

The Indonesian Language

Last Updated Thursday, 14 February 2008

Bahasa Indonesia is the national language of the Republic of Indonesia. It is one of the ten most used languages in the world. The language unites at least the 220 million people of Indonesia, whose native tongue may be one of the over 500 distinct languages or regional dialects. Older people may speak some Dutch and the foreign language of choice for business, tourism and study is English.

Since its origin is the Malay language considered as the lingua franca of the earlier Indonesian archipelago, Bahasa Indonesia is also understood in Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore.

While it is possible for foreigners to live in Jakarta without speaking Bahasa Indonesia, it is highly recommended that you obtain a working knowledge of the Indonesian national language.

The access to the language would make the stay or even a visit to Indonesia more meaningful, since the Indonesian people is wellknown for their hospitality and friendliness. Your command for general conversation in Bahasa Indonesia would certainly win you the ready smile and kindness including from those who don't speak English or any foreign language.

The tip is that starting to learn Bahasa Indonesia is best before you even make a visit to Indonesia. If you are residing in the Los Angeles area, your learning process could be easier since there are many Indonesians living in this city surrounding. Your visit to the Consulate or the many Indonesian restaurants around the city would give you an excellent opportunity to practice your Bahasa Indonesia.

To start, here are some basic phrases in Bahasa Indonesia for daily conversations:

Greetings:

Good morning

- mid-day
- evening

Good-bye

Thank you

You're welcome

How are you?

Excuse me

Selamat Pagi

Selamat siang

Selamat malam

Selamat tinggal (if you're leaving)

Selamat jalan (to someone who is leaving you)

Terima kasih

Kembali or sama-sama

Apa kabar?

Permisi or maaf

Communicating: Do you speak English?

I don't speak Indonesian.

I don't understand.

Bisa bicara Bahasa Inggris?

Saya tidak bisa bicara bahasa Indonesia.

Saya tidak mengerti.

Requesting basic assistance: Can you help me?

Where is the bathroom?

Where is . . .

How much is this?

I want this.

I want to eat.

Bisa bantu saya?

Di mana kamar kecil?

Di mana. . .

Berapa harganya ini?

Saya mau ini.

Saya mau makan

Getting home: My address is ...

Please take me to ...

Alamat saya...

Tolong, antar saya ke ...

Selamat belajar.....