

How to do your Paperwork for Indonesia, from Davao Philippines

Updated July 1, 2017

1 Register & Fill Out Vessel Declaration

Go to the [YachtERS](#) website, and create a login. Then fill out your captain's info, your boat info, and your cruise info. If you are not sure of the answers to some questions, put something in so you can complete the entire document. You don't have to complete it all at one sitting, as your login will let you back in to update your information.

You will need

1. A boat photo as a JPG file
2. The Captain's photo (ie passport type photo) as a JPG
3. A copy of your boat registration as a JPG file.
4. Your planned arrival port and date in Indonesia
5. Once you create a login on this system, you can go in and change your crew and your entry/exit and Ports List plan right up until you arrive at the Customs office, as Customs has a terminal in their office in the "approved" entry ports.

The last page of this process asks for several items a normal yacht doesn't have, including an International Plant and Animal Quarantine Certificate, a Ship Sanitation Control Certificate, and an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis. I didn't do anything with that, and no one ever asked for those items. I did download the Maritime Declaration of Health to fill out and present on arrival, to Quarantine.

When you finish, print/save the Vessel Declaration PDF file from the YachtERS site, and remember your login information.

You will email the Vessel Declaration to your sponsor for a social visa, and also provide a copy with your visa application, and take a printed copy with you to Customs for check-in.

2 Staying In Indonesia Longer than 30 Days

2.1 *Visa on Arrival*

Most first-world country passport holders can get a free "visa on arrival" that is good for 30 days, but is NON-EXTENDABLE. To renew the free 30-day visa on arrival, you will need to exit Indonesia. There appears to be no way around this (though maybe an agent in Bali or Jakarta could figure it out).

However, I have heard/read that if you arrive at a proper check-in port, and do the visa on arrival properly, you can renew this visa for another 30 days. (I believe it is a matter of paying the \$35 fee on arrival vs accepting the "free" version, and you must do this on arrival.) It may matter where you check in. Note: Not all of the 16 ports can issue a renewable Visa On Arrival. Several friends who checked in in Sorong with a "visa on arrival" in 2016 and 2017, were only given 30 days, non-renewable. They were told it was possible to get an extendable one in Bitung, but not Sorong. Some of the Bali websites talk about how to pay the fee on arrival by air, I don't know how it can be done when arriving by yacht.

To be sure you get a renewable visa, good for longer than 30 days, your best bet is to get what is known as a Social / Cultural Visa, or a B211 / 60 visa.

2.2 Social / Cultural Visa Extendable Up To 6 Months

If you wish to stay longer than 2 months, you can apply for a Social Visa. This is sometimes known as a B211/60 visa. On the forms we filled out, it is also known as a “Visit Visa”, with subcategory of “Social Visa”. This currently (in Davao at least) requires you to have a “sponsor letter” from an Indonesian citizen. *Someone in Jakarta told one cruiser he didn’t need to get a sponsor letter—just showing bank account with sufficient money in it to repatriate yourself was sufficient. However, when this cruiser tried to get a Social Visa with just a bank statement in Davao, this didn’t work.*

A Social Visa gives you an initial 2 months, extendable in 1 month increments up to a total of 6 months.

Getting Your Sponsor Letter for a Social Visa: You need to contact someone who will furnish a “sponsor letter”. In the past, this has been provided by the rally organizations, but it is not difficult to get a sponsor letter without being associated with a rally.

We used Ruth at Isle Marine info@islemarine.com (other contacts given below). Email Ruth or one of the other Indo contacts suggested below, and ask if they can give you a sponsor letter for a B211 Social Visa.

Ruth’s fee is around \$35 USD for up to 3 people/1 boat, and she takes Paypal or a direct transfer to her bank. Ruth generally wants this information by email:

1. The Vessel Declaration PDF file from #1 above
2. Copies of the photo passport pages from each crew member’s passports
3. Information about WHICH Indonesian consulate you will be getting your visa from, what your check-in port will be.

Other cruisers have used the following other contacts in Indonesia for help in getting a Social Visa:

Raymond Lesmana (the organizer of several Sail Indonesia Rallies)

raymondlesmana@ymail.com Cost: Quoted around \$75 USD in late 2016. Raymond comes well-recommended by many cruisers. I understand from another cruiser that Raymond’s fee covers all extension letters as well (you usually need a new sponsor letter each time you renew your visa), where Ruth charges about \$5 per person for renewal sponsor letters.

ASWINDO and **Dr. Aji Sularse** used to organize the Samal to Raja Ampat Rally. But in 2016 the turnout was so low that they did a poor job of organizing and supporting the rally. As the Rally Lead for the cruisers in 2016, if we sent an email to Dr. Aji with 3 questions about procedure, only one would be answered. And we got into several unexpected SNAFUs because of the changing regulations in Indonesia.

ASWINDO did not do a good job of making sure we understood and were in compliance with the new rules, and we ended up with a problem with our TIP because of that.

Second, an email to them in late 2016 asking for sponsorship possibilities in 2017 was never answered (or answered several weeks late, in someone else’s case). I have no idea whether they are interested in sponsoring individual boats going forward, or what the cost is, but here is their contact info:

Aji’s secretary/admin: evaismayanti@gmail.com Dr. Aji: sularso.aji@gmail.com and another email address we have: aswindo.skt@gmail.com

As reported on Noonsite, people in other locations (Malaysia) have applied for and received a Social Visa from an Indonesia Consulate WITHOUT having a sponsor letter, but the only person who has tried it at the Davao Indonesian Consulate, failed to get a visa. He ended up getting a sponsor letter from Ruth.

1. Ruth will email you a Statement Letter for you to sign (one for each person). Print and sign it and send it back to her. It essentially gives her permission to be acting as your agent, and also informs you and everyone else *"I would like to confirm that Rutyasi Pilemon is not responsible on anything I am doing or done in Indonesia. Everything I am doing or anything about me is my own responsibility. Rutyasi Pilemon also will not represent me in any legal matters.*

Ruth will also give bank details or ask you if you want to pay by Paypal.

2. If paying by Paypal, Ruth will send a Paypal invoice. Mine was \$45 (includes apparently terrible exchange rate and a markup for Paypal fees).
3. Once you have paid, Ruth will email you copies of a Sponsor Letter and her ID card.
4. Note that the visa application in Davao asks for the Sponsor's address and phone number. It would be a good idea to get this information directly from Ruth (we scrambled and guessed at it from her ID card and the phone number on the Isle Marine website).

3 Applying for the Social Visa at the Indonesian Consulate

Once you have your sponsor letter and a copy of your sponsor's ID card, you are ready to apply for a Social Visa.

Here is what is required for each passport/visa:

1. Sponsor letter & Sponsor's ID card
2. Visa Application form
3. Copy of the Vessel Declaration from YachtERS (see #1 above)
4. 2 passport photos
5. Passport with 6 months validity from the date of your planned arrival in Indonesia
6. Old passport, if you have recently renewed your passport and previously went to Indonesia.
7. P2,250 (About \$50 USD).

I could not find the application form online. A friend picked up some extras, and it was different than the PDF file I found on the Indonesian Embassy website in Manila, and different from the one on the Indonesian Embassy in the US. I scanned a copy, but it's a funny length (longer than A4 but shorter than 8.5x14 US legal size). You could print it in pieces and then tape it together, if you want to fill it out ahead of time. Someone who did this and handed the taped form all filled out was made to fill out a new form in the Consulate. But having the form ahead of time does help to make sure you have all the information you need with you.

The Indonesian Consulate in Davao is on Ecoland Drive on the south side of Davao (about a P90 taxi ride from Chinatown). Both Google Maps and Maps.Me show it in the right place, and most taxis know where it is. WEAR RESPECTABLE CLOTHES (no flip flops, shorts, T-shirts, etc). People have been rejected for entry to various consulates because of their attire.

4 Checking Out of Davao

Clearing out of Davao is pretty standard, pretty easy, with two exceptions:

1. If you have been in the Philippines for 6 months or more, you must get an extra piece of exit paperwork. In Davao, this is done at the downstairs counter where you extend your visa.
2. If you have a Filipina crew member, you will need to get an extra exit clearance for the Filipina. The one cruiser that I talked to that did this, took boat papers, a picture of the boat, and wrote an affidavit stating the cruise plan, and stating firm plans for returning the crew member to the Philippines. He did not get this notarized, but stamped it with his official looking boat stamp and signed it with a flourish. This seemed to suffice. Ask at Immigration (specifically with the lady UPSTAIRS in Davao that does yacht clearances) exactly what is required.

Cruisers have historically cleared out of Davao only with Immigration and Customs, when going to Indonesia, but 98% of these clearances have been when going with a Rally in the past. A Port Captain clearance was never required—however one recent cruiser suggested we should also get port clearance paperwork from the port captain (the Port Authority office is near Customs).

5 Pre-Arrival Notification

Before we went ashore the first day, I was re-reading what I could find on my computer about completing the formalities in Indonesia. The newest Indonesia Guidebook says something about having your agent do the required pre-arrival notification. So I emailed Ruth, with Isle Marine in Bali (our guarantor for our Social Visa) asking her how a yacht that didn't have an agent would do the pre-arrival notification, and whether it was required.

Ruth's response was something along the lines of "your Yachters entry is your pre-arrival notification" but she had also texted Customs for us in Bitung that we had arrived. I again asked her if there was an email address to email to, and I never got a straight answer to that question.

So I would make sure your Yachters arrival date is as accurate as possible. (I guessed right and we actually arrived on the day we said we would). But, if it were me, I would also try emailing or texting a pre-arrival notification, in case you get some Customs officer who thinks you should have submitted one. Here are some Customs email addresses that might work: pkcdt.btg@gmail.com and kppbca4_bitung@yahoo.co.id Cell # +62 0877 5165 6225

6 Checking in to Indonesia

Here is the procedure we followed in Bitung, NE Sulawesi and April 2017:

1. **The sequence:** In Bitung, they do not normally come out to your boat with all the officials, for a private yacht clearance. Customs does come, eventually. (see Customs notes below). The sequence we used was **Immigration -> Customs -> Quarantine**. We did not clear in with the Port Captain (because the cruisers we got the info from hadn't either), but you should probably also stop at the Port Captain's office and get a clearance from them, too. It is only a block away from the other offices, and doesn't cost anything. It makes getting a port clearance OUT of Bitung easier.
2. **Immigration Clearance:** (Kantor Imigrasi) We went inside, the lady at the Customer Service desk spoke good English, and told us to sit in the waiting area. About a minute later, we were called up to the desk, they took our passports and we showed them our visas. They wanted a crew list. We

waited about 5-10 minutes in a semi-air conditioned waiting room, and they gave us our passports back with a stamp in them, on the visa page, with that day's date. No charge. With a Social Visa, we now have 60 days (not 2 months) from that date before we must renew. They told us clearly to begin the visa renewal process one week ahead of the end of the 60 days.

No charge at Immigration.

Always be sure to check the stamps in your passport, and if you are NOT given a date 60 days in the future, question it. Make sure you understand when your current visa expires.

3. **Customs:** (Kantor Pabean) Inside the Customs building, we asked at the desk, and they directed us into an air-conditioned "waiting area". This area includes a computer terminal to make adjustments to your Yachters Yacht Declaration.

The general procedure is to hand over copies of passports, boat registration, your previous port's clearance, and a printed copy of your Yachters Vessel Declaration (filled in), they check it over, and have you make corrections, if necessary, with their online terminal in the office. Then they schedule a boat visit for them to inspect the boat. (within a few hours or next morning at the latest). After the inspection (more on that later), you return to Customs the next day to collect your completed and signed Vessel Declaration form.

We had several problems with our pre-submitted info on the Yachters site. Due to a bug in their system (since fixed, I think), our info, which I had edited several times before leaving Davao, had 4 entries (for the same person) in the crew list. At this time, the ONLY way to correct this was to delete the ENTIRE yacht entry and start over. Since that also deleted the boat picture and registration info previously uploaded, Customs agreed to let me re-submit when we got back on board, from my laptop. The other boat that cleared in with us has the opposite problem—one of their crew members was missing from the document, in spite of the fact that the crew had been on the list when they printed the paperwork to apply for a Social Visa, several weeks before. They corrected this and one other minor issue (Port of Origin is meant to be the origin of the current trip, ie Davao, not original boat origin back when you started your cruise). The Customs officer reprinted their information. After taking a half an hour to review our documents, we were told we were finished, except for the inspection, which we scheduled for later that afternoon.

No charge for Customs.

4. **Quarantine:** The Quarantine office is usually in another building nearby. This is where you take the MARITIME DECLARATION OF HEALTH form you downloaded from the last page of your Yachters entry, which we had filled out, signed, and stamped. There was a very nice lady in the first office who spoke English. She organized the whole procedure. Since we did not already have a "green book" (Ship's Health Book), which we apparently require in Indonesia, we had to get one of those (Noonsite says it is not needed for yachts, but it only cost \$1.25). A few minutes waiting, and the lady brought us to a wall that had all the charges for Quarantine on it, indicating we had to pay Rp 35,000 for one thing (our Certificate of Pratique) and Rp 15,000 for the Green Book. (A total of about \$4.50 per boat).

After paying that, we waited a few more minutes and were presented with a Certificate of Pratique stapled inside our new Green Book. No boat visit required (we didn't ask, they didn't mention it).

We were told to make sure we brought our Green Book when we cleared out of Bitung.

5. **Customs Inspection:** At the end of your visit to Customs ashore, you will negotiate with them for a time to have them visit your boat. This is absolutely mandatory in Indonesia both arriving and departing the country. We managed to put them off for a couple of hours so we could shop a little and get lunch.

Within 15 minutes of the appointed time, they came out in their own small launch with 4 or 5 young people (they were all still in, or just barely out of, Customs school). A couple of them spoke very good English, and the rest spoke a little. They circled the boat and took a couple of exterior pictures and then came aboard. They had a detailed checklist for the inspection, and they faithfully went down the list item by item asking if we have this, and if so, taking a picture of it. There were at least two guys with cameras (not sure how they split up who took pictures of what). When asked about liquor, I showed them my 2 cases of beer and 4-5 open liquor bottles, which they faithfully photographed, and no further discussion. When asked about drugs, I showed them our medicine cabinets and the prescription meds for blood pressure etc, and our prescription antibiotics (these were already listed on the Customs form in the "do you have drugs aboard" question). They photographed both cabinets. Some of my prescriptions are out of date, but I put the newest one forward and no one paid attention. All my prescription backup is on the computer, they never asked for it.

They wanted engine serial numbers, and they wanted to actually SEE them (we didn't actually know where they were on this new-to-us boat, so that took a little time). I had listed a gas generator on our list of equipment, they wanted to see that. Dive compressor (wanted to see and photograph). Dive tanks (we had 4 in the cockpit and 2 stowed, they took pics of the 4 in the cockpit). I had listed 2 personal computers and one nav computer. They took pictures of the Nav station. Finally, the AIS, he wanted to see the actual AIS Transmit screen... to prove that our AIS was actually transmitting. I said "you can see us on MarineTraffic.com, right?" but he still wanted to see the transmit screen on the AIS, and he took a picture of it. Our Vesper has an AIS Status screen that shows it's transmitting. I guess they have gotten wise to the dodge of having an AIS receiver only and using a cell phone app to post your position on AIS.

All in all, they were very pleasant, professional, and thorough. Two of the young officials spoke good English and the others understood some English. I offered them some cold water and was declined. The whole visit took about 30 minutes per boat. After the visit, we then had to return to Customs the next morning to receive our copy of the clearance paperwork, and were told "make sure you bring your stamp". Part of the Customs clearance paper is a half-page list of things the Captain is agreeing to, and the Captain has to sign and stamp that he agrees to this list.

6. **Customs Clearance:** When you clear in, take your printed Declaration Form with you, plus crew lists, copy of yacht registration, etc.
7. **Lots of copies.** Every officer that visited our boat (4 total offices...Immigration, Customs, Port Captain, Health, I think) wanted copies of our Boat Registration/Documentation and Passports and/or Crew List, plus whatever clearance paperwork we got from our previous port. So make sure you have plenty of copies. It's also a good practice to copy or scan your port clearances from the previous port and make sure you keep one entire set. (Several times we've given up a clearance document to one guy only to be asked for it again by the next guy).

- 8. More Copies.** Once you've cleared in, it's a good idea to make copies of the new paperwork you've been given, and keep one set secure. This makes sure that you don't give away a piece of paper in a later interaction with an official that you might be asked for by someone else later.

6.1 Helpful Hints on Checking In

1. Before you enter Indonesia, make sure you have a boat stamp. Customs especially wants the captain to both sign AND STAMP documents. On the other hand, not having a proper rubber boat stamp last year, we used the one we had previously made for our old boat, with the wrong hailing port and wrong registration number, and no one seemed to notice.
2. Before you leave internet in your port of departure, pre-download stuff to your smartphone
 - a. Google Translate with the pre-downloaded dictionary for Indonesian.
 - b. Google Maps for your port of entry. The maps help a lot to locate offices and ATM's, before you get a sim card in Indonesia.
 - c. The first 10-12 podcasts from LearningIndonesian.com (it is very helpful to know the important phrases and basic numbers). Though the officials all have at least one person who speaks good English, often the common people have NO English except "Hello Mister."
3. Cash...Few places, except big hotels and resorts, accept credit cards, at least in the Eastern Indonesia cruising grounds. So you will be using primarily cash.

There are ATM's everywhere in Indonesia, but our Visa-backed credit and debit cards do not seem to work in the BRI and BNI ATM's (the most common ATM's). However, I have had good success with Mandiri ATM's. They aren't as plentiful as the BRI's, but we have found at least one in nearly every town. Having a small amount of Indonesian Rupiah on arrival makes everything easier (gives you something to pay for taxi/bemo before you find the first ATM).

In Davao, the only place to get Indonesian Rupiah is from a money changer near the Marco Polo Hotel. Philippine Banks won't be able to give you Indonesian money.

The most cash you can get in one transaction from an Indonesian ATM is Rp 2,500,000 in Rp 100,000 bills (about US \$185 at current exchange rates). Many of the ATM's will only dispense 1,250,000 in Rp 50,000 bills. This is a limitation of the ATM, not of your credit card, so you can make multiple transactions on one of these ATMs until you reach your bank limit. Look for ATM's marked 100,000 on the face. Those marked 50,000 will only dispense 1,250,000.

7 Inter-Country Clearances at Other Ports

I have understood from other cruisers that we no longer need to clear in and out of every port as we move around in Indonesia. But we DID clear OUT of Bitung. We did this in case some other Port Captain wanted to see our clearance paperwork.

We put Ambon as our next destination (which was our next planned port) when we did the clear out paperwork in Bitung. But since then, we have been to Ambon and Tual twice, and not cleared in and out in those ports. Nobody has hassled us, except we had a Navy RIB visit us while we were in Tual (after we'd been there a week). Apparently they were just practicing/curious/justifying their existence. They were very friendly, asked a few questions, filled out a piece of paper, and that was it.

8 Keeping in Touch with Customs

I understand that the normal yacht clearance in Indonesia now gives you up to 5 years with your yacht in the country. But I heard that you need to continue to let the Customs office at your initial clearance port know that you are still in the country (after 6 months?). We forgot to ask about that when we cleared in.

Our Customs clearance included two email addresses for Bitung Customs.

After 3 months in Indonesia, we got an email from Bitung Customs telling us that we needed to keep our AIS on, and failure to do so was a violation of the terms of our agreement. (It had been on, all the time we were underway, but we had been in some really out of the way places, so there had been not updates to our position on MarineTraffic.com in a couple of months). We emailed them back with that information, with our current location, and our plans for the next couple of months. The response from them was, "Thank you, sorry to bother you, but we do need to keep track of the yachts."

If you have not otherwise heard from the Customs office from your port of entry, and you plan to keep your boat in Indonesia for more than 6 months, be sure to contact the Customs office from your port of entry. Being off the boat is not an excuse.

I am not sure exactly what is required, because we haven't been through it yet.

9 Social Visa Renewal

Visa Renewal: Be sure to start your renewal approximately 1 week before your initial 60 days is up.

Your social visa sponsor will need to send you a new sponsor letter for your renewal, and (at least with Ruth) there is a separate fee for that. There is also a fee you must pay to renew at Immigration—in 2017 it was Rp 355,000 (about US \$35) per passport.

Here is the paperwork you will require:

1. Copy of Visa and every extension stamp to date
2. Copy of current Vessel Declaration (the paper you received from Customs on check-in)
3. Copy of Sponsor letter for the office you are renewing in
4. Copy of ID of Sponsor
5. Copy of Boat registration
6. Copy of crew list
7. Your passport
8. Rp 355,000 (2017)

In 2017, the visa renewal turnaround time seems to be about 1-3 days. Some Immigration offices will turn around a renewal in a day, others may take a few days. And it may depend on whether you NEED a quick turnaround time.

The "expedite fee" of approx. \$100 USD per passport in Sorong, to get a renewal completed in less than 7 days, has gone away, as reported by several cruisers.

The first renewal, you submit your paperwork, pay the fee, and after they have had a chance to look it over, you will need to report to the Immigration office for a photo and fingerprint. For us, in Tual, the photo/fingerprint session happened the next day. Another cruiser in Sorong did the fingerprint/photo

the same day they submitted the paperwork. All crew must of course be present for the photo/fingerprint session, but otherwise, I think one person can renew for several passports.

10 References

Indonesian Immigration Site: <http://www.imigrasi.go.id/index.php/en/>

Philippine Consulate Site: http://www.indonesianembassy.org.ph/consular_services/visa-cultural.html

However, their visa page seems out of date, and doesn't match the Indonesian Site. An email to the address on the website was never returned.

Davao Consulate Contact Info: 082-299-2930, 31, 32, 33, 34

Sherry s/v Soggy Paws, July 1, 2017

From somewhere in West Papua, Indonesia