

# Lombok



Just a short hop east of Bali, Lombok is an incredibly diverse island of abundant natural and cultural interest. Physically, it's dominated by the mighty presence of Gunung Rinjani (Mt Rinjani), a volcano which towers over the entire northern half of the island. Rivers spilling down its fissured slopes water the island's crops (chiefly rice, soya beans, coffee and tobacco), while its summit – complete with a dazzling crater lake – lures both trekkers and local pilgrims, for whom Rinjani is a sacred peak.

Lombok's other key attractions are the fabled Gili Islands – three exquisite tropical islets of white-sand beaches, coconut palms and coral reefs teeming with marine life. Accommodation here runs the full gamut: from no-frills beach huts to uber chic air-conditioned contemporary hotels; and you can feast on everything from a humble *nasi campur* to zenlike arrangements of sushi and sashimi. While most visitors spend their days here diving, snorkelling or simply chilling by the sea, Gili Trawangan also offers plenty of after-dark action including a lively bar scene and vibrant nightlife.

Lombok's dramatic south coast, characterised by a chain of headlands dividing a series of wonderful sandy beaches, offers big breaks that are a magnet for surfers. Here the mellow village of Kuta (no relation to its Bali namesake) is a good base, with an array of attractive hotels and no crowds.

In contrast to Bali, most people on Lombok (around 90% of the population) are Sasaks, a Muslim people with a culture and language unique to the island. There's also a significant Hindu Balinese minority – a legacy of the time when Bali controlled Lombok.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Trekking the lush slopes of **Gunung Rinjani** (p314), Lombok's emblematic volcanic cone
- Plunging into the big blue off the **Gili Islands** (p299), where the prolific reef life offers terrific snorkelling and scuba diving
- Grooving to the funky beat under the coconut palms in party central **Gili Trawangan** (p305)
- Exploring the beautiful sandy coves and spectacular coastline east and west of **Kuta** (p322), a region that has some of Lombok's best surf
- Searching for the perfect beach in the thinly populated **Southwestern peninsula** (p292), a rugged region that includes the lovely offshore islands of Gili Nanggu and Gili Gede



## WESTERN LOMBOK

☎ 0370

Most travellers who visit Lombok spend some time in the western part of the island, if only because the airport (Mataram) and the main port (Lembar) for ferries to and from Bali are here. It's the most populous part of Lombok, with the largest urban area centred on the Mataram conurbation, as well as the biggest tourist resort: the Senggigi beach strip. There are a number of attractive villages around Mataram, as well as some stunning coastal areas on the southwest peninsula.

### MATARAM

pop 321,000

The capital, and main city on Lombok, is Mataram, although it's actually a conglomeration of several separate towns – Ampenan (the port); Mataram (administrative centre); Cakranegara (business centre), which is often shortened to Cakra; and Bertais-Sweta to the east, home to the bus terminal. This urban area contains over a million people and stretches more than 10km from east to west. It's not an unattractive place, and has some broad tree-lined avenues, but as sights are slim on the ground, and as there are beaches close by at Senggigi, very few visitors choose to stay here.

### Orientation

The four towns are spread along one main road – it starts as Jl Pabean in Ampenan, becomes Jl Yos Sudarso, then changes to Jl Langko, Jl Pejanggi and travels from Sweta to Bertais as Jl Selaparang. It's one-way all the way, running west to east. A parallel one-way road, running east to west, Jl Tumpang Sari–Jl Panca Usaha–Jl Pancawarga–Jl Caturwarga–Jl Pendidikan, brings traffic back to the coast.

### Information

#### EMERGENCY

**Police station** (☎ 631225; Jl Langko) In an emergency, dial ☎ 110.

**Rumah Sakit Umum Mataram** (☎ 622254; Jl Pejanggi 6) The best hospital on Lombok; has English-speaking doctors and a special tourist service from 8am to noon.

#### INTERNET ACCESS

Most cybercafés are in the streets around the Mataram Mall (p290).

**Deddy's** (Mataram Mall Lt 1; per hr 6000Rp; 9am–9pm)

### MONEY

You'll find plenty of banks with ATMs scattered along Cakra's main drag, particularly Jl Penanggi; most of them will also change cash as well as travellers cheques. Mataram Mall and the airport also have ATMs and moneychangers (which open longer than the banks).

### POST

**Main post office** (Jl Sriwijaya 37; 8am–5pm Mon–Thu, 8–11am Fri, 8am–1pm Sat) Inconveniently located, but has internet and poste-restante services.

**Sub-post office** (Jl Langko, Ampenan; 8am–4.30pm Mon–Thu, 8–11am Fri, 8am–1pm Sat) Near the Nitour Hotel.

### TELEPHONE

There are wartel (public telephone offices) on Jl Pejanggi and at the airport.

**Telkom** (☎ 633333; Jl Pendidikan 23, Mataram; 24hr) Offers phone and fax services.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**West Lombok tourist office** (☎ 621658; Jl Suprato 20; 7.30am–2pm Mon–Thu, 7.30–11am Fri, 8am–1pm Sat) Has some maps and leaflets but is not a particularly informative office.

**West Nusa Tenggara tourist office** (☎ 634800; Jl Singosari 2; 8am–2pm Mon–Thu, 8–11am Fri, 8am–12.30pm Sat) Offers limited information about Lombok but staff are friendly enough.

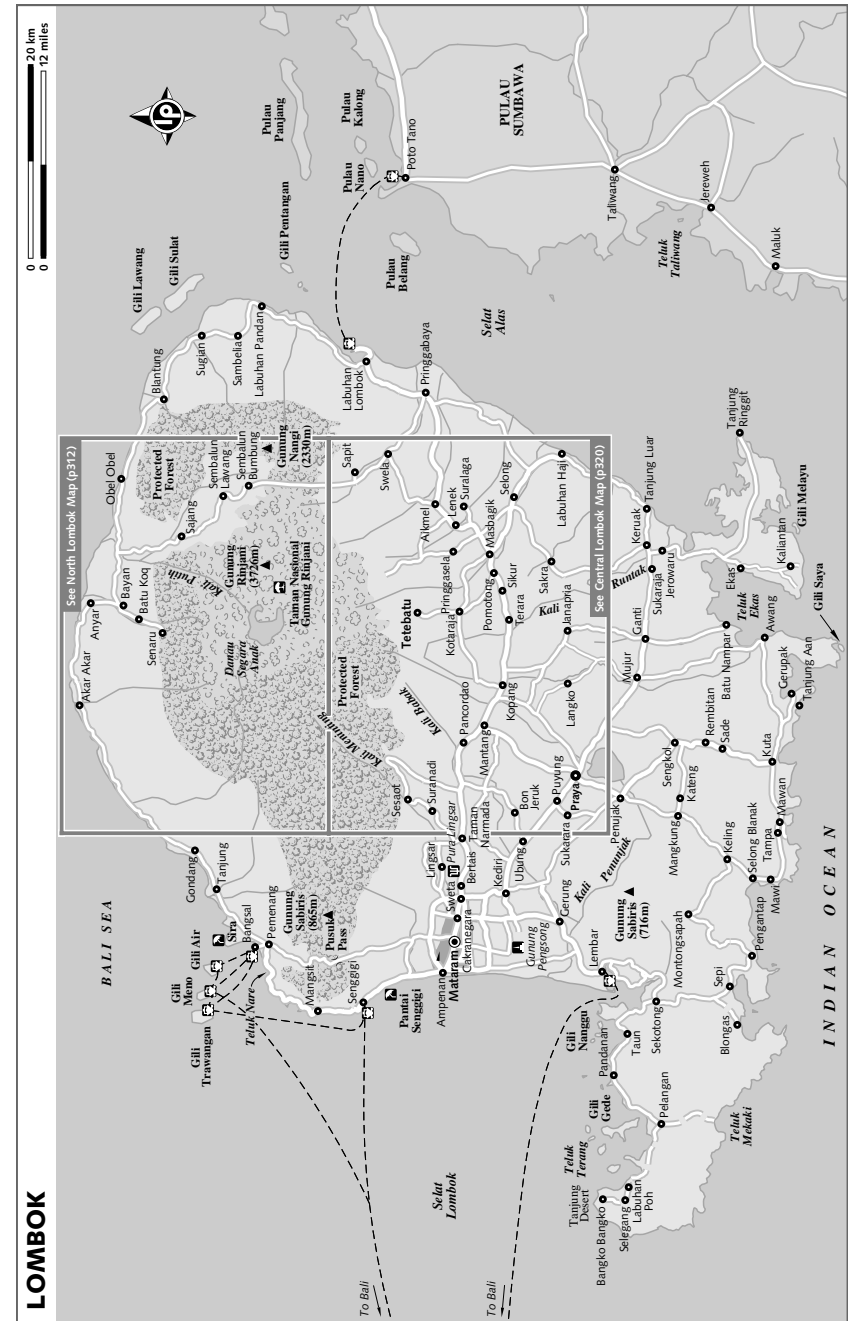
### Sights

#### MUSEUM NEGERI NUSA TENGGARA BARAT

This modern museum (☎ 632519; Jl Panji Tilar Negara 6; admission 1500Rp; 8am–2pm Tue–Thu & Sat–Sun, 8–11am Fri) has exhibits on the geology, history and culture of Lombok and Sumbawa. If you intend on buying antiques or handicrafts, take a look at the kris (traditional daggers), *songket* (silver- or gold-threaded cloth), basketware and masks for comparison.

#### MAYURA WATER PALACE

This palace (Jl Selaparang; admission 1000Rp if requested; 7am–7.30pm) was built in 1744, and was once part of the Balinese kingdom's royal court on Lombok. It's a pleasant retreat now, popular with fishermen and families, but in 1894 it was the site of bloody battles between the Dutch and Balinese. The complex contains a large artificial lake, with a modest replica of a *bale kambang* (floating pavilion) in its centre, connected to the shoreline by a raised



footpath. The original pavilion was a court of justice.

You'll find that the entrance to the walled enclosure of the palace is on the western side, off Jl Selaparang.

### PURA MERU

Opposite the water palace, **Pura Meru** (admission by donation: ₨ 8am-5pm), is the largest temple on Lombok. Built in 1720 by Balinese prince Anak Agung Made Karang of the Singosari kingdom in an attempt to unite Lombok, it's dedicated to the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The outer courtyard has a hall housing the wooden drums that are beaten to call believers to ceremonies (the June full moon is the most important of these). The inner court has one large and 33 small shrines, as well as three *meru* (multiroofed shrines), which are in a line: the central *meru*, with 11 tiers, is Shiva's house; the *meru* to the north, with nine tiers, is Vishnu's; and the seven-tiered *meru* to the south is Brahma's. The *meru* are also said to represent the three great mountains, Rinjani, Agung and Bromo.

The caretaker will lend you a sash and sarong if you need one.

### Sleeping

Most visitors find Cakranegara the most convenient and pleasant place to stay.

### BUDGET

**Hotel Herta Yoga** (☎ 621775; Jl Pejanggalik 64; s/d incl breakfast 40,000/50,000Rp, with air-con 80,000/85,000Rp; a ) A new place with pleasant, spotless rooms with air-con, good mattresses, clothes rails and private shower/mandi (bath). The fan-only rooms are much rougher and a last resort only. It's located next to the Perama office.

**Karthika II Hotel** (☎ 641776; Jl Subak 1, Cakra; r with fan/air-con 70,000/90,000Rp; a ) Built like a Balinese temple compound, this excellent-value place has squeaky clean, if slightly garishly presented tiled rooms with modern bathrooms that all have verandas. There's ample parking.

**Hotel Handika** (☎ 633578; fax 635049; Jl Panca Usaha 3; s/d with fan 55,000/60,000Rp, s with air-con 85,000/130,000Rp, d with air-con 95,000-145,000Rp, all incl breakfast; a ) Behind the Mataram Mall, this hotel has an array of idiosyncratic rooms, some with slightly alarming carved-eagle bed frames, in five price categories.

Or consider the following:

**Ganesha Inn** (☎ 624878; Jl Subak 2; s/d 30,000/40,000Rp) Guesthouse with well-presented, good-value rooms and cold water bathrooms.

**Hotel Melati Viktor** (☎ 633830; Jl Abimanyu 1; s/d 45,000/50,000Rp, with hot water & air-con 75,000/100,000Rp; a ) Smart, clean, tiled rooms and bathrooms.

### MIDRANGE

**Nitour Hotel** (☎ 623780; fax 625328; Jl Yos Sudarso 4; s/d incl breakfast from 200,000/250,000Rp) Welcoming, but the accommodation, scattered among random patches of garden, is looking a bit jaded, with an assortment of mismatched furnishings.

**Hotel Sahid Legi** (☎ 636282; sahid@mataram.wasara.net.id; Jl Sriwijaya 81; r/deluxe 365,000/580,000Rp; a s ) Swiss hotel that marries modern and Indonesian design influences. It offers the most comfortable base in town with well-appointed rooms, three restaurants and a circular pool surrounded by lush gardens and expansive lawns.

**Hotel Lombok Raya** (☎ 632305; lora@mataram.wasara.net.id; Jl Panca Usaha 11; s/d from 390,000/525,000Rp, plus 21% tax; a s ) This centrally-situated hotel has spacious, comfortable rooms. Its decor is on the bland side of beige but all rooms have balconies and mod cons including multi-channelled TV. Escape the city heat in the large pool or spa.

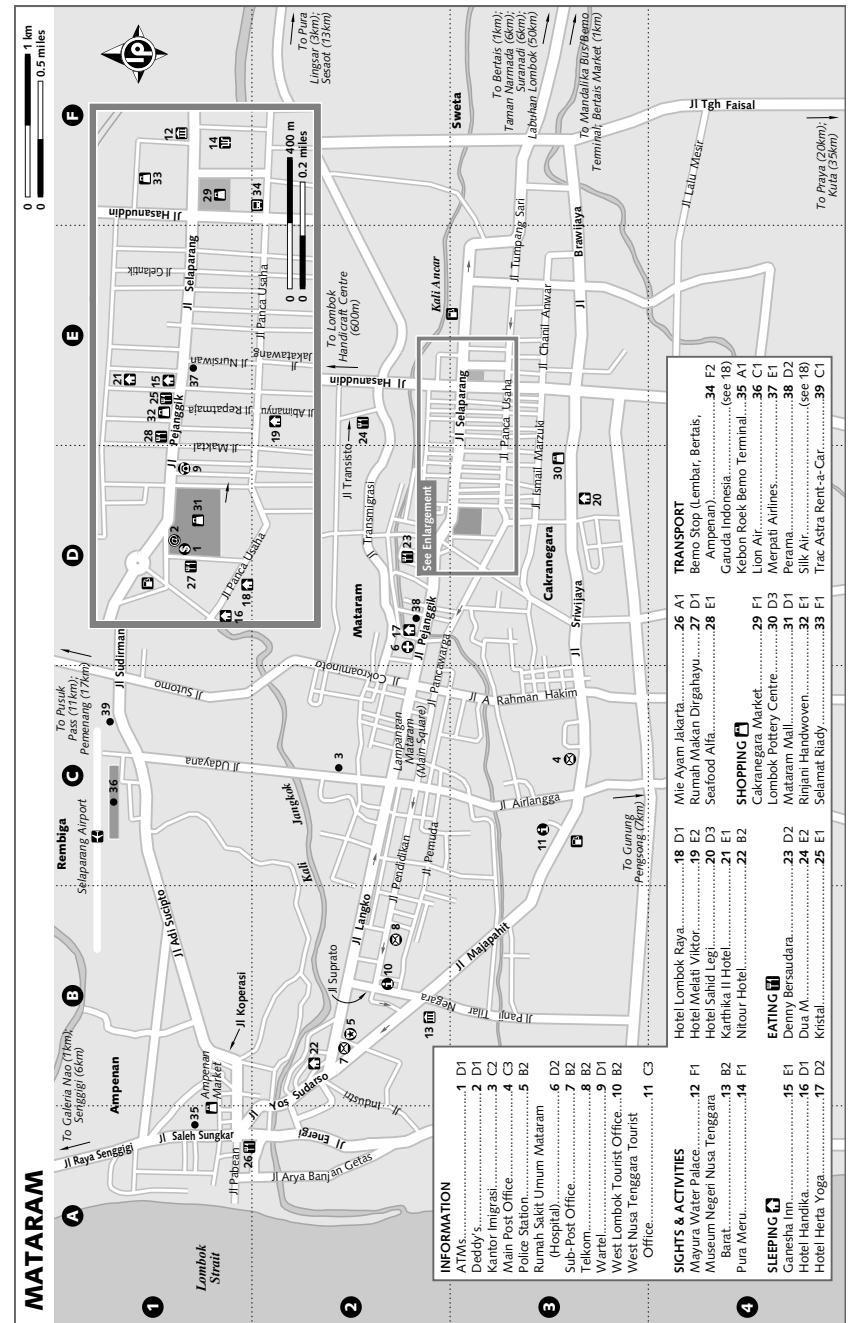
### Eating

You'll find plenty of Western fast-food outlets and Indonesian staples in the Mataram Mall. **Seafood Alfa** (☎ 660-0088; Jl Pejanggalik 34; dishes 8000-25,000Rp; ₨ 9am-11pm) A bright, clean welcoming place; perch yourself on one of the coloured stools and tuck into dishes like *gurami asam manis* (freshwater fish with sweet sauce) or the rice and noodles dishes under 10,000Rp.

**Rumah Makan Dirgahayu** (☎ 637559; Jl Cilinaya 19; mains 8000-30,000Rp; a ) Huge, popular Makassar place with long menu that takes in veggie choices like fried spinach and tofu, or delicious *karper goreng* (fried carp) for 20,000Rp.

**Denny Bersaudra** (☎ 633619; Jl Pelikan 6; dishes 10,000-27,000Rp) Agreeable, airy and welcoming place that specialises in Sasak cuisine. Look for the sign near the roundabout along western Jl Pejanggalik.

**Dua M** (☎ 622914; Jl Transisto 99; dishes 12,500-20,000Rp; ₨ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat; 9am-9.30pm Sun) Authentic Sasak food, including terrific *ayam goreng taliwang* (Sumbawa-style spicy





chicken). Try to bag the low table facing the garden and pond.

Other recommendations:

**Mie Ayam Jakarta** (Jl Pabean; dishes 5000-12,000Rp)

Scores for tasty, inexpensive Javanese food.

**Kristal** (% 627564; Jl Pejajnggik 22; dishes 6000-20,000Rp) Head here for Chinese cuisine and seafood.

## Shopping

For handicrafts try the many stores on Jl Raya Senggigi, the road heading north from Ampenan.

**Lombok Handicraft Centre** (Jl Hasanuddin; 11 8am-6pm) At Sayang Sayang (2km north of Cakra) this place has a wide range of crafts from across Lombok and eastern Indonesia.

**Mataram Mall** (Jl Selaparang; 11 7am-7pm) This multistorey shopping mall contains a supermarket, electrical goods and clothes stores as well as food stalls.

**Galeria Nao** (% 626835; Jl Raya Senggigi 234, Meninting; 11 8.30am-6pm) Beautifully finished contemporary wooden furniture and artefacts that wouldn't look out of place in *Wallpaper\**.

**Lombok Pottery Centre** (% 640351; Jl Sriwijaya 111) Offers a vast range of Lombok pottery, and prices are reasonably competitive.

**Rinjani Handwoven** (% 633169; Jl Pejajnggik 44; 11 8am-6pm Mon-Sat) You can see weavers in action at this workshop and buy their handiwork.

**Selamat Riady** (% 631196; www.lombokpottery.com; Jl Tanun 10) Offers textiles, including ikat from Lombok, Flores and Sumba, and other crafts.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

See p350 for airlines serving Lombok and details on the airport and departure tax. Note that fares from Bali are often quite cheap – under US\$30.

**Garuda Indonesia** (% 638259; www.garuda-indonesia.com; Hotel Lombok Raya, Mataram) Jakarta, Surabaya and Bali.

**Lion Air** (% 629111, 692222; www.lionair.co.id; Hotel Sahid Legi, Mataram) Surabaya.

**Merpati Airlines** (% 621111; www.merpati.co.id; Jl Pejajnggik 69, Mataram) Flies to Bali and Sumbawa.

**Silk Air** (% 628254; www.silkair.com; Hotel Lombok Raya, Mataram) Serves Singapore direct.

**Wings Air** (see Lion Air, above)

### BUS

The sprawling, dusty Mandalika bus station in Bertais is the main bus and bemo (small minibus) terminal for the entire island and

also for long-distance buses to Sumbawa, Bali and Java (p353).

The terminal is fairly chaotic, so be sure to keep a level head to avoid the 'help' of the commission-happy touts. Long-distance buses leave from behind the main terminal building, while bemo and smaller buses leave from one of two car parks on either side.

Some distances and fares for buses and bemo from Mandalika terminal:

Destination	Distance	Price (Rp)	Duration
Labuhan Lombok	69km	15,000	2hr
Lembar	22km	7500	30min
Praya	27km	6000	30min
Kuta (via Praya & Sengkol)	54km	6000 (+6000)	90min
Pemenang (for Bangsal)	30km	5000	40min

Kebon Roek terminal in Ampenan has the bemo to Bertais (1500Rp) and services to Senggigi (3000Rp).

### TOURIST SHUTTLE BUS

**Perama** (% 635928; www.peramatour.com; Jl Pejajnggik 66) operates shuttle buses to popular destinations in Lombok (including Bangsal, Senggigi and Kuta) and to Bali.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Lombok's Selaparang airport is on the north side of the city, 5km from Cakra. A taxi desk sells prepaid tickets: 17,500Rp to anywhere in Mataram; 44,000Rp to Senggigi; 98,000Rp to Bangsal and Lembar; 145,000Rp to Kuta; 210,000Rp to Senaru. Alternatively, walk out of the airport to Jl Adi Sucipto and take one of the No 7 bemo that run frequently to Ampenan.

### BEMO

Mataram is *veryspread* out, so don't plan on walking. Yellow bemo shuttle back and forth between Kebon Roek terminal in Ampenan and Mandalika terminal in Bertais (10km away). Some make slight detours, but they generally travel along the two main thoroughfares. The bemo terminals are good places to organise a charter trip. Outside the **Cakranegara market** (cnr Jl Hasanuddin & Jl Selaparang; 11 6am-5.30pm) there is a handy bemo stop for services to Bertais, Ampenan, Sweta and Lembar. The standard fare is 1500Rp, regardless of distance.

## AVOIDING OFFENCE

Most of Lombok is culturally conservative, and immodest dress and public displays of affection between couples can cause offence. Both men and women should dress appropriately away from Senggigi and the Gilis. Nude or topless bathing anywhere is very offensive.

Islamic law forbids drinking alcohol and, although booze is widely available on Lombok, public drunkenness is quite definitely frowned upon. It's particularly offensive to drink alcohol near a mosque. Ramadan is a time to be particularly sensitive about local cultural sensibilities – most locals fast during daylight hours during this month, and there are no parties on Gili Trawangan.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Most hotels can arrange car hire, but you'll almost certainly find a much better deal in Senggigi. If you'd rather someone else did the driving, contact **Ido Ado Dalmin** (% 0813 3956 2129) a reliable driver-guide who speaks fair English. He charges around 350,000Rp per day for a car and his services. For care hire, try **Trac Astra Rent-a-Car** (% 626363; www.trac.astra.co.id; Jl Adi Sucipto 5, Rembiga Mataram; Kijang with driver per 6hr 425,000Rp, self-drive per day 385,000Rp).

### TAXI

For a metered taxi, call **Lombok Taksi** (% 627000).

## AROUND MATARAM

East from Mataram there are some gorgeous areas with villages, rice fields and temples, reminiscent of some of the best landscapes and scenery that Bali has to offer. You can easily visit all the following places in half a day if you have your own transport.

### Taman Narmada

Apparently designed as a scaled down version of the summit of Gunung Rinjani and its crater lake, **Taman Narmada** (Narmada Park; admission 5000Rp; 11 7am-6pm) was built in 1805. Though the rectangular main pool and manicured terraced gardens hardly look like a volcanic cone, the extensive grounds of the park are a pleasant enough place to spend an hour or two (except perhaps on Sundays when it's packed).

The temple, **Pura Kalasa**, is still in use, and the Balinese Pujawali celebration is held here

every year (in November or December) in honour of the god Batara, who is said to dwell on Gunung Rinjani. There's also a large swimming pool (2000Rp extra) in the grounds.

Narmada is 6km east of Bertais, and then 100m south of Lombok's main east-west highway. Frequent bemo from Mandalika run to Narmada market, which is directly opposite the entrance to the gardens.

### Pura Lingsar

This large temple compound (admission by donation; 11 7am-6pm), built in 1714 by King Anak Agung Ngurah, is the holiest in Lombok. It combines the Bali Hindu and Wektu Telu (p316) religions in one complex. Designed with two separate sections and built on two different levels, the Hindu temple (Pura Gaduh) in the northern half is higher than the Wektu Telu temple in the southern section. Pura Gaduh has four shrines: one orientated to Gunung Rinjani (seat of the gods on Lombok), one to Gunung Agung (seat of the gods in Bali) and a double shrine representing the union between the two islands.

The Wektu Telu temple is noted for its small enclosed pond devoted to Lord Vishnu, and the holy eels which can be enticed from their hiding places with hard-boiled eggs (available at stalls outside). You will be expected to rent a sash and/or sarong (or bring your own) to enter the temple, but not to enter the outer buildings.

A huge ritual battle, Perang Topat, is held here every year here in November or December (the exact date depends on the lunar month). After a costumed parade, Hindus and Wektu pelt each other with *ketupat* (sticky rice in coconut leaves).

Pura Lingsar is 9km northeast of Mandalika. First take a bemo from the terminal to Narmada, and another to Lingsar. Ask to be dropped off near the entrance to the temple complex, which is 300m down a well-marked path from the main road.

### Suranadi

Suranadi is a pleasant little village surrounded by picturesque countryside. It has a temple, a small pocket of forest and a swimming pool, making it a popular spot for locals on weekends.

### SIGHTS

Set amid gorgeous countryside, **Pura Suranadi** (admission by donation; 11 7.30am-6pm) is one of the

holiest Hindu temples on Lombok. It's worth a visit for its lovely gardens which have a bubbling, icy cold natural spring and restored baths with ornate Balinese carvings (plus the obligatory holy eels).

Just opposite the village market, an entrance leads to **Hutan Wisata Suranadi** (admission 1000Rp; 11 8am-5pm), a small forest sanctuary which is a shady and quiet area good for short hikes and bird-watching. There's a **Sumatran elephant** (rides through the forest 15/25min 40,000/60,000Rp) here too.

#### SLEEPING & EATING

Just above the temple, **Losmen Jati** (☎ 6606437; r 30,000Rp) is a friendly and well-kept place, while the once-wonderful colonial atmosphere of the **Suranadi Hotel** (☎ 636411; fax 635630; r from 195,000Rp; ☎ ) still has some faded charm, as well as a pool and tennis courts.

Several smart restaurants are dotted along the main road close to the temple and there are plenty of cheap warung (food stalls) in the neighbouring village of Surandi.

The temple is 6km northwest of Narmada and served by frequent public bemo. Failing that, charter one.

#### Sesaot & Around

Some 4km northeast of Suranadi is Sesaot, a charming market town on the edge of a forest. There are some gorgeous picnic spots and you can swim in the river. The water is very cool and is considered holy as it comes straight from Gunung Rinjani. Regular transport connects Narmada with Sesaot, and bites are available at the warung along the main street.

Further east, **Air Nyet** is another pretty village with more options for swimming and picnics. Ask for directions to the unsigned turn-off in the middle of Sesaot. The bridge and road to Air Nyet are rough, but it's a lovely stroll (about 3km) from Sesaot; otherwise charter a vehicle from Sesaot or Narmada.

#### Gunung Pengsong

This Balinese hilltop temple (admission by donation; 11 7am-6pm), 9km south of Mataram, has spectacular views across a green ocean of rice fields towards distant volcanoes and the sea. Japanese soldiers hid here towards the end of WWII, and remnants of cannons can be found, as well as plenty of pesky monkeys.

Once a year, generally in March or April, a buffalo is taken up the steep 100m slope and

sacrificed to give thanks for a good harvest. The **Desa Bersih festival** (p337) also occurs here at harvest time – houses and gardens are cleaned, fences whitewashed, and roads and paths repaired. Once part of a ritual to rid the village of evil spirits, it's now held in honour of the rice goddess Dewi Sri.

It's a 15-minute walk up to the temple top from the entrance. Very little direct public transport comes here – it's best visited with your own wheels.

#### Banyumulek

This is one of the main pottery centres on Lombok, specialising in decorated pots and pots with a woven fibre covering, as well as more traditional urns and water flasks. It's close to the city – head south of Sweta on the main road to Lembar, and after 6km take a turnoff on the right to Banyumulek, a couple of kilometres to the west.

#### LEMBAR

Lembar is Lombok's main port for liners coming in from Bali and Peln. Though the harbour itself, with azure inlets ringed by soaring green hills, has to be one of Indonesia's most beautiful, there's no reason to stay the night given the dearth of facilities and excellent transport connections with Mataram and Senggigi. But if you do somehow get stuck, or need a bite to eat, the clean and very hospitable **Losmen Tidar** (☎ 681444; Jl Raya Pelabuhan; s/d with bathroom 40,000Rp, cottages 75,000Rp, all incl breakfast) 1km north of the ferry port is an excellent deal. It offers neat rooms and cottages, all with cable TV and one with its very own fish pond. Very hearty Indonesian meals (8000Rp to 17,000Rp) are also served by the family owners.

Plenty of bemo shuttle back and forth between Lembar and the Mandalika terminal in Bertais (3500Rp), or you can catch one at the market stop in Cakra. See p350 for details on the ferries and boats between Bali and Lembar, including the public ferries from Padangbai (p221).

#### SOUTHWESTERN PENINSULA

The corrugated, beach-blessed coastline and tiny offshore islands west of Sekotong has long been hyped as Lombok's next big tourist destination, but while the odd pocket of development is ongoing here, for now it remains a tranquil, highly scenic region. The hump-

shaped inland hills form rich pastureland in the rainy season; visit the area at this time and you'll hear cow bells clanking. The road which hugs the coast, passing white-sand cove after cove, is narrow but paved until Selegang. A track continues to the west past Bangko Bangko to Tanjung Desert (Desert Point), one of Asia's legendary surf breaks, but there's no accommodation here, so you'll need to bring camping gear.

Only a few of the beautiful offshore islands, fringed with coconut palm-studded sandy beaches and offering fine snorkelling, are inhabited. Currently, Gili Nanggu and Gili Gede have accommodation. The latter island has some Bugis villages where locals make a living from boat building, and also some offshore pearl farms.

#### Sleeping & Eating

Places to stay and restaurants are slim on the ground in this region, and some close in the rainy season. **Sundancer** (www.sundanceresort.com), a huge new hotel and resort complex, with a PADI scuba diving centre is due to open in late 2006 just west of Pandanan.

#### MAINLAND

**Putri Doyang** (☎ 0812 375 2459; Jl Raya Pelangangi, Tembowong; s/d 25,000/50,000Rp) Simple clean rooms and hospitable owners make this losmen (basic accommodation), 2km north of Pelangan, a budget option worth considering.

**Sekotong Indah Beach Cottages** (☎ 6601921; r without/with air-con 55,000/85,000Rp; a ) Offers basic tiled, nearly clean rooms with bamboo furniture that would benefit from a little more TLC. However, the location opposite a slim sandy beach 2km west of Toun is great. Meals are 5000 Rp to 20,000Rp.

**Bola Bola Paradis** (☎ 623783; batuapi99@hotmail.com; Jl Raya Bangko-Bangko; r 160,000-280,000Rp; a ) Just west of Pelangan, this attractive place set on a fine stretch of sand has funky octagonal bungalows, comfortable air-con rooms, and a restaurant (mains 20,000Rp to 55,000Rp) and chic lounge area.

**Nirvana Roemah Air** (☎ 640107; www.floatingvilla.com; Jl Raya Medang, Sekotong Barat; villas incl airport transfers US\$150-250 ; a ) Billing itself as a floating island resort, this luxurious place, 2km west of Sekotong, in a secluded mangrove-fringed location, has stylish wood-panelled villas. Book via the internet for substantial discounts in the low season.

#### ISLANDS

**Gili Nanggu Cottages** (☎ 623783; www.gilnanggu.com; cottages s/d 100,000/120,000Rp, s/d bungalows 225,000/275,000Rp; a ) A great choice, this island resort has a beachfront location and rustic two-storey *lumbung* (rice barn) cottages, plus less attractive but comfortable air-con bungalows. Lifts from Lembar can be organised. Meals are 16,000Rp to 38,000Rp.

**Secret Island Resort** (☎ 661-3579; www.secretislandresort.com; r 200,000Rp, bungalow 250,000Rp, two bed villa 1,000,000Rp; a ) This new resort on Gili Gede offers beautiful accommodation, all with fine sea or mountain views and terraces. The double-deck bar-restaurant rustles up great seafood and barbecued meats. Check out the hot tub – spa, plunge pool and swimming pool are planned. Kayak, snorkel and dive trips can be arranged here.

#### Getting There & Away

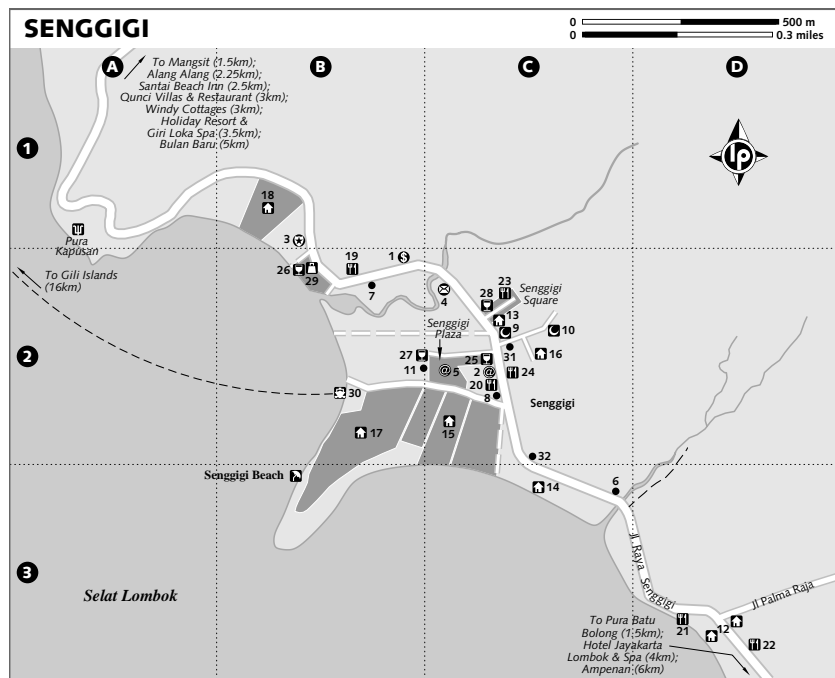
Bemo buzz between Lembar and Pelangan (one hour, 45 minutes, every 30 minutes) via Sekotong (25 minutes). West of Pelangan, transport is less regular, but the route is still served by infrequent bemo services until Selegang.

To reach Gili Nanggu, a return charter on a *prahu* (outrigger fishing boat) from Toun costs 150,000Rp. Public boats connect Tembowong with the islands of Gili Gede and Gili Ringit (both 8000Rp one way), leaving from Putri Doyong losmen, 2km north of Pelangan. Alternatively, you can charter your own boats here for about 60,000Rp one way or arrange a day trip around the islands for about 225,000Rp.

#### SENGGIGI

Superbly positioned along a stretch of sweeping bays, Senggigi is Lombok's principal beach resort. Accommodation here is generally excellent value for money, as luxury hotels have slashed rates in an attempt to draw in tourists following several tough years. Unless you visit in peak season, expect quiet restaurants and empty shopping malls, but plenty of attention from the street hawkers.

Senggigi has fine sandy beaches, and as the sun sinks, all eyes turn west to take in the blood-red sunsets over Bali that can be enjoyed from one of the seafront restaurants. As it gets dark, the fishing fleet lines up offshore, the bright lanterns glinting like a floating village against the night sky.



## Orientation

The Senggigi area spans about 10km of coastal road. Most of the shops and other facilities, and a fair concentration of hotels, are on the main road, Jl Raya Senggigi, which starts about 6km north of Ampenan. Street numbers are not used in Senggigi.

## Information

### EMERGENCY

The nearest hospitals are in Mataram.  
**Police station** (% 110) Next to the Pasar Seni.  
**Senggigi Medical Clinic** (% 693856; h 8am-7pm)  
 Based at the Senggigi Beach Hotel.  
**Tourist Police** (% 632733)

### INTERNET ACCESS & TELEPHONES

Most internet cafés on the main strip also double as wartel.  
**Millennium Internet** (% 693860; Jl Raya Senggigi; per min 300Rp; h 24hr)  
**Superstar** (Senggigi Plaza A2; per min 300Rp; h 24hr)

### MONEY

There are several ATMs in central Senggigi. The Bank Central Asia (BCA) and Bank Ne-

gara Indonesia (BNI) on Jl Raya Senggigi both have ATMs and will exchange cash and travellers cheques.

### POST

**Post office** (Jl Raya Senggigi; h 8am-6pm)

## Sights

### PURA BATU BOLONG

The small pagodas of this modest Balinese temple (admission by donation; h 7am-7pm) cling to a rocky volcanic outcrop that juts into the sea about 2km south of central Senggigi. Crabs scuttle over statues and families come here to snack and cool off at the beach directly below. The temple is orientated towards Gunung Agung, Bali's holiest mountain, and is a favoured spot to watch the sunset. The rock underneath the temple has a natural hole that gives it its name – *batu bolong* (literally, 'rock with hole').

## Activities

### SNORKELLING & DIVING

There's reasonable snorkelling off the point in Senggigi, in the sheltered bay around the

INFORMATION		SLEEPING		RUMAH MAKAN PADANG	
BCA ATM.....	(see 13)	Batu Bolong Cottages.....	12 D3	Sugar Café.....	(see 27)
BNI ATM.....	1 B2	Millennium Internet.....	(see 22)	<b>DRINKING</b>	
Police Station.....	3 B1	Hotel Elen.....	13 C2	Happy Café.....	25 C2
Post Office.....	4 C2	Lina Cottages.....	14 C3	Office.....	26 B2
Senggigi Medical Clinic.....	(see 17)	Mascot Cottages.....	15 C2	Papaya Café.....	(see 24)
Superstar.....	5 C2	Raja's Bungalows.....	16 C2	Sugar Café.....	27 B2
		Senggigi Beach Hotel.....	17 B2	Tropicana.....	28 C2
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>		Sheraton Senggigi Beach Resort.....	18 B1	<b>SHOPPING</b>	
Blue Marlin.....	6 C3	Asmara.....	19 B2	Asmara Collection.....	(see 19)
Dive Indonesia.....	7 B2	Bumbu.....	20 C2	Pasar Seni (Art Market).....	29 B2
Dream Divers.....	8 C2	Café Alberto.....	21 D3	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Laguna Beach Spa.....	(see 18)	Café Wayan.....	22 D3	Departure point for Perama boats.....	30 B2
Lombok Biking Tours.....	(see 8)	English Tea Room.....	23 C2	Kotasi.....	31 C2
Mandara Spa.....	(see 17)	Papaya Café.....	24 C2	Perama.....	32 C2
Mesjid.....	9 C2				
Mesjid Baru.....	10 C2				
Rinjani Trek Club.....	(see 20)				
Stylish Salon.....	11 B2				

headland, and in front of Windy Cottages, a few kilometres north of the town. You can rent snorkelling gear (25,000Rp per day) from several spots along the beach near Senggigi Beach Hotel.

Diving trips from Senggigi normally visit the Gili Islands, so you may want to consider basing yourself there. Professional dive centres include the following:

**Blue Marlin** (% 692003; www.dive-indo.com; Jl Raya Senggigi & Holiday Resort Lombok)  
**Dive Indonesia** (% 639367; www.diveindonesiaonline.com; Galeria Mall, Jl Raya Senggigi)  
**Dream Divers** (% 692047; www.dreamdivers.com; Jl Raya Senggigi)

### BIKING & HIKING

Guided mountain bike rides are offered by **Lombok Biking Tours** (% 6605792; Jl Raya Senggigi; day excursions per person from 200,000Rp) through rural areas of Lombok including the Sekotong region and the countryside around Lingsar and Surandi.

If you're thinking of hiking Gunung Rinjani, you could drop by the local office of the **Rinjani Trek Club** (% 693202; rtc.senggigi@gmail.com; Jl Raya Senggigi) for information about routes and conditions.

### MASSAGES, SPAS & SALONS

Several local masseurs armed with mats and oils tout for business on Senggigi Beach – you won't have to wait long before someone approaches you. Expect to pay about 40,000Rp for one hour after bargaining. Almost all hotels can also arrange for a masseur to come to your room; rates start at about 60,000Rp.

For a really indulgent experience, visit one of the many spas in the Senggigi area, most

are hotel-based. **Giri Loka Spa** (% 693444; Holiday Resort; h 8am-9pm) offers fabulous warm stone massages (one hour; US\$45). First rosemary and orange oils are applied to your body then a masseur rubs the heated stones over your 'chakra' points, stimulating the lymph nodes, blood and muscles.

**Laguna Beach Spa** (% 693333; Sheraton Senggigi Beach Resort; h 9am-9pm) has Balinese milk-and-honey body scrub treatments (1½ hours; US\$50) and massages (one hour; US\$28). **The Mandara Spa** (% 693210; Senggigi Beach Hotel; h 10am-9pm) offers a comprehensive range of treatments and massages (from US\$26) including Balinese aromatherapy massages and reflexology. Rates at the **Jayakarta Spa** (% 693048; Hotel Jayakarta Lombok; h 8am-11pm) are competitive at 120,000Rp for a traditional massage and 255,000Rp for a Lulu Indonesian exfoliation and 'body polishing' treatment.

For a manicure, pedicure or other beauty treatments in simple surroundings, **Stylish Salon** (% 6194240; Senggigi Plaza Blok 1 No 4; treatments & massages from 40,000Rp; h 8.30am-7.30pm) fits the bill.

## Sleeping

Senggigi has an excellent choice of accommodation spread up and down the coastal road; if you want to stay close to the action, chose a place on the main strip – virtually everything listed below is located on or just off the main drag Jl Raya Senggigi. Many of the places north of here in Mangsit have more character and wonderful gardens, and some offer free transport into central Senggigi.

Virtually all the top-end places have special promotional rates outside peak times, when discounts of up to 50% are common.



## BUDGET Senggigi

**Hotel Elen** (☎ 693014; r without/with air-con 50,000/75,000Rp; a ) This hotel offers a quadrangle of smallish, cheap, if not very cheerful rooms; those with air-con are a little better presented. Prepare yourself for a double-barrelled early morning wake-up call from the two local mosques, Mesjid (Mosque) and Mesjid Baru (New Mosque).

**Raja's Bungalows** (☎ 0812 3770 138; rajas22@yahoo.com; s/d 60,000/75,000Rp) A welcoming, bohemian guesthouse that's popular with travellers. Raja's has inviting, spotless rooms with high ceilings, bamboo furniture and zany outdoor bathrooms with mandi and showers. There's plenty of communal chilling space, a few books to browse and veggie meals (9000Rp to 14,000Rp) are offered.

**Lina Cottages** (☎ 693237; r with fan/air-con/sea view 60,000/75,000/150,000Rp; a ) Occupying pole position right on the beach, Lina is a good choice with a variety of rooms, the cheapies on the small side and fan-only; all have verandas. There's an adjoining Indo-Chinese restaurant.

**Café Wayan** (☎ 693098; s/d incl breakfast 100,000/150,000Rp) At the rear of the café, these four stylish rooms, tastefully furnished with beautiful ikat fabrics and Balinese artefacts and with large bathtubs, enjoy a peaceful location overlooking a blossoming garden.

## Mangsit

**Santai Beach Inn** (☎ 693038; www.santaibeachinn.com; lumbung s/d 70,000/80,000Rp, bungalows 95,000-200,000Rp) Set in a lush garden by the beach this unusual place has a selection of rustic *lumbung* and spacious bungalows, constructed from local wood and bamboo. Inexpensive, veggie and fish dishes are eaten communally in a pleasant pavilion (lunch/dinner 15,000/25,000Rp) and there's a book exchange.

**Windy Cottages** (☎ 693191; lidya@mataram.wasantara.net.id; cottages with cold/hot water 110,000/150,000Rp, r 140,000Rp; a ) Charming, popular beachside place with decent snorkelling offshore and attractive thatched cottages, many with sea-view verandas. Also has air-con rooms and hot-water bathrooms; local and Western meals are offered (dishes 14,000Rp to 30,000Rp).

**Bulan Baru** (☎ 693786; r 200,000Rp; a s ) Set in a lovely garden and a short walk from a fine sandy beach, this welcoming hotel has spacious, well-furnished rooms, all with mini-

bars, air-con and hot water bathrooms. The friendly Australian owners, and staff, are a mine of information about Lombok and local culture. No children are allowed.

## MIDRANGE

### Senggigi

**Batu Bolong Cottages** (☎ 693065; bbcoresort\_lombok@yahoo.com; r incl breakfast inland/beachside 125,000/260,000Rp; a ) This place, located south of central Senggigi, has good-value, spacious rooms with fridges and Balinese artefacts facing a lawned beachfront plot, with the waves just beyond. Its cheaper digs facing a garden on the other side of the road are looking a little tired however.

**Hotel Jayakarta Lombok** (☎ 693048; www.indo.com/hotels/jayakartalombok; r USS38-43, ste from USS63; a s ) This Indonesian chain hotel, 5km south of central Senggigi offers competitive rates on its comfortable air-con rooms with bathtubs, minibars and sea views. There's a beachfront setting, extensive grounds, a spa (p295), and a large pool.

**Mascot Cottages** (☎ 693365; fax 693236; s/d bungalows 200,000/275,000Rp; a ) Undergoing renovation at the time of research, this place has air-con bungalows set in a garden that extends towards the beach.

## Mangsit

**Holiday Resort** (☎ 693444; www.holidayresort-lombok.com; Jl Raya Senggigi; r from USS68, bungalows from USS140; a s ) A well-designed luxury hotel with extensive gardens plotted with coconut trees and the full gamut of accommodation options, from rooms to private villas. Also offers a fine spa, tennis courts, a scuba school and a playground and day nursery for children aged two to 11.

## TOP END

Senggigi has an excess of luxury hotels, so discounts on the rack rates listed here are usually available.

## Senggigi

**Senggigi Beach Hotel** (☎ 693210; www.senggigibeach.aerowisata.com; r USS80, beach bungalows USS100-160 plus 21% tax; a s ) These classy detached bungalows enjoy a beautiful setting in lush gardens set back from the beach, though only Nos 105 and 106 have direct sea views. There's a large pool that's well situated close to the shore, a spa and tennis courts in the complex.

**Sheraton Senggigi Beach Resort** (☎ 693333; www.sheraton.com; r from USS178; s ) Just north of the centre this fine hotel has commodious rooms, all with terraces or balconies. There's a palm-fringed swimming pool and a kids' pool, two restaurants and a well-regarded spa (p295) and health club. Discounts can drop rates to around USS80 a night at quiet times.

## Mangsit

**Qunci Villas** (☎ 693800; www.quncivilas.com; r garden/ocean view USS70/90 plus 21% tax; a s ) Lombok's hippest hotel, combining textbook minimalist style with Balinese and Japanese design influence. The rooms are undeniably gorgeous (book No 8 for the best sea view) and popular with moneyed Europeans and rich kids from Jakarta. There's a small pool at the ocean's edge and a very fine restaurant (p298). You'll find the staff is extremely well trained and welcoming. For groups or the seriously solvent, there are two private villas (from USS325 a night) up in the hills behind the hotel, each with private pool and butler service that come close to defining Lombok luxe.

**Alang Alang** (☎ 693518; www.alang-alang-villas.com; s/d bungalows USS80/110; a s ) Stylish bungalows set in lush gardens, most are semidetached with commodious beds and Balinese wood furniture. Only Nos 101 to 110 have decent sea views. The beach here consists of a slimline stretch of sand and the pool is small.

## Eating

Central Senggigi is an excellent place to eat out, with a cosmopolitan glut of restaurants. Many offer free transport for evening diners – phone for a ride.

For authentic Indonesian street food, head to the hillside warung on the route north to Mangsit where *sate* (satay) sizzles and pots of noodles bubble.

## SENGGIGI

**Rumah Makan Padang** (☎ 693026; meals 8000-14,000Rp) Come here for real local atmosphere and authentically fiery Padang food, including a filling *rendang* (beef coconut curry).

**Café Wayan** (☎ 693098; dishes 9000-45,000Rp) A highly enjoyable place to eat, this stylish Balinese-run café has an extensive menu of soups and salads, pizza, pasta dishes, pancakes, seafood and yummy freshly baked breads and cakes.

**Bumbu** (☎ 692236; mains 18,000-30,000Rp) Deservedly popular little restaurant on the main strip, come here for inexpensive Thai curries and Indo cooking served up on a slim street-side terrace. Some Western dishes are also served, and there's always a daily special.

**Asmara** (☎ 693619; www.asmara-group.com; mains 18,000-75,000Rp; a ) Consistently recommended by expats, this is a comfortable, spacious and airy two-storey thatched restaurant offering fine European cuisine – try the *frikadellen* (meatballs with mustard gravy and sautéed potatoes) – plus Indonesian and international favourites. Children are well catered for from a special menu, and there's a small pool and play area too.

**English Tea Room** (☎ 692085; Blok A4, Senggigi Square; dishes 21,000-65,000Rp; r 9am-9pm; a ) A civilised air-con retreat, this delightful place, located in a shopping plaza, offers a wide choice of salads and sandwiches as well as terrific cakes. The teas include Ceylon and Indonesian green and you'll find some interesting coffees too. There's a terrace table upstairs.

**Sugar Café** (☎ 6194000; Plaza Senggigi; mains 22,000-44,000Rp; r 6-11.30pm; a ) Perhaps the most modern place in town, this chic little lounge bar-restaurant is highly atmospheric, with candlelit tables and creative, beautifully presented Indonesian and Asian fusion cuisine. Eat in the air-conditioned interior or outside on the terrace.

**Papaya Café** (☎ 693616; mains 28,000-50,000Rp; r 8am-11.30pm; a ) Invitingly decorated with rattan sofas and exposed stone walls, this enjoyable place has a tempting menu of Indonesian, Chinese and Japanese dishes and some of the best cocktails in town.

**Café Alberto** (☎ 693039; mains 30,000-85,000Rp; r 11.30am-11pm) Occupying a large beachfront plot well away from the road, feast on Italian (pizza and pasta) or Indonesian (the usual suspects in generous portions) cuisine at this enjoyable restaurant. Lunch at a table on the sand and then snooze it off on one of Alberto's loungers. There's also a small kids' playground here with slides and a sandpit.

## MANGSIT

**Bulan Baru** (☎ 693786; mains 24,000-48,000Rp) Head to this hotel restaurant for Western comfort food – think meaty bangers and creamy mash, or maybe a juicy imported steak. You'll also find snacks such as spring rolls and burgers.

**Qunci restaurant** (☎ 693800; www.quncivilas.com; mains 46,000-64,000Rp) Abutting the beach in Mangsit, this terrific, hip hotel-restaurant (p297) has a modern menu with both Asian and European – think tuna balsamico and seafood risotto – dishes. The well-trained staff will guide you through the menu and make suggestions, while low-key electronica music adds atmosphere to the dining experience. Arrive before sunset and get the party started properly with two-for-one cocktails during happy hour (4pm to 7pm).

### Drinking & Entertainment

Senggigi's after-dark action is pretty middle-of-the-road by nature, revolving around a handful of bars and a disco or two. All bars are on Jl Raya Senggigi except one, and may close early if it's very quiet.

**Happy Café** (☎ 693984; 11 8am-2am) This slightly staid but always popular bar has a resident cover band playing reggae or pop tunes every night.

**Papaya Café** (☎ 693616; 11 8am-1am) It's hardly cutting edge, but the Papaya also has live music of the Muzak variety and is fine for a relaxed drink. Happy hour is from 4pm to 8pm.

**Office** (☎ 693162; 11 9am-2am) Beachside bar with fine sunset views, a pool table and live sports events on the TV. It's popular with middle-aged expats and there are regular pool competitions on Tuesday.

**Sugar Café** (☎ 0812 3962 206; Plaza Senggigi) Tiny, hip place with electronica and lounge music and a mixed gay and straight clientele. Also serves fine food (p297).

**Tropicana** (☎ 693432; www.tropicalombok.com; admission 25,000Rp; 11 11pm-3am) Old skool-style disco with slightly cheesy DJs spinning Western pop, rock and a few Indo hits plus live acts and bands. Expect 'Mr & Miss Tropicana' contests and the like.

### Shopping

Senggigi's shopping malls are woefully under-occupied. The **Pasar Seni** (Art Market; Jl Raya Senggigi) has some handicraft stalls and you'll find **Asmara Collection** (☎ 693619; Jl Raya Senggigi; 11 9am-9.30pm), in front of the restaurant of the same name, has some fine weavings, tribal art and furniture.

The warehouses and craft shops along the main road to Ampenan are also worth stopping for a browse.

### DETOUR

North of Senggigi is a succession of wonderful, near-deserted sandy coves where you can pretty much guarantee to have a beach to yourself, bar the odd fishermen and his net. Just west of the Bulan Baru hotel, about 7km from central Senggigi, there are some beautiful beaches, Pantai Setangi being just one fine example. The coastal road from Mangsit to Pemenang is a spectacular drive in itself, slaloming around the coastal contours, serving up sweeping views of the waves below.

### Getting There & Away

#### BOAT

**Perama** (☎ 693007; Jl Raya Senggigi) operates a daily boat service from Padangbai in Bali to Senggigi (p224; 200,000Rp, four hours). There's also a daily Perama boat from Senggigi to the Gili Islands (70,000Rp, 30 to 60 minutes) at 9am, which means you avoid having to deal with Bangsal. The dive schools (p294) also operate speed-boat shuttles (from 120,000Rp per person) to the Gilis most days – contact them in advance.

#### BUS

Regular bemo travel to Senggigi from the Kebon Roek terminal in Ampenan (3000Rp), some continuing north as far as Pemenang or Bayan. Overcharging tourists is common on this route.

The Perama company has a few tourist shuttle bus/boat services daily between Senggigi and Bali; Kuta (Bali) and Bali airport (160,000Rp), Ubud (160,000Rp); and other places on Lombok including Kuta (80,000Rp).

### Getting Around

A prepaid taxi from the airport to Senggigi costs 48,000Rp. The very efficient and prompt **Bluebird taxis** (☎ 627000) will whisk you around the Senggigi area and beyond. Remember that many restaurants offer free lifts for diners – call for a ride.

Cars and motorbikes are readily available for hire in Senggigi; ask at any hotel or travel agent. **Kotasi** (☎ 693804; Jl Raya Senggigi) has bikes from 40,000Rp per day and jeeps from 175,000Rp per day (its insurance covers you for a maximum charge of US\$500 in case of damage). You could also hire a car and guide-driver

## GILI ISLANDS

### ☎ 0370

Just off the northwest coast of Lombok is a vision of tropical paradise – a trio of tiny coral-fringed islands, each with white sandy beaches and pellucid water teeming with a kaleidoscopic array of reef fish. For years the islands of Gili Air, Gili Meno and Gili Trawangan were a budget-priced stopover for travellers on the Asian trail, but recently, accommodation options have diversified and now there are luxury villas and rustic chic bungalows dotted between the simple bamboo-and-thatch huts for rent.

Delightfully free of cars and motorcycles, the only traffic on the Gilis is the tinkling *cidomo* (pony cart) and the odd bicycle. All three islands have professional scuba diving centres, and the snorkelling is excellent too.

Each Gili has its own character and charm: Trawangan has a big party scene and Meno is very mellow, with Gili Air falling somewhere between the two in terms of atmosphere.

### Information

#### INTERNET & TELEPHONE

All the islands have wartel and internet cafés, but surfing (around 400Rp per minute) is woefully slow in most places.

#### MONEY

There are no banks on the Gilis and money-changer exchange rates at the shops and hotels

### SURVIVING BANGSAL

Bangsals, a squalid little port, is the gateway for public boats to the Gilis. Frankly, it's a hole and has become so overrun with persistent small-time hustlers and would-be scammers that it's best to completely ignore anything that you're told here about boats being cancelled, or other tall tales.

Public bemo to Bangsal actually stop in Pemenang on the main road, 1km or so from the port. Hiring a *cidomo* (pony cart; around 3000Rp) to the port is money well spent as it'll save you an ear-bending from the hustlers on your way to the terminal.

Keep calm, and head straight for the ramshackle Koperasi harbour office on the left, as you approach the sea. Here you can buy inexpensive, fixed-price, public boat tickets (as well as shuttle and charter tickets) to the three Gili islands – there are printed price lists available. The harbour office has a scruffy waiting area where they'll announce when the public boats have enough passengers to depart.

It's quite possible to avoid Bangsal completely by using the Perama boat service between Senggigi and the Gilis, or by booking a speedboat transfer (from US\$12, 15 minutes) to/from Lombok using the Gili dive schools – these operate from the serene little bay of Teluk Nare to the south.

are dire. Credit card cash advances are available through many dive operators, although a 7% commission is charged. It's better to change money in Mataram or Senggigi or use the ATMs there. Try to bring as many small-denomination notes as possible, as there's often a problem changing the bigger notes.

### Dangers & Annoyances

There are no police on any of the Gilis, so report any theft to the island *kepala desa* (village head) – if you need help locating them, or need someone to help you translate, the dive schools are a good point of contact. If you are on Gili Trawangan, notify Satgas, the community organisation that runs island affairs, via your hotel or dive centre. Satgas uses its community contacts to resolve problems or track down stolen property with a minimum of fuss.

Touts often meet boats as they land, and they can be quick to take your luggage, plus you, to the place of *their* choice. If you want to stay in a particular place, don't let a tout convince you that it's full, expensive, closed, or doesn't exist.

Incidents are rare, but several foreign women have experienced sexual harassment and even assault while on the Gilis – it's best to walk home in pairs to the quieter parts of the islands. Each island has a gaggle of local Kuta cowboy-style gigolos who compete to impress and seduce visiting Western women, and can get very territorial with other males that they see as competition.



Jellyfish are common when strong winds blow from the mainland, and they can leave a painful rash. See p370.

## Getting There & Away

From Bali, most people either use the Perama tourist bus and boat service via Padangbai (see p224) and Senggigi; or, fly to Mataram and travel on from there.

Coming from other parts of Lombok you can travel via Senggigi (there are direct Perama boats to the Gilis from here); via Bangsal (the cheapest route) or book a shuttle bus/speed boat. Blue Marlin and Manta Dive (p306) on Gili Trawangan can arrange transfers (125,000 to 250,000Rp per person, depending on destination and passenger numbers). All the above use the idyllic harbour of Teluk Nare, south of Bangsal.

Coming by public transport, catch a bus or bemo to Pemenang, from where it's about 1km by *cidomo* (3000Rp) to Bangsal harbour. Bangsal is a headache, see p299 for tips on dealing with the inevitable hassle there. Boat tickets are sold at the Koperasi harbour office, where the prices are displayed – the public boats (roughly 8am to 5pm) don't leave until full (about 18 people). While it can take hours for the boat to Gili Meno to fill up, you shouldn't have to wait more than an hour for the other two islands. The one-way fares at the time of research were 5500Rp to Gili Air, 6800Rp to Gili Meno and 8800Rp to Gili Trawangan, though expect steep price rises because of escalating fuel costs. Special charters can also be organised in Bangsal.

All boats pull up on the beach when they get to the Gilis, so you'll have to wade ashore with your luggage.

## Getting Around

### CIDOMO

Hiring a *cidomo* for a clip-clop around an island is a great way to explore the terrain; a short trip costs around 7000Rp, or you can pay about 20,000Rp for a two-hour jaunt.

### ISLAND-HOPPING

There's a twice-daily boat service that loops between all three islands, meaning that you can spend the day snorkelling and exploring Meno and get back to Air or Trawangan for a sunset drink. The morning boat leaves Air at 8.30am, stopping on Meno at 8.45am, Trawangan at 9.30am, Meno again at 9.45am

and returning to Air at 9.45am. In the afternoons the boat leaves Air at 3pm, Meno at 3.15pm, Trawangan at 3.30pm, Meno at 4.15pm and gets back to Air at 4.30pm. Check the latest timetable at the islands' dock.

### WALKING

The Gilis are flat and easy enough to get around by foot (or bicycle, opposite). A torch (flashlight) is useful at night – you can buy one at local shops for around 25,000Rp.

## GILI AIR

Closest to the mainland, Gili Air's easy-going appeal contrasts with party-boy Gili T and sedate Gili Meno. The island retains a distinctly rural character, its coconut grove-filled, flat landscape juxtaposed with dramatic views of Gunung Rinjani and, on a clear day, Gunung Agung in Bali. The slim white-sand beaches, turquoise water and laid-back atmosphere are the main draw, but in high season the bar scene can get quite lively. Gili Air is the most heavily populated of the three islands, yet this still amounts to just 1800 or so inhabitants.

### Orientation

Boats stop at the southern end of the island, near the jetty; the Koperasi (r 8am-5.30pm) has a hut here with prices marked clearly outside. Virtually all accommodation and restaurants are on the east and south coasts, which have the best beaches for swimming. The network of dirt tracks that crisscrosses the island can get quite confusing at times. To explore Air it's simplest to follow the coastal path around the island – it's a lovely walk that takes about an hour and a half.

### Information

There's a small Perama (% 637816) office next to the Gili Indah Hotel. **Ozzy's Shop** (% 622179; per min 400Rp; r 8am-8pm) about halfway up the east coast has pedestrian-paced, internet access, a wartel and will change money, as will Hotel Gili Air, but exchange rates are poor. Blue Marlin charge 7% for cash advances on credit cards. There's a clinic (r 8am-6pm) in the village for medical services.

### Activities

#### SNORKELLING & DIVING

You'll find diverse marine life and great snorkelling all along the east coast. Beach access is



easy and gear can be hired from Ozzy's Shop for 15,000Rp a day. Check with dive centres first about currents, as sometimes they can be extremely strong. Ozzy's Shop also operates glass-bottomed boat tours (per person 40,000Rp, minimum 4 people) around all three islands.

There are several good scuba diving sites a short boat ride away. See p306 for more information. Gili Air has two dive schools, **Blue Marlin Dive Centre** (% 634387; www.diveindo.com) and **Dream Divers** (% 634547; www.dreamdivers.com).

### SURFING

Directly off the southern tip of the island there's a long, peeling right-hand break. To rent a board, ask around in the dive schools.

### CYCLING

Ozzy's Shop has bikes for hire for 20,000Rp a day. Exploring the island by bike is a delight, though sandy tracks can make the going a bit tough, and you're sure to end up in someone's back yard at times due to the unmarked trails.

### Sleeping

Most places are spread up and down the east coast, where the best swimming is. Prices quoted are high-season rates – expect about a 25% discount in low season. Breakfast is included in all (except one) of the hotels listed.

### BUDGET

**Gili Air Santay** (% 641022; gililair\_santay@yahoo.com; s/d 40,000/50,000Rp) Set back from the beach in a quiet coconut grove, these spacious bamboo-

### INFORMATION

Koperasi/Public Boat Office.....	1	A2
Medical Clinic.....	2	A2
Ozzy's Shop.....	3	B1
Perama.....	4	A2

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

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### SLEEPING

Abdi Fantastik.....	7	B1
Coconut Cottages.....	8	B1
Gili Air Santay.....	9	B2
Gili Indah Hotel.....	10	A2
Gusung Indah.....	11	B1
Hotel Gili Air.....	12	B1
Kira Kira.....	13	B1
Lucky's.....	14	A2
Nusa Tiga Bungalows.....	15	B2
Pino Cottages.....	16	B2
Pondok Sandi.....	17	B1
Sunrise Cottages & Restaurant.....	18	B2

### EATING

Abdi Fantastik.....	(see 7)	
Blue Marlin.....	(see 5)	
Coconut Cottages.....	(see 8)	
Gecko Café.....	19	A2
Gusung Indah.....	(see 11)	
Hotel Gili Air.....	(see 12)	
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### DRINKING

Chill Out Bar.....	21	B2
Gita Gili.....	22	B2
Hallelujah Bar.....	(see 11)	
Legend Pub.....	23	A1
Star Bar.....	24	B1

and-timber huts are just above the bog standard category, all coming with hammocks, fans and fairly modern bathrooms. There's also a little shoreside restaurant here, see p302.

**Abdi Fantastik** (% 636421; r 75,000-80,000Rp) Enjoying unobstructed sea vistas, these neat – rather than 'fantastik' – thatched bungalows are just a few metres from the shore and come equipped with verandas and a hammock to swing in.

**Sunrise Cottages & Restaurant** (% 642370; s 50,000-75,000Rp, d 80,000-100,000Rp) A class above the real cheapies, this efficiently run place has rustic two-storey *lumbung*-style bungalows with bathroom and separate living area (with day bed and hammock). The accommodation is well spaced and sits at the rear of a pretty garden. There's a safe for valuables and a great beachside café-restaurant.

**Kira Kira** (% 641021; kirakira@mataram.wasantara.net.id; s 70,000-110,000Rp, d 80,000-125,000Rp) Stylish, well-presented thatched cottages with rattan furniture, large ceiling fans, decent beds and

hammocks overlooking a small garden. The bathrooms are cold water while the restaurant, open from 7am to 9pm, offers Japanese dishes such as tempura.

**Coconut Cottages** (☎ 635365; www.coconuts-giliair.com; r 110,000-180,000Rp) A delightful, welcoming Indo-Scottish-owned place with a selection of atmospheric accommodation spread around a fecund, well-tended garden. Some of the well-maintained cottages have shell-inlaid decorative detailing, all have good quality mattresses, bamboo furniture and bedside reading lights. There's a fine restaurant here too, right, and books for sale or rent.

Also worth considering:

**Nusa Tiga Bungalows** (r 40,000-50,000Rp) Basic bamboo bungalows set in a coconut grove, inland from the east coast.

**Lucky's** (☎ 0812 378 2156; 45,000Rp) Run by a friendly family, these simple bungalows enjoy a quiet location. No breakfast is included.

**Pondok Sandi** (s/d 50,000/100,000Rp) Facing the sea, these are spacious huts with bathrooms.

**Pino Cottages** (☎ 639304; r 60,000-80,000Rp) Situated back from the beach, Pino has well-maintained, clean thatched cottages with hammocks.

**Gusung Indah** (☎ 0812 3789 054; r 70,000-100,000Rp) Facing a good stretch of beach, these simple beach bungalows with verandas are decent value. You pay more for a sea view.

## MIDRANGE

**Gili Indah Hotel** (☎ 637328; gili\_indah@mataram.wa.antara.net.id; bungalows 200,000-350,000Rp; a ) Conveniently close to the jetty, this well-run hotel has a variety of good, well-constructed bungalows, all with hot-water bathrooms. The best also have air-con and huge front decks with expansive sea views.

**Hotel Gili Air** (☎ 634435; www.hotelgiliair.com; r US\$17, with hot water US\$33, with hot water & TV US\$43-63; a s ) Setting itself up as the island's 'proper' hotel, this place offers four classes of digs – from rustic-but-comfy huts to international hotel-chain-style rooms with marble bathrooms, attractive wood furniture and laminate floors. The pool is small and the gardens look neglected however.

## Eating

Dining out in Gili Air is a treat, with an array of simple places serving Indonesian and Western dishes, many located right by the sea – there's nothing fancy though. Beware – service can be slow.

**Abdi Fantastik** (☎ 636421; dishes 10,000-25,000Rp) Come here for some of the best Sasak food on the island at fair prices; try the *kangkung pelecing* (spicy water spinach).

**Coconut Cottages** (☎ 635365; dishes 10,000-28,000Rp) An inventively prepared menu that combines Western and Indonesian dishes, you'll dine well in this pleasant hotel restaurant. Try the fantastic Sasak buffet, at 40,000Rp per person, served every Wednesday night in high season.

**Santay** (☎ 641022; dishes 12,000-20,000Rp) Perch yourself on a beachside table, soak up the views of Gunung Rinjani and tuck into a sandwich, a good pumpkin and coconut curry, or satay.

**Sasak Warung** (mains 12,000-28,000Rp) Dine well here, by the waves, under pretty shell lanterns. It's one of the best places to eat fish and seafood.

**Blue Marlin** (☎ 634387; dishes 15,000-35,000Rp) The best bet for Western food, the kitchen here serves up a mean burger as well as pasta, sandwiches, stick-to-yer-ribs breakfasts, and some Indonesian dishes.

**Hotel Gili Air** (☎ 634435; dishes 15,000-56,000Rp) Recommended by resident foreigners as the best venue for pizza and pasta on the island, the service is prompt. Also serves Indonesian dishes and steaks.

**Gecko Café** (☎ 641014; dishes 10,000-25,000Rp; 11am-3pm & 6.30-8.30pm) This friendly caff is good for sandwiches, cake and coffee, or Indonesian snacks. Its Wednesday-night dinners, from 35,000Rp – such as roast beef followed by apple crumble – are an island institution for homesick Divemaster candidates.

Or try one of the following:

**Munchies** (dishes 7500-26,000Rp; 11am-11pm)

Serves fine curries, fish and overflowing sandwiches.

**Gusung Indah** (☎ 0812 3789 054; dishes 10,000-30,000Rp; 11am-10.30pm) Sit under a beachfront *beruga* (open-sided pavilion) & feast on local food such as *opor ayam* (braised chicken in coconut milk), and sandwiches or pasta.

## Drinking

Except for the odd party, Gili Air is generally pretty quiet at night.

**Star Bar** (11-3pm-late Thu-Tue) Next to the Blue Marlin, this little bar's trump card is Azam, the resident trickster barman.

**Chill Out Bar** (11-2am) Popular with visitors and locals, it has a good selection of spirits and cocktails.

**Gita Gili** (11-1am) A friendly bar where you can request a DVD to watch while you sink a cold one.

**Hallelujah Bar** (11-8am-11pm) Offers a beachside location and a well-stocked bar including plenty of spirits.

**Legend Pub** (11-10am-11.30pm Thu-Tue, happy hour 5-7pm, party 10pm-2am Wed) Wednesday night is the big one here, especially in high season, with speakers bumpin' to (mainly) reggae bass lines.

## GILI MENO

Gili Meno is the quietest of the three islands, and has the best beaches. With a permanent population of just 300, it's not hard to play Robinson Crusoe along Meno's isolated shores should you so desire. Most of the accommodation is strung out along the eastern coast, near the widest and most picturesque beach. Inland you'll find scattered homesteads, coconut plantations and a shallow lake that produces salt in the dry season.

## Information

There are a couple of minimarkets by the boat landing, so you will be able to locate most basic supplies. Internet access (per min 500Rp) and a wartel are available near the boat landing. Money can be exchanged at the Gazebo Meno and Kontiki Meno hotels, as well as at others, at poor rates. For tours and shuttle bus/boat tickets, the travel agent Perama (☎ 632824) is based at Kontiki Meno bungalows. The medical clinic near the bird park is attended by a resident nurse. Doctors are also on call in Mataram.

## Sights & Activities

### TAMAN BURUNG

About 300m inland from the boat landing, this bird park (☎ 642321; admission 30,000Rp; 11am-5pm) has an impressive and well-cared-for collection of 300 or so exotic species from Asia and Australasia, as well as three kangaroos and a baby Komodo dragon. The birds are let out of their cages for three hours a day, when they fly around a large expanse covered by a net. Interactive feeding times are also held. There's also a bar and accommodation (p304).

## SNORKELLING & DIVING

Snorkelling trips (per person 40,000Rp, minimum four people), sometimes using glass-bottomed boats, leave from the jetty. There's

## GILI ISLANDS CURRENTS: WARNING

Currents between the Gili Islands are very strong. Take care when snorkelling offshore and do not attempt to swim between islands – this goes double after a night on the ale.

good snorkelling off the northeast coast near Amber House huts, on the west coast near Good Heart and also around the former jetty of the (abandoned) Bounty resort – gear is available for 20,000Rp per day from several places on the eastern strip. Always ask about the state of the currents. For more on snorkelling and diving, see the boxed text p306.

**Blue Marlin Dive Centre** (☎ 639979; www.diveindo.com) offers fun dives and courses from Discover Scuba to Divemaster.

## Sleeping

The basic places are generally more expensive than equivalent lodgings on the other Gilis, and don't usually include breakfast. Prices quoted are high-season rates – reductions of up to 25% are possible the rest of the year.

## BUDGET

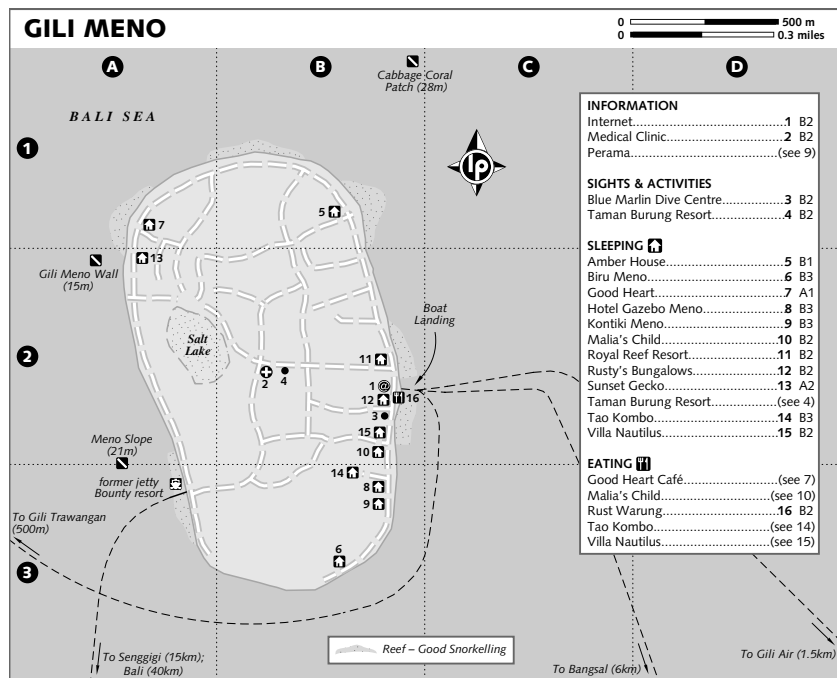
**Biru Meno** (☎ 0813 3657 322; r 80,000-100,000Rp) A very welcoming place, located in a tranquil spot south of the main strip with a selection of spacious sea-facing bungalows – the most expensive have big windows and coral walls. There's also a simple restaurant.

**Tao Kombo** (☎ 0812 3722 174; tao\_kombo@yahoo.com; platforms/bungalows 25,000/90,000Rp) About 200m inland, this mellow place has attractive, individually decorated bungalows scattered around a large garden, and some bamboo sleeping platforms (with mattresses, mosquito nets and safety boxes). There's 24-hour power, a chillout lounge and a bar-restaurant.

**Kontiki Meno** (☎ 632824; r with fan/air-con 90,000/150,000Rp; a ) Clean, breeze-block bungalows, some with elaborately carved doorways. Book No 1 or 2 for a direct sea view.

**Malia's Child** (☎ 622007; www.gilimeno-mallias.com; r 150,000Rp) Facing the sea, these attractive, orderly bamboo-and-thatch bungalows with fans, nets and Western toilets sit pretty on a well-raked stretch of sandy beach.

**Good Heart** (☎ 0813 3955 6976; bungalows 150,000Rp) Excellent, friendly Balinese-owned place with a row of superb, newly constructed twin-deck



0 500 m  
0 0.3 miles

**INFORMATION**  
Internet.....1 B2  
Medical Clinic.....2 B2  
Perama.....(see 9)

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**  
Blue Marlin Dive Centre.....3 B2  
Taman Burung Resort.....4 B2

**SLEEPING**   
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Biru Meno.....6 B3  
Good Heart.....7 A1  
Hotel Gazebo Meno.....8 B3  
Kontiki Meno.....9 B3  
Malia's Child.....10 B2  
Royal Reef Resort.....11 B2  
Rusty's Bungalows.....12 B2  
Sunset Gecko.....13 A2  
Taman Burung Resort.....(see 4)  
Tao Kombo.....14 B3  
Villa Nautilus.....15 B2

**EATING**   
Good Heart Café.....(see 7)  
Malia's Child.....(see 10)  
Rust Warung.....16 B2  
Tao Kombo.....(see 14)  
Villa Nautilus.....(see 15)

*lumbung*-like bungalows with coconut- wood roofs and beautiful open-air fresh-water bathrooms. It's opposite a slim stretch of beach that faces Gili Trawangan and there's also a book exchange and a good restaurant. Discounts of around 40% are offered in low season.

**Sunset Gecko** (081 576 6418; firefrog11@hotmail.com; bungalows/house 150,000/350,000Rp) This new place, built by a multinational team to high eco-standards, offers gorgeous shared bathroom, A-frame bungalows and a stunning two-bed timber house with the best views on the island from its upper deck. All accommodation has excellent ventilation and plenty of natural light. It's in an isolated spot, but next to a tranquil beach with some snorkelling. A restaurant serving Japanese, Indonesian and Western food is planned. Rates drop substantially at quiet times.

Other recommendations:

**Amber House** (☎ 643676; amber\_house02@hotmail.com; s/d from 30,000/40,000Rp) Attractive bamboo bungalows in a flourishing garden with sea aspects.

**Rusty's Bungalows** (Pondok Wisata; ☎ 642324; s/d 50,000/60,000Rp) Bog standard but acceptable huts behind the boat landing.

**Royal Reef Resort** (☎ 642340; r 150,000Rp) Large, orderly bungalows overlooking the sea.

#### MIDRANGE

**Taman Burung Resort** (Bird Park Resort; ☎ 642321; www.balipvbgroup.com; dm/deluxe r 30,000/300,000Rp; a ) Offers four comfortable air-con rooms with TV/DVD player and basic self-catering equipment, as well as a funky dormitory with three bunk beds. Check out the restaurant and Beatles-themed bar too.

**Hotel Gazebo Meno** (☎ /fax 635795; r with fan/air con US\$30/65; a s ) Classy, spacious and stylish bungalows, those with air-con adopting a distinctly colonial feel with parquet floors, desks and chaise lounges, set in a coconut grove just off the beach. There's a small saltwater swimming pool.

#### TOP END

**Villa Nautilus** (☎ 642143; www.villanautilus.com; r US\$75; a ) Deluxe detached villas, beautifully finished in contemporary style with natural wood, marble and limestone. The design allows plenty of natural light to flood the lounge level, which has doors opening to a decked

terrace – book No 1, 2 or 3 for sea views. Steps lead up to the bedroom/dressing room and down to the shower.

#### Eating & Drinking

The beachfront restaurants near the boat landing all offer fine views for your meal, which is just as well as service can be slow.

**Rust Warung** (☎ 642324; mains 6000-28,000Rp) Simple *beruga* with low tables and a menu of Indonesian and Western favourites.

**Good Heart Café** (mains 7500-20,000Rp) Perfectly primed for the sunset, Good Heart has a relaxed atmosphere aided by bamboo wind chimes and shells decorating the trees. There are regular BBQs, happy hour from 6pm to 8pm, and the bar has a variety of cocktails.

**Tao Kombo** (☎ 0812 3722 174; mains 9000-24,000Rp) Popular bar run by French Bob with a chilled vibe, lounge tunes, cocktails and a pool table. Tuck into fine Italian and Indonesian cuisine here too.

**Villa Nautilus** (☎ 642143; mains 15,000-27,000Rp) Come here for breakfast, a sandwich, pasta, or a pizza from a wood-fired oven.

**Malia's Child** (☎ 622007; dishes 15,000-28,000Rp) You'll eat well here, with tasty Indonesian food and pizza served either on an upper terrace with fine views or on one of the seaside *beruga*.

#### GILI TRAWANGAN

Trawangan has a reputation as a party island, a Shangri La for backpackers and hedonistic Indonesians, awash with budget-priced digs and dive centres. Shoestring ravers do still flood here, but the island's increasingly upmarket facilities – a mushrooming luxe-fest of lounge bars, sushi restaurants and boutique hotels – has meant that Jakartan hipsters and weekendend Singaporeans are almost as common as rupiah-light gap-year students. It's the one corner of Lombok where tourism is really vibrant, and while there are still plenty of tranquil corners, the island's main strip buzzes every night until the early hours.

Unfortunately, environmental management has yet to catch up with the pace of development, and discarded garbage blots the landscape, particularly in the village just inland from the beach.

Diving is so critical to the local economy that the island's fishermen are paid by the scuba schools not to fish on Trawangan's reefs, a pioneering initiative that has resulted in greatly increased diversity, with turtles and

top predators such as reef sharks frequently spotted here. Culturally, this moratorium is not without its difficulties however, as the islanders are descended from Bugis fishermen who arrived in Trawangan 55 years ago.

#### Orientation & Information

Boats dock on the eastern side of the island, which is also home to virtually all of Trawangan's accommodation, restaurants, stores and facilities. The best stretch of beach is just north of the jetty. There are a few places to stay at other points around the coast (and one inland) but they're quiet and away from the action.

Several stores will change cash or travellers cheques, but rates are poor. Dive shops give cash advances on credit cards for a hefty 7% commission.

There is no post office, but stamps and postcards are sold in the wartel and Pasar Seni (Art Market).

#### EMERGENCIES

**Satgas** (a community organisation which controls security on the island) Contact Satgas via your hotel or dive school.  
**Clinic** (r 9am-5pm) Just south of Villa Ombak Hotel.

#### INTERNET ACCESS & TELEPHONE

Also offering a wartel, the owner of **Lightening** (internet access per min 400Rp) was installing a satellite link for broadband when we visited. Other places are spread along the eastern waterfront.

#### TRAVEL AGENCIES

Located just north of the jetty, **Perama** (☎ 638514; www.peramatour.com) offers boat tickets to Pandangbai in Bali and Senggigi as well as ongoing destinations by shuttle buses. Trips to Komodo can also be arranged here (see the boxed text, p361).

#### Sights

##### TURTLE HATCHERY

At the southern end of the beach, there's a glass aquarium housing the hatchery, where green and hawksbill turtle hatchlings are raised until they are around nine months' old (around 25cm in length). It's a small scheme set up by a local restaurant owner that releases several hundred turtles into local waters each year. The turtles are fed three times a day on chunks of fresh tuna; if you want to support this conservation project there's a donation box beside the tank.



## UNDERWATER GILIS

The Gili Islands are a terrific dive destination. Though coral life above 18m is not generally in good condition – years of fish bombing and the El Niño phenomenon, which caused ‘heatstroke’ damage to the temperature-sensitive reefs back in the 1990s, have taken their toll – you’ll find marine life is plentiful and varied. Turtles and black- and white-tip reef sharks are common, and the macro life (small stuff) is excellent with seahorses, pipefish and lots of crustaceans. Around full moon, large schools of bumphead parrot fish appear to feast on coral spawns, while at other times of the year manta rays glide by dive sites.

Safety standards are high in the Gilis despite the modest dive costs – there are no dodgy dive schools, and instructors and training are professional. Rates are fixed (no matter who you dive with) at US\$25 a dive, with discounts for a package of 10 dives. A PADI Open Water course costs US\$300, the Advanced course is US\$225, Divemaster starts at US\$650, and Nitrox and Trimex dives are offered by some schools. For contact details of dive schools, see individual island entries.

The Gili Eco Trust, a partnership between dive operators and the local community, aims to improve the condition of the reefs. All divers help fund the trust by paying a one-off fee of 30,000Rp with their first dive. Another initiative has seen the establishment of several reef growth accelerators, called **Biorock**. They use electrical currents to stimulate coral development. Two Biorock installations are located directly opposite the Vila Ombak hotel on Gili Trawangan at a depth of 8m. For more information, consult [www.biorock.net](http://www.biorock.net).

Surrounded by coral reefs and with easy beach access, the Gilis are superb for snorkelling too. Masks, snorkels and fins can be hired for as little as 20,000Rp per day. On Trawangan, try snorkelling the area right off the beach where turtles are often seen. Around Gili Meno, the pier by the (closed) Bounty resort has prolific marine life, while over on Air the walls off the east coast are good.

Some of the best dive sites include the following:

**Deep Halik** The canyon-like profile of this site is ideally suited to drift diving. Black- and white-tip sharks can often be seen at 28m to 30m.

**Deep Turbo** At around 30m, this site is ideally suited to Nitrox diving. It has impressive sea fans and catches the prevailing currents so anything can come out of the big blue (including, very occasionally, mantas or even whale sharks).

**Hans Reef** Off the northeast coast of Gili Air, this reef is great for macro life including frogfish, ghostfish, seahorses and pipefish.

**Japanese Wreck** For experienced divers only (as it lies at 45m) this shipwreck of a Japanese patrol boat is another site ideal for Nitrox divers. Prolific soft coral, lots of nudibranches – look out for lionfish and frogfish.

**Shark Point** Perhaps the most exhilarating dive in the Gilis: reef sharks and turtles are very regularly encountered, as well as schools of bumphead parrotfish and mantas. Look out too for cuttlefish and octopi. At shallow depths there can be a strong surge.

**Simon’s Reef** The reef here is in excellent condition; you can see schools of trevally, and occasionally, great barracuda and leopard sharks.

**Sunset (Manta Point)** The sloping profile of the reef here has good coral growth below 18m, including some impressive table coral. Large pelagics are frequently encountered and strong currents are rarely an issue.

## Activities

### DIVING

Trawangan is a veritable diver’s delight with seven established scuba schools, no cowboy outfits and inexpensive prices (see the boxed text, above)

**Big Bubble** (% 625020; [www.bigbubblediving.com](http://www.bigbubblediving.com))

**Blue Marlin Dive Centre** (% 632424; [www.diveindo.com](http://www.diveindo.com))

**Dive Indonesia** (% 642289; [www.diveindonesianonline.com](http://www.diveindonesianonline.com))

**Dream Divers** (% 634496; [www.dreamdivers.com](http://www.dreamdivers.com))

**Manta Dive** (% 643649; [www.manta-dive.com](http://www.manta-dive.com))

**Trawangan Diving** (% 649220; [www.trawanganadive.com](http://www.trawanganadive.com))

**Villa Ombak Diving Academy** (% 638531; [gilidive@mataram.wasantara.net.id](mailto:gilidive@mataram.wasantara.net.id))

### BOAT TRIPS & SNORKELLING

Glass-bottomed boat trips (40,000Rp per person, including snorkelling equipment) to coral reefs can be booked at many stores on the main strip.

There’s fair snorkelling off the beach north of the jetty, though there’s plenty of coral damage in evidence here and strong currents

## MANDI SAFAR

Many of Trawangan’s locals do not visit the island’s beach frequently, partly because many cannot swim and have no interest in sunbathing, but also because Sasak Muslim attitudes towards modesty mean that most prefer to avoid seeing half-naked Western bodies roasting in the sun.

But in an annual ceremony held at the end of the second month of the Islamic calendar, a ritual purification, *Safar*, takes place as hundreds of villagers enjoy a day on the beach and take a dip in the ocean in a tradition said to symbolise the last bath of the Prophet Muhammad. The ceremony begins with the construction of a *pondok pisang* (banana house), a square structure which is loaded with fruit. Drumming, seated dancing and reading from the *Koran* follows. Prayers are then written on mango leaves before the participants take to the sea, taking their prayers with them.

Later everyone returns to shore to pin up the prayer leaves beside a local well (it’s believed this action will maintain the well’s water purity) and munch on the fruit from the *pondok pisang*. Later, everyone tucks into a huge rice-table-style buffet donated by Trawangan’s restaurants.

Anyone is welcome to attend the event, but make sure you’re well covered so as not to offend local customs.

further out from the shoreline. The reef is in better shape close to the lighthouse off the northwest coast, but you’ll have to scramble over some low coral to access it.

Snorkelling gear can be hired for around 20,000Rp per day from shacks near the jetty.

## SURFING & WATER SPORTS

Trawangan has a fast right-hand wave that breaks over a coral outcrop that is not sharp. It’s best at high tide and can be surfed all year long. You’ll find it just south of Vila Ombak.

**Fun Ferrari** (% 0812 3756 138; Horizontal; watersports per 15min incl tuition 150,000Rp, fishing per person US\$50) offers water-skiing, parasailing, wakeboarding and sports fishing.

## WALKING & CYCLING

Trawangan is perfect for exploring on foot or by bike. You can walk around the whole island in a couple of hours – if you finish at the hill on the southwestern corner (which has the remains of an old Japanese gun placement) at sunset you’ll have terrific views of Bali’s Gunung Agung.

Bikes can be hired from 15,000Rp a day from just south of the jetty.

## Sleeping

There are approaching a hundred places to stay in Gili T, from simple beach huts to air-conditioned private villas with private pools. Most of the very cheapest accommodation is in the village – you’ll pay more for a beach-side address. Perhaps the hottest real estate

is the area north of the jetty, where you can stumble out of your bungalow and flop on the beach, neutralising those (perhaps inevitable) hangovers with a morning dip.

In all but the most expensive places, the tap water is quite saline. Rates quoted are high-season prices, they drop about 30% off-peak. Breakfast is included unless stated otherwise.

## BUDGET

### Main Strip

**Pak Majid** (r 60,000Rp) In the thick of the action, this place has clean concrete bungalows with plain furnishings. Breakfast is not included.

**Creatif Satu** (% 634861; r with fan/air-con 75,000/125,000Rp; a ) Close to the jetty, the large rooms here are clean and quite acceptable.

**Trawangan Cottages** (% 623582; r without/with air-con 100,000/140,000Rp; a ) Well-kept rooms with private bathrooms and verandas with nice seating.

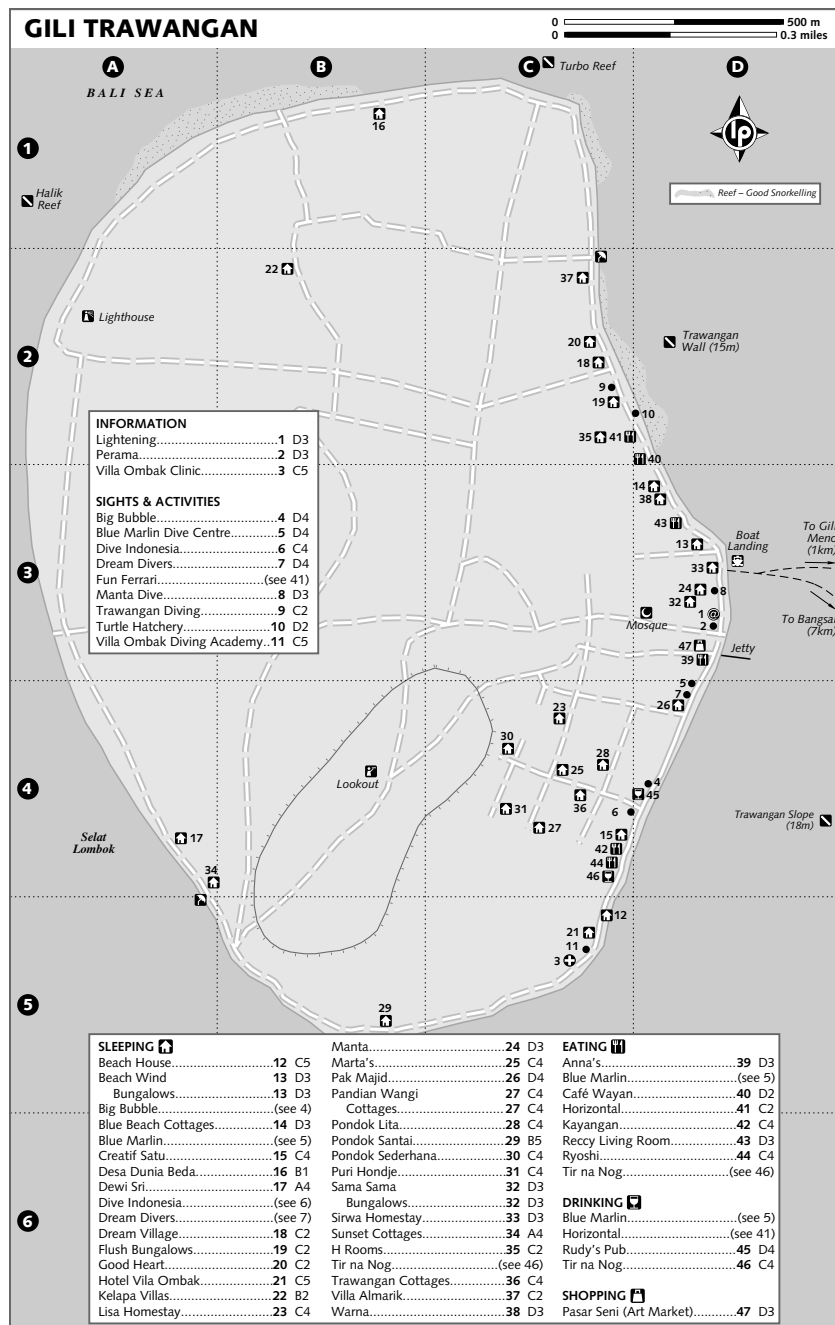
## Village

If the following places are full you’ll find a dozen or so comparable alternatives in the village.

**Pandian Wangi Cottages** (s/d 40,000/75,000Rp) Friendly place with simple clean rooms with fans and mozzie nets.

**Pondok Sederhana** (% 0813 3860 9964; r 60,000Rp) Run by a house-proud and friendly Balinese lady, the spotless rooms here face a neat little garden.

**Lisa Homestay** (% 0813 3952 3364; 75,000Rp) Very friendly little place with airy and light tiled rooms that look out over a garden.



**Pondok Lita** (r 80,000-100,000Rp) Nine good rooms with tiled floors, set around a garden. All rooms have two beds and a clean bathroom. Also has a book exchange and laundry service.

**Puri Hondje** (r 150,000Rp; a ) Tucked away down a quiet village lane, these very stylish rooms overlook a small fish pond surrounded by bougainvillea and palms.

### Beachside

**Sirwa Homestay** (s/d 40,000/45,000Rp) Spacious rooms – some have two double beds – with prices to suit those on a strict budget. There's a simple restaurant up front.

**Beach Wind Bungalows** (☎ 0812 3764 347; s/d with fan 75,000/85,000Rp, with air-con 120,000/150,000Rp; a ) Excellent-value, stylish, spacious rooms in a row just off the beach, all with handsome bamboo-framed beds and a veranda; those with air-con have two beds. There's also table tennis, a book exchange and snorkelling gear available for hire.

**Flush Bungalows** (r 120,000-150,000Rp) This small, rustic place is just off the shore, and has one room with a glorious sea-facing balcony. Initial rates asked are a little pricey, so be sure to bargain. Free water, mozzie nets and fans are provided.

**Warna** (☎ 623859; r 140,000Rp) Four well-priced, tasteful bungalows with large beds, reading lights and attractive wooden furniture set off a gorgeous slim garden, just off the beach. Rates are seriously slashed during quiet times.

**Blue Beach Cottages** (☎ 623538; bbc@indo.net.18; r with fan/air-con 170,000/250,000Rp; a ) Representing good value for money, these attractive huts have high ceilings, rattan furniture, ikat wall hangings, hot water and lovely verandas set off a blossoming garden. But best off all, the beach is a few steps away.

### Southwest Coast

**Sunset Cottages** (☎ 0812 3785 290; s/d 50,000/60,000Rp) Friendly place, opposite a small beach offering traditional-style huts with fans, and verandas that catch the afternoon breeze.

**Pondok Santai** (s/d 60,000/70,000Rp) On the south coast, yet only a five-minute walk from the main strip; these simple, secluded thatched huts all have two beds and attached mandi.

**Dewi Sri** (☎ 0819 3314 5164; r 60,000Rp & 100,000Rp) Family-owned place, opposite two classes of well-built bungalows set around a beachside plot. There's good home cooking available and a slim beach area with loungers opposite.

### MIDRANGE

#### Main Strip

**Big Bubble** (☎ 625020; www.bigbubblediving.com; r fan/air-con US\$22/30; a s ) A row of very stylish modern rooms, built from natural materials and each with hammocks and front terraces, face a beautiful slender garden. Out the front there's a wonderful pool and decked area.

**Dive Indonesia** (☎ 642289; www.diveindonesianonline.com; r US\$25; n a s ) At the rear of the dive shop are seven really attractive bungalows, each with a bathtub, tropical-chic bamboo furniture and front patios.

**Blue Marlin** (☎ 632424; www.diveindo.com; r US\$25; a s ) Decent air-con rooms, all with wardrobes and desks, hot water, bathrooms and TV. Guests also have access to a fully-equipped gym.

**Tir na Nog** (☎ 639463; tirnanog@mataram.wasantara.net.id; r US\$25, villa US\$125; a ) At the rear of the bar, these huge rooms with air-con have been thoughtfully designed and decorated; most have spacious private terraces and swanky modern bathrooms. For real luxury book the private villa which even comes with its own chef and plunge pool.

**Beach House** (☎ 642352; www.beachhousegilit.com; r 320,000-525,000Rp, villa 2.5 million rupiah; a s ) Competitive pricing and the simple elegance of these understated modern rooms, in three price categories, means that this place is busy all year round. There's a freshwater plunge pool at the rear (and an amazing four-bedroom villa with modish furnishings and its own pool, but no sea views).

### Village

**Marta's** (☎ 0812 3722 777; martas\_trawangan@yahoo.com; bungalow/family bungalow 250,000/400,000Rp; a ) Representing exceptional value for money, these sumptuous detached two-storey air-con bungalows, owned by a helpful and welcoming English-Indonesian couple, are grouped around a lush garden. Decorated mainly in calming creams and beige, the attention to detail is excellent and the beds are absolutely sumo-sized. If you're in a group, consider the super-spacious family rooms, which sleep four.

### Beachside

**Good Heart** (☎ 0812 2395 170; r 100,000Rp, bungalows 350,000-500,000Rp; a ) A great choice with superb-value budget rooms (each with large beds) and a couple of very stylish thatched A-frame bungalows – these have all the mod

cons you could need, and pebble-floored open-air bathrooms.

**Sama Sama Bungalows** (☎ 0812 3763 650; r with fan/air-con 250,000/350,000Rp; a s ) Combining natural materials – logwood bed frames, timber flooring and coconut wood – with mod cons including TV/DVD players, these rooms make a comfortable base. It's set back a little from the beach.

**Manta** (☎ 643649; www.manta-dive.com; r 380,000Rp; a s ) Eight delightful modern *lumbung*-style bungalows, each with twin or king-sized beds, polished timber floorboards, a fridge, security box, and wonderful screened outdoor bathrooms with volcanic stone floor tiles. Prices are flexible during low season and there are discounts for Manta Dive school customers.

**Dream Village** (☎ 0818 546 591; www.dreamvillage-trawangan.com; bungalows 400,000-500,000Rp; a ) A wonderful new place offering a contemporary take on *lumbung*-style chic, each cottage is well finished with teak floors and rattan chairs, fridge, TV, security box and gorgeous freshwater outdoor bathrooms. An Italian restaurant, spa and small pool are planned.

**Villa Almarik** (☎ 638520; www.almarik-lombok.com; r US\$70-75; a s ) Huge, light and airy, high-ceilinged bungalows with dining/living-room area and modern bathroom, TV and minibar. The swimming pool is modestly sized though.

#### TOP END

**Hotel Vila Ombak** (☎ 642336; www.hotelombak.com; r US\$75-135 plus 21% tax; a s ) Just south of the main drag, this highly attractive resort occupies a leafy garden plot partly shaded by yuccas and palms. The faux-traditional two-storey A-frame bungalows are not that large for the price, but do have real character. The stunning superior rooms are more minimalist in design. Has a great pool, spa, diving academy, restaurant and beach bar too.

**H Rooms** (☎ 639248; somersguy@yahoo.com; villas US\$100; a ) Redefining the mod-Asian look that is so prevalent in Bali, these remarkable modernist villas to the rear of the Horizontal bar can sleep four comfortably, with dividing walls separating sleek interiors replete with Japanese-style tatami matting, distressed coconut-wood walls and decked floors. Home cinema equipment, huge Jacuzzis and gorgeous open-air bathrooms are all standard, while butler and personal DJ services can also be arranged.

**Desa Dunia Beda** (☎ 641575; www.desaduniabeda.com; bungalows US\$110 plus 21% tax; a s ) Out on their own in the north of the island, these absolutely astonishing Javanese Joglo bungalows command the biggest wow factor on the island. Each has been decorated with classy furniture and boasts a four-poster bed, writing desk, sofas and back-to-nature open-air bathrooms. Smallest pool though, and it is isolated up here.

**Kelapa Villas** (☎ 632424; www.kelapavillas.com; villas US\$150-410 plus 21% tax; a s ) Between the coasts, surrounded by coconut groves, these beautifully finished luxury villas boast full catering facilities, private pools and all the comforts of home including TV/DVD and fresh-water bathrooms.

#### Eating

It's easy to munch your way around the world in Trawangan, which belies its size and offers everything from sushi to Irish stew. In the evenings several places display fresh fish and seafood on the main strip.

**Anna's** (dishes 5000-8000Rp) Tiny, friendly warung with a very short menu. It serves up a mean *nasi campur* and *soto ayam* (chicken soup).

**Kayangan** (dishes 7500-15,000Rp) It may look a bit grubby, but the inexpensive Chinese and Indonesian dishes here are executed well.

**Café Wayan** (dishes 17,000-35,000Rp) Hygiene standards are high, so it's a great venue for salads (try the papaya and chicken) as well as pasta, Thai and Indo faves like prawns *a la ketut* (served with cashews). Leave room for cake, including death-by-chocolate and carrot.

**Beach House** (☎ 642352; dishes 17,000-50,000Rp) Boasts a great beachside terrace and a menu that takes in everything from tasty baguettes through the usual Indonesian suspects to chargrilled sirloin steaks. It sells wine and there's also a fine choice of juices – try the pineapple, guava and mint.

**Ryoshi** (☎ 639463; dishes 17,000-48,000Rp, set menus from 37,000Rp) Authentic, superfresh sushi, teriyaki chicken and other Japanese treats at moderate prices served on Nippon-style low tables (though you can also eat your Eastern treats next door in the Irish bar, Tir na Nog, too).

**Tir na Nog** (☎ 639463; dishes 21,000-37,000Rp) Ideal for enormous portions of comfort food such as Irish stew and fish 'n' chips, and puds like *banoffi* (banana and condensed milk) pie.

**Horizontal** (☎ 639248; dishes 25,000-65,000Rp) With more than a nod to Seminyak style, this lounge-bar-restaurant boasts sleek

contemporary seating including luxe scarlet lounges, sculptured white 'escape pods' and lots of hip design details. The extensive, eclectic menu fuses pan-Asian and mod-European food, with bar snacks like hot 'n' spicy queso-sadillas to munch on, mains including salt-and-pepper squid with lime and lemon dip to savour, and desserts to die for. The bizarre looking white globe with a chimney by the entrance is actually a wood-fired pizza oven (not a mosque for cats as one local mused). Home-sick Brits should check out the 7pm Sunday roast, with all the trimmings of course.

Other recommendations:

**Blue Marlin** (mains 9000-35,000Rp) Offering mainly Western food, this place serves up some of the finest fish and seafood on Trawangan – choose yours from the iced street-side display.

**Reccy Living Room** (dishes 12,000-23,000Rp) Friendly place with *beruga* overlooking the beach that offers decent Western food including lasagne. Order the house special 'rice table' a day in advance.

#### Drinking & Entertainment

Despite its diminutive size, Trawangan punches way above its weight in the party stakes. Its rotating parties fire up around 11pm and go on until 4am or so (except during Ramadan when the action is completely curtailed out of respect for local culture). At the time of research the party schedule shifted between Dive Indonesia (Saturday), Blue Marlin (Monday), Tir na Nog (Tuesday), Horizontal (Thursday) and Rudy's (Friday).

Imported DJs from Bali and beyond mix techno, trance and House music while Rudy's has a more eclectic musical policy.

**Blue Marlin** (r 8am-midnight Tue-Sun, 8am-3am Mon) Of all the party bars, this upper-level venue has the largest dance floor and the meanest sound system – which pumps out trance and tribal sounds on Monday. There's also a great outdoor terrace with views across the ocean to Lombok.

**Tir na Nog** (r 7am-2am Wed-Mon, 7am-4am Tue) Known to one and all as the 'Irish bar', it combines a sociable barnlike main room, where you can catch live sports on a big screen and play table soccer, and a superb beachside terrace. You can also watch films here, choosing a title from the extensive selection and watching it on a portable TV, set up on a private *beruga*.

**Horizontal** (r 10am-2am) Adjacent to a gorgeous stretch of beach, this super-stylin' place

offers a radically different take on drinking culture compared with the usual drinking dens on Trawangan. Primarily an alfresco chillout zone, but with terrific food (see left), the cocktails are the best in Trawangan (try the raspberry margarita or Long Island ice tea). Also serves espresso and cappuccino.

**Rudy's Pub** (r 8am-4am Fri, 8am-11pm Sat-Thu) Run by the inimitable Joko, the friendliest and most entertaining barman in town, this place hosts a terrific Friday-night party.

## NORTH & CENTRAL LOMBOK

☎ 0370

The sparsely populated northern part of Lombok is remarkably beautiful, with a variety of landscapes, few tourists and even fewer facilities. Public transport is not frequent though, nor does it detour from the main road. With a set of wheels, however, you can explore the shore, waterfalls and inland villages. The main coastal road is narrow but paved and in good condition.

Towering Gunung Rinjani is unquestionably the region's main attraction. But even if you don't attempt the cone itself, its southern slopes are well watered and lush, and offer scenic walks through rice fields and jungle. Most villages in central Lombok are traditional Sasak settlements, and several of them are known for their local handicrafts.

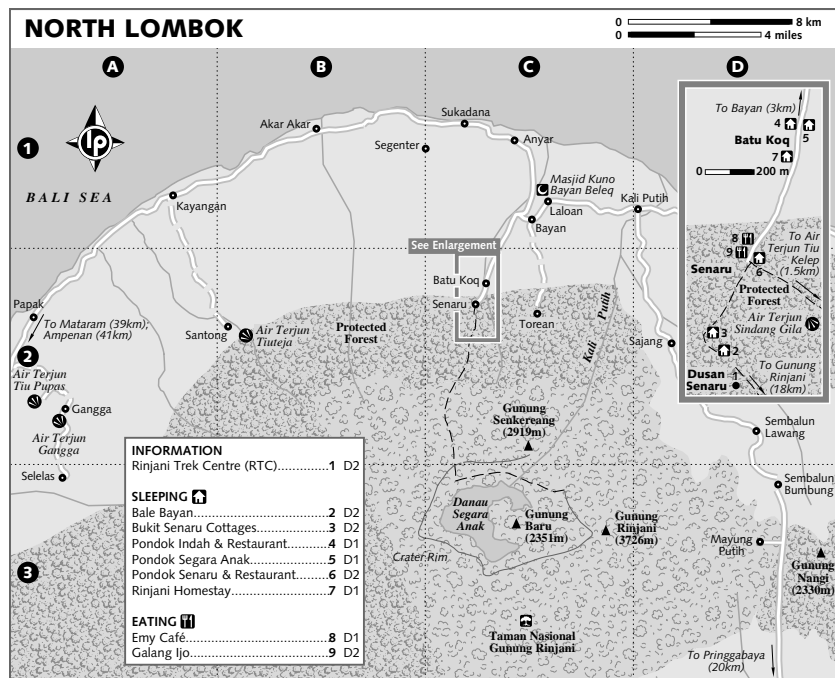
#### BANGSAL TO BAYAN

The port of Bangsal is run down and a hassle, see the boxed text, p299. Heading north of Bangsal, public transport isn't that frequent. Several minibuses a day go from Mandalika terminal in Bertais (Mataram) to Bayan, but you may have to get connections in Pemenang and/or Anyar. This area is best explored with your own wheels.

#### Sira

This peninsula has a glorious sweeping white-sand beach, some snorkelling offshore and Lombok's most luxurious hotel, the **Oberoi Lombok** (☎ 638444; www.oberoihotels.com; r from US\$240, villas from US\$350, plus 21% tax; a s ). The rooms, villas and pavilions here are beyond commodious, with lashings of marble, teak floors, oriental rugs and astonishing garden-bathrooms





with sunken bathtubs. There's a fine spa and good sports facilities, including tennis courts, though before the restaurant prices – a sandwich is 100,000Rp (plus tax).

Close by, signposted from the road south to Bangsal, the **Lombok Golf Kosaido Country Club** (96 640137; per round incl caddy & cart US\$80) is an attractive 18-hole, 72-par course by the sea, laid with Bermuda grass. Hole 9 faces the waters of Sira Bay, while holes 10 to 18 have great views of Rinjani. Manta Dive on Gili Trawangan can organise discounted rates here.

### Gondang & Around

Just northeast of Gondang village, a 6km trail heads inland to **Air Terjun Tiu Pupas**, a 30m waterfall that's only really impressive in the wet season. Trails continue from here to other waterfalls including **Air Terjun Gangga**, the most beautiful of all. A guide is useful to navigate the confusing trails in these parts – speak to the owners of the **Pondok Pantai** (96 0812 375 2632; www.pontok-pantai.com; bunggalows 50,000-90,000Rp) a welcoming Dutch-Indonesian-run guesthouse with lovely thatched bungalows, tip-top food (dishes 9000Rp to 22,000Rp) and a west-facing

beachside setting that serves up blood-red sunsets. It's 2km north of Gondang.

### Bayan

This northernmost part of Lombok is the birthplace of the Wektu Telu religion (p316), and also has some venerable mosques. One very fine example, **Masjid Kuno Bayan Beleg**, close to village of Laloan, is one of the oldest on Lombok, reputedly dating from 1634. Built on a square platform of river stones the structure has a pagoda-like upper section and inside there's a huge old drum. Access to the interior of the mosque is not permitted, and the structure is not actively used for worship. You may be asked to sign a visitor's book and make a donation for the mosque's upkeep.

### Senaru & Batu Kog

These picturesque villages, merging into each other along a ridge with sweeping views to the east and south, are the main starting points for climbs up **Gunung Rinjani**. Even if you've not got your volcano-climbing head on, they're still worth a day or so, with some fine walking trails and dramatic waterfalls.

### INFORMATION & ORIENTATION

**Rinjani Trek Centre** (RTC; 96 satellite 0868 1210 4132; www.info2lombok.com), at the southern end of the village, has good information on Rinjani and the surrounding area.

The two villages are spread out along a single steep road which heads south to Rinjani. **Batu Kog** is about 3km south from Bayan, **Senaru** is a further 3km uphill.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Definitely visit **Air Terjun Sindang Gila** (2000Rp), a spectacular set of falls 20 minutes' walk from Senaru. The walk is partly through forest and partly alongside an irrigation canal that follows the contour of the hill, occasionally disappearing into tunnels where the cliffs are too steep.

A further 50 minutes or so up the hill is **Air Terjun Tiu Kelep**, another waterfall, where you can go swimming. The track is steep and tough at times, so it's a good idea to take a guide (15,000Rp).

Six kilometres south of Bayan is the traditional village of **Dusun Senaru** where locals will invite you to chew betel nut (or tobacco) and show you around.

Community tourism activities can be arranged in most guesthouses – they include a rice terraces and waterfalls walk (35,000Rp), which takes in **Sindang Gila**, some stunning vistas and a bemo ride back; and the **Senaru Panorama Walk** (45,000Rp), which is led by female guides and incorporates information about local lifestyles.

To recuperate, head to **Emy Café** (p313) for a posthike massage (25,000Rp).

### SLEEPING & EATING

Some comfortable rooms have been built recently, but most of the dozen lodges here have basic rooms and shared cold-water mandi. As the climate's cooler, you won't need fans. All these places are dotted along the road from Bayan to Senaru.

**Bukit Senaru Cottages** (r 40,000Rp) Shortly before **Dusun Senaru**, this place has four well-constructed semidetached bungalows with verandas and bathrooms with Western toilets overlooking a leafy garden.

**Pondok Indah & Restaurant** (96 081 7578 8018; s/d 80,000/100,000Rp) A well-run friendly place with spacious accommodation in two blocks 3km south of Bayan. Many rooms share a communal balcony and have well-scrubbed

showers and Western toilets. There's parking and a good restaurant (dishes 7000Rp to 18,000Rp).

**Pondok Senaru & Restaurant** (96 622868, 0868 1210 4141; r 150,000-300,000Rp) Well set-up place 4km from Bayan offering great easterly views of the valley from its recommended restaurant (dishes 11,000Rp to 21,000Rp) and spacious, spotless rooms – a little overpriced but the most comfortable digs in town. The superior rooms have TV, minibar and hot showers.

Also worth considering: **Rinjani Homestay** (96 0817 5750 889; s/d 35,000/40,000Rp) A little further uphill it has plain clean rooms and a restaurant with Western and Indonesian dishes (7000Rp to 25,000Rp) **Bale Bayan** (96 0817 5792 943; r 40,000Rp) Opposite **Dusun Senaru** village, this place has rustic bungalows and a restaurant in a nice garden. **Pondok Segara Anak** (96 0817 5754 551; r 40,000Rp) Panoramic views and neat, clean good-value rooms. It's 3km from Bayan.

Head to **Emy Café** (dishes 5000-12,500Rp) or **Galang Ijo** (dishes 5000-8000Rp) both midway between **Batu Kog** and **Senaru** for simple food and some Sasak specials.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

From **Mandalika** terminal in **Mataram** catch a bus to **Anyar** (12,500Rp, 2½ hours). Bemo leave **Anyar** for **Senaru** (4000Rp) about every 20 minutes until 4.30pm. If you're coming from, or going to, eastern Lombok, get off at the junction near **Bayan** (your driver will know it), from where bemo go to **Senaru**.

### THE SEMBALUN VALLEY

96 0376

High on the eastern side of **Gunung Rinjani** is the beautiful **Sembalun Valley**, whose inhabitants descend from the Hindu Javanese. The two main settlements are **Sembalun Lawang** and **Sembalun Bumbang**. The former is a popular starting point for treks up **Gunung Rinjani**. The statue of an enormous garlic bulb in the village is indicative of the area's main crop, which is harvested in October.

**Sembalun Bumbang**, 3km south of **Sembalun Lawang** and just off the main road, is a sprawling and relatively wealthy village. It's often referred to simply as **Sembalun**; the 'Bumbang' is used to differentiate its neighbour. However, **Sembalun Lawang** is the more convenient place to stay for organising treks.

## Information & Activities

The staff at the Rinjani Information Centre (RIC; 11 6am-6pm) are well informed about the area and offer treks such as a not-too-demanding four-hour **Village Walk** (100,000Rp, minimum 2 people). The more strenuous **Wildflower Walk** (per person 560,000Rp for 2 people incl a guide, porters, meals and all camping gear) is a delightful two-day trek inside the national park past flowery grasslands; it costs less if there are more of you.

The RIC has also helped local women to revive traditional weaving in Sembalun Lawang. Follow the signs from the village centre to their workshops.

## Sleeping & Eating

Sembalun Lawang is a more expensive place to stay than Senaru or Batu Koq, but the vistas are more impressive.

**Bale Galeng** (s/d with shared bathroom 30,000/45,000Rp) These basic, serviceable *lumbung* cottages are set in a rambling garden rich with scrubs and medicinal herbs. About 1km from the RIC.

**Maria Guesthouse** (r 50,000Rp) Try this homestay with two basic rooms; rates include breakfast and dinner.

**Losman Lembah Rinjani** (% 0818 0362 0918; s/d with shared bathroom 60,000/80,000Rp, s/d 130,000/160,000Rp) Head down a side road near the RIC to find this well-run place, the cheaper rooms have less impressive volcano views. There's a restaurant on site (dishes 8000Rp to 14,000Rp).

**Sembalun Nauli** (% 0818 362 040; [sembalunnauli@lycos.com](http://sembalunnauli@lycos.com); r 120,000Rp) These smart, spacious rooms, with wonderful Rinjani views, are 3km before Sembalun Lawang on the road from Banyan. There's good local food here (dishes 6000Rp to 17,000Rp).

## Getting There & Away

From Mandalika bus terminal take a bus to Aikmel (8000Rp) and change there for Sembalun Lawang (9000Rp). Hourly pick-ups connect Lawang and Bumbung.

There's no public transport between Sembalun Lawang and Senaru, you'll have to charter an *ojek*, or a bemo for around 100,000Rp. Roads to Sembalun are sometimes closed in the wet season due to landslides.

## SAPIT

% 0376

On the southeastern slopes of Gunung Rinjani, Sapit is a tiny, very relaxed village with views across to Sumbawa. *Open*, tall red-

brick tobacco-drying buildings, loom above the beautifully lush landscape, and 'baccy can be bought in blocks in the market.

## Sights

Between Swela and Sapit, a side road leads to **Taman Lemor** (admission 3000Rp; 11 8am-4pm), a park with a refreshing spring-fed swimming pool and some pesky monkeys. Further towards Pringgabaya, **Makam Selaparang** is the burial place of ancient Selaparang kings.

You can also visit hot-water springs and small waterfalls near Sapit. Ask either homestay for directions.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hati Suci Homestay** (% 0818 545 655; [www.hatisuci.tk](http://www.hatisuci.tk); s 40,000-45,000Rp, d 75,000-85,000Rp) An efficiently run place with excellent budget bungalows with en-suite bathrooms set in a blossoming garden. The accommodation and restaurant (dishes 8000Rp to 18,000Rp) both offer stunning views over the sea to Sumbawa. Breakfast is included and hikes to Rinjani can be organised here.

**Balelangga Bed & Breakfast** (% 22197; s/d with shared bathroom 30,000/50,000Rp) Under the same management, this place has simpler rooms and good home cooking (dishes 6000Rp to 18,000Rp). It's sometimes closed in the low season.

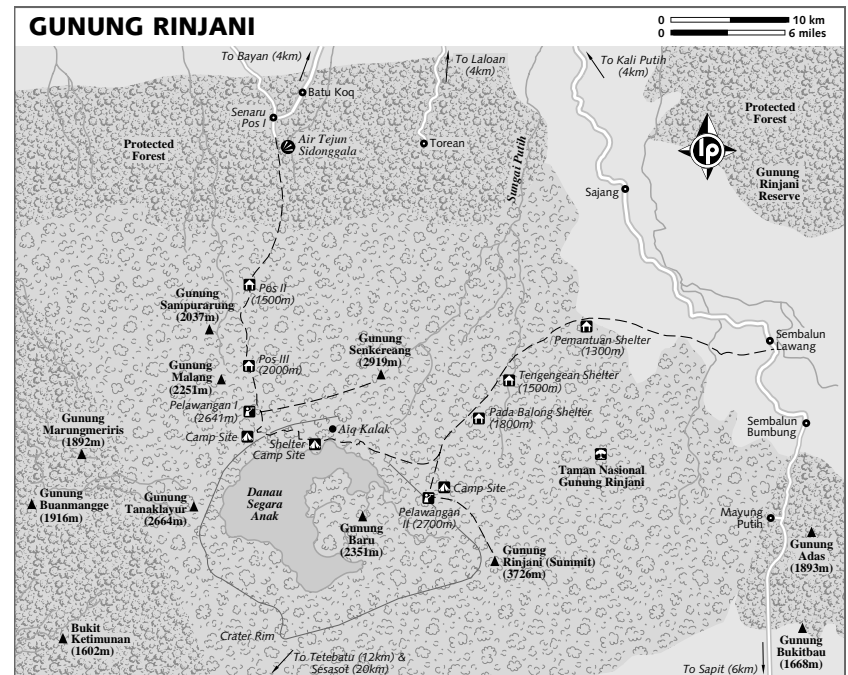
## Getting There & Away

To reach Sapit from Mataram or Central Lombok first head to Pringgabaya, which has frequent bemo connections to Sapit. Occasional bemo also go to Sapit from the Sembalun valley in the north.

## GUNUNG RINJANI

Soaring over northern Lombok, the mighty Rinjani volcano is of immense cultural (and climatic) importance for Lombok's people, while climbing the peak is one of Indonesia's most exhilarating experiences. The great cone, which reaches 3726m, and its upper slopes were declared a national park in 1997. Thousands of pilgrims, for whom Rinjani is a sacred mountain, venture up to its crater lake and place offerings in the waters, bathe in the hot springs here and pay respects to Rinjani as an abode of deities.

Gunung Rinjani is the highest mountain on Lombok and Indonesia's highest outside Papua. Its caldera contains a cobalt crescent-



shaped lake, Danau Segara Anak (Child of the Sea), which is about 6km across at its widest point. The crater has a series of natural hot springs known as Aiq Kalak, whose waters locals take to blend with herbs to make medicinal treatments, particularly for skin diseases. The lake is 600m below the crater rim, and rising from its waters is a minor, newer cone, Gunung Baru (or Gunung Barujari), which only emerged a couple of hundred years ago. This ominously grey, highly active scarred peak erupted as recently as October 2004.

### GUNUNG RINJANI SECURITY WARNING

There were incidents of armed robbery on Rinjani in 2000, though we have not received reports of any further incidents until another attack in July 2005. While this seems to have been an isolated incident, it's best to check safety advice locally before you set out.

There are plans to post police and mountain security guards inside the crater.

Both the Balinese and Sasaks revere Rinjani. To the Balinese, it is equal to Gunung Agung (p219), a seat of the gods, and many Balinese make an annual pilgrimage here. In a ceremony called *pekelan*, people throw jewellery into the lake and make offerings to the spirit of the mountain. Some Sasaks make several pilgrimages a year – full moon is their favourite time for paying respect to the mountain and for curing ailments by bathing in Aiq Kalak. Rinjani is particularly revered by the Wektu Telu (see the boxed text, p316) for whom the mountain has immense spiritual power.

The trek to the crater lake is not to be taken lightly and should only be undertaken as part of an organised trek due to the active status of Gunung Baru and, sadly, because there have been (very) occasional attacks on hikers (see left). Climbing Rinjani during the wet season (November to March), when the tracks are often treacherously slippery and there's a real risk of landslides, is not at all advisable – the National Park office often completely forbids access to Rinjani for the first three months of each year. June to August is the only time you are guaranteed (well, almost) no rain or



cloud, but be prepared as it can still get very cold at the summit.

Senaru has the best services for trekkers so most start their treks there. Those who want the fastest summit climb, however, should start from Sembalun Lawang on the eastern side.

### Organised Treks

The best and most inexpensive way to organise a trip is to head to either the Rinjani Trek Centre (p313) in Senaru or the Rinjani Information Centre (p313) in Sembalun Lawang. Anyone passing through Senggigi can

#### WEKTU TELU

Believed to have originated in the northern village of Bayan, Wektu Telu is an indigenous religion unique to Lombok, though it does bear many similarities with Agami Jawi, the Javanese Islamic syncretism. In the Sasak language, *wektu* means 'result' and *telu* means 'three'. The name probably denotes the complex mixture of Hindu, Islamic and animistic influences that make up this religion; and the concept of a trinity is embodied in many Wektu Telu beliefs, such as the sun, the moon and the stars (representing heaven, earth and water); the head, body and limbs (representing creativity, sensitivity and control). Wektu laws are also based around three principles: religion, custom and governance.

The number of Wektu adherents is quite small (fewer than 30,000), although this is almost certainly understated as it is not a state recognised religion, and Wektu traditions and rituals continue under the unifying code of Islam. Nevertheless, numbers have been steadily declining as more and more young people now worship at orthodox Islamic mosques. You can recognise Wektu Telu believers by their *sapu puteq* (white headbands), tied in a knot at the front like Balinese Hindus, and their flowing white robes.

As recently as 1965 the vast majority of Sasaks in northern Lombok were Wektu Telu, but following the 1965 coup, Soeharto's New Order government decreed that all Indonesians must have an *agama*, an officially recognised religion – either Islam, Hinduism, Christianity or Buddhism – and indigenous religious beliefs were discouraged and decreed backward. In tense times, when 'godless' Communists were being slaughtered by the thousands, virtually all Lombok's Wektu Telu declared themselves to be Muslims on their state identity cards – many fearing that if they did not practise an official religion, they could be construed as being atheists. By 1967, as far as state records were concerned, virtually all Wektu Telu had become Wektu Lima – *lima* (five) refers to the five pillars of Islam that all orthodox Muslims strive to adhere to. (About 5000 villagers in Bentek, with strong Wektu Telu traditions, originally opted to be categorized as Buddhists, but later became Muslims).

The Wektu Telu observe only three days of fasting during Ramadan. They do not pray five times a day as dictated by Islamic law and some have no objection to eating pork. Their dead are buried with their heads facing Mecca, but Wektu Telu do not make pilgrimages there. In fact, the only fundamental tenets of Islam to which the Wektu Telu seem to hold firmly are the belief in Allah, and that Muhammad is Allah's prophet.

For the Wektu, death does not signify the end of a person's soul, and they believe that the departed return on important days in the calendar to provide ritual blessings. For this reason, much respect is paid to Wektu ancestors. Three rituals – the reading of sacred mantras, the offering of betel nut, and the placement of a bowl of spring water – are performed when the Wektu wish to invite their ancestors to a ceremony.

The Wektu also believe strongly that the spiritual world is firmly linked with the natural world – particularly springs, hilltops and mountains (of which Rinjani is most revered). Shaman called *pemangku* provide the contact between the two worlds, and act as guardians of pre-Islamic monuments called *gedeng lauq* and *gedeng daya*, sanctuaries of linga-shaped stones protected by bamboo roofs.

Most of the Wektu Telu religious festivals take place at the beginning of the rainy season (from October to December), or at harvest time (April to May), with celebrations in villages all over the island. Many of these ceremonies and rituals are annual events but, as they do not fall on specific days, getting to see one is a matter of luck and word of mouth. The Bayan area of northern Lombok remains a stronghold of the Wektu Telu community.

first contact the Rinjani Trek Centre's office there (p294). Funded by the New Zealand government, the centres use a rotation system so that all of the local trekking organisers get a slice of the hiking pie.

Whether you book through your losmen, or directly at the RTC or RIC, the same trek packages (at the same prices) are offered. The most popular is the three-day, two-night trek from Senaru to Sembalun Lawang via the summit and includes food, equipment, guide, porters, park fee and transport back to Senaru. This costs 1.6million rupiah for one, dropping to 966,000Rp per person for two hikers and 821,000Rp for three. An overnight trek to the crater rim from Senaru costs 1.19million rupiah for one, 714,000Rp for two and 606,900Rp for three. The deals are cheaper the more of you there are.

A number of agencies in Mataram, Senggigi and the Gili Islands can organise all-inclusive treks. Prices usually include everything outlined above, plus return transport from the point of origin. For example, Perama ([www.peramatour.com](http://www.peramatour.com)), with offices in all of these locations, has a trekking package that leaves from any of the places above, via Senaru using official RTC guides for 1.6million rupiah per person (minimum two people).

### Guides & Porters

Hiking independently is not recommended due to security and safety concerns (see the boxed text, opposite).

If you don't want to do an all-inclusive trekking package with RTC or RIC you can hire guides (100,000Rp per day) and porters (80,000Rp) from them independently, but make sure you take a radio (10,000Rp per day). Contract your guides and porters directly from the centres in Senaru and Sembalun Lawang, as they are licensed for your security. Guides are knowledgeable and informative, but won't carry anything for you, so take at least one porter. You also have to provide them with food, water and transport, and probably cigarettes as well.

### Entrance Fee & Equipment

The entrance fee for the Rinjani National Park is 27,000Rp – register and pay at the RTC in Senaru or the RIC in Sembalun Lawang before you start your trek.

Sleeping bags and tents are essential and can be hired at either RTC or RIC. You'll also

need solid footwear, layers of warm clothing, wet-weather gear, cooking equipment and a torch (flashlight), but these can also be hired from the RTC. Expect to pay about 50,000Rp a head per day for all your equipment.

Take a stove so you don't need to deplete the limited supply of firewood. Carry all rubbish out with you and make sure others in your party do the same.

Backpacks can be left at most losmen in Senaru or the RTC for around 5000Rp per day.

### Food & Supplies

Trek organisers at RTC and RIC can arrange trekking food, or you can take your own. It's better to buy most supplies in Mataram or Senggigi, where it's cheaper and there's more choice, but some provisions are available in Senaru. Take plenty of water and a lighter.

### Getting There & Away

For transport options from Sembalun Lawang to Senaru, see p314. If you've purchased a trekking package, transport back to the point of origin is usually included.

### TETEBATU

☎ 0376

Nestling in the lower slopes of Gunung Rinjani, Tetebatu is an attractive rural retreat sitting at a high enough altitude (400m) to make the climate a tad more refreshing than down on the sticky coast. There are magnificent views across tobacco fields and rice paddies towards southern Lombok, east to the sea and north to Rinjani. The *open* (brick towers) that dot the landscape are used for drying tobacco, the major crop here. Tetebatu makes a fine setting for a few days hiking to nearby waterfalls or visiting the surrounding handicraft villages.

Tetebatu is quite spread out, with facilities on roads north and east (nicknamed 'waterfall road') of the *ojek* stop in the centre of the village. There's a wartel (☎ 9am-9pm) next to Salabuse Café.

### Sights & Activities

#### TAMAN WISATA TETEBATU

A shady 4km track leading from the main road, just north of the mosque, heads into the Taman Wisata Tetebatu (Monkey Forest) with black monkeys and waterfalls – you will need a guide to find them. Alternatively, to get there you could take an *ojek* from the turn-off.



## CLIMBING GUNUNG RINJANI

The two most popular ways to climb Gunung Rinjani are a five-day trek (described below) that starts at Senaru and finishes at Sembalun Lawang, or a strenuous dash from Senaru to the crater rim and back. A guide is essential from the hot springs to Sembalun Lawang, as the path is indistinct (see p312). This trek is outlined on the Gunung Rinjani map (p315). Another good map is the one from the Rinjani Trek Centre (RTC) – it is large, in colour, glossy and easy to understand.

It's often not possible to climb Rinjani during the wet season, particularly after heavy rainfall when the trail around the lake is very dangerous due to the threat of rock fall.

### Day One: Senaru Pos I to Pos III (Five to Six Hours)

At the southern end of the village is the Rinjani Trek Centre (Pos I, 601m), where you register and pay the park fee. Just beyond the post, the trail forks – continue straight ahead on the right fork. The trail climbs steadily through scrubby farmland for about half an hour to the sign at the entrance to Gunung Rinjani National Park. The wide trail climbs for another 2½ hours until you reach Pos II (1500m), where there's a shelter. Water can be found 100m down the slopes from the trail, but it should be treated or boiled.

Another 1½ hours' steady walk uphill brings you to Pos III (2000m), where there are another two shelters in disrepair. Water is 100m off the trail to the right, but sometimes evaporates in the dry season. Pos III is usually the place to camp at the end of the first day.

### Day Two: Pos III to Danau Segara Anak & Aiq Kalak (Four Hours)

From Pos III, it takes about 1½ hours to reach the rim, Pelawangan I, at an altitude of 2641m. Set off very early for the stunning sunrise. It's possible to camp at Pelawangan I, but there are drawbacks: level sites are limited, there's no water and it can be very blustery.

It takes about two hours to descend to Danau Segara Anak and around to the hot springs, Aiq Kalak. The first hour is a very steep descent and involves low-grade rock climbing in parts. From the bottom of the crater wall it's an easy 30-minute walk across undulating terrain around the lake's edge. There are several places to camp, but most locals prefer to be near the hot springs to soak their weary bodies and recuperate. There are also some caves nearby which are interesting, but not used for shelter. The nicest camp sites are at the lake's edge, and fresh water can be gathered from a spring near the hot springs. Some hikers spend two nights or even more at the lake, but most who are returning to Senaru from here head back the next day. The climb back up the rim is certainly taxing – allow at least three hours and start early to make it back to Senaru in one day. Allow five hours from the rim down to Senaru. Instead of retracing your steps, the best option is to complete the Rinjani trek by continuing to Sembalun Lawang and arranging transport back to Senaru (see p312).

### Day Three: Aiq Kalak to Pelawangan II (Three to Four Hours)

The trail starts beside the last shelter at the hot springs and heads away from the lake for about 100m before veering right. It then traverses the northern slope of the crater, and it's an easy one-hour walk along the grassy slopes. It's then a steep and constant climb; from the lake it takes about three hours to reach the crater rim (2639m). At the rim, a sign points the way back to Danau Segara Anak. Water can be found down the slope near the sign. The trail forks here – go straight on to Lawang or continue along the rim to the camp site of Pelawangan II (2700m). It's only about 10 minutes more to the camp site which is on a bare ridge.

### Day Four: Pelawangan II to Rinjani Summit (Five to Six Hours Return)

Gunung Rinjani stretches in an arc above the camp site at Pelawangan II and looks deceptively close. Start the climb at 3am in order to reach the summit in time for the sunrise and before the clouds roll in.

It takes about 45 minutes to clamber up a steep, slippery and indistinct trail to the ridge that leads to Rinjani. Once on the ridge it's a relatively easy walk uphill. After about an hour

heading towards what looks like the peak, the real summit of Rinjani looms behind and towers above you.

The trail then gets steeper and steeper. About 350m before the summit, the scree is composed of loose, fist-sized rocks – it's easier to get along by scrambling on all fours. This section can take about an hour. The views from the top are truly magnificent on a clear day. The descent is much easier, but again, take it easy on the scree. In total it takes three hours or more to reach the summit, and two to get back down.

### Day Four/Five: Pelawangan II to Sembalun Lawang (Five to Six Hours)

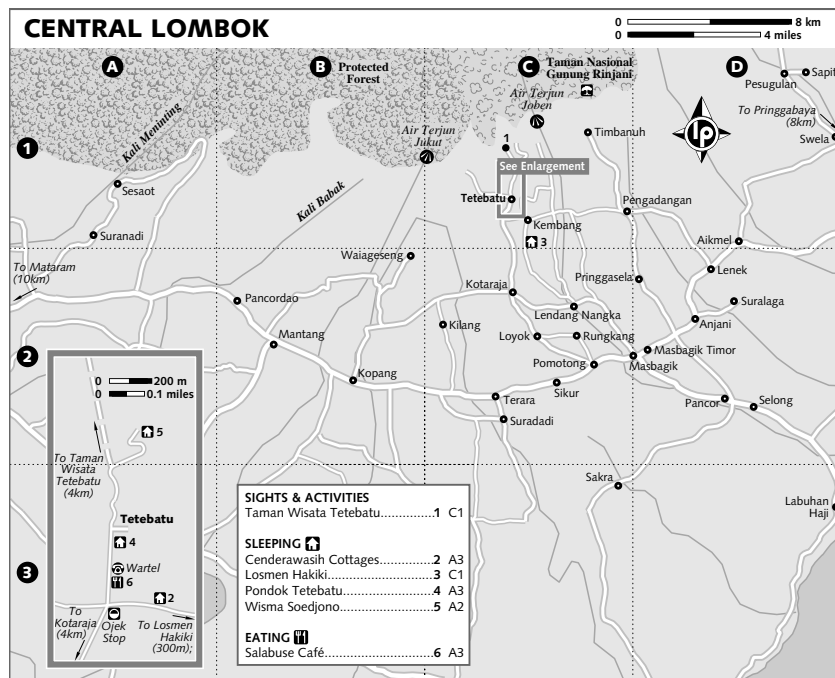
After negotiating the peak, it's still possible to reach Lawang the same day. After a two-hour descent, it's a long and hot three-hour walk back to the village. Head off early to avoid as much of the heat of the day as possible and make sure you've brought along plenty of water. From the camp site, head back along the ridge-crest trail. A couple of hundred metres past the turn-off to Danau Segara Anak there is a signposted right turn leading down a subsidiary ridge to Pada Balong and Sembalun Lawang. Once on the trail, it's easy to follow and takes around two hours to reach the bottom.

At the bottom of the ridge (where you'll find Pada Balong shelter; 1800m) the trail levels out and crosses undulating to flat grassland all the way to Sembalun Lawang. After about an hour you will hit the Tengengean shelter (1500m); it's then another 30 minutes to Pemantuan shelter (1300m). Early in the season, long grass obscures the trail until about 30 minutes beyond Pemantuan. The trail crosses many bridges; at the final bridge, just before it climbs uphill to a lone tree, the trail seems to fork; take the right fork and climb the rise. From here, the trail follows the flank of Rinjani before swinging around to Lawang at the end. A guide is essential for this part of the trip.

## Variations

There are a few possible variations to the route to the top of Gunung Rinjani described above. They're outlined here:

- Compress the last two days into one (racking up a hefty 10 to 11 hours on the trail). On the plus side it's downhill all the way after the hard climb to the summit.
- Retrace your steps to Senaru after climbing to the summit, making a five-day circuit that includes another night at the hot springs.
- Another popular route, because the trail is well defined and (if you're experienced) can be trekked with only a porter, is a three-day trek from Senaru to the hot springs and back. The first night is spent at Pos III and the second at the hot springs. The return to Senaru on the final day takes eight to nine hours.
- For (almost) instant gratification (if you travel light and climb fast) you can reach the crater rim from Senaru in about six hours. You'll gain an altitude of approximately 2040m in 10km. Armed with a torch (flashlight), some moonlight and a guide, set off at midnight to arrive for sunrise. The return takes about five hours.
- If you reach Pelawangan I early in the day, consider taking a side trip along the crater rim, following it around to the east for about 3km to Gunung Senkereang (2919m). This point overlooks the gap in the rim where the stream that comes from the hot springs flows out of the crater and northeast towards the sea. It's not an easy walk, however, and the track is narrow and very exposed in places – if you do decide to give it a go, allow around two hours to get there and back.
- Start trekking from Sembalun Lawang (a guide is essential), from where it takes six or seven hours to get to Pelawangan II. This is a shorter walk to the rim than from Senaru, with only a three-hour trek up the ridge.



## WATERFALLS

On the southern slopes of Gunung Rinjani National Park there are two waterfalls. Both are accessible by private transport, or a lovely 1½-hour walk (one way) through rice fields from Tetebatu. If walking, *be sure* to hire a reputable guide (ask at your losmen).

Locals believe that water from Air Terjun Jukut (Jeruk Manis, Air Temer; admission 2000Rp) will increase hair growth. The falls are a steep 2km walk from the car park at the end of the road.

Northwest of Tetebatu, Air Terjun Joben (Otak Kokok Gading; admission 2000Rp) is more of a public swimming pool, so less alluring.

## Sleeping & Eating

Most accommodation in Tetebatu has a rustic charm. The losmen on Waterfall Rd tend to be more funky.

**Pondok Tetebatu** (☎ 632572; s/d 30,000/45,000Rp) North of the intersection this is a good choice with two rows of neat, spotless rooms, with Western toilets that face a pretty garden, plus a restaurant (dishes 8000Rp to 35,000Rp).

**Losmen Hakiki** (☎ 01808 0373 7407; cottages incl breakfast 50,000-70,000Rp) Enjoying a lovely aspect over

rice fields, about 1km east of the intersection, this place has charming little *lumbung* with yellow window frames and serves tasty Indonesian and Sasak cuisine (7000Rp to 18,000Rp).

**Cenderawasih Cottages** (☎ 0818 0372 6709; r 65,000Rp) Four gorgeous little *lumbung* cottages, with bamboo walls and shower/mandi facing a pond and garden. Tuck into Sasak, Indonesian or Western grub (7000Rp to 22,000Rp) in the elevated octagonal lounge and eating area, which gives sweeping views of the surrounding area. It's about 500m east of the intersection.

**Wisma Soedjono** (☎ 21309; r 75,000-150,000Rp, cottages 125,000Rp; ☎ ) About 2km north of the intersection, these slightly soulless but functional rooms (some with hot water) and lovely two-storey chalet-style cottages (with both balconies and verandas) are scattered around the grounds of a rambling family home. The large swimming pool is infrequently cleaned however. There's also a restaurant, with dishes from 10,000Rp to 28,000Rp.

**Salabuse Café** (☎ 0817 5731 143; dishes 6000-17,500Rp; ⌚ 7am-10pm) Cheery, cheap place serving Western, Indonesian and Sasak meals.

## Getting There & Around

Busse go from Mandalika to Pomotong (7000Rp), which is on the main east-west highway. From there, take a bemo to Kotaraja (2000Rp), then an *ojek* (3000Rp) or *cidomo* (4000Rp) to Tetebatu.

Bicycles and motorbikes can be rented at Pondok Tetebatu, and other losmen, for 15,000Rp and 50,000Rp per day, respectively.

## SOUTH OF TETEBATU

The nearest market town to Tetebatu is Kotaraja, which is also the transport hub of the area. It's known for its skilled blacksmiths. There's a market on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

Loyok is noted for its fine basketry and Rungking is known for its pottery, made from a

local black clay. You'll find workshops in both villages.

Masbagik is a large town on Lombok's east-west highway with a daily morning market, a huge cattle market on Monday afternoon, and an imposing new mosque with elegant minarets. There's an ATM opposite the mosque. Masbagik Timur, 1km east, is a centre for black-clay pottery and ceramic production.

Lendang Nangka is a Sasak village surrounded by picturesque countryside, 3km north of the highway. In and around the village you can see blacksmiths who make knives, hoes and other tools using traditional techniques. A few silversmiths are also based here and there's an excellent homestay, Radiah's (☎ 0376 631463; per person incl meals 50,000Rp) run by English speaker Radiah and his wife Sannah, who make Western

## SASAK LIFE

Lombok's indigenous Sasak people comprise about 90% of the island's population. Virtually all are now orthodox Muslims, though before 1965, many Sasaks in remote areas were Wektu Telu (see boxed text, p316), a subset of Islam peculiar to Lombok.

The traditional Sasak village layout is a walled enclosure. Sasak houses are made of bamboo, and sit on a base of compacted mud; they have a steeply-angled thatched roof, fireplace and (usually) no windows. A dividing wall of bamboo or woven fibres separates the main living area in some houses. Each village will have *lumbung*, rice storage barns that sit on stilts (to keep rodents at bay) that look like little thatched cottages; their façades shaped like the letter omega, or a mosque's mihrab. (Many hotels in the Gili Islands and Tetebatu now offer *lumbung*-style cottage accommodation.) There are several examples of traditional villages in northern Lombok including Dusun Senaru (p312) on the slopes of Gunung Rinjani, while in the south, Sade and Rembitan (p322) near Kuta also have Sasak houses and *lumbung*. But across the island, modern concrete homes with tin roofs and windows containing several rooms are becoming more common.

Many Sasak villages, particularly on the north of the island, still maintain a caste system which heavily influences courtship and marriage – women are not allowed to marry a man from a lower caste by tradition. Weddings between the highest castes – *Datu* (men) and *Denek Bini* (women) – and lower castes are quite rare.

There are three kinds of marriage rituals in Sasak culture: arranged marriages, a union between cousins, and elopement. Until recently, the tradition of elopement was dying out, but with more contact between castes and travel between villages it has regained popularity. For a boy from a caste lower than his girlfriend, eloping with her for a specified period of days – whisking her away to a safe house before notifying the *kepala desa* (village chief) of his intent to marry her – may be the only route to marriage. The chief will talk with the couple, negotiate between the parents, consult elders from both villages, and fix a wedding dowry, and the fine to be paid for the boy's actions.

When romance has been blossoming for a while between a couple, it's not unknown for parents who disapprove of a daughter's suitor to surreptitiously arrange a marriage with another boy, confining their daughter to the family home under close supervision. But with many locals now having access to mobile phones and SMS, boyfriends are often able to 'kidnap' their sweethearts when she is alone in the family home (strict protocols apply, and for an elopement marriage to be valid he must take her from her house, not from the village well or by the roadside).

Dowries also reflect these caste differences: the lower his caste and the higher hers, the more money changes hands. For the ceremony the bride and groom usually dress in traditional costume and are carried through the village in sedan chairs to the accompaniment of gamelan music.





## NYALE FESTIVAL

On the 19th day of the 10th month in the Sasak calendar – generally February or March – hundreds of Sasaks gather on the beach at Kutain Lombok. When night falls, fires are built and young people sit around competing with each other in rhyming couplets called *pantun*. At dawn the next day, the first of millions of *nyale* (wormlike fish) are caught, after which it's time for the teenagers to have fun. In a colourful procession, boys and girls sail out to sea – in different boats – and chase one another with lots of noise and laughter. The *nyale* are eaten raw or grilled, and are believed to have aphrodisiac properties. A good catch is a sign that the rice harvest will also be good.

further out, but nearly all need a boat; the current charter rate is a negotiable 200,000Rp per day. *Mawi* also offers consistent surf.

Drop by the friendly **Kimen Surf** (% 655064; kimensurf@yahoo.com) just west of the junction for swell forecasts, tips and information. Boards can be rented here (30,000Rp per day), repairs undertaken, lessons are offered (310,000Rp for four hours) and day trips to Gerupak (240,000Rp) and Bangko Bangko (950,000Rp) organised.

**Kuta Reef Surf Shop**, a simple place on the beachfront, is another recommended place, offering surf and bodyboard rentals at similar rates.

## Sleeping

Breakfast is included at all the places listed here. All accommodation is virtually on or just behind the beach, except *Mimpi Manis*. Many places have plenty of character and are well spread out with no sense of overcrowding.

## BUDGET

**Segare Anak Cottages** (% 654846; segareanakbungalow@yahoo.co.id; r 35,000-65,000Rp) Around 800m east of the junction. Overlooking a pretty garden the basic huts here have seen better days, but the newer concrete bungalows are a good deal and worth the extra rupiah. Also home to a moneychanger and the Perama office.

**Melon Homestay** (% 0817 367 892; angela\_granemann@web.de; r 50,000Rp, apt 65,000Rp) A terrific deal, this place has two gorgeous apartments with a lounge and self-catering facilities, one with sea

views from its balcony. There are a couple of smaller modern rooms with veranda and bathroom. It's about 400m east of the junction.

**Mimpi Manis** (% 0818 369 950; www.mimpimanis.com; s 50,000-90,000Rp, d 65,000-105,000Rp; a ) An extremely welcoming English-Balinese-owned guesthouse with two spotless, bright rooms and a two-storey house, all with en-suite shower room and TV/DVD player. There's home-cooked food, a dartboard and plenty of good books to browse and DVDs to borrow. It's 2km inland from the beach, but the owners offer a free drop-off service and can arrange bike and motorbike rental.

**Rinjani Bungalows** (% 654849; s/d with fan 80,000/95,000Rp, s/d with air-con 200,000/250,000Rp; a ) Looking good, this well-run place is about 1km east of the junction. Offers very clean, spruce bamboo bungalows with ikat bedspreads and bathrooms with Western toilets, and spanking new spacious concrete bungalows, each with two double beds, hot water, hardwood furniture and cable TV.

**Surfers Inn** (% 655582; www.lombok-surfersinn.com; r with fan 100,000-160,000Rp, with air con 180,000-500,000Rp; a s ) A very smart, stylish and orderly place with five classes of modern rooms, each with huge windows and large beds, and some with sofas. Book ahead as it's very popular.

Also recommended:

**Ketapang Bungalows** (% 655194; s/d 30,000/40,000Rp) Has simple thatched-roof bungalows with verandas; it's 500m east of the junction.

**Lamancha** (% 655186; s/d 40,000/50,000Rp) Four basic but spotless semidetached huts with mandi and shower.

**G'Day Inn** (% 655432; s/d 40,000/60,000Rp) This friendly, family-run place offers clean, recently-renovated rooms, some with hot water as well as a café. Located about 300m east of the junction.

## MIDRANGE

**Matahari Inn** (% 655000; www.matahariinn.com; r 180,000Rp-550,000Rp; a s ) This Balinese-themed hotel has an array of baroque rooms, each suffering somewhat from gaudy artefact overkill with an excess of reclining Buddhas and the like. Nevertheless, the garden, shaded by bamboo and palm trees is gorgeous.

**Kutah Indah Hotel** (% 653781; kutaindah@indonet.id; r US\$17-30; a s ) Set around well-tended gardens with a clipped lawn, these cottages are spacious but slightly tired-looking – the pool's nice.

**Tastura Beach Resort** (% 655540; tastura@mataram.wasantara.net.id; r US\$25-30; a s ) A bland, gov-

ernment-owned hotel with 20 distinctly average bungalows in expansive grounds 600m east of the junction. Cleanliness could be much better.

## TOP END

**Novotel Lombok** (% 653333; www.novotel-lombok.com; r without/with terrace US\$120/140, villa US\$235, plus 21% tax; a s ) This attractive resort 3km east of the junction has appealing modern rooms, with coconut-wood flooring and furniture, that are set off less-than-attractive corridors. The spacious thatched Sasak-style villas are lovely however. Two pools face a superb beach and there's a wonderful spa, good restaurants and a plethora of activities on offer including catamaran sailing, fishing, scuba diving and even archery classes.

## Eating & Drinking

All these places are on or just off the beach, though few actually have tables with sea views. For a really cheap bite, there are warung shacks on the beach opposite *Surfers Inn* and along the esplanade.

**Family Cafe** (% 653748; mains 6000-30,000Rp) Large thatched restaurant with a tempting menu including delicious *sate pusut* (satay served with coconut and chilli) and *urap urap* (mixed vegetables with *sambal* and coconut). Western dishes including chicken cordon bleu are tasty too. It also serves cocktails.

**Astari** (dishes 8000-22,000Rp; h 8.30am-6pm) Perched on a mountaintop 2km west of town on the road to Mawan, this remarkable, mainly vegetarian lounge-restaurant has a to-die-for healthy menu that takes in winsome breakfasts, sandwiches, and creatively assembled mains. The blackboard always has a daily dish and drink of the day – perhaps focaccia bread with eggplant and tamarind cooler. The view at least matches the cuisine, and it's easy to lose hours up here daydreaming, enjoying the music, browsing magazines or playing backgammon, and gazing out over Kuta's low hump-backed hills to the distant ocean rollers.

**Halang** (dishes 11,000-35,000Rp) Right on the beach, this ramshackle-looking place scores for fresh seafood.

**Cafe Lombok Lounge** (% 655542; 12,000-30,000Rp) Inexpensive Indonesian food including *cumi cumi* (squid) and Western dishes like omelettes.

**Mascot Pub** (dishes 12,000-38,000Rp; h 11-2am) Virtually the only nightlife in town; though don't expect a rave – it's more a local band

playing covers, and only on Friday and Saturday nights. Also serves Indonesian food.

**Rinjani** (dishes 13,000-39,000Rp; h 8am-11pm) This beachside place has a nice decked restaurant area, it serves both Western and Indonesian cuisine and also features live music some Saturdays.

**Empat Ikan** (Novotel Lombok; mains 75,000-175,000Rp) For something more fancy, this beachside hotel restaurant is strong on fish and seafood.

## Getting There & Away

Kuta is a hassle to reach by public transport, from Mandalika terminal in Mataram you'll have to go via Praya (6000Rp), then to Sengkol (3500Rp) and finally to Kuta (2500Rp). You'll usually have to change buses at all these places. Many people opt for the Perama shuttle-bus option from Senggigi or the Gili Islands to Kuta.

## Getting Around

*Ojek* congregate around the main junction as you enter Kuta. Bemo go east of Kuta to Awang and Tanjung Aan (2500Rp), and west to Selong Blanak (3000Rp), or can be chartered to nearby beaches. See p323 for more information about bike-hire scams. The guesthouse *Mimpi Manis* rents bicycles for 20,000Rp and motorbikes for 35,000Rp a day.

## EAST OF KUTA

Quite good roads traverse the coast to the east, passing a series of beautiful bays punctuated by headlands. There's public transport, but it's much easier with a motorbike.

**Pantai Segar** (Segar Beach) is about 2km east around the first headland, within walking distance of the town. The enormous rock of Batu Kotak, 2km further on divides two glorious white-sand beaches. Continuing east, **Tanjung Aan** is a very fine beach with chalk-white, powdery sand. Due to a spate of problems with stealing, there's a security guard keeping an eye on the place – even so, it's best not to bring valuables to the beach. The road continues another 2km to the fishing village and surfers' fave **Gerupak** where there's a market on Tuesday and a restaurant on the beach. Alternatively, turn northeast just before **Tanjung Aan** and go to **Awang**, a busy fishing village with a sideline in seaweed harvesting. You could take a boat from Awang across to **Ekas** (a charter costs around 120,000Rp) or to some of the other not-so-secret surf spots in this bay.

## SASAK FESTIVALS & CEREMONIES

As more and more Sasaks have adopted orthodox Islam, many ancient cultural rituals and celebrations based on animist and Hindu traditions have dwindled in popularity. Nevertheless some festivals and events endure, and are being actively promoted by local authorities. In addition to these festivals, there are also important events celebrating the harvesting of a sea worm called *nyale* (p324) in Kuta, and the riotous Hindu–Wektu Telu ‘rice war’ known as Perang Topat held at Pura Lingsar (p291).

**Lebaran Topat**, held in the seven days after the end of the fasting month (Idul Fitri; Ramadan) in the Islamic calendar is a Sasak ceremony thought to be unique to West Lombok. Relatives gather in cemeteries to pour water over family graves, and add offerings of flowers, betel leaves and lime powder. A place to observe these ceremonies is Bintaro cemetery on the outskirts of Ampenan.

**Malean Sampi** (meaning ‘cow chase’ in Sasak) are highly competitive buffalo races held over a 100m waterlogged fields in Narmada (see p291), just east of Mataram. Two buffalo are yoked together and then driven along the course by a driver brandishing a whip. The event takes place in early April, and commemorates the beginning of the planting season.

**Gendang Beleq** (big drum) performances were originally performed before battles. Today many villages in central Lombok have a *gendang* battery, some with up to 40 drummers, who perform at festivals and ceremonies. The drums themselves are colossal, up to a metre in length and not unlike an oil drum in shape or size. The drummers support the drums using a sash around their necks.

**Peresean** (stick fighting) are martial art performances by two young men stripped to the waist, armed with rattan sticks and square shields made of cowhide. The Sasak believe that the more blood shed on the earth, the better the rainfall will be in the forthcoming wet season. In late July demonstrations can be seen in Senggigi and in late December there’s a championship in Mataram.

## WEST OF KUTA

West of Kuta are a succession of outstanding beaches that all have superb surf when conditions are right. It’s possible that the region may eventually be developed when the new airport (p322) is completed, but for now it remains near-pristine and all but deserted. The road, which is potholed and very steep in places, doesn’t follow the coast closely, so you’ll need to detour slightly to find these beaches. **Mawan** (parking motorbike/car 2000/4000Rp) is the most impressive, a bite-shaped bay backed by steep green hills with a fine sandy beach below. **Tampa** is similar but a little wilder – you’ll need to drive through rice fields on a grassy road, and past a tiny village to get there. **Mawi** (parking motorbike/car 2000/4000Rp), 16km from Kuta, is an absolutely stunning beach and surfing stronghold with a legendary barrel wave, but there can be a very strong riptide so be extra careful. Sadly, thefts have been reported here. **Selong Blanak** is another wonderfully expansive stretch of sand.

From **Pengantap**, the road climbs across a headland to descend to another superb bay; follow this around for about 1km then look out for the turn-off west to **Blongas**, which is a very steep, rough and winding road with breathtaking scenery.

## EAST LOMBOK

☞ 0376

All that most travellers see of the east coast is Labuhan Lombok, the port for ferries to Sumbawa, but the road around the northeast coast is in fair shape, and a round-the-island trip is quite feasible. Similarly, the once-remote southeastern peninsula is becoming more accessible, particularly to those with their own transport.

### LABUHAN LOMBOK

Labuhan Lombok (Labuhan Kayangan), is the port for ferries and boats to Sumbawa. The town centre of Labuhan Lombok, 3km west of the ferry terminal, is a scruffy place but it does have great views of Gunung Rinjani.

### Sleeping & Eating

Try to avoid staying overnight as there’s only one decent place – there are warung in town and around the ferry terminal.

**Losmen Lima Tiga** (☞ 23316; Jl Raya Kayangan; r 55,000Rp) About 2.5km inland from the port on the main road, this is a very clean family-run place with neat little rooms and spotless shared bathrooms.

**Hotel Melati Munawar** (r 30,000Rp) This one’s filthy.

### Getting There & Away

#### BUS & BEMO

Frequent buses and bemo travel between Labuhan Lombok and Mandalika terminal in Mataram (11,000Rp, two hours), and also head north from Labuhan Lombok to Anyar. Note that public transport to and from Labuhan Lombok is often marked ‘Labuhan Kayangan’ or ‘Tanjung Kayangan’. Buses and bemo that don’t go directly to Labuhan Lombok, but just travel the main road along the east coast, will only drop you off at the port entrance, from where you’ll have to catch another bemo to the ferry terminal. Don’t walk; it’s too far.

#### FERRY

See p353 for details of ferry connections between Lombok and Sumbawa and p290 for bus connections between Mataram and Sumbawa.

### NORTH OF LABUHAN LOMBOK

This road has limited public transport and becomes very steep and windy as you near Anyar. There are isolated black-sand beaches along the way, particularly at Obel Obel.

Leaving Labuhan Lombok, look out for the giant mahogany trees about 4km north of the harbour. From Labuhan Pandan, or from further north at Sugian, you can charter a boat to the uninhabited Gili Sulat and Gili Pentangan. Both islands have lovely white beaches and good coral for snorkelling, but no facilities.

Just before the village of Labuhan Pandan, 15km from Labuhan Lombok, the Swiss-run **Matahari Inn** (☞ 0812 3749 915; www.pondok-matahari.com; s/d 90,000/120,000Rp) is a peaceful place with clean, comfortable bungalows right on the beach and two rooms inland. There’s good food (dishes 7000Rp to 26,000Rp), and snorkelling offshore. Fun dives (per dive US\$31) and scuba-diving courses are offered by the instructor-owners.

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### SOUTH OF LABUHAN LOMBOK

The capital of the East Lombok administrative district, **Selong**, has some Dutch colonial buildings. The transport junction for the region is just to the west of Selong at **Pancor**, where you can catch bemo to most points south.

**Labuhan Haji** is on the coast where the black sand is a bit grubby, but the water is OK for swimming. The basic, isolated bungalows at **Melewi’s Beach Hotel** (☞ 621241; r 40,000Rp) are almost on the beach and have great views across to Sumbawa.

**Tanjung Luar** is one of Lombok’s main fishing ports and has lots of quaint Bugis-style houses on stilts. From there, the road swings west to **Keruak**, where wooden boats are built, and continues past the turn to **Sukaraja**, a traditional Sasak village where you can buy woodcarvings. Just west of Keruak a road leads south to **Jerowaru** and the southeastern peninsula. You’ll need your own transport; be warned that it is easy to lose your way around here and that the roads go from bad to worse.

A sealed road branches west past Jerowaru – it gets pretty rough but eventually reaches **Ekas**, from where you can charter a boat to Awang across the bay. Offering a superb, if remote base in this part of Lombok, the spectacularly-sited **Heaven on the Planet** (☞ 0812 3705 393; www.heavenontheplanet.co.nz; basic chalets 100,000-150,000Rp, villas 300,000-500,000Rp; ☞ ) is an ideal base for activity junkies with surfing, diving and abseiling facilities. There are two restaurants, and a well-stocked bar. Just a kilometre away from here, right by the Ekas surf break, a second resort to be called Ocean Heaven (formerly the Laut Surga), owned by the same Kiwi owners as Heaven on the Planet should be up and running by the time you read this.

The road to this region is really pretty terrible, so it’s best to try to contact the hotel in advance and get them to come and pick you up, or you could consider chartering a boat from Awang (see p325).