

Kupang, Timor - first impressions

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The plane approached over Semau Island and the western end of Timor. The airport is 15 Km to the east of Kupang. First impression as we drove to Kupang - it is very rocky and arid, and the town of Kupang is spread out. We stayed at the house of our friends which is in Osmok, halfway between Central Kupang and the ports. The house is on a hillside looking across palms to the beach and Kupang Bay. We got to enjoy the beach bars where you can easily meet some expats and tourists. This one, Pantai Laut Resto, is a new name located where a well-known Bar (Teddy's) was. Teddy's has moved into a nearby hotel. The guy in the photo on the right is selling locally woven rugs called ikats.

Behind Pantai Laut Resto is an inlet with a rocky wall. Two holes have been cut into this wall, and we were told that the Japanese tunneled these during the 2nd World War (around 1942) as safe parking for their small submarines. The photo on the right shows some of the local fishing boats nearby - quite different from fishing boats in Bali. L'avalon is another beach bar a couple of kilometres east, and it offers free internet access - so I kept going back for that reason. The photo on the right shows the beach view from L'avalon, and you can see one of the big speakers out there that is providing the music.

Kupang is spread out a bit, so you need transport. There are taxis but no meters, so you negotiate often by time - like you figure you want him for 2 hours while you go shopping and grab a meal, then you negotiate a price for that. Alternatively, there are bemos which are highly decorated with window stickers and colorful flashing lights. They also have huge speakers under the passenger seats and can really boom like a disco as they move about.