



ON ROUTE IN INDONESIA

ZOOM-Campaign

Kids on the Move



Klima-Bündnis

On Route in Indonesia

In April 2017, Margit Meßmer, a volunteer for the Climate Alliance, was in Indonesia for a few weeks. This is her report about all the fascinating modes of transportation that she has seen over there and about her experiences on the train to Pekalongan, a city in central Java.

Selamat siang (Hello in Indonesian)

Have you ever heard of Indonesia? It is an "archipelago", a group of many islands, and is located near the equator between the Asian mainland and Australia. With over 17,500 islands in total, it is the largest archipelagic country on Earth. Indonesia is home of a lot of different cultures and of over 700 languages. In order to be able to communicate one common language was introduced over 100 years ago, the Bahasa Indonesia.



Its biggest islands are Borneo and New Guinea (only the Western part belongs to Indonesia) and Sumatra, the sixth largest island in the world. The capital, Jakarta, is located on the island Java.

On Sumatra and Borneo, or Kalimantan, as it's called in Indonesian, there are large jungle areas, which are often cut or burned down in order to grow palm oil on plantations (have a look at the Climate Voyage Stopover "Palm Oil and Toilette Paper from the Rainforests").

On huge island nations like Indonesia, transportation is of great importance. Most passenger ferries and cargo ships embark from Tanjung Priok, Jakarta's main harbour to all the islands. Due to the long distances, air traffic is quite an important choice for passengers, too. There are buses for travelling between smaller towns and villages.

Trains operate between the major cities on the main islands, these are called "kereta api" in Indonesian, and "locomotives" in English and have first-class wagons (Eksekutif), second-class (Bisnis) and "saving's class" (Ekonomi). First-class is expensive; in order to keep the price for the saving's class low, so even poorer people can afford a train journey. The air conditioners are set so cold, that blankets are distributed in the first-class wagons. In the saving's class it is good to dress yourself with a jacket and long pants.

Bicycles and Becaks, the Indonesian rickshaws, are only occasionally found on route. Becaks are bicycles with a bench installed between the two front wheels. They are like taxis on the roadside and can chauffeur one or two people. The only propulsion is the muscle power of the Becak driver, who has to work very hard, especially on uphill roads in the tropical heat.



My original intention to go by bike myself I quickly gave up as I got too scared in the chaos of motorcyclists on the roads. And there seems to be neither an inner-city speed limit nor any bike paths!

With day temperatures between 24 and 32 ° C it is very warm in Indonesia all year round. Especially in rainy season between November and April there is a high humidity. Everyone is glad about a cooling down by air circulation. This is certainly one of the reasons why Indonesians like to ride motorcycles so much.

The airflow is a blessing on the sweaty skin and dries the light clothes quickly after a rain shower. And of course motorcycles cost much less than cars, so more people can afford a motorized two-wheeler rather than a car. As you can see on the photos, even a young family with two young children fits on one motorbike. This is quite risky; because accidents are not unusual.



In order to transport loads on a wobbly bike, the islanders are very inventive. Cleverly, they pile large loads in the backseat or use handcrafted racks for transporting food or even fragile goods.



Even small kitchens are often mounted on a two-wheeler and are just parked where the owner expects to find the most customers. They are often located on the roadside near parks or other busy locations.



Due to the proximity to the equator it already gets dark on Java around 17:30h all year round. Then on the sidewalks around the small cookshops so-called 'warungs', flying restaurants are built up. You can eat a soup or different rice and pasta dishes for a reasonable price. Until late at night there is a lively hustle and bustle along the streets and often children are present, too.



Pedestrians often have to switch to the street, because there is no space for passing through on the sidewalks - quite unimaginable for us!



In april 2017, Margit Meßmer worked for the Senior Expert Service (SES) for four weeks at a vocational secondary school in Kediri, east java.

There she trained a group of teachers on the basis of models and with a practical orientation in project management and sustainable building.

The photos were mostly taken in Kediri, a medium-sized city with about 270,000 inhabitants on the island of Java.

Kids on the Move for Climate Action!

Together around the One World!



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