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EVENT CALENDAR

MARCH-APRIL

Semana Santa, Larantuka, Flores Timur
The history of Semana Santa started when Portuguese traders settled in Larantuka briefly before 1600. After the Dutch East India Company gained control over the spice island trade, the Portuguese in Larantuka focused at the trade of Sandalwood from Timor. In 1520 they established a trading post and transit harbor in the village of Lamalera on the eastern side of Solor. The Portuguese population of Larantuka exploded after the Dutch conquered Malacca and Makassar. The Portuguese cultural influence since then remained substantial in the diocese of Larantuka in Flores Timur.

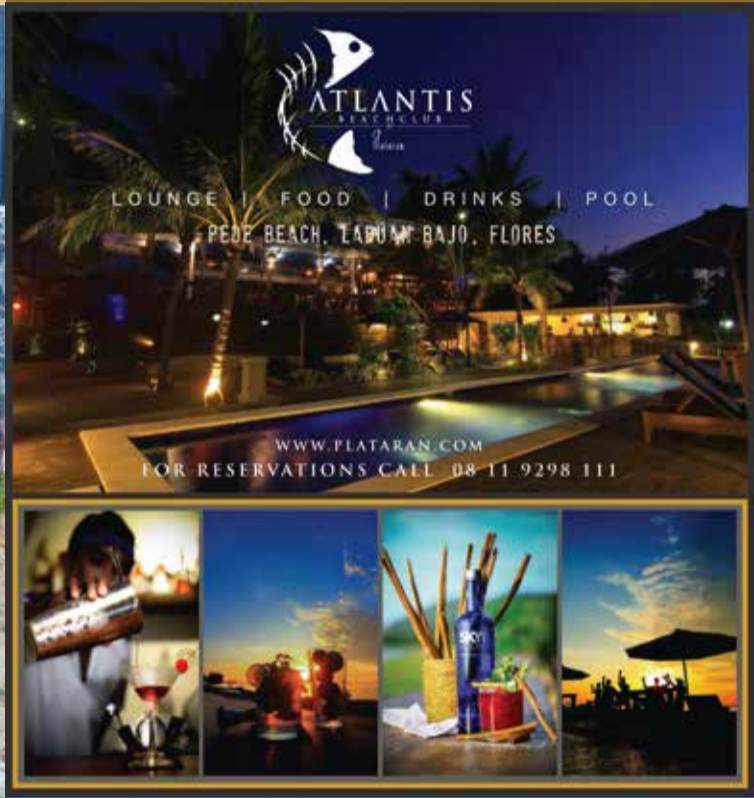
Semana Santa is an annual Easter celebration that has been flooding Catholic pilgrims from Flores and all over Indonesia to Larantuka every April. In the occasion, the statue of Tuan Ma (Maria), Tuan Ana (Jesus) and Meninho (baby Jesus) lead the procession started from the Katedral Reinha Rosary. The parade draws a huge number of mass who makes stops in a number of points where scenes of the history of Jesus is theatrically performed as a commemoration in the event, until the parade ends in the same cathedral again. The procession done in 2010 marked the 5th century of Catholic existence in Flores Island. The long and winding road to Larantuka failed to discourage no less than 15,000 pilgrims – local and foreign – flocking in the little town that week.



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RETAIL PRODUCT

BOOK FLORES: A GLIMPSE OF THE PEOPLE & CULTURE
This travel guide takes you into a journey to explore Flores, an island in the eastern part of Indonesia blessed with beautiful natural surroundings, fascinating people and amazing cultures and traditions. The book is a must have for travelers keen on unveiling Flores' long gone past, hidden treasures and the charm of the Florenese people.

BOOK FLORES: ADVENTURE TRAILS
Flores: Adventure Trails brings you to a spellbound journey along 24 select treks from the west to the east of Flores Island. Its colorful pages captivate with information, trekking maps and appealing images exploring Flores' active volcanoes, rugged mountain ranges, pristine forests, wildlife and much more.

This book is the latest Flores' guidebook of a series every thrill seeker looks for to enjoy the beauty of Flores, a perfect setting for an unforgettable energizing trekking adventure.

NOVEMBER

Gren Mahe, Sikka
Ai is one of the largest tribes in the Sikka. This community lives mainly in areas from Talibura sub-district until the border between Sikka and Flores Timur. The Tana Ai inherits a unique traditional culture and sacred rituals, with **Gren Mahe** being one of them. *Gren* means celebration, *Mahe* means altar or a place for offering. The Mahe of Tana Ai bear similar look to other tribe's that consists of menhir erected in a circle on the ground.

Gren Mahe is a ritual found among Tana Ai community to show respect and gratitude to Mother Earth (*Ina Nian Tana*), and Father Sky (*Ama Lero Wulan Reta*). In Kringa, Gren Mahe is celebrated every five years, while others conduct it once a year, once every seven years or even every twenty years, depending on its urgency and their economic situation.

The village leaders of Tana Ai called *Litin Pitu Lera Walu* who with a permission granted by *Du'a Mo'an Watu Pitu* (the holy ancestors) lead the villagers in making important decisions for Gren Mahe. Gren Mahe is usually initiated by *Tana Pu'an* (one of the village leaders or landlords) who will invite all *Litin Pitu Lera Walu* members, consisting of *Marang* (the commander of Gren Mahe), *Ekak* (the person in charge of giving offerings to the ancestors), *Hurit* (in charge of sacrifice ritual of animals), *Lire Wu'a Boga Ta'a* (in charge of "sirih pinang" or betel nut ceremony), *Utin* (the indigenous traditional leader), *Puku Nulu Bano Wa'a* (in charge of directing).

They will gather and discuss the schedule (usually done during rainy season or before the planting season) and how Gren Mahe will be organized. It is so important that its preparation usually starts almost a year before the actual date.

In the old times, the rituals usually last 7 days and nights. Some Tana Ai communities still preserve this culture, but due to some considerations, others only do the ceremony for 2 days and nights as in Kringa. The first day commences with villagers walking together to the Mahe. While at the same time, some men led by *Puku Nulu Bano Wa'a* will do "Pati Ai" (the cutting of a tree) - which will be used as *Wanin* (gong). During Pati Ai, goat and pig will be sacrificed.

In every Gren Mahe, all rituals centralise and are held around the Mahe, where two stilt houses (*Woga and Lepo*) are built. The first house, *Woga*, serves as the ritual centre equipped with a set of gong waning - traditional drums and gongs. In the same house, goats and pigs prepared for the rituals are kept under the house. Only men who already got "Gareng Lamen" (circumcised) are allowed to be around this house. Another house, *Lepo*, is the communal kitchen where food, drink and offerings are served and prepared. It is obligatory that every participant, including invitees, must pay respect to the holy ancestors by circling the Mahe 3 times.

Close to the peak of the event, the tribal members perform *Labit* - a Tana Aian traditional martial art especially dedicated to great warriors before going to a battle. After *Labit*, the women sing and dance. For the occasion, they put on their most beautiful clothes and ikat sarongs and do their hair in a traditional "konde" bun, complemented with "bahar tibu" - golden earrings (worn by only married women). The ceremony ends with a ritual of sacrificing goats and pigs.

MAUMERE, FLORES
CITY MAP
free

Cycling in Flores



Flores has absolutely great potential for touring around on various roads using bicycles. Pedalling across idyllic villages, passing rice fields, lakes and forests and enjoying a nice picnic at a spot of your choice is just a wonderful experience you can have while on the island.

Cycling in Flores is an adventure fitting for small groups and individualists and is best done by bringing your own, well maintained, bicycle from home country. Alternatively, rent a bike in Bali and transport it free of extra charges with Garuda Indonesia Airways either to Labuan Bajo or Ende and back. A classical mountain bike with medium broad tyres fits most of Flores' road conditions. Bring a helmet, gloves and lights as well as air pump, good chain oil and an all-purpose toolset with you.




FLORES: DIVING AROUND KOMODO
Flores: Diving in Komodo will put divers enchanted under the spell of Komodo National Park mesmerizing underwater world. The 100 colorful pages explore the extraordinary natural beauty of untouched crystal clear shores and the challenges of dive sites around the park. With tons of useful diving and travel tips, this book makes a great practical guide for diving aficionados in Flores.

FLORES TRAVEL MAP
Especially made to help plan your holiday in Flores, the travel map features Flores Island from the farthest west to its most eastern area. Highlighting more than 40 places of interest Flores is famous for; it also provides 4 main city maps and 5 trekking maps. Be it adventure or leisure, Flores Travel Map is your great guide to an amazing journey.

FLORES, THE CAPE OF FLOWER
This CD is dedicated to those who place music in life as one of important priorities. In this album Ivan Nestorman tries to capture the spirit of his homeland Flores through his music from a more pop angle. The real richness of Flores music is there within the island and you don't really know it until you get there yourselves. Listening to this album at least gives you a glimpse of Flores music and a warm welcome to Flores.

WONDERFUL UNDERWATER, MAUMERE BAY SIKKA

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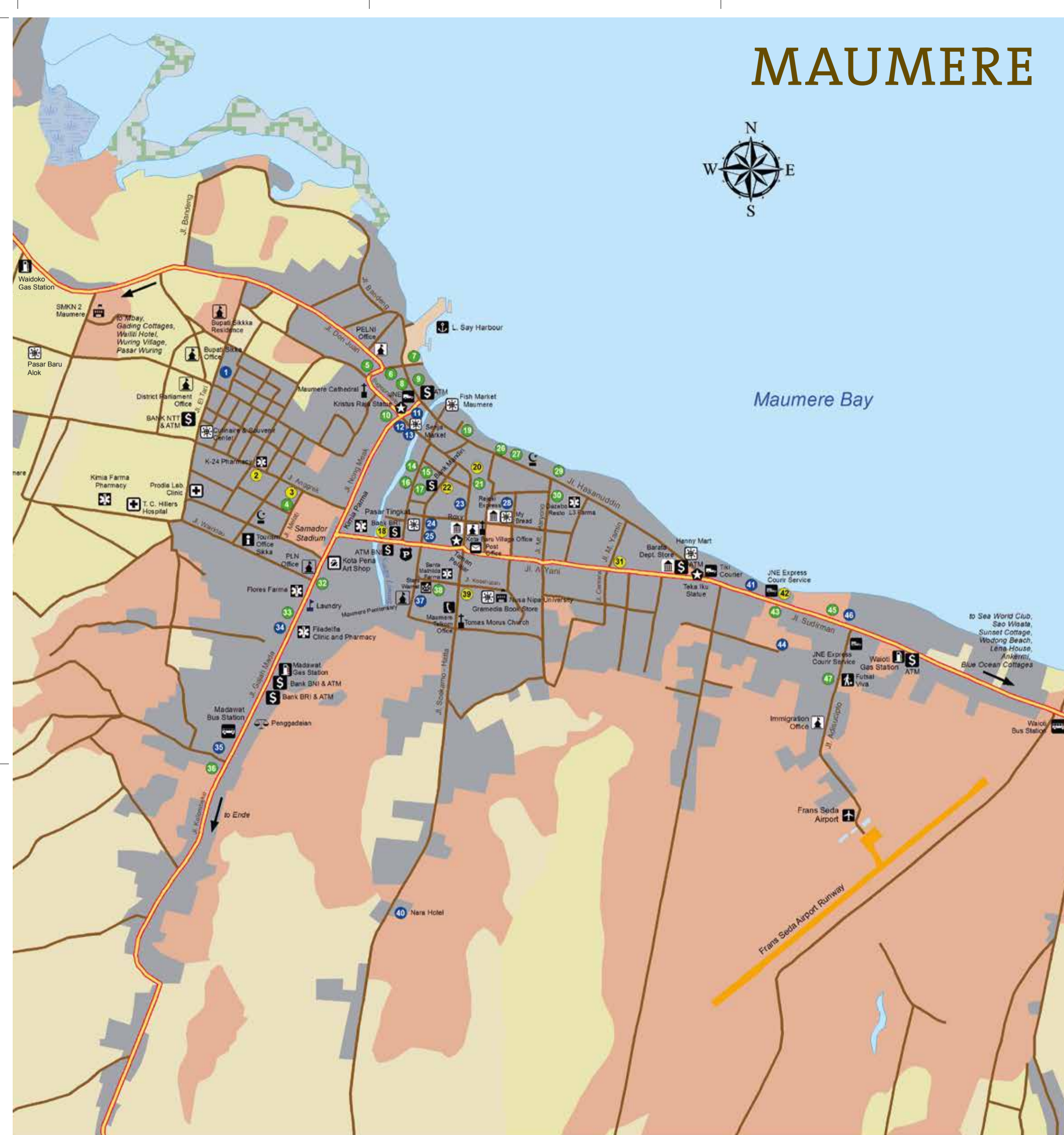
This city map is available for free in major business outlets and Tourist Information Center of the town where it is distributed in Flores Island. If you can't find it, please get it from the nearest Tourist Information Center.

The above events may or may not be held regularly every year. Unfortunately, there is no fixed schedule because timing usually relies on internal consensus among community members from one tribe to another. Some events may be conducted in the same months yearly, without specific dates. Thus it is strongly recommended to always check the correct dates in advance with your travel agent or Tourist Information Centre near you.

WONDERFUL indonesia **FLORES**

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MAUMERE



Maumere Bay

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PLACES TO VISIT

Watublapi, Sikka

Culture

This is 'the' venue for traditional Ikat textile adorns. Established in 2004, the women of Watublapi Village perform a demo on Ikat processing, from spinning the yarn to coloring that only uses natural dyes from home gardens. Short courses are available including accommodation and workshop. Take home with you the fondest memory of the long forgotten songs from the past the men and women of Watublapi had sung, and of course, the mesmerizing charm of the vibrant Indigo and earth colors of Ikat.



MURUSOBE WATERFALL, SIKKA

TRAVEL PRACTICALITIES

Getting Around

Flores will entangle you with its impressive landscape and unique cultural features. Be aware though that the roads are often steep, curvy, and in a mediocre condition, you will rarely go faster than 30km/hr. Thus, travelling in Flores requires some patience and some time to adjust.

The so-called Transflores 'highway' is the main road that connects Flores from west to east. Starting from Labuan Bajo and ending in Larantuka, this 700km-long road twists and tumbles across the island and lead you to waterfalls, crosses mountains, and passes traditional villages.

Bike and car rental

Hiring a car with an experienced driver is an alternative to public transport. Most of the cars are privately owned, and no cars are rented for self-driving. A motorbike is a good option for travelling around Flores as well, since some of the remote areas can only be reached by this means of transport.

Public transportation

Within the district capitals and larger towns, it is quite easy and cheap to cover short distances by hopping on and off bemo (minibuses). The ojek, a motorbike taxi is another option for shorter distances. Price is negotiable. For longer distances, you may choose to ride on one of the many buses and trucks that bring their passengers from one town to another. It is advisable to reserve a seat in advance at a local travel agent. They mostly depart and arrive via public bus stations. Exact time schedules are not available, and buses will only depart once all seats are occupied.

Money

In Flores, only Indonesian rupiah (IDR) is accepted for cash payments. In general, the payment in Flores is cash-based. There are ATMs in the district capitals which – depending on the bank – accept major credit cards (Visa/Mastercard) where you can get cash. The ATMs of BNI (National Bank of Indonesia) are the most reliable. You also have the option of changing your money at local money changers. Be sure to check their exchange rates and fees before the transaction. Traveler's checks are rather difficult to change.

Shopping

The hustle and bustle of Flores markets will bring you closer to an important part of Flores daily life. Not only will you see a range of familiar or unknown local products, you may also witness a barter transaction, which used to be the traditional way of doing business in Flores. Of all Flores products, ikat cloth, which is sold in locally different forms, colors, and styles, is definitely the most meaningful, valuable, and unique souvenir. Flores ikat is mostly hand woven, and some of the cloth is made out of all-natural local ingredients. Traditional Flores coffee is another typical island product that you should not miss.

Dos and Dont's

Dress conservatively! For female travelers, it is highly advisable to dress rather conservatively – a shirt covering the shoulders and a lower body garment to the knees – especially when visiting villages and cultural objects. Unless you are on a dive boat or on the beach or islands frequently visited by tourists, you should wear more than just a bikini to swim. Please also consider that it is inappropriate for men and women to change clothes in the same place.

Smile a lot! Probably the most important thing is smiling. Arrogant visitors who do not respond to smiles or greetings will find it hard to get close to the local people.

Murusobe, Sikka

Trekking, Culture

Murusobe, in local Lio dialect, means straight plunge. "muru" means plunge/jump/dive/leap and "sobe" means straight, like a bamboo pole. In a freefall from about 100 meters, the twin cascading waterfall of Murusobe will bring out the "child" in you, urging you to jump-in in glee into the refreshing cool water basin from one of its surrounding cliffs. Explore also Poma, a small village amidst rain-catcher rice fields with flowering Fairy Duster Calliandra shrubby, and lush clusters of coffee, cocoa, vanilla and candlenuts trees in the background.

Wair Nokerua, Flores Timur

Pilgrim, Trekking

Tracked in the notable history of Catholicism in Flores, Wair Nokerua attracts both nature and religious-interest travellers flocking to Kolisia Village. The cross country trek endeavours not only a journey to the time of St. Francis Xavier pilgrimage, but also a relaxing moment with Wair Nokerua's gentle waves by the lagoon. Take time to also rejoice in the rural Flores village living whilst at the same time; adore the pleasure of sighting the lush of green rice paddy and the thrilling exotic flora and fauna.



Ile Padung, Flores Timur

Culture

An exceptional historical landmark for East Flores, Ile Padung (±30 km from the East Flores capital, Larantuka) is a sanctuary for treasured well-conserved traditional house. The houses are still in splendid shape proudly preserved by the local villagers as loving homes and the venue of many enchanting holy ceremonies. Also known as Leworahang Village, Ile Padung also serves as the base for an organic cashew plantation whose harvest is mainly delivered to Wolowaru for packaging and distribution.

Watotena, Flores Timur

Relaxing

One of the most beautiful virgin beaches Flores Timur has is Watotena in Adonara, an island in the eastern of Flores, reachable by 2.5 hour-sailing from Larantuka. Watotena is well-known for its white sand beach and black magma rocks adorned the shoreline. The dark greyish almost black rocks in various shapes give it a unique impression that set Watotena apart from any other coasts found in Adonara or Flores mainland. The crystal clear water and the pearly sand beach are the reasons to visit Watotena.

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