

History

There are few traces of Stone Age people on Bali, although it's certain that the island was populated very early in prehistoric times – fossilised human-oid remains from neighbouring Java have been dated to as early as 250,000 years ago. The earliest human artefacts found on Bali are stone tools and earthenware vessels dug up near Cekik in western Bali, estimated to be 3000 years old. Discoveries continue, and you can see exhibits of bones that may be 4000 years old at the Museum Situs Purbakala Gilimanuk (p283). Artefacts indicate that the Bronze Age began on Bali before 300 BC.

Little is known of Bali during the period when Indian traders brought Hinduism to the Indonesian archipelago, although it is thought it was embraced on the island by the 7th century. The earliest written records are inscriptions on a stone pillar near Sanur, dating from around the 9th century AD; by that time Bali had already developed many similarities to the island you find today. Rice, for example, was grown with the help of a complex irrigation system, probably very like that employed now, and the Balinese had also begun to develop their rich cultural and artistic traditions.

If little is known about the earliest inhabitants of Bali, then even less is known about Lombok until about the 17th century. Early inhabitants are thought to have been Sasaks from a region encompassing today's India and Myanmar.

HINDU INFLUENCE

Java began to spread its influence into Bali during the reign of King Airlangga (1019–42), or perhaps even earlier. At the age of 16, when his uncle lost the throne, Airlangga fled into the forests of western Java. He gradually gained support, won back the kingdom once ruled by his uncle and went on to become one of Java's greatest kings. Airlangga's mother had moved to Bali and remarried shortly after his birth, so when he gained the throne there was an immediate link between Java and Bali. At this time the courtly Javanese language known as Kawi came into use among the royalty of Bali, and the rock-cut memorials seen at Gunung Kawi, near Tampaksiring, are a clear architectural link between Bali and 11th-century Java.

After Airlangga's death, Bali remained semi-independent until Kertanagara became king of the Singasari dynasty in Java two centuries later. Kertanagara conquered Bali in 1284, but the period of his greatest power lasted a mere eight years, until he was murdered and his kingdom collapsed. However, the great Majapahit dynasty was founded by his son, Vijaya (or Wijaya). With Java in turmoil, Bali regained its autonomy, and the Pejeng dynasty, centred near modern-day Ubud, rose to great power. In 1343 the legendary Majapahit prime minister, Gajah Mada, defeated the Pejeng king Dalem Bedaulu and brought Bali back under Javanese influence.

Although Gajah Mada brought much of the Indonesian archipelago under Majapahit control, this was the furthest extent of their power. The 'capital' was moved to Gelgel, in Bali near modern Semarapura, around the late 14th century, and for the next two centuries this was the base for the 'king of Bali', the Dewa Agung. The Gelgel dynasty in Bali, under Dalem Batur Enggong,

extended its power eastwards to the neighbouring island of Lombok and even westwards across the strait to Java.

The collapse of Majapahit into weak, decadent petty kingdoms opened the door for the spread of Islam, from the trading states of the north coast in to heartland Java. As the Hindu states fell, many of the intelligentsia fled to Bali. Notable among these was the priest Nirartha, who is credited with introducing many of the complexities of Balinese religion to the island, as well as establishing the chain of 'sea temples', which includes Pura Luhur Ulu Watu (p132) and Pura Tanah Lot (p272). The court-supported artisans, artists, dancers, musicians and actors also fled to Bali at this time and the island experienced an explosion of cultural activity. The great exodus to Bali was complete by the 16th century.

DUTCH DEALINGS

The first Europeans to set foot in Bali itself were Dutch seamen in 1597. Setting a tradition that has prevailed to the present day, they fell in love with the island and when Cornelius De Houtman, the ship's captain, prepared to set sail from the island, two of his crew refused to come with him. At that time, Balinese prosperity and artistic activity, at least among the royalty, was at a peak, and the king who befriended de Houtman had 200 wives and a chariot pulled by two white buffaloes, not to mention a retinue of 50 dwarfs, whose bodies had been bent to resemble the handle of a kris (traditional dagger). By the early 1600s, the Dutch had established trade treaties with Javanese princes and controlled much of the spice trade, but they were interested in profit, not culture, and barely gave Bali a second glance.

In 1710 the 'capital' of the Gelgel kingdom was shifted to nearby Klungkung (now called Semarapura), but local discontent was growing; lesser rulers were breaking away, and the Dutch began to move in, using the old strategy of divide and conquer. In 1846 the Dutch used Balinese salvage claims over shipwrecks as a pretext to land military forces in northern Bali, bringing the kingdoms of Buleleng and Jembrana under their control. Their cause was also aided by the various Balinese princes who had gained ruling interests in Lombok and thus were distracted from matters at home and also unaware that the wily Dutch would use Lombok against Bali.

In 1894 the Dutch, the Balinese and the people of Lombok collided in battles that would set the course of history for the next several decades. See the boxed text, p32.

With the north of Bali long under Dutch control and the conquest of Lombok successful, the south was never going to last long. Once again, it was disputes over the ransacking of wrecked ships that gave the Dutch an excuse to move in. In 1904, after a Chinese ship was wrecked off Sanur, Dutch demands that the rajah (lord or prince) of Badung pay 3000 silver dollars in damages were rejected, and in 1906 Dutch warships appeared at Sanur.

The Dutch forces landed despite Balinese opposition, and four days later had marched 5km to the outskirts of Denpasar. On 20 September 1906 the Dutch mounted a naval bombardment on Denpasar and began their final assault. The three princes of Badung realised that they were completely outnumbered and outgunned, and that defeat was inevitable. Surrender and exile, however, would have been the worst imaginable outcome, so they decided to take the honourable path of a suicidal *puputan* (a warrior's

A serene little temple, Pura Gede Perancak (p279), marks the spot in West Bali where Nirartha landed in 1546.

A Short History of Bali – Indonesia's Hindu Realm, by Robert Pringle, is a thoughtful analysis of Bali's history from the Bronze Age to the present, with excellent sections on the 2002 bombings and ongoing environmental woes caused by tourism and development.

Bali – A Paradise Created, by Adrian Vickers, traces Balinese history and development by concentrating on the island's image in the West.

The Balinese rulers of Lombok recognised Dutch sovereignty in 1844, however most of the island's population had other ideas and strife continued for more than 50 years.

TIMELINE 7th Century

Bali fully embraces Hinduism

1292

Bali gains independence from Java with death of Kertanagara

1546

The charismatic priest Nirartha brings his own form of Buddhism to Bali

1597

The Dutch first visit Bali

THE BATTLE FOR LOMBOK

In 1894 the Dutch sent an army to back the Sasak people of eastern Lombok in a rebellion against the Balinese rajah (lord or prince) who controlled Lombok with the support of the western Sasak. The rajah quickly capitulated, but the Balinese crown prince decided to fight on.

The Dutch camp at the Mayura Water Palace was attacked late at night by a combined force of Balinese and western Sasak, forcing the Dutch to take shelter in a temple compound. The Balinese also attacked another Dutch camp further east at Mataram, and soon the entire Dutch army on Lombok was forced back to Ampenan where, according to one eyewitness, the soldiers 'were so nervous that they fired madly if so much as a leaf fell off a tree'. These battles resulted in enormous losses of men and arms for the Dutch.

Although the Balinese had won the first battles, they had begun to lose the war. They faced a continuing threat from the eastern Sasak, while the Dutch were soon supported with reinforcements from Java.

The Dutch attacked Mataram a month later, fighting street-to-street against Balinese and western Sasak soldiers and civilians. The Balinese crown prince was killed, and the Balinese retreated to Cakranegara (Cakra), where they had well-armed defensive positions. Cakra was attacked by a large combined force of Dutch and eastern Sasak. Rather than surrender, Balinese men, women and children opted for the suicidal *puputan* (a warrior's fight to the death) and were cut down by rifle and artillery fire. Their stronghold, the Mayura Water Palace, was largely destroyed.

The Balinese rajah and a small group of commanders fled to Sasari near Lingsar, and though the rajah surrendered, most of the Balinese held out. In late November 1894, the Dutch attacked Sasari and, again, a large number of Balinese chose the *puputan*. With the downfall of the dynasty, the local population abandoned its struggle against the Dutch. The conquest of Lombok, considered for decades, had taken the Dutch barely three months. The old rajah died in exile in Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1895.

fight to the death). First the princes burned their palaces, and then, dressed in their finest jewellery and waving ceremonial golden kris, the rajah led the royalty and priests and courtiers out to face the modern weapons of the Dutch.

The Dutch implored the Balinese to surrender rather than make their hopeless stand, but their pleas went unheeded and wave after wave of the Balinese nobility marched forward to their death, or turned their kris on themselves. In all, nearly 4000 Balinese died. The Dutch then marched northwest towards Tabanan and took the rajah of Tabanan prisoner, but he also committed suicide rather than face the disgrace of exile.

The kingdoms of Karangasem and Gianyar had already capitulated to the Dutch and were allowed to retain some of their powers, but other kingdoms were defeated and their rulers exiled. Finally, in 1908 the rajah of Semarapura followed the lead of Badung, and once more the Dutch faced a *puputan*. As had happened at Cakranegara on Lombok, the beautiful palace at Semarapura, Taman Kertha Gosa (p213), was largely destroyed.

With this last obstacle disposed of, all of Bali was under Dutch control and became part of the Dutch East Indies. There was little development of an exploitative plantation economy on Bali, and the common people noticed little difference between Dutch rule and rule under the rajahs. On Lombok, conditions were harder as new Dutch taxes took a toll on the populace.

For much of the 19th century, the Dutch earned enormous amounts of money from the Balinese opium trade. Most of the colonial administrative budget went to promoting the opium industry, which was legal until the 1930s.

WWII

In 1942 the Japanese landed unopposed Bali at Sanur (most Indonesians saw the Japanese, at first, as anticolonial liberators). The Japanese established headquarters in Denpasar and Singaraja, and their occupation became increasingly harsh for the Balinese. When the Japanese left in August 1945 after their defeat in WWI, the island was suffering extreme poverty, but the occupation had fostered several paramilitary, nationalist and anticolonial organisations that were ready to fight the returning Dutch.

INDEPENDENCE

In August 1945, just days after the Japanese surrender, Soekarno, the most prominent member of the coterie of nationalist activists, proclaimed the nation's independence, but it took four years to convince the Dutch that they were not going to get their great colony back. In a virtual repeat of the *puputan* nearly 50 years earlier, a Balinese resistance group called Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Force) was wiped out by the Dutch in the battle of Marga in western Bali (p274) on 20 November 1946. The

In Praise of Kuta, by Hugh Mabbett, recounts Kuta's early history and its frenetic modern development.

THE TOURIST CLASS

Beginning in the 1920s, the Dutch government realised that Bali's unique culture could be marketed internationally to the growing tourism industry. Relying heavily on images that emphasised the topless habits of Bali's women, Dutch marketing drew wealthy Western adventurers who landed in the north at today's Singaraja and were whisked about the island on rigid three-day itineraries that featured canned cultural shows at a government-run tourist hotel in Denpasar. Accounts from the time are ripe with imagery of supposedly culture-seeking Europeans who really just wanted to see a boob or two. Such desires were often thwarted by Balinese women who covered up when they heard the Dutch jaloopies approaching.

But some intrepid travellers arrived independently, often at the behest of the small colony of Western artists such as Walter Spies in Ubud (see p52 and p181). Two of these visitors were Robert Koke and Louise Garret, an unmarried American couple who had worked in Hollywood before landing in Bali in 1936 as part of a global adventure. Horrified at the stuffy strictures imposed by the Dutch tourism authorities, the pair (who were later married) built a couple of bungalows out of palm leaves and other local materials on the otherwise deserted beach at Kuta. Having recently been to Hawaii on a film shoot, Bob and Louise knew the possibilities of a good beach, which at that point was home to only a few impoverished fishing families. Robert left another lasting impression by teaching local boys to surf.

Word soon spread, however, and the Kokes were booked solid. Guests came for days, stayed for weeks and told their friends. The Dutch at first dismissed the Koke's Kuta Beach Hotel as 'dirty native huts', but soon realised that increased numbers of tourists were good for everyone. Other Westerners built their own thatched hotels, complete with the bungalows that were to become a Balinese cliché in the decades ahead.

WWII wiped out tourism and the hotels (the Kokes barely escaped ahead of the Japanese), but once people began travelling again after the war, Bali's inherent appeal made its popularity a forgone conclusion. The introduction of jet travel, reasonably affordable tickets and dirt cheap accommodation on beautiful Kuta Beach gave Bali an endless summer, which began in the 1960s.

In 1987 Louise Koke's long-forgotten story of Kuta Beach Hotel was published as *Our Hotel in Bali*, illustrated with her incisive sketches and her husband's photographs.

1908

Last Balinese kingdom falls to the Dutch

1936

Two Americans build first hotel at Kuta Beach

1946

Battle at Marga leads to independence for Indonesia

1963

Gunung Agung erupts, devastating East Bali

Dutch finally recognised Indonesia's independence in 1949, but Indonesians celebrate 17 August 1945 as Independence Day.

At first, Bali, Lombok and the rest of Indonesia's eastern islands were grouped together in the unwieldy province of Nusa Tenggara. In 1958 the central government recognised this folly and created three new governmental regions from the one, with Bali getting its own and Lombok becoming part of Nusa Tenggara Barat.

1965 COUP & BACKLASH

Independence was not an easy path for Indonesia to follow. A European-style parliamentary assembly was mired in internecine squabbles, with Soekarno as the beloved figurehead president. When Soekarno assumed more direct control in 1959 after several violent rebellions, he proved to be as inept a peacetime administrator as he was inspirational as a revolutionary leader. In the early 1960s, as Soekarno faltered, the army, communists, and other groups struggled for supremacy. On 30 September 1965, an attempted coup – blamed on the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, or Communist Party) – led to Soekarno's downfall. General Soeharto (he didn't get the Muhammad moniker until the late '80s) emerged as the leading figure in the armed forces, displaying great military and political skill in suppressing the coup. The PKI was outlawed and a wave of anticommunist reprisals followed, which escalated into a wholesale massacre of suspected communists throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

In Bali, the events had an added local significance as the main national political organisations, the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Nationalist Party) and PKI, crystallised existing differences between traditionalists, who wanted to maintain the old caste system, and radicals, who saw the caste system as repressive and who were urging land reform. After the failed coup, religious traditionalists in Bali led the witch-hunt for the 'godless communists'. Eventually the military stepped in to control the anticommunist purge, but no-one on Bali was untouched by the killings, estimated at between 50,000 and 100,000 out of a population of about two million, a percentage many times higher than on Java. Many tens of thousands more died on Lombok.

SOEHARTO COMES & GOES

Following the failed coup in 1965 and its aftermath, Soeharto established himself as president and took control of the government, while Soekarno was shoved aside, spending his final days under house arrest in the hills above Jakarta. Under Soeharto's 'New Order' government, Indonesia looked to the West in foreign policy, and Western-educated economists set about balancing budgets, controlling inflation and attracting foreign investment.

Politically, Soeharto ensured that Golkar (officially not a political party), with strong support from the army, became the dominant political force. Other political parties were banned or crippled by the disqualification of candidates and the disenfranchisement of voters. Regular elections maintained the appearance of a national democracy, but until 1999, Golkar won every election hands down. This period was also marked by great economic development in Bali and later in Lombok as social stability and maintenance of a favourable investment climate took precedence over democracy.

Bali and the Tourist Industry by David Shavit is a highly entertaining look at how tourism developed in Bali between the wars with the help of a menagerie of local and Western characters.

Bali's airport is named for I Ngurah Rai, the national hero who died leading the resistance against the Dutch at Marga in 1946.

LONELY PLANET 1975

A verdant tropical island so picturesquely and immaculately presented it could easily be a painted backdrop.

Kuta Beach At latest count there were over a 100 (over one hundred!) places to stay. One item you won't find on the menus are the 'special' omelettes and pizzas. About 400Rp for a large one – the special ingredients are the mushrooms. There's quite a rush on them at mid afternoon to ensure a good high by sunset.

Legian With Kuta getting bigger and more resort-like daily, a lot of people are moving 2km down the road to Legian, the mushroom village... They even have electricity now.

Tony Wheeler in South-East Asia on a Shoestring, first edition (1975)

In early 1997 Southeast Asia began to suffer a severe economic crisis, and within the year the Indonesian currency (the rupiah) had all but collapsed and the economy was on the brink of bankruptcy. To help deal with the continuing economic crisis, Soeharto agreed to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demand to increase the government-subsidised price of electricity and petrol, resulting in immediate increases in the cost of public transport, rice and other food staples. Riots broke out across Indonesia and although Bali and Lombok were spared most of the violence, their tourism-dependent economies were battered.

Unable to cope with the escalating crisis, Soeharto resigned in 1998, after 32 years in power. His protégé, Dr Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, became president. Though initially dismissed as a Soeharto crony, he made the first notable steps in opening the door to real democracy, such as freeing the press from government supervision. However he failed to tackle most of the critical issues dogging Indonesia such as corruption, and his cavalier handling of East Timor's independence helped to precipitate the 1999 massacres.

TERRORISTS & RECOVERY

In 1999, Indonesia's parliament met to elect a new president. The frontrunner was Megawati Sukarnoputri, whose party received the largest number of votes at the election. Megawati was enormously popular in Bali, partly because of family connections (her paternal grandmother was Balinese) and partly because her party was essentially secular (the mostly Hindu Balinese are very concerned about any growth in Muslim fundamentalism). However, the newly empowered Islamist parties helped to shift the balance of power. By astutely playing both the Islam card and using his long-standing relationship with Golkar leaders, Abdurrahman Wahid, the moderate, intellectual head of Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation, emerged as president.

Outraged supporters of Megawati took to the streets of Java and Bali. In Bali, the demonstrations were typically more disruptive than violent – trees were felled to block the main Nusa Dua road, and government buildings were damaged in Denpasar and Singaraja. The election of Megawati as vice-president quickly defused the situation.

On Lombok, however, religious and political tensions spilled over in early 2000 when a sudden wave of attacks starting in Mataram burned Chinese-Christian businesses and homes across the island. The impact on tourism was immediate and severe, and the island is still trying to put this shameful episode behind it.

Bali Blues by Jeremy Allan tells of the struggle by locals to survive in Kuta during the year following the 2002 terrorist attacks.

1965

Political and religious violence in Bali and on Lombok kills tens of thousands

1998

Soeharto resigns as president although his family retains control of several Bali resorts

2000

Religious riots on Lombok devastate tourism

2002

Bombs in Kuta on October 22 killed over 200

LOCAL RULE BALI STYLE

Within Bali's government, the most important body is also the most local. More 3500 neighbourhood organisations called *banjars* wield enormous power. Comprising the married men of a given area (somewhere between 50 and 500), a *banjar* controls most community activities, whether it's planning for a temple ceremony or making important land use decisions. Decisions are reached by consensus and woe to a member who shirks his duties. The penalty can be fines or worse: banishment from the *banjar*.

Although women and even children can belong to the *banjar*, only men attend the meetings where important decisions are taken. Women, who often own the businesses in tourist areas, have to communicate through their husband to exert their influence. One thing that outsiders in a neighbourhood quickly learn is that one does not cross the *banjar*. Entire streets of restaurants and bars have been closed by order of the *banjar* after it was determined that neighbourhood concerns over matters such as noise were not being addressed.

As with his predecessor Soekarno, Wahid's moral stature and vast intellect did not translate into administrative competence. His open contempt towards squabbling parliamentarians did little to garner him much-needed support. After 21 months of growing ethnic, religious and regional conflicts, parliament had enough ammunition to recall Wahid's mandate and hand the presidency to Megawati.

Indonesia's cultural wars continued and certainly played a role in the October 2002 bombings in Kuta. More than 200 tourists and Balinese were killed and hundreds more were injured. Besides the obvious enormous monetary loss (tourism immediately fell by more than half), the blasts fuelled the ever-present suspicions the Hindu Balinese hold regarding Muslims (that the Muslim Javanese are trying to muscle in on the profitable Bali scene, and the Muslims from Indonesia are, in general, looking to show prejudice against non-Muslim Balinese) and shattered the myth of isolation enjoyed by many locals. See the boxed text, p102 for more on this and subsequent bombings which have dramatically changed life on the island.

Blessedly the elections of 2004 managed to dispel fears and were remarkably peaceful. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (popularly known as 'SBY') beat incumbent Megawati Sukarnoputri. A former general and government minister, SBY promised strong and enlightened leadership. He has been put to the test numerous times since, with the tsunami that devastated Aceh in 2004, the spread of bird flu and the volcano eruption and tsunami which hit Java in 2006. So far there has been little to show that he'll enjoy more success than Soeharto, Wahid et al.

Meanwhile Bali continued to be affected by global politics. Its relationship with Australia became fractious over several high-profile arrests of Australians on drug charges and a perception that Indonesia had been lenient with many of those accused of the 2002 bombings which killed 88 Australians.

Still, tourism numbers had almost recovered by October 2005 when three suicide bombers killed 20 people – including five tourists – in Kuta and Jimbaran. Evidence collected in the following months showed that the attacks had been masterminded by a British- and Australian-educated engineer on behalf of a fundamentalist Islamic group based in Indonesia. Again tourism numbers suffered and the entire island's economy took a hit.

For a different take on Bali, read Geoffrey Robinson's enlightening revisionist history *Bali, The Dark Side of Paradise*.

2004

Peaceful elections see Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono elected president of Indonesia

2005

Suicide bombers kill 20 in South Bali

The Culture

REGIONAL IDENTITY

Bali is commonly described as a heaven for its cheery, offering-proffering residents but it is a romanticism worthy of a tourist brochure at best. Life is often hard and the average Balinese person has a hardscrabble existence that would be familiar to people worldwide. However, the Balinese do excel in one key area – they have an undeniable talent for making use of every resource on the island: bamboo, vines, flowers and shells for their imaginative offerings; European perfumes, international CDs, brand-name clothing for rip-off copying. Even the tourist is a resource to be painted, oiled, massaged, manipulated, tattooed or plaited.

Balinese life centres around the village, and increasingly, the suburban neighbourhoods of the south. Every activity – from producing crops to preparing food, and from bargaining with tourists to keeping the youth employed – involves everybody. It is impossible to be a faceless nonentity on the island. This involvement with other people in the village extends to tourists. To make you feel welcome, Balinese will go out of their way to chat to you. But they won't talk about the weather or even the football. They are interested in you, your home life and your personal relationships. Chatting in Bali can get rather personal (see p57) but is never with malicious intent.

Balinese are known for their sense of fun, their joy of life, and their ability to adapt a situation to suit changing needs. The legend that tells of how a group of Balinese farmers promised to sacrifice a pig if their harvest was good is an example of this. As the bountiful harvest time approached, no pig could be found. Then they had an idea. The sacrifice had been promised after the harvest. If there was always new rice growing, the harvest would always be about to take place and no sacrifice would be necessary. Since then, farmers have always planted one field of rice before harvesting another.

Everybody loves children – visit Bali with your kids and you'll have a constant stream of people making sure they enjoy every moment. In one memorable scene, an otherwise irascible driver-tout dived to pluck a tourist child walking into the path of a taxi. Older children take care of the younger ones in their family or village. They're always seen carrying a child on their hips, all of them remarkably well-behaved and happy.

Women enjoy a prominent position in Bali, from manual labour jobs (you'll see them carrying baskets of wet cement on their heads) to almost every job in the tourist industry. In fact, the traditional female role of caring for people and preparing food means that many successful tourists shops and cafés were established by women.

Traditional Balinese society is founded on the Balinese Hindu religion and it permeates every aspect of life. There are temples in every village, shrines in every field, offerings made at every corner, nook and cranny. The Balinese feel that their religion should be an enjoyable thing, for mortals as well as the gods. It's summed up well in their attitude to offerings – once the gods have eaten the 'essence' of the food, you've still got enough left over to be satisfied (see p45).

The Balinese are a very proud, confident race, with a culture that extends throughout the generations. It's a culture they embrace with passion. After all, it's only a hundred years ago that 4000 Balinese nobility, dressed in their finest, walked out into the gunfire of the Dutch army rather than become colonial subjects (p31).

“Balinese are known for their sense of fun, their joy of life”

LIFESTYLE

For the average rural Balinese, the working day is not long. Their expertise at coaxing bountiful harvests from the fertile volcanic soil leaves them lots of quality time to chat or to prepare elaborate cultural events. In the towns, the working day is longer, but although routine observances may be less elaborate, they are undertaken with no less devotion.

In villages life is concentrated under the tropical vegetation of palm, breadfruit, mango, papaya, and banana trees. The centre of a village has an open meeting space, temples, the town market, perhaps a former prince's home, the *kulkul* (hollow tree-trunk drum used to sound a warning or call meetings) tower and quite likely a big banyan tree. The *banjar* (local division of a village consisting of all the married adult males) continues the strong community spirit by organising village festivals, marriage ceremonies, cremations and the local gamelan (traditional Balinese orchestra). The headquarters is the open-sided *bale banjar* (communal meeting place of a *banjar*) where you might see a gamelan practice, a meeting, food being prepared for a feast, or men preening their roosters for the next round of cockfights.

In the more urbanized south however, life embodies many of the same hassles of modern life anywhere. There's traffic, noise that drowns out even the loudest barking dog and various social ills such as drugs. There is though still a concept of village life under it all in that people are part of a greater group beyond their immediate family. This is important as women are finding much to do outside of the home, whether it's work or even cultural activities. Child care becomes an adult responsibility, not just a family or maternal one. In the end, an air-conditioned mall fills in for the village banyan tree as a meeting place for many.

Historically, the culture on Lombok is almost as rich as Bali's, but today it is no longer as colourful or as accessible as in Bali. Ancient traditions of worship, including elements of Hindu and animist beliefs, have all but died out as the vast majority of people now practise orthodox Islam. Nevertheless, small numbers of Wektu Telu (p316), a religion unique to Lombok, still exist and both Lombok's Balinese and Buginese communities help add to the diversity.

Island of Bali, by Miguel Covarrubias, written in the 1930s, is still a fantastic introduction to the romance and seduction of the island and its culture.

Bali has three university campuses: in Singaraja, Denpasar and on the Bukit Peninsula.

DON'T HANG THOSE UNDIES! *Janet de Neeffe*

You might have noticed that the Balinese often dry their clothes on the grass in the fields or on low clothes racks. In Bali, clothing is considered unclean and should never occupy high sacred spaces. Even in my cupboard, my temple clothes occupy the top shelves with underwear strictly reserved for the lowest area.

When my husband Ketut, who is Balinese, saw our Hills Hoists and clothes lines in the suburbs of Melbourne, he was deeply offended. He ended up drying all his clothes, in the middle of winter, on a low bench in the backyard. Recently, he invited a priest to scan our Balinese compound for any negative energies that compounds tend to accumulate. When all was ready, Ketut did a final check of the property before the redeemed priest was about to arrive. Suddenly, he ran to me in a panic saying, 'you must go and tell the tourist to take all his washing down!' I ran to the front of our compound and was greeted with a riot of wet laundry in all shapes and sizes, flapping happily in the breeze. Our guest had decided to wash everything he owned. His sand shoes and wet underwear, shirts and other articles were stuck on branches, hung from lamps and stretched between the pillars out the front of his room. I quickly had to ask him if he could remove the garments until the priest was finished, and politely added that to display one's washing so high is very offensive for the Balinese. Since then, I have added a note in our guest rooms advising that all washing should only be hung to dry on the clothes racks provided.

Ceremonies & Rituals

Every stage of life, from conception to cremation, is marked by a series of ceremonies and rituals, which are the basis of the rich, varied and active Balinese cultural life.

BIRTH & CHILDHOOD

The first ceremony of Balinese life takes place when women reach the third month of pregnancy, with offerings to ensure the wellbeing of the baby. Soon after the birth, the afterbirth is buried with appropriate offerings. Twelve days later women are 'purified' through another ceremony. After 42 days, offerings are made for the baby's future.

The much-repeated Balinese names – which are gender neutral – carry a symbolic meaning, indicating social status and birth order. Low caste Balinese name their first child Wayan, Putu or Gede; the second is Made, Kadek or Nengah; the third is Nyoman or Komang; and the fourth is Ketut. The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth children re-use the same set. The large number of Balinese named Anak Agung, a name denoting the child of a royal concubine, attest to the fertility of the Balinese rajahs (princes).

A child goes through 13 celebrations, or *manusa yadnya*. At 105 days, the baby is welcomed to the family and its feet are allowed to touch the ground for the first time – ground is considered impure, so babies are held until then. At 210 days (first Balinese year) the baby is spiritually blessed in the ancestral temple and there's a huge feast for the family and community.

A rite of passage to adulthood is the tooth-filing ceremony, when a priest symbolically files a teenager's (around 16 to 18 years) upper front teeth to produce a pleasing line. Crooked fangs are, after all, one of the chief distinguishing marks of evil spirits – just have a look at a Rangda mask! No-one may marry unless their teeth have been filed.

MARRIAGE

Every Balinese is expected to marry at a relatively young age. In rural areas this can be the late teens, and in the urban south it's after formal schooling is completed or a solid job secured. In general, marriages are not arranged, although there are strict rules that apply between the castes.

The respectable way to marry, known as *mapadik*, is when the family of the man visits the family of the woman and politely proposes. The Balinese, however, like their fun and often prefer marriage by *ngorod* (elopement). Nobody is too surprised when the young man spirits away his bride-to-be. The couple go into hiding and somehow the girl's parents, no matter how assiduously they search, never manage to find her.

Eventually the couple re-emerge, the marriage is officially recognised and everybody has had a lot of fun and games. Elopement has another advantage: apart from being exciting and mildly heroic, it's cheaper.

DEATH & CREMATION

The last ceremony, *pitra yadna* (cremation), is often the biggest, most spectacular, noisy and exciting event. Because of the burdensome cost of even a modest cremation ceremony, the deceased are buried, sometimes for years, and disinterred for a mass cremation with the cost shared among families. Brahmanas (high priests), however, must be cremated immediately.

The body is carried in a tall, incredibly artistic multitiered tower made of bamboo, paper, tinsel, silk, cloth, mirrors, flowers and anything else colourful, on the shoulders of a group of men. The number of tiers of the tower depends on the importance of the deceased. The funeral of a rajah or high priest may require hundreds of men to tote the 11-tiered structure.

Balinese education begins with six years of primary school, which most children attend – you'll see them walking along the roads in their uniforms.

The Balinese tooth-filing ceremony closes with the recipient being given a delicious *jamu* (herbal tonic), made from freshly pressed turmeric, betel-leaf juice, lime juice and honey.

COCKFIGHTS

Cockfights are a regular feature of temple ceremonies – a combination of sacrifice, sport and gambling. Men keep fighting cocks as prized pets, carefully grooming and preparing them for their brief moment of glory or defeat. Look for their hoop-shaped baskets near houses.

At the festival, the cocks are matched, a lethally sharp metal spur is tied to one leg, there's a crescendo of shouting and betting, the birds are pushed against each other to stir them up, then they're released and the feathers fly. It's usually over in seconds – a slash of the spur and one rooster is down and dying. After the bout, the successful gamblers collect their pay-offs and the winning owner gets to take the dead rooster home for his cooking pot. When travelling in rural Bali, you'll know there's a cockfight nearby when you see scores of vehicles and scooters parked near a temple but nobody in sight. The men are usually back behind the compound.

Although cock-fighting was once a method of keeping the small amounts of available cash in circulation, as more people in Bali hold jobs, wagering has exploded. It now diverts family income from school fees and credit payments.

Along the way, the group confuses the deceased's spirit so it cannot find its way back home. They shake the tower, run it around in circles, throw water at it and generally make the trip anything but a stately funeral crawl. Meanwhile, the priest halfway up the tower hangs on grimly, doing his best to soak bystanders with holy water. A gamelan sprints behind, providing an exciting musical accompaniment.

At the cremation ground, the body is transferred to a funeral sarcophagus which corresponds to the deceased's caste (p43) – a black bull for a Brahmana, white bull for priests, winged lion for a Ksatriyasa, and elephant-fish for a Sudra. Finally, it all goes up in flames and the ashes are taken to the sea to be scattered on the waves. With the material body well and truly destroyed, the soul is free to descend to heaven and wait for the next incarnation.

Reality Check

There is a growing problem with drug use among Balinese youth and on Lombok, especially with crystal meth – yabba – brought over from Java and sold cheaply to teenagers with access to cash raised from the tourism economy.

Local attitudes to sexuality differ to the Western misconceptions that still persist. For example, in rural areas people still bathe naked by the side of the road. This is not a show of exhibitionism, but a tradition; while bathing, they consider themselves invisible.

Begging has no place in traditional Balinese society – what you see in the south and at times in Ubud are either the mountain Aga people or families from Java.

Though unmarried Balinese girls are ostensibly virgins, discreet premarital sex is common, but generally restricted to couples who intend to marry. Sex workers and willing companions looking for some cash or merchandise on the side, however, are common in tourist areas. These people – of both sexes – are usually from another island, with Java being the primary source. In some cases they are from villages in the north and are counting on not being seen in the company of a foreigner by any one they know.

ECONOMY

Bali's economy has traditionally been agricultural. A majority of Balinese worked in the fields, and agriculture still contributes about 40% of Bali's total economic output, although a much smaller proportion of its export income. Coffee, copra, seaweed (p150) and cattle are major agricultural exports – most of the rice goes to feed Bali's own population.

But tourism really is the engine of Balinese economic life. There's the money that pours in with visitors, and that which is made when people abroad buy Balinese goods. The value of handicrafts exported each year (whether silly and profane wood-carvings in a backpack or exquisite ikat cloth destined for a designer abroad) is at least US\$1.5 billion.

Within the often-battered Indonesian economy, Bali is a relatively affluent province, with tourism providing a substantial hard-currency income, along with the craft and garment industries. Economic problems and unemployment elsewhere in Indonesia have led to an increasing number of people coming to Bali from other islands, hoping for work or for some other way to make money, and this is a continuing source of tension.

The Tourism Industry

Tourism accounts for about 40% of Bali's formal economy. This is achieved through the provision of accommodation, meals, services and souvenirs to visitors. You won't go anywhere in Bali and not see the importance of visitors to the island's livelihood. In many ways it underpins the economy, providing the funds needed for Bali to develop its infrastructure, educational system and more. The bombings of 2002 and 2005, coupled with bad relations with Australia, caused a plunge in visitor numbers that have sent shock waves throughout the island's economy. Shops and other businesses have closed by the score and the effects have been felt in the most remote villages as young people are no longer able to send home their earnings from tourism.

In 2006, the total number of visitors was expected to be somewhere near 1.2 million, down 20% from the peak year of 2001. With the numbers of visiting Australians – who historically shared top visitor status with the Japanese – down more than 50%, Bali has had to rely more on tourists from Asia, North America and Europe. The entire industry is also undergoing a shift as the high end of the market continues to grow, seen in the hundreds of villas displacing rice fields north and west of Seminyak.

Lombok's tourism industry, though much smaller, has suffered several lean years since rioting provoked by religious and cultural tensions affected Senggigi in 2000. Though visitor numbers remain depressed in many parts of Lombok, the Gili Islands, particularly Trawangan, have largely bucked this trend.

Farmers must join the local *subak* (rice growers' association). The *subak* ensures that water reaches all the paddies, so whoever's field is at the bottom is usually elected to lead the organisation since his happiness will mean others are happy as well.

STOPPING CHILD-SEX TOURISM IN BALI

Unfortunately, Indonesia has become a destination for foreigners seeking to sexually exploit local children. A range of socioeconomic factors render many children and young people vulnerable to such abuse and some individuals prey upon this vulnerability. The sexual abuse and exploitation of children has serious, life-long and even life-threatening consequences for the victims. Strong laws exist in Indonesia to prosecute offenders and many countries also have extraterritorial legislation which allows nationals to be prosecuted in their own country for these intolerable crimes.

Travellers can help stop child-sex tourism by reporting suspicious behaviour. Call the **Women & Children Care Unit** (☎ 0361-226 783, ext 127) of the Bali police. If you know the nationality of the individual, you can contact their embassy directly.

For more information, contact the following organisations:

Child Wise (www.childwise.net) This is the Australian member of ECPAT.

ECPAT (End Child Prostitution & Trafficking; www.ecpat.org) A global network working on these issues, with over 70 affiliate organisations around the world.

PKPA (Center for Study & Child Protection; ☎ 061 663 7821 in Medan, Sumatra) An organisation committed to the protection of Indonesia's children and the prevention of child-sex tourism.

Balinese culture keeps intimacy behind doors. Holding hands is not customary for couples in Bali, and is reserved for small children; however, linking arms for adults is the norm.

The average Balinese earns US\$100 a month in income, and restaurant, hotel and shop workers often make only half as much. Something to remember when you think about leaving a tip.

Although exact numbers are hard to come by, it's generally agreed that Bali has Indonesia's highest literacy rate.

POPULATION & MULTICULTURALISM

Bali is densely populated, with over 3.1 million people, almost all of the Balinese Hindu religion. Other residents come from Java, Sumatra and Nusa Tenggara; the Balinese tourist industry is a magnet for people seeking jobs and business opportunities.

The Balinese people are predominantly of the Malay race, descendants of the groups that travelled southeast from China around 3000 BC. Before that, ethnic strands have been traced to the Australian Aborigine, India, Polynesia and Melanesia, and a diverse range of physical features from those groups can be seen in Bali's population.

In Lombok, the majority of people live in and around the principal centres of Mataram, Praya and Selong. Almost 90% of the people are Sasak, with minority populations of Balinese, Chinese, Buginese, Javanese and Arabs. The Sasak are assumed to have come from northwestern India or Myanmar (Burma), and the clothing the women wear today – long black sarongs called *lambung* and short-sleeved blouses with V-necks – is very similar to that worn in those areas. The sarong is held by a 4m scarf called a *sabuk*, trimmed with brightly coloured stripes. Women wear very little jewellery and never any gold ornaments. Most Sasak people are Muslims, and many traditional beliefs are interwoven with Muslim ideology.

The Balinese of Lombok have retained their Balinese Hindu customs and traditions. They contributed to the emergence of Lombok's Wektu Telu religion (p316), and Balinese temples, ceremonies and processions are a colourful part of western Lombok's cultural life.

Ethnic minorities in Bali include the Bali Aga of the central highlands, whose Hindu traditions predate the arrival of the Majapahit court in the 15th

AVOIDING OFFENCE

Be aware and respectful of local sensibilities, and dress and act appropriately, especially in the rural villages and religious sites. When in doubt let the words 'modest' and 'humble' guide you.

- An increasing number of younger Balinese now adopt the dress of visitors, which means you'll see shorts everywhere. Overly revealing clothing is still frowned upon though – few want to see your butt crack.
- Many women go topless on Bali's tourist beaches, but bring a top for less touristy beaches (definitely if you're going to Lombok).
- Thongs (flip-flops) are acceptable in temples if you're otherwise well dressed, but if you are going to a government office, say to get a local driving licence, you need to look smarter.
- Take off your shoes before entering a mosque or someone's house.
- Don't touch anyone on the head, as it is regarded as the abode of the soul and is therefore sacred.
- Pass things with your right hand. To show more respect, pass something using both hands.
- Beware of talking with your hands on your hips as it is a sign of contempt, anger or aggression (as displayed in traditional dance and opera).
- Shaking hands is customary for both men and women on introduction and greeting.
- Beckon to someone with the hand extended and a downward waving motion. The Western method of beckoning is considered very rude.

BALI'S CASTES

Caste in Bali determines roles in religious rituals and the language to be used in social situations. This caste system derives from Hindu traditions on Java around 1350, and the structure, which suited Dutch interests, was entrenched during the colonial period.

Most Balinese belong to the common Sudra caste. The rest belong to the *triwangsa* (three people) caste which is divided into: Brahmana, high priests with titles of Ida Bagus (male) and Ida Ayu (female); Ksatriyasa, merchants with titles of Cokoda (males) and Anak Ayung (females); and Wesia, the nobility with titles of Gusti Ngura or Dewa Gede (male), and Gusti Ayu or Dewa Ayu (female). Despite the titles, the importance of one's caste is diminishing, as status now comes more from education, economic success and community influence.

Caste differences in language is overcome by the use of 'polite' forms of Balinese, or the use of the national Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia), itself a sign of status (for information on languages, see p373). In a traditional village, however, caste is still a central part of life, and absolutely essential to all religious practices.

century. There are Chinese in the larger towns, Indian and Arab merchants in Denpasar and thousands of permanent Western expatriate residents (p122). The island is a model of religious tolerance, with two Christian villages, some Chinese temples, a Buddhist monastery and Muslim communities, particularly around the ports of Gilimanuk, Singaraja, Benoa and Padangbai. Though Bali Hinduism largely defines the culture, in most cases, permanent residents professing other religions still refer to themselves as Balinese.

Ethnic minorities in Lombok include Chinese, brought over to serve as coolies in the rice paddies beginning in the 18th century. Many went on to set up their own businesses, which were singled out in the riots of 2000. The Arabs in Lombok are by and large devout Muslims, well educated and relatively affluent. In the late 19th century, Buginese from south Sulawesi settled in coastal areas and their descendants still operate much of the fishing industry.

MEDIA

Following the end of Soeharto's authoritarian rule, the press enjoyed a degree of freedom. However, it was short-lived. The courts have allowed defamation suits to be filed by government officials and businesspeople against editors and reporters using the Criminal Code instead of the Press Law. A consequence of this has been an increase in self-censorship.

Meanwhile, the influential *Jakarta Post* promotes a more humane civil society while serving the needs of its readers, both expatriate and Indonesian. In Bali visitors are likely to see scores of tourist-oriented publications which avoid serious controversy. The best source of local news in English is the Bali Discovery website (www.balidiscovery.com), which has a news section that draws from many local sources.

You may also see copies of the Indonesian edition of *Playboy* on newsstands. It's published in Denpasar, and despite having centrefolds featuring models wearing considerably more than the average tourist on Kuta Beach, it was chased out of Jakarta by Islamic protesters.

See p346 for details on broadcasting and other publications in Bali and Lombok.

RELIGION Hinduism

Hinduism was the predominant religion in Indonesia (there are remarkable Hindu monuments on Java) until the great Hindu kingdom, the Majapahit, evacuated to Bali, taking their religion and rituals, and also the

The Sweat of Pearls: Short Stories About Women of Bali, by Putu Oka Sukanta, is a small collection of engaging stories about village life. Try to find a copy in one of the many used-book stalls.

TEMPLE ETIQUETTE

Foreigners can enter most temple complexes if decently dressed. Usually, clean, tidy clothing and a *selandong* (traditional scarf) or sash to tie around your waist – some temples have these for hire for around 2000Rp, or a donation – is an acceptable show of respect for the gods.

Priests should be shown respect, particularly at festivals. Don't put yourself higher than them (eg by climbing on a wall to take photos).

Usually there's a sign at temple entrances warning you to be respectful, and asking that women not enter if menstruating. At this time women are thought to be *sebel* (ritually unclean), as are pregnant women and those who have recently given birth, or been recently bereaved.

art, literature, music and culture. While the Bali Aga retreated to the hills to escape this new influence, the rest of the population simply adapted it for themselves. The Balinese overlaid the Majapahit interpretation of Hinduism on their animist beliefs creating the unusual Balinese form of the religion.

Balinese worship the trinity of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, three aspects of the one god, Sanghyang Widi. The basic threesome is always alluded to, but never seen – a vacant shrine or empty throne tells all. Balinese temples come to life at the regular and colourful temple festivals (p337). A temple ritual involves major communal offerings, plus each family's own large and colourful offering, brought in in a spectacular procession. The betel on top of every offering symbolises the Hindu Trinity, as do the three basic colours used – red for Brahma, black or green for Wisnu, and white for Siwa. Conical shapes are models of the cosmic mountain and rice cookies represent plants, animals, people or buildings.

Islam

Islam is a minority religion in Bali; most who practise it are descendants of seafaring people from Sulawesi. Mosques are most often seen at seaports and fishing villages.

Gujarati merchants brought Islam to Lombok via the Celebes (now Sulawesi) and Java in the 13th century. The traditions and rituals affect all aspects of daily life. Friday afternoon is the official time for worship, when all government offices and many businesses close. Many, but not all, Muslim women in Lombok wear headscarfs, very few choose to wear the veil, and large numbers work in the tourism industry. Middle-class Muslim girls are often able to choose their own partners. In east Lombok most people practise a stricter, more conservative variety of Islam, and there is evidence that more radical, anti-Western beliefs are taking root with some youths.

Wektu Telu

This unique religion originated in Bayan, in north Lombok. *Wektu* means 'result' in Sasak, while *telu* means 'three' and signifies the three religions that comprise Wektu Telu: Balinese Hinduism, Islam and animism. The tenet is that all important aspects of life are underpinned by a trinity. The Wektu Telu (p316) believe they have three main duties: to believe in Allah; to avoid the temptations of the devil; and to cooperate with, help and love other people.

The Wektu Telu have three days of fasting and prayer for Ramadan. They pray when and where they feel the need, so all public buildings have a prayer corner that faces Mecca. And, they believe that everything that comes from Allah is good, therefore pork is good.

The ancient Hindu swastika seen all over Bali is a symbol of harmony with the universe. The German Nazis used a version where the arms are always bent in a clockwise direction.

ARTS

The richness of Bali's arts and crafts has its origin in the fertility of the land. The purest forms are the depictions of Dewi Sri, the rice goddess, intricately made from dried and folded strips of palm leaf to ensure that the fertility of the rice fields continues.

Until the tourist invasion, the acts of painting or carving were purely to decorate temples and shrines and to enrich ceremonies. Today, with galleries and craft shops everywhere, paintings are stacked up on their floors and you trip over stone- or woodcarvings. Much of it is churned out quickly, but you will still find a great deal of beautiful work.

Balinese dance, music and *wayang kulit* (a leather puppet used in shadow puppet plays) performances are one of the reasons that Bali is much more than just a beach destination. The artistry on display here will stay with you long after you've moved on from the island.

On Lombok you can find excellent crafts, including pottery in villages such as Banyumulek (p292). There are many shops and galleries with good items in Mataram (p290) and Senggigi (p298).

Dance

BALI

You can catch a quality dance performance in Bali anywhere there's a festival or celebration, and you'll find exceptional performances in and around Ubud. Enjoying this purely Balinese form of art is reason enough to visit and no visit is complete without this quintessential Bali experience.

To see good Balinese dance on a regular basis, you'll want to spend some time in Ubud. For an idea of what's on, see p197. Performances typically take place at night and although choreographed with the short attention spans of tourists in mind they can last two hours or more. Absorb the hypnotic music and the alluring moves of the performers and the hours will, er, dance past. Admission to dances is generally around 50,000Rp. Music, theatre and dance courses are available in Ubud, where private teachers advertise instruction in various of the Balinese instruments (see p185).

OFFERINGS

Although tourists in Bali may think they are the honoured guests, the real honoured guests are the gods, ancestors, spirits and demons that live in Bali. They are presented with offerings throughout each day to show respect and gratitude, or perhaps to bribe a demon into being less mischievous.

A gift to a higher being must look attractive, so each offering is a work of art. The basic form is fresh food arranged on a palm leaf and crowned with a *saiban* (palm leaf decoration). Once presented to the gods it cannot be used again, so new offerings are made again and again each day, usually by women (as more women hold jobs, you'll see easy-to-assemble offerings for sale in markets – much as you'll find quick dinner items in Western supermarkets).

While offerings come in many forms, typically they are little bigger than a guidebook. Expect to see flowers, bits of food – especially rice – and a few more unusual items such as Ritz crackers. More important shrines and occasions will call for more elaborate offerings, which can include dozens of citrus fruits and even entire animals cooked and ready for eating.

One thing not to worry about is stepping on offerings. Given their ubiquity it's almost impossible not to (just don't try to). In fact, at Bemo Corner in Kuta (p95) offerings are left in front of the shrine in the middle of the road where they are quickly run over by taxis. And across the island, dogs hover around fresh offerings ready to devour a bite or two, especially the crackers. Given the belief that gods or demons absorb the essence of an offering instantly, the critters are really getting leftovers.

Richly illustrated, *The Art & Culture of Bali* by Urs Ramseier is a comprehensive work on the foundations of Bali's complex and colourful artistic and cultural heritage.

A great resource on Bali culture and life is www.murnis.com. Click through to Culture to find explanations on everything from kids' names to what one wears to a ceremony and the weaving of the garments.

For a perspective on the state of dance in Bali today from one of its top dancers, see the boxed text, p143.

Many tourist shows in South Bali hotels offer a smorgasbord of dances – a little Kecak, a taste of Legong and some Barong to round it off. Some of these performances can be pretty abbreviated with just a few musicians and a couple of dancers.

Balinese love a blend of seriousness and slapstick, and this shows in their dances. Some have a decidedly comic element, with clowns who convey the story and also act as a counterpoint to the staid, noble characters. Most dancers are not professionals. Dance is learned by performing, and carefully following the movements of an expert. It tends to be precise, jerky, shifting and jumpy, remarkably like Balinese music, with its abrupt changes of tempo and dramatic contrasts between silence and crashing noise. There's little of the soaring leaps or the smooth flowing movements of Western dance.

Every movement of wrist, hand and fingers is charged with meaning; and facial expressions are carefully choreographed to convey the character of the dance. Watch the local children cheer the good characters and cringe back from the stage when the demons appear.

Kecak

Probably the best known of the dances, the Kecak has a 'choir' of men who provide the 'chak-a-chak-a-chak' accompaniment, imitating a troupe of monkeys. In the 1960s, the tourist version of Kecak developed. This is easily found in Ubud and also at the Pura Luhur Ulu Watu (p132).

Kecak dances tell a tale from the *Ramayana*, one of the great Hindu holy books, about Prince Rama and his Princess Sita. The evil Rawana, King of Lanka, lures Rama away with a golden deer (Lanka's equally evil prime minister, who has magically changed himself into a deer). Then, when the princess is alone, he pounces and carries her off to his hideaway.

Hanuman, the white monkey-god, tells Princess Sita that Rama is trying to rescue her and gives her Rama's ring. When Rama arrives he is met by the evil king's evil son, Megananda, who shoots an arrow that magically turns into a snake and ties Rama up. Fortunately, he is able to call upon a Garuda (mythical man-bird creature) who helps him escape. Finally, Sugriwa, the king of the monkeys, comes with his monkey army and, after a great battle, good wins out over evil and Rama and Sita return home.

Throughout the dance the chanting is superbly synchronised with an eerily exciting coordination. Add in the actors posing as an army of monkeys and you have unbeatable spectacle.

Barong & Rangda

This rivals the Kecak as Bali's most popular dance for tourists. Again it's a battle between good (the Barong) and bad (the Rangda). The Barong is a strange but good, mischievous and fun-loving shaggy dog-lion. The widow-witch Rangda is bad through and through.

The story begins with Barong Keket, the most holy of the Barong, enjoying the acclaim of its supporters – a group of men with kris (traditional daggers). Then Rangda appears, her long tongue lolling, terrible fangs protruding from her mouth, human entrails draped around her neck, and pendulous parody breasts. (In fully authentic versions – which are rarely seen by visitors – the Rangda is covered with real entrails from freshly slaughtered animals.)

The Barong and Rangda duel, and the supporters draw their kris and rush in. The Rangda throws them into a trance that makes them stab themselves. But the Barong dramatically casts a spell that stops the kris from harming them. They rush back and forth, waving their kris, rolling on the ground,

desperately trying to stab themselves. It's all a conspiracy to terrify tourists in the front row!

Finally, the terrible Rangda retires and good has triumphed again. The entranced Barong supporters, however, still need to be sprinkled with holy water. Playing around with all that powerful magic, good and bad, is not to be taken lightly. A *pesmangku* (priest for temple rituals) must end the dancers' trance and a chicken must be sacrificed after the dance to propitiate the evil spirits.

Legong

This most graceful of Balinese dances is performed by young girls. It is important in Balinese culture that in old age a classic dancer will be remembered as a 'great Legong'.

Peliatan's famous dance troupe, often seen in Ubud, is particularly noted for its Legong Keraton (Legong of the Palace). The very stylised and symbolic story involves two Legong dancing in mirror image. They are dressed in gold brocade, their faces elaborately made up, their eyebrows plucked and repainted, and their hair decorated with frangipani. The dance relates how a king takes a maiden, Rangkesari, captive. When her brother comes to release her, Rangkesari begs the king to free her rather than go to war. The king refuses and on his way to the battle meets a bird with tiny golden wings bringing ill omens. He ignores the bird and continues on, meets Rangkesari's brother and is killed.

Sanghyang

These dances were developed to drive out evil spirits from a village – Sanghyang is a divine spirit who temporarily inhabits an entranced dancer. The Sanghyang Dedari is performed by two young girls who dance a dream-like version of the Legong in perfect symmetry while their eyes are firmly shut. Male and female choirs provide a background chant until the dancers slump to the ground. A *pesmangku* blesses them with holy water and brings them out of the trance. The modern Kecak dance developed from the Sanghyang.

In the Sanghyang Jaran, a boy in a trance dances around and through a fire of coconut husks, riding a coconut palm 'hobby horse'. Variations of this are called Kecak Fire Dance (or Fire and Trance Dance for tourists) and are performed in Ubud almost daily.

Other Dances

The warrior dance, the Baris, is a male equivalent of the Legong – grace and femininity give way to energetic and warlike spirit. The Baris dancer must convey the thoughts and emotions of a warrior first preparing for action, and then meeting the enemy, showing his changing moods through facial expression and movement – chivalry, pride, anger, prowess and, finally, regret. It is one of the most complex of dances requiring great energy and skill.

The *Ramayana* ballet tells the familiar tale of Rama and Sita but with a gamelan gong accompaniment. It provides plenty of opportunity for improvisation and comic additions.

The giant puppet dances known as Barong Landung take place annually on the island of Serangan and a few other places in southern Bali. The legend relates how the demon Jero Gede Macaling popped over from Nusa Penida, disguised as a standing Barong, to cause havoc in Bali. A huge Barong puppet was made to scare him away. The dance, often highly comical, features two gigantic puppet figures – a horrific male image of black Jero Gede and his female sidekick, white Jero Luh.

Belgian artist, Adrien Jean Le Mayeur, married renowned Legong (classic Balinese dance) dancer Ni Polok when he was 55 and she was 15. His house of antique carvings became a museum (see p140).

Dancing Out of Bali, by John Coast, tells of a ground-breaking international tour by a Balinese dance troupe in the 1950s.

Balinese Music, by Michael Tenzer, features photographs, a sonography and a guide to all types of gamelan, each with its own tradition, repertoire and social or religious context.

The Richard Meyer gallery in Seminyak (p123) maintains a large collection of historic photographs of Balinese life and culture. Some are often on display and others may be viewed by request.

In the Topeng, which means 'Pressed Against the Face', as with a mask, the dancers imitate the character represented by the mask. The Topeng Tua is a classic solo dance where the mask is that of an old man. In other dances there may be a small troupe who perform various characters. A full collection of Topeng masks may number 30 or 40. Mask dances require great expertise because the dancer cannot convey thoughts and meanings through facial expressions – the dance has to tell all.

Dance in Bali is not a static art form. The Oleg Tambulilingan was developed in the 1950s, originally as a solo female dance. Later, a male part was added and the dance now mimics the flirtations of two *tambulilingan* (bumbees).

You may often see the Pendet being danced by women bringing offerings to a temple. One of the most popular comic dances is the Cupak, which tells of a greedy coward (Cupak) and his brave but hard-done-by younger brother, and their adventures while rescuing a beautiful princess.

Drama Gong is based on the same romantic themes as a Balinese soap opera – long and full of high drama.

LOMBOK

Lombok has dances found nowhere else in Indonesia, but they are not widely marketed. Performances are staged in some luxury hotels and in the village of Lenek, known for its dance traditions. If you're in Senggigi in July there are also dance and *gendang beleq* (big drum) performances (p326).

The Cupak Gerantang is based on one of the Panji stories, an extensive cycle of written and oral stories originating on Java in the 15th century. It's often performed at traditional celebrations.

Another version of a Panji story is the Kayak Sando, but here the dancers wear masks. It is only found in central and eastern Lombok. The Gandrung follows a theme of love and courtship. It is a social dance, usually performed outdoors, most commonly in Narmada, Lenek and Praya.

A war dance, the Oncer (also called *gendang beleq*), is performed by men and boys. It is a highly skilled and dramatic performance, with dancers playing a variety of unusual musical instruments for *adat* (tradition, customs and manners) festivals, in central and eastern Lombok. The Rudat is danced by pairs of men in black caps and jackets and black-and-white check sarongs, backed by singers, tambourines and *jidur* (large cylindrical drums). The music, lyrics and costumes reveal both a mixture of Muslim and Sasak cultures.

The Tandak Gerok combines dance with music played on bamboo flutes and the *rebab* (a bowed lute), as well as singers imitating the sound of gamelan instruments. It is usually performed after harvesting or other hard labour.

Music

BALI

Balinese music is based around an ensemble known as a gamelan, also called a *gong*. A *gong gede* (large orchestra) is the traditional form, with 35 to 40 musicians. The *gong kebyar* is the modern, popular form, and has up to 25 instruments. Although it sounds strange at first with its noisy, jangly percussion, it's exciting, enjoyable, melodic and at times haunting.

The prevalent voice is from the xylophone-like *gangsra*, which the player hits with a hammer dampening the sound just after it is struck. The tempo and nature of the music is controlled by the two *kendang* drums – one male and one female. Other instruments are the deep *trompong* drums, the small *kempli* gong and the *cengceng* cymbals used in faster pieces. Although some of the instruments require great skill, others do not which makes it a good village activity.

Artists on Bali, by Ruud Spruit, is a well-illustrated description of the work of Nieuwenkamp, Bonnet, Spies, Hofker, Le Mayeur and Smit who studied and documented the culture and natural beauty of the island.

The pieces are learned by heart and passed down from father to son – there is little musical notation, although CDs are widely available. Look in music shops and department stores in South Bali and Ubud. It's traditionally a male occupation, although women have been known to play, and there are more ancient forms, such as the gamelan *selunding*, still occasionally played in Bali Aga villages like Tenganan in eastern Bali.

You can see instruments being made (usually to order) in Blahbatuh in eastern Bali and Sawan in northern Bali. Giant bamboo gamelan, with deep resonating tones, are made in Jembrana in western Bali.

LOMBOK

The *genggong*, a performance seen in Lombok, uses a simple set of instruments, which includes a bamboo flute, a *rebab* and knockers. Seven musicians accompany their music with dance movements and stylised hand gestures.

Theatre

Music, dance and drama are closely related in Bali. Balinese dance has the three elements working together, as does the *wayang kulit* drama performances, with the sound effects and the puppets' movements an important part of the show. The *arja* is a dance-drama, comparable to Western opera.

WAYANG KULIT

Wayang kulit has been Bali's cinema for centuries, but it is primarily a sacred matter. It has the sacred seriousness of classical Greek drama. (Indeed the word drama comes from the Greek *dromenon*, a religious ritual.) The word *wayang* means shadow and can refer to the puppets or the show. It may be derived from *hyang*, meaning ancestor or gods. Alternatively it may be from *bayan*, meaning shadow. *Kulit* means leather or hide.

Shadow puppet plays are more than entertainment, for the puppets are believed to have great spiritual power and the *dalang* (the puppet master and storyteller) is an almost mystical figure. A person of considerable skill and even greater endurance, he manipulates the puppets and tells the story while conducting the *gender wayang* (small gamelan orchestra) and beating time with his chanting. Having run out of hands, he does this with a horn held with his toes!

The *dalang's* mystical powers are needed because the *wayang kulit*, like so much of Balinese drama, is about the eternal struggle between good and evil. Endurance is also required because a *wayang kulit* can last six or more hours, and the performances always start so late that the drama is only finally resolved as the sun peeps over the horizon.

The intricate lacy puppets are made of buffalo hide carefully cut with a sharp, chisel-like stylus and then painted. The figures are completely traditional – there is no deviation from the standard list of characters and their standardised appearance, so there's definitely no mistaking who's who.

The *dalang* sits behind a screen on which the shadows of the puppets are cast, usually by an oil lamp which gives a romantic flickering light. Traditionally, women and children sit in front of the screen, while the men sit with the *dalang* and his assistants.

Goodies are arrayed to the right and baddies to the left. Characters include nobles, who speak in the high Javanese language Kawi, and common clowns, who speak in everyday Balinese. The *dalang* also has to be a linguist! When the four clowns (Delem and Sangut are the bad ones, Twalen and his son Merdah are the good ones) are on screen, there is rushing back and forth, clouts on the head and comic insults. The noble characters are altogether more refined – they include the terrible Durga and the noble Bima.

Perceptions of Paradise: Images of Bali in the Arts by Garret Kam is not only a detailed guide to Ubud's Neka Art Museum (p178) but is also a beautiful primer on Balinese art in general.

Wayang kulit stories are chiefly derived from the great Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and to a lesser extent the *Mahabharata*.

Puppets are made in the village of Puaya near Sukawati, south of Ubud, and in Peliatan, just east of Ubud, but they're easy to find in craft, antique and souvenir shops. Although performances are normally held at night (for performances in Ubud, see p198), there are sometimes daytime temple performances, where the figures are manipulated without a screen.

ARJA

An *arja* drama is not unlike *wayang kulit* in its melodramatic plots, its offstage sound effects and its cast of easily identifiable goodies, the refined *alus*, and baddies, the unrefined *kras*. It's performed outside, often with a curtain as a backdrop. Sometimes a small house is built on the stage, and set on fire at the climax of the story!

As the story is told by clown characters who describe and explain all the actions of the nobles, the dialogue uses both high and low Balinese. The plot is often just a small part of a longer story well known to the Balinese audience but very difficult for a foreigner to understand or appreciate.

Literature

The Balinese language has several forms, but only 'high Balinese', a form of Sanskrit used for religious purposes and to recount epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, is a written language. Illustrated versions of these epics inscribed on *lontar* (specially prepared palm leaves) are Bali's earliest books. The poems and stories of the early Balinese courts, from the 11th to the 19th centuries, were written in Old Javanese or Middle Javanese, and were meant to be sung or recited rather than read. Even the most elaborate drama and dance performances had no real written scripts or choreography, at least not until Westerners, like Colin McPhee, started to produce them in the 1930s.

In the colonial period, a few Indonesians began writing in Dutch, while Dutch scholars set about documenting traditional Balinese language and literature. Later, the use of Indo-Malay (called Bahasa Indonesia) became more widespread. One of the first Balinese writers to be published in that language was Anak Agung Pandji Tisna, from Singaraja in northern Bali. His second novel, *The Rape of Sukreni* (1936), adapted the features of Balinese drama: the conflict between good and evil, and the inevitability of karma. It was a popular and critical success. Most of the action in the novel takes place in a warung (food stall). An English translation is available at bookshops in Bali, and is highly recommended.

Most modern Balinese literature has been written in Bahasa Indonesia. Short stories are frequently published in newspapers and magazines, often for literary competitions. An important theme throughout these stories has been tradition versus change and modernisation, often elaborated as a tragic love story involving couples of different castes. Politics, money, tourism and relations with foreigners are also explored. Several anthologies translated into English are currently in print, some by Putu Oka Sukanta, one of Indonesia's most important authors of poetry, short fiction, and novels. Another novelist, Oka Rusmini, is both Balinese and female, which makes her book, *Tarian Bumi*, a story of generations of Balinese women, rather special. Other local writers of note include poet and novelist Pranita Dewi and the author Gusti Putu Bawa Samar Gantang.

It is striking how much has been published about Bali in the Western world, and (until recently) how little of it has been written by Balinese – it says a lot about the Western fascination with Bali. See p21 for recommendations

Bali Behind the Seen: Recent Fiction from Bali, translated by Vern Cork and written by Balinese authors, conveys much of the tension between deeply rooted traditions and the irresistible pressure of modernisation.

of widely available works. The Lontar Foundation (www.lontar.org) is a nonprofit organisation run by Indonesian writers and is dedicated to getting at least 100 of the most important Indonesian books translated into English so that universities around the world can offer courses in Indonesian literature.

Cinema & TV

Fewer films have been filmed in Bali than one would expect. The main efforts have been location work for box-office hits like *Almayor's Folly* and *Toute la Beauté du Monde*. However, the Bali Film Commission (www.balifilm.com) is doing its game best to lure filmmakers. It's even copyrighted the phrase 'Baliwood'.

The island is the site for numerous television documentaries, most focusing on some aspect of the culture or environment.

Painting

Balinese painting is probably the art form most influenced by Western ideas and demand. There are a relatively small number of creative original painters, and an enormous number of imitators. Originality is not considered as important in Bali as it is in the West. Even some renowned artists will simply draw the design, decide the colours and leave apprentices to apply the paint. Thus, shops are packed full of paintings in the popular styles – some of them are quite good and a few of them are really excellent. It's rare to see anything totally new.

Visit the Neka Art Museum and Museum Puri Lukisan in Ubud (p175) to see the best of Balinese art and some of the European influences that have shaped it. Visit commercial galleries like the Neka Gallery near Ubud and the Agung Rai Gallery to view high-quality work. If you buy a painting, consider buying a frame as well. These are often elaborately carved works of art in themselves.

Traditional paintings faithfully depicting religious and mythological symbolism were customarily for temple and palace decoration. After the 1930s, Western artists introduced the novel concept that paintings could also be artistic creations which could be sold for money. The range of themes, techniques, styles and materials expanded enormously.

A loose classification of styles is: classical, or Kamasan, named for the village of Kamasan near Semarapura; Ubud style, developed in the 1930s under the influence of the Pita Maha; Batuan, which started at the same time in a nearby village; Young Artists, begun postwar in the 1960s, and influenced by Dutch artist Arie Smit; and finally, modern or academic, free in its creative topics, yet strongly and distinctively Balinese.

CLASSICAL PAINTING

There are three basic types of classical painting – *langse*, *iders-iders* and calendars. *Langse* are large decorative hangings for palaces or temples which display *wayang* figures, rich floral designs and flame-and-mountain motifs. *Iders-iders* are scroll paintings hung along the eaves of temples. Calendars are still used to set dates and predict the future. They include simple yellow calendars from Bedulu, near Ubud; more complex calendars from Semarapura and Kamasan; and large versions of the zodiacal and lunar calendar, especially the 210-day *wuku* calendar, which regulates the timing of Balinese festivals.

Langse paintings helped impart *adat* to the ordinary people in the same way that traditional dance and *wayang kulit* puppetry do. *Wayang* tradition can be seen in stylised human figures shown in profile, their symbolic

Long before the gorilla appears (!), you know *Road to Bali* is one of the lesser 'road' movies of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. Few last long enough to see the pair vie for the affections of 'Balinese princess' Dorothy Lamour.

See examples of some of the work by Bali's female artists that is on display, or available for sale, at www.seniwati.com.

WESTERN VISITORS IN THE 1930S

When Gregor Krause's book *Bali: People and Art* was published in 1922, it became a bestseller. Krause had worked in Bangli as a doctor between 1912 and 1914 and his unique photography of an uninhibited lifestyle in a lush, tropical environment was one of the driving forces that promoted Bali as a tropical paradise for hordes of tourists in the 1930s. Western visitors included many talented individuals who helped rejuvenate dormant Balinese arts, and who played a great part in creating the image of Bali that exists today.

Walter Spies

German artist Walter Spies (1895–1942) first visited Bali in 1925 and moved there in 1927, establishing the image of Bali for Westerners that prevails today. Befriended by the important Sukawati family, he built a house at the confluence of two rivers at Campuan, west of Ubud. His home soon became a prime gathering point for Westerners who followed. He involved himself in every aspect of Balinese art and culture and was an important influence on its renaissance.

In 1932 he became curator of the museum in Denpasar, and with Rudolf Bonnet and Cokorda Gede Agung Sukawati, their Balinese patron, he founded the Pita Maha artists' cooperative in 1936. He co-authored *Dance & Drama in Bali*, published in 1938, and adapted a centuries old chant into the Kecak dance for the German film, *The Island of Demons*.

Rudolf Bonnet

Bonnet (1895–1978) was a Dutch artist whose work concentrated on the human form and everyday Balinese life. Many classical Balinese paintings with themes of markets and cockfights are indebted to Bonnet. He returned to Bali in the 1950s to plan the Museum Puri Lukisan in Ubud, and again in 1973 to help establish the museum's permanent collection.

Miguel Covarrubias

Island of Bali, written by this Mexican artist (1904–57), is still the classic introduction to the island and its culture. Covarrubias visited Bali twice in the early 1930s and was also involved in theatre design and printmaking.

Colin McPhee

Canadian musician Colin McPhee (1900–65) wrote *A House in Bali*, not published until 1944, but one of the best written accounts of Bali – his tales of music and house building are often highly amusing. After WWII, McPhee played an important role in introducing Balinese music to the West, and encouraging gamelan (traditional Balinese orchestra) to visit the US.

Robert & Louise Koke

This American couple opened the first hotel at Kuta Beach in 1936, which was an instant hit. Many of their decisions still resonate today. See above for more about the Kokes and the early days of tourism in Bali.

K'tut Tantri

A woman of many aliases, K'tut Tantri breezed in from Hollywood in 1932 inspired by the film *Bali, the Last Paradise*, an early example of soft-core ethnographic 'documentaries'. She dyed her red hair black (only demons have red hair) and was befriended by the prince of the Bangli kingdom. She opened a hotel first in collaboration with and then in competition with the Kokes.

After the war, however, only traces of the hotel's foundations remained. In the postwar struggle against the Dutch, K'tut worked for the Indonesian Republicans, and as Surabaya Sue, she broadcast from Surabaya in support of their cause. Her book, *Revolt in Paradise* (written as K'tut Tantri), was published in 1960.

Other Western Visitors

Others played their part in chronicling the period, such as writer Hickman Powell, whose book *The Last Paradise* was published in 1930, and German author Vicki Baum, whose book *A Tale from Bali*, a fictionalised account of the 1906 *puputan* (warrior's fight to the death), is still in print.

gestures, refined divine and heroic characters, and vulgar, crude evil ones. The paintings tell a story in a series of panels, rather like a comic strip, and often depict scenes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Other themes are the Kakawin poems, and indigenous Balinese folklore with its beliefs in demonic spirits – see the painted ceilings of the Kertha Gosa (Hall of Justice; p213) in Semarapura for an example.

The skill of the artist is apparent in the overall composition and sensitivity of the line work. The colouring is of secondary importance, often left to the artist's children. Natural colours were once made from soot, clay and pigs' bones, and artists were strictly limited to set shades. Today, modern oils and acrylics are used, but the range of colours is still limited. A final burnishing gives these pictures, known as *lukisan antic* (antique paintings), an aged look.

A good place to see classical painting in a modern context is at the Nyoman Gunarsa Museum near Semarapura (p215), which was established to preserve and promote classical techniques.

THE PITA MAHA

In the 1930s, with few commissions from temples, painting was virtually dying out. Rudolph Bonnet and Walter Spies (opposite), with their patron Cokorda Gede Agung Surapati, formed the Pita Maha (literally, Great Vitality) to encourage painting as an art form and to find a new market. The group had more than 100 members at its peak in the 1930s.

The changes Bonnet and Spies inspired were revolutionary. Balinese artists started painting single scenes instead of narrative tales and using everyday life rather than romantic legends as their themes: the harvest, the market, cockfights, offerings at a temple or a cremation. These paintings were known as the Ubud style.

Batuan, a noted painting centre, came under the influence of the Pita Maha, but its artists still retained many features of classical painting. They depicted daily life, but included many scenes – for example a market, dance and a rice harvest might all appear in a single work. The Batuan style is also noted for its inclusion of some very modern elements, such as sea scenes with the odd windsurfer.

Themes changed, and so did the actual way of painting. Modern paint and materials were used and stiff formal poses gave way to realistic 3D representations. More importantly, pictures were not just painted to cover a space in a palace or temple.

In one way, however, the style remained unchanged – Balinese paintings were packed with detail; a painted Balinese forest, for example, has branches, leaves and a whole zoo of creatures reaching out to fill every tiny space. You can see these glorious styles at the Museum Puri Lukisan in Ubud (p175) and in many galleries and art shops.

This new artistic enthusiasm was interrupted by WWII and Indonesia's internal turmoil. New work degenerated into copies of the original spirits, with one exception: the development of the Young Artists' style.

THE YOUNG ARTISTS

Dutch painter Arie Smit was in Penestanan, just outside Ubud, in 1956, when he noticed an 11-year-old boy drawing in the dirt and wondered what he would produce if he had proper equipment. The story tells of how the lad's father would not allow him to take up painting until Smit offered to pay somebody else to watch the family's ducks.

Other 'young artists' soon joined that first pupil, I Nyoman Cakra, but Smit did not actively teach them. He simply provided the equipment and

Scores of non-Balinese artists make their home on the island. One, Ashley Bickerton, who is formerly of New York, is renowned for his grotesque and funny paintings of human forms that often draw inspiration from tourist life on Bali. For more, see the boxed text, p122.

WOJ Nieuwenkamp: *First European Artist in Bali*, by Bruce Carpenter, is a fascinating depiction of Bali from 1904, when the Dutch artist Nieuwenkamp first arrived with a sketchpad and a bicycle.

encouragement, and unleashed what was clearly a strong natural talent. An engaging new 'naive' style developed, as typically Balinese rural scenes were painted in brilliant technicolour.

The style is today one of the staples of Balinese tourist art. It is also known as work by 'peasant painters'. I Nyoman Cakra still lives in Penestanan, still paints, and cheerfully admits that he owes it all to Smit. Other 'young artists' include I Ketut Tegen, I Nyoman Tjarka and I Nyoman Mijung.

OTHER STYLES

There are some other variants to the main Ubud and Young Artists' painting styles. The depiction of forests, flowers, butterflies, birds and other naturalistic themes, for example, sometimes called Pengosekan style, became popular in the 1960s, but can probably be traced back to Henri Rousseau, who was a significant influence on Walter Spies. An interesting development in this particular style is the depiction of underwater scenes, with colourful fish, coral gardens and sea creatures. Somewhere between the Pengosekan and Ubud styles are the miniature landscape paintings that are popular commercially.

The new techniques also resulted in radically new versions of Rangda, Barong, Hanuman and other figures from Balinese and Hindu mythology. Scenes from folk tales and stories appeared, featuring dancers, nymphs and love stories, with an understated erotic appeal.

A growing number of Balinese artists receive formal art training. Others are influenced by artists who visit Bali. For details on Murni, an important female painter in Ubud who died in 2006, see p180. Or, to learn about how a prominent painter from outside Bali has been influenced by the island, see the boxed text, p122.

Crafts

Bali is a showroom for all of the crafts of Indonesia. A typical, better tourist shop will sell puppets and batiks from Java, ikat (cloth whose individual threads are dyed before weaving) garments from Sumba, Sumbawa and Flores, and textiles and woodcarvings from Bali, Lombok and Kalimantan. The kris, so important in a Balinese family, will often have been made in Java, which any Balinese will tell you is *the* place for a kris.

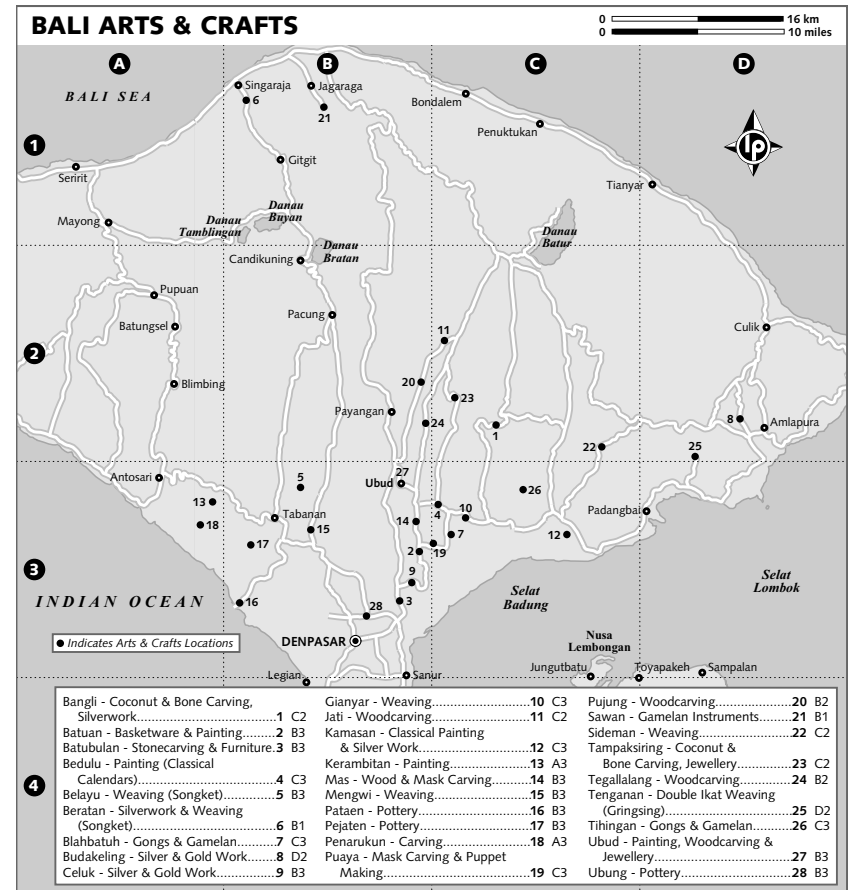
On Lombok, where there's never been much money, traditional handicrafts are practical items, skilfully made and beautifully finished. The finer examples of Lombok weaving, basketware and pottery are highly valued by collectors. Some traditional crafts have developed into small-scale industries and villages now specialise in them: textiles from Sukarara, batik paintings from Sade and Rembitan, and pottery from Penujak. Shops in Ampenan, Cakranegara and Senggigi have a good range of Lombok's finest arts and crafts, as do the local markets.

OFFERINGS & EPHEMERA

Traditionally, many of Bali's most elaborate crafts have been ceremonial offerings not intended to last: *baten teguh* (decorated pyramids of fruit, rice cakes and flowers); rice-flour cookies modelled into tiny sculptures and entire scenes with a deep symbolic significance; *lamak* (long woven palm-leaf strips used as decorations in festivals and celebrations); stylised female figures known as *cili*, which are representations of Dewi Sri (the rice goddess); or intricately carved coconut-shell wall hangings. Marvel at the care and energy that goes into constructing huge funeral towers and exotic sarcophagi, all of which will go up in flames.

Murni (Gusti Kadek Murniasih) was one of Bali's most innovative contemporary artists before her death in 2006. She overcame a brutal childhood and went on to win praise for her taboo-breaking work. For more, see the boxed text, p180.

Pre-War Balinese Modernists 1928-1942: an additional page in art-history, by F Haks et al, is a beautiful book on the work of some brilliant but long-neglected Balinese artists.



TEXTILES & WEAVING

The sarong is an attractive article of clothing, sheet or towel with a multitude of other uses. There are plain or printed cottons, more elegant batik designs, and expensive fabrics, such as *endek* (elegant fabric, like *songket*, but the weft threads are pre-dyed) and *songket* (silver- or gold-threaded cloth, hand-woven using a floating weft technique), that are necessary for special occasions – it is a religious obligation to look one's best at a temple ceremony. Dress for these occasions is a simple shirt or blouse, a sarong and a *kain*, a separate length of cloth wound tightly around the hips, over the sarong.

For more formal occasions, the blouse is replaced by a length of *songket* wrapped around the chest, called a *kamben*. Any market, especially those in Denpasar (p171) will have a good range of textiles.

Batik

Traditional batik sarongs are handmade in central Java. The dyeing process has been adapted by the Balinese to produce brightly coloured and patterned

Australian artist Donald Friend found the freedom to pursue his provocative art and lifestyle on Bali in the 1960s. Living in Sanur he created the Tanjung Sari Hotel, the island's first boutique hotel.

Balinese Textiles
by Hauser, Nabholz-
Kartaschoff & Ramseyer
is a large and lavishly
illustrated guide detailing
weaving styles and their
significance.

The Bali Arts Festival
showcases the work of
thousands of Balinese
each June and July in
Denpasar. See p336 for
details.

fabrics. Watch out for 'batik' fabric that has been screen printed. The colours will be washed out compared with real batik cloth, and the pattern is often only on one side (the dye should colour both sides as the belief is that the body should feel what the eye sees).

Ikut

In this complex process, the pattern is dyed into either the warp threads (those stretched on the loom), or weft threads (those woven across the warp) before the material is woven. The resulting pattern is geometric and slightly wavy. Its beauty depends on the complexity of the pattern and the harmonious blending of colours, typically of a similar tone – blues and greens; reds and browns; or yellows, reds and oranges. Ikat sarongs and *kain* are not everyday wear, but they are not for strictly formal occasions either.

Gianyar, in East Bali, is a major textile centre with a number of factories where you can watch ikat sarongs being woven on a hand-and-foot-powered loom; a complete sarong takes about six hours to make.

Gringsing

In the Bali Aga village of Tenganan, in eastern Bali, a double ikat process is used, in which both warp and weft threads are pre-dyed. Called *gringsing*, this complex and time-consuming process isn't practised anywhere else in Indonesia. Typical colours are red, brown, yellow and deep purple. The dyes used are obtained from natural sources, and some of the colours can take years to mix and age. The dyes also weaken the cotton fabric, so old examples of *gringsing* are extremely rare.

Songket

For *kamben*, *kain* and sarongs worn exclusively for ceremonial occasions, the *songket* cloth, with gold or silver threads woven into the tapestry-like material, has motifs of birds, butterflies, leaves and flowers. Belayu, a small village in southwestern Bali between Mengwi and Marga, is a centre for *songket* weaving. *Songket* is also woven near Singaraja.

Prada

Another technique for producing very decorative fabrics for special occasions, *prada* involves the application of gold leaf, or gold or silver paint or thread to the surface of a finished material. Motifs are similar to those used in *songket*. The result is not washable, so *prada* is reserved for *kain* or for decorative wraps on offerings and for temple umbrellas. For *prada*, have a look at shops in Sukawati, south of Gianyar.

Weaving on Lombok

Lombok is renowned for its traditional weaving on backstrap looms, the techniques handed down from mother to daughter. Each cloth is woven in established patterns and colours, some interwoven with gold thread. Abstract flower and animal motifs sometimes decorate this exquisite cloth; look carefully to recognise forms such as buffaloes, dragons, crocodiles and snakes. Several villages specialise in weaving cloth, while others concentrate on fine baskets and mats woven from rattan or grass. You can visit factories around Cakranegara and Mataram that produce weft ikat on old hand-and-foot-operated looms.

Sukarara and Pringgasela are centres for traditional ikat and *songket* weaving. Sarongs, Sasak belts and clothing edged with brightly coloured embroidery are sold in small shops.

SMALL TALK

'Where do you stay?' 'Where do you come from?' You'll hear these questions over and over whether you're in a gallery, a café, walking down the street or just sitting in the shade. It's Balinese small talk and is traditional for locals who wish to change your status from complete stranger to a known quantity. It's all part of the culture.

Saying you're staying 'over there' and that you come from 'over there' can suffice as answers or you can go into detail. But expect follow-ups. 'Are you married?' It's easiest to say you are *sudah kawin*, 'already married'. 'Where's your partner?' A dead spouse is considered less of a tragedy than a divorced one. 'Do you want a boyfriend?' It's definitely easier to be 'married' than single.

'What's your religion?' If you have a strong conviction say so, otherwise just name whatever is common where you are from (you know, 'over there').

Don't get bent out of shape by this small talk, it's what makes Bali a sociable and enjoyable place.

WOODCARVING

A decorative craft, woodcarving was chiefly used for carved doors or columns; figures such as Garudas, or demons with a symbolic nature; minor functional objects, such as bottle tops; and the carved wooden masks used in Balinese dance. Yet, as with painting, it was the demand from outside that inspired new subjects and styles.

Ubud was a centre for the revolution in woodcarving. Some carvers started producing highly stylised figures. Others carved delightful animal figures, some realistic, some complete caricatures. More styles and trends developed: whole tree trunks carved into ghostly, intertwined 'totem poles', and curiously exaggerated and distorted figures which became baroque fantasies.

Almost all carving is of local woods, including *belalu*, a quick-growing light wood, and the stronger fruit timbers such as jackfruit wood. Ebony from Sulawesi is also used. Sandalwood, with its delightful fragrance, is expensive, soft and used for some small, very detailed pieces.

Tegallalang and Jati, on the road north from Ubud to Batur, are noted woodcarving centres. Many workshops line the road east of Peliatan (p205), near Ubud, to Goa Gajah (Elephant Cave). The route from Mas, through Peliatan, Petulu and up the scenic slope to Pujung is also a centre for family based workshops; listen for the tapping sound of the carvers' mallets.

Despite the emphasis on what sells, there's always something special, the technical skill is high and the Balinese sense of humour shines through – a frog clutching a leaf as an umbrella, or a weird demon on the side of a bell clapping his hands over his ears. It's difficult to separate traditional and foreign influences. The Balinese have always incorporated and adapted foreign themes into their work – religious figures based on Hindu mythology are very different to the equivalent carvings made in India.

In Lombok, carving usually decorates functional items, such as containers for tobacco and spices, and the handles of betel-nut crushers and knives. Materials include wood, horn and bone. A recent fashion is for primitive-style elongated masks, often decorated with inlaid shell pieces. Cakranegara, Sindu, Labuapi and Senanti are centres for carving.

Wooden articles lose moisture when moved to a drier environment. Avoid possible shrinkage by placing the carving in a plastic bag at home, and letting some air in for about one week every month for four months.

Mask Carving

A specialised form of woodcarving, only experts carve the masks used in theatre and dance performances such as the Topeng dance. The mask maker

The website www.lombok-network.com gives details of Lombok customs, and the arts and crafts of various areas.

must know the movements that each performer uses so that the character can be shown by the mask.

Other masks, such as the Barong and Rangda, are brightly painted and decorated with real hair, enormous teeth and bulging eyes. Mas is recognised as the mask-carving centre of Bali, followed by the small village of Puaya, near Sukawati. The Museum Negeri Propinsi Bali in Denpasar (p168) has an extensive mask collection and is a great place to get an idea of different styles before buying anything.

STONE CARVING

Traditionally for the adornment of temples, stone sculptures haven't been affected by foreign influences, mainly because your average stone statue isn't a convenient souvenir. Stone carving is also Bali's most durable art form. Though it is soon covered in moss, mould or lichen, it doesn't deteriorate in the humid atmosphere.

Stone carving appears in set places in temples. Door guardians are usually a protective personality such as Arjuna. Above the main entrance, Kala's monstrous face often peers out, his hands reaching out beside his head to catch any evil spirits. The side walls of a *pura dalem* (temple of the dead) might feature sculpted panels that show the horrors that await evildoers in the afterlife.

Even when decorating a modern building, stone carvers tend to stick to the tried and trusted – patterned friezes, floral decoration or bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the *Ramayana*. Nevertheless, modern trends can be seen and many sculptors are happy to work on nontraditional themes, such as Japanese-style stone lanterns or McDonalds' characters outside its Kuta store.

Much of the local work is made from a soft, grey volcanic stone called *paras*. It's a little like pumice, and so soft it can be scratched with a fingernail. When newly worked, it can be mistaken for cast cement, but with age, the outer surface becomes tougher and darker. Soft sandstone is also used, and sometimes has attractive colouring. Because the stone is light it's possible to bring a friendly stone demon back in your airline baggage. A typical temple door guardian weighs around 10 kg.

Batubulan (p172), on the main highway from South Bali to Ubud, is a major stone-carving centre. Stone figures from 25cm to 2m tall line both sides of the road, and stone carvers can be seen in action in the many workshops.

JEWELLERY

Bali is a major producer of jewellery and produces variations on currently fashionable designs. Very fine filigree work is a Balinese speciality, as is the use of tiny spots of silver to form a decorative texture – this is a very skilled technique, as the heat must be perfectly controlled to weld the delicate details onto the underlying silver without damaging it. Balinese work is nearly always handmade, rarely involving casting techniques. Most silver is imported, though some is mined near Singaraja in northern Bali.

Celuk (p205) has always been associated with silversmithing. To see the 'real' Celuk, visit family workshops north and east of the main road. Other silverwork centres include Kamasan, near Semarapura in eastern Bali, and Beratan, south of Singaraja in northern Bali.

There's a wide range of earrings, bracelets and rings available, some using imported gemstones. Different design influences can be detected, from African patterning to the New Age preoccupation with dolphins and healing crystals.

Treasures of Bali by Richard Mann is a beautifully illustrated guide to Bali's museums big and small.

A carefully selected list of books about art, culture and Balinese writers, dancers and musicians can be found at www.ganeshabooksbali.com/bookstore.html.

You'll find many jewellery workshops in areas around Ubud. Tam-paksiring, northeast of Ubud, has long been a centre for cheaper styles of fashion jewellery. Brightly painted, carved wooden earrings are popular and cheap.

KRIS

Often with an ornate, jewel-studded handle and sinister-looking wavy blade, the kris is the traditional and ceremonial dagger of Bali and other parts of Indonesia. A kris can be the most important of family heirlooms, a symbol of prestige and honour. It is supposed to have great spiritual power, sending out magical energy waves and thus requiring great care in its handling and use.

OTHER CRAFTS

To see potters at work, visit Ubung and Kapal, north and west of Denpasar, respectively. Nearly all local pottery is made from low-fired terracotta. Most styles are very ornate, even functional items such as vases, flasks, ash-trays and lamp bases. Pejaten (p276), near Tabanan, also has a number of workshops producing small ceramic figures and glazed ornamental roof tiles. Some excellent, contemporary glazed ceramics are produced in Jimbaran, south of Kuta.

Earthenware pots have been produced on Lombok for centuries. They are shaped by hand, coated with a slurry of clay or ash to enhance the finish, and fired in a simple kiln filled with burning rice stalks. Pots are often finished with a covering of woven cane for decoration and extra strength. Newer designs feature bright colours and elaborate decorations. Penujak, Banyumulek and Masbagik are some of the main pottery villages, or head towards Mataram to visit the Lombok Pottery Centre (p290).

Lombok is noted for its spiral-woven rattan basketware; bags made of *lontar* or split bamboo; small boxes made of woven grass; plaited rattan mats; and decorative boxes of palm leaves shaped like rice barns and decorated with shells. Kotaraja and Loyok (p321) are noted for fine basketware, while Rungkang, near Loyok, combines pottery and basketware. Sayang is known for palm-leaf boxes.

Trees have a spiritual and religious significance in Bali. The banyan is the holiest; creepers that drop from its branches take root, thus it is 'never-dying'.

Architecture

There is a spiritual and religious significance of Balinese architecture that is much more important than the physical materials, the construction or the decoration.

A village, a temple, a family compound, an individual structure – and even a single part of the structure – must all conform to the Balinese concept of cosmic order. It consists of three parts that represent the three worlds of the cosmos – *swah* (the world of gods), *bhwah* (the world of humans) and *bhur* (the world of demons). The concept also represents a three-part division of a person: *utama* (the head), *madia* (the body) and *nista* (the legs). The units of measurement used in traditional buildings are directly based on the anatomical dimensions of the head of the household, ensuring harmony between the dwelling and those that live in it. Traditionally, the designer of the building is a combination architect-priest called an *undagi*.

The basic element of Balinese architecture is the *bale*, a rectangular, open-sided pavilion with a steeply pitched roof of thatch. Both a family compound and a temple will comprise of a number of separate *bale* for specific functions, all surrounded by a high wall. The size and proportions of the *bale*, the number of columns, and the position within the compound, are all determined according to tradition and the owner's caste status.

The focus of a community is a large pavilion, called the *bale banjar*, used for meetings, debates and gamelan (traditional Balinese orchestra) practice, among many other activities. You'll find that large, modern buildings such as restaurants and the lobby areas of resorts are often modelled on the larger *bale*, and they can be airy, spacious and very handsomely proportioned.

During the building process, if pavilions get beyond a certain size, traditional materials cannot be used. In these cases concrete is substituted for timber, and sometimes the roof is tiled rather than thatched. The fancier modern buildings – banks and hotels – might also feature decorative carvings derived from traditional temple design. As a result of this, some regard the use of traditional features in modern buildings as pure kitsch, while others see it as a natural and appropriate development of modern Balinese style. Buildings with these features are sometimes described as Baliesque, Bali baroque, or Bali rococo if the decoration has become too excessive.

Visitors may be disappointed by Balinese *puri* (palaces), which prove to be neither large nor imposing. The *puri* are the traditional residences of the Balinese aristocracy, although now they may be used as top-end hotels or as regular family compounds. They prove unimposing, as a Balinese palace can

Architecture of Bali by Made Wijaya is a lavish book detailing the personal observations and conclusions of the Australian-born Bali landscape designer. The vintage photos and illustrations are worth the price alone.

Bali Style by Rio Helmi and Barbara Walker is the coffee-table book that spawned enough imitations to pave Kuta Beach. First published in 1995, the book details the sort of clean and open-plan Bali design ethos that would become a cliché if it weren't simply so adaptable.

LOMBOK ARCHITECTURE

Lombok's architecture is governed by traditional laws and practices. Construction must begin on a propitious day, always with an odd-numbered date, and the building's frame must be completed on that day. It would be bad luck to leave any of the important structural work to the following day.

In a traditional Sasak village there are three types of buildings – *beruga* (the communal meeting hall), *bale tani* (family houses) and *lumbung* (rice barns). The *beruga* and the *bale tani* are both rectangular, with low walls and a steeply pitched thatched roof, although, of course, the *beruga* is much larger. The arrangement of rooms in a *bale tani* is also very standardised. There is a *serambian* (open veranda) at the front and two rooms on two different levels inside – one for cooking and entertaining guests, the other for sleeping and storage.

THE VILLA BLIGHT

Like ducks in rice paddies after a rain, villas have appeared everywhere in Bali, especially in the south and along the coast stretching west to Pura Tanah Lot. But unlike ducks, the villas are far from beneficial to the landscape and although aimed at the affluent, they are really about as welcome as effluent.

True, many are creative works of architecture and some find innovative ways to celebrate Balinese design and art. But many more are generic boxes aimed at the *Wallpaper** magazine set: copy-cat fashion statements drawn from whim and catering to base instincts.

Made Wijaya, the renowned landscape architect, designer and author has watched the spread of villas with alarm. They are just trendoid and paranoid. The fortresslike gates are built bang on the road with intercom buzzers and flanking pots of horsehair grass – the lavender of metrosexuals.'

Wijaya, who is originally from Australia, has a deep understanding of Balinese culture. His look, which he describes as 'Bali baroque' – lots of traditional ornamentation and design cues – has been used to great effect on some of Bali's most sensitive and honoured projects such as the Oberoi in Seminyak and the Four Seasons in Jimbaran.

He decries the ethos behind the villas as 'aimed at people who'd go to Ibiza but come here for the cheap help.

'There's a small box for the maid and the driver doesn't even get a glass of water. Balinese design is about community and openness, but these things have a plunge pool surrounded by walls and a bland 'zen' design of black, white, brown and timber slats.

'They are treeless, birdless, loveless, godless environments with no shrines, no offerings... These things could be anywhere, whatever happened to local colour?'

never be built more than one storey high. This is because a Balinese noble could not possibly use a ground-floor room if the feet of people on an upper floor were walking above.

THE FAMILY COMPOUND

The Balinese house looks inward – the outside is simply a high wall. Inside there is a garden and a separate small building or *bale* for each activity – one for cooking, one for washing and the toilet, and separate buildings for each 'bedroom'. In Bali's mild tropical climate people live outside, so the 'living room' and 'dining room' will be open veranda areas, looking out into the garden. The whole complex is oriented on the *kaja* (towards the mountains)–*kelod* (toward the sea) axis.

Many modern Balinese houses, particularly in Denpasar and the larger towns, are arranged much like houses in the West, but there are still a great number of traditional family compounds. For example, in Ubud, nearly every house will follow the same traditional walled design.

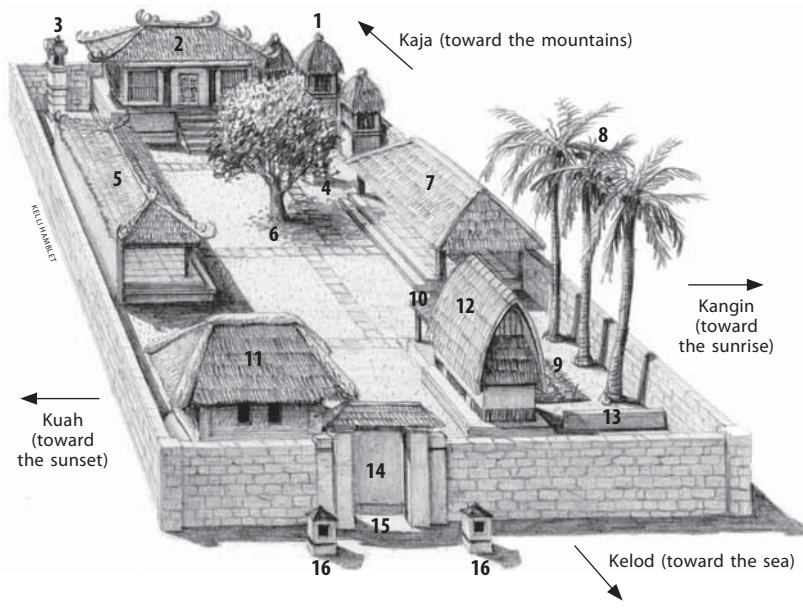
Analogous to the human body, there's a head (the family temple with its ancestral shrine), arms (the sleeping and living areas), legs and feet (the kitchen and rice storage building), and even an anus (the garbage pit). There may be an area outside the house compound where fruit trees are grown or a pig may be kept. Usually the house is entered through a gateway backed by a small wall known as the *aling aling*. It serves a practical and a spiritual purpose, both preventing passers-by from seeing in and stopping evil spirits from entering. Evil spirits cannot easily turn corners so the *aling aling* stops them from simply scooting straight in through the gate!

There are several variations on the typical family compound, illustrated on p62. For example, the entrance is commonly on the *kuah* (sunset side), rather than the *kelod* side as shown, but *never* on the *kangin* (sunrise) or *kaja* side.

The gate to a traditional Balinese house is where the family gives cues as to its wealth. They range from the humble – grass thatch atop a gate of simple stones or clay – to the relatively grand: bricks heavily ornamented with ornately carved stone and a tile roof.

THE FAMILY COMPOUND

- 1 Sanggah or Merajan** Family temple
- 2 Umah Meten** Sleeping pavilion for the family head
- 3 Tugu** Shrine
- 4 Pengijeng** Shrine
- 5 Bale Tiang Sanga** Guest pavilion
- 6 Natak** Courtyard with frangipani or hibiscus shade tree
- 7 Bale Sakenam** Working and sleeping pavilion
- 8 Fruit trees & coconut palms**
- 9 Vegetable garden**
- 10 Bale Sakepat** Sleeping pavilion for children
- 11 Paon** Kitchen
- 12 Lumbung** Rice barn
- 13 Rice-threshing area**
- 14 Aling Aling** Screen wall
- 15 Candi Kurung** Gate with roof
- 16 Apit Lawang or Pelinggah** Gate shrines

**TEMPLES**

Every village in Bali has several temples, and every home has at least a simple house-temple. The Balinese word for temple is *pura*, from a Sanskrit word literally meaning ‘a space surrounded by a wall’. Similar to a traditional Balinese home, a temple is walled in – so the shrines you see in rice fields or at ‘magical’ spots such as old trees are not real temples. Simple shrines or thrones often overlook crossroads, to protect passers-by.

All temples are built on a mountains–sea orientation, not north–south. The direction towards the mountains, *kaja*, is the end of the temple, where

MAJOR TEMPLES

Bali has thousands of temples, but some of the most important are listed here, and shown on the colour highlights map, pp2–3.

Directional Temples

Some temples are so important they are deemed to belong to the whole island rather than particular communities. There are nine *kahyangan jagat*, or directional temples.

- Pura Besakih (p216) in Besakih, East Bali.
- Pura Goa Lawah (p221) near Padangbai, East Bali.
- Pura Lempuyang (p233) near Tirta Gangga, East Bali.
- Pura Luhur Batukau (p241) on Gunung Batukau, Central Mountains.
- Pura Luhur Ulu Watu (p132) at Ulu Watu, South Bali.
- Pura Masceti (p209) near Gianyar, East Bali.
- Pura Sambu (p210) remotely located on Gunung Agung, East Bali.
- Pura Ulun Danu Bratan (p250) in Candikuning (Danau Bratan), Central Mountains.
- Pura Ulun Danu (p242) in Batur, Central Mountains.

Most of these are well known and accessible, but some are rarely seen by visitors to Bali. Pura Masceti, on the coast east of Sanur, is easily reached on the new coast road but seldom visited, and it’s a stiff walk to remote Pura Lempuyang.

Sea Temples

The 16th-century Majapahit priest Nirartha founded a chain of temples to honour the sea gods. Each was intended to be within sight of the next, and several have dramatic locations on the south coast. From the west, they include the following.

- Pura Gede Perancak (p279) – where Nirartha first landed
- Pura Rambut Siwi (p278) – on a wild stretch of the west coast
- Pura Tanah Lot (p272) – the very popular island temple
- Pura Luhur Ulu Watu (p132) – spectacular cliff-top view (one of the nine directional temples)
- Pura Mas Suka (p133) – at the very south of the Bukit Peninsula
- Pura Sakenan (p147) – on Pulau Serangan, southern Bali
- Pura Pulaki (p268) – near Pemuteran, in northern Bali

Other Important Temples

Some other temples have particular importance because of their location, spiritual function or architecture. They include the following.

- Pura Beji (p261) in Sangsit, northern Bali, is dedicated to the goddess Dewi Sri, who looks after irrigated rice fields.
- Pura Dalem Penataran Ped (p153) on Nusa Penida is dedicated to the demon Jero Gede Macaling, and is a place of pilgrimage for those seeking protection from evil.
- Pura Kehen (p211) is a fine hillside temple in Bangli, eastern Bali.
- Pura Maduwe Karang (p261), an agricultural temple on the north coast, is famous for its spirited bas-relief, including one of a bicycle rider.
- Pura Pusering Jagat (p203), a temple at Pejeng, near Ubud, with an enormous bronze drum.
- Pura Taman Ayun (p274), the imposing state temple at Mengwi, is northwest of Denpasar.
- Pura Tirta Empul (p204), the beautiful temple at Tampaksiring, has springs and bathing pools at the source of Sungai Pakerisan (Pakerisan River), north of Ubud.

the holiest shrines are found. The temple's entrance is at the *kelod*. *Kangin* is more holy than the *kuah*, so many secondary shrines are on the *kangin* side. *Kaja* may be towards a particular mountain – Pura Besakih in eastern Bali is pointed directly towards Gunung Agung – or towards the mountains in general, which run east–west along the length of Bali.

Architectural Conservation In Bali by Edo Budiharjo examines the case for conservation of architectural heritage on the island of Bali, an important issue at a time when modern forms are appearing everywhere.

Temple Types

There are three basic temple types, found in most villages. The most important is the *pura puseh* (temple of origin), dedicated to the village founders and at the *kaja* end of the village. In the middle of the village is the *pura desa*, for the many spirits that protect the village community in daily life. At the *kelod* end of the village is the *pura dalem* (temple of the dead). The graveyard is also here, and the temple may include representations of Durga, the terrible side of Shiva's wife Parvati. Both Shiva and Parvati have a creative and destructive side; their destructive powers are honoured in the *pura dalem*.

Other temples include those that are dedicated to the spirits of irrigated agriculture. Rice-growing is so important in Bali, and the division of water for irrigation is handled with the utmost care, that these *pura subak* or *pura ulun suwi* (temple of the rice-growers' association) can be of considerable importance. Other temples may also honour dry-field agriculture, as well as the flooded rice paddies.

In addition to these 'local' temples, there are a lesser number of great temples. Each family worships its ancestors in the family temple, the clan worships in its clan temple and the village in the *pura puseh*. Above these are the state temples or temples of royalty, and often a kingdom would have three of these: a main state temple in the heartland of the state (such as Pura Taman Ayun in Mengwi, western Bali); a mountain temple (such as Pura Besakih, eastern Bali); and a sea temple (such as Pura Luhur Ulu Watu, southern Bali).

Every house in Bali has its house temple, which is at the *kaja-kangin* corner of the courtyard. There will be shrines to the Hindu 'trinity' of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu; to *taksu*, the divine intermediary; and to *tugu*, the lord of the ground.

Temple Design

Temple design follows a traditional formula. A temple compound contains a number of *gedong* (shrines) of varying sizes, made from solid brick and stone and heavily decorated with carvings. See the boxed text, opposite, for an example.

Temple Decoration

Temples and their decoration are closely linked on Bali. A temple gateway is not just erected; every square centimetre of it is carved in sculptural relief and a diminishing series of demon faces is placed above it as protection. Even then, it's not complete without several stone statues to act as guardians.

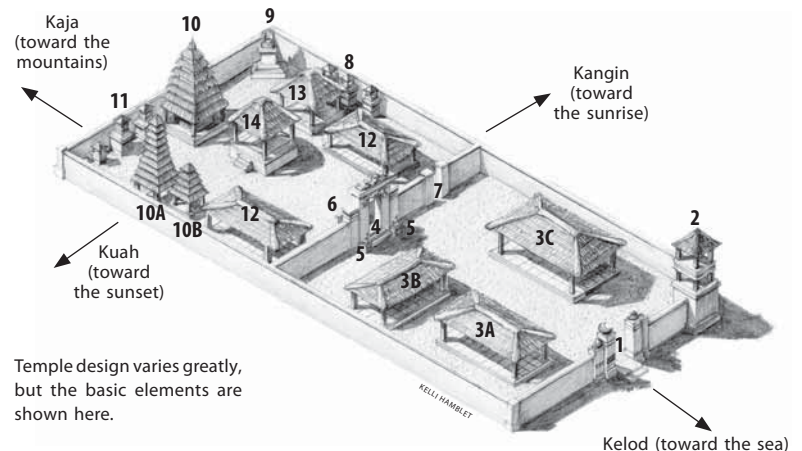
The level of decoration varies. Sometimes a temple is built with minimal decoration in the hope that sculpture can be added when more funds are available. The sculpture can also deteriorate after a few years because much of the stone used is soft and the tropical climate ages it very rapidly (that centuries-old temple you're looking at may in fact be less than 10 years old!). Sculptures are restored or replaced as resources permit – it's not uncommon to see a temple with old carvings, which are barely discernible, next to newly finished work.

You'll find some of the most lavishly carved temples around Singaraja in northern Bali. The north-coast sandstone is very soft and easily carved,

Scores of open-air carving sheds supplying statues and ornamentation to temples and shrines are a highlight of the road between Muncan and Selat in East Bali (see p220).

TYPICAL TEMPLE DESIGN

- 1 Candi Bentar** The intricately sculpted temple gateway, like a tower split down the middle and moved apart.
- 2 Kulkul Tower** The warning-drum tower, from which a wooden split drum (*kulkul*) is sounded to announce events at the temple or warn of danger.
- 3 Bale** A pavilion, usually open-sided, for temporary use or storage. May include a *bale gong* (3A), where the gamelan orchestra plays at festivals; a *paon* (3B) or temporary kitchen to prepare offerings; or a *wantilan* (3C), a stage for dances or cockfights.
- 4 Kori Agung or Paduraksa** The gateway to the inner courtyard is an intricately sculpted stone tower. Entry is through a doorway reached by steps in the middle of the tower and left open during festivals.
- 5 Raksa or Dwarapala** Statues of fierce guardian figures who protect the doorway and deter evil spirits. Above the door will be the equally fierce face of a Bhoma, with hands outstretched against unwanted spirits.
- 6 Aling Aling** If an evil spirit does get in, this low wall behind the entrance will keep it at bay, as evil spirits find it difficult to make right-angle turns.
- 7 Side Gate (Betelan)** Most of the time (except during ceremonies) entry to the inner courtyard is through this side gate, which is always open.
- 8 Small Shrines (Gedong)** These usually include shrines to Ngrurah Alit and Ngrurah Gede, who organise things and ensure the correct offerings are made.
- 9 Padma Stone** Throne for the sun god Surya, placed in the most auspicious *kaja-kangin* (mountain-sunset) corner. It rests on the *badawang* (world turtle), which is held by two *naga* (mythological serpents).
- 10 Meru** A multiroofed shrine. Usually there is an 11-roofed *meru* (10A) to Sanghyang Widi, the supreme Balinese deity, and a three-roofed *meru* (10B) to the holy mountain Gunung Agung.
- 11 Small Shrines (Gedong)** At the *kaja* (mountain) end of the courtyard, these may include a shrine to the sacred mountain Gunung Batur; a Maospahit shrine to honour Bali's original Hindu settlers (Majapahit); and a shrine to the *taksu*, who acts as an interpreter for the gods. (Trance dancers or mediums may be used to convey the gods' wishes.)
- 12 Bale Piasan** Open pavilions used to display temple offerings.
- 13 Gedong Pesimpangan** Stone building dedicated to the village founder or a local deity.
- 14 Paruman or Pepelik** Open pavilion in the inner courtyard, where the gods are supposed to assemble to watch the ceremonies of a temple festival.



Temple design varies greatly, but the basic elements are shown here.

CONTEMPORARY HOTEL DESIGN

Intruding upon the serenity of Balinese cosmology and its seamless translation into the island's traditional architecture are tourists – interlopers, who, like Bali's many foreign visitors centuries ago, formed an intrinsic part of the island's myths and legends. Such legends describe tensions between the sacred and the profane, the high and the low, and it is these tensions that characterise boutique Bali hotels – the most accessible and significant examples of contemporary Balinese architecture. By their function, these hotels seem immediately alien to traditional Balinese culture. In all of them, however, despite obvious contradictions of commerce and privilege, there is the sincere attempt to define them as highly sophisticated architectures, albeit for hedonistic escape. These hotels are worth visiting because they heighten, even exaggerate, the sensation of being in Bali.

Hotels such as the pioneering Oberoi in Seminyak by Australian architect Peter Muller, his pièces de resistance, the Amandari, Ubud, and the Lombok Oberoi as well as those designed by another Australian, Kerry Hill; the Amanusa, Nusa Dua and the Alila (formerly Serai), near Candidasa employ the typical buildings and spaces of Bali: the walled house and garden compound and the village with its *bale* (an open-sided pavilion with a steeply pitched thatched roof), *bale agung* (village assembly hall), *bale banjar* (communal meeting place of a banjar; a house for meetings and gamelan practice) and *wantilan* (large bale pavilion used for meetings, performances and cockfights) structures. Yet such appropriation is not tokenistic. Much of the allure of these hotels is in the inclusion of traditional Balinese materials, crafts and construction techniques, as well as Balinese design principles that respect an archetypal approach to the world. Hence, a reflection on Balinese cosmology becomes an intrinsic part of each design. The inclusion of elaborate swimming pools and paradisaical garden designs by landscape architects like Made

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allowing local sculptors to give free rein to their imaginations; as a result, you'll find some delightfully whimsical scenes carved into a number of the temples.

Sculpture often appears in set places in Bali's temples. Door guardians – representations of legendary figures like Arjuna or other protective personalities – flank the steps to the gateway. Above the main entrance to a temple, Kala's monstrous face often peers out, sometimes a number of times – his hands reaching out beside his head to catch any evil spirits foolish enough to try to sneak in.

Elsewhere, other sculptures make regular appearances – the front of a *pura dalem* will often feature images of the witch Rangda and sculpted relief panels may show the horrors that await evil-doers in the afterlife.

Wijaya and Ketut Marsa has added a further dimension to these free interpretations on tradition. Landscape has become one of the most powerful and seductive components of the Bali hotel experience, evidenced, for example, in the wonderful gardens of Bali's Four Seasons Resort at Jimbaran Bay.

Other designers have employed landscape but in a different way, drawing inspiration from the terracing of Bali's rural landscape or from water palaces like those at Tirta Gangga, Jungutan and Taman Ujung in East Bali. A feature of these sites are the *bale kambang* (water pavilions or 'floating palaces') that can also be found in the palaces of Klungkung and Karangasem, pavilions where kings would meditate and commune with the gods. For hotel designers, such an analogy is extremely attractive. Thus a hotel like Amankila near Manggis in East Bali adopts a garden strategy, with a carefully structured landscape of lotus ponds and floating pavilions that step down an impossibly steep site.

Another attraction of these buildings is the notion of instant age, the ability of materials in Bali to weather quickly and provide 'pleasing decay'. Two Ubud hotels that epitomise this phenomenon are Ibah Luxury Villas and Begawan Giri (now rebranded the COMO Shambhala). The latter is a private resort estate that comprises five uniquely styled residences designed by Malaysian-born architect Cheong Yew Kuan and where abstracted Balinese architectural principles are combined with exquisite craftsmanship. By contrast, at Sayan near Ubud, John Heah of Heah & Company (London), has created a completely new image for the Balinese hotel. The Four Seasons Resort at Sayan is a striking piece of aerial sculpture, a huge elliptical lotus pond sitting above a base structure that appears like an eroded and romantic ruin set within a spectacular gorge landscape.

Many of these hotels go close to that boundary where the reproduction is more seductive than the original. And it has to be said that the hotel was never a traditional building form in Bali! Each hotel has been designed not to mimic but rather to facilitate a consciously artificial reading of the place. These buildings need to be seen for what they are: thoroughly convincing architectures of welcome. They are skilful and highly resolved exercises in appealing to the most profound wants in Western society's eyes – the pleasures of the threshold; the pleasures of the perception of an exotic 'other'; and the pleasures of simply being in another highly sensitised state, and in what better place than Bali, Island of the Gods.

Philip Goad is professor of architecture at the University of Melbourne and author of Architecture Bali: Birth of the Tropical Boutique Resort.

Although overall temple architecture is similar in both northern and southern Bali, there are some important differences. The inner courtyards of southern temples usually house a number of *meru* (multiroofed shrines), together with other structures, whereas in the north, everything is grouped on a single pedestal. On the pedestal you'll find 'houses' for the deities to use on their earthly visits; they're also used to store religious relics.

While Balinese sculpture and painting were once exclusively used as architectural decoration for temples, you'll soon see that sculpture and painting have developed as separate art forms influencing the look of every aspect of the island. And the art of temple and shrine construction is as vibrant as ever: more than 500 new ones in all sizes are built every month.

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IN PICK & MIX

When you stay in a hotel featuring *lumbung* design, you are really staying in a place derived from rice storage barns – the 2nd floor is meant to be airless and hot!

Environment

THE LAND

Bali is a small island, midway along the string of islands that makes up the Indonesian archipelago. It's adjacent to the most heavily populated island of Java, and immediately west of the chain of smaller islands comprising Nusa Tenggara, which includes Lombok.

The island is visually dramatic – a mountainous chain with a string of active volcanoes, it includes several peaks around 2000m. Gunung Agung, the 'Mother Mountain', is over 3000m high. The agricultural lands are south and north of the central mountains. The southern region is a wide, gently sloping area, where most of the country's abundant rice crop is grown. The northern coastal strip is narrower, rising rapidly into the foothills of the central range. It receives less rain, but coffee, copra, rice and cattle are farmed there.

Bali also has some arid, less-populated regions. These include the western mountain region, and the eastern and northeastern slopes of Gunung Agung. The Nusa Penida islands are dry, and cannot support intensive rice agriculture. The Bukit Peninsula is similarly dry, but with the growth of tourism and other industries it's becoming more populous.

Bali is volcanically active and extremely fertile. The two go hand-in-hand because eruptions contribute to the land's exceptional fertility, and high mountains provide the dependable rainfall that irrigates Bali's complex and amazingly beautiful patchwork of rice terraces. Of course, the volcanoes are a hazard as well – Bali has endured disastrous eruptions in the past and no doubt will again in the future. Apart from the volcanic central range, there are the limestone plateaus that form the Bukit Peninsula, in the extreme south of Bali, and the island of Nusa Penida.

As with Bali, Lombok's traditional economy has driven intensive rice cultivation. The wooded slopes of Gunung Rinjani have provided timber as have the coconut palms which also provide fibre and food. The land use has been environmentally sustainable for many years, and the island retains a natural beauty largely unspoiled by industry, overcrowding or overdevelopment.

WILDLIFE

The island is geologically young, and while most of its living things have migrated from elsewhere, true native wild animals are rare. This is not hard to imagine in the heavily populated and extravagantly fertile south of Bali, where the orderly rice terraces are so intensively cultivated they look more like a work of sculpture than a natural landscape.

In fact rice fields cover only about 20% of the island's surface area, and there is a great variety of other environmental zones: the dry scrub of the northwest, the extreme northeast and the southern peninsula; patches of

Keeping birds has been a part of Indonesian culture for centuries. It's common to see caged songbirds and they are sold in most markets.

Birds of Bali by Victor Mason and Frank Jarvis is enhanced by lovely watercolour illustrations.

GONE TO THE DOGS

For many people, the one off-note memory of their visit to Bali has been the hordes of mangy ill-tempered and ill-treated *anjing* (dogs). Why are there so many? Because for many Balinese they barely exist, inhabiting a lowly world of trash-eating and scavenging. Left to their own devices, the dogs keep reproducing and hanging around the fringes of society. Their reputation – and plight – is also not helped by the fact that many people consider them to be fraternisers with evil spirits (which is why they are always barking). Still Balinese fraternisation with dogs is on the upswing. Amid the mangy curs you'll find pampered pooches with healthy coats and cute collars.

THE WALLACE LINE

The 19th-century naturalist Sir Alfred Wallace (1822–1913) observed great differences in fauna between Bali and Lombok – as great as the differences between Africa and South America. In particular, there were no large mammals (elephants, rhinos, tigers etc) east of Bali, and very few carnivores. He postulated that during the ice ages, when sea levels were lower, animals could have moved by land from what is now mainland Asia all the way to Bali, but the deep Lombok Strait would always have been a barrier. Thus he drew a line between Bali and Lombok, which he believed marked the biological division between Asia and Australia.

Plant life does not display such a sharp division, but there is a gradual transition from predominantly Asian rainforest species to mostly Australian plants such as eucalypts and acacias, which are better suited to long dry periods. This is associated with the lower rainfall as one moves east of Java. Environmental differences – including those in the natural vegetation – are now thought to provide a better explanation of the distribution of animal species than Wallace's theory about limits to their original migrations.

Modern biologists do recognise a distinction between Asian and Australian fauna, but the boundary between the regions is regarded as much fuzzier than Wallace's line. Nevertheless, this transitional zone between Asia and Australia is still called 'Wallacea'.

dense jungle in the river valleys; forests of bamboo; and harsh volcanic regions that are barren rock and volcanic tuff at higher altitudes. Lombok is similar in all these respects.

Animals

Bali has lots and lots of lizards, and they come in all shapes and sizes. The small ones (onomatopoeically called *cecak*) that hang around light fittings in the evening, waiting for an unwary insect, are a familiar sight. Geckos are fairly large lizards, often heard but less often seen. The loud and regularly repeated two-part cry 'geck-oh' is a nightly background noise that visitors soon become accustomed to, and it is considered lucky if you hear the lizard call seven times.

Bats are quite common, and the little chipmunklike Balinese squirrels are occasionally seen in the wild, although more often in cages.

Bali has more than 300 species of birds, but the one that is truly native to the island, the Bali starling, is just about extinct (see the boxed text, p282). Much more common are colourful birds like the orange-banded thrush, numerous species of egrets, kingfishers, parrots, owls and many more.

Bali's only wilderness area, Taman Nasional Bali Barat (West Bali National Park, p280) has a number of wild species, including grey and black monkeys (which you will also see in the mountains and East Bali), *muncak* (mouse deer), squirrels and iguanas. Bali used to have tigers and, although there are periodic rumours of sightings in the remote northwest of the island, nobody has proof of seeing one for a long time.

There is a rich variety of coral, seaweed, fish and other marine life in the coastal waters. Much of it can be appreciated by snorkellers, but the larger marine animals are only likely to be seen while diving. The huge, placid sun fish found off Nusa Penida lure divers from around the world.

Dolphins can be found right around the island and have unfortunately been made into an attraction off Lovina.

INTRODUCED SPECIES

Bali is thick with domestic animals, including ones that wake you up in the morning and others that bark all through the night. Chickens and roosters are kept both for food purposes and as domestic pets. Cockfighting is a popular

The Malay Archipelago by Alfred Wallace is a natural history classic by the great 19th-century biologist and geographer, who postulated that the Lombok Strait was the dividing line between Asia and Australia. The book remains in print.

ProFauna (www.profauna.or.id) is an Indonesia-based nonprofit that works to protect the environment. It's active in Bali and has worked on issues such as saving sea turtles.

SEA TURTLES

Both the green-sea and hawksbill turtles inhabit the waters around Bali and Lombok, and the species are supposedly protected by international laws that prohibit trade in anything made from sea turtles.

In Bali, however, green-sea turtle meat is a traditional and very popular delicacy, particularly for Balinese feasts. Bali is the site of the most intensive slaughter of green-sea turtles in the world – no reliable figures are available, although in 1999 it was estimated that more than 30,000 are killed annually. A survey conducted in the past few years suggests that 4000 or more turtles are smuggled off the island annually as part of illegal trade. It's easy to find the trade on the back streets of waterside towns such as Benoa. One irony is that tourism money helps more people afford turtle meat both for consumption and for religious rituals and offerings.

Many individuals and organisations are involved in protecting the species, including Heinz von Holzen, the owner of Bumbu Bali restaurant in Tanjung Benoa (p138), and the Reef Seen Turtle Project at Reef Seen Aquatics in Pemuteran (p269). Bali's Hindu Dharma, the body overseeing religious practice, has decreed that turtle meat is essential in only very vital ceremonies.

male activity and a man's fighting bird is his prized possession. Balinese pigs are related to wild boar, and look really gross, with their sway backs and sagging stomachs. They inhabit the family compound, cleaning up all the garbage and eventually end up spit-roasted at a feast – they taste a lot better than they look.

Balinese cattle, by contrast, are delicate and graceful animals that seem more akin to deer than cows. Although the Balinese are Hindus, they do not generally treat cattle as holy animals, yet cows are rarely eaten or milked. They are, however, used to plough rice paddies and fields, and there is a major export market for Balinese cattle to Hong Kong and other parts of Asia.

Ducks are another everyday Balinese domestic animal and a regular dish at feasts. Ducks are kept in the family compound, and are put out to a convenient pond or flooded rice field to feed during the day. They follow a stick with a small flag tied to the end, and the stick is left planted in the field. As sunset approaches the ducks gather around the stick and wait to be led home again. The morning and evening duck parades are one of Bali's small delights.

Plants TREES

Almost all of the island is cultivated, and only in the Taman Nasional Bali Barat are there traces of Bali's earliest plant life. As with most things in Bali, trees have a spiritual and religious significance, and you'll often see them decorated with scarves and black-and-white check cloths. The *waringin* (banyan) is the holiest Balinese tree and no important temple is complete without a stately one growing within its precincts. The banyan is an extensive, shady tree with an exotic feature – creepers that drop from its branches take root to propagate a new tree. Thus the banyan is said to be 'never-dying', since new offshoots can always take root. *Jepun* (frangipani or plumeria trees), with their beautiful and sweet-smelling white flowers are also common in temples and family compounds.

Bali has monsoonal rather than tropical rainforests, so it lacks the valuable rainforest hardwoods that require rain year-round. The forestry department is experimenting with new varieties in plantations around Taman Nasional Bali Barat, but at the moment nearly all the wood used for carving is imported from Sumatra and Kalimantan.

The environmental group, World Wide Fund for Nature (www.wwf.or.id), is active on both Bali and Lombok. It has programmes focused on reefs, sea turtles and more.

Mangoes are one of the leading cultivated trees in Bali. You'll see these green heavy hangers growing almost everywhere; in gardens, fields and by the side of the road.

A number of plants have great practical and economic significance. *Tiing* (bamboo) is grown in several varieties and is used for everything from satay sticks and string to rafters and gamelan (traditional Balinese orchestral music) resonators. The various types of palm provide coconuts, sugar, fuel and fibre.

FLOWERS & GARDENS

Balinese gardens are a delight. The soil and climate can support a huge range of plants, and the Balinese love of beauty and the abundance of cheap labour means that every space can be landscaped. The style is generally informal, with curved paths, a rich variety of plants and usually a water feature. Who can't be enchanted by a frangipani tree dropping a carpet of fragrant blossoms?

You can find almost every type of flower in Bali, but some are seasonal and others are restricted to the cooler mountain areas. Many of the flowers will be familiar to visitors – hibiscus, bougainvillea, poinsettia, oleander, jasmine, water lily and aster are commonly seen in the southern tourist areas, while roses, begonias and hydrangeas are found mainly in the mountains. Less-familiar flowers include: Javanese *ixora* (*soka*, *angsoka*), with round clusters of bright red-orange flowers; *champak* (*cempaka*), a very fragrant member of the magnolia family; flamboyant, the flower of the royal poinciana flame tree; *manori* (*maduri*), which has a number of traditional uses; and water convolvulus (*kangkung*), the leaves of which are commonly used as a green vegetable. There are literally thousands of species of orchid.

The brilliant red of a hibiscus flower is at the centre of many a Balinese temple offering and decoration. Although they last but a day, the flowers grow in such profusion that there is always a new supply.

Besides providing the leaves for *lontar* books, *rontal* palms also supply the sap needed to make *tuac*, the brutal home-made palm beer that's been the basis for many a hangover.

RICE

Rice cultivation has shaped the social landscape – the intricate organisation necessary for growing rice is a large factor in the strength of Bali's community life. Rice cultivation has also changed the environmental landscape – terraced rice fields trip down hillsides like steps for a giant, in shades of gold, brown and green, green and more green.

The elaborate irrigation system used to grow rice makes careful use of all the surface water. The fields are a complete ecological system, home for much more than just rice. In the early morning you'll often see the duck herders leading their flocks out for a day's paddle around a flooded rice field; the ducks eat various pests and leave fertiliser in their wake.

There are three words for rice – *padi* is the growing rice plant (hence paddy fields); *beras* is the uncooked grain; and *nasi* is cooked rice, as in nasi goreng (fried rice) and *nasi putih* (plain rice). A rice field is called a *sawah*.

A harvested field with its left-over burnt rice stalks is soaked with water and repeatedly ploughed, often by two bullocks pulling a wooden plough. Once the field is muddy enough, a small corner is walled off and seedling rice is planted there. When it is a reasonable size it is replanted, shoot by shoot, in the larger field. While the rice matures there is time to practise the gamelan (traditional Balinese orchestral music), watch the dancers or do a little woodcarving. Finally, the whole village turns out for the harvest – a period of solid hard work. It's strictly men only planting the rice, but everybody takes part in harvesting it.

In 1969, new high-yield rice varieties were introduced. These can be harvested a month sooner than the traditional variety and are resistant to many diseases.

However the new varieties also have greater needs for fertilizer and irrigation water, which strain the imperilled water supplies. More pesticides are also needed; this has caused the depletion of the frog and eel populations, which depend on the insects for survival.

Although everyone agrees that the new rice doesn't taste as good as *padi* Bali, the new strains now account for more than 90% of rice. Small areas of *padi* Bali are still planted and harvested in traditional ways to placate the rice goddess, Dewi Sri. Temples and offerings to her dot every rice field.

Flowers of Bali and Fruits of Bali by Fred and Margaret Wiseman are nicely illustrated books that will tell you what you're admiring or eating.

The Indonesian Ecotourism Centre (www.indecon.or.id) is devoted to highlighting responsible tourism. It lists places in Bali and on Lombok that have made a commitment to the local environment and culture.

Flowers can be seen everywhere – in gardens or just by the roadside. Flower fanciers should make a trip to the Danau Bratan area in the central mountains to see the Bali Botanical Gardens, or visit the plant nurseries along the road between Denpasar and Sanur.

NATIONAL PARKS

The only national park on Bali is Taman Nasional Bali Barat, p280. It covers 19,000 hectares at the western tip of Bali, plus a substantial area of coastal mangrove and the adjacent marine area, including some fine dive sites.

The Taman Nasional Gunung Rinjani (Gunung Rinjani National Park), on Lombok covers 41,330 hectares and is the water-collector for most of the island. At 3726m, Gunung Rinjani is the second-highest volcanic peak in Indonesia and is very popular for trekking, see p316.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

A fast-growing population in Bali has put pressure on limited resources. The tourist industry has attracted new residents, and there is a rapid growth of urban areas, resorts and villas that encroach onto agricultural land.

Water use is a major concern. Typical top-end hotels use more than 500L of water a day per room and the growing number of golf courses – the new one on the arid Bukit Peninsula near Dream Beach is an outrage (see the boxed text, p131) – suck an already stressed resource. Water pollution is another problem both from deforestation brought on by firewood-

collecting in the mountains and lack of proper treatment for the waste produced by the population. The vast mangroves along the south coast near Benoa Harbour are losing their ability to filter the water that drains here from much of the island (the Mangrove Information Centre near Sanur has more on this, see p147).

Air pollution is another problem as anyone stuck behind a smoke-belching truck or bus on one of the main roads knows. And it's not just all those plastic bags and water bottles but just the sheer volume of waste produced by the ever-growing population that is another problem. What to do with it?

Just growing Bali's sacred grain rice has become fraught with environmental concerns. (See the boxed text, p147 for details.)

On the upside there is a nascent effort to grow rice and other foods organically, reducing the amount of pesticide and fertilizer run-off into water supplies. Things may finally be moving forward on starting a sewage treatment programme in the south (but it will take years and the money is not there) and proposals to expand the airport's runways have inspired efforts to protect the nearby mangroves.

The environmental group PPLH Bali in Sanur is active on a range of issues and is a great resource. See p127 for details.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

The best way to responsibly visit Bali and Lombok is to try to be as least-invasive as possible. This of course is easier than it sounds but consider the following tips:

Watch your use of water. Travel into rice-growing regions of Bali and you'll think the island is coursing with water, but demand is starting to outstrip supply. Take up your hotel on its offer to save itself big money, er, no, to save lots of water by not washing your sheets and towels every day. Cynicism aside, this will save valuable Balinese water. So too you can forgo your own private plunge pool at the high end or a pool altogether – although this is almost impossible at any price level.

Don't hit the bottle. Those bottles of Aqua (the top local brand of bottled water, owned by Danone) are convenient but they add up. The zillions of such bottles tossed away each year are a major blight. Still, you're wise not to refill from the tap so what do you do? Ask your hotel if you can refill from their huge containers of drinking water. In Ubud, stop by the **Pondok Pecak Library & Learning Centre** (Map p188; ☎ 976194; Monkey Forest Rd, Ubud) which will refill your water bottle and tell you which other businesses offer this service.

Support environmentally aware businesses. Several hotels have a strong conservation focus; they include the Udayana Eco Lodge near Jimbaran (p129), Hotel Santai in Sanur (p142), Hotel Uyah Amed (p236), Puri Lumbung in the cool highlands of Munduk (p253) and Taman Sari Bali Cottages in Pemuteran (p270).

Don't play golf. The resorts will hate this, but tough. Having two golf courses on the arid Bukit Peninsula is environmentally mental.

Conserve power. Sure you want to save your own energy on a sweltering afternoon, but using air-con strains an already overloaded system. Much of the electricity from Java and the rest is produced at the roaring and smoking plant near Benoa Harbour.

Don't drive yourself crazy. The traffic is already bad, why add another vehicle to it? Can you take a tourist bus instead of a chartered or rental car? Would a walk, trek or hike be more enjoyable than road journey to an over-visited tourist spot (Pura Tanah Lot comes to mind)?

For organisations that may be able to use your help in protecting the environment in Bali, see p346.

Bali & Lombok Outdoors

It's so much more than a beach holiday with an overlay of amazing culture – Bali's an incredible place to get outside and play. Sure you may have to actually get up off the sand to do this, but the rewards are many. In waters around the island you'll find world-class diving that ranges from reefs to shipwrecks to huge, rare swimming critters.

When that water hits shore, it creates some of the world's best surfing. No matter what time of year you visit, you'll find legendary surf spots. Away from the waves, a passel of aquatic fun companies offer everything from parasailing to banana-boat racing.

On land, hikes abound through the luxuriant green of the rice fields and deep into the river valleys. In the cool mountains, trails lead past a profusion of waterfalls, lakes and lush forest. If you want to head high, you can climb any of the island's three main active volcanoes for views, vent holes and visions of a lunar landscape.

Lombok doesn't have the same level of organisation but it has fine diving, surfing – often in remote locations – and a famous volcano trek.

DIVING & SNORKELLING

With its warm water, extensive coral reefs and abundant marine life, Bali offers excellent diving and snorkelling possibilities. Reliable dive schools and operators all around Bali's coast can train complete beginners or arrange challenging trips that will satisfy the most experienced divers. The best sites can all be accessed in a day trip from the south of Bali, although the more distant ones will involve several hours travelling time. Lombok is close behind Bali for diving. It has good sites, especially around its northwest coast.

Snorkelling gear is available near all the most accessible spots, but if you're keen, it's definitely worthwhile to bring your own, and to check out some of the less visited parts of the coasts.

Dive Costs

On a local trip, count on US\$40 to US\$75 per person for two dives, which includes all equipment. Many operators offer open-water diving certification for US\$350 to US\$400.

Dive Courses

If you're not a qualified diver, and you want to try some scuba diving in Bali, you have three options.

First, nearly all operators offer an 'introductory', 'orientation' or 'initial' dive for beginners, usually after classroom training and shallow-water practise. Courses are reasonably cheap (from around US\$60 for one dive), but it is essential to stick to one of the recommended dive operators (see opposite).

Second, some of the larger hotels and diving agencies offer four- or five-day courses that certify you for basic dives in the location where you do the course. A resort course will give you a better standard of training than just an introductory dive, but it doesn't make you a qualified diver. These courses cost about US\$300.

Finally, if you are serious about diving, the best option is to enrol in a full open-water diving course, which gives you an internationally recognised qualification. A four-day open-water course, to Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) standards, with a qualified instructor, manual, dive table and certification, will cost about US\$300 to US\$400. Experienced divers

Bike tours down Bali's volcanoes are popular. The company takes you to the top and you ride a relatively quiet road partway down the hill through tropical forest, coffee plantations and terraced rice fields. See p363 for tour companies.

Sobek (☎ 0361-287059; www.balisobek.com) is Bali's largest activity and adventure operator. They have a huge range of tours, including rafting, trekking and biking. Their equipment is of a high standard.

can also upgrade their skills with advanced open-water courses in night, wreck and deep diving etc, from around US\$200 for a three-day course.

Dive Operators

Major dive operators in tourist areas can arrange trips to the main dive sites all around the island. But distances can be long, so it's better to stay relatively close to your destination.

SINK OR SWIM: DIVING SAFELY

Diving is justifiably popular in Bali and on Lombok. But like all diving destinations, it is important to stay safe in and out of the water. Here are some tips to make your trip the best possible.

Choosing a Dive Operator

In general, diving in Bali and on Lombok is safe, with a good standard of staff training and equipment maintenance. However, as with anywhere in the world, some operations are more professional than others, and it is often difficult, especially for inexperienced or beginner divers, to select the best operator for their needs. Here are a few tips to help you select a well set-up and safety-conscious dive shop.

- Are its staff fully trained and qualified? Ask to see certificates or certification cards – no reputable shop will be offended by this request. Guides must reach 'full instructor' level (the minimum certification level) to be able to teach any diving course. To guide certified divers on a reef dive, guides must hold at least 'rescue diver' or preferably 'dive master' qualifications. Note that a dive master cannot teach – only fully qualified instructors can do that.
- Does it have safety equipment on the boat? At a minimum, a dive boat should carry oxygen and a first-aid kit. A radio or cell phone are also important.
- Is the boat's equipment OK and its air clean? This is often the hardest thing for the new diver to judge. A few guidelines are:
 1. Smell the air – open a tank valve a small way and breathe in. Smelling dry or slightly rubbery air is OK. If it smells of oil or car exhaust, that tells you the operator doesn't filter the air correctly.
 2. When the equipment is put together, are there any big air leaks? All dive centres get some small leaks at some time, however, if you get a *big* hiss of air coming out of any piece of equipment, ask to have it replaced.
- Is it conservation-oriented? Most good dive shops explain that you should not touch corals or take shells from the reef. It's also common for the better places to work with local fishermen to ensure that certain areas are protected. Some even clean beaches!

Safety Guidelines for Diving

Before embarking on a scuba diving or snorkelling trip, carefully consider the following points to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience:

- Possess a current diving certification card from a recognised scuba diving instructional agency (if scuba diving).
- Be sure you are healthy and feel comfortable diving.
- Obtain reliable information about physical and environmental conditions at the dive site (eg from a reputable local dive operation). Conditions vary greatly between dive sites around Bali and the islands. Seasonal changes can significantly alter any site and dive conditions.
- Be aware of local customs and etiquette about marine life and the environment.
- Dive only at sites within your realm of experience; if available, engage the services of a competent, professionally trained dive instructor or dive master.

RESPONSIBLE DIVING

Please bear in mind the following tips when diving and help preserve the ecology and beauty of reefs:

- Never use anchors on the reef, and take care not to run boats aground on coral.
- Avoid touching or standing on living marine organisms or dragging equipment across the reef.
- Be conscious of the effect from your fins. Even without contact, the surge from fin strokes near the reef can damage delicate organisms. Take care not to kick up clouds of sand, which can smother organisms.
- Practise and maintain proper buoyancy control. Major damage can be done by divers descending too fast and colliding with the reef.
- Do not collect or buy corals or shells or loot marine archaeological sites (mainly shipwrecks).
- Ensure that you take home all your rubbish and any other litter you may find as well. Plastics in particular are a serious threat to marine life.
- Do not feed the fish.
- Minimise your involvement with marine animals. Do not ever ride on the backs of turtles and learn as much as you can about the animals' natural habitat.

For tips on choosing a dive shop, see the boxed text, p75. Places with good dive shops in Bali include Sanur (p141), Padangbai (p156), Candidasa (p227), Amed (p234), Lovina (p263), Pemuteran (p269) and Nusa Lembongan (p150).

Diving & Snorkelling Sites**BALI**

Bali's main diving and snorkelling sites including those places we've listed above with good dive centres. For details see those sections of the book. In addition, Nusa Penida (p153) and Pulau Menjangan (p282) in Taman Nasional Bali Barat (West Bali National Park) are renowned for their diving.

LOMBOK

There is some very good scuba diving and snorkelling off the Gili Islands (see the boxed text, p306), though some of the coral has been damaged by dynamite fishing. There are also some good reefs near Senggigi (p294). Quite a few dive operators are based on the Gilis and in Senggigi and many have good reputations.

Equipment

All the equipment you need is available in Bali and on Lombok, but remember, you may not be able to get exactly what you want in the size you need. The quality is variable – some operators use equipment right to the end of its service life. Most dive operators in Bali include the cost of equipment in the cost of the dive, but if you have your own equipment (excluding mask, snorkel and fins), you'll receive a discounted rate. Tanks and weight belt – as well as lunch, drinking water, transport, guides and insurance – are generally included in dive trips.

The most essential basic equipment to bring is a mask, snorkel and fins – they're not too difficult to carry and that way you know they'll fit. At any area with coral and tourists you will be able to rent snorkelling gear for around

Huge sunfish up to 2.5m in length and twice as high are a much treasured sight for divers. They can usually be found around Nusa Lembongan, Nusa Penida and at times off Tulamben. These gentle giants feed on jellyfish and plankton.

20,000Rp per day, but make sure that you check the condition of the equipment carefully before you take it away.

Also worth bringing, if you plan to do a lot of diving, is a thin, full-length wetsuit, which is important for protection against stinging animals and possible coral abrasions. A thicker one (3mm) would be preferable if you plan frequent diving, deep dives or a night dive – the water can be cold, especially deeper down.

Some small, easy-to-carry things to bring from home include protective gloves, spare straps, silicone lubricant and extra globes for your torch (flashlight). Most dive operators can rent good-quality regulators (about US\$5 per day) and BCVs (aka BCDs or Buoyancy Control Devices; about US\$5), but if you bring your own you'll save money, and it's a good idea especially if you're planning to dive in more remote and secluded locations than Bali, where the rental equipment may not be as good.

HIKING & TREKKING

Bali does not offer remote 'wilderness treks'; as it's simply too densely populated. For the most part, you'll make day trips from the closest village, often leaving before dawn to avoid the clouds and mist that usually blanket the peaks by mid-morning – for most treks you'll go on you won't need camping gear.

Hiking is a good way to explore the wilds of Bali – you can trek from village to village on small tracks and between the rice paddies. Munduk (p252) is fast becoming one of the most popular places to hike, thanks to its lack of hassles and lush, waterfall-riven landscape.

You can easily go on short hikes, without guides, around Danau Buyan and Danau Tamblingan (p248), Tirta Gangga (p232), to splendid villages near Ubud (p180) and many more.

Several agencies offer organised walking and trekking trips. See the coverage for the destinations listed in the previous paragraphs.

On Lombok, the Gunung Rinjani area (p314) is superb for trekking.

RAFTING

Rafting is very popular, usually as a day trip from either South Bali or Ubud. Operators pick you up from your hotel, take you to the put-in point, provide all the equipment and guides, and return you to your hotel at the end of the day. The best time is during the wet season (October to March), or just after; by the middle of the dry season (April to September), the best river rapids may be better called 'dribbles'.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR TREKKING

Before embarking on a trekking trip, consider the following points to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience:

- Pay any fees and possess any permits required by local authorities; often these will be rolled into the guide's fee, meaning that it is all negotiable.
- Be sure you are healthy and feel comfortable walking for a sustained period.
- Obtain reliable information about physical and environmental conditions along your intended route, eg the weather can get quite wet and cold in the upper reaches of the volcanoes.
- Confirm with your guide that you will only go on walks/treks within your realm of experience.
- Carry the proper equipment. Depending on the trek and time of year this can mean rain gear or extra water. Carry a torch (flashlight); don't assume the guide will have one.

The Sanur-based environmental group PPLH Bali (see p127) has several programmes devoted to protecting Bali's reefs and educating people about their value.

Lombok's trekking favourite Gunung Rinjani is an active volcano and the third-largest in Indonesia. It rises to 3726m (12,224ft) and erupted as recently as 2004.

Most operators use the Sungai Ayung (Ayung River; see p184), near Ubud, where there are between 19 and 25 Class II to III rapids (ie potentially exciting but not perilous). As you float along, you can admire the stunning gorges and rice paddies from the boat. Sungai Telagawaja (Telagawaja River) near Muncan in East Bali (p208) is also popular. It is more rugged than the Ayung and the scenery is more wild.

Dress to get wet and bring something dry for afterwards. Companies will pick you up at your hotel in South Bali and Ubud.

Advertised prices run from around US\$40 to US\$70; discounts are common. Reputable operators include the big operators Sobek (see sidebar, left) and Bali Adventure Tours, plus the following:

Discovery Rafting (☎ 0361-764915; www.discoveryrafting.com) Sungai Ayung.

Telaga Waja Adventure (☎ 0361-727525; telagawajarafting@yahoo.com) Sungai Telagawaja.

SURFING

In recent years, the number of surfers in Bali has increased enormously, and good breaks can get very crowded. Many Balinese have taken to surfing, and the grace of traditional dancing is said to influence their style. The surfing competitions in Bali are a major local event. Facilities for surfers have improved, and surf shops in Kuta will sell just about everything you need.

Equipment

A small board is usually adequate for the smaller breaks, but a few extra inches on your usual board length won't go astray. For the bigger waves – 8ft and upwards – you will need a gun. For a surfer of average height and build, a board around the 7ft mark is perfect.

If you try to bring more than two or three boards, you may have problem with customs officials.

There are surf shops in Kuta (p101) and elsewhere in South Bali (see p132). You can rent boards of varying quality and get supplies. If you need repairs, ask around, there are lots of places.

Other recommended equipment:

- Solid luggage for rugged airline travel
- Board-strap for carrying
- Tough shoes for walking down rocky cliffs
- Your favourite wax if you're picky
- Wetsuit or reef booties
- Wetsuit vest or other protective cover from the sun, cloudy days, reefs and rocks
- Surfing helmet for those rugged conditions (and riding a rented motor-cycle)

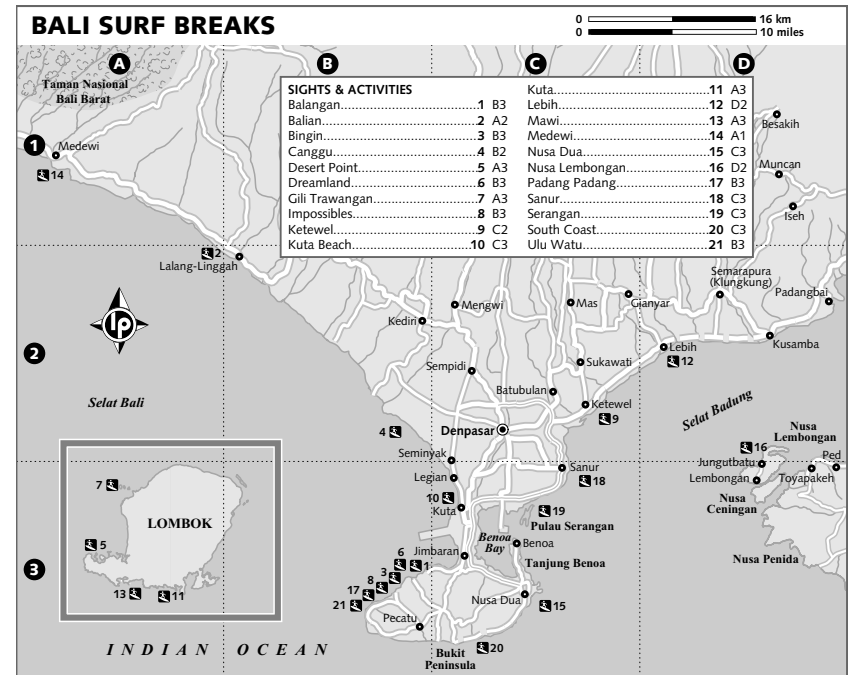
Surf Trips from Bali

Charter boats take groups of surfers for day trips around various local reefs, or for one-week 'surfaris' to great breaks on eastern Java (Grajagan, also known as G-Land has an incredible left), Nusa Lembongan, Lombok and Sumbawa, some of which cannot be reached by land. These are especially popular with those who find that the waves in Bali are too crowded. You'll see them advertised in numerous agents and surf shops in Kuta. Prices start at around 300,000Rp per person per week (seven days/six nights), including food. The most basic boats are converted Indonesian fishing boats with minimal comforts and safety equipment.

G-Land Bobby's Surf Camp (☎ 0361-755588; www.grajagan.com) is at Grajagan in East Java. It provides transport to/from Bali.

www.surftravel.com.au is an Australian tour company with camps, yacht charters and a website with destination information, surfer reviews and more.

There are several surf schools that teach beginners in the waves off Kuta and Legian beaches. See p102 for details.



Where to Surf

BALI

Swells come from the Indian Ocean, so the surf is on the southern side of the island and, strangely, on the northwest coast of Nusa Lembongan, where the swell funnels into the strait between there and the Bali coast.

In the dry season (around April to September), the west coast has the best breaks, with the trade winds coming in from the southeast; this is also when Nusa Lembongan works best. In the wet season, surf the eastern side of the island, from Nusa Dua around to Padangbai. If there's a north wind – or no wind at all – there are also a couple of breaks on the south coast of Bukit Peninsula.

Balangan

Go through growing Pecatu Indah resort and follow the road around to the right past Dreamland to reach the Balangan warung (food stall). Balangan (p131) is a fast left over a shallow reef, unsurfable at low tide, good at midtide with anything over a 4ft swell; with an 8ft swell, this can be one of the classic waves.

Balian

There are a few peaks near the mouth of Sungai Balian (Balian River, p276 in western Bali – sea water here is often murky because the river can carry a lot of pollution. Look for the Taman Rekreasi Indah Soka, along the main road, just west of Lalang-Linggah. The best break here is an enjoyable and consistent left-hander that works well at mid- to high tide if there's no wind.

www.surftravelonline.com has information on remote Indonesian locations.

Kuta's famous Tubes Surf Bar & Restaurant (p102) is a popular centre for anything to do with surfing – the Tubes tide chart is widely available.

Bingin

North of Padang and accessible by road, this spot (p132) can now get crowded. It's best at midtide with a 6ft swell, when it manufactures short but perfect left-hand barrels.

Canggu

North of Kuta-Legian-Seminyak, on the northern extremity of the bay, Canggu (p125) has a nice white beach and a few surfers. The peak breaks over a 'soft' rock ledge – well, it's softer than coral. An optimum size for Canggu is 5ft to 6ft. There's a good right-hander that you can really hook into, which works at full tide, and what the surf writer Peter Neely calls 'a sucky left ledge that tubes like Ulu but without the coral cuts', which works from midtide.

Dreamland

You have to go through Pecatu Indah resort and past the water-sucking golf course to reach this spot (p131), which can also get crowded. At low 5ft swell, this solid peak offers a short, sharp right and a longer more tubular left. There's quite a good scene here and cheap places to stay.

Impossible

Just north of Padang Padang (opposite), this outside reef break has three shifting peaks with fast left-hand tube sections that can join up if the conditions are perfect (low tide, 5ft swell), but don't stay on for too long, or you'll run out of water.

Ketewel & Lebih

These two beaches (for Lebih, see p209) are northeast of Sanur, and access is easy from the new coast road. They're both right-hand beach breaks, which are dodgy at low tide and close out over 6ft. Most likely there are other breaks along this coast all the way to Padangbai, but they need a big swell to make them work.

Kuta Area

For your first plunge into the warm Indian Ocean, try the beach breaks at Kuta Beach (p95); on full tide go out near the life-saving club at the southern end of the beach road. At low tide, try the tubes around Halfway Kuta (p102), probably the best place in Bali for beginners to practise. Start at the beach breaks if you are a bit rusty. The sand here is fine and packed hard, so it can hurt when you hit it. Treat even these breaks with respect. They provide zippering left and right barrels over shallow banks and can be quite a lot of fun.

Further north, the breaks at Legian Beach (p95) can be pretty powerful, with lefts and rights on the sand bars off Jl Melasti and Jl Padma. At Kuta and Legian you will encounter most of the local Balinese surfers.

And again further north, there are more beach breaks off Seminyak (p101), such as the Oberoi, near the hotel of the same name. The sea here is fickle and can have dangerous rip tides – take a friend.

For more serious stuff, go to the reefs south of the beach breaks, about a kilometre out to sea. Kuta Reef, a vast stretch of coral, provides a variety of waves. You can paddle out in around 20 minutes, but the easiest way is by boat, for a fee. The main break is a classic left-hander, best at mid- to high tide with a 5ft to 6ft swell, when it peels across the reef and has a beautiful inside tube section; the first part is a good workable wave. Over 7ft it tends to double up and section.

The reef is well suited for backhand surfing. Unfortunately it's not surfable at dead-low tide, but you can get out there not long after the tide turns. The locals can advise you if necessary. It gets very crowded here, but if conditions are good there's another, shorter left, 50m further south along the reef, which usually has fewer surfers.

Medewi

Further along the south coast of western Bali is a softer left called Medewi (p277) – it's a point break that can give a long ride right into the river mouth. This wave has a big drop, which fills up then runs into a workable inside section. It's worth surfing if you feel like something different, but to catch it you need to get up early, because it gets blown out as the wind picks up. It works best at mid- to high tide with a 6ft swell. There's accommodation.

Nusa Dua

During the wet season you should surf on the east side of the island, where there are some very fine reef breaks. The reef off the Nusa Dua (p133) has very consistent swells. The main break is 1km off the beach to the south of Nusa Dua – go past the golf course and look for the whole row of warung and some boats to take you out. There are lefts and rights that work well on a small swell at low to midtide. On bigger days, take a longer board and go further out, where powerful peaks offer long-rides, fat tubes and lots of variety. Further north, in front of the Club Med, is a fast, barreling right reef break called Sri Lanka, which works best at midtide and can handle swells from 6ft to 10ft.

Nusa Lembongan

In the Nusa Penida group, this island (p148) is separated from the southeast coast of Bali by the Selat Badung (Badung Strait).

The strait is very deep and generates huge swells that break over the reefs off the northwest coast of Lembongan. Shipwreck, clearly visible from the beach, is the most popular break, a longish right that gets a good barrel at midtide with a 5ft swell.

A bit to the south, Lacerations is a very fast, hollow right breaking over a very shallow reef – hence the name. Still further south is a smaller, more user-friendly left-hander called Playground. Remember that Lembongan is best with an easterly wind, as are Kuta and Ulu Watu, so it's dry-season surfing.

Padang Padang

Just Padang for short, this super shallow, left-hand reef break (above) is just north of Ulu Watu towards Kuta. Again, check this place carefully before venturing out. It's a very demanding break that only works over about 6ft from mid- to high tide – it's a great place to watch from the cliff top.

If you can't surf tubes, backhand or forehand, don't go out: Padang is a tube. After a ledge take-off, you power along the bottom before pulling up into the barrel. So far so good, now for the tricky part. The last section turns inside out like a washing machine on fast-forward. You have to drive high through this section, all the time while in the tube. Don't worry if you fail to negotiate this trap, plenty of other surfers have been caught too. After this, the wave fills up and you flick off. Not a wave for the faint-hearted and definitely not a wave to surf when there's a crowd.

Sanur

Sounds exciting! Sanur Reef (p132) has a hollow wave with excellent barrels. It's fickle, and doesn't even start till you get a 6ft swell, but anything over 8ft

www.indosurf.com.au has web links and surfing info and www.wannasurf.com has surf reports and a message board.

Surfing Indonesia by Leonard and Lorca Lueras has about 80 pages on Bali. It has great photos, a comprehensive coverage of the waves, and some good surfing background.

There are four 18-hole golf courses in Bali. One near Danau Bratan (p248), another near Pura Tanah Lot (p272) and two rather inappropriately on the arid Bukit Peninsula at Nusa Dua (p134) and a new one at Pecatu Indah (p134).

You can ride horses in Bali from stables in Kerobokan (p124), Yeh Gangga (p276), Ubud (p181) and Pemuteran (p269). Many people enjoy the chance to see nature at a relaxed pace and in some cases gallop through the surf.

will be world-class, and anything over 10ft will be brown board shorts material. There are other reefs further offshore and most of them are surfable.

Hyatt Reef, over 2km from shore, has a shifty right peak that can give a great ride at full tide. Closer in, opposite the Sanur Beach Market, Tanjung Sari gives long left rides at low tide with a big swell, while Tanjung Right can be a very speedy wall on a big swell. The classic right is off the Grand Bali Beach Hotel.

Serangan

The abortive development at Pulau Serangan (Turtle Island) entailed huge earthworks at the southern and eastern sides of the island, and this has made the surf here much more consistent, though the landfill looks like a disaster. The causeway has made the island much more accessible, and several warung face the water, where waves break right and left in anything over a 3ft swell (see p147).

South Coast

The extreme south coast (p133), around the end of Bukit Peninsula, can be surfed any time of the year provided there is a northerly wind, or no wind at all – get there very early to avoid onshore winds. The peninsula is fringed with reefs and big swells are produced, but access is a problem. There are a few roads, but the shoreline is all cliff. If you want to explore it, charter a boat on a day with no wind and a small swell.

Nyang Nyang is a right-hand reef break, reached by a steep track down the cliff. Green Ball is another right, which works well on a small to medium swell, ie when it's almost flat everywhere else. Take the road to the Nikko Bali Resort & Spa, fork left just before you get there and take the steps down the cliff. The south coast has few facilities and tricky currents, and it would be a bad place to get into trouble.

Ulu Watu

When Kuta Reef is 5ft to 6ft, Ulu Watu (p127), the most famous surfing break on Bali, will be 6ft to 8ft with bigger sets. Kuta and Legian sit on a huge bay – Ulu Watu is way out on the southern extremity of the bay, and consequently picks up more swell than Kuta. It's about a half-hour journey from downtown Kuta by private transport.

Teluk Ulu Watu (Ulu Watu Bay) is a great setup for surfers – local boys will wax your board, get drinks for you and carry the board down into the cave, which is the usual access to the wave. There are warung and nearby there are cheap losmen (basic accommodation).

Ulu Watu has about seven different breaks. The Corner is straight in front of you to the right. It's a fast-breaking, hollow left that holds about 6ft. The reef shelf under this break is extremely shallow, so try to avoid falling headfirst. At high tide, the Peak starts to work. This is good from 5ft to 8ft, with bigger waves occasionally right on the Peak itself. You can take off from this inside part or further down the line. It's a great wave. At low tide, if the swell isn't huge, go further south to the Racetrack, which is a whole series of bowls.

At low tide when the swell is bigger, Outside Corner starts operating, further out from the Racetrack. This is a tremendous break and on a good day you can surf one wave for hundreds of metres. The wall here on a 10ft wave jacks up with a big drop and bottom turn, then the bowl section. After this it becomes a big workable face. You can usually get tubed only in the first section. When surfing this break you need a board with length, otherwise you won't be getting down the face of any of the amazing waves.

Look for the free newspaper *Magic Wave*, which is distributed around Kuta and has full coverage of the Bali surfing scene.

www.surfaidinternational.org is a very well-regarded international surfer-run aid organisation that has done impressive work for the tsunami-ravaged islands off Sumatra.

Another left runs off the cliff that forms the southern flank of the bay. It breaks outside this in bigger swells, and once it's 7ft, a left-hander pitches right out in front of a temple on the southern extremity. Out behind the Peak, when it's big, is a bombara (submerged reef) appropriately called the Bommie. This is another big left-hander and it doesn't start operating until the swell is about 10ft. On a normal 5ft to 8ft day there are also breaks south of the Peak. One is a very fast left, and is also very hollow, usually only ridden by goofy-footers, due to its speed.

Observe where other surfers paddle out and follow them. If you are in doubt, ask someone. It is better having some knowledge than none at all. Climb down into the cave and paddle out from there. When the swell is bigger you will be swept to your right. Don't panic, it is an easy matter to paddle around the white water from down along the cliff. Coming back in you have to aim for the cave. When the swell is bigger, come from the southern side of the cave as the current runs to the north. If you miss the cave, paddle out again and repeat the procedure.

LOMBOK

Lombok has some good surfing and the dearth of tourists means that breaks are uncrowded.

Desert Point

Located in an extremely remote part of Lombok, Desert Point (above) is legendary if elusive wave that was voted the 'best wave in the world' by *Tracks* magazine. Only suitable for very experienced surfers, on its day this left-handed tube can offer a 300m ride, growing in size from take-off to close-out (which is over razor-sharp coral). Desert Point only really performs when there's a serious ground swell and can be flat for days and days – May to September offer the best chance of the right conditions. The nearest accommodation is about 12km away in Pelangan, down a rough dirt track, so many surfers either camp next to the shoreline, or cruise in on surf safaris from Bali.

Gili Trawangan

Much better known as a scuba diving mecca, Trawangan (p307) also boasts a little-known surf spot off its southwestern tip, offshore from the Vila Ombak hotel. It's a quick right-hander that breaks in two sections, one offering a steeper profile, and breaks over rounded coral. It can be surfed all year long but is best at high tide. There are no surf facilities in Trawangan, though both resident Westerners and locals may lend you a board.

Mawi

About 18km west of Kuta, Lombok the stunning bay of Mawi (above) has a fine barrelling left with a late take-off and a final tube. It's best in the dry season from May to October with easterly offshore winds and a southwest swell. As there are sharp rocks and coral underwater and the riptide here is very fierce, take great care. Unfortunately thefts have been reported from the beach, so leave nothing of any value and tip the locals to look after your vehicle.

WATER SPORTS

The east coast of South Bali is popular for water sports. The close-in reefs off Sanur and Tanjung Bena (Bena Headland) mean that the water is usually calm enough for a lot of aquatic fun. Parasailing, jet-skiing, water-skiing and banana-boat rides are just some of the choices. In Sanur (see p142) there are activity huts along the beach. In Tanjung Bena (p137) several large water-sports centres are located on the beach. Most fetch and return patrons from

Bali-based Surf Travel Online (☎ 0361-750550; www.surftravelonline.com) has information on surf camps, boat charters and package deals for surf trips to remote Indonesian locations, as well as Nusa Lembongan.

Indo Surf & Lingo (www.indosurf.com.au) by Peter Neely tells surfers where and when to find good waves around Bali and other Indonesian islands. The book also has a language guide with Indonesian translations of useful words. It's available at surf shops in the Kuta region.

AHHH, A SPA

Whether it's a total fix for the mind, body and spirit, or simply the desire for some quick-fix serenity, lots of travellers in Bali are spending hours and days being massaged, scrubbed, perfumed, pampered, bathed and blissed-out. Sometimes this happens on the beach or in a garden, other times you'll find yourself in lavish surroundings.

Every upmarket hotel worth its stars has spa facilities (which are generally open to nonguests) offering health, beauty and relaxation treatments. Day spas are also common, particularly in Ubud (p181), Kuta (p103) and Seminyak (p104). The cost can be anything from a 20,000Rp beach rub to a multihour sybaritic soak for US\$100 or more. However in general the costs are quite low compared with other parts of the world and the Balinese have just the right cultural background and disposition to enhance the serenity.

Massage and herbal body scrubs have an important place in Balinese family life. From birth, parents massage their children, and as soon as children are able it's normal for them to reciprocate. Anyone with an ailment receives a specially formulated scrub, and men provide and receive massage as much as women. The Balinese massage techniques of stretching, long strokes, skin rolling and palm and thumb pressure result in a lowering of tension, improved blood flow and circulation, and an all-over feeling of calm.

So what can you expect in a spa? It's usually a three-stage process – the massage, the scrub and the soak. Therapists are often female, although top-end spas may have male therapists. Many massage rooms are also set up with two massage beds, so you can have a massage alongside your partner or friend.

A basic therapeutic massage is a one-hour, top-to-toe, deep-tissue massage to relax the muscles, tone the skin and eliminate stress, while aromatherapy massages feature a choice of essential oils, such as ginger, nutmeg, coconut and sandalwood. Commonly offered massage options include Shiatsu, Thai and Swedish massage and reflexology (concentrating on pressure points of the feet). For something special, the 'four-hands' massage, where two therapists will treat you, is also an option at many spas.

Based on traditional herbal treatments, popular spa options include the *mandi rempah* (spice bath) and the *mandi susu* (milk bath). The *mandi rempah* begins with a massage, followed by a body scrub with a paste made from assorted spices, and ending with a herbal-and-spice hot bath. The *mandi susu* begins with a massage, followed by a herbal scrub and a milk-and-yogurt body mask. The treatment ends with a soak in a milk bath.

The most popular treatment though, is the Javanese *mandi lulur* body scrub. Based on the centuries-old Javanese palace ritual, the *mandi lulur* takes almost two hours but it feels longer as all sense of time is lost during the deep-tissue massage (ask for strong treatment if you dare). The massage is followed by a full body rub made from a vibrant yellow paste of turmeric, sandalwood and rice powder. This is allowed to dry and then gently rubbed off, exfoliating and polishing the skin. Next, a mixture of yogurt and honey is smoothed on, to moisturise and feed the skin and restore the perfect pH balance. After a quick rinsing shower, the highlight follows – a long and lovely bath in fragrant essential oils amid pale, floating frangipani petals. Refreshing hot ginger tea is normally served during the calming recovery time following the bath, when you'll feel so good you'll be dreamily planning another two hours of luxurious bliss.

all over the south. Costs for the various mechanized marvels can quickly add up to US\$20 an hour or more. Just swimming off the beach is free.

For watery adventures after an island voyage, try one of the party boats making daily excursions to Nusa Lembongan (p148) and Nusa Penida (p153). There you have a full range of water sports based aboard a barge that often looks like something from the Kevin Costner dud *Waterworld*. It's all organised frolic and most basic activities like snorkelling the interesting reefs are included in the package cost (per person US\$60 to US\$80). Note that with pick-up and drop-off at your South Bali hotel, plus the boat ride to/from the barge it can be a very long day.

Food & Drink

Considered by many as one of the most dynamic islands in Indonesia, Bali has a fiery cuisine that matches the nature of its enigmatic folk, and one that is guaranteed to speed up the metabolism and have your blood flowing like the Sungai Ayung in the wet season! While the cuisine of Bali has remained a mystery to visitors for years (and it's still easy to eat Western cuisine for every meal, if that's your preference), times are changing. Balinese food is now more accessible than ever – be it on street corners or in restaurants frequented by tourists.

The finest Balinese food is found spilling out of even simple Balinese kitchens in your average village compound. It is here that the family cook takes the time to roast the coconut until the smoky sweetness kisses your nose, grinds the spices diligently to form the perfect paste and perhaps even makes fresh fragrant coconut oil in which to fry them. And when I say kitchen, don't for one minute imagine a stainless-steel work place with a fridge, oven and cupboards stacked with plates and cups. The favoured Balinese kitchen has a wood-fired oven that is fuelled by bamboo and sometimes even coffee wood that creates a smoky sweetness and wonderful flavour that modern cookers cannot reproduce.

Compared with other Indonesian islands, Balinese food is more pungent and lively. The biting note of fresh gingers is matched by the heat of raw chillies, shrimp paste, palm sugar and tamarind. There is nothing shy about this cuisine and it is certainly not as sweet and subtle as the food of the neighbouring island of Java. But there is more to it than that – there is a multitude of layers that make the complete dish. A meal will contain the six flavours (sweet, sour, spicy, salty, bitter and astringent), which in turn promote health, vitality and stimulate the senses.

There are shades of South-Indian, Malaysian and Chinese flavours in Balinese food. It has evolved from years of cross-cultural cook-ups and trading with seafaring pioneers and perhaps even pirates, across the seas of Asia. The idea that you should only eat what is native to the soil doesn't apply in this part of the world, because even the humble chilli was introduced by the fearless Portuguese, along with a plethora of other colourful, edible exotica from the New World. In true Balinese-style, the village chefs selected the finest and perhaps most durable new ingredients and adapted them to the local tastes and cooking-styles of the people.

Like Malaysian and Peranakan cooking, Balinese cuisine has a predominance of turmeric, ginger, chilli and coconut flavours, and shares many similar dishes with its South-east Asian neighbours. Other native ingredients such as the beloved candlenut, galangal and musk lime are fundamental to the cuisine of this region, as is the elegant, alluring lemongrass. Indian-style spices such as cinnamon, cardamom and cumin are seldom used in Bali. Emphasis is on the combination of fresh gingers, balanced by the complex sweetness of palm sugar, tamarind and shrimp paste along with the clean fresh flavours of lime-scented lemongrass, lime leaves and coriander seeds.

Bali has also become a place where global cuisines meet. Once famous only for its jaffles and black-rice pudding, Bali has become a culinary nirvana, offering the best of Indian, Moroccan, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, French, fusion and, of course, Indonesian food.

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

Balinese cuisine is shaped around a lifestyle rich with ceremonies and cultural activity. Rice, the staple, has also played a leading role in determining the very nature of a meal and the way it's prepared. Many dishes are chopped

The Food of Bali by Heinz von Holzen and Lothar Arsana brings to life everything from *cram cam* (clear chicken soup with shallots) to *bubuh injin* (black-rice pudding). Von Holzen's books also include a forthcoming one on Balinese markets.

A bowl of cooked *kangkung* (water spinach) for dinner is guaranteed to give you a good night's sleep as it is full of natural tryptophan.

WE DARE YOU *Janet de Neeffe*

One of my favourite drinks served at the Ubud market is *daluman*. Horrifying to most tourists, this wobbly green drink is full of natural chlorophyll and a bunch of health-giving nutrients. You could be forgiven thinking it's green slime or something scooped out of a Balinese river, but believe me, when served with palm-sugar syrup and a swirl of roasted coconut milk, it is sublime! It cools down a hot tummy and is said to help prevent stomach cancer.

Eels are an islandwide favourite and there is nothing tastier than deep-fried seasoned eel or even eel chopped and steamed in banana leaves, with freshly ground spices and a touch of delicate torch ginger.

For a refreshing treat, I dare you to try *es campur*. It is a mountainous mix of crushed ice, fresh fruits, fermented yam, seaweed jelly and lashings of sweetened condensed milk and iridescent pink syrup. I used to eat this soupy fruit salad when I was pregnant, much to the dismay of the Balinese, as pregnant women are not supposed to eat ice.

Bee larvae is a sweet, juicy delicacy in Bali. I always buy this golden honeycomb when it's available for the Casa Luna market tour and cook it up for the class. The baby bees are simmered with fragrant lemongrass, lime leaves and *salam* leaves and then mixed with roasted shredded coconut, lashings of chilli with shrimp paste and fried shallots. The subtle hint of honey and meaty texture of the bees, matched with gentle aromatics and spice is so delicious it makes you buzz!

finely to complement the cooked grains of rice and for ease of eating with the (right) hand. As you can imagine, the Balinese are very particular about rice – dry, fluffy grains are preferred.

Breakfast

In Bali, you can start the day with alluring flavours that will slap you out of that early morning slowness. The best breakfast food is usually found at the local market. Typical fare includes compressed rice cake mixed with steamed greens tossed with a freshly ground peanut sauce bursting with flavour; or soft, boiled rice topped with brilliant, chopped greens and sprouts mixed with a fiery *sambal* (chili paste) and roasted coconut, or you might like to eat plain, steamed rice with fried *tempe* (Indonesian soy-bean cake), crunchy anchovies, bitter greens and *sambal*; or a variety of satay from goat meat to pounded fish, roasted chicken, pork or even goat soup. If you have a sweet tooth, you can eat your way through endless rice porridges, temples cakes, squiggly rice cakes, boiled bananas and wash it all down with a green leafy drink or *cendol* (coconut milk and palm suagr). You can choose to sit in the lively ambience of the market or get your meal wrapped up in a banana leaf or brown paper and take it home. And that's just to start the day!

Lunch & Dinner

Lunch is eaten from 11am, and the regular fare is the famous *nasi campur*. *Nasi campur* simply means steamed rice and a mixture of side dishes. The combination of these is dependent on seasonal produce and economy. This is in fact the style of eating for just about every meal. Lunch constitutes the main meal of the day for it is at this time that the rice has finished a couple of hours of happy steaming and all the side dishes are ready and bubbling with vitality. The menu might consist of a stewy, meat dish such as *babi kecap* (pork in sweet soy sauce) or roast chicken, steamed greens with roasted or grilled coconut, fried tofu and *tempe* in a tomato-chilli sauce, fried fish and a spicy *sambal* or chilli seasoning. There are generally four or five side dishes that grace the plate and depending on family economics, dinner might just be a matter of leftovers. Dessert is a rarity; for special occasions, it will consist of fresh fruit or gelati-style coconut ice cream.

If you really enjoy spicy food, you can ask the staff in any restaurant to serve a fresh *sambal* of chopped chilli drowned in *kecap manis* (sweet soy sauce).

Mixing watermelon and palm sugar together is a major food no-no in Bali, and one that is bound to leave you with painful stomach cramps.

DRINKS

If you are a passionate wine drinker visiting Bali, you might do better to take up beer! Bintang, Bali Hai and now, the new organic, Storm beer will certainly quench your thirst on a hot day. Otherwise, Hatten wine makes an interesting local wine, and its glowing pink rosé has quite a following. Wine of the Gods, perhaps the finest local wine, actually imports freshly crushed grapes from Western Australia and bottles the wine in Denpasar.

Of course, if you want a more serious shot of alcohol, *arak* is probably the answer. *Arak* is the alcohol produced from fermented palm fruits and *tuak* is made from another type of palm. Drinking either of these is guaranteed to have you swaying like a palm tree with an immense hangover the next day. *Brem*, or rice wine, is a sweeter, milder brew that is not unlike sake. It is best served with lime juice and loads of ice. One of the most popular nonalcoholic local drinks on the island is *cendol*. This is an interesting, psychedelic mix of palm sugar, fresh coconut milk and crushed ice full of all sorts of known and unknown extra flavourings and floaties. My daughter's favourite is *es teler* which is a mix of soft avocado with young coconut and sago. Green coconut juice is the perfect tonic for upset tummies, hangovers and fevers. Mother Nature's perfect rehydration drink, it helps cool the body and replace all those electrolytes that tend to evaporate in tropical weather. Sometimes you will be greeted in the rice fields by farmers offering green coconut juice; they'll be eager to show their coconut-climbing skills to awe-struck tourists and make some pocket money on the side. Try it with ice and a squeeze of lime juice.

CELEBRATIONS & CEREMONIES

Food is a major part of Balinese ceremonies, with the menu varying according to the size and importance of the occasion. A small home ceremony might include spit-roasted chicken, or smoked duck, whereas, with a grand affair, suckling pig is the desired fare. The preparations begin at dawn the day before with kilos of spices, exotic ingredients, meats and rice being cooked.

Men are ceremonial chefs for all festivities, becoming 'spice Gods' for the occasion and creating a celebratory extravaganza to honour the deities. The action begins in the early hours of the morning, when pigs, ducks or chicken are slaughtered and then prepared for a multitude of lively, spiced dishes that will be used as offerings to God and to feed all those who have

BABI GULING

Babi guling, or suckling pig, appears on the menu of most major household ceremonies, from a baby's three-month ground-touching ceremony to the fearful tooth-filing ceremony. I have seen these small, roasted *babes* delivered to our door so many times, wrapped in layers of plastic, ready to be sliced and served to friends, family and neighbours on a grand occasion. It is, by far, the most revered dish on the island.

In the early days, tourists were advised not to eat *babi guling* in order to avoid the renowned Bali belly, but nowadays you don't need to be sitting in a tight sarong at a ceremony to enjoy the succulent meat and spicy filling. The spice paste used includes chilli, turmeric, ginger, galangal, shallots, garlic, coriander seeds, aromatic leaves and is basted in turmeric and coconut oil. In the cuisine capital of the island, Ibu Oka's warung (food stall) in Ubud (p193) serves suckling pig every lunchtime and is jam-packed with lip-smacking tourists, brushing shoulders with Balinese, Indonesians and other Asians as they vie for a table at this popular, East-meets-West local eatery. Up to six freshly roasted pigs are brought in each day after 11am and if you are not there by 2pm, you will probably miss out. The meal includes slices of tender, roasted pork, homemade blood sausage, chopped greens, *sambal* (chilli sauce) and crisp pork crackling.

You can find this treat all over the island, from Gianyar to Tabanan.

Green coconut juice is the perfect traditional remedy for heat stroke, Bali belly and fever.

Balinese ceremonies are determined by the phases of the sun, the moon and the stars, and you only have to glance at a Balinese calendar to see how many religious celebrations are held annually. For more information on the Balinese calendar, check out www.indo.com/culture/calendar.html.

White pepper is the preferred pepper in Asia, so don't be surprised if it is hard to find black pepper in restaurants.

helped prepare the food. It's community work at its best, sometimes with hundreds of men pounding meat and spices, chopping vegetables, boiling coconut milk, frying entrails and making Balinese satay. For my father-in-law's cremation, our garage became a production-line food hall, with more than 100 men preparing more than 800 satays and a whole range of other ceremonial, meaty dishes. *Lawar* is a celebratory favourite and consists of roasted shredded coconut, a fragrant coconut-milk broth, cooked greens, chopped fried liver, a drop of red, glossy, congealed blood, fried entrails, *sambal* and just about anything else that is sitting around. As you can imagine, this is not a dish for the faint-hearted.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Balinese Food

It's everywhere, naturally. Balinese food can be enjoyed fresh from a street vendor, at world-class restaurants where it is elevated to culinary art, or at scores of places in between.

WARUNG

In between modern establishments are a million small cafés and local eateries known as warung or *kedais* (coffee houses). A warung is a small, no-frills local store-meets-restaurant with a couple of well-worn bench seats and long tables for hungry guests. A number of cooked dishes usually sit in a small glass cabinet at the entrance of the warung for all to see, and you can select from these or just order the house mixture or *nasi campur*. These roadside hang-outs are perfect for watching the world go by and are the gathering place for young and old alike. Seaside warung that hug the coastline serve a variety of fresh seafood; my favourite eating house, Merta Sari, near the bat caves in Kusamba (p221), serves up a meal that's hard to beat. Juicy, pounded fish satay, a slightly sour, fragrant fish broth, fish steamed in banana leaves, snake beans in a fragrant tomato-peanut sauce and a fire red *sambal* make up its renowned *nasi campur*. Other places around the coast also serve a wonderful selection of similar dishes but you'll have to hunt them down yourself.

A *warung lesehan* is a typical type of local eatery that you often find hugging the coastline or out in the villages, although there are also several of these open-style cafés in Denpasar. These simple above-ground wooden pavilions are furnished with low tables and bamboo mats where diners sit, sharing the space with other diners, the occasional tourist and the ubiquitous Balinese dog. Sometimes they are perched on the edge of the rice fields, offering a lovely view of ducks and endless green.

QUICK EATS

In every village in Bali you will find morning and afternoon food stalls or tables, usually perched under the enormous shade of the local banyan tree. These makeshift take-away affairs are a bit like meals-on-wheels, except that

Every town of any size in Bali and on Lombok will have a *pasar malam* (night market). You can sample a vast range of fresh offerings from warung (food stalls) and carts after dark.

BALI & LOMBOK'S TOP FIVE

- Bumbu Bali (p138) has superb and creative Balinese food in Tanjung Bena.
- Sate Bali (p121) delivers sumptuous traditional Balinese meals in Seminyak.
- Three Monkeys (p194) has a diverse menu in a magical Ubud setting.
- Café des Artistes (p196) is a cultured alternative with an enticing menu in a quiet part of Ubud.
- Qunci Restaurant (p298) is a hip hotel restaurant on the beach in Mangsit.

the wheels just happen to be the legs of the old granny selling the food. The table laden with all the cooked treats is carried by the seller to the selected destination and sold from there. When all is finished, the table, and empty pots and plates are carried back home. This is usually the best place to buy delicious rice puddings and sweet treats.

For an afternoon snack or light broth, you might want to sample the famous cuisine of the *bakso* or *kaki-lima* sellers. *Kaki-lima* translates as something five-legged and refers to the three legs of the cart and the two legs of the vendor. These mobile food merchants, usually from neighbouring Java, push their carts through the village streets in the late afternoon and sell light soups with *bakso* (Chinese-style meatballs). Of course, any meat product that sits in a glass cabinet in tropical heat requires a major dose of preservatives and probably lashings of MSG so, eat at your own discretion. Nowadays there is a movement in Bali to serve Balinese-style *bakso* in warungs. Signs displaying the words *Krama Bali* or *Bakso Babi* indicate they are serving freshly made *bakso*, usually with pork meatballs (p29).

International Food

You can eat well all over Bali and you are pretty much spoiled for choice. The classic modest traveller's café with a timeless mix of burgers, pizza, pasta and Indonesian dishes is found any place you find visitors.

But in places throughout South Bali, Ubud and parts of the east and beyond you can enjoy exceptional cuisine from all corners of the globe, often at prices that would make people at home weep. In particular, look to Seminyak and Ubud for dozens of innovative restaurants that beguile with choice and selection.

Most places serve breakfast through to dinner (8am until about 10pm – later at really trendy joints); in places where everything is fresh and the food service vendor is the produce market, you'll find kitchens are often very accommodating to special requests. If they have it they'll cook it how you want – although at times communicating this will be the biggest challenge.

VEGETARIANS

Bali is a dream come true for vegetarians. Tofu and *tempe*, rich in protein, can be seen on many restaurant menus, and other wok-fried dishes, such as *cap cay* and *sayur hijau* can easily be ordered without meat. Salads abound in many modern restaurants, and that old rule of not eating raw foods in Bali no longer applies.

Vegetarian restaurants will of course be true to their name and there are many good Indian restaurants that also have vegetarian choices. Most vegetarian restaurants also cater for vegans, although you might need to double-check on shrimp paste.

'Aquarians' (vegetarians who eat seafood) will find eating on the island full of wonderful choices. Freshly grilled seafood satay is often on sale around Bali in the afternoons, and seafood features on nearly all menus.

EATING WITH KIDS

Children are treated like deities in Bali and most places have child-doting staff that will grab yours and entertain them so you can enjoy a bit of quiet time together. In fact, children often seem as relieved as the parents to have someone else to play with! Most restaurants are happy to prepare different foods for frustrated children and, when in doubt, spaghetti, chips and ice cream will keep your young 'uns happy. Don't forget that kids aren't the intrepid travellers we would like them to be, so pay attention to their needs and don't expect them to like eating spicy foods and exotic dishes if they

Janet de Neefe's *Fragrant Rice* is part memoir, part cookbook and part cultural guide. It's a warm and informative telling of her deepening immersion into Balinese life, framed around traditional food and the rich rituals and customs that surround it.

Lonely Planet's *World Food Indonesia* by Patrick Witton has the low-down on Balinese high feasts as well as details of the cuisine for which the islands are known.

LOMBOK'S SPICY FLAVOURS

The Sasak people of Lombok are predominantly Muslim, so the porky plethora found on Bali gives way to a diet of fish, chicken, vegetables and rice. In fact, rice here is of the finest quality, yet the drier climate means that sometimes only one crop can be produced a year. The fact that *lombok* means chilli in Indonesian makes sense, as Sasaks like their food spicy; *ayam taliwang* (whole split chicken roasted over coconut husks served with a peanut, tomato-chilli-lime dip) is one example. *Sares* is a dish made with chilli, coconut juice and banana-palm pith; sometimes it's mixed with chicken or meat. Three vegetarian dishes are *kelor* (hot soup with vegetables), *serebuk* (vegetables mixed with grated coconut) and *timun urap* (sliced cucumber with grated coconut, onion and garlic).

don't eat them at home. Even common favourites will taste different in Bali, especially when compounded with a hot, sticky climate, so patience and kindness are the keys for a bonding, stress-free family experience.

HABITS & CUSTOMS

It is not customary for the Balinese to talk while eating. I remember in the early days with my husband, eating meal after meal in silence, thinking how rude he was. In the meantime, he was thinking that when you give a Westerner a plate of food, they never stop talking. We eventually understood each other and now we sometimes eat in silence or talk softly while eating. If you wish to eat in front of a Balinese, it is customary to invite them to join you, even if you know they will say 'No', or you don't have anything to offer.

Remember, it is not a custom for Balinese to complain in restaurants and flexibility is the key to a happy holiday. If there is something you don't like about a meal, you can deliver a message much more effectively in Bali if it is done in a polite manner.

Balinese are formal about behaviour and clothing, so remember that it isn't polite to enter a restaurant without a shirt on, or eat a meal half-naked, no matter how many muscles or piercings you have. And while it's OK to chomp on your food while eating, blowing your nose at the table is quite offensive.

The right hand is the hand that gives and receives good things. It is the symbol of Brahma, the creator. The left hand is the hand that deals with unpleasant sinister elements. The tradition in local restaurants is to eat your meal with your right hand, thus explaining the bowl of water that is served with all Indonesian dishes (licking your fingers is not appreciated).

It is customary to wash your hands before eating, even if you choose to eat with a spoon and fork; local restaurants always have a sink outside the restrooms to lather up before the feast.

If you happen to be drinking coffee with a Balinese person, don't be surprised if they tip the top layer of their coffee on the ground. This is an age-old protection against evil spirits.

If you're invited to a Balinese home for a meal, it's OK to say you don't want second helpings or refuse food you don't like the look of. It's customary for Balinese to insist you eat more, but you may always politely refuse!

COOKING COURSES

It is said that the cuisine of a region always offers insight into the culture. When I first moved to Bali, I recorded Balinese recipes at ceremonies and felt like I was slowly excavating a precious ruin. The intrigue of this ancient cuisine certainly fired my own passion to learn more. Look for the famed cooking classes of Heinz von Holzen in Tanjung Benoa (p137), as well as good ones in Seminyak (p118) and Ubud (see p185).

There are many interesting drinks you can try in Bali. One of my children's favourites is avocado milkshake with chocolate.

You must not speak harshly of anything that lives in the rice fields, including ducks, eels, frogs and rats. Rice is the sacred grain and any creature that lives in these verdant fields must be treated with respect.

EAT YOUR WORDS

Although you won't find the language much of a barrier, see the Language chapter (p373) for pronunciation guidelines.

Useful Phrases

Here are some handy phrases that will help you enjoy a meal in Bali and on Lombok.

Where's a...?

food stall
night market
restaurant

... *di mana?*
warung
pasar malam
rumah makan

Can I see the menu, please?

Do you have a menu in English?
I'm hungry.

Minta daftar makanan?
Apakah ada daftar makanan dalam baasa Inggris?
Saya lapar.

I'll try what they're having.

Saya mau masakan seperti yang mereka pesan.

Not too spicy, please.

I like it hot and spicy.

Kurang pedas.
Saya suka masakan pedas.

I don't eat...

chicken
fish
meat
milk & cheese
pork
poultry
seafood

Saya tidak mau makan...
ayam
ikan
daging
susu dan keju
daging babi
ayam
makanan laut

Thank you, that was delicious.

The bill, please.
Do you accept credit cards?

Enak sekali, terima kasee.
Minta bon.
Bisa bayar dengan kartu kredit?

Do you have a highchair for the baby?

Ada kursi khusus untuk bayi?

I'm a vegetarian/I eat only vegetables.

Do you have any vegetarian dishes?
Does this dish have meat?
Can I get this without the meat?

Saya hanya makan sayuran.
Apakah ada makanan nabati?
Apakah masakan ini ada dagingnya?
Bisa minta masakan ini tanpa daging?

What's that?

Apa itu?

Can you please bring me (some/more)...?

chilli sauce/relish
beer
a napkin
pepper
soy sauce
a spoon
coffee
tea (with sugar)
tea (without sugar)
water

Bisa minta... (lagi)?
sambal
bir
tisu
lada
kecap
sendok
kopi
teh manis
teh pahit
air minum

For an exhaustive run-down of eating options on Bali, check out www.balieats.com. The listings are encyclopaedic, although criticism seems to exist only for places that have closed for competing media.

Food & Drink Glossary

Almost every restaurant in Bali – from humbled to fabled – will have a few of these classic dishes on the menu. Some can be found throughout Indonesia, others are unique to Bali and/or Lombok.

air botol, aqua – bottled water

air minum – drinking water

arak – spirits distilled from palm sap

ayam – chicken

ayam taliwang – whole split chicken roasted over coconut husks served with a tomato-chilli-lime dip (Lombok)

babi – pig

babi guling – spit-roast pig stuffed with a Balinese spice paste (Bali)

bakmi/mie goreng – rice-flour noodles fried with vegetables, and often meat and sauces

bakso ayam – light chicken soup with glass noodles and meatballs; a street-stall standard

bebek betutu – duck stuffed with Balinese spice paste, wrapped in coconut bark and banana leaves and cooked all day over smouldering rice husks and coconut husks (Bali)

brem – a type of rice wine, distilled from white and black rice (Bali)

bubuh injin – black-rice pudding made from black sticky rice and served with coconut milk (Bali)

cap cai – stir-fried vegetables (Chinese)

cendol – coconut milk drink mixed with palm sugar and crushed ice

daging sapi – beef

dingin – cold

es campur – a mixture of sliced fresh fruit, coconut fruits, seaweed jelly and fermented cassava served with shaved ice and sweet syrup

fu yung hai – a Chinese-style omelette with a sweet-and-sour sauce

gado-gado – steamed or salad vegetables tossed in a spicy peanut sauce

goreng – fried

isen – galangal, a gingerlike spice; also called *laos* and *lengkuas*

ikan – fish

jambu – guava

jeruk manis – orange

kacang – peanut

kari – curry

kelor – hot soup with vegetables (Lombok)

kentang – potatoes

kepiting – crab

kerupuk – rice crackers; also called *krupuk*

kodok – frog

kopi – coffee

krupuk udang – prawn crackers

lawar – a salad of chopped coconut, spices, meat (pork, chicken or liver) and sometimes blood

mangga – mango

mie kuah – noodle soup

nanas – pineapple

angka – jackfruit

nasi campur – steamed rice served with a selection of meat and vegetable side dishes

nasi goreng – fried rice that includes Chinese greens and often meat; often served with satay and a fried egg

nasi putih – plain white steamed rice

pahit – ‘bitter’; word meaning ‘no sugar’ in tea or coffee

panas – hot (temperature)

pepesan ikan – spiced fish wrapped in banana leaves and steamed or grilled

pisang goreng – fried banana fritters; a popular streetside snack

rambutan – red fruit covered in hairy spines, containing sweet white flesh

rendang – beef coconut curry

rijsttafel – literally, rice table; a Dutch adaptation of an Indonesian banquet encompassing a wide variety of dishes

sambal – chilli sauce or paste; contains chillies, garlic or shallots and salt

sares – chilli, coconut juice and banana-palm pith; sometimes mixed with chicken or meat (Lombok)

sate – grilled meat on skewers with peanut sauce; also spelled satay

sayur – vegetable

serebuk – vegetables mixed with grated coconut (Lombok)

serobotan – spicy salad of chilli, water spinach, bean sprouts, long beans, coconut milk and peanuts

soto ayam – light chicken soup

susu – milk

teh – tea

tempe – Indonesian soy-bean cake

timun urap – sliced cucumber with grated coconut, onion and garlic (Lombok)

tom – pounded duck, pork chicken or their livers, with spices and steamed in a banana leaves (Bali)

tuak – palm beer/wine

urab – greens with grated coconut, chilli, shallots and garlic

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