



# MOUNT KELUD SUNRISE

MIKE SMITH sweated it out in Surabaya enjoying its history and culture, then chilled out on Mount Kelud an active volcano in East Java, Indonesia



Mount Kelud

Acrobats rushed towards us doing mid-air somersaults and the Reog Ponorogo dance, depicting the mythical battle between the King of Ponorogo and the magical lion Singa. The Barong dance commenced. The huge elaborate masks the performers wore are made of animal skin and peafowl feathers. They weigh about 30kg and require great strength to manoeuvre, but these guys make it look easy.

### **City of Heroes**

The setting was perfect; by the Heroes Monument in Surabaya, Indonesia, dedicated to the people who died during the battle of Surabaya in the War for Independence in 1945, where we'd travelled courtesy of Tigerair and Visit Indonesia Tourism Office Singapore.

The action continued with young girls performing the Jaran Kepang dance on horses made of woven bamboo. The finale saw the whole troop gather to prove their might, hoisting some of the ladies astride the lion masks – a great show made even better by guides and scouts in the crowd befriending us!

Surabaya is known as Kota Pahlawan or City of Heroes to some, but others suggest the name is derived from the words "sura" meaning shark and "baya" meaning crocodile who fought each other for the title "King of the Sea" according to legend. Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia has a compact centre with enough tourist attractions to keep visitors entertained for a couple of days. Sights include a statue depicting the great tussle between the two creatures and an adjacent submarine which sits on the bank of the Kali Mas River, rather a long way from the sea!

### **Whiskey Class**

The Russian built, Whiskey Class Submarine was used by the Indonesian Navy and saw action against the Dutch. It was cut in sections, transported to Surabaya and reassembled at its present location. We had great fun exploring the sleeping quarters and torpedo rooms, peering into the periscope and getting a good feel for how cramped and claustrophobic it is on board even

Heroes monument



without being submerged in deep water!

The small 13th Century Joko Dolog or Buddha Akshobya statue in Apsari Park may be of historical importance, but the street art, or graffiti depending on your point of view, next to it got far more of my attention particularly as the lovely Diana posed for pictures for me there! There are plenty of other amazing pieces of street art around Surabaya suggesting the local government encourages, or at least, tolerates it – an enlightened attitude!

**The Red Bridge**

The National Mosque is an impressive building, but the red bridge, although significant in the battle of Surabaya has no tourist appeal except for history buffs or those trying to flag down a becak or trishaw for a ride through the old, narrow streets of nearby Chinatown.

I don't smoke, but did enjoy the tour next morning to Sampoerna House which offers an intriguing insight of a classic rags to riches tale of how Liem See Ting moved from China to Surabaya and grew a massive cigarette company from a humble, small street stall. It's staggering to see the speed of the finger movements as 500 employees hand roll 5,000 kretek, clove cigarettes per day each in the factory.

Inside submarine



**Charming Chanting**

Almost every major city in Java seems to have its own style of batik and Surabaya is no exception. To get a flavour of how chanting (painted batik)



The Barong dance

Mural girl



is done we visited a local workshop where top quality material was produced. The location was great with kids waving hello in the street outside as they strolled to school.

At Ria Indonesia Delicacies Restaurant we had to prepare our own lunch of rojak cingcur, a traditional Surabaya fruit and vegetable salad dish containing raw mango, pineapple, cucumber, kangkong, longtong, tofu, yam and tempe, covered in a thick black sauce made from petis (fermented shrimp paste,) chilli, garlic, sugar, salt, tamarind, shallots, peanuts and water all patiently ground together using plenty of energy in a pestle and mortar. We also had a bowl of rawon soup, an East Java classic beef dish using the Indonesian black nut or buah Keluak for its unique taste.

### Selfies in the Sun Rise

Following lunch we headed to Kediri, a town employing thousands of people in the tobacco and sugar industries. We didn't see much of the town except for a pleasant, old Catholic church built from volcanic rock in rambling grounds and featuring statues of Mary, a grotto and scenes from Christ's crucifixion. In the evening we attended a puppet show and networking dinner before an early night because we wanted to get up at 2:30am to see sunrise at Mount Kelud.

Many visitors to Surabaya take the side trip to the spectacular Mount Bromo, however, Mount Kelud offers an alternative for those preferring a less crowded spot to see an active and at times deadly volcano spewing steam. Indeed it erupted in February 2014 causing havoc and the viewpoint has only just reopened for visitors.

After an early morning wakeup call and a hot coffee in the lobby of the Grand Surya Hotel we were on our way by bus to Mount Kelud soon after 3:00am. The initial trek to the viewpoint was rather steep, but the ground was firm underfoot and the temperature a cool 15°C, so it was not too difficult and within a short time we were admiring the scenery, posing for pictures, taking selfies and waiting for sunrise. When it did rise the girls jumped, but I kept my feet firmly on the ground! It looked very calm, but during

our descent I tried to imagine the terror the recent eruption must have caused.

### Competing with Paris

Returning to Kediri we passed pineapple and sugar plantations before realising that Kediri was bizarrely trying to compete with Paris with its own Arc de Triomphe. On weekends it's a meeting point for locals and while we were there an outing for cat lovers was taking place!

Passing briefly through Kampong Ingerris we had lunch at the Fish Farm, which might appeal to school groups. We then headed for Malang where we continued the agricultural theme by picking guavas and apples at the Agro Farm.

Over dinner, at the excellent Rumah Makan Inggil Museum in Malang, our eldest tour participant Pak John sportingly joined the duo playing live music and gave an outstanding version of "My Way". I loved the ambience and decoration there and also at the nearby Tugu Hotel which we popped into before heading back for a nightcap at the Kesuma Agro Hotel where we spent the night.



Batik making



The national mosque

## POCKET GUIDE

### AIRLINE AND ACCOMODATION

Airline: Tigerair  
Hotel Surabaya:  
Hotel Kediri: Hotel Malang;  
Organiser: Vito Singapore / East Java  
Tourism

### Drive-Through Zoo

If you are in Surabaya don't miss out on a trip to Taman Safari Indonesia 2. I love to drive through safari zoos and this place ranks highly. The animals, both native and exotic species from around the world, look healthy. The big cats in particular are exciting. For those with lots of time and a big budget there are opportunities to have intimate encounters with dolphins, elephants and primates. There are also cute souvenir stuffed toys in the shop!

It would be easy to spend a full day at the safari, but unfortunately we had limited time as we had a flight back to Singapore. I highly recommend paying a slight premium to get the extended legroom by the emergency exit on Tigerair, it feels as if you are sitting in business class.

All too soon our trip to Surabaya and Mount Kelud was over. I'll go again to Surabaya and visit Mount Bromo next time, despite the exorbitant US\$35 entry visa and Rp200,000 exit airport tax. It will be interesting to see how East Java tourism develops as the tourism board and travel agents attempt to revitalise the region. **AJ**