

## East Timor

Country name in English	East Timor <sup>1</sup>
State title in English	Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
Country name in official languages	Timor-Leste ( <i>tet</i> , <i>por</i> ) <sup>2, 3</sup>
State title in official languages	República Demokrátika Timor-Leste ( <i>tet</i> ) República Democrática de Timor-Leste ( <i>por</i> )
Name of citizen	East Timorese
Official languages	Tetum ( <i>tet</i> ) <sup>4</sup> , Portuguese ( <i>por</i> )
Script	Roman
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	TL/TLS
Capital	Díli
Population	1.34 million (UN data <sup>5</sup> as of 2021)

### Introduction

The Island of Timor<sup>6</sup> is the easternmost island of the island chain between mainland Malaysia and Australia. It was a combination of Portuguese and Dutch possession from the 16th century, until the 1859 Treaty of Lisbon divided the island between the two. The western half of the island became known as Dutch Timor until 1945 when it became part of Indonesia, while the eastern half was known as Portuguese Timor. Portugal withdrew from Portuguese Timor in 1974, and Indonesia invaded shortly thereafter; this annexation was unrecognized by most of the international community. In 1999, East Timor declared independence from Indonesia and in May 2002, was internationally recognized as an independent state.

East Timor includes the islands of Ataúro and Jaco, plus the enclave of Oecussi-Ambeno<sup>7</sup>, a Special Administrative Region, situated on the western (Indonesian) part of the island.

### Geographical names policy

PCGN recommends using place names as found on official Portuguese-language sources. Although Tetum names are also official, official Tetum-language map sources are unlikely to be found. Tetum names may also be shown on maps if required, in the style Portuguese/Tetum, however PCGN would usually suggest simply showing the Portuguese-language names, as these are the names most frequently encountered.

The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [Geographic Names Server](https://geographic-names-server.com/) (GNS) database is a good source for geographical names.

<sup>1</sup> Note that the name Timor-Leste should be used in place of East Timor in official correspondence with East Timor.

<sup>2</sup> ISO 639 codes are given for the languages mentioned in this Factfile.

<sup>3</sup> The Tetum language name *Timor Lorosa'e* (meaning "Timor of the rising sun") is sometimes seen.

<sup>4</sup> Also spelled Tetun, Tétum or Tettum.

<sup>5</sup> <http://data.un.org/en/iso/tl.html>

<sup>6</sup> Derived from 'timur', the Malay word for 'east'.

<sup>7</sup> The presentation of the exclave is inconsistent: Oecussi is the usual Portuguese spelling, Ambeno was the name under Indonesian administration. It is frequently seen in the combined form Oecussi-Ambeno, including on the government of East Timor website: <http://timor-leste.gov.tl>.

Traditionally, the indigenous geographical names of the island did not have a standard written form, so have principally been written with the Portuguese alphabet. There were few colonially-imposed Portuguese names, most of which have not been used since 1975 (e.g. Vila Salazar, the former name of Baucau). During the Indonesian occupation, many spellings were revised to reflect the Indonesian language. In particular, the sound of the letter 'k' was changed from 'c' or 'qu' in Portuguese, to 'k' in Indonesian e.g. Viqueque was re-written as Vikeke. In not recognizing the Indonesian occupation, these changes were not reflected by HMG.

## **Language**

The [Constitution of East Timor](#) states that the official languages are Tetum (*tet*) (a Malay-Polynesian language) and Portuguese (*por*). The Tetum language is spoken by around 30% of the population. Portuguese was the language of administration during the colonial era until 1975. Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) (*ind*) and English are classed as working languages alongside the official languages. Apart from these, there are other local languages such as Mambai (*mgm*), Makasae (*mkz*), Kemak (*kem*), Galolen (*gal*), Tukudede (*tkd*), Bunak (*bfn*) and Fataluku (*ddg*).

The Portuguese alphabet uses 23 letters of the Roman alphabet: K, W and Y are used only in foreign loan words. The Tetum alphabet uses all 26 letters of the Roman alphabet, as does the Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) alphabet.

## **Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings<sup>8</sup>):**

### **Tetum**

In addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman alphabet, the **Tetum** language contains the following letter-diacritic combinations:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Ñ	00D1	ñ	00F1

### **Portuguese**

In addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman alphabet, the **Portuguese** language contains the following letter-diacritic combinations:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Á	00C1	á	00E1
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ã	00C3	ã	00E3
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Í	00CD	í	00ED
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Õ	00D5	õ	00F5
Ú	00DA	ú	00FA

<sup>8</sup> See [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

## Administrative structure

East Timor has 14 municipalities (*munisípiu* (*tet*), *município* (*por*)) and one Special Administrative Region (*rejaun administrativa espesial* (*tet*), *região administrativa especial* (*por*)), Oecussi-Ambeno, at the first-order administrative level (ADM1).

## East Timor: First-Order Administrative Divisions

PCGN approved name	Name in other local languages	Location	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre <sup>9</sup> (PCGN approved name)	Location
Aileu	Aileu ( <i>tet</i> , <i>ind</i> )	08° 42' S, 125° 38' E	TL-AL	Aileu <sup>10</sup>	08° 44' S, 125° 34' E
Ainaro	Ainaru ( <i>tet</i> ) Ainaro ( <i>ind</i> )	09° 02' S, 125° 32' E	TL-AN	Ainaro	09° 0' S, 125° 30' E
Ataúro <sup>11</sup>	Ata'uro ( <i>tet</i> ) Pulau Kambing ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 16' S, 125° 36' E	-	Vila Maumeta <sup>12</sup>	08° 17' S, 125° 34' E 08° 16' S, 125° 36' E
Baucau	Baukau ( <i>ind</i> , <i>tet</i> )	08° 32' S, 126° 28' E	TL-BA	Baucau <sup>13</sup>	08° 29' S, 126° 27' E
Bobonaro	Bobonaru ( <i>tet</i> ) Bobonaro ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 57' S, 125° 13' E	TL-BO	Maliana	09° 0' S, 125° 13' E
Cova Lima	Kovalima ( <i>ind</i> , <i>tet</i> )	09° 16' S, 125° 15' E	TL-CO	Suai	09° 19' S, 125° 15' E
Díli	Dili ( <i>ind</i> , <i>tet</i> )	08° 33' S, 125° 40' E	TL-DI	Díli <sup>14</sup>	08° 34' S, 125° 34' E
Ermera	Ermera ( <i>ind</i> , <i>tet</i> )	08° 50' S, 125° 23' E	TL-ER	Gleno	08° 43' S, 125° 26' E
Lautém	Lautein ( <i>tet</i> ) Lautem ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 31' S, 126° 58' E	TL-LA	Lospalos	08° 31' S, 127° 0' E
Liquiçá	Likisá ( <i>tet</i> ) Likisia ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 39' S, 125° 19' E	TL-LI	Liquiçá	08° 35' S, 125° 21' E
Manatuto	Manatutu ( <i>tet</i> ) Manatuto ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 43' S, 125° 57' E	TL-MT	Manatuto	08° 31' S, 126° 01' E
Manufahi	Manofahi ( <i>ind</i> ) Manufahi ( <i>tet</i> )	09° 0' S, 125° 47' E	TL-MF	Same	09° 0' S, 125° 39' E
Oecussi-Ambeno	Oé-Cusse ( <i>por</i> ) Ambeno ( <i>ind</i> ) Oekusi Ambenu ( <i>tet</i> )	09° 19' S, 124° 18' E	TL-OE	Pante Macassar <sup>15</sup>	09° 12' S, 124° 23' E
Viqueque	Vikeke ( <i>ind</i> , <i>tet</i> )	08° 47' S, 126° 22' E	TL-VI	Viqueque	08° 51' S, 126° 22' E

<sup>9</sup> It was former practice for all the centres to bear the same name as the municipalities.

<sup>10</sup> Previous name during Portuguese administration: Vila General Carmona.

<sup>11</sup> In January 2022, the island of Ataúro, a former administrative post of Díli, became the 14<sup>th</sup> municipality.

<sup>12</sup> Sometimes called Vila or Ataúro.

<sup>13</sup> Previous name during Portuguese administration: Vila Salazar.

<sup>14</sup> Previous spellings: Delhi, Deli, Dilli and Dilly.

<sup>15</sup> Sometimes referred to as Pantemakasar or Pantemakassar (or even Oekusi, Oekussi or Okusi) during Indonesian administration.

## Other significant locations

PCGN approved name	Name in other local languages	Location	Feature type
Ilha de Ataúro ( <i>por</i> )	Pulau Atauro ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 13' S, 125° 35' E	Island
Ihéu de Jaco ( <i>por</i> )	Pulau Jaco ( <i>ind</i> )	03° 25' S, 127° 19' E	Islet
Tatamailau ( <i>por</i> )	Foho Tatamailau ( <i>tet</i> )	08° 55' S, 125° 29' E	Mountain
Ira Lalaro ( <i>por</i> )	Danau Iralaloro ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 27' S, 127° 08' E	Lake
Ombai Strait	Estreito de Ombai ( <i>por</i> ) Estreitu Ombai ( <i>tet</i> ) Selat Ombai ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 30' S, 125° 00' E	Strait
Wetar Strait	Estreito de Wetar ( <i>por</i> ) Estreitu Wetar ( <i>tet</i> ) Selat Wetar ( <i>ind</i> )	08° 20' S, 126° 30' E	Strait

## Useful references

- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-14919009>
- CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/timor-leste/>
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/timor-leste>
- Government of Timor-Leste: <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?lang=en>
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/>
- Languages: [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com); [www.omniglot.com](http://www.omniglot.com)
- PCGN Country Names list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names>
- Statistics Timor-Leste (2010 Census): <https://www.statistics.gov.tl/>
- Unicode [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)
- US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) Geographic Names Server: [GNS Search & Download WebApp \(nga.mil\)](https://www.nga.mil/GNS/Search/Download)

Compiled by PCGN  
[info@pcgn.org.uk](mailto:info@pcgn.org.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/pcgn](http://www.gov.uk/pcgn)  
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