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Route a6

DARWIN to PHUKET

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corrected to 2008

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For interactive Google Map

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INDONESIAN SECTION

Getting things done in Indonesia can be a bureaucratic nightmare requiring many photocopies of relevant documents combined with often having to make "facilitation" payments to smooth the way when obtaining goods or services. Sometimes getting the simplest task done can take all day. There are usually no set procedures or clear rules of engagement and the concept of time in the manner familiar to the western mind is not familiar to Indonesia society. The phrase "Jam Karet", which translates as "rubber time", invariably delivered with a smile will explain why the parts you are waiting for or the taxi you have ordered are late or do not arrive at all. The people are almost always friendly and as helpful as they can be within the bounds of Indonesian governance. Officials, no matter how small their power base, can be difficult especially if crossed. The guiding rule is to be overtly charming even if you would rather take a swing at them!

Indonesia offers a safe, varied and culturally interesting cruising ground. The problem has always been getting the necessary permission to cruise these waters and the visas to allow one time to do so. The detailed requirements of both are listed later but the underlying rule is GET THEM BEFORE YOU GO.

This is where the Darwin – Kupang Rally, also known as the Sail Indonesia Rally, comes into its own. See <http://www.sailindonesia.net/home/home.php>. They do most of the paperwork for you and explain in detail how to get visas. Even if you are not Rally folk I would

strongly recommend that you at least start off as part of the Rally and then break away to do your own thing once you have been cleared in to Indonesia at Kupang. The Rally is government sponsored and attracts political support. This reduces the amount of graft that can be demanded as one can always reply "but the Minister told us" whilst reaching for ones mobile phone – many a difficult official melted away when we rehearsed that line in front of them.

Whilst there is no longer any threat of piracy, you should beware light-fingered visitors in canoes at remote villages. Loose deck fittings are sometimes removed as "souvenirs" – we lost a snatch block – and a "neighbourhood watch" is always a good idea when you are anchored near habitation.

English is not widely spoken. A Bahasa Indonesia phrase book or dictionary can be useful - if in doubt smile.

Spares

Obtaining yacht spare parts in Indonesia is almost impossible. Basic diesel engine spares may be available but they will be difficult to locate away from the main centres. Take sufficient spares to last until Singapore, especially fuel filters. Importing spares can be a nightmare as the Indonesian Customs procedures are very bureaucratic (to say the least) for yachts in transit and in any case these services are only readily available in ports of entry and exit such as Kupang, Bali, and Jakarta. The postal service is very slow and unreliable.

Supermarkets

After leaving Darwin you will not find a decent supermarket (as we know it) until you reach Bali - the "Makro Supermarket" there is about 2 miles from the marina.

Internet Facilities

Few and far between outside the larger towns. Resort hotels usually have Internet. The service is usually slow and often unreliable.

Indonesian Phone Services

The GSM phone network is well established throughout Indonesia and a good option when you arrive is to purchase an Indonesian SIM card for your phone from one of the many outlets. SMS services are very cheap. The country code for Indonesia is 62. (Australian prepaid phones may not work in Indonesia.)

Medical Services

Limited to non-existent away from urban centres. If needed I understand that the SOS International Medical Clinics in Bali and Jakarta offer good service. The phone number for the Bali centre is +62 361 710 505.

Bargaining

You are expected to bargain for everything including food in the market. You can generally expect to reduce asking prices by 40%.

Water

Indonesian tap water is not drinkable. Large 20 litre returnable bottles are available everywhere costing around about 50p (Dec 2008) plus your refundable deposit for the bottle.

Diesel Fuel

Diesel is called “solar” in Indonesia and is available everywhere although often contaminated with foreign material (take plenty of fuel filters). Since the bombings in Bali it is supposed to be illegal to carry fuel in jerry-cans but this restriction is easily bypassed with a "facilitation" fee or “delivery charge”. It is cheap by UK standards – about 50p/litre (Dec 2008).

LPG Gas Bottles

Government regulations do not permit gas bottles with non Indonesian connections be refilled in Indonesia so you should take 3 month supply of gas with you. Despite this rule, some places will fill your gas bottles but such service is unpredictable

Cruising Permit (CAIT) and Immigration Information

All yachts are required to have a valid Cruising Application for Indonesian Territory (CAIT) while in Indonesian waters. If participating in the Rally, the cost for your CAIT is included in the entry fee and is obtained for you by Sail Indonesia from the Indonesian Department of Sea Communications in Jakarta. It is handed over when/as you clear Australian Customs in Darwin. The permit is valid for a fixed period of three months from the date of your arrival at your port of entry – generally Kupang. The CAIT details cannot be changed after it is sent to be processed in Jakarta and is NOT extendible or transferrable. It is NOT a substitute for a visa but everyone onboard your yacht has to be listed on the CAIT. You will probably need more than a month to cruise through Indonesia to Singapore. This is more than the standard “on arrival” visa allows (30 days). It is necessary to obtain a Social Visa from the Indonesian Consulate in Darwin before you leave. The process is simple but takes 4 days plus a fee of about £25.

Passage Making

Two hazards are present most of the way to Langkawi. The first, and less frequent, are floating logs/trees/roots/branches. The forest felling around these parts leads to lots of floating timber – whilst the floating bits do no more than bruise your paint job or gelcoat, the underwater bits can de-blade a prop quite effectively. A good lookout is important. The second is fishermen and their nets. By day the hazard is the nets launched from very small boats that they lay inshore in just about the waters one is transiting through. The nets float/hang about 1.5 m to 2.5 m below the surface and sometimes one can pass over them without snagging. But that is a course to avoid if possible – as they are hard to see you will probably cross several without realising it. They are easy enough to cut free if you do become entangled and the fishermen are usually content to receive 20,000 – 40,000 rupiah or so (£1 - £2) in compensation. At night the really small boats are replaced by larger ones, some of them trawlers, whose only idea of navigation lights is to have a single light (white, red or blue), sometimes flashing and sometimes fixed and often only lit or switched on when you are a few hundred yards away. The almost complete absence of port and starboard lights makes transiting the fleets one meets at night a nail-biting experience. That said we always seemed to pass through them although unnervingly close at times.



Illustrated Route

The route illustrated on the Google Map is that taken by *Fortuna* in 2005. The Rally follows a similar path but with some added stops. Some alternative "off-route" stopping places are shown on the Google Map. The first port of call after leaving Darwin was:

Kupang

This is one of the main cities in eastern Indonesia located at the western end of Timor and is the place Captain Bligh called at in June of 1789 after the mutiny on HMS Bounty. Kupang Airport is about 15 kilometres from town and there is an air service from Darwin together with daily flights that connect with all other ports in Indonesia. Kupang has a new shopping centre, "Flobamora Mall" where most grocery items are available. There are Banks and ATMs within a 10 minute walk from the anchorage off Teddy's Bar. There are also a number of restaurants and cafes close by. Internet facilities in internet cafes are often very slow and unreliable - a better service is available at the TELKOM office up the hill on the way out of town, a short ride on the number 2 bus (bemo) beside the anchorage.

Lewoleba

Large village/small town with an interesting market strung along the tiny back streets. There is a long stone quay used by local ferries - not recommended - we anchored off. Good range of basic foodstuffs available if you search. Diesel available (measured out by jug from a large drum!) and carried to the beach in enormous jerry cans - they will do it for you for a few rupiah.

Sagu Bay

Although generally quite deep (25m) there is a convenient spur of sand on the E side of this pretty bay with depths down to 4m. Rocks and reef further in. Good holding.

Sea World Resort Maumere

An exposed anchorage but as there is generally little wind hereabouts it is reasonably safe and secure. The resort ashore (<http://www.sea-world-club.com>) welcomes yachties to use their facilities.

Riung

Delightful spot. Puts on quite a show for the Rally boats. It is possible to anchor in many isolated spots all round the "bay" close to very small uninhabited islets. Limited provisions ashore plus several local restaurants.

Teluk Bari

A large, well sheltered bay. Get in close to the SE end to find reasonable anchoring depths of 10 - 4m. Coral reef around shoreline so don't get too close. (We were inundated with young men in canoes trying to cadge things. We gave out pens, lighters, etc. but they would not leave. The following morning we discovered they had unscrewed and stolen a snatch-block - so beware!)

Rinca

The large bay on the west side offers several anchoring possibilities. All require one to get close in to achieve reasonable anchoring depths. Wildlife abounds here. The bay on the south side is a recommended spot to see Komodo Dragons (we saw several on the E shore).

Bali

The small, rather scruffy and somewhat disorganised Bali International Marina is the only show in town. (<http://www.balimarina.com>) Staff helpful. Laundry and fuel available but pricey. Taxi required to get into town (Denpasa) or to Kuta, the touristy area, with masses of restaurants, bars, shops, etc. Excellent spot for provisioning with a wide range of supermarkets to suit most tastes.

(The Rally doesn't call here anymore but instead anchors en masse off Lovina Beach near Singaradja on the N coast. We have no knowledge of this location.)

Kumai

Another somewhat scruffy town where most supplies can be found. Several enterprising local firms run overnight boat trips into the National Park. They provide boat guards to ensure your yachts security whilst you are away. The trips are truly magical and cannot be recommended too highly.

Nongsa Point Marina

An unusually efficient marina (by Indonesian standards) and the place where most cruisers check out of Indonesia. This process can take a very variable length of time - patience is required! A charge of about S\$25 (£12) is made for this process (2008) Approach from the north (entry waypoint 01° 12.15' N 104° 05.7' E) leaving the eastern reef of off-lying Nongsa Island about 1 nm to the west. Pile beacons mark two almost parallel channels, separated by a reef. The eastern one leads to the marina. Care should be taken of two shoal patches (1.8 m) just to the north of the marina channel - these are usually marked by buoys but they are sometimes absent and are substituted with yellow flagged sticks. The marina is part of a resort complex and has 170 berths available for vessels up to 20 metres. The channel is dredged to 3.5 m with most of the marina having this depth. The marina/resort was renovated in 2008. There is a fuel dock (about 70p/l in 2008), metered potable water is available at each berth together with 220v power. The resort's swimming pools, showers, restaurant and laundry facilities are available to users of the marina. A courtesy shuttle bus runs to the Nongsapura Ferry Terminal and to the excellent Mata Hari super market. The ferry to Singapore takes 35 mins and runs hourly. It is possible to have Singaporean GST/VAT refunded if proof of export to Indonesia is provided – boat stamp/papers, passport, etc. <http://www.nongsapointmarina.com>



SINGAPORE SECTION

Singapore is a vibrant, bustling almost frenetic island state with incomparable shopping, food choices galore. It even has a few, but not many, sightseeing opportunities. If you need something repaired or a spare part, this is the place to do it or find it. Prices are higher here than in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand so it is worthwhile checking ahead before purchasing. Entry procedures, including the regulations about compulsory transponders, are outlined on: <http://www.noonsite.com/Countries/Singapore/?rc=Formalities#Clearance>

There is an excellent international air hub at Changi Airport and a comprehensive Metro (MRT) system that covers practically the whole island. There are two commercial marina's

and two yacht club marinas (the latter two are often fully booked but are worth emailing on the off-chance)

Singapore Armed Forces Yacht Club (SAF Yacht Club)

A growing and vibrant facility on the Changi coast with marina berths
<http://www.safyc.org.sg> or sscangel@safyc.org.sg

Republic of Singapore Yacht Club

An excellent facility which welcomes visiting non-members provided space is available. VHF 77. Customs and Immigration clearance is possible here. 130 marina berths, with full facilities and a chandlery. Located conveniently close to downtown with bus and train service within easy reach.

<http://www.rsyc.org.sg> or info@rsyc.org.sg

Raffles Marina

Probably the best known of the bunch. Provides a courtesy shuttle to the nearest MRT station. Well run but on the pricey side of life. The 70 tonne travel lift and boatyard facilities are run by a separate organisation (Marina Yacht Services). VHF 77.

<http://www.rafflesmarina.com.sg/marina.htm> or dmo@rafflesmarina.com.sg

One°15 Marina

The latest addition to Singapore's marina stock and the most expensive. Situated on the eastern end of Sentosa Island (off the southernmost tip of Singapore). The marina provides a free shuttle-bus service (every 8 minutes) to the nearest huge shopping centre and MRT station, which makes access to the city very easy. There are no shops in the marina vicinity, except for a limited chandlery (that rarely opens!). Other facilities include a large swimming pool, gym, and various restaurants (expensive). The marina entrance is open to a much used shipping channel and swells continually invade the marina.

<http://www.one15marina.com/>



MALAYSIAN SECTION

Malaysia is much easier to negotiate. You will get an automatic 3 month visa when you arrive (the only stipulation being that your passport must have 6 months to run) and your yacht can stay in Malaysia indefinitely. There is still a degree of "rubber time" here but in general goods and services are readily available and are supplied efficiently.

The people are friendly, always smiling and are imbued with the Muslim spirit of being helpful. Most people have a smattering of English, particularly the non-Malays – Chinese, Indian and Thai.

There is a continuation leg of the Rally here too - <http://www.sailmalaysia.net>

Spares

There are several chandlery outlets in the ports you can call at but their range is limited. The

best sources are in Langkawi (Peninsular Yachts) and Phuket (Phuketsail). Yacht spares can be received without paying duty but this requires negotiation with the Customs.

Supermarkets

Plentiful

Internet Facilities

Internet facilities abound. Most marinas have Wi-Fi. Data speed is slowish at about 1Mbs.

Malaysian Phone Services

It is again worthwhile purchasing one of the many SIM cards available – Maxis Hotspot seems one of the most popular. SMS services are very good value. It is possible to call the UK on one's mobile for the equivalent of 20p for 5 minutes. The country code for Malaysia is 60.

Medical Services

Excellent medical services, particularly in the big centres like Georgetown, Penang. Medical tourism is popular here.

Diesel Fuel

Good quality diesel is readily available everywhere. There is usually a limit on how much can be carried away from a filling station in jerry-cans. The pump price in marinas is about 50p/litre.

LPG Gas Bottles

Difficult to locate filling sources but they do exist. The easiest solution is to buy local cylinders and decant.

Passage Making

Over 50,000 vessels transit the Malacca Straits each year. These vessels are usually much further offshore than a yacht needs to be and are thus of little concern, except in the very near vicinity of Singapore. The problem for yachtsmen are the hundreds of fishermen who ply these waters in small and sometimes tiny boats. As the prevailing current is N/S, they sting their nets E/W, right across one's path. Additionally, large fleets of slightly bigger boats trawl and seine-net en masse at night, often using banks of ultra bright lights to attract fish (and dazzle you!). Their idea of navigation lights is to have a single light (white, red or blue), sometimes flashing and sometimes fixed and often only lit or switched on when you are a few hundred yards away. This general absence of port and starboard lights makes transiting the fleets one meets at night a nail-biting experience. Night passages are not recommended but can be made with caution.



Illustrated Route

The route illustrated on the Google Map is that taken by *Fortuna* in 2005. The first port of call after leaving Indonesia was:

Sebana Cove Marina

Part of a five star hotel complex this marina is a couple of miles upriver in a peaceful location. The hotel's facilities are available to berth-holders. A courtesy bus runs in to the

local village/town where all normal supplies are available together with a host of restaurants. There is a fast ferry to Singapore on site as well as Customs and Immigration services. There are no chandlery or yacht service facilities but the marina is nonetheless a strong favourite among cruisers for the ambiance it provides. Wi-Fi available.

<http://www.sebanacove.com/marina>

Danga Bay

Now possessed of a marina, this is the bay from which to visit Johor Bahru and Singapore without undergoing the hassle of Singaporean entry requirements. The new marina is apparently helpful and well equipped although it will not fully functioning until April 2009.

<http://www.noonsite.com/Members/val/R2009-03-08-1> or email info@dangabay.com

Kukup Is

Pick the best shelter from prevailing wind. Quite shallow.

Water Is

Useful overnight stop to break the monotony of Malacca Straits night passaging.

Admiral Marina, Port Dickson

The first "proper" stop on the way north. A well run marina with a superb swimming pool and a good restaurant that is an excellent spot from which to visit Malacca or Kuala Lumpur or (as we did) the Cameron Highlands. VHF Ch. 14. Exact position: 02° 28.75'N, 101° 50.40'E. <http://www.admiralmarina.com.my>

There is a reef called Pulau Terrumbu about 1nm SSW of the marina which runs parallel to the coast for 1.2 nm, jutting out about 0.4 nm at its N end. The W cardinal buoy is not lit.

The marina gives the following approach waypoints:

02° 25.50' N 101° 50.40' E

02° 25.75' N 101° 50.95' E

02° 28.42' N 101° 49.73' E

Pankor Laut Is

Anchor in about 8m in Royal Bay. This island is the site of an exclusive hotel.

Nearby Lumut has a small, welcoming YC and inexpensive fuel is available at the fisherman's fuelling quay.

Penang

Penang Marina - Because of its proximity to the cross channel ferry terminal this marina is both badly silted and very roly. It has nice, new facilities but is not very well run.

Junk Anchorage - A far better bet than the nearby marina if you want to spend time in Penang inexpensively. Local boatmen will ferry you back and forth from the Chinese village pier close-by for a few ringgit and the centre of the old town is close by. Not roly, unlike the marina.

Langkawi

Ayer Taban Bay - A very convenient and sheltered bay to pull into after the long haul north from Penang. Kuah is 12 nm distant from here.

Kuah Anchorage - This is a popular anchorage with dinghy jetty on the northern shore beside the new ferry terminal - easy to spot just to the left of the mosque as you look NE.

Royal Langkawi Yacht Club - A well run marina that has easy access to yachting services (but no haul-out facility) and to the shopping offered by Langkawi's principal town. <http://www.langkawayachtclub.com>

Telaga Marina - Another good marina but its isolation from Kuah means that fewer services and only limited shopping are available. Very pretty situation with many good western-style (and priced) restaurants nearby. The Rally ends here, usually with a big party! <http://www.telagaharbour.com>

Rebak Marina - Another useful marina. The drawback here is that it is on an isolated island with a small ferry providing communication with the main island. Services and shopping are, therefore, limited. But it does have reasonable haul-out facilities and a large hard-standing area with some support services. The hotel facilities - good ones - are available to berth-holders with a 20% discount. <http://www.rebakmarina.com>

Phuket (Thailand)

Phuket Island is a busy and popular destination for cruising yachts. Several Yacht Charter companies have bases around the coast. Its principal town, Phuket Town, is a thriving metropolis with most facilities available and a wide range of Western goods and groceries available at several large malls, the most popular being Festival Mall.

Import Duty

In order to compete with Langkawi, Thailand has recently reduced all its import duties to between 3% for new equipment and 25% on spare parts. Other items have an assessed rate of 7%.

Medical Excellent medical treatment is available at several large hospitals in Phuket Town. Both the International Hospital and the Bangkok Phuket Hospital are highly recommended

Nai Harn Bay - Excellent protected anchorage much favoured by cruisers. Expect 50 - 100 boats here at Christmas with room to spare. Good restaurant ashore and many car-hire/taxi/tuk-tuk services available to get in to both Ao Chalong and Phuket Town. Checking in to Thailand is done at Ao Chalong but yacht can remain in Nai Harn - make trip by tuk-tuk.

Ao Chalong - Immigration, Customs and the Harbour Office share a purpose-made building here at the root of the long pier. They are open from 1000 - 1500 every weekday. The Check In process is time-consuming and requires loads of paperwork. You will need three copies of all passports (front and back pages) countersigned by the bearer and three copies of your yacht registration certificate (front and back) countersigned by the skipper. There is a limited copying facility outside the office but it is better to come with all the documents copied - copy shops abound in the town. Alternatively, Customs & Immigration in Phuket Town, situated on Phuket Road can process yachts and are generally most helpful (unless you want

to deviate from “normal” routines in which case they can be the reverse). At both locations it is most important that crew are registered as “passengers” otherwise you may have to guarantee their departure with a bond and they will not be free to come and go as they please. They do not need to be physically present throughout the formalities. Should you wish to leave your yacht in Thailand while you travel elsewhere, even to do a visa run to nearby Burma, you will need to post a large Bond with Customs Office. This process is only dealt with at the Phuket Town office.

There are four marinas on the island. Two of them share the same approach channel which is severely constrained by tides and both are effectively landlocked. They are:

Boat Lagoon. It is advisable to enter during the last two hours of a rising tide and to request the marina to send out their pilot boat to guide you into the inner section as the junction at the entrance to the marina is tricky and shallow. The beacons approach channel starts at 07° 58.65'N, 098° 24.95'W. White painted beacons are on the port side only (on entering) and are quite difficult to see from far away. The 2.5m.dredged channel is narrow and has almost no water at low tide. (Tidal range 2.2 m at springs, 1.3 m at neaps). Turn to starboard at the end of the beacons channel to enter a mangrove lined river. Follow this for about half a mile until the marina entrance is seen. The marina complex has a large hard-standing area plus three travel lifts (max 80 tonnes). There are a multitude of engineering, woodworking (including teak re-decking experts) and sail-making facilities available – as these are constantly changing they are not listed specifically here. 7% VAT is added to all charges. Two swimming pools, cold showers and toilets are inclusive in marina charge. There are scores of restaurants nearby, both inside and outside the marina complex, as well as an hotel, apartments, laundry facilities and a chandlery.

<http://www.phuketboatlagoon.com/marina/marina.php>

Royal Phuket Marina. Smaller than Boat Lagoon and generally pricier. On the plus side it is quieter, tidier and has nicer/smarter/newer facilities – including a large and comprehensive fitness centre.

<http://www.royalphuketmarina.com>

Yacht Haven Marina. This is located on the island’s NE shore, close to the airport, at 8° 10.2'N, 098° 20.4'E. The marina is a pleasant place to stay but it is a long way from the centre of town, check-in facilities, chandlers, yacht services and supermarkets. Taxis get expensive and most people hire a cheap car to access all necessary facilities.

<http://www.yacht-haven-phuket.com> The marina staff are very helpful and can advise on suppliers/services.

Ao Po Grand Marina. This is the latest, and largest, addition. It is at 08° 04.07'N, 098° 26.73'E on the island’s NE coast. Very new, it is again a long way north of most of Phuket’s facilities but it claims it will have a travel lift (45 tonnes) by April 2009 and it has hard standing facilities. Despite all the hype, it looked far from thriving in Jan 2009 and there was no travel lift evident.

<http://www.aopograndmarina.com>

There is also

Ratanachai Slipway. Originally a boatyard catering for fishing boats, this friendly place now has more yachts than commercial craft. Much less expensive than the other marinas for haul

out and for labour services. They can slip vessels up to 45 metres/180 tons, 9.1m wide and 3.5m. draught. Situated on the outskirts of Phuket Town at 07° 52.77'N 098° 24.91'E.
<http://www.ratanachai-slipway.com>

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