THE STORMRIDER SURF GUIDE
INDONESIA
AND THE INDIAN OCEAN
Dubbed “The land of the head-hunters” by Marco Polo, who was the first Western visitor to this chain of 72 islands, islets and rocks, now commonly referred to as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Geographic isolation, heavily restricted travel, mysterious Stone Age culture and totally uncharted waters characterize this zone. Geographically akin to the Sumatran island chains, the Andaman’s have been on many surfers’ travel wish list since being unveiled in the late ’90s by surfing photographer, John Callahan. Whilst foreign tourists are permitted to visit the Andaman Islands, the Nicobars are only accessible to Indians and tribal areas are restricted. With only 36 of the 239 Andaman Islands

**TRAVEL INFORMATION**

**Local Population:**
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands - 360,000

**Coastline:**
- 2,000km (1,250mi)

**Time Zone:** GMT +5.30

**Video:**
- Thicker Than Water

**Getting There:**
- Foreigners need an Indian tourist visa, plus a 30-day tourist permit must be obtained on arrival at Port Blair from the immigration authorities. Plan to lose one day in PB to get entry permits and paperwork in order. Port Blair is served by Alliance AirIndian Airlines flights from Calcutta and Chennai (Rs 2,500). Jet Airways have daily Chennai flights from Rs 100 to 400. Book very early as there are only 3 to 4 ferries per month depart Calcutta and Chennai, taking 66 hours and costing Rs 1,125 for a bunk or Rs 125 for a deluxe cabin.

**Lodging and Food:**
- Butlers Bay now has tourist huts available on the shore. Surfers have camped on the point, just prepare to be eaten alive by mosquitoes and sand flies. There’s guesthouse and government accommodation in Port Blair. Boats charterers are the only way to get to the best spots, but few operate – the family run 72ft (21.5m) sail yacht Soma does min 12d tours at $1,900p/d collecting guests in Port Blair after the 3 day crossing from Phuket (www.somayacht.com). The 51ft (15.3m) Gnea is a wooden, kite-rigged trimaran, taking scuba and surf tours around the Andaman Sea.

**Weather:**
- The climate remains tropical throughout the year with temperatures varying between 24° C (75° F) and 33° C (91° F). Due to the incessant sea breeze, the Andaman’s has very humid weather. The SW monsoon first touches Indian soil in the Andaman’s and then proceeds towards the mainland. From mid-May to October, heavy rains hammer the islands, often bringing violent cyclones that leave the west coast beaches strewn with fallen trees. In November and December, less severe rains arrive with the NE monsoon. The best time to visit these islands is between mid-November and April. Annual rainfall can reach 3,860mm (120”. Water temps remain warm year round; take 2 pairs of boards at least.

**Nature and Culture:**
- Home to 9age tribes (Onges, Jarawas, Sentineles) these exclusive aboriginal people live in impenetrable jungles, and still practice age old rituals including some cannibalism. In the Nicobars, the people of Chawai are believed to have some occult powers over winds, waves, tides, current, etc., and to manipulate them to their advantage. In Port Blair, the Cellular Jail is worth a visit and Ross Island will give a lasting impression of British imperial rule. Little Andaman has elephant safaris through the rainforest and they train them to carry bags. Trek to the White Surf and Whisper Wave waterfalls. This is a world-class diving zone with large pelagics and amazing visibility. Great fishing.

**Hazards and Hazards:** Due to its remoteness, any emergency would take days to reafrate; take a well-stocked first aid kit. If camping, take a water purifying kit - fresh drinking water is hard to find. Sand flies on the beach are bloodthirsty and merciless and impossible to avoid in many areas. The bees really linger and are easily infected – keep all wounds/cuts clean and covered. These islands are wild; mind the sea crocs and potentially hostile tribes.

**Handy Hints:** Take everything including two regular shortboards, reef boots and repair kit, plus snorkelling equipment for the many flat/windy days.
inhabited, the dense tropical forests support an exotic, fragile ecosystem of unique flora and fauna, preserved and protected in 96 sanctuaries and nine national parks.

Port Blair only merits a short stay for surfers. Havelock is a popular island with resorts and swell can sneak in from the south, but it will usually be flat and only fit for a bodyboard. Close to Port Blair is the main tourist beach of Corbym’s Cove, just east of Ramesh. Hadeppie, where the palm-fringed beach is generally flat or a tiny cove, unless there is wind off from the E–SE or booming S filtering thru. There are no reliable breaks on the tiny Twin Islands off Rolkot or the Cinque Islands, which are dive, snorkelling and tourist day trip destinations. An exposed, wide reef pass on North Sentinel Island has been surfed, but these areas are off limits and the Sentinelese locals have a habit of attacking any strangers with spears and arrows. Tiny, uninhabited South Sentinel may hold a hollow left wall on its eastern side in certain conditions. Little Andaman offers the best swell exposure from the S.W., as it isn’t blocked by the Nicobars, sitting a little to the SE. Jackson Creek offers a safe anchorage inside a large flathead reef a few miles south of the island. It is an excellent left, but needs E-S winds to be offshore and a decent swell to rip so it’s quite inconsistent. No crowds unless you include illegal fishing boats and unbelievable mosquitoes. Past the two stretches of beachbreak on the west coast is another left called Totem Reef that needs the same SE wind to be perfectly offshore, but can still be rideable during the NE monsoon. The SW tip of the island should show the most swell, especially at Muddy’s, a solid, leggy lefthander that works in NE and barrels hard in sections. Around Sandy Point is the main event, namely Kumari Point, which was the fastest and longest right pointbreak in the country. Unfortunately, due to the recent spate of earthquakes in the region, this most photogenic of reefs has been lifted out of the water and now only breaks for about a quarter of it’s former glory. Instead of a pin wheeling right point, the line-up has broken up into a more peaky, sectiony affair, but still shows some awesome average form when there’s enough S-SW swell and winds from the N quadrant. The inside section has got even hollower as it spins down to the creek mouth channel in the reef. Most surfers concentrate on the reliable left reef up the east coast on the northern headland at Butler’s Bay known as Jawa Point, named after one of the indigenous tribes. It’s positioning leaves W swells out of the equation, but anything S will hit a rocky, limestone shelf that curves into the bay, turning any N winds offshore. When it’s on, a fast jetting left suffices up and peels from start to finish. Even when it’s smaller, it still offers fun park walls that tumble down the reef in sections, offering hits and shoulders, with the chance of a few cover-ups at bigger sizes. Most Andaman waves are fairly easy with...