

Lombok & Gili Islands, Indonesia — 90-Day Survival Guide

0. City Overview & Quick Facts

Lombok and the three Gili Islands (Trawangan, Air, Meno) are Indonesia's quieter answer to Bali: same tropical climate, lower prices, less traffic, fewer beach clubs, and a more Indonesian feel. For nomads, Lombok offers surf towns, rice terraces, and the looming bulk of Mount Rinjani; the Gilis offer car-free island life, diving, and a slower rhythm.

The two areas are linked by fast boat and local ferry but are quite different in character. Lombok is large enough to spend months exploring; the Gilis are tiny enough to cycle around in 30 minutes. Most long-stay nomads pick a mainland base (Kuta Lombok, Senggigi, or Mataram) and visit the Gilis for weekends, or base on Gili Air/Gili Trawangan and accept higher costs and limited healthcare.

Fact	Detail
Population	~3.5 million (Lombok); ~5,000 permanent residents across the Gilis
Area	4,514 km ² (Lombok); Gili islands are tiny (Gili Trawangan ~3 km ² , Gili Air ~1.7 km ² , Gili Meno ~1 km ²)
Elevation	Sea level on coasts; 3,726 m at Mount Rinjani summit
Language	Indonesian; Sasak (indigenous Lombok language); English in tourist areas
Currency	Indonesian rupiah (IDR)
Timezone	WITA (UTC+8) — one hour ahead of Bali/Jakarta
Climate	Tropical; dry season May–Oct, wet season Nov–Apr
Religion	Lombok is majority Muslim; the Gilis are more mixed due to tourism
Power	230V, Type C / F plugs; outages after storms, especially in rural areas
Water	Tap water not potable; bottled/filtered water standard
Internet	20–50 Mbps fibre in towns; patchy on Gilis and remote beaches

Why nomads stay: lower cost than Bali, less crowded, strong surf, real Indonesian culture, easy Gili escapes, and a growing café scene in Kuta Lombok.

Why nomads leave: weaker healthcare than Bali, limited coworking, patchy internet outside towns, less English, and the Gilis can feel isolating or party-heavy depending on the island.

1. Landing — First 72 Hours

Arrival at Lombok International Airport (LOP / Praya)

LOP is in central Lombok, about 40 km south of Senggigi and 20 km east of Kuta Lombok.

Airport to base

Option	Cost	Time	Best For
Taxi to Senggigi	IDR 250k–350k	60–90 min	Door-to-door comfort
Taxi to Kuta Lombok	IDR 150k–250k	30–45 min	South coast base
Shuttle bus to Senggigi	IDR 50k–75k	90–120 min	Budget
Taxi to Bangsal harbour	IDR 350k–450k	2–2.5 hr	Gili Islands connection
App ride (Grab/Gojek/Maxim)	IDR 100k–250k	Variable	Cheaper but limited driver availability

If you are heading to the Gilis, you can also fly LOP → taxi to Bangsal → public boat or fast boat.

From Bali to Lombok / Gilis

- **Fast boat Padangbai–Gili/Lombok:** IDR 250k–700k; 1.5–2.5 hours depending on operator and sea state.
- **Public ferry Padangbai–Lembar:** IDR ~50k; 4–6 hours; cheapest but slow and uncomfortable.
- **Flight DPS–LOP:** ~1 hour; often \$30–80 one-way.

First 24-hour checklist

1. **Cash.** Withdraw IDR at the airport or in Mataram before heading to the Gilis. ATMs on Gili Trawangan and Gili Air exist but can run dry on weekends.
2. **SIM.** Telkomsel has the best island coverage, especially on the Gilis. XL/Indosat work in Mataram/Senggigi. Passport required for registration. Tourist SIM ~IDR 150k–200k.

3. **Base.** Kuta Lombok for surf/social, Senggigi for calm beaches, Mataram for budget, Gili Air for chill island life, Gili Trawangan for dive/party.
4. **Transport.** Install Grab/Gojek/Maxim; note apps are limited on the Gilis.

Move-in tests

- AC, hot water, internet speed (aim 25+ Mbps for calls).
- Water pressure and mosquito nets.
- Confirm electricity inclusion or separate billing.
- Get lease/deposit terms in writing.

2. Visa & Immigration

Indonesia's national rules apply. Lombok has immigration offices in Mataram; the Gilis do not.

Option	Detail	Cost (2026 est.)
Visa on Arrival (VoA)	30 days; many passports eligible	IDR 500,000 (~\$30)
VoA extension	+30 days; visit immigration in Mataram	Government fee + agent IDR 800k–1.2M
B211A visit visa	60 days, extendable up to 180 days	Via agent; varies
Overstay	IDR 1,000,000/day; can blacklist/deport	Avoid
KITAS / remote worker	Long-stay paths for eligible applicants	Agent-dependent

Practical advice * If based on the Gilis, use a Mataram-based agent who can collect/return your passport by boat courier or schedule a ferry trip for biometrics. * If based in Kuta/Senggigi/Mataram, extensions are more straightforward than in Bali because queues are shorter. * Always check imigrasi.go.id before travel.

3. Money & Banking

Cash is king on the Gilis and in local warungs. Cards work at hotels, mid-range restaurants, and some supermarkets.

ATMs * BCA, Mandiri, BNI available in Mataram and Senggigi. * Gili Trawangan and Gili Air have ATMs but they can run out of cash or have low limits. * Withdraw a buffer before weekends and boat trips.

Money changers * Better rates in Senggigi and Kuta than on the Gilis. Change major currency there or bring cash from Bali.

Cards and apps * Visa/Mastercard accepted at mid-range hotels and restaurants; Amex rare. * Grab/Gojek/Maxim work on mainland Lombok but driver supply is limited outside Mataram/Senggigi. * QRIS mobile payments are growing in towns but not useful for beach warungs or boat trips.

Tipping * Not mandatory. Round up for drivers and leave 5–10% at nicer restaurants if service charge is not included.

4. Neighborhoods & Housing

Lombok mainland

Kuta Lombok / Mandalika

Surf town on the south coast, growing fast. Cafés, co-working-ish cafés, cheap guesthouses, and a young traveller crowd. Monthly rent: \$200–550. Best for surf, beach-hopping, and a social nomad scene.

Senggigi

Calm beaches, older resort strip, restaurants, and sunset bars north of Mataram. Quieter than Kuta. Monthly rent: \$250–600. Best for long-stay comfort and easy access to Bangsal for Gili trips.

Mataram

The provincial capital. Local city, cheapest rents, no beach, limited English. Monthly rent: \$150–400. Best for tight budgets and authentic Indonesian daily life.

North Lombok (Senaru, Sembalun)

Gateway to Mount Rinjani. Very small, rural, cool mountain air. Monthly rent: \$150–350. Best if trekking Rinjani repeatedly, not for internet-dependent work.

Gili Islands

Gili Trawangan

The largest and liveliest Gili. No cars, dive shops, beach bars, night market, and a party scene. Monthly rent: \$300–900. Best for divers and social life; can be noisy.

Gili Air

Quieter than Trawangan, family-friendly, good snorkeling, small beachfront cafés. Monthly rent: \$300–800. Best for chill island life with some amenities.

Gili Meno

Smallest and most secluded. Limited shops and restaurants. Monthly rent: \$300–800. Best for unplugging; worst for reliable internet and nightlife.

Renting tips

- Facebook groups (Lombok Expats, Gili Islands, Kuta Lombok Housing) are useful.
- Electricity may be separate; AC can add \$30–80/month.
- Many landlords prefer cash and a 1-month deposit.
- On the Gilis, water is sometimes delivered and extra; ask.

5. Transport

Lombok mainland

Scooters * Rental: IDR 60k–90k/day; monthly deals IDR 1M–1.5M. * Essential for Kuta beach-hopping, waterfalls, and Rinjani trailheads. * Helmet and IDP recommended; roads are improving but rural roads can be rough.

Taxis and apps * Blue Bird taxi is metered and reliable in Mataram/Senggigi area. * Grab/Gojek/Maxim are available but limited outside main towns. * Negotiated taxis: IDR 150k–350k for airport runs; agree price in advance.

Buses and bemos * Public buses and shared minibuses (bemos) run between towns but are slow and confusing for newcomers.

Gili Islands

- **No motor vehicles.** Transport is by foot, bicycle, or cidomo (horse-drawn cart).
- **Bicycle rental:** IDR 50k/day; best way to circle Gili Trawangan or Gili Air.

- **Cidomo:** IDR 100k–200k per trip; negotiate before getting in. Animal-welfare concerns exist; walking or cycling is preferable for short distances.
- **Inter-island boats:** Public boats from Bangsal to the Gilis cost ~IDR 25k–35k. Fast boats from Bali arrive directly at each Gili.

Inter-island travel

- **Bali–Gili fast boat:** IDR 250k–700k; 1.5–2.5 hours from Padangbai.
- **Bali–Lembar public ferry:** IDR ~50k; 4–6 hours.
- **Lombok–Gili public boat:** IDR 25k–35k from Bangsal; 15–45 min.
- **Flights LOP–DPS/LBJ:** ~1 hour; \$30–100.

6. Food & Dining

Lombok has excellent local food, heavily influenced by Sasak cuisine. The Gilis have more tourist-oriented menus.

Must-try dishes

- **Ayam taliwang** — Lombok spicy grilled chicken.
- **Plecing kangkung** — water spinach with sambal plecing.
- **Sate rembiga** — sweet-spicy beef skewers from Rembiga village.
- **Nasi campur** — rice with assorted sides.
- **Bebek goreng** — crispy fried duck.
- **Ikan bakar** — grilled fish with sambal.
- **Es kelapa muda** — young coconut drink.

Typical prices

- Local warung meal: IDR 20k–40k (\$1.30–2.60).
- Fresh grilled seafood dinner at beach restaurant: IDR 60k–150k.
- Western/tourist café meal: IDR 50k–120k.
- Gili Trawangan night market: IDR 25k–60k.
- Mid-range dinner for two with drinks: IDR 200k–400k (\$12–24).

Dietary notes

- Lombok is majority Muslim; halal food is easy to find.
- Vegetarian options exist but are less developed than in Bali.
- Alcohol is available in tourist areas but more expensive than Bali.
- Tap water is unsafe; ice in reputable places is usually fine.

7. Remote Work & Coworking

Lombok and the Gilis are not mature coworking destinations, but remote work is possible if you choose the right base.

Internet

- **Mainland towns:** 20–50 Mbps fibre in newer apartments and hotels.
- **Kuta Lombok:** growing café Wi-Fi but variable speeds.
- **Gilí islands:** patchier; some hotels and cafés have decent speeds, but power outages and slow peak-hour congestion are common.
- **Mobile:** Telkomsel is the most reliable; buy a generous data package.

Coworking

- Formal coworking is limited. A few nomad cafés in Kuta Lombok and Gili Trawangan offer laptop-friendly seating.
- Hotel lobbies and poolside tables often become the default workspace.

Time zone

WITA (UTC+8), one hour ahead of Bali. Note this when booking flights and calls.

8. Healthcare

Lombok's best hospital is in Mataram. The Gilis have small clinics but anything serious requires evacuation to Lombok or Bali.

Facility	Location / Phone	Notes
Siloam Hospitals Mataram	Jl. Pejanggik, Mataram; +62 370 6001100 / 1500-911	Best private hospital on Lombok
RSUD Mataram	Mataram	Public hospital
RSUD Lombok Utara	Tanjung, North Lombok	Nearest public hospital to the Gilis
Gili Emergency Clinic / Island Medical Service	Gili Trawangan	24/7 clinic + evacuation coordination
Blue Island Clinic	Gili Trawangan / Senggigi	Private clinic network

Travel insurance * Evacuation coverage is essential. Serious cases are airlifted to Bali or Jakarta. * Diving insurance (DAN) is recommended if you dive. * Outpatient coverage helps for minor infections, coral cuts, and scooter scrapes.

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

9. Dental

Dental care on Lombok is limited compared to Bali; many expats fly to Bali for major work. Minor cleanings and fillings are available in Mataram and Senggigi.

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

Standard travel insurance usually excludes dental.

10. Safety & Emergency

Lombok and the Gilis are generally safe, but ocean, mountain, and scooter risks are real.

Crime

- Petty theft (phones, bags, scooters) is the main concern, especially in Kuta and on Gili Trawangan.
- Drink-spiking incidents have been reported on Gili Trawangan; watch your drink and stick with trusted groups.
- The Gilis have no formal police station; serious issues are handled on Lombok mainland.

Ocean safety

- No lifeguards on most beaches.
- Currents can be strong, including around the Gilis and south-coast surf breaks.
- Snorkel with a buddy; use a dive flag or float.
- Boat travel depends on weather; do not pressure captains to sail in rough seas.

Mount Rinjani

- Indonesia's second-highest volcano (3,726 m). Treks are guided and require permits.
- Weather can close the park suddenly; check with your guide.
- Altitude and steep terrain make it a serious hike, not a casual walk.

Scooters

- Wear a helmet and carry IDP/license.
- Roads in south Lombok are improving but rural roads can be rough.
- Police checkpoints exist; fines for no license/helmet are common.

Legal warnings

- Indonesian drug laws are extremely severe; possession can mean long prison terms or the death penalty.
- Dress modestly away from beaches, especially in Mataram and rural Lombok.

11. Weather by Month

Lombok has a dry season (May–October) and a wet season (November–April). The dry season is best for diving, surfing, and Rinjani treks.

Season	Months	Conditions
Dry / best	May–Oct	Calm seas, best diving, clear Rinjani views, consistent south-coast surf
Peak surf	May–Sep	Consistent south Lombok swells
Wet / monsoon	Nov–Apr	Heavy rain, rough seas, some boat cancellations, fewer crowds

May through September is the ideal window. December–February is the wettest and least reliable for boat trips.

12. Shopping & Daily Life

Supermarkets and mini-marts

- **Mataram Mall / Epicentrum Mall:** ATMs, pharmacies, supermarkets.

- **Senggigi minimarts:** tourist basics at beach prices.
- **Ampenan old town market:** local produce and household goods.
- **Kuta Lombok grocery stores:** growing selection for long-stayers.
- **Gili Trawangan minimarts:** limited stock; prices higher than mainland.

Pharmacies

- Apotek and Guardian are available in Mataram and Senggigi; limited on the Gilis.
- Bring a travel medical kit: rehydration salts, anti-diarrhoea, antihistamines, topical antibiotic, hydrocortisone, reef-safe sunscreen, and seasickness tablets.

Laundry

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

Alcohol and nightlife

- Available in tourist areas; Gili Trawangan has the liveliest bar scene.
- Prices higher than mainland due to transport costs.

13. Groceries, Markets & Meat

Local markets are the cheapest source of fresh produce; supermarkets are better for packaged goods.

Fresh produce

- Tropical fruit: bananas, papaya, pineapple, snake fruit, rambutan.
- Vegetables: water spinach, bean sprouts, eggplant, cassava leaves.
- Tofu and tempeh are staples and cheap.

Meat and fish

- Chicken and beef are common; beef can be tough.
- Fresh fish and seafood are highlights, especially in Senggigi and Kuta.
- Pork is harder to find than in Bali due to the Muslim majority.

Water

- Tap water is not safe. Use bottled or filtered water.
- On the Gilis, water is sometimes delivered in large jugs; confirm cost with your accommodation.

14. Language & Local Etiquette

English works in tourist businesses but less so in local warungs and Mataram daily life.

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

- Lombok is majority Muslim. Dress modestly away from beaches and remove shoes before entering homes or prayer spaces.
- Use your right hand for giving and receiving.
- Greet with a smile and slight nod.
- On the Gilis, be respectful of local residents and avoid loud, drunken behavior outside tourist areas.
- Bargain gently at markets; fixed prices in shops and restaurants.

15. History & Culture Snapshot

Lombok's culture is a blend of indigenous Sasak, Balinese Hindu, and Muslim influences, shaped by Dutch colonial rule and integration into Indonesia.

Sasak culture

- The Sasak people are the indigenous majority. Traditional villages like Sade and Rembitan preserve thatched-roof houses and weaving traditions.
- **Sasak weaving:** intricate textiles produced in villages; a good souvenir.

Balinese influence

- Western Lombok was once under Balinese control; Hindu temples and Balinese-descended communities remain, especially around Mataram.

Modern Lombok

- Tourism development is concentrated in Kuta/Mandalika, Senggigi, and the Gilis.

- The 2018 earthquakes caused significant damage and a tourism slump; recovery has been uneven.

Gili Islands

- Originally fishing and coconut-farming communities, now heavily tourism-dependent.
- No motorized vehicles by local regulation; bicycles and cidomos are the transport.
- Environmental pressures (waste, water, coral damage) are ongoing concerns.

16. Tourism & Day Trips

Lombok mainland

- **Mount Rinjani:** 2–4 day guided trek to the crater rim or summit. Park fee ~IDR 200k/day; guided packages \$130–285/person. Best May–Oct.
- **Sendang Gile & Tiu Kelep waterfalls:** near Senaru; entry ~IDR 20k.
- **Sade / Sasak traditional villages:** thatched-roof villages near Kuta Lombok; donation-based.
- **Narmada Palace and Lingsar Temple:** historical sites near Mataram.
- **South Lombok beaches:** Selong Belanak (beginner surf), Mawun (horseshoe bay), Tanjung Aan (powdery sand).
- **Pink Beach (Tangsi):** coral-shaded beach; boat trip from Tanjung Luar or Kuta area.
- **Semeti Beach and Mekaki Beach:** dramatic coastal formations in south Lombok.

Gili Islands

- **Gili Trawangan:** diving, snorkeling, nightlife, night market, sunset swings.
- **Gili Air:** snorkeling, yoga, slow beach life.
- **Gili Meno:** bird sanctuary, turtle hatchery, most secluded.
- **Inter-Gili snorkeling:** hop between islands by local boat.

Typical costs

- Rinjani trek: \$130–285/person for 2–4 days.
- South Lombok beach day: scooter + fuel + food ~IDR 100k–200k.
- Gili day trip from Senggigi/Bangsals: IDR 50k–150k return boat + food.
- Diving: IDR 1M–1.8M for two fun dives including equipment.

17. Master Links

Resource	URL / Contact	Use For
Indonesian Immigration	imigrasi.go.id	Visa rules
Indonesian e-Visa	evisa.imigrasi.go.id	Apply online
Siloam Hospitals Mataram	+62 370 6001100 / 1500-911	Best hospital on Lombok
Wikivoyage Lombok	en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Lombok	Mainland travel info
Wikivoyage Gili Islands	en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Gili_Islands	Gili travel info

18. Final Budget Table

Monthly cost-of-stay estimates for Lombok & Gili Islands, in USD. FX rate used: **16,500 IDR = 1 USD**.

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Room	\$220 (homestay / local apartment in Mataram or Kuta area)	\$450 (private 1BR in Senggigi/Kuta or Gili guesthouse)	\$1,000 (villa or boutique hotel in Senggigi/Gili)
Food	\$160 (warung food, simple self-catering)	\$300 (mix of warung + restaurants)	\$600 (daily restaurant meals, imported groceries, alcohol)
Transport	\$50 (scooter rental + fuel on mainland)	\$120 (scooter + occasional taxi + Gili boat trips)	\$250 (private driver, fast boats, inter-island flights)
Coworking	\$0 (cafés / home Wi-Fi)	\$0 (limited formal coworking)	\$50 (occasional hotel business space)
Insurance	\$60 (travel insurance)	\$100 (travel insurance + evacuation cover)	\$180 (comprehensive nomad/diving insurance)
Visa	\$30 (VoA amortised + extension)	\$50 (VoA + agent)	\$80 (B211A or longer-stay path)

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Entertainment	\$80 (beach days, local trips, snorkeling)	\$250 (surf trips, diving, Rinjani/Gili weekends)	\$550 (liveaboard, private boat, daily tours)
Buffer	\$20	\$45	\$90
TOTAL / month	\$620	\$1,315	\$2,800
90-DAY TOTAL	\$1,860	\$3,945	\$8,400

Assumptions by Tier

Lean Nomad (~\$620/mo) Homestay or local apartment in Mataram/Kuta area, warung food, scooter, no formal workspace, basic insurance, local beach days and occasional Gili trip.

Comfortable Nomad (~\$1,315/mo) Private 1BR in Senggigi/Kuta or Gili guesthouse, mix of warung and restaurant meals, scooter plus occasional taxis and Gili boats, evacuation insurance, regular surf/diving/Rinjani/Gili weekends.

Premium Nomad (~\$2,800/mo) Villa or boutique hotel, daily restaurant dining, private driver and fast boats, comprehensive diving/nomad insurance, frequent liveaboard/private-boat trips and daily tours.

19. Glossary of Local Terms

- **Ayam taliwang** — Lombok spicy grilled chicken
- **Plecing kangkung** — water spinach with sambal plecing
- **Sate rembiga** — sweet-spicy beef skewers
- **Cidomo** — horse-drawn cart (Gili Islands)
- **Ojek** — motorbike taxi
- **Bemo** — shared minibus
- **Warung** — small eatery
- **Pasar** — market
- **Sasak** — indigenous Lombok ethnic group
- **Gili** — small island (literally “small island” in Sasak)
- **Terima kasih** — thank you
- **Tidak** — no
- **Permisi** — excuse me

20. Sources & Credits

- Wikipedia — Lombok, Gili Islands, Mount Rinjani

- Wikivoyage — Lombok, Gili Islands
- Indonesian Immigration (imigrasi.go.id)
- Siloam Hospitals Mataram
- Local operator pricing for Rinjani treks, dive trips, and transport
- Weather and transport data from official and travel sources

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