Indonesia has the world’s largest Muslim population. Lying near the intersection of shifting tectonic plates, the country is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The amazing landscape and floating emerald islands of Indonesia dazzle the eye. The beauty and riches of the country have attracted all types of visitors throughout the centuries, including missionaries, pirates, mining companies and backpackers. However, this paradise has been tainted by deep racial conflicts, religious strife, government corruption, economic mismanagement, terrorism and natural disasters. Indonesians continually press forward, trying to manage the conflicts and embrace the highlights of their nation.

Indonesia is a big place. If all the 17,000 islands could be combined, Indonesia would be slightly smaller than three times the size of Texas. The culture in one part of the country could be very different than the rest. Spread across a chain of thousands of islands between Asia and Australia, Indonesia is ethnically diverse, with about 583 languages and dialects. This strategic position has always influenced the cultural, social, political and economic life of the country, which has achieved independence from the Netherlands in 1949.

Food for the Hungry’s work is focused mainly on the island of Sumatra. This island was greatly affected by the tsunami of 2004. The population is largely Muslim and, unlike Jakarta or Bali, they have had little exposure to Western visitors. It is necessary to be sensitive and aware of all cultural considerations.

Note: Recognizing that information on Indonesia is readily available on the Internet, we encourage you to learn as much as you can about the political background, history, geography, economics and culture of this amazing country. This document provides a general overview, with some specific information that will help short-term teams appreciate Indonesia even more and understand our work. Going to Indonesia as part of a short-term team is different from a leisure trip or traveling for business. The information provided here can help you prepare for a potentially life-changing experience. Sources used for some country facts include CIA: The World Factbook and BBC News.
**QUICK FACTS**

**Full Name:** Republic of Indonesia  
**Head of State:** President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono  
**Land:** 1,919,443 sq km (741,098 sq miles) spread across 17,000 islands.  
**Population:** 246 million (July 2011 est.)  
**Capital city:** Jakarta  
**Official Language:** Indonesian (There are 300 regional languages, the most important of which is Javanese.)  
**Major Religion:** Islam  
**Life Expectancy:** 70 years (men), 74 years (women) (UN)  
**Monetary currency:** Rupiah

---

**PASSPORT/VISA**

To enter and depart Indonesia, you are required to have a passport valid for at least six months from the date of your proposed entry into Indonesia. In addition to a passport, some countries require a visa for entry. A visa is a special permit issued by a country’s government to allow a foreign citizen into the country. At this time, a visa is required for Americans travelling to Indonesia. If you are a U.S. citizen, you are eligible to apply for a Visa on Arrival (VOA). This visa can be applied for after you have landed at certain airports and seaports in Indonesia. The Visa on Arrival cannot be converted or extended to obtain an immigration permit. The maximum stay permitted by the VOA is 30 days. Visa fee for stay up to 30 days is $25. In addition, be prepared to pay an exit tax of approximately $8 for each team member.

If you have a passport from a country other than the U.S., you may need to take extra measures to ensure smooth entrance into and exit from Indonesia. Consult the host country consulate to find out what measures need to be taken.

For the most up-to-date information about travel from the United States to any foreign country, please visit the Department of State’s website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

---

**VACCINATION INFORMATION**

While there are no compulsory vaccinations required for entry into Indonesia, we advise that you make an appointment with your family doctor and share with him/her where you are going, how long you will be there and what activities you will be participating in. In consultation with your doctor, you can decide which vaccinations and/or medications will be best for you.
To better familiarize yourself with travel health, please visit the Center for Disease Control’s website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) prior to your visit with your doctor.

**WEATHER**

Being such a big country and containing such varied topography, Indonesia has a varied climate. However, we’ll focus in on the island of Sumatra. The region Food for the Hungry is working in is very close to the equator and has a very tropical climate. Year round the temperatures in coastal Sumatra are in the upper 80s and lower 90s with extremely high humidity. Rainfall is also common year-round, although some regions have a rainy and dry season.

It’s important to stay hydrated when working and serving in this region. Drink lots of water and avoid carbonated beverages. The sunlight is intense, so be sure to use sunscreen even on cloudy days.

**FOOD**

Food for the Hungry will provide breakfast, lunch and dinner during the whole trip. Meals will be a mix of local Indonesian fare and the occasional American dish. However, don’t let your expectations soar too high. Indonesians have a different way of preparing American dishes, so the meal, although familiar, may not always taste the same.

An Indonesian meal usually consists of rice with a combination of meat, fish, chicken, vegetables and egg side dishes. Flavors are extremely important in Indonesian food. Aromatic coriander and cumin, together with chilies, lemon grass, coconut, sweet soy sauce and palm sugar are all important flavorings, while sambal – a hot chili sauce – is served just about everywhere in case the food isn’t spicy enough! Vegetables are used generously in most dishes. Tofu and fermented soybeans are often used, which are both good sources of protein.

Traditionally, food is eaten using the fingers of the right hand (the left is considered unclean), hence the soft stickiness of their rice. In some situations, cutlery will be provided – usually a spoon and a fork.

While some dishes may be unfamiliar, please come with an open mind and be willing to try what has been prepared for you. If you have any food allergies or special dietary needs, please communicate those to FH/US ahead of time. Our field staff will need time to arrange other options for you.

**CLOTHING**

Our dress code is a sign of respect for the people you will be working with, as well as to convey a conservative Christian lifestyle. Wearing appropriate clothing will open the door for establishing good relationships with the community members.

Since you will be serving in a largely conservative Muslim region, modesty in dress is essential for all situations. It is suggested that men wear long pants and loose-fitting T-shirts, while women wear loose-fitting long-sleeved blouses that
fall below the waistline and either skirts that cover the ankles or loose-fitting pants. It is recommended to wear cotton fabrics as the temperature can be very hot. Women may be required to wear a head scarf. Talk to your team leader prior to the trip about this option.

Please do not wear clothing with holes, rips, questionable language or stains. Closed-toe shoes are required at all times in the field. Please do not wear tight clothing and pants or low-cut blouses. Leave your midriffs, sleeveless shirts and shorts at home.

Out of respect for cultural sensitivity, we request your cooperation in submitting to FH’s policy in regard to piercings, tattoos and radical haircuts. For more details about this topic, please talk to your team leader.

To help stay cool, bring light and breathable clothes on this trip. Heavy materials, such as jeans and thick khaki pants don’t work well in this climate.

During travel and leisure days, we suggest that you still dress conservatively. Although people on the street do not know you are a Christian, anyone from Western culture is assumed to be a Christian.

COMMUNICATION
You will likely be without telephone and/or e-mail access during your time in Indonesia. While these services may be readily available, especially in major cities, your schedule will be packed with activities. This will help you to focus your energy and attention on the transformative work of the Lord and to help maintain a cohesive group dynamic. We encourage you to leave your cell phone at home and inform your family and friends that you will be unavailable until you return to the States.

If there is an emergency in the country or community where you are serving, your Team Coordinator will contact your family and appropriate people at your home church. Before you leave the U.S. you will be given a U.S. phone number and other details, which you will pass on to your family and close friends. If there is an emergency in the U.S. while you’re on the field, your family member or friend may call that number. Your Field Liaison will assess the call and facilitate communication with you or the field staff as necessary.

TRANSPORTATION
The team will travel around the country mostly in mini- and full-size buses. Once in the community, travel will be mostly on foot. All transportation will be provided by FH. Your drivers will either be FH staff or hired by a reliable company that FH frequently uses.

The roads are likely to be bumpy and winding. You may feel that the vehicle you are in is uncomfortably close to the vehicle or pedestrian beside it. Streets may seem overwhelmingly crowded. Traffic signs may
not always be followed. Remember that you are in good hands. Your driver is a professional and used to the traffic conditions. Keep your hands, feet and belongings inside the vehicle at all times. If you experience carsickness, sit in the front or take an appropriate medicine for motion sickness.

LUGGAGE
Although airlines may allow you to check two hefty bags, we advise you to travel light. All team members will be responsible to carry their luggage. Also remember that vehicle space is limited, so be conservative when packing. We ask that you bring only one checked bag and one carry-on bag. When you’re working in the communities, your luggage will be safe at the hotel. We suggest that you bring a backpack for water bottle, sun block, camera, snacks, and small items. Please refer to your teams training materials for a packing list.

MONEY
Once you arrive in country, you will not need any money for team-related activities. You will only need money for personal items, souvenirs and shopping that you will do in-country and while traveling. You may exchange money in the airport upon arrival if you like, but there will be other opportunities to exchange money as well. Bring bills $20 or larger and be sure that the bills are crisp and new (no more than 5 years old) to ensure acceptance.

It is best to bring cash on this trip for your spending money. ATMs do exist in some cities through Sumatra, but they are frequently out of order and the fees can be large to withdraw cash. If there are problems with the ATM and your card cannot be retrieved, there are few options of remedying the situation. Credit cards are accepted at some stores in the city, but do not rely on this method of payment. Traveler’s checks can be used, but they can only be exchanged in limited locations and extra fees always apply.

CAMERAS AND CAMCORDERS
We want you to be able to take pictures and capture videos and share these incredible moments of transformation with your friends and family back home. However, please use discretion when taking pictures or videos. Upon your arrival in the country FH/Indonesia staff will explain in depth our photo policy for everyone’s safety. We want to make sure that we are focused on the work at hand, and ask that team members be sensitive to the culture and people. We want you to see the country through our own eyes, not only through the lens of a camera.

You may bring cameras (disposable, standard or digital), iPods, cell phones and other small electronic devices; however, you assume all risks of damage, loss or theft of your belongings. Keep in mind that you will be kept quite busy, and there will not be a lot of time to use many electronic devices. Also, electricity may not always be available to recharge electronic equipment, including cameras and camcorders. Please bring extra batteries. When in public, don’t display expensive electronic items or any items that may just appear expensive.
**FH History and Programs**

FH began operational programs throughout Sumatra in late 2004 in response to the overwhelming needs resulting from the December 26 tsunami that impacted Southeast Asia. The immediate response during the first six months was focused on relief efforts. Our work, however, has transitioned to include long-term development projects.

**Agriculture:**
- Permaculture – Through this project, small-scale home gardening is encouraged to supplement family nutrition. This helps alleviate financial burden on families and can save them money that they can use to support their children’s education.
- System of Rice Intensification – is a method used to increase the productivity of irrigated rice by changing the management of plants, soil, water and nutrients. This can result in reduced costs of production and increased profitability and income for farmers.
- Market-driven agribusiness

**Economic Development:**
- Teaching women skills such as sewing, embroidery, baking as a way to augment family income.
- Marketing and business planning
- Establishing community savings groups to help families learn how to save and manage their finances, as well as provide financial support through loans so families can provide for their children’s needs and address emergencies.

**Education:**
- Teacher training
- After-school programs

**Good Governance:**
- Leadership training
- Emergency management
- Disaster risk reduction

---

**Prayer Requests**

- Pray for creativity and wisdom as FH/Indonesia engages different communities and leaders for community transformation.
- Pray for opportunities and resources to reduce illiteracy and drop-out rates among children.
- Pray for appropriate vocational training and income-generating activities to help families earn more income.
- Pray that we can establish community groups that take leadership initiatives in community development projects.
- Pray that we can develop an effective system of disaster risk reduction through community managed organizations in order to improve food access and family economy and reduce vulnerability to natural hazards.