

Frommer's

Bali & Lombok



ISBN 978-1-118-09600-0
52199



9781118096000



INDONESIA

Frommer's®

Bali & Lombok

2nd Edition

by Jen Lin-Liu & Candice Lee



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Published by:

JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC.

Copyright © 2012 John Wiley & Sons Inc, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,
West Sussex PO19 8SQ, UK

Telephone (+44) 1243 779777

Email (for orders and customer service enquiries): cs-books@wiley.co.uk. Visit our Home Page on
www.wiley.com

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except under the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS, UK, without the permission in writing of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons Inc, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8SQ, England, or emailed to permreq@wiley.co.uk, or faxed to (+44) 1243 770620.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The Publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the Publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Publisher: Kelly Regan

Production Manager: Daniel Mersey

Editor: Fiona Quinn

Project Editor: Hannah Clement

Cartography: Andrew Murphy

Photo Editor: Cherie Cincilla, Richard H. Fox, Jill Emeny

Front cover photo: Sunrise behind Gunung Agung from the beach in Amed, Bali, Indonesia © Edmund Lowe / Alamy Images

Back Cover photo: Detail of Yellow crested toucan bird © John Kershaw / Alamy Images

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some content that appears in standard print versions of this book may not be available in other formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit us at www.wiley.com.

For information on our other products and services or to obtain technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877/762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317/572-3993 or fax 317/572-4002.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-118-09600-0 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-118-22355-0 (ebk), ISBN 978-1-118-23691-8 (ebk),

ISBN 978-1-118-26194-1 (ebk)

Typeset by Wiley Indianapolis Composition Services

Printed and bound in the United States of America

5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

List of Maps vii

1 THE BEST OF BALI & LOMBOK 1

The Best Unique Balinese Experiences 2

The Best Temples 2

The Best Diving & Snorkeling 3

The Best Beaches 4

The Best Activities for Kids 5

The Best Resort Hotels 6

The Best Value Accommodations 6

The Best Dining 7

The Best Spas 8

2 BALI IN DEPTH 9

Bali Today 9

BALI'S ROYAL REGENCY PAST 10

Looking Back: Bali History 11

Art & Crafts 15

BUYING TEXTILES 18

BALI'S CRAFT VILLAGES AT A GLANCE 19

Balinese Architecture 19

Eating & Drinking 21

EATING AT THE KAKI LIMA 23

When to Go 24

ONLINE TRAVELER'S TOOLBOX 27

Calendar of Events 27

Lay of the Land 28

Responsible Travel 29

JOHN HARDY'S BALI 31

3 BALI & LOMBOK REGIONS & SUGGESTED ITINERARIES 32

The Regions in Brief 32

THE BEST OF BALI IN 1 WEEK 34

THE BEST OF BALI IN 2 WEEKS 37

BALI FOR FAMILIES 38

SUGGESTED LOMBOK ITINERARIES 39

4 ACTIVE TRIP PLANNER 40

Organized Trips & Tours 40

Activities A to Z 42

ALTERNATIVE HEALTH & WELLNESS A TO Z 44

5 KUTA & LEGIAN 54

Essentials 54

FAST FACTS: KUTA 55

Where to Stay 58

Where to Eat 62

Exploring Kuta & Legian 66

Shopping 69

Kuta & Legian Entertainment & Nightlife 72

6 SEMINYAK 75

Essentials 75

FAST FACTS: SEMINYAK 78

Where to Stay 78

Where to Eat 82

THE BEST OF EAT STREET 88

Exploring Seminyak 89

Shopping 90

Seminyak Entertainment &
Nightlife 95

Canggu 96

Denpasar 99

7 SANUR & THE NUSA ISLANDS 101

Essentials 101

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOURISM IN SANUR 104

FAST FACTS: SANUR 105

Where to Stay 105

Where to Eat 109

Exploring Sanur 113

Shopping 117

Sanur Entertainment & Nightlife 118

Nusa Lembongan, Ceningan &
Penida 119

FAST FACTS: NUSA LEMBONGAN 122

*WALKING FROM TAMARIND TO MUSHROOM
BEACH* 123

NUSA CENINGAN 128

FAST FACTS: NUSA PENIDA 129

8 THE BUKIT PENINSULA 133

Jimbaran Bay 133

FAST FACTS: JIMBARAN BAY 136

Uluwatu 145

*PECATU INDAH DEVELOPMENT & THE NEW
KUTA* 149

LUXURY VILLAS IN ULUWATU 151

Nusa Dua 153

FAST FACTS: NUSA DUA 154

THE NUSA DUA SEAWEED FARMERS 161

*BALINESE DANCE PERFORMANCES
ON THE BUKIT PENINSULA* 162

*ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST:
CREMATION* 163

Tanjung Benoa 164

FAST FACTS: TANJUNG BENOA 164

9 UBUD 168

ESSENTIALS 169

FAST FACTS: UBUD 172

Where to Stay 172

Where to Eat 179

CAFES, COFFEE & TEA 182

Exploring Ubud 186

LEARNING TO LOVE THE EARTH 194

Around Ubud 195

Shopping: Island of the Goods 197

DANCE & CULTURAL PERFORMANCES 200

Ubud Entertainment &
Nightlife 202

10 CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 203

Essentials 203

Danau Batur 204

*A VIEW OF DANAU BATUR &
PENELOKAN* 206

Bedugul & Danau Bratan, Buyan &
Tamblingan 212

Munduk 215

Gunung Batukaru 217

11 EAST BALI 221

Exploring East Bali 221

FAST FACTS: EAST BALI 224

Klungkung (Semarapura) 225

DINING & BREAKING RECORDS IN KARANG-SEM REGENCY 226

The Sidemen Valley 227

Bangli & Gunung Agung 229

FAST FACTS: BANGLI 229

Padangbai 233

12 NORTH BALI 250

Tembok, Sembirenteng & Tejakula 250

Air Sanih & Surrounding Villages 254

Singaraja 255

FAST FACTS: SINGARAJA 256

13 WEST BALI 268

Essentials 268

FAST FACTS: WEST BALI 268

Tabanan 269

Tabanan to Negara 274

14 LOMBOK 283

Lombok in Depth 283

BEST LOMBOK EXPERIENCES 284

Getting There & Getting Around 287

FAST FACTS: LOMBOK 292

West Lombok 293

SPECIALIZED LOMBOK TOURS 294

ISLAND OF 1,000 MOSQUES 296

Senggigi 298

The Southwest Coast & Islands 305

LOMBOK'S (& THE WORLD'S?) GREATEST WAVE 306

FAST FACTS: PADANGBAI 233

Manggis 235

FESTIVALS IN & AROUND TENGANAN 236

Candidasa 238

FAST FACTS: CANDIDASA 238

Amlapura 241

FAST FACTS: AMLAPURA 241

Amed 244

Tulamben 247

Lovina 257

FAST FACTS: LOVINA 258

Pemuteran 263

FAST FACTS: PEMUTERAN 264

PEMUTERAN'S BIOROCK PROJECT 265

Negara & Around 277

Taman Nasional Bali Barat (West Bali National Park) 279

Kuta & the South Coast 308

SURFING ON LOMBOK'S SOUTHERN PENINSULA: EKAS BAY 309

BAU NYALE FESTIVAL 310

Central Lombok 312

North Lombok 313

TIPS FOR TREKKING GUNUNG RINJANI 318

East Lombok 319

CULTURAL RICHES & ANCIENT TRADITIONS IN EAST LOMBOK 321

15 THE GILI ISLANDS 323

Getting to, Between & Around the
Gilis 324

FAST FACTS: THE GILI ISLANDS 327

Gili Trawangan 328

FAST FACTS: GILI TRAWANGAN 328

*BIKING & SNORKELING TOUR: GILI
TRAWANGAN* 334

*THE FIVE BEST DIVE SPOTS ON THE
GILIS* 336

Gili Air 339

FAST FACTS: GILI AIR 340

Gili Meno 343

FAST FACTS: GILI MENO 343

16 PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO BALI 346

Getting There 346

Getting Around 346

Tips on Hotels 348

Money & Costs 351

*GETTING YOUR MONEY'S WORTH WHEN
CHANGING CURRENCY* 352

Health 353

FAST FACTS 355

17 BASIC INDONESIAN 362

Basic Grammar 362

Essential Words & Phrases 362

Index 367

Accommodations Index 372

Restaurant Index 373

LIST OF MAPS

Suggested Bali & Lombok Itineraries	35	Danau Batur	207
Kuta	56	East Bali	222
Seminyak	76	North Bali	252
Sanur	102	West Bali	271
Nusa Lembongan, Nusa Ceningan & Nusa Penida	121	Taman Nasional Bali Barat & Gilimanuk	281
The Bukit Peninsula	134	Lombok	288
Nusa Dua & Tanjung Benoa	155	The Gili Islands	325
Ubud	170	Biking & Snorkeling Tour: Gili Trawangan	335
Central Mountains	205		

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

After first visiting Bali in 2003, **Jen Lin-Liu** travels to the island frequently and has written about Bali and Lombok for numerous publications including *The New York Times* and *Travel + Leisure*. She is the author of *Serve the People: A Stir-Fried Journey Through China* (Harcourt, 2008) and a forthcoming book about the food of the Silk Road (Riverhead Press). She lives in Beijing, where she lives in the old traditional neighborhoods near the cooking school and restaurant she owns, Black Sesame Kitchen.

Candice Lee has lived in Beijing for the past five years and has worked as a manager and cooking instructor at Black Sesame Kitchen for three years with previous experience working with HIV/AIDS, research, and event managing. She explores, eats, and scrappily finds her way through as many new places as possible (usually by bicycle).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my husband Craig Simons for his hard work in scoping out new gems across Bali and Lombok. I would also like to express my appreciation for Kevin Bell of Bali Eats, Ni Made and the team at the Samaya, and John Halpin of the COMO Shambhala. The team at the Oberoi Lombok was gracious and helped us get out a jam in Lombok — thank you Rudy! Thank you also to editor Fiona Quinn for her input and feedback to make this a better book.

—Jen Lin-Liu

HOW TO CONTACT US

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

Frommer's Bali & Lombok, 2nd Edition
John Wiley & Sons, Inc. • 111 River St. • Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

ADVISORY & DISCLAIMER

Travel information can change quickly and unexpectedly, and we strongly advise you to confirm important details locally before traveling, including information on visas, health and safety, traffic and transport, accommodation, shopping and eating out. We also encourage you to stay alert while traveling and to remain aware of your surroundings. Avoid civil disturbances, and keep a close eye on cameras, purses, wallets and other valuables.









While we have endeavored to ensure that the information contained within this guide is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication, we make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. We accept no responsibility or liability for any inaccuracy or errors or omissions, or for any inconvenience, loss, damage, costs or expenses of any nature whatsoever incurred or suffered by anyone as a result of any advice or information contained in this guide.

The inclusion of a company, organization or Website in this guide as a service provider and/or potential source of further information does not mean that we endorse them or the information they provide. Be aware that information provided through some Websites may be unreliable and can change without notice. Neither the publisher or author shall be liable for any damages arising herefrom.

FROMMER'S STAR RATINGS, ICONS & ABBREVIATIONS

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system**. In country, state, and regional guides, we also rate towns and regions to help you narrow down your choices and budget your time accordingly. Hotels and restaurants are rated on a scale of zero (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). Attractions, shopping, nightlife, towns, and regions are rated according to the following scale: zero stars (recommended), one star (highly recommended), two stars (very highly recommended), and three stars (must-see).

In addition to the star-rating system, we also use **eight feature icons** that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

-  **special finds**—those places only insiders know about
-  **fun facts**—details that make travelers more informed and their trips more fun
-  **kids**—best bets for kids and advice for the whole family
-  **special moments**—those experiences that memories are made of
-  **overrated**—places or experiences not worth your time or money
-  **insider tips**—great ways to save time and money
-  **great values**—where to get the best deals
-  **warning**—traveler's advisories are usually in effect

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE American Express DISC Discover V Visa
DC Diners Club MC MasterCard

TRAVEL RESOURCES AT FROMMERS.COM

Frommer's travel resources don't end with this guide. Frommer's website, **www.frommers.com**, has travel information on more than 4,000 destinations. We update features regularly, giving you access to the most current trip-planning information and the best airfare, lodging, and car-rental bargains. You can also listen to podcasts, connect with other Frommers.com members through our active-reader forums, share your travel photos, read blogs from guidebook editors and fellow travelers, and much more.

THE BEST OF BALI & LOMBOK

1

Between the two Indonesian islands of Bali and Lombok, you can experience it all—from pristine, quiet beaches to a throbbing nightlife scene and more: Culture, world-class surfing, lush rice paddies, volcanic mountain scenery, and fantastic year-round weather. But wait, there's more. The island pair also offers the best-rated resorts at reasonable prices, flawless service, and pampering, cut-rate spa treatments.

A Hindu haven in the Muslim-majority Indonesian archipelago, Bali has for years attracted artists, honeymooners, spiritual seekers, surfers, and those otherwise looking for the “good life,” while Lombok attracts more rugged travelers looking for an off-the-beaten-path experience. The Balinese and the people of Lombok have always been accommodating hosts, and their acceptance of different lifestyles has drawn an assortment of “misfit” residents. During your trip, you're destined to meet some real characters, whether they be of the “Kuta cowboy” variety—young Indonesian bachelors trolling the beach for foreign girlfriends—or the cult of New Age, yoga-obsessed foreigners who've settled in the rice paddies of Ubud.

The Balinese practice a unique amalgam of Indian Hindu traditions, Buddhism, ancient Javanese customs, and indigenous, animistic beliefs. The beauty of their faith colors every aspect of life, from fresh flowers strewn everywhere in obeisance to the calm of morning prayer at the temple. During your visit, you're sure to catch the distinctive tones of the gamelan, a xylophone-like instrument, and the gathering of sarong-clad worshipers at the island's ubiquitous temples. Meanwhile, you'll experience a moderate Muslim culture in Lombok. After a decade of ups and downs, Bali's tourism industry is on the upswing. With terrorism fears dwindling, Bali is becoming crowded with more visitors than ever, while Lombok remains the Bali of two decades ago. The movie *Eat, Pray, Love*—disparagingly called *Eat, Pay, Leave* by some locals—has added to Bali's tourism surge. The rise in the number of tourists has led to overcrowded roads, that have doubled travel times around the island, and rampant overdevelopment of bland, indistinguishable-looking villas in the south. But the glut of new villas and developments means that good deals are still available on the island.

You'll likely hear complaints from longtime residents that much of Bali's charm has been lost with its growing villas, strip malls, Western outposts of Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts, and its sometimes-rowdy nightlife. But

get out of south Bali, the center of the island's development, and you'll be rewarded in every direction with quiet villages, pristine scenery, and plenty of time to restore your "inner balance."

THE best UNIQUE BALINESE EXPERIENCES

- Strolling in a Village in the Morning:** Local color is at its brightest in the mornings in a village in Bali. Take a leisurely stroll and you'll see children in uniform walking hand in hand to school, mothers bringing back the day's provisions from the market, and men and women placing offerings throughout the village and in the temples. It's a stunning start to your day in paradise.
- Calling on a Balian:** What's a Balian you say? The simplest explanation is a medicine man (or woman) or a spiritual healer. The Balinese visit them for cures to illness, emotional distress, and all manner of problems. Currently, you'll hear the name **Ketut Lyer** bandied about as the healer made famous by Elizabeth Gilbert's book *Eat, Pray, Love*. Eager seekers form lines running round the block of his Ubud home-cum-practice, so don't bother going there. Instead ask a Balinese friend or someone at your hotel where they recommend you go, as every good Balinese has a Balian. Appointments aren't necessary and there are normally no phone calls you can make to find your special healer: It's all about just showing up on a first-come, first-served basis, trying your luck, and leaving a donation. Good Balian's don't discuss money with a client. What you leave is what you decide to leave and many Balinese without much spare cash leave rice and simple offerings. Short of scouring the villages for your own healer, the best and most professional healers can be found at **Five Elements**, a retreat in Ubud (see p. 44).
- Eating with Locals at a Warung:** Warungs (roadside cafes) serve some of the best local food on the island. Pull up a well-worn wooden stool to a group table and pick your food from the buffet. One of the best warungs is in Seminyak, the **Warung Sulawesi** (p. 88), where flavors of Bali are mixed with the piquant offerings of far-flung Indonesian islands. In Ubud, even though it is well discovered, go for the suckling pig at **Ibu Oka** (p. 184). Ask anyone where it is and they'll point you in the right direction.
- Participating in a Ceremony:** No matter where you're staying in Bali, you can get yourself invited to a ceremony through either a friendly villa staff member or your hotel concierge. Pick up the spiritual vibe, keeping in mind that "ceremony" is often just a word that replaces "celebration." Don't forget your sash and sarong.
- Watching a Balinese Dance Performance:** Bali's highly stylized traditional dances have evolved from ancient Hindu rites and often take the performer into a trancelike state. The best way to see such a performance is in a temple, but dances at public theaters and even on hotel grounds can be equally entrancing. Don't pass up an opportunity to see the rarely performed *Oleg Tambulilingan*: It's a sexy virtuososo duet depicting a randy male bumblebee courting a coy lady bee.

THE best TEMPLES

Take a guide when visiting temples and you'll understand far more about each one: The layout and style of most temples is the same, and so it's the specific history that brings out the life in them. Always dress appropriately and observe temple rules.

- **Pura Besakih:** This temple makes the “Best of” solely because of its importance and its spectacular ceremonies. It’s the largest and the holiest, known as the “Mother Temple,” and translates literally as the “Temple of Spiritual Happiness.” Go early, avoid the crowds, and take your own guide. See p. 231.
- **Pura Goa Giri Putri:** This is quite an extraordinary experience. You enter the cave, on one side of the mountain, on your hands and knees through a small gap in the rocks, and then pass 450m (1,500 ft.) inside the mountain only to come out the other side on to a beautiful valley. A visit here justifies a day trip to Nusa Penida on its merits alone. See p. 131.
- **Pura Gunung Kawi:** Bali’s “Valley of the Kings” is hewn in the cliffs, and on both sides of the river are massive commemorative monuments to 11th-century kings and queens. Strictly speaking, Gunung Kawi isn’t a temple, but it’s nevertheless considered a holy place. A visit here is an unforgettable experience. See p. 186.
- **Pura Lempuyang:** Only for the fit and willing, it takes some 1,700 winding steps up through the forested slopes of Mount Lempuyang to reach Pura Lempuyang, and the views on to Mount Agung are divine. See p. 242.
- **Pura Luhur Batukaru:** This is one of the six axial temples sacred to all Hindu Balinese and one of the most ancient sacred sites on the island. Majestically nestled in the jungle, at the head of the valley on the slopes of Batukaru, this is a wonderful place to wander round. See p. 218.
- **Pura Luhur Uluwatu:** This is a dramatically perched sea temple on the cliffs above the legendary surf break Uluwatu, and possibly Bali’s most spectacular shrine. The best time to visit is at sunset. Be sure to take in the nightly Kecak dance show and mind the gap—the railings are few and far between. See p. 145.
- **Pura Tanah Lot:** Otherwise known as Pura Pakendungan, this temple sits dramatically on a rock, surrounded by black sand and pounding surf, and is possibly the most picturesque and most photographed temple on the island—especially so at sunset. The temple is reachable only during low tide and can get very busy with coach-loads of tourists, so it’s best seen in the early morning. See p. 270.
- **Pura Ulan Danu Bratan:** This temple sits on the edge of Lake Bratan and is worth a visit if only for its beautiful surroundings. The part of the temple that gets all the attention is the 11-roof meru (altar), situated on a point of land, jutting out into the lake. Sadly, the lake and the surrounding area can get overrun with litter from visiting tourists. See p. 213.
- **Tirta Empul:** This temple is built around a sacred spring, Tampak Siring, and the Balinese have used its two bathing spots for a millennium. The springs are believed to have magical powers and bring good health and prosperity. Pack your bathing suit, go at sunrise, and experience the springs as the Balinese do. See p. 188.

THE best DIVING & SNORKELING

- **Nusa Penida:** This island is the nearest dive site for those staying in the south of the island. It’s a 40-minute boat ride from Sanur and benefits from the main deep-water channel current running down the Lombok Strait. The main draw is from July to November when there’s a high chance of swimming with the large Mola mola (oceanic sunfish); around the same time, you might find manta rays. See p. 130.
- **Bloo Lagoon:** This small, white sand bay just outside Padangbai isn’t normally a recipe for finding interesting fish, but the treasure-trove of marine life here

includes sharks, stonefish, scorpionfish, and nudibranches. One of the highlights of this dive spot is its night dives. See p. 234.

- **Gili Biaha:** This island is a 25-minute boat ride north of Candidasa and has some of Bali's most stunning diving. Here you'll find a vast diversity of fish, sharks, and frequent pelagic visitors set against a backdrop of chiseled, black walls with beautiful, healthy corals and often superb visibility. Go to the Shark Cove and you're almost guaranteed to see a white tip shark or two. See p. 234.
- **U.S.A.T. Liberty:** Certainly the most famous and popular dive site in Bali, this wreck lies between 3m and 37m (10 ft.–120 ft.) from the surface and can be enjoyed by serious divers and snorkelers alike. It's easy to reach from the shore and hosts more than 300 species of fish. Go for a night dive. See p. 247.
- **Menjangan Island:** Situated in the West Bali National Park, 10km (6 miles) offshore, this deer-inhabited island offers deep coral-reef walls only 45m to 90m (150 ft.–300 ft.) from shore, with a diversity of coral gorgonian fans and plenty of small and medium-size fish on view. The protected island is reached by boats staffed by ex-fishermen from the area. The high visibility coupled with the gentle currents makes this an exceptional place for the whole family. See p. 279.
- **Belongas Bay:** This bay in south Lombok has many excellent dive sites and pristine and as yet unpolluted reefs. There's plentiful macro life and an abundance of mackerel, tuna, barracuda, Napoleon wrasse, and white and black tip reef sharks. You may even see hammerhead sharks. See p. 49.
- **The Gili Islands:** Located off the west coast of Lombok, and with more than 20 accepted sites, this is an ideal location to base yourself if you want to spend the day sub aqua. The Gilis are famous for their turtles, and if you're quick and fortunate, you may even get to swim with them. See chapter 15.

THE best BEACHES

The image of Bali as a beach destination probably derives from its surf-dominated tourist origins back in the 1970s. But although there are many beautiful beaches, they're less typical of the island as a whole. Planning your beach trip requires thought—not least because the rip and swell that lure surfers pose a less hospitable attraction for swimmers.

- **Bingin Beach:** Of all the amazing golden beaches on the Bukit, this remains as charming and original a spot as you can get. Untroubled to date by overzealous developers, and with surfers doing a daily show out front, this is a perfect beach-side experience. See p. 146.
- **Ku de Ta:** Although more of a bar than a beach, treat it as the latter and book one of the four-person sun loungers; kick back for the day with top-drawer service on tap. See p. 82.
- **Kuta, Lombok:** Pristine, bright blue bays and expert surfing, flanked by rocky hills, with very few tourists and touts, make the beaches around Kuta one of the best-kept secrets in southeast Asia. See p. 308.
- **Sanur Beach:** Although similar in style to the Nusa Dua resort, Sanur retains an old-world charm and connection to a more authentic Bali, with mile after mile of traditional warungs competing with top-class resorts set on the boardwalk. This is a great spot for sailing, kite surfing, and child-friendly swimming. See p. 101.
- **Pantai Pasir Putih (White Sand Beach):** This idyllic spot, off the tourist trail, is a closely guarded secret. Just beyond Candidasa, it's a perfect crescent beach

protected by two high promontories with a dozen picturesque warungs serving cold beer and prawns. This setting is the closest Bali comes to the Caribbean with azure waters and gentle breezes. See p. 239.

- **Private beach between the Banyan Tree and the Semara Resorts, Bukit Peninsula:** Although all beaches are public property in Bali, this span of fine sand and crystal blue water, protected by reef and imposing cliffs, is as private as things get, and it's the perfect place for a swim. Access is through the Banyan Tree and Semara resorts, or the Karma Kandara with its excellent Nammos Beach Club and Restaurant. See p. 150.
- **The Gili Islands:** Here, you'll find near-perfect, soft white sand beaches. Quite how they've managed to retain their innocence for so long is a mystery. Take a 3-day break. See p. 323.

THE best ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

- **Surfing:** Teenagers can take part in many of the surfing and kite schools on the island, depending on the time of year and prevailing winds. Sanur is the best area for learning to kite surf and Kuta Beach is ideal for wave surfing. See chapter 4 for more on surfing.
- **Waterbom:** Youngsters will love you for taking them to this water park, but be forewarned, once you've visited you'll never hear the end of it. The place is great fun, exhilarating, and well managed with surprisingly good food. The management has rigged it too by offering you a discount card on exit for a repeat visit within 7 days. Your saving grace after this generous day out with the children is that they'll be so knackered they'll hit the sack early. See p. 69.
- **Bali Safari & Marine Park:** Children of all ages will love the zebras, rhinos, and wildebeest roaming as free as they're going to get this side of the savanna. Add in the animal rides and daily shows and this makes a terrific break from the sea and surf for youngsters. See p. 113.
- **Green Camp:** Let your children have their own natural discovery of the wonders of Balinese culture and the great outdoors from planting rice, picking cocoa, and making chocolate to climbing one of the hundreds of coconut trees that dot the landscape of this cool camp. If they like getting dirty (and what child doesn't) this is the place. Parents can exhaust and educate at the same time. The camp is seasonal and courses are weekly or daily—drop-ins are welcome. See p. 194.
- **Bali Bird Park:** Certainly one of the best-managed bird parks and rehabilitation centers in the world, this is an experience that all ages will relish. The Bali starlings, birds of paradise, and Komodo dragons are each worth the trip in their own right, never mind all together. See p. 113.
- **Bali Tree Top Adventure Park:** Tree Top will test the bravery and agility of all ages from 6 to 60. Budding Tarzans are catered for in the wondrous setting of the Bedugul Botanical Garden. The six levels range from brave children to super-hero. A must for the outward bound. See p. 213.
- **Menjangan Resort:** Take the safari jeeps with rooftop seating around the estate to view the deer, monkeys, and wild boar in the hedgerow. There's world-class snorkeling at Menjangan Island, horse riding, trekking, and bird watching to keep any child amused. You can even stay in charming cabins in the mangroves—great for inspiring botanists. See p. 282.

- **Elephant Safari Park:** Children get a kick out of feeding and washing the cute, well-cared-for baby elephants here. If you stay overnight in the park's hotel, you can arrange for an elephant to pick you up at your door and take you on a night safari. See p. 194.

THE best RESORT HOTELS

- **Alila Villas Soori:** Up the coast from busy and crowded Seminyak, these pristine villas sit on a black-sand beach framed by palm trees. Private plunge pools, movies and music on demand via Apple TV, and delicious yet healthy food, make this a must if you're willing to splurge. See p. 272.
- **Amankila:** Perched above a private dark-sand beach, this Aman property, featuring a three-tiered lap pool that mimics the look of the nearby rice paddies, has Moorish-style villas with amazing views of the Lombok Strait. See p. 237.
- **COMO Shambhala:** This resort is so self-confident that it calls itself "The Estate"—and it's a title that's well-earned. With 41 hectares (100 acres) of sculpted grounds and wild jungle, top-notch detox and wellness programs steered by qualified specialists, as well as elegant rooms with antique touches, you may never want to leave. See p. 173.
- **Desa Seni (Canggu):** Although certainly not one of the more costly or extravagant options, this bijou resort will nourish your soul in a way that sometimes money just can't buy. From the incredibly tasteful layout, to the complimentary yoga classes and organic dining sourced right from the resort's own gardens, you'll leave relaxed and restored. See p. 96.
- **Four Seasons, Jimbaran Bay:** The thatched-roof bungalows overlooking a gorgeous bay give you a taste of "old Bali"—with all the luxuries of a five-star resort. See p. 137.
- **The Oberoi Lombok:** The thatched-roof rooms and villas overlook a beautiful strip of beach and the Gili Islands beyond, although most guests enjoy the setting so much they don't set foot away from the resort. What's more, the resort offers diving, snorkeling, and surfing. See p. 316.

THE best VALUE ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Alam Sari (Ubud):** This hotel offers an excellent combination of setting, social responsibility, and low price—and is a delightful find for families, ecowarriors, and those who want to immerse themselves in Balinese culture. See p. 178.
- **Desa Dunia Beda (Gili Islands):** There are plenty of inexpensive places to stay on the Gilis, but this quiet resort, next to one of the best snorkeling spots on the Gilis, features classy, romantic joglo (Javanese-style bungalows). See p. 330.
- **Novotel Kuta (Lombok):** Pristine beachfront, five-star hotel amenities, and a quiet, out-of-the-way location are the benefits of this beautiful—and inexpensive—resort. See p. 310.
- **Pearl Beach Resort (Lombok):** This is one of our favorite places to stay in all of Lombok and Bali—and it's just US\$70 per night. The only place to stay on the tiny island of Gili Asahan, this set of new, beachside bungalows offers some of the area's best snorkeling. See p. 307.

THE best DINING

1

THE BEST OF BALI & LOMBOK

The Best Dining

- **La Lucciola:** This is the most elegant beachside dining experience in Bali. Accessed over a charming footbridge and sitting on one of the prettiest stretches of Seminyak Beach, this is a wonderful place for a leisurely meal at any time of the day. Mellow, magical, and memorable. See p. 84.
- **Nutmegs:** Picturesque Nutmegs overlooks a spacious garden filled with frangipani trees and hundreds of candles that twinkle under the stars. The open kitchen remains wondrously calm given the level and variety of cooking on offer. See p. 83.
- **Sardine:** Quite possibly Bali's most charming restaurant. Built entirely of bamboo with a stunning rice paddy view in the posh Petitenget area of Seminyak, the design is as innovative as the daily changing menu. Fresh sardines feature high on the menu. See p. 85.
- **Sarong:** Running the gamut of Asian cuisine, this buzzing Seminyak eatery draws crowds like bees to honey. What makes it great? Superbly decadent decor of chandeliers, soft lighting, plenty of mirrors, and an expansive bar—people-watching nirvana. See p. 85.
- **Sip:** A better French bistro outside of France would be hard to find and with more than 100 wines and champagnes on offer, it's a crowd-puller for the general managers and restaurateurs that run the competition. See p. 85.
- **Minami:** Hardly something you'd expect in the rice paddies of Ubud, the Japanese-owned Minami serves delicious Osaki-style bento boxes with some of the freshest sashimi on the island. The immaculate cuisine complements the airy white dining room. See p. 181.
- **Echo Beach (Canggu):** Sunday nights on the beach here are famous for their seafood barbecue with picnic tables and stools by the waterfront, lots of gregarious groups of friends and families, and live rock and roll. The scene would suit the 1960s but it's still family-friendly. See p. 96.
- **Jimbaran Bay:** A visit to Bali isn't complete without a trip to Jimbaran for seafood. Come at sunset, dip your toes in the sea, watch the local families splashing in the waves, have a beer, and settle down to a seriously delicious seafood barbecue by candlelight. See p. 133.
- **Kayuputi at St. Regis:** Grab a private cabana overlooking the white sand beach, settle into the white overstuffed cushions, and choose from the seasonal selection of Sturia and Prunier caviar and oysters. Enjoy the ocean breeze and ask the award-winning sommelier for his recommendation while you peruse the menu. Make lunch hour a day out and at the end hope the breeze blows your bill away. See p. 159.
- **Mozaic (Ubud):** Chris Salan's restaurant in the heart of Ubud has become the most coveted fine-dining experience on the island. His six-course tasting menus, with optional wine pairing, should be on everyone's Ubud itinerary. Crayfish sourced from Java cooked with curry butter and passionfruit cream is the kind of consistent innovation that makes this place a shining star that gets three stars from us. See p. 180.
- **Warung Bule (Lombok):** Next to Kuta beach, a local chef—who formerly worked for the Novotel and has cooked for presidential visits—cooks some of the best seafood on the island. It's an unassuming little hole-in-the-wall lit by candlelight and often visited by expats in the know. See p. 311.

THE best SPAS

- **Five Elements:** The most authentic Balinese massages on the island can be found at the new Five Elements Healing Center where the owners, an intrepid American and Italian couple, have sought out the best traditional healers from around the island for invigorating massages in a pristine riverside setting. This is the real deal and not for the faint-hearted; expect them to pummel you into putty. See p. 44.
- **Theta Spa:** The best treatment rooms in this hip destination spa in Bali's Kuta have floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the beach that let you look out while nobody else can see in. All the treatments use natural ingredients with honey being a favorite, and after a bit of pampering you can hang at the spa bar—a magnet for the tanned and trendy. See p. 67.
- **Jari Menari:** The award-winning Jari Menari's name, "Dancing Fingers," immediately gives the wrong impression that a massage here is going to be on the delicate side. With all-male masseurs it couldn't be further from the truth. The "Four Handed" massage has two practitioners working in rhythmic harmony. See p. 90.
- **Thallasso at Ayana:** Seawater is considered holy by the Balinese who use it not only to receive the ashes of their loved ones, but also to cleanse temples and even themselves. You needn't go that far to have a holy experience. In the world's largest aqua-tonic seawater therapy pool at the Ayana, you have a priceless view of the Indian Ocean and experienced hands to lead you. See p. 137.
- **COMO Shambhala:** "The Source" therapy rooms have full-frontal views of the Ayung river gorge. Treat yourself to the Hot River Stone Massage where stones collected on-site are warmed and used gently to massage those aching knots in your body. See p. 173.
- **The Jiwa Spa at the Conrad:** After a day at the beach, book in for the signature treatment "Ocean Flow" that combines elements of flowing strokes with acupressure similar to the movement of ocean waves. See p. 165.
- **The Remede Spa at St. Regis:** The Remede Spa is deliciously indulgent and open to nonresident guests. Make the most of your time by using the Aqua Vitale pool set in the elegant spa courtyard. Be sure to take advantage of the complimentary Jacuzzi, steam, and sauna. Carpe diem. See p. 162.
- **Four Seasons Sayan:** The new Watsu Pool at the Four Seasons was built specifically for the water therapy guru Elisa Senese, who practices Watsu Waterflow therapy and craniosacral balancing. Elisa's mild movements bring you into a weightless state intended to make you feel as cosseted as being back in the womb. See p. 174.
- **Maya Ubud Spa:** Go for the oversize circular baths and outdoor bales (thatched pavilions) that hang serenely over the edge of the river. Listen to the sound of chirping cicadas and birds and relax after your treatment of choice in a jasmine- and frangipani-infused bathtub. See p. 174.
- **Beach Massage:** Sometimes the best things in life are almost free and a US\$5 massage on the comfort of your own beach lounger is pretty close to both. At just about any tourist beach in Bali, wizened women with strong hands and hearts will approach you for massages. Chances are you won't be disappointed.

BALI IN DEPTH

Bali measures 153km (95 miles) east to west and 111km (69 miles) from tip to toe. Although small, a rich millennia of history has fostered an artistically diverse population, with virtually every Balinese skilled as artisan, dancer, or artist and living a spiritual life. Bali boasts more temples than houses, and ceremonies can last for days or even weeks. The island also has beaches, volcanoes, rice paddies, mountain treks, arts and crafts, rivers (for rafting), ceremonies and blessings, mountaintop sunrises, and beachside sunsets. Whichever Bali you're looking for, it's waiting to be found. Ask a typical visitor or expat what Bali means to them and you'll get many different answers. Small certainly doesn't mean limited when it comes to Bali.

2

BALI TODAY

Against a tumultuous historic backdrop, and in an otherwise Muslim-dominated archipelago, Bali has somehow managed to retain its Hindu independence while flourishing as a tourist paradise. The Balinese amalgam of Hindu traditions, Buddhism, and ancient Javanese practices with their acceptance of different lifestyles, has led many outsiders to call this place home—or at the very least to return time and time again. Recent efforts by politicians to impose Muslim Sharia law and far-reaching anti-pornography measures in Indonesia indicate that support for an Islamic state is still strong in some areas of this vast nation. Thankfully, the Governor of Bali has gone on record as declaring that the law won't be enforced in Bali, although for cultural and historic reasons rather than for the economic benefits that tourism brings. Bali has seen a huge inflow of foreign investment in recent years. Luxury resorts and multimillion-dollar villas are commonplace, even despite the fact that only Indonesian citizens can own land in freehold title. Foreigners investing in Bali adhere to different ownership forms, which all have time limits on the control of the land in question—though it's still possible to own a patch of paradise.

Indonesia as a whole has seen improvements in infrastructure, telecoms, education, and health, and although Bali still lacks many modern facilities, it's well ahead of the pack. That said, the roads remain potholed, with piles of litter, and many locals still use the rivers for all aspects of their daily ablutions. Although this peaceful island has been dealt various blows in recent years, not least the bomb attacks of 2002 and 2005, the government has shown resolve to wipe out local terrorist cells and tighten security. Most locals think that any repeat of the bombings is unlikely, and

BALI'S royal REGENCY PAST

Bali is divided into one municipality, Denpasar, and eight regencies. Each regency has a capital, which further consists of a number of districts, divided into villages and then comprised of a *banjar* (or a series of *banjar*), which are the local, traditional neighborhood organizations.

Today's regencies have historic roots. The south coast at Gelgel was settled by the son of the last Rajah of Majapahit who declared himself the King of Bali or the Dewa Agung in the 14th century. The Dewa, in an attempt at some form of orderly rule, subdivided the island into principalities, which he then gave to his relatives and generals to govern. Over time, these principalities became increasingly independent and their descendants became princelings and then rajahs of smaller kingdoms. Many of the princelings set out to extend their influence and lands beyond their limited principalities and conquered, among others, the neighboring lands of Lombok and Sumbawa.

The arrival of the Dutch in 1596 with their superior weaponry, organized forces, and willingness to trade were fundamental in Bali's development by not allowing any single dynasty to dom-

inate. The local regencies took the somewhat pragmatic approach of recognizing Dutch supremacy and engaging in trade treaties while retaining, or more accurately being allowed to retain, their local autonomy. The Dutch themselves had their eyes on greater prizes, notably the Spice Islands (the Moluccas to the east), and they largely left Bali to its own devices. With the increasing interest of the British in the region, however, Bali became strategically important, given its proximity to the Dutch lands and plantations in nearby Java. The regencies of Buleleng, Jembrana, and then Karangesem, Gianyar, and Bangli all submitted themselves to Dutch control leaving the remaining three of Badung and Tabanan in 1906 and Klungkung in 1908 to fall in the dreadful *puputan* (for more on these mass suicides, see the later section "The Advent of Colonialism").

Ancestors of the royal families still live and work in what is left of their palaces although they now use their old homes as hotels or guesthouses or antiques shops. But the Balinese, with the caste system still relevant if not completely intact, retain their regents as the center of their community.

the island has been rewarded with a resurgence in popularity. At the same time, Bali is increasingly global. Travelers are emerging from Russia and China, competing with the traditional Australian, Japanese, and European markets. The travel industry is struggling to keep up with demand, but dozens of new hotels have kept prices manageable, particularly during the low season from January to July and mid-September to mid-December.

The greatest change has come as many Balinese leave the rice fields to work in the tourism industry; but the island's culture has survived intact, and is perhaps stronger than ever. As with any paradise that isn't so undiscovered anymore, some people say that the little island isn't what it was. Certainly it's not the 1930s island of German artist Walter Spies (who lived here from 1927 until his death in 1942) and Charlie Chaplin (who visited in 1932), but it remains an enchanted isle that—with a little searching—will provide whatever you're looking for.

LOOKING BACK: BALI HISTORY

Early History

Although Bali's recorded history is scant (even in the last 100 years), there's evidence of a Stone Age people dating to around 2,500 B.C. and the arrival of the first migrations of the Austronesian people. These rice-eating travelers of Chinese and Malayan descent arrived via the maritime trade routes of southeast Asia via Taiwan and the Philippines, cultivating rice as they went. They first introduced and developed the complex irrigation system, *subak*, which survives to this day.

A Bronze Age people of Chinese and Vietnamese descent from the Dong Son area of Vietnam arrived in the 3rd century B.C., bringing bronze, copper, and iron. Their first sites were in the northwest at Cekik near what is now Gilimanuk and inland at Sembiran. Evidence from these sites indicates a population of fishermen, hunters, and farmers. Their graves show evidence of metallurgy and that they had by this stage acquired the skills to cast or smelt copper, bronze, and iron.

The lasting influence for much of Bali came from the Indian traders who arrived around the 1st century A.D. These mainly peaceful merchants also brought Hinduism. By the 5th century, a Hindu kingdom had been founded in Bali.

Bali's history, as a whole, is populated with many different groups of people; many of these diverse communities lived self-sufficiently and independently from each other. Indonesia claims to be a mix of some 250 ethnic groups, and the Balinese have their own special genetic blend of Chinese and Malay, with traces of Polynesian and Melanesian mixed in with Indian and Javanese.

Among the diverse groups that arrived in Bali after the original Chinese settlers, was a group of some 400 who came from the village of Aga, in East Java, around the 8th century. They settled in the remote mountainous area around Gunung Agung and their communities prospered. Bali Aga societies survive intact and to this day defy and resist most forms of outside influence—with little or no contact with the outside world, their arcane ways are still evident in their original colonies of Campuhan, Taro, Tegalalang, and Batur. Their societal structures exist on rigid and ancient rules and visits by outsiders and tourists can still be a daunting and occasionally harrowing experience. They remain a tough and hardened society, far removed from much of the Bali that most visitors know.

The topography of the island therefore gave way to two forms of living: the people of the mountains and the people of the sea. It's the gentrified southern and coastal people, with their civilizing Javanese customs and easy natural resources, that have given Bali its overarching identity.

By the 11th century, the influence of the Javanese, with their then predominately Hindu beliefs, was being felt more and more. Initially they came peacefully and shared reciprocal political and artistic ideals. This union of the two islands, Bali and Java, was cemented under the rule of Javanese King Airlangga, whose mother moved to Bali shortly after his birth. This informal connection allowed Bali to remain semi-autonomous for the next 200 years until King Kertanegara conquered Bali in 1284.

Although his reign was short lived (he was murdered about 8 years later), his son, the great Vijaya, founded the Majapahit dynasty, which lasted from 1293 to 1520. The influence of this dynasty reached as far afield as the Malaysian peninsula and the very eastern extent of what is now the Republic of Indonesia. The Majapahit bequeathed to Bali many of the features of its present-day society, from the style of

royal rule to its architecture and the structures of its temples. The Majapahit also brought the principles of the caste system, which are adhered to today.

The ascendancy of Islam and its spread into Java in the late 15th century caused the Hindu Majapahit dynasty to falter and ultimately disintegrate into feuding sultanates. The last Javanese Majapahit king high-tailed it to Bali, taking with him many of the court's intellectuals, artists, and priests. This wave of culture and spirituality formed the basis of Balinese society that we see today as such a rich and cultured heritage.

Included in this exodus was the great priest Nirartha who, it's believed, introduced many of the complexities of Balinese religion and was a founder of many of the major temples on the island. Bali's Hindu influences and the unique way of life have managed to withstand the dominance of Islam for centuries. To this day, Bali remains the only non-Islamic island in the whole of Indonesia.

The Advent of Colonialism

Marco Polo in 1292 and Vasco de Gama around 1512 were known to have reached Indonesia, but the first European to set foot on Bali is credited as the Dutchman Cornelis de Houtman in 1597. He, like many others since, was captivated with the island and when it came time to leave, he's said to have taken almost a year to round up his crew. The Dutch were more driven by financial gain than cultural pleasures and the control of the Spice Islands, the Moluccas, was a higher priority than the beauty and charms of Bali. Therefore, they established trading posts in Bali instead of taking any forceful control.

Dutch colonial control expanded across the Indonesian archipelago in the early part of the 19th century, including an increasing presence in Bali. By then, Bali's independent kingdoms that we know today—Klungkung, Karangasem, Buleleng, Jembrana, Tabanan, Mengwi, Badung, Gianyar, and Bangli—had taken shape. By this time the Dutch were intent on adding the whole of Bali to their colonial ambitions and set about its capture. It took separate and simultaneous wars from 1846 to 1849, and the actions of various Balinese kings using the colonizers to advance their own local ends, for the Dutch to take control of even just the north of the island. And it wasn't until the wars of the rajahs, from 1884 to 1894, that the Dutch finally extended their rule to the east. Karangasem and Lombok fell in 1894 and finally the Rajah of Gianyar, in a ploy where self-interest took precedence over island sovereignty, was convinced by the new Lords of Ubud to make peace with the Dutch.

The south refused to yield to Dutch rule and although some of the older guard preached peace, they were overruled by a group of headstrong young princes who defeated the Dutch in a surprise attack. Needless to say, the Dutch didn't take this lightly and a larger force was dispatched to Bali to make a stand against the stubbornly resistant and proud southern kingdoms of Tabanan, Klungkung, and Badung. And yet, the Dutch were still seeking justification for an all-out assault.

In 1904, a Chinese schooner struck the reef near Sanur. The Dutch government made what were essentially unreasonable demands for compensation, which was refused by the Rajah of Badung, with the support of Tabanan and Klungkung. A dispute over the rights to plunder the cargo ships (traditionally held by the Balinese) presented the Dutch with the reasoning needed to launch a new attack. In 1906 the full force of the Dutch navy rocked up at Sanur, initiating the Badung War. After blockading the southern ports and having various ultimatums ignored, the Dutch mounted large naval and ground assaults and in September they marched on the palace of Badung.

At the palace, the Dutch weren't met by the expected resistance, but instead by a silent procession with the rajah at the lead dressed in white cremation garb, armed only with a kris (a ceremonial dagger), followed by his supporters. His march stopped some 100 paces from the Dutch and then a priest plunged the kris into his chest. The rest of the procession followed suit and proceeded to kill either themselves or others in the procession. Sensing certain defeat at the guns of the heavily armed Dutch, the noble Balinese decided not to suffer the ignominy of defeat or surrender, but instead had their death rites applied and voluntarily entered into the ritual mass suicide rite known as *puputan*. Despite the Dutch pleas for them to surrender, this *puputan* ended in the deaths of an estimated 4,000 Balinese men, women, and children. That same afternoon a similar event took place at the palace of Pemecutan. The Rajah of Tabanan and his son surrendered, but both committed suicide 2 days later in a Dutch prison. The last remaining regency, Klungkung, brokered a peace deal.

Not surprisingly, the atrocity of the *puputan* garnered worldwide condemnation and even a member of the Dutch Upper House of Parliament labeled the scandal the "extermination of a heroic race." The Netherlands' image as a responsible and even-handed colonial power was seriously compromised.

The deal that had been brokered with Klungkung fell apart when the Dutch attempted to take monopoly control of the opium trade. Riots erupted in Gianyar and the Dutch sent the troops back in, forcing the rajah to flee to Klungkung. He attempted an all-out attack, initially by himself, armed only with a ceremonial kris believed to wreak havoc on the enemy. He was brought down by a single bullet. Seeing the death of their beloved, his six wives turned their kris on themselves and committed suicide. They were then followed by the others in the procession coming out of the palace. With this last *puputan*, the Dutch could finally claim victory over the island.

The victory proved to be spiritually and morally empty, however, and the Dutch governors were able to exercise little influence. Local control over religion and culture generally remained intact. For most commoners, life went on whether they were being ruled by their new colonial masters or the previous rajahs.

The advent of tourism and travel after World War I brought new influences and greater worldwide attention to Bali. The island became home to anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, and artists Miguel Covarrubias and Walter Spies. Musicologist Colin McPhee, in his autobiographical book *A House in Bali*, fostered the Western image of Bali as "an enchanted land of aesthetes at peace with themselves and nature." Celebrity visitors such as Noel Coward and Charlie Chaplin, Barbara Hutton and Doris Duke, helped make Bali synonymous with a latter-day Garden of Eden. It was at about the same time that Pandit Nehru, the reflective and scholarly first Prime Minister of India, described Bali as the "Dawn of the World." Western tourism soon landed on the island.

The Road to Independence

Dutch rule over Bali came later than in other parts of the East Indies, such as Java and Maluku, and it was never as well established. Despite the long road to colonization, the Dutch period lasted only until Imperial Japan occupied Bali in 1942, for the duration of World War II. After Japan's Pacific surrender in August 1945, the Dutch attempted to return to Indonesia, including Bali, and to reinstate their prewar colonial administration. But Indonesia and Bali resisted, this time armed with Japanese weapons. One of the many heroes of the time was the wartime resistance leader Colonel I Gusti Ngurah Rai who spent the war years tormenting the Japanese. His

death, in an almost suicidal attack considered the final *puputan*, is another footnote in the heroic history of Bali and its warriors.

The Dutch tried to maintain their colonial rule for another 4 years before finally conceding that they no longer had a role as masters in the East Indies. The Republic of Indonesia that had been originally constituted by Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, now included Bali and the 12 other island states the Dutch had attempted to retain. On December 29, 1949, with the inclusion of these last states in the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, the curtain came down on the Dutch East Indies.

Post-Colonial Indonesia: From 1949 Onward

The tentative federation, led by Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta, attempted to consolidate this 17,000-island nation. The road to peace and prosperity wasn't without its troubles. Sukarno, who had been a revolutionary, moved from democracy to autocracy and on to authoritarianism. Regional and factional problems led him eventually, in July 1959, to dissolve the assembly and assume full dictatorial powers. Increasingly, Sukarno was becoming pro-Communist and received aid from Communist sources. He made little secret of his desire to make amends for centuries of Western colonialism in southeast Asia and he was perhaps driven more by this than any actual Communist sympathies. In 1963, he went as far as to make a stand against the formation of Malaysia, seeing it as a puppet for continued British rule. He was ultimately unsuccessful and failed to bring the disputed, now Malay lands, of northern Borneo into the Indonesian Republic.

The economic cost of this failure on the fledgling economy, coupled with Sukarno's alienation from the West and resulting lack of financial support when it was most needed, created hyperinflation, which lasted throughout the early part of the decade. The resulting social unrest and Sukarno's failing health weakened his iron grip on the country.

Matters came to a head on the night of September 30, 1965, when eight senior generals were taken from their houses, supposedly by a group of Communist renegade army divisions, and were either summarily executed or taken to Halim airport where they met the same fate. The later justification that these actions were taken to prevent an army-led coup didn't convince many people. A certain General Suharto convinced the other surviving generals to plan their own countermove, and in a surprisingly easy manner they regained control of the military faction. Sukarno stayed in power but Suharto had emerged as a major political figure.

The backlash against the Communists in 1965 after the attempted coup is one of the bloodiest in Indonesian history. Bali was the scene of some of the worst atrocities, where mobs rounded up suspected Communists and sometimes just clubbed them to death. As many as 500,000 suspected Communists or ethnic Chinese were massacred in Indonesia, with about 100,000 being killed in Bali alone—at the time, 5% of Bali's population. Sukarno, who had enjoyed unprecedented levels of popularity, was on his way out. Finally in 1966, he fled the presidential palace and remained president for another year only nominally.

Under Suharto, the military gained far-reaching influence over national affairs. For the next 3 decades, until his undoing by the economic crisis of 1997, Indonesia enjoyed a period of sustained prosperity, even despite Suharto's embezzling autocracy and his cronies' horrific graft. Fortunately the economic meltdown had an upside: the resulting riots and protests brought an end to Suharto's military-led rule and in June

1999, Indonesians enjoyed their first free parliamentary election since 1955. They overwhelmingly ousted the incumbent.

Indonesia achieved a tentative peace under a provisional democratic government headed by President Megawati, daughter of Sukarno. Although she inherited political instability and an economy in crisis, she addressed corruption and the military's human rights record. However, her rule only lasted until 2004 when she was defeated by the former military general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, otherwise known as SBY. His coalition government, based on his moral code of honesty and anticorruption, also came out on top in the elections of 2009.

ART & CRAFTS

This small island developed its own distinctive arts during “Bali’s Golden Age” under the patronage of the Gelgel kings, when the island was largely independent. These arts remain the touchstones of the culture and Balinese psyche and life—arts are so intrinsic that the Balinese language has no word for art or artist.

Under a regency decree, whole villages became dedicated to one craft or artistic discipline. From this we have Ubud and Batuan for paintings, Mas for wood carvings, Celuk for silver and gold markets, and Batubulan for stone carvings. Outside of royalty, the temples were the main patron of the arts. Art has always played an important role for the temples and their ceremonies, which can be entirely given over to one form of artistic expression.

The tradition of art in Bali has largely been one of anonymity, in which individuals created and performed their arts and crafts not for personal aggrandizement but to serve and glorify their village, community, and temple, and class or caste was irrelevant. For example, princes, goldsmiths, and drivers would all perform different parts in the same orchestra or dance.

This lack of posterity permeates many aspects of Balinese life. Although they revere and remember the spirits of the dead, the Balinese don’t themselves seek immortality—just as they know that their wood carvings will eventually rot, their soft sandstone sculptures crumble, and termites eat their canvases.

Much of the way art was expressed, certainly in paintings, has changed with the circumstances. The temples and rajahs are no longer the island’s biggest art patrons. A new class of customer has arrived with new demands: the tourist. In the mid-1920s, with the arrival of international artists such as Walter Spies and Rudolf Bonnet, a very traditional style of painting (*wayang*), in which images are depicted as two-dimensional figures, emerged as a new distinctive art movement. What remains today is a combination of traditional artisans using conventional methods and time-honored customs and new and expressive art forms that are increasingly experimental.

Performing Arts

Dance, theater, and music all blend together in Balinese culture, and no Balinese would think of a show that separated each of the component parts. The generic term for this traditional theater, as with the style of painting, is *wayang*, which literally means shadow. Dance, drama, and music also play a central part in ritual ceremonies and temple blessings. Their history is told and passed down through the generations in the many dramatic tales performed on a regular basis. Until the advent of television, this was how history was transmitted.

THEATER

Of the many forms of theater, **Wayang Kulit** is the best known and most often performed. This is a dance with shadow puppets, featuring intricately cut figures, originally made from buffalo parchment, called *kulit*, meaning leather or skin. The puppeteers project the images against a screen and depict tales from the Hindu epics, accompanied by a xylophone-like gamelan ensemble.

Other similar types of theater are **Wayang Arja**, a puppet opera set to music telling romantic stories. In **Wayang Golek**, wooden doll puppets are operated from below by rods. **Wayang Karucil** is somewhere in between Golek and Kucil, and the puppets are made from thin bits of wood. **Wayang Beber** uses illustrations and scrolls along with a narrator who sings and tells the story.

DANCE

As with theater, Balinese dance mainly portrays stories from Hindu epics, the **Ramayana** being the most common. There are more than a dozen differing styles of dance and all can be incredibly powerful with many of the performers entering true trance-like states.

Balinese dancing originated with religious dance, although it has become increasingly theatrical, with characters that were once demons or devils now more for the amusement of the crowd. Each movement in a dance is made up entirely of prescribed gestures. This leaves little room for improvisation, though much can be enhanced by the individual dancer or troupes' interpretation, emotional intensity, and expressiveness of their features. During any dance, watch the dancers' faces, and particularly the eyes. Like many displays of art, there are certain aspects that can't be taught.

Among the many different varieties of Balinese dance, the following are the most important: **Kecak**, or the Ramayana Monkey Dance, is the most famous and most powerful. A circle of up to 150 men, wearing only checked cloths, chant rhythmically "cak cak cak cak cak" while throwing their arms up in the air, dancing round the circle or rocking on the ground, over and over, to and fro. The dance tells the tale of a monkey king and his warriors. Walter Spies worked with the local dancer Wayan Limbak to turn the dance into a more dramatic performance though it comes as no surprise that kecak was originally a trance ritual with its origins in exorcisms. One of the most famous places to see this dance is at sunset at **Pura Luhur Uluwatu** (p. 145) surrounded by real monkeys who are as naughty as some of the characters being portrayed.

Barong and Rangda (or the Barong and Kris dance) has been mainly adapted for tourists and is a fight between good and evil with the King of the Spirits (*barong*) overcoming the demon queen (*rangda*) after the wicked queen has cast a spell on the *barong* and his supporters making them stab themselves with their kris. The *barong* however is able to make the daggers cause no harm and so they stab themselves with no effect, but spectators, especially those in the front row, are usually left feeling as though they've witnessed some form of exorcism—the dance's original purpose.

Among the other dances, **Legong** is a graceful one performed by young girls. **Baris** is a traditional war dance in which a solo dancer depicts the feelings of a young warrior prior to battle. **Topeng** is a masked drama with tales of mythical kings and gods. A narrator, who wears a half mask, tells the story accompanied by the gamelan (see below) with dance, fight, and comedy. **Wayang Wong** is a shadow dance in which the players wear masks and tell an aristocratic love story between Rama and Rawana

with soft delicate music. It was originally only ever performed in four royal palaces and has always been considered the most aristocratic of plays.

MUSIC

Bali is renowned for its profusion of musical performances and the variety of its instrumental ensemble, the **gamelan** orchestra: a group of players with xylophone-like instruments, drums, and gongs that can range up to 50 in number. Each gamelan has its own specific tuning and is considered a single entity. All Balinese music is based around the gamelan, which is an integral part of all ceremonies and performing arts. The sound is easily identifiable and identified with Bali.

Musical styles vary regionally: The music of western Bali, for example, uses gamelan instruments made from bamboo (*jegog*), which grows to enormous sizes and means that it can take up to four men to carry one instrument. There are some 25 types of varying sizes of gamelan instruments in metal, bronze, or bamboo. Of the various different styles, the **Gong Keybar**, introduced in the early 1900s, is nowadays the most popular form. If you're curious to see the manufacture and production of gamelan instruments, visit **Tihingan** (p. 225) in east Bali.

Painting

WAYANG STYLE

The classic Balinese painting style is *wayang*, which takes its origins from the shadow puppets of the same name (see “Theater,” above). Clear rules determine the shapes, colors, and even the positioning of the characters—noble on the left, evil on the right, just as they are in a performance. Paintings were traditionally on *langse*, which were broad rectangular cloths used as wall hangings in temples or curtains in palaces, or on *ider-ider*, which were similar to scrolls. This style of painting continues to flourish thanks to the drive of **Nyoman Mandara** in the 1960s and his government-sponsored painting school.

Other traditional styles are **Batuan**, which is strongly *wayang*-based and involves hundreds of painted images of Balinese life, and **Keliki**, which is similar to an old Batuan style showing mythical characters engaged in the struggle of good against evil, though the Keliki paintings are rarely larger than 20cm × 15cm (8 in. × 6 in.). The **Pengosekan** style deals with nature, plants, and insects and emerged as recently as the 1960s with influences that could certainly be ascribed to “flower power.”

German artist Walter Spies (1895–1942) and Dutch Rudolf Bonnet (1895–1978) helped evolve more abstract terms of expression during the 1920s. Their arrival in Bali coincided with a seismic cultural shift as the increasing Dutch colonial influence removed the power and money from the rajahs and the temples. This meant that the rajahs were no longer the main patrons and financial supporters of artists and as such could no longer dictate the traditional styles. This two-pronged influence led to a huge change and an explosion in the whole artistic movement. No more were artists retained purely for the benefit of the temple or the palace with their constrained and preordained styles; now they had to cut their cloth for a new style of buyer, the tourist. This new freedom of expression brought individual displays of talent leading to fame for the likes of **I Gusti Nyoman Lempod** and **Sudjojono** whose work now commands hundreds of thousands of dollars. I Gusti Nyoman Lempod's paintings are full of energy and characterize everyday life as well as religious themes. Two other Balinese artists of note are **Nyoman Gunarsa** and **Made Wianta** who are considered to be the pioneers of Balinese contemporary art.

PITA MAHA & THE MODERN STYLE

Spies had originally been enticed to Bali from Java at the behest of the royal family. With Bonnet and one of the local princes, Cokorda Gede Agung Surapati, he established the **Pita Maha**, an artists' cooperative that allowed artists to develop their own expressive style and to even sign the canvas. Pita Maha means literally "great vitality," but it also means "ancestor," which resonates particularly well with the Balinese. Here the cooperative sponsored and controlled the quality of work of selected artists and sold pieces through the gallery. In later years many of the sponsored paintings were donated to the **Puri Lukisan** (p. 188), the oldest museum in Ubud. World War II and Spies's incarceration—for his fondness for certain young Balinese boys—disrupted the movement. Bonnet's return in the 1950s never quite reclaimed the past glories, nor did the Ubud Painters group, which replaced Pita Maha. The 1950s saw the further input of **Arie Smit** who developed a Matisse-style of painting with lots of bright colors, fish or frogs on bicycles, and ducks with hats. Many of his paintings now hang in the **Neka Museum** (p. 189).

Crafts

TEXTILES & WEAVING

Prized for their stunning beauty, variety, and role in traditional costume and ceremony, the traditional textiles of Bali and Indonesia are woven, twined, batiked, tie-dyed, embroidered, and embellished works of art and are among the best treasures to acquire while visiting anywhere in Indonesia. Fine, authentic, handmade textiles are available in antiques shops, boutiques, galleries, and markets. Religious paraphernalia, shrines, dancers, priests, masks, and offerings are all wrapped, bound, draped, or ornamented with specifically prescribed textiles, redolent with symbolic meaning. Bali is by no means unique in this regard. Throughout Indonesia, traditional textiles are ritual objects, stored wealth, trade goods, bride wealth, and tokens of prestige.

Bali itself is extraordinarily rich in textile traditions. Ikat cloths have patterns dyed into the individual threads before they're woven, with the design only appearing on the loom. The effect creates jagged borders between one color and the next and bold



BUYING textiles

If you want to purchase textiles in Bali, develop an eye for the kind of cloth you like and then shop around. When you look at textiles, in general, it's best to start at the high end (and perhaps come back to it). First, try the galleries at five-star hotels and reputable antiques shops in Ubud and Seminyak for antique textiles, and then visit markets and boutiques for contemporary pieces. You may well return to the high-end shops, and obtain good value there, because their owners know the world market and are adept at sourcing the very finest examples. They're also more likely to

identify textiles correctly as to origin, age, and quality. Expect reputable galleries to offer literature and anecdotal information about collectible textiles. They're your best source of accurate information.

Use your eyes and judge for yourself: After all, you're choosing a work of art. Ultimately, your feeling is the best guide. Whatever type of Indonesian textile you choose to acquire, choose well, and then rest assured that you've acquired an object of lasting value, for both its visible and spiritual attributes.