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WAYFARER

One Planet. Endless Journeys.

Pico, the Azores: from hunting whales to watching them

- TRIPURA'S WATER PALACE AND THE CARVED HILLS OF UNAKOTI
- SWARAJ DWEEP AND SHAHEED DWEEP: THE ANDAMANS, CAREFULLY
- KOMODO AND FLORES UNDER A NEW VISITOR CAP
- EIGHT LINES OF PREPARATION: THE ISLAND LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

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EDITOR'S DISPATCH

Islands and Oceans

A note from the editor

An island is a useful teacher. It has edges, so you can see what it can carry. A ferry that runs twice a day, a reef that does not like sunscreen, a national park that has just decided how many people it can hold in a day: these are not inconveniences, they are the place telling you its limits.

This month's issue goes to a few of them. We begin in the Azores, where the same cliffs that once held whale-spotters' huts now hold spotters who radio boats full of visitors. We go to Tripura, which does not appear on enough itineraries, and to the Andaman Islands, where one researcher's patient work with fishers has turned into a network of more than 200 people watching for dugongs.

As always, the profiles in these pages are drawn from published reporting and say so. We have not met the people named, and we have marked how we would feature them properly. If you know them, or have been to these places, we would like to hear from you.

Read slowly. Pack light. Ask the ferry operator twice.

Read slowly. Pack light. Ask the ferry operator twice.

EDITOR'S DISPATCH

- *Gitanjali Gautam*

July is the month to look at the edges of the map. A whaling island that learned to watch its whales instead, a water palace in Tripura, coral and seagrass in the Andamans, a dragon-haunted national park with a new visitor cap, and a winter city at the bottom of Australia. The common thread is attention: islands reward people who slow down, and punish those who hurry.

Local communities are key decision-makers.

SWAPNALI GOLE, SANCTUARY ASIA, JUNE 2022

DID YOU KNOW

The Azores are nine islands; about 28 of the world's roughly 80 cetacean species have been recorded in their waters, according to an operator's summary.

DID YOU KNOW

The Andaman and Nicobar archipelago has around 834 islands and more protected areas than any other part of India.

DID YOU KNOW

Cousin Island in Seychelles had only 26 Seychelles warblers when it was bought in 1968; by 1982 there were 320.

DID YOU KNOW

Komodo National Park was established in 1980 and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991.

DID YOU KNOW

Unakoti, in Tripura, was added to India's UNESCO tentative list in December 2022.

TRAVEL TIP

Look, do not touch: swim just above the reef, never stand on coral, and never feed marine life.

TRAVEL TIP

In July, the Andamans and Tripura are in monsoon. Carry a rain layer and keep a spare day.

An island is a useful teacher. It has edges.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DISPATCH

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.

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PHONE	+91 70022 09781
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How to read Wayfarer

RESEARCHED	Compiled from public sources; field verification pending.
PROPOSED	A commission, brief or concept - not a published story.
ILLUSTRATIVE	An example itinerary; check times and costs locally.
TEMPLATE	A format showing how offers appear; no real prices.

TRAVEL TIP

Check the official notice for permit rules; many travel websites carry outdated Andaman rules.

Read slowly. Pack light. Ask the ferry operator twice.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DISPATCH

Whales are not an attraction here; they are neighbours who were once on the menu.

FROM THE PICO FEATURE



Photo: Leeloa · Public domain

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.



COVER STORY

Pico: the island that stopped hunting whales and started watching them

In the Azores, sperm whales still live offshore all year. What changed is who goes out to look for them, and why.

RESEARCHED

Photo: Unukorno · CC BY-SA 3.0

ON A HEADLAND ABOVE Lajes do Pico, there is a small whitewashed hut with a view over the Atlantic. For decades, a watchman sat in places like this with a telescope. When he saw a whale, he fired a rocket, and crews ran for their boats. Today the same kind of lookout is still staffed, but the spotter is more likely to be on the radio, telling a tour boat where to head. Several of them, according to operators on the island, are former whalers or their descendants.

The Azores are nine volcanic islands in the middle of the Atlantic, and their whaling history is bound up with the world's. From the eighteenth century, American whaling ships recruited Azorean boys as crew. Organised sperm-whale hunting from the islands themselves took shape in the 1860s, after the wine and orange trades had collapsed, and it used open boats of about eleven or twelve metres, crewed by seven men. By one operator's estimate, around 12,000 sperm whales were killed before it ended; treat that figure as an approximation. Portugal banned commercial whaling in 1984, the factory at São Roque do Pico closed that year, and reports say the last sperm whale was taken off Pico in 1987.

What happened next is the part worth travelling for. In 1988 the Museu dos Baleeiros opened in Lajes do Pico, telling the story from the whalers' side. In 1989 a former whaler, João Vigia, and a French sailor, Serge Viallelle, started Espaço Talassa, which took the first paying visitors out to see the animals that the island's fathers had hunted. The Queimada lookout, built in 1939, was reopened in 1991 for whale watching, and regional rules followed in 1999.

Those rules are worth knowing before you book. According to one operator's summary, boats must keep at least 50 metres from the animals, no more than three boats may approach a group, and an encounter should last no more than 30 minutes. A good operator will say so unprompted, and will tell you plainly when a trip has found nothing.

What will you see? Sperm whales are resident year-round. About 28 of the world's roughly 80 cetacean species have been recorded in Azorean waters. Operators disagree on the best season: several put the big migrating whales, including blue and fin whales, in spring, between March and June, while summer is the most dependable season for Atlantic spotted dolphins. July is therefore a good month for dolphins and resident sperm whales, and a gamble for the largest species. Plan for at least two sea days, so a rough one does not end the trip.

Spend the rest of your time on land. The whaling museum in Lajes, the Museu da Indústria Baleeira at São Roque do Pico and the Porto Pim whaling factory on Faial each tell part of the same story. Pico is also winemaking country, and its black volcanic walls and low vines are part of the landscape. Take the short ferry across from Horta, or fly into Pico, and leave a few days free for walking.

How to go well: choose a small boat operator that follows the 50-metre rule, ask whether the guides come from the whaling families, and resist the urge to chase the whale for a better photograph. Whales are not an attraction here; they are neighbours who were once on the menu.

At a glance

WHERE	Pico island and the town of Lajes do Pico, Azores, Portugal
BEST TIME	Sperm whales year-round; big migrating whales usually spring; dolphins reliable in summer (operators differ — verify)
GETTING THERE	Fly to Pico (PIX), or take the ferry from Horta on Faial to Madalena
ENTRY	Portugal is in the Schengen area; the EU Entry/Exit System has been fully operational since 10 April 2026, and ETIAS is scheduled for the last quarter of 2026
RULES AT SEA	Reported: 50 m minimum distance, maximum three boats, 30 minutes per encounter
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — operator figures are secondary sources; confirm with the regional government and your operator



Photo: Kingshuk Mondal · CC BY 4.0

HOW TO REACH

Lajes do Pico, Pico island, Azores, Portugal

AIRPORT	Pico Airport (PIX), roughly 35 km by road from Lajes do Pico (35-40 minutes) and about 9 km from Madalena; most visitors connect via Lisbon, Porto or Ponta Delgada.
RAILWAY	There is no railway in the Azores.
BY ROAD	Island roads link Madalena, São Roque and Lajes; the drive from Madalena to Lajes is a little over half an hour.
GETTING AROUND	Hire car is the easiest way around Pico; a ferry crosses between Horta (Faial) and Madalena; taxis and tour operators run whale-watching transfers.

Distances approximate. Check ferry timetables and flight connections with the operators. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Visit Azores (official) (www.visitazores.com); Azores whaling routes (regional government) (rotas.azores.gov.pt); Espaço Talassa, Lajes do Pico (www.espacotalassa.com)

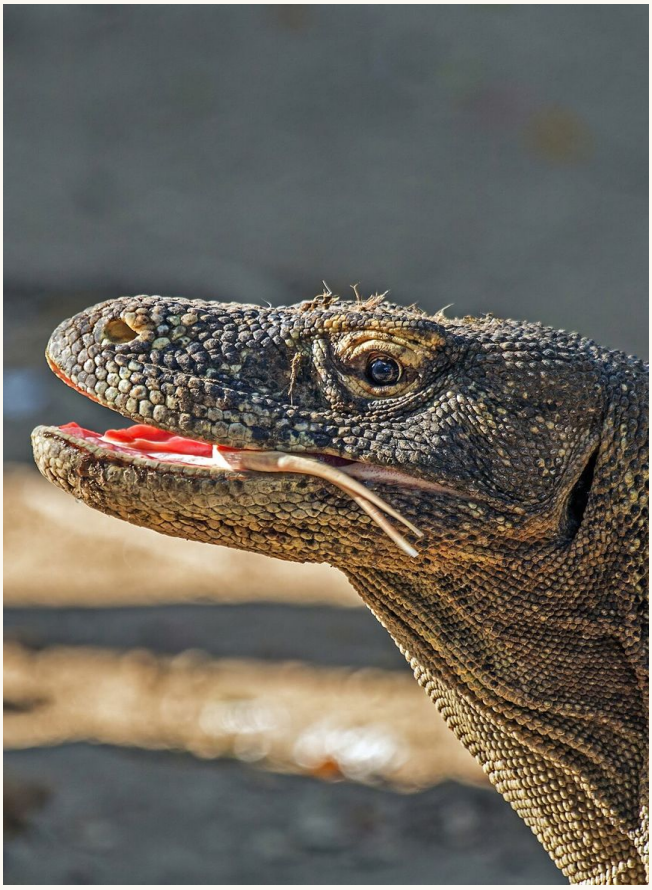


Photo: Charles J. Sharp · CC BY-SA 4.0

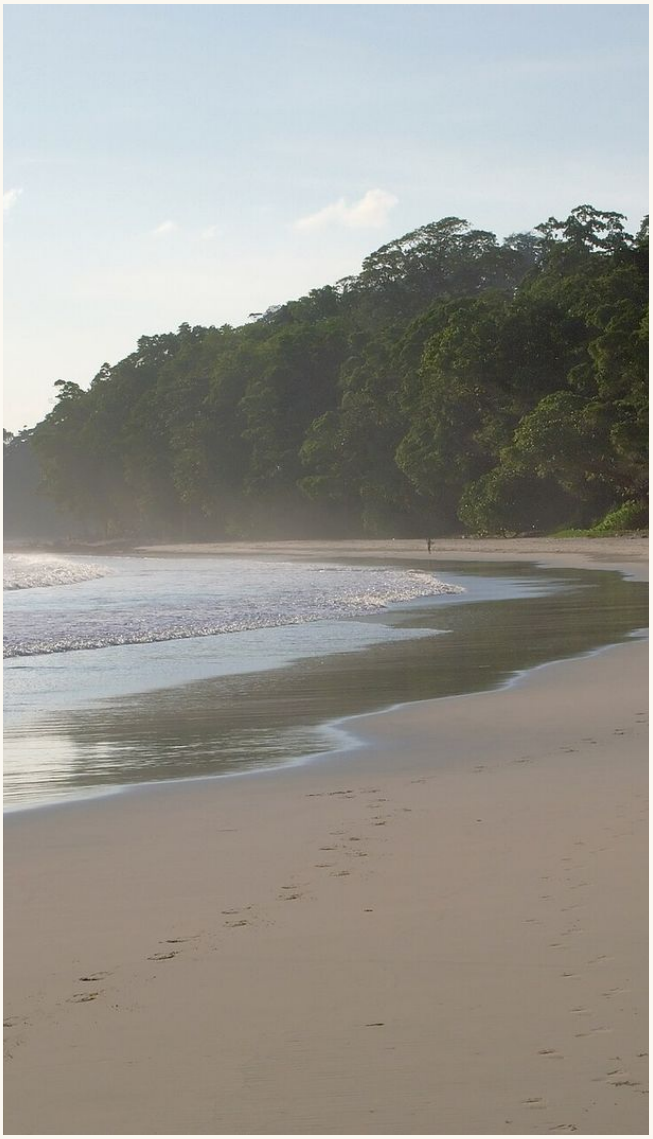


Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg · CC BY 4.0

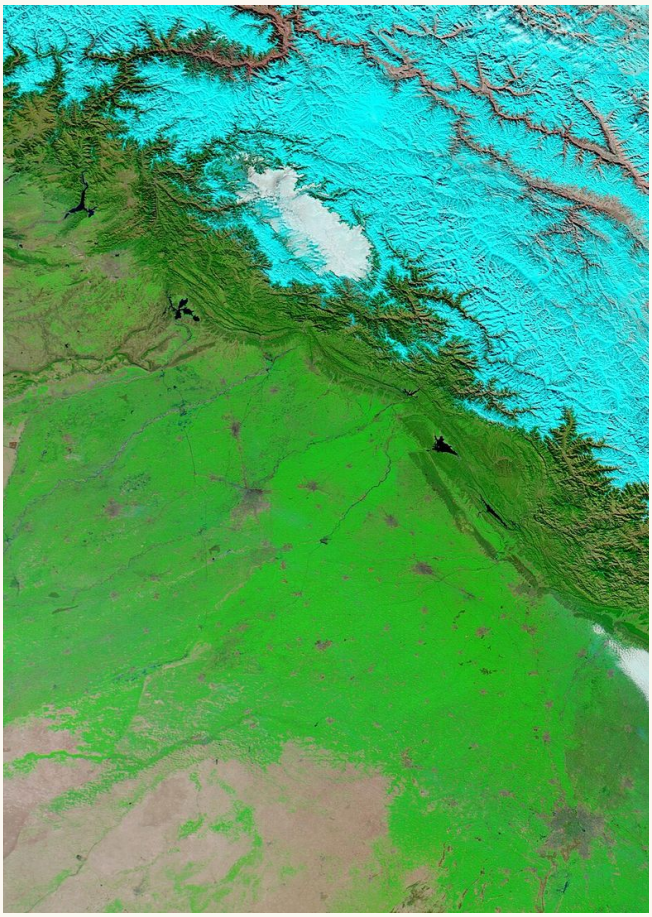


Photo: MODIS Land Rapid Response Team, NASA GSFC · Public domain



NORTHEAST INDIA · TRIPURA

Tripura: a palace on a lake and a hillside of stone gods

Agartala's royal buildings, a water palace reached by boat, and the carvings of Unakoti, a site now on India's UNESCO tentative list.

RESEARCHED

Photo: Mr Nimai Debbarma · CC BY-SA 3.0

TRIPURA IS THE SMALL state that sits almost entirely inside Bangladesh's embrace, and it is easy to skip. That is a shame, because its royal history and its archaeology are as rich as better-known parts of the Northeast, and visitors are fewer. A sensible first journey takes in three places: the capital, Agartala; the lake palace at Melaghar; and the rock-cut carvings at Unakoti.

In Agartala, Ujjayanta Palace is the landmark. It was the royal residence of the Manikya rulers and now houses the Tripura State Museum. Sources differ on the exact year of construction, with one placing it in 1901, so we do not quote a date here. Opening hours and any entry arrangements should be confirmed locally; one listing gives 10 am to 5 pm, but it is a secondary source. The Tripura Sundari Temple and Bhubaneswari Temple are nearby day trips, according to the official Incredible India itinerary.

Neermahal, the Water Palace, stands in the middle of Rudrasagar Lake at Melaghar, about 53 km from Agartala. It was commissioned by Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya, with a British firm, Martin and Burns, as main contractor, and you reach it by boat. Sources disagree on the construction dates: one puts them at 1930 to 1938, another at 1921, so treat any single year with care. A Neermahal Water Festival with boat races is held here each year; check Tripura Tourism for the dates.

Unakoti, in the north of the state about 178 km from Agartala, is the surprise. The name means roughly “one crore less one”, and the legend explains the number. On the hillside, huge reliefs of Shiva and other deities are carved into the rock or modelled in relief. The central head, known as Unakotiswara Kal Bhairava, is about 30 feet high, including a headdress of about ten feet. Large figures of Ganesha and half-buried Nandi bulls complete the scene. Stylistic studies date the carvings to about the seventh to ninth centuries CE, before the Manikya rulers. The Archaeological Survey of India looks after the site, and India submitted it to UNESCO's tentative list in December 2022. A tentative listing is a first step, not a World Heritage inscription.

A Hindu fair, the Ashokastami Mela, draws large crowds in April, and a smaller gathering takes place in January. If you want a quieter visit, go outside those dates.

How to go well: Tripura is monsoon country in July, so plan for rain and slow roads, carry a rain layer, and build a spare day into any journey north. Travel with a local driver who knows the route, and confirm access and any permits for foreign visitors with the state tourism office before you leave.

At a glance

BEST TIME	Cooler months, October to March, for comfort; July is monsoon (verify locally)
GETTING THERE	Fly to Agartala (IXA); Neermahal is about 53 km by road, Unakoti about 178 km
PERMITS	Indian citizens do not need an Inner Line Permit for Tripura; foreign visitors should check the latest rules with Tripura Tourism
UNESCO	Unakoti is on India's tentative list (submitted December 2022); it is not a World Heritage Site
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — hours, ferry/boat access and road conditions must be confirmed locally

HOW TO REACH

Agartala, Neermahal (Melaghar) and Unakoti, Tripura

AIRPORT	Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport, Agartala (IXA) — the only commercial airport; Agartala city is a short drive from it.
RAILWAY	Agartala railway station; for Unakoti, Dharmanagar station on the Lumding–Sabroom line is about 20 km away.
BY ROAD	Agartala to Melaghar is about 53 km; Agartala to Unakoti about 178 km, a long drive of several hours on hill roads.
GETTING AROUND	Taxis and shared cabs from Agartala; hire a driver for Unakoti; a boat is needed to reach Neermahal.

Distances approximate. Check monsoon road conditions. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Tripura Tourism (official) (tripuratourism.gov.in); Incredible India: Tripura itinerary (www.incredibleindia.gov.in); UNESCO tentative list: Unakoti (whc.unesco.org)

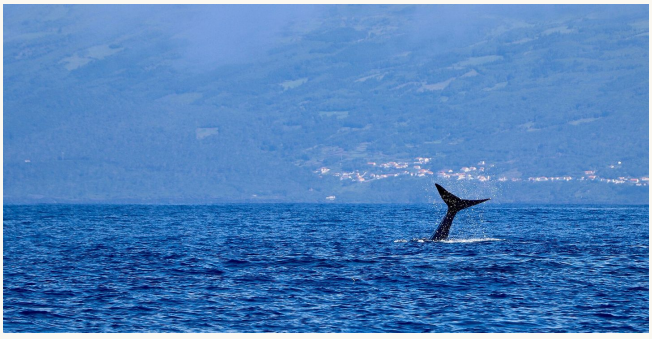
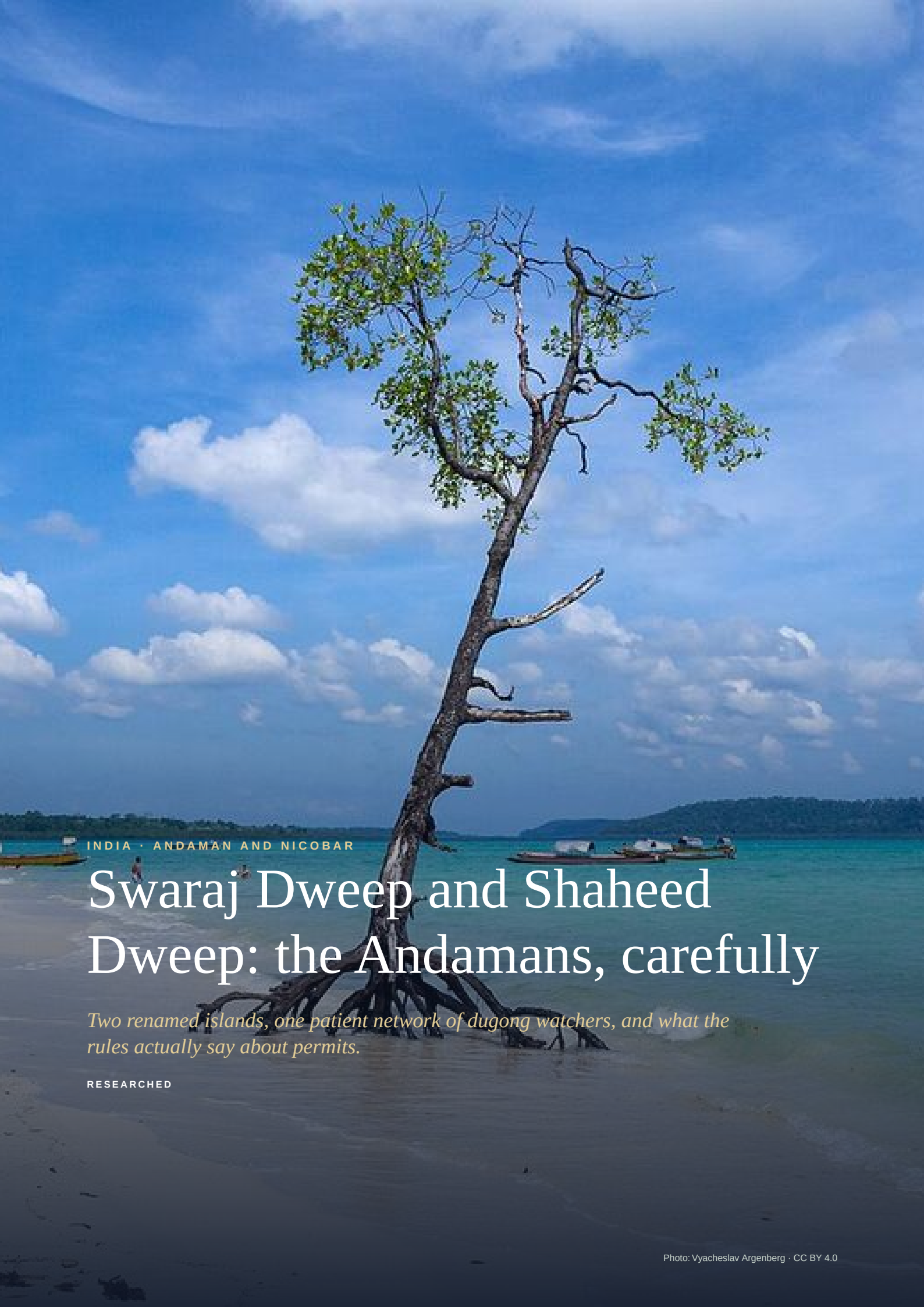


Photo: Navin75 · CC BY-SA 2.0



INDIA · ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR

Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep: the Andamans, carefully

Two renamed islands, one patient network of dugong watchers, and what the rules actually say about permits.

RESEARCHED

Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg · CC BY 4.0

MOST VISITORS KNOW HAVELOCK and Neil. Official signage and tickets now use Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep. They sit within an archipelago of around 834 islands, which has more protected areas than any other part of India, and that fact shapes everything: where you may dive, how fast boats may go, and who is allowed to fish.

From the state capital, Sri Vijaya Puram, formerly Port Blair, ferries run to both islands. Neil Island takes about two hours by boat, according to a researcher's account in Nature inFocus; sources for Havelock give 1.5 to 2 hours. Both services run on timetables that change with the sea and the season, and government and private operators differ, so book directly with a licensed operator and confirm the day before.

Permits are the most misunderstood part of the trip. Indian citizens do not need a permit for the main tourist islands. For foreign visitors, the Andaman and Nicobar Administration's tourism department states in a 2026 notice that no Restricted Area Permit is required for the 29 islands excluded from the regime, and that 11 uninhabited islands are exempted for day visits only, with the exemption valid up to 31 December 2027. Citizens of Afghanistan, China (including Hong Kong and Macau) and Pakistan still require a permit, and separate approvals apply for reserved forests, sanctuaries and tribal reserves. Many travel websites still carry outdated rules; use the official notice.

The sea here is also a working landscape. Marine researcher Swapnali Gole, writing in Sanctuary Asia, describes how a small team built a dugong monitoring network that began with a handful of informants and now has more than 200 members: fishers, dive operators, forest staff, schoolchildren, marine police and the navy and coast guard. Dugongs graze on seagrass and nothing else, which ties their survival to a few meadows that boats and trawlers can easily damage. Her account of the early workshops is candid about what did not work: the first, in 2018, drew two fishers instead of the roughly 20 expected, and a later meeting drew nobody.

For visitors, the lessons are simple. Choose dive and snorkel operators that keep boats slow near seagrass beds and reefs, never touch or chase marine life, and buy fish from the local market rather than assuming a menu fish was caught nearby. The monsoon, which is in progress in July, brings rough seas and can disrupt ferries and diving; plan flexibly or choose the drier months for a first visit.

The islands also have a history that is not about beaches. The next pages visit it.

At a glance

BEST TIME	Sea conditions and ferry reliability are best outside the monsoon; July is rough (verify locally)
GETTING THERE	Fly to Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair), then ferry to Swaraj Dweep or Shaheed Dweep
PERMITS	Indians: none for main tourist islands. Foreigners: see the A&N tourism department notice (exemption valid to 31 December 2027); Afghan, Chinese and Pakistani nationals still need an RAP
RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL	Slow boats near seagrass; no touching or feeding; use licensed operators
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — permit rules and ferry timetables change; confirm before you travel

HOW TO REACH

Swaraj Dweep (Havelock) and Shaheed Dweep (Neil), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

AIRPORT	Veer Savarkar International Airport, Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair), IXZ — a short drive from the city centre.
RAILWAY	There is no railway in the islands; the nearest mainland rail heads are in Chennai, Kolkata and Visakhapatnam, with flights or ships onward.
BY ROAD	Port Blair to the ferry terminal is a short road transfer; the islands themselves have limited roads.
GETTING AROUND	Ferries from Port Blair take about 1.5 to 2 hours; on the islands, scooters, auto-rickshaws and bicycles.

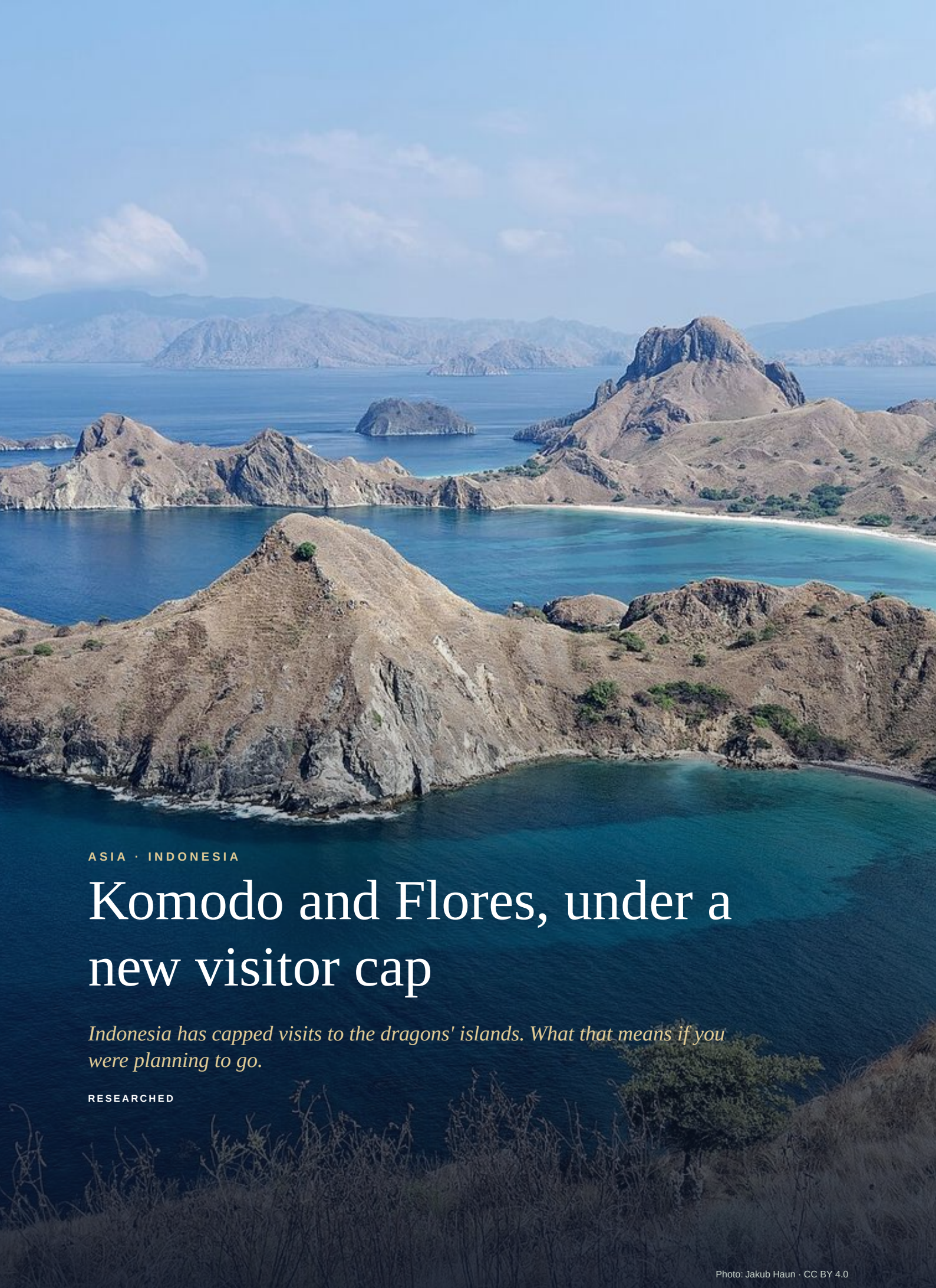
Check sea conditions and ferry schedules the day before. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Andaman & Nicobar Tourism (official) (tourism.andamannicobar.gov.in); A&N Tourism: Restricted Area Permit notice (2026) (tourism.andamannicobar.gov.in); Sanctuary Asia: dugong community conservation (sanctuarynaturefoundation.org)



Photo: Rohit Sharma · CC BY-SA 4.0

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.



ASIA · INDONESIA

Komodo and Flores, under a new visitor cap

Indonesia has capped visits to the dragons' islands. What that means if you were planning to go.

RESEARCHED

Photo: Jakub Haun · CC BY 4.0

KOMODO NATIONAL PARK WAS established in 1980 and inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991. It covers about 1,733 square kilometres, of which about 603 are land, and it includes three large islands, Komodo, Padar and Rinca, plus 26 smaller ones. The wild population of Komodo dragons is concentrated on Komodo and Rinca, with smaller numbers elsewhere; counts on one reference site give roughly 1,700 on Komodo and 1,300 on Rinca, but they are undated, so treat them as indicative.

In April 2026, Indonesia's Ministry of Forestry introduced a visitor limit. According to Indonesian public broadcaster RRI, the quota took effect on 1 April 2026 and allows 1,000 visitors per day, roughly 365,000 a year, across Padar, Rinca and Komodo islands and 23 diving sites in the surrounding area. Forestry minister Raja Juli Antoni cited research warning that long-term over-tourism would damage the area, and the policy was developed in discussion with stakeholders in the gateway town of Labuan Bajo since May 2025. Lawmakers have asked for more attention to the communities who depend on the trade.

In practice, that means booking early, and being sceptical of any operator who promises last-minute availability in peak weeks. Fee figures vary widely across commercial sites, from a few hundred thousand to more than IDR 600,000, and we could not confirm a current official schedule. Confirm the fee and any required permits with the park authority, Balai Taman Nasional Komodo, or a licensed operator. Dry season runs roughly from May to October, which is also high season.

The park is not the only reason to come. Flores, the large island to the east, rewards time on land. Wae Rebo, a village high in the Manggarai mountains, is famous for its tall, conical, thatched houses, known as Mbaru Niang; its rebuilding won UNESCO recognition in 2012. It is reached on foot, a trek of roughly three to four hours from the village of Denge, and has no mobile signal. There is a profile of the village in this issue's People pages.

How to go well: use a ranger-led walk on land, keep the distance rangers tell you, never feed or approach dragons, and book with a local licensed operator. Be wary of anything promising “exclusive” or “private” access. If a quota is full, take it as the cue to explore Flores' villages, coffee farms and coast, rather than as a problem to be bought away.

At a glance

BEST TIME	Dry season, roughly May to October (verify with operators)
GETTING THERE	Fly to Komodo Airport, Labuan Bajo (LBJ), the gateway for boats and tours
VISITOR LIMIT	1,000 visitors per day across Komodo, Rinca, Padar and 23 dive sites, from 1 April 2026 (RRI, 16 April 2026)
ENTRY	Visa rules depend on nationality; check Indonesia's official immigration site
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — fees and quota rules are changing; confirm with the park and your operator

HOW TO REACH

Komodo National Park and Labuan Bajo, Flores, Indonesia

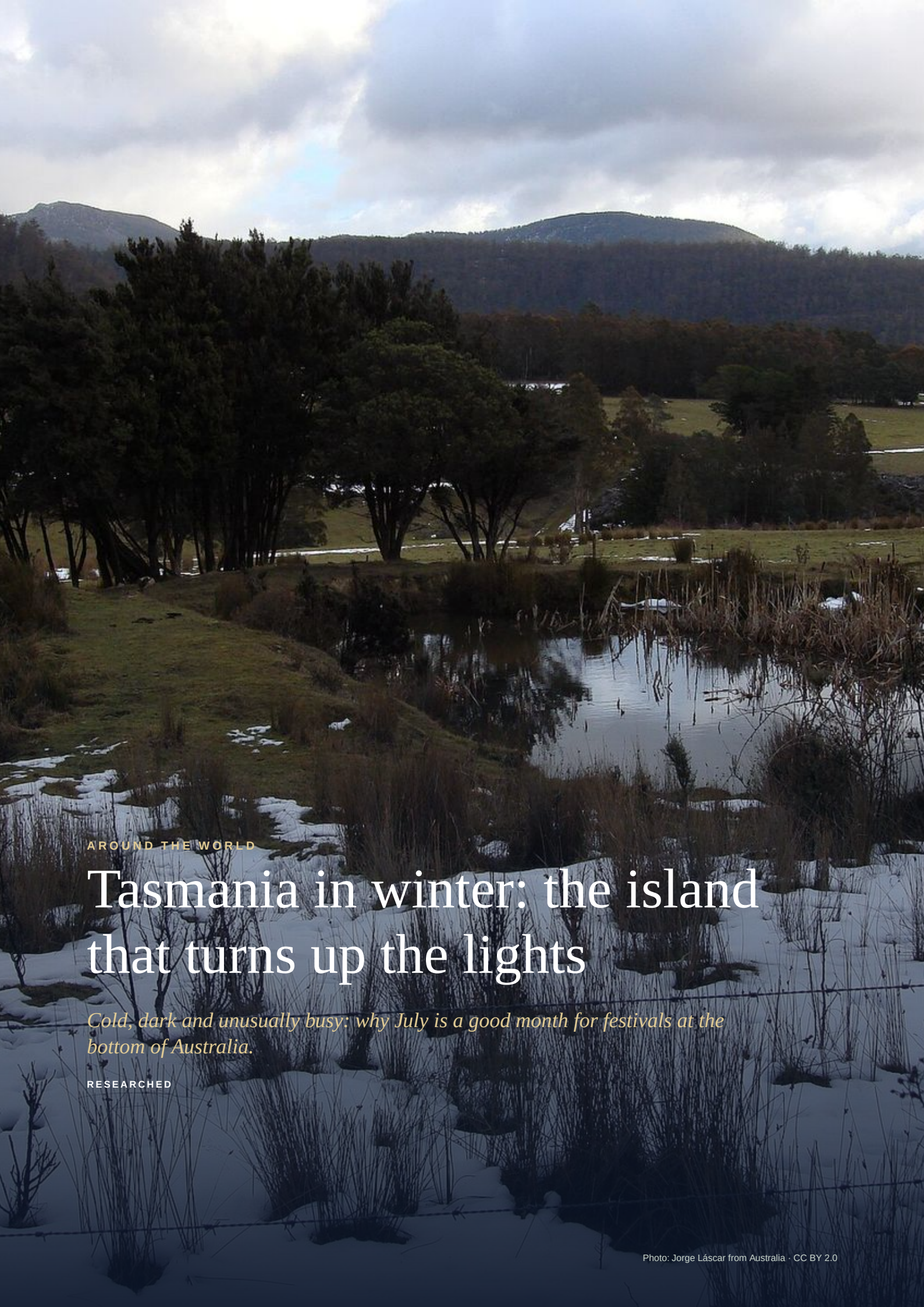
AIRPORT	Komodo Airport, Labuan Bajo (LBJ), with flights via Bali (DPS) and Jakarta.
RAILWAY	There is no railway on Flores.
BY ROAD	Labuan Bajo is the road hub for western Flores; Denge, the trailhead for Wae Rebo, is a long road journey inland.
GETTING AROUND	Boats from Labuan Bajo harbour to the park; taxis and hired cars for the Flores mainland.

Distances and journey times approximate; confirm with your operator. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: RRI: Ministry of Forestry limits tourist quota (16 April 2026) (rri.co.id); Indonesia Travel: Wae Rebo (official tourism site) (www.indonesia.travel); UNESCO World Heritage: Komodo National Park (whc.unesco.org)



Photo: Prof. Vikramjit Kakati · CC BY-SA 4.0



AROUND THE WORLD

Tasmania in winter: the island that turns up the lights

Cold, dark and unusually busy: why July is a good month for festivals at the bottom of Australia.

RESEARCHED

Photo: Jorge Láscar from Australia · CC BY 2.0

TASMANIA IS AN ISLAND state of Australia, and its winter is its quiet season, which the state tourism body has turned to its advantage. The Off Season campaign, as Tourism Tasmania calls it, runs until the end of August and is built around festivals that make a virtue of the cold and the long nights.

The year's most famous winter event, Dark Mofo in Hobart, ended on 22 June. The Bay of Fires Winter Arts Festival in St Helens, with a sunrise swim and a sand-sculpture competition, was also in June. But July and August have plenty. Tasmania's official tourism site lists the Festival of Voices in Hobart from 3 to 12 July, with a free outdoor singalong in Salamanca; Devonport Jazz from 23 to 26 July; Tasmanian Whisky Week across more than 40 distilleries from 1 to 9 August; and Beaker Street, a science and arts festival with stargazing dinners, from 6 to 17 August in Hobart.

The sensible plan is to base yourself in Hobart, which has a compact waterfront and markets, and to build day trips around the weather. Cradle Mountain gets snow in winter and needs warm layers and a check of conditions before you set out; it is a long drive from Hobart and closer to Launceston, so check distances on a map. Dress for rain, wind and short days, and book a weekend ahead if you want a festival.

For readers from India, winter in July is an inversion of expectations: you will carry a coat, not an umbrella. For all readers, remember that the Australian winter is the cold, dark half of the year; festival programmes are designed around that.

How to go well: check festival dates on organisers' sites, choose locally owned stays, and respect the cultural and environmental rules in national parks. Visitors from many countries need an Australian visa or Electronic Travel Authority; check the official government site.



Photo: Diganta Talukdar · CC BY-SA 4.0

At a glance

BEST TIME	Winter, June to August, for festivals; shoulder seasons for walking
GETTING THERE	Fly to Hobart (HBA), usually connecting via Melbourne or Sydney
WINTER EVENTS (2026)	Festival of Voices 3–12 July; Devonport Jazz 23–26 July; Whisky Week 1–9 August; Beaker Street 6–17 August
ENTRY	Visa or ETA depends on your passport; check the Australian Department of Home Affairs
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — event dates should be re-confirmed with organisers

HOW TO REACH

Hobart and southern Tasmania, Australia

AIRPORT	Hobart Airport (HBA), about 17 km east of the city, with flights from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.
RAILWAY	Tasmania has no passenger railway network for visitors; Hobart is reached by air or by the Spirit of Tasmania ferry to the north of the island.
BY ROAD	Roads from Hobart reach the east coast, Port Arthur and the north; allow extra time in winter conditions.
GETTING AROUND	Buses and ride-hailing in Hobart; a hire car is best for the wider island.

Distances approximate; check road and weather conditions. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Discover Tasmania: winter festivals (official) (www.discovertasmania.com.au); Festival of Voices (official) (festivalofvoices.com)



Photo: Udit Kapoor · CC BY-SA 4.0



AROUND THE WORLD

Seychelles: granite islands and a conservation experiment

How to see the Indian Ocean's best-known islands without treating them as scenery.

RESEARCHED

Photo: NorbertNagel · CC BY-SA 4.0

SEYCHELLES IS AN ARCHIPELAGO in the western Indian Ocean, and its granite islands, such as Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, are the ones most travellers see. They are also home to some of the longest-running conservation projects in the region, which gives a visit a purpose beyond the beach.

Entry is straightforward but formal. The Immigration and Civil Status Office says that all visitors must hold an Electronic Travel Authorisation before leaving their country, applied for through the Seychelles e-Border app or the government portal. A visitor's permit is issued on arrival for holiday, business or family visits, and you need a valid return or onward ticket, confirmed accommodation and sufficient funds. The initial permit is free for the first three months. Fees for the authorisation itself differ between sources, from about EUR 10 to just over EUR 12 with charges; check the government site.

The case for staying a few days on the inner islands is the quiet, slow pace: cycling on La Digue, walking on Praslin, and taking small boats between granite headlands. Climate is warm all year, and there are two main wind seasons; wind and sea conditions affect inter-island ferries, so allow a spare day on each transfer.

The best-known conservation story is on Cousin Island, a small special reserve that is part of this issue's People pages. A visit there can be arranged through Nature Seychelles, the island's manager.

How to go well: choose small, locally owned guesthouses where you can, avoid souvenirs made from shell or coral, keep to marked paths on protected islands, and never feed wildlife.

At a glance

BEST TIME	Warm all year; wind and sea conditions vary by season (verify with local operators)
GETTING THERE	Fly to Seychelles International Airport, Mahé (SEZ)
ENTRY	Electronic Travel Authorisation required for all visitors; visitor's permit on arrival, free for the first three months
RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL	Visit reserves only with authorised guides; no shell or coral souvenirs
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — fees and entry rules change; confirm on the official site

HOW TO REACH

Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, Seychelles

AIRPORT	Seychelles International Airport (SEZ) on Mahé, close to Victoria, with onward flights to Praslin (PRI).
RAILWAY	There is no railway in Seychelles.
BY ROAD	Roads on Mahé and Praslin are narrow and winding; La Digue has almost no cars.
GETTING AROUND	Inter-island ferries and small flights; taxis and buses on Mahé and Praslin; bicycles on La Digue.

Check ferry schedules and sea conditions. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Seychelles Immigration and Civil Status Office: visitor's permit (official) (www.ics.gov.sc); Nature Seychelles (natureseychelles.org)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

Listening to fishers: the researcher who built a dugong watch

In the Andamans, a marine researcher and a growing circle of fishers and divers are tracking an animal most people confuse with a dolphin.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Kora27 · CC BY-SA 4.0

Swapnali Gole is a marine researcher and PhD scholar with the Wildlife Institute of India, working on dugongs and seagrass in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. She has worked on dugongs since 2016, and in two pieces she wrote for Nature inFocus and Sanctuary Asia, she describes how the work began with talking to the people who spend most time at sea.

In 2020, she recounted conversations with fishers, including Ram Majhi, then 63, a third-generation settler of Havelock, who began fishing at 12. He described how trawlers from Port Blair threaten the small boats' catch. In her Sanctuary Asia account, she writes of a January 2021 dive at Shaheed Dweep, where a divemaster alerted her to a three-metre dugong the team had named Neil, after the island.

The monitoring programme began with a few informants and now has more than 200 members from fishing communities, schools, the forest department, the dive trade, marine police, the navy and the coast guard. Aerial sightings from patrols have helped show where dugongs live, and recreational divers have helped identify individual animals by marks on their bodies. Three individuals have been photo-identified in Shaheed Dweep.

The article is honest about the hard parts. A first workshop in Wandoor in 2018 drew two fishers when about 20 had been expected, one of them Sukumar Mondal. A later meeting had no one at all. Fishers argue, she reports, that protected areas shrink their grounds while illegal fishing inside them goes unpunished. Her conclusion is that local communities are key decision-makers.

For travellers: dugongs live only where seagrass grows, and fast boats and jet skis threaten them. Choose operators that go slowly in shallow seagrass areas, and report sightings responsibly to local conservation groups rather than posting locations.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	Sanctuary Asia, Vol. 42 No. 6, June 2022; Nature inFocus, 20 November 2020 — both written by Swapnali Gole
PEOPLE NAMED	Swapnali Gole; Ram Majhi; Sukumar Mondal; Ajay Kumar (dive instructor)
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published reporting. We have not spoken to the people named.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Approach through the Wildlife Institute of India or the Dugong Recovery Programme; seek written consent from the researcher and from any fisher before using names or photographs.

HOW TO REACH

Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Wandoor, South Andaman

AIRPORT	Veer Savarkar International Airport, Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair), IXZ.
RAILWAY	No railway in the islands.
BY ROAD	Wandoor is about 25 km from Port Blair by road; Havelock and Neil are reached by ferry.
GETTING AROUND	Ferries and local taxis; ask operators about marine park rules.

Distances approximate. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Sanctuary Asia article (sanctuarynaturefoundation.org); Nature inFocus: A Sea of Knowledge (natureinfocus.in)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

The whaler who took visitors to see the whales

In 1989, a former whaler and a French sailor started the Azores' first paid whale-watching trips from Lajes do Pico.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Guillaume Baviere from Helsingborg, Sweden · CC BY 2.0

Espaço Talassa, the whale-watching operator in Lajes do Pico, was founded in 1989, according to its own pages and to published accounts of the island's whaling history. Its founders are given as João Vigia, a former whaler, and Serge Viallelle, a French sailor; one of the company's later pages also credits architect Alexandra Teles with a founding role, so accounts differ on exactly who started it.

The context matters. Portugal had banned commercial whaling in 1984, and the museum in Lajes, the Museu dos Baleeiros, opened in 1988. The Azores had a whaling tradition in which boats were rowed and sailed out under the direction of lookouts on the cliffs. When the hunt ended, the lookouts did not disappear. Espaço Talassa says it mainly uses former whalers in its observation towers, and the Queimada lookout, built in 1939, reopened in 1991 for whale watching.

The company's own narrative stresses the idea of conversion: a skill built to find and kill whales became a skill for finding whales to watch. That story is retold in many travel pieces and should be treated as the operator's own account.

For visitors, the point is the quality of attention. A good operator on Pico will say how many boats may approach, how close, and for how long. Ask about those rules before you book and notice whether the boat respects them.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	Espaço Talassa (operator's own pages); Azores Getaways whaling-history article; Azores regional government whaling route pages (dates not stated on the pages we read)
PEOPLE NAMED	João Vigia; Serge Viallelle; Alexandra Teles (named on one operator page)
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published and operator sources; accounts of the founders differ.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Contact Espaço Talassa directly; seek consent and verify founder details first-hand.

HOW TO REACH

Lajes do Pico, Pico island, Azores

AIRPORT	Pico Airport (PIX), roughly 35 km by road.
RAILWAY	There is no railway in the Azores.
BY ROAD	A little over half an hour by road from Madalena.
GETTING AROUND	Hire a car; whale-watching operators run from Lajes and Madalena.

Distances approximate. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Espaço Talassa (operator) (www.espacotalassa.com); Azores whaling history (Azores Getaways) (azoresgetaways.com)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

Twenty-six birds and a coconut plantation

How a tiny Seychelles island, bought to save one bird, became a model for conservation.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Dreizung · CC BY-SA 3.0

Cousin Island is small, about 0.3 square kilometres, and a few decades ago was largely a coconut plantation. In 1968, according to Nature Seychelles, the island was bought by what is now BirdLife International to save the Seychelles warbler. When it was acquired, only 26 of these Critically Endangered birds remained.

The method was patient rather than dramatic. Coconut palms were cut back and native vegetation was allowed to regrow. By 1982 the island had reached its maximum population of 320 birds, and the project became a model for other work in the country. The Seychelles government declared the island a special reserve in 1975 according to a separate source, and Nature Seychelles has managed it since 1998.

Visitors have been welcome since 1972, when ecotourism began on the island, and the organisation says about 10,000 people come each year. In September 2010 it became what the organisation calls the world's first carbon-neutral nature reserve. Nature Seychelles chief executive Nirmal Shah, in a 2012 piece, says of the early days that the partnership "was built from scratch."

The lesson for travellers is the visiting rules, not the number of birds. Go with the authorised arrangements, keep to paths, and leave nothing behind. Check Nature Seychelles for opening days and fees; the page we read did not list them.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	Nature Seychelles, "Coconuts to conservation – BirdLife's History in 20 Objects", 12 August 2012
PEOPLE NAMED	Nirmal Shah, Chief Executive, Nature Seychelles
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published reporting; figures vary slightly between sources (island size, dates).
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Contact Nature Seychelles for an interview, current figures and photographs, with consent.



Photo: Extreminatethejuice · CC BY-SA 4.0

HOW TO REACH

Cousin Island Special Reserve, off Praslin, Seychelles

AIRPORT	Praslin Airport (PRI), a short transfer from the boat landing at the west of Praslin; international arrivals land at Mahé (SEZ).
RAILWAY	There is no railway in Seychelles.
BY ROAD	Reach Praslin by air or ferry; the island is visited by boat from Praslin.
GETTING AROUND	Reserve visits are by organised boat; check with Nature Seychelles.

Distances approximate; confirm current visiting arrangements. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Nature Seychelles article (2012) (natureseychelles.org); Nature Seychelles (natureseychelles.org)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

A village that rebuilt its houses by hand

High in the mountains of Flores, the people of Wae Rebo won UNESCO recognition for restoring their conical houses together.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Jakub Haun · CC BY 4.0

Wae Rebo is a small village in the Manggarai area of Flores, Indonesia, about 1,100 metres above sea level. It sits among mountains and dense forest and is reached by a trek of about three to four hours from the village of Denge. There is no mobile signal and electricity is available only in the evening, from 6 to 10 pm, according to Indonesia's official tourism site.

The village is known for its Mbaru Niang: tall, cone-shaped houses thatched with lontar palm from the roof to the ground. Each has five levels with set purposes, from family living space at the base to storage for food and seed to a top level for offerings to the ancestors. Indonesia's tourism ministry says the village has around 1,200 residents living in seven houses. Its founder, Empu Maro, built it about a century ago, and today's residents are described as his descendants of the eighteenth generation.

In 2012, Wae Rebo received the top Award of Excellence in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards, announced in Bangkok on 27 August. The award recognised the community-led rebuilding of the houses and the way it improved village welfare. A Burung Indonesia account adds that the work involved villagers and volunteers, along with hospitality and English training for local guides, especially women.

If you go, go as a guest. Arrange the visit through a licensed guide, carry cash, bring a warm layer for the cold evenings, and ask before photographing people or the interiors of houses. Villagers are hosts, but the houses are family homes.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	Indonesia Travel (Ministry of Tourism site); Burung Indonesia — dates not given on the pages we read
PEOPLE NAMED	None living; the founder, Empu Maro, is named in tourism material. This is a place and community profile.
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published tourism and NGO sources.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Contact village leaders through a local guide or a Flores operator, with consent for photographs and quotations.

HOW TO REACH

Wae Rebo, Manggarai, Flores, Indonesia

AIRPORT	Komodo Airport, Labuan Bajo (LBJ); the village is several hours away by road and trail.
RAILWAY	There is no railway on Flores.
BY ROAD	The road trip to Denge takes several hours; then about 3 to 4 hours on foot.
GETTING AROUND	Arrange a driver and a local guide in Labuan Bajo or Ruteng; carry cash.

Times approximate; confirm with local guides. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Indonesia Travel: Wae Rebo (www.indonesia.travel)

READER AND CONTRIBUTOR BRIEFS

Proposed commission: “The ferry that changed my plans”

A brief for a real reader or contributor. Not a published story.

PROPOSED COMMISSION · NOT A REAL STORY

What we want: a first-person account (800–1,200 words) of an island journey in which the boat, ferry or flight did not go to plan, and what you found instead. One setting, one person you met, one change of mind.

What we need: a true story; photographs you took, with permission to publish; a short trip recap (island, dates, route, budget range with currency and date, one thing you wish you had known).

Rights: you keep your copyright; we ask for permission to publish and archive with credit. To contribute, write to us via the contact page — and please do not send invented or composite stories.

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

The Taste of Travel: Mui Borok, Tripura's kitchen

Fermented fish, bamboo shoot, and a cuisine that mostly skips the oil.

RESEARCHED

The traditional food of the Tripuri, or Borok, people is called Mui Borok. Its signature ingredient is berma, a dried and fermented fish, which is cooked with vegetables and little or no oil; it is salty, pungent and spicy. Bamboo shoot is another staple, and the cuisine is shaped by local herbs, forest vegetables and fish.

Among the dishes described in published sources: chakhwi, a curry traditionally cooked in a bamboo vessel over hot coals; wahan mosdeng, a pork dish with ground chilli, called a bharta, salad or chutney depending on who is telling; and mosdeng serma, a tangy chutney made with berma, garlic and green chilli. Bengali influence is strong in the wider food culture of the state.

Where to try it: Agartala's restaurants and festival stalls. Ask for the dish name and what it is made of. If you are vegetarian, say so at the start; many traditional dishes rely on fish or pork, and a good host can usually cook vegetables and rice.

At a glance

SAY IT	Ask what berma is before you order; it is strong.
ETIQUETTE	Accept food graciously; ask before photographing a meal in someone's home.
VEG-FRIENDLY?	Possible with notice; confirm in advance.

Official sources: Incredible India: Savour the flavours of Agartala (www.incredibleindia.gov.in)

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

Heritage Without Borders: the Cellular Jail

A penal colony, a prison of solitary cells, and a site that asks to be visited with care.

RESEARCHED



Photo: Harvinder Chandigarh · CC BY-SA 4.0

The history of Port Blair as a penal colony goes back to the 1857 uprising. The Cellular Jail itself was built between 1896 and 1906, according to Incredible India, during the years when the number of prisoners grew with the independence struggle. It remains one of the most important places in India's colonial history and a place of memory for the many people held there.

Visit with time to read and listen. Opening hours and show schedules vary by source: Incredible India lists a Hindi light-and-sound show at 5:50 pm daily and an English show at 6:50 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while other sites give different times. The official site, cellularjail.com, is the place to confirm the schedule and book. The museum closes on Mondays and national holidays, according to one listing.

Dress modestly, speak quietly, and treat the site as a memorial, not a backdrop.

At a glance

ETIQUETTE	Treat as a memorial; modest dress, quiet voices.
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — show times and museum hours conflict between sources; confirm on the official site.

HOW TO REACH

Cellular Jail, Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

AIRPORT	Veer Savarkar International Airport (IXZ), a short drive away.
RAILWAY	No railway in the islands.
BY ROAD	In the centre of Port Blair, on Atlanta Point; a short taxi or auto-rickshaw ride from most hotels.
GETTING AROUND	Taxis, auto-rickshaws and walking.

Confirm hours and show times on the official site. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Cellular Jail (official tickets and shows) (cellularjail.com); Incredible India: Cellular Jail (www.incredibleindia.gov.in)

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

The Natural Calendar: July

What to look for, where, and how sure we are.

RESEARCHED

Azores whales and dolphins: sperm whales live in Azorean waters all year; blue and fin whales are usually spring visitors, and summer is best for Atlantic spotted dolphins. *Resident species reliable; large migrants uncertain in July.*

Komodo dry season: roughly May to October, the standard window for visiting the dragons' islands. *Predictable season; the new daily quota is the real constraint.*

Perseids and a total eclipse, in August: the Perseid meteor shower peaks around 12 to 13 August, and a total solar eclipse on 12 August crosses Greenland, Iceland and northern Spain. A solar eclipse always happens at new moon, so the Perseids will fall under dark skies that year. *Date certain; weather is not.*

Monsoon in India: July is monsoon in the Andamans and Tripura; ferries and roads can be disrupted. *Predictable season; plan flexibly.*

At a glance

SOURCE	IGN (Spain) for the eclipse; operators' summaries for Azores seasons.

Official sources: Instituto Geográfico Nacional (Spain): total solar eclipse of 12 August 2026 (astronomia.ign.es)

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

Responsible Travel: swimming above the reef

Three habits that protect coral and seagrass, wherever you snorkel.

RESEARCHED

Look, do not touch. The basic rule is to stay just above the reef without making contact, and never to feed marine life, even if a guide suggests it. Use designated moorings, and keep anchors off reef habitat.

Think about sunscreen. NOAA says no sunscreen is proven to be reef safe, though mineral sunscreens based on non-nano zinc oxide or titanium dioxide do not appear to harm corals. The phrase “reef-safe” has no legal definition in most countries, so read the ingredients list. A rash vest cuts the amount you need.

Slow down near seagrass. In the Andamans, dugongs graze only on seagrass, and fast boats threaten the meadows. Ask your operator about speed limits in shallow areas.

Source quality note: sunscreen guidance here is from NOAA and National Park Service pages and secondary summaries; check NOAA's own page before publication.

At a glance

CHECKED	10 November 2026

Official sources: NOAA: skincare chemicals and coral reefs (oceanservice.noaa.gov); National Park Service: protect yourself, protect the reef (www.nps.gov)



Photo: Vikramjit Kakati · CC BY-SA 4.0

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

The Island Logistics Checklist

Ten points for ferries, small planes and places with limited choices.

PRACTICAL · EVERGREEN

1. **Book the boat before the bed:** ferry and small-plane seats often sell out before rooms do.

2. **Leave a buffer day:** weather cancels crossings; never schedule a flight home on the day of an island ferry.

3. **Use licensed operators:** ask for the licence number and check it with the tourism authority.

4. **Carry cash:** cards and cash machines are patchy on small islands.

5. **Pack for water:** dry bags, a rain layer, reef-friendly sun protection and a rash vest.

6. **Travel insurance:** check that it covers boats, diving and medical transport.

7. **Seasickness:** carry remedies recommended by your doctor; sit mid-boat.

8. **Know the rules:** permits, protected-area rules and quotas change; check official sites.

9. **Respect residents:** islands are homes; keep noise down and ask before photographing people.

10. **Tell someone:** share your route and ferry bookings with a person at home.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

The 24-Hour Destination: Port Blair (Sri Vijaya Puram)

One illustrative day. Hours, sea conditions and your own pace will change it.

ILLUSTRATIVE ITINERARY · VERIFY LOCALLY

Morning: Cellular Jail and its museum, with time to read and not rush; check that it is open (one listing says the museum closes on Mondays).

Late morning: a short walk or taxi ride to the nearby waterfront; leave time to rest.

Lunch: a local seafood restaurant; ask what the day's catch was.

Afternoon: the town's museums, or a boat trip if the sea allows; follow the guidance of licensed operators.

Evening: the Cellular Jail light-and-sound show, if you want one; times differ between sources, so confirm on the official ticketing site.

What to skip if short on time: extra beaches; see the jail and one waterfront.

Costs and timings are illustrative and must be verified on production day.

HOW TO REACH

Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair), South Andaman

AIRPORT	Veer Savarkar International Airport (IXZ), a short drive from the centre.
RAILWAY	No railway in the islands.
BY ROAD	Compact town; most sights are a short taxi ride apart.
GETTING AROUND	Taxis, auto-rickshaws and walking.

Timings approximate. Distances approximate - verify.

COMMUNITY

The Traveller's Lexicon: saudade

A Portuguese word for a particular kind of longing.

LEXICON

Saudade — pronounced roughly “sow-DAH-deh” — is a Portuguese word for a deep, sweet-sad longing for something or someone absent. It is often linked to Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking world, and to the experience of those who left by sea.

It is a word that is hard to translate into a single English term, and it is best not to use it as a tidy label for an entire culture.

COMMUNITY

Travel Quiz — July

Five questions. Answers appear in next month's issue.

QUIZ

1. Which whale species lives in Azorean waters all year?

2. In which Indian state is Unakoti?

3. What is Havelock Island officially called today?

4. How many visitors per day does Komodo National Park now allow?

5. Which island reserve in Seychelles was bought to save the Seychelles warbler?

Answers (for the editor's copy): Sperm whale · Tripura · Swaraj Dweep · 1,000 · Cousin Island.

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.

COMMUNITY

Your turn: a quiet island memory

Reader engagement idea for the next issue.

READER INVITATION

Tell us about an island, large or small, and one moment there you would not swap. 150 words and one photograph you took. A selection will appear in a future Readers' Pages with your name and photo credit — only with your permission.

COMMUNITY

The Traveller's Bookshelf

Three books for the sea.

RECOMMENDED READING

Moby-Dick by Herman Melville (1851) — the great whaling novel, which also takes in the Azores and the islanders who crewed American ships. Read it for the ocean.

The Sea Around Us by Rachel Carson (1951) — a clear, lyrical natural history of the ocean. Read it for the wonder.

The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh (2004) — a novel set in the Sundarbans, the tidal forests of the Bay of Bengal. Read it for the people.

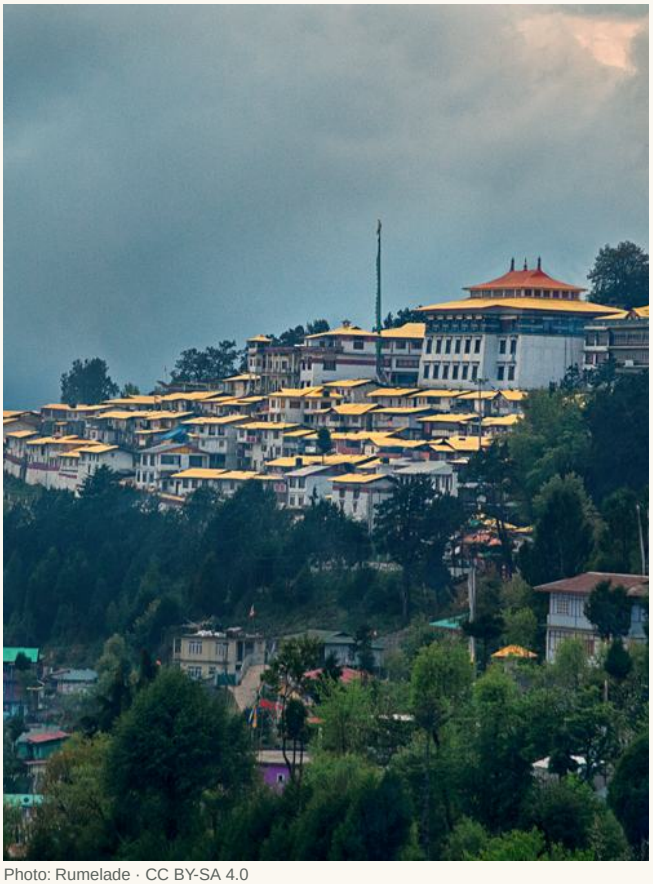


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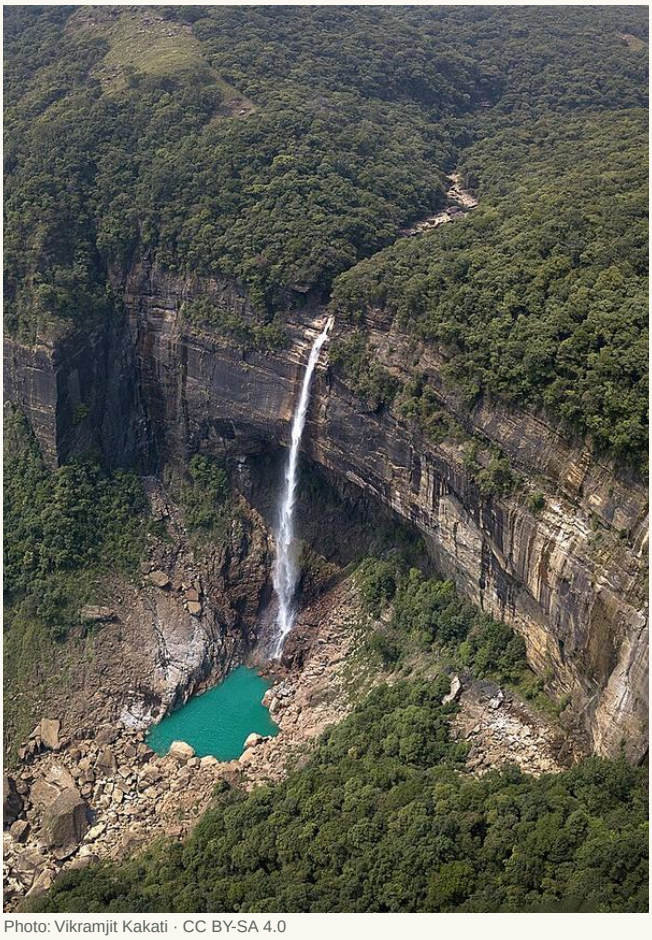


Photo: Vikramjit Kakati · CC BY-SA 4.0

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.

THE WORLD CELEBRATES

Festivals & events radar

Dates come from our festival guide and are approximate. Confirm with the official organiser before booking; lunar-calendar and annually announced events are provisional until confirmed.

NORTHEAST INDIA & INDIA

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Beh Deinkhlam	Jowai, Meghalaya	6–9 July 2026	A Pnar festival of the Jaintia hills marking the monsoon, with ritual dancing and the pulling of tall decorated poles into water..
Rath Yatra	Puri, Odisha	16 July 2026 (Bahuda Yatra 24 July)	The annual chariot festival of Lord Jagannath, with huge wooden chariots pulled through the streets..
Kharchi Puja	Old Agartala, Tripura	22–28 July 2026	A week-long festival at the Chaturdasha Devata Temple, where unusually only the heads of fourteen deities are worshipped..
Onam (Thiruvonam)	Kerala	26 August 2026	Kerala's harvest festival, with flower carpets and a vegetarian feast, the sadya..
Janmashtami	Across India (Mathura and Dwarka are major centres)	4 September 2026	Celebrates Krishna's birth with fasting, midnight prayers and, in Maharashtra, human-pyramid curd-pot festivals..
Ganesh Chaturthi	Mumbai, Pune and across India	14 September 2026 (about ten days)	A ten-day festival of clay Ganesha idols ending with immersion processions..

ASIA

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Naadam	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	11–13 July 2026	Mongolia's national festival of wrestling, archery and horse racing..
Mid-Autumn Festival	China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam	25 September 2026	A moon-viewing and mooncake festival, with lantern displays in many cities..

EUROPE

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Edinburgh Festival Fringe	Edinburgh, Scotland	7–31 August 2026	The world's largest open-access arts festival, with thousands of shows across the city..
Total solar eclipse	Greenland, Iceland and northern Spain	12 August 2026	A rare total eclipse crossing Europe, visible in Spain shortly before sunset..
Notting Hill Carnival	London, England	30–31 August 2026	Europe's largest street festival of Caribbean culture, with parades and sound systems..
Oktoberfest	Munich, Germany	19 September–4 October 2026	The world's largest beer festival, held on the Theresienwiese..

AFRICA & THE AMERICAS

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Guelaguetza	Oaxaca, Mexico	20 and 27 July 2026	Oaxaca's celebration of regional dance, music and costume at the Cerro del Fortín auditorium..

OCEANIA & INTERNATIONAL

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Festival of Voices	Hobart, Tasmania	3–12 July 2026	A winter singing festival, opening with a free outdoor singalong in Salamanca..
Garma Festival	Gulkula, north-east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory	31 July–3 August 2026	Australia's leading Yolu cultural festival, hosted by the Yothu Yindi Foundation..

THE TRAVEL BRIEFING

Format example

Real developments up to 30 June 2026, each with a source. Check each one before you travel.

Europe's Entry/Exit System has been fully operational at Schengen external borders since 10 April 2026; ETIAS is scheduled for the last quarter of 2026, with the exact date to be announced. Source: European Commission, Home Affairs (home-affairs.ec.europa.eu).

Komodo National Park's visitor quota of 1,000 a day took effect on 1 April 2026, as reported by RRI on 16 April 2026 (rri.co.id).

Andaman and Nicobar Administration's tourism department states that foreign nationals do not need a Restricted Area Permit for 29 excluded islands, and 11 islands are exempt for day visits, valid to 31 December 2027, with exceptions for certain nationalities (tourism.andamannicobar.gov.in).

Air India Express announced direct flights from Navi Mumbai to Abu Dhabi from 15 July 2026, the first international service from the new airport, as reported by The National on 22 June 2026 (www.thenationalnews.com).

Tell us where you are going next

WRITE	editor@travaah.com
CALL	+91 70022 09781
PLAN	travaah.com/planner
CONTRIBUTE	Send a story or photograph via the contact page



Photo: Madhumita Das · CC BY-SA 4.0



Photo: ANKAN · CC BY-SA 4.0



Photo: Aravind Manickam · CC BY-SA 4.0

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.

WAYFARER

One Planet. Endless Journeys.

Published by Travaah Privé Escapes · editor@travaah.com · travaah.com/magazine

