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When you first arrive in Bali, that dazzling destination of global fame... where to go and what to do?

If you are a returning or regular visitor those questions are irrelevant. You will probably head straight back to that special place you fondly remember from before and if you have already booked your accommodation, it is likely that a car and a driver will be waiting for you at the airport. If that is not the case and if you are coming for the first time, you better think about these questions before you touch down. Bali has much to offer and there is something suitable for every taste and budget but it may be a bewildering experience when you first arrive at Ngurah Rai Airport and do not know where to go. What you need to know is that nowadays the island is in fact a mixture of 'three-different-destinations-in-one'.

First there is the area between Kuta and Seminyak, just to the North of the airport. The beach, surf and stunning sunsets of this coastal strip made Bali famous and over the past thirty years this area has become the center of gravity. The neighborhoods of Tuban, Kuta, Legian and Seminyak have turned into an urban agglomeration with hundreds of hotels, clubs and restaurants plus several thousand shops and here is the clue: if you are under thirty and your major interest is basically what happens during the hours between the time that the sun sets and that it rises again, this is definitely where you should stay. It is the 'lifestyle' city that never sleeps and traditionally a favorite haunt for the young crowd from Australia.

If on the other hand you are inclined to be in bed by midnight, primarily came for a lazy beach holiday and if you can afford to indulge in superb resort luxury, you are much better off staying somewhere on the southern "Bukit Badung Peninsula." There is a great choice of five star beach hotels in Jimbaran, Tanjung Benoa and Nusa Dua plus a range of boutique properties on the southern and western cliffs that are spectacularly romantic.

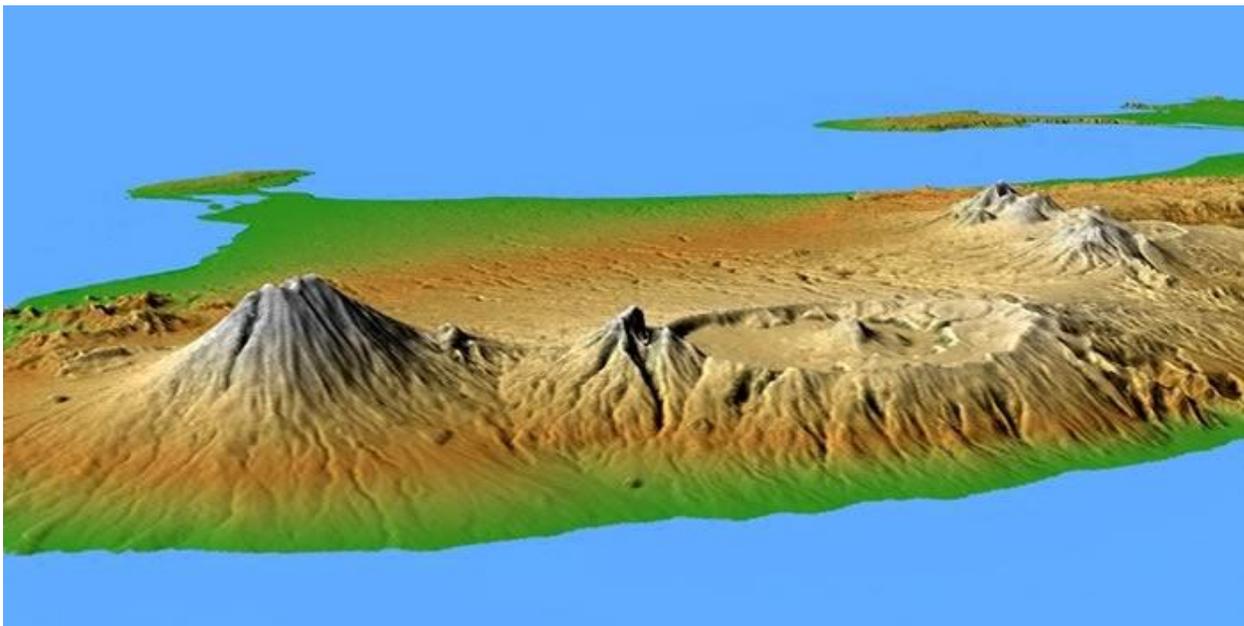
Should your interest be to rather experience Bali 'how it used to be', it is probably better to opt for the elegant beach village of Sanur. In case you have the luxury of being able to stay a longer time and prefer peace and quiet over hustle and bustle you may even wish to go to Candi Dasa on the east coast or to Lovina or Pemuteran in the north. Finally, if you prefer the foothills over the beach, a splendid alternative is the traditional village of Ubud in the Gianyar Regency, since long the artistic and cultural centre of Bali. In a way Ubud and its surroundings have become a destination all by itself. Traditional Bali has a remarkably resilient culture that is still fully alive and as soon as you go inland you immediately find incredible magic and beauty everywhere. The island remains the perfect destination for people who want their holiday to be an experience...We call this "the Bali of Legend".

Geography and History

East to west, Bali is approximately 153 km (95 miles) wide and it spans about 112 km (69 miles) north to south; its land area is 5,632 km². The island currently has 4 million inhabitants of whom the vast majority is Hindu. Balinese Hinduism has roots in Indian Hinduism and in Buddhism, and also adopted animistic traditions of the aboriginal population.

The first tribes from continental Asia reached Bali around 2000 BC as evidenced by stone tools dated to that time found in the island's west. The first Hindus arrived in Bali as early as 100 BC, but the unique culture which until today permeates every aspect of life, originated in neighboring Java. In the 14th century Bali had become an official outpost of the Majapahit Empire. With the rise of Islam the Majapahit Empire started to decline in the 15th century and this triggered an exodus of Hindu intellectuals, artists, priests, and musicians from Java to Bali. When by the turn of the 16th century the Javanese aristocracy retreated to Bali, the island became independent and once again started to live its own life, in splendid isolation.

Physically Bali is dominated by a volcanic mountain range that runs the entire length of the island from east to west. The highest peak is Mount Agung (3,031 m).



South of the mountains is a broad, steadily descending area where most of Bali's rice crop is grown. Over hundreds of years the combination of fertile volcanic soils and abundant rain led to methods of wet rice cultivation with extremely high and stable yields. Agriculture became a much more efficient activity than it was elsewhere on the planet because farmers found that it was to their advantage to cooperate closely with their neighbors and the Balinese are deservedly well-known

for their efficient collective use of irrigation water. On most hillsides the landscape is a sculpture that was meticulously perfected over hundreds of years by many generations of farmers who collectively created an intricate infrastructure of dams, canals and aqueducts to efficiently distribute water to their individual rice fields. The highly sophisticated system of irrigation management as it developed over the centuries revolves around local organizations called 'subak'. As a system of governance the subak is soundly based on democratic principles, but it is also a vital component of Balinese Hinduism. The universal Balinese philosophy of "Tri Hita Karana" guides farmers to keep the harmony between God, the people and nature.

The Bukit Peninsula

For some twenty years people used to call the peninsula south of the airport 'Nusa Dua', which in fact was (and still is) just the name of the 741-acre hotel complex on its eastern shoreline. Nowadays the peninsula is again commonly referred to as 'the Bukit' and over the last ten years it has turned into what is essentially a separate holiday destination all by itself.

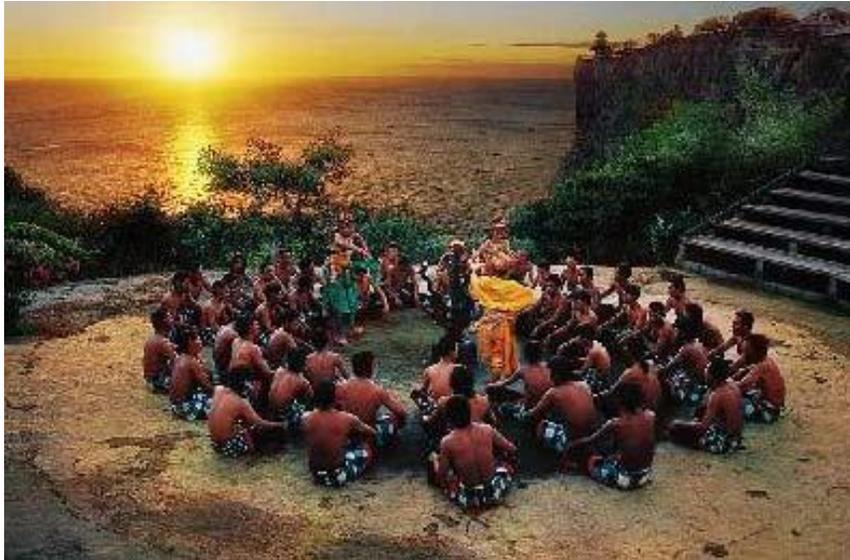
Before the advent of mass tourism this part of Bali used to be a real backwater visited only by an occasional handful of intrepid surfers. The landscape is rather different from the rest of Bali. On the southern side the peninsula has dramatic limestone cliffs that drop steeply into the ocean but it has little rain fall and relatively thin soils, much less fertile than the land up North. That also explains why the southern appendage to Bali was never as densely populated as the main part of the island. Yet its rugged character has an undeniable appeal to all visitors.

In hindsight it is rather ironic that initially, when in the 1970s the Central Government in Jakarta first conceived the idea to develop a Nusa Dua 'Second Island' concept, its intention was to keep the bulk of hotels and tourist facilities apart from the essential way of life and the culture of Bali. It was an attempt to protect the island from being 'contaminated' by tourism. At the same time the authorities saw an opportunity to turn cheap empty land into a first-class resort area that could be easily controlled and exploited, both in terms of access and resources. In true Suharto style a 'Master Plan' was developed, a 'Bypass Road' was built to the airport and in the course of the 1980s the Bali Tourism Development Corporation (BTDC) started the realization of the Nusa Dua Tourism Complex.

The original impeccably manicured Nusa Dua enclave has three manned gates and everyone entering is subject to a security search. To the original seven top notch five star hotels that opened their doors in the nineties and that share the long white sand beach within the original confines many others were added later, both to the north along the Tanjung Benoa beachfront and to the south, towards the end of Geger beach, where the cliffs begin. The east coast of the peninsula is now a long continuous strip of world class hotel accommodation. Protected by a coral reef it is

perfectly safe to swim everywhere and this coast is a perfect environment for a wide variety of water sports. The pride of Nusa Dua is the Bali International Convention Centre. Its facilities match all other such venues anywhere in the world and the BICC regularly hosts key international conferences and world summits. In addition to the high-end beach accommodation of the east coast there is now also a remarkable number of elegant boutique hotels scattered along the south and southwestern cliffs, each in splendid isolation, nestled somewhere in a private cove, quietly catering to the happy few. This is the latest 21st century chapter in the history of the Bukit peninsula: the Bukit of romantic cliff top hideaways...

Since long the single most important site that every visitor to the Bukit must visit is Pura Uluwatu on the extreme southwestern tip of the island. This temple dates back to the 11th Century and is one of Bali's nine key cardinal temples. The structure itself is not anywhere as impressive as other temples on Bali and the central courtyards can only be entered during special rituals but its location, on the edge of a steep cliff some 70 meters above the roaring waves of the Indian Ocean, is 'downright' spectacular. The entrance fee is Rp 20,000 and you need to be properly dressed to enter. Sarongs and sashes are available free at the entrance. The temple is inhabited by a large number of monkeys, well-known for snatching visitors' belongings, including cameras and sunglasses. Keep a good grip on all your belongings and stow away your spectacles! If your intention is to watch the sunset from Uluwatu you may want to stay for the Kecak monkey dance that is performed every day near the temple between 6PM and 7PM.



Another interesting site not far from the temple is the impressive Uluwatu surf 'break', which in the past has frequently been used for the World Surfing Championships. The

waves that break around the westernmost rocks are only suitable for advanced or expert surfers since they tend to be huge. Even if you do not surf yourself it is more than worth it to go there and watch the action. There is a string of bars and warungs built into the cliff, each one a perfect spot for taking in the scene.

Other mysterious names that only used to be whispered in the surfer community have now started to gain a wider audience: Nyang Nyang, Padang Padang, Bingin,

Balangan; when you start to check out these spots you quickly come to an important conclusion: Bali's best beaches are on the Bukit.

Another beach that used to attract many surfers and for several years informally gathered international fame under the name of Dreamland has been reclaimed by Big Business and recently reincarnated as Klapa New Kuta Beach. It is now the private beach of an exclusive club incorporated into the Pecatu Indah Resort. The owning company, PT Bali Pecatu Graha has boldly brought back the master planning approach from the 1970s. Pecatu Indah includes the New Kuta Golf Course and at Pecatu one finds a select crowd in an atmosphere where 'Jakarta meets Bali'. For people with a more laid-back disposition, we suggest the easygoing ambiance of nearby Balangan instead.

GWK, the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park is a 240 hectare private cultural park around the central attraction of a huge statue of the Hindu god Vishnu, with Garuda, the mythical bird as his companion. Currently, the statue of Vishnu is 23 meters high, while the original design of its sculptor, Nyoman Nuarta, still heralds a completion to Vishnu being 146 meter tall riding a Garuda with a wing span of 64 meters. It would make this remarkable creation the largest statue in the world.

In addition the GWK Park has an exhibition hall and a large amphitheater so it has become the venue of choice for major outdoor events. There is also a restaurant, Jendela Bali, which offers a grand view on the island. At 300 meters above sea level and looking towards the North you look out over the west coast of Jimbaran and Kuta and the east coast of Tanjung Bena and Sanur Beach, with Mount Agung and Mount Batur in the background; from this vantage point that is indeed a superb panorama. GWK is open from 8:00 AM till 8:00 PM with an entrance fee of Rp 60,000.

Jimbaran Bay Jimbaran is both a fishing village and a posh tourist resort just south of Ngurah Rai Airport, with some of the most prestigious luxury hotels on the island and a beautiful white sand beach where the sea is perfectly safe for swimming. Jimbaran Bay is the anchorage for the traditional fishing fleet of 'jukung' outriggers and the traditional Kedongan fish market is located at the northern end of the bay. The catch comes in every morning and this is where you may run into the chefs of Bali's fine dining restaurants. The best time to visit would be between sunrise and 09:00.

Eating seafood on the beach in Jimbaran has become a standard item on the agenda of many visitors. Along Jimbaran beach there are several areas with dozens of grilled seafood restaurants that all adopted the same winning formula and together these have become a major tourist draw in the evenings.

Tables are set up in the sand right on the beach. From a tank you can select the live seafood that you wish to eat: fish, crab, squid, shrimp or lobster; you pay by weight and it is immediately prepared, usually grilled over a fire of coconut husks rather than charcoal. It is best to arrive in time for the sunset but after dark the whole area is lit by oil torches. Dining on fresh seafood in this romantic atmosphere never fails to result in a memorable evening.

When visiting Jimbaran we warmly recommend you stop by the Jenggala Gallery. Jenggala is a large art gallery and retail showroom for ceramics produced in Bali. They host regular exhibitions of paintings and other art by up and coming local artists. Jenggala is located on the principal access road to Jimbaran (Jalan Uluwatu) and easy to find. The gallery has an excellent café and is also great place for a light lunch

A special recommendation for dinner Bumbu Bali

Your vacation on the Bukit will not be complete until you have eaten at Bumbu Bali. Located on Jl. Pratama in Tanjung Benoa, just North of Nusa Dua, Bumbu Bali has been a culinary institution since Heinz von Holzen first opened its doors in 1997. After he had studied the local cuisine for fifteen years, while working as a chef in top resorts, Heinz initially pioneered Bumbu Bali as a cooking school and until today no other restaurant has managed to come close to the same standard. For authentic Balinese cuisine this still is the only place to go. Bumbu Bali has won many international awards and was included as one of the five best restaurants in Indonesia in the 2009-/10 edition of the Miele Guide. What Bumbu Bali serves will always surprise and never disappoint you.

Two last suggestions of 'something-else-to-do':

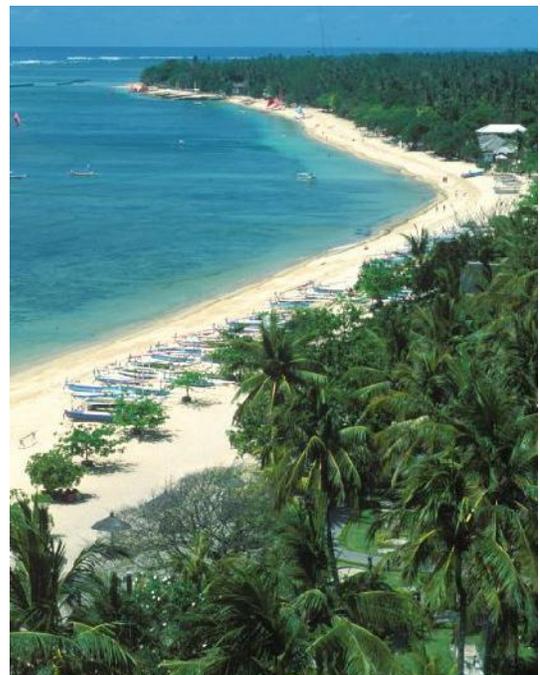
The Pasifika Museum is located in Blok P of the Nusa Dua complex (across from the Sogo entrance of the Bali Collection shopping center). This is one of Bali's best kept secrets and unfortunately Pasifika does not receive the attention it deserves but even if you are only vaguely art-minded it is more than worth the visit. You find an impressive exhibit of over 600 works by 140 different artists from 20 different nationalities, brought together by a passionate private collector with a keen eye for universal beauty. The focus is on Bali, Southeast Asia and the South Pacific region and on how European artists wandering through Asia and the Pacific were inspired in the art they found and how in turn they left their imprint on local artists. Open daily from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm. Admission Rp 70,000.

The Island Sustainability Center is the informal campus of the R.O.L.E. Foundation and covers a hillside just outside the hamlet of Sawangan, some five kilometers south of the BDTC complex. The initials R.O.L.E. stand for RIVERS, OCEAN, LANDS, ECOLOGY and the foundation covers a range of activities as broad

as the name suggests. It is the brainchild of Michael O’Leary, who first came to the island as a surfer in 1979 and proceeded to build a hugely successful Bali-based jewelry business. After he sold everything in 2007 he resolved to continue to make himself useful and as a lifelong environmentalist he now certainly succeeds in making a difference. Michael has a sweeping vision and the Island Sustainability Center can best be described as ‘a work in progress’. While the grounds are a showcase of permaculture, renewable energies and water harvesting, you also find a classroom where unskilled women from poor communities on the Bukit receive basic education and vocational training. ROLE further assists these underprivileged women with job placement or helps them starting up eco-friendly micro businesses. In addition the Island Sustainability Center receives every year around 2000 children from Public Primary and Secondary Schools, for an interactive environmental, diet and exercise program that teaches them about the principles of sustainability. They learn about waste management, how to plant seedlings or to recognize herbs on their smell. This 1.5 hectare Park is definitely worth the visit. On top of the hill there is a café with a superb view over Nusa Dua, really a great place to meet people...

The Bali of legend

Sanur developed from a fishing village to a beach town but it retains a decidedly quiet and relaxed atmosphere. It does not have the urban buzz of Kuta-Seminyak and in contrast to artificial resort areas like Nusa Dua it retains the elegant charm of an authentic Indonesian village with a long line of mature trees providing shadow along the main road. The drive from the airport to Sanur is less than half an hour and Sanur has a broad range of places to stay from budget accommodation to top of the line luxury resorts. Sanur stretches for about 5 km along the eastern coastline, with lush hotel gardens spilling out onto the white sand beach. The beach is rather narrow but it is protected by a reef so Sanur is a preferred choice for families with children. There is a paved path along the entire length of the beachfront and it is easy to walk around town on foot. Sanur offers a pleasant variety of independently owned restaurants and bars. There is an attractive local market plus a good mix of shops on the main street. Most importantly, the location of Sanur makes it an excellent base for day trips into the center of Bali.

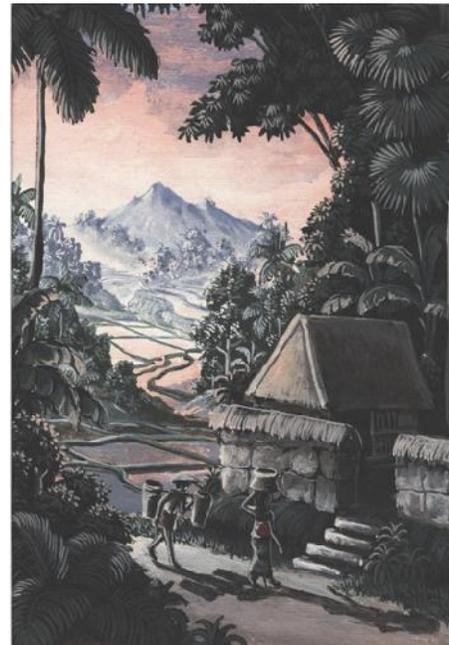


The road from Sanur to Ubud passes through a series of villages where the inhabitants specialize in the production of particular arts and crafts. These villages are Batubulan and Singekerta for stone carvings, Celuk for silver jewelry, Batuan for paintings, and Mas for wood carvings.

Ubud

That Bali is blessed with exuberant flora and fauna, exceptional beauty, and that this is underpinned by a culture that venerates nature was first extensively documented in the 1930s by anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, artists Miguel Covarrubias and Walter Spies. They were instrumental promoting Balinese art and culture worldwide and found a base in Ubud, where the Royal family had fostered a long tradition patronizing the arts. The King of Ubud co-founded the Pitamaha Artists Cooperative in 1936, which triggered a process of cross-pollination between traditional Balinese and Western painting styles. Although over the past two decades the town has developed into a major tourist center with hundreds of boutiques and shops, Ubud and the surrounding villages remain the undisputed cultural heartland of Bali and the growth has not ruined the splendid natural setting. The scenery is breathtakingly beautiful; undulating rice terraces are interspersed with majestic hundred year old trees and several dramatic gorges slice through these foothills. What makes Ubud so unique is the fact that over the years this spectacular natural beauty has been recorded in large collections of timeless art, such as can be found in the Museum Puri Lukisan, the Neka Art Museum and the Agung Rai Museum of Art.

Many tourists come to Ubud just for the day and for most it will be one of the highlights of their stay in Bali. They will stop at the Monkey Forest sanctuary, pay a visit to one of the museums and they also find that the town is a true shopping paradise. The shops are filled with unique and beautiful crafts, art work, carvings, jewelry and gifts. Ubud provides a much more sophisticated shopping experience than the tacky souvenir malls in the beach resorts down south.



On the other hand it is also perfectly possible to choose the Ubud area as your base for a longer stay. Around the central market it is busy with tourists but away from the town centre, quiet village life carries on relatively undisturbed and there is an incredible choice of places to stay, from budget bed-and breakfasts to extravagant luxury. The town has everything that the visitor needs, and is centrally located.

Hiking around Ubud is truly an experience and there are several important historical sites in the general area such as the ornate 9th century Elephant Cave and the 11th century Gunung Kawi. No visit to Ubud is complete without witnessing a traditional dance performance. Balinese dances are colorful re-enactments of classic Hindu legends and in Balinese culture dance is truly a sacred art.



The classic up-country highlights

If you want to experience the quintessential Bali in one single day, our best suggestion is that you visit the Batukaru temple and Jatiluwih.

Pura Luhur Batukaru is a temple complex in the Tabanan Regency about 20 kilometers north of the capital town of the same name. The temple is located in the middle of the rain forest on the southern slope of Mount Batukaru, Bali's second-highest peak at 2,276 meters, and the drive up through the spectacular green landscapes of Tabanan is already a wonderful experience all by itself.

For this day out we urge you to get an early start. If you reach the temple before ten o' clock you may find that you can enjoy the mystical atmosphere of this spectacular site all by yourself! Pura Batukaru is one of nine 'cardinal' temples meant to protect Bali from evil spirits. Originally built during the 11th century, it was dedicated to the ancestors of the rajas of Tabanan. It was destroyed in 1604, but rebuilt in 1959. The temple's most important shrine is a multiple tiered pagoda dedicated to Mahadewa, the God of Mount Batukaru. Until today this remains an extremely sacred site for Bali's Hindu population and some of the complex's grounds remain off-limits to visitors for various ceremonies and events throughout the year. All visitors should carefully read and abide by the temple rules posted at the entrance. Make a small donation and borrow a sarong and sash when you register in the visitor's book.

The Jatiluwih rice terraces

Going back down the temple road it is possible to take a left turn onto the 'back-road' to Jatiluwih. The distance is only some ten kilometers and the road may be a bit rough at the end of the rainy season, but it leads through lush forest and past beautiful hillside rice fields to that other wonderful jewel in the Bali treasure chest, the Jatiluwih rice terraces. There is an entrance fee of Rp 10,000 for adults and Rp 5,000 for children. This remarkable valley offers one of the most astonishing examples of terraced agriculture in the world and the sight of the endless paddy fields that follow the contours of the land against the background of Mount Batukaru is truly unforgettable.

In Jatiluwih the landscape is a sculpture that was meticulously perfected over some five hundred years by many generations of farmers who collectively created an intricate infrastructure of dams, canals and aqueducts to irrigate their individual rice fields most efficiently. This highly sophisticated system of Balinese irrigation management goes by the name 'subak'. As a system of governance it clearly has a democratic character but the social and spiritual foundation is based on Balinese Hinduism so in order to guarantee a good harvest the subak irrigation committees also organize the ceremonies honoring Dewi Sri, the rice goddess.

Last year Jatiluwih was added to the UNESCO's World Heritage List as a site of outstanding universal value to humanity and if you dare to wander down through the terraces it will not be difficult to understand why. The gentle song of water that continuously trickles down from one rice paddy into the next will not fail to mesmerize you. Poets and philosophers beware! It won't be easy to extricate yourself from such a profound source of inspiration...you may fall under the spell of Dewi Sri.

Bedugul and Lake Beratan

This region of great natural beauty in the central highlands also deserves to be on everybody's list of places one should not fail to see. The village of Bedugul itself sits on the South shore of Lake Beratan, the largest of three volcanic lakes, about 50 km north of Denpasar on the main road from South Bali to Singaraja. Here you find yourself at an altitude of 700 to 900 meters while the surrounding mountain peaks rise to about 2,000 meters. Most of the time the temperature is very pleasant but at night it may be a bit chilly.

One of the iconic images that can be seen in every Bali travel guide is a picture of the 'Pura Ulun', the temple on the western shore that is devoted to the goddess of the lake, Ida Batara Dewi Ulun Danu. It was built in 1633 and in that particular setting the temple also offers an image of stunning beauty that no one will forget.



Located in the village of Candikuning nearby, another place of interest is the Eka Karya Botanic Garden. Covering 160 hectares this is truly a living museum with more than 2,000 species of plants and trees representing nearly all the flora that can be found in eastern Indonesia: Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, Maluku and Papua. Yet the Botanical Gardens are not only interesting for botanists and students of biology. For exceptional group and family fun here you also find the Bali Treetop Adventure Park. The park includes six main circuits that stretch from tree to tree, as well as nets, Tarzan Jumps, and bridges. Each run features "Flying Fox" zip-lines

of up to 160 meters, providing heart-pounding thrills to guests as they fly through the air. Two circuits are specially designed for young children from 4 years old.

The final attraction that adds another special dimension to Bedugul as a world-class resort destination is the famous Bali Handara Kosaido Golf and Country Club. At an altitude of 1,142 meters and surrounded by green mountains, crater lakes and ancient forest, it is the highest golf course in Indonesia and it is considered as one of the very best in Asia.

After visiting Lake Beratan we recommend that you take the scenic road along the rim of Lake Buyan and Lake Tamblingan. You will go through a spectacular landscape of coffee and clove plantations and finally the road winds down the hill into the enchanting town of Munduk. Here you find yourself in one of the most attractive areas for nature walks and in a small village with a rich history.

Mount Batur

Mount Batur is one of the most majestic sites on the planet. It is the widest volcano in the chain that stretches from the east to the west of Bali, with a smaller secondary crater in its center and a large lake on the eastern side, inside the main caldera. Unfortunately the so called "Kintamani-tour" is the number one day excursion on the island and crowds of tourists converge on the Batur rim for lunchtime. Rather than doing what everyone else does, arrive there after three o' clock in the afternoon and have the whole place to yourself. It is actually best to include Batur in an overnight trip and stay at the Lakeview Hotel. Ignore the suggestion you may find in some of the older guidebooks to undertake the trip across the lake to the aboriginal village of Trunyan. Here the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of Bali still stick to the old custom not to cremate the dead but to wrap them in cloth and then expose them to the birds. While the village has been tidied up and is no longer the hair-raising experience that it used to be, the level of the lake has dropped some three meters over the last ten years and nowadays it is rather difficult to get in and out of the boats. However if you do stay overnight do not miss climbing the central secondary crater, so make it an early evening and get up at 0400. Start your trek uphill around 0430 and do bring a jacket. You will get there at the perfect moment for the sunrise and the stunning views you have from that spot will forever remain etched in your memory.

We also recommend visiting the Tirta Sanjiwani Hot Springs, a very special place. And a final suggestion for the truly intrepid: plan your visit to coincide with the full moon and then bribe one of the locals to take you to the Pura Dalem Balingkan. At night the front of the temple will be locked so you must use the side entrance. This was the earliest seat of a Balinese Government and where in the tenth century a Balinese king espoused a Chinese princess from the Kang clan....a site with more magic vibrations than most people will be able to handle.

Aboriginal Tenganan and the royal architecture of Karangasem:

If you aspire to tell your friends that you did get to know the island well it is an absolute must that you visit the magnificent imprints left behind by the royal family of Karangasem. The easternmost regency of Bali has a rich history and both the Royal Gardens of Taman Ujung and the Tirtagangga Water Palace are monuments of great importance and you will spend a most pleasant day when you visit these historic landmarks.

Nestled in a secluded valley in the foothills of Karangasem the unique 700-year-old walled village of Tenganan is home to a community of Bali Aga people, descendants of the earliest aboriginal Balinese who settled on the island before all others. The villagers of Tenganan have preserved certain pre-Hindu customs. The women of the village weave a rare double ikat cloth, which is supposed to have magical powers to protect the wearer, and is greatly sought after for cremation ceremonies. The process is known only in this village and weaving a single cloth can take up to five years.

Amlapura is the capital of what is now the Regency and used to be the Kingdom of Karangasem, ruled by one of seven separate clans on the island that have continuously waged war against each other for most of the past 500 years. One after the other these kingdoms rose to relative prominence for short periods, only to be quickly eclipsed by their neighbors, but since the last quarter of the 18th century it was Karangasem that became the most powerful state in Bali, and at the turn of the 19th Century its king even extended his power to Lombok. Customarily all Balinese kings needed a large number of wives to ensure that there would be at least one surviving male heir to carry on the dynasty and the extended Royal family in Amlapura was no exception. As a result Puri Agung Karangasem, home of the royal family, ended up being expanded to three residences all built in the course of the 20th century: Puri Agung, Taman Ujung and Taman Tirtagangga.

The principal Royal Palace as it stands today was built in the early 1900s by the King at the time, I Gusti Bagus Jelantik. In 1908 he abdicated in favor of his adopted son and nephew, Anak Agung Agung Anglurah Ketut Karangasem. His successor, still a young man in his early twenties, took great pleasure in creating architectural landmarks, and especially loved incorporating moats and pools. He designed his first Water Palace five kilometers south of Amlapura at the fishing village of Ujung. The architecture of Taman Ujung is a mixture of Balinese, Dutch and Chinese influences. The complex was completed in 1921. Puri Agung in Amlapura is still the residence of the extended family but not open to the public. However the original royal garden palace of Taman Ujung can be visited and this is what you should see first.

Afterwards you should proceed to the Tirta Gangga Water Palace, which is on the main road some five kilometers north of Amlapura. King Ketut Karangasem was already in his sixties when he decided to create this final masterpiece. He started the work on the one hectare complex in 1946 and it was finished just before he abdicated in 1950. Tirta Gangga, which literally means ‘water from the Ganges’ turned out to be the pinnacle of his career as a landscape architect and designer of water gardens.

Unfortunately the grounds were largely ruined by the eruption of Mount Agung in 1963, a fate shared by Taman Ujung. In fact large parts of Amlapura itself were ravaged by lava during the eruption. Most of the lower area of the town was destroyed, and homeless refugees were offered shelter and food in the royal palace, which stands on higher ground. An earthquake in 1979 did further damage but everything has now been restored and especially Tirta Gangga has regained an authentic air of royal magnificence. The centerpiece of the complex is an eleven tiered fountain, and there are many beautiful carvings and statues adorning the gardens.



There is a modest entry fee of Rp 10,000 to enter the grounds and a similar additional amount to swim in one of two large swimming pools. It is pure magic to be able to chill out in such an alluring atmosphere of bygone days!

It is perfectly possible to undertake the visit to Karangasem as a day trip from Sanur or Ubud, but if you have more time, you may consider spending some nights in Candi Dasa or making your base for a few days in one of three villages up north, Amed, Lovina or Pemuteran.

Candi Dasa is a coastal village on the main road to Amlapura. Although it does not have a beach it is a most pleasant alternative to the hectic southern part of the island because of its decidedly relaxed atmosphere. There is a wide range of accommodation options from budget to splendid boutique style and it also has a good choice of cafes and restaurants. Candi Dasa is a good starting point from which to explore the interior of east Bali. It is close to the Bali Aga village of Tenganan and there are numerous wonderful trails in the nearby hills to go trekking.

Amed was originally just one small fishing hamlet on the remote and rugged north-eastern tip of Bali. Nowadays the name Amed is commonly used to include a string of neighboring bays and hamlets. The pace of life here is rather slow but the coastal scenery is very attractive and the beaches are lined with hundreds of traditional outrigger fishing boats. The sand of the beaches in this area is the black volcanic variety but the primary attraction of this area is the stunningly beautiful underwater landscape so most visitors come here to either snorkel or dive and as a result there are many dive shops. Amed became popular in the nineties and there is a wide selection of accommodation available. Most of these hotels and guesthouses tend to be quite small and intimate but more are appearing all the time. As a result Amed has become a convenient stopping point for those travelling around the island. It is still possible to charter traditional outrigger boats for fishing trips. Hardy adventure travelers sometimes use Amed as a base to climb Gunung Agung.

Lovina - Lovina Beach is a 12 kilometer stretch of coast to the West of Singaraja in North Bali. Singaraja is the capital city of the Buleleng Regency. During the Dutch colonial period this was the administrative capital of Bali and in a way it still has the feel of a colonial city but there are few historical sites of great interest and most people pass straight through without stopping. Lovina is a relatively recent name coined in the 1950s by the late king of Buleleng for an agglomeration of seven traditional villages that are now considered to be a single town along a ten kilometer stretch of the main road. The village of Kalibukbuk is the hub of this area and often thought of as the town center. Lovina's black sand beaches are narrow but in contrast to the surf rolling in from the Indian Ocean in the south, the Bali Sea off the north coast is relatively calm and safe for swimming. Lovina oozes an atmosphere of laid-back tranquility and in the nineties it turned into a favorite destination for backpackers. As a result there still is a large amount of budget and mid-range accommodation available but nowadays the mix of tourists mainly consists of families and couples and options at the higher end have increased accordingly. There are many restaurants and cafes. The main activities are diving, snorkeling and dolphin watching. Dolphin sighting trips leave the main beaches each morning at dawn and are great fun for kids despite occasional mutterings that the boats tend to outnumber the dolphins. Worthwhile sights in the area include the Banjar Hot Springs and Brahma Vihara Arama, Bali's largest Buddhist monastery.

Pemuteran in the far northwest corner of Bali is the crown jewel in the treasure chest. When longtime expatriates living on Bali want to go on a beach vacation, their first choice invariably is Pemuteran. This laid-back fishing village is an oasis of peace and an ideal base for trekking in the West Bali National Park or snorkeling and diving at nearby Menjangan Island. Pemuteran has a splendid selection of elegant boutique hotels with easy access to the beach.

Three great theme parks

WATERBOM PARK AND SPA For a wonderful day that the kids will never forget, your first choice should be to visit the legendary Waterbom Park. The Park opened in 1993 with 8 slides and is now home to more than 20 world class waterslides and leisure facilities for all ages. Located in the heart of Kuta, Waterbom is literally an oasis surrounded by tropical gardens. These exciting water slides slice through 3.8 hectares of landscaped tropical parks providing hours of fun and entertainment for everyone, both the young and the young at heart! The kids will be unstoppable and you can set your own pace for a day of fun in the sun or relaxation in the shade. For relaxation, drift leisurely in a tube raft or go for a tranquil dip in one of the pools. The pleasure pool and its nearby thatched gazebos are a perfect chill-out haven. Or if you like to make friends, join in a game of water volleyball. Then share a drink and swap stories at the Sunken Pool Bar just a stretch away. A soothing massage or spa treatment is another way to unwind. For those who want privacy there are stylish thatched-roof Gazebos for rent. With a choice of dining outlets and a swim up bar for tropical drinks, Waterbom Bali is the number one leisure park on the island.

BALI BIRD PARK The Bali Bird Park is located in Singapadu, roughly halfway between Sanur and Ubud, and this wonderful natural sanctuary with more than 2000 tropical plants and trees provides a safe haven to almost 1000 birds of 250 different species. At the Bali Bird Park you enter a fascinating world of exotic sights and sounds. Hundreds of the world's



rarest and most beautiful birds greet you as you stroll through the tropical gardens. You will be enthralled by the variety and radiance of Indonesian parrots and in addition to rare Cassowaries, Black Palm Cockatoos and Hornbills you will find a fascinating collection of Birds of Paradise. On your path through the park you will wander through a mist-shrouded walk-in aviary, home to free flying birds in a dense rainforest setting. Several vantage points have been strategically positioned to catch glimpses of free flying birds as they follow their survival instincts of foraging for food, nesting and mating. These protected enclosures safeguard rare species from outside predators, whilst still exposing them to the various aspects of living in the wild. The Bali Bird Park incorporates a breeding, research and

veterinary facility and has been hugely successful in the captive reproduction of exotic birds. With its advanced nursery and fully trained staff, Bali Bird Park is a caring home for birds and an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages. In the middle of this splendid tropical greenery there is a lovely restaurant serving delicious cuisine from around the world with a symphony of birdsong resonating in the background.

ELEPHANT SAFARI PARK The Elephant Park is located in Taro, a village off the beaten track in the green heart of Bali, a drive of less than half an hour north of Ubud. The Park is operated by Bali Adventure Tours, one of the local pioneers in white water rafting and mountain cycling tours and they offer a visit to the Park primarily as a full day excursion from any hotel in the South of Bali with an elephant ride and lunch included or as inclusion in an overnight stay at the Elephant Safari Park Lodge. Of course it is also possible to visit on your own accord and pay the single entrance fee of USD 19 for adults and USD 10 for kids. That does not include a safari ride but still gives you the opportunity to experience these amazing animals and touch, feed, and play with them. The Elephant Park has a heroic history. In 1997 Bali Adventure Tours founder and owner Nigel Mason was approached by someone who offered nine elephants for sale that had been brought to Bali and were living in dried out rice field in extremely poor conditions. After Nigel had taken in these nine neglected animals, he learned about the general fate of Sumatran elephants whose habitat was being destroyed by the palm oil industry. He travelled to Sumatra and rescued another herd of 18. The difficulty of adopting and transporting these elephants was enormous and took almost four and a half

years. The Elephant Safari Park is an official member of the World Zoo Association, and meets international standards for animal welfare. It is the only place in the world where you can sleep amongst 27 endangered Sumatran elephants and the late crocodile hunter Steve Irwin said it was the 'best



elephant park he had ever seen'. Everyone else will equally come away most impressed.

Our dining suggestions – a short list of restaurants worth a detour

Bali's culinary landscape offers visiting gourmets the widest possible variety of choice from glamorous 'fine dining' restaurants harboring Michelin level ambitions to fashionable globetrotter cafes with Wi-Fi access, all the way to funky roadside warungs; the epitome of the latter is the cluster that you find on the beach in Jimbaran Bay specializing in barbequed seafood. Every week new places open and become the-buzz-of-the-town for awhile. Some have staying power and manage to establish a reputation; others fade away again and disappear or reopen under some other concept. In this ever-changing scenery there is also a category of restaurants that have become permanent landmarks and appear on a list-of-the-best in many publications. However there are now so many that it is impossible to include all of them so we limit our suggestions to the real celebrities, the stars that deserve to be nominated for an Academy Award.

MADES WARUNG The Oscar for lifetime achievement would go to Mades Warung, which is in fact more than just a restaurant. It is an institution that has played a leading role in the history of the island as a tourism destination and now comes in two sizes. The original roadside warung established in 1969 on the sand path to the beach now known as Jalan Pantai Kuta, just a stone's throw from 'bemo corner', soon became a well known international hub where travelers would meet. For many years it would be the first stop of many people after their arrival at Ngurah Rai, not only to start with a real good meal but also in order to check who else would happen to be on the island. Today the original Mades Warung Kuta is still there and the food is still as good as it has always been but in its function as a meeting place it has been eclipsed since the owners created Mades Warung Seminyak and that is where we suggest you should go.

The larger restaurant in Seminyak has a similar colonial-era two-story wooden decor as the original, with marble-top tables, brass ceiling fans and teak furniture, but this one is nicely sheltered from the road and its additional open-air seating in a frangipani fringed courtyard gives the restaurant a most pleasant atmosphere both during the day and the evening. Once again it has gained the reputation of a laid back cosmopolitan meeting place and the quality of the food is consistently of the highest standard. Warung Made offers authentic Indonesian food and the nasi campur, gado gado and sate are among the best you will find on Bali. In addition there is a perfectly balanced international menu of selected delicacies from the Thai, Japanese and Italian cuisines. Breakfast, lunch, dinner...something for everybody at a most reasonable price served up by staff that are a textbook example of efficiency.

METIS When Chef Nicolas 'Doudou' Tourneville and his partner Said Alem opened Métis in 2009 they were no unknown quantity on Bali. The duo of French chefs had

taken over Kafe Warisan in Kerobokan in 1997 and gained fame as the pioneers who took the concept of fine dining off the exclusive premises of five star hotels. When Warisan made a Time magazine list of top restaurants in Asia the two of them had put Bali on the map as a world-class gourmet destination. In the elegantly comfortable ambiance of Métis, Doudou is now outdoing himself and with more than 100 staff members in the kitchens and on the restaurant floor there is no better address for superior French-Mediterranean cuisine. The architecture is unabashedly urban chic but with its open plan and panoramic view of terraced rice fields Métis does not betray its Balinese identity. The 'private cellar' option takes sophisticated dining to a new level of exclusivity and the menus are both expansive and impressive. With so much choice it may be hard to decide what to order.

SARONG Sarong Restaurant opened its doors in 2008 but managed - and certainly deserved - to become popular fast. Sarong is a signature restaurant under the direction of Will Meyrick. Originally from Scotland, Meyrick is a man with a track record and a concept. His career as a Chef took him from London to Hong Kong and Sydney and gave him the opportunity to travel extensively throughout Asia and study the local cuisines. He now profiles himself as 'Street Food Chef' and his menu is a symphony of Asian gourmet fare with ingredients and cooking methods from India, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia fused into oriental harmony. Sarong Restaurant has two open-air dining pavilions and an informal dining area adjacent to the bar. In a stylish and chic décor you can savor distinctly modern Asian cuisine complemented with world-class wines. The restaurant is open evenings only and bookings are essential.

SARDINE Sardine Restaurant is another relatively new entry into the field. It opened in 2009 and swiftly became Bali's foremost seafood restaurant. The décor is elegantly Balinese, an airy bamboo pavilion surrounded by lily ponds and overlooking a long terrace of rice fields. Sardine serves dishes that are a fusion of Asian and Western cuisine but the emphasis is on seafood. The menu changes day by day since it includes the best of the daily catch from the fish market in Jimbaran and the vegetables come from Sardine's own organic gardens in Bedugul so the chef will highlight what is in season. Sardine is popular among those who want healthy, light food in a casual atmosphere and...even meat eaters and vegetarians need not stay away. The wine list is exemplary, not only in the white spectrum but on the side of light reds as well. There is an outdoor lounge area overlooking the rice fields with comfortable daybeds where you can relax for pre dinner drinks or post dinner coffee and chill out under the stars. Open daily from 11:30 am - last order 11:00 pm – reservations recommended

MOZAIC Mozaic is not shy about its thoroughbred French identity. This is a "Restaurant Gastronomique". Where all others are certainly worth a detour, Mozaic is worth the voyage. That voyage will lead to a magical candle-lit tropical garden in

Ubud, a most elegant setting with widely spaced tables, where Mozaic offers four 6-course menus. These are all ever-changing, à la minute creations that evolve, disappear and return in accordance with market availability. Chef Chris Salans and his chef de cuisine prepare what inspires them in the moment and a meal will take several hours. Here dining is truly an experience and Salans has been honored with many awards for his knack to take Balinese flavors to French cuisine. Even the wine list received an award and Mozaic is the only Indonesian restaurant to be selected as one of the 100 World's best in the San Pellegrino Guide. As a great alternative to dinner in the garden there is also the Mozaic Lounge. Here Mozaic offers both a 'teasers' menu with samples from the famed kitchen served tapas-style and a lounge menu of appetizer portions of Mozaic dishes. In the lounge it is possible to order one or several dishes and compose a meal yourself.

Mozaic is open 7 days a week from 6pm onwards. The first reservation is accepted at 5.45pm and the last reservation is at 9.45pm. Tables are seated by time in 30 minute intervals to safeguard the quality of the cuisine. The lounge remains open till late. No children under 12 years



MY Sustainable Solutions is a global association of consultants who assist companies to reduce their environmental footprint. At the core of MY Sustainable Solutions is a husband and wife team retired from the tourism business. The letters M and Y are the initials of Muriel Ydo. Muriel is a sustainability expert and creative thinker, driven by a desire to develop practical solutions to environmental problems. Willem is the logician and scribe providing strategic support. We have been networking for more than three decades and our web of long term associates covers all five continents.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Tourism inevitably has an environmental and cultural impact, both locally and globally so we urge you to follow the fundamental principles of responsible travel. Leave no litter behind and do not disturb fragile environments, both on land and under water. Do not just gawk at the sites but make an effort to meet the people and experience the place that you visit. In the cultural exchange locals and visitors can learn from each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

