



**North Nias Traditional House**  
Traditional houses in North Nias District are oval in shape. We can see fine examples of North Nias traditional houses in Tumori Village near Gunung Sitoli. These houses have more complex earthquake shock resistance structure system.



**The Lives of Niassan**  
Subsistence agriculture (mainly cash crops such as rice, rubber, cocoa, coconut, cassava, sweet potato, bananas and coffee) is the source of livelihood for the majority of Niassans aside from fishing, crafts making, carpentry, and animal husbandry.



**War Dance/Fatele**  
Used by ancestors to boost up the spirit and enthusiasm of villagers before confronting a battle with another village. This dance is exceptionally prestigious as it is the symbol of transformation from juvenile to adulthood in men's lives. Since inter-village battle no longer exists, its function has been modified into one of the attractions for visitors.



**Stone Jumping**  
The ultimate symbol of Nias tradition and culture, the stone jumping or hombo batu in Nias language, can be found in most traditional villages in Teluk Dalam, South Nias. To name a few, they are Hilinawalö Mazinö, Bawömataluo and Botohilitanö. The stone stands roughly two meters tall.

**Coral Reef in Northern Nias**

The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (IPI) states that coral reef areas in northern Nias Island waters are potential for diving sites. The condition of the coral reefs and other sea biota are well preserved. Butterfly fish, an indicator for coral reef health assessment, can be found here.

**How to Get to Nias**

Since 2003, Nias Island is divided into two districts: Nias and South Nias. There are several routes to get to this unique island. From Polonia Airport in Medan, North Sumatra, one can take a direct flight to Binaka Airport in Gunung Sitoli, Nias. Another route is from Padang, West Sumatra, where one can take a bus to Sibolga, a small town on the coast of North Sumatra and continue with a speed ferry to Gunung Sitoli, Nias.

**\*Toji Ndrawa Cave**

In Nias language, Toji Ndrawa Cave means 'the foreigners' cave'. Archeologists have discovered traces of human existence believed to be 10,000 years old inside this cave which is located 175 meters above the sea level. Based on stone artifacts findings, researchers conclude that the cave inhabitants lived in the late Paleolithic period or the early Mesolithic period.

**\*Museum Pusaka Nias**

The sanctuary for approximately 6,500 Nias cultural heritage objects was established in 1991 by Father Johannes Hämmeler. Located in Gunung Sitoli this museum has an array of collections from megalith statues, household appliance artifacts, jewelrys, traditional weapons, currencies, battle suits, aristocracy symbols, of replicas of traditional houses. The museum also houses a library, meeting room, canteen, guesthouse and a mini zoo.

*Fandru Garamba*, a bronze oil lamp, is from the collection of the Museum Pusaka Nias



**Omo Sebau**  
Omo Sebau, known as the Big House, stands approximately 24 metres tall in Bawömataluo Village in South Nias. This traditional structure survived the earthquake of 8.7 on the Richter scale in 2005. Omo Sebau in Bawömataluo Village is a living proof of traditional structure's strength in dealing with natural phenomena.



**Adu Zatau**  
Adu Zatau is the figure that represents the ancestors of Niassans, and exists in various designs mainly carved in wood and stone. Adu Zatau is from the collection of Museum Pusaka Nias in Gunung Sitoli

**\*Lahusa Idanö Tae**

This village contains numbers of megalithic relics, including five *bebu* (large stone 4-5 meter in height with a diameter of 1-1.5 meter), 55 medium size stones (1-2 meter in height), 5 *sitölu bagi* (chair shaped stone), 5 *ni'olare* or *ni'ogadi* (carved, tall and artistic shaped stone) as well as round stone with a flat surface and a single leg (mushroom stone).

**\*Börönadu**

*Sisao*—Nias ancestor—first came to Nias when he and his boat casted away in the island. He piled upward through Susua River and came to a location where Gomo River emptied into Susua River. He then went along to the northern part of the Gomo River and settled in Sifalagö Gomo Village. This place is also called *Börönadu* because it was here that the first statue of the ancestor was made and found.

**\*Hilisimaetanö**

Hilisimaetanö Village is one of the biggest traditional settlements in Nias. The village has traditional houses, megalith culture and ornaments of Nias ancestors made from stone and wood. Hilisimaetanö is another place of interest for tourists who want to see the unique culture of Nias.

**Sorake Beach**

A surfer's paradise, Sorake Beach has been part of international surfing events and championships since 1993. The remarkable waves' heights and thrusts reach up to 4.5 meters and 200 meters respectively which occur during May to September. Hotels and inns are available along this beach.

**Mo'ale Beach**

Known for its white sand beach and sunset view, Mo'ale Beach is located in the west coast of Amandraya Sub-district 45 km north of Teluk Dalam, South Nias. Besides its beautiful white sand beaches, Nias Island is rich in marine biodiversity which are potential for diving.



**Omo Hada**  
The understructure or the supporting columns are the strength points of *Omo Hada*, the traditional dwelling-house of Niassan. The wooden vertical supporting columns (*ehomo*) and the diagonal supporting columns (*ndriwa*) of *Omo Hada* (traditional Niassan dwelling) rest upon stone boulders. This allows flexibility for the house to move or shift following the quake's horizontal force in the event of an earthquake.

**Traditional Crafts**

Hili Ganöwö, Bawö Dobara, Hili Zalo'o tanö, Bawömataluo and Lahusa Fau are few remaining villages that still produce handcrafted goods. Bawömataluo is famous for its woodcarvings while Lahusa Fau is known for its *Fandru Garamba*, a small and rare bronze oil lamp. These villages have become a place of interest for tourists to see the craftspeople at work.

Photo: Senior traditional woodcarver in Bawömataluo Village in South Nias.

**The Beauty of Batu Islands Group**

Accessible by boat and airplane, Batu Islands Group is a potential tourist attraction with its beautiful natural landscape and rich marine life.



# NIAS CULTURAL TOURISM MAP

Nias Archipelago consists of one main island and several small islands facing the Indian Ocean, off Sumatra's west coast. The main island of Nias, with an area of 5,500 square kilometers, carries a number of mysteries and uniqueness ranging from living traditional villages, cultural landscapes to stunning megaliths and architectural monuments. For generations, people of Nias have called themselves *Omo Niba* (descendants of men), which is believed by some anthropologists and archeologists as a member of the Austronesian language family—one of the earliest Indonesian archipelago's ancestors to come from Asian continent. Based on a number of the oldest-civilization-proofs, Niassans are associated with the development of megalithic (massive

stone) tradition, which existence can still be viewed today. The cultural heritage of Nias, such as traditional houses, stone jumping tradition, and war dances have become integral tourism icons, even more after the stroke of two natural disasters: the 2004 tsunami and the 2005 earthquake. To restore them to their former glory, some parties have put serious efforts to rebuild Nias based on their cultural heritage that are now on the brink of extinction. Traditional villages in Nias, with cultural heritage and oral tradition alive, are interesting tourism destinations. Hopefully, cultural tourism activities will stimulate Nias Island's economy and re-establish people's interest in preserving their cultural heritage for future generations.

**LEGEND**




This map presents the unique cultural heritage of Nias Island in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The selected photographs and materials presented on this map are part of the documentation and cultural resources mapping exercise carried out during the UNESCO culture project in Teluk Dalam, South Nias, during 2006 – 2007. The project was funded by UNDP as part of its Emergency Response and Transitional Recovery (ERTR) Programme for Aceh and Nias. The map pictures the unique architecture, traditional settlements, cultural and natural landscapes, megaliths and traditional crafts of Nias Island. This is part of our effort to protect and preserve the tangible and intangible cultural heritage for future generations.

Text by: Culture Unit, UNESCO Office, Jakarta  
Photos by: Feri Latief for UNESCO Office, Jakarta  
Map compiled from various sources  
Scale may vary due to cartographic projection

**UNESCO Office, Jakarta**  
Jalan Galuh II No. 5  
Kebayoran Baru  
Jakarta Selatan 12110  
INDONESIA  
Telephone: +62 21 739 8818  
Facsimile: +62 21 7279 6489  
Email: jakarta@unesco.org  
www.unesco.org