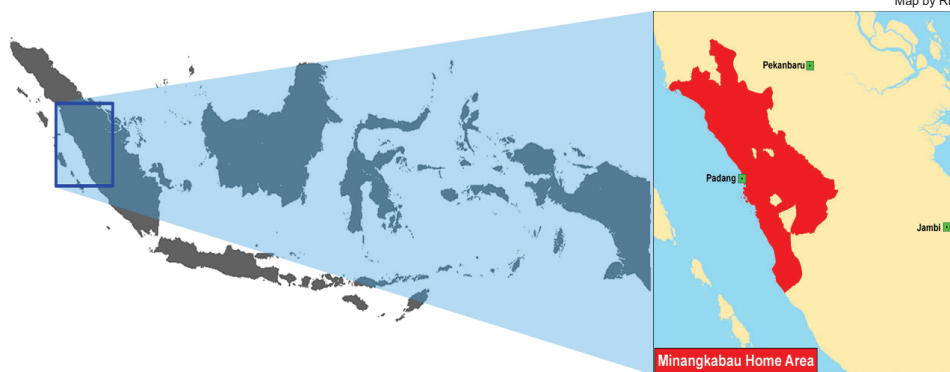


MINANGKABAU



Demography	Minangkabau Language	Status
Location: West Sumatera	Bible: NT	Believers: < 1,000 ^(15,611)
Population: 6.000.000	Jesus Film: Yes	Engaged: Yes
Major Religion: Islam	Online Media: No	Indigeneous: 1

Identity and Location

The Minangkabau (also called the Minang) are the original inhabitants of West Sumatra Province and most of them live in that province. They are famous for their tradition of merantau: leaving their home village and working in other areas to find their fortune. Many of them have moved to other islands of Indonesia. They are the fourth largest ethnic group in Indonesia, and have a great deal of influence.

The very name Minangkabau reflects their shrewdness. It means “winning” (menang) “water buffalo” (kerbau). According to legend, soldiers from Java came to attack West Sumatra. Realizing the huge number of soldiers, the Minangkabau leader challenged the Javanese to a buffalo fight to determine the outcome of a war. The Javanese champion was a huge buffalo, while the Minangkabau chose an unweaned calf. After starving the calf before the fight, they tied a knife to its snout. When the animals met, the hunger-crazed Minangkabau calf tried to nurse, causing the Javanese beast to bleed to death. Since that time, the water buffalo has figured prominently in Minangkabau myth, culture, and architecture. Traditional Minangkabau homes and buildings have roofs shaped like the horns of a buffalo.

Society and Culture

In the past, Minangkabau villages were small and were led by a chief and his advisors. Every village had autonomy. Kings and nobles were not allowed to interfere.

Other than owning restaurants, Minangkabau also are famous as traders.

The Minangkabau are very proud of their traditions. In their matrilineal culture, the family name and the family wealth is inherited by the daughter. In the household,

much of the responsibility is held by the wife’s brother, called ninik mamak.

This uncle is required to take care of his nephews and nieces and watch over everything connected to the family heirlooms and inheritance. The role of the uncle is decreasing nowadays as more Minangkabau change to the more common way of life of the husband leading the house. This change is primarily seen in Minangkabau who have moved out of the Minangkabau homeland to find their fortune. The Minang have restaurants literally all over country. They are also famous as traders, dealing primarily in clothing and jewelry.

Beliefs

Most Minangkabau are orthodox Muslims. There is a Minangkabau saying, “To be Minangkabau is to be Muslim”. The Minangkabau who leave Islam are disowned by their family and neighborhood and lose their job.

In the 1800s, the Dutch took advantage of a conflict between the guardians of Minangkabau traditions and the Muslim religious leaders to increase their power in the area. Once the religious leaders united with the traditional elders to oppose the Dutch, Islam was added to the Minangkabau traditions.

Needs

In education and business, the Minangkabau are relatively better off than other ethnic groups in Indonesia. Nevertheless, education and industry in West Sumatra still need improvement. Home industries are mainly weaving, sewing, and knitting. These crafts have the potential to be increased. Tourism could also be developed in the Mentawai islands and the areas of Lake Maninjau, Lake Singkrak, and Bukittinggi, because of the amazing natural beauty of those locations