**17 Best Beaches in Indonesia**

Indonesia is an archipelago which consisting of five main islands and thousands of small islands and is surrounded by many oceans. No wonder then that Indonesia has a lot of attractions in the beach. Starting from mediocre beaches to the most beautiful beaches in the world are here.

If you want a holiday at a beach with white sand, clear sea water and surely a very exotic landscape, these are some of the best and most beautiful beaches in Indonesia that you can go visit.

1. Nusa Dua Beach, Bali

Nusa Dua Beach is located 40 kilometers in the south of Denpasar. With its white sand that are pure and beautifully arranged, it makes the tourists stay longer to enjoy the scenery. This beach has been rewarded as one of the best beaches in the world by TripAdvisor community, where the valuation is taken from the rating of quality and quantity which were provided by the tourists who have come to Nusa Dua Beach.

1. Kuta Beach, Bali

Kuta Beach is the main destination for tourists that come to Bali. This beach has already been well-known since 1970s. Kuta Beach is the heart of Bali which is never devoid of tourists. There are white sand and big and long waves that will get surfers adrenaline pumping. Kuta Beach is also the best place for surf overs in Bali. You can also enjoy the beautiful sunset.

1. Padang Padang Beach, Bali

Well, Bali is an island with a lot of beautiful beaches. With its white and soft sand, calming sound of waves, shady hills and steep reefs making this beach unique. The beauty of Padang Padang Beach is not in doubt anymore as this beach has been used as a shooting location of Hollywood movie titled Eat, Pray, Love starring Julia Roberts. Moreover, group Michael Learns to Rock also used this beach as their one of shooting locations of their video clip.

1. Senggigi Beach, Lombok

Senggigi Beach is located in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. It is located on the west coast of Lombok Island. Behind the beauty of the sea with its white sand and clear blue sea water, this beach also has a very beautiful underwater scenery, allowing tourists to do snorkeling.

In Senggigi Beach, there is a towering coral reefs in the middle of ocean, so the big waves broke before reaching the shore.

1. Plengkung Beach, Banyuwangi, East Java

Plengkung Beach is located in the southeast end of Java Island. It has some extraordinary waves and beautiful nature scenery. The big waves make this beach into a paradise for surf lovers.

You can also enjoy the sunsets while relaxing on the beach and also turtles landing sites on the east side of the island. To go to this beach, you can come from Bali or Banyuwangi with a sea transportation, or you can also take a road trip. But, you have to pass Alas Purwo National Park that are steep and dangerous. So make sure your vehicles are prepared.

1. Pangandaran Beach, West Java

Pangandaran Beach dubbed as the most beautiful beach in Java Island. It is located in Pananjung Village, 92 kilometers from Ciamis city. The special thing of Pangandaran Beach is that you can enjoy the sunrise and sunset at the same place. There is also a marine park, so you can see the fishes and beautiful underwater life. You can also take a stroll or sunbathing in its white sand.

1. Parai Tenggiri Beach, Bangka Belitung

This beach is located near Liat River, Bangka. It takes around 45 minutes to reach this beach by a vehicle from Pangkal Balam Harbour or Depati Amir Airport. Just like other beautiful beaches, it has white sand as well, but what sets it apart is the green tosca sea water which makes it an incredible sight. Beautiful rock stones also complement the beauty of this beach. You can go swimming in this beach and if you are tired you can take a rest on those rock stones.

1. Parangtritis, Yogyakarta

In Yogyakarta, there is a really famous beach called Parangtritis Beach, which is located 27 kilometers in the south of Yogyakarta city. In the evening before the sun sets is the best time to enjoy the scenery of this beach, because the view of the sunset is the most favorite thing to be anticipated by tourists. Before you enjoy the sunset, you can go climbing Gembirawati Cliff which is located behind the beach. There, you can see the view of all Parangtritis Beach, south sea to the horizon. In the eastside, you can see a hidden ancient temple, Gembirawati Temple.

1. Sanur Beach, Bali

Sanur is located in the eastside of Denpasar. Sanur Beach is one of the favorite beaches for tourists who came to Bali. You will be pampered by beautiful sunrise view there. Every morning at 5.30 am you can see many tourists that is waiting for the sunrise.

Sanur Beach is known as a sunrise beach. In addition to that, Sanur Beach has white sand and its sea water tend to be shallow. Along the coast, you can see some traditional boats with attractive colors.

1. Dreamland Beach, Bali

This beach is very cozy and quiet as it is located behind the cliff. This atmosphere is suitable for tourists that want a relaxation and do sunbathing. Behind its serenity, this beach has big waves, so it attracts a lot of international tourists’ attention.

The attractiveness of this beach is its clean and bluish sea water that make you want to stay longer. You can play with sand, strolling around the coast or just sitting back.

Dreamland Beach is located in Pecatu Village, District of South Kuta, Badung Regency. To reach this beach, you have to travel for about 45 minutes from Ngurah Rai Airport.

1. Kuta Beach, Lombok

If you said “Kuta Beach”, what will occur in most of people’s mind is Kuta Beach in Bali. But apparently, there is also a beach named Kuta in Lombok that its beauty is not lost to Kuta Beach in Bali. This beach is really neat and has white sand. This beach is also called as pepper beach because its white sand grains is really soft and cream-colored. Its preserved coral reefs caused this beach still looks natural. Aside from its naturalness, this beach also has a big and high waves so it is the right place to surf.

In the eastern coast, there is a hill named Mandalika Hill. Based on the story of the ancestors of local people, the name of the hill was taken from the name of a princess who jumped from the hill to the sea to avoid a prince who chased her to marry her. From the top of the Mandalika Hill, tourists can enjoy the beautiful Kuta Beach Lombok with its white sand and clean water. Kuta Beach Lombok is located in Kuta Village, Central Lombok and is about 56 kilometers from Mataram city.

1. Balangan Beach, Uluwatu, Bali

Balangan Beach is surrounded by cliffs which were eroded by high tides. It is still natural because it is not well-known yet like other beaches in Bali. This beach is one of great places for surfers as the sea waves is really high and the air is really clean. From the top of Balangan Beach cliff, you can see the beauty of Dreamland Beach. Even at low tide, visitors can go to the Dreamland Beach via the coast of Balangan Beach.

1. Tanjung Aan Beach, Lombok

Tanjung Aan Beach is located on the south of Lombok Island, not too far from Kuta Beach Lombok. It is still natural and quiet. Tanjung Aan Beach is suitable for you who love to snorkeling and swimming because the waves are fairly calm with a relatively shallow depth. Besides of that, you can walk along the beach while enjoying the beautiful hills. You will take about one and a half hour from Mataram by cars or motorcycles.

1. Virgin Beach, Karangasem

Pasir Putih Beach or Virgin Beach can be traveled for 20 minutes by driving to the north of Candidasa in East Bali. This beach is a beach with the best white sand in Bali. Local tourists are more familiar with Pasir Putih Karangasem as its name. On the sides of the beach, you can enjoy the beautiful sea in front of you and the forest behind you. You can also go up to the hill on the right of the coast and you will see amazing sights there. You can see a beach with black sand (Bugbug) on the south, Nusa Penida Island and several small islands around the beach.

1. Pink Beach, Komodo, Lombok

This is one of the beauty that can be found in Komodo National Park, East Nusa Tenggara. Pink Beach or Red Beach is one of seven beaches with pink sand around the world. Behind its beautiful uniqueness, the underwater life of Pink Beach is also beautiful with various species of fishes and corals. Pink Beach is also crowned as one of the seven natural wonders nomination in the world.

1. Tanjung Papuma Beach, Jember, East Java

From Jember city, you need about 45 minutes to go to Tanjung Papuma Beach. This beach is called tanjung or headland because of its seashore that jutting into the sea. Before you enter the beach, you will pass the scenery of tropical forest that is Malikan forest. After you pass the forest, you will be welcomed with clean white sand and some fishermen boats. There are many large rocks and landscapes that will please your eyes.

1. Klayar Beach, Pacitan, West Java

Klayar Beach is located in Donorojo, approximately 35 kilometers to the west of Pacitan city and can be reached for 60 minutes. There are not many visitors to this beach because there are many difficulties that you have to go through in order to get there. Although the road to Klayar Beach is quite challenging, but after you arrive you will see the beautiful white sand, crystal clear waves and coral hills on the right and left sides.

**Places-to-Go-in-Bandung**

Any plan to visit Bandung? This city which was known as flower city is no doubt has a lot of attractions to entertain its visitors. Some of the reasons why a lot of people come to Bandung are because of its cool temperature, lots of tourist attraction and its culinary. If you never come to Bandung before, you have to collect some information about things to do and visit in Bandung so that your holiday will be optimal.

These are some places that you can visit during your holiday in Bandung, such as :

1. Bandung Zoo

Bandung Zoo is always crowded on the weekend because it is a popular place for local people to do some outdoor recreation. It is located at Taman Sari Road, near Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). It has a lot of fauna and flora that are protected and preserved. You can also enjoy some amusement rides such as Flying Fox, playing at playground, or riding a rental swan boat in the zoo lake. You can also ride elephants and horses. The cool breeze and the green trees of the zoo makes you stay relax and happy.

1. Braga Road

Try to visit Braga Street, as you can feel the shades of the past here. This road has a length of approximately 700 meters and is located in the heart of Bandung. There is Merdeka building that is near Asia Africa Road.

The romantic atmosphere can be felt here just like some streets in Europe cities. The rows of stores, buildings and hotels still maintain its original architecture. You can see some paintings and art shops along the road and you can also go to the landmark of Bandung, Masjid Agung Bandung Square. At night you can enjoy some live music performances from some cafés in this road.

1. Cihampelas Walk (Ciwalk)

Cihampelas Walk is a shopping center in Bandung with a concept of nature. It is located in Cihampelas Road that has been known as a great place to shop some clothes. Bandung is famous as a center of fashion and also well-known to international.

If you are looking for some places for a romantic dinner, Cihampelas Road will bring it to you as you will see beautiful lights strings hung along this road.

1. Trans Studio Bandung

Trans Studio Bandung is one of the largest indoor tourist rides in the world. It has many rides and it is a great destination for a family trip. Trans Studio Bandung is located in Gatot Subroto 239 Road.

You can see some performances, such as Trans Studio Big Band, New Parade, Laser Show, Legend of Crown Prince, Bolang & Zoo Crew Adventure, Kabayan Goes to Hollywood and Special Effects Action Show. There are also many rides that you can try, from extreme rides to soft play for kids.

1. Tangkuban Perahu Mountain

The iconic place to visit in West Java is Tangkuban Perahu Mountain. It is a mountain that resembles a shape of boat and it is located in Lembang, about 30 kilometers from Bandung city.

The legendary mountain has a really unique story, where Tangkuban Perahu was formed from the boat that Sangkuriang (a legend character) kicked upside down. Here you can see fascinating large crater panorama and the three main crater. Although it is no longer active, but you still can see outburst of sulfur in some places. If you set your foot here, do not forget to capture your moments with the beautiful mountain as your background.

1. Ciwidey White Crater

In Ciwidey, a region which is located 44 kilometers from Bandung city, there is a panorama with a unique nuance. Just like its name, in the center of Ciwidey White Crater, there is a volcanic crater with white sand surrounding it. The white sand was formed because the soil contained sulfur. The greenish lake makes the scenery even more beautiful. In the northern of the lake, there is a grey limestone cliff and some moss and various plants that decorating this area.

1. Situ Patenggang Lake

Also in Ciwidey, about seven kilometers from White Crater Ciwidey, there is an exotic lake named Situ Patenggang Lake. There, you can enjoy the nature while having a picnic, relaxing in the lakeside or touring around the lake with a boat that you can from the tour manager.

1. Ciater Hot Spring

About 30 kilometers from Bandung city, near Lembang, you will see a hot spring that comes from the active crater of Tangkuban Perahu Mountain. You can enjoy the hot water by taking a bath. During the trip to this hot spring, you will meet the scenery of greenish tea gardens.

1. De’Ranch Lembang

If you want to ride a horse with cowboy style, you can visit De’Ranch Lembang. Here you can rent some horses along with a cowboy costume and riding it around De’Ranch. You will be guided by a professional. Besides riding a horse, you can also riding a delman (horse-drawn carriages), fun boating, doing some gold hunting or archery and lots of other activities to spend your adventure time.

In addition to all the activities above, you can also go to some places to try the Bandung culinary. There are a lot of places that will serve you various food and beverages. There is a place like Paskal Food Market, where there are more than 1.000 menu of food and beverages served by many stalls there. Paskal Food Market is a largest center of culinary in Bandung and is located in Pasir Kaliki Road. Enjoy your holiday in Bandung!

**Raja Ampat**

This tourist attraction with a beautiful under the sea scenery has been one of the most favorite underwater places to visit in the world. Raja Ampat (*four kings)* is a destination that consists of four beautiful and exotic main islands. The four islands are Waigeo, Salawati, Batanta and Misool which is home to ancient rock paintings. There are also a lot of other islands that is not less beautiful than the main islands.

According to “The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International”, about 75% of world marine species live among these exotic islands. Raja Ampat region is very large with areas of land and oceans to reach 4.6 million hectares. There are various flora and fauna species, such as 540 types of coral, 1.511 species of fish, 700 types of Mollusca and other undiscovered species. This plentiful biota caused Raja Ampat as the center and most complete of coral reefs and marine biota. All of this beautiful nature in Raja Ampat was protected by Indonesian legal entities. The tourist that visit Raja Ampat was also encouraged to take part in protecting it. It is important to prevent the destruction of marine ecosystem where some people only care about business profit.

Raja Ampat beauty has been documented into a documentary film “Edis Paradise 3” where it was premiered in Swiss. The documentary was made by Avant Premire and it showed the underwater beauty of Raja Ampat. As a result, it is dubbed as *Amazon World Ocean*. The nickname was given because Raja Ampat is located in the center of The Coral Triangle. Raja Ampat is located in the territory of West Papua and consist of 610 island where only 35 of them was inhabited.

A renowned underwater photographer, Michael Aw, stated “I was like a 5-years-old kid who was for the first time saw coral reefs and was fascinated by its beauty. With all the available resources, we have to preserve the beauty of Raja Ampat.”

The beauty of Raja Ampat will make you feel like you are in a fantasy island that will dazzle either the new visitor or tourist who has come several times. The most favorite activities to do by tourist in Raja Ampat are diving and snorkeling. If you jump into the clear and transparent ocean, you will see the pretty animals and coral down there. You can watch some scarce fish or even touch them. Manta ray and wobbegong will appear in your view, aside from tuna, giant trevallies, snapper, and barracuda. While enjoying the sight of them, some dugong will accompany you swimming. Time seemed to pass so quickly when you are in the ocean of Raja Ampat.

**How to Get There**

If you plan to visit Raja Ampat from Jakarta, Bali or from wherever you are, please book flight tickets with Sorong city as the destination. Sorong is the way to enter to Raja Ampat. The flight will take about six hours (from Jakarta) and usually will transit to Makassar or Manado before arriving at Domine Eduard Sorong airport. Then, you can continue the trip to Sorong harbor by public transportation at a low cost. After that you have to buy a ticket to Waisai city. Waisai is the capital city of Raja Ampat which is located at Waigeo Island. Waigeo Island is one of four main islands of Raja Ampat. The trip from Sorong to Raja Ampat can be reached approximately in two hours.

**Where to Stay**

After arriving in Waisai (capital city of Raja Ampat), you can find hotels and lodges with varying prices. If you have to stop at Sorong city because the flight tickets to Waisai already sold out, you can stay there for a night before continuing the trip the next day. In Waisai, you can find some affordable hotels starting from IDR 300000.

You can also stay in Saonek Monde. Saonek Mande has many resorts; such as Sorido Bay Resort which is famous for its coral reefs, Kri Eco Resort which was built over water with its traditional environment, etc. There are also hotels or rental houses in Saonek, Mansuar and Yenwaupnor Island that you can choose as your place to stay.

**What to Eat**

You don’t have to worry to be starved here as Raja Ampat also serve international menu for international tourists, in addition to local and traditional menu. The dishes usually was already provided by diving organizers and you can just choose your desired menu. The food was made by local people from the ocean. One dish that you have to try is yellow fish soup, which is a special menu from Raja Ampat.

**Shopping and Souvernirs**

Most of the divers who came to Raja Ampat said that the best souvenirs to get from there are experiences and photos and videos that they took during the trip. But, for you who loves to shopping, there are many souvenir and gift shops in Raja Ampat. You can buy Asmat statue, traditional fabrics, traditional musical instruments, and tambur (Papua traditional drum). If you come to visit Arborek village, don’t forget to buy traditional webbing there.

**Local Culture**

Due to the location of Raja Ampat which is located in the westernmost island of the big archipelago, that is New Guinea, making Raja Ampat anthropologically and linguistically was called diversity (an area of diversity). This nickname itself portrays the culture and language situation that is blending the native Raja Ampat culture and other culture that was brought by people from outside Papua. Just like in a song “Aku Papua” by the late Frankie Sahilatua, the special characteristic of Papua and Raja Ampat people are their dark skin and curly hair.

Raja Ampat residents usually speak in two language, Biak language and Melayu Papua language. Biak language is mostly used in the coast and islands, whereas Melayu language is used in daily activities. The deployment of tribes based on the islands are : Waigeo Island (Wawiyai (Wauyai) Tribe, Kawe Tribe, Laganyan Tribe, Ambel (Waren) Tribe, Biak Tribe); Batanta Island (Batanta Tribe and Biak Tribe); Salawati Island (Tepin Tribe, Moi (Moi-Maya) Tribe, Fiat Tribe, Domu Tribe, Waili Tribe, and Butlih Tribe); Misool Island ( Matbat Tribe, Misool Tribe, Biga Tribe, Biak Tribe); and Kofiau Island (Biak Tribe, Biak Beteu/Beser Tribe).

**Best Things to Do in Raja Ampat**

The most visited island by tourists are Wayang Island, Waiwo Island, Karang Island, Gam Island and Arborek Island. Diving and snorkeling are the most favorite things to do in Raja Ampat. South Waigeo becomes a favorite destination for divers.

Do not miss the beautiful scenery of karst island in Kabui Bay, cave of skulls and historical sites in Kali Raja, Raja Ampat. You can also see various types of bird in Yenwaupnor and Sawinggrai villages, the Salay dance in Sanoek, and some beautiful woven handicrafts in Arborek. You can diving and seeing group of stingrays swimming in Arborek as well. In Sawandarek, there is a white sandy beach with sea ducks ad pretty corals. Besides that, there is a traditional village where you can take a stroll and enjoy the unforgettable atmosphere around.

Aside from them, the most attractive thing in Papua is that it has dense forest, colorful clusters of limestone, various species of scarce plants and turtle nest at seashore. There are 540 species of coral and 1.511 species of fish in Raja Ampat. Around 75% of world coral species are in Raja Ampat, making it equals to 10 times the number of coral species that was found throughout the Caribbean. There are five species of endangered turtle, 13 species of marine mammals, 57 species of mantis shrimp and 27 species of fish that can only be found in Raja Ampat.

Most of tourists that come will be surfing in Raja Ampat because it has fairly high sea waves. In Gam Island, there is a unique fauna of Papua called cendrawasih which means bird-of-paradise. It has some types, such as red cendrawasih, big cendrawasih, small cendrawasih and magnificent cendrawasih. For hikers, you can go to Karang Island. You can climb a cliff where the slope reaches 90 degrees there, but after you reach the peak, the panoramic beauty of Raja Ampat will make you forget the tiredness and fatigue through the hiking. You can see the whole green islands and blue ocean scenery.

If you come at the right time to eastern Waigeo, around Urbinasopen village and Yesner, there is an interesting phenomenon that only occurs at the end of the year. There is a light that comes from the under the sea and goes around the ocean surface for 10-18 minutes. The local people called the phenomenon as “ocean ghost”.

There is a performance of traditional bamboo flutes or also called as tambur that you can enjoy in north and west Waigeo. The traditional performance only held in Indonesia Independence Day, spiritual festival and when officials or governors visit. In the north Waigeo, you may learn some history as you can come to see a cave from World War II where Netherlands and Japanese Army built their bunker. Sometimes there is also a war dance performed by local people.

Moreover, you can see big paintings of human and animals palms in a cave in Timolol. The paintings were painted by prehistoric caveman. There is also a waterfall that keeps on flowing in Salawati.

Next, you can go to Ayau Island which consists of some small islands. Ayau Island is so beautiful with its white sand and all the islands is connected to each other. There is also an island with white sand that the local people called zandplaat, which is a unique habitat for local vegetation. You can see some mothers and children of local tribes catch sea worms (insonem) there.

As for other activities that you can do are feeding some cuscuses, kayaking, exploring the island by a boat, exploring bat cave, doing traditional fishing of Papua, trekking to waterfalls and also making some wood sculptures guided by Asmat craftsmen. Be sure to document all your activities.

**Travelling Around**

To travelling around Raja Ampat, you can contact some travel agencies that can be found in Sorong. Some travel agencies also offers some tour package such as tour around the islands and diving tours in Raja Ampat.

From Sorong, there are two transportation that you can take : speed boat or long boat. You can also rent a small boat to go around the beautiful Raja Ampat.

**Tips**

* Choose the right time to visit Raja Ampat because climate change is uncertain
* Don’t forget to bring video camera and underwater camera to documented your trip
* Don’t forget to bring sunblock and your favorite hats as the sunray is quite strong
* Prepare some medicines such anti-malarial drugs, insects repellent and some aid kit to cure wounds

**Top Places to Visit in Jakarta**

Welcome to Jakarta! If you come from Soekarno Hatta International Airport (Cengkareng), you will take about one hour to arrive at Central Jakarta. On the way, you will see how busy this city is.

Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia and is the most populous city in Indonesia and even in Southeast Asia. This city is the center of business and government of Indonesia, so it is not surprising that Jakarta is so busy for 24 hours all day long. Because of the bustle of the city, the need for a place of entertainment has become one of the important needs.

There are some recreation or entertainment places you can try to visit in this capital city of Indonesia, such as :

1. Monas (National Monument)

Monas is an icon of Jakarta city, so do not forget to visit this place. The monument is located in the middle of Merdeka Square in Central Jakarta and is near the State Palace. This monument is a memorial monument with a height of 132 meters in the area of 80 hectares. This monument is topped by a flame that is covered by gold foil.

What you can do here is to take a walk to enjoy the beautiful grassy park and the cool shade of trees. You can also learn about Indonesian history in this museum or go up to the top of Monas by using a lift. This museum is open every day from 8 am to 3 pm.

1. Kota Tua Tour

In here is stored the old atmosphere of some old buildings from the colonial era of Indonesia. The name of this place is Kota Tua (Old City) which used to be called as Old Batavia. The total area of this place is only 1.3 kilometers. Kota Tua becomes the favorite place for tourists who come to Jakarta because you can add your collection of photos with old buildings as the background.

You can also expand your knowledge about Indonesian history by visiting some museums that are located at Kota Tua, such as Fatahillah Museum, Bank Indonesia Museum, Museum of Fine Arts and Ceramics and more. For the culinary, you will see various traditional dishes of Batavia such as gado-gado, egg crust, coffee shops and several cafés that served many types of food.

1. Ragunan Zoo

Ragunan Zoo was established in 1864 which is the first zoo in Indonesia. Ragunan Zoo has a total area of 147 hectares and is located at Harsono Road 1, Pasar Minggu, South Jakarta. Because of its strategic location, a lot of public transportations pass this zoo. The zoo is open from 9 am to 6 pm.

In this wildlife park, there are many kinds of animals and plants that are always protect this area from the scorching sun so that this area remains cool. This zoo keeps a lot of animals such as reptiles, birds, primates, mammals and other animals. Because this place is very spacious, you can use the tourist train to tour around the zoo.

1. Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park

Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) or Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park is a recreational park that was established with the purpose of providing a place to relax with family and friends. The culture-themed park has an area of 150 hectares and is one of the largest recreational park in Indonesia.

You can see the miniature of Indonesian archipelago, the typical culture of each region in Indonesia, the traditional dances and traditional clothes, and also some museums. There are also houses of worship which were inaugurated by the Indonesian government.

For recreation, there are castle of Indonesian children, cable car, swan boat, snow bay, various gardens and also a theatre.

1. Sunda Kelapa Harbor

If you are bored with the bustling city of Jakarta, you can come to the Sunda Kelapa. Sunda Kelapa is an old harbor that is located in Penjaringan, North Jakarta and has an area of 760 hectares. This place is quite unique, because beside that this place is entertaining, you will also gain knowledge about the history of Indonesia's maritime and also colonial historical heritage of Dutch here.

There is a maritime museum here which contains Indonesian maritime historical heritage and even in the south of the harbor, there still is a colonial Dutch shipyard and some old buildings that have been renovated. If the weather is fine, do not forget to capture your moments with a backdrop of old buildings and wooden ships.

1. Sudirman Road and Thamrin Road

Sunday is the best day to enjoy the city of Jakarta, because it is a car free day. Car Free Day is carried out along the road from Sudirman Road to Thamrin Road. It closed the main roads of Jakarta and cleared out all the cars for the pedestrians to do some jogging, running or riding a bike while enjoying the morning air. Car Free Day is held every Sunday from 6 to 11 am.

1. Ancol

Ancol is the most popular recreational place in Indonesia, because there are many exciting rides, such as Fantasy Land (Dufan) which provides you some adventures that will get your adrenaline going, Ocean Ecopark which is an area that is often used for concerts of local and international artists, Atlantis Water Adventure that provides a wide variety of water rides and Ocean Dream Samudra where it often holds an exciting attraction show and many other performances. There are also an art market where some exhibitions usually take place and haunted house.

There are five beautiful beaches in Ancol that you can visit, such as Pantai Indah, Pantai Elok, Pantai Festival, Pantai Ria and Pantai Carnival Beach Club.

1. Surabaya Road, Jakarta

For you all the lovers of antiques, you must stop at the Surabaya Road. There lined up shops that sell antiques. The antiques that are available such as classic vinyl records, antique lamps, ceramics, wood sculptures, puppets and various historic ancient objects. The antiques market is located in the downtown of Jakarta. You can take a taxi, bajaj or bemo to go to this market. Along the Surabaya Road there are lots of trees that keeps this place cool.

1. Trying some unique public transportations

If you are too tired to walk, you can try to use some unique Jakarta transportations. One of them is delman, which is a two-wheeled carriage drawn by a horse. Delman is driven by a coachman. You can find the delmans at National Monument, Palmerah, Tanah Abang, Jati Petamburan and some other places.

There is also bemo or becak motor which is a three-wheeled vehicle that looks like a mini bus and is used like a collecting taxi. Bemo is really popular in Indonesia. It has a superiority than other transportations because it can reaches narrow streets. Bemo is also practical because the passengers can ride it from its rear.

Another unique vehicle is bajaj. Bajaj is just like a bemo, but it is smaller and can only carry two passengers. The passengers usually enter it through the left door. The characteristics of bajaj are its plastic sheet cover, blue-colored or orange-colored and its shape that is familiar to three-wheeled Vespa.

In addition to visiting those places above, you have to try the unique culinary of Jakarta that are widely available on the streets, such as ketoprak, pickles, egg crust and others. There is also many local and international food.

Those are some things that you can do when you come to Jakarta. You can also try the favorite place that many Jakarta residents visit every weekend like Puncak, Bogor. There you can enjoy the natural and beautiful scenery, cold air, tea gardens, and colorful lake.

Or if you prefer to do some water tourism, you can go to Thousand Islands. There are several beautiful islands that you can visit, such as Tidung Island, Pari Island, Bidadari Island and Harapan Island. There you can enjoy the crystal clear beaches and white sand or go snorkeling and diving.

**Toba Lake**

One of the most popular natural wonders in Indonesia is Toba Lake which is located in North Sumatera. The cool breeze and blue water that accompany you when you take a walk around the lake making them as the charms that attract tourists to come. The Toba Lake also has a waterfall, pine forest and sulfur bath houses. The lake is located 900 meters above the sea level with an area of 1.145 square meters.

Based on its size, Toba Lake is more like an ocean than a lake. It is the largest and deepest lake in South East Asia and the second in the world after Victoria Lake in Africa. In the center of Toba Lake, there is a volcanic island called Samosir Island. It attracts a lot of tourists because there are two lake, Sidihoni Lake and Aek Natonang Lake there. The two lake often called as “lake above the lake”.

Toba Lake used to be a volcano. Around 75.000 years ago, there was a tremendous explosion from a volcano that released 2.800 cubic kilometers volcanic ash that caused almost half of Earth turned into black. The explosion was expected to happen for a week and the ash reached 10 kilometers above the sea level. Because of that some species of animals in the earth were vanished and there was a change in the weather.

Local people believe in a myth that said Toba Lake is the place where Namborru (seven goddess of Batak ancestors) lives. If Batak (the North Sumatera tribe) will hold a ceremony somewhere around the lake, they pray as a way to ask permission of Namborru beforehand.

**How to Get There**

There are two international airports that you can use to travel from to go to Toba Lake. The first one is Medan International Airport, where you will pass Parapat and go straight to Toba Lake. The second airport is Minangkabau International Airport in West Sumatera. But it will take you longer as you have to pass Bukittingi → Padang Sidempuan → Sibolga→ Tangkahan → Lawang Hill → Berastagi before you can arrive at Toba Lake. The advantage of the second choice is you can go to some places in West Sumatera during the journey.

To get to Toba Lake, you have to travel from Medan Kualanamu International Airport by public transportations such as bus, plane, train, rental cars and (which is recommended) taxi/minibus hire. If you come from West Sumatera, it is highly recommended to take bus or minibus hire as it will cost you cheaper and there are beautiful sceneries throughout the trip.

**Where to Stay**

You can choose the hotels and lodges that suit you best. You can go to Tuktuk Siadong village, a village in a small headland in Samosir Island. It is famous among the tourists because of its green landscape accompanied by the traditional atmosphere of Batak tribes, as well as the clean and fresh air surrounding it.

Tuktuk Siadong has an easy access to all destinations in Toba Lake and also Samosir Island. You can go to various places such as hospitals, cafés, restaurants, internet cafés and other facilities provided there.

The hotels themselves range differently, from first class to ordinary lodges in the lakeside or in the village. Some places to stay are Bagus Bay, Horas Family Home, Samosir Villas, Ramlan Guest House and Tabo Hotel.

**What to Eat**

There are a lot of restaurants and food stalls that serve you the special menu of North Sumatera around the lake. They offer you menu from international food to local food. Wherever you eat, you will meet the freshwater fishes that are the specialty of Toba Lake. If you are a Moeslem, you can go to Rumah Makan Islam Murni who will serve you *halal* food.

**Shopping and Souvenirs**

If you are looking for some souvenirs, you can find them at Parapat. You can buy shirts, accessories, antique Batak guitar, antique Batak calendar and another souvenirs. If you want to buy some fabrics, you can find it in Samosir and Jangga. There are also two traditional market that will be held twice a week.

**Local Culture**

Toba Lake is really strong in its culture, such as Batak tribe. Batak tribe is a pretty large tribe among other tribes in Indonesia. This tribe comes from Tapanuli and North Sumatera where the lineage comes from the father (also called as Patrilinear). The Batak language is very different to Indonesian language. Batak tribe divided into some smaller tribes and one of them is Batak Toba, where in the past it used to be a kingdom. You can find some cultural and traditional villages in Samosir Island.

**Best Things to Do in Toba Lake**

There are a lot of activities that you can do in Toba Lake, such as climbing a mountain, sailing boat, swimming, etc. You can go to Parapat to water skiing, riding a motor boat, rowing a canoe, fishing and also playing golf. You can also go sightseeing the beautiful scenery of bougainvillea, poinsettia and honeysuckle that will bloom throughout the year.

You can enjoy the two lakes in Toba Lake, Sidihoni Lake and Aek Natonang Lake. You can also visit a cemetery in Sidabutar to see some unique cultural heritage or go to traditional village in Jingga to understand more of Batak tradition. In the side of Toba Lake there is Wisma Soekarno, where the Indonesian first president was exiled.

**Travelling Around**

You can enjoy the waterfall in Simanindo, the hot spring in Pangururan, the seminary in Nainggolan and so on. You can use a rental car or take a bus or bemo to enjoy all of them. While you travel around the city you can enjoy the scenery of Toba Lake and some traditional Batak villages from a distance.

**Events and Festivals**

There is a yearly festival in Toba Lake that is called Toba Lake Festival. There will be cultural performances, fashion show and creative tourism exhibition. For the sports, there will be a dragon boat race, rafting and swimming competition, etc.

**Tips**

The average temperature of Toba Lake is around 20 degrees Celsius, so make sure to bring some sweater and jackets to keep you stay warm.

**What Should You Do in Ubud, Bali?**

One of the world's tourist paradise that is located in Bali is Ubud. Ubud Bali is a place that has been known since 1930s. Ubud is located in Gianyar regency that is a center of culture in Bali. Some of the culture are music, dance, sculpture, painting and carving. Ubud art area is also called as a village for international. Ubud has been a place for the search of love for Elizabeth Gilbert, a writer of Eat, Pray, Love book that has been made into a movie with the same title starring Julia Roberts.

To go to Ubud city, you have to travel from Denpasar International Airport as far as 40 kilometers in less than two hours. Its location that is in the area of rice fields, forests, rivers, cliffs and canyons, making this location as one of the most beautiful regions in the world. With its natural charm, culture and community, Ubud will be one of the loveliest memories in your travelling life. If you go to Ubud, be prepared to fall in love with the magical aura of Ubud (Balinese called it as “taksu” aura) where this aura will make you feel comfortable and yearning to come back.

And these are some places and activities that you have to try while travelling in Ubud :

1. Cycling along the rice fields

Did you know? One of Julia Roberts scenes in Eat, Pray, Love movie is cycling with the rice fields of Ubud as the background. Cycling is one of the most favorite things to do in Ubud. Along the Ubud highway, you can rent some bicycles with a various packages, ranging from cycling around the city to cycling far up to Kintamani. Accompanied by a guide, you will be taken around the rice fields and go into the township residents and you can even also interact directly with the local people.

If you can’t ride a bike, there is a trekking tour that you can take to see the beautiful rice fields and local residents. You can get to know the culture and the life of local people as by interacting with them and their friendly welcome.

1. Yoga morning in Ubud

Ubud is identical with yoga. People from all around the world come to Ubud to learn yoga, from professionals to beginners. The quiet and cozy atmosphere is the best place for doing yoga. You can do yoga while enjoying the view of green rice fields, parks, rivers and the fresh clean air. Some hotels in Ubud also provide yoga facilities, from free to premium grade class are there.

One of the most famous places in Ubud to do yoga is Yoga Barn which is located in Hanoman Road. There are various classes that you can choose while enjoying the sight of Ubud.

1. Watching kecak api dance

If you come to Ubud, make sure that you go watching the performance of kecak api dance. Kecak dance is one of the attractions in the Gods Island. *Cak.. cak.. cak..!*  That is such a distinctive sounds that come from the Kecak dancers. Kecak dance is usually done at night starting at 7 pm. The total numbers of the dancers are 50 to 70 dancers and all the dancers are males. Kecak is a Hindu scared dance as many dancers are unconscious while dancing on stage.

It is really easy to find the location of kecak dance performance in Ubud. You can find it in the Dalem Temple at Ubud Road or in Puri Agung Saren. In Puri Agung Saren you can also watch Legong dance performance. Besides of them, you can also watch shadow plays and other performances while in Ubud. Make sure to prepare a ticket to watch the kecak dance.

1. Learning to cook Balinese cuisine

Most of all restaurants and hotels in Ubud open cooking classes for the tourists who come. Various menus of Balinese cuisine are available for you to choose, such as satay, lawar or other Indonesian food like mixed vegetables with the peanut sauce, fried rice or yellow rice. If you want to try typical Balinese culinary classes, you can go to Paon Bali in Laplapan who have cooking classes at home. You can also go to Casa Luna restaurant which is famous for its cooking classes as it is the first restaurant that open a cooking class in Ubud. The cooking classes usually started in the morning and all the participants will be taken to a traditional market to buy and choose the ingredients that they will use to cook later.

1. Exploring the culinary of Ubud

When you come to Ubud, you have to try the local culinary. If you are interested in the typical culinary of Ubud and Bali, you should try the roast pork of Madam Oka which is located next to Ubud Temple, Ubud Bengil duck, chicken rice kedewatan Madam Mangku, or Betutu chicken at Murni restaurant.

Ubud is a tourist area that has been established since before the independence of Indonesia, so various food of Indonesia and also international cuisine can be found here. You can also try Asian cuisine, European cuisine and American cuisine here such as Italian gelato, Japanese traditional cuisine, Mexican taco and burrito and French cuisine. You just have to choose a menu that fits with your taste.

1. Trying some traditional medication of Ketut Liyer

For a long time, local people in Ubud has been used traditional medications using natural ingredients to cure the sick people. Spas and wellness in Ubud are growing rapidly in order to pamper the tourists who come. The traditional medication is just like a spa, using massage therapy and spiritual meditation. The Balinese people called the traditional “doctor” as Balian.

Balian Ketut Liyer is a medicine man that became famous after his appearance in the novel and movie Eat, Pray, Love which do therapy with some meditation approaches. As the most Balian in Ubud is Ketut Arsana. He has given medications with massage therapy and herbal medicine for about 25 years.

1. Rafting at Ayung River

One of rafting places in Bali is Ayung River. This rafting has category II and category III so it is suitable for beginners, but there will be a lot of obstacles that you will meet along the 12 kilometers of Ayung River. It takes about two hours to explore it.

In addition to that, you can also see panoramas of towering palm trees, hill trees and the yellow rice fields on the left and right side of Ayung River. There are also Balinese artists’ carvings on the rock cliffs of Ayung River. If you take a tour package, it is usually already included the lunch and dinner delivery service.

1. Visiting the museums in Ubud

Almost all of the museums in Ubud show the beauty and history of art and paintings. There are six museums that you can visit, such as Puri Lukisan Museum which is the first museum in Ubud. This museum displays the collection of Balinese paintings in three eras, from kingdom era of Bali to the independence era of Indonesia. Other museums that you can also visit are Neka Museum, Rudana Museum, Agung Rai Museum, Antonio Blanco Museum and Marketing Museum which has been established since 2011.

1. Shopping at Ubud traditional markets

If you are looking for the center of souvenir stores in Bali, then Ubud is the right place for you. Shopping at Ubud will bring you to some colorful Bali handicrafts. Various Bali handicrafts are already displayed here by some sellers that mostly are native Balinese.

These handicrafts such as wicker, sculpture, beach sarong, trinket, sandals, Balinese traditional clothes, paintings and many other types of handicrafts are available here. You can also try the variety of food in Ubud, but remember, you have to come early as in the daytime it will be very crowded. The parking lot will be full around noon too.

1. Say hello to some monkeys at Monkey Forest

If you want to get a more interesting experience, you should come visit Monkey Forest to meet the monkeys that can roam freely. In this 27 hectares forest, there are a lot of dense trees and the air is really clean and fresh. Upon entering this area you will be greeted by a giant monkey statue. You have to be careful with your luggage, as some mischievous monkeys will take your luggage and bring it to the top of the tree.

1. Coming to Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (UWRF) in Bali

If you come at the right time, do not miss to come to International Literature Festival. This festival is held only once a year and is the world's largest literature festival. You can meet the authors directly, both Indonesian authors and foreign authors. You can also get to know and learn about the culture, art and literature or can also enter some of the free events that take place during the festival.

Happy holidays and enjoy Ubud, the tourist paradise!

**Elvira Devinamira Shares an Exciting Story after Participating in Miss Universe 2015**



Miss Universe 2015 event surely is a very prestigious event. This year, beautiful and intelligent women from 87 countries across the world gathered to be the participants. They competed with each other and showing their talents and skills during the quarantine and also on the grand finale night. Elvira Devinamira, Putri Indonesia 2014, who represented Indonesia in that event has some exciting story and fun experience that will be ready to tell to you.

She succeed to make it to top 15, an accomplishment that also been achieved by Artika Sari Devi in 2005. In Miss Universe 2013 last year, Wulandhary Herman also successfully make it to top 16.

Another great news is the national costume presented by Elvira won the Best National Costume of Miss Universe 2015. It is such a proud achievement as it was obtained for the first time by Indonesia after 19 years of waiting.



The costume worn by Elvira was inspired from Borobudur Temple, Central Java. As stated by justjared.com, the costume managed to become the best costume after winning a vote for three days and hashtag #MissUniverseIndonesia became a trending topic. The costume itself weighs around 20 kilograms and truly attracted the public attention.



This woman who was born in Surabaya deeply feel grateful for the hard work that she had done. A lot of valuable experiences were gained by Elvira during the greatest beauty contest, such as meeting friends from many countries in the world.



“There are nearly 90 gorgeous women and they are trying to accentuate themselves. I make friends with all of them, and not being picky,” she said at Graha Mustika Ratu, South Jakarta, on Monday, February 2nd 2015.

She added that during the competition many participants are highly competitive and form some certain groups. However, the 21-year-old woman does not want to classify herself and she joined with anyone.

“There are some groups there. Some girls group to Europe group, Africa group, Latin group or Asia group. But I don’t. I think being friends with anyone is an opportunity for me. Hospitality to everyone is one of the characteristics of Indonesian women that I have to uphold,” said Elvira.

She also admitted that she felt tired from the quarantine and grand finale night of Miss Universe. But she had to endure it for the sake of her dream, so she stays high-spirited to bring the Indonesian dignity to international.

“There are a lot of memorable things there, and I do enjoy the moment. It is very tiring, as at 5 am we have to already dressed up, done our make-up, and then at 12 pm we have to clean it up again. It goes on every day and we have to keep smiling, being friendly. I tried to always be sincere and honest. I think this is a golden opportunity that not everyone can achieve,” she concluded with a smile.

Well, it must be fun to be Elvira and participating in the most prestigious event in the world! Hopefully in the future Indonesia can make more accomplishments in the international world.