

# stamford spark

Sixth Edition

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2021 E-MAGAZINE



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**Stamford Spark Vol. 1 Issue 6 - Lifestyle  
February - March 2020**

**Editorial**

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**Contributors:**

**Anika Poojary, Kushaan Thawani, Liliana Sophiana  
Still, Megan Arianto Phang, Erlin Anisa, Maila Jumao-  
As, Carolyn Sulaeman, Mary Jane Luyon-Fajardo, Dr  
Peter Darmawan, Jaya Raj Gopala Krishnan.**

**Teacher in-charge**

**Erlin Anisa**

Erlin@Stamford.sch.id

**Advertising Opportunities**

**Write to:**

Editor@Stamford.sch.id

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**Write to:**

Stamford Spark Editorial

Stamford School

Jalan Citra Green, Allegro Altura Complex

Bandung 40142

west Java - Indonesia

Phone: +62 (22) 251-5255

E-mail: [editor@stamford.sch.id](mailto:editor@stamford.sch.id)

[www.stamford.sch.id](http://www.stamford.sch.id)

[info@stamford.sch.id](mailto:info@stamford.sch.id)

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Stamford Spark

# CHINESE NEW YEAR

## AT STAMFORD SCHOOL

By Wu Shi Jin

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, is one of China's most important festivals. It is time for families to get together, worship the Gods and ancestors. The Chinese New Year can also be called "Guonian" which means the passing of the old year to the new one. This festival emphasizes the importance of family ties. The dinner gathering of Chinese New Year's Eve is the most essential family occasion of the year. According to Chinese twelve zodiacs, this year is the year of golden ox. Chinese New Year falls on Friday, February 12, 2021, beginning a year of ox.

### The common practices of Chinese New Year

On the Eve of Chinese New Year, every house should be cleaned and swept, which means wiping away the old and evil spirits. After cleaning, Chinese people taped the decorations on the wall, windows and the doors, such as large vertical scrolls of red papers and spring couplets. The couplets are mainly written in classical Chinese calligraphy, expressing the good wishes for the family in the coming year.

Additionally, red envelopes ("hongbao") are sold in the markets and on streets. The money inside the red envelopes is called "ya sui qian", symbolizing the warding off, or suppression of evil. On the cover of the red envelopes, there are usually icons of what the year belongs to or some common greetings like "xin nian kuai le" (Happy New Year) "ji xiang ru yi" (wish everything goes well for you). As we receive the red envelopes from other people, remember that we must say some Chinese greetings back to the givers. In these blessing days, we can deliver best wishes through this custom.



### Stamfordians' Chinese New Year

Stamford school regards Chinese New Year as one of most important events for the school. We celebrated Chinese year of ox on Friday, 19th February. All of the Stamfordians worked together to prepare this online event. Preschool, Primary 1 and 2 performed the Chinese dance 〈哈鹿哈鹿〉. Upper primary and secondary students prepared short videos to introduce the customs of Chinese New Year. The teachers and students' family recorded Chinese greetings for all stamfordians to welcome the blessed new year. Due to the pandemic, we could not get altogether to celebrate this big event, but we know somehow, our hearts are still closely connected through Stamford School. As the event ended, everyone learned not only the Chinese customs but also the Chinese greetings to keep giving good wishes to their family and friends.

# 3 Tips To Learn Better

By Alicia Caitlyn

Exams are coming up soon and in order to get good grades, there are some things that we can do to learn better. Here are 3 tips that, in my opinion, will help you achieve the best grades you possibly can.

1

## Organize your notes



Studies show that **people who write down notes have better grades than others**. This is as **we gain better memory** while writing down our notes. Not only that but, we also **understand the concept of the topic we are trying to learn better**. Here are a few ways to organise your notes:

### Write in clear handwriting:

Clear handwriting will allow us to read our notes at a future date. It also keeps our notes organized and will help us find the notes that we need much more efficiently.

### Colour coding:

Grab a highlighter or some colored pens and start writing the notes. When writing, keep in mind to 'code' the notes of the same topic with one color and another topic with another colour. This is shown to improve memory and help dissociate topics from one another

### Use headers:

When starting a new topic, use headers! This will separate the topics and help us to easily identify the topic we would like to learn.





# 2

## Learning schedule



When revising or reviewing for an exam, whether it is a topical test or your final exams, **it is good to have enough time to study. When revising a subject over a period of time, it is more likely to stick to you than trying to cram all the information in your head overnight.** Personally, I like to take around two weeks before the exams to study. This helps to absorb more information as your brain will have more time to take it in.

Another thing that you can do in relation to time is to **revise shorter amounts of time, more frequently.** When you **review in 4x25 minute sessions for 2 hours with 5 minute breaks in the middle,** you will actually **gain more than studying for 2 hours straight.** This is as your brain has enough time to rest and clear up.



# 3

## Rest and de-stress

### Sleep:

During exam season, sleep is very important! Sleeping 7-8 hours a day will give your body time to rest and give you a clear head. This way, you will be able to concentrate during the exams.

### Exercise:

Spend around 15 to 30 minutes everyday getting up and exercising. Whether it is running or just a simple workout, it will keep your body healthy and fit. This way, you will not feel fatigued.

### Eat well:

To do exams well, you need enough energy. Just like sleep, eating well is a necessity. Some people tend to skip meals during exam time and this makes them feel tired and have no energy to focus on the exams.

### Relax:

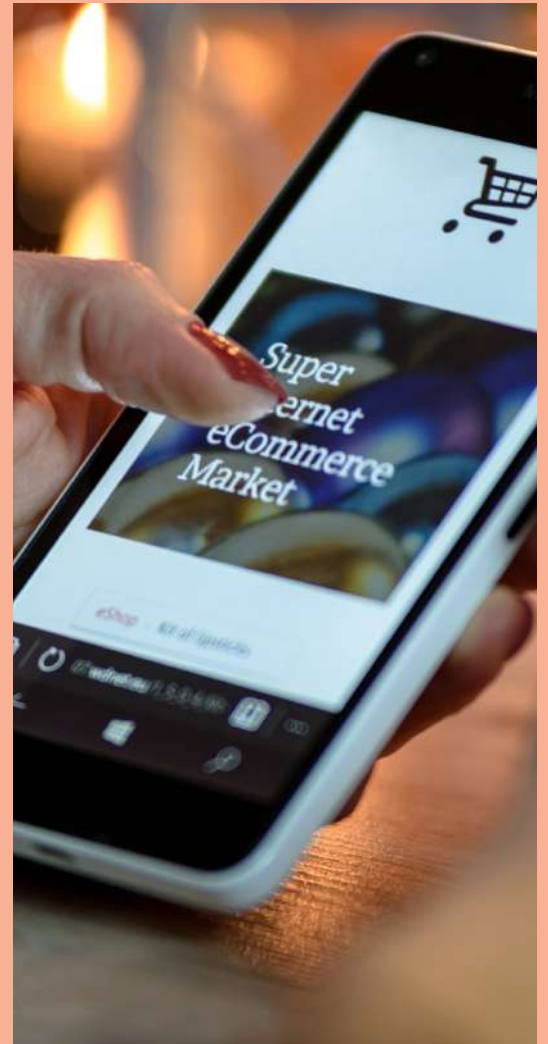
Stress levels are likely to increase with exams. While pressure can be good sometimes, stress will lead to panic and this will decrease our self confidence and not be able to write the exams well. My suggestion is to take a few minutes everyday to de-stress and calm down. Some things you can do is meditate or taking a walk around the park.



**Kushaan - Lili -  
Anika - Megan**

*What is the  
lifestyle in  
Quarantine time?*

Primary Team Articles



# Do you know Tik Tok?

Tik Tok is a trendy app where you can post dances or make videos about various stuff.

For those who have just started Tik Tok, you should take a look at this trend that many people are now hopping on. You should try it too!

Press this link to check out the trending dance! <https://youtu.be/7rmsQ5aEBvY>



## What's Trending on Tiktok?

People who use Tik Tok love to make dance videos, do pranks and even create art videos! In addition to these features, you can get some useful information from that app. Tik Tok is the app that told me about the Lebanon Explosion.



Anika Poojary

You may even come upon funny videos!

If I were to rate this app, I would give it a 5 Star rating. When posting, we need to make sure that we are posting something inspiring, funny or even creative. We can post anything we want, as long as we don't hurt anyone's feelings or make negative comments about someone. This app is made to have fun.

**I really suggest you try the app.**

**It's fun!**

# Online and thrift stores

We can't go anywhere because there is a virus that is dangerous called Corona. We have to stay in our houses while waiting for the doctors and scientists to provide the Corona vaccination. Some people are bored and want to go shopping, but it's dangerous, so some people have created online shops and online thrift stores so people can buy clothes, shoes, and accessories. Lazada, Shopee, and Tokopedia are examples of online shops. On Instagram, people have set up many thrift stores. I sometimes buy clothes in thrift stores too.

It's good that people can make online shops and thrift stores, so we can buy online rather than going somewhere to buy clothes because it's dangerous nowadays. We can also buy electronic goods, movies, sports equipment, board games, books, and coloring materials online, to do fun activities at home so that we are not bored.

## Experience

Sometimes I buy my clothings, accessories, cases, and more in online and thrift stores on instagram or apps that are trusted. Everytime i find an online shop, I see the taggings first because if I dont the store might be a scammer. I never trust people online saying that they sell things, I always check first. But I'm happy that I can buy online because it's safer than going to malls.

## How to be wise in doing online shopping?

Sometimes I buy my things from online and thrift stores with my dad or my sister. Sometimes me and my sister buy clothings from thrift stores together in one store, but we also tell our dad that we are buying clothing from there and sometimes he allows us to buy from that store.

## Online Vs Offline Shopping

Sometimes if I buy online it's hard to find what I want and like. I prefer shopping in malls to online because we know what the material of the clothing is or if it is comfortable or not. We can also check the size easily in malls. OOnline sometimes the size is wrong and the material is not really nice and comfortable.



**Megan Arianto Phang**



# *Tips about online learning.*

I really want school to reopen. It will be much better and my friends and I can learn peacefully without any disturbance and talk to each other face to face. I also miss playing or having fun in the soccer field. However, we still have to be patient and do the online lesson since the pandemic is still in our world.

There are many challenges in doing online lessons. Sometimes it is due to the internet connection and our gadget. We have to prepare well in our online lesson.



So, here I would like to share some tips that I use during lessons.

- Save your battery power.
- Don't stress too much. Take a break between lessons.
- Keep away the things that always distract you.
- Keep your room tidy so you can think properly and find the things you need.

I hope we will get the covid vaccine so we can start normal school and meet friends and relatives again.



Liliana Sophia Still

# *Sport during the pandemic - maintaining a healthy lifestyle*

## Sports when pandemic hits

During this pandemic many are people not exercising enough because they can't go anywhere to work out. Many people are too lazy to exercise because there are limits on where they can go and it's difficult to do any sports with their friends. It is really important to exercise especially at this time because if you get Covid 19 your immune system needs to be prepared for it and it is really important as exercise will boost your immune system and lower your cholesterol.



## My personal experiences

At the start of the virus I was also very lazy and did not want to exercise because I missed exercising with my friends. A few weeks later, I had a very high fever and was worried that maybe I had contacted the coronavirus. Thankfully, I took a test and it turned out I was negative. After that, I realised that being healthy and exercising is important.

## Exercise at home

Did you guys know that there are many ways of exercising at home? Here are some easy activities for your home exercise: Maybe you can share some examples of how to do exercise at home

Click this link for the detail of some exercises:  
[https://youtu.be/gC\\_L9qAHVJ8](https://youtu.be/gC_L9qAHVJ8)



Kushaan Anand Thawani





# Effective Exam Revision Strategy

By Dr Peter Darmawan

Time flies so quickly! We are entering yet another examination season soon for our Secondary 4 and Junior College students. The days leading to the examination can be stressful because of the sheer amount of work that needs to be studied in such a short amount of time. If this stress is not controlled, it can lead to a panic attack that might ruin your exam performance.

Therefore KEEP CALM, because I am going to share with you some tips that might be useful to prepare for the big day.

**Step 1: Make a plan.**  
The moment you receive the examination schedule, you should switch to high gear for revision. Being organised can undoubtedly reduce stress and anxiety and help you make the best use of your remaining time before the exams. A useful tool you can use is by making a countdown timetable: dividing the subjects (or topics) that you need to revise against the remaining days before your exams.

This table serves as a reminder of how many days you have left before the exam and what topics to study on each day. This way, you do not need to waste time deciding what to study and have a good awareness of what exam is coming up soon.

**Step 2: Decide how many hours can you devote to studying.**  
In your timetable, you should also specify the time that you should start studying, your break time and what time you should sleep. A solid 3 to 4 hours may be a good start during school days. During the exam week itself, the study time can be extended to 6 hours or more. For myself, I will put in more time for the subjects that I am weak at.



#### Step 3: Set up a quiet study space.

Your environment must be conducive to support your long study hours. Your desk is preferably clean with a lot of space for your laptop, notes and textbook. Your study corner should be in a quiet place in your house with as little distractions as possible. Put everything that you may need nearby: writing materials, water and snacks.

#### Step 4: Remove distractions.

You need to remove yourself from the little temptations all around us that can suck out a lot of our time. I must admit that this is extremely difficult and takes a lot of commitment. The best way is to switch off your mobile phone or leave it where you can't see or hear it (even the phone's vibration can distract us).

Let your family members know that you are not to be disturbed during the times specified in your time table. Turn off all social media notifications on your laptop. Commit to using your laptop for study purposes only.

#### Step 5: Focus on quality, not on quantity.

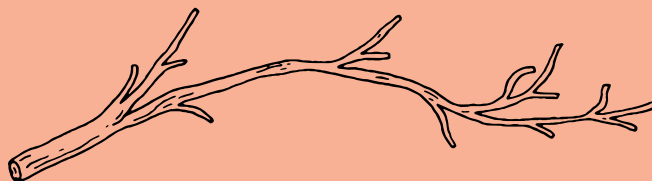
When preparing for exams, we tend to want to cover everything in the shortest time possible. A better strategy would be to focus on quality, not on quantity. Quality means knowing the topic in-depth so that you can score full marks (or close to full marks) on any question related to that topic. Remember, it is not how much time you spend, but how much you understand after studying it.

#### Step 6: Review your progress and get help, if needed.

It is essential to reflect on your progress and adjust your timetable accordingly. If you feel that you are struggling to understand a topic, immediately ask someone who can help. There is no time to waste as you inch closer to the examination. Review your progress frequently to ensure that you are on track to complete your revision.

I hope that the above tips help you to be more prepared for the year-end examination!

Best wishes!





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# HOME GARDENING BENEFITS

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## Increasing Food Access and Community Development in Neighborhoods

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**There are many benefits that come from gardening. In my first year of gardening, I have tried planting a variety of plants and acquiring some knowledge. I have learned that each plant has a different harvest time and requires different sun exposure and many things. It has been a very hands on learning experience.**

WRITTEN BY ERLIN ANISA



You can get your garden started with some basic vegetables such as carrots and onions . From there, you can start experimenting with a wider variety of plants. You can even exchange different vegetables with your neighbours, which brings **a sense of community involvement to the venture**. Once I had my neighbour share his tomatoes and I gave him a young Cavendish banana plant. **From acts like this, the whole community can start to benefit and feel closer.**

**I am learning to run a startup which is inspired by my home garden.** It started from a desire to encourage others, like friends and relatives, to start their own home gardens since some of them have experience and knowledge to share. We sell seeds and vegetables, not only from our own gardens but also from those of others. By marketing them online, those who have ripe produce available for sale can get the help in marketing it . There is a strawberry farm that successfully produces the fruit continuously. They started with a small harvest and have increased their farm yield continually to meet ever growing demand. I help the owner to find buyers.

I have also produced a variety of farm fruit. We are working on possible fruits that could help the farmer increase their income. We have the seeds growing as a test and hopefully it will work.

Lastly, I also work at making homemade traditional herbal drinks. **Indonesia is rich with natural medicinal herbs and we need to keep the tradition of drinking traditional herbal drinks (jamu) going as an important feature of our Indonesian heritage.**

The Covid pandemic has also led to herbal products being in higher demand and I see this as an opportunity to be more productive. I enjoy investigating organic herbs, modifying traditional growing practices to ensure the plants are more hygienic, thereby promoting a healthier lifestyle for our customers. I can't work on my own on all these farming ideas.

**Having the community to support myself and each other is one way of giving each other a helping hand during this challenging time.**

There is so much to learn from all kinds of gardening so why not give it a go?



Organic Herbal Anthem  
**Orgaherm**



**KEBUN  
POJOKAN**

FARMING GROUP  
@kebunpojokan  
0812-3932-2372



# ART CORNER



Sophie



Adam



Kevin



Manova



Alexa



Miguel



Sherlyne



Anaya



Reeya



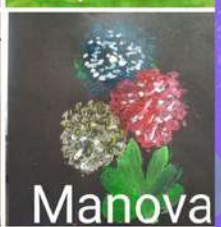
Sophie



Kevin



Sherlyne



Manova



Miguel



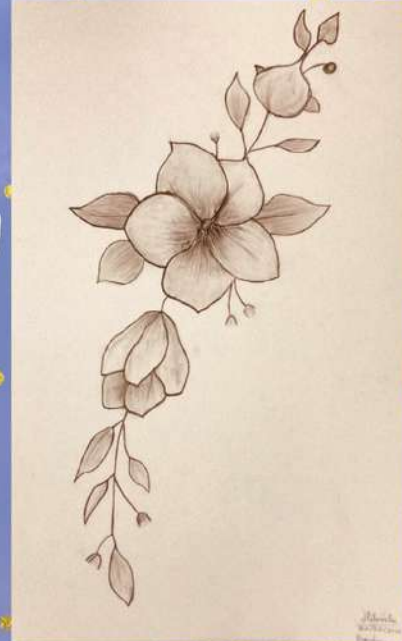
Alexa



Ben



Clifford



Ceisha





**ART CORNER**



# ADVENTURE

LIVE LIFE UNCHARTED



## ROADTRIP OF THE YEAR

From Bandung to Sulawesi  
By: Jaya Raj Gopala Krishnan  
Compiled by: Dr. Peter Darmawan

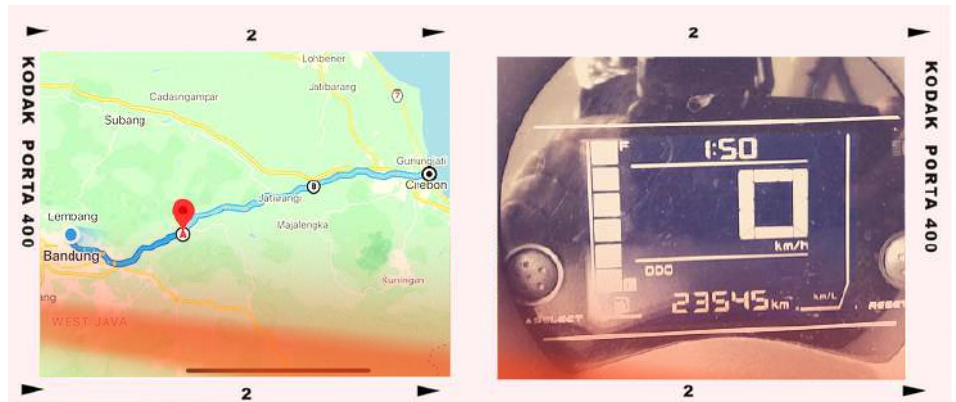


# MY TRAVEL DIARY TO SULAWESI

## DAY 1

22 Dec 2020: Bandung-Cirebon

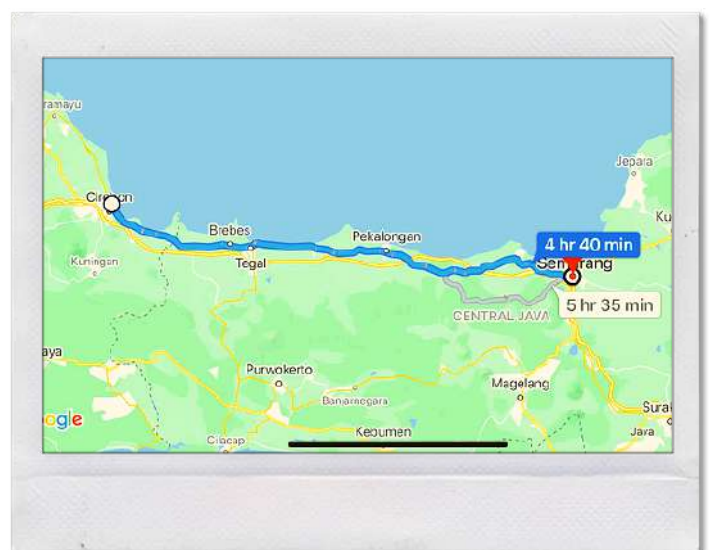
The original plan was to ride to Tegal, but there was a heavy rain on the way. I was therefore forced to stay overnight in Cirebon. I managed to clock 133 km on Day 1



## DAY 2

23 Dec 2020

Started the trip from Neo Cirebon after breakfast. I made a stop at Alun Alun Tegal, the black sandy beach of Pantai Kodok, and over at Raja Sate to enjoy the kambing sate for lunch. By 3pm, I reached Semarang and after resting for a while, went out to meet a friend at Simpang Lima. Alun Alun is a beautiful site in Semarang to relax and socialize, though there was very little crowd due to covid related restrictions. 234km on Day 2.



## DAY 3

24 December 2020. Semarang to Surabaya.

The trip started after breakfast from HA KA hotel and was a long and tiring one. Plenty of trucks on the way and had to ride carefully to avoid many potholes along the way. I made a stop at Pantai Perbatasan which at the border between Central Java and East Java. Pantai Tuban is also a nice place to relax and eat some tender coconut. It was 6pm by the time I checked into Santika in Cubeng. 334km on Day 3.



## DAY 4

25 Dec 2020

Surabaya is under lockdown due to Covid and this means most of the streets are empty. After breakfast, I went to the port to fix the tickets for the ship. The normally crowded port is quite empty and was able to confirm the details of tickets quickly through an agent. The health department was fine with the antibody test that I did in Bandung before the trip. It cost 1 Jt for the ticket to Makassar including the transportation of motorbike. The only problem was that the ship is leaving on 27th Sunday. This means staying one more night in Surabaya than planned. I decided to meet a friend and explore the city in the evening. We went to the second largest mosque in Indonesia in terms of capacity - Al Akbar Masjid in Surabaya. Also, I tried some traditional food in Surabaya.





## DAY 5

26 Dec 2020

Yosi, a friend and a streamer, promised to help me see the city. She came in the morning and after the Starbucks coffee we went to explore. Museum - closed, Tugu Pahlawan - closed, all parks in the city - closed. I could see what's going to happen with this trip, it is going to be a sight seeing one instead of learning culture and history through the normal way of visiting museums. We had coffee at the famous Jalan Tunjungan and had fish barbecue for lunch. During coffee time, made more friends and had a chance to learn about an electric motorbike made in the US. Apparently it can ride for 300km in one charging. Could be a possible replacement for future trips. After washing the motorbike and dropping off my friend I decided to pack and get ready for the long ship ride early morning on the next day.



## DAY 6

27 Dec 2020

Woke up early in the morning to catch the ship, checked out and reached the port by 06:30 am only to realise that the ship hasn't arrived from Makassar and it is rescheduled to leave from Surabaya at 15:50. I checked WhatsApp and realised that the agent has sent me a message at midnight about this. I missed it - mistake! I called Santika immediately and asked them whether I can use the checked out room till noon. The nicest receptionist immediately said yes, and I came back to sleep in the same room I vacated an hour back. After lunch, I checked out for the second time. I met Figo who arranged the ticket, at 13:00 and he showed me the tracking app that shows the ship approaching, and closer to Madura. It took another 3 hours for the ship to arrive. Surabaya North Quay is a beautiful port to sit and have coffee. I enjoyed the view and once the Pelini ship arrived, I got ready to board. The trucks took a long time to get out of the ship. In the meantime, the police checks the documents and I made a few more friends while waiting. Once I parked the motorbike in the hull of the ship, I went upstairs to change my economy ticket to first class. The room had two two beds and a toilet and I am the sole occupant for this trip. Beautiful ship. There were some issues in the hull with a truck getting stuck in the parking area and this caused another delay. By the time the ship left Surabaya it was 9pm. 30 hours of ocean ride ahead and I decided to sleep early after dinner.



## DAY 7

28 Dec 2020

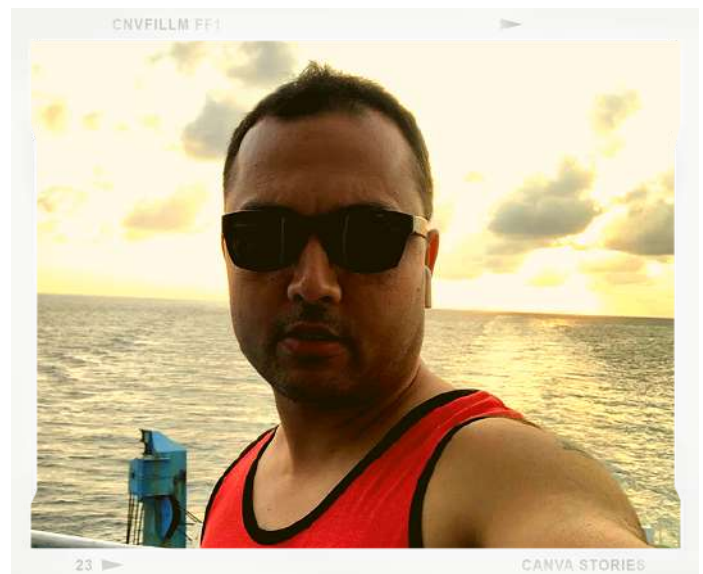
Woke up to the sounds of ocean and the slow rumbling of the ship engine. Not much sound enters the air conditioned room. The greatest thing about being in the middle of the ocean is that there is no phone signal, so there was plenty of time to think, walk around, refresh and have coffee. The flask and coffee I brought with me I order to reduce contact with shops, has become a blessing as there was a free flow of hot water available in the ship restaurant. I checked out the economy class sleeping area which is also spacious, air conditioned and clean. By the time I got back to the room, the food was already on my table. Excellent room service in the ship. The food is not the greatest that you can get, but it is definitely a treat to have in the middle of the ocean.

I watched one movie and then spend most of the afternoon in the deck area watching the ocean and an incredible sunset. Occasionally the GPS in the phone worked, and i realised that we are nowhere near Makassar and this is going to be a two night journey. After shower & dinner, which was again served to room, I went to the economy chair room where there was entertainment in the form of songs. Went to bed again early knowing that the ship is going to dock early morning at Makassar.

## DAY 8

29 Dec 2020

The ship arrived at Makassar by 6am. Being parked closer to the exit gate means I was able to get out of the ship quickly. I went to Fox Lite hotel and checked in, paying an extra 60% for an early check-in. It was laundry time as it has been a few days since I started the trip. After dropping clothes at a nearby laundry place, I went to see the museum and a fort. Both were closed. The part 1 of my plan was over once I reached Makassar. The antibody test I did in Bandung before the trip was a week or so ago and it was time to do another one. Went to Kimia Farma to do the test and they said the result will take at least two days. There were so many people there, coughing and wearing masks. Realized that if I stay there, I'll probably get the infection and that will certainly ruin the trip. I decided to do a plan B for covid test and delay it until the day I leave Makassar. I went to a mall and did some basic groceries for the trip and came back and did an online lesson with JC students. I promised to meet a friend the next day and went to bed watching football.







## DAY 9

30 Dec 2020

Makassar has an increasing number of Covid cases and I knew if I leave this city behind, I'll be moving to the so called green zones and the chance of infection will go down significantly. I decided to do some minimal exploration of the city today. I went to the Paotere harbour where boats from all across Sulawesi arrive for trade. Not much as a sightseeing site, but it might be useful if I am planning to explore inhabited or uninhabited islands at this side of Sulawesi. My next destination was the Masjid Raya Makassar which was constructed in 1949. The access to 99 Domes mosque was closed and so was Loasari beach.

I met up with a former colleague for lunch and enjoyed some Makassar fish dishes. She mentioned about Toraja and I started thinking about changing the coastal route I had in mind for Part 2 of my trip. The Majane - Mamuju route was the initial plan. Looking at the map I can see that if I commit to Toraja I'll have to go through the mountains and may end up skipping West Sulawesi completely. Still anxious about mountain roads in Sulawesi, I decided to change my plan and came up with a plan B in case the roads are bad after Toraja. I plan to retrace the road back to the west coast and then follow the the original plan to West Sulawesi after visiting Toraja. I tried the famous Coto Makassar and then went back to my room to pack for the trip tomorrow and rest.



# DAY 10

31 Dec 2020

I used one of the rapid test kit to do a self diagnosis to make sure that I have not got the infection so far. I started the day after eating breakfast from Fox Lite hotel.

It was sunny when I left Makassar. There were plenty of *becaks* on the road, both motorized and the pedaled ones. The coastal road also offers plenty of beach side restaurants to sit and relax. The single lane road from Makassar to the north has a tarmac that is patched up. You need precision and focus to ride at a reasonably good speed. The road is being repaired which means that you can expect a rectangular piece of concrete missing from the road while riding. This has happened too many times during my ride.

The plan was to visit Helena Sky Bridge, Bantimurung waterfall and some nearby caves before moving to Celebes Canyon and then finally getting to the small city of Pare Pare for an overnight stay. The party pooper came in the form of heavy thunderstorms. After riding for 30 minutes, in very low visibility I decided to stop and contemplate. There is no way that I can go anyway near any waterfall or caves in that kind of rain. I rested for a while at restaurant for the rain to lighten and then decided to cancel all of my exploration plans. Instead, I stick to the coastal route and ended up in Pare Pare well earlier than I planned.

The small town is in semi lockdown as the mayor gave orders not to have any celebrations for the new year eve and went the extra mile to order the closing of all shops by 6 pm including eateries. There was one KFC in the small town and I ended up queuing up for more than an hour to get the least favored delicacy for a new year eve. The year of 2020 ended the way it deserved, at least for me. In total, 170 km of riding today.







## DAY 11

1 Jan 2021

South Sulawesi is mainly inhabited by Makassarese people whereas areas north of Makassar including Pare Pare are Bugis ethnic group majority. Both these ethnic groups have long and rich histories which can be tracked back to ancient Megalith societies. These people are traditionally excellent seafarers and they used to trade with most of Asia.

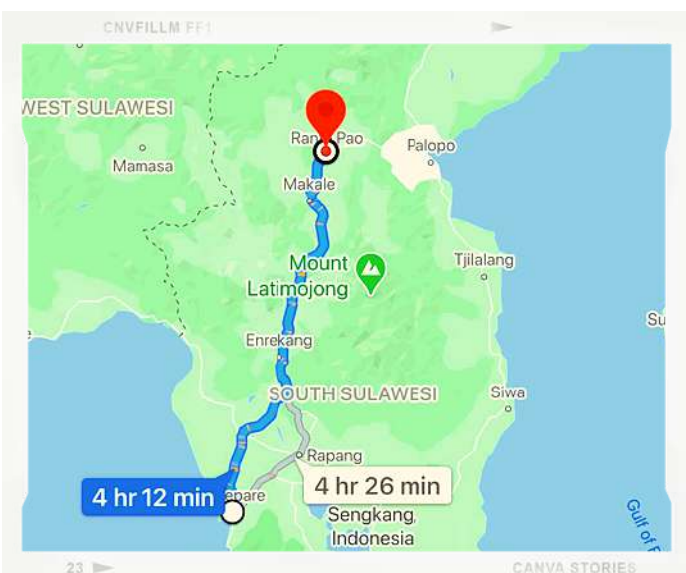
The plan for today is to move north to the next ethnic group, the Torajans - the people of the mountains. I have always been worried about the roads to the mountains, but I was in for a surprise. The roads to Toraja are very well maintained and it was an unforgettable ride through the twisty mountain roads with great views.

The Toraja traditional house is a great sight. The elegant roof looks like an upturned boat and the house apparently represents the 3 parts of the universe: heaven, earth and the world underneath.

The main religion is animistic though many have converted to Christianity. There is a huge statue of Jesus on top of a hill in Makele but access to the site was closed.

This is one great place to learn culture and explore. Two days definitely worth it here.

By noon, I reached Luta resort. I had lunch and once again did my laundry. Not long after, it rained again. Just like in Bandung, afternoons can be quite wet in these mountains. 175km of riding today.



# DAY 12

2 Jan 2021

Having breakfast in Luta Resort beside the river was a cool experience. The only problem was that the river water was muddy due to constant rains in the afternoons.

I went out to explore the villages and got straight into some ancient burial sites. Erong Lombok is the first one I visit, and it has a lot of human bones placed in wooden boxes in a cave. Torajans believe in afterlife and they keep bodies in special wooden boxes. They take care of these bodies regularly in order to make sure that the souls can come back to these bodies. The practice of taking bodies out of the tomb and cleaning is also very common. These burial sites play a significant role in their culture.

Covid means no tourists, and that also means I was the only one alive in most of the burial places. So had plenty of time to observe and literally talk to the dead while using Gopro to do the photography. As expected, none of the dead were helping me take photos!

The peculiar limestone and volcanic mountains forms plenty of natural caves and some of the oldest remains of civilisations in the world has been found from these parts of Sulawesi. I must plan an elaborate exploration, if time and resources permit in the future.

Around noon, I went up the mountain to a spot called Lolai Lempe. It is high up in the mountain with a stunning view. If we can get there early in the morning, the sunrise and the cloud view will be just like in Dieng. After that, I visited a couple more hill tops and then all of a sudden, the downpour started.

There was no other option but to ride back through the rain. I got back to the resort, took a shower and had a nice massage to get rid of all the tiredness from the long distance riding. I went out for dinner and after that, I started planning the next long ride tomorrow.





## DAY 13

3 Jan 2021

On a long trip like this, sometimes things don't go as planned. I got my calculations completely wrong today. I was looking at the map and I could see that Kota Palopo is only around 60km away. That's a very short distance to cover in a day. So I looked for the next big city to stay and found Kota Poso as the nearest big city with reasonably good accommodation. Google Map showed 340 km from Luta Resort to Ancyra Hotel in Poso. I have done 300 plus kilometres three times over the last few years. The trip from Tapan to Padang took 301 km, whereas the trip from Bukit Tinggi to Padang Sidempuan in 2019, took 310 km. In this trip itself, the Semarang - Surabaya ride took 334km. So I am confident that I could do the 340 km to Poso in one go. What I missed was that Google Map has picked a shortcut and I was in for a huge surprise.

Approximately 30 km into the trip through a beautiful highway, Google asked me to change into a small road. Normally I don't give complete control to Google, but when I looked at the map, I could see the problem. If I follow the highway to Palopo and then to Poso, that will be more than 400kms. I had no option but to follow Google. About 5 km into the dirt track, I realised the bigger mistake. The small road is going deep into the mountains and forests. I had to stop and make a decision. Luckily within a few minutes, I saw two ladies approaching in a village motorbike trying to maneuver their motorbikes through the pebble filled mountain road. They told me, there is no way that I can go with my motorbike through that trail to Poso. Only bicycles and mountain bikes can take the trail to the main road some 30km away, and the trail cuts off in several locations. I knew then what was happening with my Google Maps. Bicycle riders switch on the Google map with the default option when they take this trail. The default vehicle is car and Google thinks that another car has passed through that trail and it is an open road.







I started retracing the path back to the highway and checked the motorbike for any puncture. Then, I decided to commit to the 400 + km ride to Poso with a plan B to reconsider again when I reach Palopo.

There was virtually no traffic in the road, except for some bikers and soon I realised the reason. A major bridge in the middle of the forest got wiped out in a landslide and there is only a temporary narrow hanging bridge for motorbikes.

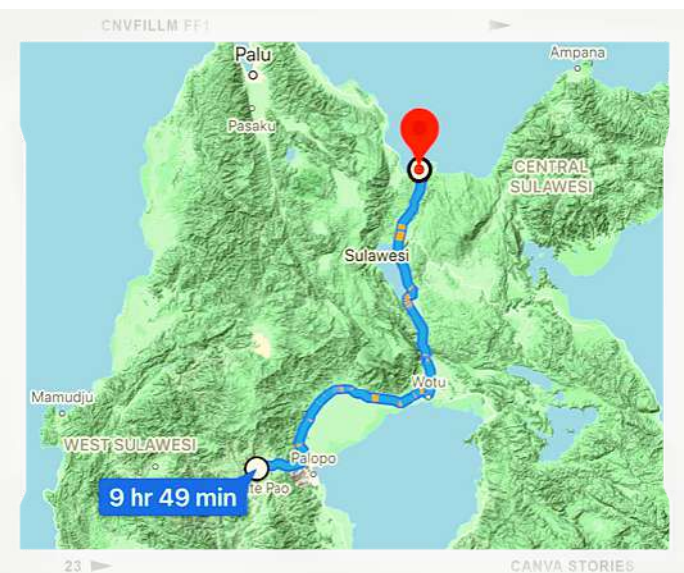
The ride was an unforgettable one but I could not stop frequently to take photos or enjoy the scenery as the 400 km distance was always occupying my mind. The majority of the ride was through a forest with sparsely populated villages in between.

As I reached Luwu Utara, the devastation of the flash floods that happened in June were everywhere. Houses, roads and even bridges have disappeared in that flood with thousands of people displaced.

By 3pm I reached the border between South Sulawesi and Central Sulawesi and there were the health authorities supported by men with assault guns to prevent anyone with Covid from crossing the border. I was asked a few questions and the test results that I had were sufficient to go through the check post. Very efficient border patrol, and not at all practical in provinces in Java with a huge population.

The flask and hot water means I could make coffee whenever I want and that was a blessing. I skipped most of the resting and rode continuously trying to enjoy the ride as best as I can.

I reached Poso by 7:30 pm, 12 hours after leaving Toraja and was super tired. Luckily it didn't rain. Had it rained, I would have either got stuck in the forest or got delayed significantly. I should plan better next time. I broke my personal record in terms of riding distance in a day: 410 km in 12 hours.



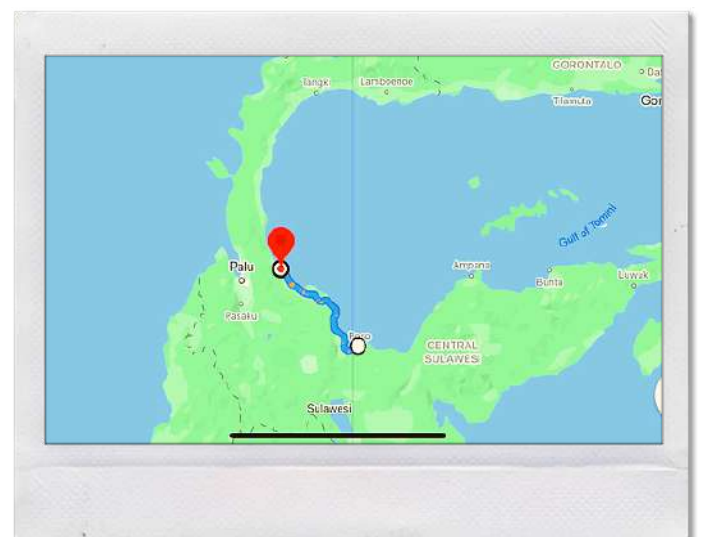
## DAY 14

4 Jan 2021

Slept very well after the 410 km ride yesterday and decided take it easy today. I woke up late, had a great breakfast at Ancyra Hotel, and by 10 am, it was already very hot outside. From now onwards, the trip will be a coastal route. The plan for the day is to ride to Parigi and find a comfortable place to stay. Parigi is not far away and this means that I will get some time to explore some of the beaches over there.

The surprise today came in the form a Hindu community occupying the coastal belt between Poso to Parigi. The road is lined with numerous Hindu temples (pura) just like in Bali minus the luxuries associated with mass tourism. I was told that historically, these Hindus had migrated from Bali a long time ago. Most of them are fishermen or farmers. So far, this is the biggest Hindu community that I have seen in Indonesia outside Bali.

I reached Parigi by 3 pm. After checking into Octaria Hotel, I went to a nearby beach. The beaches lining this coastline are all white sandy beaches with calm waves. I got some time to sit, relax and swim. This is a much needed break time after the long trip yesterday. As usual, lunch and dinner were fish, which is cheap and fresh in this area. I rode 148km today.





## DAY 15

5 Jan 2021

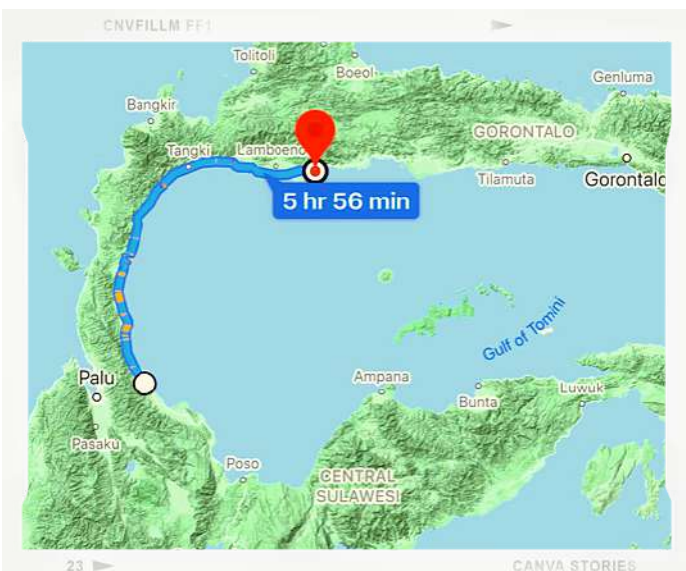
Palu was supposed to be the end of Part 2 of this long trip, but since it's already Parigi and it's parallel to Palu, I decided to consider that part 2 is over. The reason I decided to skip Palu is that it will require a few days of riding back and forth through the same road. Instead, it is better to focus the attention on the coastal road going to north of Sulawesi.

This is an extremely relaxing ride with beautiful beaches scattered across the right side of the road and magnificent mountains at the left side. The problem was that there were too many nice beaches to stop, and it was slowing the ride.

By 10am, I reached the equator. This is the second time I'm crossing the equator by land in Indonesia. Last year it was on the way to Banda Aceh from Padang. Moving from the Southern Hemisphere to the Northern hemisphere gave me a feeling of achievement, although for people in this area it is a daily routine. Today is a painfully hot and humid trip.

Central Sulawesi has good roads with nice tarmac for coastal roads. The clip for my GoPro was broken yesterday and thus I had to strap the camera to my chest which is a pity as the camera angle was not great.

Lunch was at a mangrove filled secluded beach. By evening, I reached Sakina Resort. The name does not provide any justification to the facilities. It is a roadside guesthouse for long distance drivers. I had cockroaches and mosquitoes for company. Luckily, I had a highly effective insect repellents with me. On the plus side, the room has a tiny balcony facing the beach. I slept well listening to the sound of waves. Tomorrow, I plan to cross the broader to Gorontalo. I rode 290 km today.



## DAY 16

6 Jan 2021

Early morning left Sakina Resort (a guest house) for Gorontalo. By 7am, I crossed the border from Central Sulawesi to Gorontalo and the roads changed instantly. The status of the road gave the impression of poverty in these areas. It has become more and more remote as well as less traffic on the road. Surprisingly, no one stopped me at the border to check my covid results, possibly due to the early morning hours.

The mountainside road gave me a feeling of being in Sumba (NTT) at times, minus the wandering wild horses. By 12 noon, I have reached the tranquil and breezy beach of Bolihutuo. I have already booked a hotel in Gorontalo and paid in advance, which is a mistake. There was a better place to stay at this beach and I could have easily spend a week here. I need to come back here again in the future to stay and explore nearby islands.

Lunch was again fish, fried in the local village way. By the time I got closer to Gorontalo, it started raining lightly and I got to Grand Q hotel by 5 pm. The room that I got gave me another surprise in the form of electricity in the shower water. The hotel engineers tried to fix it, without much success. I changed my room after an hour.

I decided to have a massage to pamper my body followed by a cozy dinner with beer at the hotel restaurant. Some luxury at least. I rode 280km today.





## DAY 17

7 Jan 2021

Exactly at 5 am in the morning, the bed shook violently. Waking up, I knew immediately that it is an earthquake. The shaking lasted for approximately 10 seconds and I grabbed my phone. I waited for the shaking to stop before running out of the room, looking for the emergency exit. The corridor was completely empty and silent. I looked out through the window to the roads outside and it was all empty and quiet. Nobody was evacuating! I took the stairs to the lobby and there was no one except the security who smiled and said, "gempa ya pak (it is an earthquake, sir)". It sounded as if they experience it very often here! Reluctantly went back to room to get some sleep. Exactly one hour after, there was one more shaking from the aftershock, but this time it is much lighter.

Breakfast was great at Grand Q. I took the motorbike for a water service, and then went to see Fort Benteng. This fort was constructed by the kings of Gorontalo in 1522, which was then taken over by the Portuguese followed by the Dutch, which was eventually recaptured by the King of Gorontalo.

I went to visit the museum and I was disappointed to see it closed due to the pandemic again, although not a single case has been reported in Gorontalo so far.

Gorontaloan people are the majority in these areas and this is the widespread ethnic group from Central Sulawesi to the North. Islam is the predominant religion in this area.

I collected laundry and rested for a while before going out again to the beach to have an early dinner of fish barbecue while watching the sunset. Tomorrow I will have another 400 km ride to Manado.



# DAY 18

8 Jan 2021

There are two routes going to North Sulawesi from Gorontalo, the main highway takes the northern coastline and looked like a busy road from the map. There is an alternate route shown by Google Map, on the southern coastline which apparently is also called Trans Sulawesi highway. Since this road is going through the coastline lining Tomini Bay, not much thinking was required to pick this route.

The plan was to cross the border of the province early in the morning, so that any delay due to Covid testing or result checking can be adjusted and I can still get to Manado by evening. It has been a while since I last did my testing, but I felt pretty safe as I have been travelling through the very remote areas of Sulawesi: the so called Green zones. Yet there was a bit of nervousness as I approached the border, which was shown around 60km from Gorontalo city.

Surprise surprise, there was no border! This road is so remote, and so few people travel it, that there is no boundary marked between the provinces of Gorontalo and North Sulawesi! Even the traditional gate welcoming visitors to North Sulawesi is not there on this road.

The beaches were once again exceptionally beautiful. An empty mountainous road with exotic beaches on the right hand side. This is one of the best stretches of the ride. The road was in exceptionally good condition, except in very small stretches where the force of flash floods were clearly visible. At least 3 bridges were completely gone in the last rainy season and the remains of these bridges gave clear evidence of the struggle these people are going through, on a yearly basis.

By noon, I reached Kotamobagu and had the fish for lunch with Minahasan side dishes.

Once I reached the northern coast of North Sulawesi, the beaches changed colour to a dark sandy ones. This side of the ocean has clearly experienced a more recent volcanic activities. The ManadoTua island is a majestic upwelling from the ocean and it showcased the raw power of nature. By 6pm reached the final destination - Manado Checked into S Loft hotel and rested after dinner, once again fish. This is the second time I have done 400 plus km in a day and it did not feel as bad as the first one. 406 km today.







## DAY 19

9 Jan 2021

As expected, I woke up very very late. I definitely needed a bit of a rest day after a long stretch of riding through the entire coastline of Tomini bay.

After having breakfast, I went out to Kimia Farma to do covid test. It was a Saturday and these places close by noon. It was still open when I got there but the customer service told me they only have limited number of test kits every day, unlike in Java, and the quota has already finished. I looked for a second option and then picked the more expensive Prodia Farma. They said any type of test will take 3 days due to backlog. I picked the PCR test to make sure that there is no problem at all before catching the flight back home next week. I will get the result on Wednesday and that gives me plenty of time to relax and explore.

Lunch was at Kinamang Resto, and I had a delicious Bobara bakar. I had a massage in the afternoon before going out to see a friend. I spent the evening at Manado Town square Mall. Life goes on as usual here in Manado, though the police came out at 8pm to send everyone home from streets. Not much riding today. It was a cool, relaxing day.



# DAY 20

10 Jan 2021

In Sulawesi, the vehicle number plates start with D just like in Bandung. But unlike in Java, vehicles in Sulawesi have two alphabets, for example Makassar, it is DD. For North Sulawesi this becomes DB. This gave me one advantage throughout the trip.

Unlike in Sumatra, where it all starts with B and my 'D' number plate raised eyes throughout the trip. Sulawesi was a different story. Most people connected the 'D' with one of them, which means I could easily blend among the traffic without getting noticed. I have also not seen a single D registration vehicle throughout this trip in Sulawesi, whereas in Sumatra, especially, north Sumatra, there was an abundance of D and B registration vehicles, most taking the easy ferry from Merak to Bakauheni and then riding north.

Today, after breakfast at S Loft, I decided to visit the satellite city of Tomohon. The mountainous city is a beautiful site and my aim was to climb Mount Lokon, an inactive volcano, which last erupted in 2011 and 2012, with a unique sideways eruption from the mountain, causing thousands of people to get displaced.

The climb was through the lava flow area, which over the last few years transformed to a small stream, and water flow changing the shapes of rocks and solid lava. The climb was tiring, possibly due to the hot weather and thin air. The volcano stands at 5180 feet from sea level. In an hour, I reached the top and there were a few youngsters up there, enjoying the view. The unique crater is another example of the raw power of nature.

By noon, I came back from Tomohon and rested for a while before going out to see the sunset from a wonderful site, the Soekarno Bridge. It is a unique icon of Manado and despite the pandemic, a lot of people stay near the bridge area to see the wonderful sunset, with encompassing view of Pulau Manado Tua and Bunaken islands.

I had tuna Barbecue for dinner before going to bed. I rode just under 80km today.







## DAY 21

11 Jan 2021

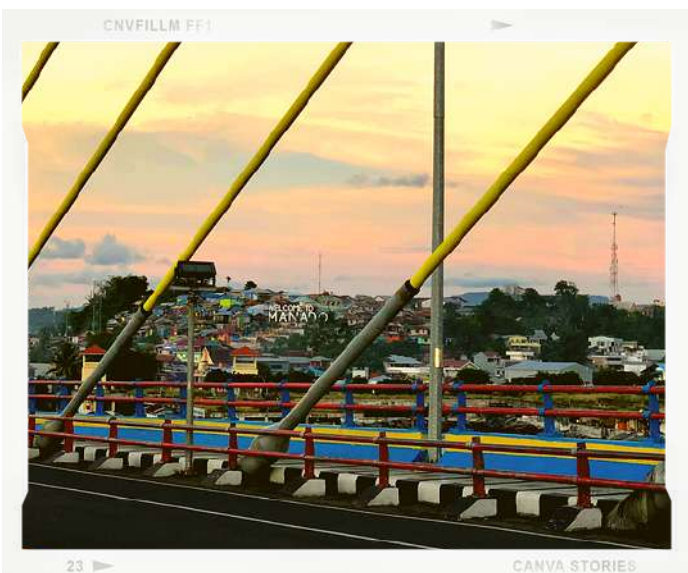
Taking a photo at the easternmost point of mainland Sulawesi was a plan in mind from the very beginning of the trip. From the map I could see a beautiful beach in there, one of the best in that coastline. The place is still 60 km away from Manado city but is easily manageable in the morning. I took my hammock, sun lotion, glasses, cap, snorkelling kit and spare clothes along with all the essentials for a beach day. After riding through some of the best roads of the trip, I got to the village at the entrance of the beach and there was the most disappointing board. The beach is closed! Apparently the people have heard about the pandemic and there were a few cases in the province which prompted the closing of all tourist locations. "Pulisan beach closed" "Paal beach closed" it was a disappointing outing.

The only photo I could take of the motorbike with the easternmost point was the one on the road facing the lagoon in the distance.

Seeing the road to Likupang beach, partially open, got into it. It's a dark, rocky beach area with plenty of boats and people. Decided to explore that area more and ended up circling the whole peninsula as I lost my directions and gps signal. There were a few more beaches but none so exotic.

Eventually decided to drop the plans and came back to the city. On the way had one of the best tuna barbecue for lunch. Came back to the hotel, took shower, and then went out see sunset again at the Soekarno bridge. Unfortunately the sunset was not as great as yesterday, but still got a relaxing time there watching the ocean, traffic and people enjoying the breeze and the tender coconut.

Tomorrow I will change hotel and start planning the return trip. I rode 180km today.



## DAY 22

12 Jan 2021

Minahasan people eat everything that's moving. It's a unique culture. Bats, dogs, cats, snakes and monkeys are delicacies here. My friends told me about a traditional market in Tomohon where these meats are sold and a search in Google Maps for "Tomohon Traditional Market" gave gross pictures of animals, with some very bad reviews from tourists. I somehow managed to miss this information from my earlier checklist when I visited Tomohon the day before yesterday. So I decided to ride back up the mountain in the morning to see the market.

There were plenty of butchered pork, beef, sheep and chicken. The only strange meat that I could find was bats, each roasted one costing around IDR 60k. Apparently the exotic meat market activity has been reduced owing to the pandemic. Later I was told there was another market around 30 km from Tomohon called "Pasar Tradisional Langowan". Remember the "wuhan wet market video" which you probably might have seen in whatsapp, when the pandemic started. The video was shot in this market. I would have certainly rode the 30 km happily, had I known about the meat market there, but the information came too late from my contacts.

The whole Bandung-Manado trip has been a long one so far, but I could feel the energy and enthusiasm and over the last few days.

The trip is going to end. After a quick lunch at Best Western, I went to wash the motorbike and straightaway went to Indah Cargo to send the motorbike back to Bandung. The bike has been so reliable, never giving me any problems, even with all the abusive riding throughout the trip for more than 3100 km over the last 22 days. It was sad to send it like that. The plan now is to collect the PCR test tomorrow and catch the next possible flight to Bandung.

My friends picked me up from the hotel for dinner and we had a seafood feast. Tomorrow will be the second last day of the trip







## DAY 23

13 Jan 2021

With the motorbike gone, I had to use grab to move around and decided to keep the use of grab to a minimum to avoid catching any viruses before going home. The breakfast at Best Western is really diverse and I can easily spend an hour or more at the restaurant just watching the ocean. The very next day I vacated this hotel, this whole area was inundated with seawater due to an unusually high tide.

I went out to see Museum Manado, and just like in other cities, it was closed due to the pandemic. I spent some time at the beachside and then went to JNE to send back home some belongings, in order to reduce my luggage weight and to make sure that I don't have a check-in luggage.

Indah Cargo has sent me a picture of the packed motorbike, and confirmed that the motorbike will leave Manado on 15th, on a different type of trip. It would take 20 days to get back to Bandung, via truck and ship to Balikpapan and Jakarta. The freight would also get delayed due to the earthquake in Majane on the 15th of Jan.

Dinner tonight was Grilled Tuna gill cover, which is a delicacy here. Today is the second last day of the trip.



## DAY 24

14 Jan 2021

The Bandung-Manado motorcycle trip is ending successfully with 3100 km clocked.

The breakfast was once again great, but I had to rush a bit to checkout and catch the flight home at 11:30 from Sam Ratangi airport. The airport provides antigen testing at 200k but we should get there at least 4 hours before the trip. I already had the PCR test results with me so it was not required. The flight reached Jakarta on time and I immediately took a travel minibus to Bandung. By 5 pm, I was in Bandung. It only took me 6 hours to get back home in the return trip whereas the trip to Manado took me 18 days in total!



**STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT  
ADVENTURE...**

