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ACCOMMODATION

There are some good choices among the places to stay in Dili. But many of the sleeping options subsist on the long-term residence of expats assigned to East Timor and, thus, haven't felt competitive pressure to offer decent products.

Elsewhere, Baucau and Com have some good choices, as do Maubisse, Viqueque and Lospalos and a handful of smaller places. But don't expect anything swank – if you get a clean room with good mosquito nets or screens and a few hours of electricity for reading and a fan, you're doing well.

Large swathes of East Timor have no organised accommodation and you'll be on your own finding a room in a home or a place to camp.

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Camping

East Timor has no campsites but there's really no limit on where you can pitch a tent. In places like Tutuala Beach, the central mountains and all across the south coast, your only accommodation will be a tent. Although the weather is mild except high up in the mountains, you'll want a tent protecting you from insects and sudden rain.

You should bring your own gear if you plan to travel off the beaten path, although **Mega Tours** (☎ 723 5199; www.timormegatours.com) in Dili may be able to rent you gear for US\$5 a day.

Homestays

Homestays happen on an ad hoc basis; you may find yourself someplace where the hospitality of others will be your only accommodation. Remember, people have little, so offer to help out in any way you can. The Timorese are really a gracious lot, so someone will usually come forward with an offer if you're in a rural village and it's getting dark. The local police station is always a good source of leads.

Hostels

Dili has East Timor Backpackers (p45), which is the nation's one hostel – and a very good one it is too.

Hotels

Dili has some very good accommodation options at every price point, from budget hotels (rooms for as little as US\$10), through midrange (US\$25 to US\$50) to top end (often US\$100 or more). But it also has many dumps. You won't feel like your US\$50 is going far when you find yourself

in a windowless ex-shipping container or stuffy clapped-out room where the furnishings are busted and the decoration is cigarette burns. Compare places, but also note that the town can fill up fast with foreigners during crises.

Outside Dili the story is not so straightforward. A handful of places offer better standards (Maubisse, Baucau, Com), and cheap family-run places have opened in a few other locations, many of which are very well run. Overall, though, the choice is not wide and the standards not high. Be grateful for getting a roof over your head.

Cheaper hotels, where they exist, may not have running water or showers. Washing facilities are likely to be Indonesian *mandi* style, something with which travellers who have been off the beaten track in Indonesia will be familiar. A *mandi* is a large water tank, from which you scoop water with a ladle, jug or what looks like a plastic saucepan. Once wet, you soap yourself down and then rinse the soap off with more water from the *mandi*. You certainly do not climb into the *mandi*.

Religious Orders

'Get thee to a nunnery' is good advice when it means an immaculate room in a peaceful setting. Churches and other religious groups offer simple accommodation across East Timor. Your vow of poverty won't be in danger but, for US\$10 or so, you'll have great shelter for the night. While not universal, you can find religious accommodation in Suai, Maubara, Maubisse and other locales.

ACTIVITIES

Outside of diving, activities are pretty much do-it-yourself, although Dili tour companies can help out. If you're independent, you can find excellent trekking, climbing and cycling. One good way to find out more is simply to hook up with people in Dili and hear what others are doing. You can even rent a kayak at the beach on the east side of Dili.

MEASURING UP

East Timor uses the metric system.

Cycling

Reasonably good roads in most of the country, relatively light traffic and East Timor's compact size mean that cycle touring could develop as an interesting way to explore the country.

A few expats have started cycling and you can buy a mountain bike in Dili, but for the most part you'll be a pioneer.

Diving & Snorkelling

Divers in the know get a bit giddy when they talk about East Timor. It has amazing shore diving and many people who work in Dili dive daily before work. Elsewhere it's estimated that only about 10% of possible sites have even been named. Reefs teeming with life line the north coast and Atauro Island. In the east, the Golden Triangle, a vast coral reef thought to have the greatest diversity of sea creatures on the planet, awaits off Tutuala.

The reefs offer a colourful array of hard and soft corals, as well as a vivid assortment of reef fish. Pelagics – open-water species like tuna, bonito and mackerel – are also regularly encountered, along with harmless reef sharks, manta rays and dolphins. There are even dugongs, the ugly sea mammals that are said to have been mistaken by seafarers for mermaids.

Diving is possible year-round, although the conditions are smoother and the water clearer during the March to September dry season when visibility is typically 20m to 35m. During the wet season from October to February visibility is still 10m to 20m. February is probably the worst month of the year for visibility. It picks up again by late March, and in April visibility is once again excellent. September is great for manta rays and, if you're lucky, whale sharks. Some dive sites can experience strong currents and are more suitable for experienced divers. The water temperature is typically 26°C to 28°C.

Nusa Tenggara, the island chain that runs east from Bali through to Timor, is a prime region for scuba diving, which is already popular around the Indonesian islands of Bali, Komodo and Flores.

Given that you can walk right into the water in East Timor and be at a spectacular drop-off after just a few strokes means that

RESPONSIBLE DIVING

Please consider the following tips when diving and help preserve the ecology and beauty of East Timor's largely untouched reefs:

- Never use anchors on the reef, and take care not to ground boats on coral.
- Avoid touching or standing on living marine organisms or dragging equipment across the reef.
- Be conscious of your fins. Even without contact, the surge from fin strokes near the reef can damage delicate organisms. Take care not to kick up clouds of sand, which can smother organisms.
- Practise and maintain proper buoyancy control. Major damage can be done by divers descending too fast and colliding with the reef.
- Resist the temptation to collect or buy coral or shells or to loot marine archaeological sites (mainly shipwrecks).
- Ensure that you take home all your rubbish and any litter you may find as well. Plastics in particular are a serious threat to marine life.
- Do not feed fish.
- Minimise your disturbance of marine animals. *Never* ride on the backs of turtles.

diving will surely lead tourism development here, with many enthusiasts migrating from the islands to the west.

Dili has two excellent dive shops (see p43) that will be able to arrange pretty much anything you wish to do, whether it be shore based or from a boat.

Look for recommendations on where to dive in the Dili, West of Dili, East of Dili and Atauro Island chapters but remember, East Timor's dive sites are still being named so there's ample room to freelance. You can have a meaningful experience one hour from Dili, and none of the known great sites require more than a day trip.

Experienced divers with their own equipment can rent tanks and explore further afield. Check with the Dili dive shops for ways you can get your air replenished at a remote spot like Tutuala – it will require some sort of delivery.

The dry season is between April and October, although the water is sooo clear that other times are not bad at all and there's not that many rivers on the north coast to stir things up. From August to October you have the best chance of seeing larger animals, such as sharks and rays, up close to the reefs.

East Timor's official tourism website has an excellent overview of diving by local expert Ann Turner (www.turismotimorleste.com/en/activities/diving).

Snorkelling is equally accessible, and dive operators will generally take snorkellers along on their dive trips.

Walking

East Timor has a range of good walking and trekking possibilities, which will undoubtedly develop as tourism grows. The easy walking ascent of Mt Ramelau (see p73), the highest mountain in Timor, is the most popular walk at present.

It's easy to make a day trip to Mt Ramelau from Dili, although many visitors combine the walk with an overnight stop in Maubisse.

Towards the eastern end of the island, Mt Matebian (see p58) is another popular ascent, although it's more difficult to get to than Mt Ramelau. It would clearly be possible to walk between the north and south coast in a few days, and walks along the village routes will probably develop. There's good walking from the road to Viqueque; the lodge in Ossu can help (see p56).

The Dili tour companies (see p44) can arrange many different walks and treks.

BUSINESS HOURS

Apart from Dili there are only a handful of places that keep business hours, typically of the 9am-to-6pm, Monday-to-Friday variety, sometimes with a long lunchtime siesta as a reminder of the old Portuguese influence, and maybe with a few Saturday hours to keep busy.

CHILDREN

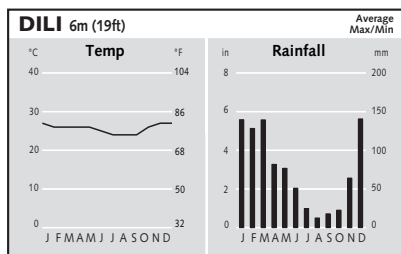
East Timor is not yet the sort of place you'd plan to bring children, and there are few facilities for them. The main concerns are the limited medical facilities and the necessity of taking precautions against malaria.

CLIMATE CHARTS

East Timor has extreme wet and dry seasons. The dry season is very dry from May to November, when the north coast gets virtually no rain, the hills brown off and agricultural activity all but ceases. The arid landscapes, particularly on the north coast, are reminiscent of Australia, and temperatures soar around October to November. The cooler central mountains and the south coast get an occasional shower during this time, and are generally green. This is the season for sitting around the village, weaving, repairing houses and trading produce to survive the 'hungry season' until the rains come again and crops can be planted. To remedy the water problem, there is an intensive programme of small earth-dam building.

When the rains come, they often cause floods, and the wide stony rivers, which are dusty in the dry season, become torrents. Roads are cut and landslides are common. The country is transformed as gardens are planted and the land turns green. The forest areas and the lush central south coast is steamy and almost tropical. The end of the wet season, just after the harvest, is the time for festivities.

Dili has an average rainfall of around 1000mm, most of it falling from December to March. The south coast is wetter than the north, and high rainfall occurs on the central south coast and in the southern mountains of East Timor. But weather patterns are erratic, and the mountains create many microclimates.



Day temperatures are around 30°C to 35°C (85°F to 95°F) in the lowland areas, dropping to the low 20s overnight. In the mountain areas daytime temperatures are still warm to hot, but night temperatures can drop to a more chilly 15°C (60°F), or lower at greater altitudes. At the end of the dry season, parts of the north coast swelter with temperatures higher than 35°C (95°F), but humidity is low compared with further north.

COURSES

The NGO **Timor Aid** (☎ 331 2260; Ave dos Direitos Humanos, Dili) has classes in Tetun at its compound near the Hotel Turismo. These are highly recommended and cost from US\$3 to US\$8 per hour depending on class size. You can arrange for private tutoring here or through many of Dili's English-speaking locals. Ask around.

Both Dili dive shops (p43) offer a range of diving courses.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

The usual types of rules (1L of alcohol, 200 cigarettes) apply to arrivals in East Timor.

ELECTRICITY

When electricity is available, it's 240V. Since the public supply is so unreliable in the main centres, and often nonexistent in the rural and smaller centres, there are lots of generators chugging away, and some of these supplies are 110V. In Dili you should expect power – except when it goes off. Many places have back-up generators. Elsewhere in the country there may be no electricity or just some for a few hours.

There are a wide variety of power outlets, so bring a complete selection of converters. You'll find Australian power points (angled pins), standard European and Indonesian outlets (two round pins), British outlets (three large square pins) and quite possibly US outlets (flat pins).

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Embassies & Consulates in East Timor

A number of countries have representation in Dili; see p91 for visa information. Citizens of Canada and the UK should contact their embassies in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Australia (Map pp36-7; ☎ 332 2111; www.easttimor.embassy.gov.au; Av dos Mártires de Pátria) Unfortunately located in a part of town prone to rioting and with a design that looks like an overgrown Indonesian shophouse.

European Commission (Map pp36-7; ☎ 332 5171; ectimor@arafura.net.au; Rua Santo António de Motael 8, Farol)

Indonesia (Map pp36-7; ☎ 331 7107; kukridil@hotmail.com; cnr Ruas Marinha & Governador Cesar, Farol) After a reconstruction, the visa services area is actually nice.

Ireland (Map pp36-7; ☎ 332 4880; charles.lathrop@dfc.ie; Rua Alferes Duarte Arbiro 12, Farol) A tiny but typically cheery operation. Look for the gold harp on the fence out the front.

New Zealand (Map pp36-7; ☎ 331 0087; kiwidili@gmail.com; Rua Alferes Duarte Arbiro, Farol) Small and efficient.

USA (Map pp36-7; ☎ 332 4684; consdili@state.gov; Av de Portugal, Farol) Typically fortresslike, but very helpful to citizens and if you can penetrate the walls with the right invite, there's an amazing pool.

East Timorese Embassies & Consulates Abroad

East Timor has diplomatic representation in only a handful of places overseas:

Australia (☎ 02-6260 8800; tl_emb.canberra@bigpond.com; 25 Blaxland Cres, Griffith, Canberra, ACT 2603)

European Union (☎ 280 0096; jo_amorim@yahoo.com; Ave de Cortenbergh 12, 1040 Brussels, Belgium)

Indonesia (☎ 021 390 2978; tljkt@yahoo.com; 11th fl, Surya Bldg, Jl MH Thamrin Kav 9, Jakarta 10350)

USA (☎ 202 965 1515; embtlus@earthlink.net; 3415 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington DC 20007)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

As a staunchly Catholic country, Christian holidays are celebrated with gusto (see following for dates). During any of the major holidays there'll be a church celebration. Easter is particularly colourful, with parades and vigils.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

There's no organised network for gays and lesbians in East Timor, but it's also unlikely that there will be any overt discrimination. Although some unwavering religious types have fulminated on the subject.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

East Timor's government offices are still getting settled whether by plan, lack thereof or mayhem (the important customs building was torched in 2007). So you'll have to ask around if you have visa, import-related or other issues.

HOLIDAYS

East Timor has a large and growing list of public holidays. Many special days of commemoration are declared each year – sometimes on the morning of what becomes a holiday.

New Year's Day 1 January

Idul Adha Muslim day of sacrifice

Good Friday March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Independence Restoration Day 20 May (the day in 2002 when sovereignty was transferred from the UN)

Corpus Christi Day May/June

Popular Consultation Day 30 August (commemorates the start of independence in 1999)

All Saints' Day 1 November

All Souls' Day 2 November

National Youth Day 12 November (commemorates the Santa Cruz cemetery massacre)

Proclamation of Independence Day 28 November

Idul Fitri End of Ramadan

National Heroes' Day 7 December

Immaculate Conception 8 December

Christmas Day 25 December

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is vital in East Timor (see p95 for details). Medical facilities outside Dili are virtually nonexistent, and the best facilities in Dili are rather ad hoc (see p39 for details).

INTERNET ACCESS

There are plenty of internet cafés and a few hotels in Dili with poky access averaging US\$6 an hour. Other than in Baucau, access is unheard of elsewhere in East Timor.

LEGAL MATTERS

If you are the victim of a serious crime, go to the nearest police station and notify your embassy. The Timorese police force is only one of a passel of national and international groups providing security in the country. If arrested, you have the right to a phone call and legal representation, which your embassy can help locate.

Possession and trafficking of illicit drugs carries stiff penalties.

MAPS

The Timorese government's tourism department distributes a free and pretty good *Timor-Leste* country map (1:750,000), which you'll find around Dili. Other than that, accurate and up-to-date maps are a business opportunity for someone.

MONEY

The US dollar is the official currency of East Timor. Locally minted centavo coins also circulate, which are of equal value to US cents.

Make sure you arrive with US dollars as there are no exchange services at the airport. In fact, arriving with any other currency means you'll probably be leaving with that currency as well. You'll need to make all financial transactions in Dili, where ATMs dispense US dollars and banks change travellers cheques (see p39 for details).

A few establishments in Dili accept credit cards, though there's often a hefty 5% surcharge attached. Elsewhere in the country it's all cash, all the time.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Print film and video cassettes are readily available in Dili, but specialist film and camera batteries can be hard to find, so if you have specialist photographic requirements, it's wise to bring supplies with you. Getting film developed is not so easy. Conditions can be severe in East Timor; it can get dusty, hot and humid, so take care with sensitive cameras, particularly digital equipment. The usual precautions for taking photographs in intense tropical light conditions apply, but photographers will find the East Timorese are happy to be photographed, particularly children. This is not a country that has been subjected to a surfeit of photographers, but, of course, the usual rules apply: don't take photographs or video if the subject doesn't want to be filmed, and always ask permission first.

POST

East Timor post offices offer no mail delivery services to individual addresses in East Timor. Post-office box delivery is the best you can expect, and even the number of post-office boxes is limited. Dili and Baucau are the only real places for outgoing mail service. Postage on postcards is US50¢ to anywhere in the world; deliveries take two to four weeks.

For express mail, DHL has an agent in Dili (at Harvey World Travel, see p39 for details).

TELEPHONE

If you're phoning an East Timor number from overseas, the international country code is ☎ 670. When making an international call from East Timor, the access code is ☎ 0011. There are no area codes in East Timor, and few landline numbers outside Dili. Landline

numbers begin with 3 or 4; mobile numbers start with 7. You can make local and international calls from Timor Telecom offices in Dili and Baucau.

A mobile phone is useful in East Timor. You can purchase a SIM card from **Timor Telecom** (www.timortelecom.tp) for US\$20, which includes US\$10 credit. Beware of vendors who may say you have to buy a card to go with your SIM card – you don't. All around Dili you will be besieged by street vendors offering scratch-off cards with additional credit in many amounts. You'll soon need them as the monopoly on phone service allows Timor Telecom to charge up to US25¢ a minute for domestic calls and up to US\$2 a minute for international calls.

Coverage around the country is good in populated areas and mobile use is widespread.

Note that calling East Timor from abroad can be costly. Even people with discounted international plans may pay as much as US\$3 per minute. Know that those whispered sweet nothings will cost you something.

TIME

East Timor is nine hours ahead of GMT (UTC). When it's noon in Dili, it's 10am in western Indonesia (including Bali), 11am in central Indonesia, 12.30pm in Darwin and 1pm on the Australian east coast. Further afield, it will be 7pm the previous day in Los Angeles, 10pm the previous day in New York and Montreal, and 3am in London.

TOILETS

Hotels and restaurants recommended in this book will have toilet facilities ranging from modern Western flush toilets down to a well-kept hole in the ground with a handy bucket of water. Elsewhere you'll be doing OK if you can find a hole in the ground. Obviously you'll want to carry something like toilet paper around with you to ensure you end up feeling fresh.

TOURIST INFORMATION

East Timor doesn't have a tourist office. However, the expat community is especially generous with information. Drop by any of the popular bars, restaurants or dive shops and soon you'll be hooked into all sorts of info. Locals are also very happy to help and – language differences aside – are usually honoured by your visit and eager to help.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

East Timor makes absolutely no provisions for disabled travellers. The East Timorese are likely to be very helpful – they've faced plenty of problems of their own over the years – but there are unlikely to be any facilities established with travellers with disabilities in mind.

VISAS

An entry visa (for up to 30 days) is granted to valid-passport holders for US\$30 on arrival in East Timor. To avoid hassles later if plans change, always ask for a 30-day visa, even if you plan on staying for a shorter period. Visas can be extended for US\$30 a month if the applicant has a valid reason to do so.

Some travellers visit East Timor to renew their Indonesian visas. An Indonesian visa takes three to five working days to process at the remarkably pleasant and well-organised Dili embassy. A 30-day tourist visa costs US\$45. A single-entry seven-day transit visa costs US\$20 and a double-entry version costs US\$40 (the latter is useful for land trips to Oecussi as you'll need a visa both to get there via Indonesia as well as leave).

See p88 for a list of embassies and consulates in Dili.

VOLUNTEERING

Major volunteer organisations active in East Timor include the following: **Australian Volunteers International** (www.australianvolunteers.com) and **UN Volunteers** (www.unv.org). There are scores more groups working in the country; visit the links page at www.etan.org for a voluminous listing.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Women travellers need to be aware of personal security issues, particularly in Dili. Do not walk or take taxis after dark, unless you're in a group. Assault and rape do occur. That said, respect is part of local culture and overt harassment is bad form (a local guy trying it might well get a stern admonishment from a local woman).

Women travellers will attract less attention by wearing knee-length or longer clothes, and may want to cover their shoulders. Bikinis are tolerated in only a few locations, such as the popular beaches in Dili. Wearing shorts and a T-shirt is more acceptable beach attire.

Transport

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Just getting around East Timor can be the highlight of any trip. Not only for the adventure and the likely stories that will come out of it but also because you'll really see the country, including its often great natural beauty. Some backroads traverse lands where people live as they have for centuries. Locals welcome your voyeurism with a friendly wave.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are no boat services to East Timor from other countries. Your only way here will be via one of two air routes or overland from West Timor. For info on getting to the tiny enclave of Oecussi, see p83.

AIR

Dili's Nicolau Lobato International Airport (DIL) is not an impressive entry to the country. Dirty toilets, busted light bulbs and just plain dirt are its hallmarks. There are only two airline routes to the rest of the world: to Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory and Denpasar in Bali.

Air North (☎ 1800 627 474 in Australia; www.airnorth.com.au) flies twice daily between Darwin and Dili (return fares from a shocking US\$500, 1½ hours). **Merpati** (Map pp36-7; ☎ 332 1880; www.merpati.co.id; Landmark Plaza, Av dos Mártires de Pátria) flies almost daily between Denpasar (Bali) and Dili (return fares from an almost shocking US\$300, two hours).

Generally, most people will fly via Bali not only because it makes a delightful stopover but also because airfares to Bali from much

of the world are more competitive than those to Darwin.

Overall, the cost of flying to East Timor is pretty high and this holds down both casual travel and people looking to renew their Indonesian visa (it's cheaper to fly to Singapore from expat-crawling Bali than it is to fly to Dili). If airfares could be reduced from Bali, a quick add-on tour market would likely develop for visitors there. The Darwin airfares are just silly.

BUS

Overland travellers have one point of entry into East Timor.

The four-hour bus ride from Dili to the border town of Batugade costs US\$5. You have to walk 200m across the border to Motoain in West Timor, from where a *mikrolet* (minibus) costs less than US\$2 to Atambua. Buses from Atambua to Kupang cost about US\$5 and take eight hours. Buses to and from Dili stop running by mid-afternoon, so don't get caught at the border where there's no place to stay. You'll need an Indonesian visa before crossing the border into West Timor (see p91).

Much easier is the through-bus service offered by **Timor Tour & Travel** (Map pp36-7; ☎ 333 1014; Rua Quinze de Outubro 17, Dili). There's a daily service between Dili and Kupang, which takes 12 hours in an air-conditioned minibus (US\$18); book in advance (☎ 0380-881 543; Jl Timor Raya 8, Kupang).

GETTING AROUND

Roads are the great limiting factor in getting around East Timor. They stink and are getting worse with every rain storm. Even places that had pretty good access five years ago are often now a challenge for traveller and vehicle. The one exception is the coast road all the way from the Indonesian border through Dili and Baucau to Com. This is suitable for conventional cars. Elsewhere, regional centres like Maliana, Suai, Same, Viqueque, Tutuala and Lospalos are reachable but stretches of bad road will require a 4WD. The south coast and more inland towns may not be reachable at all.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow jetsetters to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: lonelyplanet.com.

Be sure to make inquiries before setting out from Dili and prepare for being stranded by bringing along extra supplies, especially water. Traffic on the roads is light; your greatest hazard apart from potholes are white SUVs.

Get any local talking about the roads and first they'll deplore their general state. But then they'll quickly move on to their real beef: UN and NGO SUVs (always white) that speed around the country at haphazard speeds with little regard for others on or near the road.

Don't follow their example, instead enjoy driving at a reasonable pace with your windows rolled down, waving greetings to people you pass. Invariably you'll get a big smile in return. By contrast, all you have to do is see the looks on people's faces as an NGO or white SUV blows past, its occupants hidden behind dark windows, to see how many hearts and minds are being won.

Buses are plentiful to all major places. Vehicles can be hired in Dili and you might find a driver with a vehicle.

BICYCLE

For cycling long distances, new bikes can be purchased in Dili for around US\$175. Road conditions away from the north coast can be brutal, which may appeal to mountain bikers, but traffic is usually light.

BOAT

Ferry transport is available between Dili and Atauro Island (see p80 for details), and Dili and the Oecussi enclave (see p83). The new German-built ferry *Nakroma* features three classes of service: economy, business and VIP. The seats in all are the same but those in VIP are in a small and unpleasant room. In practice, business-class tickets are for foreigners and economy tickets are for locals. People freely mix across the compact ship. Secure space on the small top deck to avoid the many passengers who find eruptive discomfort in even the calmest of seas.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change as East Timor is constantly changing. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for reaching the country. The same goes once you're in East Timor. Although roads may yet get even worse, there's also the likelihood that once oil money starts flowing, a roadworks scheme will see improvements nationwide.

HOW MUCH IS THAT CHICKEN UNDER MY TYRE?

Even though road conditions keep speed down, there's still the chance that you'll hit something unintended while you drive. Boulders are an obvious hazard, but so too are various domestic animals that have little aversion to the light traffic.

Should you, say, hit a chicken, stop immediately. Small as the fowl is, it's a significant investment to most of the impoverished folk living in the countryside. Although you may just want to offer some money and be on your way, that's very bad form. Good manners dictate that you allow a pause while the owner offers a harsh assessment of your driving skills. Eventually you will learn that the chicken was the smartest one of its kind in East Timor or possibly a gift from a beloved grandmother.

At this point negotiations will begin and you'll end up paying about US\$20 for the chicken's demise. Once compensation's been paid, there will be smiles all around. Other critters that come with a price include dogs (US\$10 to US\$20), piglets (US\$20), mature pigs (US\$100) and goats (US\$200).

Should you run into one of the enormous and tank-like water buffaloes, it's likely somebody else will be paying for you.

There are also reports that on the long Oecussi run you might be able to secure an officer's bunk for roughly US\$40. The boat has a limited snack counter, good for water, drinks and packaged snacks.

BUS & MIKROLET

Cramped *mikrolets* operate at least daily between most towns, and generally depart early in the morning. Outlying villages are serviced less frequently by *anggunas* – flat-bed trucks where passengers (including the odd buffalo or goat) all pile into the back. Ask locally for departure points. Large but still crowded buses run frequently on important runs like Dili–Baucau.

The less mature make take some amusement from the many buses bearing the legends 'PP' and 'BM' on the front. These acronyms mean that the bus runs a return service on its route.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving in East Timor is optimistically termed an adventure. Except for Dili and the main road running along the north coast, most roads are deeply potholed and rutted. You'll be lucky to average 30kph and even then you'll need to be on the lookout for kids, goats, dogs etc. Bridges and entire segments of road wash away or flood during the rainy season. Check conditions with the UN (☎ 331 2210 ext 5454, 723 0635).

Rentlo (Map pp36-7; ☎ 723 5089; www.rentlocarhire.com; Fomento-Comoro, Dili) is the main source of vehicles; it's 3km from the airport on the main road. Rentals include 100km free per day and limited liability coverage is available from US\$15 per day (with a whopping US\$6000 deductible) and may be needed, given the

toll the roads take on cars. A compact car costs from US\$40 per day, a small 4WD from US\$70. Consider sharing.

Motorcycles are quite handy, breezing over bumps at a respectable pace. **East Timor Backpackers** (Map pp36-7; ☎ 723 8121; Av Almirante Americo Tomas, Dili) charges US\$15 to US\$25 per day.

Alternatively you could make arrangements with a driver so that you can enjoy the scenery while someone else tackles the potholes (and brings their local knowledge to bear). Ask around and expect to negotiate starting from US\$40 per day.

The myriad hazards make driving at night foolish.

FUEL

Petrol (gasoline) in Portuguese is *besin*, diesel fuel is *solar*; expect to pay at least US\$1 per litre. Petrol is usually sold from used plastic water containers at roadside stands. The quality varies. In Dili, Tiger Fuel (see p50 for details) is a reliable full-service petrol station.

HITCHING

Hitchhiking is never entirely safe, so it's not recommended. It's not uncommon for locals walking 5km or so into town to ask for a ride. A traveller doing the same would be expected to pay a small sum – usually the price of a *mikrolet* ride.

TAXI

Dili has a big fleet of often rather tatty taxis, many with a big hole in the windshield from a thrown rock. Elsewhere there are no taxis and almost no private vehicles of any kind.

Health

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A tropical country with low sanitation standards, East Timor is an easy place to get ill. The climate provides a good breeding ground for malarial mosquitoes, but the biggest hazards come from contaminated food and water. Don't worry excessively about this – with some basic precautions and adequate information, few travellers experience more than upset stomachs. Travellers tend to worry about contracting infectious diseases when in the tropics, but infections rarely cause serious illness or death in travellers. Pre-existing medical conditions, such as heart disease and accidental injury (especially traffic accidents), account for most life-threatening situations.

The following advice is a general guide only and does not replace the advice of a doctor trained in travel medicine.

BEFORE YOU GO

Pack medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. If you have a heart condition, bring a copy of your ECG taken just before travelling.

If you take any regular medication, bring double your needs in case of loss or theft. It would also be wise to carry these extra sup-

HEALTH ADVISORIES

It's usually a good idea to consult government travel health websites before departure.

Australia (www.smartraveller.gov.au)

Canada (www.travelhealth.gc.ca)

New Zealand (www.safetravel.govt.nz)

UK (www.dh.gov.uk)

US (wwwn.cdc.gov/travel)

plies separately. You may be able to buy some medications over the counter in Dili without a doctor's prescription, but it can be difficult to find some of the newer drugs, particularly the latest antidepressants, blood pressure medications and contraceptive pills.

INSURANCE

Even if you are fit and healthy, don't travel without health insurance – because accidents do happen. Declare any existing medical conditions you have – the insurance company will then establish whether or not your problem is pre-existing and will not cover you if it is undeclared. You may require extra cover for adventure activities, such as scuba diving, and you should pay particular attention to the small print if you intend to use a motorcycle. If you're uninsured, emergency evacuation is expensive; bills of more than US\$100,000 are not uncommon. Find out in advance whether or not your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenses. Doctors may expect payment in cash.

VACCINATIONS

Specialised travel-medicine clinics are your best source of information; they stock all available vaccines and will be able to give specific recommendations for you and your trip. The doctors will take into account such factors as past vaccination history, the length of your trip, activities you may be undertaking and underlying medical conditions.

Most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before

departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

Recommended items for a medical kit:

- Antibacterial cream, eg Muciprocin
- Antibiotic for skin infections, eg Amoxicillin/Clavulanate or Cephalexin
- Antibiotics for diarrhoea include Norfloxacin or Ciprofloxacin; for bacterial diarrhoea Azithromycin; for giardiasis or amoebic dysentery Tinidazole
- Antifungal cream, eg Clotrimazole
- Antihistamine – there are many options, eg Cetrizine for daytime and Promethazine for night
- Antinausea medication, eg Prochlorperazine
- Antiseptic, eg Betadine
- Antispasmodic for stomach cramps, eg Buscopan
- Contraceptives
- Decongestant, eg containing pseudoephedrine
- DEET-based insect repellent (at least 25% DEET)
- Diarrhoea 'stopper', eg Loperamide
- First-aid items, such as scissors, Elastoplasts, bandages, gauze, thermometer (but not mercury), sterile needles and syringes, safety pins and tweezers
- Ibuprofen or another anti-inflammatory
- Indigestion medication, eg Quick Eze or Mylanta
- Iodine tablets (unless you are pregnant or have a thyroid problem) to purify water
- Laxative, eg Coloxyl
- Medicine for migraines if you suffer from them
- Oral rehydration solution for diarrhoea, eg Gastrolyte
- Paracetamol
- Permethrin to impregnate clothing and mosquito nets
- Steroid cream for allergic/itchy rashes, eg 1% to 2% hydrocortisone
- Sunscreen and hat
- Throat lozenges
- Thrush (vaginal yeast infection) treatment, eg Clotrimazole pessaries or Diflucan tablet
- Ural or equivalent if you're prone to urinary tract infections

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the internet. **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good place to start. The **World Health Organization** (WHO; www.who.int/ith/) publishes a superb downloadable book called *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually and is available online at no cost. Another website of general interest is **MD Travel Health** (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country and is updated daily. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC; www.cdc.gov) website also has good general information.

FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel – Asia & India* is a handy pocket-sized book that is packed with useful information, including pretrip planning, emergency first aid, immunisation and disease information, and what to do if you get sick on the road. Other recommended references include *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood and *Travelling Well* by Dr Deborah Mills – check out the website www.travellingwell.com.au.

IN EAST TIMOR

AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE

In Dili a patchwork of medical facilities exists. The **Dili Nacional Hospital** (Map pp36-7; ☎ 331 1008; Rua Cicade Viana do Castelo) often has highly skilled medical personnel on volunteer rotations from outside the country assisting local staff. In addition, although not formally organised, the various NGOs, UN agencies and embassies will network to get assistance for expats. But for anything serious you'll need to be evacuated to Darwin or Bali and beyond to Singapore.

Outside Dili little medical attention is available, but fortunately most common illnesses can either be prevented with some common-sense behaviour or be treated easily with a well-stocked traveller's medical kit. In some towns you may be able to purchase simple antibiotics, but for anything more serious, or simply to see a doctor, you'll need to go to Dili.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES Dengue Fever

This mosquito-borne disease is becoming increasingly problematic throughout Asia and is common in East Timor. As there's no vaccine

RECOMMENDED & REQUIRED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization recommends the following vaccinations for travellers to Southeast Asia:

- **Adult diphtheria and tetanus** Single booster recommended if none in the previous 10 years. Side effects include a sore arm and fever.
- **Hepatitis A** Provides almost 100% protection for up to a year; a booster after 12 months provides at least another 20 years' protection. Mild side effects such as headache and sore arm occur in 5% to 10% of people.
- **Hepatitis B** Now considered routine for most travellers. Given as three shots over six months. A rapid schedule is also available, as is a combined vaccination with hepatitis A. Side effects are mild and uncommon – usually headache and sore arm. In 95% of people lifetime protection results.
- **Measles, mumps and rubella** Two doses of MMR are required unless you have had the diseases. Occasionally a rash and flu-like illness develops a week after receiving the vaccine. Many young adults require a booster.
- **Polio** No countries in Southeast Asia have recently reported cases of polio. Only one booster is required in an adult for lifetime protection. Inactivated polio vaccine is safe during pregnancy.
- **Typhoid** Recommended; the vaccine offers around 70% protection, lasts for two to three years and comes as a single shot. Tablets are also available; however, the injection is usually recommended as it has fewer side effects. Sore arm and fever may occur.
- **Varicella** If you haven't had chickenpox, discuss the vaccination with your doctor.

These immunisations are recommended for longer-term travellers (more than one month) or those at special risk:

- **Japanese B encephalitis** Three injections in all; booster recommended after two years. Sore arm and headache are the most common side effects. Rarely, an allergic reaction comprising hives and swelling can occur up to 10 days after any of the three doses.
- **Meningitis** Single injection. There are two types of vaccination. The quadrivalent vaccine gives two to three years' protection. Meningitis group C vaccine gives around 10 years' protection. Recommended for long-term backpackers younger than 25.
- **Rabies** Three injections in all. A booster after one year will then provide 10 years' protection. Side effects are rare – occasionally headache and sore arm.
- **Tuberculosis** A complex issue. Adult long-term travellers are usually recommended to have a TB skin test before and after travel, rather than vaccination. Children may be recommended to have the vaccination; only one is necessary in a lifetime.

The only vaccine required by international regulations is yellow fever. Proof of vaccination will be required only if you have visited a country in the yellow-fever zone within the six days before entering Southeast Asia. If you are travelling to Southeast Asia from Africa or South America, you should check to see whether you require proof of vaccination.

available, it can be prevented only by avoiding mosquito bites. The mosquito that carries dengue bites both day and night, so use insect avoidance measures at all times. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache and body ache (dengue was previously known as 'breakbone fever'). Some people develop a rash and experience diarrhoea. There's no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol – don't take aspirin as it increases the likelihood of haemorrhaging. See a doctor to be diagnosed and monitored.

Hepatitis A & B

Hepatitis A is a food- and water-borne virus, which infects the liver, causing jaundice

(yellow skin and eyes), nausea and lethargy. There's no specific treatment for hepatitis A; you'll just need to allow time for the liver to heal. All travellers to East Timor should be vaccinated against hepatitis A.

Hepatitis B is spread by body fluids, including sexual contact. It can be prevented by vaccination.

Hepatitis E

Hepatitis E is transmitted through contaminated food and water, and has similar symptoms to hepatitis A but is far less common. It's a severe problem in pregnant women and can result in the death of mother

and baby. There is currently no vaccine; prevention is by following safe eating and drinking guidelines.

HIV

HIV is increasing through much of Southeast Asia, with heterosexual sex now the main method of transmission. East Timor has low-profile prostitution centred in Dili.

Influenza

Present year-round in the tropics, influenza (flu) symptoms include high fever, muscle aches, runny nose, cough and sore throat. It can be very severe in people over the age of 65 or in those with underlying medical conditions, such as heart disease or diabetes; vaccination is recommended for these individuals. There is no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol.

Japanese B Encephalitis

Rare in travellers, this viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes is found in East Timor. Most cases of Japanese B encephalitis occur in rural areas, and vaccination is recommended for travellers spending more than one month in the country. There is no treatment. A third of infected people will die, and another third will suffer permanent brain damage.

Malaria

Malaria is a significant problem in East Timor, including Dili. Take all possible precautions. In many parts of Asia the risk of side effects from antimalarials may outweigh the risk of getting the disease. But this is not the case in East Timor, where the risk of contracting malaria is far more serious than the risk of any side effects from tablets. Remember that malaria can be fatal. Before you travel, seek medical advice on the right medication and dosage for you.

Malaria is caused by a parasite transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. The most important symptom of malaria is fever, but general symptoms such as headache, diarrhoea, cough or chills may also occur. Diagnosis can be made only by taking a blood sample.

Two strategies should be combined to prevent malaria: mosquito avoidance and antimalarial medications. Most people who catch malaria have taken inadequate or no antimalarial medication.

Travellers should prevent mosquito bites by taking these steps:

- Use a strong DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin. Wash this off at night, as long as you are sleeping under a mosquito net treated with permethrin. Natural repellents such as citronella can be effective, but must be applied more frequently than products containing DEET.
- Sleep under a mosquito net impregnated with permethrin.
- Where possible choose accommodation with screens and fans (if not air-con). Check windows and doors for gaps that let insects in.
- Impregnate clothing with permethrin.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers in light colours.
- Use mosquito coils.
- Spray your room with insect repellent before going out for your evening meal.

TREATMENT

There are a variety of antimalarial medications available:

Artesunate Artesunate derivatives are not suitable as a preventive medication. They are useful treatments under medical supervision.

Chloroquine & Paludrine The effectiveness of this combination is now limited in most of Southeast Asia. Generally not recommended.

Doxycycline This daily tablet is a broad-spectrum antibiotic that has the added benefit of helping to prevent a variety of tropical diseases, including leptospirosis, tick-borne diseases, typhus and melioidosis. The potential side effects include photosensitivity (a tendency to sunburn), thrush in women, indigestion, heartburn, nausea and interference with the contraceptive pill. More serious side effects include ulceration of the oesophagus – you can help prevent this by taking your tablet with a meal and a large glass of water, and never lying down within half an hour of taking it. Must be taken for four weeks after leaving the risk area.

Lariam (Mefloquine) This weekly tablet suits many people. Serious side effects are rare but include depression, anxiety, psychosis and having fits. Anyone with a history of depression, anxiety, other psychological disorders or epilepsy should not take Lariam. It's considered safe in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. It's around 90% effective in most parts of Asia. Tablets must be taken for four weeks after leaving the risk area.

Malarone This recent drug is a combination of Atovaquone and Proguanil. Side effects are uncommon and mild, most commonly nausea and headache. It is the best tablet for scuba divers and for those on short trips to

high-risk areas. It must be taken for one week after leaving the risk area. It is commonly taken by visitors to East Timor. Secure your supply before arriving.

A final option is to take no preventive medication but to have a supply of emergency medication should you develop the symptoms of malaria. This is less than ideal, and you'll need to get to a good medical facility within 24 hours of developing a fever. If you choose this option, the most effective and safest treatment is Malarone (four tablets once daily for three days). Other options include Mefloquine and quinine, but the side effects of these drugs at treatment doses make them less desirable. Fansidar is no longer recommended.

Measles

This highly contagious bacterial infection is spread via coughing and sneezing. Most people born before 1966 are immune, as they had the disease in childhood. Measles starts with a high fever and rash, and can be complicated by pneumonia and brain disease. There is no specific treatment.

Rabies

This fatal disease is not believed to be present in East Timor, although it occurs in nearby Indonesian island areas. Rabies is spread by the bite or lick of an infected animal – most commonly a dog or monkey. You should seek medical advice immediately after any animal bite and confirm the local rabies situation.

STDs

Sexually transmitted diseases most common in Southeast Asia include herpes, warts, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. People carrying these diseases often have no signs of infection. Condoms will prevent gonorrhoea and chlamydia but not warts or herpes. If after a sexual encounter you develop any rash, lumps, discharge or pain when passing urine, seek immediate medical attention. If you have been sexually active during your travels, have an STD check on your return home.

Tuberculosis

Although tuberculosis (TB) is rare in travellers, it is prevalent in East Timor. Medical and aid workers and long-term travellers who have significant contact with the local population should take precautions. Vaccination is usually given only to children under the age of

five, but adults at risk are recommended to have TB testing both before and after travelling. The main symptoms are fever, cough, weight loss, night sweats and tiredness.

Typhoid

This serious bacterial infection is spread via food and water. It causes a high and slowly progressive fever and a headache, and may be accompanied by a dry cough and stomach pain. It's diagnosed by blood tests and treated with antibiotics. Vaccination is recommended for travellers spending more than a week in the region or travelling outside the major cities. Be aware that vaccination is not 100% effective so you must still be careful with what you eat and drink.

TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea is by far the most common problem affecting travellers – between 30% and 50% of people will suffer from it within two weeks of starting their trip. In more than 80% of cases, traveller's diarrhoea is caused by a bacteria (there are numerous potential culprits), and therefore it responds promptly to treatment with antibiotics. Treatment with antibiotics will depend on your situation – how sick you are, how quickly you need to get better, where you are etc. 'Traveller's diarrhoea' is defined as the passage of more than three watery bowel actions within 24 hours, plus at least one other symptom, such as fever, cramps, nausea, vomiting or feeling generally unwell. Treatment consists of staying well hydrated; rehydration solutions like Gastrolyte are the best for this. Antibiotics such as Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin (especially effective) or Azithromycin will kill the bacteria quickly.

Loperamide is just a 'stopper' and doesn't get to the cause of the problem. It can be helpful, for example, if you have to go on a long bus ride. Don't take Loperamide if you have a fever or blood in your stools. Seek medical attention quickly if you do not respond to an appropriate antibiotic.

Amoebic Dysentery

Amoebic dysentery is very rare in travellers, but is often misdiagnosed by poor-quality labs in Asia. Symptoms are similar to bacterial diarrhoea, ie fever, bloody diarrhoea and generally feeling unwell. You should always seek reliable medical care if you have blood in your diarrhoea. Treatment involves two

drugs: Tinidazole or Metronidazole to kill the parasite in your gut, and then a second drug to kill the cysts. If left untreated, complications such as liver abscess and abscess in the gut can occur.

Giardiasis

Giardia lamblia is a parasite that is relatively common in travellers. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, excess gas, fatigue and intermittent diarrhoea. 'Eggy' burps are often attributed solely to giardiasis, but work in Nepal has shown that they are not specific to this infection. The parasite will eventually go away if left untreated but this can take months. The treatment of choice is Tinidazole, with Metronidazole being a second-line option.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Diving

Divers and surfers should seek specialised advice before they travel to ensure that their medical kit contains treatment for coral cuts and tropical ear infections, as well as the standard problems. Divers should ensure that their insurance covers them for decompression illness – get specialised dive insurance through an organisation such as **DAN** (Divers Alert Network; www.danasiapacific.org).

Food

Eating in restaurants is the biggest risk factor for contracting traveller's diarrhoea. Ways to avoid it include eating only freshly cooked food and avoiding shellfish and food that has been sitting around. Peel all fruit, cook vegetables and be wary of raw vegetables. Eat in busy restaurants with a high turnover of customers. Always wipe the top of beverage cans and bottles with a dry and clean napkin or cloth; all ice and water is suspect. Bottled water is readily available.

Heat

East Timor can be very hot and humid throughout the year. Most people take at least two weeks to adapt to the hot climate. Swelling of the feet and ankles is common, as are muscle cramps caused by excessive sweating. Prevent these by avoiding dehydration and too much activity in the heat. Take it easy when you first arrive. Don't eat salt tablets (they aggravate the gut), but drinking rehydration solution or eating salty food helps.

DRINKING WATER

- Never drink tap water.
- Bottled water is generally safe – check that the seal is intact at purchase.
- Avoid ice.
- Be sure to wipe any liquid off the tops of beverage cans.
- Avoid fresh juices – they may have been watered down.
- Boiling water is the most efficient method of purifying it.
- The best chemical purifier is iodine. It should not be used by pregnant women or those with thyroid problems.
- Water filters should also filter out viruses. Ensure that your filter has a chemical barrier, such as iodine, and a small pore size, ie less than four microns.

Treat cramps by stopping activity, resting, rehydrating with double-strength rehydration solution and gently stretching.

Dehydration is the main contributor to heat exhaustion. Symptoms include feeling weak, headache, irritability, nausea or vomiting, sweaty skin, a fast, weak pulse and a slightly elevated body temperature. Treatment involves getting the victim out of the heat and/or sun, fanning them and applying cool wet cloths to the skin, laying the victim flat with their legs raised and rehydrating with water containing a quarter of a teaspoon of salt per litre. Recovery is usually rapid, although it's common to feel weak for some days afterwards.

Heatstroke is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms come on suddenly and include weakness, nausea, a hot dry body with a body temperature higher than 41°C, dizziness, confusion, loss of coordination, fits, and eventual collapse and loss of consciousness. Seek medical help and commence cooling by getting the sufferer out of the heat, removing their clothes, fanning them and applying cool, wet cloths or ice to their body, especially to the groin and armpits.

Prickly heat is a common skin rash in the tropics, caused by sweat being trapped under the skin. The result is an itchy rash of tiny lumps. If you develop prickly heat, treat it by moving out of the heat and into an air-

conditioned area for a few hours and by having cool showers. Creams and ointments clog the skin so they should be avoided. Locally bought prickly-heat powder can be helpful.

Tropical fatigue is common in long-term expatriates based in the tropics. It's rarely due to disease but is caused by the climate, inadequate mental rest, excessive alcohol intake and the demands of daily work in a different culture.

Insect Bites & Stings

Bedbugs don't carry disease, but their bites are very itchy. They live in the cracks of furniture and walls, and then migrate to the bed at night to feed on you. You can treat the itch with an antihistamine. Lice inhabit various parts of your body but most commonly your head and pubic area. They can be difficult to treat, and you may need numerous applications of an antilice shampoo, such as permethrin. Transmission is via close contact with an infected person. Pubic lice are usually contracted from sexual contact.

Ticks are contracted after walking in the bush. Ticks are commonly found behind the ears, on the belly and in the armpits. If you have had a tick bite and experience symptoms, such as a rash at the site of the bite or elsewhere, a fever or muscle aches, you should see a doctor. Doxycycline prevents tick-borne diseases.

Leeches are found in humid rainforest areas. They do not transmit any disease, but their bites are often intensely itchy for weeks afterwards and can easily become infected. Apply iodine-based antiseptic to any leech bite to help prevent infection.

Bee and wasp stings mainly cause problems for people who are allergic to them. Anyone with a serious bee or wasp allergy should carry an injection of adrenaline (eg an EpiPen) for emergency treatment. For others, pain is the main problem – apply ice to the sting and take painkillers.

Most jellyfish in Southeast Asian waters are not dangerous, just irritating. First aid for jellyfish stings involves pouring vinegar onto the affected area to neutralise the poison. Don't rub sand or water onto the stings. Take painkillers, and anyone who feels ill in any way after being stung should seek medical advice. Take local advice if there are dangerous jellyfish around, and keep out of the water.

Parasites

Numerous parasites are common in local populations in Southeast Asia; however, most of these are rare in travellers. The two rules to follow if you wish to avoid parasitic infections are to wear shoes and to avoid eating raw food, especially fish, pork and vegetables. A number of parasites are transmitted via the skin by walking barefoot, including strongyloides, hookworm and cutaneous larva migrans.

Skin Problems

Fungal rashes are common in humid climates. There are two common fungal rashes that affect travellers. The first occurs in moist areas that get less air, such as the groin, armpits and between the toes. It starts as a red patch that slowly spreads and is usually itchy. Treatment involves keeping the skin dry, avoiding chafing and using an antifungal cream, such as Clotrimazole or Lamisil. Tinea versicolour is also common – this fungus causes small, light-coloured patches, most commonly on the back, chest and shoulders. Consult a doctor.

Cuts and scratches become easily infected in humid climates. Take meticulous care of any cuts and scratches to prevent complications such as abscesses. Immediately wash all wounds in clean water and apply antiseptic. If you develop signs of infection (increasing pain and redness), see a doctor. Divers and surfers should be particularly careful with coral cuts as they become easily infected.

Snakes

Southeast Asia is home to many species of poisonous and harmless snakes. Assume all snakes are poisonous, and never try to catch one. Always wear boots and long pants if walking in an area that may have snakes. First aid in the event of a snakebite involves pressure immobilisation via an elastic bandage firmly wrapped around the affected limb, starting at the bite site and working up towards the chest. The bandage should not be so tight that the circulation is cut off; the fingers or toes should be kept free so that the circulation can be checked. Immobilise the limb with a splint, and carry the victim to medical attention. Don't use tourniquets or try to suck the venom out. Antivenom is available for most species.

Sunburn

Even on a cloudy day, sunburn can occur rapidly. Always use a strong sunscreen (at least factor 15), making sure to reapply it after a swim; and always wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses outdoors. Avoid lying in the sun during the hottest part of the day (10am to 2pm). If you become sunburnt, stay out of the sun until you have recovered, apply cool compresses and take painkillers for the discomfort. One per cent hydrocortisone cream applied twice daily is also helpful.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Pregnant women should receive specialised advice before travelling. The ideal time to travel is in the second trimester (between 16 and 28 weeks), when the risk of pregnancy-related problems is at its lowest and pregnant women generally feel at their best. During the first trimester there's a risk of miscarriage, and in the third trimester such complications as premature labour and high blood pressure are possible. It's wise to travel with a companion. Avoid travel in rural areas with poor transport and medical facilities. Most of all, ensure that travel insurance covers all

pregnancy-related possibilities, including premature labour.

Malaria is a high-risk disease in pregnancy. The World Health Organization recommends that pregnant women do not travel to areas with Chloroquine-resistant malaria (some Chloroquine resistance has been reported in East Timor). None of the more effective antimalarial drugs is completely safe in pregnancy.

Traveller's diarrhoea can quickly lead to dehydration and result in inadequate blood flow to the placenta. Many of the drugs used to treat various diarrhoea bugs are not recommended in pregnancy. Azithromycin is considered safe.

In Dili supplies of sanitary products are readily available. Birth-control options may be limited so bring adequate supplies of your own form of contraception. Heat, humidity and antibiotics can all contribute to thrush. Treatment is with antifungal creams and pessaries such as Clotrimazole. A practical alternative is a single tablet of Fluconazole (Diflucan). Urinary-tract infections can be precipitated by dehydration or long bus journeys without toilet stops; bring suitable antibiotics.

Language

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WHICH LANGUAGE?

Just like Switzerland, there are four languages in use in East Timor. They are Tetun, Portuguese, Indonesian and English. Unlike Switzerland, East Timor does not have a well-funded school system to ensure that most citizens are polylingual. In fact, in a good year, it barely has the resources to ensure that its children can be educated in one language.

How did this situation come about? The story is almost a metaphor for the country. Tetun is the language spoken by a majority of East Timorese. It's an amalgam of various local dialects with a heavy dose of Portuguese influence (eg thank you, *obrigadu/a*, is very close to the Portuguese *obrigado/a*). At least 15 variations can be found around the country. It's primarily a spoken rather than written language.

After independence in 2002, the government decided to designate another official language and the choice, Portuguese, remains controversial. The reasons for this are many. During the Portuguese era the official language was, of course, Portuguese.

Twenty-five years of neglect meant that the number of Portuguese speakers had inevitably declined and were principally elderly. At independence it was estimated that less than 5% of the population spoke the language, down from a still-not-impressive 15% during the Portuguese era.

In addition, Portuguese was always the language of East Timor's economic and political elite and was used to keep the Tetun-speaking rabble in their place. A recent survey shows that less than 50% of those in parliament have a working knowledge of Portuguese and both the UN and the official 2006 census show Portuguese fluency at 5% and holding.

Still, making Portuguese an official language has helped East Timor maintain its cultural ties with Portugal and the country has a burgeoning foreign exchange student programme with Brazil. Perhaps most importantly, it's not the language of either of the two countries that have been most vexing to locals: Australia and Indonesia.

However, in making Portuguese the second official language, East Timor has ignored a couple of realities. Most importantly, Indonesian is spoken by a huge number of people. It was the only language taught from 1975 to 1999 and, as a result, it's understood by over 40% of the population. Although not typically used by locals in everyday discourse, vast numbers of Indonesian words flavour conversations. A visitor fluent in Indonesian would have no problem communicating anywhere in East Timor.

Ever the pragmatists, both Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta have called for Indonesian to remain an official 'working language' and have recognised that fluency is important for dealing with East Timor's large and previously restive neighbour.

Meanwhile, English, which many had hoped would be chosen as an official East Timorese language, is the other 'working language'. Advocates had hoped its selection would help the country in its international dealings, but this seems to be happening anyway, as it's an almost mandatory choice for East Timorese in higher education. Still,

outside of foreigner-frequented haunts in Dili, English isn't much use elsewhere.

On a final note, fans of the *I Love Lucy* episode in which a Parisian café becomes a Tower of Babel will appreciate that, due to a lack of people who speak both Indonesian and Portuguese, translation between the two are usually done via English.

TETUN

Tetun is the most widely spoken lingua franca in East Timor. For a comprehensive guide to the language, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *East Timor Phrasebook*, which offers an excellent introduction to Tetun.

For more in-depth coverage of the multifaceted local language scene, the **National Institute of Linguistics** (www.asianlang.mq.edu.au/INL/) in Dili has a number of specialised texts available.

PRONUNCIATION

j	as the 's' in 'pleasure' (sometimes as the 'z' in 'zebra')
r	trilled
x	as the 'sh' in 'ship' (the more traditional, Portuguese-style spelling is ch , but it's always pronounced as 'sh'); sometimes pronounced as the 's' in 'summer'

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...	<i>Hau buka hela ...</i>
guesthouse	<i>losmen/pensaun</i>
hotel	<i>otél</i>

Do you have any rooms available?	<i>Ita iha kuartu ruma mamuk?</i>
---	-----------------------------------

I'd like ...	<i>Hau hakarak ...</i>
a single room	<i>kuartu mesak ida</i>
to share a room	<i>faha kuartu ida</i>

CONVERSATION

Hello.	<i>Haló.</i> (polite)/ <i>Olá.</i> (informal)
Goodbye.	<i>Adeus.</i>
Yes.	<i>Sin/Diak/Los.</i>
No.	<i>Lae.</i>
Please.	<i>Favór ida/Halo favór/Faz favór/Par favór.</i>
Thank you (very much).	<i>Obrigadu/a (barak).</i>

EMERGENCIES – TETUN

Help!	<i>Ajuda!</i>
It's an emergency.	<i>Ne emerjénsia.</i>
I'm ill.	<i>Hau moras.</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>Bolu dotór!</i>
Call the police!	<i>Bolu polísia!</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Hau lakon tiha.</i>
Where are the toilets?	<i>Sintina iha nebé?</i>

You're welcome.	<i>La (iha) buat ida./ (De) nada.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Kolisensa.</i>
What's your name?	<i>Ita-nia naran sa/saida?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Hau-nia naran ...</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Ita koalia Inglês?</i>
I don't understand.	<i>Hau la kompriende.</i>

NUMBERS

Larger numbers are given in Tetun, Portuguese or Indonesian.

0	<i>nol</i>
1	<i>ida</i>
2	<i>rua</i>
3	<i>tolu</i>
4	<i>hat</i>
5	<i>lima</i>
6	<i>nen</i>
7	<i>hitu</i>
8	<i>ualu</i>
9	<i>sia</i>
10	<i>sanulu</i>
11	<i>sanulu-resin-ida</i>
12	<i>sanulu-resin-rua</i>
20	<i>ruanulu</i>
100	<i>atus ida</i>
1000	<i>rihunu ida</i>

SERVICES

Where is a/the ...?	<i>... iha nebé?</i>
bank	<i>banku</i>
general store	<i>loja</i>
market	<i>basar/merkadu</i>
post office	<i>koreiu; kantor pos</i>
telephone	<i>telefone; wartel</i>
toilet	<i>sintina/WC</i>

What time does ... open/close?	<i>Tuku hira maka ... loke/taka?</i>
How much is it?	<i>Folin hira?</i>

TIME & DAYS

What time is it? (It's) one o'clock.	<i>Tuku hira (ona)? Tuku ida.</i>
---	-----------------------------------

today	<i>ohin</i>
tonight	<i>ohin kalan</i>
tomorrow	<i>aban</i>
yesterday	<i>horseik</i>

Monday	<i>segunda</i>
Tuesday	<i>tersa</i>
Wednesday	<i>kuarta</i>
Thursday	<i>kinta</i>
Friday	<i>sesta</i>
Saturday	<i>sábadu</i>
Sunday	<i>dumingu</i>

TRANSPORT

When does the ... leave/arrive?	<i>Tuku hira maka ...</i>
bus	<i>ba/to?</i>
minibus	<i>bis/biskota</i>
plane	<i>mikrolet aviaun</i>

bus station	<i>terminal bis nian</i>
road to (Aileu)	<i>dalan ba (Aileu)</i>
Go straight ahead.	<i>Los deit.</i>
To the left.	<i>Fila ba liman karuk.</i>
To the right.	<i>Fila ba liman los.</i>
near	<i>besik</i>
far	<i>dok</i>

BAHASA INDONESIA

ACCOMMODATION

guesthouse	<i>losmen</i>
bathroom	<i>kamar mandi</i>
bed	<i>tempat tidur</i>
toilet	<i>WC (way say)/kamar kecil</i>

Is there a room available?	<i>Adakah kamar kosong?</i>
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------

May I see the room? one night	<i>Boleh saya melihat kamar? satu malam</i>
two nights	<i>dua malam</i>

CONVERSATION

Good morning.	<i>Selamat pagi.</i>
Good day.	<i>Selamat siang.</i>
Good afternoon.	<i>Selamat sore.</i>
Good evening/night.	<i>Selamat malam.</i>
Goodbye. (to person staying)	<i>Selamat tinggal.</i>
Goodbye. (to person going)	<i>Selamat jalan.</i>
How are you?	<i>Apa kabar?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>Kabar baik.</i>
Please.	<i>Tolong.</i>

EMERGENCIES – BAHASA

Help!	<i>Tolong!</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>Panggil dokter!</i>
Call the police!	<i>Panggil polisi!</i>
I'm ill.	<i>Saya sakit.</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Saya keasar.</i>
Go away!	<i>Pergi!</i>

Thank you (very much).	<i>Terima kasih (banyak).</i>
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Yes.	<i>Ya.</i>
No.	<i>Tidak/Bukan.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Maaf/Permisi.</i>
I don't understand.	<i>Saya tidak mengerti.</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Bisa berbicara bahasa Inggris?</i>

NUMBERS

1	<i>satu</i>
2	<i>dua</i>
3	<i>tiga</i>
4	<i>empat</i>
5	<i>lima</i>
6	<i>enam</i>
7	<i>tujuh</i>
8	<i>delapan</i>
9	<i>sembilan</i>
10	<i>sepuluh</i>
11	<i>sebelas</i>
20	<i>duapuluh</i>
21	<i>duapuluh satu</i>
30	<i>tigapuluh</i>
50	<i>limapuluh</i>
100	<i>seratus</i>
1000	<i>seribu</i>
2000	<i>duaribu</i>

SERVICES

Where is a/the ...?	<i>Dimana ...?</i>
bank	<i>bank</i>
post office	<i>kantor pos</i>
telephone	<i>telepon</i>
public toilet	<i>WC umum</i>

What time does it open/close?	<i>Jam berapa buka/tutup?</i>
How much is it?	<i>Berapa harganya ini?</i>
It's too expensive.	<i>Terlalu mahal.</i>

TIME

When?	<i>Kapan?</i>
At what time ...?	<i>Pada jam berapa ...?</i>
today	<i>hari ini</i>
tonight	<i>malam ini</i>

PORTUGUESE BASICS

Other than a few pleasantries and familiarity with numbers, you're unlikely to need much Portuguese in East Timor.

Hello.

Olá. o-laa

Good day.

Bom dia. bong dee-aa

Good evening.

Boa noite. bo-aa noy-te

See you later.

Até mais tarde. aa-te mais taarr-de

Goodbye.

Tchau. chau

How are you?

Como vai? ko-mo vai

Fine, and you?

Bem, e você? beng e vo-se

Do you speak English?

Você fala inglês? vo-se faa-laa een-gles

Yes.

Sim. seem

No.

Não. nowng

Please.

Por favor. por faa-vorr

Thank you (very much).

(Muito) obrigado/ (mween-to) o-bree-gaa-do/
obrigada. o-bree-gaa-daa (m/f)

You're welcome.

De nada. de naa-daa

Excuse me.

Com licença kom lee-seng-saa

Sorry.

Desculpa. des-kool-paa

What's your name?

Qual é o seu nome? kwow e o se-oo no-me

My name is ...

Meu nome é ... me-oo no-me e ...

Where are you from?

De onde você é? de ong-de vo-se e

I'm from ...

Eu sou (da/do/de) ... e-oo so (daa/do/de)

0	zero	ze-ro
1	um	oom
2	dois	doys
3	três	tres
4	quatro	kwa-tro
5	cinco	seen-ko
6	seis	says
7	sete	se-te
8	oito	oy-to
9	nove	naw-ve
10	dez	dez
11	onze	ong-ze
12	doze	do-ze
13	treze	tre-ze
14	quatorze	kaa-torr-ze
15	quinze	keen-ze
16	dezesseis	de-ze-says
17	dezesete	de-ze-se-te
18	dezoito	de-zoy-to
19	dezenove	de-ze-naw-ve
20	vinte	veen-te
21	vinte e um	veen-te e oom
30	trinta	treen-taa
40	quarenta	kwaa-ren-taa
50	cinquenta	seen-kwen-taa
60	sessenta	se-seng-taa
70	setenta	se-teng-taa
80	oitenta	oy-teng-taa
90	noventa	no-veng-taa
100	cem	seng
200	duzentos	doo-zeng-tos
1000	mil	mee-oo

tomorrow besok
yesterday kemarin

TRANSPORT

What time does Jam berapa ...
the ... leave/arrive? berangkat/tiba?
bus bis/bus
boat kapal

bus station setasiun bis/terminal
ticket karcis/tiket

I want to go to ... Saya mau pergi ke ...

How far? Berapa jauh?
near dekat
far jauh
straight ahead terus
left/right kiri/kanan
north utara
south selatan
east timur
west barat

Glossary

This glossary is a list of Indonesian (I), Portuguese (P) and Tetun (T) terms, and acronyms you may come across in East Timor.

ABRI – Indonesian Army and National Police Force until 1999 when it was divided into two separate forces

Apodeti – one of the three political parties that appeared after the collapse of the military government in Portugal in 1974; pushed for integration with Indonesia

ASDT-PSD – coalition of two parties with roots in the resistance years; placed third in the 2007 parliamentary elections

CNRT – National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction, the current party of Gusmão; finished second in 2007's parliamentary elections and formed the government in coalition

deportado – a Portuguese exile from the Salazar dictatorship period

deuhoto (T) – large conical Bunak houses

Falantil – military wing of Fretilin; formed the guerrilla army in the anti-Indonesian struggle; after independence helped the International Peace Keeping Forces patrol the Indonesian border area

F-FDTL – Timor-Leste Defence Force; the army and navy

Fretilin – left-wing political party that played a major part in the early struggle against Indonesia and now one of two major parties; finished first in 2007 parliamentary elections with 29% of the vote, but couldn't form a government

godown (I) – warehouse

IDP – Internally Displaced People, the acronym for refugees from political violence

ladang (I) – destructive slash-and-burn agricultural system; still widely utilised in East Timor

likurai (T) – Tetun dance to welcome warriors returning from battle; today performed by married women as a courtship dance

liurai (T) – local chief during the Portuguese period

losmen (I) – a small, usually family-run hotel

mandi (I) – a bathroom water tank; you scoop water out of the tank to wash with; you definitely do not climb into a *mandi* to wash

mane tais (T) – a *tais* piece worn by men as a sarong

Maubere (T) – an indigenous Timorese word used in a derogatory fashion to refer to the people of East Timor; often used by Fretilin to mean the people of the resistance

Merah Putih (I) – Red White in Indonesian (the colours of the Indonesian flag); many of the pro-integration militias incorporated the words into their name

mestizo – person of mixed Portuguese and Timorese ancestry

mikrolet (T) – minibus

NGO – nongovernment organisation

OPMT – women's organisation that supported the independence struggle from 1975

pousada (P) – traditional Portuguese inn; the *pousada* at Maubisse has survived from the Portuguese era

PKF – international Peace Keeping Force

PNTL – Timor-Leste National Police; often clashes with the F-FDTL over jurisdiction

prato do dia (P) – dish of the day

rumah makan (I) – literally 'house to eat'; Indonesian expression for a restaurant

salendang (T) – *tais* woven as a sash

Sparrow Force – Australian guerrilla force that fought the Japanese for nearly a year after the Japanese invasion of Timor in 1942

Suara Timor Lorosae – East Timor newspaper; known as *Suara Timor Timur* during the Indonesian period

sungai – river

tais (T) – weaving, and the articles produced by that weaving: shawls, blankets, scarves

Tetun – most widespread local language; spoken by a majority of East Timorese

Tim-Tim – the shortened form of Timor Timur; East Timor in Indonesian

timur (I) – east in Indonesian

Topasses – Christian, Portuguese-speaking descendants of intermarriage between the Solorese, Portuguese and slaves from Portuguese colonies in India and Melaka; called 'Black Portuguese' by the Dutch

UDT – right of centre political party; came into being following the collapse of the military government in Portugal in 1974

uma lulik (T) – traditional sacred houses

ume kebubu (T) – traditional house

Unamet – United Nations Mission in East Timor, which operated in 1999

Unmiset – United Nations Mission in Support of East Timor, assisted with security after independence, in operation 2002–05

Unmit – United Nations Integrated Mission for Timor-Leste, the beefed-up UN security force operating after the 2006 political turmoil

Unotil – United Nations Office in Timor-Leste, a low-level UN security force in operation 2005–06

Unpol – United Nations Police, the international police force that handles police duties

Untaet – United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, in place 1999–2002

VOC – Dutch commercial company that administered the Dutch East Indies until it went bankrupt in 1799 when the Dutch government took over directly

warung (I) – an Indonesian expression for a small food stall; a step below a *rumah makan*

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