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Travel

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Test your surfing skills  
(or just watch someone  
else testing theirs) on  
Sumbawa

***With 17,000-plus isles to choose from, planning an Indonesian island-hopping adventure can feel overwhelming. If you're beginning - but not wanting to end ñ your adventure on Bali, the Nusa Tenggara archipelago to the east is an excellent place to start. Bouncing between ferries and buses, you'll have an intimate window on a natural wonderland.***

**H**ang out with Indonesians on the decks of boats, gazing at innumerable tiny islands which dot the seas around larger siblings such as Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores and West Timor. Catch buses across the major islands, stopping off for beaches, surf breaks, dive spots, eons-old villages, tourist towns, beautiful views and much more. The following itinerary takes you from Bali all the way to West Timor on a journey that can fill a 30-day visa. Travel as far east as you want and then fly back to Bali from various airports along the way.

#### **LOMBOK**

Just east of Bali, similarly sized Lombok makes a perfect transition to the exotic adventures of Nusa Tenggara. It has the tourist services of its famous neighbour but is much less crowded, and has a vibe that doesn't march to the beat of visiting hordes. Among the star attractions are the superb south coast beaches, starting with the wide, azure bay at Kuta.

#### **Personality**

Lombok is almost entirely Muslim, with many grand new mosques evidence of the island's growing prosperity. It's relaxed, pragmatic and tourist-friendly.

#### **Getting there and around**

From Bali, hourly public ferries make the four-to-five-hour trip to Lembar on Lombok. Along the way, enjoy fine views of soaring Gunung Agung on Bali and southwestern Lombok, which includes the legendary surf break,



Tanjung Desert (Desert Point). There are also fast boats to Senggigi on Lombok or you can go via the Gili Islands. Public buses run frequently to the eastern port town of Labuhan Lombok. From the main city, Mataram, you can buy through tickets to islands further east. It's about four hours by bus across Lombok. Lombok's modern airport at Praya is close to the southern beaches and has frequent flights to Bali and the main cities in Nusa Tenggara.

#### **SUMBAWA**

Large, dry and thinly populated, Sumbawa makes a clear break from its busier neighbours to the west. The pace is slow and traditional attractions few, although it has two famous coasts for surfing: Maluk and Pantai Lakey, near Hu'u. Many travellers hurry across the island on their way to eastern Nusa Tenggara.

#### **Personality**

Sumbawa is a very conservative Muslim island; the city of Bima is a centre of fundamentalist beliefs. However, travellers are a common sight and the perceived standoffishness of locals is mostly due to shyness.

#### **Getting there and around**

There are airports at the main cities of Sumbawa Besar and Bima, and ferries frequently make the 90-minute run between Labuhan Lombok and Poto Tano. Public buses regularly cruise the main highway between Poto Tano and the eastern port town of Sape; it's about 13 hours across the island.