



# A very basic introduction to the Indonesian language - Bahasa Indonesia

The local language now used throughout Indonesia is actually a form of the original Malaysian language, with a few slight differences. If you can speak and understand Indonesian you can also talk with Malaysian people. Throughout the islands of Indonesia there are hundreds of different dialects many of which are not at all like the usual Indonesian. In the likes of Java and Bali the local people have 3 different local languages, these are linked with the caste system with lower cast people often not understanding higher caste people at all, unless the higher caste person wants them to.

Indonesian language can be a very simple language to learn. The problem I often see is that teachers tend to teach the more precise form of Indonesian which is much more difficult to learn and is very rarely used in normal situations. Only high or the very well educated will use this form of Indonesian. On a more village level, local people often keep the language very simple indeed

Below is a very brief sample with a few hints and words that may help you along in Indonesia. When you are talking with locals in English always remember to talk slowly and as clear as possible, do not use any slang and try to make your sentences as short as possible. Oh yeah... talking loud does not help in the slightest. One of most important things when trying to talk with locals in their language is your pronunciation. It is very important to pronounce the words correctly. To do this you need a basic understanding of how they pronounce the vowels and a few other letters of importance:

**a** - is always hard as in cat    **e** - is soft as in our    **i** - is as soft as our e    **o** - is hard as in cot    **u** - as in oo

A few other letters of importance are:

- **c** - always ch as in church
- **k** - when used at the end of word always stop short, as for cigarette, rokok pronounced roko stop short of the final k
- **ng** - always stop just before you reach the final g
- **r** - get that tongue moving, always roll your r's
- When e is used between 2 consonants, drop it, as in the well used greeting selamat, this would be slamat.
- **t** - when t is at the end of a word stop short of the final t

## Simple greetings:

**Selamat** (s'lamat) - is a word for congratulation also used before most pleasantries

**Welcome** - selamat datang, **arrive** - datang

**Good morning** - selamat pagi (s'lamat paghee) 6am-11am

**Good afternoon** - selamat siang (s'lamat siang) 11am-4am, remember to just about stop before the final g

**Good afternoon** - selamat sore (s'lamat sorray) 4-sundown

**Good evening** - selamat malam (s'lamat malam) after sundown **Good night** (as in sleep) - selamat tidur (slamat teedoor)

**Good bye** - selamat jalan is to someone who is leaving and **selamat tinggal** if someone is staying

## Other commonly used words:

**Thank you** - terima kasih (t'rima kasee) **Please** - silakan

**Yes** - similar like our yeah or ya!

**No** - tidak (teeda) remember there should be a k on the end but you stop just before this

**Good** - bagus **No good** - tidak bagus **Delicious** - enak **Flavour** - rasa

**Me** - saya (saya) or aku (akoo)

**You** - kamu (kamoo) for a friend or people you know

**You** - anda (anda) is much more pleasant, especially when you do not know the person too well

**We** - Kita (keeta) us, including you **They or them** - mereka (m'rayka) excluding you

**Older woman** - ibu (eeboo) **Older man** - bapak (bapa)

**This** - ini (inee) **That** - itu (eetoo) **How much** - berapa - (b'rrapa)

**How much is this. how much is that** - ini berapa/itu berapa

**Want** - mau (mou) **Have** - ada **May I** - boleh saya (bole' saya)

**Cheap** - murah (moorah) **Expensive** - mahal (mahal) **Free** - gratis (g'ratis)

**Eat** - makan **Food** - makanan **Drink** - minum **Water** - air (a'er) **Fruit** - buah (booah)

**Fish** - ikan (eekan) **Chicken** - ayam (iyam) **Beef** - sapi (sapee) **Lamb** - kambing **Pork** - babi

**Rice** - nasi (nasee) **Noddles** - mie (me) **Bread** -roti (rotee) **Nut** - kacang (kachang)

**Butter** - mentega **Jam** - selai (s'lay) **Peanut butter** - selai kacang

**Beer** - bir (beerrr) **Wine** - anggur **Coffee** - kopi (kopee) **Tea** - teh

**Sugar** - gula (goola) **Salt** - garam **Pepper** - merica (m'richa) **Candy** - gula gula

**Orange** - jeruk **Mango** - mangga **Apple** - apel **Water melon** - semangka

**Table** - meja **Chair** - kursi (kurrsee) **Knife** - pisau (peesou) **Fork** - garpu **Spoon** - sendok

**Cup** - cangkir (chankeerrr) **Glass** - gelas **Bowl** - mangkok **Plate** - piring **Bottle** - botol

**Time** - jam (jam) **What time** - jam berapa **Now** - sekarang (skarang)

**Later** - nanti (nantee) this can mean at any time, later today, tomorrow, next week, never rely on this word

**Late** - terlambat **Maybe** - mungkin (mungkin) another word never to be trusted

**More** - lagi **Less** - kurang (korang) **Enough** - cukup (chukup) **Already** - sudah (sooda)

**Full** - penuh (p'noo) **Half** - setengah (s'tenga) **Empty** - kosong **Alive** - hidup **Dead** - mati

**Broken** - rusak **Repair** - perbaikan (perrbike'an) **Wet** - basah **Dry** - kering

**Beautiful** - (scenery) - indah, **Lady** - cantik (chantik), **Man** - (ganteng) **Age** - umur

**Young** - mudah (moodah) **Old** - tua (tooah) **Year** - tahun (tahoon)

**Ugly or bad** - jelek (j'lek) **Big** - besar (b'sarr) **Medium** - sedang **Small** - kecil (k'chil)

**Hot** - panas **Cold** - dingin **Clean** - cuci (chuchi) **Dirty** - kotor

**T-shirt/shirt** - baju **Long Pants** - celana panjang (ch'lana) **Shorts** - celana pendek

**Glasses** - kacamata **Watch** - jam tangan **Tool** - alat **Electric** - listrik **Light bulb** - balon

**Underwear** - celana dalam **Shoes** - sepatu (s'patoo) **Socks** - kaos kaki (kaus kakee)

**Room** - kamar **Toilet** - wc (waysay) **Bathroom** - kamar mandi **Sleep** - tidur (teedoorr)

**Shower** - mandi **Towel** - handuk **Place** - tempat (t'mpat) **Bed** - tempat tidur

**Blanket** - seprei **Pillow** - bantal **Book** - buku (bookoo) **Toilet paper** - tissue guling (ti'su gooling)

**Soap** - sabun **Shampoo** - sampoo **Toothpaste** - pasta gigi

**Boat** - kapal **Taxi** - taksi **Car** - mobil **Motorbike** - motor

**Driver** - sopir (sopeerr) **Road** - jalan **Walking** - jalan jalan **Run** - lari

**Dive** - menyelam (m'nyelam) **Tank** - tanki **Camera** - kamera (kamra) **Lamp** - senter **Fins** - sepatu nyelam or fin

**Mask** - masker   **Wetsuit** - baju selam (bajoo s'lam)   **Booties** - boots  
**Fish** - ikan (eekan)   **Coral** - karang   **Island** - pulau   **Tree** - pohon   **Flower** - bunga

**Black** - hitam (heetam)   **White** - putih (pootee)   **Yellow** - kuning   **Blue** - biru   **Red** - merah  
**Pink** - merah mudah   **Brown** - coklat (chocolat)  
**Gold** - mas   **Silver** - perak

**From** - dari (daree)   **To** - ke   **Want** - Mau (mau)   **Where** - mana (mana)   **There** - sana (sana)  
**Where are you from** - anda dari mana   **Where do you want to go** - anda mau kemana  
**I am from England/America** - saya dari Inggris/Amerika

If you need plurals simply say the twice and in fruits buah buah.

## Money and amounts:

The local currency is rupiah (rrrupeeya)

**1** - satu (sattoo)   **2** - dua (dooa)   **3** - tiga (teega)   **4** - empat (mpat)   **5** - lima (leema)

**6** - enam (nam)   **7** - tujuh (toojoo)   **8** - delapan (d'lapan)   **9** - sembilan (simbilan)

**10** - sepuluh (s'pulo)   **11** - sebelas (s'blas)   **12** - dua belas (dooa blas)

**13** - tiga belas.... and so on following usual primary number till:

**20** - dua puluh (dooa puloo)   **21** - add primary number as in - dua puluh satu till:

**30** - for all following numbers simply use primary number plus puluh till:

**100** - seratus (s'ratus) - ratus being the number for hundreds as in: **200** - dua ratus

**101** - simply add above numbers - seratus satu till:

**1000** - seribu (s'reeboo) - ribu being the number for thousand

**10000** - sepuluh ribu (s'pulo reeboo)

**100000** - seratus ribu (s'ratus reeboo)

**1000000** - satu juta (satoo joota) - just being the words for million

and so on....

Keep learning and enjoy this simple and fun language!

Periplus and other publishers produce handy pocket sized books for learning the basics of the Indonesian language.