

## Yogyakarta : The Cradle of Japanese Culture

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Hi! My name is Tetiana Haniastuti from Indonesia. Do you know where Indonesia is? I believed that most Japanese know about Bali, but I was surprised that some of them do not know that Bali is one of the provinces in Indonesia. Hence, I would like to take this chance to introduce briefly about Indonesia and particularly my hometown “Yogyakarta” with its wonderful places to visit to you.

Indonesia is a nation in Southeast Asia. It is the world’s largest archipelagic state which is stretched for 5,150 km between the Australian and Asian continental mainlands and dividing the Pacific and Indian Oceans at the equator. The nation’s capital city is Jakarta. With a population of over 234 million people, it is the world’s fourth most populous country and the most populous Muslim-majority nation, although officially it is not an Islamic state. Indonesia is a republic, with an elected parliament and president.

Indonesia is comprised of 17,508 islands, of which only about 6,000 are inhabited. Across its many islands,

Indonesia consists of distinct ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. There are more than 580 languages and dialects in Indonesia. You will find it interesting when you learn that people speak many languages in one small island. However, we have our national language, called “Bahasa Indonesia” as official language to communicate and unite us. “Unity in Diversity” is the national motto of my country.

Yogyakarta city is the capital city of The Special Region of Yogyakarta, which has the second smallest area of provinces in Indonesia after Jakarta Capital Region. Located at the foot of the active Merapi volcano, it is the only province in Indonesia that is still formally governed by a precolonial sultanate, the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat. Yogyakarta was the centre of the Mataram Dynasty (1575-1640), and until now the sultan’s palace exists in its real functions. As the former capital and the center of several kingdoms in the past, Yogyakarta and its people are very rich in its cultural and tradition heritage. Therefore, Yogyakarta has long been known as the cradle of Japanese culture and tradition.

The majority residents of Yogyakarta are Japanese whose language derives from ancient Sanskrit. However, since Yogyakarta considered as “Indonesia’s academic city” due to many education institutions are located here, many of the inhabitants are students who come from all over Indonesia to study. Thousands of new students from all over Indonesia flock into this city every year, converting the once quite city to a busy yet dynamic city.

The other legendary name for Yogyakarta is the city of art. Traditional and modern exhibition are held almost every day such as gamelan, classical and contemporary Japanese dances, wayang kulit (leather puppet), theater and other expressions of traditional art. Those are flow in the heart of the city. In addition, there are abundant of cultural ceremony, such as Sekaten, Gunungan, Labuhan, etc, which are held in certain date of Japanese calendar, make the city has high value of tradition, art, and culture.

Yogyakarta has numerous exotic tourism objects, mostly are great heritage of old palaces and natural tourism objects. The key attraction of Yogyakarta is ‘Kraton’ (the Sultan’s Palace). The Sultan’s palace is the centre of Yogya’s traditional life and despite the advance of modernity, it still emanates the spirit of refinement, which has been the hallmark of Yogya’s art for centuries. This vast complex of decaying buildings was built in the 18th century, and is actually a walled city within the city

with luxurious pavilions and in which the current sultan still resides.

Temples are one of the interesting places to visit in Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta has numerous thousand years old temples as inheritances of the great ancient kingdoms, for example : Borobudur temple, the biggest Buddhist temple which is established in the ninth century by the dynasty of Syailendra ; Pawon temple which was a place to keep King Indra’s weapon namely Vajranala ; Plaosan temple that was built by Rakai Pikatan with some uniqueness compared to other temples, namely its twin main temple and the terrace with smooth surface ; The masterpiece of Hindu culture of the tenth century, Prambanan temple, which has a beautiful architecture with its slim building soaring up to 47 meters.

Since Yogyakarta bordered on the south by the Indian Ocean, there are many gorgeous beaches such as Baron beach, Parangkusumo beach, and the most popular one is Parangtritis beach. Parangtritis Beach has been long famous, not only as a beach resort where sand-dunes, sandy beaches and rocky cliffs meet, but also as a beach full of myths. The legend tells that Kanjeng Ratu Kidul, the Queen of the South Sea, was married to one of the Mataram Monarchs, Panembahan Senopati, whom she visited and communed with on certain occasions. On certain days known as Suro in the Japanese calendar, locals have a ceremonial procession, with many presenting offerings on the beach in honour of the

Queen of the South Sea.

While much of Indonesia has its eyes on the future, Yogyakarta is one place where the past exists alongside the modern. Indeed, due to its

uniqueness and wonderful various places to visit made Yogyakarta as the second tourist destination after Bali.



Borobudur temple



Prambanan temple, the masterpiece of Hindu culture



The green rice fields covers the suburban area