

### Who are the Banjar?

The Banjar are an ancient people of mixed Dayak, Malay and Javanese ancestry. The Banjar live primarily in southeastern Kalimantan, Indonesia. Some also live in East Malaysia. The Banjar have been called the "people of the water" because they live along Kalimantan's many rivers and depend on these waterways for their livelihood. There are about 3.5 million Banjar people today.

### Languages

The Banjar people have their own Banjar language, a Malay dialect. Most also speak Bahasa Indonesia, the Indonesian national language.

### Livelihood

In addition to fishing, many Banjar work on farms and plantations. Trade, transportation and mining are also common occupations. Products produced in south Kalimantan include pepper, rice, rubber, plywood, sawn timber, rattan, frozen shrimp and crayfish, carpets and furniture, tree bark for making joss sticks and insect repellent, roots for making

Javanese jamu and other traditional medicines, coal, crude oil, cacao, coconut, iron ore, kaolin, limestone, diamonds, gold and other precious stones. Most of these products are of export quality.



### History

Banjarmasin, the capital city of South Kalimantan, is home to many of the Banjar people. The city was established in 1526 by Prince Samudera, the founder of the Banjar Kingdom. Prince Samudera solidified his power with the help of the sultan of Demak, the ruler of a nearby Muslim state. As a condition of Demak's help in battle, Samudera accepted Islam and changed his name to Sultan Suriansyah. Islam spread quickly among the Banjar people after the Prince's conversion. Today, nearly all Banjar are Muslim. Mosques and prayer-houses are omnipresent throughout Banjarmasin and southeastern Kalimantan.

### Culture

Many Banjar villages are located along Kalimantan's rivers, in swampy areas with thick undergrowth. Villages usually have a bridge, a least one road, several Islamic houses of worship, an elementary school, a junior high school, a cemetery and a marketplace. A mesjid or mosque is located near the center of the village not far from the river, with a large front door and sometimes a high tower. There are also several smaller worship and teaching centers.



The Banjar of south Kalimantan seldom move to other areas of Indonesia or mingle with other ethnic groups. They tend to marry and settle near their relatives in south Kalimantan.

### Beliefs

Ancestors of the present-day Banjar have at times followed Buddhism and Hinduism as well as Islam. Today, however, nearly all Banjar are Muslim. Banjar ethnic identity is inseparable from the Islamic religion.

Islam influences every aspect of individual and family life among the Banjar. Islamic feasts and the Ramadan fast are strictly observed. Many Banjar prefer modern Islamic schools to schools provided by the government. When natural disasters occur, religious officials respond immediately. The government also considers Islam its primary ally in maintaining order and controlling crime.

Although there are many followers of Jesus in south Kalimantan, there has been little outreach to the Banjar people. Perhaps only 50 Banjar follow Jesus.

For more information about the Banjar, visit: [www.apeopleloved.com/banjar](http://www.apeopleloved.com/banjar)



Population: 3.5 million  
Location: Kalimantan, Indonesia  
Languages: Banjar, Bahasa Indonesia

### Prayer Points

**Praise God** for the Banjar who have decided to follow Jesus.

**Pray** that the Banjar followers of Jesus would boldly share the Good News with their family, friends and neighbors.

**Pray** that other followers of Jesus in Kalimantan would develop an increasing burden to reach out to the Banjar.

**Pray** that followers of Jesus would find ways to serve the Banjar people, demonstrating God's love in practical ways.