



Indonesia, Etc.: Exploring the Improbable Nation

By Elizabeth Pisani

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“A spectacular achievement and one of the very best travel books I have read.”—Simon Winchester, *Wall Street Journal*

Declaring independence in 1945, Indonesia said it would “work out the details of the transfer of power etc. as soon as possible.” With over 300 ethnic groups spread across over 13,500 islands, the world’s fourth most populous nation has been working on that “etc.” ever since. Author Elizabeth Pisani traveled 26,000 miles in search of the links that bind this disparate nation.

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Editorial Review

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Pisani first came to Indonesia as a journalist and later as an epidemiologist specializing in HIV, living there at various times during a 25-year period. Charmed by Indonesia's idiosyncrasies, contradictions, enigmas, disappointments, and seductions, she garnered the impression that the nation is "one giant Bad Boyfriend." Indonesia is a string of more than 13,000 islands inhabited by people of more than 360 ethnic groups who speak more than 700 languages—a cobbling together of peoples and cultures that is a result of colonization by the Dutch and occupation by the Japanese. Pisani (*The Wisdom of Whores*, 2008) spent a year randomly traveling 26,000 miles around the archipelago, visiting the capital, Jakarta, as well as jungles and small villages to talk to farmers, politicians, priests, fishermen, teachers, soldiers, nurses, and others to capture the heart and soul of Indonesia. She encountered child brides, witnessed young men jousting with javelins, sipped tea at a funeral, and spotted satellite dishes on the grass roofs of bamboo huts. An intimate, fascinating look at the world's fourth most populous nation, one working to define itself in a modernizing world. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"Exuberant and wise... Pisani is an exceptionally resourceful observer of the ongoing battle to define Indonesia." (Pankj Mishra - *The New Yorker*)

"Beautifully written, richly entertaining." (*The Economist*)

"A rollicking good adventure... To read *Indonesia Etc.* is to grow rather fond of both author and country." (Pallavi Aiyar - *Los Angeles Review of Books*)

"For anyone about to visit the place, [Elizabeth Pisani's] book is an essential companion." (Misha Glenny - *Guardian*)

"Intrepid and passionate... Profound, lasting, a masterpiece of its genre?and so much fun!" (Amy Wilentz, author of *The Rainy Season* and *Farewell, Fred Voodoo*)

About the Author

Elizabeth Pisani has lived in Indonesia at various times over the past twenty-five years, originally as a journalist and later as an HIV epidemiologist. The author of *The Wisdom of Whores* and *Indonesia Etc.*, she is based in London.

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