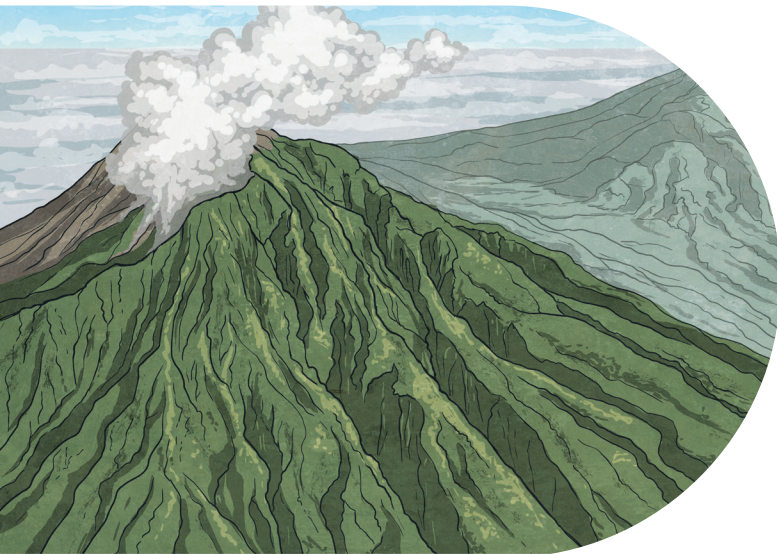


Indonesia

Indonesia is Australia's largest and closest neighbour. It is a part of southeast Asia. Indonesia is an archipelago made up of more than 17 200 islands, 6 000 of which are inhabited. An archipelago is a group of islands. Being a nation of islands affects the way Indonesian people and cargo are transported around the country. As such, Indonesia relies heavily on planes and ferries to keep the nation moving.



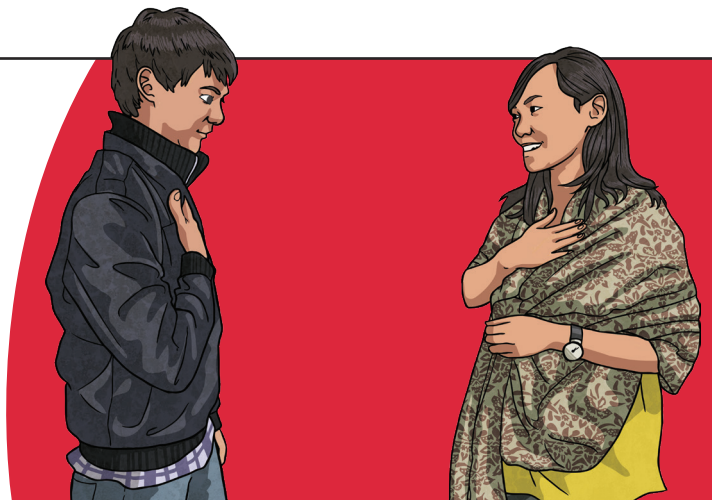
On Boxing Day in 2004, there was a huge earthquake in the Indian Ocean, just off the coast of Indonesia, that caused a tsunami that killed 230 000 people. It is known as the Boxing Day Tsunami.



Indonesia sits on the equator, which generates a tropical climate. Tropical climates have two seasons, wet and dry. Indonesia is part of the Ring of Fire, a horseshoe-shaped ring of islands with active volcanoes that run along the Pacific Ocean. Indonesia has 147 volcanoes, of which 76 are active. Consequently, Indonesia experiences regular volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis (tidal waves).

Europeans first travelled to Indonesia in 1512 and continued to visit the islands throughout the 16th century. The Dutch laid claim over the Indonesian islands in 1602 so they could control the lucrative clove and nutmeg trade, spices which at the time were worth more than gold. An Indonesian independence movement gained strength in the 1940s during World War 2. Indonesia claimed independence on 17th August 1945, after nearly 350 years of Dutch colonial rule.

The population of Indonesia is 267.7 million, making it the fourth most populated country in the world. It is a diverse country made up of many different ethnic groups. This is reflected in the Indonesian national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which means Unity in Diversity.



Bahasa Indonesia is the country's national language, but more than 700 indigenous languages are also spoken throughout the islands. Indonesians are mostly Muslim, making up 87% of the population, but there are also large populations of Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Confucianists and Animists.



The capital of Indonesia is Jakarta. Jakarta is the second-largest city in the world and has a population of more than 30 million people, which is larger than the population of Australia, at 25 million.

Jakarta is on the island of Java, the most densely populated island in the world. Java has a population density of more than 1000 people per square km. In comparison, Australia has a population density of 3.2 people per square km.



Wayang is an ancient form of performance art that continues to this day. Wayang comes in many forms, from puppet theatre to masked dances. Indonesia is also known for its intricate batik textiles, dyed using special wax techniques.

Indonesian food is rich in flavour and has lots of spice. Traditionally, all meals, including breakfast, are served with rice. Indonesian national dishes include nasi goreng (fried rice), mi goreng (fried noodle), rendang (beef curry) and sate (meat on skewers w peanut sauce).

Indonesia is a large, diverse and multicultural country made up of hundreds of different ethnic groups, each with its own unique culture. Diversity is celebrated in Indonesia. Many Indonesians identify more strongly with their indigenous ethnicity rather than their national identity. This means a person from Java may introduce themselves as Javanese. Culture is heavily influenced by a mixture of ancient indigenous customs and modern religion.

