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# Tour Notes

Indonesia - Sulawesi Explorer

Tour Duration – 15 Days



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●● | History ●●●○○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

## Tour Pace

Busy

## Tour Highlights

- ✓ The sheer beauty and variety of the landscapes offered by the island
- ✓ The scenic expanse of Lake Tempe with its many species of birds
- ✓ The fascinating region of Tanah Toraja with its traditional houses and intriguing culture
- ✓ The tranquil reserve of Tangkoko with its engaging wildlife



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## Tour Map



## Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of Comfortable hotels (the accommodation is rather basic at the Tangkoko Reserve).  
**Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary  
**Group Size:** Maximum 12  
**Start Point:** Makassar – you can arrive any time on day 1  
**End Point:** Manado – you can depart any time on day 15  
**Transport:** Minibuses, motor boats, internal flight.  
**Countries:** Indonesia



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## Indonesia - Sulawesi Explorer

*The enormous and oddly shaped island of Sulawesi is one of Indonesia's cultural treasures, but is often neglected by western tour companies, in favour of better-known Bali or Java. Yet it holds a wealth of treasures that should be on the itinerary of every serious traveller, with fascinating ethnic groups following elaborate social practices, which cannot be seen elsewhere. Our trip to this remarkable land encompasses both the north and south of the island, starting from the bustling capital Makassar and heading into Tanah Toraja, an area of highlands where traditional architecture and practices are at their strongest. We explore villages with amazing carved houses where we hope to see some of their tribal festivals, we visit incredible 'hanging graves' and walk along picturesque rice terraces to reach little visited communities. In Sulawesi's north we visit parks and reserves in search of the island's unusual wildlife, including the tiny Tarsier, and enjoy traditional meals cooked for us by the inhabitants of local villages. We see the unusual 'waruga' sarcophagi of the Minhasa Highlands and explore colourful local markets where anything is considered to be food. This is an intriguing and rather mysterious part of the Indonesian archipelago with unique and complex social customs that are unlike anything you will have seen before. This two-week trip encompasses the very best of this fascinating island, and will leave you wanting to explore more of this vast and varied region.*

### Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

### Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

# Itinerary

## Day 1 – Makassar

On arrival in Makassar, the capital of Sulawesi, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Overnight at Aston Hotel or similar.

### Makassar

Makassar (called Ujung Pandang between 1972 and 1999) is the lively capital of Sulawesi and due to its central location, the city has functioned as a gateway to the eastern islands of Indonesia for centuries. Makassar also has a rich historical past with two powerful kingdoms that were able to resist the Dutch colonial forces for many years. The fort of Rotterdam (Benteng Ujung Pandang) in the centre of Makassar is a well-preserved reminder of that past. In the evening the boulevard comes to life and people gather at the pavilions and hand carts selling snacks appear. A part of the boulevard is closed to traffic, and impressive sunsets can be enjoyed here.

## Day 2- Makassar

Today will be spent exploring Makassar. We begin with a visit to two markets in Makassar, a fish and a vegetable-fruit market, where you will purchase the necessary ingredients for a cooking class later today. We will cross the river by local ferry to a small village, where the cooking class will take place in the traditional



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kitchen of a local Bugis house. It is a rural setting, surrounded by rice fields, fish ponds and abundant gardens, so you feel as if you are in the countryside. In the village you will see many traditional Buginese houses on stilts. We will return to the centre and see some of the sights of Makassar including Fort Rotterdam, and Paotere Harbour, with its dozens of traditional wooden ships. Overnight at Aston Hotel or similar. (BL)

### **Day 3- Rantepao, Tanah Toraja (323 kms, approx. 9 hours)**

After breakfast we leave Makassar for the highlands of Tanah Toraja, home to some of Sulawesi's most intriguing customs, and a stronghold of traditional architecture. Lunch is taken in the home of a local family. We pass Enrekang driving onwards through Toraja to the market town of Rantepao. Overnight at Toraja Misiliana or similar. (BL)

### **Tanah Toraja**

This mountainous district is the homeland of several ethnic groups who are called Toraja (Toraja means 'the people of the mountains' or 'the people of the west'). The Toraja call their traditional religion Aluk to Dolo (rites of the ancestors) and they live according to rules defined by their ancestors and gods. These include the impressive rituals that accompany the burying of the deceased, which involve pig and buffalo sacrifices, and can last for many days. There is a very good chance that you will witness part of one of these ceremonies. The region is also known for its beautiful carved houses with the remarkable roofs, known locally as "tongkonan,". The Toraja were among the last people in Indonesia to submit to colonial rule, resisting until well into the 20th century. Although most Toraja are Christian nowadays many of the original traditions still live on.

### **Day 4- Tanah Toraja**

After breakfast, your Toraja excursion starts. The very first visit is Lemo, a place famous for its tombs hanging on steep cliffs, whose verandas are decorated with dozens of Tau Tau sculptures depicting the deceased ancestors. Here you also have the opportunity to take special souvenir photos of your Indonesia trip in traditional Toraja traditional attire. Continue to the tomb of Tampang Allo and Kambira where you'll explore the different ways the Toraja bury their death; from the hanging graves as it was done in the old days to the baby graves in the trunk of big trees.

After lunch, take a hike in the beautiful scenery of the surrounding area from Bebo' to Karuaya. Enjoy the afternoon atmosphere of the beautiful surroundings and get real impressions of the village life of the locals. The trail leads past rice terraces and small picturesque villages, whose traditional houses, combined with the beautiful landscape, give a perfect picture.

The day ends at the village of Kete Kesu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The village is one of the most important centers of Tana Toraja culture with its typical Tongkonan houses, ornately carved and decorated with antique wood ornaments. Near the village there are rock cave tombs, as well as hanging coffins. Overnight Toraja Misiliana or similar. (BL)

### **Day 5- Tanah Toraja**

Today's excursion will captivate you with beautiful sceneries. In the morning visit Londa to see the most unusual tombs in the world. This is located on steep, overgrown limestone rocks and in caves. The special feature here are the densely packed ancestor figures on a porch, which carry quite realistic facial features. A very impressive sight. Again, it is possible to explore the burial caves closer.

Catch the dawn chorus of buffalo grunts and excited haggling at Bolu buffalo market. This open-air market – which takes place on Tuesdays and Saturdays – is surely one of Indonesia's most fascinating animal shows, yet it remains very much a local event with few visitors.



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Passing through impressive scenery, you continue to Bori, where more than a hundred ancient monoliths stand tall on the funeral site here showing the family status. In Pallawa, you will get another insight into the way of life of Toraja residents and their impressive Tongkonan houses.

Continue towards Batutumonga, an area located on a dramatic ridge high on the slope of Mount Sesean known for its spectacular rocky terraces that last forever. It offers a relaxing ambiance and cool temperature. There is a possibility to take a walk along the terraces to get close to local life for 2 - 3 hours. You will have lunch at a local restaurant on the top which offers a wonderful view over Rantepao.

Visit Lo'komata, a huge burial stone. Spend your afternoon walking to the authentic village of Buntu Lobo before returning to the hotel. Overnight at Toraja Misiliana or similar. (B)

**\*Please note that the format of the above two days will change if the opportunity to attend a funeral ceremony arises.**

#### **Day 6- Sengkang (204 kms, approx. 5 hours 20 mins)**

Leave Tanah Toraja for the small town of Sengkang where we will visit a silk weaving shop making beautifully coloured local garments. Overnight at Semani Hotel or similar. (B)

#### **Sengkang**

Sengkang is a small town through which the Walennea River flows, and has a population of Islamic Bugis, living mainly in traditional wooden pile dwellings. It is the capital of the district of Wajo, one of the most influential Bugis states of the 16th century.

#### **Day 7- Lake Tempe- Malino (223 kms, approx. 6 hours 30 mins)**

Early in the morning we board traditional colourful motorised canoes, travelling along the Walennea River to Lake Tempe. The lake is very scenic and is home to a number of species of birds, who share it with local fishermen, some of who live in floating villages where we will take tea/coffee in one of the floating houses. We continue to the refreshingly cool market town of Malino, which lies on the lower slopes of Mount Bawakaraeng, and was once the favourite weekend retreat for the colonial Dutch. Overnight at Malino Highlands Resort or similar. (BL)

#### **Lake Tempe**

Lake Tempe stretches for at least 1000 hectares in the dry season, and expands to around 35.000 ha during the wet season, when all the surrounding area is flooded. Local fishermen use a variety of methods to catch fish here, including nets, rods and enclosures, and more than 20 species of water birds can be seen at this lake. Some of the fishermen live in floating houses near the edge of the lake.

#### **Day 8- Malino- Makassar**

Today we will take a walk through the surrounding area of Malino, approx. 4-5 hours. We will start from your accommodation following a path uphill and downhill, crossing a small river via a bamboo bridge or if broken (which often happens!) by wading through the river. We will pass the Biroro waterfall with the chance to bathe- the views are amazing. A simple lunch will be served after which you will be picked up by car to begin the journey back to Makassar, stopping on the way to visit some local fruit markets. Overnight at Aston Hotel or similar. (BL)

#### **Day 9- Maros - Leang Leang Caves- Manado**

After breakfast, you'll be enroute to visit Rammang Rammang in Maros, here, an exciting excursion near the lime stone cliffs await. You make canoe trip along a small river which banks covered by nipa palms, slide under rock openings to reach a hidden village. This will be followed with a wonderful walk-through rice to visit a well-hidden cave in which you can find some fingerprints left there by ancient cave dwellers over 5,000



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years ago. You'll have a chance to meet the local at their houses, see them work on their rice fields and possibly have tea or coffee with them. We will transfer to the airport for our flight from Makassar to Manado in the north of Sulawesi on Citilink Indonesia (QG307 2015:2200), and on arrival we will transfer to our hotel. Overnight at Aryaduta Hotel or similar (BL)

#### **Day 10 – Manado – Tangkoko (70 kms, approx. 2 hours 30 mins)**

Spend the morning exploring Manado town and its surroundings, visiting the local fish market where all the fish from the surrounding areas is sold. Proceed to the largest Chinese Temple in town, a beautiful landmark, and continue to the North Sulawesi Provincial Museum where we will be guided through the history of North Sulawesi. Around noon, set off on the drive to Tangkoko Batuangas Reserve, and after checking into our hotel we will take an afternoon walk in the reserve (approx. 2 hours) in search of its unusual wildlife, including Tarsiers and Cuscus Bears. Overnight at Tangkoko Lodge or similar. (BD)

#### **Tangkoko Batuangas Reserve**

The reserve itself is a beautiful park, filled with fruit and palm trees and the forest is home to a large number of mammals and birds, many of which are endemic to Sulawesi. One of these is the Black Crested Macaque, groups of which are usually easy to spot. In addition is the Cuscus, a marsupial relative which also live in Papua New Guinea, the Maleo, a rare megapode bird, Red Crescent Hornbills and the Tarsier, the world's smallest primate just the size of a human hand. It feeds during the night and will only return to its sleeping tree just before sunrise.

#### **Day 11 –Tangkoko - Tomohon (70 kms, approx. 2 hours 30 mins)**

This morning we take another walk in the forest in search of wildlife (approx. 3 hours), before continuing on. We explore the fascinating Minhasa Highlands along the way, with its relics of traditional culture. In the afternoon, explore the surroundings of Lake Tondano and visit the nearby sulphur Lake Linow which is known for its changes of colour. Overnight at Gardenia Country Inn or similar. (BD)

#### **Minhasa Highlands**

At an average altitude of around 700-800 metres this district holds a wealth of treasures for visitors to explore. Most notable are the ancient waruga sarcophagi in which important people were buried sitting in a foetal position – these can be seen in the small town of Sawangan. In Woloan we can see how people construct wooden houses to break them down again and sell them as a 'do-it-yourself-pack'. The region is known for its cuisine which includes such delicacies as rat kebabs and fried bat wings. The people of the area were renowned as headhunters, although that practice no longer survives, having been eradicated by missionaries from the 19th century onwards.

#### **Day 12 –Mahawu Volcano**

This morning we will visit the colourful market of Tomohon. The Minhasa are known for eating most things and you will find some unusual "ingredients" ready to take home and cook. We then head to the rim of Gunung Mahawu, an active volcano which gives us great views of its crater lake as well as of the surrounding area, including the nearby island of Bunaken. We reach it by a combination of driving and walking (it entails climbing around 250 steps). In the afternoon, you have the opportunity to rest at the hotel or continue the adventure with a visit to either Pinaras Waterfall or Tekaan Waterfall and the hotspring at Ranolewo. Overnight at Gardenia Country Inn or similar. (BD)

#### **Day 13 –Manado (60 kms, approx. 2 hours)**

Check out of your hotel and transfer back to Manado. The rest of the day is free to relax or further explore this interesting cosmopolitan city. Overnight at Cocotinos or similar. (B)

#### **Day 14 –Bunaken Island**



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Today our destination is Bunaken Island off the northern tip of Sulawesi. The island is part of Bunaken Marine Reserve, and the sea around here is alive with stunning marine life including turtles, whales, dolphins and rays. We take a boat out to snorkel and then take lunch on the beach before heading back to Manado. Overnight at Cocotinos or similar. (BL)

**Please note: Snorkelling equipment can be rented for approx. RP100.000 (£6)**

### Day 15 –Manado

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. Tour ends. (B)

## Inclusions/Exclusions

### Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers  
Domestic flight from Makassar to Manado  
Transport throughout  
All accommodation  
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary unless otherwise stated.

### Excluded:

International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Visas  
Drinks  
Donations during possible ceremonies.  
Snorkelling equipment on Bunaken Island – approx. Rp 100,000 per person (£6)

## Important Information

### Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing there are no warnings against travel to Indonesia. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or if you would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

### Accommodation and Meals

### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early





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morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

### **Accommodation Rating**

On this tour all rooms will be en-suite, with private bathroom and in general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar. The accommodation in Tangkoko Batuangas Reserve is rather basic, but does have a private bathroom and hot water.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

### **Food & Drinks**

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### **Budgeting for your Tour**

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### **Food**

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

Lunch £2-£4

Dinner £4-£6

### **Drinks**

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Water £ 0.80

Beer £ 0.90

### **Tipping – Guide and Drivers**

Tipping is common practise throughout Asia. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. A reasonable amount if you are travelling on a group tour would be \$4-5 per person per day for the guide and \$2-3 for the driver. If you are travelling privately you should allow more than this





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## Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** ATM machines are available in bigger towns but you should check with your card issuer if you can use them.

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** The use of cards is extremely limited.

**Local Currency:** Rupiah (rp)

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US Dollars

**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you

## Joining your Tour

### Flight Information

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

### Joining Your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

### Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require a visa for a tourist visit to Indonesia. For further details please visit the applicable website shown below

British Nationals - [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - [www.smartraveller.gov.au/](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/)

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destination's nearest embassy or consulate.

Should you require any documentation to support a visa application, such as a letter of invitation, upon request this will be provided by Undiscovered Destinations after receipt of your balance payment.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance.



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### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of your departure from Indonesia.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of the developing world, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, and Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication will also be required and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

The best time to visit Sulawesi is between May and October – although the temperature is fairly consistent throughout the year, these months receive the least rain.

### Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and it is also advised that a hat be worn through the day to protect from the sun. Even in the dry season it can rain and so you should make sure that you bring a waterproof jacket. It can be cooler in the evenings and at night, so you should bring some warmer clothes to wear then.

### Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have.

### Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on our tours. Comfortable walking shoes/boots that are waterproof are recommended, as you will be walking alongside streams and getting in and out of boats. Light shoes/sandals are fine for leisure time.

### Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

### Electric Supply & Plugs



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Electrical supply is 230V/50Hz and plugs usually have two round pins like most European countries, or three pins in the British style.

### **Tour Itinerary Versions**

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated 26 April 2023.

