

BAHASA INDONESIA BASICS

A free language guide from www.roamindonesia.com

The official language of Indonesia is Bahasa Indonesia (literally, language of Indonesia). Around Bali, English is widely spoken and less so in Java, Lombok and Flores. But elsewhere, English is almost non-existent so if you're getting out of Bali, learning a few words of Indonesian will be a great help.

The good news is that Bahasa Indonesia is one of the easiest languages to learn, especially for English speakers. For most people the biggest issue is overcoming their shyness about trying a few words, but in our experience, even in Bali the locals love it when a *bule* (foreigner) makes an attempt to speak their language so it's worth making the effort.

With only a few exceptions, the pronunciation of vowels and consonants is quite similar to English but unlike English, there are no tricks such as two or three different ways of pronouncing a single vowel or silent letters. Bahasa Indonesia is also non-tonal and words are generally spoken exactly as they are spelled. Lastly, most adjectives and verbs are comprised of a root word to which different prefixes or suffixes applied to denote particular actions, states or descriptors. For beginners, using the root word alone will generally be enough to be understood.

There are many excellent Bahasa Indonesia language resources readily available on the internet and the good news is many of them are free. In the meantime, we've put together a beginner's guide to Bahasa Indonesia to get you started.

GETTING STARTED

Pronunciation

Pronunciation rarely varies to that shown below. The pronunciation of most consonants is consistent with English but there are a few differences. We've highlighted the ones to watch out for.

a	'ar' as in father	ng	'ng' as in hanging
b	as in boat	ny	like the 'ni' as in senior
c	'ch' as in cheese	o	'o' as in pot
d	as in dock	p	as in pot
e	'e' as in elephant	q	'k' as in kiss
f	as in fish	r	'rr' as in rice but with a slight roll of the tongue
g	as in gold	s	as in sat
h	as in house	t	as in tap
i	'ee' as in meet	u	'oo' as in food
j	as in job	v	as in vet
k	as in kite	w	as in walk
l	as in life	x	as in wax
m	as in man	y	as in year
n	as in no	z	as in zulu

Numbers

0	Nol	Larger numbers as denoted by the addition of the following words after the singular number as follows:	
1	Satu	11 - 19	Belas
2	Dua	Tens	Puluh
3	Tiga	Hundreds	Ratus
4	Empat	Thousands	Ribu
5	Lima	Millions	Juta
6	Enam	The only exception is the first number in each group where the prefix 'se' is applied instead of using 'satu' as follows:	
7	Tujuh	10	Sepuluh
8	Delapan	11	Sebelas
9	Sembilan	100	Seratus
10	Sepuluh	1000	Seribu
11	Sebelas	1 million	Sejuta
12	Dua belas		
20	Dua puluh		
21	Dua puluh satu		
30	Tiga puluh		
40	Empat puluh		
108	Seratus delapan		
235	Dua ratus tiga puluh enam		
200,000	Dua ratus ribu		
357,000	Tiga ratus enam puluh tuju ribu		

Titles

In Indonesia, it is considered disrespectful to speak to an older man or woman without addressing them properly. Here's how:

Pak	A shortened version of 'Bapak' meaning father. It should be used to address an older man or if speaking to an important person you might normally address as 'Sir' such as a police officer.
Bu	A shortened version of 'Ibu' meaning mother. It should be used to address an older woman.

There are other titles but these two will suffice in most situations as the important thing, which Indonesian's will appreciate, is the intent to show respect.

Common Words & Useful Phrases

Bahasa Indonesia	English	Comments
Greetings		
Halo	Hello	
Selamat pagi	Good morning	Used until 10am. Often shortened to just "pagi"
Selamat malan	Good evening or good night	Selamat jalan – Safe journey Terima kasih – Thank you
Selamat jalan	Goodbye to someone who is leaving	Literally have a "safe journey"
Selamat tinggal	Goodbye to someone who is staying	Literally have a "safe stay".
Selamat datang	Welcome	
Hari baik	Have a nice day	
Apa kabar?	How are you?	Literally what's news?
Baik	Fine	Response to <i>apa kabar</i>
Titles		
Saya	Me, mine, I	Used to yourself in any form
Anda	You, yours	Polite form of referring to someone you're speaking to
Kami	We, us, ours	
Mereka	Them, they	
Child/children	Anak/anak-anak	
Bersama	Together	
Kami bersama	We're together	
Getting to know each other		
Siapa nama anda?	What's your name?	
Nama saya...	My name is...	
Senang bertemu dengan Anda	I'm happy to meet you	
Anda dari mana?	Where are you from?	
Saya dari...	I'm from...	
Yes & No		
Ya	Yes	
Tidak	No	Among Indonesian's, <i>tidak</i> (no) is most commonly used to negate something rather than as a direct response to question. Instead, Indonesian's prefer to use <i>sudah</i> (I already have it, I've already done it etc) or <i>belum</i> (I haven't got/done it yet but I might one day). Most non-native Indonesian speakers use <i>tidak</i> only but if you can master <i>sudah</i> or <i>belum</i>
Sudah	Already	
Belum	Not yet	

Bahasa Indonesia	English	Comments
		instead, you'll get a far more positive response, especially when dealing with hawkers and vendors.
Mungkin	Maybe	
Manners		
Tolong	Please	
Kembali	You're welcome	
Terima kasih	Thank you	
Maaf	Sorry	Pronounced ma'af
Permisi	Excuse me	
Communicating		
Anda bias bicara Bahasa inggris?	Do you speak English?	
Saya tidak bicara Bahasa Indonesia	I don't speak Indonesian	
Saya sedikit saja bicara Bahasa Indonesia	I only speak a little Indonesian	
Tolong bisa anda bicara pelan-pelan	Can you please speak more slowly	
Saya mengerti	I understand	
Saya tidak mengerti	I don't understand	
Bagaimana cara...dalam Bahasa Indonesia?	How do you say ... in Indonesian?	
Questions		
Apa ini?	What is this?	
Apa itu?	What is that?	
Berapa harganya?	What is the price?	
Terlalu mahal	Too expensive	
Bagaimana	How?	
Berapa	How much/many?	
Kapan	When?	
Mana?	Which?	
Dimana	Where?	
Siapa	Who?	
Jam berapa?	What time is it?	
Ada	Is/are there? There is.	
Boleh?	May I? You may.	When asking to be allowed to do something or being given permission to do something.
Boleh saya minta...	May I ask...	To which you may receive the response <i>boleh</i> or <i>boleh-boleh</i> – Okay, you may.
Bisa anda...?	Can you...?	

Bahasa Indonesia	English	Comments
Expressing Yourself		
Saya mau...	I want...	
Saya tidak mau...	I don't want...	
Saya suka...	I like...	
Saya tidak suka...	I don't like...	
Eating & Drinking		
Makan	Food	
Minum	Drink	
Warung	Small local food stall or shop	
Restoran	Restaurant	
Air botol	Bottled water	Pronounced <i>ar'eer</i>
Ada air minum?	Is there any drinking water?	
Ada meja untuk dua orang?	Is there a table for two people?	
Selamat makan	Enjoy your meal	
Getting Around		
Pergi	Go	
Tinggal	Stay	
Di	At	
Ke	To	
Sini, disini	Here	
Dimana?	Where?	
Sana, kesana	There, To there	
Saya mau pergi ke...	I want to go to...	
Bagaimana saya pergi kesana	How do I get to...	
Kami tinggal di...	We are staying at...	
Kami tinggal disini	We are staying here	
Transport		
Taksi	Taxi	
Ojek	Motorbike taxi	
Mobil sewa	Hire car	
Sepeda motor	Scooter	Literally motorised bicycle
Bus	Bus	Pronounced boos
Kapal	Boat, ship, ferry	

Bahasa Indonesia	English	Comments
Time		
Jam	Hour (time)	
Hari	Day	
Malam	Night	
Hariini	Today	Literally this day
Besok	Tomorrow	
Kemarin	Yesterday	
Bulan	Month	
Tahun	Year	
Place Names		
Jalan	Street or lane	
Pasar	Market	
Pantai	Beach	
Candi	Temple	Pronounced "chandi"
Palau	Island	
Gunung	Mountain	
Gunung Api	Volcano	Literally "fire mountain"
Sungai	River	
Toko	Shop	
Desa or kampung	Village	
Kota	City	
Other Useful Words & Phrases		
Dan	And	
Atau	Or	
Orang	Person	
Rupiah	Currency	
Uang	Money	
Jalan-Jalan	Walk	
Saya jalan-jalan	I'm just walking	In response to taxi, ojek or hire car tout.
Di mana kamar mandi? or Di mana WC?	Where's the toilet?	
Orang		
Ada kamar untuk keluarga empat orang satu malam?	Do you have a room for a family of four for one night?	
Dua orang dewasa dan dua anak-anak	Two adults and two children	