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# TRAVEL

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The sun rises in the town of Igoh on the island of Pulau Weh in the Aceh province of Indonesia. While Pulau Weh is a legendary spot among in-the-know divers, tourists can also enjoy snorkeling, fishing, hiking or relaxing in one of the many seaside bungalows.

## Gifts career travellers suggest

BETH J. HAPPAZ

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — What's the best travel bag out there? What's the most handy gadget for travellers?

Of Travel asked seven people who travel for a living — from Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler to the CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line and Marriott hotels — what they can't leave home without.

• **Norwegian Cruise Line CEO Kevin Sheehan:** Sheehan travels so much that he's rarely in one place long enough to actually plug a charger into a wall, so he relies on portable chargers to keep his devices charged on the go. He also has a number of universal external battery chargers that can recharge cellphones, iPads, and other electronics when they're not plugged in.

• **Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson:** Sorenson needs an adapter that not only works with different voltage systems and outlets around the world but also has more than one USB charging port. Walkabout Travel Gear sells a universal adapter that not only

works with every voltage system "on the planet" but also has two USB power ports and can support high-powered devices such as iPhones and iPads.

• **Travel Channel's "Hotel Impossible" host Anthony Mokkasin:** Mokkasin never knows what he'll need "travelling all over the country, in all different climates and circumstances."

• **The Inmate Traveler:** Porter has a few must-haves that also make great stocking stuffers. Among them, a compact LED flashlight with a clip so he can attach it to his bag or belt.

• **Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler:** Wheeler is travelling entirely on low-cost airlines. On many of these airlines, you're only allowed one carry-on, so he squirrels the fold-up duffel into the larger carry-on, then back it out for duty on wheels in the destination.

• **Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler:** Wheeler often recommends a fold-up bag, "something that you can carry along for those occasions when unexpected shopping, gifts, whatever, overloads your usual bag." But lately he's suggesting a redline

meet on the corner, a fold-up duffel like the Eagle Creek packable duffel. Wheeler is working on a new book that he bills as an update on Paul Theroux's classic *The Great Railway Bazaar*, but instead of talking trains across continents, Wheeler is travelling entirely on low-cost airlines.

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## Remembering the tsunami

Signs of the 2004 tragedy are all around in Indonesia's Banda Aceh, despite reconstruction

JUDY KRAMER

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia

Four years after a tsunami hit this city on Dec. 26, 2004, killing 157,000 people, roads and bridges have been rebuilt. There are houses on the beach, trees have grown back, and the millions of tons of debris that covered the island are gone. But for a first-time visitor, reminders of the disaster seem to be everywhere.

A sculpture of a giant wave marks Lambea, one of four mass graves, where 6,000 bodies are buried. A hotel from 2004 displays a photo of smoldering boats filling its parking lot. The dome of a mosque — torn off its building 1.6 kilometers away — sits in an overgrown rice field.

Water streams down the canal-like walls of the Tsunami Museum, which serves as both a memorial and evacuation site, with a kiosk on high ground offering refuge in case another tsunami strikes. The centre of the museum is an atrium that rises above a park, decorated with the word "Peace" and the flag of countries that provided assistance. Exhibits explain how the community worked together to rebuild, and how the once-entrenched province even found ways to make peace after the disaster with rebels in a long and bloody separatist fight.

Almost everyone in Banda Aceh has a story to share. Dara Usurna and her neighbors have in their yards two wrecked boats that came to rest there after the waves. Visitors can climb in one boat, but it's tilted at a steep angle. Local fish position myself squarely on the ladder and I'm tangled from the run. I wondered what it was like trying to cling to anything stable to survive the waves.

A massive 2,000-ton steel barge that housed a floating diesel power generator, the Ageng 1, was carried five kilometers inland. Walkways and five flights of stairs leading to a viewing tower allow visitors to appreciate its sheer bulk. A ramp outside the barge honors victims from the immediate area. A copper-colored sculpture, symbolizing the height and colour of the



Clockwise from top: Dara Usurna with boyfriend Septian, near a boat that came to rest near her Banda Aceh home after the 2004 tsunami. The art in the Tsunami Museum displays flags of the countries that assisted in the tsunami recovery. A diorama depicts the Bahurathuman Grand Mosque after the tsunami. Hundreds of people took refuge at the mosque after the disaster.

rescue waves, surrounds a clock tower where time is stopped just before 8 a.m., the moment when the earthquake struck, unleashing the tsunami.

One of the most-visited sites is a ring, looking like that crashed on top of a house. A ramp leads to the ring, and you can walk under the beach where it's wedged between two dwellings. The boat provided a refuge for 36 survivors. Some memorials include photo

galleries of the destruction and recovery. They do not attempt to sanitize. Mixed in with photos of debris and rebuilding are graphic images of human suffering.

The Bahurathuman Grand Mosque, with its 35-meter minaret, peels white walls and seven jagged black domes, sits in the tsunami largely unscathed, and hundreds of boats taking refuge there. Visitors can wander through the mosque's pillars and admire the chandeliers, marble floors and architecture. It's beautifully lit at night, and Friday prayers offer a colorful experience.

Heaven that the province has implemented a variety of sharia or Islamic law and visitors to the mosque must cover up. Savings can be borrowed by those who come unprepared.

While residents tolerate tourists in shorts elsewhere, modest clothing covering legs and shoulders is more socially acceptable. Local women wear veils and dress conservatively.

Lampuk, a few kilometers to the south of Banda Aceh, is known for its beaches, but if you're planning on swimming in a hotel, it's best to stick to the area near the cliffside bungalows where most of the tourists congregate.

A short ferry ride from Banda Aceh to the north is the island of Pulau Weh, or Sabang. It's legendary among in-the-know divers, and non-divers can enjoy snorkeling, fishing, hiking and viewing from hotel balconies. Prices are moder-

### IF YOU GO

BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA

GETTING THERE: Banda Aceh can be reached from Jakarta and Medan, Indonesia, or Garuda or Lion Air, and from Malaysia or AirAsia from Kuala Lumpur or in ferry from Hong Kong.

The most beach near the port is Suka "Pia," about 20 minutes away, and much of the island is ringed by easily accessible coral reefs. The closest thing to a typical beach comes in Dyer, an hour from port. Sharia law here is strict, but some restaurants and beach hotels geared toward tourists quietly will serve.

Organized tourist activities — such as water excursions — come to a halt Friday mornings for the Muslim holy day.

While all the tsunami sites are somber reminders of one of the worst natural disasters in modern history, visitors cannot help but feel Aceh's resilience.

A multi-billion dollar reconstruction effort, widely considered a success, has left the province in many ways better off than others in Indonesia, which remains a poor country despite sustained economic growth over the last 10 years.

A huge tower inside the museum is engraved with just a few names of the dead, but the dark light reaches up to the bright sky.

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