

Labuan Bajo & Komodo National Park, Indonesia — 90-Day Survival Guide

0. City Overview & Quick Facts

Labuan Bajo is a small harbour town on the western tip of Flores, Indonesia's gateway to Komodo National Park. For most visitors it is a launchpad for dragon treks, manta dives, and liveaboard trips rather than a long-stay nomad hub. That said, a small community of dive instructors, marine-biologists, boat crews, and remote workers spends months here during the dry season, drawn by world-class ocean access and a slower pace than Bali.

The town itself is tiny: you can walk across the centre in 20 minutes. Most of the action sits along the harbour and the main road, with newer boutique hotels spreading north toward Waecicu and south toward Pede Beach. Beyond the town, the landscape is dry, hilly, and dramatic — a preview of the islands that lie offshore.

Fact	Detail
Population	~7,000–10,000 (town); ~275,000 (West Manggarai regency)
Area	Small town; regency ~3,141 km ²
Elevation	Sea level to low hills
Language	Indonesian; local Manggarai languages; English in tourist/dive businesses
Currency	Indonesian rupiah (IDR)
Timezone	WITA (UTC+8) — one hour ahead of Bali/Jakarta
Climate	Tropical savanna; dry season Apr–Oct, wet season Nov–Mar
Religion	Catholic majority in Flores; Muslim and Protestant minorities
Power	230V, Type C / F plugs; outages after storms and during peak load
Water	Tap water not potable; bottled and filtered water standard
Internet	10–40 Mbps in decent hotels; patchy on boats and budget guesthouses

Why people stay 90 days: diving, snorkeling, boat life, proximity to Komodo, lower cost than Bali, slow island rhythm.

Why most do not: weak healthcare, limited coworking, unreliable internet, small dating/social scene, visa extension requires travel to Mataram or Kupang, and everything fun costs boat-fuel money.

1. Landing — First 72 Hours

Arrival at Komodo Airport (LBJ)

LBJ is a small airport on a plateau above town. After baggage claim you exit to a line of drivers and a small taxi counter.

Airport to town centre

Option	Cost	Time	Notes
Airport taxi	IDR 75k–150k	10–20 min	Fixed-ish counter price; negotiate only if unmetered
Hotel transfer	Often included	10–20 min	Pre-arrange with your accommodation
Walk	Free	30–40 min	Only if staying very close and carrying light luggage
App ride (Grab/Gojek/Maxim)	IDR 50k–100k	10–15 min	Limited drivers; may not always be available

Most travellers arrange a pickup through their hotel or dive shop.

First 24-hour checklist

1. **Cash.** Withdraw IDR at the airport or in town before boat trips. ATMs exist but can run out of cash or have low limits on weekends. Bring cash for multi-day boat deposits, park fees, tips, and remote warungs.
2. **SIM.** Telkomsel has the best signal in town and on many boat routes. XL and Indosat work in town but fade offshore. Passport required for registration. eSIMs are increasingly popular if your phone supports them.
3. **Book your Komodo trip.** Day boats and liveaboards fill up in peak season (Jun–Aug). Confirm what is included (park fee, ranger fee, meals, snorkel gear) before paying.
4. **Sunscreen and reef-safe toiletries.** Shops in the harbour area sell basics at tourist prices; bring what you can from Bali.

Move-in tests for any long-stay rental

- AC and hot water test.
- Internet speed test at multiple times.
- Water pressure and mosquito nets.

- Confirm electricity billing (some places include it; others charge separately).
- Get written lease/deposit terms.

2. Visa & Immigration

Indonesia's national visa rules apply. Labuan Bajo itself has only a small immigration office; extensions for tourist visas usually require travel to Mataram (Lombok) or Kupang, or using an agent who courier the passport.

Option	Detail	Cost (2026 est.)
Visa on Arrival (VoA)	30 days; many passports eligible	IDR 500,000 (~\$30)
VoA extension	+30 days; biometrics required	Government fee + agent IDR 800k–1.5M
B211A visit visa	60 days, extendable up to 180 days	Via agent; varies
Overstay	IDR 1,000,000/day; risk of blacklisting	Avoid
KITAS / remote worker	Long-stay paths for eligible applicants	Agent-dependent

Practical advice * If you plan 60 days, do the VoA + extension cycle and use an agent who can handle the passport run to Mataram or Kupang. * If you plan 90 days, consider the B211A visit visa from the start to avoid mid-stay travel. * Always confirm current rules on imigrasi.go.id before booking.

3. Money & Banking

Labuan Bajo is more cash-dependent than Bali. Hotels, dive shops, and some restaurants take cards; warungs, boat deposits, park fees, tips, and transport want cash.

ATMs * BCA, Mandiri, and BRI ATMs exist in town. Withdrawal limits can be low and machines sometimes empty on weekends. * Withdraw a buffer before weekend boat trips.

Cards and apps * Visa/Mastercard accepted at mid-range hotels and dive shops. * Grab/Gojek/Maxim work but driver availability is limited. * QRIS is not useful for foreigners in most cases.

Money changers * Limited and often poor rates. Change major currency in Bali or Jakarta before flying in.

Tipping * Boat crew: IDR 50k–150k per day on multi-day trips is appreciated. * Drivers and ojek: round up or add IDR 10k. * Restaurants: 5–10% at nicer places if service charge is not included.

4. Neighborhoods & Housing

Labuan Bajo is small enough that “neighbourhood” mostly means which road or beach you are on.

Town centre / harbour

Closest to dive shops, restaurants, the night market, and the harbour. Noise from boats and traffic. Monthly guesthouse/hotel room: \$250–500. Best for convenience.

Waecicu

North of town along the sunset strip. Quieter, boutique hotels, beachfront cafés. \$400–800/month. Best if you want calmer sleep and sunset views but still want to reach town by scooter.

Pede Beach

South of town; resort-style area with beach access. You need a scooter to get anywhere else. \$600–1,200/month. Best for comfort and sea views, less for social life.

Monthly homestay / local house

Scattered behind the main road or in nearby villages. \$200–400/month. Basic, often with limited English, but the cheapest long-stay option.

Renting tips

- Long-term inventory is limited; ask dive shops, hotels, and Facebook groups (Labuan Bajo Expats, Komodo Divers).
- Monthly deals at hotels are common in low season.
- Electricity may be billed separately; AC is expensive.

5. Transport

Walking

The town centre and harbour are walkable. Most of the main strip is flat. Pede Beach and Waecicu require wheels.

Scooters

- Rental: IDR 70k–150k/day; monthly deals IDR 1M–1.8M.
- Essential for Waecicu, Pede, waterfalls, and Rangko Cave.
- Helmet and IDP recommended; roads outside town are steep and rough.

Taxis / ojek

- Limited supply. Negotiate a price before getting in.
- Typical town ride: IDR 20k–50k.

Boats

- The reason most people come. Options range from shared day boats to private speedboats to multi-day liveaboards.
- **Shared day trip:** IDR 1M–2.5M/day per person (Padar, Komodo/Rinca, Pink Beach, Manta Point, Taka Makassar).
- **Private speedboat:** IDR 3M–8M/day depending on boat and itinerary.
- **Liveaboard:** \$150–500+/person/night for 2–4 night diving/snorkel trips.

Flights

- LBJ has frequent flights from Bali (DPS), Lombok (LOP), and Jakarta (CGK).
- DPS–LBJ is ~1 hour; Batik Air, Indonesia AirAsia, Garuda, and others operate the route. One-way tickets often \$80–150.

6. Food & Dining

Labuan Bajo's food scene is improving but still limited compared to Bali or Yogyakarta. You will eat a lot of grilled fish, rice, and noodles.

Typical prices

- Local warung meal: IDR 20k–40k (\$1.30–2.60).
- Grilled seafood dinner at waterfront restaurant: IDR 60k–150k.
- Western/tourist café meal: IDR 50k–120k.
- Night-market fish BBQ: IDR 30k–80k.
- Beer at a harbour bar: IDR 35k–60k.

Must-try dishes

- **Ikan bakar** — grilled fish or squid with sambal and lime.
- **Sayur lodeh** — vegetables stewed in coconut milk.
- **Nasi campur** — rice with assorted meats, vegetables, and sambal.
- **Sate kambing** — goat satay, common in Flores.
- **Jagung bose** — Flores-style corn dish.
- **Es kelapa muda** — young coconut over ice.
- **Kopi tubruk** — strong local coffee.

Practical notes

- Imported groceries are limited and expensive. Bring snacks, oats, protein powder, etc. from Bali if you have dietary needs.
- Alcohol is available but more expensive than in Bali due to transport costs.
- Many boat trips include meals; clarify whether food, water, and snorkel gear are included.

7. Remote Work & Coworking

Labuan Bajo is not a coworking destination. Most remote workers here are tied to dive shops, marine projects, or boats.

Internet

- Town hotels and cafés: 10–40 Mbps, variable reliability.
- Offshore/boats: patchy to nonexistent.
- Mobile: Telkomsel has the best coverage; buy a generous data package.
- Power outages happen, especially during wet-season storms.

Workspaces

- Formal coworking is almost nonexistent.
- Laptop-friendly cafés exist along the harbour and Waecicu; speeds vary.
- Hotel lobbies are the default workspace for many.

Time zone

WITA (UTC+8), one hour ahead of Bali. Be careful when booking flights and calls; your phone may auto-switch.

8. Healthcare

Labuan Bajo has basic hospital care but anything serious requires evacuation to Bali (Denpasar) or Jakarta.

Facility	Location / Phone	Notes
Siloam Hospitals Labuan Bajo	Jl. Gabriel Gampur, Gorontalo; 1-500-911 / +62 385 2391911	Only full-service hospital in Labuan Bajo/West Manggarai; 24/7 emergency
LBIMC Medical Center	Marina Harbor area	Tourism- focused clinic near harbour
Puskesmas Labuan Bajo	Town centre	Basic public clinic
Medevac to Bali/Jakarta	By air	Needed for serious trauma, complex surgery, cardiac, or neuro cases

Travel insurance * Essential. Get evacuation coverage. * Diving insurance (DAN, for example) is highly recommended if you dive. * Outpatient coverage helps because ear infections, coral cuts, and stomach bugs are common.

Emergency numbers * General emergency: **112** * Police: **110** * Ambulance: **118** or **119** * Search and rescue: **115**

9. Dental

Dental care exists but is limited compared to Bali. For anything beyond a cleaning or simple filling, many expats fly to Bali.

Procedure	Typical price (USD)
Cleaning + checkup	\$30–60
Filling	\$35–80
Crown	\$250–600
Single implant	\$700–1,300

Standard travel insurance excludes dental; budget separately or buy a dental rider.

10. Safety & Emergency

Labuan Bajo is generally safe, but the environment — ocean, Komodo dragons, scooters, and remote islands — creates real risks.

Komodo dragons

- Always follow ranger instructions.
- Do not approach, feed, or photograph dragons up close.
- Bites can be fatal or cause severe infections; keep children close.
- Rangers escort all treks on Komodo and Rinca.

Ocean safety

- No lifeguards on most beaches.
- Currents can be strong, especially around Manta Point and between islands.
- Snorkel with a buddy and use a dive flag/float.
- Do not pressure boat captains to sail in rough seas.

Crime

- Petty theft is the main concern, especially phones and scooters.
- Keep valuables locked in your room; do not leave bags unattended on boats.
- Night market and harbour areas are safe but stay alert after dark.

Scooters

- Roads outside town are steep and rough; some are unpaved.
- Wear a helmet and carry IDP/license.
- Watch for goats, dogs, and children on the road.

Natural hazards

- **Wet season (Nov–Mar):** rough seas, boat cancellations, limited visibility, and occasional flooding.
- **Earthquakes:** Flores is seismically active.
- **Sun/heat:** intense tropical sun; reef-safe sunscreen and hydration essential.

Legal warnings

- Indonesian drug laws are extremely severe; possession can mean long prison terms or the death penalty.
- Respect local Catholic and Muslim customs; dress modestly away from the beach.

11. Weather by Month

Labuan Bajo has a clearer dry/wet split than Bali. The dry season is the only practical time for reliable boat trips.

Season	Months	Conditions
Dry / best	Apr–Oct	Calm seas, all boats running, best diving and dragon-trekking
Shoulder	Mar, Nov	Fewer crowds, some weather risk
Wet / monsoon	Dec–Feb	Rough seas, cancellations, limited visibility, cheaper rooms

Peak season is June–August; book boats and hotels well ahead. Wet season is much quieter but many operators close or reduce schedules.

12. Shopping & Daily Life

Supermarkets and mini-marts

- Alfamart and Indomaret are in town for basics.
- Harbour shops sell snorkel gear, sunscreen, and boat supplies at inflated prices.
- Fresh produce is available at the local market.

Pharmacies

- Apotek exists in town but stock can be limited.
- Bring a travel medical kit: rehydration salts, anti-diarrhoea, antihistamines, broad-spectrum antibiotic (with prescription), topical antibiotic, hydrocortisone, high-SPF reef-safe sunscreen, and seasickness tablets.

Laundry

- Wash-and-fold services exist; typical cost IDR 10k–20k/kg.

Alcohol and nightlife

- Harbour bars and hotel restaurants serve beer and cocktails; prices are higher than Bali.
- Nightlife is low-key; most people are tired from boats and dives.

13. Groceries, Markets & Meat

Cooking for yourself saves money but requires planning because ingredient variety is limited.

Fresh produce

- Local market: fruit, vegetables, eggs, tofu/tempeh.
- Seasonal tropical fruit: bananas, papaya, pineapple, dragon fruit.
- Imported or Western items are scarce and expensive.

Meat and fish

- Fresh fish is the highlight; buy at the market or eat at warungs.
- Chicken and beef are available; pork is less common due to Muslim influence.
- Refrigeration can be unreliable in budget accommodation; shop frequently.

Water

- Tap water is not potable. Use bottled or filtered water for drinking and brushing teeth.

14. Language & Local Etiquette

English works in dive shops, hotels, and tourist restaurants but less so in warungs and villages.

Useful Indonesian phrases

- **Terima kasih** — thank you
- **Tidak** — no
- **Permisi** — excuse me
- **Maaf** — sorry
- **Berapa harganya?** — how much?
- **Saya tidak mengerti** — I don't understand
- **Enak** — delicious
- **Pedas** — spicy

Etiquette

- Flores is more conservative than Bali. Cover shoulders and knees away from the beach.
- Use your right hand for giving/receiving.
- Greet people with a smile and slight nod.
- Ask permission before photographing locals.

- Do not bargain aggressively in small family shops.

15. History & Culture Snapshot

Labuan Bajo was a sleepy fishing village until Komodo National Park became a global tourism draw. Today it is a frontier town in transition: new hotels, dive shops, and restaurants crowd the harbour while the surrounding regency remains rural and largely Catholic.

Komodo National Park

Established in 1980 and declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991, the park protects Komodo dragons, coral reefs, mangroves, and iconic islands. Visitor numbers have surged, leading to park-fee increases, daily visitor caps (around 1,000/day for Komodo Island as of 2026), and ongoing debates about sustainability.

Flores identity

- The island is predominantly Catholic due to Portuguese and Dutch missionary history.
- Manggarai, Ngada, and Ende cultures each have distinct languages and traditions.
- Traditional villages with conical houses (waerebo) and megalithic sites lie inland from Labuan Bajo but require long, rough trips.

Modern tensions

- Rapid tourism growth has strained waste management, water, and local infrastructure.
- Dragon tourism revenue is important but conservation concerns are growing.

16. Tourism & Day Trips

This is why you come to Labuan Bajo. Everything else is logistics.

Komodo National Park day trips

A standard shared day tour includes several of the following: * **Padar Island:** iconic three-bay viewpoint sunrise hike. * **Komodo Island or Rinca:** guided trek to see Komodo dragons. Ranger fee applies. * **Pink Beach:** coral-shaded pink sand beach. * **Manta Point:** snorkel or dive with manta rays. * **Taka Makassar:** tiny white sandbar. * **Kanawa or Siaba:** snorkelling stops.

Typical shared day trip: IDR 1M–2.5M per person including lunch. Park fees and ranger fees are often extra; confirm before booking.

Park fees (2026 estimates)

- Basic park entry: IDR 150k–250k per person per day depending on week-day/weekend.
- Conservation fee: ~IDR 100k.
- Ranger fee: IDR 80k–200k per group for dragon treks.
- Komodo Island “premium” conservation fee: IDR 3.5M (~\$225) per foreign visitor per visit has been proposed/discussed; verify current rules before travel.

Diving

- Komodo is one of the world’s top dive destinations: manta rays, sharks, turtles, coral walls, and strong currents.
- Day dive trips: IDR 1.5M–3M/day including tanks, weights, lunch; park fees extra.
- Liveaboard: \$220–550/person/night for 2–7 night trips.
- Certification courses available; currents are not beginner-friendly.

Mainland Flores trips

- **Cunca Wulang waterfall:** canyon waterfall with natural slides; ~IDR 100k–200k entrance + transport.
- **Rangko Cave:** cave pool with blue water; ~IDR 200k–400k including boat.
- **Wae Rebo village:** traditional conical-hut village; full-day trek; permits required.
- **Sano Nggoang volcanic crater lake:** hot springs and lake; long day trip.

Beach and sunset

- **Waecicu Beach:** sunset beach, cafés, kayaks.
- **Pede Beach:** resort beach, calm water.
- **Batu Cermin (Mirror Cave):** small cave near town.

17. Master Links

Resource	URL / Contact	Use For
Indonesian Immigration	imigrasi.go.id	Visa rules

Resource	URL / Contact	Use For
Indonesian e-Visa	evisa.imigrasi.go.id	Apply online
Siloam Labuan Bajo	1-500-911 / +62 385 2391911	Hospital, 24/7 emergency
Komodo National Park official info	Various official/regional tourism sources	Fees, quotas, rules
Wikivoyage Labuan Bajo	en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Labuan_Bajo	Travel guidance
Wikipedia Komodo NP	en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Komodo_National_Park	Background

18. Final Budget Table

Monthly cost-of-stay estimates for Labuan Bajo, in USD. FX rate used: **16,500 IDR = 1 USD**.

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Room	\$220 (homestay / budget guesthouse)	\$450 (mid-range hotel room or apartment)	\$1,000 (boutique resort or waterfront villa)
Food	\$160 (warung food, simple self-catering)	\$300 (mix of warung + waterfront restaurants)	\$600 (daily restaurant meals, imported groceries, alcohol)
Transport	\$60 (scooter rental + fuel + local ojek)	\$160 (scooter + occasional private car/boat transfer)	\$350 (private driver, speedboat transfers, flights to Bali)
Coworking	\$0 (hotel Wi-Fi / cafés)	\$0 (no formal coworking)	\$50 (occasional hotel business centre or private space)
Insurance	\$60 (travel insurance with diving add-on if needed)	\$100 (travel insurance + evacuation cover)	\$180 (comprehensive nomad/diving insurance)
Visa	\$30 (VoA amortised + extension)	\$50 (VoA + agent)	\$80 (B211A or longer-stay path)
Entertainment	\$100 (shared boat trips, local beaches)	\$400 (regular Komodo day trips, diving, mainland tours)	\$900 (liveaboard, private boat, daily tours)

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Buffer	\$25	\$60	\$140
TOTAL / month	\$655	\$1,520	\$3,200
90-DAY TOTAL	\$1,965	\$4,560	\$9,600

Assumptions by Tier

Lean Nomad (~\$655/mo) Homestay or budget guesthouse, warung food, scooter, no formal workspace, basic insurance, one or two shared boat trips per month.

Comfortable Nomad (~\$1,520/mo) Mid-range hotel room or apartment, mix of warung and restaurant meals, scooter plus some private transport, evacuation insurance, regular Komodo day trips and a few dives.

Premium Nomad (~\$3,200/mo) Boutique resort or waterfront villa, daily restaurant dining, private driver and boat transfers, comprehensive diving/nomad insurance, frequent liveaboard or private-boat trips, imported food and alcohol.

19. Glossary of Local Terms

- **Komodo dragon** — *Varanus komodoensis*, the world's largest lizard
- **Manta Point** — snorkel/dive site famous for manta rays
- **Pink Beach** — beach coloured by crushed coral fragments
- **Padar** — island with the iconic three-bay viewpoint
- **Rinca** — island also home to Komodo dragons
- **Liveaboard** — multi-day boat with accommodation and diving
- **Ikan bakar** — grilled fish
- **Sate kambing** — goat satay
- **Jagung bese** — Flores-style corn dish
- **Waerebo / Wae Rebo** — traditional conical-hut village
- **Ojek** — motorbike taxi
- **Puskesmas** — public health clinic
- **Terima kasih** — thank you
- **Tidak** — no
- **Permisi** — excuse me

20. Sources & Credits

- Wikipedia — Labuan Bajo, Komodo National Park, Flores
- Wikivoyage — Labuan Bajo

- Indonesian Immigration (imigrasi.go.id)
- Siloam Hospitals Labuan Bajo
- Komodo operator and dive-shop pricing for 2026
- Weather and transport data from official and travel sources

Compiled: 2026-07-16. Confirm visa, medical, park fees, and boat prices directly with official sources before travel.