

48 Hours in Bali

With cheaper flights, shorter trips to the sacred island now make sense.
By Top Koysomboon and Gregoire Glachant



Ulan Danu Temple, Bedugul



Kuta Beach



religious mask, Ubud

DAY 1: Chic Seminyak

10am—Good morning. You're in Bali's most exclusive area, a playground for the rich (the street-side gas vendors keep their fuel in old bottles of Absolut) that still preserves a laid-back attitude. Kick things off with some authentic French patisserie at **La Boulangerie de Bali** (Bintang Supermarket, Jl Raya Seminyak, +62-361-731752. Open daily 7am-11pm). The baker who founded this place is from France so we promise you'll get the real thing: wood-fired baguettes and classic desserts like the Tropezienne or Paris-Brest.

11am—Bali's beaches can't rival Phuket's but Petitenget is nonetheless a clean, vast expanse of sand. Take a stroll and work up an appetite. If stone temples rock your boat, **Putra Petitenget** is petite but pretty.

Noon—When in Seminyak, you must have lunch at **La Lucciola** (Kaya Ayu Beach, +62-361-216047). No, it's not because the sort-of Italian fare will remind you of Naples (it won't), it's because the beach view is simply stunning and the decor is wise enough to take second billing. We also like the trim, proper, traditionally outfitted waiters—a smart server goes a long way in our book.

2pm—Wow, you've been productive, today! Relax with a yoga-inspired massage at **Jari Menari** (47 Jl Raya Basangkara, Seminyak, +62-361-736740, www.jarimenari.com. Open daily 9am-9pm.). If you're feeling more active, they also offer classes (half-day B6,000 to 12-day B141,500).

4pm—You haven't showered, dinner is in a few hours, and you have nothing to wear. Time to move into second gear. Seminyak is shopping central so head down to Jl Basangkasa and walk briskly past the windows—just don't forget to stop when something catches your eye. We're guessing you're going to pause at **Zenergy** (28 A, Jl Basangkasa, +62-361-731489) or **Kasai**, just next door, (+62-361-737015) for some bohemian or ethnic chic. If you're planning on send-

ing a container back to Bangkok, the street is also full of antiques and decor stuff. Time to max out that platinum!

8pm—Dinner is served. You're at **Sarong restaurant** (Jl. Petitenget No.19X, Kerobokan-kuta, +62-361-737809), of course, for some pan-Asian fusion. The setting (oversized mirrors, Pompougnac soundtrack, blonds laughing loudly) might be a bit over-the-top, but you'll need it to get into the party mood. You only landed a few hours ago and it's going to be a long night. This is Seminyak, people come here to par-tay!

10:30pm—Hu'u (Jl. Oberoi, +62-361-736574. Open Mon-Thu 11:30am-3:30pm, 6pm-midnight, Fri-Sat 11:30am-1am, Sun 6pm-midnight) also serves dinner but we recommend you go for the chill, loungey vibe and a few stiff martinis to help your digestion. Once you've been shell-shocked out of your torpor, you can move on to bigger things.

Midnight—We hope you're not too tipsy—we need you to focus on the horizon. **Ku De Ta** (9 Jl Laksmana, Seminyak, +62-361-736969) may have been the place to be seen for years, but we still can't get enough of those big waves lit up by huge projectors. Nature, a decorative feature you just can't beat. Inside, the man-made fittings are suitably angular and minimalist. We love the long drink list—go cheap and get the sangria: it's with white wine, it's fun, and it does the job.

2am—Lights out. Head home (in this neighborhood, that would be **Space Villas**, see below) and crash. You've got a big day tomorrow.

DAY 2: Touristy Denpasar & Ubud

10am—What better way to kick start your day than to do some shopping? While the products at the **Kampung Bali** outlet (77 Jl. Merta Nadi, Kuta, +62-361-240991) are proba-

bly cheaper, we recommend you head to **Sukawati Market** (Sukawati) instead. There, you can sharpen your bargaining skills. Never buy anything until you manage to get at least 40% off. Also, watch your step! In Bali, you will spot (small bowls made from banana leaves filled with colorful flower petals everywhere, even on sidewalks) They are offerings to Hindu gods so show some respect.

11am—Batik is the Indonesian signature handicraft. Skip the cookie-cutter ones that are dominant on the streets and make your way to **Popiler Batik Factory** (Tohpati, Denpasar, +62-361-463597), where you can find sophisticated handmade items to impress your loved ones.

Noon—You've made it to **Ubud**, yay! Fill your rumbling tummy at **Bebek Bengil Dirty Duck** (Hanoman Street, Padang Tegal, Ubud, +62-361-975489/977675). Even though it looks touristy (actually, it is), this open-air eatery sitting next to a rice paddy rolls out yummy deep-fried crispy duck. But don't linger too long. You still have a long day ahead of you.

1pm—When on top of the **Kintamani Volcano**, you'll realize that your tank-top is just too summer for this place. No matter how hot the weather on the ground is, it's always



Tanah Lot

Essentials

GETTING THERE

Getting to Bali just got a lot more affordable as **Air Asia** (02-515-9999, www.airasia.com) now operates a daily flight from Bangkok to Bali's Denpasar Nura Rai Airport, with prices starting from B7,200 for a roundtrip.

Thai Airways (02-356-1111, www.thaiairways.com) also flies to Bali at approximately B11,750 for a round trip.

WHERE TO STAY

• **You Actually Like Kuta:** For the party animals, **Hard Rock Hotel Bali** (Jalan Pantai, Banjar Pande Mas, Kuta, +62-361-761-869, www.hardrockhotels.net/bali) is a nice option since it's conveniently located on Kuta beach, close to the bustling nightlife district. The huge main pool is impressive but if you get back at the hotel at 3am and need a swim, a small pool opens all night. Rates start from B8000.

• **You've Got Kids:** Home to several luxurious resorts, Nusa Dua is a better location for those looking for a more exclusive spot to enjoy some peace. The newly revamped **Club**



Med Bali (Lot 6, Nusa Dua, +62-361-771-521, www.clubmed.com) appeals to families and honeymooners with its all-inclusive deal.

Book before **Apr 30** for special rates starting at B46,700 for two persons (count another extra 12,140 per kid) for a three-night all-inclusive package which includes all-you-can-eat breakfast, lunch dinner, snacks and drinks.

• **You Need Privacy:** Set in the island's hottest district for shopping, clubbing

and dining, **Space at Bali Villas** (8 Jl. Drupadi, Seminyak, Bali, +62-361-731100, www.spaceatbali.com) manages to preserve a real sense of space for its guests. Pool villas come with two rooms flanking a large open air living area and mezzanine, with a huge pool. The interiors combine modern Balinese with Moroccan style. The exterior architecture is Javanese, and feels natural and local. Travel before **Apr 30**, and get rates starting from B12,400 for a two-bedroom villa including airport transfers.

chill and breezy on the hilltop. On a clear day, you are able to see the mirror-like **Batur Lake** from the peak of this active volcano. If you still have time to spare, the lakeside temple at **Bedugul** is definitely worth checking out.

4pm—After a trip uphill, rest your weary feet at **Buana Amertha Sari** (+62-361-7842242, Br Seribatu, Tampaksiring). Overlooking the rice fields, the coffee farm serves *luwak* coffee along with nice views. What's *luwak* coffee, you might ask. In Indonesia, the coffee farmers feed civets (*cha mod* in Thai) with coffee beans. The beans, then, journey through the digestive system, exit... And the farmers collect the still-intact beans from the civets' poop, then roast and ground them just like any other coffee. Don't make a sour face. Despite the bizarre processing, the *luwak* coffee actually tastes nice—rich and musty—and can be as pricey as B1,000 for a small bag.

5pm—On the way back to the city center, you can make another cultural stop at the **Taman Ayun Temple** (Mengwi), where you can admire the splendor of Balinese architecture. Surrounded by fish ponds and gardens, the imposing temple was built back in 1632 during the Mengwi Kingdom.

6pm—Another landmark in Bali is **Tanah Lot**, loosely translated as "land in the middle of the sea." Located on the stunning rock shore, this black-colored temple is said to have been constructed in the 15th century as a sacrifice to the god of the sea. It's the favorite place to catch the sunset in Bali for both locals and tourists alike. And if you still have some Rupiahs left, you can continue your retail therapy at the **flea market** in front of Tanah Lot.

7pm—Hungry? Make your dinner reservation at **The Rych at Kuta** (Hotel Mercure Arcade, 10X Jl. Pantai Kuta, Banjar Pande Mas, Kuta, Bali, +62-361-752180) and feast on modern Chinese fare. Or for some international dishes served by the pool, go instead to **Rosso Vivo** (Pantai Kuta Rd., Kuta, Bali, 62-361-751-961, www.kutaseaviewhotel.com).

10pm—It's party time! Take a shower and change into your best outfit then hit **Hard Rock Café** (see Where to Stay) for some rocking live music. But if you want to mingle with the locals, head to Legian Road, which looks like Siam Square by day and RCA by night, and check out local favorites like **M Bar Go** (Jl. Legian, Kuta, +62-81-2388-2276), **Vi Ai Pi** (88 Jl. Legian, Kuta, +62-361-750428) and **Sky Garden Lounge** (61 Jl. Legian, Kuta, +62-361-755-423). ■



Balinese Girl



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E. ppmb@dusit.com
www.pprincess.com