

The ULTIMATE Guide on How to Get to the Gili Islands

Your heart is set on experiencing the vision of paradise the Gili Islands are. But how to get there? There are loads of options, and it can feel a bit overwhelming trying to pick the best way based on cost, travel time, convenience, and where you're coming from. So we've put together the ultimate guide on [how to get to Gili islands](#).

We are totally unaffiliated with any travel company, and so we feel this is the best unbiased, detailed, and up-to-date guide you can find across the internet. Let's dive into it!

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Getting to Gili Islands from Bali

Bali is the most popular destination for tourists in Indonesia, and so this is the route to the Gili Islands that the overwhelming majority of travellers take. You have a few main options: taking a 'fast' boat, taking a 'slow' boat, or flying to Lombok (then driving and taking a short boat ride).

Fast boat to Gili Islands from Bali: what to expect

The most common and generally quickest method of transport from Bali to the Gilis is boat, specifically using what are called 'fast boats' i.e. medium-sized passenger boats that go fairly fast. Although they are 'fast', remember these boats are operating on island time—they don't always leave and arrive at their scheduled times.

You have two main options on where to get the boat from—the Sanur harbour (on the east side of the top of the southern tip of Bali) or the Padang Bai port (which is significantly further east). Most visitors opt for Padang Bai port because it's closer to the Gilis and the boat ride is shorter, and there are more boat crossings from this port.

If you're staying in Sanur, it probably makes sense to just catch the boat from there. If you're staying elsewhere—like in Canggu, Seminyak, Kuta, or Ubud—then the boat from Padang Bai is likely the best option. **Want to know how to book a fast boat?** [Click here](#).

Padang Bai to the Gilis

From Canggu, it's about a 1.5-hour drive (without stops) to reach Padang Bai. From Ubud, it will be about an hour and 15 minutes. When you book your boat ticket, pick-up from the main tourist locations is usually included in the price—note, you'll be sharing the car, mini-van, or bus with other people. Sometimes it takes a long time to pick up everyone on the passenger list, and if you are first on the list to be picked up, you'll have to be ready long before the departure time.

You could arrange your own transport to the port, at your cost, such as by using ride-hailing apps GoJek or Grab or booking a driver. If you do this, allow *plenty* of contingency time for traffic which is often terrible in Bali. Another benefit of using the boat company's provided transportation, though, is that if the vehicle is stuck in traffic, or late for any other reason, the boat will sometimes delay departure so that you can all make the boat (no guarantee on this).

Once you've arrived at Padang Bai, the driver or other boat company staff should show you where to go. The boat offices are right in front of the pier where you'll board. Here, they usually confirm your booking and give you a lanyard to wear and you give this back when you board the boat to prove you've paid.

After that, head to the pier to wait to be called for your boat. Just follow the crowd that are wearing the same lanyards as yours. If you forgot to bring snacks or drinks for the journey, don't worry because there will be about a dozen ladies on the pier eagerly trying to sell you just about anything you can imagine.

The boat journey is typically around two hours depending on factors such as water chopiness. After the boat departs, you're usually free to get up from your seat and move around on the boat (as much as possible on the sometimes cramped boat). Some prefer to sit on the top of the boat and work on their tan a bit—and normally up there they have a cooler filled with Bintang beer and other beverages.

The boat will stop at all three Gili Islands and then usually go on to Lombok. So pay attention to make sure you get off at the right place. Getting off the boat at Gili Air and Trawangan (Meno has a pier) involves climbing down a ladder into the shallows so be prepared for this by wearing shorts and flip-flops or sandals. Staff do help with your luggage though. And that's it, you're in the Gilis!

Sanur to the Gilis

There isn't too much difference involved with catching the boat from Sanur, so check the above info on catching the boat from Padang Bai even if you're planning on going from Sanur. The boat company you book with should still offer you transportation to the port.

Once at the port, the process is mostly the same as Padang Bai for boarding the boat. Except for a key difference—there is no pier at Sanur, so you'll need to wade through the shallows to reach the boat. They usually partly beach the boat so you don't have to wade through very deep water, but you'll want to wear shorts and flip-flops/sandals that you can quickly take off.

The journey from Sanur to the Gilis is significantly longer than Padang Bai—around 4 hours. But you obviously save time by not having to drive to Padang Bai. It is quite a long journey, so even if you don't usually get seasick, it's advisable to take a motion sickness tablet. The most common brand in Indonesia is Antimo and you can find it in all pharmacies or in shops around the port.

Slow **boat to Gili Islands**

Apart from the popular fast boats, you can also get a 'slow' boat i.e. a ferry from Padang Bai to Lembar port in Lombok. You'll then have to arrange your own taxi from Lembar to Bangsal port (around 1.5 hours) to catch a smaller boat to the Gilis.

This is the public ferry that is mostly used by locals. You'll be crammed in with lots of other people, including children and crying babies. It can be hot. Sometimes they do karaoke on the boat—it's very loud and not as fun as it sounds. It takes around 4–5 hours but it's very cheap—last time we checked it was IDR 55,000 (USD 3.50). It runs 24 hours a day, leaving once an hour.

Although you're getting a great bargain for the ferry, with the taxi and boat ticket to the Gilis themselves, this cost quickly goes up and you have to deal with being uncomfortable on the ferry. Definitely purchase some motion sickness pills beforehand (called Antimo) from a pharmacy or shop at the port.

Flying to the Gilis (sort of)

As an alternative to the fast and slow boats to the Gilis, you can fly from Bali Ngurah Rai Airport to Lombok International Airport. The flight is fast (25 minutes) and it can certainly be a convenient and comfortable option. The prices go up and down but can be as low as IDR 350,000 (USD 22).

However, Lombok International Airport isn't that close to the Gilis. There used to be an airport closer to the Gilis (Selaparang Airport) but it was closed over 10 years ago. [Read more about getting to the Gilis from Lombok International Airport here.](#)

Getting to the Gili Islands from Lombok

While you have a few options, your best bet is simply to show up at Bangsal port and ask when the next available boat to your chosen Gili Island is. Note that not all boats will go to all the Gili Islands, so do check.

Public boat from Bangsal, Lombok

This is the cheapest option by far—tickets cost IDR 10,000 (USD 0.65) or less depending on the island you're going to. The boat runs at irregular intervals from around 7.30 am to 4:30 pm. The journey takes around 30 minutes from Bangsal port.

Fast boat from Bangsal, Lombok

Pretty much all the fast boat companies that serve the Bali/Gili route make a stop in Lombok. None of them seem to allow you to buy **Lombok to Gili Island** tickets online though—likely because the cost is small and it's not worth their time to sell them online. Just buy them at the port in Bangsal. With a fast boat, the journey is usually around 20 minutes depending on the island you're getting off at. The last fast boat is usually around 4:30 pm

Chartering a private boat

Missed all the scheduled boats? Don't worry too much—you'll never usually find it difficult to charter a private boat no matter where on the shore in Indonesia you are. The cost may be high, or not, depending on your haggling skills. Be careful—fishermen may prioritise your cash above safe seafaring conditions.

From Lombok International Airport

From Lombok International Airport, you'll need to take a 1.5–2 hour taxi to Bangsal Port—prices start at IDR 250,000 (USD 16). Online taxis (like GoJek and Grab) are prohibited from picking up passengers at the airport, so you'll have to use the taxis that wait outside.

They'll likely start shouting 'transport, transport!' as soon as you walk out the door. They'll give you a high price to begin with—negotiate. Once you reach Bangsal, follow the [instructions above for catching a boat to the Gilis.](#)

How to book a fast boat

There are a few ways to book. The most convenient is probably through your accommodation. You can also use a travel/tourist agency—you'll see loads of them

advertising boat trips everywhere you go in tourist areas. Prices range widely. Don't go with the first agent you see—instead, compare prices and negotiate.

You can also book online with some companies. Sometimes you get a better price online, sometimes not. It's usually cheaper to book a return ticket and this will be an open ticket so you don't need to actually decide the day you're coming back when booking. However, they usually ask you to confirm your return date the day before. The cheapest return price you'll see tends to be around IDR 700,000 (USD 45) from Padang Bai to the Gilis.

Fast boat companies

Note: the information provided below was correct at the time of writing, but prices and departure locations can change at any time and they are merely provided here to give you a point of reference.

You won't be able to travel from every departure location to every destination across all companies—check if they offer your desired route through the links below.

Eka Jaya

This is the best-recommended company as it's one of the oldest and usually the most reliable, and its fleet of boats seems to be of a generally higher standard than other companies.

- Departs from / arrives to: **Padang Bai (Central-East Bali); Gili Trawangan; Gili Meno; Gili Air; Bangsal (Lombok)**
- Online return price for Padang Bai–Gili Islands: **IDR 725,000**

[Book online with Eka Jaya here.](#)

BlueWater Express

- Departs from / arrives to: **Padang Bai (Central-East Bali); Serangan (South Bali); Gili Trawangan; Gili Meno; Gili Air; Bangsal (Lombok); Nusa Penida**
- Online return price for Padang Bai–Gili Islands: **IDR 720,000**

[Book online with BlueWater Express here.](#)

Gili Gili Fastboat

- Departs from / arrives to: **Padang Bai (Central-East Bali); Gili Trawangan; Gili Air; Bangsal (Lombok)**
- Online return price for Padang Bai–Gili Islands: **IDR 1,580,000**

[Book online with Gili Gili Fastboat here.](#)

Marlin Fast Boat

- Departs from / arrives to: **Padang Bai (Central-East Bali); Sanur (South Bali); Gili Trawangan; Gili Air; Bangsal (Lombok); Nusa Penida; Nusa Lembongan**
- Online return price for Padang Bai–Gili Islands: **IDR 1,000,000**

[Book online with Marlin Fastboat here.](#)

Golden Queen

- Departs from / arrives to: **Padang Bai (Central-East Bali); Sanur (South Bali); Gili Trawangan; Gili Air; Bangsal (Lombok); Nusa Penida;**
- Online return price for Padang Bai–Gili Islands: **IDR 700,000**

[Book online with Golden Queen here.](#)

How to get between the Gili Islands

There is an official island-hopping boat service that serves the three Gili Islands. It runs on a schedule that you can check at the harbour of whichever island you're on. You simply purchase tickets at the boat's service booth. The latest price was IDR 40,000 per ticket—you can get off at any island. Two services run daily at around 8:30–9 am and 3–4 pm but do check the schedule at the harbour.

Otherwise, you can charter a boat. Either try asking local fishermen or ask at your accommodation. This can be preferable to the island hopper boat since you're not constrained by a schedule, and you can ask the fisherman to take you around the best snorkel sites or wherever else you want to go. Obviously the longer you use the boat, the more you should expect to pay. Do be careful, as these little fishing boats don't normally carry life jackets.

Important: Do not attempt to swim between the islands. They may look close, but the currents out there are VERY strong—even Olympic swimmers would likely run into trouble.

FAQs

How far is Gili Islands from Bali?

Padang Bai (the most-used port to get to the Gili Islands) is about 64 km/40 miles from the Gili Islands.

Can you do a day trip to Gili Islands from Bali?

It's possible, but not advisable. The earliest you'll arrive to the Gilis using the fast boats is around 11 am and you'll then have to catch the last boat at around 4:30 pm. Meaning you'll get around 5 hours on the islands, but you'll have spent more time than that travelling. Just stay on the islands.

How far is Gili Islands from Lombok?

From Bangsal port in Lombok, the Gili Islands are only 7 km/4 miles away.

Do the boats have life jackets?

All the fast boats have sufficient life jackets. The ferries also have life jackets, but whether they actually have enough for the sometimes large number of passengers is not guaranteed. If you ever charter a local's boat, they probably won't have life jackets.

Can you fly to Gili Islands?

The Gilis are three tiny islands—no airport would fit. But you can fly to Lombok International Airport and then journey to the Gili Islands from there. If you're coming from Bali, though, the fast boats are generally the best option.

How to reach Gili Islands from Bali—the easiest way?

The fast boats are probably the easiest, followed by flying to Lombok and making your way from there.

How many Gili Islands are there?

There are three: Gili Trawangan, Gili Meno, and Gili Air.

Is there transport between Gili Islands?

Yes, there is an island hopper boat.