

**Colonial Bengkulu / Benkoelen, worth a visit and much more than that**  
You want colonial adventure, go to Bengkulu and fall in love!!  
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Pictures are available on request.

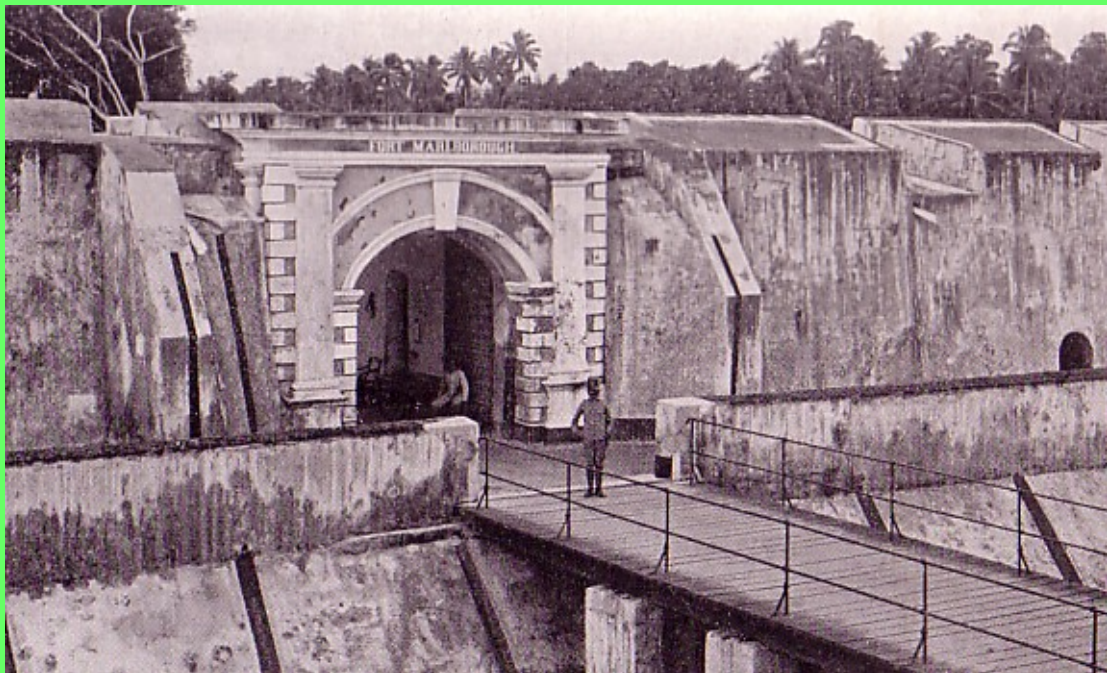
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**1. Introduction**

Bengkulu / Benkoelen, southwest coast of Sumatra, is an Indonesian province. The province is small and is not so densely populated, comprising a very mixed ethnic ancestry people (Rejang, Malay, Bugis, Chinese, Singhalese, Arabic and Indo (mixed Indonesian / Chinese and Dutch blood). The traveller has to pass the Bukit Barisan Mountains and will arrive, at last, at this beautiful and clean colonial diamond, called Bengkulu capital of the of the same name, on the western coast of this very rainy island a few miles west from Singapore. Cheap flight reservations can be arranged to reach Medan in the north of Sumatra from anywhere. Then follows a long, but interesting journey over land before you reach Bengkulu. By air Bengkulu is connected with Jakarta. But delay is normal. The British founded Bengkulu in 1685. It still is a quiet university town as well as an administrative centre. The town contains a number of historical monuments such as Benteng Marlborough / Fort Marlborough, Sukarno's House, Mesjid Jamik (designed by Sukarno, a professional architect, during his exile in Bengkulu), Bengkulu Museum and the European cemetery at Jalan Ditra.

Most of Bengkulu is set back from the quiet coast. Only Fort Marlborough and a part of the old town are located at the ocean. In my opinion specially Fort Marlborough and Sukarno's House, a beautiful Dutch villa, are worth a visit.



**P.1 The main gate of Fort Marlborough, Bengkulu 1918**

In front a soldier of the Dutch East-Indian Army stand on quard.

From: Indië, geïllustreerd Weekblad voor Nederland en Koloniën: jrg. 2 april 1918 – april 1919;  
Haarlem Holland 1918 p. 654

**P.2 Sumatra, The outpost, Bengkulu/ Benkoelen, see >> on the picture below**

From > Gelder, W. van: Schoolatlas van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië; Den Haag 1916 no. 6



## 2. The beach



P.3 A stormy day at the beach, Bengkulu 1998  
 Photo Dirk Teeuwen

My wife and I have been spending there a couple of days. We were the only guests of the hotel and we enjoyed a wonderful time. During the afternoon locals joined us at the swimming pool for a swim, a dive and a chat. We felt lost at the pantai-(beach-)esplanade, but a lovely lady, her beautiful baby as well as the refreshments (P.5)made us feel very comfortable.



P.4 Not Treasure Island, but the beach of Bengkulu on a busy day in 1998  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen



P.5 Pantai / beach of Bengkulu, 1998, a beautiful mother and a beautiful baby of course  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen



**P.6 The esplanade of Bengkulu in 1998  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen**

### **3. The Chinese quarter after the earthquake of 1916**

**Earthquakes could happen around Bengkulu / Bengkulu sometimes, such as the following photographs from the olden days will show.**



**P.7 The Chinese Quarter of Bengkulu / Benkoelen after the earthquake of 1916  
From: Indië, geïllustreerd Weekblad voor Nederland en Koloniën: jrg. 2 april 1918 – april 1919;  
Haarlem Holland 1918 p. 652**



**P.8 The Chinese Quarter at Bengkulu, 1918, after reconstruction**  
From: *Indië, geïllustreerd Weekblad voor Nederland en Koloniën*: jrg. 2 april 1918 – april 1919;  
Haarlem Holland 1918 p. 653

### **3. Some monuments: Fort Marlborough and Sukarno's House**

The first president of Indonesia was brought into exile by the Dutch from 1938 until the arrival of the Japanese in 1942. The Dutch allowed him to spend his time in a luxury villa in Bengkulu. He was not allowed to leave Bengkulu and vicinity, but otherwise Sukarno could do whatever he liked to do.



**P.9 Exile in luxury, Sukarno's beautiful Dutch colonial villa, Bengkulu 1998**  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen



**P.10 Sukarno's bicycle, made in Holland in the Gazelle Factory, Bengkulu 1998  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen**

The British founded Bengkulu in 1685. It was the last last territory in the Dutch East-Indies to be held by the British. The military centre of Bengkulu is Fort Marlborough, constructed in 1762. It is a stronghold with old English gravestones with English inscriptions. Fort Marlborough was the seat of British power in the province of Bengkulu. It replaced a fort called York and was completed in 1720. Restoration found place in 1985. The fort is open to the public.



**P. 11 and 12 The main gate (see p.1 also)from the outside and from the inside of Benteng Marlborough in 1998  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen**



**P. 13 The second, northern gate from the inside, Bengkulu 1998  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen**



**P.14 The northern gate and a part of the ramparts, Bengkulu 1998  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen**



**P.15 The southern main gate and another part of the ramparts, Bengkulu 1998**  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen



**P.16 The inner court, the main gate at the left, Bengkulu 1998**  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen





**P.17 Another part of the northern ramparts, Bengkulu 1998**  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen



**P.18 View from the fort into the old town, Benkuku 1998**  
Photo Dirk Teeuwen



**P.19 Modern Bengkulu in 1998**



**P.20 Author and fans  
Photo taken by a very nice Bengkulu lady**

5. European cemetery



