as 275,000Rp per day, but the average price is nearer 500,000Rp (which includes petrol and the driver's meals and accommodation costs). Hiring a car and driver is an excellent way to explore the remote sights of East Java, or the temples around Solo.

Scooters are the favoured mode of transport for most Javanese, and hiring one yourself can be a good way to get to the island's quieter corners, like the coastal strip near Pangandaran. Rental prices start at around 40,000Rp per day, and should include a proper helmet. Java's roads are no place to try your hand at riding for the first time.

Train

Java has a decent, if hardly speedy, rail service running right across the island. It connects with ferries to Bali (at Banyuwangi/Ketapang) and Sumatra (Merak). The service runs fairly efficiently and some classes are comfortable by developing-world standards. Punctuality is generally quite good.

A complete train timetable to Java, the InfoKA, is supposedly available from the larger train stations, but we've never seen one. A better option is to check timetables online at www.infoka.kereta-api.com, a clunky but useful website. Timetables are displayed on boards at stations and printed *jadwal* (timetables) are available at main stations (for that station).

If you can, select a train that begins in the city you are departing from, thus guaranteeing a seat; obtaining a seat on through-trains can sometimes prove difficult.

The railway's **Train Information Service** (☎ 0361-227 131; www.kereta-api.com) has more information (on the website, '*jadwal*' means schedule).

CLASSES

Top of the range are the fairly fast 1st-class trains that operate to/from Jakarta. Usually indicated by an Argo prefix, they are well-maintained and comfortable, with reclining seats, air-conditioning, a complimentary meal and drink, video and plenty of legroom. The

carriages used are ageing, however, so don't expect a luxury service. Tariffs are quite affordable; the Jakarta–Yogya trip costs about 230,000Rp.

Express trains, which offer business-class (*bisnis*) and executive-class (*eksekutif*) carriages, are one step down. *Bisnis* carriages can get very hot (there's no air-con), but the seats are quite comfortable and tickets are cheap. Executive class offers air-con and reclining seats and sometimes a video or snack. Rolling stock used in both these classes is quite old, however, and cleanliness standards could be better.

Java's most popular class with the masses is economy (*ekonomi*). Cheap, basic, slow, smoke-filled, excessively crowded, and a riot of livestock, hawkers, musicians and all manner of produce, these chicken trains move the country around and halt at every stop (except, quite often, a city's central one). Seats on these trains are hard (literally) to get and cannot be booked. Some, however, have been upgraded – designated 'economy plus' – and are limited express with padded seats that can be booked.

RESERVATIONS

Purchasing tickets at ticket windows is usually straightforward. The bigger cities have helpful information desks; otherwise information is usually handed out with authority by the *kepala stasiun* (station master) or one of his cohorts.

Business- and executive-class trains can be booked weeks in advance at the appropriate ticket window. Some travel agencies and hotels can also buy tickets for you.

For basic economy-class trains, tickets go on sale an hour before departure – just roll up, buy a ticket and hope that you can get a seat. The better economy-class services can be booked up to a week in advance for a small extra fee.

It's usually possible to get a ticket in any class on the day of departure if you're travelling on a weekday, but seats should be booked ahead for weekend travel. Note that it's virtually impossible to get a seat during the main holiday periods, when enterprising *calo* (scalpers) buy large numbers of tickets and fob them off to desperate passengers at a hefty mark-up. Avoid planning a trip during the Idul Fitri public holiday, when the entire island is on the move and tickets are as rare as a snowfall in Jakarta.

JAKARTA

☎ 021 / pop 8.9 million

Jakarta is a hard city to love. One of the world's greatest megalopolises, its grey, relentlessly urban sprawl spreads for tens of kilometres across a flood-prone plain with barely a park to break the concrete monotony.

And yet beneath the unappealing facade of high-rises, slums and gridlocked streets, this is a city of surprises and many faces. The 'Big Durian' is actually a far from threatening place, and its citizens are a remarkably good-natured, optimistic and positive bunch. Compared to many of the world's capitals, crime levels are very low (as is the cost of living, with four-star hotels starting at US\$50 a night).

From the steamy, richly scented streets of Chinatown to the city's riotous, decadent nightlife, Jakarta is filled with unexpected corners. Here it's possible to rub shoulders with Indonesia's future leaders, artists, thinkers, movers and shakers in a bohemian cafe or a sleek lounge bar and go clubbing till dawn (and beyond).

Jakarta certainly isn't a primary tourist destination, but parts of the atmospheric old city (Kota) offer an interesting insight into the capital's long history, and there are a handful of good museums and dozens of swanky shopping malls. Though Jakarta's infamous traffic jams still choke the city, an ever-expanding modern busway network has speeded up travel considerably in recent years.

So if you really want to get under the skin of Indonesia, a visit to this mammoth city (the Greater Jakarta conurbation exceeds 20 million people) is essential.

HISTORY

Jakarta's earliest history centres on the port of Sunda Kelapa, in the north of the modern city. When the Portuguese arrived in 1522, Sunda Kelapa was a bustling port of the Pajajaran dynasty, the last Hindu kingdom of West Java. By 1527 the Portuguese had gained a foothold in the city, but were driven out by Sunan Gunungjati, the Muslim saint and leader of Demak. He renamed the city Jayakarta, meaning 'victorious city', and it became a fiefdom of the Banten sultanate.

At the beginning of the 17th century the Dutch and English jostled for power in the city, and in late 1618 the Jayakartans, backed

WAYANG CHARACTERS

The *wayang* characters are often based on figures from the Mahabharata and Ramayana. In the Mahabharata, the Kauravas are essentially the forces of greed and evil, while the Pandavas represent refinement and enlightenment.

At a *wayang* or dance performance the *halus* characters tend to be smaller and more elegant in proportion; their legs are slender, and their heads are tilted downwards, representing humility. The *kasar* characters are often muscular and hairy, with upturned heads.

Colour is also of great significance. Red often indicates aggressiveness, greed or anger. Black and blue indicate calm, spiritual awareness and maturity. Gold and yellow are reserved for the highest nobles, and white symbolises virtue.

Mahabharata Characters

Bima is the second-eldest of the Pandavas. He is big, burly and aggressive. He is able to fly and is the most powerful warrior on the battlefield, but he also has infinite kindness and a firm adherence to principle.

The svelte figure of Arjuna is a fitting representative of the noble class, with good looks and a keen sense of virtue. He can be fickle, but he remains *halus*. Arjuna's charioteer is Krishna, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, who plays the dual role of spiritual adviser and ruthless, Machiavellian politician.

The dwarf clown Semar is an incarnation of a god. He is a great source of wisdom and advice to Arjuna – but his body is squat, with an enormous posterior, a bulging belly and a predisposition for explosive farting.

Gareng, Petruk and Bagong are Semar's three sons and are awkward, comic figures. Despite their ungainly appearances, they are the mouthpieces of truth and wisdom.

On the Kaurava side, Duryudana is the handsome, powerful leader, too easily influenced by the evil designs of his uncle, Sangkuni. Karna is actually a Pandava, brought up by the rival family but, adhering to the code of the warrior, he stands by his king and so dies tragically at the hands of Arjuna.

Ramayana Characters

The characters of the Ramayana are a little more clear-cut. Like Arjuna, Rama is the ideal man and his wife Sita (or sometimes Shinta) is the ideal wife. Rawana's warrior brother, Kumbakarna, however, is more complex. He knows that Rawana is evil but is bound by the ethics of the Ksatria warrior to support his brother to the extremely grisly end.

by the British, besieged the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) fortress. The Dutch managed to fend off the attackers until May 1619 when, under the command of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, reinforcements stormed the town and reduced it to ashes. A stronger shoreline fortress was built and the town was renamed 'Batavia' after a tribe that once occupied parts of the Netherlands in Roman times. It soon became the capital of the Dutch East Indies.

Within the walls of Batavia the prosperous Dutch built tall houses and pestilential canals in an attempt to create an Amsterdam in the tropics. By the early 18th century, the city's population had swelled, boosted by both Javanese and Chinese eager to take advantage of Batavia's commercial prospects.

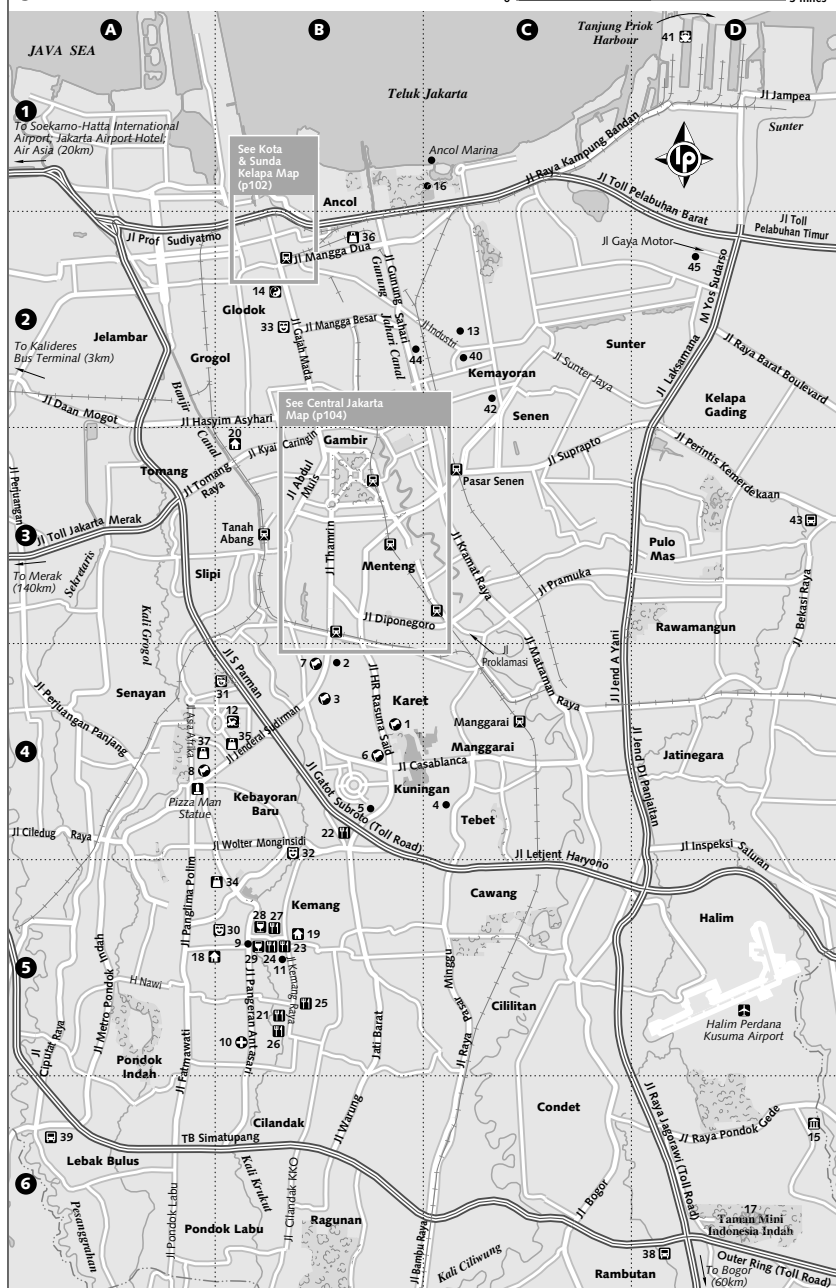
By 1740 ethnic unrest in the Chinese quarters had grown to dangerous levels and on 9 October violence broke out on Batavia's streets; around 5000 Chinese were massacred. A year later Chinese inhabitants were moved to Glodok, outside the city walls. Other Batavians, discouraged by the severe epidemics between 1735 and 1780, also moved, and the city began to spread far south of the port.

Dutch colonial rule came to an end with the Japanese occupation in 1942 and the name 'Jakarta' was restored, but it wasn't until 1950 that Jakarta officially became the capital of the new republic.

Over the next four decades, the capital struggled under the weight of an ever-increasing population of poor migrants, but

0 5 km

0 3 miles



INFORMATION		SLEEPING 		Erasmus Huis.....(see 5)
Australian Cultural Centre.....(see 1)		Dharmawangsa.....18 A5		Nine Muses Club.....32 B4
Australian Embassy.....1 B4		Kemang Icon.....19 B5		Periplus.....(see 37)
British Council.....2 B4		PT Pulau Sepa Permai.....20 B3		Stadium.....33 B2
Canadian Embassy.....3 B4				
Central Immigration Office.....4 C4		EATING 		SHOPPING 
Dutch Embassy.....(see 5)		Anatolia.....21 B5		Blok M Mall.....34 B5
Erasmus Huis.....5 B4		Blowfish.....22 B4		FX Mall.....35 B4
Malaysian Embassy.....6 B4		Casa.....23 B5		Mangga Dua Mall.....(see 36)
New Zealand Embassy.....7 B4		Kemang Food Festival.....(see 27)		Pasar Pagi Mangga Dua.....36 B2
Papua New Guinea Embassy.....8 A4		Kemang Food Square.....24 B5		Pasar Seni.....(see 16)
QB World Books.....9 B5		Kinara.....25 B5		Pasaraya Department Store.....(see 34)
Singapore Embassy.....(see 5)		Payon.....(see 27)		Plaza Senayan.....37 A4
SOS Medika Klinik.....10 B5		Puro.....(see 22)		
X2.....(see 37)		Santong Kuo Tieh 68.....(see 14)		TRANSPORT
		Toscana.....26 B5		Blok M Bus Terminal.....(see 34)
		WWWok.....27 B5		Kampung Rambutan Bus
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES				Terminal.....38 D6
Ancol Marina.....(see 16)		DRINKING 		Lebak Bulus Bus Terminal.....39 A6
Bikram Yoga.....11 B5		Eastern Promise.....28 B5		Merpati.....40 C2
Bung Karno Stadium Complex.....12 B4		Red Square.....(see 37)		Pelni Passenger Terminal.....41 D1
Jakarta Fairgrounds.....13 C2		Tabac.....29 B5		Pelni Ticketing Office.....42 C2
Jin de Yuan.....14 B2				Pulo Gadung Bus Terminal.....43 D3
Museum Pancasila Sakti.....15 D6		ENTERTAINMENT 		Sriwijaya Airlines.....44 B2
Petak Sembilan.....(see 14)		Centro.....30 B5		Trac Astra.....45 D2
Taman Impian Jaya Ancol.....16 C1		Embassy.....31 B4		
Taman Mini Indonesia Indah.....17 D6				

by the 1990s Jakarta's economic situation had turned around. This all changed, however, with the economic collapse of 1997. The capital quickly became a political battleground and the epicentre of protests demanding Suharto's resignation.

After months of tension, the army fired live ammunition into a group of students on 12 May 1998; four were killed. Jakarta erupted in three days of rioting as thousands took to the streets and looted malls. The Chinese were hardest hit, with shocking tales of rape and murder emerging after the riots.

In recent years Jakarta has suffered on several fronts. Severe floods (which strike each rainy season) cause massive damage to homes and infrastructure. Terrorists have targeted Western interests. The July 2009 suicide bomb blasts that targeted the US-owned Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott hotels followed previous attacks on the Australian embassy in 2004 and Marriott in 2003.

The city faces many challenges. Millions live in desperate poverty, many in flood-prone areas. Jakarta's public transport system has improved with the introduction of the busway, but it remains woefully inefficient compared with the metro networks now in place in many Chinese cities, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. There's much to be done before Jakarta becomes a modern metropolis.

ORIENTATION

Jakarta sprawls around 30km from the docks to the suburbs of south Jakarta, covering 661 sq km. The city centre fans out from around Merdeka Sq (Lapangan Merdeka), which contains the central landmark of Sukarno's towering gold-tipped National Monument (Monas). Merdeka Sq is one of the city's central focal points, along with a number of other centres that are all separated by vast traffic jams and sweltering heat.

Just south of Monas is Jl Jaksa, the traditional backpacker centre, which is well placed for the historic north of the city and transport links, with busways and the main train station, Gambir, close by.

North of Monas is the old city of Kota, containing most of Jakarta's meagre tourist attractions, while nearby is the schooner harbour of Sunda Kelapa. The modern harbour, Tanjung Priok, is several kilometres along the coast to the east, past the Taman Impian Jaya Ancol recreation park.

The main thoroughfare in the central part of the city is Jl Thamrin, which stretches south of Monas and Merdeka Sq down to the Welcome Monument roundabout; it's lined with big hotels and shopping centres.

Continuing south, Jl Thamrin becomes Jl Jenderal Sudirman, home to more hotels, large banks and office blocks. Further south are the affluent suburban areas of Kebayoran Baru, Pondok Indah and Kemang, with their own

OBAMA IN JAKARTA

Barack Obama moved to Jakarta in 1967 when his mother married a second husband, Lolo Soetoro, an Indonesian whom she'd met in Hawaii. Obama lived for four years in the Indonesian capital, including a period in the exclusive central suburb of Menteng, where he attended the SDN Menteng 1 government-run school (Map p104) and studied in the Indonesian language. This school is still going strong, and there's a plaque at the front commemorating its most famous ex-pupil.

A popular child, he was nicknamed 'Barry' by his fellow students. It's been reported that he declared an ambition to become president whilst at this school. Obama lived close by on Jl Taman Amir Hamzah in a handsome terracotta-tiled Dutch villa with art deco-style windows.

When asked if he missed anything from his time in the country, Obama, who speaks Bahasa Indonesia, said he dreamt of *'bakso'* (meatball soup), *'nasi goreng'* (fried rice) and rambutan'.

centres and busy shopping districts. Kemang, in particular, is swamped with bars, restaurants and boutiques, but accommodation options are limited.

The intercity bus terminals – Kalideres in the west, Kampung Rambutan in the south and Pulo Gadung in the east – are on the outskirts of Jakarta but are all connected by busway routes to the centre.

Maps

Jakarta's Visitor Information Office (opposite) provides a good free colour city map that highlights Jl Thamrin, Jl Jenderal Sudirman and Kota.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Gramedia and Gunung Agung are the two big Indonesian chains, with shops all over town.

Periplus (Map p98; ☎ 718 7070; level 3, Plaza Senayan, Jl Asia Afrika; ☒ 9am–7pm) Stocks a wide range of English-language titles, including Lonely Planet guidebooks and Periplus maps.

QB World Books (Map p98; ☎ 718 0818; Jl Kemang Raya 17) Offers a good selection of literature and magazines published in English.

Cultural Centres

The various foreign cultural centres have libraries and/or regular exhibits, films and lectures.

Australian Cultural Centre (Map p98; ☎ 2550 5555; Jl HR Rasuna Said Kav 15-16)

British Council (Map p98; ☎ 252 4115; www.britishcouncil.org/indonesia.htm; Widjono Centre, Jl Jenderal Sudirman 71)

Erasmus Huis (Map p98; ☎ 524 1069; www.mfa.nl/erasmushuis; Jl HR Rasuna Said Kav S-3) Regularly hosts films, exhibitions and cultural events.

Emergency

Tourist Police (Map p108; ☎ 566 000; Jl Wahid Hasyim 9) On the 2nd floor of the Jakarta Theatre.

Immigration Office

Central Immigration Office (Map p98; ☎ 654 1209; Jl Merpati Kemayoran 3) Provides information on visa extensions and renewals.

Internet & Wi-Fi Access

Internet cafes are scattered all over town and generally charge 4000 to 10,000Rp per hour. For wi-fi, most upmarket malls have free wireless connections, as do increasing numbers of cafes, bars and restaurants (look out for the words 'Hot Spot').

Virtual Net (Map p108; Jl Jaksa 33)

Internet Resources

http://metromad.blogspot.com This blogger and newspaper columnist has been a Jakarta resident for two decades and really has his finger on the pulse of the city.

www.expatriate.or.id Geared at longer-term visitors; boasts everything from accommodation listings to chatrooms.

www.jakarta.go.id The Jakarta City Government Tourism Office's official site; offers plenty of useful listings, though the English-language section is often down.

www.jakchat.com English-language forums where you can discuss everything from bars to politics.

Media

Jakarta Globe (www.thejakartaglobe.com; 7500Rp) Excellent newspaper with stylish layout, quality reporting and illuminating features.

Jakarta Kini (www.jakartajavakini.com; 35,000Rp) Glossy monthly English publication that features restaurant and entertainment reviews alongside lifestyle articles; usually free in many of the bigger hotels.

Jakarta Post (www.thejakartapost.com; 7500Rp) Long-running English-language daily with news, views and cultural content, though has now been eclipsed by the *Jakarta Globe*.

Time Out (www.timeoutjakarta.com; 33,000Rp) By far the best English-language listings magazine, with great cultural content and features, though tends to focus on exclusive venues.

Medical Services

Cikini Hospital (Map p104; ☎ 2355 0180; Jl Raden Saleh Raya 40) Caters to foreigners and has English-speaking staff.

SOS Medika Klinik (Map p98; ☎ 750 5980; www.internationalosos.com; Jl Puri Sakti 10, Kemang) Offers English-speaking GP appointments, dental care, and emergency and specialist healthcare services.

Money

There are banks all over the city, and you're never far from an ATM in Jakarta.

BCA bank ATM (Map p108; Jl Haji Agus Salim) A stone's throw from the Jakarta Visitor Information Office.

BII bank (Map p104; Jl Thamrin) With ATM; in the basement level of Plaza Indonesia.

Post

Main post office (Map p104; Jl Gedung Kesenian 1) Occupying an octagonal building near Lapangan Banteng.

Telephone

There are several wartels (private telephone offices) in the Jl Jaksa area.

Wartel Bhumi Bhakti (Map p108; Jl Wahid Hasyim)

Tourist Information

Jakarta Visitor Information Office (Map p108; ☎ 315 4094, 316 1293; www.jakarta.go.id; Jl Wahid Hasyim 9; ☎ 9.30am–7pm Mon–Sat, to 5pm Sun) Inside the Jakarta Theatre building. A pretty helpful office; the staff here can answer many queries, though practical information is a little lacking. Has a good stock of leaflets and publications. There's also a desk at the airport.

Travel Agencies

Travel agencies in the Jl Jaksa area are convenient places to start looking for international flights and long-haul bus tickets. Domestic air tickets usually cost the same from a travel agency as from the airline, but discounts are sometimes available.

Crystal Tours (Map p108; ☎ 390 2929; Jl Wahid Hasyim 45) A professional new agency with helpful English-speaking staff and competitive flight prices.

Robert Kencana Travel (Map p108; ☎ 314 2926; Jl Jaksa 20B) Good deals are available.

Smiling Tours (www.mysmiling.com) Jl Majapahit 28 (Map p104; ☎ 380 0022; Jl Majapahit 28; Jl Thamrin 9 (Map p108; ☎ 331 994; Jl Thamrin 9) Offices all over town. The Jl Majapahit branch is one of Jakarta's biggest travel agencies and the Jl Thamrin office is in the Skyline building just next to the tourist office.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

For such a huge city with obvious social problems and an unhealthy reputation, Jakarta is surprisingly safe. Violent crime is very rare and tourists are very seldom targeted. It does, however, remain the most crime-prone city in Indonesia. Exercise caution after dark, particularly in Glodok and Kota. Attacks by taxi drivers have been known to take place, so always opt for reputable firms at night, such as the citywide Bluebird group.

Jakarta's buses and trains tend to be hopelessly crowded, particularly during rush hours. Pickpockets are notoriously adept and many locals will warn you against such thieves.

Some foreign embassies warn against travel to Indonesia and especially Jakarta, though overall there's very little risk for travellers. That said, attacks against foreign interests have occurred and protests, although often peaceful, may still become violent with little warning. Events in the Middle East can spark demonstrations.

Occasionally, bars and clubs have been smashed up by the city's self-appointed morality police, the Jakarta-based Front Pembela Islam (FPI or Islamic Defenders Front), especially during Ramadan.

SIGHTS

Kota

The old town of Batavia, now known as Kota, was once the hub of Dutch colonial Indonesia. Today it's a sad vision of a once-grand empire and dozens of historic buildings have rotted, crumbled or been bulldozed away. A master plan exists to regenerate the area, but as yet little has been done other than pedestrianise a couple of streets and restore a structure or two. One of the main obstacles to attracting inward investment is that Kota is particularly susceptible to flooding.

Taman Fatahillah (Map p102), Kota's central cobblestone square, is still reminiscent of the area's heyday, and it's lined with imposing colonial buildings including the Taman Fatahillah, the former town hall.

A block west of the square is **Kali Besar**, the great canal along Sungai Ciliwung. This was once a high-class residential area and on the west bank of the river are the last of the homes that date from the early 18th century. One of the most impressive is the red-tiled facade of **Toko Merah** (Red Shop; Map p102; Jl Kali Besar Barat), which was once the home of Governor General van Imhoff. There are plans to convert this house into a museum dedicated to the Dutch period. At the northern end of Kali Besar is the last remaining Dutch drawbridge, the **Chicken Market Bridge** (Map p102), which dates from the 17th century.

To reach Taman Fatahillah, take the busway Korridor I from Blok M or Jl Thamrin to Kota train station and walk. Trains from Gondangdia, near Jl Jaksa, also run here. A taxi will cost around 30,000Rp from Jl Thamrin.

MUSEUM WAYANG

This **puppet museum** (Map p102; ☎ 692 9560; Taman Fatahillah; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am-1.30pm Tue-Fri & Sun, to 12.30pm Sat) has one of the best collections of *wayang* puppets in Java and its dusty cabinets are full of a multitude of characters. The collection includes puppets from not only Indonesia but also China, Vietnam, India, Cambodia and Europe, and masks used by dancers. There are free wayang performances here on Sunday at 10am.

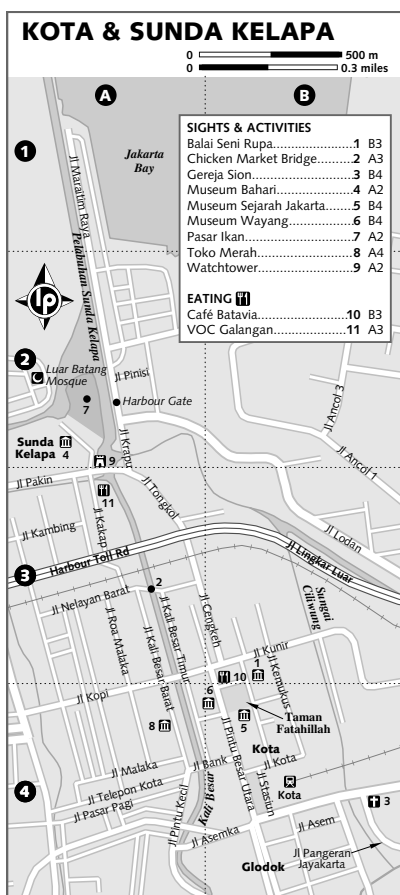
Formerly the Museum of Old Batavia, the building itself dates from 1912. In the downstairs courtyard, you'll find memorials to Dutch governor generals who were once buried here, including Jan Pieterszoon Coen, founder of Batavia.

Be warned that we have received reports of a scam involving freelance guides at this museum, who pressure you into making exorbitant purchases after a tour of the exhibits.

MUSEUM SEJARAH JAKARTA

The **Jakarta History Museum** (Map p102; Taman Fatahillah; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am-3pm Tue-Sun) is housed in the old town hall of Batavia, a stately Dutch-style structure that was once the epicentre of an empire. This bell-towered building, built in 1627, served the administration of the city and was also used by the city law courts.

Today it's a typically poorly presented municipal museum of peeling plasterwork and lots of heavy, carved ebony and teak furniture



from the Dutch period (plus a disparate collection of exhibits collected from across the nation). But you will find the odd exquisite piece, such the stunning black granite sculpture of Kali, a Hindu goddess associated with death and destruction.

In the back courtyard is a strange memorial stone to Pieter Erbervelt, put to death in 1722 for allegedly conspiring to massacre the Dutch inhabitants of Batavia, and the huge bronze **Canon Si Jagur** that once graced Taman Fatahillah. This Portuguese cannon, brought to Batavia as a trophy of war after the fall of Melaka in 1641, tapers at one end into a large clenched fist, with the thumb protruding between the index and middle fingers. This suggestive fist is a sexual symbol in Indonesia,

and childless women would offer flowers and sit astride the cannon in the hope of becoming mothers.

BALAI SENI RUPA

Built between 1866 and 1870, the former Palace of Justice building is now a **Fine Arts Museum** (Map p102; Taman Fatahillah; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am-1.30pm Tue-Sun). It houses contemporary paintings with works by prominent artists, including Affandi, Raden Saleh and Ida Bagus Made. Part of the building is also a ceramics museum, with Chinese ceramics and Majapahit terracottas.

GEREJA SION

Near the Kota train station, this **church** (Map p102; Jl Pangeran Jayakarta) dates from 1695 and is the oldest remaining church in Jakarta. Also known as Gereja Portugis (Portuguese Church), it was built just outside the old city walls for slaves captured from Portuguese trading ports. The exterior of the church is very plain, but inside there are copper chandeliers, a baroque pulpit and the original organ.

Sunda Kelapa

A kilometre north of Taman Fatahillah, the old port of **Sunda Kelapa** (Map p102; admission 2000Rp) is full of magnificent Makassar schooners (*pinisi*). The dock scene here has barely changed for centuries, and porters unload cargo from these sailing ships by hand and trolley. Sadly, the port itself is rundown and its waters grotesquely polluted these days.

Ambitious plans exist to redevelop the entire Sunda Kelapa area and open new museums in the crumbling buildings, though these proposals have been stalled for years.

MUSEUM BAHARI

Near the entrance to Sunda Kelapa, several old VOC warehouses (dating back to 1652) have been converted into the **Museum Bahari** (Map p102; ☎ 669 3406; www.museumbahari.org; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am-3pm Tue-Sun). This is a good place to learn about the city's maritime history, and though the wonderful old buildings (some renovated) are echoing empty there are some good information panels (in English and Bahasa Indonesia). Under the heavy wooden beams of the vast old storage premises are various random exhibits: a sextant (used for astronomical navigation), various traditional boats from around Indonesia, the shell of a

giant clam, plenty of pickled fish and a light-house lamp or two. The sentry posts outside are part of the old city wall.

Just before the entrance to the museum is a **watchtower** (Map p102; admission 5000Rp), built in 1839 to sight and direct traffic to the port. There are good views over the harbour, but opening hours are haphazard – ask for the caretaker if it is closed.

Further along the same street from the museum is the early-morning **Pasar Ikan** (fish market; Map p102). It's an intense, colourful scene of busy crowds around dawn, when the day's catch is sold. Later in the day household items and a growing collection of souvenirs are sold.

Glodok

The neighbourhood of Glodok, the traditional enclave of the Chinese, is an archetypical downtown district full of bustling lanes, street markets, a shabby mall or two and some of the world's most decadent nightlife. It was also the site of the terrible riots of May and November 1998, which reduced huge swathes of the area to ash and rubble.

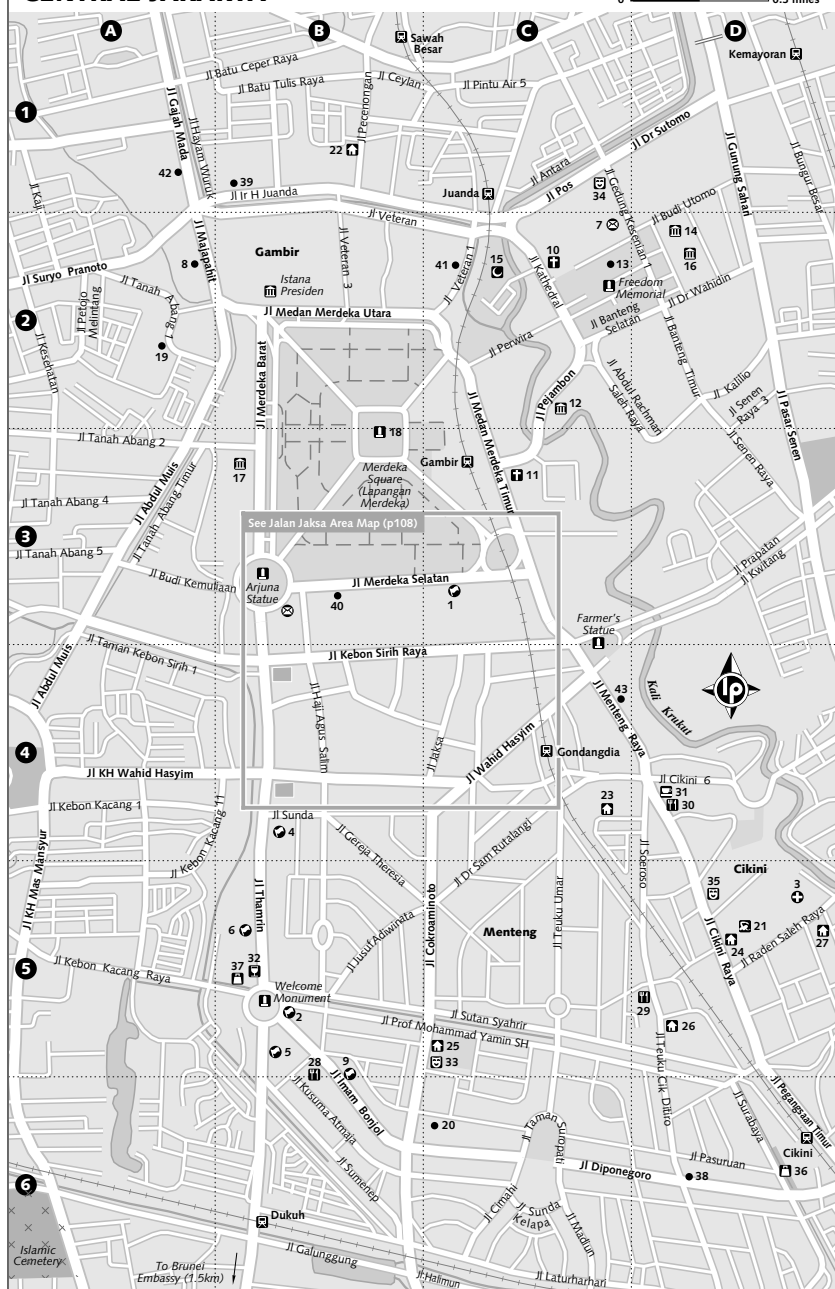
Most of the fun here is simply experiencing the (very) Chinese vibe of the place, eating some dumplings and browsing the myriad stalls and stores selling everything from traditional medicines to dodgy DVDs. Be sure to wander down the impossibly narrow **Petak Sembilan street market** (Map p98) off Jl Pancoran, lined with crooked houses with red-tiled roofs. It's a total assault on the senses, with skinned frogs and live bugs for sale next to an open sewer.

At the western end of the market is the large Chinese Buddhist temple compound of **Jin de Yuan** (Map p98; Dharma Bhakti Temple; www.jindeyuan.org; Jl Kemenangan III 13), which dates from 1755 and is one of the most important in the city. The main structure has an unusual roof crowned by two dragons eating pearls, while the interior is richly atmospheric: dense incense and candle smoke cloud the Buddha statues, ancient bells and drums, and there's some wonderful calligraphy.

Central Jakarta

If a centre for this sprawling city had to be chosen, then Merdeka Sq (Lapangan Merdeka) would be it. This huge grassy expanse is home to Sukarno's monument to the nation, and is surrounded by a couple of museums and some fine colonial buildings.

CENTRAL JAKARTA



INFORMATION			
American Embassy.....	1 C3	Park of Inscription.....	19 A2
Bill Bank.....	(see 37)	SDN Menteng 1 School.....	20 C6
British Embassy.....	2 B5	Swimming Pool.....	21 D5
Cikini Hospital.....	3 D5		
French Embassy.....	4 B4	SLEEPING	
German Embassy.....	5 B5	Alila Jakarta.....	22 B1
Japanese Embassy.....	6 B5	Gondia International	
Main Post Office.....	7 C2	Guesthouse.....	23 C4
Smiling Tours.....	8 A2	Hotel Formule 1 (Cikini).....	24 D5
Thai Embassy.....	9 B5	Hotel Formule 1 (Menteng).....	25 C5
		Hotel Marcopolo.....	26 D5
		Yannie International	
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		Guesthouse.....	27 D5
Catholic Cathedral.....	10 C2		
Emanuel Church.....	11 C3	EATING	
Gedung Pancasila.....	12 C2	El Wajh.....	(see 28)
Lapangan Banteng.....	13 C2	Hazara.....	(see 28)
Mahkamah Agung.....	14 D2	Lan Na Thai.....	28 B5
Mesjid Istiqlal.....	15 C2	Lara Djonggrang.....	29 D5
Ministry of Finance Building.....	16 D2	Vietopia.....	30 D4
Museum Nasional.....	17 B3		
National Monument (Monas).....	18 B3		
		DRINKING	
		Bakoel Koffie.....	31 D4
		Burgundy.....	32 B5
		Cork & Screw.....	(see 37)
		Face Bar.....	(see 28)
		ENTERTAINMENT	
		BB's.....	33 C5
		Gedung Kesenian Jakarta.....	34 C1
		Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM).....	35 D5
		SHOPPING	
		Flea Market.....	36 D6
		Plaza Indonesia.....	37 B5
		TRANSPORT	
		Avis.....	38 D6
		Batavia Air.....	39 B1
		Garuda.....	40 B3
		Kerta Jaya.....	41 C2
		Lion Air.....	42 A1
		Menara Buana Surya.....	43 C4

MUSEUM NASIONAL

On the western side of Merdeka Sq, the **National Museum** (Map p104; ☎ 381 1551; www.museum.nasional.org; adult/child 750/250Rp; ☎ 8.30am-2.30pm Tue-Sat), built in 1862, is the best of its kind in Indonesia and is the one museum in the city that's an essential visit. A very impressive new wing was added on the north side of the neo-classical colonial structure in 2007. No photographs are allowed.

The museum has an enormous collection. Around the open courtyard is some magnificent statuary including a colossal 4.5m stone image of a Bhairawa king from Rambahan in Sumatra who is shown trampling on human skulls. The ethnology section is superb, with Dayak puppets and wooden statues from Nias bearing beards (a sign of wisdom) plus some fascinating textiles.

Over in the spacious new wing there are four floors with sections devoted to the origin of mankind in Indonesia, including a model of the Flores 'hobbit' (see the boxed text, p539). There's also a superb display of gold treasures from Candi Brahu in Central Java, including some glittering necklaces, armbands and a bowl depicting scenes from the Ramayana.

Outside the museum is a bronze elephant that was presented by the King of Thailand in 1871; thus the museum building is popularly known as the Gedung Gajah (Elephant House).

The **Indonesian Heritage Society** (☎ 572 5870; www.heritagejkt.org) organises free English tours of the museum at 10.30am every Tuesday

and Thursday, every second Saturday and the last Sunday in the month. Tours in French, Japanese and Korean are also available; consult the website for details.

MONAS

Ingloriously dubbed 'Sukarno's final erection', this 132m-high **National Monument** (Monumen Nasional, Monas; Map p104; ☎ 8.30am-5pm, closed last Mon of every month), towering over Merdeka Sq, is both Jakarta's principal landmark and the most famous architectural extravagance of the former president. Begun in 1961, this typically masculine column was not completed until 1975, when it was officially opened by Suharto. The monument is constructed from Italian marble, and is topped with a sculpted flame, gilded with 35kg of gold leaf.

In the base of the monument, the **National History Museum** (adult/child 1500/500Rp) tells the story of Indonesia's independence struggle in 48 dioramas using *Thunderbirds*-like models. The numerous uprisings against the Dutch are overstated but interesting; Sukarno is barely mentioned and the events surrounding the 1965 coup are a whitewash.

Expect smog-tainted views from the top of the monument (adult/child 5000/2500Rp). Avoid Sunday and holidays, when the queues for the lift are long.

TAMAN PRASASTI

To the northwest of the National Museum is **Taman Prasasti** (Park of Inscription; Map p104; Jl Tanah Abang; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am-3pm Tue-Thu & Sun, to

2.30pm Fri, to 12.30pm Sat), which is actually the Kebon Jahe Cemetery; important figures from the colonial era are buried here.

LAPANGAN BANTENG

Just east of Merdeka Sq, in front of the Hotel Borobudur Jakarta, **Lapangan Banteng** (Banteng Sq, formerly the Waterlooplein; Map p104) was laid out by the Dutch in the 19th century, and the area has some of Jakarta's best colonial architecture.

The **Catholic cathedral** (Map p104) has twin spires and was built in 1901 to replace an earlier church. Facing the cathedral is Jakarta's principal place of Muslim worship, the striking, modernist **Mesjid Istiqlal** (Map p104), which was completed in 1978 to a design by Catholic architect Frederick Silaban. The mosque has five levels, representing the five pillars of Islam; its dome is 45m across and its minaret tops 90m. During Ramadan over 200,000 worshippers can be accommodated here. Non-Muslim visitors are welcome. You have to sign in first and then you'll be shown around by an English-speaking guide (who will expect a tip).

To the east of Lapangan Banteng is the **Mahkamah Agung** (Supreme Court; Map p104), built in 1848, and next door is the **Ministry of Finance Building** (Map p104), formerly the Witte Huis (White House). This grand government complex was built by Daendels in 1809 as the administrative centre for the Dutch government.

To the southwest is **Gedung Pancasila** (Map p104; Jl Pejambon), which is an imposing neo-classical building built in 1830 as the Dutch army commander's residence. It later became the meeting hall of the Volksraad (People's Council), but is best known as the place where Sukarno made his famous Pancasila speech in 1945, laying the foundation for Indonesia's constitution. Just west along Jl Pejambon from Gedung Pancasila is the **Emanuel Church** (Map p104), another classic building dating from 1893.

Southern Jakarta

In the southern reaches of the city reside a couple of attractions that require a day trip to fully enjoy.

TAMAN MINI INDONESIA INDAH

In the city's southeast, near Kampung Rambutan, **Taman Mini Indonesia Indah** (Map p98; ☎ 545 4545; Jl Raya Pondok Gede; adult/child 6000/4000Rp; ☎ 8am-5pm) is a 'whole country in one park'.

This 100-hectare park has full-scale traditional houses for each of Indonesia's provinces, with displays of regional handicrafts and clothing, and even a mini-scale Borobudur. Museums, theatres and an IMAX cinema are scattered throughout the grounds, which all command additional entrance fees. Free cultural performances are staged in selected regional houses (usually around 10am); Sunday is the big day for cultural events, but shows are also held during the week.

You can walk or drive your own car around Taman Mini. Free shuttle buses operate regularly, or you can take the monorail or cable car that go from one end of the park to the other. Taman Mini is about 18km from the city centre; allow about an hour to get there and at least three hours to look around. To get there, take a Koridor 7 bus to the Kampung Rambutan terminal and then a T15 metro-mini to the park entrance. A taxi from central Jakarta costs about 70,000Rp.

MUSEUM PANCASILA SAKTI

Just north of Taman Mini, this **museum** (Map p98; ☎ 840 0423; Jl Raya Pondok Gede; 3000Rp; ☎ 8am-4.30pm) is a bizarre homage to anti-communism. Inside you'll find dioramas depicting Communist crimes, photos of the 1960s show trials, and even bullet hole-ridden military uniforms. There's a large monument to the self-appointed 'saviours of the nation'.

ACTIVITIES

Fitness & Yoga

Jakarta has several public swimming pools. The best option in the centre (within walking distance of Jalan Jaksa) is the 50m **pool** (Map p104; Jl Cikini Raya; admission 20,000Rp; ☎ 7am-8pm) behind the Hotel Formule 1 in Cikini. There's another 50m pool over in Senayan inside the **Bung Karno stadium complex** (Map p98; Jl Jenderal Sudirman; per swim 5000Rp; ☎ 7am-9pm), which also has squash, tennis and badminton courts, plus rackets for hire.

Bikram Yoga (Map p98; ☎ 719 7379; Sabber House, Jl Kemang Raya 10A; www.bikramyogajakarta.com; per session 100,000Rp) gets good reports for its hot yoga, Vinyasa, Asthanga and beginners' classes.

Massage

Jakarta has massage establishments that range from ultra-luxe spas to dodgy set-ups that are

simply fronts for brothels. The hygienic and elegant massage and sauna facilities and professional masseurs at **Bersih Sehat** (Map p108; ☎ 390 0204; www.dayugroup.web.id; Jl Wahid Hasyim 106; 1hr massage from 110,000Rp; ☎ 10am-9pm) are highly recommended. For a real treat, the spa facilities at the Alila Jakarta hotel (p110) are excellent, where massages are available from US\$30 per hour.

JAKARTA FOR CHILDREN

Taman Impian Jaya Ancol

Along the bay front, between Kota and Tanjung Priok, the people's 'Dreamland' (Map p98; ☎ 6471 0497; www.ancol.com; basic admission incl entry to Pasar Seni 12,000Rp; ☎ 24hr) is built on land reclaimed in 1962. This 300-hectare, landscaped recreation park, providing non-stop entertainment, has hotels, theatres and a variety of sporting and leisure facilities including bowling. It's easily the city's best entertainment for kids in the city.

Taman Impian Jaya Ancol's prime attractions include **Pasar Seni** (Art Market), which has sidewalk cafes, a host of craft shops, cable-car rides, art exhibitions, and live music every Friday and Saturday night, and **Seaworld** (☎ 641 0080; www.seaworldindonesia.com; Mon-Fri 30,000Rp, Sat & Sun 40,000Rp; ☎ 9am-6pm), with its 'sharkquarium', dugongs and turtles. At the **Gelanggang Samudra** (☎ 640 6677; Mon-Fri 40,000Rp, Sat & Sun 50,000Rp; ☎ 11am-6pm Mon-Thu, 2-8pm Fri, 11am-8pm Sat & Sun) you can swim with dolphins.

Over in the **Gelanggang Renang** (☎ 640 6677; Mon-Fri 40,000Rp, Sat & Sun 50,000Rp; ☎ 11am-6pm Mon-Thu, 2-8pm Fri, 11am-8pm Sat & Sun) water-park complex there's a wave pool and slide pool plus two artificial beaches.

The biggest draw card in the larger Ancol recreation park is **Dunia Fantasi** (Fantasy Land; ☎ 6471 2000; Mon-Fri 60,000Rp, Sat & Sun 80,000Rp; ☎ 11am-6pm Mon-Thu, 2-8pm Fri, 11am-8pm Sat & Sun), a fun park that must have raised eyebrows at the Disney legal department. Spectacular rides here include the Halilintar twisted roller-coaster ride, the Niagra flume ride and a Ferris wheel. The park gets very crowded on weekends, but on weekdays it's fairly quiet. Take a bus or city train to Kota train station, then bus 64, 65, 125 or *angkot* 51. A taxi will cost around 45,000Rp from Jl Thamrin.

TOURS

Numerous travel agencies offer daily tours of Jakarta. Bookings can be made through the tourist office and major hotels.

Gray Line (☎ 630 8105; www.grayline.com) Offers city tours (from US\$35) and many other trips, including Pulau Seribu (p118; from US\$140) and Bogor's botanical gardens (p135; US\$85).

Indonesian Heritage Society Located at Museum Nasional. Offers city tours for 100,000Rp; see p105.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

March

Java Jazz Festival Held in early March at the Jakarta Convention Center in Senayan and attracts some acclaimed international artists. Day passes cost around 350,000Rp.

June/July

Jakarta Anniversary On 22 June, this marks the establishment of the city by Gunungjati back in 1527, and is celebrated with fireworks and the Jakarta Fair (fairground event held at the Jakarta Fairgrounds, Map p98, from late June until mid-July).

August

Independence Day Indonesia's independence is celebrated on 17 August and the parades in Jakarta are the biggest in the country.

Jalan Jaksa Street Fair Features Betawi dance, theatre and music, as well as popular modern performances. Street stalls sell food and souvenirs, and art and photography exhibits are also staged. It is held for one week in August.

December

JiFFest (Jakarta International Film Festival; www.jiffest.org) Indonesia's premier film festival takes place in early December.

SLEEPING

Jakarta has some excellent deals in the mid-range and top-end hotel sectors, with promotional rates slashed as low as US\$50 a night for luxury places; check websites or call the hotels direct for the best deals. Falling visitor numbers have seen standards slip badly in many of the traditional budget haunts; backpackers should consider forking out for a midrange hotel in this city.

Jalan Jaksa Area

This is the travellers' ghetto in Jakarta, but today it's a shadow of its former gap-year glory and looking pretty rundown. The handful of remaining budget places are looking grungy, but the area does have some decent midrange options and plenty of restaurants and bars. Jaksa is conveniently located near

BUDGET

Bloem Steen Homestay (Map p108; ☎ 3192 5389; Gang 1 173; r 70,000Rp; 🏠) This place has its posi-

Hotel Tator (Map p108; ☎ 3192 3940; Jl Jaksa 37; r with shower & toilet 80,000Rp, r with hot water & air-con 100,000-140,000Rp; 🍷) Lacks atmosphere but offers plain, functional and clean rooms (smell that bleach) and has a little cafe out front. Breakfast is included with the more expensive rooms.

Wisma Delima (Map p108; ☎ 392 3850; Jl Jaksa 5; dm/s/d with shared mandi 25.000/45.000/60.000Rp) The

original guest house on Jl Jaksa, with poky, ultra-basic rooms, but it's secure and dirt cheap.

Kresna Homestay (Map p108; ☎ 3192 5403; Gang 1 175; r 50,000Rp, with mandi 50,000Rp) Its location on a quiet little side alley is a plus, and the owner is hospitable, but the cramped rooms were due for a makeover 30 years ago.

Yusran Hostel (Map p108; ☎ 314 0373; Jl Kebon Sirih Barat VI 9; r with shared/private bathroom 70,000/100,000Rp, with air-con 140,000Rp; ☎) Nothing fancy, but this ageing, humble place has plenty of simple, sparse little rooms. It's down a narrow alley off Jaksa.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Margot (Map p108; ☎ 391 3830; margot.hotel@yahoo.com; Jl Jaksa 15; r 220,000Rp; ☎) It's not exactly homely, but this place has the appearance of a half-decent hotel. The rooms are in fair shape, all with hot-water, en-suite bathrooms, TV and weak air-con. There's also an adjacent cafe-bar.

Ristana Ratu Hotel (Map p108; ☎ 314 2464; Jl Jaksa 7-9; r 250,000-300,000Rp; ☎) This brand-spanking-new place was just opening when we passed by and has really raised the stakes on the Jaksa strip with large, modern, stylish rooms with contemporary decor that have great beds, bright duvets and soft pillows.

Hotel Cipta (Map p108; ☎ 3193 0424; cipta1@cbn.net.id; Jl Wahid Hasyim 53; r 400,000Rp; ☎) Looking like a cross between an alpine mountain lodge and a pagoda, Cipta is no identikit chain hotel. Rooms are well presented and comfortable, and there's a good restaurant on the ground floor.

Ibis Tamarind (Map p108; ☎ 391 2323; www.ibishotel.com; Jl Wahid Hasyim 77; r from 410,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) Of the two very comparable Ibis hotels on Jl Wahid Hasyim, the Tamarind has better facilities (including a small gym).

Ibis Arcadia (Map p108; ☎ 230 0050; www.ibishotel.com; Jl Wahid Hasyim 114; r from 415,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) The other Ibis option, the Arcadia has more in terms of style.

Cemara Hotel (Map p108; ☎ 390 8215; www.cemara.hotel.com; Jl Cemara 1; r from 435,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) This hotel does have some local character, with a Borobudur-style stone carving in the polished lobby and some paintings by Indonesian artists dotted around. Rooms are smart, though those in the old wing are looking a little dated. The rooftop pool is small but has great skyline views, and there's a small spa.

Or try:

Hotel Paragon (Map p108; ☎ 391 7070; www.paragon.co.id; Jl Wahid Hasyim 29; r/st 400,000/500,000Rp;

☎ ☎) A child of the 1970s, Paragon's multistoreyed design and concrete appearance is from another era, though the rooms and facilities are decent enough.

Cikini & Menteng

Cikini and Menteng (southeast and south respectively of Jaksa) have a selection of decent midrange hotels, a guest house or two and some excellent restaurants and cafes.

BUDGET

Gondia International Guesthouse (Map p104; ☎ 390 9221; gondia@rad.net.id; Jl Gondangdia Kecil 22; r incl breakfast 180,000-240,000Rp; ☎) A good alternative base to the Jaksa strip, this friendly little guest house occupies a leafy garden plot on a quiet suburban street and has quite spacious tiled rooms with bathrooms, sitting areas and a few books to browse.

MIDRANGE

Yannie International Guesthouse (Map p104; ☎ 314 0012; ygh@cbn.net.id; Jl Raden Saleh Raya 35; s/d 200,000/250,000Rp; ☎) Two floors of plain, simple rooms with the odd textile to break up the monotony. The management could be a lot more welcoming, though. There's no sign, just a 'Y' out front.

Hotel Formule 1 (Map p104; ☎ 3190 8188; www.hotelformule1.com; Jl Cikini Raya 75; r 300,000Rp, f 370,000Rp; ☎ ☎) The formula is actually very straightforward here: this is a no-frills, nonsmoking, midrange hotel with a bright, zany colour scheme and great prices. Rooms are uncluttered, immaculately clean and have flat-screen TV and wi-fi, while the family rooms have good bunk beds. Downstairs there are restaurants, and there's a huge pool (p106) right behind the hotel.

Hotel Formule 1 (Map p104; ☎ 391 8007; Jl Cokroaminoto 79; r 300,000Rp, f 370,000Rp; ☎ ☎) This second branch is located close by in Menteng, though there's no pool here. It's also nonsmoking.

Also worth considering:

Hotel Marcopolo (Map p104; ☎ 230 1777; www.marcopolo.co.id; Jl Teuku Cik Ditiro 19; r from 405,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) An eight-storey concrete affair, this nonsmoking place has generously proportioned but slightly dated rooms, all with satellite TV. It's in a central location and the (free) buffet breakfast is quite a spread.

Airport

Jakarta Airport Hotel (☎ 559 0008; www.jakartaairport.hotel.com; r from US\$110; ☎ ☎) Located right in the international terminal, this nonsmoking

hotel has comfortable, well-insulated rooms, a bar and a restaurant. Six-hour rates are available for US\$78. Note that the room rate doesn't include the tax of 21%.

Other Areas

Alila Jakarta (Map p104; ☎ 231 6008; www.alila.com/jakarta; Jl Pecenongan 7-17; r from US\$80; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Of the two hotels in the Alila group, Alila Jakarta offers top-end facilities married with modern design, a gorgeous outdoor pool, spa and gym and mighty fine complimentary buffet breakfasts. Note that you must add 21% tax to the room rate. Rooms are nonsmoking.

Kemang Icon (Map p98; ☎ 719 7989; www.alila-hotels.com/kemangicon; Jl Kemang Raya 1; r from US\$150; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) In terms of location, this place – the other Alila option – can't be beat as it's in the heart of south Jakarta's buzzing Kemang area. Here all the apartment-sized suites boast cutting-edge design, iPods, and state-of-the-art bathrooms, plus there's a rooftop lap pool and restaurant-lounge. Note that you must add 21% tax to the room rate. Nonsmoking.

Dharmawangsa (Map p98; ☎ 725 8181; www.the-dharmawangsa.com; r from US\$195; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) The most luxurious hotel in the city, the Dharmawangsa exudes style and class, with huge rooms and unmatched standards of service (each guest is assigned a private butler!). The leisure facilities (including two pools, spa, squash and tennis courts) and restaurants are also outstanding. Note that you must add 21% tax to the room rate. Nonsmoking.

EATING

This is a terrific city for eating out. There are seriously stylish restaurants with international menus in the upmarket enclaves of southern Jakarta like Kemang and excellent inexpensive food courts in the dozens of malls spread throughout the city.

Tasty street grub is everywhere, but one excellent hot spot is Jl Pecenongan (Map p104), where there's everything from *sate babi* (pork sate) to fresh seafood. It's about 500m north of Monas.

And if you just can't face one more bowl of *nasi goreng*, don't fear, as there's a cosmopolitan choice of exotic cuisine – including Mexican, Vietnamese and Middle Eastern places.

Jalan Jaksa Area

Jakarta has a decent selection of backpacker-gear cafes and a few more authentic places. Breakfasts are often very good value.

KL Village (Map p108; ☎ 3192 5219; Jl Jaksa 21-23; mains from 15,000Rp; ☎ 7am-11pm Sun-Wed, 24hr Thu-Sat; ☎) Deservedly popular new Malaysian place with pavement tables under a covered terrace. Offers great curries (try the *kambing masala*), Western food, terrific juices and fruit shakes (but no beer).

Memories (Map p108; Jl Jaksa 17; mains 20,000Rp; ☎ 24hr) Classic Jaksa haunt of fresh-in-town backpackers and seen-it-all expats. There's plenty of Chinese food, set breakfasts (from 19,000Rp), a book exchange and CNN on round the clock. It even has a few budget rooms upstairs.

Blueberry Pancake House (Map p108; ☎ 390 4701; Jl Wahid Hasyim 53; mains from 20,000Rp; ☎) Below the Cipta hotel, this smart little restaurant is good for Indonesian food, pasta and snacks at moderate prices and offers a welcome air-conditioned retreat from Jaksa's steamy streets. The pancakes are only so-so, though.

Sate Khas Senayan (Map p108; ☎ 3192 6238; Jl Kebon Sirih Raya 31A; mains from 25,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-10pm) Excellent two-storey air-con restaurant at the northern end of Jl Jaksa, renowned for its superb sate, *rawon buntut* (oxtail stew) and other classic Indonesian dishes.

Shanghai Blue 1920 (Map p108; ☎ 391 8690; Jl Kebon Sirih Raya 77-79; mains from 45,000Rp; ☎ 12.30-11pm) A five-minute walk from the northern end of Jaksa, two fine restaurants occupy the same historic building. Downstairs, Shanghai Blue serves *masakan peranakan* (Chinese and traditional Indonesian cuisine) in a large room dripping with furniture and artefacts rescued from an old Batavia tea house.

our pick Samarra (Map p108; ☎ 392 0384; Jl Kebon Sirih Raya 79; mains from 45,000Rp; ☎ 12.30pm-1am) The upstairs option has an intimate opium-den atmosphere, with secluded tables, subtle lighting, oriental antiques and a great outdoor terrace (with DJs spinning lounge and house music on weekends). The food here encompasses flavours from the Middle East, Indonesian classics and some of the most creative salads in town.

Also worth a try:

Pappa Kafe (Map p108; Jl Jaksa 41; mains 20,000Rp) Offers travellers' fare at fair rates under fairy lights.

Popeye's (Map p108; cnr Jl Hali Agus Salim & Jl Kebon Sirih Raya; mains 20,000Rp) Flies the flag for junk-food fetishists, serving an assortment of deep-fried fish and chicken.

Kota, Sunda Kelapa & Glodok

Santong Kuo Tieh 68 (Map p98; ☎ 692 4716; Jl Pancoran; 10 dumplings 20,000Rp; ☎ 10am-9pm) For fried or steamed Chinese pork dumplings, look no further than this humble but highly popular little place; you'll see cooks preparing them out front. The *bakso ikan isi* (fish balls) are also good.

VOC Galangan (Map p102; ☎ 667 8501; Jl Kakap 1; snacks & meals from 12,500Rp; ☎ 9am-5pm) Occupying the premises of a beautifully restored warehouse that dates back to 1628, this is a fabulously atmospheric cafe – enjoy a drink or meal inside the beamed interior or on the terrace, which overlooks a grassy courtyard where there's a vintage car and horse-buggy carriage. Manager Derek Courbois runs a tight ship, and prices are very reasonable for dishes like *gado gado* (13,500Rp) given the setting.

Café Batavia (Map p102; ☎ 691 5531; Jl Pintu Besar Utara 14; mains 50,000Rp) An essential visit if you're in Kota, this historic restaurant sits pretty, overlooking Taman Fatahillah. Its teak floors and art deco furniture make a richly atmospheric setting, though the menu is overly grandiose and seems to be stuck in 1970s nostalgia. As it's often woefully empty you may opt to have a coffee or a cocktail instead.

Cikini & Menteng

Vietopia (Map p104; ☎ 391 5893; Jl Cikini Raya 33; mains 25,000-50,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-10.30pm; ☎) Authentic Vietnamese food, including steaming *pho* noodle broth, and plenty of delicious chicken, beef and seafood mains – green papaya with shrimp is gorgeous. All dishes are moderately priced and delicately spiced and the surroundings are very attractive, with Zen-influenced minimalist decor and bamboo plants.

our pick Lara Djonggrang (Map p104; ☎ 315 3252; Jl Teuku Cik Ditiro 4; mains 45,000-150,000Rp; ☎ 12.30-11pm) An attractive selection of dishes from around the archipelago, stunning decor that mixes traditional Indonesian flair with North African charm, atmospheric lighting and a great wine list make this one stunning place to eat.

Lan Na Thai/Hazara/El Wajh (Map p104; ☎ 315 0424; www.facebars.com; Jl Kusuma Atmaja 85; mains 70,000-120,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-11pm) This four-in-one venue (Face Bar, see p112, is also located here) is great for North Indian food, including wonderful tandoori choices in Hazara, exquisite Thai cuisine in Lan Na Thai and delectable Moroccan dishes in El Wajh.

Kemang Area

In addition to the following upmarket places Kemang has a couple of excellent food courts. The best of these is the huge **Kemang Food Festival** (Map p98; Jl Kemang Raya; meals from 12,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-11pm), which has 50 or so stalls rustling up *roti canai* (Indian-style flaky flat bread), Japanese noodles, and Iranian, Arabic and Indonesian food. On weekend nights there's a real buzz here and the place is crammed. Over the road, the smaller **Kemang Food Square** (Map p98; Jl Kemang Raya; meals from 15,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-11pm) also has stalls.

WWWok (Map p98; ☎ 719 3928; Jl Kemang Raya 9 J-K; mains 35,000-85,000Rp; ☎) Cafe-bar-restaurant with a really relaxed boho vibe that's popular with a freelance media crowd and students. There are plenty of sofas and space, pool tables and a menu of Chinese and Indonesian faves.

Payon (Map p98; ☎ 719 4826; Jl Kemang Raya 17; mains 40,000-110,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-11pm) This feels like a secret garden, as you dine under a delightful open pagoda set well off the road and surrounded by greenery. Payon is a very civilized setting for authentic Javanese cuisine.

Casa (Map p98; ☎ 719 9289; www.casajakarta.com; Jl Kemang Raya 88; mains 45,000-90,000Rp; ☎) Stylish, modern cafe-restaurant with large plate-glass windows overlooking the happening Kemang strip. There's always a buzz about this place, with quality lounge music and a straightforward menu of pizza, grilled meats, pasta and salads.

Anatolia (Map p98; ☎ 719 4658; Jl Kemang Raya 110A; mains 50,000-150,000Rp; ☎ 5.30-11pm) Authentic Turkish cuisine with an exceptional choice of mezze (including dozens of veggie dishes), succulent lamb and chicken kebabs and *pide* (Turkish-style pizza). Belly dancers strut their stuff here on Friday and Saturday night.

Kinara (Map p98; ☎ 719 2677; Jl Kemang Raya 78B; mains 55,000-125,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-11pm) The mock medieval doors guarding Kinara lead to an opulent interior of grand arches that's an impressive setting for some of the finest Indian dishes in Jakarta – plump samosas, sublime chicken tikka and plenty of vegetarian choices.

Toscana (Map p98; ☎ 718 1217; Jl Kemang Raya 120; mains 85,000-195,000Rp; ☎ 5.30-11pm) Elegant Italian place renowned for its pizzas (baked in a wood-fired oven) and great fish dishes (try the John Dory with red-pepper puree). Also boasts a good selection of Tuscan wines.

Blowfish (Map p98; ☎ 5297 1234; www.blowfish-puro.com; City Plaza at Wisma Mulia, Jl Gatot Subroto 42; meals 120,000-300,000Rp; ☎ 6-11pm) Blowfish has a new location in Kuningan, situated 3km north of Kemang, but the quality of its Japanese cuisine (the sushi and sashimi here is sea spray-fresh) remains unchanged. Or if that doesn't tickle your tuna, you can head over to **Puro** (under the same management) for gourmet Italian food. Both of these places have contemporary decor, steep prices and gorgeous bar areas and are popular with Jakarta's beautiful crowd.

DRINKING Bars

If you're expecting Jakarta, as the capital of the world's largest Muslim country, to be a pretty sober city with little in the way of drinking culture, think again. Bars are spread throughout the city, with down-to-earth (and down-at-heel) places grouped around Jalan Jaksa, swish lounge bars concentrated in Kemang and south Jakarta, and many more places in-between, including a strip of expat bars in Blok M (consult www.jakartablokm.com for more on these).

Note that most bars stay open till around 1am or 2am, sometimes later on weekends, and all establishments listed under Live Music (opposite) rank highly as drinking spots.

Red Square (Map p98; ☎ 5790 1281; Plaza Senayan Arcadia, Jl New Delhi 9) A hip, lively and fashionable vodka bar, Red Square has floor-to-ceiling stocks of Russia's favourite tipple. It even has a walk-in freezer for knocking back slammers. There's hip electronic music in the early evening and harder progressive house later on.

Burgundy (Map p104; ☎ 390 1234; Grand Hyatt Hotel, Jl Thamrin) One of Jakarta's most upmarket drinking haunts, with spectacularly expensive cocktails, avant-garde decor, a cigar humidor and more beautiful people than you can shake a daiquiri at.

Cork & Screw (Map p104; ☎ 3192 8996; Plaza Indonesia, Jl Kebon Kacang Raya) Seriously swanky bar-cum-restaurant with the city's best selection of wine – just choose your vintage from the hundreds of bottles on display. As wine is very heavily taxed in Indonesia, make sure your wallet is suitably stuffed.

Eastern Promise (Map p98; ☎ 7179 0151; Jl Kemang Raya 5; ☎) A classic British-style pub in the heart of Kemang, with a pool table, a wel-

coming atmosphere and filling Western and Indian grub. Service is prompt and friendly, the beer's cold and there's live music on week-ends. It's a key expat hang-out.

our pick Melly's (Map p108; Jl Wahid Hasyim 84; ☎) The best bet in the Jaksa area for a couple of drinks, this quirky little place attracts a good mix of locals and Westerners, has cheap snacks and beer (a large Bintang is 22,000Rp), and plenty of loungy sitting areas. It's open-sided (so it doesn't get too smoky) and there's a popular quiz here every Wednesday.

Tabac (Map p98; ☎ 390 1234; Jl Kemang Raya 25) Perhaps Jakarta's most unusual bar; the lobby to this place is actually a cigar store, and the bar is located behind a secret entrance (hint: push the door of the telephone kiosk). Inside it's like a private club, all wood panelling and comfortable seating. Pricey (a small Bintang is 40,000Rp) and draws a good mix of locals and expats.

The following restaurants also have great bars:

Blowfish (Map p98; ☎ 5297 1234; www.blowfish-puro.com; City Plaza at Wisma Mulia, Jl Gatot Subroto 42) A very happening and exclusive bar where DJs spin the latest club tunes till late.

Café Batavia (Map p102; ☎ 691 5531; Jl Pintu Besar Utara 14) The place for a cocktail or just a cool Bintang in north Jakarta.

Face Bar (Map p104; ☎ 315 0424; www.facebars.com; Jl Kusuma Atmaja 85) Part of the Lan Na Thai, Hazara and El Wajh venue (p111), this hip lounge bar has plenty of subdued reds and dark woods.

Cafes

Cafe culture has taken off in Jakarta in the last few years and all the malls have a Starbucks or Starbucks-style coffee house selling extortionately priced cappuccinos and lattes. Yet every humble warung in town should be able to rustle up a cup of wonderfully strong Javanese coffee (ask for *kopi java* or *kopi hitam*) for between 2000Rp and 6000Rp.

Bakoei Koffie (Map p104; ☎ 3193 6608; Jl Cikini Raya 25; coffees from 10,000Rp; ☎) Occupying a fine old Dutch building, this is a really relaxed and atmospheric cafe, with vintage furniture, art on the walls and lots of little corners with Jakartan professionals tapping away on their laptops. Only the finest beans from Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra are used, and snacks and cakes are served.

A CUP OF JAVA

Java is so synonymous with coffee, one of the world's favourite drugs – sorry, *drinks* – that in some countries the term java has become a catch phrase for a cup of the hot, brown stuff.

Coffee was introduced to Indonesia by the Dutch, who initially founded plantations around Jakarta, Sukabumi and Bogor. Due to the country's excellent coffee-growing conditions, plantations began springing up across Java, and even in parts of Sulawesi and Sumatra. Early on, the prominent coffee was arabica; arabica coffees were traditionally named after the port they were exported from, hence the common worldwide terms of java and mocha (from Yemen) for coffee.

Commonly thought of as a bean, coffee is actually a fruit pit or berry. Around 2000 berries are needed to make one pound of coffee. The most expensive coffee in the world, fetching US\$300 a pound, is *kopi luwak*, a fully flavoured coffee produced in Java (it is also exported from the Philippines, Vietnam and southern India). What makes *kopi luwak* – also known as civet coffee – so expensive is the process by which it gains its unusually rich flavour. The local palm civet, a catlike animal, gorges itself on coffee berries and passes the inner pit through its digestive tract unharmed. Along the way the pits are affected by the animal's stomach enzymes and come out the other end smelling of roses (or rich coffee in this case). The coffee has been appetisingly nicknamed 'cat poop' or 'monkey poo' coffee.

Today, Indonesia is the fourth-largest producer of coffee in the world after Brazil, Vietnam and Colombia. Robusta has replaced arabica as the leading coffee of choice, currently making up some 88% of the country's exports. For further reading on Indonesia's love affair with coffee pick up a copy of *A Cup of Java* by Gabriella Teggia and Mark Hanusz.

ENTERTAINMENT

Jakarta is Indonesia's most broad-minded, sophisticated and decadent city, with the nightlife to match. The club scene can be nothing short of incendiary. Note that things can be a lot quieter during Ramadan.

The live music scene is also vibrant, with grunge, indie and reggae bands particularly popular with Jakarta's thousands of students.

Check the entertainment pages of *Time Out Jakarta* or *Jakarta Kini* for films, concerts and special events.

Cultural Performances

Museum Wayang (p102) holds *wayang kulit* and *golek* performances on Sunday between 10am and 2pm.

Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM; Map p104; ☎ 3193 7325; www.tamanismailmarzuki.com; Jl Cikini Raya 73) TIM is Jakarta's principal cultural centre, with a cinema, theatres (performances include Javanese dance, plays and gamelan concerts), two art galleries and several restaurants in the complex. The tourist office and listings magazines have program details.

Gedung Kesenian Jakarta (Map p104; ☎ 380 8282; Jl Gedung Kesenian 1) Hosts traditional dance and theatre, as well as European classical music and dance.

Erasmus Huis (Map p98; ☎ 524 1069; www.mfa.nl/erasmushuis; Jl HR Rasuna Said Kav 5-3) This cultural centre holds regular cultural events and exhibitions.

Live Music

West Pacific (Map p108; ☎ 391 2025; Jl Thamrin 12) Hosts indie/alternative bands and also has an extensive restaurant menu. It's below Jaya Pub.

BB's (Map p104; ☎ 3193 1890; Jl Cokroaminoto) Really popular with students, this scruffy multi-storeyed bar showcases emerging acoustic, blues and reggae bands. Drinks are quite reasonable, especially if you order beer by the pitcher. Friday night is the big night here; entrance is 30,000Rp.

Jaya Pub (Map p108; Jl Thamrin 12) This Jakarta institution has been around for more than 30 years and isn't showing signs of slowing down. Expect an older crowd and live bluesy rock performers.

Nine Muses Club (Map p98; ☎ 722 1188; www.ninemusesclub.com; Jl Wijaya I 25, Kebayoran Baru) Upmarket European-style bar-restaurant where the jazz artists, pianists and Latin bands draw an older crowd.

Clubs

Jakarta is the clubbing mecca of Southeast Asia. The city has some great venues (from dark 'n'

leazy to polished and pricey), internationally renowned DJs, world-class sound systems and some of the planet's longest party sessions (some clubs open around the clock for the entire weekend!). Entrance is typically 50,000Rp to 80,000Rp but includes a free drink. Clubs open around 9pm, but they don't really get going until midnight; most close around 4am.

Centro (Map p98; ☎ 7278 0818; www.centrojakarta.net; Jl Dharmawangsa IX) A huge club that attracts international DJs on a regular basis.

Embassy (Map p98; ☎ 574 3704; www.embassythelclub.com; Taman Ria Senayan, Jl Gatot Subroto) One of the most respected clubs in the city, its three levels include the main room for house and R&B, and the basement for techno and tribal sounds.

Stadium (Map p98; ☎ 626 3323; www.stadiumjakarta.com; Jl Hayum Waruk 111 FF-JJ) The big daddy of Jakarta's scene, this club has the heritage (established in 1997), the reputation (DJs including Sasha and Dave Seaman have spun here), the capacity (around 4000), the sound system and the crowd. There are four levels, but the main room is where the prime dance-floor action is – a dark, cavernous space of pounding beats full of clubbers in sunglasses. This ain't no disco – alcohol is not the drug of choice, and Stadium has a distinctly underground vibe. Its weekend session is totally hardcore – beginning on Thursday evening and running until Monday morning.

X2 (Map p98; ☎ 572 5560; www.x2club.net; Plaza Senayan, Jl Asia Afrika 8) Huge upmarket club with futuristic lighting, three dance zones (house and R&B/hip hop and trance/progressive sounds) plus a cocktail lounge. Entrance is a hefty 100,000Rp on weekend nights.

SHOPPING

Shopping is one of Jakarta's biggest attractions. Clothes, shoes, bags and electrical goods (including DVDs) are very cheap, especially those that are locally made. Brand-name goods are available in profusion, but the genuine ones are rarely any cheaper than you could get them at home. Jakarta has handicrafts from almost everywhere in Indonesia, and while prices are higher than in the places of origin, it's a good opportunity to get an idea of prices if you have just arrived, or to make last-minute purchases if you are just leaving.

Arts & Handicrafts

Jl Kebon Sirih Timur (Map p108), the street east of Jl Jaks, has a number of shops that

sell antiques and curios. The quality is high, but so are the prices. Jl Palatehan 1 is just to the north of the Blok M bus terminal (Map p98), and has some interesting antique and craft shops.

Flea market (Map p104; Jl Surabaya) Jakarta's famous flea market is in Menteng. It has woodcarvings, furniture, textiles, jewellery and many (often instant) antiques. Bargain like crazy – prices may be up to 10 times the value of the goods.

Pasar Seni (Map p98; Taman Impian Jaya Ancol) In north Jakarta, this is a good place to look for regional handicrafts and to see many of them being made.

Pasaraya department store (Map p98; Jl Iskandarsyah II/2) Opposite Blok M Mall, Pasaraya has two huge floors that seem to go on forever and are devoted to batik and handicrafts from throughout the archipelago.

Shopping Centres

Jakarta has more shopping centres than you could spend a month of Sundays in, and the general rule in the capital is, the bigger, the better.

Pasar Pagi Mangga Dua (Map p98; Jl Mangga Dua) This is an enormous wholesale market with some of Jakarta's cheapest clothes, accessories and shoes, as well as a host of other goods. Quality can be a problem, though.

Mangga Dua Mall (Map p98; Jl Mangga Dua) Across the road from Pasar Pagi Mangga Dua, this is the place for computers, electronics, DVDs and CDs (and even Russian watches). The surrounding area has other malls, making it Southeast Asia's biggest shopping precinct.

Blok M Mall (Map p98; Kebayoran Baru) This mall by the large bus terminal has scores of small, reasonably priced shops offering clothes, shoes, CDs and DVDs.

Plaza Indonesia (Map p104; www.plazaindonesia.com; Jl Thamrin; ☎) Exclusive Plaza Indonesia tops Jakarta's A list for shopping centres, with dozens of designer stores. There's a good, surprisingly inexpensive food court in the basement.

Plaza Senayan (Map p98; www.plaza-senayan.com; Jl Asia Afrika; ☎) This huge plaza has a cinema, one of the city's best clubs (X2; see left) and stores including Marks & Spencer and Prada – though prices are very steep.

FX Mall (Map p98; Jl Jenderal Sudirman; ☎) An up-market mall in the Senayan district, the main

attraction here is the 72m transparent cylindrical slide that shoots you down six stories in about 12 seconds – spend 100,000Rp and the ride is free.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Jakarta is the main international gateway to Indonesia; for details on arriving here from overseas, see the Transport chapter (p842). Jakarta is also a major centre for domestic travel, with extensive bus, train, air and boat connections.

Air

All international and domestic flights operate from Sukarno-Hatta international airport (off Map p98). Consult www.jakartaairportonline.com for airport information and schedules. The city's second airport, Halim, is no longer used for passenger flights. For information on departure tax and international airlines, see the boxed text, p843, and p842 respectively.

Domestic airline offices in Jakarta include the following.

AirAsia (off Map p98; ☎ 5050 5088; www.airasia.com; Sukarno-Hatta international airport)

Batavia Air (Map p104; ☎ 3899 9888; www.batavia-air.co.id; Jl Ir H Juanda 15)

Garuda (Map p104; ☎ 231 1801, 0804 180 7807; www.garuda-indonesia.com; Garuda Bldg, Jl Merdeka Selatan 13)

Lion Air (Map p104; ☎ 632 6039; www.lionair.co.id; Jl Gajah Mada 7)

Mandala Air (Map p108; ☎ 314 4838, 0804 123 4567; www.mandalair.com; Jl Wahid Hasyim 84-88)

Merpati (Map p98; ☎ 654 8888, 0800-101 2345; www.merpati.co.id; Jl Angkasa Blok B/15 Kav 2-3, Kemayoran)

Sriwijaya Airlines (Map p98; ☎ 640 5566; www.sriwijayaair-online.com; Jl Gunung Sahari)

Boat

See p848 for information on the Pelni shipping services that operate on regular weekly, two-week and four-week schedules to ports all over the archipelago. The **Pelni ticketing office** (Map p98; ☎ 421 2893; www.pelni.com; Jl Angkasa 18) is northeast of the city centre in Kemayoran. Tickets (plus commission) can also be bought from designated Pelni agents: **Menara Buana Surya** (Map p104; ☎ 314 2464; Jl Menteng Raya 29), in the Tedja Buana building, 500m east of Jl Jaksa; or **Kerta Jaya** (Map p104; ☎ 345 1518; Jl Veteran 1 27), opposite Mesjid Istiqlal.

Direct Pelni destinations from Jakarta include Padang, Tanjung Pandan (Pulau Belitung), Surabaya, Semarang, Belawan, Kijang (Pulau Bintan) and Batam. Some of the most useful services include the *Ganda Dewata*, which sails to/from Makassar and the *Kelud* to Batam (near Singapore). To Kalimantan, the *Leuser* goes via Tanjung Pandan to Pontianak.

Pelni ships all arrive at and depart from Pelabuhan Satu (dock No 1) at Tanjung Priok, 13km northeast of the city centre. Busway Koridor 10 (at the time of writing, slated to begin in mid-2009) should provide the fastest connection to the port, and Koridor 12 should provide an additional link some time in 2010. A taxi from Jl Jaksa costs around 70,000Rp. The **information centre** (☎ 436 7487) at the front of the dock No 1 arrival hall can be helpful, or try the nearby **Pelni Information Office** (Map p98; ☎ 430 1260; Jl Palmas 2), though you can't buy tickets here!

There are no longer any hydrofoils sailing between Jakarta and Batam.

Bus

Jakarta's four major bus terminals – Kalideres, Kampung Rambutan, Pulo Gadung and Lebak Bulus – are all a long way from the city centre. Take the TransJakarta busway to these terminals as the journey can take hours otherwise. Trains are generally a better alternative for travelling to/from Jakarta.

Tickets (some including travel to the terminals) for the better buses can be bought from agencies (see p101).

KALIDERES

About 15km northwest of Merdeka Sq, this terminal (off Map p98) serves points to the west of Jakarta. Frequent buses run to Merak (28,000Rp, two hours) and Labuan (36,000Rp, 3½ hours). A few buses go through to Sumatra from Kalideres, but most Sumatra buses leave from Pulo Gadung bus terminal.

KAMPUNG RAMBUTAN

Buses that travel to areas south and southwest of Jakarta leave from this big bus terminal (Map p98), some 18km south of the centre. It mostly handles buses to West Java, including Bogor (normal/air-con 9000/12,000Rp, 45 minutes), Cianjur (26,000Rp, 2½ hours) and Bandung, via the toll road/Puncak Pass, (42,000Rp, three/four hours). Services also

run to Pangdaran (from 65,000Rp, eight hours) and Pelabuhan Ratu (31,000Rp, four hours) from here.

PULO GADUNG

Twelve kilometres east of the city centre, Pulo Gadung (Map p98) has buses to Bandung, Central and East Java, Sumatra, Bali and even Nusa Tenggara. This wild bus terminal is the busiest in Indonesia. The terminal is divided into two sections: one for buses to the east and the other for Sumatra.

To points east, frequent buses go to virtually all cities in Central and East Java, and Bali. Destinations include Bandung, via the toll road (42,000Rp, three hours), Cirebon (from 48,000Rp, five hours) and Yogyakarta (from 90,000Rp, 12 hours).

Sumatra is a long haul from Jakarta by bus; most travellers fly these days. Services to Sumatra tend to leave between 10am and 3pm. Destinations include Bengkulu (from 210,000Rp), Palembang (from 180,000Rp) and even Padang (from 250,000Rp). Prices listed are for air-con deluxe buses with reclining seats and toilets.

LEBAK BULUS

This terminal (Map p98) is 16km south of the city centre, and is another departure point for the long-distance deluxe buses to Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Bali. Most bus departures are scheduled for the late afternoon or evening.

Car & Motorcycle

See opposite for details on car hire in Jakarta.

Minibus

Door-to-door *travel* minibuses are not a good option in Jakarta because it can take hours to pick up or drop off passengers in the traffic jams. Some travel agencies book them, but you may have to go to a depot on the city outskirts.

Media Taxis (Map p108; ☎ 390 9010; Jl Johar 15) Has minibuses to Bandung (75,000Rp).

Train

Jakarta's four main train stations are quite central, making trains the easiest way out of the city. The most convenient and important is Gambir station (Map p104), on the eastern side of Merdeka Sq, a 15-minute walk from Jl Jaksa. Gambir handles express trains to Bogor, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang and

Surabaya. Some Gambir trains also stop at Kota station (Map p102) in the north of the city. The Pasar Senen train station (Map p98) is to the east and mostly has economy-class trains. Tanah Abang (Map p98) train station has economy trains to the west.

For express trains, tickets can be bought in advance at the booking offices at the northern end of Gambir train station, while the ticket windows at the southern end are for tickets bought on the day of departure. Check timetables online at www.infoka.kereta-api.com, or consult the helpful staff at the station's **information office** (☎ 692 9194).

There's a (slightly pricey) taxi booking desk inside Gambir station; the fare to Jl Jaksa is 35,000Rp.

BOGOR

Comfortable *Pakuan Express* trains (8500Rp, one hour) leave from Juanda (Map p98) and Gambir stations roughly every hour until 9pm. No-frills trains (4000Rp, 90 minutes) also run this route, about every 30 minutes, but can be horribly crowded during rush hours (watch your gear).

BANDUNG

There are frequent trains to Bandung along a scenic hilly track, but be sure to book in advance (especially on weekends and public holidays).

Six efficient and comfortable *Parahyangan* services depart from Gambir train station daily for Bandung (business/executive 45,000/65,000Rp, 3¼hr) between 5.15am and 4.30pm. Seven more luxurious *Argo Gede* services (executive 75,000Rp, three hours) cover the same route between 6.10am and 7.30pm.

CIREBON

Most trains that run along the north coast or to Yogyakarta go through Cirebon. Two of the best services from Gambir station are the *Cirebon Express* (business/executive 60,000/75,000Rp, three hours) with five daily departures, and the *Argo Jati* (business/executive 70,000/85,000Rp, three hours), which runs twice daily at 9am and 5.10pm.

YOGYAKARTA & SOLO

The most luxurious trains are the *Argo Lawu* (220,000Rp, 8¼ hours), departing at 8pm, and the *Argo Dwipangga* (225,000Rp, 8¼ hours),

departing at 8am. These trains go to Solo and stop at Yogyakarta, 45 minutes before Solo, but cost the same to either destination.

Cheaper services from the Pasar Senen train station to Yogyakarta are the *Fajar Yogyakarta* (business 110,000Rp, 8½ hours), departing at 6.20am, and the *Senja Utama Yogya* (110,000Rp, nine hours) at 7.20pm. The *Senja Solo* goes to Solo (110,000Rp, 10 hours) at 8.30pm and also stops in Yogyakarta.

SURABAYA

Most trains between Jakarta and Surabaya take the shorter northern route via Semarang, though a few take the longer southern route via Yogyakarta. Trains from Gambir range from the *Gumerang* (business 140,000Rp, 13 hours) that departs at 6pm to the smart *Argo Bromo Anggrek* (special executive class from 260,000Rp, 9½ hours), which departs at 9.30am and 9.30pm.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Jakarta's Sukarno-Hatta international airport is 35km west of the city centre. A toll road links the airport to the city and the journey takes about an hour (longer during rush hour).

Damri (☎ 460 3708, 550 1290) airport buses (20,000Rp, every 30 minutes) run between 5am and 7pm between the airport and Gambir train station (near Jl Jaksa) and several other points in the city including Blok M. From Gambir train station to Jl Jaksa, a taxi is a minimum of around 35,000Rp, or you could

walk (it's just under 1km). Damri buses also run regularly to Bandung (115,000Rp) and Bogor (55,000Rp).

Taxis from the airport to Jl Thamrin/Jl Jaksa cost about 140,000Rp including tolls. Book via the official taxi desks to be safe, rather than using the unlicensed drivers outside.

A new train line is being constructed between Manggarai station in central Jakarta and the airport; it's expected to be operational sometime in 2010.

Bus

Jakarta has a very decent new TransJakarta busway system (see the boxed text, below), which has really speeded up city travel in recent years. Other buses are not very useful for visitors as they are much slower, hotter (no air-con) and crowded (pickpockets can be a problem). Nevertheless you may come across regular city buses, *patas* ('express') buses and orange Metro minibuses from time to time; fares cost between 2000Rp and 3000Rp.

The tourist office can provide a little information on buses around Jakarta, though at the time of research its city map did not plot the busway routes.

Car

Jakarta has branches of the major car-rental operators, including **Avis** (Map p104; ☎ 314 2900; www.avis.co.id; Jl Diponegoro 25), and **Trac Astra** (Map p98; ☎ 650 6565; www.trac.astra.co.id; Jl Gaya Motor 1/10). Alternatively, enquire in travel agencies, as a vehicle with driver may be the most economical option.

TRANSJAKARTA BUSWAY

Jakarta has a new network of clean, air-conditioned buses called TransJakarta that run on busways (designated lanes that are closed to all other traffic). Journey times have been slashed, and they now represent by far the quickest way to get around the city.

Most busways have been constructed in the centre of existing highways, and stations have been positioned at (roughly) 1km intervals. Access is via elevated walkways and each station has a shelter. Eight busway lines (called *koridor*) were up and running at the time of research, with a total of 15 planned, which should eventually form a network from Tanjung Priok south to Kampung Rambutan.

Tickets cost 3500Rp, payable before you board, which covers you to any destination in the network (regardless of how many *koridor* you use). Buses (running 5am to 10pm) are well maintained and not too crowded, as conductors (usually) ensure that maximum passenger numbers are not exceeded.

The busway system has been a great success, but as most middle- and upper-class Jakartans remain as addicted as ever to their cars, the city's famous traffic jams look set to continue for a good few years yet.

A number of the 'transport' guys who hang around on Jl Jaksa can offer some of the best deals if you negotiate directly with them, avoiding hotel or travel-agency commissions.

The big operators charge about 550,000Rp per day with a driver (450,000Rp without), while private operators may ask for around 10% less.

Taxi

Taxis in Jakarta are metered and cost 4500Rp to 6000Rp for the first kilometre and around 250Rp for each subsequent 100m. Make sure the meter (*argo*) is used. Many taxi drivers provide a good service, but Jakarta has enough rogues to give its taxis a bad reputation and a number of travellers have complained about pushy drivers. Tipping is expected, if not demanded, but not obligatory. It is customary to round the fare up to the next 1000Rp. Carry plenty of small notes – Jakarta taxi drivers rarely give change.

Bluebird cabs (☎ 794 1234, 798 1001) has the best reputation; a minimum of 20,000Rp is charged for ordered taxis. Any toll road charges and parking fees – there are lots of them – are extra and paid by the passenger.

Other Local Transport

Bajaj (pronounced 'ba-jai') are basically Indonesian tuk-tuks. They are being slowly phased out and there are few about now in central Jakarta. If you hire one it's worth remembering that they are not allowed on many major thoroughfares.

Jakarta has some other weird and wonderful means of getting around. In the back streets of Kota there are plenty of pushbikes with an additional padded seat on the back. These contraptions are ideal for shuttling to and from Sunda Kelapa; expect to pay 3000Rp to 7000Rp for a ride. Bemos are the original three-wheelers from the 1960s that still operate around Glodok and other parts of Jakarta. The *helicak*, cousin to the *bajaj*, is a green motorcycle contraption with a passenger car mounted on the front.

Jakarta also has plenty of *ojeks*, which are motorcycles that take pillion passengers. Weaving in and out of Jakarta's traffic on the back of an *ojek* is decidedly risky. Becak (bicycle-rickshaws) have been banned from the city and only a few tourist becak remain at Ancol.

AROUND JAKARTA Pulau Seribu

☎ 021 / pop 18,000

A popular destination for locals and expats alike lies only kilometres from the polluted harbour of Jakarta. Pulau Seribu (Thousand Islands), a string of islands in Teluk Jakarta (Jakarta Bay), is the perfect respite for those stuck in the capital too long.

Despite the misleading name, there are actually only 130 islands in the group, and of these, 37 have been used for commercial purposes. **Pulau Pramuka** is the group's district centre, but most people live on **Pulau Kelapa**, which is about 15km north of Jakarta. Near Pulau Kelapa, **Pulau Panjang** has the only airstrip on the islands.

The most accessible islands have been developed into resorts with bungalows and water sports. Most of these are expensive by Indonesian standards and charge hefty weekend supplements. That said, they do have white-sand beaches and calm, clear seas (aside from the islands close to the mainland).

The resorts have offices in Jakarta or at the **Ancol Marina** (Map p98; ☎ 6471 1822; Taman Impian Jaya Ancol) for bookings. As well as booking through their respective offices, you can make reservations through the Jakarta Visitor Information Office (p101), allowing for better comparisons.

Getting There & Around

The resorts have daily speedboats from Jakarta's Ancol Marina for guests and day trippers, usually leaving between 8am and 11am and returning between 2pm and 5pm, with additional services on weekends. Some are just a 20-minute ride away, but the furthest islands take around two hours to reach. Return day-trip rates to the resorts with lunch include Pulau Bidadari (240,000Rp), Pulau Ayer (314,000Rp), Pulau Sepa (618,000Rp) and Pulau Kotok (850,000Rp). Gray Line also offers day trips to the islands (p107).

Locals will ferry you from one island to the next (but this can be pricey). Most islands are small enough to easily explore on foot.

PULAU BIDADARI

This is the closest resort island and is popular with Jakarta residents for day trips. It is one of the least interesting resorts, but you can use it to visit other islands such as **Pulau**

Kahyangan, Pulau Kelor (which has the ruins of an old Dutch fort), or **Pulau Onrust** (where the remains of an 18th-century shipyard can be explored). Boats can be hired for the short trip from Pulau Bidadari for 50,000Rp per hour.

The island's **resort** (per person incl full board from 454,000Rp) has a variety of simple cottages and sports facilities, and can be booked at Ancol Marina.

PULAU AYER

Pulau Ayer is a little further north and is another popular day-trip destination. Its **resort** (☎ 385 2004; www.pulauayer.com/cottages.htm; packages incl full board 1st/additional night from 661,000/498,000Rp) has comfortable 'land' and 'floating' (built on stilts) cottages plus a small stretch of good beach with cloudy water.

PULAU KOTOK

Near the islands' administrative centre is Pulau Kotok, an island with coral reef that's in reasonable condition for snorkelling and diving.

On the western side of Kotok, **Kul Kul Kotok Island Resort** (packages incl full board/additional night 1,141,000/675,000Rp; ☎) is about the quietest and most traditional option, scoring high marks in the deserted-tropical-island stakes. Two dives here cost 1,375,000Rp. The resort can be booked through its **Jakarta office** (☎ 4280 1932; www.alamresorts.com/lang-en/kotok; Jl Cempaka Putih Tengah 34).

PULAU PUTRI

About 4km north of Pulau Kelapa, Pulau Putri has a tunnel aquarium, a scuba-diving school and banana boat trips. Its **resort** (packages from 1,260,000Rp, additional night 835,000Rp; ☎) consists of rustic yet charming cottages and has an idyllic setting at the north of the island; it can be booked through **PT Buana Bintang Samudra** (☎ 828 1093; Jl Sultan Agung 21).

PULAU SEPA

Pulau Sepa is another island near Pulau Putri; it's quite small (on foot, it takes about 10 minutes to circumnavigate) and is surrounded by wide stretches of pristine white sand.

The rooms at **Pulau Sepa Resort** (full-board packages from 938,000, additional night 570,000Rp; ☎) have hot water but are quite basic, while its cottages have more character. Book through **PT Pulau Sepa Permai** (Map p98; ☎ 6386 3477; Jl Kyai Caringin 20).

WEST JAVA

Many tourists experience the lush, volcanic panoramas of West Java (Jawa Barat) through the murky window of a speeding bus. In the rush to get to Yogyakarta and the high-profile attractions of Central Java, those with limited time make a beeline through the province. But this dramatic, diverse region, historically known as Sunda and the heartland of the Sundanese people, has a fair few marvels of its own. Many of its attractions are off the beaten track, but while they will take some extra time to get to, they are well worth searching out.

West Java stretches from the remote islands of the Ujung Kulon National Park (last Javan home of the one-horned rhino) in the west to the sweeping beaches of Pangandaran in the east. In between, you can visit the infamous offshore volcano of Krakatau, kick back in chilled coastal resorts, get to know Sundanese culture in Cianjur and stroll through Bogor's lush botanical gardens.

JAKARTA TO MERAK

Most visitors just head straight from Jakarta to Merak on their way to (or from) Sumatra, simply because there's not a lot in this area to attract your attention. From here it is possible to head for the west coast, though, and the historic town of Banten can be an intriguing diversion if you have time to kill.

Banten

On the coast due north of Serang, the dusty fishing town of Banten was once a great maritime capital, where the Dutch and English first landed in Java to secure trade and struggle for economic supremacy.

Banten reached its peak during the reign of Sultan Agung (1651–83), and in 1680 he declared war on the Dutch, but conflict within the royal house ultimately led to his downfall. Agung fled Banten but finally surrendered in 1683, and his defeat marked the real beginning of Dutch territorial expansion in Java.

The chief landmark here is the 16th-century mosque **Mesjid Agung**, a good example of early Islamic architecture; its great white octagonal minaret was reputedly designed by a Chinese Muslim. Next to the mosque is an **archaeological museum** (admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am–4pm Tue–Sun), which has a modest collection of local clay artefacts, and spikes used

by Banten's Debus followers. (The Debus tradition involves masochistic activities like self-piercing, which the faithful are said to be able to perform without drawing blood).

Directly across from the mosque is the large grass-covered site of the early ruler Hasanuddin's fortified palace, the **Surosowan**, which was wrecked in the bloody civil war during the reign of Sultan Agung (and again by the Dutch in 1832).

Other points of interest around the mosque include the massive ruins of **Fort Speelwijk** to the northwest; opposite the entrance to the fort is a **Chinese temple**, dating from the 18th century. Back along the road to Serang are the huge, crumbling walls and archways of the **Kaibon** palace, and nearby is the **tomb of Maulana Yusuf**, who died in 1580.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Take a bus from Jakarta's Kalideres bus terminal to Serang (15,000Rp, 1½ hours), 10km south of Banten, from where a minibus (3000Rp, 20 minutes) will drop you near the Mesjid Agung.

Pulau Dua Bird Sanctuary

Off the north coast at Banten, Pulau Dua is one of Indonesia's major bird sanctuaries. The island has a large resident population – mainly herons, storks and cormorants – but the peak time is between March and July, when great numbers of migratory birds flock here for the breeding season.

It's a half-hour trip by chartered boat from the Karanghantu harbour in Banten, but you can walk across the fish ponds (via bridges) to the island. From Banten, take an *angkot* 5km east to Sawahluhur village. The trail to the island starts 100m or so before the village and then it's a hot 1km walk, weaving between the fish ponds – just keep heading for the trees on the horizon. There is a PHKA post with a derelict hut that has bare wooden beds and not much else. If you are planning to stay, bring food and water.

MERAK

☎ 0254

Right on the northwestern tip of Java, 140km from Jakarta, Merak is an ugly port town, the terminus for ferries shuttling to and from Bakauheni on the southern end of Sumatra. In a decade or so a new Selat Sunda bridge should connect Java and Sumatra here, but for

now you'll be boarding a boat between these two great islands. If you're stuck in **Merek Hotel Andā** (☎ 571 041; Jl Raya Puloirda 4; r from 60,000Rp, with air-con from 110,000Rp; ☹) will do for a night; it's right opposite the ferry terminal.

Getting There & Away

The bus terminal and train station are at the ferry dock.

BOAT

Ferries to Bakauheni in Sumatra depart every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day (see also p474). Ferries cost 15,000/18,000Rp in economy/business class and take around three hours. Much faster speedboats (42,000Rp, 45 minutes) also make this crossing, but these don't run in heavy seas. The through-buses to Bandarlampung are the easiest option.

BUS

There are frequent buses making the run between Merak and Jakarta (economy 20,000Rp, three hours; express 28,000Rp, two hours). Most terminate at Jakarta's Kalideres bus terminal, but buses also run to/from Pulo Gadung and Kampung Rambutan. Other buses run all over Java, including Bogor (40,000Rp) and Bandung (normal/air-con 42,000/55,000Rp).

Buses leave from the front of the Merak bus terminal for Serang (7000Rp) and Cilegon (5000Rp); for Labuan (12,000Rp), a change at Cilegon is required.

TRAIN

A business train to Jakarta (18,000Rp, 3¼ hours) departs at 12.30pm but is sometimes cancelled; a slower economy-class train (5500Rp, four hours) leaves at 2pm.

WEST-COAST BEACHES

The west-coast beaches of Java have some good swimming spots, sparkling white sands and even a little surf. They're popular with weekenders Jakartans, though few travellers make it out here.

Apart from the multiplying resorts, the area is sparsely populated. The main place of interest is Carita, for arranging tours to Krakatau, visible on the horizon from most of the resorts, and Ujung Kulon National Park. Strangely, this area is also notorious for motorcycle theft; if you bring your own vehicle, keep a close eye on it.

Anyer & Around

☎ 0254

Anyer, some 14km to the southwest of Cilegon, is easily the most upmarket village along the this coastline. Here you'll find the west coast's semi-luxurious resorts and decent beaches. Anyer was once a big Dutch port before being totally destroyed by the tidal waves generated by the Krakatau eruption. The **Anyer lighthouse** dates from 1885.

Karang Bolong, 11km south of Anyer and 30km north of Labuan, also has a good beach. A huge stand of rock forms a natural archway from the land to the sea.

SLEEPING & EATING

Most hotels here are pricey and not great value (and rates increase on weekends).

Hotel Mambruk Anyer (☎ 601 602; www.mambruk.co.id; r incl breakfast from 900,000Rp; ☞ ☞) The Mambruk Anyer occupies a huge coastal plot and has dozens of rooms, cottages and villas, though the beach is slimline. Facilities include tennis courts and two pools. It's the first place south of the Anyer lighthouse.

our pick Griya Anyer Spa (☎ 602 577; Jl Griya Anyer, km 127; www.dayugroup.web.id; villas 400,000Rp) This superb spa-restaurant-hotel has two lovely villas that can sleep four (book well ahead) and a fine Japanese restaurant serving sushi and bento sets (60,000Rp), teriyaki dishes and tempura in elegant surrounds. The spa is one of the most professional in West Java, with moderately priced massages (from 110,000Rp per hour) and spa treatments including aromatherapy and body scrubs. It's located on the very northern edge of Anyer.

Seafood warungs are scattered along the coast from Anyer to Karang Bolong and provide the only cheap dining.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Most visitors to Anyer go by car from Jakarta – 2½ to three hours via the toll road (turn off at Cilegon). By bus from Jakarta, take a Merak bus and get off at Cilegon, from where infrequent buses and frequent minibuses run to Labuan via Anyer (6000Rp) and Karang Bolong.

Carita

☎ 0253

Carita has a more rustic and laidback feel than Anyer and a certain scruffy charm. The beach is wide, and there's some good swimming

and a few moderately priced accommodation options. Trips to Krakatau (opposite) and Ujung Kulon National Park (p133) are best organised here.

The hotel **Sunset View** is the best place for information. Heading north from Labuan port, the usual access point, Carita proper starts around 8km further on.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

About 2km from Carita over the rice paddies you can see the village of **Sindanglaut** (End of the Sea), which is where the giant tsunami of 1883 ended its destructive run. **Hutan Wisata Carita** is a forest reserve with walks through the hills and jungle. **Curug Gendang** waterfall is a three-hour return hike through the reserve.

Travel agencies including **Black Rhino** (☎ 802 818; blackrhinojava@yahoo.com), next to the Sunset View hotel, can arrange diving (as can Rakata Hotel); two-dive excursions start at 750,000Rp including equipment rental. The best diving is in Ujung Kulon National Park, but Krakatau and Pulau Sanghiang are also of interest.

TOURS

Virtually everyone in town will try to peddle you a Krakatau tour. Check your tour boat first as waves can be rough, and make sure it has a radio on board. Black Rhino (above) and Rakata Hotel receive good reports; after bargaining, day trips to Krakatau start from around 1,800,000Rp. Trips to Ujung Kulon cost from US\$280 per person for four days and three nights; overnight trips to Badui villages start at US\$150.

SLEEPING & EATING

Sunset View (☎ 801 075; r 85,000Rp, with air-con 150,000Rp; ☞) The cheapest option on this stretch, though the small, poky rooms could do with a really good scrub.

Rakata Hotel (☎ 801 171; r 90,000Rp, with air-con & TV 175,000Rp; ☞) Another inexpensive option, the Rakata offers reasonably priced rooms, though tariffs jump on weekends. The restaurant serves up good seafood and tours can be set up here.

Carita Baka Baka (☎ 801 126; r from 160,000Rp, family bungalows from 450,000Rp; ☞) It's looking a bit weary these days, and maintenance is not what it should be, but this midrange place has an idyllic spot right on the beach and is surrounded by palm trees. Rates double at weekends.

Mutiara Carita (☎ 801 069; www.mutiara-carita.com; r from 450,000Rp, cottages from 800,000Rp; ☺ ☺) Stylish rooms and thatched cottages, some with beachfront aspects, in a large, leafy complex that has a tennis court, pool tables (and, unfortunately, karaoke). The kids' facilities and activities are excellent here.

Krakatau Surf Carita (☎ 803 848; villas from 635,000Rp; ☺ ☺) This place has three classes of well-constructed, attractive detached bungalows (with either two or four bedrooms) right on the beach, with a view of the crashing surf. Prices rise by 30% on weekends. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Valentine Restaurant (meals from 30,000Rp) Carita has scores of inexpensive local places that specialise in fish and seafood, but for a smarter setting head to this elegant place, opposite the Krakatau Surf, which has a long menu of meat and fish dishes.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

To get to Carita from Jakarta, take a bus to Labuan and then an *angkot* to Carita (5000Rp). To Anyer, an *angkot* costs 7000Rp.

LABUAN

☎ 0253

The dreary little port of Labuan is merely a jumping-off point for Carita or for Ujung Kulon National Park (p133), but it is home to the helpful **Labuan PHKA office** (☎ 801 731), located 2km north of town towards Carita.

Frequent buses depart from Kalideres bus terminal in Jakarta for Labuan (36,000Rp, 3½ hours). Regular buses also operate between Labuan and Bogor (38,000Rp, four hours). *Angkots* for Carita (5000Rp, 30 minutes) leave from the market, 100m from the Labuan bus terminal.

TANJUNG LESUNG

☎ 0253

Tanjung Lesung, 30km southwest of Labuan, is a quiet and unspoilt peninsula with beautiful beaches and traditional Sundanese villages. Accommodation is limited in this region, with no budget options.

Tanjung Lesung Sailing Club (☎ 0813 8515 1999; www.tanjunglesung.com/sailing.html; cottages weekdays/weekends from 275,000/345,000Rp; ☺) has attractive, good-value cottages with huge beds and mozzie nets in a great setting just off the resort's sandy bay. There's a bar and restaurant here and it's obviously a great place for

sailors (boats are available from 62,000Rp per hour). Sailing instruction is available from English-speaking staff. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Tanjung Lesung Resort Hotel (☎ 802 900, in Jakarta 021-6856 7118; www.tanjunglesung.com; cottages weekdays/weekends from US\$68/150; ☺ ☺) is a good choice, with three classes of cottages, sleeping between two and seven people, all of a high standard. There's a huge ocean-facing pool, lovely grounds, a spa and a restaurant. Add 21% tax to room rates.

From Labuan, *angkot* run to Citeureup (9000Rp, 45 minutes), the odd one continuing down towards Tanjung Lesung. However, you may have to hire an *ojek* for the final part of the journey.

GUNUNG KRAKATAU

The legendary peak of Krakatau, the most famous of the world's famous volcanoes, is a name almost everyone knows – but few actually know of its location (take the film makers of *Krakatoa, East of Java*, for instance). Resting in relative peace some 50km from the West Java coast and 40km from Sumatra, the volcano is nowadays a shadow of its former self – a small group of disconnected islands centred on **Anak Krakatau** (Child of Krakatau), a volcanic mass that has been on the boil since 1928.

The highlight of any trip to Krakatau is rounding Pulau Rakata and first glimpsing the menacing peak of Krakatau's child.

Information

Labuan PHKA office (☎ 801 731; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) has information on the volcano; otherwise consult your hotel reception for information on tours and Anak Krakatau's current activity status.

Activities

Krakatau is only accessible by boat. It's often possible to land on the eastern side of Anak Krakatau, but this is very much dependent on volcanic activity. If conditions are favourable, organised tours usually take visitors about 150m up the side of Anak Krakatau. Walking to the edge of the caldera is never advisable – people have been killed by flying rocks. Always seek qualified advice before making any trip to the volcano.

After Krakatau, tours usually move on to hike and snorkel on neighbouring islands.

DAY INTO NIGHT

Few volcanoes have as explosive a place in history as Krakatau, the island that blew itself apart in 1883. Turning day into night and hurling devastating tsunamis against the shores of Java and Sumatra, Krakatau quickly became vulcanology's A-list celebrity.

Few would have guessed that Krakatau would have snuffed itself out with such a devastating swan song. It had been dormant since 1680 and was regarded as little more than a familiar nautical landmark for maritime traffic passing through the narrow Selat Sunda.

But from May through to early August in 1883, passing ships reported moderate activity, and by 26 August Krakatau was raging.

At 10am on 27 August 1883, Krakatau erupted so explosively that on the island of Rodriguez, more than 4600km to the southwest, a police chief reported hearing the booming of 'heavy guns from eastward'.

With its cataclysmic eruptions, Krakatau sent up a column of ash 80km high and threw into the air nearly 20 cu kilometres of rock. Ash fell on Singapore 840km to the north and on ships as far as 6000km away; darkness covered Selat Sunda from 10am on 27 August until dawn the next day.

Far more destructive were the great ocean waves that were triggered by the collapse of Krakatau's cones into its empty belly. A tsunami more than 40m high swept over the nearby shores of Java and Sumatra, and the sea wave's passage was recorded far from Krakatau, reaching Aden (on the Arabian peninsula) in 12 hours over a distance 'travelled by a good steamer in 12 days'. Measurable wave effects were even said to have reached the English Channel. Coastal Java and Sumatra were devastated: 165 villages were destroyed and more than 36,000 people were killed.

The following day a telegram sent to Singapore from Batavia (160km east of Krakatau) reported odd details such as 'fish dizzy and caught with glee by natives', and for three years, ash clouds circled the earth, creating strange and spectacular sunsets.

The astonishing return of life to the devastated islands has been the subject of scientific study ever since. Not a single plant was found on Krakatau a few months after the event; 100 years later – although the only fauna are snakes, insects, rats, bats and birds – it seems almost as though the vegetation was never disturbed.

Krakatau may have blown itself to smithereens, but it is currently being replaced by Anak Krakatau, which has been on the ascendant ever since its first appearance nearly 80 years ago. It has a restless and uncertain temperament, sending out showers of glowing rocks and belching smoke and ashes.

Getting There & Away

Most visitors to Krakatau come from Carita or the other beach resorts on the west coast of Java. However, Krakatau officially lies in Sumatra's Lampung province, and it is slightly quicker and cheaper to reach Krakatau from the small port of Kalianda (p000), 30km north of the ferry terminal at Bakauheni.

Tour operators out of Carita (see p122) will take down the names of interested travellers wanting to share a ride, but usually the numbers just aren't available and you will have to charter.

Prices vary depending on the quality of the boat, but always charter the best boat you can afford. During the rainy season (November to March) there are strong currents and rough seas, but even during the dry season strong southeast winds can whip up the swells and

make a crossing inadvisable. Krakatau is a 90-minute ride from Carita in a fast boat when weather conditions are fine. It's a long one-day trip, but it's definitely worth the effort – if you can hire a safe boat.

Small fishing boats may be cheap, but so are the tales of travellers who spent the night, or longer, adrift in high swells. Reliable boats with radios and life jackets start at 1,800,000Rp for a small utility boat (maximum of six people) and go up to around 3,300,000Rp for faster boats (eight to 10 people). These can be organised through Carita agents or **Marina Lippo** (☎ 0253-801 525) in Carita.

Wanawisata Alamhayati (☎ 571 0392) also arranges expensive tours to Krakatau from Jakarta.

(Continued on page 133)

(Continued from page 124)

UJUNG KULON NATIONAL PARK

On the remote southwestern tip of Java, this Unesco World Heritage-listed **national park** (admission 59,500Rp) covers about 760 sq km of land, including large Pulau Panaitan. Because of its isolation and difficult access, Ujung Kulon has remained an outpost of prime rainforest and untouched wilderness in heavily developed Java; alongside some fine opportunities for hiking, it also has good beaches with intact coral reefs. Few people visit the park (which was Indonesia's first national park), but it is one of the most rewarding, if remote environments in all Java.

Ujung Kulon is best known as the last refuge in Indonesia of the one-horned Javan rhinoceros. There are only thought to be around 55 in Ujung Kulon (and perhaps a dozen or so in Vietnam), so it's one of the globe's most critically endangered mammals. That said, numbers are thought to be stable here, and breeding is occurring: in 2006 evidence of at least four baby rhinos was confirmed.

Javan rhinos are an extremely rare sight and you are far more likely to come across banteng (wild cattle), wild pigs, otters, squirrels, leaf monkeys and gibbons. Panthers also live in the forest and crocodiles in the river estuaries, but these are also rare. Green turtles nest in some of the bays and Ujung Kulon also has a wide variety of bird life. On Pulau Peucang, sambar deer, long-tailed macaques and big monitor lizards are common, and there is good snorkelling around coral reefs.

The main park area is on the peninsula, but it also includes the nearby island of Panaitan and the smaller offshore islands of Peucang and Handeuleum. Much of the peninsula is dense lowland rainforest and a mixture of scrub, grassy plains, swamps, pandanus palms and long stretches of sandy beach on the west and south coasts. Walking trails follow the coast around much of the peninsula and loop around Gunung Payung on the western tip.

Information

The **Labuan PHKA office** (☎ 801 731; ☒ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) is a useful source of information, but you pay your entry fee when you enter the park at the park office in Tamanjaya or on the islands. Try to pick up a copy of the excellent, but rarely available, *Visitor's Guidebook*

to the Trails of Ujung Kulon National Park (25,000Rp) from the park office.

The best time to visit Ujung Kulon is in the dry season (April to October), when the sea is generally calm and the reserve less boggy. Be aware that malaria has been reported in Ujung Kulon.

Guides must be hired for hiking in the park and cost around 275,000Rp per day. Bring along lightweight food, such as packaged noodles, and drinking water if you are trekking; otherwise food can be organised by tour operators or the park wardens. Supplies are available in Tamanjaya, but in Sumur and Labuan there is more choice.

Activities

Tamanjaya village, the entry point to the park, has accommodation and can arrange guides for the three-day hike across to the west coast and on to Pulau Peucang. This is the most rewarding way to explore the park and its diversity. It can be tackled by anyone of reasonable fitness but is not a stroll.

Conditions on the trail are basic – there are rough shelters, but some are almost derelict. If you have a tent, bring it. The trail heads to the south coast and the hut near Pantai Cibandawoh. The second day is a five-hour walk along the beach to the hut at Sungai Cibunar – rivers have to be waded through. On the third day, most hikers cross over the hills to the west coast at Cidaon, opposite Peucang. An alternative and longer trail with good coastal scenery goes from Cibunar via Sanghiang Sirah and the lighthouse at Tanjung Laya, the westernmost tip of mainland Java.

Pulau Peucang is the other main entry into the park but can only be reached by chartered boat. Good but expensive accommodation and a restaurant are run by a private tour company, **Wanawisata Alamhayati** (☎ 571 0392). Peucang also has beautiful white-sand beaches and coral reefs on the sheltered eastern coast. Hikers might be able to hitch a lift on a boat out of Peucang, but don't count on it.

There is also comfortable but simple accommodation at **Pulau Handeuleum**, which is ringed by mangroves and doesn't have Peucang's attractions. Boats or canoes can be hired for the short crossing to Cigenter, on the mainland opposite Pulau Handeuleum, and other trails can be explored on this side of the park.

Large **Pulau Panaitan** is more expensive to reach but has some fine beaches and hiking. It is a day's walk between the PHKA posts at Legon Butun and Legon Haji, or you can walk to the top of Gunung Raksa, topped by a Hindu statue of Ganesh, from Citimbuyung on the east coast. Panaitan is a legendary **surfing** spot (see the boxed text, p824), with breaks including the infamous One Palm Point, a left-hand barrel that spins over a sharp reef. The controversial surf camp located here is now closed and surf tours are once again heading to Panaitan.

Tours

Most tours from Carita, as offered by travel agencies such as **Black Rhino** (☎ 802 818; blackrhinojava@yahoo.com) are four days/three nights with a transfer by car to Sumur, then a boat to Handeuleum (about seven to eight hours), where you camp. Then you trek to Jamang and camp overnight at the ranger's post. The next day you can explore around Tanjung Alang Alang and the nearby beaches, then return. The all-inclusive tours cost around US\$265 per person for a minimum of four.

Boat hire from Labuan or Carita can also be arranged. A three-day return trip to Pulau Peucang costs around US\$350 in a speedboat (2½ hours, maximum six people). The park office in Tamanjaya can arrange boat transfers to the islands for around 2,000,000Rp.

Wanawisata Alamhayati (☎ 571 0392) has all-inclusive, two-day, three-night tours to Pulau Peucang for around US\$300 per person, depending on accommodation, for a minimum of two people.

Surf packages are also available to Panaitan; Bali-based **Surf Panaitan** (☎ 0361-850 0254; www.surfpانيتان.com) charges from US\$740 for a seven-day trip, including transfers from Jakarta airport.

Sleeping & Eating

Advance bookings are recommended for Pulau Peucang and Handeuleum, particularly at weekends. Within the park you can camp or stay at the primitive huts for a small fee. Bring food for yourself and your guide.

Pulau Umang (☎ 0813 8034 5450; www.pulau-umang.com; weekday/weekend r 750,000/1,500,000Rp; ☼ ☼) It's not exactly a Robinson Crusoe experience, but this island has plenty going for it, with fine cottages, built in a kind of contemporary-meets-rustic style right on a white-sand beach,

and has two pools, spas and some snorkelling offshore. It's an idyllic spot, but beware the jet-skis and banana boats, and the restaurant and service standards could be better. Pulau Umang is just offshore from the village of Sumur.

Other options:

Flora A & B bungalows (d US\$80; ☼ ☼) On Pulau Peucang and much more luxurious than its guest house; has hot water and fridges. Add 15% tax to all rates, including meals in the very good restaurant.

Pulau Handeuleum guest house (r 120,000Rp) In pleasant surroundings with a kitchen – bring your own food, as the island has no other dining options. Add 15% tax to room rates.

Pulau Peucang guest house (d 440,000Rp)

Sunda Jaya homestay (r per person 50,000Rp) In Tamanjaya; basic digs and meals.

Wisma Wisata Alam (☎ 0253-802 224; Jl Dermaga; r 50,000-65,000Rp) Also in Tamanjaya; homestay with simple rooms and good views of Krakatau.

Getting There & Away

The cheapest way to get to the park is by minibus from Labuan to Sumur (32,000Rp, 3½ hours), and then an *ojek* to Tamanjaya (50,000Rp, one hour) along a badly rutted road.

Or you could charter a boat to get here. Given the long stretch of open sea, fork out for a decent one. Surf tours use their own transport.

BOGOR

☎ 0251 / pop 830,000

'A romantic little village' is how Sir Stamford Raffles described Bogor when he made it his country home during the British interregnum. As an oasis of unpredictable European weather – it is credited with 322 thunderstorms a year – cool, quiet Bogor was long the chosen retreat of starch-collared colonials escaping the stifling and crowded capital.

Today, the long arm of Jakarta reaches almost the whole way to Bogor, and while a ribbon of green still just about survives between the two, the city is already choked with the overspill of the capital's perennial traffic problem.

But while Bogor's transformation into a distant Jakartan suburb continues apace, the real oasis remains untouched. Planted in the very centre of the city, with the traffic passing idly by, Bogor's botanical gardens are truly world class.

The gardens can be visited as a day trip from Jakarta, or since the capital is only an hour away, Bogor can be used as a cooler and more manageable base from which to visit the capital. From Bogor you can venture to the mountains that surround the city or continue on to Bandung or Pelabuhan Ratu.

Though Bogor stands at a height of only 290m, it's appreciably cooler than Jakarta. Visitors in the wet season should bear in mind the town's 'City of Rain' moniker.

Information

Wartels can be found next to the post office and train station. There's free wi-fi at the Botani Square mall. Bogor has plenty of banks. Both those listed below have an ATM.

BCA bank (Jl Ir H Juanda 28)

Bil bank (Jl Dewi Sartika)

Internet (Jl Merdeka; per hr 7000Rp)

PHKA Headquarters (Jl Ir H Juanda 15; ☎ 7am–2.30pm Mon–Thu, to 11am Fri) The official body for the administration of all of Indonesia's wildlife reserves and national parks; located next to the main garden gates.

Post office Just south of the western entrance to the gardens; also has internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 081 111 0347; agus_pribadi@hotmail.com; Jl Dewi Sartika 51; ☎ 8am–4pm) Outrageously, the city authorities fail to provide the committed staff at this very helpful office a landline phone. The team here can help out with most queries, provide a city map, and offer excellent, well-priced tours (p137).

Sights

KEBUN RAYA

At the heart of Bogor are the fabulous botanical gardens, known as the **Kebun Raya** (Great Garden; www.bogor.indo.net.id/kri; admission 9500Rp; ☎ 8am–5pm), the city's green lung of around 87 hectares. Governor General Raffles first developed a garden here, but the spacious grounds of the Istana Bogor (Presidential Palace) were expanded by Dutch botanist Professor Reinwardt, with assistance from London's Kew Gardens, and officially opened in 1817. It was from these gardens that various colonial cash crops, such as tea, cassava, tobacco and cinchona, were developed by Dutch botanists including Johannes Teysmann, during the infamous Cultivation Period in the 19th century. The park is still a major centre for botanical research in Indonesia. This was the one place in Indonesia George W Bush visited when he dropped by the country in 2006.

Allow yourself at least half a day to enjoy Kebun Raya, while keen gardeners could spend a week here and not be bored. It's tricky to pick out highlights in such a verdant wonderland – there are more than 15,000 species of trees and plants – but the gardens are said to contain 400 types of magnificent palms, including the footstool palm native to Indonesia, which tops 40m. There's a good stock of graceful pandan trees (look out for their unusual aerial roots) and some huge agave (used to make tequila) and cacti in the Mexican section. Drop by the Orchid House (admission an extra 2000Rp) and take in the lovely ponds, which have giant water lilies over a metre across, and look out for monitor lizards, exotic bird life and deer.

Near the main entrance of the gardens is a small **monument**, erected in memory of Olivia Raffles, who died in 1814 and was buried in Batavia. There is also a **cemetery** near the palace with Dutch headstones including the tomb of DJ de Eerens, a former governor general.

Crowds flock here on Sunday, but the gardens are quiet at most other times. The southern gate is the main entrance and home to Bogor's only touts; other gates are only open on Sunday and holidays. There's a great cafe-restaurant inside the gardens (see p138).

ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Near the entrance to the botanical gardens, this **museum** (admission 2000Rp; ☎ 8am–4pm Sat–Thu, to noon Fri) has a motley but interesting collection of zoological oddities, including the skeleton of a blue whale, giant stick insects, beetles as big as tennis balls and a pooch-sized Flores rat.

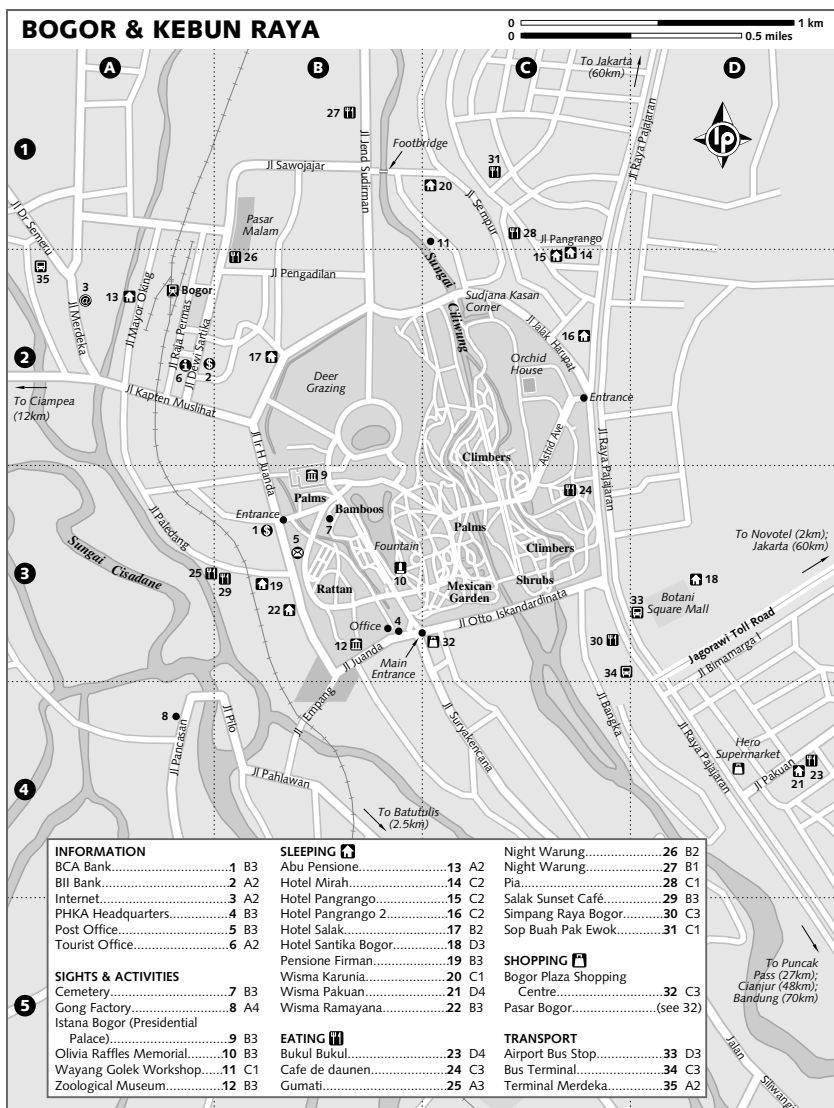
ISTANA BOGOR

In the northwestern corner of the botanical gardens, the summer palace of the president was formerly the opulent official residence of the Dutch governors general from 1870 to 1942.

Today, herds of white-spotted deer roam the immaculate lawns and the building contains Sukarno's huge art collection, which largely focuses on the female figure. The palace is only open to groups (minimum 10) by prior arrangement, and children are not allowed inside. Contact the tourist office for more information.

OTHER SIGHTS

The **Batutulis** is an inscribed stone dedicated to Sri Baduga Maharaja (1482–1521), a Pajajaran



king credited with great mystical power. The stone is housed in a small shrine visited by pilgrims – remove your shoes and pay a small donation before entering. Batutulis is 2.5km south of the botanical gardens, on Jl Batutulis. It's almost opposite the former home of Sukarno. His request to be buried here was ignored by Suharto, who wanted the

former president's grave as far away from the capital as possible.

One of the few remaining gongsmiths in West Java is located in Bogor. Visitors are welcome to drop by the **gong factory** (☎ 832 4132; Jl Pancasan 17), where gamelan instruments are smelted over a charcoal fire. As it takes two weeks to beat a copper gong into shape

you may want to tip the workers here a note or two. A few pricey gongs and *wayang golek* puppets are on sale.

Pak Dase makes quality puppets at his **wayang golek workshop** (Lebak Kantin RT 02/VI), down by the river, just north of the botanical gardens. Take the footbridge to Wisma Karunia (see right) from Jl Jenderal Sudirman and ask for Pak Dase in the labyrinthine *kampung* (village).

Tours

Tours of Bogor taking in a working-class *kampung*, and various cottage industries including a gong factory and tofu and *krupuk* (prawn cracker) kitchens can be arranged through the tourist office (see p135) for around 150,000/250,000Rp per half-day/day. Four-day, three-night eco-trips to Halimun National Park cost €200, while two-night trips to Garut and Pangandaran are €150. Some of the excellent English-speaking guides here include Nyoman and **Agus** (agus_pribadi@hotmail.com).

Alwi (☎ 0813 8434 3711; alwiadin@yahoo.com), who used to work in the office here, also organises excellent tours in the Bogor area. It's possible to visit local villages to teach children English in exchange for food and lodging.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Bogor has quite a few family-run budget places, though standards have slipped a little as the number of travellers passing through has declined. Most are on the west side of the gardens.

Pensione Firman (☎ 832 3246; Jl Paledang 48; r 60,000-140,000Rp) This venerable guest house has been serving travellers for decades and, though it's looking decidedly ramshackle these days, it's still a secure and friendly base – English-speaking owner Warda looks after her guests well, offers cheap meals and serves up free tea. Rooms here are very basic, though.

Abu Pensione (☎ 832 2893; Jl Mayor Oking 15; r with fan 90,000-150,000Rp, with air-con & hot water 220,000Rp; ☎) This is a good choice near the train station, with a selection of decent, clean rooms set at the rear of the property around a pleasant, quiet garden. There's a great little cafe, with cheap grub and views over a gurgling stream. Selfi, a guide based here, offers good (if a little pricey) city tours from 200,000Rp for a half-day trip.

Wisma Pakuan (☎ 831 9430; Jl Pakuan 12; r with balcony 150,000Rp, with air-con 200,000Rp; ☎) Pakuan occupies a large, modern family home a short stroll from the bus terminal. Rooms are very generously sized, in good condition and have hot-water bathrooms, but ask for one at the rear, as it's located on a busy street.

Also recommended:

Wisma Karunia (☎ 832 3411; Jl Sempur 33-35; r with-out private bathroom 60,000Rp, s/d with private bathroom 60,000/85,000Rp) A hike from the centre, but it offers a quiet base and it's run by friendly folk.

Wisma Ramayana (☎ 832 0364; Jl Ir H Juanda 54; r 80,000Rp) Worth considering as it's so close to the gardens, but some rooms are a tad damp.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Bogor is strangely lacking in good midrange options.

Hotel Pangrango 2 (☎ 832 1482; Jl Raya Pajajaran 32; budget/standard r 215,000/545,000Rp; ☎) Large concrete hotel offering spacious if dated standard rooms and a good restaurant, but traffic noise can be an issue here. Note that no alcohol is served.

Hotel Mirah (☎ 834 8040; www.mirahhotelbogor.com; Jl Pangrango 9A; r from 349,000Rp, ste 785,000Rp; ☎) A gaudily opulent hotel with a variety of rooms: the older doubles are bland, but rooms in the impressive newer wing are much better. All have free wi-fi and a large, flat-screen, multi-channel TV.

Novotel (☎ 827 1555; www.novotel-bogor.com; Bogor Raya; r from US\$62; ☎) Arguably the best hotel in the city, set just east of the centre, the nonsmoking Novotel has its own 18-hole golf course. Standards are high here and rates are moderate given the comfort levels and facilities, which include a spa, a well-equipped gym, a tennis court and two restaurants.

Hotel Salak (☎ 837 3111; www.hotelsalak.co.id; Jl Ir H Juanda 8; r from 720,000Rp; ☎) Large colonial-style hotel within walking distance of the gardens with a plethora of cafes and restaurants and good business facilities. Rooms are spacious and comfortable enough, but would benefit from a make-over. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Hotel Santika Bogor (☎ 840 0707; www.santika.com/bogor; Jl Raya Pajajaran; r from 750,000Rp; ☎) Huge new nonsmoking hotel just behind the Botani Square mall that ticks all the right boxes in terms of minimalist design, though perhaps the effect is just a little soulless. Check the website for promotional deals.

Or try:

Hotel Pangrango (☎ 832 8284; Jl Pangrango 23; <http://hotel-pangrango.co.id>; r/deluxe r incl breakfast 325,000/550,000Rp; 🍴 🚿) The carpeted rooms are looking old-fashioned at this peculiar mock-Tudor setting, though they are spacious. This is a booze-free hotel.

Eating & Drinking

Both the Bogor Trade Mall and the upmarket Botani Square shopping malls have good food courts including Western-style fast food, Indonesian favourites and cafes. Cheap warungs appear at night along Jl Dewi Sartika and Jl Jenderal Sudirman.

Sop Buah Pak Ewok (☎ 215 1369; Jl Bukittinggul 5; fruit punch 7000Rp) This is a great, very casual place popular with students for its inexpensive, delicious and refreshing bowls of fruit punch, which are tropical fruits of the season served up with ice. Other snacks including noodles and rice dishes are available.

Pia (☎ 832 9765; Jl Pangrango 10; pies from 11,000Rp) A stylish little eatery with low tables facing a narrow courtyard/car park, this place is renowned throughout West Java for its apple pie (though other fruit flavours including strawberry are available, and there are plenty of savoury options including chicken). It's also good for a bowl of soup, coffee or juice.

Simpang Raya Bogor (☎ 420 1577; Jl Raya Pajajaran; meals from 15,000Rp) A huge Pandang restaurant serving up Sumatra's finest and spiciest. Heaves with customers by early evening; stroll on in and find a seat wherever there's room.

Bukul Bukul (☎ 838 4905; Jl Pakuan 14; mains 16,000-22,000Rp; 🍴 11.30am-10pm) Sleek and stylish restaurant with a Zen-like garden that makes a great setting for a meal, Bukul Bukul is surprisingly affordable. It specialises in Indonesian and Sundanese cuisine. No alcohol is served, but there's a mocktail list, or you're welcome to BYO for no charge.

Gumati (☎ 832 4318; www.cafegumati.com; Jl Paledang 28; mains 15,000-59,000Rp; 🍴 10am-10pm) An imposing restaurant with wonderful vistas over Bogor's red-tiled rooftops to Gunung Salak from its two huge terraces – there's even a small pool here. You'll find an extensive menu, with tapas-style snacks and specials (try the *paket timbal kompli*, which gives you a selection of dishes); no booze though.

Café de Daunen (☎ 835 0023; meals 25,000-59,000Rp)

Inside the botanical gardens, this is the nicest setting in town for a meal, with sweeping views down across a meadow to the water lily ponds. It's a little pricey, but the revamped menu has tasty food including fish and chips, pasta and good Indonesian dishes. For a refreshing drink try the *bandrek* (tea made with ginger and herbs).

Salak Sunset Café (Jl Paledang 38; mains 20,000Rp)

For a beer, your best bet is this low-key place, geared to travellers, with cool Bintang and Western food such as pizzas and spaghetti.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Every 15 minutes or so, buses depart from Jakarta's Kampung Rambutan bus terminal (normal/air-con 9000/12,000Rp, 45 minutes).

Hourly air-conditioned Damri buses head direct to Jakarta's Sukarno-Hatta airport (55,000Rp) from 4am to 6pm from Jl Raya Pajajaran.

Buses depart frequently to Cianjur (14,000/20,000Rp, two hours) and Bandung (30,000/42,000Rp, 3½ hours), but at weekends these buses are not allowed to go via the scenic Puncak Pass and therefore travel via Sukabumi. Other bus destinations from Bogor include Pelabuhan Ratu (27,000Rp, three hours) and Labuan (38,000Rp, four hours).

Air-con, door-to-door *travel* minibuses go to Bandung for 60,000Rp. **Dimas Dewa** (☎ 653 671) has the best buses. Phone for a pick-up.

Damri air-con buses run approximately hourly (55,000Rp) to/from Jakarta's Sukarno-Hatta international airport from a bus stop on Jl Raya Pajajaran, across the road from the bus station.

CAR

Bogor is a good place to hire a car and driver for a trip around the countryside; ask the tourist board to recommend someone – many speak English. Prices start at around 450,000Rp per day.

TRAIN

Comfortable *Pakuan* express trains (8500Rp, one hour) leave Bogor for the capital roughly every hour. Economy trains (4500Rp, 1½ hours) run even more frequently but are usually packed.

Getting Around

Green *angkot* minibuses (2000Rp) shuttle around town, particularly between the bus terminal and train station. Blue *angkot* run to outlying districts and terminate at Terminal Merdeka. *Angkot* 03 does an anticlockwise loop of the botanical gardens on its way to Jl Kapten Muslihat, near the train station. To the bus terminal from the train station take *angkot* 06.

Becak are banned from the main road encircling the gardens. Taxis are extremely rare in Bogor.

AROUND BOGOR

Batutulis (Purnawarman Stone)

Those in need of reminding that all great empires come to an end can head for Batutulis, where sits the large black boulder on which King Purnawarman inscribed his name and footprint around AD 450. His rather immodest inscription, in the Palawa script of South India, is uncannily reminiscent of Percy Shelley's *Ozymandias*, and reads: 'This is the footstep of King Purnawarman of Tarumanagara kingdom, the great conqueror of the world'.

The Ciampea boulder has been raised from its original place and embedded in the shallow water of Sungai Ciaruteun. The inscription on the stone is still remarkably clear after more than 1500 years.

Minibuses make the run to Batutulis from the village of Ciampea, about 12km northwest of Bogor.

Gunung Halimun National Park

This national park is home to some primary rainforest, but the park has mixed usage and also includes plantations such as the Nirmala Tea Estate. The dominant feature of the park is the rich montane forest in the highland regions around **Gunung Halimun** (1929m), which is the highest peak.

Visitor facilities at the park are undeveloped and park administration is handled by the Gede Pangrango National Park (p142) at Cibodas, located some distance away. The most-visited attractions in the park are the waterfalls near Cikidang and those near the Nirmala estate, but the big drawcard is **white-water rafting**. **Pt Lintas Seram Nusantara** (☎ 021-835 5885; www.arusliar.co.id) in Jakarta organises white-water rafting on the Class II to IV (depending on

season) Sungai Citarak on the southeastern edge of the park. Prices start at 185,000Rp for an hour-long trip up to 425,000Rp for a full day excursion.

The usual access (you need your own transport) is through Cibadak on the Bogor–Pelabuhan Ratu road, from where you turn off to Cikadang and then on to the Nirmala Tea Estate. Rainfall in the park is between 4000mm and 6000mm per year, most of which falls from October to May, when a visit is more or less out of the question.

Speak to the staff at the tourist board in Bogor (p135) about setting up a trip to Halimun.

SUKABUMI & SELABINTANA

☎ 0266

Sukabumi is a thriving provincial city of 300,000 people at the foot of Pangrango and Gede volcanoes. The main reason to visit is for bus connections to Bandung and Pelabuhan Ratu or to visit Selabintana, a small hill resort 7km north of town.

Selabintana is much less developed than the Puncak Pass resort area to the north of Gunung Gede. It is possible to walk up the hillside to **Sawer Waterfall** and on to **Gunung Gede**, but there is no PHKA post in Selabintana. Selabintana has a golf course, swimming pools and a good selection of mid-range hotels.

The old-fashioned, slightly faded **Hotel Selabintana** (☎ 221 501; Jl Selabintana, km 7; r from 240,000Rp, VIP bungalows 435,000Rp; ♿) is for sport junkies; it has a golf course, tennis and volleyball courts, two swimming pools and a bar-restaurant for afters. There are rooms or large bungalows with antique furniture. Minibuses from Sukabumi (take a 10 from the Yogyakarta department store) to Selabintana run straight up to the foot of Gunung Gede and terminate at the hotel. Add 21% tax to room prices.

PELABUHAN RATU

☎ 0266

At the rear of a huge horseshoe-shaped bay, about 90km south of Bogor, Pelabuhan Ratu is a popular seaside retreat for Jakartans. The town itself is pretty humdrum – saved only by its long black-sand beach and the colourful outrigger fishing boats crowding the harbour. Most people come here for the fine surf beaches to the west.

Legend has it that Pelabuhan Ratu (which translates as 'Harbour of the Queen') actually witnessed the creation of Nyai Loro Kidul, the malevolent goddess who takes fishermen and swimmers off to her watery kingdom. Don't wear green on the beach or in the water (it's *her* colour), and in the Hotel Indonesia Samudra a room is set aside for meditating mystics wishing to contact the Queen of the South Seas.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 433 544; Jl Kidang Kencana; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri) is within easy walking distance of the bus terminal – just head for the water. You'll find a wartel next door. The **BCA bank** (Jl Siliwangi) has an ATM and will change US dollars, and there are several other ATMs on the same street.

Sights & Activities

The coastline here is pounded by crashing surf, and swimming can be treacherous, so take extreme care. Drownings do occur in spite of the warning signs. There are several excellent **surfing** spots in the region; for a really detailed guide consult the Pondok Kencana website (www.ombaktujuh.net).

Aside from its huge **fish market**, Pelabuhan Ratu won't hold your interest for long – it's best to head west once you've got your bearings. **Cimaja**, 8km west of Pelabuhan Ratu, has a pebble beach and some of the south coast's best waves at the **Ombak Tujuh** (Seven Waves) surf break. This is also the place to arrange diving, fishing or motorcycling trips. Surf lessons can be set up here for around 100,000Rp per day (excluding soft board rental); call **Iman** (☎ 0857 2305 8595) or **Mumu** (☎ 0812 890 1580).

Pantai Karang Hawu, 13km west of Pelabuhan Ratu, is a towering cliff with caves, rocks and pools created by a large lava flow. According to legend, it was from the rocks of Karang Hawu that Nyai Loro Kidul leapt into the mighty ocean to regain her lost beauty and never returned. Stairs lead up to a small *kramat* (shrine) at the top.

Further west, about 2km past Cisolok, are the **Cipanas hot springs**. Boiling water sprays into the river, and you can soak downstream where the hot and cold waters mingle. It is a very scenic area; you can walk a few kilometres upstream through the lush forest to a waterfall. Cipanas has changing sheds, warungs and crowds on the weekend.

Goa Lalay is a bat cave that's about 4km southeast of Pelabuhan Ratu. It's of limited interest except at sunset, when thousands of small bats flutter off into the night sky.

Sleeping & Eating

Pelabuhan Ratu is very quiet in the week and fills up at weekends and during holidays.

PELABUHAN RATU & CITEPUS

Pelabuhan Ratu (and Citepus 3km to the west) have an excess of uninspiring hotels and lodges that are poor value for money. Cimaja, 8km to the west, is far more attractive.

Hotel Inna Samudra (☎ 431 200; Citepus; s/d from 470,000/560,000Rp; ☎ ☎) It's said that Sukarno ordered the construction of this hotel, which was quite luxurious back in the 1960s and still remains a period piece, with most of the faded furnishings still in situ. It has its own beach, and all rooms face the ocean rollers. Room 308 is said to be the haunt of the Queen of the South Seas, and nonguests are free to take a look. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Queen Restaurant (☎ 431 229; Jl Kidang Kencana; mains 30,000-60,000Rp) On the western end of the harbourfront in Pelabuhan Ratu, this huge Chinese restaurant is the best in town, with a long menu of tempting seafood dishes.

CIMAJA

This enjoyable, relaxed little place is by far the best base in the area. There's a good choice of accommodation and restaurants and excellent waves on tap offshore (plus a couple of surf shops). The village is split in two by Sungai Cimaja; most accommodation is on the east bank. The following places are listed in the order you approach them from Pelabuhan Ratu.

Pondok Kencana (☎ 431 465; www.ombaktujuh.net; dm 30,000Rp, r 100,000Rp, bungalows from 240,000Rp; ☎) An Australian-owned place with a choice of good-quality wooden bungalows in several price categories, plus a pub-restaurant with Western food such as lamb chops, ham steaks and BLT sandwiches (meals from 40,000Rp). Diving and fishing trips can be organised here. Add 15% tax to room rates.

Green Room (☎ 432 608; r with fan 50,000Rp) An excellent choice for a budget bed, this simple little place has plain but pleasant digs, and the shared bathrooms are kept very clean. The bar-restaurant has cold beer and Western food including sandwiches and spaghetti carbonara (meals from 25,000Rp).

Rumah Makan Mirasa (☎ 436 337; r 50,000–70,000Rp)

Just past the Didesa, this humble little eatery serves up filling portions of Indonesian grub (meals 15,000Rp) and has simple fan-cooled rooms with no frills.

Sunset Plaza (☎ 431 125, 0815-7202 2360; r/ste 350,000/500,000Rp; ☎ ☑) Just west of Any's, this new hotel has a prime beachfront location. All the spacious, commodious rooms enjoy full-frontal ocean vistas while the suites have four-poster beds. The bar area is terrific, wrapping around two sides of the structure. A 25m hotel pool and a campground (over the road) are both planned. Meals cost from 30,000Rp.

our pick Cimaja Square (☎ 644 0800; <http://cimaquare.com>; Jl Raya Cisolok; bungalows US\$40–60; ☎ ☑) This excellent new place offers gorgeous, comfortable wooden bungalows with kitchens, front decks and thatched roofs in a quintessentially Indonesian rice paddy setting. The roadside restaurant has a bistro feel, with tasty Indonesian and European food (meals from 28,000Rp) and stylish bamboo seating.

Didesa (☎ 433 288; www.didesa.co.id; Jl Raya Cisolok 23; r/ste 460,000/550,000Rp; ☎ ☑) A well-run, comfortable option with a large beachfront plot and plush bungalows on stilts. You'll also find a sun terrace, surf shop/repair service, a tower for checking wave conditions, and live reggae every Saturday night.

Café Loma (Jl Raya Cisolok, meals from 12,000Rp) A great little log cabin-style warung, withingham tablecloths and cheap local grub like *cap cay*, plus cold beer.

Any's Tavern (☎ 431 184; www.anystavern.com; Jl Cisolok Raya, km 12; mains around 40,000Rp) What's this? A large, welcoming, stylish and efficient bar-cum-restaurant in the middle of nowhere – well, over Sungai Cimaja anyway. German-owned Any's promises ice-cold beer and has a lengthy cocktail list and a menu of filling fare like bratwurst and chorizo sandwiches. Motorcycling trips can be organised here.

Getting There & Away

Pelabuhan Ratu is around four hours from Jakarta; regular buses (31,000Rp) run to/from the Kampung Rambutan terminal until 3pm. Buses run throughout the day from Bogor (27,000Rp, three hours) and hourly from Sukabumi (20,000Rp, 2¼ hours). Buses from Sukabumi continue on via Pelabuhan Ratu and Cimaja to Cisolok, and it's possible to continue right along the south coast by a variety of connections.

Getting Around

Angkot run regularly between Pelabuhan Ratu and Cisolok (6000Rp). Motorbikes can be hired for around 60,000Rp per day from locals in Cimaja.

PUNCAK PASS AREA

Snaking through sleepy tea plantations and terraced fields, the road over the 1500m-high Puncak Pass between Bogor and Cianjur rolls through some of West Java's most sensational scenery. But sadly the Puncak area has fallen victim to its own beauty: usually gridlocked, the highway is lined by an ugly sprawl of overpriced motels, factory-shopping outlets and vacation homes. Weekends are pandemonium (and buses are not even allowed to use the highway because of the congestion). That said, there are a couple of pleasant highland hotels.

Just east of Cisarua, about 12km from Bogor, is the turn-off to **Taman Safari Indonesia** (☎ 0251-250 000; www.tamansafari.com; adult/child under 6 years 70,000/60,000Rp, car 15,000Rp; ☎ ☎ 9am–5pm), a drive-through safari park with animals including zebras and red pandas, children's rides, animal shows, a pool and plenty of restaurants. A park bus does tours for those without a car.

In the foothills, 7km before the Puncak summit, are the lush, tea-carpeted hills of **Gunung Mas Estate** (☎ 0251-252 501; ☎ ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun). You can tour the tea factory (7000Rp), which is a couple of kilometres from the highway, or combine it with a guided walk through the plantation itself (60,000Rp). The estate **guest house** (r basic/deluxe 185,000/245,000Rp, bungalows from 600,000Rp) is a quiet, relaxing mountain lodge; add 50,000Rp to all rates on weekends. On the Bandung side of the pass, the historic **Puncak Pass Hotel** (☎ 0263-512 503; www.puncakpassresort.com; r/bungalows from 500,000/950,000Rp; ☎ ☎) is from the Dutch era and has tastefully renovated bungalows that have a classy, polished charm and terrific alpine views.

Cibodas

☎ 0263

Cibodas, the next village over the Puncak Pass, is famous for its stunning gardens, the **Kebun Raya Cibodas** (☎ 512 233; www.bogor.indo.net.id; per person/car 6000/15,500Rp; ☎ ☎ 8am–4pm), which are an extension of the Bogor botanical gardens. Spread over the steep lower slopes of Gunung Gede and Gunung Pangrango at an altitude of 1300m to 1440m, these lush gardens are one

of the dampest places in Java. The Dutch tried to cultivate quinine here (its bark is used in malaria medication), though the East Javan climate proved more suitable.

You'll find an outstanding collection of ferns, palms, 65 species of eucalypt, Mexican mountain pines, and glasshouses bursting with cacti and succulents. A road loops around the gardens, passing via the Japanese garden with its cherry trees, and there are also paths leading through forests of bamboo to the impressive Cismun waterfall.

There are two guest houses (see below) and a couple of inexpensive cafes in the gardens. Visitors must pay 2000Rp to enter Cibodas village.

SLEEPING & EATING

Pick **Cibodas Guest House** (☎ 512 051; r from 125,000Rp) At this outstanding little Balinese-owned place, very attractive and well-priced rooms are perched on a shelf overlooking a valley. All come with balcony, sprung mattresses and private bathroom (and hot water on request). The restaurant here (meals 20,000Rp to 50,000Rp) is equally fine and makes the most of the views, serving good Western and Indonesian food, and Bintang. It's about 4km south of the entrance to the gardens.

Freddy's Homestay (☎ 515 473; r without mandi incl breakfast 150,000Rp) Located down a narrow alleyway 500m before the gardens, Freddy's is the base in the area for birders. Rooms here are very simple: they are clean but well overpriced. Nevertheless, this homestay does offer good information and bird books to browse, and guides can be hired. Meals are available too.

Guest houses (☎ reservations 512 233) Of the two guest houses in the gardens, Wisma Medinella (r from 275,000Rp) is the one to book; it's a lovely new (but rustic) stone-and-timber building with neat little rooms with pine furniture. Wisma Tamu (r from 300,000Rp) has far more basic accommodation, though the house does have character. Both are a 1km walk uphill from the gate. Book ahead and note that student groups often reserve the entire houses on weekends.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

For travel information from Jakarta and Bogor, see opposite. The turn-off to Cibodas is on the Bogor-Bandung Hwy, a few kilometres west of Cipanas. The gardens are 5km off the

main road. Yellow *angkot* run from the road-side in Cipanas up to the gardens (3000Rp, 15 minutes).

Gede Pangrango National Park

The Cibodas gardens are right next to the main entrance to Gede Pangrango National Park, the highlight of which is the climb to the 2958m peak of the volcanically active Gunung Gede. From the top of Gede on a clear day you can see Jakarta, Cirebon and even Pelabuhan Ratu on the south coast – well, Raffles reported that he could.

Register for the climb and obtain your permit (6000Rp, 3000Rp for Cibeureum Falls only) from the PHKA office just outside the gardens' entrance. The office has an information centre and pamphlets on the park, which is noted for its alpine forest and bird life, including the rare Javan eagle. Guides to the summit can also be hired here for around 300,000Rp at the office, or for around 350,000Rp at Freddy's (left).

From Cibodas, the trail passes **Telaga Biru** (15 minutes), which is a blue-green lake. **Cibeureum Falls** (one hour away) lie just off the main trail. Most picnickers only go this far, though some continue on to the **hot springs**, 2½ hours from the gate. The trail continues to climb another 1½ hours to **Kandang Badak**, where a hut has been built on the saddle between the peaks of Gunung Gede and Gunung Pangrango (3019m). Take the trail to the right for a hard three-hour climb to Pangrango. Most hikers turn left for the easier, but still steep, 1½-hour climb to Gede, which has more spectacular views. The **Gede Crater** lies below the summit, and you can continue on to the **Suryakencana Meadow**.

The 10km hike right to the top of Gunung Gede takes at least 10 hours there and back, so you should start as early as possible and take warm clothes (night temperatures can drop to 5°C), food, water and a torch (flashlight). Most hikers leave by 2am to reach the summit in the early morning before the mists roll in. Register at the park office the day before. The main trails are easy to follow. The hike should only be undertaken in the dry season from May to October.

Cianjur

☎ 0263 / pop 156,000

East of Cibodas it's 19km to Cianjur, a market town that's famed throughout Java for

the quality of its rice; indeed the town is enveloped by shimmering green paddy fields. Cianjur has a certain relaxed provincial charm, and a few sights of interest in the surrounding district, but most people are here to learn about Sundanese culture and mix with locals as part of the highly successful homestay program here.

You'll find several banks (with ATMs) on the main drag, Jl Cokroaminoto, and internet cafes are grouped together on Jl Siti Jenab.

SIGHTS

Cianjur itself has few attractions, but it's possible to visit a huge **plastic recycling plant** to learn about waste management here. Plastic is sent here from all over West Java to be separated by hand, then washed, chopped and dried before being sent on to plastic manufacturers.

Around 18km northeast of town, **Jangari** is an intriguing 'floating village' on a large reservoir that has a substantial fish-farming community where fish are fattened for Jakartan dining tables. You can hire a boat here (around 75,000Rp) to get across the lake to a great restaurant (meals cost around 25,000Rp).

The lush hillsides and processing plants of the **Gedeh tea plantation** (admission free; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Sat), 15km northwest of town, are also well worth a visit.

Cianjur also makes a good base for trips to the Cibonas gardens, and down to the coast at Pelabuhan Ratu (p139).

SLEEPING & EATING

Most travellers stay with local families in Cianjur (see the boxed text, p147). The region is famous for its sweet, spicy cuisine and there are several delicious dishes unique to the area. Be sure to try the local **lontong** (sticky rice with tofu in a delicious, sweet coconut sauce); there are several warung on Jl Dewisartika that specialise in this dish. Some of the best beef sate in Java, locally known as **marangi**, is served up right on the street – there's a great place at the corner of Dr Muwardi and Jl Cokroaminoto in the town centre.

After dark, **BCNY** (Jl A Rahamam Hakin 40; ☎ 5-11pm) is a cool hang-out – an open-air food court that has live music at weekends.

Lendel Hotel (☎ 263 268; Jl Dr Muwardi 165C; r with fan from 120,000Rp, with air-con 190,000-275,000Rp; ☎) Offers a choice of spacious rooms in good

condition, with wardrobe and TV, that are grouped around fish ponds in a garden with palm trees. Bathrooms are all cold-water *mandi*, though.

RM Batagor Ihsan (☎ 280 737; Jl Juanda 55; meals from 8000Rp) This place gets the locals' vote as the hot spot for *batagor* (crispy tofu), which is either eaten with *krin* (peanut sauce) or as part of a *kuah* soup with onion and garlic.

Lotek LP (☎ 264 554; Jl Aria Cikudang 76; meals 10,000Rp) A roadside warung that serves up the best *gado gado* in Cianjur, plus authentically sweet and sticky *sate marangi* (4000Rp per stick).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

On weekdays buses leave Jakarta's Kampung Rambutan every 30 minutes to Cipanas (normal/air-con 17,000/23,000Rp, two hours) and Cianjur (21,000/26,000Rp, 2½ hours). At weekends (when traffic is terrible around Puncuk Pass) buses are routed via Sukabumi (add an extra hour to your journey time, and 5000Rp). Buses to/from Bandung (14,000/20,000Rp, 1¾ hours) run every half-hour.

There are buses to Bogor from Cianjur (14,000/20,000Rp, two hours) and the highway by Cipanas every 20 minutes; *angkot* ply the route on Sunday.

BANDUNG

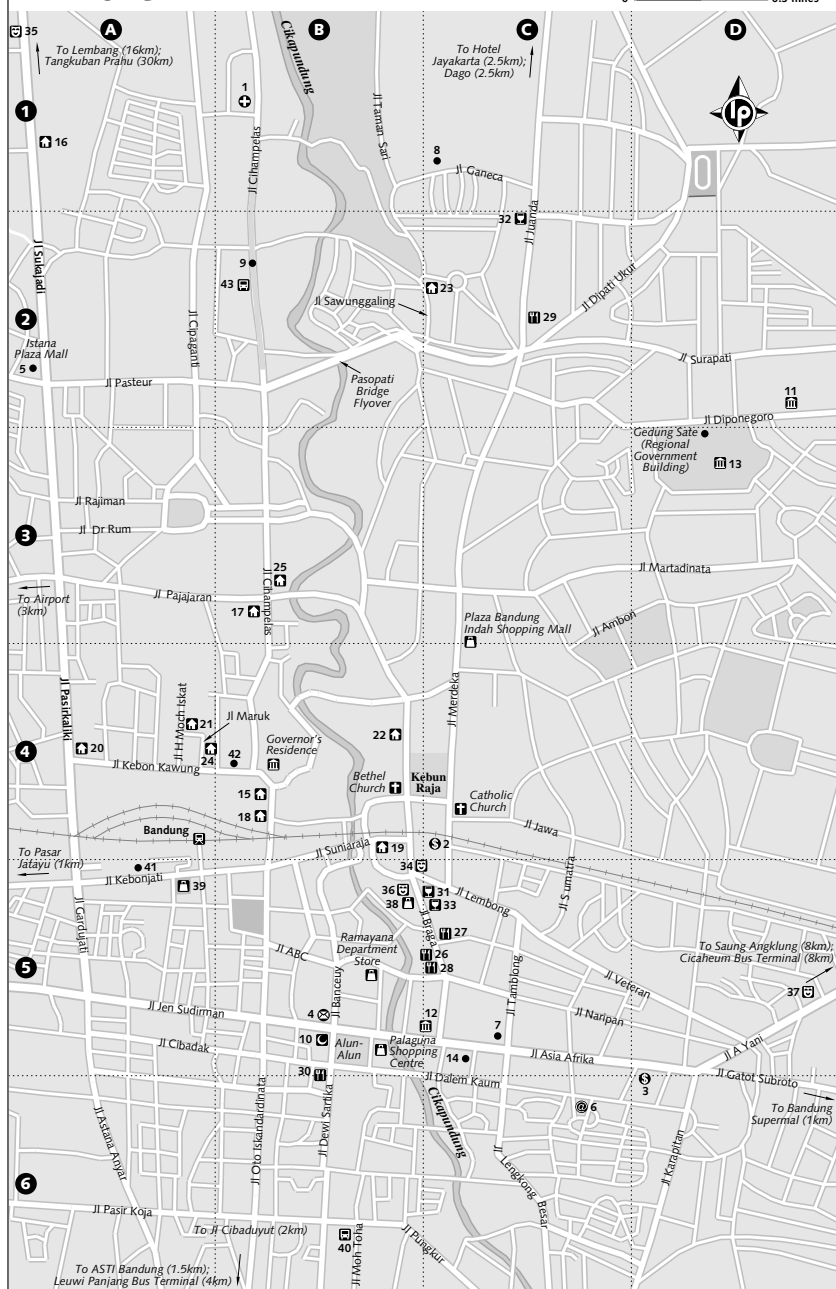
☎ 022 / pop 2.4 million

After the bottle-green hills of Cibondas and the Puncak Pass, the sprawling bulk of Bandung hits you like a baseball bat across the back of the head. Once the 'Paris of Java', the city is now a throng of congested, polluted streets and endless suburbs, and any romantic notions of colonial glamour have long disappeared. This is one of Indonesia's megacities (the Bandung conurbation is home to over seven million people) and West Java's capital, and it likes everyone to know it.

But not everything has gone to pot. Among the shopping malls and business hotels you'll find a dynamic, major city that's on the move. It attracts workers, intellectuals and students from across the archipelago, and its industries, restaurants and cafes throb with life. Today, grandiose art deco buildings, heaving market stalls, *becak* and multiplexes jostle for space in the city.

Bandung was originally established in the late 19th century as a colonial garrison town,

0 500 m
0 0.3 miles



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but it rapidly acquired importance as a commercial and educational centre. Because of its pleasant climate – it stands at 750m above sea level – the Dutch even had plans to make it the capital prior to WWII. The city's most notable entry in the history books was as host of the Asia-Africa conference in 1955.

The main attraction of Bandung is its proximity to sights: high volcanic peaks, hot springs and enormous tea plantations are all easy day trips from the city.

Orientation

Bandung spreads out over the northern foothills of a huge plateau surrounded by high mountain ridges. The main part of the city lies south of the train line, and is centred on Jl Asia Afrika and the *alun-alun* (main public square). Along Jl Asia Afrika are the tourist office, post office, banks and some fine art deco hotels. Jl Braga just north of here has a strip of bars and cafes.

In colonial times, the train tracks divided the riff-raff in the south from the Dutch city in the north, and the social divide still rings true. The genteel tree-lined streets and upmarket residential areas in the north harbour most of Bandung's cosmopolitan restaurants (and the key student area around Jeans St) and are bordered by the hills of Dago.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Periphus (☎ 0888 135 7697; Istana Plaza Mall, Jl Pasir Kaliki; ☎ 9am-7pm) Excellent selection of English

books, maps and magazines including some Lonely Planet guidebooks.

INTERNET ACCESS

Most of the upmarket shopping malls including the Bandung Supermal and Braga City Walk have free wi-fi.

X-net (Jl Lengkong Kecil 38) Access for 5000Rp per hour.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Adventist Hospital (☎ 203 4386; Jl Cihampelas 161) A missionary hospital with English-speaking staff.

MONEY

Banks with ATMs are scattered across Bandung.

Bank Mandiri (Jl Merdeka) Has an ATM and exchanges travellers cheques.

Golden Megah moneychanger (Jl Asia Afrika 142) Offers decent rates for cash dollars and euros.

POST

Main post office (cnr Jl Banceuy & Jl Asia Afrika)

TELEPHONE

Wartel apently can be found just south of the train station.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Bandung Tourist Information Centre (☎ 420 6644; Jl Asia Afrika; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 2pm Sun) Managed by the very helpful Ajid Suriana, this office is located in the foyer of the central mosque. There's also a desk at the train station. Offers excellent free booklets, maps and information on cultural events.

Sights

CITY CENTRE

The **Museum Konferensi** (Conference Museum; Jl Asia Afrika; admission free; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri) inside the Gedung Merdeka (Freedom Building) is dedicated to the Asia-Africa conference of 1955. The scanty exhibits are pretty disappointing, but there are a few interesting photos of Sukarno, Nehru, Ho Chi Minh, Nasser and other developing world leaders of the 1950s.

For a bird's-eye view of central Bandung, climb the easterly tower of **Masjid Agung** (Jl Asia Afrika; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 9am-5pm Sat & Sun), next to the *alun-alun*.

There are some very fine Dutch art deco structures to admire on Jl Jenderal Sudirman and Jl Asia Afrika, two of the best being the **Grand Hotel Preanger** (p148) and the **Savoy Homann Hotel** (p148), both of which have imposing facades.

NORTH OF THE CENTRE

About 3km north of the centre, the **Museum Geologi** (Geological Museum; Jl Diponegoro 57; admission free; ☎ 9am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, to 1.30pm Sat & Sun) is housed in the massive old headquarters of the Dutch Geological Service. It's a good place to get to grips with all matters geological and volcanic in Indonesia, though there's almost no information in English. Nevertheless it's worth an hour or so poking around the lava stones, crystals and bones that include a model of *Tyrannosaurus rex* and a mammoth. *Angkot* bound for 'Sadang Serang' leave the train station; get off at the Gedung Sate (Regional Government) complex, about 300m from the museum.

While you're in the neighbourhood, dip into the **Museum Prangko** (Stamp Museum; Jl Diponegoro; admission free; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri) in the northeastern corner of the Gedung Sate complex. As well as thousands of stamps from around the world, the museum has everything from postboxes to pushcarts used since colonial times.

BANDUNG INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Further north of Gedung Sate is the **Bandung Institute of Technology** (ITB; Jl Ganeca), set in spacious grounds and gardens with some bizarre hybrid Indo-European architecture.

Opened in 1920, ITB was the first university open to Indonesians. Sukarno studied here and formed the Bandung Study Club,

which later grew into the pro-independence Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI). The institute has maintained a reputation for political activism, and students here published the *White Book of the 1978 Students' Struggle*, which alleged corruption in high places. In 1998, in the lead-up to Suharto's downfall, up to 100,000 students rallied daily.

The ITB also has an excellent fine arts school, and its **art gallery** (admission free; ☎ on request) can be visited. Across from the main gate is a useful canteen in the *asrama mahasiswa* (student dorm complex), where many of the students congregate.

To reach the ITB, take a Lembang or Dago *angkot* from the train station and then walk down Jl Ganeca.

DAGO

At the end of Jl Merdeka, Jl Juanda climbs up to Dago Hill to the north, overlooking the city. The famous, but now very faded, **Dago Thee Huis** (Dago Tea House; ☎ 250 5364; admission 1000Rp) offers city views through a tangle of power lines and a forest of radio towers. The complex has a cafe-restaurant, outdoor and indoor theatres and a small children's playground.

On the main road, 100m past the teahouse turn-off, a path leads down to **Curug Dago** (Dago Waterfall). From here you can walk along the river to **Taman Hutan Raya Ir H Juanda**, which is a pleasant forest park with another waterfall and walking paths. By road, the park entrance is 2km past the Dago bemo terminal.

Gua Pakar is in fact an ammunition store hacked out by the Japanese during the war. Further north is **Gua Belanda**, which is the same deal but built by the Dutch. A tunnel cuts right through the mountain to the start of the trail that leads all the way to **Maribaya** (p150) along Sungai Cikapundung.

'JEANS' STREET

Bandung's celebrated 'Jeans' Street, Jl Cihampelas is one of the main student areas of the city and lined with cafes, boutiques, stalls and clothes stores (look out for very kitsch giant plastercast statues of Rambo, Superman and the like that shops use as advertising symbols).

ADU DOMBA

These noisy ram-butting fights, held most Sundays between 9am and 1pm, are wildly popular in Bandung. Animal lovers won't like

it a bit but, like Spain's bullfights, they're a sight to behold, and at least the rams only walk away with a sore head. Consult the Tourist Information Centre (p145) for the latest program of events.

Tours

Freelance English-speaking tour guide **Ahmadi** (☎ 0852 2106 3788; enoss_travellers@yahoo.com) runs good one-day tours (300,000Rp per person) of the sights to the north and south of the city, and can set up trips on to Garut and Pangandaran (around 800,000Rp). Hotel Guntur also offers similar trips.

Sleeping BUDGET

Many of Bandung's very cheapest places close to the train station on Jl Kebonjati are looking very rundown these days and the area is very dark after nightfall. Backpackers should reckon on having to up their budgets in this prosperous city.

Guest House Pos Cihampelas (☎ 423 5213; Jl Cihampelas 12; r economy/standard from 50,000/90,000Rp; ☹) The best bet in the city for a cheap bed, this place has a plethora of different rooms – from humble but clean economy options with shared bathroom facilities to air-con doubles. English is spoken, and there's a lounge area and a very cheap in-house warung (meals from 10,000Rp).

Hotel Patradissa (☎ 420 6680; Jl H Moch Iskhat 8; r 120,000–200,000Rp; ☹) This slightly quirky guest house may be old-fashioned in appearance, but it's secure, staff are friendly and helpful, and the location is quiet. There are plenty of rooms, all with a chintzy touch that granny would approve of, and some have air-con. Breakfast is included.

Hotel Gunter (☎ 420 3763; Jl Oto Iskandardinata 20; r with/without air-con 175,000/150,000Rp; ☹) Gunter vaguely resembles a motel, and has clean, spacious rooms complete with 1970s-style fur-

nishings. All have a porch area with chairs that face a central garden bursting with flowering shrubs and topiary. Tours can be organised here. Prices rise a little at weekends.

Edelweiss (☎ 203 2369; Jl Sukajadi 206; r with air-con & TV from 180,000Rp; ☹) A well-run, quiet and clean guest house with plain, orderly rooms that offer good value for money. It's a fair hike from the centre, but as there's a factory outlet in the compound (and plenty more close by) it's ideal for shopaholics. Staff are helpful, and breakfast is included.

Or try:

Hotel Patradissa 2 (☎ 420 6657; Jl Wastukencana 7A; d from 135,000Rp; ☹) A newer option in the Patradissa empire; most rooms here have air-con.

MIDRANGE

Bandung has plenty of midrange hotels, especially north of the train station and along Jl Gardujati, but most are old and faded.

our pick Hotel Serena (☎ 420 4317; <http://serena.bandung.multiply.com>; Jl Maruk 4-6; r incl breakfast from 238,000Rp; ☹) This classy little modern hotel offers outstanding value and a good degree of minimalist style. All rooms are smart, with comfortable beds and reading lights, and immaculately clean. The hot-water bathrooms have a sparkle. There's a restaurant too with tasty, well-priced local grub. Prices rise 10% at weekends.

Hotel Kedaton (☎ 421 9898; www.hotelkedaton.com; Jl Suniaraja 14; r from 490,000Rp; ☹) A large concrete hotel in a central location with an abundance of spacious rooms that are comfortable but slightly dated in terms of presentation. Worth considering for its excellent facilities though, as there's a good gym, a spa and an attractive pool area.

Arion Swiss-Belhotel (☎ 424 0000; www.swiss-belhotel.com; Jl Oto Iskandardinata 16; r from 655,000Rp; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) Modern nonsmoking hotel with roomy, immaculate accommodation and

LIVE WITH THE LOCALS

The **Cianjur homestay program** (☎ 081 7085 6691; www.cianjuradventure.com) is a superb initiative set up by author Yudi Sujana, who lived for years in New Zealand, that allows travellers to experience life in a non-touristy town in Java. Yudi and his team all speak fluent English, so it's a wonderful opportunity to get to understand Sundanese and Indonesian culture. School visits, sightseeing trips, hikes (and occasionally some volunteer-work opportunities) are offered at backpacking rates. Guests pay US\$12 per person per day, which includes family accommodation and three meals; it's best to book a place a few days in advance. Airport pick-ups and drop-offs can also be arranged at very moderate rates, allowing you to bypass Jakarta completely.

excellent facilities including multichannel TV and high-speed internet. The top floor has a pool, a spa and a fitness centre.

Hotel Jayakarta (☎ 250 5888; www.jayakartahotelsresorts.com; Jl Juanda 381; r from 770,000Rp; ☎) Up near the Dago Tea House, this is a well-regarded, nonsmoking four-star hotel. Offers sweeping views from its top-floor rooms and there's a great spa.

Or consider:

Hotel Sawunggaling (☎ 421 8254; Jl Sawunggaling 13; r from 280,000Rp; ☎) Attractive hotel, out near ITB with some colonial style. It occupies a quiet corner and rooms are big and comfy.

Hotel Mutiara (☎ 420 0333; www.mutiarahotel.com; Jl Kebon Kawung 60; r incl breakfast from 488,000Rp; ☎) A polished, motel-style place with a range of well-equipped and well-presented rooms. Also has a restaurant and bar.

TOP END

Like any big city, Bandung has a glut of luxury hotels, all with swimming pools. Most offer good discounts, so shop around.

Savoy Homann Hotel (☎ 423 2244; www.savoyhomann-hotel.com; Jl Asia Afrika 112; r/ste from 660,000/840,000Rp; ☎) Dating back to 1921, this wonderful-looking hotel has a superb sweeping facade, and the rooms and communal areas retain real art deco class, with period lighting and stylish detailing galore. Call for a free pick-up from the train station or airport.

Novotel (☎ 421 1001; www.novotel.com; Jl Cihampelas 23; r from 720,000Rp; ☎) By far the most contemporary hotel in the city, this seriously stylish new monument to luxury is no show pony and delivers on every level, with well-trained staff, free cable internet access and wi-fi, a great gym and spa, and an excellent restaurant. Nonsmoking.

Another option:

Grand Hotel Preanger (☎ 423 1631; www.preanger.aerowisata.com; Jl Asia Afrika 181; r from 785,000Rp, ste from 1,350,000Rp; ☎) Historic hotel that retains some art deco charm, but there's an ugly modern extension and the rooms are overpriced. Check out the terrific English pub, though.

Eating

Jl Braga has a strip of cafes, restaurants and bakeries, but the city's really swanky, hip new places are concentrated in the north. For cheap food check out the night warungs on Jl Cikapundung Barat, across from the *alun-alun*.

London Bakery (Jl Braga 37; cakes from 2000Rp) Stylish little cafe with coffee, cakes, snacks and light meals including pasta and sandwiches. You'll find a few magazines and copies of the *Jakarta Post* to read here, though traffic noise is intense.

Bandung Supermal (Jl Gatot Subroto 289; meals 10,000-45,000Rp) In the east of the city, this upmarket shopping mall has a good food court, tons of fast-food joints, cafes and a Bread Talk bakery.

Utami (☎ 7078 7075; Jl Cihampelas 12; meals 12,000-20,000Rp) This is a very clean, attractive little eatery where a great deal of care is taken over the food – you'll find plenty of fresh greens, tasty *ayam goreng* and two feisty sambals to add a little extra spice to your plate.

New Braga Café (☎ 421 1567; Jl Braga 15; meals 12,000-21,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-9.30pm, closed Fri) An excellent, friendly Sundanese restaurant in an elegant building that dates back to colonial days. All the food is laid out on covered plates and bowls for you to choose from; *bakar ayam seuhah* (spicy roast chicken) is the house speciality, and there are plenty of vegetarian dishes.

Warung Nasi Ampera (Jl Dewi Sartika 8; meals 14,000Rp; ☎ 24hr) Just south of the *alun-alun*, this clean place is the best of several traditional Sundanese places on this road. Serves up delicious fresh tempeh (cake made from fermented soybeans) and curries around the clock.

ourpick Kiosk (Braga City Walk, Jl Braga; meals 15,000-20,000Rp; ☎) This great little mini-food court on the ground floor of the Braga City Walk is ideal for sampling some unusual snacks such as *pempek* (fish or egg fried with sago in a rich, dark sauce) from Sumatra and noodle dishes. Drinks include milky *teh tarik* (cardamom chai) and loads of yummy juices, from blueberry to *sirsak* (soursop).

Prefere 72 (☎ 253 4338; Jl Juanda 72; meals from 25,000Rp; ☎ 10am-midnight, to 2am Fri & Sat; ☎) A library, cafe and restaurant rolled into one hip modernist building, this is one of the most happening places in fashionable north Bandung. You'll find pasta, snacks and rice and noodle dishes on the menu.

Momiji (☎ 420 3786; Jl Braga 64; mains 27,000-60,000Rp; ☎ noon-10.30pm) Momiji is a traditional Japanese restaurant with a relaxed, civilised ambience. Prices are surprisingly moderate given the surroundings and quality of the sushi, noodle, teriyaki and teppanyaki dishes here.

Drinking

After dark Jl Braga has a typical downtown vibe, with small bars, karaoke lounges and live-music venues. Up in north Bandung Jeans St is a popular hang-out for students (though there are few bars here), while rich kids gravitate to the hip places along Jl Juanda.

Roempoet (Jl Braga 80) Intimate bar with live bands (mainly playing covers) and a social vibe. Sizzling sate is also served up (mains 20,000Rp) here.

North Sea Bar (Jl Braga 82) The beer flows into the wee small hours at this pub-style expat and bargirl hang-out. There's a popular pool table.

R Café & Lounge (Jl Juanda 97; ☎) Happening, very metropolitan bar-café with a terrace facing busy Juanda, stylish seating, mocktails and cocktails. It's above a spa-fitness centre.

Entertainment

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Bandung is the place to see Sundanese performing arts; however, performance times are haphazard – check with the Tourist Information Centre for the latest schedules.

Rumentang Siang (☎ 423 3562; Jl Baranangsiang 1) Bandung's premier performing arts centre, where *wayang golek*, Jaipongan (West Javanese dance), *pencak silat* (the art of self-defence), Sandiwara (traditional Javanese theatre) and *ketoprak* (popular Javanese folk theatre) performances are held.

ASTI-Bandung (☎ 731 4982; Jl Buah Batu 212) In the southern part of the city, this is a school for traditional Sundanese arts – music, dancing and *pencak silat*.

Saung Angklung (☎ 727 1714; Jl Padasuka 118; performances 80,000Rp; ☎ 10.30am–5pm) *Angklung* (bamboo musical instrument) performances take place at Pak Ujo's Saung Angklung in the east of the city. You can also see the instruments being made here. Performances are held most afternoons at 3.30pm.

LIVE MUSIC

Bar-cum-restaurant, Roempoet (above) has a relaxed, informal air and live bands most evenings.

Classic Rock Café (☎ 420 7982; Jl Lembong 1; www.classicrockcafe.co.id) For those about to rock – don your denim 'n' leather and head here. The whole place reeks of 1970s nostalgia, but try telling the regulars that the world has moved

on. There's a live rock band nightly at 10pm and a modest (or no) entrance fee.

CLUBS

Bandung has a vibrant clubbing scene and Indonesian and visiting DJs play to big crowds here. The unpretentious **New Braga Club** (☎ 423 2006; Jl Braga) is a good bet in the downtown district. Elsewhere in the city, **Mansion** (☎ 081 861 3743; Paris Van Java Mall, Jl Sukajadi 137–139) is a very popular dance club that draws a glam crowd; turntablists including the Martinez Brothers have spun their stuff here.

Shopping

With a roster of glitzy malls and factory outlets, shopaholics come here from as far as Malaysia in search of labels and bargains. Jl Cihaduyut, in southwest Bandung, is to shoes what Jl Cihampelas is to jeans. Check out Jl Braga for antique and curio stores.

Bandung Supermal (www.bandungsupermal.com; Jl Gatot Subroto 289; ☎) Has one of the largest Hero supermarkets in Indonesia, a bowling alley, cinemas, and more than 200 shops including Mango and Next.

Braga City Walk (Jl Braga; ☎) Small upmarket shopping mall with plenty of boutiques, a food court, a cinema, a gym, a spa and a supermarket.

Pak Ruhayat (No 78/17B) Down a small, unnamed alley behind Jl Pangarang 22, this small shop produces *wayang golek* puppets and masks.

Saung Angklung (☎ 727 1714; Jl Padasuka 118) Traditional Sundanese musical instruments can be bought at this bamboo workshop.

Markets to explore in Bandung:

Pasar Baru (Jl Kebonjati) Somewhat grotty central market, but good for fresh fruit.

Pasar Jatayu (Jl Arjuna) One kilometre west of the train station, this flea market is where a few collectables hide in piles of junk.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Bandung airport is served by **Merpati** (☎ 426 0253; www.merpati.co.id; Jl Kebon Kawung 16), flying to Batam and Surabaya; **Garuda** (☎ 420 9468; Grand Hotel Preanger, Jl Asia Afrika 181), which flies to Singapore; **AirAsia** (☎ 5050 5088; www.airasia.com), connecting Bandung with Kuala Lumpur and Singapore; and **Sriwijaya Air** (☎ 640 5566; www.sriwijayaair-online.com), with planes to Surabaya and on to Denpasar.

BUS

Five kilometres south of the city centre, **Leuwi Panjang bus terminal** (Jl Sukarno Hatta) has buses west to places such as Cianjur (normal/air-con 14,000/20,000Rp, 1¼ hours), Bogor (30,000/42,000Rp, 3¼ hours) and to Jakarta's Kampung Rambutan bus terminal (36,000Rp to 45,000Rp, three hours). Buses to Bogor are not allowed to take the scenic Puncak Pass route on weekends.

Buses to the east leave from the Cicaheum bus terminal on the eastern outskirts of the city. They include Cirebon (normal/air-con 26,000/38,000Rp, four hours), Garut (14,000Rp, two hours) and Pangandaran (52,000Rp, six hours).

X-Trans (☎ 204 2955; Jl Cihampelas 57) offers an hourly shuttle bus service to various drop-off points in central Jakarta (70,000Rp, 2½ hours), and also direct hourly buses to Jakarta airport (90,000Rp, three hours). **Sari Harum** (☎ 607 7065) has an air-con *travel* minibus to Pangandaran (80,000Rp, five hours) at 6am. Both **Kramatdjadi** (☎ 423 9860; Jl Kebonjati 96) and **Pahala Kencana** (☎ 423 2911; Jl Kebonjati 90) run luxury buses to long-distance destinations, such as Yogyakarta (85,000Rp).

TRAIN

Six comfortable *Parahyangan* (business/executive 45,000/65,000Rp, 3¼ hours) trains connect Bandung with Jakarta's Gambir station daily. Seven additional and more luxurious *Argo Gede* (executive 75,000Rp, three hours) trains also cover this route.

Several trains operate on the Bandung-Banjara-Yogyakarta line, most continuing on to Surabaya. The business-class *Mutiara Selatan* passes through Bandung at 5pm on its way to Yogyakarta (110,000Rp) and Surabaya (135,000Rp). The *Lodaya* leaves Bandung at 8am for Yogyakarta and Solo (business/executive 100,000/165,000Rp).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Bandung's Husein Sastranegara airport is 4km northwest of town; it costs around 50,000Rp to get there by taxi from the centre.

BUS, ANGKOT & TAXI

Bandung has a fairly good, if crowded, Damri city bus service that charges a fixed 2000Rp. Buses 9 and 11 run from west to east down Jl Asia Afrika to Cicaheum bus terminal.

Angkot run on set routes all over town between numerous stations. From Stasiun Hall (St Hall), on the southern side of the train station, *angkot* go to Dago, Ledeng and other stations. When returning, catch any *angkot* displaying 'St Hall'. Abdul Muis (Abd Muis), south of the *alun-alun* on Jl Dewi Sartika, and Cicaheum are the other main *angkot* terminals. *Angkot* cost from 2000Rp to 3000Rp.

For a taxi call the ever-reliable **Bluebird** (☎ 756 1234). Becak are now very rare in central Bandung.

NORTH OF BANDUNG

Lembang

☎ 022

The town of Lembang was once a noted hill resort but is now a busy little market town. Most visitors keep heading further up the hills, but if you're looking for a quick break from Bandung, 16km to the south, then it's a decent option.

The colonial-era **Grand Hotel Lembang** (☎ 278 6671; www.grandhotellembang.com; Jl Raya Lembang 272; weekday/weekend r from 360,000/422,000Rp; 🍽️) dates from 1921 and was once a fashionable base for the Dutch. It's a sprawling place with 191 recently renovated rooms and a smart, modern bistro, plus beautiful gardens and tennis courts.

Maribaya Hot Springs

Maribaya, 5km east of Lembang, has a thermal spa, landscaped gardens and a thundering waterfall (admission 5000Rp). It's another tourist spot, crowded on Sunday, but worth visiting. You can extend your Tangkuban Prahū (below) trip by walking from the bottom end of the gardens down through a brilliant, deep and wooded river gorge all the way to Dago. There's a good track, and if you allow about two hours for the walk (6km), you can be at a Dago vantage point for sunset. From there it's only a short trip by *angkot* back to Bandung.

Tangkuban Prahū

The 'overturned *perahu*' volcano crater is 30km north of Bandung. Years ago the centre of Tangkuban Prahū collapsed under the weight of built-up ash and, instead of the usual conical volcano shape, it has a flat, elongated summit with a huge caldera.

camping per person 7500Rp, bungalows 170,000Rp) has a camp site and basic wooden bungalows (sleeping up to four). Cooking facilities are available, or there's a tiny restaurant for meals. Tours and treks to the mountain are offered by staff. Book ahead.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Bandung's minibus terminal in front of the train station, take a Subang *angkot* (10,000Rp) via Lembang to the park entrance.

Entry is 20,000Rp per person. Minibuses to the top officially cost 12,000Rp per person, but the drivers will probably ask for more; if there are not enough people to share, you will have to charter – bargain hard.

Alternatively, you can walk from the gate at the main road. It's 4.5km along the road or you can take the more interesting side trail that goes via Kawah Domas. This very steep one-hour walk through the jungle is better tackled from the top down. It starts just behind the information centre and is very easy to follow.

Drivers in Bandung will charge around 450,000Rp for a day-trip to Tangkuban Pahu.

Ciater Hot Springs

Eight kilometres northeast of Tangkuban Pahu, Ciater is an attractive village surrounded by tea and clove plantations. The area has good walks, and a tea factory on the south side of Ciater can be visited.

Ciater's main attraction is the **Sari Ater Hot Spring Resort** (☎ 0260-471 700; admission 12,000Rp, pools extra 20,000Rp; ☎ 24hr). Although they're quite commercialised, the pools are probably the best of all the hot springs around Bandung. Rooms (from 250,000Rp) and rustic bungalows are available here.

Ciater has plenty of small *penginapan* (lodging houses) with rooms starting at around 40,000Rp.

You can walk to Ciater – about 12km across country – from Tangkuban Pahu, or flag down an *angkot* at the entrance point to Tangkuban Pahu.

SOUTH OF BANDUNG

☎ 022

Less developed than the resorts to the north, the mountains south of Bandung have fewer facilities, but are quieter. The road south of Bandung leads to **Ciwidey**, a town where every second house has a strawberry patch.

From there, the road winds through the hills to the turn-off to **Kawah Putih** (per person 7000Rp, plus motorbike/car 1000/5000Rp; ☎ 7am-5pm), a volcanic crater with a beautiful turquoise lake. The turn-off is 6km before Rancabali, and then it is 8km to the small crater lake just below Gunung Patuha (2334m). Although it is only a small crater, Kawah Putih is exceptionally beautiful and eerily quiet when the mists roll in.

Back on the road, a few kilometres further south from the turn-off to Kawah Putih are two developed hot springs at **Cimanggu**; the newer **Walini** complex has big hot pools and a few bungalows.

Rancabali, 42km from Bandung, is basically one big tea estate surrounded by rolling green hills of tea plantations. Just 2km south of the town is **Situ Patengan**, a pretty lake with tea rooms and boats catering to the Sunday crowds.

The area's main attraction is the **Malabar Tea Estate**, 5km from Pengalengan, where you can tour the plantations and stay at the wonderful guest house, the Malabar Mess (below).

Sleeping

Hotel options are limited in this region, but there are a few places in Ciwidey, Alam Endah and Pengalengan, plus the Malabar Tea Estate. Generally all are echoingly empty (or wonderfully peaceful, depending on your perspective) during the week.

Hotel Selly (☎ 592 8261; Jl Raya Rancabali, km 1; r from 70,000Rp) It's on the busy main road in Ciwidey but does have well-kept and well-swept, plain rooms.

Patuha Resort (☎ 022-720 8310; camping per person 6000Rp, r sleeping 4 from 140,000Rp) Managed by the Forestry Commission, this place in Alam Endah is geared to students on outdoor-pursuits trips. Its 12 wooden cabins are clean and comfortable and there's a canteen for inexpensive meals.

Malabar Mess (☎ 597 9401; weekday/weekend r from 176,000/231,000Rp) Located at an altitude of 1500m, this fine colonial guest house enjoys a delightfully temperate climate in tea plantations near the town of Pengalengan. Furnished with Dutch antiques, it's a great place to kick back for a few days. Book through the estate's Bandung office (☎ 022-203 8996).

Getting There & Away

From Bandung's Leuwli Panjang terminal, frequent buses run to Ciwidey (10,000Rp,

1¼ hours). From Ciwidey *angkot* run to Situ Patengan (7000Rp). Kawah Putih is not serviced by regular public transport, but you'll find plenty of *ojek* (10,000Rp) in Alam Endah. Buses also run directly to Pengalengan (8000Rp), where *ojek* hang out at the bus terminal.

BANDUNG TO PANGANDARAN

Heading southeast from Bandung, the road passes through rolling hills and stunning volcanic peaks skirting – at a safe distance – the particularly explosive **Gunung Papandayan** (2622m). This is the Bandung–Yogyakarta road as far as Banjar; the Bandung–Yogyakarta train line passes through Tasikmalaya and Banjar, but not Garut. After the choked streets of Jakarta and Bandung, these quieter back roads are a pleasure.

Garut & Cipanas

☎ 0262

Sixty-three kilometres southeast of Bandung, Garut is a once-lovely spa town that's now become featureless sprawl and leatherware centre. But 6km north of here the lovely village of Cipanas makes a much more tranquil base for a day or two exploring some stunning volcanic scenery and soaking away any travelling tensions in a hot spring-fed bath or pool.

From Cipanas, the **Curug Citiis** waterfall is a three-hour walk away up the mountain; it's a four-hour hike further on to the peak of Gunung Guntur. Leave by 5am for good views.

The region is famed for its *dodol* – a confectionery of coconut milk, palm sugar and sticky rice. The 'Picnic' brand is the best quality, and it is possible to visit the **factory** (Jl Pasundan 102) in Garut.

SLEEPING

Cipanas has a good choice of places to stay; all are strung along Jl Raya Cipanas, the resort's single road. Most rooms are equipped with water piped in from the hot springs. Many of the flashier hotels have swimming pools heated by the springs; if you're staying at a cheaper option, it's possible to use the pools for a minimal fee (7000/3000Rp for adults/children). Prices quoted here are weekday rates; expect anything between a 15% and 40% increase on weekends.

Hotel Tirta Merta (☎ 231 112; r from 85,000Rp) Perhaps the best choice for a cheap base in

Cipanas, this place has clean rooms, cheerful staff and plenty of decorative concrete tree stumps.

Hotel Nurgraha (☎ 234 829; r from 125,000Rp; ♿) Offers decent value, with well-presented if ageing rooms and bungalows with wooden floors and balconies. There are sunset views of the thermal pool, rice fields and coconut trees.

Cipanas Indah (☎ 233 736; r from 135,000Rp, VIP r 295,000Rp; ♿) Simple, clean rooms and attractive bungalows grouped around a pool. Prices rise substantially at weekends.

Tirtagangga Hotel (☎ 232 549; www.tirtagangga-hotel.com; r/stc from 325,000/815,000Rp; ♿) Large, low-rise hotel offering stylish and well-presented accommodation, a large pool surrounded by palm trees and a good-quality restaurant.

Sumber Alam (☎ 238 000; r 345,000–1,140,000Rp; ♿) This upmarket resort has fine thatched-and-timber bungalows built around a huge pool and pond. It's a popular family hang-out, particularly on weekends.

Danau Dariza (☎ 243 693; www.danaudariza.com; bungalows from US\$66; ♿) If you're travelling with kids this large resort could be a good choice as it has a huge hot spring-fed water park complete with plunging water slides and pools. Accommodation is in quite tasteful mock-traditional wooden bungalows.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses and *angkot* leave from the Guntur terminal in Garut, in the north of the town. Garut is easily reached by bus from Bandung (14,000Rp, two hours) and also from Tasikmalaya (16,000Rp, two hours). For Pangandaran, take another bus from Tasikmalaya.

Regular *angkot* run around town and to Cipanas (*angkot* 4, 2000Rp).

A car or minibus with driver can be rented in Cipanas – ask around the hotels. A trip to Papandayan will cost 350,000Rp to 500,000Rp, depending on the quality of the car and your bargaining skills.

Around Garut

Near Leles, about 10km north of Garut, is **Candi Cangkuang**, which is one of the few remaining Hindu temples in West Java. Dating from the 8th century, some of its stones were found to have been carved into tombstones for a nearby Islamic cemetery. The restored temple lies on the edge of Situ Cangkuang,

a small lake. It has become something of a tourist trap, but it's a beautiful spot. From Garut take a green *angkot* to Leles (3000Rp) on the highway and then another *angkot* or horse-drawn *dilman* (two-wheeled buggy; 5000Rp per person) for the 3km to Candi Cangkuang. Rafts across the lake to the temple cost 25,000Rp.

Twenty-eight kilometres to the southwest of Garut, twin-peaked **Gunung Papandayan** is one of the most active volcanoes in West Java. Papandayan exploded in 1772, a catastrophe that killed more than 3000. It erupted again in 2002, and thousands were forced to flee when pyroclastic flows devastated the area. Papandayan is once again open to visitors, but check first with locals before setting out.

The bubbling yellow crater (Kawah Papandayan) just below the peak is an impressive sight and clearly visible from the Garut valley on clear mornings. To get there, take a Cikajang minibus and get off at the turn-off on the outskirts of Cisarupan (5000Rp), where you can catch a waiting *ojek* (25,000Rp one way, 13km).

From the car park area it is an easy half-hour walk to the crater, which is riddled with bubbling mud pools, steam vents and crumbling sulphur deposits. Take care – keep well to the right when ascending through the crater; it may pay to hire a guide (around 250,000Rp per day; from the PHKA office, as the car park area is generally full of cowboys) for closer inspection. For fine views, go very early in the morning before the clouds roll in. Gunung Papandayan's summit is a two-hour walk beyond the crater, and there are fields of Javan edelweiss near the top. PHKA staff can arrange a camping permit.

To the east of Garut town, **Gunung Telagabodas** (2201m) has a bubbling green sulphurous crater lake. To get to Telagabodas, take an *angkot* to Wanaraja (4000Rp) and an *ojek* (12,000Rp) to the parking area and then walk to the crater. Craters to the west of Garut that can be visited are **Kawah Darajat**, 26km away, and **Kawah Kamojang**, 23km away, the site of a geothermal plant that has defused the once spectacular geyser activity and replaced it with huge pipes.

Halfway between Garut and Tasikmalaya is **Kampung Naga**, a beautiful traditional Sundanese village of thatch-roofed timber houses nestled next to a river and surrounded by precipitous hillsides. Crowds of tourists

pass through here during the dry season, but it's still a lovely spot. There are 360 steps up to the car park on the main highway. Freelance guides will offer to explain local customs, but they ask a hefty 50,000Rp for a tour.

Tasikmalaya

☎ 0265

Sixty kilometres east of Garut, Tasikmalaya is an unremarkable town on the road to Pangandaran, though the surrounding area has a few points of interest. Tasik has plenty of hotels; the **Crown Mahkota Graha** (☎ 332 282; Jl Martadinata 45; r 245,000–445,000Rp; ☎ ☎), with its restaurant and tidy rooms, is the best.

From Tasikmalaya, buses operate to Bandung (38,000Rp, four hours), Garut (20,000Rp, two hours) and Pangandaran (30,000Rp, three hours). The main bus terminal is 4km from the town centre on the eastern outskirts. Tasikmalaya is also on the main train line.

Around Tasikmalaya

For cheap rattan crafts, for which the area is famous, visit the village of **Rajapolah** (12km north of Tasikmalaya on the road to Bandung), where many of the weavers work.

The hot spring **Cipanas Galunggung** is 20km northwest and lies at the foot of **Gunung Galunggung** (2168m), a volcano that exploded dramatically in 1982, killing 68 people. From the hot springs recreation park, a trail leads to a small waterfall and then on to Galunggung crater, 3km away. A steep road to the crater is an easier walk but less scenic. From Tasikmalaya's main bus terminal take an *angkot* to Bantar on the highway. From there, *ojek* will cover the final 14km along a rough road for around 25,000Rp.

Situ Lengkon is about 40km north of Tasikmalaya and 500m from the village of Panjalu. It's a serene lake that was formed when the Hindu ruler of Panjalu dammed the valley. There is a forested island in the middle and boats can be hired to take you around the lake. Panjalu village has a small **museum** containing the heirlooms of the kings of Panjalu. Situ Lengkon can be reached by bus from Tasikmalaya or from Kawali terminal, where *angkot* run the 20km to Ciamis.

On the highway to Banjar and Pangandaran, 16km southeast of Ciamis, **Karang Komulyan** is the excavated site of the ancient Galuh kingdom. It's often said that Galuh was both the

first Hindu and the first Muslim kingdom in Java, but this Neolithic settlement dating from around the 5th century points to the pre-Hindu period. Only a few stone walls and foundations remain of the 'palace', store, prayer and bathing areas, but it is a beautiful walk through the jungle and bamboo groves down to the confluence of the swift Ciliwung and Citanduy rivers. A large car park and government-built cottages next to the park are attempts to make it a major tourist stop.

Banjar

Banjar, 42km east of Tasikmalaya, is a large, bustling town and major junction on the Bandung–Yogyakarta road and rail route. From here a side road heads down to Pangandaran.

The bus terminal is 4km west of town on the highway. Many buses can be caught as they come through the centre of town near the train station. From Banjar buses go to Pangandaran (17,000Rp, two hours), Bandung, Purwokerto and Jakarta.

Banjar is not a good place to catch trains, since most are crowded through-trains. If you're heading east to Yogyakarta and Solo from Pangandaran, Sidareja station (p159) is more convenient, cheaper and quicker. For Bandung, the *Lodaya* passes through Banjar at 2.08pm and the *Argo Wilis* at 4.35pm.

PANGANDARAN

☎ 0265

Situated on a narrow isthmus, with a broad sweep of sand on either side and a thickly forested national park on the nearby headland, Pangandaran is Java's premier beach resort. Walk away from the centre and the coastal scenery is reduced to its raw elements: a strip of dark sand, a vast, empty ocean and an enormous, gently curving horizon.

Most of the year Pangandaran is a quiet, tranquil place to enjoy walks along the sweeping sands or through the forest, but the town fills up on holidays (and weekends). The heavy swell that relentlessly pummels the impressive beach doesn't make for great swimming, though there are some more secluded spots along the coast. But as the surf is consistently good, it's a great place to get out on a board, or learn how to (surfing lessons can be easily arranged).

Pangandaran was hit hard by a tsunami in 2006 (a different one from the disaster that

devastated Banda Aceh in Sumatra) that killed around 600 people and wiped out several hotels here. But the town is very much open for business again and there's little evidence of its impact today. Many hotels have been modernised and upgraded since the tsunami. Sadly, less attention has been devoted to the beach, which is littered with plastic and flotsam and in dire need of a clean-up.

Orientation

Pangandaran extends for about 2km from the bus terminal to the national-park boundary in the south. The town is flanked by the west and east beaches, and bisected by the main street, Jl Kidang Pananjung. The west beach is a wide sweep of sand and the main resort strip. The east beach is a quieter, fishing beach, and not much sand remains since a retaining wall was built.

Information

A 3500Rp admission charge is levied at the gates on entering Pangandaran. There's no tourist office in town.

BNI ATM (Jl Merdeka) There's a second branch on Jl Bulak Laut.

BRI bank (Jl Kidang Pananjung) Changes cash dollars and major brands of travellers cheques.

Magic Mushroom Books (Jl Pasanggrahan) Sells Western titles from a psychedelic shack and also changes money.

Post office (Jl Kidang Pananjung)

Telkom (Jl Kidang Pananjung)

Tiara Internet (Jl Kidang Pananjung; per hr 12,000Rp)

YK (Jl Pamugaran; per hr 15,000Rp) Helpful internet cafe with modern terminals and reasonable speed net connection.

Sights & Activities

The **Taman Nasional Pangandaran** (Pangandaran National Park; admission 5500Rp; ☎ dawn-dusk), which takes up the entire southern end of Pangandaran, is a wild expanse of dense jungle. Within its boundaries live porcupines, *kijang* (barking deer), hornbills, scorpions and monkeys (including Javan gibbons). Small bays within the park enclose pretty tree-fringed beaches. Occasionally, the park is even used as a temporary home for elephants being transported around the archipelago. The park is divided into two sections: the recreation park and the jungle. Due to environmental degradation, the jungle is usually off limits.

Like most south-coast beaches, the surf can be treacherous, particularly the northern end of the west beach, where people still drown regularly. South from Bumi Nusantara Hotel, the beach is patrolled (sometimes) and is sheltered by the headland, so swimming is safer. Pangandaran's best beach, Pasir Putih, on the western side of the national park, is now off limits to stop the hordes that have destroyed the coral reef.

At sunset huge **fruit bats** emerge from the forest in search of insects. They fly right down the length of Pangandaran's beach but have to evade local boys who patrol with barbed-wire kites. Few are trapped this way, but every now and then a bat's wing will get caught on a kite string and the creature will be brought crashing to the ground in a fit of squeals, before being dispatched to the cooking pot.

Surfing lessons (per half-day incl board hire 100,000Rp) are offered at the northern end of the beach. Pangandaran is a good place to learn, and local instructors have 'soft' boards ideal for beginners. You'll find instructors in the Mungil Steak House (p158).

Tours

Popular Green Canyon tours (150,000Rp per person; see p160) usually combine 'home industry' visits that take in a sugar, *tahu* (tofu or soybean curd) or *krupuk* (prawn cracker) kitchen factory, as well as a *wayang golek* maker.

There are also tours to **Paradise Island**, an uninhabited nearby island with good beaches (including a 5km white-sand beach) and surfing. Day trips cost around 275,000Rp per person (minimum four people); for food, make an early-morning visit to Pangandaran's *pasar ikan* and fire up a barbecue when you get to the island.

Mini TIGA Homestay (right) organises good trips, or speak to the freelance guides who hang around the Mungil Steak House and Bamboo Bar.

Sleeping

Most places have flexible prices that are totally dependent on demand, so you've a great chance of a good deal on weekdays outside the main holiday periods: Christmas, and Lebaran (the end of Ramadan). There are around 100 hotels and guest houses in town.

It's worth noting that Pangandaran has a tightly controlled becak union, or mafia,

depending on which side of the bike seat you're on. All hotels have to pay 15,000Rp per person in commission to the becak driver who takes you to your accommodation, so if you walk in your bargaining powers are far better primed.

BUDGET

Many of Pangandaran's best homestays and losmen are crowded along the northern stretch of the town's western beach. None of the following have hot water.

Pondok Moris (☎ 639 490; Gang Moris 3; r 60,000Rp)

Close to the eastern end of the beach, this friendly little place has smallish rooms with character and is surrounded by greenery. It would be a veritable oasis if it weren't so close to the mosque.

Rinjani Homestay (☎ 639 757; r with fan 60,000Rp)

Just off the beach, this is a clean, friendly place with 15 rooms (all with a verandah or balcony and private bathroom) on two levels that face a little courtyard.

Losmen Mini II (☎ 639 298; Jl Kalen Buhaya 14;

s 60,000-80,000Rp, d 70,000-120,000Rp; ☎) An excellent choice, this efficiently managed guest house has very clean, tidy rooms and beds with good-quality mattresses; some rooms have balconies. It's run by a friendly, house-proud lady.

ourpick Mini TIGA Homestay (☎ 639 436; kat-

maja95@yahoo.fr; s/d incl breakfast 65,000/80,000Rp) The most popular place in town with backpackers and rightly so. Mini TIGA has atmosphere in spades and offers very good comfort levels for the price, with spacious rooms (all with en-suite bathrooms and Western toilets). Catherine, the French owner, has lived in Pangandaran for years and looks after her guests really well, offering free tea/coffee, DVDs to watch, cheap tours, transport and even homemade yoghurt!

Bamboo House (☎ 639 419; r with fan 70,000Rp,

with air-con 90,000-100,000Rp; ☎) Another popular budget place, here there are plain, ye olde fan-powered rooms with Asian toilets and outside bathrooms, or modern, air-con, concrete rooms that are uber-spartan (but very clean at least). Breakfast is available and there's free tea/coffee.

Sandaan (☎ 639 165; r with fan 100,000Rp, with air-con

250,000-400,000Rp; ☎) This large hotel has a wide selection of rooms (mostly in the mid-range category, which are not great value), plus basic but decent economy options. The

hotel's trump card is its very attractive pool area (and not its aloof reception staff).

Villa Angela (☎ 639 641; Jl Pamugaran; r 100,000-150,000Rp; ☼) Offering superb value, this new guest house has spacious rooms (all with TV and bathroom) in two attractive villa-style houses. It's run by a welcoming family and has a nice little garden. There's free tea/coffee and parking.

Other recommendations:

Hotel Melati Nugraha (☎ 639 225; Jl Pasanggrahan 3; r 45,000Rp) A row of very cheap, clean if bare rooms facing a grassy plot.

Komodo (☎ 630 753; Jl Bulak Laut 105; r 80,000-100,000Rp; ☼) Friendly, family-owned place with spotless, if gaudy, large rooms.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Many of Pangandaran's midrange and top-end hotels have been upgraded since the tsunami. Weekday prices are given; expect to pay 15% to 30% more at some places on weekends.

Adam's Homestay (☎ 639 396; www.adamshomestay.com; Jl Pamugaran; r 160,000-440,000Rp; ☼ ☼) This is a really relaxing, enjoyable place to stay, with a good, if slightly pricey, restaurant. Offers gorgeous, artistically presented rooms (many with balconies, beamed ceilings and outdoor bathrooms) spread around a verdant tropical garden that's just bursting with exotic plants and ponds.

Pantai Sari (☎ 639 175; Jl Bulak Laut 80; r incl breakfast 200,000-250,000Rp; ☼) This renovated hotel has a very flash reception and though the rooms are more prosaic they're good value – spacious and very clean with flat-screen TVs, modern furniture and new beds.

Hotel Century (☎ 639 171; Jl Bulak Laut 86; r 250,000-300,000Rp; ☼) Opening in late 2008, this modern hotel has smart rooms with a minimalist design, all with TV and air-con and some with sea views. Breakfast is included.

Laut Biru (☎ 639 360; www.lautbiru.com; Jl Jaga Lautan 17-18; r 400,000Rp; ☼ ☼ ☼) A new modernist hotel at the southern end of the main beach that has huge rooms (each with twin beds, stylish dark-wood furniture and a balcony) that tick all the right contemporary boxes.

Sunrise Beach Hotel (☎ 639 220; Jl Kidang Pananjung 185; r 550,000-650,000Rp, ste from 800,000; ☼ ☼) Arguably Pangandaran's best hotel, this small resort has well-presented, spacious rooms (some with sea views), 24-hour room service and a restaurant and bar. Breakfast is included.

Eating

Pangandaran is famous for its excellent seafood. For cheap Indonesian nosh, the town has many warungs.

Warung Dapur (Jl Bulak Laut 181; meals from 10,000Rp) Humble, inexpensive and friendly warung with bamboo walls and seats and a street terrace where you can watch the world go by. Try the *ayam bakar* (barbecued chicken) or *soto* (meat and vegetable broth).

Batagor Bandung (☎ 630 166; Jl Kidang Pananjung 116; snacks/meals 10,000/20,000Rp) Also known as the Green Garden Cafe, this excellent place has a relaxed boho vibe with artwork on display and tables set back off the street. *Batagor* (crispy tofu) is the delicious house speciality, but it also serves up other Indonesian dishes and great fresh juices.

Relax Restaurant (☎ 630 377; Jl Bulak Laut 74; mains 20,000Rp) Long-running Swiss-owned restaurant with a restrained, enjoyably formal air. The menu covers both Western and Indonesian fare, and service is prompt and efficient. Breakfast with the homemade bread is a treat.

Sarimbit (Jl Pantai Timor; meals around 25,000Rp) This simple local place is one of several fresh-fish restaurants facing east beach, and has tables facing the sea. Feast on red snapper or jumbo prawns cooked with a sauce of your choice.

Chez Mama Cilacap (☎ 630 098; Jl Kidang Pananjung 187; mains from 28,000Rp) This large restaurant has a good reputation and specialises in seafood, especially crab, fresh from the market.

Pasar Ikan (Fish Market; Jl Raya Timor; large fish 30,000-50,000Rp) Pangandaran's fish market occupies a little square that's situated just off the east beach. This is a great place for fresh fish and seafood – just choose what you want from the glistening iced displays, pay according to weight, and it's served up with a sauce (usually oyster or sweet-and-sour) within minutes.

Drinking

Bamboo Café (Jl Pamugaran) Bamboo Café is fine for a cold Bintang, and though it has a great aspect over the ocean it's looking a bit shabby these days. The food's very average (mains from 15,000Rp).

Mungil Steak House (Jl Pamugaran) This log cabin bills itself as a 'steak house' for some bizarre reason, but it works much better as a bar (the food here – mains are 12,000Rp to 50,000Rp –

is greasy and takes hours to arrive). As well as beer it sell jugs of *arak*, and the sea views are top-drawer.

De Coffee House (Jl Pamugaran; coffee 2000-40,000Rp) Smart new cafe with stylish decor and a long list of coffees (including Irish, hazelnut-flavoured and cappuccino), though most of the prices are absurd. Food including omelettes are also available.

Getting There & Away

Pangandaran lies roughly halfway between Bandung and Yogyakarta. Most people get here by road as there's no train station close by, but it's perfectly possible to arrive by rail and bus. Speak to staff at the Mini Tiga Homestay for impartial transport advice and possible routes, and you can book tickets there too.

BOAT

The once-popular backwater boat trip east of Pangandaran via Majingklak harbour to Cilacap is now effectively dead in the water due to dwindling numbers and better road and rail connections. It can still be done, but you'll have to charter your own *compreng* (wooden boat) to make the journey, which is very scenic, passing through rich swampland. Boatmen in Majingklak will do the three-hour trip for 300,000Rp after very hard bargaining. From Cilacap there are direct buses to Yogyakarta (48,000Rp, five hours).

BUS

Local buses run from Pangandaran's main bus terminal to Tasikmalaya (30,000Rp, three hours), Ciamis (24,000Rp, 2½ hours), Banjar (17,000Rp, two hours) and Sidareja (10,000Rp, 1¼ hours). Buses also run along the west coast as far as Cijulang (8000Rp, 40 minutes).

Many *patas* buses to Jakarta and Bandung leave from the Sari Bakti Utama depot, just north of town, and Budiman bus company depot, about 2km west of Pangandaran along Jl Merdeka. Other services also leave from the main terminal. Buses leave for Bandung every one to two hours (52,000Rp, six hours) and for Jakarta's Kampung Rambutan terminal (65,000Rp to 80,000Rp, eight hours), mainly between 7pm and 9pm.

The most comfortable way to travel to Bandung is aboard a **Sari Harum** (☎ 639 276)

door-to-door *travel* minibuses for 90,000Rp. **Perkasa Jaya minibuses** (☎ 639 607) pick up from hotels for the trip to Jakarta's Kampung Rambutan terminal (130,000Rp, eight hours).

CAR

Travel agencies rent minibuses with drivers for about 700,000Rp per day including driver and petrol. The most popular trip is a three-day tour to Yogyakarta, usually via Wonosobo for the first night, Dieng for sunrise, then on to Borobudur. The final day is to Yogyakarta via Prambanan.

TRAIN

The nearest stations are Banjar to the north and Sidareja on the east side. Both have regular local bus connections to Pangandaran. From Bandung to Banjar the most convenient trains are the *Argo Wilis* (executive class 175,000Rp, 3½ hours), which leaves at 7am, and the *Lodaya* (executive/business class 110,000/165,000Rp, 3½ hours), departing at 8am. You'll then have to hop on a local bus (17,000Rp, two hours), which leave every 20 minutes down to Pangandaran.

Train times and connections are not good or convenient from Yogyakarta to Sidareja. But if you're heading east to Yogya there's a very useful *bisnis* train (50,000Rp, 3½ hours) at 12.10pm from Sidareja direct to Yogya. You can't reserve seats on this train, but it's not usually crowded and it's possible to upgrade to an executive air-conditioned carriage once you're on board for an extra 50,000Rp. To make this connection either take a Budiman local bus from Pangandaran to Sidareja or hire a car to drop you off (150,000Rp). Travel agents and hotels including Mini Tiga Homestay can help with travel arrangements and tickets on this route via Sidareja, which is the quickest and most comfortable way to travel to Yogya.

Getting Around

Pangandaran's brightly painted becak start at around 5000Rp and require heavy negotiation; see the warning about the local becak mafia, p157.

Bicycles can be rented for 20,000Rp per day, and motorcycles cost around 50,000Rp per day, excluding petrol; **Wawan Rental** (☎ 0852 2380 1257; Jl Pamugaran) rents out well-maintained bikes.

LOCAL VOICE: GECKO

In the previous edition of this guidebook, the sole 'our pick' in the Pangandaran area was Delta Gecko, a bohemian beach-side hang-out for travellers and creative Indonesians. But then the 2006 tsunami struck Java's southern coast.

Agus 'Gecko' Ramadhi, one of the founders of Delta Gecko, is an artist from Bandung but has been living in Pangandaran for years.

'I first came to Pangandaran in 1982. There was no electricity and only three losmen. I was studying art but hated studying and I was addicted to narcotics. I had two pet geckos – that's how I got my nickname, 'Gecko' – but they both died when my friend fed them tobacco. I painted 14 gecko designs in their memory, which were all bought by a Japanese guy.

We opened Delta Gecko in 1990, with a German partner and my ex-wife, Christina. I helped design and construct a lot of the bungalows, all from natural materials like bamboo and wood. We separated all our rubbish and composted. Gradually we created a mini-zoo. We had many animals – a porcupine, purple herons, wild pigs, three kinds of eagles as well as chickens, ducks, geese and goats. We did tours the right way – going up the Green Canyon in canoes, not using motor boats, so people could see the birds and wildlife.

I built a 7m gecko from papier mâché and bamboo to celebrate 50 years of Indonesian independence. We carried it through the streets of Pangandaran – the children loved it. Our parties – every Wednesday – were famous. We had our own *pongdut* band and everyone would dance after dinner around a big beach bonfire. Sometimes we stayed up till sunrise. And no drugs! Just *arak* (palm wine) and beer.

On the day of the tsunami I remember it was my coffee time, four o'clock. We had no guests that day; the last one had checked out the day before. I was lying in my house at the back of Delta Gecko. There was no warning because the electricity was down. I heard a woman scream; the kitchen wall had fallen down. I ran. I ran like a madman. After about 100m the water hit me. It came up to my knees, but I got away.

Everything was gone except one bungalow. I lost my best friend, Iwan, and his little daughter Vanessa. He used to play music for the guests every night.

Afterwards it was so difficult. I had no money, no income. I would love to rebuild a kind of Delta Gecko but make it more an art space. I am lucky that I have a good friend who gives me room so I can paint and show my work.'

Agus's art can be seen at Batagor Bandung (p158).

fan-cooled wooden rooms with verandahs or huge air-con bungalows that can sleep six. The Tsunami bar here sells cold Bintang.

Panireman Riverside (☎ 0812 7255 8666; bungalows incl breakfast 250,000-400,000Rp) A new place in a lovely riverbank setting, 1km before the entrance to the village. The nine thatched bungalows, built in local style but with modern amenities including sprung mattresses, have front decks overlooking the river. Popular with students at weekends, it's usually very peaceful here during the week, and there's a restaurant. Very little English is spoken, however. Kayaks (20,000Rp per hour), dinghys (150,000Rp per hour) and jet-skis (60,000Rp for 15 minutes) are for hire.

Java Cove (☎ 708 2020; www.javacovebeachhotel.com; economy r 120,000Rp, luxury r 420,000-620,000Rp; 🍷) Gorgeous Australian-owned beachfront hotel that offers beautiful, if a little pricey,

contemporary-chic rooms as well as no-frills economy options. There's a decked, surf-facing garden with a coffee and ice-cream bar, and Western treats like meat pies and pizzas are available. Add 15% tax to room rates.

Eating options:

Sederhana (mains 8000-18,000Rp) Catch a bite to eat while watching the waves here.

Kang Aji (☎ 708 2025; mains 10,000-20,000Rp) Neighbours Sederhana.

Popeye (mains 10,000-20,000Rp) Opposite Bonsai Bungalows, this chalet-like place has good omelettes and Indo food.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

You have to pay a toll of 3900Rp to enter the village. Batu Karas can be reached from Pangandaran by taking a bus to Cijulang (7000Rp) and then an *ojek* over the pretty bamboo bridge for 6000Rp.

East of Pangandaran

The main Pangandaran–Banjar road runs east initially, passing a series of bays and beaches exposed to the full force of the Indian Ocean. The first of these, about 8km along the road, is **Karang Nini** (entrance fee 3500Rp), where there's a group of warung on a headland, picnic areas beneath pandan trees and some bare, unattractive **bungalows** (per night 220,000Rp). The eastern section of beach here is superb, with a sweeping expanse of sand and crashing surf. Walk for 15 minutes along this beach and you'll reach a beautiful river estuary, its banks lined with tropical forest and patrolled by gliding eagles. Karang Nini is about 3km south of the highway.

Pushing eastwards you get views over **Nusa Kambangan** (p167), the last port of call on this planet for the Bali bombers who were executed on this island prison in 2008. Around 7km from Karang Nini, there's a turn-off for the scruffy harbour of **Majingklak**, which sits on the western bank of Segara Anakan lagoon. There are no longer scheduled boats to Cilacap, but boatmen might be persuaded to take you there; expect to pay upwards of 300,000Rp for the three-hour trip. It's possible to charter a boat to explore the lagoon for 60,000Rp an hour after persistent bargaining.

CIREBON

☎ 0231 / pop 230,000

Well off the tourist trail, on the sunburnt north coast, Cirebon is a cultural melting pot, blending the scattered remains of the ancient Islamic kingdom that once had its base here with a more contemporary cocktail of Javanese, Sundanese and Chinese culture.

Compared to many of Java's cities, Cirebon is refreshingly laid-back. And with venerable *kraton* (walled city palaces), a thriving batik industry and one of the north coast's biggest fishing fleets, it's a worthwhile stopover for seafood lovers and inquisitive travellers. Cirebon is famous for its batik; *tari topeng*, a type of masked dance; and *tarling*, music blending guitar, *suling* and voice.

Cirebon was one of the independent sultanates founded by Sunan Gunungjati of Demak in the early 16th century. Later the powerful kingdoms of Banten and Mataram fought over the town, which declared its allegiance to Sultan Agung of Mataram but was finally ceded to the Dutch in 1677. By a further treaty signed in 1705, Cirebon became a Dutch pro-

tectorate, jointly administered by three sultans whose courts at that time rivalled those of Central Java in opulence and splendour.

Information

Banks and ATMs can be found all over town; a branch of BRI Bank is located at the northern end of Jl Siliwangi.

Elganet (Ruko Grand Centre B/4; per hr 5500Rp) Internet access.

Main post office (Jl Yos Sudarso) Near the harbour.

Telkom (Jl Yos Sudarso) For international telephone calls and faxes.

Tourist office (☎ 486 856; Jl Dharsono 5; ☎ 7am–3pm Mon–Fri) Lies 5km out of town on the bypass road, near Gua Sunyaragi. Staff are helpful here, but printed information is lacking.

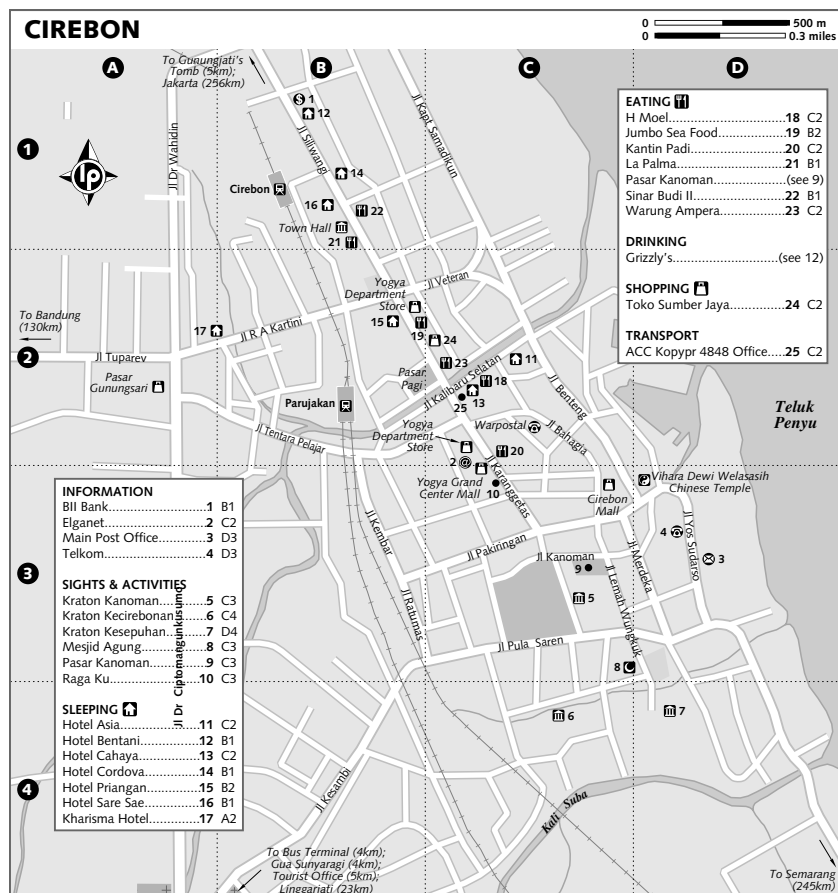
Sights & Activities

KRATON KESEPUHAN

At the southern end of Jl Lemah Wungkuk, **Kraton Kesepuhan** (admission 3000Rp, camera 2000Rp; ☎ 8am–4pm Mon–Thu & Sat, 8–11am & 1–4pm Fri, 8am–4pm Sun) is the oldest and best preserved of Cirebon's *kraton*. Built in 1527, its architectural style is a curious blend of Sundanese, Javanese, Islamic, Chinese and Dutch. Although this is the home of the sultan of Kesepuhan, part of the building is open to visitors. Inside is a pavilion with walls dotted with blue-and-white Delft tiles (many depicting biblical scenes), a marble floor and a ceiling hung with glittering French chandeliers.

The *kraton* museum has an interesting, if poorly displayed collection of *wayang* puppets, kris, cannons, furniture, Portuguese armour (weighing in at an impressive 45kg) and ancient royal clothes. The pièce de résistance is the Kereta Singa Barong, a 16th-century gilded chariot with the trunk of an elephant (Hindu), the body and head of a dragon (Chinese-Buddhist), golden wings (Egyptian-Islamic) and the paws of a tiger. It was traditionally pulled by four white buffalo and the suspension apparently flapped the wings and waggled the creature's tongue. It is quite possibly the wildest carriage you'll ever see.

Entry to the *kraton* includes a guided tour (payment at your discretion), which finishes in the *kraton's* museum. Here there are spice boxes, French crystal and relics from Portugal and Holland. Look out for the Javanese-Hindu Kama Sutra woodcarving.

**KRATON KANOMAN**

A short walk from Kraton Kesepuhan, **Kraton Kanoman** (admission by donation; ☎ 8am-5pm) was constructed in 1588 but is now in poor shape. The Kanoman dynasty was founded by Sultan Badaruddin, who broke away from the main sultanate after a lineage dispute with the sixth sultan's heir. Outside the *kraton* is a red-brick, Balinese-style compound and a massive banyan tree. Further on past the white stone lions is the *kraton*, a smaller, neglected cousin of Kraton Kesepuhan.

The museum here has some intriguing carvings (one featuring a reptile king) amidst layers of dust. Again it's the sultan's chariot that steals the show, however. This version is in exactly the same style as the one over in

Kraton Kesepuhan, but here they claim that theirs is the original – rivalry for the sultanate still exists, it seems. The *pendopo* (large open-sided pavilion) and its inner altar were closed for renovation at the time of research.

The colourful **Pasar Kanoman**, just in front of the *kraton*, is at its most vibrant in the morning and is worth a visit in its own right.

KRATON KECIREBONAN

Although it's classed as a *kraton*, this is really only a house occupied by members of the current royal family, descendants of Raja Kanomin, who broke away from the 10th Kesepuhan sultanate. Wander in, knock on the door and someone will be happy to show you around. Built in 1839, the house has fine

colonial architecture and a small collection of swords, documents and other royal memorabilia. A donation is expected.

MESJID AGUNG

On the western side of the field in front of Kraton Kesepuhan is Mesjid Agung. One of the oldest mosques in Java, it has a tiered roof and is similar in style to the Mesjid Agung in Banten.

GUA SUNYARAGI

Approximately 4km southwest of town is this bizarre ruined 'cave' – a grotto of rocks, red brick and plaster, honeycombed with secret chambers, tiny doors and staircases that lead nowhere. It was originally a water palace for a sultan of Cirebon in the early 18th century and owes its present shape to a Chinese architect who had a go at it in 1852. It's often frequented by local students who, at the sight of a tourist, are more than happy to practise their English, even from 50m away.

Activities

Sightseeing involves a lot of legwork. Head to **Raga Ku** (☎ 339 1099; Jl Karanggetas 6; massages from 45,000Rp; ☎ 9-9pm) for an excellent, very inexpensive massage; reflexology is also available.

Sleeping

Hotel Cordova (☎ 204 677; Jl Siliwangi 87; r 40,000-154,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) The renovated lobby is quite fancy at the Cordova, but the rooms haven't been touched: they're old-fashioned but kept clean enough; some have air-con.

Hotel Asia (☎ 204 905; Jl Kalibaru Selatan 11A; r 55,000-85,000Rp; ☎ ☎) It's looking a bit weary these days, but this fine old Dutch-Indonesian inn does have character. Rooms are basic, but fine for a night and there's a courtyard for your breakfast.

Hotel Cahaya (☎ 206 018; Jl Kalibaru Selatan 47; r 75,000-125,000Rp; ☎ ☎) This well-run place is popular with visiting salesmen and has plain, functional and clean rooms in a central location, the more expensive options have air-con and hot water. A free *nasi goreng* breakfast is included in the restaurant below.

Hotel Priangan (☎ 200 296; Jl Siliwangi 108; r 75,000-210,000Rp; ☎ ☎) Set back from the street, this slightly quirky place has ageing but decent rooms that face a narrow garden. Watch your head entering the bathroom – ceilings are very low!

our pick Hotel Sare Sae (☎ 209 489; Jl Siliwangi 70; r 250,000-300,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) The Sare Sae is a terrific newish hotel, with excellent comfort levels for the price, helpful staff and real style. Rooms, set to the rear of the property, have exposed beams, chunky wooden furniture and unusual bathrooms with zany *mandi*/showers. Enjoy your complimentary breakfast on the decked terrace above fish ponds.

Kharisma Hotel (☎ 207 668; kh-hotel@telkom.net; Jl RA Kartini 60; r from 376,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) Kharisma is one of Cirebon's better midrange hotels; book one of the very spacious rooms in its new section. There's a restaurant and a couple of bars here for late-night drinks.

Hotel Bentani (☎ 203 246; www.bentani-hotel.com; Jl Siliwangi 69; r 500,000-622,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This garish-looking hotel has 88 spacious rooms with rattan furniture that are well-maintained and clean. The pool is small; there's a spa and a bar. Discounts are available.

Eating & Drinking

Cheap warungs serving seafood and snacks can be found along Jl Kalibaru Selatan near Hotel Asia. For ultra-fresh exotic fruit, head directly to **Pasar Kanoman** (Jl Kanoman).

La Palma (Jl Siliwangi 86; cakes from 2000Rp; ☎ 7.30am-6pm) A period piece housed in an old Dutch villa, La Palma looks as if it hasn't changed for generations. Serves cakes, snacks and pastries. Nonsmoking.

Kantin Padi (☎ 208 836; Jl Karanggetas 51; meals 10,000-20,000Rp) Opposite the Yogya Grand Center Mall, this new place was just opening when we passed by. We recommend you do too, for the Indonesian food is super-fresh and no MSG is used – *nasi kunming* (yellow rice) is the house speciality.

Warung Ampera (☎ 201 205; Jl Siliwangi 247; meals from 12,000Rp) The hottest place in town, this new upmarket warung serves traditional Javanese food in modern surrounds. Choose from buffet-style displays – there are always plenty of delicious fish dishes. Ampera also has wonderful fresh juices.

H Moel (☎ 206 886; Jl Kalibaru Selatan 69; mains 12,000-65,000Rp) Huge place that has a city-wide reputation for its seafood; try the *ikan bakar* (from 25,000Rp). There's an open kitchen, so you can see the chefs at work.

Sinar Budi II (☎ 208 045; Jl Siliwangi 97; meals from 15,000Rp) For Padang food in Cirebon don't look any further.

Jumbo Sea Food (☎ 200 170; Jl Siliwangi 191; mains 27,000–50,000Rp) Another huge fish restaurant, the Jumbo is renowned for its hot plates and seafood grills.

For a drink:

Grizzly's (Jl Siliwangi 69) In the Hotel Bentani, this bar is about the only game in town, and has regular drinks specials.

Shopping

Toko Sumber Jaya (Jl Siliwangi 211 & 229) The two branches of this store stock all sorts of *oleh-oleh* (souvenirs) from Cirebon including pottery and bamboo crafts.

Getting There & Away

There are no longer any Peln boats to or from Cirebon.

BUS

The Cirebon bus terminal is 4km southwest of the centre of town.

Normal/air-con buses run between Cirebon and Jakarta (42,000/58,000Rp, four hours), Bandung (26,000/38,000Rp, four hours), Pekalongan (34,000/44,000Rp, four hours); and Semarang (50,000/66,000Rp, seven hours), as well as many of Java's main cities.

For *travel* from Cirebon, the **ACC Kopyor 4848 office** (☎ 204 343; Jl Karanggetas 9) operates minibuses to Bandung (60,000Rp, four hours) and Semarang (100,000Rp, seven hours).

TRAIN

Cirebon is serviced by frequent trains that run on both the main northern Jakarta–Semarang–Surabaya train line and the southern Jakarta–Yogyakarta–Surabaya line. The better services leave from Cirebon's main train station, just off Jl Siliwangi. Crowded economy-class trains leave from the Parujakan train station further south.

For Jakarta's Gambir station, the *Cirebon Express* (business/executive class 60,000/75,000Rp, three hours) departs from Cirebon five times daily. To Yogyakarta, the business-class *Fajar Yogya* (110,000Rp, five hours) departs at 9.35am.

Getting Around

Cirebon's city minibus (*angkutan kota*) services operate from behind the main bus terminal; a fixed 2000Rp fare is charged.

Cirebon has legions of pushy becak; you'll get harassed constantly. A ride from the train station to Pasar Pagi costs around 10,000Rp.

There are also taxis, but meters are seemingly reserved for family members and royalty.

AROUND CIREBON

In the royal cemetery, 5km north of Cirebon, is the **tomb of Sunan Gunungjati**, who died in 1570. The most revered of Cirebon's kings, Gunungjati was also one of the nine *wali songo* (saintly men who spread Islam throughout Java), and his tomb is one of the holiest places in the country. The inner tombs are only open once a month on Kliwon Thursday of the Javanese calendar (the calendar is a combination of the normal seven-day week and the five-day Javanese market week), and at Idul Fitri and Maulud Nabi Muhammed (see p832). Pilgrims sit in contemplation and pray outside the doors on other days. Along from Sunan Gunungjati's tomb is the tomb of his first wife, who was Chinese – this tomb attracts Chinese worshippers.

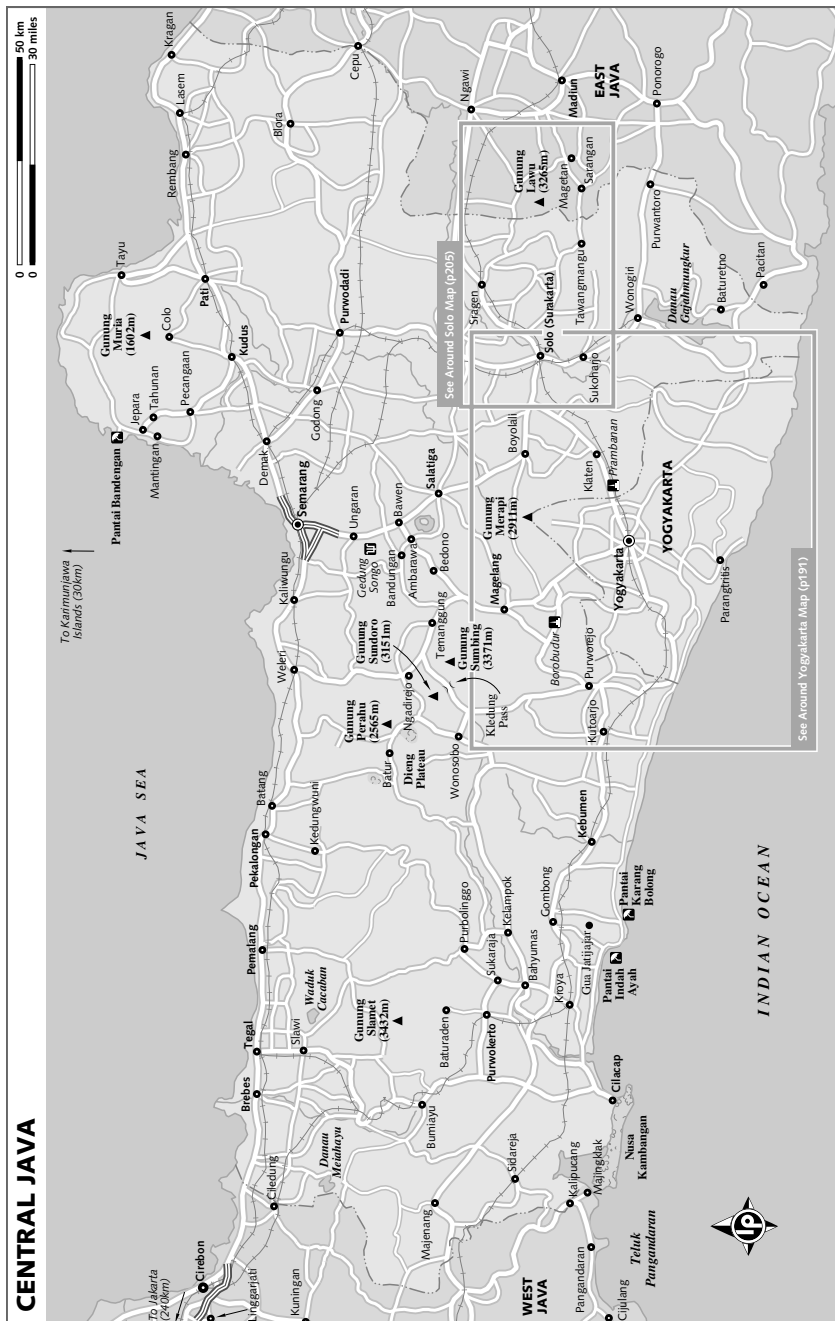
Linggarjati, a small mountain resort 23km south of Cirebon, was assured of its place in the history books when, in 1946, representatives of the republican government and the returning Dutch occupying forces met to negotiate a British-sponsored cooperation agreement. Terms were thrashed out in a colonial hotel at the foot of **Gunung Cirema** (3078m), once a retreat from the heat for Cirebon's Dutch residents. Sukarno briefly attended, but the Linggarjati Agreement was soon swept aside as the war for independence escalated. The hotel is now **Gedung Naksa**, a museum recreating the events.

To reach Linggarjati, take a Kuningan bus from Cirebon to Cilimus (5000Rp) and then an *angkot* (3000Rp) or *andong* (horse-drawn passenger cart) to either resort.

CENTRAL JAVA

Jakarta may be the nation's capital, but the Javan identity is at its strongest here, in the island's historic heartland. As the seat of Java's first major Indianised civilisation, as well as the great Islamic sultanates centred on the *kraton* of Yogyakarta and Solo, Central Java (Jawa Tengah) remains the province in which the island's cultural pulse beats loudest.

Even though Central Java has a reputation for a short fuse when dealing with religious and political sentiments, it's a relaxed, easy-going province for tourists. Yogyakarta, at the centre



of its own quasi-independent 'special region' stretching from the south coast to Gunung Merapi, and Solo, just 65km to the northeast of Yogyakarta, are Java's most interesting cities. But even Semarang, the province's busy, maritime capital, has its fair share of charm and is, like its more bombastic tourist centres, an intriguing fusion of Java's past and future. Most, though, will find the intricate Borobudur and Prambanan temples the highlight of any trip to the centre of this stunning island.

CILACAP

☎ 0282 / pop 210,000

Over the border from West Java, Cilacap is an unhurried city of wide boulevards and has the only natural harbour with deep-water berthing facilities on Java's south coast. Very few travellers pass through here now there are no regular boats plying the backwater trip to Pangandaran.

The **tourist office** (☎ 534 481; Jl A Yani 8; ☎ 8am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-1pm Sat) is opposite the Hotel Wijayakusuma.

Sights & Activities

Built between 1861 and 1879, **Benteng Pendem** (admission 2000Rp; ☎ 8am-4pm) is an impressive Dutch fort complex at the entrance to the old harbour. It has intact barracks (bring a torch to explore properly, as they're rather dark) and massive ramparts, and is one of the best-preserved colonial garrisons in Java.

The fort overlooks a long stretch of dirty sand, **Pantai Teluk Penyü**. This popular local beach has souvenir stalls that sell an array of shells and trinkets.

For better beaches – complete with white sand – head to **Nusa Kambangan**, a long island south of the port. This island contains no fewer than four high-security prisons (and five inactive ones); former inmates have included the Bali bombers and Tommy Suharto. There are fine beaches to explore, but swimming can be treacherous. Keep a lookout for white-bellied fish eagles surfing the thermals. Ferries sail from Cilacap at 7am (30,000Rp) and return in the late afternoon.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Anggrek (☎ 533 835; Jl Anggrek 16; r with shared mandi/air-con 45,000/75,000Rp; ☎) For a cheap bed, consider this place, which has spartan and reasonably clean rooms. It's about a five-minute walk to Jl Yani, the main drag.

Hotel Mutiara Cilacap (☎ 531 545; mutiaracilacap@intanhotels.com; Jl Gatot Subroto 136; r from 550,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) This is the best hotel in town, with business-class facilities, comfortable, spacious rooms, and a decent restaurant plus a bar and cafe.

Restaurant Perapatan/Sien Hieng (Jl A Yani 62; mains around 30,000Rp) Long-running Chinese place that has the best rep in Cilacap. The seafood dishes excel here.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Only charter boats are now plying the backwaters from Cilacap to Majingklak. See p162 for more information on trips. The jetty is near the big Pertamina installations.

The Cilacap **bus terminal** (Jl Gatot Subroto) is 3km north of the city centre. Buses run between Cilacap and Pangandaran (32,000Rp, three hours), Yogyakarta (48,000Rp, five hours) and Purwokerto (14,000Rp, 1½ hours), where you'll need to change for Wonosobo.

For door-to-door minibuses to Yogyakarta (70,000Rp) call **Toko Djadi** (☎ 533 490; Jl A Yani 72); for Purwokerto (20,000Rp) use **Nusantara Express** (☎ 533 301; Jl Perwira).

Cilacap's central train station is just off Jl A Yani. Very few trains now operate from here, but the *Purwojaya* leaves for Jakarta (executive/business class 150,000/80,000Rp, five hours) at 6.30pm.

PURWOKERTO

A surprisingly clean city with some architectural reminders of the Dutch colonial era, Purwokerto is a crossroads for travellers heading between Wonosobo and Pangandaran. There are hotels here, but you're better off staying at the mountain resort of Baturaden, 14km to the north.

The train station is close to the city centre and the bus terminal is about 2km south. Buses run to all major centres, including Wonosobo (28,000Rp, three hours), Banjar and Yogyakarta. Infrequent direct buses go to Baturaden (6000Rp), or catch an *angkot* from Pasar Wage (6000Rp) in town.

WONOSOBO

☎ 0286 / pop 110,000

Wonosobo is the main gateway to the Dieng Plateau. At 900m above sea level in the central mountain range, it has a comfortable

climate and is a typical country town with a busy market. On national holidays it comes alive as people from surrounding villages gather for festivities in the main square. You might see the Kuda Kepang dance from nearby Temanggung, or the local Lenggeng dance, in which men cross-dress and wear masks.

If you value your comfort it's easy to base yourself here in one of the town's good-quality hotels and get up to Dieng, which is only just over an hour away and served by very regular buses.

Information

Bina (Jl Veteran 36; internet access per hr 5000Rp; ☎ 24 hr)

BNI bank (Bank Negara Indonesia; Jl A Yani) Changes cash and travellers cheques, and has an ATM for credit-card withdrawals.

Telkom office (Jl A Yani) Near the *alun-alun*.

Tourist office (☎ 321 194; Jl Kartini 3; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri) Can provide maps and brochures of Wonosobo and the Dieng Plateau, and contact details for tour operators in the area.

Sleeping

our pick Wisma Duta Homestay (☎ 321 674; dutahomestay@yahoo.com; Jl Rumah Sakit 3; economy r 50,000Rp, r 300,000Rp) This is one of the best homestays in the central mountains, occupying a lovely suburban house and garden. It's efficiently run by motorbike enthusiast Helly, who's been hosting travellers for years and speaks fluent English. Duta offers rooms at two extremes: the basic rooms are a bit neglected but still a fair budget option; all have a little verandah and private *mandi*. If you can afford it, though, the sleek new rooms here are exceptionally attractive, modern and comfortable, with exposed stonework, thick mattresses and private terraces at the rear that face a narrow garden. Breakfast and tea/coffee are complimentary.

Citra Homestay (☎ 321 880; Jl Angkatan 45; r 60,000Rp) A simple homestay above a carpenter's with basic rooms and shared *mandis*. Tours of the Wonosobo area and Dieng Plateau can be set up here. The mosque close by will ensure you're awake early for the ride up to Dieng.

Hotel Sri Kencono (☎ 321 522; Jl A Yani 81; economy r 60,000Rp, standard r 250,000Rp, f 440,000Rp) This large, concrete, motel-like place has well-kept, spacious rooms with TVs and writing desks, and the hot-water bathrooms have Western-style

toilets. There are also a few basic economy options with cold-water *mandi*. You'll find plenty of communal sitting areas, and breakfast is included (except in economy).

Hotel Surya Asia (☎ 322 992; www.suryaasia.com; Jl A Yani 137; r 292,000-430,000Rp, ste 630,000Rp) A medium-size hotel with large, tiled rooms with bright bedspreads, TVs and hot-water bathrooms. The restaurant has a good reputation and serves up delicious Chinese food, plus some local specialties. Book ahead on weekends.

Gallery Hotel Kresna (☎ 324 111; www.galleryhotels.com/wono; Jl Pasukan Ronggolawe 30; r 550,000-1,580,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Kresna dates from 1921, when it was a retreat for Dutch planters, and still exudes colonial charm. Rooms are stylish and plush, the restaurant is top-notch, there's a contemporary art gallery and the large pool is heated. Good deals are offered on weekdays. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Eating

Rumah Makan Kita (Jl Resimen 109; meals 8000-20,000Rp) Close to Duta Homestay, this simple, clean place hits the spot for fresh, inexpensive Chinese-style food, with a good selection of noodle and rice dishes.

Dieng Restaurant (☎ 321 266; Jl Mayjend Bambang; mains 20,000-60,000Rp) Out near the bus terminal, about 4km from the town centre, Dieng has good Indonesian, Chinese and European food served buffet-style. Mr Argus, the owner, can arrange tours of Dieng Plateau (from 180,000Rp).

Krishna Garden Restaurant (☎ 322 640; Jl Major Muin 100; meals from 25,000-55,000Rp) Around the corner from the Gallery Hotel, Kresna is a delightful place with dining tables set around a lovely garden. It's a great setting for a memorable meal – try the *bubur ayam* (rice porridge with chicken) or *bihun goreng* (fried rice noodles) – then puff the night away on a *sheesha* (water pipe).

Getting There & Away

Wonosobo's bus terminal is 4km out of town on the Magelang road.

From Yogyakarta take a bus to Magelang (13,000Rp, 1½ hours) and then another bus to Wonosobo (15,000Rp, two hours). Regular buses also connect Borobudur and Magelang (5000Rp, 40 minutes) until 4pm. **Rahayu Travel** (☎ 321 217; Jl A Yani 95) has door-to-door minibuses to Yogyakarta (40,000Rp, three hours).

Hourly buses go to Semarang (32,000Rp, four hours), passing through Secang and Ambarawa (18,000Rp, 2½ hours) en route.

Very frequent buses to Dieng (8000Rp, one hour) leave throughout the day (the last at 5pm) and continue on to Batur; you can catch them on Jl Rumah Sakit, 100m from Duta Guesthouse.

DIENG PLATEAU

☎ 0286

The lofty plateau of Dieng (2093m above sea level) is home to some of the oldest Hindu temples in Java. Its name comes from Di-Hyang (Abode of the Gods), and it's thought that this was once the site of a flourishing temple-city of priests.

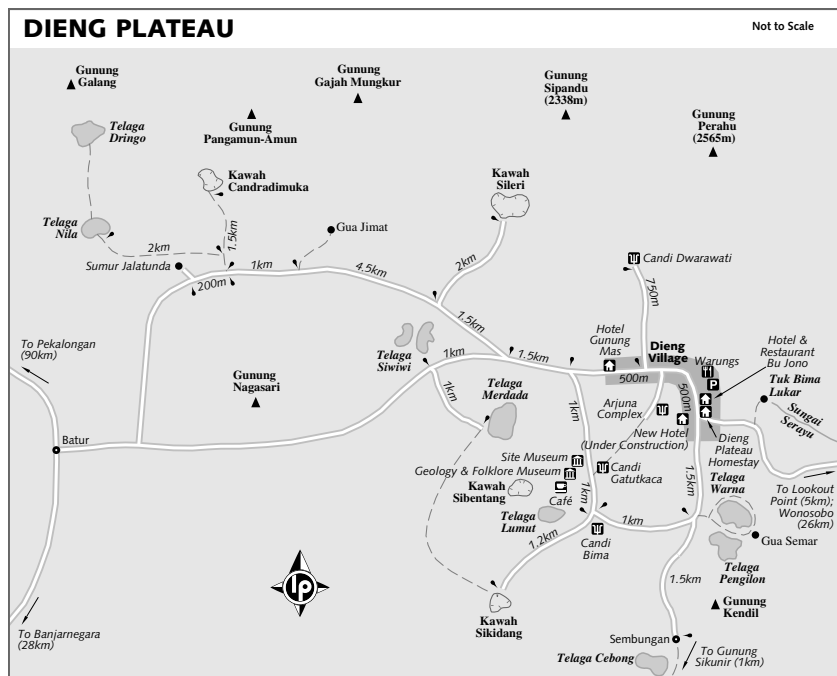
More than 400 temples, most of which were built between the 8th and 9th centuries, covered the highland plain, but with the mysterious depopulation of Central Java, this site, like Borobudur, was abandoned and forgotten. It was not until 1856 that the archaeologist Van Kinsbergen drained the flooded valley around the temples and catalogued the ruins. The eight remaining temples are characteristic of

early Central Javanese architecture – stark and quite squat.

These simple temples, while of great archaeological importance, are not stunning. Rather, Dieng's beautiful landscape is the main reason to make the long journey to this isolated region. Any number of walks across the volcanically active plateau, the marshy caldera of a collapsed volcano, are possible – to mineral lakes, steaming craters or even the highest village in Java, Sembungan.

You can either stay in Dieng village, or commute up from Wonosobo, which has better facilities. The route up to Dieng is stunning, climbing through vertiginous hillsides of terraced fields planted with potatoes, spraying onions and asparagus (all judiciously sprayed with pesticides). Vegetables have replaced pine forests, leaving little to bind the top soil together; inevitably, landslides are common in the rainy season.

The temples and the main 'natural' sights can be seen in one day on foot – arrive in Dieng in the morning, before the afternoon mists roll in. It's a pleasant three- or four-hour loop south from Dieng village to Telaga



Warna (Coloured Lake), Candi Bima (Bima Temple), Kawah Sikidang (Sikidang Crater), and then back to Candi Gatutkaca, the Arjuna Complex and the village. Many other lakes and craters around Dieng are scattered over a large area and are difficult to reach.

Information

Entrance prices have risen recently for the temples and natural sights in Dieng. A cost-saving ticket used to exist that covered you for the main sights, but at research time this appeared to have been discontinued – expect to have to pay for each attraction separately.

The BRI bank, near Hotel Gunung Mas, changes US dollars.

Sights

TEMPLES

The five main temples that form the **Arjuna Complex** (20,000Rp) are clustered together on the central plain. They are Shiva temples, but like the other Dieng temples they have been named after the heroes of the *wayang* stories of the Mahabharata epic: Arjuna, Puntadewa, Srikandi, Sembadra and Semar. All have mouth-shaped doorways and strange bell-shaped windows and some locals leave offerings, burn incense and meditate here. Raised walkways link the temples (as most of this land is waterlogged), but you can see the remains of ancient underground tunnels, which once drained the marshy flatlands.

Just southwest of the Arjuna Complex are **Candi Gatutkaca**, two small museums (admission incl in Arjuna ticket price; ☎ 8am–3pm) and a modest cafe. The site museum contains statues and sculptures from the temples, including Shiva's carrier, Nandi the bull – with the body of a man and the head of a bull, it is a unique representation in Hindu iconography. There's also a headless image of Shiva himself, depicted in the lotus position, while a gargoyle sporting an erection is distinctly animist. The second museum, a new building directly behind the site museum, has lots of information about the geology of Dieng, the folklore associated with the plateau and more carved statues. All the display information here is in Bahasa Indonesia only.

Further south, **Candi Bima** is unique in Java, its *kudu* (sculpted heads) looking like spectators peering out of windows.

The restored **Candi Dwarawati** is on the northern outskirts of the village. Near the entrance to Dieng at the river, **Tuk Bima Lukar**

is an ancient bathing spring. It was once a holy place and is said to be a fountain of youth.

OTHER SIGHTS

The road south from Dieng Plateau Homestay passes a mushroom factory and a flower garden before the turn-off to beautiful **Telaga Warna** (7000Rp; ☎ 8am–4.30pm), which has turquoise hues from the bubbling sulphur deposits around its shores. A trail leads anticlockwise to the adjoining lake, **Telaga Pengilon**, and the holy **Gua Semar**, a renowned meditation cave. Return to the main road via the indistinct trail that leads around Telaga Pengilon and up the terraced hillside. The colours of the lakes are better viewed from up high.

From Telaga Warna it's about 1km along the main road to Candi Bima, and then another 1.2km to **Kawah Sikidang** (5000Rp), a volcanic crater with steaming vents and frantically bubbling mud ponds. Exercise extreme caution here – there are no guard rails to keep you from slipping off the sometimes muddy trails into the scalding-hot waters. **Kawah Sibentang** is a less spectacular crater nearby, and **Telaga Lumut** is another small lake.

South of the geothermal station, the paved road leads on to **Sembungan**, said to be the highest village in Java, at 2300m. Potato farming has made this large village relatively wealthy – it sends an inordinate number of pilgrims to Mecca.

Gunung Sikunir, 1km past Sembungan, and the shallow lake of **Telaga Cebong**, just beyond the village, are the main attractions in this area. Views from Sikunir are spectacular, stretching across Dieng and east as far as Merapi and Merbabu volcanoes on a clear day. To reach the hill in time for sunrise, start at 4am from Dieng village. It's a one-hour walk to Sembungan and another 30 minutes to the top of the hill. Dieng Plateau Homestay and Hotel & Restaurant Bu Jono both offer guides for 45,000Rp per person.

Other attractions to the west are more difficult to reach. **Telaga Merdada** is a large lake, with a mushroom factory next to it. **Kawah Sileri**, 2km off the main road and 6km from Dieng, is a smoking crater area with a hot lake. A cave, **Gua Jimat**, is a 1km walk through the fields from the main road.

Nine kilometres from Dieng village is the trail to **Kawah Candradimuka**; it's a pleasant 1.5km walk to this crater through the fields.

Another trail branches off to two lakes: **Telaga Nila** and (a longer, two-hour walk away) **Telaga Dringo**. Just a few hundred metres past the turn-off to Kawah Candradimuka is **Sumur Jalatunda**. This well is in fact a deep hole some 100m across with vertical walls plunging down to bright-green waters.

Another popular spot to see the sunrise and views of the valley is the **lookout point** on the Wonosobo road, 5km back towards Wonosobo.

Sleeping & Eating

Dieng's dozen or more guest houses are notoriously poor value. Spartan conditions and draughty, semi-clean rooms are the norm. Beware that hot water is not always forthcoming. A new midrange hotel was nearing completion when we were in town. It's located right opposite the entrance road from Wonosobo (and painted a not-very-fetching dirty-pink colour).

Dieng Plateau Homestay (☎ 0813 2779 1565; Jl Raya, km 26; r 40,000Rp) Ubersparse place where the very basic rooms have concrete floors, a stick or two of furniture and rough blankets. That said, Titu, who works here, is a very amusing and hospitable guy who runs tours (sunrise trips are 50,000Rp) and will help you out in any way he can. The chilly, bare restaurant downstairs was closed for renovation when we visited but should soon reopen and serve typical travellers' fare.

Hotel & Restaurant Bu Jono (☎ 642 046, 0813 2845 5401; Jl Raya, km 26; r 50,000-75,000Rp) 'Hotel' is pushing it (considerably), but this simple place does have a certain quirky, if ramshackle charm. All rooms are small (one bed comes equipped with a Superman headboard!) and there are three shared hot-water *mandis*. The restaurant is actually a good place to eat, and even has tablecloths; try the high-altitude, energy-giving, carb-attack Swiss rosti. Staff are friendly here, supply good local information and offer tours.

Hotel Gunung Mas (☎ 334 2017; r 100,000, with hot water 150,000Rp) This is the most 'upmarket' hotel in town. Reception is not particularly friendly, and staff may enquire if couples are married (co-habiting is not on the agenda here, folks) and ask you to pay in advance. Still, at least the rooms are kept clean and in are good condition.

Food is not Dieng's strong suit; Hotel & Restaurant Bu Jono is your best bet and has

beer, but be prepared to wait for your nosebag. The cafe near the museums may or may not be open. While in town you must try the local herb, *purwaceng*, which is a kind of Dieng-style coca leaf that gives you a lift (if not a buzz). It's added to tea and coffee and for sale around town and at the entrance to the Arjuna Complex.

Getting There & Away

Dieng is 26km from Wonosobo (8000Rp, one hour), which is the usual access point. Buses continue on to Batur (3000Rp from Dieng), where you can catch a further bus to Pekalongan (27,000Rp, three hours) via a steep and bumpy but paved road.

It's possible to reach Dieng from Yogyakarta in one day (including a stop at Borobudur) by public bus, provided you leave early enough to make the connection; the route is Yogyakarta-Borobudur-Magelang-Wonosobo-Dieng. Travel agents in Yogyakarta offer day trips that include Borobudur, but you'll spend most of your time on a bus and (unless you're very fortunate) generally end up seeing Dieng clouded in mist.

BOROBUDUR

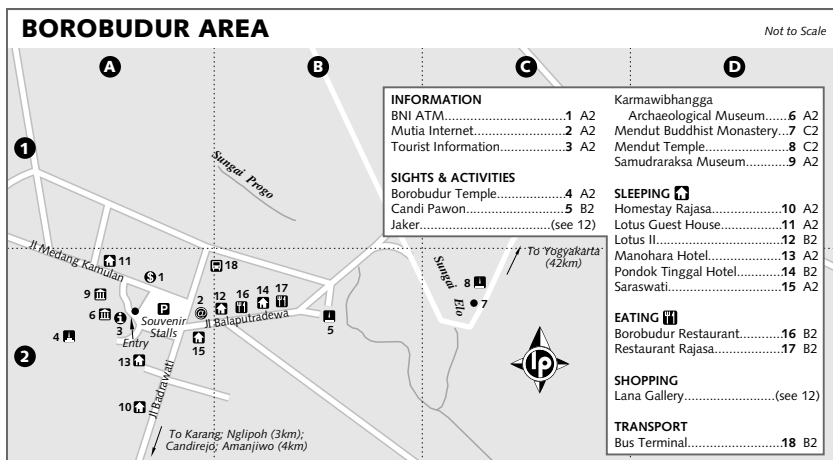
☎ 0293

Like Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Bagan in Myanmar, Java's Borobudur makes the rest of Southeast Asia's spectacular sites seem almost incidental. Looming out of a patchwork of bottle-green paddies and swaying palms, this colossal Buddhist monument has survived Gunung Merapi's ash flows, terrorist bombs and the 2006 earthquake to remain as enigmatic and beautiful as it must have been 1200 years ago.

However, in recent years the impact of mass tourism (on holidays up to 90,000 people ascend the temple) has put extreme pressure on Borobudur and conservationists are declaring that urgent measures are now necessary to ensure its survival.

It's well worth planning to spend a few days in the Borobudur region, which is a supremely beautiful landscape of impossibly green rice fields and traditional rice-growing *kampung*, all overlooked by soaring volcanic peaks.

This region is establishing itself as Indonesia's most important centre for Buddhism, and there are now three monasteries in the surrounding district. Visitors are welcome and you can even join the monks at prayer time for chanting; see p174.



History

Rulers of the Sailendra dynasty built Borobudur some time between AD 750 and AD 850. Little else is known about Borobudur's early history, but the Sailendras must have recruited a huge workforce, as some 60,000 cu metres of stone had to be hewn, transported and carved during its construction. The name Borobudur is possibly derived from the Sanskrit words 'Vihara Buddha Uhr', which mean 'Buddhist Monastery on the Hill'.

With the decline of Buddhism and the shift of power to East Java, Borobudur was abandoned soon after completion and for centuries lay forgotten, buried under layers of volcanic ash. It was only in 1815, when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles governed Java, that the site was cleared and the sheer magnitude of the builders' imagination and technical skill was revealed. Early in the 20th century the Dutch began to tackle the restoration of Borobudur, but over the years the supporting hill had become waterlogged and the whole immense stone mass started to subside. A mammoth US\$25-million Unesco-sponsored restoration project was undertaken between 1973 and 1983 to stabilise and restore the monument. This involved taking most of it apart stone by stone, adding new concrete foundations, inserting PVC and a lead drainage system, and then putting the whole shebang back together again.

On 21 January 1985, bombs planted by opponents of Suharto exploded on the upper layers of Borobudur. Many of the smaller stupas

were damaged, but the temple has once again been fully restored, demonstrating the structure's resilience. In 1991 Borobudur gained the status of a World Heritage Site.

Orientation & Information

The small, bustling village of Borobudur consists of around a dozen or so hotels and guest houses, scores of warungs and innumerable souvenir stalls. The bus terminal is less than 10 minutes' walk from the monument.

For standard tourist information contact the **information office** (☎ 788 266; www.borobudur park.com; admission to temple US\$12; ☎ 6am-5.30pm) just beyond the temple's entrance. Official guides are available at the smart new entrance lobby; they charge 50,000Rp for a 90-minute tour (up to 20 people).

BNI ATM (Jl Medang Kamulan) Near the temple's entrance.

Mutia Internet (Jl Balaputradewa; per hr 3000Rp) Speeds are pedestrian.

Sights

BOROBUDUR TEMPLE

Borobudur is built from two million stone blocks in the form of a massive symmetrical stupa, literally wrapped around a small hill. It stands solidly on its 118m by 118m base. Six square terraces are topped by three circular ones, with four stairways leading up through finely carved gateways to the top. The paintwork is long gone, but it's thought that the grey stone of Borobudur was at one time washed with a colour to catch the sun.

Viewed from the air, the structure resembles a colossal three-dimensional tantric mandala (symbolic circular figure). It has been suggested, in fact, that the people of the Buddhist community that once supported Borobudur were early Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhists who used it as a walk-through mandala.

The monument was conceived as a Buddhist vision of the cosmos in stone, starting in the everyday world and spiralling up to nirvana, the Buddhist heaven. At the base of the monument is a series of reliefs representing a world dominated by passion and desire, where the good are rewarded by reincarnation as a higher form of life, while the evil are punished by a lowlier reincarnation. These carvings and their carnal scenes are covered by stone to hide them from view, but they are partly visible on the southern side.

Starting at the main eastern gateway, go clockwise (as one should around all Buddhist monuments) around the galleries of the stupa. Although Borobudur is impressive for its sheer bulk, the delicate sculptural work when viewed close up is exquisite. The pilgrim's walk is about 5km long and takes you along narrow corridors past nearly 1460 richly decorated narrative panels and 1212 decorative panels in which the sculptors have carved a virtual textbook of Buddhist doctrines as well as many aspects of Javanese life 1000 years ago – a continual procession of ships and elephants, musicians and dancing girls, warriors and kings.

On the third level there's a lengthy panel sequence about a dream of Queen Maya, which involved a vision of white elephants with six tusks. Monks and courtiers interpret this as a premonition that her son would become a Buddha, and the sequence continues until the birth of Prince Siddhartha and his journey to become a Buddha. Many other panels are related to Buddhist concepts of cause and effect or karma.

Some 432 serene-faced Buddha images stare out from open chambers above the galleries, while 72 more Buddha images sit only partly visible in latticed stupas on the top three terraces – one is considered the lucky Buddha. The top platform is circular, signifying never-ending nirvana.

Admission to the temple includes entrance to **Karmawibhanga archaeological museum**, which is just east of the monument and contains 4000 original stones and carvings from Borobudur,

an exhibition of tools and chemicals used in its restoration, and some interesting photographs, including some recording the damage caused by the 1985 bomb.

Close by, the new **Samudraraksa museum** is dedicated to the importance of the ocean and sea trade in Indonesia. There's an 18m wooden outrigger here, a replica of a boat depicted on one of Borobudur's panels. This boat was sailed to Madagascar and on to Ghana in West Africa in 2003, a voyage that retraced ancient Javanese trading links – the original spice trade – with the continent over a thousand years ago.

An audiovisual show at the Manohara Hotel costs 5000Rp, and there are a few other attractions at Borobudur, including a children's playground and a tacky magic museum.

Borobudur is Indonesia's single most popular tourist attraction; it can be crowded and noisy, especially on weekends. Hawkers both outside and inside the archaeological park can be very pushy but are sometimes put off if you tell them in Bahasa Indonesia that you are a resident of Yogyakarta (*saya tinggal di Yogyakarta*). The finest time to see Borobudur and capture something of the spirit of the temple is at dawn or sunset, but you won't have it to yourself. These are popular times for the bus loads of tour groups to visit Borobudur. The temple is usually at its quietest during Ramadan.

It is, however, possible to beat the crowds at sunrise; for 300,000Rp (150,000Rp if you're a guest at the hotel) Manohara Hotel lets visitors enter the temple's grounds at 4.30am. A passport is required for entry.

MENDUT TEMPLE

This exquisite **temple** (admission 3300Rp; ☎ 8am–4pm), around 3.5km east of Borobudur, may look insignificant compared with its mighty neighbour, but it houses the most outstanding statue in its original setting of any temple in Java. The magnificent 3m-high figure of Buddha is flanked by Bodhisattvas: Lokeshvara on the left and Vairapana on the right. The Buddha is also notable for his posture: instead of the usual lotus position, he sits Western-style with both feet on the ground.

The Mendut temple, also called Venu Vana Mandira (Temple in the Bamboo Grove), was discovered in 1836, and restoration attempts were made by the Dutch between 1897 and

1904. The gracefully carved relief panels on its outer walls are among the finest and largest examples of Hindu-Javanese art in the country.

The statues are particularly evocative at night, when spotlight against the evening sky, and the inner chamber appears charged with an almost supernatural energy. Guards here will sometimes allow visitors to enter Mendut after dark if accompanied with a local guide (speak to Jaker; see right).

Next to the temple is the **Mendut Buddhist Monastery**. You can join the monks here for prayers at around 6pm every day, and meditation courses are often held in December.

CANDI PAWON

Around 1.5km east of Borobudur, this small solitary **temple** (admission 3300Rp; ☎ 8am-4pm) is similar in design and decoration to the Mendut temple. It is not a stupa but resembles a Central Javanese temple, with its broad base, central body and pyramidal roof. Elaborately carved relief panels adorn its sides. Pot-bellied dwarfs pouring riches over the entrance to this temple suggest that it was dedicated to Kuvera, the Buddhist god of fortune.

NEARBY VILLAGES

Away from the temples, the region around Borobudur is supremely beautiful – a verdant, incredibly fertile and classically Javanese landscape of villages and rice fields. Borobudur itself sits in a large bowl-shaped valley ringed by mountains and volcanoes that the locals call *mahagelan* – the giant bracelet.

Around 3km southwest of the monument, the small village of **Karang** is prime tofu-making terrain. There are several kitchens in the village, each producing around 50kg of *tahu* daily using traditional methods, cooking with coconut oil over a wood fire. The next settlement of **Nglipoh** is a ceramics centre, where locals say claypots have been made for over 1000 years; everyone in the village is involved in production in some way. Today mostly *ibu* (cooking vessels) are made, though glazed ashtrays and other pots are for sale too. The potters are very friendly and will let you try your hand on their wheels (just expect a giggle or two).

At **Candirejo**, 3km from Borobudur, locals have set up a **homestay program** (☎ 789 675; ind 3 meals 200,000Rp) that allows you to experience life in a Javanese village. Trekking, rafting

(125,000Rp) and tours (60,000Rp) of local home industries including palm sugar and *krupuk* kitchens are also offered.

Tours

Jaker (☎ 0293-788 845; jackpriyana@yahoo.com.sg) is a group of guides and local activists based in the small settlement of Borobudur that surrounds the world's largest Buddhist monument. All Jaker members were born in the area (some in a *kampung* that no longer exists after the temple compound was expanded in the 1990s). If you want to explore the region around Borobudur, Jaker can provide expert local knowledge; many guides speak fluent English. Backpacking rates are charged for trips to **Selogriyo** (towering rice terraces and a small Hindu temple), **Tuksongo** (a centre of glass-noodle production), tofu and pottery villages, and to **Mahitan hill** for sunrise over the Borobudur monument.

Festivals & Events

Festival of Borobudur Around June the Festival of Borobudur kicks off with a *Ramayana*-style dance, and goes on to feature folk-dancing competitions, handicrafts, white-water rafting and other activities.

Waisak The Buddha's birth, his enlightenment and his reaching of nirvana are all celebrated on the full-moon day of Waisak. A great procession of saffron-robed monks travels from Mendut to Pawon then Borobudur, where candles are lit and flowers strewn about as offerings, followed by praying and chanting. This holiest of Buddhist events attracts thousands of pilgrims, and usually falls in May.

Sleeping

Presently little of the millions of dollars that the Borobudur monument generates trickles down to the people who live in its vicinity – many hotels are owned by Jakartan (or foreign) interests. Jaker (above) is campaigning to get discounts for visitors who stay in locally owned hotels.

Pondok Tinggal Hotel (☎ 788 145; Jl Balaputradewa 32; dm 15,000Rp, r with fan 70,000-90,000Rp, with air-con from 120,000Rp; ☎) First impressions of this large hotel constructed of bamboo and timber are that it looks far too grand for budget travellers, but actually there's an excellent choice of inexpensive rooms around an attractive, peaceful garden, and even a couple of dorms. Don't expect much in the way of atmosphere, but there's a small *wayang* 'museum' and a decent restaurant too.

Lotus Guest House (☎ 788 281; Jl Medang Kamulan 2; r incl breakfast from 60,000-200,000Rp) North of the temple, Lotus is one of the original guest houses in Borobudur and it's still run by the same super-hospitable family. The 23 bare rooms scattered over a rambling building are very basic but kept clean, and there's plenty of space to read a book, free tea/coffee, and very cheap and tasty food.

our pick Lotus II (☎ 788 845; jackpriyana@yahoo.com.sg; Jl Balaputradewa 54; r incl breakfast 150,000Rp; ♿) An outstanding guest house that's owned by one of the founders of Jaker (see opposite), so there's great local information and it's the ideal place to set up a tour. Most of the artistically styled rooms here are exceptionally large, with mosquito nets draped from high ceilings and lovely comfy beds, but also bathrooms (with tubs) bigger than most losmen rooms. There's also a wonderful rear balcony with views directly onto rice fields that's the ideal spot for an afternoon tea or beer.

Homestay Rajasa (☎ 788 276; ariswara_sutomo@yahoo.com; Jl Badrawati 2; r with fan & cold water/air-con & hot water 160,000/275,000Rp; ♿) A popular guest house that makes a very homey base, with rooms at the rear of a villa that face rice fields (through railings). Prices have ramped up in recent years, and though it remains a good place to stay the 14 rooms are quite plain for the tariffs asked. There's a pleasant, open-air restaurant and free afternoon tea/coffee.

Manohara Hotel (☎ 788 131; www.yogyes.com/manohara; r incl breakfast from 575,000Rp; ♿) Set within the grounds of Borobudur, this nonsmoking hotel enjoys an unrivalled location. Rooms are comfortable and very well kept, if slightly dated, with carpets, a small TV and a porch. There's a good restaurant-café facing the monument. Unlimited entry to Borobudur is included, so if there are two of you the savings are substantial.

Saraswati (☎ 788 843; www.saraswatiborobudur.com; Jl Balaputradewa 10; r from US\$99, ste from US\$157; ♿ ♿ ♿ ♿) New, nonsmoking hotel a short walk from the monument with a grand, chintzy lobby and plush rooms set to the rear of the property with elegant furniture. The hotel's trump card is its delightful, shady pool area.

Amanjiwo (☎ 788 333; www.amanresorts.com/amanjiwo; r US\$700-2600; ♿ ♿ ♿ ♿) Amanjiwo rivals Borobudur temple in architectural extravagance. Perched on a hillside 4km south of Borobudur, with panoramic views towards

the stupa, this monument to luxury has it all. Stupendously exclusive suites, many with their own pool, are some of the finest in Indonesia. The complex has two tennis courts, a 40m pool and a wonderful spa. David Beckham stayed here in 2007. Nonsmoking. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Eating

Of the hotel restaurants, Lotus Guest House scores for cheap local food (try the *soto*) and has great juices, while Homestay Rajasa caters well to vegetarians. There are countless warungs outside the monument enclosure and around the bus terminal.

Restaurant Rajasa (☎ 789 690; Jl Balaputradewa; meals 20,000-30,000Rp) This is a lovely, intimate restaurant in a traditional Javanese house that has good Indonesian food: try a curry, or duck cooked in butter.

Borobudur Restaurant (☎ 788 109; Jl Balaputradewa; buffet 40,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-9pm) Large restaurant geared to tour groups with tables positioned near rice fields. Worth considering for its Javanese lunchtime buffet (40,000Rp).

Shopping

There's an excess of touristy tat and cheapo souvenir stalls around the entrance to the monument.

Lana Gallery (☎ 0813 9207 7763; Jl Balaputradewa 56) For something completely different, check out the terrific contemporary art available here.

Getting There & Away

Direct buses make the 42km trip from Yogyakarta's bus terminal to Borobudur (12,000Rp, 1½ hours) via Muntilan. These buses skirt the central city but can also be caught at Jombor, about 4km north of Yogyakarta on Jl Magelang, near the northern ring road. Bus 5 runs from Jombor to the city centre.

From Borobudur terminal buses go regularly to Magelang (5000Rp) until 4pm.

In Borobudur a becak should cost 5000Rp to 7000Rp to anywhere in the village. It's a fine walk to Mendut and Pawon; otherwise a bus or bemo is 2000Rp to hop from one temple to the next. Bicycles (20,000Rp) and motorbikes (50,000Rp) can be hired from hotels.

Tours of Borobudur (p182) are easily arranged in Yogyakarta with the Prawirotaman or Sosrowijayan agents.

YOGYAKARTA

☎ 0274 / pop 700,000

If Jakarta is Java's financial and industrial powerhouse, Yogyakarta is its soul. Central to the island's artistic and intellectual heritage, Yogyakarta (pronounced 'Jogjakarta'), called Yogya for short, is where the Javanese language is at its purest, Java's arts at their brightest and its traditions at their most visible.

Fiercely independent and protective of its customs, Yogya is now the site of an uneasy truce between the old ways of life and the onslaught of modernity. Still headed by its sultan, whose *kraton* remains the hub of traditional life, contemporary Yogya is nevertheless as much a city of cybercafes, lounge bars and traffic jams as batik, gamelan and ritual. But while the process of modernisation homogenises many of Java's cities, Yogya continues to juggle past and present with relative ease, sustaining a slower, more conservative way of life in the quiet *kampung* that thrive only a stone's throw from the throbbing main streets.

Yogya's potency has long outweighed its size, and it remains Java's premier tourist city, with countless hotels, restaurants and attractions of its own. The city is also an ideal base for exploring nearby attractions, including Indonesia's most important archaeological sites, Borobudur and Prambanan.

History

Yogyakarta owes its establishment to Prince Mangkubumi, who in 1755 returned to the former seat of Mataram and built the *kraton* of Yogyakarta. He took the title of sultan, adopted the name of Hamengkubuwono (The Universe on the Lap of the King) and created the most powerful Javanese state since the 17th century.

Yogya has always been a symbol of resistance to colonial rule; it was the heart of Diponegoro's Java War (1825–30) and became the capital of the republic from 1946 until independence in 1949.

When the Dutch occupied Yogya in 1948, the patriotic sultan locked himself in the *kraton* and let rebels use the palace as their headquarters. The Dutch did not dare move against the sultan for fear of arousing the anger of millions of Javanese who looked upon him almost as a god. As a result of the sultan's support of the rebels, Yogya was granted the status of a special region when independence finally came.

Orientation

It's easy to find your way around Yogya. Jl Malioboro, named after the Duke of Marlborough, is the main road and runs straight down from the train station to the *kraton* at the far end. The road becomes Jl A Yani further south but is generally referred to as Jl Malioboro. The tourist office and many souvenir shops and stalls are along this street and most of the budget places to stay are west of it, in the Jl Sosrowijayan area near the railway line.

The old, walled *kraton* is the centre of old Yogya, where you will also find the Taman Sari (Water Castle), Pasar Ngasem (Bird Market) and numerous batik galleries. There's a second hotel and restaurant enclave south of the *kraton*, around Jl Prawiroataman.

MAPS

The city's **tourist information office** (Map p177; ☎ 566 000; Jl Malioboro 16; ☎ 8am–7pm Mon–Thu, to 6pm Fri & Sat) produces a decent map of the city and also has a useful TransYogya busway map.

Information

The website www.yogyes.com is a useful portal to the city.

BOOKSTORES

Gramedia (off Map p177; ☎ 433 1141; Ambarukmo Plaza, Jl Laksda Adisucipto) This branch, 5km west of the centre, stocks a few new English-language titles.

Lucky Boomerang (Map p184; ☎ 895 006; Gang 1 67) Has used guidebooks and fiction, Periplus maps and books, plus souvenirs.

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafes can be found all over town, although many of the cheaper cafes (3000Rp per hour) are located north of Jl Diponegoro.

Internet Queen (Map p184; Jl Pasar Kembang 17; per hr 7000Rp; ☎ 24hr) Pretty speedy place that also has scanning and fax facilities and offers cheap international calls.

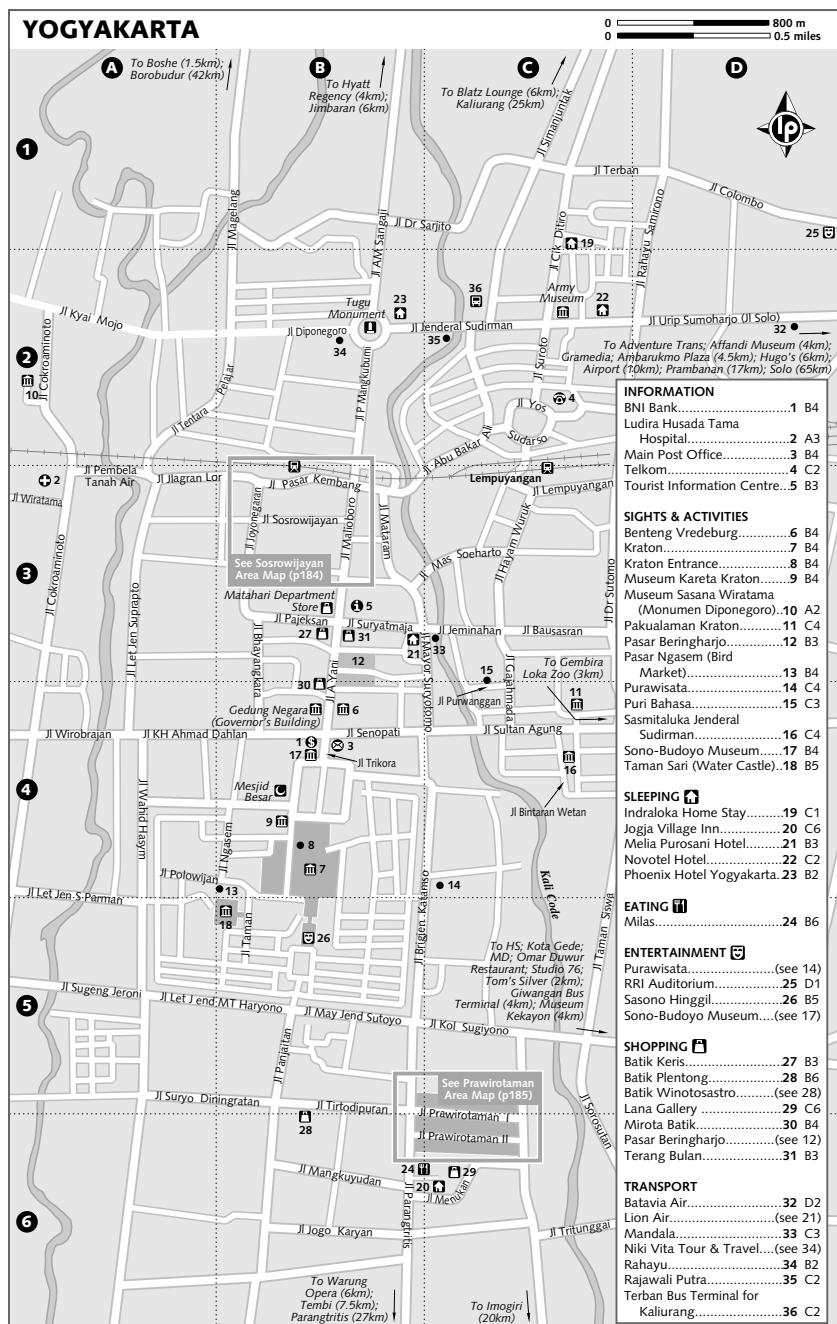
11 Net (Map p185; Jl Parangtritis; per hr 5000Rp) Equipped with modern terminals; speeds are quite respectable.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Ludira Husada Tama Hospital (Map p177; ☎ 620 333; Jl Wiratama 4; ☎ 24hr)

MONEY

There are numerous banks (and a few money changers) in the tourist areas. ATMs are very widespread throughout the city.



BNI bank (Map p177; Jl Trikona 1) Opposite the main post office.

Mulia (Map p184; Inna Garuda Hotel, Jl Malioboro 60) Along with Pt Barumun Abadi, this has the best exchange rates in Yogya.

Pt Barumun Abadi (Map p184; Inna Garuda Hotel, Jl Malioboro 60) Offers competitive rates.

POST

Main post office (Map p177; Jl Senopati)

TELEPHONE

Wartels are located all over town.

Telkom (Map p177; Jl Yos Sudarso) One kilometre east of Jl Malioboro.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre (Map p177; ☎ 566 000; Jl Malioboro 16; ☎ 8am–7pm Mon–Thu, to 6pm Fri & Sat) A well-organised office with helpful staff, free maps and good transport information. Produces a number of publications (including a calendar of events). Also has counters at the airport and on the eastern side of the Tugu train station.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Great Tours (Map p184; ☎ 583 221; Jl Sosrowijayan 29) Good for sunrise tours, bus and minibus tickets and tours to places including Bromo and Jlen.

Dangers & Annoyances

Hassle from smooth-talking batik salesmen is a constant issue for every traveller in town. The tourist board get hosts of complaints about these sharks, who may strike up conversations pretending to be guides. Inevitably you'll end up at a gallery where you'll get the hard sell and they'll rake in a big commission if you buy. A time-honoured scam is to pressure you to visit a 'special export' batik collection, a 'fine art student exhibition' or an 'official government store' – there are no official shops or galleries in the city.

Some of these dodgy batik salesmen hang around the *kraton* (right), where they tell you that the *kraton* is closed or there are no performances, but they might offer to show you to the 'sultan's batik workshop' (which is actually just a very expensive commission-paying showroom).

Be aware too that due to a schism in the ruling family there are actually two separate entrances, and ticket offices, at the *kraton*. One entrance (with a 5000Rp charge) only allows you to view a small area, which contains

some dioramas and horse carriages; it may be signposted 'Pagelaran.' Official-looking guys with IDs will try to shepherd you in here before inviting you to look at some of the 'sultan's batik'. This is *not* the main entrance to the *kraton*, which has a big clock by its ticket window (and an entrance fee of 12,500Rp).

Becak drivers are very pushy in Yogya; those offering 'special rates' of 1000Rp for one hour are also trying to get you into a batik gallery.

Sights

Most of Yogya's sights are in a small central area of the city centred on the *kraton* complex, and just to the north. But away from here and out in the eastern and southern suburbs are other attractions, including the quirky Affandi museum.

THE KRATON & AROUND

The historic *kraton* area harbours most of Yogya's most important buildings and tourist attractions and is eminently walkable.

Kraton

The cultural and political heart of this fascinating, independently minded city is the huge palace of the sultans of Yogya, or *kraton* (p177; ☎ 373 321; admission 12,500Rp, camera 1000Rp, guided tour by donation; ☎ 8am–2pm Sat–Thu, to 1pm Fri).

Be sure to read the warning under Dangers & Annoyances, left, about the two *kraton* ticket offices and entrances, and scams practised by batik sellers who hang around here.

Effectively a walled city, this unique compound is home to around 25,000 people, and has its own market, shops, batik and silver cottage industries, schools, and mosques. Around 1000 of its residents are employed by the sultan.

The *kraton* suffered damage during the 2006 earthquake and was closed for a time but is open again for visitors. Disappointingly, the treasures here are poorly displayed and not well labelled – don't expect much information to put the palace, its buildings and contents in context.

The innermost group of buildings, where the current sultan still resides, was built between 1755 and 1756, although extensions were made during the long reign of Hamengkubuwono I. European-style touches to the interior were added much later, in the 1920s. Structurally this is one of the finest

YOGYA IN...

Two Days

Start your day with a visit to the **kraton** (opposite) and a traditional performance of gamelan, *wayang* or dance, then spend the afternoon exploring the *kampung* surrounding the sultan's palace and nearby **Taman Sari** (below). End your afternoon with a wander through the city's squawking bird market, **Pasar Ngasem** (p180).

Your second day could start with a wander down Jl Malioboro scouting for batik bargains, and a meander through Yogya's main market, **Pasar Beringharjo** (p180). A becak ride to **Kota Gede** (p180) to seek out silver could be finished off with a trip to the Prawirotan district and a meal at the hip and happening **Via Via** (p186) restaurant.

Four Days

After exploring the city of Yogya it's time to get out and see wonders within striking distance of the city. Rise early and catch the sunrise at the incomparable Buddhist temple of **Borobudur** (p171), before exploring the verdant countryside and fascinating villages around the monument, ideally with a community guide from Jaker (see p174).

On day four move on to **Prambanan** (p194), the Hindu masterpiece on the other side of the city; it's fun to make a whole day of it by cycling there via some of the minor outlying temples.

examples of Javanese palace architecture, providing a series of luxurious halls and spacious courtyards and pavilions. The sense of tradition holds strong in Yogya, and the palace is attended by very dignified elderly retainers who still wear traditional Javanese dress.

The centre of the *kraton* is the reception hall, the **Bangsai Kencana** (Golden Pavilion), with its marble floor, intricately decorated roof, Dutch-style stained glass windows and great columns of carved teak. A large part of the *kraton* is used as a museum and holds an extensive collection, including gifts from European monarchs, gilt copies of the sacred *pusaka* (heirlooms of the royal family) and gamelan instruments. One of the most interesting rooms contains the royal family tree, old photographs of grand mass weddings and portraits of the former sultans of Yogya.

A modern memorial building within the *kraton* is dedicated to the beloved Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, with photographs and personal effects (including his desk, and, slightly bizarrely, some cutlery he used when in Holland).

Other points of interest within the *kraton* include the 'male' and 'female' entrances, indicated by giant-sized 'he' and 'she' dragons (although the dragons look very similar). Outside the *kraton*, in the centre of the northern square, there are two sacred *warigin* (banyan trees), where, in the days of feudal Java, white-robed petitioners would patiently

sit hoping to catch the eye of the king. In the *alun-alun kidul* (southern square), two similar **banyan trees** are said to bring great fortune if you can walk between them without mishap blindfolded; on Friday and Saturday nights you can see the youth of Yogya attempting the feat to a chorus of laughter from friends.

There are **performances** (☎ 10am-noon) in the *kraton's* inner pavilion that are included in your 12,500Rp entrance ticket. There's gamelan on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, *wayang golek* on Wednesday, Javanese singing and poems on Friday, *wayang kulit* on Saturday and classical dance on Sunday.

The *kraton's* entrance is on the northwestern side. It's closed on national holidays and for special *kraton* ceremonies.

Taman Sari

Just southwest of the *kraton* is this **complex** (Map p177; admission 7000Rp; ☎ 8am-3.30pm), which once served as a splendid pleasure park of palaces, pools and waterways for the sultan and his entourage. The Portuguese architect of this elaborate retreat, built between 1758 and 1765, was from Batavia – the story goes that the sultan had him executed in order to keep his hidden pleasure rooms secret.

The complex, which is also known by its old Dutch name *waterkasteel* (water castle), was damaged first by Diponegoro's Java War, and an earthquake in 1865 helped finish the job. While much of what you see today lies in

ruins, the bathing pools have been restored. From the tower overlooking the pools, the sultan was able to dally with his wives and witness the goings-on below.

The entrance to the restored bathing pools is on Jl Taman. Batik touts will try to lure you to a batik gallery or pretend to be official guides – shake them off.

Pasar Ngasem

At the edge of Taman Sari, Yogya's **bird market** (Map p177; Jl Polowijan; ☎ 8am–5pm) is a colourful menagerie crowded with hundreds of budgerigars, orioles and singing turtle doves. Pigeons are the big business here (for training, not eating), but occasionally owls and raptors are also sold.

Snakes (including sometimes cobras and pythons), lizards, iguanas and other animals are also for sale, as are big trays of bird feed (swarming maggots and ants). From the back of Pasar Ngasem, an alleyway leads up to the broken walls of Taman Sari for fine views across Yogya.

Museums Around the Kraton

Near the *kraton* entrance, **Museum Kareta Kraton** (Map p177; admission 7500Rp, camera 1000Rp; ☎ 8am–2pm Sat–Thu, to noon Fri) has exhibits of the opulent chariots of the sultans, although the bug-eyed horse statues are almost more interesting than the main event.

Across the main square in front of the *kraton*, **Sono-Budoyo Museum** (Map p177; ☎ 376 775; admission 5000Rp; ☎ 8am–1.30pm Tue–Thu, to 11.15am Fri, to noon Sat & Sun) is the pick of Yogya's museums, even if it is dusty and dimly lit. It has a first-class collection of Javanese art, including *wayang kulit* puppets, *topeng* (masks), kris and batik. It also has a courtyard packed with Hindu statuary and artefacts from further afield, including superb Balinese carvings. *Wayang kulit* performances are held here (p187).

Just north of here, on the opposite side of Jl A Yani, is the **Benteng Vredenburg** (Map p177; Jl A Yani 6; admission 3500Rp; ☎ 8.30am–1.30pm Tue–Thu, to 11am Fri, to noon Sat & Sun), a Dutch-era fort that's been converted into a museum. It houses dioramas showing the history of the independence movement in Yogyakarta. The architecture is worth a look, but the dioramas are designed for Indonesian patriots.

The small **Pakualaman Kraton** (Map p177; Jl Sultan Agung; ☎ 9.30am–1.30pm Tue, Thu & Sun), 1km east of

Benteng Vredenburg, houses a small museum, a *pendopo* that can hold a full gamelan orchestra, and a curious colonial house. Outside opening times you can explore the grounds. Close by is **Sasmitaluka Jenderal Sudirman** (Map p177; Jl Bintaran Wetan 3; admission by donation; ☎ 8am–noon Tue–Sun), the memorial home of General Sudirman, who commanded revolutionary forces and died shortly after the siege of Yogya in 1948.

Pasar Beringharjo

Yogya's **main market** (Map p177; Jl A Yani; ☎ 8am–4.30pm), 800m north of the *kraton* on the southern continuation of Jl Malioboro, is a lively and fascinating place. The renovated front section has a wide range of batik – mostly inexpensive *batik cap* (stamped batik) – while the 2nd floor is dedicated to cheap clothes and shoes. Most interesting of all, though, is the old section towards the back. Crammed with warungs and stalls selling a huge variety of fruit and vegetables, this is still very much a traditional market. The range of *rempah rempah* (spices) on the 1st floor is quite something.

Purawisata

In the evening you can head along to the **Purawisata** (Map p177; Jl Brigjen Katamso), an amusement park noted more for its dance performances, but there are also rides, fun-fair games and a *pasar seni* (art market) with a basic collection of souvenirs.

EASTERN YOGYAKARTA

The east of the city has several more interesting sights, including the silver village of Kota Gede and a couple of museums.

Kota Gede

Kota Gede (off Map p177) has been famed as the hub of Yogya's silver industry since the 1930s. But this quiet old town, which is now a suburb of Yogyakarta, was the first capital of the Mataram kingdom, founded by Panembahan Senopati in 1582. Senopati is buried in the small mossy graveyard of an old mosque located to the south of the town's central market. You can visit the **sacred tomb** (admission 1000Rp; ☎ around 9am–noon Sun, Mon & Thu, around 1–3pm Fri), but be sure to wear conservative dress when visiting. On days when the tomb is closed there is not much to see here.

Jl Kemasan, the main street leading into town from the north, is lined with busy silver workshops. Most of the shops have similar stock, including hand-beaten bowls, boxes, fine filigree and modern jewellery (see p188).

Kota Gede is about 5km southeast of Jl Malioboro. Catch bus 3A or 3B, take a becak (about 18,000Rp), or cycle there; it's flat most of the way.

Museums

One of Indonesia's most celebrated artists, Affandi lived and worked in a wonderfully quirky riverside house-cum-studio, about 6km east of the town centre. Today his former home is the **Affandi Museum** (off Map p177; ☎ 562 593; www.affandi.org; Jl Laksa Adisucipto 167; admission incl 1 soft drink 20,000Rp, camera 10,000Rp; ☎ 9am-4pm except holidays), which has an extensive collection of his paintings, including some astonishing self-portraits. Affandi's work is displayed in two large Gaudiesque buildings that he designed himself and also contain a few personal items, including a boy racer's dream: a lime-green-and-yellow customized 1967 Galant car with an oversized rear spoiler.

Paintings by his daughter Kartika and other artists are also exhibited. There's a great little cafe here, and Affandi's artistic touch even extends to the *mushullah* (prayer room), which occupies a converted horse carriage, painted in technicolour tones – it looks like a psychedelic gypsy cart. Catch bus 1A to reach this museum from Jl Malioboro.

A little further east, **Museum Kekayon** (off Map p177; ☎ 379 058; Jl Raya Jogja Wonosari 277; admission 3000Rp; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun) is dedicated to the history of Indonesian people and has a priceless antique *wayang* collection gathered from all over the nation.

Zoo

Yogya's **Gembira Loka Zoo** (off Map p177; admission 8000Rp; ☎ 8am-6pm), about 5km east of Jl A Yani, has its fair share of cramped cages, but on the whole it is spacious and has some interesting exotica such as some Komodo dragons, which are successfully breeding.

OTHER AREAS

In the northwest of the city, 1.5km west of the Tugu train station, **Museum Sasana Wiratama** (Monumen Diponegoro; Map p177; admission by donation; ☎ 8am-noon Tue-Sun) honours the Indonesian

hero Prince Diponegoro, who was leader of the bloody but futile rebellion of 1825–30 against the Dutch. A motley collection of the prince's belongings and other exhibits are kept in the small museum at his former Yogya residence.

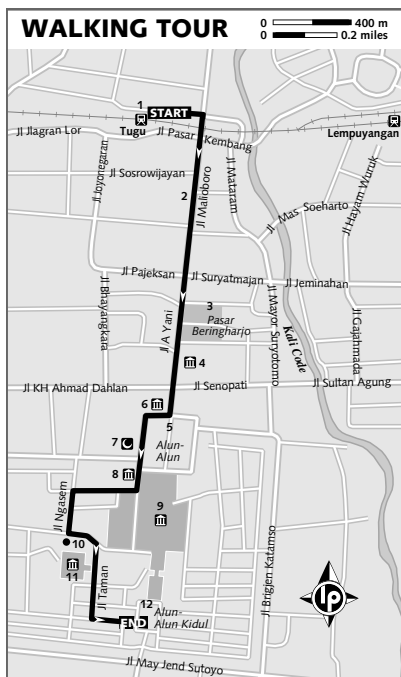
Down in the deep south of the city, **Tembi** (off Map p177; ☎ 368 000; www.tembi.net; admission by donation; ☎ 9am-4pm) is a Javanese cultural centre in a lovely position surrounded by rice paddies. The fine old wooden houses here contain an outstanding collection of kris, a few *wayang* puppets, batik and basketry and some historic photographs of Yogya. There's a highly recommended restaurant and accommodation too. To get to Tembi, jump aboard any bus bound for Parangtritis beach from Jl Parangtritis and get off at kilometre 8.4 on the highway; Tembi is 400m east of here along a side road.

Walking Tour

Yogya is a very manageable city and many of its blockbuster sights can be seen on foot. A good place to start a walking tour is **Tugu train station (1)**, from where **Jl Malioboro (2)**, Yogya's premier shopping street, is laid out in front of you. Head south along Jl Malioboro until it intersects with Jl Suryatmajan, from which point Malioboro becomes **Jl A Yani**. Only one block south of Jl Suryatmajan is the market **Pasar Beringharjo (3)** (opposite), and only another block south again is the city's old Dutch fort, **Benteng Vredeburg (4)** (opposite).

Continuing south once more, cross Jl Senopati onto Jl Trikora and the **alun-alun (5)** will appear. Swing right and past the **Sono-Budoyo Museum (6)** (opposite) before heading south again, walking by the **Mesjid Besar** (Grand Mosque; 7) and **Museum Kareta Kraton (8)** (opposite). The entrance to the **Kraton (9)** (p178) is only a few metres to the left.

From the *kraton*, head west until you hit Jl Ngasem, then turn left. Walk south and the city's **bird market (10)** (opposite) will be impossible to miss. Take Jl Taman east from outside the bird market; it quickly turns south and passes the **Taman Sari (11)** (p179). At the end of Jl Taman turn left and make a beeline for the city's southern **alun-alun (12)**. If you're with friends (or are simply feeling adventurous), have yourself blindfolded and try your luck walking between the square's two banyan trees; local folklore predicts good fortune for those who succeed.



WALK FACTS

Start Tugu train station

Finish alun-alun kidul

Distance 3km

Duration Two hours, excluding stops at attractions along the way

Finish off with a restorative cup of *ronde* (ginger tea) from one of the street vendors here, who also sell barbecued corn on the cob and *mie goreng* (fried noodles).

Courses

Yogya has plenty of places offering a variety of courses, with everything from batik painting to Bahasa Indonesia classes on offer. The Tourist Information Centre (p178) also has a list of places offering courses.

Losmen Lucy (Map p184; ☎ 513 429) Cheap batik courses – a full day costs around 110,000Rp (after bargaining!).

Puri Bahasa (Map p177; ☎ 588 192; puriindo@indosat.net.id; Jl Purwangan 15) A professional language school offering Bahasa Indonesia classes (US\$7 per hour for

one-on-one tuition). Family homestays can be arranged, starting at 450,000Rp per week.

Studio 76 (off Map p177; ☎ 714 7676; Jl Purbayan, Kota Gede) Runs good full-day silversmith courses (220,000Rp per person including lunch and 10g of silver to play around with).

Via Via (Map p185; ☎ 386 557; www.viaviacafe.com; Jl Prawiroataman I 30) Has excellent half-day cooking (85,000Rp), batik- and silver jewellery-making (both 80,000Rp) courses.

Tours

Rumah Guides (Map p185; ☎ 386 432; www.inspirasi-indonesiaholidays.com; Rumah Eyang, Gang Sartono 823, Jl Parangtritis) is an excellent new community project run by young Yogya citizens eager to show you their city and the surrounding area. Tours of the city (150,000Rp per day) and to Borobudur, Dieng and beyond can be set up in their Prawiroataman area office. It's also possible to stay with local families as part of a homestay program (US\$12 per day including all meals).

Tour agents on Jl Prawiroataman (Map p185) and in the Sosrowijayan area (Map p184) offer a host of tour options at similar prices. Typical day tours and per-person rates (excluding entrance fees):

Borobudur 70,000Rp.

Dieng 175,000Rp.

Gedung Songo and Ambarawa 175,000Rp.

Prambanan 80,000Rp.

Prambanan and Parangtritis 175,000Rp.

Solo, Sukuh and Tawangmangu 200,000Rp.

Sunrise at Gunung Merapi 200,000Rp.

Longer tours, such as to Gunung Bromo and on to Bali (from 330,000Rp for two days and one night) and Bromo/Ijen (600,000Rp for three days and two nights) are also offered. Tours are often dependent on getting enough people to fill a minibus (usually a minimum of four), and prices vary depending on whether air-con is provided. Note that tours may also stop at batik or silver galleries to earn extra commission for tour operators.

Operators also arrange cars with driver, with rates starting at 75,000Rp per hour or around 400,000Rp per day.

Adventure Trans (off Map p177; ☎ 0813 2806 1771; www.adventuretrans.net; Jl Raya Seturan 13) Adventure travel agent specialising in upmarket tours to Bali via Bromo and Ijen. Also offers trekking and rafting trips.

Jogya Trans (☎ 0816 426 0124; Gang 04/09, Madurejo, Prambanan) Professional agency that can provide cars and minibuses with drivers and also arrange bespoke tours.

Kartika Trekking (Map p184; ☎ 562 016; Jl Sosrowijayan 10) Agent specialising in trekking trips to Gunung Merapi. Recommended by locals and readers.

Festivals & Events

Gerebeg The three Gerebeg festivals – held each year at the end of January and April and the beginning of November – are Java's most colourful and grand processions. In traditional court dress, palace guards and retainers, not to mention large floats of decorated mountains of rice, all make their way to the mosque, west of the *kraton*, to the sound of prayer and gamelan music.

Arts Festival Yogya hosts this annual festival from 7 June to 7 July. Offers a wide range of shows and exhibitions. Most events are held at the Benteng Vredeburg.

Sleeping

Yogya has Java's best range of guest houses and hotels, many offering excellent value for money. During the high season – July, August and around Christmas and New Year – things can get crowded. Outside these times, you should have no problem finding a bed and discounts should be easy to come by.

BUDGET

Sosrowijayan Area

Most of Yogya's cheap hotels are in the *gang* (alleys) of the Sosrowijayan area immediately south of the train line, which still has a real *kampung* atmosphere. Running between Jl Pasar Kembang and Jl Sosrowijayan, Gang Sosrowijayan I and II are lined with cheap accommodation. Standards in many places have slipped in recent years as backpacker numbers have declined, but there are still some good options.

Tiffa Art Shop & Losmen (Map p184; ☎ 512 841; tiffaartshop@yahoo.com; s/d 40,000/70,000Rp) An excellent little losmen owned by a hospitable family, with accommodation above an art shop. All the four rooms are smallish but have private *mandi* and there's a communal balcony where you can tuck into your free breakfast and tea/coffee. They also rent out motorbikes here, from 50,000Rp a day.

Dewi Homestay (Map p184; ☎ 516 014; dewi.homestay@hotmail.com; r 50,000-75,000Rp) This converted house has some charm, with rooms with four-poster beds and massive mosquito nets, though there's not much natural light – perfect if you want a really deep sleep.

Losmen Lucy (Map p184; ☎ 513 429; s/d 70,000/80,000Rp) One of the best losmen in Yogya, this place tries much harder than most.

The 12 fan-cooled rooms here are kept really spick and span and the beds still have some spring; all have en-suite *mandi* with Asian toilets. The owner offers good batik-painting classes.

our pick Losmen Setia Kawan (Map p184; ☎ 512 452; www.bedhots.com; economy r 70,000-100,000Rp, r with air-con 125,000-200,000Rp; ☎ ☎) First choice in Sosrowijayan, this is a superb, very inviting and well-run place that occupies a fine old artistically decorated house. There are nice touches evident everywhere, with classic Vespa scooters in the lobby, a rooftop patio, a lounge area with TV/DVDs and a row of computers for internet access. Rooms are smallish but very attractive, though the swirling, hippy-dippy wall murals are a bit much to wake up to.

Bladok Losmen & Restaurant (Map p184; ☎ 560 452; Jl Sosrowijayan 76; r 80,000Rp, with balcony 120,000Rp, with air-con from 195,000Rp; ☎ ☎) A great lodge of real character and charm, Bladok caters to both budget and midrange travellers, and justifiably remains a perennial favourite. All the rooms have lovely chunky wooden beds and furniture, and crisp, fresh linen; rooms 11 and 12 have balconies. There's an excellent restaurant here too.

Hotel Asia-Afrika (Map p184; ☎ 566 219; Jl Pasar Kembang 21; r with fan 175,000Rp, with air-con from 210,000Rp; ☎ ☎) This hotel's rooms are not quite as glam as the swish marble lobby would indicate but are still good value. The decent-sized pool and sun loungers make it a tempting choice.

Also recommended:

Jaya Losmen (Map p184; ☎ 515 035; Gang II 79; s/d with shared *mandi* 35,000/40,000Rp) A pad to crash.

Superman's Losmen (Map p184; ☎ 515 007; r 45,000Rp) Simple losmen on Gang I with very basic rooms.

Rejeki Homestay (Map p184; ☎ 516 084; r 70,000Rp) Eleven neat, clean doubles and twins, with a stick or two of furniture, that all have fan and private *mandi*.

Prawirotaman Area

This area is definitely more upmarket than Sosrowijayan and has a few cheap places mixing it with lots of midrange choices. Plenty of hotels have a pool here – a huge bonus after a day spent sightseeing in the sun.

Delta Homestay (Map p185; ☎ 727 1047; www.putagardenhotel.com; Jl Prawirotaman II 597A; s/d 75,000/85,000Rp, with *mandi* 105,000/115,000Rp, with air-con 140,000/150,000Rp; ☎ ☎) An outstanding little hotel with a selection of small but

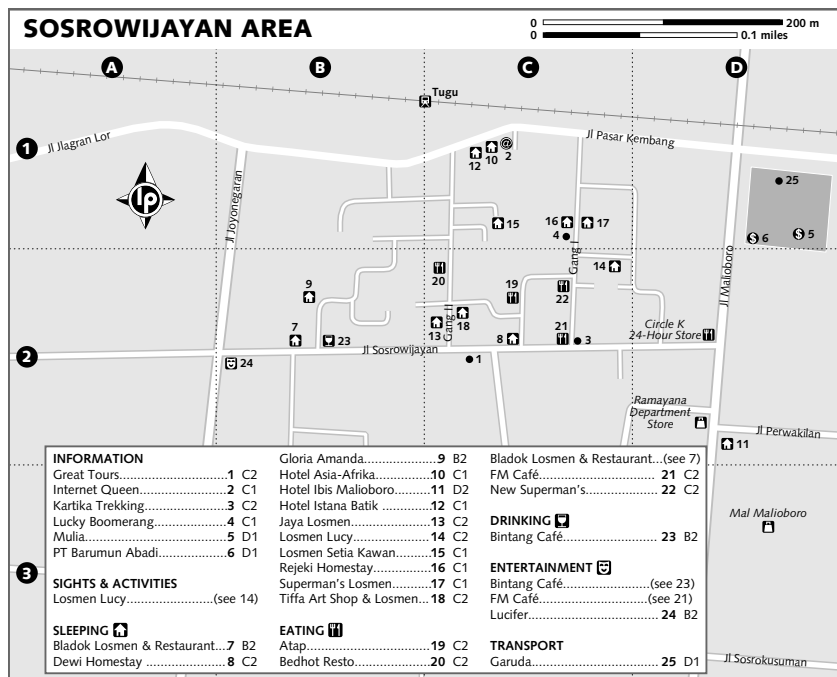
better doubles are comfortable and have bamboo trimmings and ikat-style textiles draped on good-quality beds.

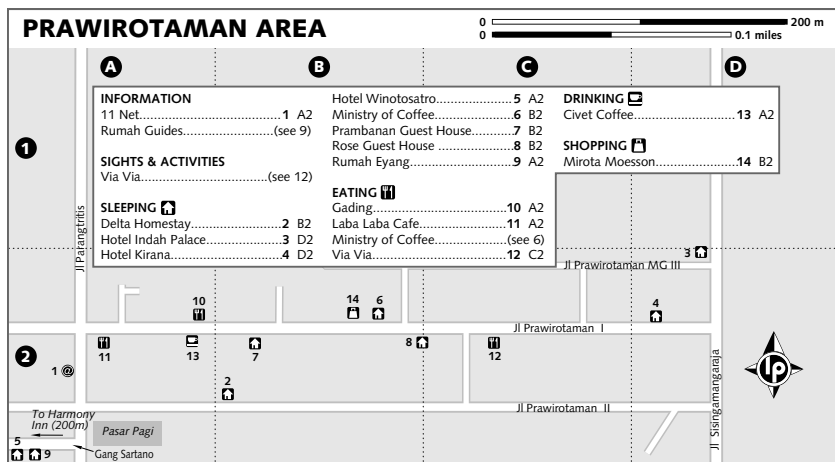
Hotel Winotosatro (Map p185; ☎ 387 110; Jl Parangtritis 92A; r 140,000-160,000Rp, deluxe r 230,000Rp; 🕒 🚗) This large hotel in a peaceful location is divided into two sections with good-value, spacious rooms that all have air-con, TV and wooden furniture. The wonderful oval pool here must be 40m across.

Harmony Inn (off Mapp 185; ☎ 387 135; Gang Sartono, Jl Parangtritis; t 175,000Rp; ♿ ♿) On the western side of Jl Parangtritis, this good-value place has spacious rooms with rattan furniture, TVs, and bathrooms with hot water and a tub. There's a great pool at the back with sun loungers and a cafe.

MIDRANGE
Sosrowijayan Area
Gloria Amanda (Map p184; ☎ 565 286; www.gloriaamanda-hotel.com; Jl Sosrowijayan 195; r with fan 150,000Rp, with air-con from 270,000Rp; ♿ ♿) Situated down a little lane, this modern place has 35 very neat if plain, smallish air-con rooms with good beds and TVs.

Gloria Amanda (Map p184; ☎ 565 286; www.gloriaamanda-hotel.com; Jl Sosrowijayan 195; r with fan 150,000Rp, with air-con from 270,000Rp; 🕒 📺 📶) Situated down a little lane, this modern place has 35 very neat if plain, smallish air-con rooms with good beds and TVs.





Hotel Istana Batik (Map p184; ☎ 587 012; www.diana-grouphotel.com; Jl Pasar Kembang 29; r 300,000-350,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) Istana Batik is what locals call *tradisional* – it has real Javanese character, with elaborately carved wooden furniture in its fine lobby and spacious rooms. Some fixtures and fittings are looking a little dated, but it's still a comfortable and convenient base.

Prawirotaman Area

Ministry of Coffee (Map p185; ☎ 747 3828; www.ministryofcoffee.com; Jl Prawirotaman I 15A; s/d from 300,000/330,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) This cutting-edge cafe-library has not only delectable coffee but also a few comfortable, stylish rooms, all with air-con, safety boxes and free wi-fi and most with little balconies.

Hotel Kirana (Map p185; ☎ 376 000; kirana.hotel@gmail.com; Jl Prawirotaman I 45; s/d incl breakfast from 370,000/390,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) A hip-looking new minimalist hotel, but rooms are not large, and though modern and well-presented, they're a bit pricey. You'll find a nice lounge and garden area at the rear. A discount is in order.

Hotel Indah Palace (Map p185; ☎ 383 738; www.hotelindahpalace.com; Jl Sisingamangaraja 74; s/d incl breakfast from 468,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) Modern midranger with plush, comfortable rooms set around a pool. The attractive restaurant, with its soaring wood-beamed roof, is good.

Other Areas

Indraloka Home Stay (Map p177; ☎ 564 341; manunggal@yogya.wasantara.net.id; Jl Cik Ditiro 18; r incl breakfast,

air-con & hot water from 225,000Rp; ☎ ☎) An intimate homestay with bags of charm, antique furniture, faded but classy old-world decor and a small garden out back. The cheaper rooms are quite poky, so shell out for the more expensive ones. It's north of Jl Sudirman.

Tembi (off Map p177; ☎ 368 000; www.tembi.net; Jl Parangtritis, km 8.4; bungalows 368,100-634,500Rp, family bungalows 918,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) On the road to the beach, this cultural centre (see p181) has seven commodious wooden bungalows, built in traditional Javanese style, with four-poster beds and wonderful open-air bathrooms. The location is semi-rural, with paddy fields all around, so it's best to have your own transport. Breakfast is included and there's a great restaurant too.

Hotel Ibis Malioboro (Map p184; ☎ 516 974; admin@ibisyogya.com; Jl Malioboro 52-58; r from 456,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) It's no beauty, but this nonsmoking central hotel is very convenient for shopping and offers homogenous but fully functional business-class comfort.

Novotel Hotel (Map p177; ☎ 580 930; admin@novotel-yogya.com; Jl Jenderal Sudirman 89; r from 504,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) It may be a chain hotel, but it's a fine example of the genre, with sleek, contemporary decor, helpful English-speaking staff and excellent facilities including a good gym. Nonsmoking.

our pick Phoenix Hotel Yogyakarta (Map p177; ☎ 566 617; info@thephoenixyogya.com; Jl Jenderal Sudirman 9-11; r from 545,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This historic hotel, part of the Accor chain, is easily the best in its class in Yogya. Dating back to 1918,

it's been sensitively converted to incorporate modern facilities. Rooms are gorgeous, many with balconies overlooking the pool area, and there's an army of attentive staff on hand, a spa and a great cafe. Tariffs asked (book via the web for the best rates) are modest given the colonial charm of this Yogya landmark. Nonsmoking.

TOP END

Yogya has a glut of luxury hotels, and heavy discounting has always been the norm. Most prices include breakfast.

Jogja Village Inn (Map p177; ☎ 373 031; www.jvidusun.co.id; Jl Menukan 5; r from US\$75; ☎ ☎ ☎) Just south of the happening Prawirotoaman area, this fine hotel has a lovely Javanese feel, with low-rise buildings scattered around a gorgeous tropical garden and huge pool. Staff are attentive, and the restaurant is excellent. Nonsmoking. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Melia Purosani Hotel (Map p177; ☎ 589 521; www.solmelia.com; Jl Mayor Suryotomo 31; r from US\$79; ☎ ☎ ☎) This luxury colossus enjoys a very central location just east of Jl Malioboro. Its range of facilities includes a spa and fitness centre, and it offers competitive deals via its website. Nonsmoking. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Hyatt Regency (off Map p177; ☎ 869 123; www.yogya.karta.regency.hyatt.com; Jl Palagan Pelajar; r from US\$115; ☎ ☎ ☎) Sitting pretty in 24 hectares of landscaped grounds in the northern outskirts of the city, this luxury hotel has a golf course, tennis courts and a huge pool. Nonsmoking. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Eating

SOSROWIJAYAN AREA

For cheap and cheerful Indonesian and Western nosh, this area fits the bill (and your pocket) nicely. It's also the place to join locals for a bite to eat; after 10pm, the souvenir vendors along the northern end of Jl Malioboro pack up and a *lesahan* area (where diners sit on straw mats) comes alive. Here you can try Yogya's famous *ayam goreng* (deep-fried chicken soaked in coconut milk) and listen to young Indonesians strumming their guitars into the wee small hours.

A whole host of good warungs also lines Jl Pasar Kembang, beside the train line.

Atap (Map p184; ☎ 0856 4318 2004; Jl Sosrowijayan GT 1/113; dishes from 10,000Rp; ☎ 5.30-10pm) Bohemian restaurant with tables made from car tyres

and a great little outdoor terrace. The menu has burgers and Indo favourites and a wicked sense of humour: *kopi osama* is coffee with a shot of brandy – the bearded one would not approve.

Bedhot Resto (Map p184; Gang II; mains 10,000-22,000Rp) Bedhot means 'creative' in old Javanese and this place is perhaps the most stylish eatery in Sosrowijayan, with art on the walls, batik tablecloths and menus made from bark. There's tasty Indonesian and Western food, good juices and internet access upstairs.

New Superman's (Map p184; meals 15,000-25,000Rp) Huge, slightly charmless place that's nevertheless a key hang-out for travellers, with a long, long menu of Western food like pizzas, jaffles and pancakes, and Chinese food.

Bladok Losmen & Restaurant (Map p184; Jl Sosrowijayan 76; mains 18,000-40,000Rp) Classy hotel restaurant with a wholesome and inviting air, and a mainly European menu.

FM Café (Map p184; Jl Sosrowijayan 14; mains around 20,000Rp) FM Café has a great courtyard setting and an eclectic menu ranging from *nasi goreng* to pizza. Happy hour is gloriously lengthy, lasting from 1pm to 8pm; bands perform here on Friday night.

PRAWIROTAMAN AREA

Our pick Via Via (Map p185; ☎ 386 557; www.viaviacafe.com; Jl Prawirotoaman I 30; mains 14,000-28,000Rp; ☎) A simply outstanding and very cosmopolitan venue, this cool cafe-restaurant gets virtually everything right. The menu is tempting, with very fresh, inventive Indonesian and Western food at fair prices, a few tapas, wine by the glass and healthy juices. The decor mixes exposed concrete and bamboo screens, and there's a great outdoor terrace.

Ministry of Coffee (Map p185; ☎ 747 3828; www.ministryofcoffee.com; Jl Prawirotoaman I 15A; meals 20,000Rp) A landmark modernist structure, with a library (with English-language books and magazines) upstairs and a cafe below. It's ideal for an espresso or latte, but the food (mainly snacks and cakes) is pretty average.

Milas (Map p177; ☎ 742 3399; Jl Prawirotoaman IV 127; meals from 20,000Rp) This secret garden restaurant, located down a quiet side road, is a project centre for street youth. Offers tasty vegetarian cooking: healthy snacks, sandwiches, salads and organic coffee.

Laba Laba Cafe (Map p185; Jl Prawirotoaman I 2; mains 20,000Rp) Laba Laba (which means 'spider') has

a great rear garden that's an ideal setting for some filling European or Indonesian food.

Gading (Map p185; ☎ 659 6921; Jl Prawirotaman I 9; mains 20,000-48,000Rp) A civilised restaurant with pleasant seating and lighting and a menu of Indonesian and Western food – the thin-crust pizza here is great. There's live music on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

OTHER AREAS

Tembi (off Map p177; ☎ 368 000; www.tembi.net; Jl Parangtritis, km 8.4; meals 8000-25,000Rp) Way down south, this lovely little restaurant specialises in traditional Javanese dishes. There are some startling things on the menu here, including squirrel and stir-fried sparrow, alongside more familiar options. It's part of the Tembi cultural centre (p181).

Jimbaran (off Map p177; ☎ 745 2882; Jl Damai; fish per ounce 8000Rp, lobster & prawns per ounce from 12,000Rp; ☎ noon-10pm) Overlooking rice fields (or kids' football pitch, depending on the season), this enjoyable place specialises in seafood. Everything is priced by the ounce; feast on crab, lobster, prawns and fresh fish. Jimbaran is about 6km north of Yogya, and about 2km north of the Hyatt.

our pick Warung Opera (off Map p177; ☎ 718 1977; Jl Parangtritis, km 6.3; mains 10,000-30,000Rp; ☎ 5-10pm) Occupying a wonderful traditional Javanese house built from teak, this unusual and bohemian restaurant is an outstanding place to sample home-style Indonesian dishes. Donny, the flamboyant owner, also does fortune reading from coffee cups.

Omah Duwur Restaurant (off Map p177; ☎ 374 952; www.omahduwur.net; Jl Mondorakan 252; mains 32,000-125,000Rp; ☎) Out in Kota Gede, this is one of Yogya's best restaurants, with a lavish setting in a 150-year-old colonial mansion. Offers a wide selection of Western (try the rack of lamb) and Eastern dishes (the chicken masala is great).

Drinking

There's not much drinking culture evident in Yogya, but if you want to sip a few beers both Sosrowijayan (along Jl Sosrowijayan) and Prawirotaman (along Jl Pangrititis) have a bar or two.

Bintang Café (Map p184; Jl Sosrowijayan 54; mains 15,000Rp) This (un)imaginatively named place in the Sosrowijayan backpacking manor has live music and is one of the liveliest places around here. The food is bog-standard fare.

Civet Coffee (Map p185; Jl Prawirotaman I; snacks 16,000Rp; ☎) A stylish new cafe with a tempting choice of coffee, including gourmet blends like arabica Toraja, plus sandwiches and snacks. Wi-fi is free for 20 minutes and 6000Rp per hour afterwards.

Entertainment

If you've ever wanted to see traditional Javanese performing arts, this is the place. Dance, *wayang* or gamelan is performed every morning at the *kraton* (p179), and provides a useful introduction to Javanese arts. Check with the tourist office for current listings and any special events.

Most famous of all performances is the spectacular Ramayana ballet (p197) held in the open air at Prambanan in the dry season.

WAYANG KULIT

Leather-puppet performances can be seen at several places around Yogya every night of the week.

Sasono Hinggil (Map p177; South Main Sq) Most of the centres offer shortened versions for tourists, but here in the *alun-alun selatan* of the *kraton*, marathon all-night performances are held every second Saturday from 9pm to 5am (20,000Rp). Bring a pillow.

Sono-Budoyo Museum (Map p177; ☎ 376 775; admission 5000Rp) This museum holds popular two-hour performances nightly from 8pm to 10pm (20,000Rp). The first half-hour involves the reading of the story in Javanese, so most travellers skip this and arrive later.

DANCE

Most performances are based on the Ramayana or at least billed as 'Ramayana ballet' because of the famed performances at Prambanan.

Purawisata (Map p177; ☎ 375 705; Jl Brigjen Katamso) This amusement park stages Ramayana performances daily at 8pm (tickets 120,000Rp). You can dine here and watch the show.

OTHER PERFORMANCES

RRI auditorium (Map p177; cnr Jl Gejayan & Jl Colombo) Here you can see *ketoprak* performances from 8pm to midnight on the first Saturday of every month for 20,000Rp.

LIVE MUSIC

Blatz Lounge (off Map p177; ☎ 748 8898; Jl Kaliurang, Km 6.3; ☎) Groovy cocktail bar that hosts smooth

live jazz every Tuesday night. There's free wi-fi here and pool tables.

Lucifer (Map p184; Jl Sosrowijayan) An intimate bar and one of the city's key live-music venues. There are live bands every night, with everything from reggae to bluesy rock.

And there's more:

FM Café (Map p184; Jl Sosrowijayan 14) Regular live music; see also p186.

Bintang Café (Map p184; Jl Sosrowijayan 54) Bands on Friday and some other nights; see also p187.

NIGHTCLUBS

Hugo's (off Map p177; ☎ 484 208; www.hugoscafeindonesia.com; Sheraton Mustika Resort & Spa, Jl Adisucipto) Hugo's is a large upmarket club popular with Yogya's rich crowd and beautiful people. Live bands alternate with house DJs.

Boshe (off Map p177; ☎ 624 041; Jl Magelang, km 6.5) A new club and the hottest in town, with a large central dance floor, a pumping sound system and karaoke rooms on lower floors. Draws a young, up-for-it crowd with trance and tribal DJs, plus less impressive boy bands and dance troupes.

Shopping

Yogya is a shopper's paradise for crafts and antiques, primarily from Java, though bits and pieces from all over the archipelago can be found here.

Jl Malioboro is one great long throbbing bazaar of souvenir shops and stalls selling cheap clothes, leatherwork, batik bags, *topeng* masks and *wayang golek* puppets. Look in some of the fixed-price shops on Jl Malioboro or nearby streets to get an idea of prices; **Mirota Batik** (Map p177; ☎ 588 524; Jl A Yani 9) is good place to start looking.

In the south of the city, Jl Prawirotaman and Jl Tirtodipuran (west of Jl Prawirotaman) have a selection of upmarket galleries, art shops and expensive batik factories. You'll find furniture, antiques, and a variety of crafts and curios from Java and further afield.

For a regular shopping mall, **Ambarukmo Plaza** (off Map p177; Jl Laksda Adisucipto) is 5km west of the centre on the road to Prambanan and has a great selection of boutiques, as well as a good food court, a cinema and a supermarket. Take bus 1A to get there.

BATIK

Most of the batik workshops and several large showrooms are along Jl Tirtodipuran, south

of the *kraton*. Many, such as **Batik Plentong** (Map p177; Jl Tirtodipuran 48) and **Batik Winotosastro** (Map p177; Jl Tirtodipuran 54), give free guided tours of the batik process. These places cater to tour groups, so prices are very high – view the process here and shop elsewhere.

Batik is cheapest in the markets, especially Pasar Beringharjo, but quality is questionable. Jl Malioboro and Jl A Yani have good fixed-price places, including the following.

Batik Keris (Map p177; ☎ 557 893; Jl A Yani 71)

Excellent-quality batik. Best for traditional shirts; don't expect fashionable styles.

Terang Bulan (Map p177; Jl A Yani 108)

BATIK PAINTING

Batik is both one of Yogya's biggest draws (it's one of the city's purist art forms) and worst blights (due to the hard sell directed at tourists). However, batik paintings can be attractive souvenirs, and small paintings (around 30cm by 30cm) can be as cheap as 40,000Rp (although the asking price may be 400,000Rp). Most of the mass-production galleries are found around Taman Sari. It pays to shop around for something different and to bargain hard.

Plenty of tourists get suckered into buying overpriced batik; heed the warning on p178.

ANTIQUES, CURIOS & FURNITURE

Although a few antiques can be found in the shops and markets, they are best left to collectors who know their stuff. Yogya art shops spend an inordinate amount of time ageing *wayang golek* puppets and *topeng* masks in the name of antiquity, and many other items get similar treatment.

Jl Tirtodipuran and Jl Prawirotaman have artefacts and furniture from all over Java and Indonesia. Prices are generally high here – bargain furiously, or get an idea of quality and look around for somewhere else to shop.

Mirota Moesson (Map p185; Jl Prawirotaman I 15) A large and interesting collection of furniture.

SILVER

The best area to shop for silverwork is in the silver village of Kota Gede (p180), although it can be found all over town. Fine filigree work is a Yogya speciality, but many styles and designs are available. Kota Gede has some very attractive jewellery, boxes, bowls, cutlery and miniatures, and there are dozens

of smaller silver shops on Jl Kemesan and Jl Mondorakan, where you can get some good buys if you bargain.

You can get a guided tour of the process, with no obligation to buy, at the large factories:

HS (off Map p177; Jl Mondorakan I) Marginally cheaper; always ask for a substantial discount off the marked prices.

MD (off Map p177; ☎ 375 063; Jl Pesegah KG 8/44)

Down a small alley off the street; as at HS, try for discounts.

Tom's Silver (off Map p177; ☎ 525 416; Jl Ngeski Gondo 60) An extensive (and expensive) selection and some superb large pieces.

ART

Lana Gallery (Map p177; ☎ 715 0465; awildan@yahoo.com; Jl Menukan 276A; ☎ Tue-Sun) A great range of contemporary art from new and emerging artists, many graduates of Yogya's Fine Arts school. Run by two of the friendliest Indonesians you'll ever meet.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Yogyakarta has international connections to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, plus very regular flights to Jakarta and Denpasar.

Air Asia (☎ 5050 5088; www.airasia.com) Flies to Singapore daily and KL four times a week.

Batavia Air (Map p177; ☎ 547 373; www.batavia-air.co.id; Ruko Mas Plaza, Jl Urip Sumoharjo) Has flights to Balikpapan, Jakarta, Pontianak and Surabaya.

Garuda (Map p184; ☎ 551 515; Inna Garuda Hotel, Jl Malioboro 60) Links Yogya with Singapore, Denpasar and Jakarta (with connections to virtually anywhere in Indonesia).

Lion Air (Map p177; ☎ 555 028; Melia Purosani Hotel, Jl Mayor Suryotomo 31) Flies to Denpasar and Jakarta.

Mandala (Map p177; ☎ 520 603; Jl Mayor Suryotomo 537A) Flies to Balikpapan, Banjarmasin, Denpasar and Jakarta.

It's worth noting that Solo airport (p203) also has international and domestic flights and is just 60km or so from Yogya.

BUS

Yogya's main bus terminal, **Giwangan** (off Map p177; ☎ 378 288; Jl Imogiri), is 5km southeast of the city centre; bus 3B connects it with Tugu train station and Jl Malioboro.

Buses run from Giwangan all over Java and also to Bali. Normal/air-con buses go to Solo (13,000/18,000Rp, two hours),

Semarang (28,000/38,000Rp, four hours), Bandung (80,000/92,000Rp, 10 hours), Jakarta (90,000/120,000Rp, 12 hours) and Surabaya (58,000/76,000Rp, eight hours).

For really long trips take a luxury bus. It's cheaper to buy tickets at the bus terminal, but it's less hassle to simply check fares and departures with the ticket agents along Jl Mangkubumi, Jl Sosrowijayan or Jl Prawirotaman. These agents can also arrange pick-up from your hotel. Check more than one agent – some charge excessive commission. Typical fares include Denpasar (220,000Rp), Surabaya and Malang (95,000Rp), Bandung (110,000Rp) and Jakarta (135,000Rp).

Local buses also operate regularly from the main bus terminal to all the towns in the immediate area, including Borobudur (12,000Rp, 1½ hours), Parangtritis (8000Rp, one hour) and Kaliurang (7000Rp, one hour). To go to Prambanan (3000Rp) take a 1A city bus from Jl Malioboro. For Imogiri (3000Rp, 40 minutes), take an *angkot* to Panggang and ask the conductor to let you off at the *makam* (graves).

MINIBUS

Door-to-door *travel* minibuses run to all major cities from Yogya. Sosrowijayan and Prawirotaman agents sell tickets. You can also buy direct from the minibuses companies, which include **Rajawali Putra** (Map p177; ☎ 583 535; Jl Jenderal Sudirman 42), **Rahayu** (Map p177; ☎ 561 322; Jl Diponegoro 9A) and **Niki Vita Tour & Travel** (Map p177; ☎ 561 884; Jl Diponegoro 25).

Destinations served by minibuses from Yogya include Solo (25,000Rp, two hours), Pangandaran (95,000Rp, eight hours), Semarang (50,000Rp, four hours), Surabaya (85,000Rp), Malang (90,000Rp) and Jakarta (135,000Rp, 12 hours).

Minibuses supposedly running to Gunung Bromo (from 110,000Rp, 10 hours) often terminate short of Cemoro Lawang, and drop you off at a hostel on the way up the volcano (which is probably paying a commission). Two-day tours – Yogyakarta to Bromo and Bali – which cost from 330,000Rp, are also popular.

Travellers have regularly reported mysterious 'breakdowns' on the Bromo route, which cut into travelling time and mean that you don't reach Cemoro Lawang. Others have experienced problems with onward connections

upon reaching Bali. Purchase your ticket from a reliable agent and check up-to-date information with other travellers and on Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree internet forum.

TRAIN

Centrally located, Yogya's **Tugu train station** (Map p184; ☎ 514 270) handles all business- and executive-class trains. Economy-class trains also depart from and arrive at Lempuyangan station (Map p177), 1km to the east.

The comfortable *Taksaka* (from 150,000Rp, eight hours) departs twice daily for Jakarta at 10am and 8pm. Or the best train is the executive *Argo Lawu* (from 220,000Rp, seven hours), which leaves at 8.53am.

Very regular trains run to Solo, including *Pramek* (7000Rp, one hour), which departs six times daily from Tugu.

For Surabaya, the best option is the executive *Argo Wilis* (from 150,000Rp, 5½ hours), which leaves at 2.22pm. Otherwise there are plenty of night trains, including the *Mutiara Selatan* (business class 110,000Rp, six hours), departing at 1.13am.

Heading for Bandung, trains include the *Lodaya* (business/executive class from 100,000/165,000Rp, 8½ hours), which passes through Yogya at 9.24pm.

From Lempuyangan train station, most of the economy-class services are overnight trains that run between Surabaya and Jakarta (40,000Rp, 11 hours) and Bandung (35,000Rp, 10 hours).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Yogya's Adi Sucipto airport, 10km east of the centre, is very well connected to the city by public transport. Buses 3A and 1A (3000Rp) leave from the terminal for Jl Malioboro. *Pramek* trains (see above) stop at Maguwo station, which is right by the airport as well.

Taxis from the airport cost 50,000Rp to the city centre, and are slightly cheaper going to the airport on the meter.

BECAK & ANDONG

Yogyakarta has an oversupply of becak; it is impossible to go anywhere in the main tourist areas without being greeted by choruses of 'becak'. Fares cost around 2000Rp per kilometre, but the minimum fare for tourists is usually around 4000Rp, and the

asking rate is a lot more. The trip from Jl Prawirotaman to Jl Malioboro costs at least 8000Rp. Avoid becak drivers who offer cheap hourly rates unless you want to do the rounds of all the batik galleries that offer commission. There are also horse-drawn *andong* around town, which cost about the same or less than becak.

BICYCLE

Bikes cost as little as 15,000Rp a day from hotels, or try the shops at the southern end of Gang I in Sosrowijayan. Always lock your bike and look for bicycle *parkir*, who will look after your bike for some spare change.

BUS

Yogya has a reliable new bus system called the TransJogja busway. These modern air-conditioned buses run from 6am to 10pm on six routes around the city to as far away as Prambanan. Tickets cost 3000Rp per journey, or 27,000Rp for a carnet of 10. TransJogja buses only stop at the designated bus shelters.

Bus 1A is a very useful service, running from Jl Malioboro as far as Jl Senopati, then northeast past the Affandi Museum, Ambarukmo Plaza and the airport to the ruins of Prambanan. Bus 3B connects Giwangan bus terminal with the airport and Prambanan before heading west to Jl Malioboro. TransJogja route maps are available at the Tourist Information Centre.

There are also older regular buses (2000Rp), which stop everywhere.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travel agencies on Jl Sosrowijayan and Jl Prawirotaman rent out cars with drivers for trips in and around town for 70,000Rp per hour, with or without petrol, depending on the travel agent. They have inflated price lists for more distant destinations, but you can usually get a car or small minibus with driver for around 700,000Rp per day.

Motorcycles can be hired for approximately 50,000Rp a day, sometimes less. An international driving permit is required by law, but they are not often checked.

TAXI

Taxis have meters and are quite efficient, costing 5000Rp for the first kilometre, then 2500Rp for each subsequent kilometre.

AROUND YOGYAKARTA

Imogiri

A royal graveyard perched on a hilltop 20km south of Yogyakarta, Imogiri was first built by Sultan Agung in 1645 to serve as his own mausoleum. Since then almost all his successors and other prominent members of the royal family have been buried here. The cemetery contains three major courtyards – in the central courtyard are the tombs of Sultan Agung and succeeding Mataram kings; to the left are the tombs of the *susuhunan* (sultan or king) of Solo and to the right are those of the sultans of Yogyakarta. The tomb of Hamengkubuwono IX, the father of the present sultan, is one of the most visited graves.

Of major interest to pilgrims is the **tomb of Sultan Agung** (admission 1000Rp; ☎ 10am–1pm Sun & Mon, 1.30–4pm Fri). There is no objection to visitors joining the pilgrims at these specified times, although to enter the tombs you must don full Javanese court dress, which can be hired for a small fee.

It's an impressive site, reached by a daunting flight of 345 steps. From the top of the stairway, a walkway circles the whole complex and leads to the actual hill summit, with a superb view over Yogyakarta to Gunung Merapi.

Angkots and buses from Yogyakarta (4000Rp) stop at the car park, from where it is about 500m to the base of the hill and the start of the steps. Like most pilgrimage sites, there will be various demands for 'donations'. The only compulsory entry charge is payable when you sign the visitors' book, inside the main compound.

Kasongan

Yogyakarta's prime pottery centre is Kasongan, where dozens of workshops produce pots and some superb figurines, giant dragons and peacocks. Kasongan pottery is generally sold painted or unpainted – very little glazing work is done. The village was very badly hit by the 2006 earthquake, but production has now resumed and visitors are very welcome (especially if they open their wallets).

Catch a Bantul-bound bus and get off on the main road at the entrance to the village, 6.5km south of Yogyakarta. It is then about a 1km walk to the centre of the village and most of the pottery workshops.

Parangtritis

☎ 0274

Windswept and sandblasted, with crashing waves on one side and craggy, looming cliffs on the other, Parangtritis has all the makings of a lonely seaside town. Or at least it would do if it weren't for the thousands of local tourists who flock here every weekend. Weekends in Yogyakarta's favourite seaside escape are a whirlwind of overpriced hotels, jostling crowds and souvenir salespeople.

During the week, however, Parangtritis becomes that slightly forlorn resort. Prices fall, an eerie quiet descends and it becomes a half-decent place to spend the day. There are some great dunes to explore once you're away from the main stretch of beach, which is marred by litter.

It's best to respect local superstitions and not wear green if you visit Parangtritis.

SIGHTS

The seas off Parangtritis are extremely dangerous, but you can swim safely in *pemandian* (freshwater pools) at the base of the hill near the village, where spring water spills out from



the hilltop through high bamboo pipes. If you'd prefer hot springs, head for **Parang Wedang**, just beyond the nearby village of Parangkusumo.

Trails along the hills above the sea to the east of Parangtritis lead to a meditation cave, **Gua Cerme**. A couple of kilometres from the town and past the Queen of the South resort is **Gua Langse**, used by mystics as a meditation cave.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Like so many places along the south coast, Parangtritis is a centre for the worship of Nyai Loro Kidul; during the annual festival of **Labuhan** staged to appease her, the sultans of Yogyakarta still send offerings to the sacred point at Parangkusumo.

SLEEPING & EATING

The main drag to the beach is lined with basic hotels and warungs. Alternatively, some of the better options are on the main road, to the east of the bus terminal. During the week, some places have rooms with *mandis* for as little as 30,000Rp.

Losmen Dinasti (☎ 368 536; r from 40,000Rp) A basic place with simple, plain but clean rooms and a homely feel, and there's also a small restaurant here.

Queen of the South (Puri Ratu Kidul; ☎ 367 196; www.queen-of-the-south.com; bungalows/ste from US\$125/195; 🍷 🍷) Perched on clifftops high above town, this place has an unbeatable location. The thatched cottages are ageing but comfortable, and either have ocean views or look over the lovely tropical garden. There's a spa and a *pen-dopo* restaurant. A 50% discount is often available in the week; add 21% tax to room rates.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses from Yogyakarta's Giwangan bus terminal, which can also be caught on Jl Parangtritis at the end of Jl Prawiroataman, leave throughout the day for the one-hour journey (8000Rp). The last bus back from Parangtritis leaves at around 5.30pm.

Gunung Merapi

Few of Southeast Asia's volcanoes are as evocative, or as destructive, as Gunung Merapi (Fire Mountain). Towering 2911m over Yogyakarta, Borobudur and Prambanan, this immense Fujiesque cone is a threatening, disturbingly close presence for thousands. The volcano has erupted dozens of times over the past century and some observers have

theorised that it was even responsible for the mysterious evacuation of Borobudur and the collapse of the old Mataram kingdom during the 11th century.

Merapi is revered and feared in equal measure. Every year, offerings from Yogya's *kra-ton* are made to appease the mountain's foul temper, in conjunction with offerings to the Queen of the South Seas at Parangtritis.

But Merapi isn't so easy to appease. On 22 November 1994 it erupted, killing more than 60 people, and it has been on the boil ever since. In 2006 28,000 people were evacuated as lava and pyroclastic flows cascaded from its upper slopes.

Such is its threat, Merapi is one of only 16 'decade volcanoes' in the world, a definition bestowed by the United Nations-sponsored International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction for particularly explosive peaks.

Eruptions, however, have not put a stop to people living on the mountain. With a population density of 690 people per sq km, Merapi supports hundreds of small communities.

The hill resort of Kaliurang, 25km north of Yogyakarta, is the main access point for views of Merapi and makes a wonderful break from the city. Yogyakarta travel agencies also sell night trips for views of the lava flows – there are several good viewpoints – but you can also do this yourself. Take a bus for Kaliurang (7000Rp, one hour) from the Giwangan terminal, get off at the Kaliurang Hill Resort, then catch one of the waiting *ojek* (8000Rp) to the viewpoint of Kalu Aden, from where there's a wonderful perspective of the lava action.

CLIMBING GUNUNG MERAPI

Merapi is frequently declared off-limits to visitors. But if conditions permit, climbing the summit is possible in the dry season (April to September). There are three possible routes, but the most popular path is from the small village of Selo, on the northern side of the mountain. Even then *extreme caution* is advised.

During quiet periods, a 1am start from Selo is necessary to reach the summit for dawn (a four- to five-hour trip). After a 2km walk through the village to Pos Merapi, the abandoned vulcanology post, the steady but steep climb begins. It is a tough, demanding walk, but manageable by anyone with a reasonable level of fitness.

The last stages are through loose volcanic scree, but guides may stop short of the summit. Check with your guide whether it is possible to go to the top before setting off. Treks from Selo are not always well organised. Guides should warn against climbing if it looks dangerous. While they don't want to endanger lives, they may be prepared to take risks in order to be paid. Even during quieter periods, Merapi can suddenly throw out a stream of lava; in September 2002 an Indonesian student was killed when he got lost and fell into a ravine. There are two vents where lava can be seen, but it is not advisable to approach them.

Check the latest situation in Kaliurang, but at the time of writing the climb to the peak from Kaliurang had been strictly off limits since 1994 because of volcanic activity. **Christian Awuy** (☎ 081 7541 2572), owner of Vogels Hostel, has organised climbs for years and is an essential first reference point.

Alternatively, you can contact the **Merapi Volcano Observatory** (☎ 0274-514180, 0274-514192; Jl Cendana 15, Kaliurang), or Kartika Trekking (p183) in Yogyakarta.

Kaliurang

☎ 0274

Kaliurang, 25km north of Yogyakarta, is the nearest hill resort to the city. At 900m, it has a cool, refreshing climate. During the rainy season, Kaliurang often sits in a thick blanket of cloud, but on clear days the views of Merapi are magical.

All visitors to Kaliurang must pay a 2500Rp entrance fee.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

One of Java's finest museums, **Ullen Sentalu** (☎ 895 161; www.ullensentalu.com; admission 45,000Rp, students 25,000Rp; ☎ 9am-3.30pm Tue-Sun) is a surprise find on the slopes of Merapi. This large complex has a principal structure that resembles a Bavarian baron's mansion, and extensive gardens and courtyards to explore. Ullen Sentalu is dedicated entirely to the richness of Javanese culture, and has an outstanding collection of fine art, including oil paintings and sculpture. Unusually, it focuses heavily on notable women of Java, particularly the wives of sultans, through pictures and stories. Batik also takes pride of place; here you can gauge the subtle differences between Yogya and Solo designs, alongside those from coastal towns

to the north. There's a great restaurant here, a high-quality contemporary art gallery, and a souvenir store loaded with top-grade batik. Admission includes a two-hour tour with a knowledgeable English-speaking guide, and copious cups of refreshing spice-flavoured tea.

There's also an excellent **forest park** (Hutan Wisata Kaliurang; admission 1000Rp; ☎ 8am-4pm) on the slopes of the mountain. Maps at the park entrance show areas you are allowed to explore. Heed them and don't venture further; in a sudden eruption lava can flow down the mountain at 300km/h. At the time of writing you could take the 15-minute walk to the Promojiwo viewpoint for views of Merapi and then on to the Tlogo Muncar waterfall, which is just a trickle in the dry season, and then back to the entrance.

Vogels Hostel arranges **mountain walks** to see the lava flows. The five-hour return trek starts at 3am and climbs 1400m up the mountain to see the glowing lava at its best (from 60,000Rp per person). Overnight camping trips (from 180,000Rp), village tours and birdwatching walks can also be arranged. A minimum of two people is required for all trips.

SLEEPING & EATING

Kaliurang is a sprawling, slightly scruffy-around-the-edges resort with more than 100 places to sleep.

Vogels Hostel (☎ 895 208; Jl Astamulya 76; dm 15,000Rp, d with shared facilities 20,000-25,000Rp, bungalows with bath and hot water 100,000Rp) Vogels is a travellers' institution and has been serving up the same mixture of cheap accommodation, hearty food and excellent information for years. The owner, Christian Awuy, is a particular authority on Merapi and its many moods.

Hotel Satriafi (☎ 895 128; Jl Kesehatan 193; r with/without hot water & TV from 110,000/85,000Rp) Clean, quite basic rooms that are a step up from those at Vogels.

Hotel Kano (☎ 895 342; Jl Giri Kondang; r with TV & hot water 200,000-300,000Rp) In the heart of Kaliurang, this large art deco-style hotel has a selection of bright, comfortable rooms that are in decent shape, and a good cafe-restaurant.

Restaurant Joyo (Jl Astamulya 63; mains around 10,000Rp) Half-shop, half-restaurant Jojo has tasty Chinese and Indonesian food and some eclectic traditional artefacts for sale. It's over the road from Vogels.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Angkot from Yogyakarta's Terban station to Kaliurang cost 7000Rp; the last leaves at 4pm. A taxi from Malioboro will cost around 90,000Rp.

Selo

On the northern slopes of Gunung Merapi, 50km west of Solo, Selo has a few basic homestays where guides can be arranged for the Merapi climb. The views of the mountain from the village are superb.

From Selo it is a very steep, four-hour trek to the volcano's summit (see p192), and about 2½ hours for the descent. At the top the sulphurous fumes can be overpowering – take great care. It's not advisable to attempt this climb in the rainy season, or after heavy downpours at any time of year.

The host at popular **Pak Auto** (r per person 25,000Rp) has been guiding trips to the summit for years. Accommodation is very basic but clean. Elderly Pak Darto rarely ventures far these days, but both of his sons (Sutrisno and Yudi) work as guides and know the route. Prices are variable depending on how many people are in the group and the risk factor. Count on a minimum of 120,000Rp for one person, or upwards of 150,000Rp for two or more people.

Hotel Agung Merapi (☎ 0276-326 025; r from 75,000Rp) is in poor shape, but it represents a (small) step up in quality from Pak Auto; it also has a restaurant.

Selo is most easily reached from Solo: take a bus to Magelang, stopping at Selo (14,000Rp, two hours) on the way. However, the route from Yogyakarta is far more beautiful. Take a Magelang bus to Blabak (8000Rp, one hour) and an *angkot* or bus to Selo (6000Rp). Travel agents in Solo and Yogyakarta arrange Merapi climbing trips via Selo.

PRAMBANAN

☎ 0274

On the road to Solo, 17km northeast of Yogyakarta, the temples of Prambanan are the best remaining examples of Java's period of Hindu cultural development. Not only do these temples form the largest Hindu temple complex in Java, but the wealth of sculptural detail on the great Shiva temple makes it easily the most outstanding example of Hindu art.

All the temples in the Prambanan area were built between the 8th and 10th cen-

turies AD, when Java was ruled by the Buddhist Sailendras in the south and the Hindu Sanjayas of Old Mataram in the north. Possibly by the second half of the 9th century, these two dynasties were united by the marriage of Rakai Pikatan of Hindu Mataram and the Buddhist Sailendra princess Pramodhavardhani. This may explain why a number of temples, including those of the Prambanan temple complex and the smaller Plaosam group, reveal Shivaite and Buddhist elements in architecture and sculpture. These two elements are also found to some degree in India and Nepal.

Following this creative burst over a period of two centuries, the Prambanan Plain was abandoned when the Hindu-Javanese kings moved to East Java. In the middle of the 16th century there is said to have been a great earthquake that toppled many of the temples. In the centuries that followed, their destruction was accelerated by treasure hunters and locals searching for building materials. Most temples have now been restored to some extent, and, like Borobudur, Prambanan made the Unesco World Heritage list in 1991.

Prambanan suffered extensive damage in the 2006 earthquake. Though the temples survived, hundreds of stone blocks collapsed to the ground or were cracked (479 in the Shiva temple alone). Parts of the complex are now fenced off and some temples are covered in scaffolding. It will take years to fully restore Prambanan. That said, Prambanan is certainly still well worth a visit, and you can get within a few metres of (if not enter) all the main monuments.

Orientation & Information

The **Prambanan temples** (☎ 496 401; adult/student US\$11/6; ☎ 6am-6pm, last admission 5.15pm) are usually visited from Yogyakarta (17km away), but they can also be visited from Solo (50km away). The main temple complex lies on the Yogyakarta-Solo highway, opposite the slightly grimy suburb of Prambanan. From the main entrance on the southeastern side, it's about a 10-minute walk to the core of the site. Behind it, on the western side near the highway, is the outdoor theatre where the Ramayana ballet is performed.

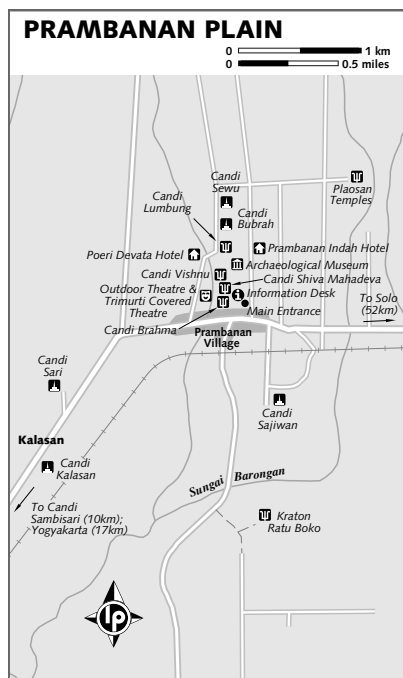
To the north of the largest Shiva Mahadeva temple is the archaeological museum. Further north are smaller, partly renovated temples

leading to Candi Sewu. A 'minitrain' (5000Rp) from the museum loops to Candi Sewu. All of these temples form the main Prambanan complex.

On the left after passing through the main gate there is a small information desk with info on the site and Ramayana performances. As at Borobudur, the admission price includes camera fees and admission to the museum. Guides charge 60,000Rp for a one-hour tour for one to 20 people. There is also an audiovisual show every 30 minutes (2000Rp).

Most of the other (seldom-visited) outlying temples are within a 5km radius of Prambanan village. You'll need at least half a day to see them on foot, or they can be explored by bicycle or motorcycle if you ride to Prambanan. A standard entry fee of 5000Rp applies to most of the outlying temples.

The best time to visit Prambanan is in the early morning or late in the day, when it's quiet, though you can never expect to get Prambanan to yourself – expect plenty of attention from visiting school groups and requests for photos.



Sights

PRAMBANAN TEMPLES

The huge Prambanan complex was erected in the middle of the 9th century – around 50 years later than Borobudur – but little is known about its early history. It's thought that it was built by Rakai Pikatan to commemorate the return of a Hindu dynasty to sole power in Java.

Prambanan was in ruins for years, and while efforts were made in 1885 to clear the site, it was not until 1937 that reconstruction was first attempted. Of the original group, the outer compound contains the remains of 244 temples. Eight minor and eight main temples stand in the highest central courtyard.

Candi Shiva Mahadeva

This temple, dedicated to Shiva, is not only the largest of the temples but also the finest. At the time of research it was not possible to get really close to the monument, but there's still plenty to admire from a distance.

The main spire soars 47m and the temple is lavishly carved. The 'medallions' that decorate its base have a characteristic Prambanan motif – small lions in niches flanked by *kalpatara* (trees of heaven) and a menagerie of stylised half-human and half-bird *kinnara* (heavenly beings). The vibrant scenes carved onto the inner wall of the gallery encircling the temple are from the Ramayana – they tell how Lord Rama's wife, Sita, is abducted and how Hanuman the monkey god and Sugriwa the white monkey general eventually find and release her.

The following descriptions apply to the temple's interior, which has not been accessible since the earthquake of 2006, but may reopen in the lifetime of this guidebook. The main chamber at the top of the eastern stairway has a four-armed statue of Shiva the Destroyer and is notable for the fact that this mightiest of Hindu gods stands on a huge lotus pedestal, a symbol of Buddhism. In the southern cell is the pot-bellied and bearded Agastya, an incarnation of Shiva as divine teacher; in the western cell is a superb image of the elephant-headed Ganesha, Shiva's son. In the northern cell, Durga, Shiva's consort, can be seen killing the demon buffalo. Some people believe that the Durga image is actually an image of the Slender Virgin, who, legend has it, was turned to stone by a man

she refused to marry. She is still an object of pilgrimage and her name is often used for the temple group.

Candi Vishnu

It's still possible to get up front and personal with this magnificent temple, which touches 33m, and sits just north of Candi Shiva Mahadeva. Its magnificent reliefs tell the story of Lord Krishna, a hero of the Mahabharata epic, and you can ascend its stone staircase to the inner chamber and see a four-armed image of Vishnu the Preserver.

Candi Brahma

Candi Vishnu's twin temple, Candi Brahma, is south of Candi Shiva Mahadeva and carved with the final scenes of the Ramayana. It has a spectacular 'monster mouth' doorway. Again, you will probably not be able to gain access to its inner chamber, which contains a four-headed statue of Brahma, the god of creation.

Candi Sewu

The 'Thousand Temples', dating from around AD 850, originally consisted of a large central Buddhist temple surrounded by four rings of 240 smaller 'guard' temples. Outside the compound stood four sanctuaries at the points of the compass, of which Candi Bubrah is the most southern one. The renovated main temple has finely carved niches around its inner gallery – these niches once held bronze statues.

PLAOSAN TEMPLES

This northeastern group of temples is 3km from the Prambanan complex. It can be reached on foot by taking the road north from the main gate, going past Candi Sewu and then walking east (right) for about 1km.

Built around the same time as the Prambanan temple group by Rakai Pikatan, the Plaosan temples combine both Hindu and Buddhist religious symbols and carvings. Plaosan Lor (Plaosan North) comprises two restored, identical main temples, surrounded by some 126 small shrines and solid stupas, most of which are now just a jumble of stone.

Two giant *dwarapala* (temple guardian statues) stand at the front of each main temple. The main temples, notable for their unusual three-part design, are two-storey,

three-room structures, with an imitation storey above and a tiered roof of stupas rising to a single, larger one in the centre. Inside each room are impressive stone Bodhisattvas on either side of an empty lotus pedestal, and intricately carved *kala* (dragon) heads above the many windows. The bronze Buddhas that once sat on the lotus pedestals have been removed.

Plaosan Kidul (Plaosan South) has more stupas and the remnants of a temple, but little renovation work has been done.

SOUTHERN GROUP

Candi Sajiwan

Not far from the village of Sajiwan, about 1.5km southeast of Prambanan village, are the ruins of this Buddhist temple. Around the temple's base are carvings from the Jataka (episodes from the Buddha's various lives).

Kraton Ratu Boko

Perched on top of a hill overlooking Prambanan, Kraton Ratu Boko (Palace of King Boko), a huge Hindu palace complex dating from the 9th century, is believed to have been the central court of the mighty Mataram kingdom. Little remains of the original complex. Renovations, while only partially successful, have included new stonework. You can see the large gateway, walls, the platform of the main *pendopo*, Candi Pembakaran (Royal Crematorium) and a series of bathing places on different levels leading down to the nearby village. The view from this site to the Prambanan Plain is magnificent, especially at sunset, and worth the walk.

To reach Ratu Boko, travel 1.5km south on the road from Prambanan village to just southwest of where the river crosses the road. Near the 'Yogya 18km' signpost a steep rocky path leads up to the main site. Altogether it is about a one-hour walk. The site can be reached by car or motorcycle via a much longer route that goes around the back of the mountain.

WESTERN GROUP

There are three temples in this group between Yogyakarta and Prambanan, two of them close to Kalasan village on the main Yogyakarta road. Kalasan and Prambanan villages are 3km apart, so it is probably easiest to take an *angkot* or bus to cover this stretch.

Candi Kalasan

Standing 50m off the main road near Kalasan village, this temple is one of the oldest Buddhist temples on the Prambanan Plain. A Sanskrit inscription of AD 778 refers to a temple dedicated to the female Bodhisattva, Tara, though the existing structure appears to have been built around the original one some years later. It has been partially restored during this century and has some fine detailed carvings on its southern side, where a huge, ornate *kala* head glowers over the doorway. At one time it was completely covered in coloured, shining stucco, and traces of the hard, stonelike 'diamond plaster' that provided a base for paintwork can still be seen. The inner chamber of Kalasan once sheltered a huge bronze image of Buddha or Tara.

Candi Sari

About 200m north from Candi Kalasan, in the middle of coconut and banana groves, the Sari Temple has the three-part design of the larger Plaosan temple but is probably slightly older. Some experts believe that its 2nd floor may have served as a dormitory for the Buddhist priests who took care of Candi Kalasan. The sculptured reliefs around the exterior are similar to those of Kalasan but are in much better condition.

Candi Sambisari

A country lane runs to this isolated temple, about 2.5km north of the main road. Sambisari is a Shiva temple and possibly the latest temple at Prambanan to be erected by the Mataram kingdom. It was discovered by a farmer in 1966. Excavated from under ancient layers of protective volcanic ash and dust, it lies almost 6m below the surface of the surrounding fields and is remarkable for its perfectly preserved state. The inner sanctum of the temple is dominated by a large lingam and yoni (stylised penis and vagina), typical of Shiva temples.

Sleeping

There are a few options close to Prambanan, but very few people stay here, given its proximity to Yogyakarta.

Prambanan Indah (☎ 497 353; Jl Candi Sewu 8; r with fan/air-con 85,000/210,000Rp, ste 291,000Rp; 🍽️) The large hotel is close to the core of the site and some rooms have temple views.

Poeri Devata Hotel (☎ 496 435; garden/temple view cottages 500,000/600,000Rp; 🍽️ 🛏️) Down a quiet

lane at the northwestern corner of the temple complex, this midrange hotel has bungalows with outdoor bathrooms set in attractive gardens, and a restaurant.

Entertainment

Ramayana Ballet (☎ 496 408; www.borobudurpark.com)

Held at the outdoor theatre just west of the main temple complex, the famous Ramayana Ballet is Java's most spectacular dance-drama. The story of Rama and Shinta unfolds over four successive nights, twice or three times each month from May to October (the dry season), leading up to the full moon. With the magnificent floodlit Candi Shiva Mahadeva as a backdrop, nearly 200 dancers and gamelan musicians take part in a spectacle of monkey armies, giants on stilts, clashing battles and acrobatics.

Performances last from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Tickets are sold in Yogyakarta through the tourist information office (p178) and travel agencies (p178) at the same price that you'll pay at the theatre box office, but they usually offer packages that include transport direct from your hotel for 30,000Rp to 50,000Rp extra. Tickets cost 50,000Rp for economy seats, 100,000Rp for 1st-class seats, 125,000Rp for special class and 200,000Rp for VIP seats (padded chairs up the front). All seats have a good view and are not too far from the stage, but the cheapest seats are stone benches that are situated side on to the stage.

Alternatively, the *Ramayana Ballet Full Story* is a good two-hour performance (condensing the epic into one night), and alternates with the four-part episodic performances. It features only 50 performers but is still a fine spectacle, held at the Trimurti Covered Theatre from November to April. Performances start at 7.30pm every Tuesday and Thursday.

Getting There & Away

BICYCLE & MOTORCYCLE

You can visit all the temples by bicycle from Yogya. The most pleasant route, though it's a longer ride, is to take Jl Senopati out past the zoo to the eastern ring road, where you turn left. Follow this right up to Jl Solo, turn right and then left at Jl Babarsari. Go past the Sahid Garden Hotel and follow the road anticlockwise around the school to the Selokan Mataram. This canal runs parallel to

the Solo road, about 1.5km to the north, for around 6km to Kalasan, about 2km before Prambanan.

To view the western temples you really need to come back via the Solo road. The turn-off north to Candi Sambisari from the Solo road crosses the canal before leading another 1km to the temple. You can visit the temple, backtrack to the canal path and continue back to Yogyakarta.

If you are coming by motorcycle, you can combine the visit with a trip to Kaliurang. From Kaliurang, instead of going back to the main Yogyakarta–Solo road, take the 'Solo Alternatif' route signposted in the village of Pakem, about halfway between Yogyakarta and Kaliurang. From there the road passes through some beautiful countryside, before tipping you onto the main highway just before Prambanan's main entrance.

BUS

From Yogyakarta, take TransYogya bus 1A (3000Rp, 40 minutes) from Jl Malioboro. From Solo, buses take 1½ hours and cost 13,000Rp.

SOLO (SURAKARTA)

☎ 0271 / pop 560,000

Arguably the epicentre of Javanese identity and tradition, Solo is one of the least westernised cities in the island. An eternal rival to Yogyakarta, this conservative city often plays second fiddle to its more conspicuous neighbour. But with backstreet *kampung* and elegant *kraton*, traditional markets and gleaming malls, Solo has more than enough to warrant at least an overnight visit. And as there are some fascinating temples close by, it also makes a great base for forays into the lush hills of Central Java.

In many ways, Solo is also Java writ small, incorporating its vices and virtues and embodying much of its heritage. On the downside, the island's notoriously fickle temper tends to flare in Solo first – the city has been the backdrop for some of the worst riots in Java's recent history. On the upside, the city's long and distinguished past as a seat of the great Mataram empire means that it competes with Yogyakarta as the hub of Javanese culture.

Solo attracts many students and scholars to its academies of music and dance. The city is an excellent place to see traditional perform-

ing arts, and traditional crafts, especially batik, are also well represented, as Solo is a major textile centre.

History

Surakarta's founding in 1745 has a mystical history. Following the sacking of the Mataram court at Kartosuro in 1742, the *susuhunan*, Pakubuwono II, decided to look for a more auspicious site. According to legend, 'voices' told the king to go to the village because 'it is the place decreed by Allah and it will become a great and prosperous city'.

Pakubuwono II died after only four years in the city, and his heir, Pakubuwono III, managed to lose half of his kingdom to the court of Yogyakarta. Pakubuwono X (1893–1938), however, had more luck. He revived the prestige of the court through the promotion of culture and gave no time to fighting rival royals.

Following WWII, the royal court fumbled opportunities to play a positive role in the revolution, and lost out badly to Yogyakarta, which became the seat of the independent government. The palaces of the city soon became mere symbols of ancient Javanese feudalism and aristocracy.

With the overthrow of Suharto, Solo erupted following the riots in Jakarta in May 1998. For two days rioters went on a rampage, systematically looting and burning every shopping centre and department store and targeting Chinese-owned businesses.

Today things have settled down again, and sleek new shopping malls have risen from the ashes of the old. But Solo retains a reputation amongst Javanese as a hotbed of radicalism, and its *madrasahs* (Islamic schools) have maintained links to extremist groups such as Jemaah Islamiah.

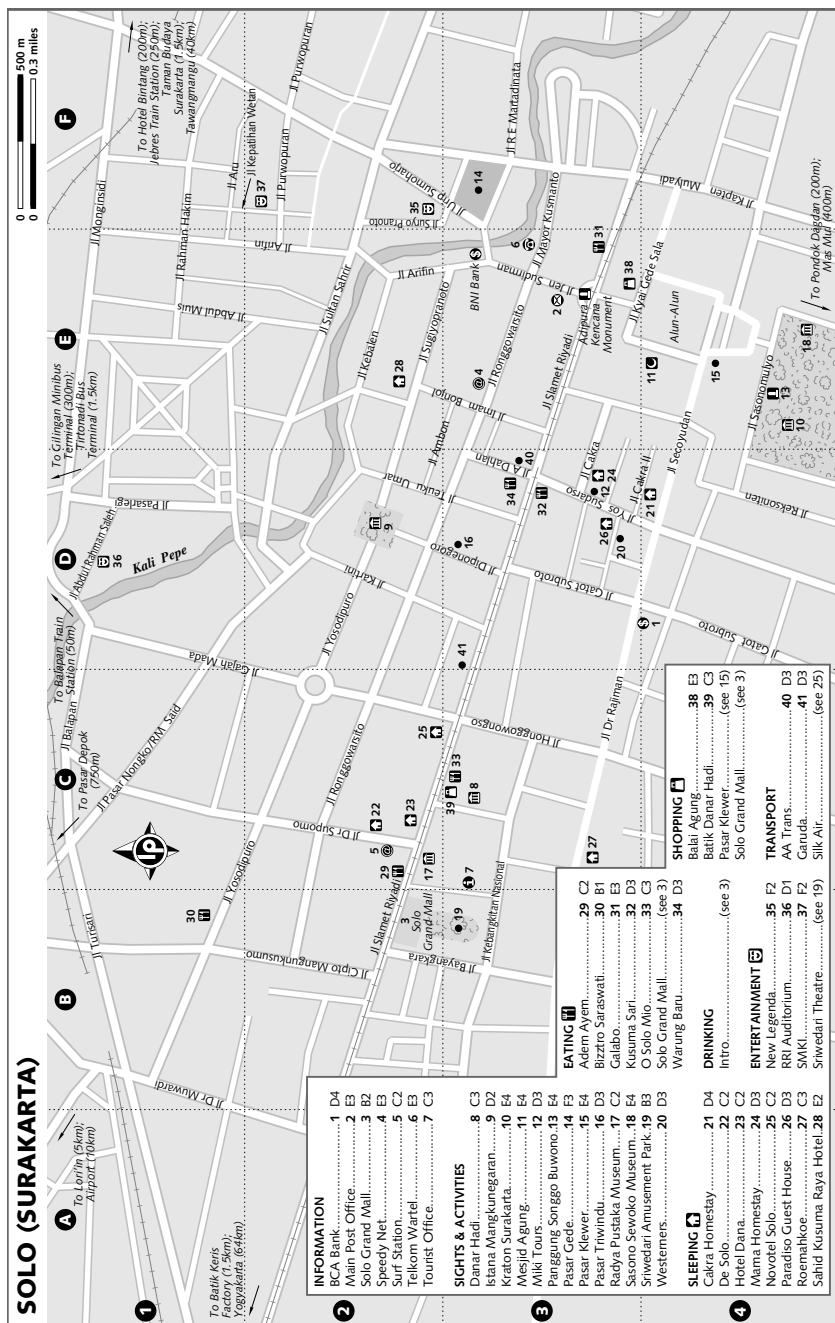
Orientation

Jl Slamet Riyadi, the broad and busy avenue running east–west through the centre of Solo, is the main thoroughfare; most hotels and restaurants are on or just off it. For most of its length it's a one-way street (east–west) between 8pm and 6am.

Solo's Balapan train station is situated in the northern part of the city, about 2km from the city centre; the main bus terminal, Tirtanadi, is 1.5km north again. The Gilingan minibus terminal is near the bus terminal.

The oldest part of the city is centred on the Kraton Surakarta to the southeast.

SOLO (SURAKARTA)



Information

BCA bank (cnr Jl Dr Rajiman & Jl Gatot Subroto) Has an ATM and currency-exchange facilities.

Main post office (Jl Jenderal Sudirman)

Solo Grand Mall (Jl Jenderal Sudirman; ☎) Free wi-fi.

Speedy Net (Jl Ronggowarsito 4; per hr 6000Rp;

☎ 24hr) Speedy net connection and plenty of computers.

Surf Station (Jl Dr Surtono; per hr 5000Rp) Offers modern terminals and decent speeds.

Telkom wartel (Jl Mayor Kusmanto) Near the post office.

Tourist office (☎ 711 435; Jl Slamet Riyadi 275;

☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Sat) Most staff are helpful here, and can provide a map of Solo and information on cultural events and places to visit. There are also desks at the bus and train stations that can help out with ticket bookings.

Sights

KRATON SURAKARTA

Once the hub of an empire, today the **Kraton Surakarta** (Kraton Kasunanan; ☎ 656 432; admission 8000Rp; ☎ 9am-2pm Tue-Fri, to 3pm Sat & Sun) is a faded memorial of a bygone era. It's worth a visit, but much of the *kraton* was destroyed by fire in 1985. Many of the inner buildings were rebuilt, but today the allure of this once-majestic palace has largely vanished and its structures left bare and unloved.

The poor condition of today's *kraton* belies its illustrious history. In 1745 Pakubuwono II moved from Kartosuro to Solo in a day-long procession that transplanted everything belonging to the king, including the royal banyan trees and the sacred **Nyai Setomo cannon** (the twin of Si Jagur, p102, in old Jakarta), which now sits in the northern palace pavilion here.

Entry is on the eastern side of the *kraton* compound (though the main gateway fronts the *alun-alun*). The main sight for visitors is the **Sasono Sewoko museum**. Its exhibits include a array of silver and bronze Hindu-Javanese figures, weapons, antiques and other royal heirlooms, plus the mother of all horse carriage collections. Labelling is poor or nonexistent.

A carved doorway leads to an inner courtyard, but most of the *kraton* is off-limits and it's still the residence of the *susuhunan*.

One edifice that has survived is the distinctive tower known as **Pangung Songo Buwono**, built in 1782 and looks like a cross between a Dutch clocktower and a lighthouse. Its upper storey is a meditation sanctum where the *susuhunan* is said to commune with Nyai Loro Kidul.

If you hire a guide (20,000Rp), don't expect a particularly illuminating tour. Children's

dance practice is on Sunday from 10am to noon, while adult practice is from 1pm to 3pm.

ISTANA MANGKUNEGARAN

Dating back to 1757, the **Istana Mangkunegaran** (☎ 644 946; admission 10,000Rp; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun) is in better condition and is more rewarding to visit. Technically a *puri* (palace) rather than a *kraton* (a *kraton* is occupied by the first ruling house), this is the home of the second house of Solo. It was founded after a bitter struggle against Pakubuwono II launched by his nephew Raden Mas Said (an ancestor of Madam Tien Suharto, the late wife of the former president). Also offers decent guided tours (in English). Members of the aristocratic family still live at the back of the palace.

The centre of the palace compound is the *pendopo*, a pavilion built in a mix of Javanese and European architectural styles, and one of the largest in the country. Its high, rounded ceiling was painted in 1937 and is intricately decorated with a central flame surrounded by figures of the Javanese zodiac, each painted in its own mystical colour. In Javanese philosophy yellow guards against sleepiness, blue against disease, black against hunger, green against desire, white against lust, rose against fear, red against evil and purple against wicked thoughts.

Behind here is the *dalem* (residence), which forms the **palace museum**. The museum is a delight but can only be visited on a guided tour (around 20,000Rp). Most exhibits are from the personal collection of Mangkunegara VII. On display are gold-plated dresses for royal dances, a superb mask collection, jewellery and a few oddities, including huge Buddhist rings and gold genital covers – one for a queen, and a (diminutive) penis cover for a king.

At the pavilion, you can see music, singing and dance-practice sessions on Wednesday and Saturday from 10am until noon.

RADYA PUSTAKA MUSEUM

This small **museum** (Jl Slamet Riyadi; admission 1000Rp; ☎ 9am-1pm Tue-Sun) has good displays of gamelan instruments, jewelled kris, puppets, a small collection of *wayang beber* (scrolls that depict *wayang* stories) and Raja Mala, a hairy puppet figurehead from a royal barge.

MARKETS

Pasar Klewer (Jl Secoyudan; ☎ 8am-6pm), the three-storey market near Kraton Surakarta, is sup-

posedly the largest batik and textile market in Indonesia. This is the place to buy batik.

Pasar Triwindu (Jl Diponegoro; ☎ 9am-4pm or 5pm Mon-Sat), Solo's flea market, was closed for renovation at the time of research but should reopen in 2010. Expect antiques and bric-a-brac galore.

Pasar Gede (Jl Urip Sumoharjo; ☎ 8am-6pm) is the city's largest general market, selling all manner of produce, particularly fruit and vegetables.

At the northwestern end of Jl Raden Mas Said, **Pasar Depok** (☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat) is Solo's squawking bird market.

OTHER SIGHTS

Danar Hadi (☎ 722 042; www.houseofdanarhadi.com; Jl Slamet Riyadi 261; admission 15,000Rp; ☎ 9.30am-4pm) is a small museum big on batik, with a terrific collection of antique and royal textiles from Java, China and beyond. It occupies a stunning whitewashed colonial building. Entry includes a guided tour in English, which explains the history of the many pieces (10,000 in the collection), though no photos are allowed. There's a workshop where you can watch craftsmen at work creating new masterpieces. There's an upmarket storeroom and souvenir shop too.

On the western side of the *alun-alun*, **Mesjid Agung**, featuring classical Javanese architecture, is the largest and most sacred mosque in Solo.

Solo's **Sriwedari Amusement Park** (admission 3000Rp; ☎ 5-10pm Mon-Fri, 5-11pm Sat, 9am-10pm Sat) has fair rides and sideshow stalls. Nightly *wayang orang* performances (and other cultural shows) are held here.

Courses

There's little demand these days, but contact the tourist office (p199) for a list of places offering batik courses. Warung Baru (p202) has batik courses for 85,000Rp, including T-shirt.

Tours

Guesthouses and travel agents including **Miki Tours** (☎ 653 278; Jl Yos Sudarso 17) run tours to Candi Sukuh, Gunung Merapi and Gunung Lawu. Prices depend on numbers, but a day trip for two people with a car and guide starts at around 500,000Rp.

Bicycle tours (from 75,000Rp) to sites around the city are popular in Solo, taking in gamelan and batik-making, *arak* and rice-cracker processing. **Westerners** (☎ 633 106; Kemlayan Kidul 11) and Miki Tours offer such trips.

If you want to set up your own tour to places around Solo, see *Getting Around*, p204.

Festivals & Events

These are two of the best of the many local festivals:

Kirab Pusaka (Heirloom Procession) Held on the first day of the Javanese month of Suro (between March and May) since 1633, these colourful processions start at Istana Mangkunegaran in the early evening and continue late into the night.

Sekaten Marks the birth of the Prophet Muhammed and is held in the Islamic month of Maulud (from May to July). Comprises two ceremonies with a week in between. Culminates with a fair erected in the *alun-alun* and the sharing out of a rice mountain.

Sleeping BUDGET

Solo has some good budget hotels. Almost all offer travel information, tours, bus bookings, bicycles for rent, breakfast, and free tea/coffee.

Pondok Dagdan (☎ 669 324; Jl Carangan Baluarti 42; r without mandi 35,000Rp) In the shadow of Kraton Surakarta, Dagdan has simple rooms around a leafy courtyard, and a welcoming owner. Is popular with students and English teachers.

Mama Homestay (☎ 652 248; Kauman Gang III; s/d incl breakfast 40,000/55,000Rp) If you're looking for a welcoming homestay and don't mind very basic digs, Mama's is worth considering. The three rooms here all have shared cold-water *mandi*.

Paradiso Guest House (☎ 652 960; Kemlayan Kidul 1; r with/without mandi from 55,000/40,000Rp) 'Paradise' may be pushing it a bit, but this is still a fine place to stay as you'll be lodging in a historic white residence of real character with ornate lighting and mirrors.

Cakra Homestay (☎ 634 743; Jl Cakra II 15; r with/without mandi 75,000/65,000Rp, with air-con 100,000Rp; ☎ ☎) An excellent choice for those interested in Javanese culture, which staff are keen to promote, and it also has a nice pool at the rear of the charming, traditional house. Cakra loses marks on the rooms, which are plain but functional. There's often a gamelan performance in the evening.

Hotel Bintang (☎ 648 737; Jl Ir Sutami 104; r from 99,000Rp; ☎ ☎) The location, 2km northeast of the centre, is a bit inconvenient, but the modern rooms here are in good condition, many with hot-water bathrooms, and there's a cafe.

MIDRANGE

Many of the hotels in this bracket are strung along or just off Jl Slamet Riyadi west of the city centre.

Hotel Dana (☎ 711 976; www.hoteldanasolo.com; Jl Slamet Riyadi 286; r/stc incl breakfast from 245,000/495,000Rp; ☹) In the heart of town, this once-grand colonial place still has some fine features, but most of the comfortable rooms are to the rear in motel-style blocks. There's a good garden cafe.

De Solo (☎ 714 887; de_solo@yahoo.co.id; Jl Dr Sutomo 8; r/stc incl breakfast from 300,000/750,000Rp; ☹) Solo's first boutique hotel has class and style, and makes a restful place to stay. Smallish 'semi-Zen' rooms lack real wow factor but are uncluttered and modern. Staff are very accommodating here and there's an attractive little garden cafe.

our pick Roemahkoe (☎ 714 024; www.roemahkoe.info; Jl Dr Rajiman 501; r/stc incl breakfast from 430,000/490,000Rp; ☹ ☹) For a truly memorable place to stay, this incredibly classy art deco landmark won't disappoint. Roemahkoe has been sensitively renovated, and boasts a wood-panelled lobby with stained-glass windows. The 13 commodious rooms are very competitively priced and juxtapose modern facilities with period features superbly. Corridors and walls are positively dripping in (very) fine art and photographs, and the restaurant is wonderful. However, staff do not speak much English.

Sahid Kusuma Raya Hotel (☎ 646 356; haku.suma@indo.net.id; Jl Sugiyopranoto 20; r from 480,000Rp; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) This hotel is centred on an elegant colonial structure, with modern buildings set around it. The pool is huge and staff are hospitable, though the restaurant is overpriced.

Novotel Solo (☎ 724 555; reservation@novotelsolo.com; Jl Slamet Riyadi 272; r from 523,000Rp; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) This luxury four-star hotel has a central location, well-trained staff and excellent facilities including a spa and fitness centre. Its bar is a popular late-night haunt. Nonsmoking.

TOP END

Solo isn't loaded with truly top-end hotels.

Lor'in (☎ 724 500; www.lor-in.com; Jl Adisucipto 47; r US\$70-110, ste from US\$200; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) This huge resort's trump card is its absolutely stunning tropical garden, complete with towering palms, dramatic statues and a vast pool. Rooms are comfortable and spacious and the gym is excellent. Special offers sometimes cut standard room prices as low as US\$55. It's 5km northwest of the centre. Nonsmoking.

Eating & Drinking

Solo has a superb street-food tradition and a great new traffic-free area called **Galabo** (Jl Slamet Riyadi; ☹ 5-11pm) where you can sample it. Galabo is a kind of open-air food court with around 90 stalls – tuck into local specialties like *nasi gudeg* (unripe jackfruit served with rice, chicken and spices), *nasi liwet* (rice cooked in coconut milk and eaten with a host of side dishes) or the beef noodle soup *timlo solo* here. It's very sociable, though you'll have to bring your own Bintang.

In daylight hours, or if it's raining, try the more conventional food court in the Solo Grand Mall on Jl Slamet Riyadi, which has Indo-Japanese food, steamboats and a juice bar.

Warung Baru (☎ 656 369; Jl Ahmad Dahlan 23; mains from 8500Rp) A long-time travellers' hang-out, the Baru bakes great bread, but the rest of the enormous menu can be pretty mediocre. Still, the friendly owners arrange tours and batik classes.

Kusuma Sari (☎ 656 406; Jl Yos Sudarso 81; mains around 8000Rp) Very inexpensive, no-frills place serving steaks, chicken dishes and ice cream.

Adem Ayem (☎ 716 992; Jl Slamet Riyadi 342; meals around 15,000Rp) An ever-popular *rumah makan* (eating house), this place has a large dining room with swirling fans and photos of ye olde Surakarta. Everyone is here for the chicken – either fried, or served up *gudeg*-style.

Mas Mul (Jl Veteran; meals around 60,000Rp; ☹ 3-11pm) A snake restaurant where you can select a live victim for sataying or frying, wash it down with serpent blood, and then take the skin home as a gruesome souvenir. If you're so inclined, of course.

O Solo Mio (☎ 727 264; Jl Slamet Riyadi 253; pizzas around 40,000Rp; ☹ 11.30am-10.30pm) Authentic Italian that's as close as you'll get to a taste of the homeland in Central Java; it has a wood-fired pizza oven and delicious pasta.

Bizztro Saraswati (☎ 717 100; Jl Yosodipuro 122; meals from 25,000Rp; ☹ 3pm-midnight; ☹) A stylish, up-market new European-owned place with an open-air lounge area, dining rooms and elegant furnishings. Serves good snacks, meals (try the NZ beef ribs), cold beer and superb coffee.

There are very few bars in Solo. The only place in the centre that might be worth a look is the flash **Intro** (☎ 742 669; Solo Grand Mall, Jl Slamet Riyadi), which has live music on weekends but is pretty dead during the week.

Entertainment

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Solo is an excellent place to see traditional Javanese performing arts; contact the tourist office for the latest schedules. Istana Mangkunegaran (p200) and Kraton Surakarta (p199) both have traditional Javanese dance practice.

At the back of Sriwedari Amusement Park, **Sriwedari Theatre** (admission 3000Rp; ☎ performances 8-10pm) has a long-running *wayang orang* troupe – it's well worth dropping by to experience this masked dance-drama; you can come and go as you please.

RRI auditorium (☎ 641 178; Jl Abdul Rahman Saleh 51) RRI holds an eclectic program of cultural performances, including *wayang orang* and *ketoprak*.

SMKI (☎ 632 225; Jl Kepatihan Wetan) The high school for the performing arts has dance practice from around 8am to noon Monday to Thursday and Saturday, and 8am to 11am Friday.

Taman Budaya Surakarta (TBS; ☎ 635 414; Jl Ir Sutami 57) This cultural centre hosts all-night *wayang kulit* performances; private dance lessons are also available.

NIGHTCLUBS

This is not a big party town, but Solo has a few clubs. All alternate cheesy bands with DJs playing pounding dance music.

New Legenda (Jl Suryo Pranoto) Popular city-centre club playing *dangdut* (popular Indonesian music characterised by wailing vocals and a strong beat), techno and Indo chart hits.

Shopping

Solo is one of Indonesia's main textile centres, producing not only its own unique, traditional batik but every kind of fabric for domestic use and export.

For everyday shopping, check out the markets (p200) or the **Solo Grand Mall** (Jl Slamet Riyadi).

BATIK

The following are all large, well-established manufacturers with showrooms for their range of sophisticated work.

Batik Keris factory (☎ 714 400; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat) In Lawiyan, west of the city, this is one place to see the batik process up close. Its

shop (Jl Yos Sudarso 62) has icy air-con, a café and two full floors of fixed-price batik bags, skirts and shirts.

Batik Danar Hadi (Jl Slamet Riyadi 261) Danar Hadi is an important Solonese manufacturer and has a good store at its museum-cum-showroom (p201).

Pasar Klewer (Jl Secoyudan) Has hundreds of stalls selling fabrics.

CURIOS

Kris and other souvenirs can be purchased from street vendors found at the eastern side of the *alun-alun* near Kraton Surakarta. The gem sellers have a mind-boggling array of semi-precious stones. Jl Dr Rajiman (Secoyudan), which runs along the southern edge of the *alun-alun*, is the goldsmiths street.

Balai Agung (Jl Kyai Gede Sala) On the north side of the *alun-alun* you can see high-quality *wayang kulit* puppets being made (and put through their paces). Gamelan sets are also on sale too.

For information about Solo's flea market, **Pasar Triwindu** (Jl Diponegoro), see p200.

Getting There & Away

AIR

A new terminal is scheduled to open at Solo's Adi Sumarmo airport in late 2009, and should result in more frequent flight connections. Currently there are just two international flights.

AirAsia (☎ 5050 5088; www.airasia.com) connects Solo to Kuala Lumpur daily. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, **Silk Air** (☎ 724 604/5; www.silkair.com; Novotel Hotel, Jl Slamet Riyadi 272) flies to/from Singapore.

Domestic services include very regular flights to Jakarta with **Garuda** (☎ 630 082; Hotel Cakra, Jl Slamet Riyadi 201) and **Sriwijaya Airlines** (☎ 723 777; www.sriwijayaair-online.com; airport).

BUS

The Tirtanadi bus terminal is 3km from the centre of the city. Only economy buses leave from here to destinations such as Prambanan (13,000Rp, 1½ hours), Yogyakarta (from 13,000Rp, two hours) and Semarang (26,000Rp, 3¼ hours). Buses also travel to a number of destinations in East Java including Surabaya (52,000Rp, seven hours) and Malang (60,000Rp, eight hours).

Near the bus terminal, the Gilingan mini-bus terminal has express air-con minibuses to almost as many destinations as the larger buses.

Travel minibuses go to Yogyakarta (25,000Rp), Semarang (45,000Rp), Surabaya and Malang (80,000Rp) and Jakarta (170,000Rp). **Citra** (☎ 713 684), based at Gilingan, runs *travel* minibuses to most main cities; call for a pick-up. Homestays, cafes and travel agents also sell these tickets.

TRAIN

Solo is located on the main Jakarta–Yogyakarta–Surabaya train line and most trains stop at **Balapan** (☎ 714 039), the main train station.

Seventeen daily trains connect Solo with Yogyakarta, so you won't have to wait long. The *Pramek* (business class 7000Rp, one hour) trains are reasonably comfortable but not air-conditioned.

Express trains to Jakarta include the 8am *Argo Lawu* (executive class 220,000Rp, eight hours), which is the most luxurious day train, and the *Senja Utama* (business class from 100,000Rp, 10½ hours), which leaves at 6pm.

The *Lodaya* (business/executive class 100,000/165,000Rp, nine hours) departs for Bandung at 8am and 8.30pm daily, while the *Sancaka* (business/executive class 55,000/80,000Rp, five hours) heads for Surabaya twice daily.

Jebres train station in the northeast of Solo has a few very slow economy-class services to Surabaya and Jakarta.

Getting Around

A taxi to/from Adi Sumarmo airport, 10km northwest of the city centre, costs around 55,000Rp, or you can take a bus to Kartosuro and then another to the airport. For a taxi, metered **Kosti Solo taxis** (☎ 856 300) are reliable. Becak cost about 7000Rp from the train station or bus terminal into the centre. Public buses run up and down Riyadi and cost 2000Rp.

Many homestays and travellers' cafes can arrange bike hire for around 15,000Rp or a motorcycle for about 60,000Rp a day.

Solo can be an extremely inexpensive place to set up car hire. Avoid homestays and hotels and book direct with **AA Trans** (☎ 632 8121; Hotel Keprabon, Jl Ahmad Dahlan 8), and you'll pay 275,000Rp for a 12-hour hire period in a modern air-con car, with driver, excluding

petrol. Due to complicated Javanese business protocol this company is reluctant to offer pick-ups from your hotel (many of whom have their own car-hire deals); in that case, arrange to meet your driver at their office instead.

AROUND SOLO

Sangiran

Sangiran is a very important archaeological excavation site (so important it gained World Heritage status in 1996), where some of the best examples of fossilised skulls of prehistoric 'Java Man' (*Pithecanthropus erectus*) were unearthed by a Dutch professor in 1936 (see the boxed text, p89).

The town's main (if not only) attraction is its small **museum** (admission 10,000Rp; ☎ 9am–4pm Tue–Sun), with a few skulls (one of *Homo erectus*), various pig and hippopotamus teeth, and fossil exhibits, including huge mammoth bones and tusks. Souvenir stalls outside sell bones, 'mammoth tusks' carved from stone and other dubious fossil junk. Guides will also offer to take you to the area where shells and other fossils have been found in the crumbling slopes of the hill.

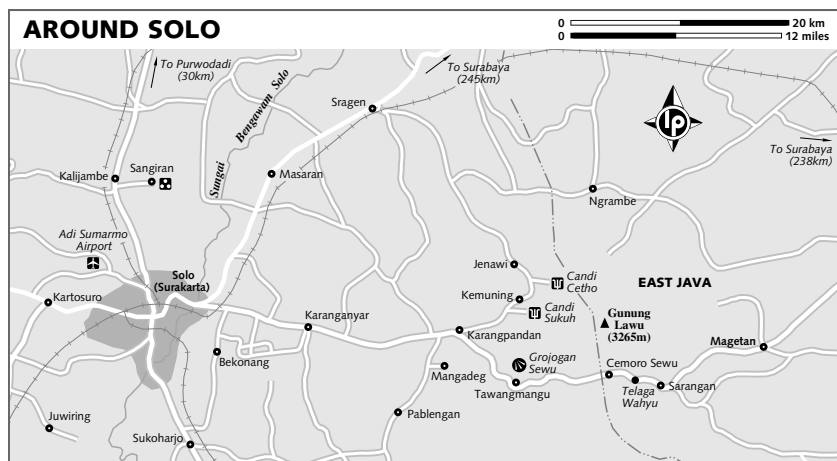
Take a Purwodadi bus from Solo's main bus terminal to Kalijambe (3000Rp). Ask for Sangiran and you will be dropped at the turn-off, 15km from Solo. It is then 4km to the museum (around 10,000Rp by *ojek*).

Gunung Lawu

Towering Gunung Lawu (3265m), lying on the border of Central and East Java, is one of the holiest mountains in Java. Mysterious Hindu temples dot its slopes and each year thousands of pilgrims seeking spiritual enlightenment climb its peak.

Although popular history has it that when Majapahit fell to Islam, the Hindu elite all fled east to Bali, Javanese lore relates that Brawijaya V, the last king of Majapahit, went west. Brawijaya's son, Raden Patah, was the leader of Demak and led the conquering forces of Islam against Majapahit, but rather than fight his own son, Brawijaya retreated to Gunung Lawu to seek spiritual enlightenment. There he achieved nirvana as Sunan Lawu, and today pilgrims come to the mountain to seek his spiritual guidance or to achieve magic powers.

The unique temples on the mountain – some of the last Hindu temples built in Java before



the region converted to Islam – show the influence of the later *wayang* style of East Java, though they incorporate elements of fertility worship. The most famous temple is Candi Suku; Candi Cetho is another large complex that still attracts Hindu worshippers.

CLIMBING GUNUNG LAWU

Angkot between Tawangmangu and Sarangan pass Cemoro Sewu (5000Rp), 5km from Sarangan on the East and Central Java border. This small village is the starting point for the 6.7km hike to the summit of Gunung Lawu. Thousands of pilgrims flock to the summit on 1 Suro, the start of the Javanese new year, but pilgrims and holidaying students make the night climb throughout the year, especially on Saturday night. Most start around 8pm, reaching the peak at around 2am for meditation.

For the best chance of witnessing a clear sunrise, start by midnight at the latest. It is a long, steady hike, but one of the easiest mountains in Java to tackle. The stone path is easy to follow – bring a torch (flashlight). Alternatively, guides can make a night climb easier and can lead you to the various pilgrimage sites along the way. Guides in Cemoro Sewu cost around 100,000Rp. Sign in at the PHKA post before starting the climb (admission to walk 2000Rp).

Candi Suku

In a magnificent position on the slopes of Gunung Lawu, 900m above the Solo plain,

Candi Suku (admission 10,000Rp; ☞ 7am–4.30pm) is one of Java's most enigmatic and striking temples. It's not a large site, but it has a large, truncated pyramid of rough-hewn stone, and there are some fascinating reliefs and statues. It's clear that a fertility cult was practised here: several sniggeringly explicit carvings have led it to be dubbed the 'erotic' temple. It's a quiet, isolated place with a strange, potent atmosphere.

Built in the 15th century during the declining years of the Majapahit kingdom, Candi Suku seems to have nothing whatsoever to do with other Javanese Hindu and Buddhist temples. The origins of its builders and strange sculptural style (with crude, squat and distorted figures carved in the *wayang* style found in East Java) remain a mystery and it seems to mark a reappearance of the pre-Hindu animism that existed 1500 years before.

At the gateway before the temple are a large stone lingam and yoni. Flowers are still often scattered here, and locals believe these symbols were used to determine whether a wife had been faithful, or a wife-to-be was still a virgin. The woman had to wear a sarong and jump across the lingam – if the sarong fell off, her infidelity was proven. Other interesting cult objects include a monument depicting Bima, the Mahabharata warrior hero, with Narada, the messenger of the gods, both in a stylised womb. Another monument depicts Bima passing through the womb at his birth. In the top courtyard three enormous flat-backed turtles stand like sacrificial altars. A 2m lingam once topped the pyramid, but it

was removed by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1815 and now resides in the National Museum in Jakarta.

If you're driving here note that there are almost no signposts to help direct you to the site and you have to pay a small fee to pass through the *kampung* of Kemuning.

Coming by public transport is very tricky. Take a bus bound for Tawangmangu from Solo as far as Karangpandan (6000Rp), then a Kemuning minibus (3000Rp) to the turn-off to Candi Sukuh; from here it's a steep 2km walk uphill to the site or a 10,000Rp *ojek* ride. For around 35,000Rp, *ojeks* will take you to both Sukuh and Cetho.

Candi Cetho

Even higher up the slopes of Gunung Lawu, **Candi Cetho** (Ceto; admission 10,000Rp; ☎ 7am-4.30pm) sits on the southern face of Gunung Lawu at around 1400m. Thought to date from around 1350, this *candi* closely resembles a Balinese temple in appearance, though it combines elements of Shivaism and fertility worship. It's a larger temple than Sukuh and is spread over terraces rising up the misty hillside. There's little carving here, but the stonework is well constructed and close-fitting. The entrance is marked by temple guardians and you'll find a striking platform with a turtle head and a large lingam on the upper terrace. Balinese Hindus visit Candi Cetho to make offerings on auspicious days.

Because of the effort required to reach Cetho, few visitors make it here – which is one of its attractions. The temple is 9km by road past the Sukuh turn-off. See above for transport details.

Tawangmangu

☎ 0271

Tawangmangu, a large hill resort on the western side of Gunung Lawu, is a popular weekend retreat for Solonese. It's a pleasant enough, if sprawling, place to escape the city heat and do a hike or two in the hills.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

About 2km from town, **Grojogan Sewu** (admission 3500Rp; ☎ 6am-6pm), a 100m-high waterfall, is a favourite playground for monkeys. It's reached by a long flight of steps down a hillside, but you probably won't want to have a dip in the very chilly and dirty swimming pool. From the bottom of the waterfall

a trail leads to a good track to Candi Sukuh, an interesting 2½-hour, 6km walk away. This path is steep in parts but is also negotiable by motorbike. *Ojek* hang out at the beginning of the trail on weekends.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are plenty of lodges on Jl Grojogan Sewu, a quieter street running between the waterfall and Jl Raya Lawu.

Hotel Wahayu Sari (☎ 697 470; Jl Grojogan Sewu 6; r 80,000Rp) One of the best options near the waterfall, with simple but acceptably clean rooms.

Pondok Sari (☎ 697 088; Jl Utara Taman; r 120,000-180,000Rp) A motel-style place with spacious if plain rooms, all with little front porches. There's a restaurant and kids' play area.

ourpick Hotel Bintang (☎ 696 269; Jl Raya Lawu; r from 150,000Rp) A surprise find in sleepy Tawangmangu, this outstanding new modern hotel has three floors of sleek, contemporary rooms, all with card-entry door, dark wood furniture, LCD TV and stylish lighting. Expect the opening tariffs quoted here to rise as the hotel becomes established. There's a mini-mart, and a cafe is planned.

ourpick Warung Grio (☎ 700 7413; set meals 45,000Rp) For a really memorable, rural setting for a meal, this riverside warung, part of an outdoor activity centre, can't be beat. Absolutely delicious traditional Javanese dishes are cooked on log fires and you eat under wooden shelters overlooking a fast-flowing stream. The freshly cooked food takes time to prepare, so expect to wait a while. It's 2km west of Tawangmangu, on the road back to Solo.

For cheaper eats, the road near the waterfall is inundated with warungs.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses travel to Solo (12,000Rp) and less-frequent *angkot* go to Sarangan (7000Rp). Minibuses (2000Rp) loop through town from the bus terminal up the main road, across to the waterfall and back.

Sarangan

☎ 0351

Just over the provincial border in East Java, 13km from Tawangmangu, Sarangan is a weekend resort set around the banks of a small lake. The journey here is beautiful, ascending steeply through the thick forest that clings to

the shoulder of Gunung Lawu volcano before plunging down to the lakeshore.

Sarangan is crowded at weekends, when speedboats zip and pedalos potter around the lake, but very quiet at other times. At 1287m, the climate is fresh and it makes a good base for tackling Lawu.

Speedboats cost 40,000Rp per person for a quick whiz around the lake; pedalos are 30,000Rp per hour.

SLEEPING

Prices rise on weekends.

Hotel Merah (☎ 888 182; Jl Raya Telaga; r 125,000-600,000Rp) Painted (appropriately) bright red, the Merah has rooms and apartments that lack character, but many do have direct lake vistas. The restaurant is ideal for a meal with a view.

Villa Joglo (☎ 888 509; Jl Raya Telaga; r/ste from 150,000/300,000Rp) This friendly place on the main drag to the lakeshore has rooms and apartment-style accommodation, some with two and three bedrooms. All are in tip-top condition. The owners are friendly but speak no English.

Nirwana (☎ 888 498; Jl Raya Telaga; ste 200,000-450,000Rp) New four-storey place with smart, bright and airy suites that all have a living area, a modern hot-water bathroom and from one to five bedrooms.

There are several restaurants on the lakeshore, including **Nusa Indah** (☎ 888 333; meals from 12,000Rp), which also sells cold Bintang.

Angkot make the run to Tawangmangu (9000Rp), passing Cemoro Sewu for the climb to Gunung Lawu, but they only leave when full.

Mangadeg

Near Karangpandan, a road branches south from the main Solo–Tawangmangu road about 5km to Mangadeg, the burial hill of Solo's royal Mangkunegoro family. Make a small donation and visit the graves or simply take in the superb views.

Just 500m away in the same sacred hills, the lavish **Astana Giribangun** is the Suharto family burial place, where the former president and military dictator was buried in 2008, alongside the grave of his wife. Tens of thousands lined the route of his funeral cortege from Solo airport to Astana Giribangun, and thousands more visit this traditional Javanese *pendopo*-style burial monument to pay their respects every year.

Just past Mangadeg is **Pablengan**, the former bathing pools of the Mangkunegoro, which has dilapidated, ancient pavilions fed by seven types of spring water.

NORTH COAST

Central Java's north coast features little on the itineraries of most travellers, but this steamy strip of land is not without its charm.

For starters, the towns dotting the north coast are steeped in history. For many centuries the coast was the centre for trade with merchants from Arabia, India and China, who brought with them not only goods but also ideas and cultures. In the 15th and 16th centuries the area was a springboard for Islam into Java, and the tombs of the country's great saints all lie between Semarang and Surabaya (with the exception of Sunan Gunungjati in Cirebon).

The north coast's rich craft traditions are also impressive. Pekalongan is celebrated for its batik, while Jepara is a major centre for wooden furniture. If the sweet smell of *kretek* (clove cigarettes) is to your liking, then a trip to Kudus, the birthplace of the *kretek*, may appeal.

Central Java's capital, Semarang, is located here, and while it won't hold your interest for too long, it is a gateway to the splendid (and often forgotten) Karimunjawa Islands and the peaceful mountains between it and Yogyakarta.

PEKALONGAN

☎ 0285 / pop 260,000

On the north coast between Semarang and Cirebon, Pekalongan (its name is said to be derived from the Chinese *a-pek-along-an*, meaning 'a place for catching fish') is known as Kota Batik (Batik City), and its batiks are some of the most sought after in Indonesia. It is less formal, more colourful and more innovative in design than the traditional styles of Yogyakarta and Solo.

Pekalongan is a steamy city that sees few tourists, but it does have a neglected, old-fashioned atmosphere and an ethnically diverse population.

Information

BIl bank (Jl Diponegoro 4)

Main post office (Kantor Pos dan Giro) Opposite the Balai Kota on the *alun-alun*.

Telkom office (Jl Merak 2) Next door to the main post office. International telephone calls can be made here.

Tourist office (☎ 423 221; Jl Angkatan 45; ☎ 7am–2pm Mon–Thu, to 11am Fri) Just north of Jl Gajah Mada, though it's of little help.

Sights

Pekalongan's microscopic **Batik Museum** (Jl Majapahit 7A; admission free; ☎ 9am–1pm Mon–Sat), 2km south of the train station, has a few examples of batik but no information in English. Of more interest is the **bird market** (Jl Kurinci) nearby.

The most interesting area of town is situated to the north, along Jl Blimbing, with its venerable **Chinese quarter**; here you'll find a Chinese temple and old terraced houses. To the east, Jl Patiunus and the streets leading off it make up the **Arab quarter**, another good area for batik (see below). Not far to the south is the town's main batik market, **Pasar Banjarsari**.

Facing the surprisingly quiet and pretty *alun-alun*, the **Mesjid Jami Yasmaja** has impressive Arabic architecture enclosing an older Javanese-style mosque.

Sleeping & Eating

Budget hotels are directly opposite the train station on Jl Gajah Mada.

Hotel Damai (☎ 422 768; Jl Gajah Mada 7; r with fan from 45,000Rp, with air-con 130,000Rp; ☎) The best budget option on Jl Gajah Mada, and right opposite the train station.

Hotel Istana (☎ 428 029; Jl Gajah Mada 23; r with fan 110,000Rp, with air-con from 156,000Rp; ☎) A 50-room midrange hotel, with clean rooms and a quiet ambience despite having karaoke and a disco on the premises (which is about the only nightlife in town).

Nirwana Hotel (☎ 422 446; Jl Dr Wahidin 11; r with fan/air-con from 125,000/235,000Rp; ☎) A modern(ish) hotel with spacious rooms, 24-hour room service, the well-regarded Astuboga restaurant, a cafe and an attractive outdoor pool area with sun loungers.

Remaja (Jl Raya Dr Cipto 30; mains from 10,000Rp) Recommended by locals for its tasty Indonesian and Chinese grub.

Shopping

Pekalongan batik is constantly evolving, and new designs are more suited to Western and modern Indonesian tastes. Traditional batik is still popular, however, and Indonesians are often required to don it for formal occasions.

Street pedlars mostly sell cheap clothes and poor-quality sarongs, but you might get lucky. Shops around town, many on Jl Hayam Wuruk, sell clothes, lengths of cloth, and sarongs in cotton and silk.

Pasar Banjarsari (Jl Sultan Agung) On the ground floor of Plaza Pekalongan, this market is a good bet for inexpensive batik.

Huza (☎ 424 863; Jl Kenanga 7) An upmarket store with an extensive range of fine-quality batik: sarongs, shirts, dresses and even kimonos.

Tobal (☎ 423 885; www.batiktobal.com; Jl Teratai 24) A large manufacturer that produces export-quality sarongs in numerous styles, shirts, and batik for babies and children. You can view the process here.

Most of the traditional batik is produced in the villages around Pekalongan. In the village of Kedungwuni, 17km south of town, Oey Soe Tjoen's workshop is famous for its intricate *batik tulis*. You can see it being made every day of the week except Friday.

Getting There & Away

Pekalongan is located on the main Jakarta–Semarang–Surabaya highway and train route. There is also a road linking Pekalongan and the Dieng Plateau.

Pekalongan's bus terminal is about 4km southeast of town, 2000Rp by *angkot* or 10,000Rp by becak. Frequent buses go to Semarang (normal/air-con 20,000/28,000Rp, three hours); buses also go to Cirebon (34,000/44,000Rp, four hours), but often you will first have to take a bus to Tegal and then another to Cirebon.

Pekalongan is roughly midway between Semarang and Jakarta, and trains can often be full as they pass through town, especially on weekends and holidays. Book ahead.

The *Fajar* (9.31am) and *Senja* (9.39pm) business-class expresses run from Pekalongan to Cirebon and on to Jakarta (both 100,000Rp), as does the luxury *Argo Muria* (5.21pm, 200,000Rp). Heading for Semarang the best daytime trains are the executive-class *Muria* (11.44am, 160,000Rp) and the *Kamandanu* (3.07pm, 140,000Rp).

Getting Around

Pekalongan has plenty of becak, and anything between 2000Rp and 10,000Rp will get you to most places in town. Orange bemos run all over Pekalongan for a standard 2000Rp. For Kedungwuni, take a bemo down Jl Mansyur.

SEMARANG

☎ 024 / pop 1.4 million

The bustling, north-coast port of Semarang is a schizophrenic city, embodying the polarity of modern Java. On one side, this old Dutch administrative centre is still deeply traditional, with a fantastically atmospheric, if decrepit, port district full of rambling colonial architecture and a vibrant Chinese quarter. On the other side, the commercial area around Simpang Lima (Five Ways), with its malls, clogged freeways and business hotels, is emblematic of Java's sudden and dramatic shift into the 21st century.

It may well be the provincial capital of Central Java, but Semarang lacks the pull of Solo and Yogyakarta. It does, however, have some appealing corners and is a good starting point for trips along the north coast or south to the central mountains.

Orientation

Semarang has two parts: 'old' Semarang is on the coastal plain, sandwiched between the two Banjir canals, while the new town sprawls southwards. An important hub in the old town is the Pasar Johar on the roundabout at the top of Jl Pemuda.

Jl Pemuda, Semarang's premier boulevard in Dutch times, is still a major artery and shopping street, though nowadays the busy, commercial hub of Simpang Lima square is the modern heart of Semarang.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

GAMA Warnet (Jl Gajah Mada 58; per hr 5000Rp; ☎ 24hr)

MEDICAL SERVICES

RS Saint Elizabeth (☎ 831 0076; Jl Kawi) The best hospital and first choice of the sizeable Semarang expat community. It's in the Candi Baru district.

MONEY

The banks listed here have ATMs.

ABN Amro (Jl Jenderal A Yani) Just off Simpang Lima.

BCA bank (Jl Pemuda 90-92) Changes most currencies.

POST & TELEPHONE

Main post office (Jl Pemuda)

Telkom (Jl Jenderal Suprpto 7)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Central Java Tourist Office (☎ 351 5451; www.central-java-tourism.com; Jl Pemuda 147; ☎ 7.30am-

4pm Mon-Fri) A useful office run by Treggono and Kartika with a good booklet devoted to the city and leaflets on the entire Central Java region. The office building is infernally hot, so bring plenty of water to cool you down.

Sights

OLD CITY

Semarang's richly atmospheric old city is the highlight of any visit. Sadly, most of the area's tremendous stock of colonial buildings are in an advanced state of decay, seemingly unloved and left to rot by the city authorities. This area is very prone to flooding; if you visit during the rainy season it may not even be possible to explore some of the back streets.

At the heart of this old Dutch port quarter is the elegant church **Gereja Blenduk** (Jl Jenderal Suprpto), built in 1753, which has a huge cupola, a spectacular baroque-style organ and an unusual wooden pulpit. Knock on the door and the caretaker will let you in; services are still held here. Towards the river from the church there are dozens of crumbling old Dutch warehouses, municipal buildings and town houses with shuttered windows, flaking plaster and peeling paint.

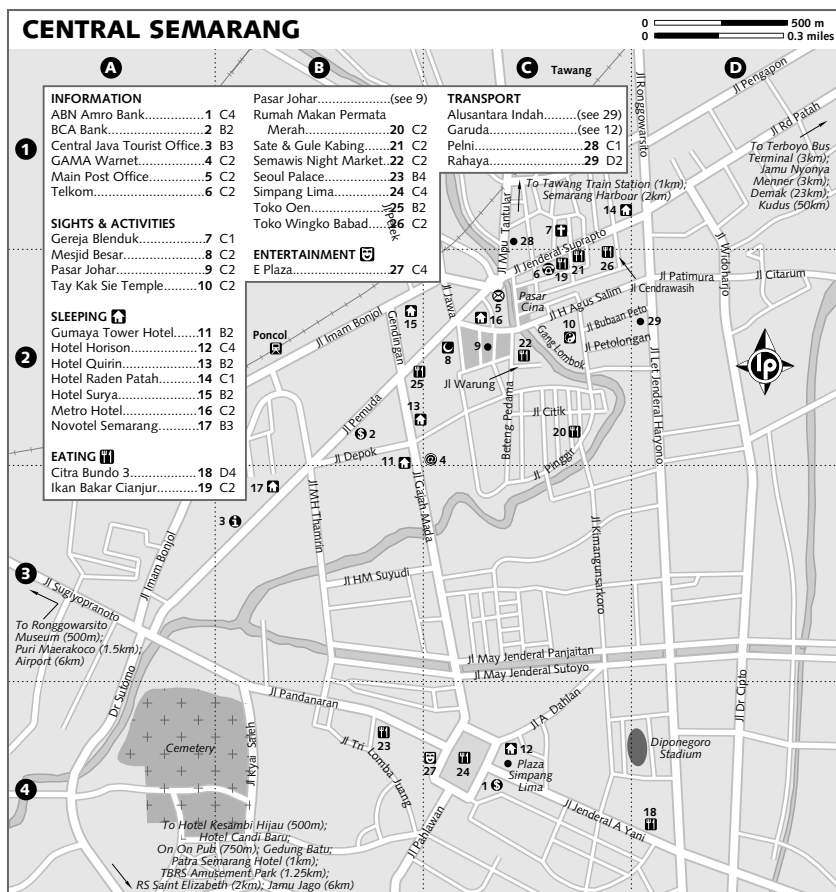
Further south you plunge into the narrow streets of Semarang's old **Chinatown**. Though Chinese characters are rarely on show (the Chinese language was long discriminated against by law), Semarang is Indonesia's most Chinese city and there's a great night market here on weekends; see p212.

Chinatown's brightly painted **Tay Kak Sie Temple** (Gang Lombok) dates from 1772 – it's on the small alley running along the river off Jl Pekojan.

Back towards the centre of the city, **Pasar Johar** (Jl H Agus Salim; ☎ 7am-5pm) is one of Semarang's main markets. Facing the market is Semarang's **Mesjid Besar**.

GEDUNG BATU (SAM PO KONG TEMPLE)

This huge **Chinese temple complex** (admission free; ☎ 24hr) stands 5km southwest of the centre of the city. It was built in honour of Admiral Cheng Ho, the famous Muslim eunuch of the Ming dynasty, who led a Chinese fleet on seven expeditions to Java and other parts of Southeast and West Asia in the early 15th century. Cheng Ho has since become a saint known as Sam Po Kong and is particularly revered in Melaka, Malaysia. He first arrived in Java in 1405 and is believed to have helped



spread Islam. This temple is also revered by Muslims.

Sam Po has three main temple buildings, and several smaller structures (with many more planned). Most are classically Indo-Chinese, with soaring pagoda-style roofs, massive drums and plenty of Chinese lanterns and dragons. But Gua Sam Po Kong temple is quite different: it has an inner chamber in the form of a cave flanked by two great dragons, hence the temple's popular name, *gedung batu* (stone building). Inside the cave is a gilded statue of Sam Po Kong surrounded by fairy lights.

Note that women having their periods are not allowed to enter the temples but can visit the complex. Though entrance is free, you

are expected to purchase some incense sticks (minimum price 5000Rp).

To get to Gedung Batu, take the Damri bus 2 from Jl Pemuda to Karang Ayu (a suburb west of central Semarang), and then an *angkot* to the temple. It takes about half an hour from central Semarang.

JAMU (HERBAL MEDICINES)

Semarang is known for its *jamu* and has two larger manufacturers; both have museums and offer tours. **Jamu Nyonya Meneer** (☎ 658 3088; www.nyonyameneer.com; Jl Raya Kaligawe, km 4; ☎ museum 10am-3.30pm Sun-Fri) is near the bus terminal, while **Jamu Jago** (☎ 747 2762; Jl Setia Budi 273) is 6km south of the city on the Ambarawa road.

OTHER SIGHTS

Ronggowarsito Museum (www.museumronggowarsito.org; Jl Abdulrachman; admission 4000Rp; ☎ 8am-2pm Tue-Sun) is a large provincial museum with antiquities, crafts including batik and *wayang* puppets, and assorted fossils and curios collected from all over the state. One of the most interesting exhibits is a recycled stone panel from the Mantingan mosque – one side shows Islamic motifs, while the reverse shows the original Hindu-Buddhist scene. Javanese dance displays are held here on Friday morning. It's approximately 2km before the airport.

Often referred to as 'Taman Mini Jawa Tengah', the 24-hectare **Puri Maerakoko theme park** (admission 3000Rp; ☎ 8am-5pm) has 35 traditional pavilions and houses representing each of Central Java's *kabupaten* (regencies). While mostly of interest to domestic tourists, you may want to drop by if you're exploring Central Java in depth. It is out near the airport and not accessible by public transport.

Semarang harbour is worth a look to see *pinisi* and other traditional ocean-going vessels that dock at Tambak Lorok wharves.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Hotel Raden Patah (☎ 351 1328; Jl Jenderal Suprpto 48; r with/without mandi 55,000/40,000Rp) Offers simple, functional rooms in a fine old historic hotel in the heart of the old city. Rooms at the rear of the quiet inner courtyard are in the best shape.

Hotel Candi Baru (☎ 831 5272; Jl Rinjani 21; r with/without air-con from 160,000/75,000Rp; ☎) In a magnificent rambling old villa with peeling paint, the occasional ghost and panoramic vistas over the city, Candi Baru is full of shabby-chic character. Rooms are enormous and it's also home to the On On pub and a cafe that sells Thai food.

Hotel Kesambi Hijau (☎ 831 2528; Jl Kesambi 7; r from 110,000Rp; ☎) With a hillside location in the south of the city and well-priced rooms in several different price categories, this is worth considering. Even some of the cheaper rooms have views and balconies.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel Surya (☎ 354 0355; www.suryahotel.net; Jl Imam Bonjol 28; r with air-con, hot water & breakfast 235,000-350,000Rp; ☎ ☎) A very sharp-looking little modern hotel with a zany orange colour

scheme and hip, stylish rooms that are competitively priced. Staff are very helpful, and there's a cafe-restaurant.

Hotel Quirin (☎ 354 7063; Jl Gajah Mada 44-52; r 240,000-320,000Rp, f 450,000Rp; ☎ ☎) This motel-style affair has been given the full minimalist treatment and now has a sleek, shiny white lobby and swanky new cafe-restaurant. Rooms are modern, comfortable and in excellent condition.

Metro Hotel (☎ 354 7371; www.metro.co.id; Jl H Agus Salim 3; r 258,000-338,000Rp, ste 418,000Rp; ☎ ☎) This three-star place is showing her age a little but remains very handy for exploring Semarang's old city and Chinese quarter. Accommodation here ranges from small, windowless boxes with air-con to plush suites.

Novotel Semarang (☎ 356 3000; www.novotel.com; Jl Pemuda 123; r from 525,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) Enjoys a good location between the old city and Simpang Lima and its facilities are first class, with an outdoor pool, a state-of-the-art gym and an impressive cafe-restaurant. Rooms are contemporary and seriously comfortable, most with sweeping city views. Nonsmoking.

Patra Semarang Hotel (☎ 841 4141; www.patra-jasa.com/semarang; Jl Sisingamangaraja; r 525,000-625,000Rp, villas from 830,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) Located on the Candi Baru hillside overlooking the city, this huge luxury hotel has excellent facilities including a good gym, tennis court and spa and a Japanese restaurant. The rooms are comfortable and spacious (but lack an X factor). Nonsmoking.

Hotel Horison (☎ 845 0045; www.horisonsemarang.com; Jl Ahmad Dahlan; r from 529,000Rp, ste from 729,000Rp; ☎ ☎) A multistorey hotel supremely handy for shopaholics; it's attached to Plaza Simpang Lima. Rooms are of the highest standard and have plasma TV and wi-fi. With the hotel's spa, massage centre, three restaurants and two bars, you may never venture out onto the steamy city streets.

Gumaya Tower Hotel (☎ 355 1999; www.gumaya.towerhotel.com; Jl Gajah Mada 59-61; r from 750,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Striking new luxury edifice with a central location and understated, well-designed rooms, all with a large LCD TVs and gorgeous bathrooms with tubs. There's an infinity pool, and panoramic city views from the top-deck Sky Line bar. Nonsmoking.

Eating

Semarang has a large Chinese population, and this is a good place to sample some interesting dishes. If you're here on a weekend head straight

to the **Semawis night market** (☎ 5-11pm Fri-Sun) on Jl Warung for fine Chinese-style noodles and *babi sate* (pork sate). There's always a sociable atmosphere here, with a bit of low-key karaoke crooning and fortune telling going on.

Other good places are Simpang Lima and Pasar Johar. The former often pips the latter for atmosphere, though; dozens of *kaki lima* (food carts) set up around the huge square, serving up snacks and offering traditional *lesahan* dining (on straw mats). Plaza Simpang Lima also has an extensive food court on the 4th floor.

Toko Wingko Babad (☎ 354 2064; Jl Cendrawasih 14; cakes 2000Rp) At this famous bakery try the local specialties such as *wingko babad*, delicious coconut cakes, which you can buy hot here.

Toko Oen (☎ 354 1683; Jl Pemuda 52; mains from 20,000Rp) For the quintessential colonial experience this place is worth a visit. It's well past its heyday – the 'gastronomic' award on display has lost a letter and has become 'astronomic' – but prices are actually quite affordable and it's not hard to rewind the clock and imagine the scene back in 1936 when Oen opened. It sells snacks, Chinese and Indonesian food, a few Western dishes, ice cream, cold beer, cappuccinos and (dry) biscuits and cakes, so there should be something on the menu for all.

curpick Ikan Bakar Cianjur (☎ 356 2333; Jl Jenderal Suprpto 19; meals from 25,000Rp) Perhaps the finest (only?) restored building in the old city, this restaurant occupies the magnificent premises of Semarang's former court house, complete with antique tiles, soaring ceilings and real colonial character. You'll find chicken, vegetable and fish dishes on the menu (try the *gurame*) as well as cold beer, coffee and juices. It's right opposite the Gereja Blenduk.

Sate & Gule Kabing (☎ 354 9692; Jl Jenderal Suprpto 29; meals 30,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-10pm) Almost opposite the Gereja Blenduk church, this restaurant serves up lamb and nothing else: served as sate, or with rich sauces like *buntel*, or as stewlike *gule*.

Seoul Palace (☎ 844 7414; Jl Pandanaran 109; mains 30,000Rp; ☎ noon-11pm) Authentic Korean restaurant with excellent meat- and fish-feast barbecues served up with home-brewed *kimchi* (spicy vegie and sauce) and delicious *banchan* (side dishes).

Also recommended:

Rumah Makan Permata Merah (Jl Pinggir 86-92; mains 10,000-30,000Rp) Offers Authentic Chinese cooking.

Citra Bundo 3 (Jl Jenderal A Yani 184; mains 12,000-20,000Rp) Hits the spot for inexpensive local food.

Drinking

On On Pub (☎ 831 3968; Jl Rinjani 21) At the Hotel Candi Baru, this popular pub-style place is a classic expat hang-out, with pool, darts and comfort grub. It's also the home base of the Hash House Harriers, who meet here on Saturday and Monday.

Entertainment

E Plaza (☎ 356 3872; Jl Ruko Gajahmada Lantai II 29; entrance 50,000Rp) There's not that much nightlife action in Semarang, but this large upmarket club in the Simpang Lima district has live bands and electronic DJs. There's also a bar, a cinema and a restaurant here, so it's a good destination for a night out.

TBRS amusement park (☎ 831 1220; Jl Sriwijaya 29, Tegalwareng) For more traditional entertainment, this amusement park holds *wayang orang* performances every Saturday from 7pm to midnight, and *wayang kulit* every Thursday Wage and *ketoprak* every Monday Wage of the Javanese calendar (5000Rp).

Getting There & Away

AIR

Semarang airport has international flights to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and good connections to Jakarta.

AirAsia (☎ 5050 5088; www.airasia.com) Flies to Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.

Batavia Air (☎ 762 5171; www.batavia-air.co.id; Ahmad Yani airport) Flies to Jakarta and Pontianak.

Garuda (☎ 845 4737; www.garuda-indonesia.com; Hotel Horison, Jl Ahmad Dahlan) Links Semarang with Singapore and Jakarta.

Lion Air (☎ 0804 778 899; www.lionair.co.id) Connects Semarang with Jakarta.

Mandala (☎ 760 3011; Ahmad Yani airport) Flies to Jakarta.

Sriwijaya Air (☎ 021 640 5566; www.sriwijayaair-online.com) Flies to Surabaya and Jakarta (three daily flights).

BOAT

For ferry information, the **Pelni office** (☎ 354 0381/6722; Jl Mpu Tantular 25; ☎ ticketing 8am-2pm Mon-Thu, to noon Fri & Sat) has timetables you can consult after its ticket sales windows shut; doors close around 5.30pm. Pelni's *Lawit*, *Leuser* and *Binaia* ferries run between Semarang and the Kalimantan ports of Sampit

(economy/1st class 165,000/511,000Rp), Kumai (146,500/449,000Rp) and Pontianak (216,000/675,000Rp). Other Peln-operated boats include the *Ciremai* and *Sinabung* to Makassar (economy/1st class from 307,000/969,000Rp).

BUS

Semarang's Terboyo bus terminal is 4km east of town, just off the road to Kudus. Destinations for normal/air-con buses are Yogyakarta (28,000/38,000Rp, four hours), Pekalongan (20,000/28,000Rp, three hours), Cirebon (50,000/66,000Rp, six hours) and Surabaya (35,000/50,000Rp, nine hours). There are also economy-only buses to Kudus (10,000Rp), Jepara (12,000Rp) and Wonosobo (32,000Rp, four hours).

Agents for luxury buses and express minibuses are located near Losmen Jaya and include **Rahayu agent** (☎ 354 3935; Jl Let Jenderal Haryono 9) and **Nusantara Indah agent** (☎ 355 3984; Jl Let Jenderal Haryono 9B).

Air-con minibuses travel to destinations across the island, including Pekalongan (40,000Rp), Wonosobo (45,000Rp), Solo (42,000Rp), Yogyakarta (50,000Rp), Surabaya (100,000Rp) and Jakarta (170,000Rp).

TRAIN

Semarang lies on the main north coast Jakarta–Cirebon–Surabaya train route. **Tawang** (☎ 354 4544) is Semarang's main station.

The luxury *Argo Muria/Argo Bromo Anggrek* trains do the Jakarta run in six hours and cost 210,000/350,000Rp, leaving at 12.41pm and 4pm respectively. The *Sembrani* (executive class 180,000Rp, six hours) passes through Semarang at 11.40pm en route to Jakarta from Surabaya and at 1.52pm going the other way (150,000Rp, four hours).

Most economy-class services depart from Semarang's Poncol train station. The *Tawangjaya* (38,000Rp, 7½ hours) for Jakarta's Pasar Senen station leaves at 7pm. All economy-class trains to Surabaya are overnight trains, such as the *Kertajaya* (28,000Rp, five hours), which leaves at 1.15am.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Ahmad Yani airport is 6km west of the centre. A taxi into town costs 45,000Rp, and around 35,000Rp when returning to the airport using the taxi meter.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

City buses charge a fixed 3000Rp fare and terminate at the Terboyo bus terminal. Buses 1, 2 and 3 run south along Jl Pemuda to Candi Baru. Minibuses (called *angkot* or *daihatsu* locally) cost the same and operate all around town.

Short becak rides cost about 5000Rp, a ride of over 3km around 8000Rp.

Semarang has plenty of metered taxis, which congregate around the big hotels and Simpang Lima. Call **Bluebird** (☎ 760 1234) or **Kosti taxis** (☎ 761 3333); a minimum of 10,000Rp is charged.

AMBARAWA

☎ 0298 / pop 87,000

The market town of Ambarawa, 28km south of Semarang, will be of interest to train spotters; it's the site of the **Ambarawa Train Station Museum** (Museum Kereta Api Ambarawa; admission 5000Rp; ☎ 8am–4pm). It's located in the premises of the old Koenig Willem I station, which opened in 1873. Today's museum has exhibits of rail memorabilia, old Morse code telegraph equipment and 21 steam locomotives built between 1891 and 1928.

Though the line has closed, groups of up to 100 passengers can charter a train for the 18km round trip from Ambarawa to Bedono for 2,500,000Rp. Book through the **Ambarawa train station** (☎ 591 035) a few days in advance. Between June and August Dutch tourists charter a train several days a week, so it may be worth showing up and seeing if you can hitch a ride.

The museum is a couple of kilometres outside town, just off the road to Magelang. Ambarawa has hotels, but nearby Bandungan is a nicer place to stay.

Nestled in the heart of 22 hectares of coffee plantation, at an altitude of 900m, **Losari Coffee Plantation** (☎ 596 333; www.losaricoffeeplantation.com; Desa Losari, Grabag; villas from US\$350; ☎ ☎) is one of Indonesia's most special (and expensive) hotels. The Losari has a glorious location ringed by volcanoes, a benign climate and 18 amazing villas decorated with lavish touches of Mediterranean and Javanese flair that make the most of the stunning views. All manner of exotic spa treatments – including volcanic stone massages – can be arranged, or just steam it up in the Turkish bath. There's an organic garden that provides for the resort's two restaurants, or you can sample the

plantation's organic tea and coffee in the historic Club House. Losari is located near Grabag, some 12km southwest of Ambarawa. From Ambarawa, it's best to take a taxi (40,000Rp) to the resort; note that 21% tax must be added to room rates.

Ambarawa can be reached by public bus from Semarang (7000Rp, one hour), and Yogyakarta (31,000Rp, three hours) via Magelang.

BANDUNGAN

☎ 0298

Bandungan is a pleasant hill resort at 980m, but the main attraction is the nearby Gedung Songo temples. It's a good base for exploring the temples and train museum at Ambarawa, and for escaping the heat of the north coast. There are several hotels here, as it's something of a weekend resort for folk from Semarang.

In town, **Hotel Parahita** (☎ 711 017; r 60,000Rp), just down the back road to Semarang from the market, has basic rooms and a friendly owner who speaks no English.

Hotel Rawa Pening Eltricia (☎ 711 445; r from 140,000Rp, cottages from 250,000Rp; 🚗) has great views from its hilltop perch and a terraced garden. Rooms are in good shape, and it has a lovely old colonial-style restaurant and a tennis court.

Buses make the run directly from Semarang to Bandungan (10,000Rp). If you are coming from the south, get off at Ambarawa and take an *angkot* to Bandungan (2000Rp).

GEDUNG SONGO TEMPLES

These nine (Gedung Songo means 'nine buildings' in Javanese) small **Hindu temples** (admission 5000Rp; 🕒 7am-5pm) are scattered along the tops of the foothills around Gunung Ungaran. The temples are not huge, but the setting is magnificent. The 1000m perch gives one of the most spectacular views in Java – south across shimmering Danau Rawa Pening to Gunung Merbabu and, behind it, smouldering Gunung Merapi; and west to Gunung Sumbing and Gunung Sundoro.

Built in the 8th century AD and devoted to Shiva and Vishnu, five of the temples are in good condition after major restoration in the 1980s; however, most of the carvings were lost. A hill path goes past three temple groupings – the temples at the third grouping are the most impressive. Halfway up, the trail leads down to a ravine and hot sulphur

springs, and then up again to the final temple and its expansive views. The 3km loop can be walked in an hour, but allow longer to savour the atmosphere. Horses can also be hired.

Arrive early in the morning for the best views. A couple of small hotels with rooms for around 40,000Rp are just outside the gate. Camping inside the temple complex is also possible, for a small fee.

The temples are about 6km from Bandungan. Take a Sumawono bus (2000Rp) 3km to the turn-off to the temples. Buses also run from Semarang and Ambarawa (4000Rp). The final 3km uphill to Gedung Songo (3000Rp) can be tackled either by foot or *ojek* (10,000Rp).

DEMAK

Demak was the springboard from which Islam made its leap into Java. As the capital of the island's first Islamic state, it was from here that the Hindu Majapahit kingdom was conquered and much of Java's interior was converted.

The town's economic heyday has now passed and even the sea has retreated several kilometres, leaving this former port landlocked. But the role this small town, 25km east of Semarang, once played has not been forgotten, and Demak's **Mesjid Agung** remains one of the archipelago's foremost Muslim pilgrimage sites.

Constructed in 1466, this is Java's oldest mosque. Legend tells how it was built from wood by the *wali songo* in a single night. Four main pillars in the central hall were originally made by four of the Muslim saints, and one pillar, erected by Sunan Kalijaga, is said to be made from scraps of timber magically fused together.

The history of the mosque is outlined in the small **museum** (admission by donation; 🕒 8am-5pm) to the side. Some of the original woodwork, including magnificent carved doors, is on display.

The tombs of Demak's rulers are next to the mosque; the tomb of Raden Trenggono (leader of Demak's greatest military campaigns), however, attracts the most pilgrims. During Grebeg Besar, when various heirlooms are ritually cleansed, thousands of pilgrims visit Demak (the date is different each year; check with Semarang's Central Java Tourist Office – see p209).

The mosque is on the main road in the centre of town, beside the *alun-alun*, and through-buses from either Semarang or Kudus (6000Rp) can drop you right outside.

KUDUS

☎ 0291 / pop 90,000

Kudus takes its name from the Arabic word *al-Quds* – the Arabic name for Jerusalem. Founded by the Muslim saint Sunan Kudus, it's an important pilgrimage site. Like much of Java, Kudus retains links with its Hindu past and the slaughter of cows is still forbidden here.

The town itself is quite industrial today and holds little charm unless you're a hardened *kretek* smoker. This is where the first clove cigarettes were produced, and today Kudus is still a stronghold of *kretek* production.

Information

The **BiI bank** (Jl Dr Lukmonohadi) has an ATM, and there are several more inside the Taman Bojana food complex (p216). You'll find the **tourist office** (☎ 435 958; Komplek Kriday Wisata; 7am–2pm Mon–Thu, to 11am Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) in the

east of town (look out for the concrete animals). Though it doesn't have much information it can direct you to local home industries, including woodcarving workshops.

Sights

OLD TOWN

West of the river, **Kauman**, the oldest part of town, has narrow streets and the feel of a *kasbah* in the Middle East, with traders selling religious souvenirs, dates, prayer beads and caps.

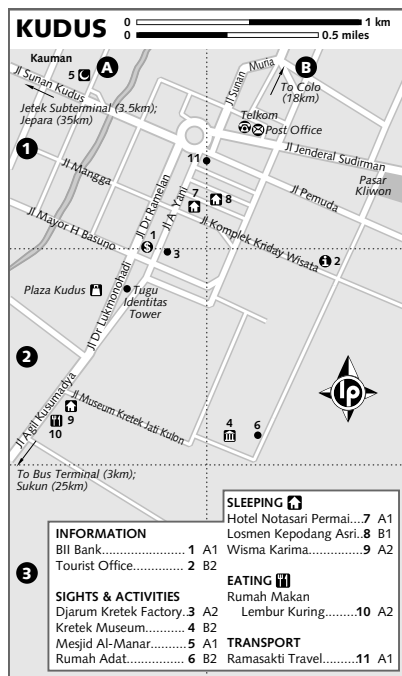
Here you'll find the **Mesjid Al-Manar** (also known as Al-Aqsa); constructed in 1549 by Sunan Kudus, it's famous for its red-brick *menara* (minaret). This minaret may have originally been the watchtower of the Hindu temple the mosque is said to be built on. Its curiously squat form and flared sides certainly have more in common with Balinese than with Islamic architecture; climb to its upper balcony to see a huge *bedug* (drum) that's still used to summon the faithful to prayer.

From the courtyards behind the mosque, a palm-lined path leads to the imposing **Tomb of Sunan Kudus**, shrouded with a curtain of lace. The narrow doorway, draped with heavy gold-embroidered curtains, leads through to an inner chamber and the grave. During *Buka Luwur*, held once a year on 10 Muharram of the Islamic calendar, the curtains around the tomb are changed and thousands of pilgrims flock to Kudus for the ceremony.

KRETEK

Kudus is a massive centre of *kretek* production – there are said to be 25 factories in the town. Djarum, which started in 1951, is the main employer and third-biggest *kretek* manufacturer in Indonesia. Tours of its modern **factory** (☎ 431 901; www.djarum.com; Jl A Yani 28) leave at 9am Monday to Friday and are free of charge. It's incredible to see the women rollers at work, a blur of hand and eye coordination. **Sukun**, outside the town, still produces *rokok klobot*, the original *kretek* rolled in corn leaves.

The **Kretek Museum** (donations accepted; Jl Museum Kretek Jati Kulon; ☎ 8am–2pm Sat–Thu) has exhibits of a number of interesting photographs and implements used in *kretek* production (almost all explanations are in Bahasa Indonesia). Next door, **Rumah Adat** is a traditional wooden Kudus house exhibiting the fabulous carving work the town is noted for.



KRETEK CIGARETTES

If Java has a smell, it is the sweet, spicy scent of the clove-flavoured *kretek*. The *kretek* has only been around since the early 20th century, but today the addiction is nationwide and accounts for 90% of the cigarette market, while sales of *rokok putih* (cigarettes without cloves) are languishing. So high is the consumption of cloves used in the *kretek* industry that Indonesia, traditionally a supplier of cloves in world markets, has become a substantial net importer from other world centres.

The invention of the *kretek* is attributed to a Kudus man, Nitisemito, who claimed the cigarettes relieved his asthma. He mixed tobacco with crushed cloves rolled in *rokok klobot* (corn leaves) – this was the prototype for his Bal Tiga brand, which he began selling in 1906.

Kudus became the centre for the *kretek* industry and at one stage the town had more than 200 factories, though today fewer than 50 cottage industries and a few large factories remain. Rationalisation in the industry has seen *kretek* production dominated by big producers, such as Sampoerna in Surabaya, Gudang Garam in Kediri, and Djarum in Kudus. Nitisemito became a victim of the industry he started and died bankrupt in 1953.

Although filtered *kretek* are produced by modern machinery – Djarum churns out up to 140 million a day – nonfiltered *kretek* are still rolled by hand on simple wooden rolling machines. The best rollers can turn out about 4000 cigarettes in a day.

As to the claim that *kretek* are good for smoker's cough, cloves are a natural anaesthetic and so do have a numbing effect on the throat. Any other claims to aiding health stop there – the tar and nicotine levels in the raw, slowly cured tobaccos are so high that some countries have banned or restricted their import.

Filtered *kretek* now dominate the market. There are now 'mild' versions on offer, but for the *kretek* purist, the conical, crackling, nonfiltered *kretek* has no substitute – Sampoerna's *Dji Sam Soe* ('234') brand is regarded as the Rolls Royce of *kretek*. To see Sampoerna rollers in action visit the factory in Surabaya (p222).

Sleeping & Eating

Few people stay in Kudus, but there are some inexpensive options.

You have to try *soto kudus* (a rich chicken soup), which the town is famous for. It's usually served up bright yellow (from turmeric) with lots of garlic, and the chicken is sometimes shredded. *Jenang kudus* is a sweet that's made of glutinous rice, brown sugar and coconut.

The best place for inexpensive food and local specialties is Taman Bojana, a food-stall complex on the main roundabout in the centre of town.

Wisma Karima (☎ 431 712; Jl Museum Kretek Jati Kulon 3; r with/without mandi 60,000/40,000Rp, with air-con 100,000Rp; ☺) A popular budget hotel with well-presented rooms and welcoming owners, although it suffers from traffic noise.

Losmen Kepodang Asri (☎ 433 795; Jl Kepodang 17; r 60,000Rp) An alternative budget choice, this simple place has spartan, clean rooms and no frills.

Hotel Notasari Permai (☎ 437 245; Jl Kepodang 12; r 100,000Rp, r with air-con, TV & minibar from 175,000Rp; ☺ ☺) This good hotel has a quiet location

situated down a little lane just off the main drag and has clean, well-scrubbed if plain rooms – those on the upper floor benefit from more natural light. There's a restaurant here too.

Rumah Makan Lembur Kuring (Jl Agil Kusumadya 35; mains 12,000-30,000Rp) At this large, pleasant restaurant complete with water features and statues you can tuck into tasty Sundanese and Javanese food under a shady pagoda.

Getting There & Away

Kudus is on the main Semarang–Surabaya road. The bus terminal is about 4km south of town. City minibuses run from behind the bus terminal to the town centre (2000Rp), or you can take an *ojek* or becak.

Buses go from Kudus to Demak (4000Rp, 30 minutes) and Semarang (10,000Rp, 1½ hours), while brown-and-yellow minibuses go to Colo for 6000Rp. Buses to Jepara (7000Rp, one hour) leave from the Jetak subterminal, 4km west of town (2000Rp by purple minibus).

For *travel* minibuses **Ramasakti Travel** (☎ 432 153; Jl A Yani 110) is recommended.

AROUND KUDUS

The small hill resort of **Colo**, 700m up the slopes of Gunung Muria, is 18km north of Kudus. Colo is famed for its **Tomb of Sunan Muria** (Raden Umar Said), one of the nine *wali songo* buried here in 1469. Built in the 19th century, the mosque surrounding the tomb is high on a ridge overlooking the plains to the south. Pilgrims pray at the tomb, and during Buka Luwur, held in Colo on 16 Muharram of the Islamic calendar, up to 10,000 pilgrims line the road to the top.

A waterfall, **Air Terjun Monthel**, is 1.5km away or about a half-hour stroll from the village.

Local artist Mustaqim paints and sculpts out of his **Taqim Arts Studio** in the village of Kajar, 1km from Colo. Visits can be arranged through the tourist office in Kudus (p215).

JEPARA

(☎ 0291 / pop 51,000)

Famed as the best woodcarving centre in Java, Jepara's booming furniture business has brought it all the trappings of prosperity. It's also as sleepy as an afternoon becak driver and more affluent than many of Java's small towns, making it a tranquil spot to take a break from the road.

If you are just here for the furniture, then the road into town passes more woodcarving workshops than you can shake a table leg at.

Information

The town's **tourist office** (☎ 591 493; www.gojepara.com; Jl AR Hakim 51; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Thu, 7-11am Fri) in the western part has very helpful staff, and runs a particularly informative website.

Sights

The **Museum RA Kartini** (admission 2000Rp; ☎ 8am-2pm), on the north side of the *alun-alun*, is named after one of Indonesia's most celebrated women (see the boxed text, p218). One room is devoted to Kartini and contains portraits of her (and her family) plus memorabilia including letters. Other rooms contain assorted archaeological findings, including a yoni and lingga, and local art and artefacts, including some fine woodcarvings and ceramics. There's also the 16m skeleton of whale that was washed up in Karimunjawa.

It is sometimes possible to visit Kartini's old rooms – if you contact the tourist office

first – which are now local government offices on the eastern side of the *alun-alun*.

Heading north from the museum, cross the river and veer left up the hill to the old Dutch **Benteng VOC**. Over the last 50 years the fort's stonework has been pillaged, but the site has good views across town to the Java Sea. The cemetery nearby has some Dutch graves.

The most popular seaside recreation park and beach is **Pantai Kartini**, 3km west of town – locals often call it Pemandian. From there you can rent a boat (around 75,000Rp return) to nearby **Pulau Panjang**, which has excellent white-sand beaches. Café SA (below) offers fishing trips to the island as well.

Sleeping

Pondok Wisma Kota Baru (☎ 593 356; Pantai Kartini; r with/without air-con 90,000/60,000Rp; ☎) A modest homestay within view of the ocean. The humble but well-swept rooms all have shared *mandi*.

Hotel Elim (☎ 591 406; Jl Dr Soetomo 13-15; r 65,000Rp, r with hot water, air-con & TV from 145,000Rp; ☎) This small hotel is ageing a tad, but it's still worth considering as the 22 rooms are in decent condition. Manager Thomas is helpful and can assist with transport, and there's a pleasant outdoor restaurant.

Kalingga Star (☎ 591 054; Jl Dr Soetomo 16; r with air-con 125,000Rp, ste from 195,000Rp; ☎) A large hotel with a range of tiled rooms in different price categories; most are spacious but a bit soulless. It's a couple of doors down from Hotel Elim and has a restaurant.

Palm Beach Jepara (☎ 594 446; www.palmbeachjepara.com; Jl Tirta Samudra 191; cottages from 800,000Rp; ☎ ☎ ☎) This resort has very spacious cottages right on the beach, tastefully furnished and each with a living room and kitchenette. The pool area is fringed by palms and the restaurant serves good Indonesian and Western cuisine. Discounts are available in mid-week.

Eating

Pondok Rasa (Jl Pahlawan 2; mains 8000-20,000Rp) Just across the river from the *alun-alun*, Rasa has a pleasant garden setting and tasty Indonesian food served *lesahan* style.

Café SA (☎ 081 7955 2266; Pantai Kartini; fish meals from 25,000Rp) For super-fresh crab, jumbo prawns and steamed or fried fish, SA is a good choice. It's right on the beach.

Yam-Yam (☎ 598 755; Jl Pantai Karang Kebagusan, km 5; meals from 40,000Rp) This seriously good, new,

AN INDO ICON

Raden Ajeng Kartini, a writer, feminist and progressive thinker, was born in 1879, the daughter of the *bupati* (regent) of Jepara. She grew up in the *bupati*'s residence, on the eastern side of the *alun-alun*, excelled at school and learnt to speak fluent Dutch by the age of 12. It was in this residence that Kartini spent her *pingit* ('confinement' in Javanese), when girls from 12 to 16 are kept in virtual imprisonment and forbidden to venture outside the family home. She later used her education to campaign for women's rights and against colonialism, before dying at the age of 24 just after the birth of her first child. The date 21 April, known as 'Kartini Day' is a national holiday in Indonesia in recognition of her work.

modish place has a prime seafront plot and serves exquisite Thai and Indonesian food, plus some Western dishes.

Shopping

Intricately carved *jati* (teak) and mahogany furniture and relief panels are on display at shops and factories all around Jepara. However, the main carpentry centre is the village of **Tahunan**, 4km south of Jepara on the road to Kudus, where it's wall-to-wall furniture.

Brightly coloured, Sumba-style *ikat* weavings using traditional motifs are woven in the village of **Torso**, situated 14km south of Jepara and 2km off the main road. Other original designs are also produced; unusually, men predominantly do the weaving here. Srikandi Ratu and Lestari Indah are two workshops that have fixed-price showrooms.

Pecangaan, 18km south of Jepara, produces rings, bracelets and other jewellery from *monel* (a stainless-steel alloy).

Getting There & Around

Frequent buses make the trip from Jepara to Kudus (7000Rp, one hour) and Semarang (12,000Rp, 1½ hours). A few buses also go to Surabaya, but Kudus has more connections.

Becak are cheap and the best way to get around. From the terminal, about 1km west of the town centre, 5000Rp will get you to anywhere in town.

AROUND JEPARA

Mantingan

The mosque and tomb of Ratu Kali Nyamat, the great warrior-queen, are in Mantingan village, 4km south of Jepara. Kali Nyamat twice laid siege to Portugal's Melaka stronghold in the latter part of the 16th century.

The mosque, dating to 1549, was restored some years ago and the tomb lies to the side of it. The mosque is noted for its Hindu-style embellishments and medallions.

Mantingan is easily reached from Jepara. *Angkudes* (minibuses) from the bus terminal can drop you outside the mosque for 2000Rp.

Beaches

Jepara has some fine white-sand beaches. **Pantai Bandengan** (aka Tirta Samudra), 8km northeast of town, is one of the best beaches on the north coast. The main public section can be littered, but a short walk away the sand is clean, the water clear and the swimming safe. To get there from Jepara, take a brown-and-yellow bemo (2000Rp) from Jl Pattimura. On weekdays you may have to charter a whole bemo (around 30,000Rp).

KARIMUNJAWA

☎ 0297 / pop 8000

The dazzling offshore archipelago of Karimunjawa, a marine national park, consists of 27 coral-fringed islands that lie about 90km north of Jepara. The white-sand beaches are sublime but rarely visited by travellers.

Relatively difficult to reach (particularly in the rainy season) and with only limited facilities, the archipelago is still little more than a pinprick on the tourist trail. Wealthy Indonesians and scuba divers count for most of the visitors here.

The archipelago is divided into zones to protect the rich ecosystem here. Zone One is completely out of bounds to all except national park rangers, with other areas set aside for sustainable tourism.

Orientation

The main island, **Pulau Karimunjawa**, is home to most of the islanders and the majority of the archipelago's facilities. It is also the site of

the islands' only real town, **Karimunjawa**, and, despite widespread mangroves, some reasonable beaches. A small airport is located on adjacent **Pulau Kemujan**.

Information

The islands don't have a tourist office per se, but a small information booth at the harbour is usually open to greet boats. Semarang tourist office p209 can also help out with practicalities. Pulau Karimunjawa is home to both a wartel and a post office.

Sights & Activities

If you can find one of the rangers, they may be able to organise a hike up Pulau Karimunjawa's 600m peak, **Gunung Gendero**, but the real attractions lie offshore. The uninhabited islands of **Menjangan Besar** and **Menjangan Kecil** both have sweeping white sands and good **snorkelling** and are within easy reach of Karimunjawa town.

Further out, **Pulau Menyawakan** is the site of Karimunjawa's only major resort. **Pulau Nyamuk**, **Pulau Parang**, **Pulau Bengkoang** and **Pulau Genting** are all home to small, traditional communities. The reefs around many of these islands offer good **diving** and **snorkelling**, which can be arranged through the Kura Kura Resort on Pulau Menyawakan.

As a marine park, many parts of Karimunjawa are off-limits. **Pulau Burung** and **Pulau Geleang** are home to nests of sea eagles and are strictly protected.

The islands can experience violent weather in January and February; during this time, flights and boat trips can be badly disrupted.

Sleeping & Eating

The main village of Karimunjawa has a handful of homestays and one *wisma* (guest house); the tourist office in Semarang (p209) can help out with names and contact numbers.

Prapatan (☎ 312 227; Jl Dermaga Baru; r 70,000Rp) A cheerful homestay in Karimunjawa's main village; for an extra 40,000Rp the host will also provide three meals a day.

Wisma Wisata (☎ 312 118; r 75,000Rp) On the *alun-alun*, Wisata is a decent choice for a budget bed, with beer, clean rooms and a good spot near the harbour.

Karimunjawa Inn (☎ 312 253; www.karimunjawainn.com; r with fan/air-con 96,000/272,000Rp; ☺) Formerly the Melati, this hotel is near the main town on Pulau Karimunjawa. Offers a choice of accommodation, from fan-cooled rooms to air-con

bungalows; all are spotless if a little dated. It's surrounded by plenty of greenery and there's a open-air restaurant with great fish and squid dishes (meals from 15,000Rp) and sea views. Book ahead for weekend visits.

Nirvana Laut (☎ 024-659 2854; www.karimunjawa.com; r from US\$55; ☺) Right on a white-sand beach with good snorkelling, this small resort has four rooms (two with en suite) in a attractive house with a kitchen that's ideal for small groups. Additionally, the eight luxurious suites here have panoramic sea views and teak floors. There's a great decked restaurant area and plenty of fresh seafood available.

Kura Kura Resort (☎ Jepara 0291-595 932; www.kurakuraresort.com; minimum 2 nights from US\$175; ☺) This five-star PADI scuba diving resort is situated on its own private island, with a bar, a restaurant and water sports facilities, and about 800m of fine, white sand. Prices are per person per night and include good-quality bungalow accommodation, flights (or speed-boat connections) and meals. Hefty supplements are charged if boats or planes from the mainland aren't full (a minimum of three people is needed for planes to take off).

Ibu Joice (Jl Pattimura) Run by Joice, a friendly local who speaks English and sells food, snacks and beer; she will cook meals (if asked in advance) and can help with transport and island info.

Ester's (mains around 20,000Rp) On the *alun-alun*; serves up seafood and Indonesian staples.

Getting There & Away

Kura Kura Resort operates the only planes flying into Karimunjawa. Most flights shuttle guests between the resort and Semarang or Yogyakarta, and last-minute deals can be as low as 350,000Rp and 500,000Rp respectively. Four-seater Cessnas can also be chartered.

The *Muria* sails to Karimunjawa (economy/VIP 24,000/60,000Rp, seven hours) from Pantai Kartini in Jepara on Wednesday and Saturday at 8.30am, returning from Karimunjawa on Monday and Thursday at the same time.

From Semarang the *Kartini I* (business/executive class 115,000/135,000Rp, 3½ hours) leaves at 9am Saturday and returns at 2pm Sunday from Karimunjawa. Tickets can be reserved via the tourist information office in Semarang or on ☎ 024-760 5660.

From Pulau Karimunjawa, it costs around 400,000Rp to charter a wooden boat for a

day trip to the outer islands or 60,000Rp for the short hop to Pulau Menjangan Besar and Kecil.

There are no buses or *angkot* operating on the islands, but *ojek* will do short trips for 10,000Rp. Mopeds (70,000Rp per day) can be hired to get around the main island's 22km of roads.

EAST JAVA

The least densely populated of Java's provinces, East Java (Jawa Timur) is a wild, rolling region with dizzying peaks, smoking volcanoes and unspoilt panoramas. While the regional capital, Surabaya, has all the accoutrements of a booming Indonesian city, including freeways, multiplexes and a trademark traffic problem, there are far more attractive bases. Malang is a civilised city with a temperate climate ringed by some fascinating Hindu temples, while Blitar has more temples and a historic site or two to explore.

For most visitors East Java is all about the raw, rugged appeal of its volcano-studded scenery and awesome landscapes. Nowhere is more synonymous with this than the sublime Bromo-Tengger Massif, incorporating the volcanic peaks of Gunung Bromo (2392m) and Gunung Semeru (3676m) – Java's highest mountain. The Bromo area and its puffing giants is an undisputed highlight, but the Ijen Plateau ranks very close, with a stunning crater lake, good hiking and far fewer travellers.

Baluran National Park is the most accessible of Java's wildlife reserves, but the southern route through East Java is the most scenic and has two great national parks – Meru Betiri, where there is a protected turtle beach, and Alas Purwo, which is hallowed among surfers for its gigantic reef breaks. Just off the coast near Surabaya is the island of Madura, a place where traditions are particularly strong and famous bull races, known as *kerapan sapi*, are staged during August and September.

SURABAYA

☎ 031 / pop 2.4 million

Surabaya is not an easy place to love. It's a big, noisy, polluted and commerce-driven city that's not well set up for visitors or pedestrians – just crossing the eight-lane highways that rampage through the centre is a challenge in itself. As one of Indonesia's largest cities (its metropolitan

area is over four million strong) and the home of the country's navy, Surabaya is a colossal port peppered with cranes, corporate buildings and crowded spaces. Against the calm of rural East Java, it is pandemonium writ large.

But while Surabaya has all the trappings of a modern city, it has quixotic little corners of interest. Its historic Arab quarter harbours a labyrinthine warren of lanes and a historic mosque that's a place of pilgrimage. Surabaya also has one of Indonesia's biggest Chinatowns and a roster of impressive, though disintegrating, Dutch buildings.

For most foreign visitors, the city is merely a place to change buses or trains. For locals, however, Surabaya is closely linked to the birth of the Indonesian nation, as it was here that the battle for independence began. To them, Surabaya is Kota Pahlawan (City of Heroes), and statues commemorating independence are scattered all over the city.

Orientation

The centre of the sprawl is the area around Jl Pemuda, which runs west from Gubeng train station, Plaza Surabaya and a number of big hotels and banks. Jl Pemuda runs into Jl Tunjungan/Jl Basuki Rahmat, another main commercial street, where you'll find Tunjungan Plaza.

The old city is centred on Jembatan Merah (Red Bridge) and Mesjid Ampel; further north is the harbour, Tanjung Perak. The main bus terminal, Purabaya, is just outside the city limits, 10km south.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Gramedia (☎ 531 4990; 1st fl, Tunjungan Plaza)

Periplus (☎ 593 7360; Galaxy Mall, Jl Dharmasuda 37) Has a great selection of English-language titles, and magazines. There's another branch inside the departures lounge at the airport.

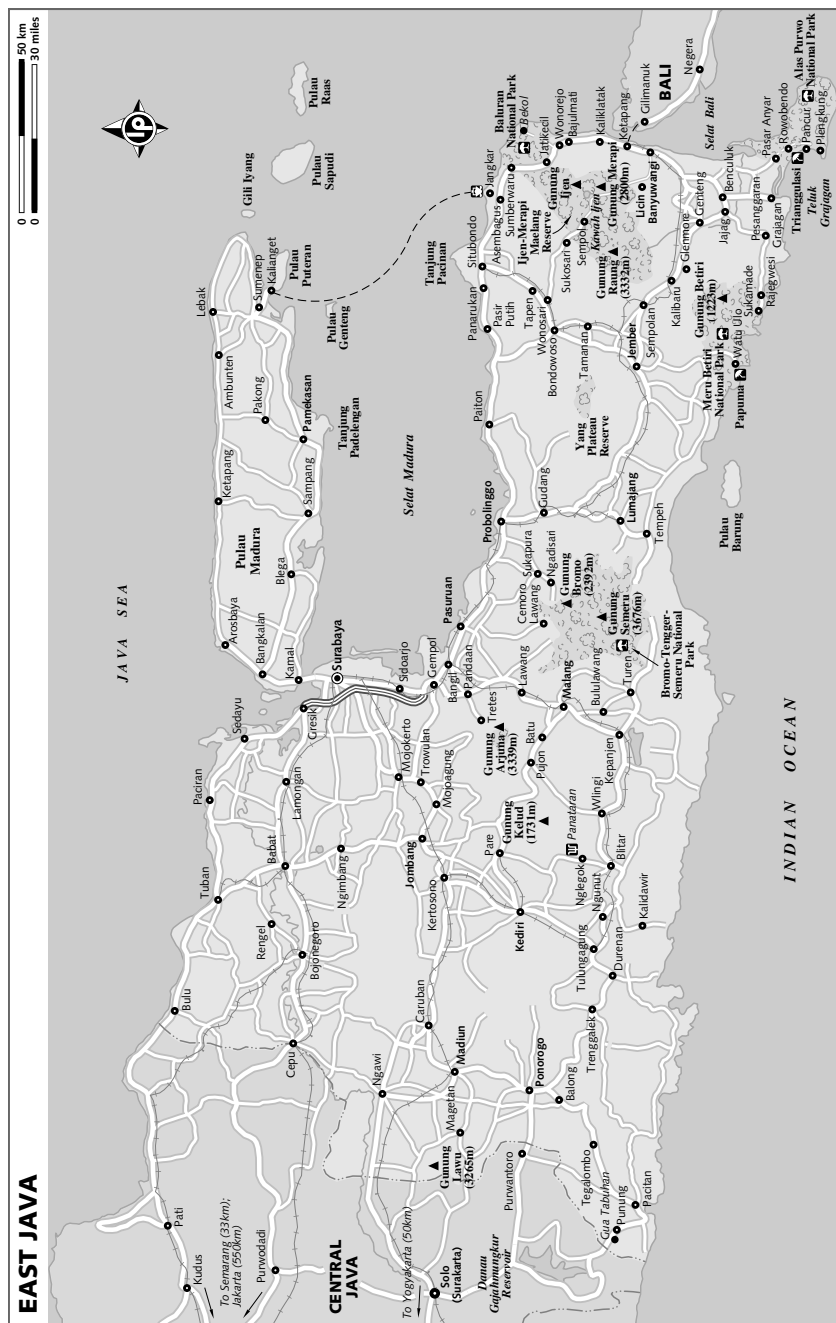
CULTURAL CENTRES

French Cultural Centre (☎ 567 8639; Jl Darmokali 10-12) Hosts exhibitions and cultural events. At the French consulate.

Goethe Institut (☎ 534 3735; Jl Taman Ade Irma Suryani Nasution 15)

INTERNET ACCESS & TELEPHONE

Malls including Tunjungan Plaza have wi-fi. **Abacommnet** (LG fl, Tunjungan Plaza, Jl Tunjungan; per hr 10,000Rp) Offers pretty speedy connections and doubles as a wartel.



Transnet (cnr Jl Pemuda & Jl Basuki Rahmat; per hr 6000Rp; ☎ 24hr)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Rumah Sakit Darmo (☎ 567 6253; Jl Raya Darmo 90) Hospital with English- and Dutch-speaking doctors.

MONEY

Jl Pemuda has plenty of banks with ATMs, as does Tunjungan Plaza.

BNI Bank (Jl Pemuda) Offers good rates and has an ATM.

POST

Main post office (Jl Kebon Rojo) Inconveniently located 4km north of the city centre.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre (☎ 534 0444; www.sparklingsurabaya.com; Jl Pemuda; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) Has helpful English-speaking staff and plenty of leaflets, and a good free colour map is offered.

East Java Regional Tourist Office (☎ 853 1822; Jl Wisata Menanggal; ☎ 7am-2pm Mon-Fri) About 3km south of the centre; has a few brochures on the province.

Sights

OLD CITY

Even though much of Surabaya's historical centre is literally falling to pieces, the old city easily wins the 'Most Attractive Neighbourhood' prize. With crumbling Dutch architecture, a fascinating Arab quarter and strong Chinese influences, it's also by far the most atmospheric and idiosyncratic area of Surabaya to explore.

From the old city you can then head north to the **Kalimas harbour**, where brightly painted *pinisi* from Sulawesi and Kalimantan unload their wares.

Jembatan Merah

A good place to start a wander around the old city is **Jembatan Merah**, the bridge that saw fierce fighting during Indonesia's battle for independence. Jl Jembatan Merah, running south of the bus terminal along the canal, is a grungy replica of Amsterdam, but worthy (although rundown) examples of **Dutch architecture** can be seen here. Another impressive structure is the Indo-European-style **Gedung PTP XXII** government office building on Jl Merak Cendrawasih.

House of Sampoerna

Just northwest of Jembatan Merah is the city's best-presented attraction, the **House of**

Sampoerna (☎ 353 9000; www.houseofsampoerna.com; Jl Taman Sampoerna; admission free; ☎ 9am-9.30pm) which is the home of one of Indonesia's most famous *kretek* cigarette manufacturers. Whatever you think about the tobacco industry, this factory and museum makes a fascinating place to visit. The building itself is a wonderful 19th-century Dutch structure, originally an orphanage but later converted into a theatre (indeed Charlie Chaplin once dropped by). The former lobby now forms the museum and is something of a shrine to the Sampoerna empire, with exhibits on the use of cloves and the history of *kretek* in Indonesia alongside uniforms and drums of the Sampoerna marching band and other quirky company curios.

Upstairs there's a bird's-eye perspective of the factory's shop floor, where hundreds of women hand roll, trim and pack the *Dji Sam Soe* brand (banned from most countries as the tar content is so strong). The fastest rollers here churn out 4000 cigarettes a day, their fingers a blur of motion.

You'll be accompanied throughout your visit by a highly informative, English-speaking guide, and there's a superb cafe-restaurant here too.

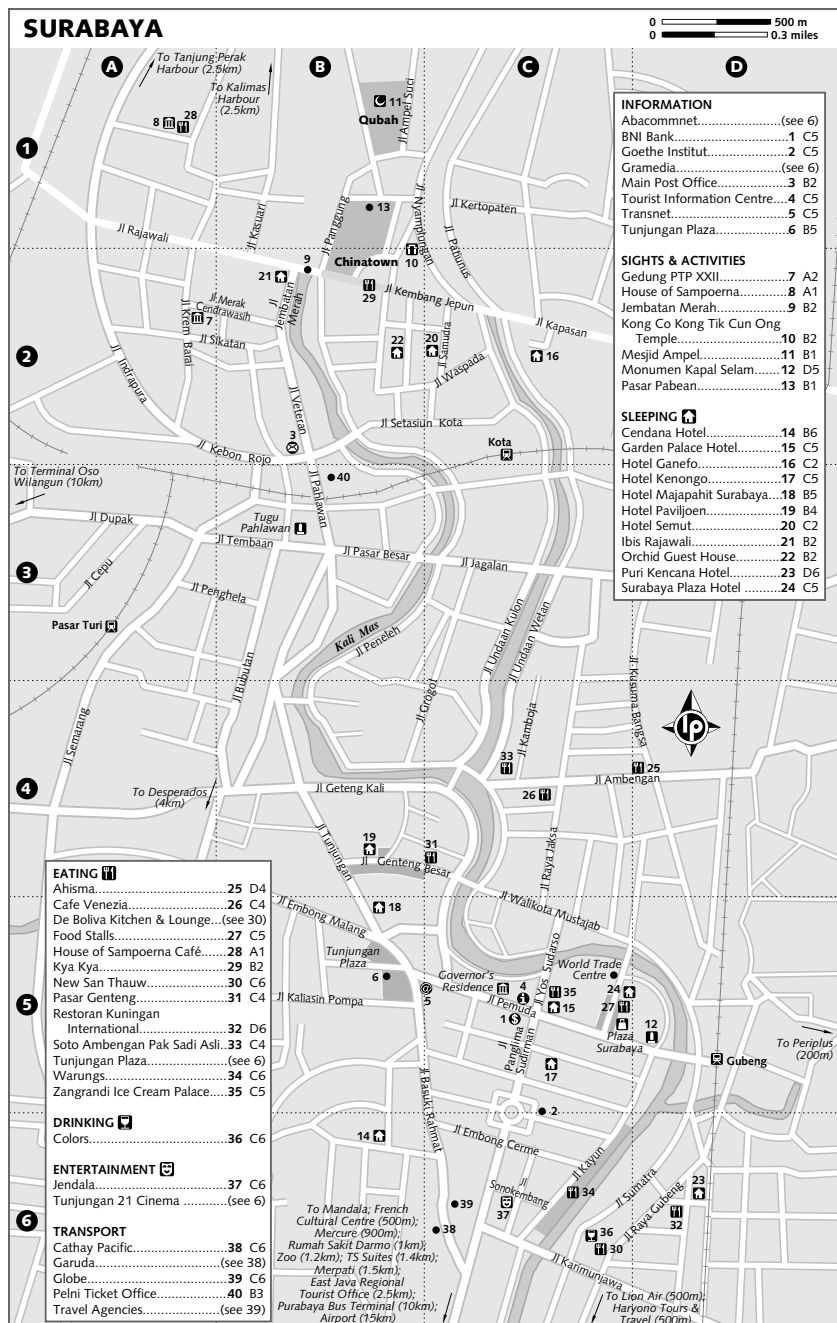
Chinatown

East of Jembatan Merah is Surabaya's **Chinatown**, with hundreds of small businesses and warehouses. Becak and hand-pulled carts are still the best way to transport goods in the crowded, narrow streets. **Pasar Pabean** (Jl Pabean) is a sprawling, darkly lit market, where you can buy everything from Madurese chickens to Chinese crockery.

Further east, near the canal, the stunningly atmospheric **Kong Co Kong Tik Cun Ong temple** (Jl Dukuh) is primarily Buddhist, but has a variety of Confucian and Taoist altars if you can see them through the plumes of incense smoke.

Arab Quarter (Qubah)

A warren of narrow lanes, Surabaya's Arab Quarter has the atmosphere and appearance of a Middle Eastern *medina*, with stalls selling prayer beads, *peci* (black Muslim felt hats) and other religious paraphernalia, alongside perfumes, dates and a plastic camel or two. All alleys lead to the **Mesjid Ampel** (Jl Ampel Suci), the most sacred mosque in Surabaya; it was here that Sunan Ampel, one of the *wali songo* who brought Islam to Java, was buried in 1481. The mosque itself is a huge space, the vast



expanse of its marble floor divided by dozens of wooden pillars, but there's very little in the way of ornamentation. Behind the mosque pilgrims chant and present rose-petal offerings at Sunan Ampel's grave.

You have to access the mosque on foot. The most direct route is to take the lane that leads west from Jl Ampel Suci – a crowd of becak marks the entrance.

SURABAYA ZOO

South of the city centre, **Surabaya Zoo** (Kebun Binatang Surabaya, KBS; Jl Diponegoro; admission 8000Rp; ☎ 9am-4pm) has a good collection of lions, tigers, elephants, hippos, kangaroos and reptiles. If you're not planning to visit Komodo, the dragons are worth a visit – 32 mini-komodos hatched here in 2009. The animals look typically nonchalant, but the park is well laid out, with large, open enclosures.

Camel-cart and donkey rides are available and entertainment is often featured in the afternoon. Avoid visiting on weekends, which are packed. Any bus heading down Jl Panglima Sudirman will take you to the zoo; alternatively, you can take an M bemo (2000Rp).

MONUMEN KAPAL SELAM

In keeping with Indonesia's fascination with all things military, Surabaya's foremost stretch of renovated waterside real estate centres on the hulk of the *Pasopati*, a Russian **submarine** (Jl Pemuda; admission 5000Rp; ☎ 9am-9pm) commissioned into the Indonesian navy in 1962. The *Pasopati* itself is well maintained, and there is a small landscaped **park** with a couple of cafes popular with young smoochers.

Sleeping BUDGET

Surabaya is very short of good budget places. Plenty of cheap hotels can be found near Kota train station, though quality and cleanliness are not strong points.

Hotel Ganefo (☎ 371 1169; Jl Kapasan 169-171; r with shared/private mandi 80,000/120,000Rp, with air-con 120,000Rp; ☎) This old-timer has some redeeming aspects including a monumental entrance verandah and lobby and a quiet location set back from the road. Fan-cooled rooms are very bare and cell-like, while air-con options are much better, if a bit soulless. Pity the poor caged monkeys in the rear courtyard.

Hotel Paviljoen (☎ 534 3449; Jl Genteng Besar 94; r with fan/air-con from 90,000/128,000Rp; ☎) This is a real respite from Surabaya's manic streets, a slightly shabby colonial villa that still has a twinkle of charm and grandeur. Rooms are plain but clean, and have some lovely touches including Mediterranean-style shuttered windows and front porches with chairs. The helpful managers speak English and Dutch.

Orchid Guest House (☎ 355 0211; orchidguesthousesby@yahoo.com; Jl Bongkaran 49; d 150,000Rp; ☎) A good choice, this newish hotel has spotless rooms at the upper end of the budget level, all with air-con, good spring mattresses and TV. It's near the Kya Kya, has a cafe and is run by an obliging English-speaking crew who can help with transport and city information.

Hotel Semut (☎ 352 4578; Jl Samudra 9-15; d from 155,000Rp; ☎) Slightly bizarre place with an excess of gaudy Chinese furniture, a slim central garden and a plethora of dated but decent rooms, some with bathtubs, in several price categories.

Also in this price range:

Puri Kencana Hotel (☎ 503 3161; Jl Kalimantan 9; r from 115,000Rp; ☎) Handy for Gubeng train station, with simple if ageing rooms and friendly staff. No hot water.

MIDRANGE

Surabaya has a wide selection of midrange accommodation. Competition is fierce, particularly at the higher end; consult websites for special offers.

Hotel Kenongo (☎ 534 1359; Jl Embong Kenongo 12; r 195,000-230,000Rp; ☎) Offers very clean, light, airy rooms, all with air-con, TV, phone and a hot-water shower; in a quiet location off Jl Pemuda. Breakfast is not included, but there is a 24-hour restaurant.

Ibis Rajawali (☎ 353 9994; www.ibishotel.com; Jl Rajawali 9-11; r from 360,000Rp; ☎) Rajawali is a fine choice if you're looking to stay in the north of town. The entire place, from the reception to the rooms, is modern and business-like, and there's a small gym and spa. Book via the web for the best rates. Nonsmoking.

Cendana Hotel (☎ 545 5101; www.cendanahotel.com; Jl Kombes Pol M Doeryat 6; r/stc from 370,000/500,000Rp; ☎) A solid midrange option with well-appointed rooms that have minibars and satellite TV. It's located just away from Surabaya's main streets and has a cafe-restaurant and bar. Breakfast is included.

Mercure (☎ 562 3000; www.mercuresurabaya.com; Jl Raya Darmo 68-78; r from 502,000Rp; ☎) Large

centrally located hotel that's part of the Accor Group's empire in Surabaya. Its facilities are excellent, with a lovely tree-fringed pool area at the rear that's a peaceful retreat, plus a great cafe-restaurant where you can sample local *jamu*. Rooms are modern, stylish and spacious and have free internet access. Nonsmoking.

Garden Palace Hotel (☎ 534 4056; www.gardenhotel.co.id; Jl Yos Sudarso 11; s/d from 525,000Rp; ☹ ☹ ☹) This huge concrete monolith is not a palace, but it does have an ostentatious marble lobby complete with giant chandelier. The rooms are a little dated in design terms but generous in size. A complimentary airport shuttle is usually offered.

Also in the running:

Surabaya Plaza Hotel (☎ 531 6833; www.primeplazahotels.com; Jl Pemuda 31-37; r from US\$70; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) One of Surabaya's ritzier establishments; well located in the thick of things. Rooms range from standard to plush suites. Nonsmoking.

TOP END

Surabaya has a glut of luxury hotels and competition is cut-throat, with some excellent deals available. Most are geared to business travellers.

TS Suites (☎ 563 1222; www.tssuites.com; Surabaya Town Sq, Jl Hayam Wuruk 6; r from US\$90; ☹ ☹ ☹) For a very different take on the luxury experience, these hip, spacious suites represent the height of Surabaya chic and have free fast internet and minibar (except booze!) and other niceties. Located above one of the city's most popular malls, so you won't have to walk far to access dozens of restaurants, cafes and a large cinema complex. Nonsmoking.

our pick Hotel Majapahit Surabaya (☎ 545 4333; www.hotel-majapahit.com; Jl Tunjungan 65; r from US\$110; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) This superb colonial hotel built in 1910 is head and shoulders above the competition in terms of class and atmosphere. It's all very tasteful indeed, with colonnaded courtyards, fountains and verdant greenery and also very competitively priced – the rooms lack nothing in terms of facilities. Staff are extremely helpful and well trained, and the Sarkies Chinese restaurant is one of the best in the city. Nonsmoking.

Eating

You won't be left hungry in Surabaya – the city has a huge array of eating options. Local dishes include *rawon*, a thick, black beef soup that tastes better than it sounds.

For cheap eats, **Pasar Genteng** (Jl Genteng Besar; mains 8000Rp; ☹ 9am-9pm) has good night warungs. Late-night munchies can also be had at the offshoot of Jl Pemuda, opposite the Plaza Surabaya, which buzzes with food-stall activity around the clock, or the strip of warungs with their backs to the river along Jl Kayun.

Sadly the once-throbbing Chinese night market **Kya Kya** (Jl Kembang Jepun; ☹ 6pm-11pm) in the old city is now far less popular, though there are still a few food stalls here.

For an air-conditioned setting, **Tunjungan Plaza** (Jl Tunjungan) has a colossal selection of squeaky-clean Asian (including a great sushi bar), Western restaurants and cafes; the food court is on the 5th floor.

Zangrandi Ice Cream Palace (☎ 534 5820; Jl Yos Sudarso 15; ice creams from 3000Rp) This ice-cream parlour has been famous since Dutch times, and is still going strong. Traffic noise is a real issue here, however.

Soto Ambengan Pak Sadi Asli (☎ 532 3998; Jl Ambengan 3A; mains 20,000Rp) This is the original location of a chain with several branches across Surabaya. Everyone is here for the delicious *soto ayam* (chicken soup), which is served up with herbs, turmeric, plenty of peanuts and an egg or two if you want.

Ahisma (☎ 535 0466; Jl Kusuma Bangsa 80; mains from 25,000Rp; ☹ noon-10pm) A welcome surprise, this elegant upmarket vegetarian restaurant has well-presented salads, tofu meals, soups, and lots of rice and noodle dishes; no MSG is used. It's owned and run by a welcoming Indo-Chinese family and there's a small (veggie) deli here too for snacks and biscuits. Nonsmoking.

our pick House of Sampoerna Café (☎ 353 9000; Jl Taman Sampoerna; meals 20,000-82,000Rp; ☹) The House of Sampoerna cigarette factory cafe, occupying a gorgeous colonial structure complete with stained-glass windows and classy seating, is the perfect spot for a meal. The menu is divided into east and west sections, with *rawon* and Singapore laksa from the former and fish and chips from the latter standing out. There are great desserts, a full bar, espresso coffee (and even a nonsmoking section!).

Cafe Venezia (☎ 534 3335; Jl Ambengan 16; mains from 40,000Rp; ☹ 11.30am-10pm) Venezia is a slightly faded old-school establishment in a venerable Dutch villa that offers Korean, Japanese and Indonesian dishes and 'proper' service.

New San Thauw (☎ 503 5776; Jl Raya Gubeng 64; fish & crab per 100g from 9000Rp) San Thauw offers seafood that only comes fresher directly from the sea; choose your meal from the tank. Also serves some unusual dishes like cassava leaf soup.

De Boliva Kitchen & Lounge (☎ 596 3202; Jl Raya Gubeng 66; meals from 40,000Rp) A popular, if pricey, Western-style cafe with filling sandwiches (try the wholewheat BLT). Its desserts are famous, with crepes, sorbets and ice cream galore (including low-fat options).

Restoran Kuningan International (☎ 503 5103; Jl Kalimantan 14; mains 45,000-200,000Rp; ☎ 5-10.30pm) For a splurge, this top-class restaurant, housed in a converted Dutch villa, is renowned for its seafood – try the lobster.

Drinking

There are very few bars in Surabaya. Those located in upmarket hotels (which often double as clubs) are a few of the only options.

Colors (☎ 503 0562; www.colorspub.com; Jl Sumatra 81) Very popular with expats, this large pub-restaurant has live music and a DJ every night. The bartenders and some locals will treat you like a long-lost cousin, and there's good Western food too.

Desperados (☎ 566 1550; Shangri La Hotel, Jl Mayjend Sungkono 120) Popular hotel bar west of the centre with live music; try the margaritas. There's a cover charge of around 40,000Rp.

Entertainment

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Jendala (☎ 531 4073; Jl Sonokembang 4-6) This restaurant, in a beautiful colonial lodge, has a varied program of so-called 'culturetainment', ranging from theatre to dance to disco.

CINEMA

Cinema complexes are found all around the city.

Tunjungan 21 (Tunjungan Plaza, Jl Tunjungan) One of the best in town, this large cinema complex shows recent Hollywood releases in English and has good sound quality.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Surabaya is Indonesia's third-busiest airport and has a few international connections and an expanding selection of domestic routes, including direct flights to Lombok and Kalimantan.

Airlines operating out of Surabaya include the following.

AirAsia (☎ 5050 5088; www.airasia.com) Flies to Johor Bahru and Kuala Lumpur.

Batavia Air (☎ 504 9666; www.batavia-air.co.id; airport) Operates flights to Ambon, Denpasar, Balikpapan, Banjarmasin, Jakarta, Kupang, Makassar, Mataram, Palangkaraya, Pontianak, Tarakan and Yogyakarta.

Cathay Pacific (☎ 0804 188 8888; www.cathaypacific.com; Hyatt Regency, Jl Basuki Rachmat 124-128) Flies daily to/from Hong Kong

Garuda (☎ 080 7142 7832, 24hr booking line 546 8505; www.garuda-indonesia.com; Hyatt Regency, Jl Basuki Rahmat 124-128) Connections to Singapore, Denpasar, Hong Kong, and several flights daily to Jakarta.

Lion Air (☎ 503 611; www.lionair.co.id; Jl Sulawesi 75) Flights to Ambon, Denpasar, Balikpapan, Banjarmasin, Batam, Jakarta, Makassar, Manado, Mataram, Ternate and Yogyakarta.

Mandala (☎ 561 0777; www.mandalaair.com; Jl Raya Diponegoro 91D) Flies to Denpasar, Balikpapan, Batam, Jakarta, Malang, Semarang and Solo.

Merpati (☎ 568 8111; www.merpati.co.id; Jl Darmo 109-111) Has plenty of connections including routes to Kuala Lumpur, Bandung, Denpasar, Jakarta, Kupang, Makassar, Manado, Mataram and Yogyakarta.

Travel agencies sell domestic tickets at a small discount and international tickets with a bigger cut. Agencies include the large, well-established **Haryono Tours & Travel** (☎ 503 4000; www.haryonotours.com; Jl Sulawesi 27-29; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat).

BOAT

Surabaya is an important port and a major transport hub for ships to the other islands. Boats depart from Tanjung Perak harbour; bus P1 from outside Tunjungan Plaza heads here.

Several Pelni ships sail to Makassar in Sulawesi (economy/1st class from 182,000/558,000Rp), and Pontianak (209,000/664,000Rp) in Kalimantan. See the Transport chapter (p848) or head to the **Pelni ticket office** (☎ 352 1044; www.pelni.co.id; Jl Pahlawan 112) for more information.

Ferries no longer run to Madura now that the Suramadu Bridge has been completed.

BUS

Surabaya's main bus terminal is called Purabaya; it's 10km south of the city centre. Crowded Damri buses run between the bus terminal and the Jl Tunjungan/Jl Pemuda

intersection in the city centre. A metered taxi costs around 50,000Rp.

Note all buses heading south of Surabaya on the toll road get caught up in heavy traffic around the Gembol junction because of the snarl-up around the mud volcano (see the boxed text, p228); during rush hour this can add an hour to your journey. Buses from Purabaya head to Malang (10,000/15,000Rp, two to three hours), Probolinggo (14,000/22,000Rp, around three hours), Banyuwangi (36,000/51,000Rp, seven hours), Solo (52,000/70,000Rp, seven hours) and Yogyakarta (58,000/76,000Rp, 8½ hours). Buses also operate from Purabaya bus terminal to Madura.

Luxury buses from Purabaya also do the long hauls to Solo, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Denpasar. Most are night buses leaving in the late afternoon or evening. Bookings can be made at Purabaya bus terminal, or travel agencies in the city centre sell tickets with a mark-up. The most convenient bus agents are those on Jl Basuki Rahmat. Intercity buses are not allowed to enter the city, so you will have to go to Purabaya to catch your bus.

Buses along the north coast to Kudus (normal/patas 54,000/74,000Rp, eight hours) and Semarang (60,000/82,000Rp, nine hours) depart from Terminal Oso Wilangan, 10km west of the city.

MINIBUS

Door-to-door *travel* minibuses collect passengers from their hotels and homes, which saves a slog to the terminal, but they aren't always quicker because of the time spent driving between pick-ups.

Destinations and sample fares include Malang (35,000Rp), Solo (80,000Rp), Yogyakarta (85,000Rp) and Semarang (95,000Rp). Hotels can make bookings and arrange pick-up or you can try the agencies along Basuki Rahmat.

TRAIN

From Jakarta, trains taking the fast north-east route via Semarang arrive at the Pasar Turi train station southwest of Kota train station. Trains taking the southern route via Yogyakarta, and trains from Banyuwangi and Malang, arrive at Gubeng and most carry on through to Kota. **Gubeng train station** (☎ 503 3115) is much more central and sells tickets for all trains.

Most Jakarta-bound trains leave from **Pasar Turi** (☎ 534 5014), including the luxury *Argo Bromo Anggrek* (from 260,000Rp, 10½ hours), which leaves at 8am and 8pm, and the *Gumarang* (business class 140,000Rp, executive class from 240,000Rp, 12½ hours), departing at 5.30pm.

From Gubeng, the slower *Bima* (executive class 220,000Rp, 13 hours) departs at 4pm for Jakarta via Yogyakarta (executive class 140,000Rp, five hours), and the business-class *Mutiara Selatan* (120,000Rp, 13 hours) at 4.35pm for Bandung.

The *Sancaka* is a convenient day train for Yogyakarta, leaving Gubeng at 7am and 3pm for Solo (4½ hours) and Yogyakarta (5½ hours); it costs from 55,000/80,000Rp in business/executive class to either destination.

The reinstated business-class *Malang Ekspres* is the best option for Malang (11,000Rp, two hours), leaving Gubeng at 10am daily. There are also a few very slow economy trains; most continue on to Blitar.

Heading east, the *Mutiara Timur* goes to Banyuwangi (business/executive class from 60,000/80,000Rp, six hours) via Probolinggo at 9.15am and 10.35pm.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Taxis from Juanda airport (17km) operate on a coupon system and cost around 85,000Rp to the city centre; from the city centre expect to pay a little more. Add on another 8000Rp for toll road fees.

There are also regular Damri buses (15,000Rp) from the airport to Purabaya bus terminal, and then on to the city centre.

BUS

Surabaya has an extensive Damri city bus network, with normal buses (2000Rp) and *patas* buses (3000Rp per journey). Watch out for pickpockets, as buses can be very crowded.

One of the most useful services is the *patas* P1 bus, which runs from Purabaya bus terminal past the zoo and into the city along Jl Basuki Rahmat. It then turns down Jl Bubutan and continues on to Tanjung Perak harbour. In the reverse direction, catch it on Jl Tunjungan. The normal buses also cover the same route.

Surabaya also has plenty of bemos labelled A, B and so on, and all charge 2000Rp, depending on the length of the journey. Bemo M runs to the zoo.

ANOTHER FINE MESS

Travel on the toll road south of Surabaya towards Malang and it's smooth going for an hour until you hit the catastrophic mud-bound mess around the town of Porong, where you'll have to exit the highway, trundle through a few suburbs and endure a substantial delay to your journey.

The whole debacle kicked off in May 2006, when PT Lapindo Brantas, a gas exploration company, drilled into a mud volcano. (The company has subsequently argued that the Yogyakarta earthquake, which occurred two days later, could have caused the mud explosion, but expert opinion is firmly against this theory.)

Thousands of tons of mud has subsequently swamped the area, displacing 25,000 people and killing 14, and wrecking infrastructure. Currently around 100,000 sq metres of mud is being expelled every day. Some geologists predict that calamitous subsidence could occur.

TAXI

Surabaya has air-con metered taxis. Flag fall is 4000Rp; reckon on around 20,000Rp for a trip of around 4km. **Bluebird taxis** (☎ 372 1234) are the most reliable and can be called in advance.

To hire a car with a driver, try **Globe** (☎ 548 1111; Jl Basuki Rahmat 147); rates start at 400,000Rp per day plus petrol.

TROWULAN

Trowulan was once the capital of the largest Hindu empire in Indonesian history. Founded by Singosari prince Wijaya in 1294, it reached the height of its power under Hayam Wuruk (1350–89), who was guided by his powerful prime minister, Gajah Mada. During this time Majapahit received tribute from most of the regions encompassing present-day Indonesia and even parts of the Malay Peninsula.

Its wealth was based on its control of the spice trade and the fertile rice-growing plains of Java. The religion was a hybrid of Hinduism – with worship of the deities Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma – and Buddhism, but Islam was tolerated, and Koranic burial inscriptions found on the site suggest that Javanese Muslims resided within the royal court. The empire came to a catastrophic end in 1478 when the city fell to the north-coast power of Demak, forcing the Majapahit elite to flee to Bali and opening Java up to the Muslim conquest.

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the great British explorer and governor general of Java, rediscovered Trowulan in 1815, and though it was choked in forest described the ruins as 'this pride of Java'.

The remains of the court are scattered over a large area around the village of Trowulan, 12km from Mojokerto. The Majapahit temples were mainly built from red-clay bricks that

quickly crumbled. Many have been rebuilt and are relatively simple compared to the glories of structures such as Borobudur, but they do give a good idea of what was once a great city. As the temples are spread over a such a large area, it's best to either hire a becak or come in a car.

One kilometre from the main Surabaya–Solo road, the impressive **Trowulan Museum** (admission 2500Rp; ☎ 7am–3.30pm Tue–Sun) houses superb examples of Majapahit sculpture and pottery from East Java. Pride of place is held by the splendid statue of Kediri's King Airlangga as Vishnu astride a huge Garuda, taken from Belahan. It should be your first port of call for an understanding of Trowulan and Majapahit history, and it includes descriptions of the other ancient ruins in East Java.

Some of the most interesting ruins include the gateway of **Bajang Ratu**, with its strikingly sculpted *kala* heads; the **Tikus Temple** (Queen's Bath – used for ritual bathing and cleansing); and the 13.7m-high **Wringinlawang Gate**. The **Pendopo Agung** is an open-air pavilion built by the Indonesian army. Two kilometres south of the pavilion, the **Troloyo cemetery** is the site of some of the oldest Muslim graves found in Java, the earliest dating from AD 1376.

Trowulan is refreshingly hawker-free, though as there's a distinct lack of information on site you may want to hire a freelance guide (there's often one waiting at the museum). Expect to pay around 60,000Rp for a half-day's guiding.

Getting There & Away

Trowulan can be visited as a day trip from Surabaya, 60km to the northeast.

From Surabaya's Purabaya bus terminal take a Jombang bus (7000Rp, one hour), which can drop you at the turn-off to the museum; a becak tour of the sites will cost

around 35,000Rp for a half-day excursion after bargaining.

PULAU MADURA

pop 3.7 million

The flat, rugged and deeply traditional island of Madura may now be connected to Java by Indonesia's longest bridge, but the character of the people and scenery are a world apart. This is an island famous for its colourful bull races, *kerapan sapi*, and its virility drink, *jamu madura*, a spicy concoction meant to put fire in men's veins. There are several minor historical sites, some sandy beaches and an unwavering traditional culture.

It's claimed the name Madura is derived from *madu* (honey) and *dara* (girl), and Madurese women are, so the story goes, known for their sexual prowess. Madura is, however, a devoutly Islamic society. The sarong and *peci* are the norm – mall fever has not found its way here – and virtually all children attend *pesantren* (religious schools). During Ramadan it's very tricky to get a meal in daylight hours (when almost the entire island is fasting).

Madurese have a reputation throughout the nation for their quick tempers and brusqueness. Depending on which side of the Madura strait you're on, they're either salt-of-the-earth *kasar* people (the Madurese perspective) or coarse and adept at wielding knives when disputes arise (the Javanese view). While the Madurese can be disconcertingly blunt at times, they can also be extremely hospitable.

The island is about 160km long by 35km wide. Its southern side is lined with shallow beaches and cultivated lowland, while the northern coast alternates between rocky cliffs and great rolling sand-dune beaches, the best of which is at Lombang. At the extreme east is a tidal marsh and vast tracts of salt around Kalianget. The interior is riddled with limestone slopes, and is either rocky or sandy, so agriculture is limited.

HISTORY

In 1624 the island was conquered by Sultan Agung of Mataram and its government united under one Madurese princely line, the Cakraningrats. Until the middle of the 18th century the Cakraningrat family fiercely opposed Central Javanese rule and harassed Mataram, often conquering large parts of the kingdom. The famous Prince Raden Trunojoyo even managed to carry off the royal treasury of Mataram in 1677, which was restored only after the Dutch intervened and stormed Trunojoyo's stronghold at Kediri.

By the beginning of the 1700s, however, the Dutch had secured control of the eastern half of Madura. The Cakraningrats then agreed to help the Dutch put down the 1740 rebellion in Central Java, but in the end they fared little better than their Javanese counterparts and ceded full sovereignty of Madura to the Dutch in 1743.

Under the Dutch, Madura continued as four states, each with its own regent. Madura was initially important as a major source of colonial troops, but in the second half of the 19th century it acquired greater economic value as the main supplier of salt to Dutch-governed areas of the archipelago.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses go directly from Surabaya's Purabaya bus terminal via Tanjung Perak and the new Suramadu bridge via Bangkalan and Pamekasan through to Sumenep (normal/patas 28,000/38,000Rp, four hours) roughly every hour. Buses also run to Sumenep (passing through Surabaya) from Banyuwangi (via Probolinggo), Denpasar (also via Probolinggo), Malang, Semarang and Jakarta.

From East Java there's an alternative route to Madura using the daily **ferry** (☎ 0328-663 054) from Jangkar harbour (near Asembagus) to



Kalianget (35,000Rp) in the east of Madura island. The ferry departs Jangkar at 2pm (Monday to Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, six hours) and at 4pm on Thursday and Sunday, when it sails via Pulau Sapudi and takes 10 hours. Schedules change regularly, so it's a good idea to phone ahead. Buses run from Situbondo to Jangkar, or you can take a bus to Asembagus, then a becak or *andong* for the 4.5km trip to Jangkar. From Kalianget, the ferry departs at 8am daily. Minibus 'O' (2500Rp, 20 minutes) travels between Kalianget and Sumenep.

GETTING AROUND

From Bangkalan, buses run along the main highway to Pamekasan (17,000Rp, 2½ hours) and Sumenep (25,000Rp, four hours). Minibuses also travel along the northern route to Arosbaya, Tanjungbun, Pasongsongan and Ambunten.

To see something of the island, it's interesting to take a bus from Pamekasan inland through tobacco country to Waru, and then another on to Pasongsongan, from where you can head back to Sumenep via Ambunten and Slopeng.

Madura's roads are almost all paved and in excellent condition, with relatively little traffic. As the island is mostly flat, Madura is a good cycling destination, although it does get very hot.

South Coast

The first port of call for most visitors is **Kamal**, a scruffy town of little importance to sight-seers. Many head directly to **Bangkalan**, the next town north of Kamal, to watch the bull races. If you've time to kill before a race, **Museum Cakraningrat** (☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Sat) will entertain you for an hour or so with displays on Madurese history and culture and exhibits including a gamelan and traditional tools. For a day trip you could do worse than head to the beach at **Sambilangan**, 7km south of town, where there's a lonely 90m lighthouse that gazes out over the Madura strait.

Sampang, 61km from Bangkalan, also stages bull races and is the centre of the regency of the same name. **Camplong**, 9km further east, is a safe and popular, if grungy, swimming beach on the south coast. The Pertamina storage tanks nearby do nothing for its visual appeal, but it is a breezy oasis from the hot interior of Madura.

About another 15km further east is the important town of **Pamekasan**, the island's capital. Bull races are held in and around Pamekasan every Sunday from the end of July until early October; during October each year it throbs with the festivities of the **Kerapan Sapi Grand Final**. The **BCA bank** (Jl Jokotole; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri), just east of the *alun-alun*, changes money and has an ATM.

About 35km east of Pamekasan, before Bluto, is **Karduluk**, a woodcarving centre.

SLEEPING

Bangkalan has a few places to stay, and the island's capital has a handful of hotels and several losmen.

Losmen Gatra (☎ 0324-322 045; Jl Agus Salim 18, Pamekasan; r 40,000Rp) For a cheap bed head to this simple losmen.

Hotel Ramayana (☎ 0324-324 575; Jl Niaga 55, Pamekasan; r from 50,000Rp, with air-con from 110,000Rp; ☎) A step up in quality and comfort from the Gatra.

Hotel Ningrat (☎ 031-309 5388; Jl Kahaji Muhammed Kholil 113, Bangkalan; r 60,000-125,000Rp, with air-con 210,000Rp; ☎) Smaller clean rooms, and bigger air-con options decorated in traditional Madurese style, are on offer here.

Hotel Camplong (☎ 0323-321 568; r 130,000Rp) In Camplong, this imaginatively named hotel is a reasonable place to bed down for the night.

Sumenep

☎ 0328 / pop 99,000

Compared with the rest of Madura, Sumenep, in the far east of the island, is a sleepy, refined town, with a Mediterranean air and quiet, lazy streets. The goats and belching pick-ups that clog the streets of the island's other main communities are a rarity here and by midafternoon the whole town seems to settle into a slow, collective siesta. With dozens of crumbling villas and a fine *kraton* and mosque, it is easily Madura's most interesting town.

INFORMATION

Madura's only **tourist office** (☎ 667 148; kurniadi@consultant.com; Jl Sutomo 5; ☎ 7am-3.30pm Tue-Sat) is run by the very enthusiastic and knowledgeable Adi Wijaya, who can answer most queries and help out with transport information relating to both Sumenep and the island. He also acts as guide.

Sumenep has several internet places, all charging around 4000Rp per hour; the fastest is on Jl KH Wahid Hasyim. The post office

A BULL RACE AT PACE

In Madurese folklore, the tradition of *kerapan sapi* began long ago when plough teams raced each other across the arid fields. This pastime was encouraged by Panembahan Sumolo, an early king of Sumenep. Today, with stud-bull breeding big business on Madura, *kerapan sapi* are an incentive for the Madurese to produce good stock. Only bulls of a high standard can be entered for important races – the Madurese keep their young bulls in superb condition, dosing them with an assortment of medicinal herbs, honey, beer and raw eggs.

Traditional races are run in bull-racing stadiums all over Madura. Practice trials are held throughout the year, but the main season starts in late August and September, when contests are held at district and regency levels. The finest bulls fight it out for the big prize in October at the grand final in Pamekasan, the island's capital.

This is the biggest and most colourful festival and as many as 100 bulls, wearing richly decorated halters, ribbons and flowers, are paraded through town to a loud fanfare. For each race, two pairs of bulls, stripped of their finery, are matched, with their 'jockeys' perched behind on wooden sleds. Gamelan music is played to excite the bulls and then, after being fed a generous tot of *arak*, they're released and charge flat out down the track – just as often plunging straight into the crowd. The race is over in a flash – the best time recorded so far is nine seconds over 100m. After the elimination heats the victors get to spend the rest of the year as studs.

Pamekasan is the main centre for bull racing, but Bangkalan, Sampang, Sumenep and some of the surrounding villages also host races. The East Java Calendar of Events, available from tourist offices in Surabaya (p222), has a general schedule for the main races, but if you are on Madura over a weekend during the main season, you can be guaranteed that races or practices will be held somewhere on the island.

is on the road to Kalianget, and the Telkom office is further out past the Chinese temple. BCA and BNI banks are on Jl Trunojoyo; both have ATMs and change cash.

SIGHTS

Occupied by the present *bupati* of Sumenep, the *kraton* and its *taman sari* (pleasure garden; admission included in carriage-house museum entry; ☎ 7am-5pm) were built in 1750 by Panembahan Sumolo, son of Queen Raden Ayu Tirtonegoro and her spouse, Bendoro Saud. The bathing pools once used by the royal women are still here, though they're no longer in use. Part of the *kraton* building is a small museum with an interesting collection of royal possessions, including Madurese furniture, stone sculptures and *binggel* (heavy silver anklets worn by Madurese women). The complex can only be visited on a guided tour arranged at the royal carriage-house museum.

Opposite the *kraton*, the **royal carriage-house museum** (admission 1000Rp; ☎ 7am-5pm) contains the throne of Queen Tirtonegoro and a Chinese-style bed, which is reputedly 300 years old. On the first Sunday of the month, **traditional dance or gamelan practice** (admission free; ☎ 10am-1pm) is held at the *kraton*.

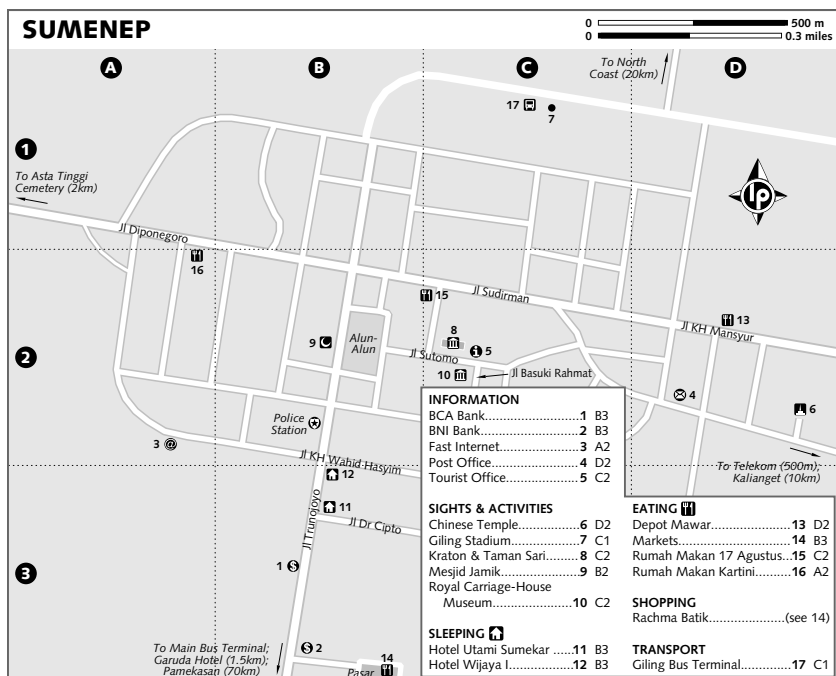
Sumenep's 18th-century **Mesjid Jamik** is notable for its three-tiered Meru-style roof, Chinese porcelain tiles and ceramics. Sumenep also has a **Chinese temple**.

The tombs of the royal family are at the **Asta Tinggi cemetery**, which looks out over the town from a peaceful hilltop 2km northwest of the centre. The main royal tombs are decorated with carved and painted panels; two depict dragons said to represent the colonial invasion of Sumenep. The biggest mausoleum is that of Panembahan Notokusomo (1762-1811), but it is the grave of Tirtonegoro that attracts pilgrims from all over Madura and Java. One of the small pavilions in the outer courtyard still bears the mark of an assassin's sword from an unsuccessful attempt to murder Bendoro Saud.

Sumenep is a centre for champion bull breeding, and on most Saturday mornings practice **bull races** can be seen at the Giling stadium.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The **Festival of Sumenep** is usually celebrated bi-annually on 31 October and marks the founding of the town, with a program of cultural performances.



SLEEPING & EATING

Hotel Wijaya I (☎ 662 433; Jl Trunojoyo 45-47; r with/without air-con from 90,000/35,000Rp; ☺) Right in the centre of town, Wijaya I is one of the best of a bunch of bad budget places. Rooms are plain and reasonably clean and there's a restaurant and a wartel here.

Garuda Hotel (☎ 662 424; Jl KH Wahid Hasyim 3; r 50,000-175,000Rp, ste 225,000Rp; ☺) Set back from the road, and very handy for the bus terminal, this new hotel is the most comfortable place in town. It has a wide range of accommodation, from no-frills economy digs with fans to large rooms with air-con and en-suite bathrooms.

Hotel Utami Sumekar (☎ 672 221; Jl Trunojoyo 53; s/d 100,000/120,000Rp, ste from 145,000Rp; ☺) A large, slightly ramshackle hotel with a selection of ageing rooms in a quiet location.

You won't go hungry in Sumenep, as there are plenty of good, inexpensive eateries. Be sure to order the local speciality *sate kambing* (lamb sate), which is often served with raw shallots and rice cakes. Good places include **Depot Mawar** (☎ 662 178; Jl KH Mansyur 55; meals 10,000Rp), **Rumah Makan Kartini** (☎ 662 431; Jl Diponegoro 83; mains around 9000Rp) and **Rumah**

Makan 17 Agustus (☎ 662 255; Jl Sudirman 34; meals from 10,000Rp).

There are good day and night markets down a lane next to the BNI bank.

SHOPPING

The main business in town is antiques, but the best stuff is carted off by the truckload to Bali and Jakarta. Every second house seems to have something for sale. Sumenep is a centre for batik on Madura.

In the market, Rachma Batik has good-quality gear and fair prices.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Sumenep's main bus terminal is on the southern side of town, a 6000Rp becak ride from the centre. Buses leave roughly hourly until 4pm for Surabaya's Purabaya bus terminal (normal/patas 28,000/38,000Rp, four hours), and there are also direct buses to Banyuwangi, Malang, Semarang, Jakarta and Denpasar. Bus agents along Jl Trunojoyo sell tickets.

The Giling bus terminal for *angkots* to the north is right near the stadium, 1.5km from the market, or around 7000Rp by becak.

From Giling minibuses go to Lombang, Slopeng, Ambunten and other north-coast destinations.

Around Sumenep

From Sumenep, the road to **Kalianget**, 10km southeast, passes many fine villas with facades of heavy, white columns under overhanging red-tiled roofs. About halfway between the two towns are the ruins of a Dutch **fort** dating from 1785, which once had four bastions, though only a perimeter wall and a couple of gateways remain. Next to the fort is a Dutch cemetery.

The Kalianget region is a centre for **salt production** – you'll see great mounds of the white powder piled up for export if you pass by in the dry season. Daily boats sail from here for Jangkar in East Java (p229) and to other islands in the Sumenep district.

You can go **snorkelling** at Pulau Talango, just offshore.

North Coast

Fishing villages and their brightly painted *perahu* (boats) dot the north coast. The coast is lined with sandy beaches, but few are particularly wonderful.

Near Arosbaya, 27km north of Kamal, the tombs of the Cakraningrat royalty are at **Air Mata** (Tears) cemetery, superbly situated on the edge of a small ravine. The ornately carved *gunungan* (wayang mountain motif) headstone on the grave of Ratu Ibu, consort of Cakraningrat I, is the most impressive and is on the highest terrace. The turn-off to Air Mata is just before Arosbaya. From the coast road it's a 4km walk inland.

The village of **Tanjungbumi** is situated on the northwest coast of Madura, about 60km from Kamal. Although primarily a fishing village, it is also a manufacturing centre for traditional Madurese batik and *perahu*.

Pasongsongan is a fishing village on the beach, where it may be possible to stay with villagers. Further east, **Ambunten** is the largest settlement on the north coast and has a bustling market. Just over the bridge, you can walk along the picturesque river, which is lined with *perahu*, and through the fishing village to the beach.

Just outside Ambunten to the east, **Slopeng** has a wide beach with sand dunes, coconut palms and usually calm water for swimming, but it is not always clean. Men fish the shal-

lower water with large cantilevered hand nets, which are rarely seen elsewhere in Java.

Slopeng is also known for its *topeng* making. Its beach is best visited on a day trip from Sumenep, only 20km away.

The stunning white sands of **Pantai Lombang**, 30km northeast of Sumenep, form the best beach in Madura; there's no development here to spoil the idyllic scene. Locals harvest tree saplings for the bonsai market, and sell coconuts to visitors.

MALANG

☎ 0341 / pop 760,000

With leafy, colonial-era boulevards and a breezy climate, Malang moves at a far more leisurely pace than the regional capital, Surabaya, sprawling over the hilltops with the airs and graces of an overgrown market town. It's a cultured city with several important universities and home to a large student population.

Established by the Dutch in the closing decades of the 18th century, Malang earned its first fortunes from coffee, which flourished on the surrounding hillsides. Today, the city's colonial grandeur is quickly disappearing behind the homogenous facades of more modern developments, but there's still much to admire for now.

And with a number of Hindu temples and sights outside the city, Malang makes an ideal base to explore this intriguing corner of East Java.

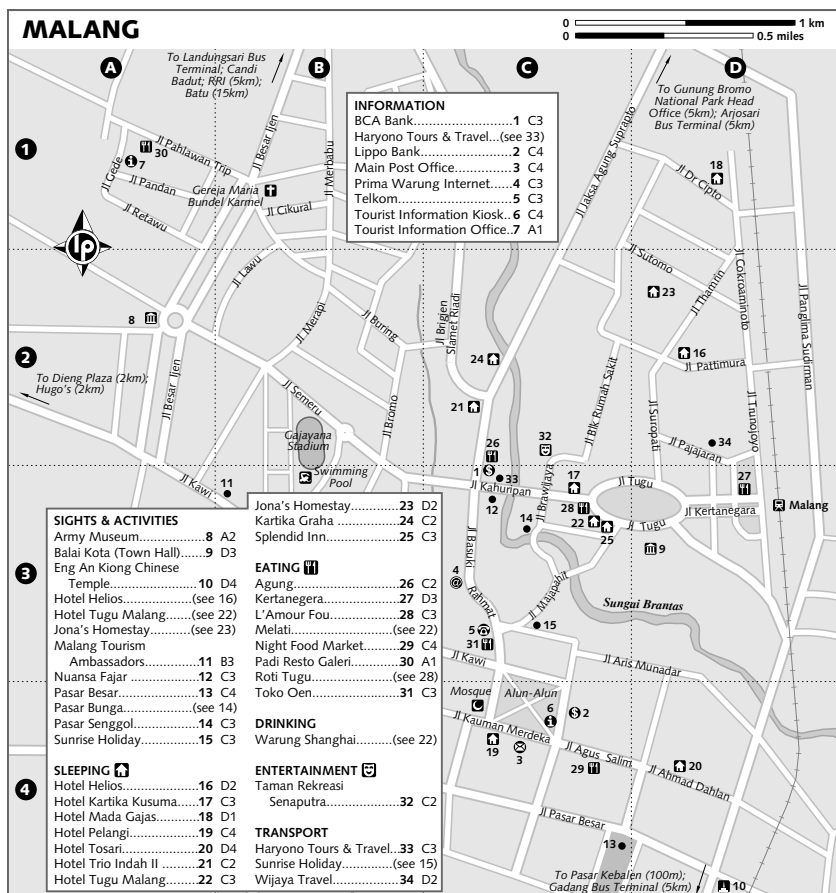
To get the most from the city and region, try to hook up with one of the city's Malang Tourism Ambassadors (p235).

Orientation

City life revolves around the *alun-alun* and the busy streets flowing into Jl Agus Salim and Jl Pasar Besar near the central market. This is where you'll find the main shopping plazas, restaurants, cinemas and many of Malang's hotels. Banks are northwest of the *alun-alun* along Jl Basuki Rahmat. Many of Malang's best restaurants are in the west of the city. For more historical wanderings, start with the circular Jl Tugu.

Information

Malang has plenty of banks with ATMs; most are congregated along Jl Basuki Rahmat, including BCA; or try Lippo Bank, opposite the *alun-alun*.



Dieng Plaza (Jl R Dieng) Has free wi-fi.

Gunung Bromo National Park head office (☎ 490 885; Jl Raden Intan 6; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Thu, to 11am Fri) For Bromo info.

Haryono Tours & Travel (☎ 367 5000; www.haryono-tours.com; Jl Kahuripan 22) Can arrange and book domestic and international flights and some bus tickets.

Main post office (Jl Kauman Merdeka) Opposite the alun-alun.

Prima Warung Internet (Jl Basuki Rahmat 33; per hr 3500Rp; ☎ 24hr) Fast internet connections.

Telkom (Jl Basuki Rahmat)

Tourist information kiosk (alun-alun) This small kiosk is staffed by students.

Tourist Information Office (☎ 558 919; Jl Gede 6; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Helpful, but 3km northwest of the alun-alun.

Sights

Malang has some wonderful colonial architecture. Just northwest of the centre, **Jl Besar Ijen** is Malang's millionaires row, a boulevard lined with elegant whitewashed mansions from the Dutch era. Many have been substantially renovated, but there's still much to admire. If you're in town during late May, drop by for the Malang Kembali festival (opposite). You'll also find the modern **Army Museum** (Jl Besar Ijen; admission 2000Rp; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Thu, to 11am Fri, to 1pm Sat & Sun) on this street.

Close to the city centre, the **Balai Kota** (Town Hall; Jl Tugu) is an immense Dutch administrative building, built in a hybrid of Dutch and Indonesian architectural styles with a

tiered central roof that resembles a Javanese mosque.

Just west of the Balai Kota, Malang's most impressive museum isn't actually a museum at all but a hotel – the five-star **Hotel Tugu Malang** (p236). Its culturally obsessed owners have amassed an astonishing collection of art, sculpture and treasures here – 10th-century ceramics, ancient *wayang*, antique teak furniture, glassware and even the complete facade of a Chinese temple. Visitors are welcome to browse the collection, which is spread throughout the hotel premises (though you might consider it polite to buy a drink while you're here).

On the northwestern outskirts of town, **Candi Badut** is a small Shivaite temple dating from the 8th century.

Malang has some good markets. The huge central affair, the **Pasar Besar** (Jl Pasar Besar; ☎ 9am–5pm), is always worth browsing in. The flower market, **Pasar Bunga** (☎ 7am–5pm), has a pleasant aspect down by the river, and it is the place to stroll in the morning. The most intriguing market, though, is **Pasar Senggol** (☎ 7am–5pm), Malang's fascinating bird market: you'll see ravens in cages (their blood is used in black-magic ceremonies) and maybe a snake or two. **Pasar Kebalen**, near the **Eng An Kiong Chinese temple**, is the most active market in the evenings, open until around 9pm most nights.

Activities

For a great massage (and to support the local community) head to **Nuansa Fajar** (☎ 324 531; Jl Kahuripan 11A; massage per hr 20,000Rp, hotel visit per hr 30,000Rp; ☎ 5.30am–10pm), a training centre that employs blind masseurs from all over the country. Shiatsu, reflexology and traditional Javanese massages are offered. The beds are set up at the back of a small store and, while the traffic drone is a bit off-putting, the masseurs are certainly very skilled.

Tours

To really experience Malang through the eyes of a local, get in touch with the **Malang Tourism Ambassadors** (☎ 940 5680; Jl Kawi 24), a loose-knit group of students who offer free city tours of Malang and the region. All speak good English and are extremely passionate about their city.

Conventional tours to southern beaches (from 330,000Rp per person, minimum of

two), Batu (220,000Rp) and Bromo (via Tosari for about 425,000Rp) are easily set up too. The following can all also arrange car hire with driver for around 400,000Rp per day, or scooter and driver from 100,000Rp.

Hotel Helios (☎ 362 741; Jl Pattimura 37) Well-known operator (the staff speak Dutch as well as English); works in tandem with Sunrise Holiday.

Jona's Homestay (☎ 324 678; Jl Sutomo 4) Anna is the helpful English-speaking owner of this place; will only rent scooters to people overnighing at the homestay.

Sunrise Holiday (☎ 359 070; www.sunriseholiday.com; Jl Majapahit 1K; ☎ 8am–8pm) Well-informed agent that runs a lot of tours in East Java. Has Dutch- and English-speaking guides and can arrange transport for bespoke trips from 500,000Rp per day. Also rents scooters.

Festivals & Events

Held in late May, **Malang Kembali** celebrates *ludruk*, an old-time music hall tradition that was very popular in Java in the last century. Jl Ijen, home to many wonderful old Dutch villas, is closed to traffic for five days and there's street theatre, shows and actors in period costumes.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Hotel Helios (☎ 362 741; www.hotelhelios-malang.com; Jl Pattimura 37; r with fan from 50,000Rp, with air-con from 110,000Rp; ☎) Helios bills itself as a 'backpackers home' and has a wide selection of clean, comfortable rooms overlooking a garden; even the very cheapest are spartan but fine. Good travel information, bus bookings and tours are available.

Hotel Tosari (☎ 326 945; Jl Ahmad Dahlan 31; r 40,000Rp, with mandi/air-con 60,000/175,000Rp; ☎) Benefits from a quiet location and has pretty decent, comfortable rooms; those upstairs have more light and space and are in much better shape.

Jona's Homestay (☎ 324 678; Jl Sutomo 4; r with shared mandi 80,000Rp, with air-con 120,000–250,000Rp) The sign here says 'home sweet home' and that's right on the money. Run by Anna, who speaks English and is a great source of information, this homestay occupies a fine colonial villa with a pleasant front garden. Offers eight very simple, functional economy rooms and has a selection of more spacious air-con options, some of which are huge.

Hotel Kartika Kusuma (☎ 352 266; Jl Kahuripan 12; r with/without air-con 175,000/140,000Rp; ☎) Maintenance could be better at this little place,

with smallish rooms around a courtyard, but at least guests can use the pool at the neighbouring Montana hotel.

Splendid Inn (☎ 366 860; splendid.inn@plasa.com; Jl Majapahit 2-4; r from 175,000Rp; ☹ ☹) Occupying a fine but faded Dutch villa, this inn has a huge lobby complete with deer's head and 1960s sofas. Staff are very amiable, and though the rooms are looking a little worn, they are still quite homey and clean, and all the en-suite bathrooms have tubs.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Pelangi (☎ 365 156; www.hotelpelangi.com; Jl Kauman Merdeka 3; economy r 150,000Rp, r 325,000-505,000Rp; ☹ ☹) A landmark colonial hotel, established in 1916, enjoying a central location just off the *alun-alun*. However, rooms haven't been touched in years and are looking decidedly weary (though clean). Staff are sweet, though.

Hotel Trio Indah II (☎ 359 083; www.hoteltrio2.com; Jl Brigjen Slamet Riadi 1-3; r 215,000-380,000Rp; ☹ ☹ ☹) This hotel, whose great arched frontage resembles a Victorian railway terminal, is a good choice, with 37 neat, clean, renovated rooms, all with TV, air-con and wi-fi, in a block set back from the road. There's room service and a cafe.

Kartika Graha (☎ 361 900; www.kartikagraha.com; Jl Jaka Agung Suprpto 17; r incl breakfast 345,000-515,000Rp; ☹ ☹ ☹) Towering, slightly gaudy hotel with spacious if dated rooms, a bar and karaoke lounge. The renovated ground-floor cafe is very modern and appealing.

Hotel Mada Gajas (☎ 358 785; Jl Dr Cipto 17; r incl breakfast from 670,000Rp; ☹ ☹) First impressions are startling – this hotel has an insanely garish facade complete with marble Romanesque columns, but rooms are actually quite straightforwardly decorated in international business-hotel style. Ask for a discount, which could be as much as 50%.

TOP END

Hotel Tugu Malang (☎ 363 891; www.tuguhotels.com; Jl Tugu 3; r/stg from US\$105/195; ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) It's difficult to find a fault with this marvellous hotel (the pool is small?) because it's so rich in Javanese character and oriental style. The premises are very grand indeed, though the contents are even grander, as the hotel doubles as a museum, (p235), with room after room filled with antiques and priceless artefacts. Staff are genuinely helpful and courte-

ous. Be sure to take afternoon tea and try the complimentary local delicacies. Rooms are very comfortable, and boast interesting design touches like the metal-plated baths, while for a real blowout book one of the suites that has hosted presidents and princes. There's a great spa, a bar, a superb cafe, and two fine restaurants, all decorated in the inimitable Tugu style. Nonsmoking; add 21% tax to room rates.

Eating & Drinking

Malang's restaurants are spread throughout the city. For cheap eats head for Jl Agus Salim, which comes alive at night to the sights and smells of Malang's night food market. Local specialties *nasi rawon* (beef soup served with fried onion and rice) and *bakso malang* (meat-ball soup served with noodles and grilled fish) are always worth a try.

Roti Tugu (☎ 325 672; Jl Tugu 3; cakes from 2000Rp; ☹ 5am-11pm) A first-rate bakery and cafe with sublime Dutch-style breads and pastries, Indonesian roti and even Italian-style ice cream. Traffic noise is annoying, however.

Agung (☎ 357 061; Jl Basuki Rahmat 80; meals around 10,000Rp) A kind of modern warung, this stylish little place has very tasty, inexpensive local food including *martabak* (meat, egg and vegetable pancake-like dish), rice and fish dishes, plus great juices for 4000Rp.

Toko Oen (☎ 364 052; Jl Basuki Rahmat 5; mains 20,000-55,000Rp) An anachronism from colonial days, with rattan furniture and waiters in starched whites and *peci* hats. These days, the ambience is more English seaside than imperial grandeur, but the Indonesian and Western food is reasonably good; try the *biefstuk met gebakken ei* (beef steak with fried egg), and there's cold beer and good ice cream.

Kertanegara (☎ 704 4141; Jl Kertanegara 1; most mains 30,000-40,000Rp; ☹ noon-11pm) Occupying a large, leafy plot, this upmarket place has a great garden terrace and serves flavoursome European, Indonesian and Chinese food with quite a good choice for vegetarians.

Melati (☎ 363 891; Jl Tugu 3; mains 35,000-160,000Rp) Melati is Hotel Tugu Malang's smaller restaurant, and it's a more intimate setting for a meal, with dining tables grouped around one side of the swimming pool. The menu has delicious, inventively prepared Indonesian, Malang and Chinese Peranakan food, plus a few Western dishes; service is flawless.

L'Amour Fou (☎ 363 891; Jl Tugu 3; mains 40,000-120,000Rp; ☎ 6-11pm) The grandeur, opulence and scale of this remarkable restaurant has to be seen to be believed. Almost everything inside L'Amour Fou touches on love: the entrance is via an endless love avenue and there are heart-shaped pizzas and lovers' nooks and crannies set to one side of the big-top tent. The menu is strong on French and Italian cuisine but also features Indonesian dishes (the *kampung tugu* is enough for two). The only drawback is the loud cover band, which you'll have to shout over to be heard.

Padi Resto Galeri (☎ 551 488; Jl Pahlawan Trip 19; mains from 50,000Rp; ☎ 11.30am-11pm) A sleek, contemporary and expensive restaurant. Attracts the Malang in-crowd with a menu of modern Western dishes like green peppercorn steak, though there are a few Indonesian choices too.

Warung Shanghai (☎ 24hr) For a drink, you won't do better than dropping by this bar inside the Hotel Tugu Malang, which has memorabilia from old Batavia, cold Bintang, a long wine list and plenty of cocktails.

Entertainment

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Taman Rekreasi Senaputra (Jl Brawijaya; admission 6000Rp, child under 4 years 5000Rp) Malang's cultural and recreational park has a swimming pool and children's playground and some quirky events. *Kuda lumping* (horse trance) dances (7000Rp) are performed every Sunday morning at 10am: the dancers ride plaited-cane horses until they fall into a trance, allowing them to eat glass and perform other masochistic acts without harm. *Wayang kulit* shows are on the fourth Sunday of the month and puppeteers give *wayang*-operating classes every Tuesday and Friday at 5pm.

RRI (☎ 387 500; Jl Candi Panggung) About 5km northwest of the city, this place has *wayang kulit* from 9pm on the first Saturday of the month.

NIGHTCLUBS

Malang has some big clubs.

Hugo's (☎ 586 304; Dieng Plaza, Jl R Dieng) The hottest place in town, Hugo's has leading DJs and live bands every night.

Getting There & Away

For a reliable taxi company try using **Citra** (☎ 490 555).

BUS & ANGKOT

Malang has three bus terminals. Arjosari, 5km north of town, is the main one, with regular buses to destinations such as Surabaya (every 20 minutes, normal/air-con 10,000/15,000Rp, two to three hours), Probolinggo (14,000/21,000Rp, 2½ hours), Jember (37,000Rp, 4½ hours) and Banyuwangi (48,000Rp, six hours). Luxury long-haul buses also run to Solo and Yogyakarta (from 95,000Rp), Denpasar (115,000Rp) and Jakarta (around 195,000Rp), mostly leaving in the early evening. Minibuses (called *angkot* or *mikrolet* locally) run from Arjosari to nearby villages such as Singosari and Tumpang.

Gadang bus terminal is 5km south of the city centre, and has buses along the southern routes to destinations such as Blitar (12,000Rp, two hours).

Landungsari bus terminal, 5km northwest of the city, has buses to destinations west of the city, such as Batu (3500Rp, 30 minutes).

You can also book bus tickets at **Haryono Tours** (☎ 367 5000; www.haryonotours.com; Jl Kahuripan 22) and at guest houses for a small commission.

MINIBUS

Plenty of door-to-door *travel* companies operate from Malang, and hotels and travel agencies can book them. **Wijaya Travel** (☎ 327 072) is one reliable agency, as is **Sunrise Holiday** (☎ 359 070; www.sunriseholiday.com; Jl Majapahit 1K). Minibuses travel to Solo (80,000Rp), Yogyakarta (90,000Rp) and Probolinggo (45,000Rp). Minibuses to Surabaya (35,000Rp) will drop you off at hotels in Surabaya, thus saving the long haul from Surabaya's bus terminal.

TRAIN

Malang train station (☎ 362 208) is centrally located but not well connected to the main network. The best train to Surabaya is the *Malang Ekspres* (8000Rp, two hours). For Jakarta, the executive-class *Gajayana* (from 270,000Rp, 13 hours) leaves Malang at 4.25pm, bound for Jakarta's Gambir station and stopping at Blitar, Solo and Yogyakarta en route.

Getting Around

Mikrolet run all over town. Most run between the bus terminals via the town centre. These are marked A-G (Arjosari to Gadung and return), A-L (Arjosari to Landungsari) or G-L (Gadung to Landungsari). Trips cost 2000Rp to 3000Rp.

AROUND MALANG

Singosari Temples

The Singosari temples lie in a ring around Malang and are mostly funerary temples dedicated to the kings of the Singosari dynasty (AD 1222 to 1292), the precursors of the Majapahit kingdom.

CANDI SINGOSARI

Situated right in the village of Singosari, 12km north of Malang, this **temple** (admission free; ☎ 7am-5pm) stands 500m off the main Malang-Surabaya road. One of the last monuments erected to the Singosari dynasty, the temple was built in 1304 in honour of King Kertanegara, the fifth and last Singosari king, who died in 1292 in a palace uprising. The main structure of the temple was completed, but for some reason the sculptors never finished their task. Only the top part has any ornamentation and the *kala* heads have been left strangely stark. Of the statues that once inhabited the temple's chambers, only the statue of Agastya, the Shivaite teacher who walked across the water to Java, remains. Statues of Durga and Ganesha once found in the temple are now both exhibited in the National Museum in Jakarta. Locals visit this temple to meditate as well as to leave offerings of flower petals.

About 200m beyond the temple are two enormous figures of *dwarapala* (guardians against evil spirits) wearing clusters of skulls and twisted serpents.

To reach Singosari, take a green *angkot* (4000Rp) from Malang's Arjosari bus terminal and get off at the Singosari market on the highway.

CANDI SUMBERAWAN

This small, squat **Buddhist stupa** (admission free; ☎ 7am-5pm) lies in the foothills of Gunung Arjuna, about 5km northwest of Singosari. Originating from a later period than the Singosari temples, it was built to commemorate the visit of Hayam Wuruk, the great Majapahit king, who visited the area in 1359.

Take an *angkot* (2500Rp) from Singosari pasar on the highway to Desa Sumberawan, and then walk 500m down the road to the canal, turn right and follow the canal through picturesque rice paddies for 1km to the temple. This delightful walk is the highlight of the visit.

Young men use the canal for washing themselves, so don't be surprised to see a naked body or two en route to the stupa. In Javanese culture it's polite to avert your eyes, and the boys will duck down into the water in fits of giggles as you pass by.

Sumberawan village is a **shoemaking** centre where wooden soles are shaped by hand for export to Bali; prospective purchasers can drop by the Echaripen's family home at Jl Candirawan 17.

CANDI JAGO

Along a small road near the market in Tumpang, 22km from Malang, **Candi Jago** (Jajaghu; admission 5000Rp; ☎ 7am-5pm) was built between 1268 and 1280 and is thought to be a memorial to the fourth Singosari king, Vishnuvardhana. The temple has some interesting decorative carving – in the three-dimensional, *wayang kulit* style typical of East Java – from the Jataka and the Mahabharata. This primarily Buddhist temple also has Javanese-Hindu statues, including a six-armed, death-dealing goddess and a lingam, the symbol of Shiva's male potency. There are two photocopied leaflets available at the entrance you can consult to learn about its history.

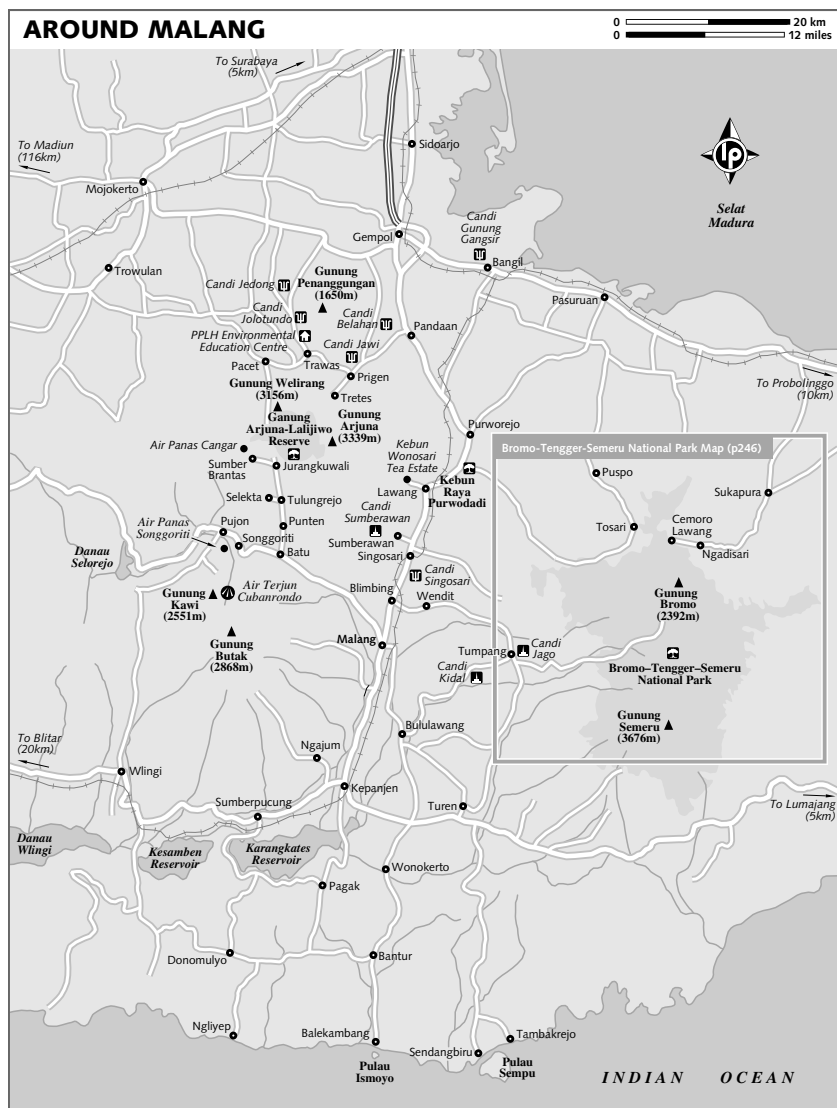
To reach Candi Jago take a white *angkot* from Malang's Arjosari bus terminal to Tumpang (4000Rp).

Tumpang is also home to the **Mangun Dharma Arts Centre** (☎ 0341-787 907; www.mangun-dharma.com), which has Javanese dance classes and performances, plus some gamelan, *wayang* and woodcarving courses. *Wayang kulit* and dance shows can be staged if pre-arranged, and books, dance DVDs, masks, puppets and batik are usually for sale.

If coming from Singosari, go to Blimbing where the road to Tumpang branches off the highway, and then catch a minibus. In Tumpang, the temple is only a short stroll from the main road.

CANDI KIDAL

This graceful **temple** (admission 5000Rp; ☎ 24hr), a fine example of East Javanese architecture, is 7km south of Candi Jago. It's now 12m high but originally topped 17m. Built around 1260 as the burial shrine of King Anusapati (the second Singosari king, who died in 1248), it is tapering and slender, with pictures of the Garuda (mythical man-bird) on three sides,



bold, glowering *kala* heads and medallions of the *haruna* and Garuda symbols. Two *kala makara* (dragons) guard the steps – like those at the *kraton* steps in Yogyakarta, one is male and the other female.

Hourly brown *angkot* (3000Rp) run from Tumpang market to Candi Kidal; the last one returns at 4pm.

Lawang

☎ 0341 / pop 200,000

Lawang, an ugly, sprawling city 18km north of Malang, is eminently forgettable, but the **Hotel Niagara** is a notable five-storey, pink art nouveau building. This once-grand hotel has seen better days, but it's fun to poke around its teak-panelled and antique-tiled interior if

management will let you. Rumour has it that the hotel is haunted, and locals avoid it like the plague.

The road just south of the Hotel Niagara climbs steeply west up to the **Kebun Wonosari tea estate** (☎ 426 032; admission 6000Rp; 🚗), which has sweeping views and a temperate climate. This agrotourism venture offers everything from tea-plantation tours (40,000Rp) and a mini-train to tennis. Guides (160,000Rp for the day) to hike to the top of Gunung Arjuna can be arranged here. Best of all, accommodation (rooms 110,000Rp to 1,020,000Rp) is available in this glorious setting. From Malang, catch a *mikrolet* to Lawang (4000Rp) and then an *ojek* to Wonosari (12,000Rp).

Purwodadi

A few kilometres north of Lawang on the road to Surabaya, the **Kebun Raya Purwodadi** (admission 4000Rp, tours 7500Rp; 🕒 7am-4pm) are expansive dry-climate botanical gardens. The 85 hectares are beautifully landscaped and contain over 3000 species, including 80 kinds of palm, a huge fern collection, a Mexican section, myriad orchids and many varieties of bamboo. The garden office to the south of the entrance has a map and leaflets. **Air Terjun Cobanbaung** is a high waterfall next to the gardens.

The gardens are easily reached; take any bus (5000Rp) from Malang to Surabaya and ask to be dropped off at the entrance.

Pandaan

Pandaan is a small town about 45km north of Malang and 40km south of Surabaya, on the road to Tretes. Here you'll find the **Candra Wilwatika Amphitheatre** (☎ 0343-631 842), where modern Javanese ballet performances normally take place once a month from July to October. Unfortunately, performances are currently cancelled due to lack of interest, but there are plans to reinstate them. You can, however, overnight at the complex (doubles are 230,000Rp); the accommodation is quite basic. To get there, take a bus from Malang or Surabaya, and then a Tretes-bound minibus. The theatre is 1km from Pandaan, right on the main road to Tretes.

Also on the main road to Tretes, a few kilometres from Pandaan before Prigen, **Candi Jawi** (admission free; 🕒 7am-5pm) is an early 14th-century Hindu temple, built to honour King Kertanegara.

Gunung Arjuna-Lalijiwo Reserve

This reserve includes the dormant volcano **Gunung Arjuna** (3339m), the semi-active **Gunung Welirang** (3156m) and the Lalijiwo Plateau on the northern slopes of Arjuna. Experienced and well-equipped hikers can walk from the resort town of Tretes to Selektia in two days, but you need a guide to go all the way. Alternatively, you can climb Welirang from Tretes or Lawang (p239).

A well-used hiking path, popular with students on weekends and holidays, and also with soul-searchers who come to meditate on the mountain, begins in Tretes near the Kakak Bodo Recreation Reserve. Get information from the **PHKA post** (☎ 081 2178 8956; Jl Wilis 523) in the northern reaches of the town. Guides can be hired here for 300,000Rp per day; allow two days to climb one mountain and three days for both.

It's a hard, five-hour, 17km walk to the very basic huts used by the Gunung Welirang sulphur collectors. Hikers usually stay overnight here in order to reach the summit before the clouds roll in around mid-morning. Bring your own camping gear, food and drinking water (or hire it all at the PHKA post for 120,000Rp per day), and be prepared for freezing conditions. From the huts it's a 4km climb to the summit. Allow at least six hours in total for the ascent, and 4½ hours for the descent.

The trail passes Lalijiwo Plateau, a superb alpine meadow, from where a trail leads to Gunung Arjuna, the more demanding peak. From Arjuna a trail leads down the southern side to Junggo, near Selektia and Batu. It's a five-hour descent from Arjuna this way; a guide is essential.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

To get to the start of the hike, take a bus to Pandaan (8000Rp) from Malang or Surabaya and then a minibus to Tretes (7000Rp).

Gunung Penanggungan

The remains of no fewer than 81 temples are scattered over the slopes of Gunung Penanggungan (1650m), a sacred Hindu mountain said to be the peak of Mt Mahameru, which according to legend, broke off and landed at its present site when Mt Mahameru was transported from India to Indonesia.

Historically this was a very important pilgrimage site for Hindus, and a few Javanese

mystics, meditators and Hindus still visit the mountain today. Pilgrims make their way to the top of the mountain and stop to bathe in the holy springs adorned with Hindu statuary. The two main bathing places are **Candi Jolotundo** and **Candi Belahan**, the best examples of remaining Hindu art. Both are difficult to reach.

In a stunning setting on the evergreen western slopes of Penanggungan, **PPLH Environmental Education Centre** (☎ 0321-722 1045; dm 20,000Rp, bungalows 240,000Rp) is a supremely relaxing place. It mainly caters to groups, but its hiking packages (guides 90,000Rp) and herbal medicine and ecology courses are also open to individuals. There's a good organic restaurant and fine accommodation in pretty bungalows or more basic dorms. During the week you'll generally have the place to yourself, aside from the occasional school group passing through. To get there, take a Trawas-bound bemo (7000Rp) from Pandaan and an *ojek* (10,000Rp) from Trawas.

For somewhere more luxurious, head to the fine **Grand Trawas Hotel** (☎ 0343-880 015; www.grandtrawas.com; r/stg incl breakfast from 500,000/700,000Rp; 🍷) in Trawas, where all rooms have balconies overlooking Penanggungan. Nonsmoking.

Batu

☎ 0341 / pop 79,000

Batu, 15km northwest of Malang, is a large hill resort on the lower reaches of Gunung Arjuna, surrounded by volcanic peaks.

Azahari Husin, a Malaysian bomb maker linked with Jemaah Islamiah and the Bali bombings, was cornered and killed here in 2005, but it's not a militant town (most people are happy holidaymakers from Malang and Surabaya).

There are several banks with ATMs near the *alun-alun*.

SIGHTS

Without leaving the confines of Batu, the only sight is the **apple and strawberry orchard** surrounding the Kusuma Agrowisata hotel.

Tours (incl electric truck ride 25,000Rp; 🕒 8am-4pm) are offered, and the price includes a piece of fruit or two and entry to the mini-zoo.

Songgoriti, 3km west of Batu, has well-known **hot springs** (admission 8000Rp; 🕒 7.30am-5pm) and a small, ancient Hindu temple in the grounds of the Hotel Air Panas Songgoriti. Nearby, Pasar Wisata is a tourist market sell-

ing mostly apples, bonsai plants, and stone mortars and pestles. The waterfall **Air Terjun Cubanrondo** (admission 10,000Rp; 🕒 7.30am-5pm) is 5km southwest of Songgoriti.

Selekta, a small resort 5km further up the mountain from Batu and 1km off the main road, is home to the **Pemandian Selekta**, a large swimming pool with a superb setting in landscaped **gardens** (admission 12,500Rp; 🕒 7.30am-5pm).

Higher up the mountain, the small village of **Sumbar Brantas**, far above Selekta, is at the source of Sungai Brantas. From here you can walk 2km to **Air Panas Cangar** (admission 5000Rp; 🕒 7.30am-5pm), a hot springs high in the mountains surrounded by forest and mist.

SLEEPING

Accommodation is available in Batu, Songgoriti and all along the road to Selekta at Puntan and at Tulungrejo, where the road to Selekta turns off. Songgoriti and Selekta are small, quiet resorts; Selekta has the best views. Batu has the best facilities but is more built-up.

Add around 25% to the prices listed here for weekend rates.

Hotel Baru (☎ 591 775; Jl Agus Salim 27; d 50,000-80,000Rp) A decent guest house with friendly staff and neat, simple tiled rooms with TV. No sheets (only blankets) are provided, and bathrooms are all cold water.

Mutiara Baru (☎ 511 259; Jl Panglima Sudirman 89; r 100,000-300,000Rp; 🍷) It's better than it looks from the street. Deluxe rooms are airy and light and face the garden and pool at the rear; economy rooms are perfunctory but clean.

Hotel Kartika Wijaya (☎ 592 600; www.kartikawijaya.com; Jl Panglima Sudirman 127; r incl breakfast from 450,000-675,000Rp; 🍷 🍷) A very grand colonial residence, Kartika Wijaya has a stately twin-towered facade and a lobby with a stained-glass map of Java. The grounds are huge – there's a vast lawn dotted with palms, tennis courts and a jogging track. Rooms are carpeted and generously sized, if a little plain.

Kusuma Agrowisata (☎ 593 333; www.kusumaagrowisatahotel.com; Jl Abdul Gani Atas; r from 560,000Rp; 🍷 🍷) A vast resort-cum-orchard with dinky little cottages and immaculate rooms in manicured grounds 3km south of Batu. There's a disco, and tours of the orchard and strawberry farm are included in the rate.

EATING

Jl Panglima Sudirman is lined with restaurants and warungs.

Pantara Café (Jl Panglima Sudirman 123; mains around 15,000Rp) An atmospheric local eatery that serves East Javan dishes in bamboo surroundings.

Waroeng Ba Be (☎ 502 5300; www.waroengba-be.com; Jl Raya Beji 142; meals 15,000-30,000Rp; ☎) A stylish faux-traditional place with some tables overlooking rice fields and others under the large main *pendopo*-style structure. Excellent snacks (spring rolls, calamari), Chinese dishes, noodles, and even a dish or two from India and Mexico. There's live jazz or blues daily at 7pm. Ba Be is 3km east of the centre on the road to Malang.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Malang's Landungsari bus terminal take a Kediri bus or one of the frequent pink *mikrolet* to Batu (3500Rp, 30 minutes). Batu's bus terminal is 2km from the centre of town – take another *mikrolet* (1500Rp) from here to Jl Panglima Sudirman.

From the bus terminal, orange *mikrolet* run to Selektta (3000Rp, 30 minutes) and Sumber Brantas (6000Rp, one hour). *Mikrolet* turn off to Sumber Brantas at Juranguwali village. For Air Panas Cangar, walk 2km straight ahead from Juranguwali.

An *ojek* to Selektta costs 12,000Rp.

Gunung Kawi

On Gunung Kawi (2551m), west of Malang and 18km northwest of Kepanjen, is the tomb of the Muslim sage Kanjeng Penembahan Djoego, who died in 1871. Descended from Pakubuwono I, king of the Mataram empire, the sage is better known as Mbah Jugo.

From the parking area, a long path leads up the slope past tacky souvenir stalls and beggars. Before the tombs at the top, there's a mosque, a Buddhist temple and the house of Mbah Jugo, which draws Indonesians of all faiths and Chinese worshippers from across Asia. Legend has it that the saint will answer the prayers of fortune-seeking pilgrims. Apparently he did so for one Chinese couple, who went on to form one of Indonesia's biggest *kretek* companies.

Gunung Kawi can be reached by taking a bus to Kepanjen (7000Rp), 3km east of the turn-off, and then a minibus (7000Rp) for the final 19km.

South-Coast Beaches

The coast south of Malang has some good beaches, but facilities are limited. **Sendangbiru** is a picturesque fishing village separated by a narrow channel from **Pulau Sempu**. This island nature reserve has a couple of lakes, **Telaga Lele** and **Telaga Sat**, both ringed by jungle. Boats can be hired (around 125,000Rp return) to get you to Sempu. Take your own provisions.

A few kilometres before Sendangbiru, a rough track to the left leads 3km to **Tambakrejo**, a small fishing village with a sweeping sandy bay, which despite the surf is generally safe for swimming.

Balekambang is best known for its picturesque Hindu temple on the small island of Pulau Ismoyo, connected by a footbridge to the beach. Balekambang is one of the most popular beaches and is crowded on weekends. Accommodation in the village is basic.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Minibuses from Malang's Gadang bus terminal travel the 69km to Sendangbiru (14,000Rp, two hours), past the turn-off to Tambakrejo; otherwise take a bus to Turen and then another to Sendangbiru. For Balekambang, buses run direct from Malang for 10,000Rp.

BLITAR

☎ 0342 / pop 140,000

Blitar makes a good base for visiting Panataran temple and the spectacular active volcano of Gunung Kelud. It's also of interest as the site of former president Sukarno's home and memorial.

Information

There are several banks in town including **BCA bank** (Jl Merdeka), with an ATM. **Telkom** (Jl A Yani 10) is the place to go for international telephone calls; it's on the eastern continuation of Jl Merdeka. **Warnet Mitra** (Jl Lawu 71; per hr 3000Rp) has internet access and is behind the main street. The post office is next to the train station.

Sights

MAKAM BUNG KARNO

At Sentul, 2km north of the town centre on the road to Panataran, former president Sukarno's grave is marked by an elaborate **monument** (admission by donation; ☎ 7am-5pm). Sukarno (or Bung Karno) is widely regarded as the father of the Indonesian nation, although he was only reinstated as a national hero in 1978.

Despite family requests that he be buried at his home in Bogor, Sukarno was buried in an unmarked grave next to his mother in Blitar. His father's grave was also moved from Jakarta to Blitar. It was only in 1978 that the lavish million-dollar monument was built and the grave site was opened to visitors. There's also a small museum here devoted to the man, which has hundreds of historic photographs of Sukarno with heads of state including John F Kennedy and Ho Chi Minh.

The monument has an undeniable poignancy, and thousands of Indonesian pilgrims come here each year to pay their respects. Sadly, as you leave, things descend abruptly into tacky consumerism as you're directed through a seemingly never-ending maze of souvenir stalls.

A becak from the Blitar town centre is around 8000Rp. Panataran-bound *angkudes* (yellow minibuses; 2000Rp) pass by; ask for the *makam* (grave). s

OTHER SIGHTS

For a more personal look into the life of Sukarno, head for the **Museum Sukarno** (Jl Sultan Agung 59; admission by donation; ☎ 7am-5pm), located in the house where he lived as a boy. Photos, revolutionary posters and memorabilia (including a Bung Karno clock!) line the front sitting room, and you can see the great man's bedroom and check out his old Mercedes in the garage. The museum is about 1.5km from the centre of town.

Blitar's large **Pasar Legi**, next to the bus terminal, is also worth a gander.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Sri Rejeki (☎ 801 718; Jl TGP 13; r with/without mandi from 50,000/35,000Rp, with air-con & breakfast from 80,000Rp; ☎) This place is a good deal, with a range of clean rooms, some with TV and Western toilets, but none with hot water. It's centrally located and staff are friendly.

our pick Hotel Tugu Blitar (☎ 801 766; www.tuguhotels.com; Jl Merdeka 173; r 100,000-300,000Rp, ste from 450,000Rp; ☎ ☎) A historic hotel of real grandeur and Javanese character, with wonderfully spacious suites in the Dutch colonial section and good-value rooms in a separate block at the rear. Staff are delightful, and service is impeccable in the open-sided restaurant, which is decorated with fine art. Complimentary afternoon tea and Javanese snacks are served. A pool is planned. Nonsmoking; add 21% tax to room rates.

Blitar has some good restaurants on Jl Merdeka:

RM Retno (☎ 802 158; Jl Ir Sukarno 37A; meals 10,000Rp) Around 300m from Sukarno's grave, this is a great local place serving inexpensive East Javanese food. The lunch buffet is a knockout, with a huge choice of varied fare including fried catfish and lots of tempeh treats, while strong local coffee costs just 1000Rp.

Ramayana (Jl Merdeka 65; mains around 17,000Rp) Large Chinese establishment east of the *alun-alun*.

Getting There & Away

Regular buses run from Blitar to Malang (12,000Rp, two hours) and Surabaya (31,000Rp, four hours), as well as Solo (42,000Rp, six hours). The bus terminal is 4km south of town along Jl Veteran (2000Rp by *angkot* from the centre). *Angkudes* run from the western end of Jl Merdeka to Panataran temple for 3000Rp, passing close to Makam Bung Karno; you'll have to walk the last 300m or so.

Blitar has a few useful train connections. Heading west, the *Matarmaja* leaves at 4.42pm from Blitar to Solo, Semarang, Cirebon and Jakarta (50,000Rp, 13 hours), and east at 5.54am for Malang. Or the *Gajayana* runs to Jakarta (from 270,000Rp, 11½ hours) via Solo and Yogya at 5.56pm.

Hiring a car and driver makes a lot of sense to see the sights around town; the Hotel Tugu Blitar can organise this for 400,000Rp per day.

PANATARAN

The **Hindu temples** (admission by donation; ☎ temple complex 7am-5pm) at Panataran are the largest intact Majapahit temples, and the finest examples of East Javanese architecture and sculpture. Construction began in 1197, during the Singosari dynasty, with building work continuing for another 250 years. Most of the important surviving structures date from the great years of the Majapahit kingdom during the 14th century.

Around the base of the first-level platform, the comic-strip carvings tell the story of a test between the fat, meat-eating Bubukshah and the thin, vegetarian Gagang Aking.

Further on is the small Dated Temple, so called because of the date '1291' (AD 1369) carved over the entrance. On the next level are colossal serpents snaking endlessly around the Naga Temple, which once housed valuable sacred objects.

At the rear stands the Mother Temple, whose lowest panels depict stories from the Ramayana. Behind is a small royal *mandi* with a frieze depicting lizards, bulls and dragons around its walls.

Three hundred metres beyond the turn-off to the temples, the **Museum Panataran** (admission by donation; ☎ 8am–2pm Tue–Thu, Sat & Sun, to 11am Fri) has an impressive collection of statuary from the complex, but labelling is poor.

Panataran is 16km from Blitar (4000Rp by bus), and 3km north of the village of Nglegok.

GUNUNG KELUD

Around 30km directly north of Panataran, **Gunung Kelud** (1731m) is one of Java's most active, accessible and rewarding volcanoes to visit, with a plunging crater, steaming vents and a small crater lake. Kelud is in a near-permanent state of growl – an eruption in 1919 killed 5000 people and one in 2007 sent smoke 2.5km into the air and created a new cone within the caldera.

To get to the crater itself you have to walk through a 200m tunnel, built under the Japanese occupation. A path snakes up the side of the crater to a viewpoint of the whole scene.

Entrance to Gunung Kelud is controlled at a **gateway** (admission 15,000Rp; ☎ 6.30am–4pm Mon–Fri, 6am–5pm Sat–Sun) 10km before the summit because of the active nature of the beast.

There's no public transport to Kelud; the nearest village served by *angkot* from Blitar is Watus, from where you'll have to hire an *ojek* (around 25,000Rp) to the entrance gateway, and another (50,000Rp return) up to the car park close to the summit. If you can afford it, it's far easier to get there with your own wheels.

PACITAN

☎ 0357

A long way from anywhere, the small south-coast town of Pacitan lies near the border with Central Java, on a horseshoe bay ringed by rocky cliffs. Pacitan's **Pantai Ria Teleng**, 4km from town, has golden sand and some surf. Swimming is possible when the seas are calm – the safest area is towards the fishing boats at the southwestern end of the bay, where there is also a swimming pool.

Pacitan has several banks with ATMs and a warnet on the main street. The helpful **Tourist Information Office** (☎ 885 326; Jl WR Supramanto;

☎ 7am–3pm Mon–Thu, to 11am Fri) is 2km from Hotel Pacitan.

The beach is the main reason to visit Pacitan, and home to **Happy Bay Beach Bungalows** (☎ 881 474; r 70,000Rp, private bungalows 85,000Rp), which has comfortable accommodation, and bicycles (15,000Rp) and motorbikes (50,000Rp) for hire. Otherwise, **Srikandi** (☎ 881 252; Jl A Yani 67; r with TV & fan/air-con 100,000/145,000Rp; ☎) is a good choice, overlooking rice paddies on the western edge of the town. It has a restaurant.

Getting There & Away

Buses run here from Solo (26,000Rp, 4½ hours) and also from Ponorogo (12,000Rp, two hours) via a scenic road. From Ponorogo, direct buses go to Blitar (21,000Rp, three hours).

Pacitan's bus terminal is 500m from the centre of town on the road to Solo and the beach. Buses from Solo pass the turn-off to the beach and can drop you there.

AROUND PACITAN

At Punung village, on the Solo road 30km northwest of Pacitan, is the turn-off to the limestone caves of **Goa Putri**, 2km away, and the much more impressive **Goa Gong**, 8km from the highway, the largest and most spectacular cave system in the area.

The more famous **Goa Tabuhan** (Musical Cave) is 4km north on the highway beyond Punung, and then another 4km from there. This huge limestone cavern is said to have been a refuge for the 19th-century guerrilla leader Prince Diponegoro. Guides will give an excellent 'orchestral' performance by striking rocks against stalactites, each in perfect pitch, and echoing pure gamelan melodies. The concert lasts about 10 minutes. You must hire a guide and lamp.

This is also agate country, and hawkers sell reasonably priced polished stones and rings.

PROBOLINGGO

☎ 0335 / pop 180,000

Probolinggo has a rep as a producer of Java's finest mangoes, but for most travellers it's a bustling, featureless transit point on the route to Gunung Bromo. You won't want to hang around here long.

Information

The main post office and most of the banks are on Jl Suroyo, which leads off the main street (Jl Panglima Sudirman) to the train station.

PROBOLINGGO PROBLEMS

Of all the bus terminals in Java, Probolinggo's has the worst reputation. It's by no means dangerous, just not very honest. Travellers have reported problems with arranging onward tickets, particularly at night, when overcharging is the norm. Even what looks like a reputable ticket agent may charge double or even triple the standard price. The best thing to do is find the bus you need and pay the fare on board; at least you'll have a chance to compare prices with other passengers. Also, when travelling to Probolinggo, make it clear to the ticket collector you want to be dropped off at the Bayuangga bus terminal; we've received letters from travellers complaining of being left at random travel agents and charged exorbitant fares for bus tickets.

Thieves are common on the buses in East Java, especially on buses departing from Probolinggo.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Bromo Permai (☎ 422 256; Jl Panglima Sudirman 327; r 65,000Rp, with air-con 90,000-180,000Rp; ☹️ 📺) It's on a mega-busy street, but the plain, clean rooms are all situated well to the rear around a garden where noise is not an issue. There's a warner and good travel info, and breakfast is included.

Hotel Paramita (☎ 421 535; Jl Siaman 7; r incl breakfast 75,000-225,000Rp; ☹️ 📺) Just off the town's main drag, this place's bunkerlike entrance is very unappealing, but its accommodation is set to the side around a lovely peaceful garden. It's worth paying a little extra here for a better room.

Sumber Hidup (☎ 421 413; Jl Dr Mosh Saleh 2; mains 12,000-25,000Rp; 🍽️ 11.30am-10pm) Serves filling Chinese food, including sweet-and-sour pork, and Indonesian dishes. Doubles as an ice-cream parlour.

Restaurant Malang (Jl Panglima Sudirman 104; mains from 15,000Rp) Has a big menu and cold beer.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Probolinggo's Bayuangga bus terminal is located about 5km from town on the road to Gunung Bromo. Yellow *angkot* run to/from the main street and the train station for 2000Rp. Buses to Banyuwangi are very frequent. Advance bookings for the long-distance executive buses will cost a little more – shop around.

From Probolinggo, buses travel to Bondowoso (15,000Rp 2½ hours) and Surabaya (economy/air-con 14,000/22,000Rp, around three hours) about every 30 minutes, though note that due to traffic chaos around Gembol (see the boxed text, p228), delays are guaranteed during rush hour and holiday periods. Other destinations covered are Malang (14,000/21,000Rp, 2½ hours), Banyuwangi

(35,000/50,000Rp, five hours) via Situbondo, Yogyakarta (58,000/85,000Rp, nine hours), and Denpasar (78,000/115,000Rp, 11 hours).

MINIBUS

Gunung Bromo minibuses leave from a stop just up from Probolinggo's Bayuangga bus terminal, heading for Cemoro Lawang (15,000Rp, two hours) via Ngadisari (12,000Rp, 1½ hours) until around 5pm. The late-afternoon buses charge more to Cemoro Lawang, when fewer passengers travel beyond Ngadisari. Make sure it goes all the way to Cemoro Lawang when you board.

TRAIN

About 2km north of town, the train station is 6km from the bus terminal. Probolinggo is on the Surabaya–Banyuwangi line. Most services are economy class. The *Mutiara Timur* costs from 60,000/80,000Rp (business/executive) to Surabaya (departing at 1.31pm, two hours) or the same rate to Banyuwangi (departing at 11.10am, five hours). The slow economy-class *Sri Tanjung* goes west to Solo via Surabaya at 11.36am or east to Banyuwangi at 5.08pm.

TAXI

Taxis and freelance car drivers meet trains, and wait for business at the bus station. A trip up to Cemoro Lawang costs around 180,000Rp after bargaining, more if it's late in the day.

GUNUNG BROMO & BROMO-TENGGER-SEMERU NATIONAL PARK

☎ 0335

A lunaesque landscape of epic proportions and surreal beauty, Gunung Bromo is one of Indonesia's most breathtaking sights.

Compared with Java's other major peaks, Gunung Bromo (2392m) is a midget, but this volcano's beauty is in its setting, not its size. Rising from the guts of the ancient Tengger caldera, Bromo is one of three volcanoes to have emerged from a vast crater, stretching 10km across. Flanked by the peaks of Kursi (2581m) and Batok (2440m), the steaming cone of Bromo stands in a sea of ashen, volcanic sand, surrounded by the towering cliffs of the crater's edge. Nearby, Gunung Semeru (3676m), Java's highest peak and one of its most active volcanoes, throws its shadow – and occasionally its ash – over the whole scene.

The immense size of the crater, the supernatural beauty of the scenery and the dramatic highland light really are something very special indeed. Mercifully, Bromo has completely escaped the tacky commercialism that besmirches many Indonesian beauty spots. And though the local Tengger people may press you into accepting a horse ride across the crater bed, there's little in the way of serious hassle, and it's still very easy to connect spiritually with this sacred peak.

Orientation & Information

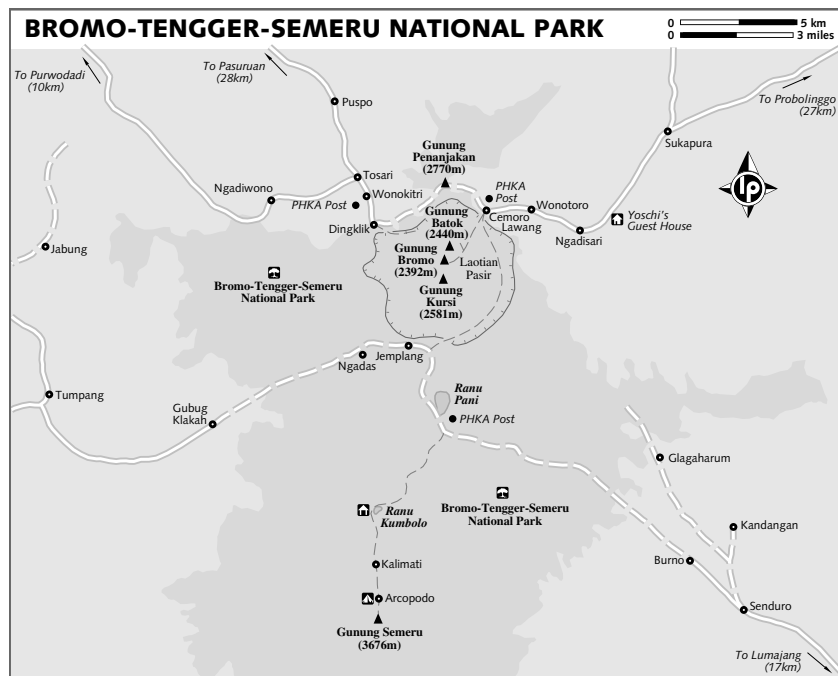
Probolinggo is the usual access point, but Bromo can be approached from a number of routes, including Wonokitri from the northwest and Ngadas from the southwest. At any time of year it's cold on these mountains and night temperatures can drop to single figures.

Whichever approach you take, an entrance fee of 25,000Rp is payable. Information is available from the **PHKA post** (☎ 541 038; ☎ 8am–3pm Tue–Sun), opposite Hotel Bromo Permai in Cemoro Lawang, and at the **PHKA post** (☎ 0343–571 048; ☎ 8am–3pm Tue–Sun) on the southern outskirts of Wonokitri. Both extend their opening hours during busy periods. The park's official office is located in Malang (p234).

There's a BNI ATM close to the crater lip in Cemoro Lawang.

Activities

Gunung Bromo is at its ethereal best at sunrise, when the colours are most impressive, and virtually all tours are planned to enable you to experience the mountain at this time. But visibility is usually good throughout the day in the dry season, even though the slopes



THE LEGENDS OF BROMO

Unsurprisingly, the eerie landscape of Bromo and its neighbouring volcanoes has spawned countless myths and legends. It is said that the Tengger crater was originally dug out with just half a coconut shell by an ogre smitten with love for a princess.

But Bromo is of particular religious significance to the Hindu Tengger people, who still populate the massif and first fled here to escape the wave of Islam that broke over the Majapahit kingdom in the 16th century. The Tengger believe that Bromo once fell within the realm of the childless King Joko Seger and Queen Roro Anteng, who asked the god of the volcano for assistance in producing an heir. The god obliged, giving them 25 children, but demanded that the youngest, a handsome boy named Dian Kusuma, be sacrificed to the flames in return. When the queen later refused to fulfil her promise, the young Dian bravely sacrificed himself to save the kingdom from retribution.

Today, the mountain is appeased during the annual Kasada festival (the park's PHKA offices can tell you when it occurs during the year), when local Tenggerese come to Bromo to throw offerings of vegetables, chickens and money into the crater of the volcano.

below Cemoro Lawang may be covered in mist. Later in the day you'll also avoid the dawn crowds, especially during busy holiday periods. In the wet season it's often bright and clear at dawn but quickly clouds over.

PROBOLINGGO APPROACH

This is the easiest and most popular route. From Probolinggo, it's 28km to Sukapura, then another 7km to Ngadisari and then 3km to Cemoro Lawang. Minibuses ply the route all the way to Cemoro Lawang from Probolinggo.

Most people get up at around 4am and head up to the neighbouring peak of **Gunung Penanjakan** (2770m), which offers the best vistas (and photographs) of the entire Bromo landscape, with Gunung Semeru puffing away on the horizon. Hired 4WDs (around 275,000Rp for a sunrise tour) climb up to Penanjakan for dawn. Alternatively, it is two hours on foot. After sunrise, 4WDs head back down the steep lip of the crater and then over the Laotian Pasir (Sand Sea) to the base of Bromo.

If you want to just hike to Bromo from Cemoro Lawang, it's a 3km (40-minute) walk down the crater wall and across the eerie Laotian Pasir to the slopes of Bromo. White stone markers are easy to follow during the day but can be more elusive in the dark. Make sure you climb the right cone (!); Bromo has a stone staircase. Some hikers, disorientated in the dark, have attempted to climb neighbouring Batok.

After ascending the 253 steps you'll come face to face with the steaming, sulphurous

guts of the volcano. From the lip there are sweeping views back across the Laotian Pasir to the lip of the crater and over to Batok and the Hindu temple (this only opens on auspicious days in the pilgrim calendar) at its base.

From Cemoro Lawang, trekkers can also take an interesting walk across the Laotian Pasir to Ngadas (8km), on the southern rim of the Tengger crater. You'll need to start early in order to get to Malang by evening.

WONOKITRI APPROACH

Small tour groups come this way to do the trip to Gunung Penanjakan, which can be reached by sealed road, or by a 4WD, which can drive all the way to the base of Bromo. Wonokitri can be approached from Pasuruan on the main northern highway, or coming from Malang you can turn off at Purwodadi just after Lawang.

From Pasuruan take an *angkot* to Puspou (7000Rp) and then another to Tosari (5000Rp), 36km from Pasuruan. From the Purwodadi turn-off, catch an *angkot* to the market town of Nongkojajar (7000Rp) then an *ojek* to Tosari (20,000Rp to 25,000Rp). Note that the latter route is not a common tourist trail, so you may have to hunt for an *ojek* to take you the last leg.

From Tosari market another *ojek* will take you to Wonokitri (10,000Rp), from where 4WDs can be hired for the last stretch to Bromo (300,000Rp, less in the afternoon), including a side trip to Gunung Penanjakan. Cheaper *ojek* can also be hired (75,000Rp to Penanjakan).

From Wonokitri, it's 5km along a good road to Dingklik on the edge of the crater, from where superb views can be had. From Dingklik the road forks – down to Bromo or 4km up along the paved road to Gunung Penanjakan for even better views. From Penanjakan a walking trail leads to Cemoro Lawang. The 6km paved road from Dingklik down to the Laotian Pasir is very steep but spectacular. From the bottom it is then 3km across the sand to Bromo.

NGADAS APPROACH

It is also possible to trek into the crater from Ngadas (at 2140m one of the highest inhabited villages in Java) to the southwest of Gunung Bromo, although it is more often done in the reverse direction as a trek out from Bromo or as an approach to climbing Gunung Semeru. This is definitely a trek for those willing and able to rough it a bit, but it is very rewarding.

Transport to the area is erratic and only available in the morning. From Malang take a *mikrolet* to Tumpang (p237), or from Surabaya take a bus to Blimbing, just north of Malang, then a *mikrolet* to Tumpang. From here take another *mikrolet* to Gubug Klakah (4000Rp), from where it's 12km to Ngadas (this track is only suitable for 4WD vehicles). From Ngadas it is 2km to Jemplang at the crater rim, and then three hours on foot (12km) across the floor of the Tengger crater to Gunung Bromo and on to Cemoro Lawang. From Jemplang, you can also head south for the Gunung Semeru climb.

CLIMBING GUNUNG SEMERU

Part of the huge Tengger Massif, the classic cone of Gunung Semeru is the highest peak in Java, at 3676m. Also known as Mahameru (Great Mountain), it is looked on by Hindus as the most sacred mountain of all and the father of Gunung Agung on Bali.

Semeru is one of Java's most active peaks and has been in a near-constant state of eruption since 1818. In 1981, 250 people were killed during one of its worst eruptions, and it exploded as recently as March 2009. At the time of writing the mountain was open to climbers, but this situation could change at any time; check with the local tourist office, other travellers or the nearest *pos pengamatan* (observation post) for Gunung Semeru's status.

It's a rough three-day trek to the summit, and you must be well equipped and prepared for camping overnight. Nights on the mountain are freezing and inexperienced climbers have died of exposure. The best time to make the climb is May to October.

Hikers usually come through Tumpang in the west, from where you can charter 4WDs to Ranu Pani (550,000Rp return), the start of the trek. If you want to do it economically under your own steam, take a minibus from Tumpang to Gubug Klakah, and then hike up the 12km to Ngadas, and then on to Jemplang. It is also possible to cross the Laotian Pasir from Gunung Bromo (12km) to Jemplang, from where you take the road that skirts around the crater rim before heading south to Ranu Pani (6km, 1½ hours on foot).

Ranu Pani is a lake with a small village nearby. Pak Tasrip runs a homestay costing 90,000Rp per person (meals are served). He can help organise a climb of Gunung Semeru, and he also rents out sleeping bags, which are essential. Ranu Pani is the usual overnight rest spot, and the Ranu Pani **PHKA post** (☎ Tumpang office 0341-787 972) is towards the lake. Hikers *must* register with the PHKA, who will have the latest info about conditions. Guides (from 200,000Rp for one day; 95,000Rp for porters) are not essential but recommended.

The main trail begins behind the PHKA post. This newish trail is lined with scrubby growth but is an easier walk than the old trail, which is steeper. Both trails lead to Ranu Kumbolo crater lake (2400m), 13km or 3½ hours from Ranu Pani. From Ranu Kumbolo, which has a shelter, the trail climbs to Kalimati (three hours), at the foot of the mountain. From Kalimati it is a steep 1½-hour climb to Arcopodo, where there is a camp site for the second night on the mountain.

From Arcopodo, it is a short, steep climb to the start of the volcanic sands, and then a tough three-hour climb through loose scree to the peak. Semeru explodes every half-hour and these gases and belching lava make the mountain dangerous – stay well away from vents. On a clear day, there are breathtaking views of Java's north and south coasts, as well as vistas of Bali. To see the sunrise it is necessary to start at 2am for the summit. It is possible to make it back to Ranu Pani on the same day.

Sleeping & Eating

CEMORO LAWANG

On the lip of the Tengger crater overlooking Bromo, Cemoro Lawang is the most popular place to stay. There's not much choice and hotel prices are inflated, but it's an attractive, relaxed little place and the cool climate can come as quite a relief. Rates increase at weekends and during high season (by around 20%). For some reason the village is plagued by flies, though it's not dirty.

Cemara Indah Hotel (☎ 541 019; old block r with/without mandi from 170,000/50,000Rp, with air-con, TV & hot water 350,000Rp; ♿) Enjoys a great position on the edge of the crater, but the staff can be a bit tour-pushy and the so-so rooms are not great value.

Hotel Bromo Permai I (☎ 541 049; economy r 99,000Rp, cottages with hot shower from 240,000Rp) Ageing but reasonable cottages with porches and a huge log cabin-style restaurant with a slightly pricey menu.

Cafe Lava Hostel (☎ 541 020; r with shared bath from 100,000Rp, with breakfast & hot shower 200,000-350,000Rp) Tumbling down the side of the mountain, this is the best base in town for travellers, with a sociable vibe and English-speaking staff. Unfortunately, it's jacked up its rates steeply in the last few years. Economy rooms have been renovated and are clean and neat if bare, while the smarter rooms are attractive (all have little porches with valley views). The restaurant serves up filling, inexpensive Indonesian and Western grub and Bintang, and is the best place in town to get a group together for the 4WD ride up Penanjakan.

Lava View Lodge (☎ 541 009; www.globaladventureindonesia.com/lava-view-lodge.htm; r 350,000Rp, bungalows from 400,000Rp) This is a well-run hotel located 500m along a side road on the eastern side of the village. Annoyingly, management has ramped prices right up here – due to the lack of competition it's the only decent midranger in town – but it's still a decent place, even if rates are too steep. At least the views are superb, wooden rooms comfortable, staff are helpful and the large restaurant is good.

There are a couple of warungs near the PHKA office.

NGADISARI & WONOTORO

Yoschi's Guest House (☎ 0335-541 018; yoschi_bromo@telkom.net; r with/without shower 170,000/90,000Rp, cottages with hot water from 330,000Rp; ♿) A friendly, hospitable place with loads of character, this alpine

chalet-style place has a good vibe, tasty food and friendly staff. Rooms are a little small but comfortable, and there's a peaceful garden. Tours and transport for the 4km to Bromo (50,000Rp person) are also offered.

Java Banana (☎ 0335-541 193; www.java-banana.com; r 650,000-2,000,000Rp) A gorgeous, super-sleek new mountain lodge, about 3km from Cemoro Lawang in Wonotoro village. Largely built from wood, with accommodation that's of a very high standard – many rooms are not large but are superbly finished at least. There's a fine cafe-restaurant, and a sauna and spa is planned. Check out the stunning gallery here, which exhibits very fine photography.

TOSARI & WONOKITRI

It's possible to stay with villagers in Wonokitri or at the **Surya Nata Homestay** (r from 100,000Rp). Wonokitri's PHKA office can help with this.

Bromo Cottages (☎ 0343-571 222; www.bromocottages.com; r from 600,000Rp, cottages from 750,000Rp) With a great aspect from its hillside location in Tosari, Bromo Cottages is a large resort with pleasant but dated rooms and cottages, plus a restaurant. Transport and tours to Bromo can be set up.

Getting There & Away

Probolinggo (see p245) is the main gateway to Bromo. Hotels in Cemoro Lawang and Ngadisari can book long-distance bus tickets from Probolinggo to Yogyakarta (125,000Rp to 140,000Rp) and Denpasar (125,000Rp to 140,000Rp).

Travel agencies in Solo and Yogyakarta book minibuses to Bromo (from 110,000Rp; see p189 for more information about options from Yogya). These are not luxury minibuses, and sometimes they run a bigger bus to Probolinggo and change there. Tours to Bromo are easily organised in Malang, and you can also arrange 4WD hire in hotels and travel agents there.

BONDOWOSO

☎ 0332 / pop 73,000

Bondowoso, 34km southwest of Situbondo, is one of the cleanest towns in Java – itself an attraction – and the home of some of the island's best *tape*, a tasty, sweet-and-sour snack made from boiled vegetable roots. It's merely a transit point for nearby attractions such as Ijen but does have banks with ATMs

and internet facilities. Tours to Ijen can be organised here.

Hotel Anugerah (☎ 421 870; Jl Sutoyo 12; r 75,000Rp, with TV/air-con 100,000/150,000Rp; ☎) A friendly place run by a hospitable Christian family, this hotel has a wide selection of rooms. All have slightly odd colour schemes but are clean and most are spacious. Good home-cooked meals (around 12,000Rp) are available and trips to Ijen (500,000Rp return) are offered.

Palm Hotel (☎ 421 201; www.palm-hotel.net; Jl A Yani 32; r with fan & mandi/air-con from 80,000/200,000Rp; ☎ ☎) Just south of the huge, grassy *alun-alun*, this is a fine hotel with immaculate, modern rooms, many with excellent facilities, a lovely pool and rooftop bar. The restaurant is one of the best in town and transport to Ijen can be arranged. A very complex discount scheme is used here – just make sure you get one!

Tape can be found on Jl PB Sudirman, where dozens of shops sell it by the basket (15,000Rp). The '321' brand is reportedly the best.

There are many (cramped) minibuses to Ijen (17,500Rp), all leaving before noon, for the 2½-hour trip. Other destinations from Bondowoso include Jember (6000Rp, 45 minutes), Probolinggo (15,000Rp, two hours) and Surabaya (normal/air-con 32,000/45,000Rp, five hours).

IJEN PLATEAU

The fabled Ijen Plateau is a vast volcanic region dominated by the three cones of Ijen (2368m), Merapi (2800m) and Raung (3332m). A beautiful and thickly forested alpine area, these thinly populated highlands harbour coffee plantations and a few isolated

settlements – Gunung Ijen is Javanese for 'Lonely Mountain'. Access roads to the plateau are poor, and perhaps because of this visitor numbers are low.

Virtually everyone that does come is here for the hike up to the spectacular crater lake of Kawah Ijen. But with sweeping vistas and a temperate climate, the plateau could make a great base for a few days up in the clouds away from the crowds.

Sights & Activities

KAWAH IJEN HIKE

The magnificent turquoise sulphur lake of Kawah Ijen lies at 2148m above sea level and is surrounded by the volcano's sheer crater walls. Ijen's last major eruption was in 1936, though a minor ash explosion occurred in 1952. At the edge of the lake, sulphurous smoke billows out from the volcano's vent and the lake bubbles when activity increases.

Ijen is a major sulphur-gathering centre (see the boxed text, below) and you'll pass the collectors as you hike up the trail. Most now ask for a fee for photographs, though a cigarette will usually be accepted as payment.

The ideal time to make the Kawah Ijen hike is in the dry season between April and October, but though the path is steep, it's not too slippery so it's certainly worth a try in rainy season if you have a clear day. Make it for sunrise if you can.

The starting point for the trek to the crater is the **PHKA post** (☎ 7am-5pm) at Pos Paltuding, which can be reached from Bondowoso or Banyuwangi. Sign in and pay your 15,000Rp entry fee here. The steep 3km path up to the observation post (where there's a tea house) takes just over an hour; keep an eye out for gibbons. From the post it's a further

A HEAVY LOAD

The Ijen volcano produces a lot of sulphur, and around 300 collectors (all men) work here, getting up at between 2am and 4am to hike up the crater to hack out the yellow stuff by hand. Their only protection against the cone's noxious fumes are cotton scarfs, which they tie around their noses. These DIY miners then spend the next six or so hours scurrying back down the volcano with loads of 60kg to 80kg on their backs.

It's incredibly tough work that pays very little (around 600Rp per kilo), and yet the physical exercise keeps the collectors incredibly fit – few report health problems despite breathing great lungfuls of sulphurous fumes virtually every day of their lives. A 72-year-old still climbs Ijen most days and locals say there's a century living in the village. Ijen sulphur is used for cosmetics and medicine, and is added to fertilizer and insecticides. Historically, sulphur was commonly called brimstone.

30-minute walk to the lip of the wind-blasted crater and its stunning views.

From the crater, a steep, gravelly path leads down to the sulphur deposits and the steaming lake. The walk down takes about 30 minutes; the path is slippery in parts and the sulphur fumes towards the bottom can be overwhelming. Take great care – a French tourist fell and died some years ago.

Back at the lip of the crater, turn left for the climb to the crater's highest point (2368m) and magnificent views, or keep walking anticlockwise for even more expansive vistas of the lake. On the other side of the lake, opposite the vent, the trail disappears into crumbling volcanic rock and deep ravines.

COFFEE PLANTATIONS

Java's finest coffee, both arabica and robusta varieties, is produced in the Ijen Plateau area, as well as cacao, cloves and rubber. It's possible to visit various coffee plantations, including **Kebun Kalisat** (admission 50,000Rp) and **Kebun Balawan** (admission free); visits will usually include a wander through coffee groves and an impromptu tour of the plantation's factory. The latter plantation has thermal pools and a gushing thermal waterfall (2000Rp) set among lush jungle. Both plantations have accommodation.

Sleeping & Eating

You'll find a couple of store-warungs at the PHKA post where you can get hot tea or a snack.

Pos Paltuding (dm 50,000Rp, r 120,000Rp, Pesanggrahan cottages 350,000Rp) The PHKA post at the start of the Kawah Ijen hike has a bare, chilly cottage with three comfortable rooms. There's no hot water and blankets are not provided, so bring a sleeping bag. The post also has an open-sided shelter for campers.

Arabika (☎ 0811 350 5881, 0828-330 1347; r ind breakfast from 125,000-245,000Rp) The Kebun Kalisat coffee plantation maintains this pleasant guest house, 1km from the main road. There are three choices of rooms, ranging from bare but serviceable to spacious and comfortable; all have hot water and a bathtub in which to enjoy it. Service is friendly, meals are served, and there's ping pong. It's at Sempol, 13km before Pos Paltuding on the Bondowoso side.

Kartimore (☎ 0813 3619 9110; r 175,000-300,000Rp; 📶) These rooms are located in the Kebun

Balawan coffee plantation some 7km from Sempol. There are quite respectable, clean rooms in a long row, or for a real (if very faded) colonial experience sleep in the original Dutch lodge, which dates back to 1894. There's a spring-fed hot tub; the swimming pool is chilly. Meals are served and tours are available. An *ojek* from Sempol is about 20,000Rp.

Jampit Villa (☎ 031-352 4893, Jember 0331-486 861; ptpn12@rad.net.id; villa 1,000,000Rp; 📶) Kebun Kalisat coffee plantation owns this luxurious villa, 14km south of Sempol at Jampit. The villa sleeps 20 and has a kitchen and a communal living room. Book through PT Perkubunan Nusantara XII (☎ 0331-486 861; Jl Gajah Mada 249) in Jember.

Ijen Resort (☎ 0333-773 3338; www.ijendiscovery.com; Dusun Randuagung, Licin; r from US\$115, ste US\$195; 📶) In the remote eastern foothills of the Ijen Plateau, this top-end resort has magnificent views over rice terraces. Rooms are more than inviting, with stone floors, open-air bathrooms and vistas of the Ijen cones or Bali. There's fine cooking in the restaurant, while tours and transport can be fixed. The resort is about 25 minutes from Banyuwangi on the road up to Ijen. Add 21% tax to room rates.

Sempol village has a couple of warungs if you need a place to eat. Pos Paltuding has a small shop for provisions and a cafe serving little more than noodles.

Getting There & Away

It is possible to travel nearly all the way to Kawah Ijen by public transport, but most visitors charter transport.

FROM BONDOWOSO

From Wonosari, 8km from Bondowoso towards Situbondo, a badly potholed road runs via Sukosari and Sempol all the way to Pos Paltuding. It's in poor shape and slow going, but a 4WD was not necessary at the time of research. Sign in at the coffee-plantation checkpoints (around 4000Rp) on the way. Both the Palm Hotel and Hotel Anugerah in Bondowoso (p249) can arrange day tours.

Several minibuses run from Bondowoso to Sempol (17,500Rp, 2½ hours), but only until noon. You should be able to find someone in Sempol who will take you the 13km to Pos Paltuding on the back of their motorbike for around 35,000Rp one way. At Pos Paltuding,

there are usually a few motorbikes to take you back.

FROM BANYUWANGI

The Banyuwangi–Ijen road is steep but paved and in pretty good condition, bar the odd dodgy stretch. Cars (500,000Rp per vehicle) can be set up through the Banyuwangi Tourist Office (p255).

There's no public transport all the way from Banyuwangi to Pos Paltuding. It may be possible to DIY using a minibus and an *ojek* or two, but this region is sparsely populated, so don't count on it. From Banyuwangi's Blambangan terminal, take a Lin 3 *angkot* to Sasak Perot (2000Rp) on the eastern outskirts of town and then a minibus on to Jambu (7000Rp) at the turn-off to Kawah Ijen, a further 17km away. From Jambu, you might be able to persuade an *ojek* to take you on via Sodong to Pos Paltuding for around 60,000Rp or so.

If you're confident riding a scooter up steep mountains, it would be a better plan to hire one in Banyuwangi and head up yourself.

JEMBER

☎ 0331 / pop 320,000

Jember is a large city and service centre for the surrounding coffee, cacao, rubber, cotton and tobacco plantations. It's a relatively clean city, with a futuristic mosque (it looks like a flying saucer) by its *alun-alun*, but there's no reason to linger here. If you plan to go to Meru Betiri, you could drop by the **Meru Betiri National Park Office** (☎ 335 535; www.merubetiri.com; Jl Sriwidjaya 53; ☎ 8am–3pm Sun–Fri), which has background and accommodation information on the park.

Hotel Sulawesi (☎ 333 555; Jl Let Jenderal Suprpto 48; r from 175,000Rp; ☎), about 1km from the town centre, has spotlessly clean, well-presented rooms if you need a bed.

The main terminal, Tawung Alun (or Terminal Jember), 6km west of town, has buses to Banyuwangi (21,000Rp, three hours) and Kalibaru (8000Rp, one hour), and economy buses to Denpasar, Solo and Yogyakarta. *Angkot* run from here to Terminal Arjesa, which serves Bondowoso (7000Rp, 45 minutes). There are also subterminals to the east (for Banyuwangi) and south (for Watu Ulo).

Jember is also located on the Surabaya–Banyuwangi train line; the station is in the town centre.

WATU ULO & PAPUMA

☎ 0331

Watu Ulo is popular on weekends, but like most of the beaches on Java's south coast, it has grey sand, and crashing surf makes swimming dangerous. The real surprise lies just west around the headland from Watu Ulo at **Papuma** – a lovely beach with white sand, turquoise waters, a warung and relatively sheltered swimming. **Hotel Vishnu** (☎ 481 028; r from 60,000Rp) is a basic place in the heart of Watu Ulo.

To reach Watu Ulo, head to the Ajung subterminal in Jember and then take a taxi (the confusing name for a public minibus in these parts) to Ambulu (7000Rp, one hour). From Ambulu yellow minibuses go to Watu Ulo (3000Rp, 30 minutes). Papuma is then a half-hour walk along a paved road over the steep headland, though bemos can drop you at the beach. It's 3000Rp to enter Papuma.

KALIBARU

☎ 0333 / pop 4000

The picturesque road from Jember to Banyuwangi winds around the foothills of Gunung Raung though rainforest up to the small hill town of Kalibaru (428m).

The village itself is not much to look at, but it has a benign climate and a remarkable array of excellent midrange accommodation. It's a good base for visiting the nearby plantations around Glenmore, just to the east, or the smaller, more easily visited plots of coffee and cloves to the north of Kalibaru train station.

The area has many plantations, but **Kebun Kandeng Lembu** (admission 25,000Rp; ☎ 9am–noon Mon–Thu & Sat, 8.30am–noon Fri), 5km south of Glenmore, is one of the most scenic. Guides can be hired (75,000Rp) for groups to see rubber tapping and processing, as well as cacao and coffee plantations.

Tours

Margo Utomo Resort (opposite) offers several tours. English-speaking guides will show you around the estate (two-hour tours 50,000Rp per person), which is totally organic and has 100 cows, a butterfly park, peppercorn, cinnamon and nutmeg trees, and vanilla and cacao plants. Trips to Sukamade 'turtle' beach (1,200,000Rp for one or two people including accommodation and food), Ijen (800,000Rp for one to four people), Alas Purwo (795,000Rp for one to five people) and Baluran can be set up here too.

Sleeping & Eating

All the following places have restaurants.

Margo Utomo Cottages (☎ 897 420; Jl Putri Gunung 3; r 250,000-450,000Rp; ☑ ☑) An excellent choice, with great little cottages scattered around a lovely garden plot that extends down to a forested riverbank and pool. All cottages are roughly the same size; you pay extra for the quality of the furnishings. Each one has a little verandah, high ceilings, and no TV. It's 3km east of town.

Kalibaru Cottages (☎ 897 333; www.kalibarcottages.com; r incl breakfast 315,000-460,000Rp; ☑ ☑) This is a large, well-run resort boasting expansive, if manicured, grounds with a T-shaped pool that's fringed by palm trees. Rooms are very spacious, immaculately maintained and excellent value. It's 4km west of town on the Jember road.

Ourpick Margo Utomo Resort (☎ 897 700; Jl Lapangan 10; r incl breakfast 350,000Rp; ☑ ☑) A classy former Dutch plantation that retains a waft of colonial style, occupying a wonderfully verdant slice of East Java, including a garden bursting with shrubs and flowers (all neatly labelled for identification). Its 50 cottages are quite modest and sparsely furnished, set along a path that leads to the wonderful 20m pool. Rates increase from June to August, when you should book well ahead.

Getting There & Away

Buses running between Jember (8000Rp, one hour) and Banyuwangi (14,000Rp, two hours) can drop you near the hotels. The train station is in the village centre; Kalibaru is on the main Banyuwangi-Jember-Probolinggo-Surabaya train line.

MERU BETIRI NATIONAL PARK

The Meru Betiri National Park, covering 580 sq km between Jember and Banyuwangi districts, is an area of magnificent coastal rainforest and abundant wildlife, making it one of Java's finest parks. It's famous as the last refuge of the Java tiger, now thought to be extinct. Meru Betiri is very difficult (often impossible in the rainy season) to access, which keeps the number of visitors to a trickle.

The future of the park is under threat on several fronts. Illegal loggers, farmers, and hunters encroach on its territory. Mining companies are also eyeing up the park after significant gold deposits were found here.

Orientation & Information

Named after Gunung Betiri (1223m) in its northern reaches, the park is very wet for much of the year due to the coastal mountains, which trap the rain. Visit in the dry season from April to October – the road into the park fords a river, which easily floods. Even in the dry season you may have to wade across the river and walk into the park.

The park's office (opposite) in Jember has plenty of information; entrance to the park costs 20,000Rp.

Sights & Activities

The park's major attraction is the protected turtle beach at **Sukamade**, one of Indonesia's most important turtle-spawning grounds, where five species of turtle come ashore to lay their eggs. Green turtles are most common, but giant leatherbacks also visit (usually between December and February). Mess Pantai (below) arranges night turtle-watching trips.

Wildlife, found mostly in the mountain forests, includes leopards, wild boars, monkeys, banteng, black giant squirrels, civets and reticulated pythons (the world's longest snake). Bird life is prolific, with Javanese eagles and large numbers of hornbills – including the rhinoceros hornbill, which emits a bark-like honk.

Trails are limited in the park and a guide (70,000Rp), arranged through the park office or accommodation, is usually necessary. Apart from some coastal walks, a trail leads about 7km northwest of Sukamade to the **Sumbersari** grazing ground part of the way through rainforest and bamboo thicket.

Rajegwesi, at the entrance to the park, is on a large bay with a sweeping beach and a fishing village. Past the park entrance the road climbs, giving expansive views over spectacular **Teluk Hijau** (Green Bay), with its cliffs and white-sand beach. A trail leads 1km from the road down to Teluk Hijau, or it is about a one-hour walk east from Mess Pantai.

Sleeping

Mess Pantai (☎ 0331-335 535; cottages with shared mandi per r 100,000Rp, entire cottage 450,000Rp, VIP r with fan 200,000Rp) Set in the forest behind Sukamade beach, Mess Pantai is a basic but wonderfully located place to stay in the park, with simple four-bedroom cottages and a bigger, more comfy two-bedroom cottage. There's very limited electricity and no mobile-phone

coverage here. Staff can provide meals (around 12,000Rp), but it's safer to bring your own food – you can stock up in Sarongan, or the Sukamade estate in the nearby plantation has a shop selling basic supplies. If you have your own equipment, you can also camp on the beach (15,000Rp per tent).

Wisma Sukamade (☎ 0331-484 711; r from 120,000Rp) Approximately 5km north of the beach, Sukamade plantation has good-quality accommodation with electricity and all the creature comforts. It has a variety of rooms and meals are provided. However, it's not as convenient unless you have your own transport or are on a tour.

Getting There & Away

It is a long, bumpy trip to Meru Betiri, even by 4WD vehicle.

The most direct way to Sukamade from Banyuwangi or Jember is to first take a bus to Jajag (14,000Rp, 1½ hours), then a minibus to Pesanggaran (8000Rp, one hour). From Pesanggaran take a taxi (the local name for a public truck) to Sukamade (25,000Rp, two hours). The taxi leaves Pesanggaran at noon on the dot (a rarity in Java); to make it on time, you'll need to leave Jember around 6.30am.

The taxi passes through Sarongan, a small town where you can stock up on supplies. *Ojeks* to Sukamade (around 60,000Rp) can be arranged here, but generally only in the dry season; during the wet the rivers are impassable. There are two river crossings: the deeper one further south and the shallower crossing further upstream. If the river is up but not flooded, you can wade across and get another *ojek* or walk the 4km to Mess Pantai. The taxi has no problem with swollen rivers unless there is severe flooding.

About 4km on from Sarongan you reach the Rajegwesi PHKA post at the entrance to the park; this is a good place to check on the condition of the river.

ALAS PURWO NATIONAL PARK

This 434-sq-km national park occupies the whole of the remote Blambangan Peninsula on the southeastern tip of Java. Facilities are limited and it is not easy to reach, but Alas Purwo has fine beaches, good opportunities for wildlife spotting, and savannah, mangrove and lowland monsoon forests. Apart from day trippers and local beach parties on weekends, the park gets few visitors.

Alas Purwo means First Forest in Javanese – according to legend, this is where the earth first emerged from the ocean. Many soul-searchers and mystics flock here during the month of Suro, which marks the Javanese New Year. These pilgrims meditate in caves and pray to Nyai Loro Kidul. **Pura Giri Selokah**, a Hindu temple in the park, also attracts many pilgrims, especially during Pagerwesi, the Hindu new year.

The huge surf at Plengkung, on the isolated southeastern tip of the peninsula, forms one of the best left-handed waves in the world, breaking over a shallow reef in a perfect tube. Surfers have dubbed it **G-Land** (for Grajagan, another name for the area). It's best between April and September.

Orientation & Information

Surfers come by charter boat from Grajagan at the western end of the bay, but the usual park entry is by road via the village of Pasar Anyar, which has a large national park office and interpretive centre. Call in here to check on accommodation; alternatively, check with the head office (opposite) in Banyuwangi.

The actual gateway to the park is at Rowobendo, 10km south along a bad road, where you need to pay your admission fee (20,000Rp). From Rowobendo the road runs past the temple before hitting the beach at Trianggulasi, 2km away. Trianggulasi has hut accommodation but nothing else.

Sights & Activities

This limestone peninsula is relatively flat and the rolling hills reach a peak of only 322m. Alas Purwo has plenty of lowland coastal forest but few trails to explore it – vast expanses of the eastern park are untrammelled, even by park staff.

Using Trianggulasi as a base, there are some interesting short walks. The white-sand beach here is beautiful, but swimming is usually dangerous.

The **Sadengan** grazing ground has the largest herd of wild banteng in Java, and *kijang* (deer) and peacocks are seen here from the viewing tower. This beautiful meadow backed by forest is a 2km walk from Trianggulasi along a road and then a swampy trail.

Alas Purwo also has a small population of *ajag* (Asiatic wild dogs), jungle fowl, leaf monkeys, *muntjac* deer, sambar deer and leopards. The park guards can arrange interesting,

although often fruitless, night leopard-spotting expeditions for around 100,000Rp.

Guards can also arrange a motorbike trip to the turtle hatchery at **Ngagelan**, or you can walk. It's 6km from Rowobendo along a rough road, or a 7km walk along the beach at low tide from Trianggulasi.

It is also possible to walk along the beach all the way to Plengkung via **Pancur**, 3km south-east of Trianggulasi, where there is a small waterfall that flows onto the beach, another PHKA post and a camping ground.

From Pancur a trail heads 2km inland through some good forest to **Gua Istana**, a small cave, and another 2km further on to **Gua Padepokan**.

From Pancur it is a further 11km walk (two hours) around Teluk Grajagan to the fine beach at **Plengkung** and one of Asia's premier surfing spots. The surf camps at Plengkung are by no means five-star but do provide unexpected luxury in the wilderness.

Tours

The bigger and better surf camps, away from the beach at Plengkung, are for tours only. Everyone comes on a surfing package that includes all transfers, usually from Bali.

Bobby's Camp (☎ bookings in Bali 0361-755 588; www.grajagan.com; ☎ ☎ ☎) The biggest camp with three standards of bungalow in shady grounds with a restaurant and bar. There's beach volleyball, and boat and fishing trips can be arranged. It's run out of Kuta, Bali, and offers three-night packages from US\$350.

G-Land Joyo's Surf Camp (☎ bookings in Bali 0361-763 166; www.g-land.com; ☎ ☎ ☎) Good-quality thatched wooden bungalows with fan or air-con and most of the facilities a surfer could want: cold beer, a large screen for sports, pool tables, internet access and table tennis. Surf guides and a doctor are based here. Packages start at US\$300 for three nights. Joyo's is open November to March only.

Sleeping & Eating

Pesanggrahan (☎ 0333-428 675; s/d 50,000/75,000Rp) Close to the beach at Trianggulasi, this PHKA establishment has elevated bungalows. The rooms are spartan, with only a bed. Water is from a well, and electricity is provided by a generator. Though primitive, this is a lovely, relaxing spot and many who come for a day or two end up staying longer.

Staff here *may* sell supplies and cook meals in the high season, but it's best to bring all food and drink with you. Trianggulasi has no warungs and is deserted if no guests stay,

but the Pesanggrahan has a kitchen with a kerosene stove and hurricane lamps.

The PHKA office at Pasar Anyar has a shop selling basic provisions for visitors, such as packet noodles, but it is better to stock up on food at the general stores in Dambuntung, where the bus drops you. There is also a camping ground and a PHKA post at Pancur.

Getting There & Away

From Banyuwangi's southern Brawijaya bus terminal there are buses to Kalipahit (12,000Rp, 1½ hours) via Benculuk and Tegadelimo until 4pm. Buses can drop you at the small village of Dambuntung, where you can stock up on food. Then take an *ojek* for around 40,000Rp to 60,000Rp first to the park office in Pasar Anyar, 3km from Dambuntung, to check on accommodation, and then on to the park. The 12km road from Pasar Anyar to Trianggulasi is badly potholed but is flat and negotiable by car.

It's possible to hire 4WDs (around 700,000Rp) in Banyuwangi for one-day trips to Plengkung.

BANYUWANGI

☎ 0333 / pop 110,000

The end of the line, Java's land's end is a pleasant-enough town, but there's no reason to hang around here.

Confusingly, the ferry terminus for Bali, bus terminal and train station are all some 8km north of town in the port of Ketapang, though all transport uses 'Banyuwangi' as a destination.

Information

Alas Purwo National Park head office (☎ 428 675; Jl A Yani 108; ☎ 7.30am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, to 11am Fri) Two kilometres south of the town centre.

Baluran National Park head office (☎ 424 119; Jl Agus Salim 132; ☎ 7am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, to 11am Fri) Four kilometres southwest of the centre.

Banyuwangi Tourist Office (☎ 424 172; Jl Ahmad Yani 78; ☎ 7am-4pm Mon-Thu, to 11am Fri) A helpful office. Mr Aekanu (☎ 081 5590 5197; aekanu@plasa.com), who works here, speaks Dutch and some English and organises tours.

Sights

One of the few sights in Banyuwangi is the **Kongco Tan Hu Cin Jin Chinese temple** (Jl Ikam Gurani 54); built in 1784, it's well worth a peek.

Banyuwangi Tourist Office has a small **museum** devoted to culture from the area.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Baru (☎ 421 369; Jl MT Haryono 82-84; r with fan/air-con 50,000/110,000Rp; 🍽️) A short walk south of the *alun-alun*, this is a clean little place with friendly staff, a choice of rooms and a cafe-restaurant.

Hotel Ketapang Indah (☎ 422 280; www.ketapangindah.com; Jl Gatot Subroto, Ketapang; r from 265,000Rp, seawiew r 475,000Rp; 🍽️ 🚗) A stylish, well-run hotel with attractive rooms and cottages, built in traditional Javanese design in the spacious grounds of a coconut plantation. There are fine views of Bali and a large restaurant; it's 2km south of the ferry terminal.

For cheap eats, there are warungs on the corner of Jl MT Haryono and Jl Wahid Harysim.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

Ferries from Ketapang depart roughly every 30 minutes around the clock for Gilimanuk in Bali. The ferry costs 7500Rp for passengers, 23,700Rp for a rider and motorcycle, and 126,400Rp for a car, including driver. Through-buses between Bali and Java include the fare in the bus ticket and are the easiest option.

Pelni ships no longer call at Banyuwangi.

BUS

Banyuwangi has two bus terminals. The Sri Tanjung terminal is 3km north of the Bali ferry terminal at Ketapang, and 11km north of town. Buses from this terminal travel to northern destinations, such as Baluran (8000Rp, one hour), Probolinggo (normal/ *patas* 35,000/50,000Rp, five hours) and Surabaya (36,000/51,000Rp, seven hours). Buses also go right through to Yogyakarta (*patas* 115,000Rp, 15 hours) and Denpasar (from 45,000Rp, five hours including the ferry trip).

Brarijaya terminal (also known as Karang Ente), 4km south of town, has most of the buses to the south. These include Kalipahit (12,000Rp, 1½ hours), Kalibaru (14,000Rp, two hours) and Jember (21,000Rp, three hours).

TRAIN

The main Banyuwangi train station is just a few hundred metres north of the ferry terminal.

The express *Mutiara Timur* leaves at 9am and 10.20pm for Probolinggo (4½ hours) and

Surabaya (business/executive 60,000/80,000Rp, 6½ hours). Economy-class trains include the *Sri Tanjung*, which leaves at 6am for Yogyakarta (41,000Rp, 17 hours).

BALURAN NATIONAL PARK

Baluran National Park harbours an amazingly diverse range of ecosystems in a 250-sq-km chunk of northeastern Java. Extensive grasslands cover parts of the park, providing rich grazing for Javanese wild oxen (*banteng*), *ki-jang* and water buffalos and making it ideal terrain for Africa-style safari excursions in 4WDs. You should see a wide range of wildlife here.

Large sections of this prime savannah were taken over by acacia thorn scrub (which was introduced as a fire break), but park rangers are steadily clearing this prickly invader from Baluran and the grasslands are reclaiming lost ground.

All kinds of tours can be organised: safari trips, hiking up the Baluran crater, visiting local villages to learn about home industries, and snorkelling on offshore coral reefs.

Orientation & Information

Wonorejo, on the main coast road between Surabaya and Banyuwangi, is the main service town for the park and has stores for food supplies. You'll find the **PHKA office** (☎ 0333-461 650; ☎ 7am-5pm) on the highway, where guides can be arranged for around 200,000Rp per day. The park's head office (p255) is in Banyuwangi. Entrance costs 20,000Rp and an extra 6000Rp is charged for a car.

Baluran can be visited at any time of the year, but the dry season (June to November) is usually the best time because the animals congregate near the waterholes at Bekol and Bama.

Sights & Activities

Baluran is rich in wildlife and supports important populations of around 500 Timor deer and 200 *banteng*, plus sambar deer, *muntjac* deer, two species of monkey, and wild boars. Visit in July and August and you may see male Timor deer rutting for breeding rights.

The park is home to leopards, but there have only been two recent sightings. Bird life is excellent, with green peafowl, red and green jungle fowl, hornbills, white-bellied woodpeckers and bee-eaters all quite easy to see.

On the hill above the guest houses at Bekol there is a viewing tower that provides

a panoramic view over a 300-hectare clearing. Banteng and deer can be seen here, and wild dogs can sometimes be seen hunting, usually in the early morning. There are walking trails around Bekol.

Bama, on the coast, is a 3km walk or drive from Bekol. It has accommodation and a beach with coral offshore that offers fair **snorkelling**. It's a popular weekend retreat for local families, but it's peaceful at other times. Watch out for the cheeky long-tailed macaques here, who have been known to pinch food.

The nearby coastal forest has numerous waterholes and is a good place to see water monitor lizards and sometimes wild boars.

Rosa's Ec lodge offers several **tours** of Baluran: wildlife-watching trips in specially converted 4WDs (600,000Rp), snorkelling (600,000Rp), bicycling trips and hikes to the Baluran crater.

Sleeping

Bookings can be made in advance through the Baluran National Park head office (p255) in Banyuwangi. Most visitors tend to day trip, so accommodation is often available, but it pays to book, especially in the peak June to August holiday period.

At Bekol, 12km into the park, **Pesanggrahan** (per person 25,000Rp) has six basic rooms; there's a *mandi* and kitchen here. Bekol also has two *wisma* (guesthouse); **Wisma Tamu** (beds per person 45,000Rp) has three simple rooms with attached *mandis*, while **Wisma Peneliti** (beds per person 60,000Rp) is a little more comfortable.

Bama beach, 3km east of Bekol, also has simple losmen. **Bama Guesthouse** (beds per per-

son 35,000Rp) is a very basic option with cooking facilities (bring your own food). **Rumah Panggung** (cottages 200,000Rp) is bigger, newer and cosier but closer to the waterhole than the beach.

Rosa's Ec lodge (☎ 0338-453 005; www.rosasecolodge.com; Ds Sidomulyo RT 03/03, Sumberwaru; r incl breakfast 350,000Rp; ♿ ♿) This guest house is run by Rene and Rosa, who are passionate and informative about the Baluran, and good hosts. The spacious rooms are immaculately kept, with tiled floors you could eat off, bathrooms with Western toilets, and front porches. Buffet-style meals of tasty Javanese food are served in the charming restaurant. This homestay is very much geared to guests booking its (quite pricey) Baluran tours, with profits channelled into community development and education, so priority is given to tour-bookers during busy times. It's on the northern edge of the park in the village of Sumberwaru.

The canteen at Bekol sells drinks and packet noodles, but meals are cooked only for groups of 10 or more.

Getting There & Away

Surabaya to Banyuwangi buses taking the coast road via Probolinggo all pass right by the (almost hidden) park entrance. From Banyuwangi it's only a half-hour journey (5000Rp). Coming from the west, Baluran is four hours from Probolinggo.

PHKA rangers at the entrance can arrange an *ojek* (around 30,000Rp) to take you the next 12km to Bekol; the road is poor but usually passable in a Kijang 4WD or high-clearance car.

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