

EXPLORE!

Discover Sulawesi
13 days

Indonesia - Trip code SUL



Discover Sulawesi

This adventurous trip takes us well off the tourist trail as we visit the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, formerly known as Celebes. Sulawesi lies in the heart of the Indonesian Archipelago and is steeped in tradition and mysticism, perhaps encapsulated best by the Toraja highlanders. The Toraja people have a rich and traditional heritage along with their elaborate funeral celebrations that can last for several days. As well as a deep and ancient culture, we discover thick rainforest, rare wildlife and drive along scenic mountain roads in this little-visited part of Indonesia.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Rantepao** - Walk through Torajaland where we discover the eerie Tau Tau statues and learn about the mysterious celebrations of death.
- ★ **Besoa Valley** - Discover the giant megalithic stones of Lore Lindu National Park, only recently made accessible by road.
- ★ **Makassar** - Witness the hustle and bustle of a centuries-old trading port.
- ★ **Maros** - Travel by Canoe past rice fields and limestone cliffs and enjoy tea in a local Bugis house.

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Makassar

Our trip starts this evening in the island's capital, Makassar. The city was established as a major trading port in the sixteenth century, trading exotic spices, rattan and sandalwood with its near neighbours the Javanese and Malays. In the 17th Century the Dutch reached the East Indies and Sulawesi was subsequently colonized, changing the character and face of this city. Modern Makassar showcases an interesting blend of this history with modernity, where glass-fronted skyscrapers jostle for position alongside Dutch colonial buildings, and the bustling harbour still remains a major stopping point for sea trade.

If there is time we hope to have a stroll along the main promenade, as at night the seaside boulevard comes alive with street vendors setting up their push cars along the pavement, offering a variety of local delicacies.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore the bustling harbour city of Makassar


Nowadays Makassar is the main gateway to the eastern islands of Indonesia, and on our visit to Poatere harbour this morning we will find the traditional wooden sailing ships, known as Pinisis, lined up along the harbour being loaded by hand before making the journey east. We will continue on foot from the harbour to the nearby fish market, where the expert Bugis fisherman come to sell their catch of fresh fish. It is an interesting, if somewhat pungent market used just by locals bartering for their lunch, and we expect to be quite the tourist attraction ourselves here.


Leaving the fish market behind we move onto a reminder of Dutch colonial rule when we discover Fort Rotterdam. When the Dutch settled in Sulawesi they decided to build on top of an existing fort from the Gowa Kingdom, creating some very curious architecture.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 3 - Drive to Sengkang, walk through Karantin Reserve and lunch with local family


We turn onto the Trans-Sulawesi highway this morning as we begin our adventure into Sulawesi's rugged interior. The journey winds its way from the low lands through lush stretches of tropical forests. On the way we stop off at Karantin Reserve and take a walk through the park where indigenous Celebes black-crested macaques can easily be spotted swinging from tree to tree. We break for lunch in a small village where we meet a local family and share a traditional lunch with them. We then continue onto Sengkang, arriving in the late afternoon.



Accommodation: Hotel BBC (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 4 - Discover Sengkang by Canoe and visit floating houses; Afternoon drive to Rantepao


This morning we take to the water aboard our canoe, being paddled along the narrow Walennea River and onto the important Tempe Lake. The lake is teeming with activity, both above and below the water, and here we can witness fisherman vying for their daily catch using a range of traditional nets, rods and bamboo fences. There are also some 20 different species of water birds that flock to this rich water source, so we hope to be able to spot some of the more colourful varieties this morning. Most of the fisherman call the lake home, residing in floating houses dotted around the outskirts of the lake. We will visit one of these floating houses where we will share tea and stories with one of the local families.

After waving goodbye to the family, we head further inland, into the dramatic mountainous interior of Sulawesi, and to Rantepao, home to the truly fascinating Toraja people.



Accommodation: Hotel Indra Toraja (or similar)

 Simple Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Visit the Tau Tau statues and hanging graves of Rantepao

Rantepao is the highlight for the few visitors that venture as far as Sulawesi. This region, otherwise known as 'Torajaland', is inhabited by the Toraja people, an indigenous population that for hundreds of years followed animist beliefs, although in more recent times they have been influenced by Christianity when Dutch missionaries began work in this region. The Toraja are perhaps best known for their celebration of death, and their elaborate funeral ceremonies that can last for several days. The funerals form important social events, and are often attended by hundreds of people from surrounding villages. Because of their size and scale, villagers often have to save for weeks, months sometimes even years to host these events, so the deceased are left, part mummified underneath houses of relatives. Other than their funerals rites, the Toraja are renowned for their unique and beautiful houses, known as Tongkonan. They are built on the principals of their spiritual beliefs, and sit on stilts with large sweeping roofs, with each end arching up towards the sky.

Today we plan to immerse ourselves in this mystical culture, first visiting Lemo where rows of Tau Tau statues sit carved into the rock face, along with a large selection of hanging graves. It is said that the Tau Tau statues are effigies that are created to honour the dead, guard the tombs and protect the living. After spending some time learning about these curious rituals, we continue onto Kete Kesu, one of the oldest Torajan villages and an excellent place to take in the Tongkonan houses, old rice barns, and the intricate colourful woodcarvings that are created in this area.

Please note the plan for the next two days will have an element of flexibility, and can be adjusted accordingly to ceremonies that may be happening in the area at the time. If we happen to arrive when a funeral ceremony is underway, we can respectfully request permission to attend so we can witness this mystifying celebration of life and death. The funerals are public affairs and more of a celebration of life than the more sombre funerals we are familiar with in the West. These rituals will often culminate in the sacrifice of a water buffalo or local livestock for a grand feast put on at the end of the celebration. These sacrifices are swift, but will be made in front of the crowds as part of the ritual.



Accommodation: Hotel Indra Toraja (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Full days walk in the remote Torajaland

Today we plan to continue our exploration of this fascinating region, with a gentle walk through the rolling hills of the Torajaland. The walk takes us past rice terraces and along unpaved roads to the remote and traditional villages that pepper this region. There are plenty of opportunities to stop for photos and to relax and take in the panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. We will break for lunch in a traditional Toraja house, where we share food with a local family. The walk will take approximately six hours including stops, and will be undertaken at a casual pace.



Accommodation: Hotel Indra Toraja (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 7 - Scenic drive to Pendolo passing mountains and waterfalls en route.

We have a full day of driving ahead of us today, with the road winding its way down from the Toraja highlands to the remote flat lands of Central Sulawesi. The route here takes us past swamps and sago palm plantations before heading back up into the hills again, reaching the sleepy village of Pendolo. The route is long, it is likely to take between 8-9 hours, but takes in some wonderful changing scenery with plenty of opportunities for stops along the way.



Accommodation: Mulia Lake Poso Hotel (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 8 - Boat across Lake Poso to Tentena. Afternoon walk to nearby waterfalls.

This morning we switch tarmac for water as we board our charter boat to take us across Lake Tentena. After the long drive the previous day, today is a more relaxing affair, with time to visit a few villages dotted around the edges of the lake, and possible swimming opportunities in the calm waters. We take lunch on a small lake-side beach. In the afternoon we will visit the impressive Saluopa Waterfall, a 12 tier waterfall with calm pools interspersed within it, suitable enough for a welcome refreshing dip.



Accommodation: Ue Datu Cottages (or similar)



Simple Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Full days drive into the Besoa Valley; late afternoon walk in Lore Lindu National Park

Today you will drive into the Besoa Valley, an area that until very recently was impossible to visit due to the lack of infrastructure. The Besoa Valley plays host to the Lore Lindu National Park, a two thousand square kilometre protected area of remote forest. The park contains a staggering collection of over 400 megalithic stones, dating back the 14th Century, along with an array of flora and fauna that is unique to the area. After arriving at our homestay we will meet and share lunch with our host family, before setting out on foot for a short exploration of the park.



Accommodation: Losmen Berkat (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Exploring the statues, forests and rice fields of the Besoa Valley on foot

Today we spend a full day exploring this remote park and we will get to see the impressive megalithic Stones, some of which date back to an estimated 3000 BC. We will also be keeping a keen eye out for some of the colourful wildlife that call the park home, including tarsiers, macaques, the rare Sulawesi civit, and the rather bizarre looking Babirusa, resembling a cross between a pig and hippopotamus. Along with the interesting collection of mammals, the park also contains 227 species of birds, of which 77 are endemic to Sulawesi.



Accommodation: Losmen Berkat (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Morning transfer to Palu to fly back to Makassar

We drive out of Lore Lindu National Park this morning and head back to civilisation on our five to six hour drive to the city of Palu. From here we will fly back to Makassar, where we arrive late in the afternoon. The rest of the day is free.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Morning visit to the limestone caves of Maros. Free afternoon in Makassar.

We head out to nearby Maros this morning, known for its beautiful rice fields and towering limestone karsts. Although geographically close to Makassar, peaceful Maros feels like a world away from the bustling city. Here we plan to explore the area on foot, with a short walk of about 1 ½ - 2 hours past rice terraces and in the shadow of rocky limestone outcrops. We will stop for tea at a local Bugis house before returning back to our start point by canoe.

This afternoon has been left free for you to make your final memories of Makassar where you can either explore the city on foot, or perhaps hop on a becak, the local name for a cycle-rickshaw.



Accommodation: **Aston Makassar Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Makassar

The trip ends in Makassar this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

Although Sulawesi one of the biggest islands in the huge Indonesian Archipelago, it is also one of the least visited by us Brits. All this time in isolation has allowed the islands inhabitants to develop a rich and traditional heritage, from the Toraja highlanders and their mysterious funeral rituals, to the Bugis who reside in coastal areas and are known as excellent fisherman. Along with its residents, the geography of Sulawesi is perhaps just as varied, with thick rainforest home to the rare tarsier, scenic mountain roads and beautiful inland lakes and waterfalls.

This trip ran as a one of our 'recce tours' in 2017, where a group of Explore customers travelled out on the first departure and fed back their experiences, shaping the current itinerary.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 12
Lunch: 4
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Boat
On Foot



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

1 nights simple cabins
5 nights standard hotel
5 nights simple hotel
1 nights simple lodge

Trip information

Country information

Indonesia

Climate

Lying on the equator, Indonesia stays hot all year round, with daytime temperatures in the 80's (26°-28°C). Humidity is usually high. The wet seasons are roughly: Java- October to April; Bali- November to May; starting later the further east you travel. Nights are much cooler in the mountains than on the plains. Sea breezes normally keep the coastal strips of the islands from becoming too uncomfortable.

Time difference to GMT

+7

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Islam, Christian, Hindu

Language

Indonesian (official), numerous regional dialects, Sundanese, Javanese and some English.

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

The region is tropical (humid) and days can be very hot. Casual clothes are the most practical, whilst tight fitting garments should be avoided. Please bring long skirts, trousers and shirts to cover yourself fully in order to respect local sensibilities and please bear in mind that short shorts are generally unacceptable. Bring some warmer clothing for the time spent at higher altitudes. Light rain gear and/or an umbrella is excellent in sticky, tropical conditions. A sunhat is essential.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage and cabin space is limited, so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor suncream (at least factor 15), good quality sunglasses and a lip salve with sun protection.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Accordingly you should allow approx. £35 for gratuities for local staff.

Country Information

Indonesia

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£5

Dinner price

£9

Beer price

£1

Water price

£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Rupiah (Rp).

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP will often get the best rates, EUR and USD are also accepted

Where To Exchange

Always check rates first. Banks and moneychangers usually have the best rates. Exchange is also possible at airports. Always keep receipts.

ATM Availability

In major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major towns.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are accepted but require the purchase receipt. Well known brands and higher denominations are recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat, On Foot

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Indonesia: British nationals travelling to Indonesia for tourism purposes can enter the country without a visa for up to 30 days at certain ports of entry including international airports in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bali, Medan, Makassar, Surabaya and Batam, and sea ports in Batam and Bintan. If travelling on a free visa you must also exit via one of these approved ports. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining after departure from Indonesia.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Indonesia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, infectious hepatitis, typhoid and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
