

For most of the world, Indonesia's gorgeous Bali conjures up 'Eat Pray Love' images. A place you go to heal and discover yourself, free from cultural norms.

Then, you have Australia's version of Bali: luxury resorts, bars in Kuta, and rubbish-filled beaches. Holidays are pre-packaged and people don't adventure outside of the Wi-Fi-range of their 5-star hotel.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with treating yourself to an all-inclusive trip. The problem lies where people make assumptions about Bali, based on a 5-kilometre radius.

The wonderful thing about Bali is, you don't have to travel great distances to experience the magic of the original Bali that made it famous in the first place.



*The Ubud Monkey Forest in Padangtegal. Image by Sapta Persona Bali*

## Surfing, yoga & Bintang

Bypass Kuta, Seminyak and Legian and don't stop until you reach Canggu. What was once an unassuming surf town is now a hippie mecca of coffee shops, beach parties, and surf events. While you'll see a few big hotels and even an infinity pool restaurant, the laid-back Canggu charm is still alive.



*Enjoy a laidback evening in Canggu. Image by Echo Beach Club*

## Avoid the beach clubs and do this instead

Avoid the big beach clubs and watch the sun go down at spots like The Naked Coconut and any of the warungs. Hop on a scooter for the day and visit Pura Tanah Lot, an ancient Hindu pilgrimage. Don't pay more than \$5 per day for your scooter.



*Pura Tanah Lot is home to an ancient Hindu temple. Image by MyBestPlace*

## Uluwatu - a quiet surfing town

Uluwatu is another surf town, situated on the foot of Bali, about an hour from Kuta. Spend the afternoons watching the surfers from atop a cliff, staying cool with an infamous Nalu Bowl.

Drive your scooter around to nearby yoga studios, the ancient Uluwatu Temple, and the Balinese dance shows at Kecak Temple. For beginner surfers, rent a board at Padang Padang break.



*Learn to surf at Padang Padang Beach. Image by Camila*

## Nusa Lembongan

To get your island fix, Nusa Lembongan is a short ride from back up from Kuta. While it's not exactly a 'secret', it'll get you out of Kuta's hangover district and breathing in the healing, morning scents of the Balinese ritual of burning incense.



*Nusa Lembongan will have you feeling refreshed. Image by Trubavin*

## Rice fields, volcanoes, waterfalls & coffee

How many people can say they've watched the sun rise over an active volcano? You can, soon, once you visit Mount Batur. Say no to that extra Bintang and organise a driver to take you to the base of the [hiking trail](#).

Enjoy a Balinese coffee and fire-cooked breakfast, in the company of cheeky monkeys and sweeping burnt orange sunrise views, above the clouds. Instead of going straight back down to Ubud and lazing by the pool, stay up in Bali's northeast.



*Get some fresh air on the Mount Batur Hiking Trail. Image by Jonathan Lee*

## Waterfalls

Wake yourself up in nearby Air Terjun Nungnung, a 50-metre warm waterfall with a swimming area at the base. For the kids (and big kids at heart) in the family, visit the Bali Treetop Adventure Park. Climb from tree-to-tree and see a version of Bali that most people miss.



*The Treetop Adventure Park in Bedugul is not to be missed. Image by Luca*

## Lake Bratan

If you're not tempted out, stop for a pick-me-up coffee in one of the coffee plantations, then onto Lake Bratan. This majestic water temple is the kind of setting you'd imagine Julia Roberts cycling past in *Eat Pray Love*. To get your blood pumping again, make your way up to one of Bali's most alluring waterfalls, Gitgit.

Follow one of the basic nature treks, then cool off in the fresh, cascading water. The only give-away you're not in Hawaii is the intricate Balinese rock carvings.



*The beautiful Lake Bratan. Image by Nature Mania*

## Create your own Balinese itinerary

While packaged holidays are easy, you miss out on experiencing the local customs and traditions, if you don't venture out. Be curious, do your own research, and you'll see there are different levels of luxury.

## Accommodation

Booking.com and Airbnb are helpful accommodation websites. You can find gorgeous villas, often with an in-house cook, in locations all over Bali (not just Kuta). Staying in towns outside of the tourist cluster (the Kuta radius) will cost less and a scooter will get you anywhere you want to go.



*You can choose to stay in a private villa complete with an in-house cook. Image by Pia*



## Sticking to a budget

Once you've booked accommodation, you can stick to a moderate budget of less than \$50 per day. The roadside and local villages are peppered with warungs where you can fill up on a \$2 Nasi Goreng or fried rice that'll make you want to turn vegetarian.

It can be an affordable holiday if you're not trying to experience 'home' in another country.



*It's easy to stick to a budget, as the food is so affordable. Image by Mark Wiens*

## Rejuvenate yourself by visiting Bali

Bali is a small island with a rich cultural heritage. Kick into holiday mode and rejuvenate yourself, the way the Balinese do.