



Culture Notes: Indonesia

The archipelago of Indonesia consists of thousands of islands and is consequently very ethnically diverse.

Because of this diversity, it is difficult to pinpoint a "general" Indonesian identity, but the country recognizes the value of its people's differences in the national motto: Unity in Diversity.


The majority of Indonesians practice Islam. Muslims do not eat pork, so you will want to keep this in mind with your student.

Rice is a staple food for most Indonesians, and fish is prevalent in many Indonesian meals.

In personal relationships, Indonesians tend to remain reserved and display few emotions until a true relationship develops. Confrontations are often met with smiles and a quieter demeanor.

Mutual assistance and agreement by consensus are important principles guiding life in Indonesia. It is a culture that values working together.

In Indonesia, eye contact is generally avoided, patience is valued, and displays of greed are avoided. Indonesians value neatness in grooming and do not generally concern themselves with punctuality, though your student should know that this is valued in the U.S.



* 45% of Indonesians are Javanese, 14% are Sudanese, 7.5% are Madurese, and 26% belong to other ethnic groups.

* There are also about 583 languages and dialects spoken in Indonesia!

- * Capital: Jakarta
- * Population: 240.3 million
- * Area: About 736,000 sq.mi.
- * Nationality: Indonesian(s)
- * Language: Indonesian (official) and local languages (most prevalent is Javanese)
- * Climate: Equatorial
- * Fun Fact: Indonesia is made up of 17,508 islands, about 6,000 of which are inhabited.