

Total solar eclipse to sweep across Indonesia

March 8 2016



Officials display a map of the planned trajectory across the Indonesian archipelago of the upcoming total solar eclipse

Tens of thousands of sky gazers will watch a total solar eclipse sweep across Indonesia on Wednesday, with parties, prayers and tribal rituals to mark the spectacle in the world's biggest archipelago nation.

The eclipse will travel in a broad arc across Indonesia, from the western island of Sumatra, to the spice-fringed Maluku Islands thousands of miles to the east.

From a festival featuring live bands, to fun runs and traditional dances, events are being organised across the country for an estimated 10,000 foreign visitors and 100,000 domestic tourists who will be witnessing the phenomenon.

Hotels in the best viewing spots filled up weeks ago—in the city of Ternate, in the Maluku Islands, officials have had to find extra space for tourists on boats.

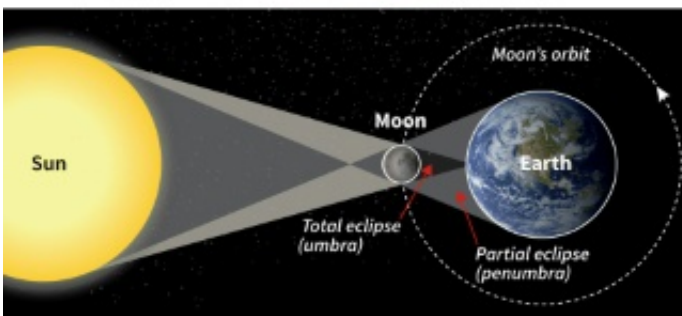
"It's an extraordinary spectacle that only takes place about once a year in one part of the world," said Arnaud Fischer, a 33-year-old French tourist, who has witnessed several eclipses and was set to watch Wednesday's in Ternate.

However there are concerns that clouds could obscure the view in some places, as it is currently the wet season in Indonesia.

It will be a deeply spiritual experience for many in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, with the faithful being urged by Islamic authorities to perform special eclipse prayers.

Total solar eclipse

Fully visible in Indonesia, partial in northern Australia and parts of Asia,
March 9



Source : NASA

AFP

Total solar eclipse

Some of Indonesia's tribespeople are fearful of the phenomenon, however. Members of the Dayak tribe in one part of Borneo island will perform a ritual to ensure that the sun, which they view as the source of life, does not disappear entirely.

The [total eclipse](#) will sweep across 12 out of 34 provinces in Indonesia, which stretches about 3,000 miles (5,000 kilometres) from east to west,

before heading across the Pacific Ocean.

It will be visible for between just one and a half to three minutes in most places.

Partial eclipses will be visible in northern Australia and parts of Southeast Asia.



This picture taken in Palembang on March 7, 2016 shows the city's icon the Ampera bridge on the Musi river where tourists and locals will watch the total solar eclipse

The moon will begin moving across the sun on Sumatra at around 6:20 am (2320 GMT Tuesday), before the [eclipse](#) sweeps across Sulawesi and Borneo, then moves over the Malukus and heads out into the ocean.

One of the most popular events for foreign tourists will be a festival close to Palu, in Sulawesi.

Among those coming to Indonesia is Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, who recently hit the headlines after a \$40,000 toilet custom-built for her visit to Cambodia went unused.

She will be watching the spectacle in Ternate, although officials insist that no luxury commode has been built for her on this occasion.

The last [total solar eclipse](#) occurred on March 20, 2015, only visible from the Faroe Islands and Norway's Arctic Svalbard archipelago.

Total eclipses occur when the moon moves between the Earth and the Sun, and the three bodies align precisely.

As seen from Earth, the moon is just broad enough to cover the solar face, creating a breath-taking silver halo in an indigo sky.

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