Bali: points of interest, things to do

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Snorkeling - mask and snorkel

The best spots are on the Menjangan Island (north-west of Bali) and Tulamben and Amed (east of Bali) where you can admire the wreck of a Liberty ship even with a mask and snorkel. As these spots are also diving spots so you can accompany diver friends and enjoy the colorful ocean beds near the surface (the various colors gradually fade at certain depths).

Diving

You can encounter almost all the fauna and coral flora of the Indian Ocean and especially butterflyfish, scorpion fish, large squids, needlefish, snake eels, sunfish or “Mola-Mola”, seahorses and a variety of amazing colored nudibranch species. On the pelagic side, Bali also offers the possibility of meeting with many species of sharks (white tip, nurse and “webeggong”) and gatherings of manta rays with up to twenty individuals, as well as barracudas, carangues, groupers and turtles.

You can discover the famous wreckage of the Tulamben, a U.S. freighter (liberty ship) inhabited by barracuda, “Manta point” at Nusa Penida which is a feeding and stopping area for the manta rays, and lastly, “Amed”, offering dives off lava covered rocks with beautiful coral reefs where you have a chance to see reef sharks, coral bushes and many star fish to name a few.

Surfing

The best spots are: Kuta, Legian, Canggu and Medow (south of the island), popular tourist sites. International competitions are held in Ulu Watu and Padang Padang but are not for beginners.
Enjoying the beaches of Lovina

The sand is very hot sometimes and it is necessary to bring sandals (to be bought locally, of course).

You can walk out quite far on the extra meters of beach that is revealed by low tides. The water is between 28 and 30 degrees and getting used to it is too easy! As elsewhere, the foreign traveler is sometimes solicited by shell (some are wonderful), clothing, jewelry, etc... sellers. They are always pleasant and nice, but sometimes disturbing if one seeks absolute tranquility. If you stay courteous, but firm, they will not insist.

Otherwise, the whole pleasure of a long negotiation starts; time to discover some facets of a friendly and engaging people.

Many beach activities are possible on the beach in Lovina:

- Surfing,
- Catamarans,
- Body-board,
- Rides in Prao (traditional boat), etc.
Swimming in volcanic hot springs

A few kilometers from the Villa, in Banjar, one can find hot springs coming out of the volcano (Banjar Hot Spring or Air Panas Banjar in Balinese.). Several large pools have been landscaped into waterfalls, cascading one into another through monstrous carved gargoyles. Their warm flowing water provides you with a superb massage. A few minute walk will lead you to these smooth concrete, rustic-looking pools which lie in the middle of the forest, under the foliage of the rainforest. A small fee is charged and there are changing rooms. Remember to take towels.
An experience to live and renew at a site of great beauty: the place is magic

Bali Temples

There are thousands ... and each house has its own small temple. Religion is of great importance in Bali and the vast majority of the Balinese are believers and go to temple regularly.
The majority religion in Bali is Hindu even though Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the world. The practice of Islam is moderate. The Hindus are also most likely found in Sumatra and Sulawesi. Some animist practices persist, mixed with Christianity and Hinduism.

The Balinese spend considerable time with offerings and prayers dedicated to the gods and other deities. This can be seen at the Villa. Practices should of course be respected. Even if they are very religious, the Balinese seem very tolerant in matters of religion as in many other areas. In any case, they do not proselytize. In going farther to discover their religion, one can find that it seems imbued with philosophical virtues that go beyond the traditional imagery that exists from the astonishing representations of their various deities. Ceremonies, rituals and festivals punctuate the daily life of Balinese. The various rituals give rise to beautiful sound processions. You can see a multitude of altars placed near trees, rivers or at intersections of crossroads to appease evil spirits. The Ulu Danu temple, to just name one, is built on an island in Lake Bratan, and is dedicated to the goddess of water. This is probably one of the most beautiful. The most important temples are those of Besakih, Ulu Watu and Tanah Lot. For visits to places of worship, proper dress is recommended (shoulders covered) and shoes must be removed to visit temples and mosques.
Rafting down the Ayung River

Going down the Ayung river is an amazing time. This is certainly one of the best rafting sites of the world, without exaggeration. Compared to rafting on the Zambezi, ranked 5 to 6 for connoisseurs, and which is practiced in the middle of crocodiles presented as vegetarians, the difficulty level is not very high. But you have a good time and the scenery is really beautiful, bewitching and sometimes mysterious. Under the bamboos and tropical trees that at points cover the entire river, you inevitably think of the film Platoon as you paddle in a silence punctuated by the cries of monkeys. Several dozen meters of rock walls are carved with symbolic, mysterious and disturbing designs: here you think more of Indiana Jones and his sudden arrival in India. The arrival of your rafting trip is breathtaking: the valley gets wider and you begin to discover the first houses of Ubud. This is when you fall in love; it is so ... beautiful! It is also at this moment that you want to stay in this country longer.

Riding an elephant

The trip by elephant is undoubtedly a classic of its own kind, touted by many advertising taglines, but for big and small, it is always an experience; even if you are not the only one to have had the idea. The ease with which these huge animals obey is fascinating, as are some of the games that we witnessed that they sometimes play.

Feeding monkeys in the Monkey forest

Monkey forest in Mandala Wisata Wenara Wana is a sacred shrine located in verdant tropical vegetation. Located near the center of Ubud, it is within walking distance.

Hundreds of monkeys decorate the moss covered stones: an amazing spectacle. The monkey population is constantly growing.
The monkeys in the monkey forest are thieves (be careful of your glasses!) but endearing. It is always the same monkeys that get the food that they people give and nursing mothers are often left behind ... Fortunately, children are quick to see this injustice. So mom and her little monkey are able move quickly to outstretched arms to enjoy bananas or peanuts. Be careful, however, some monkeys are aggressive; but you will notice them fast enough.

Just a tip: resist demands for adoption of small monkeys, too cute ...

There is a fee for the visit to the shrine of the forest monkey and bananas and peanuts are available at the door of the sanctuary.

Besides the monkeys, the forest contains three 14th century temples. The largest temple is located on the highest point of the forest. The second temple is slightly in the water and the third is a cremation temple located near a cemetery.

Visits to the former royal capital Klungkung

Klungkung was the capital of one of the most important Balinese kingdoms of the Majapahit era. In 1908, when opposed to the Dutch, the court collectively committed suicide (the Puputan).

The kingdom of Klungkung attracted the most famous artists during its most magnificent times and its court was highly respected.

The royal palace, the Justice building (Kerth Gosa) and the floating palace still exist. The courthouse is accessible by a staircase whose ramps are carved in the shape of snakes supposed to maintain the balance of the world. A guide is needed to fully enjoy the rich cultural and historic site.

Hiking and climbing volcanoes

The possibilities are immense in the middle of breathtaking scenery. This is where you can meet the real soul of Bali. To make the most out of this adventure you should purchase a guidebook which will give you a wealth of information about all the possibilities.

To see and do and certainly worthy of interest:

- The rice terraces, the planting or harvesting of rice,
- Drying cloves,
- The Singaraja market,
- Climbing the volcanoes (Batur)
- A guided hike in the forest National Park (fairly expensive, however),
- The Git Git waterfall.
- Lake Buyan,
- Lake Tambligan,
- Bratan Lake and the temple of Pura Ulun Danu,
- The temple of Gunung Kawi and its huge high reliefs carved in the rock,
- The warm waters and the temple of Pura Tirta Empul,
- Luhur Pura Uluwatu cliffs,
- Banyan Trees, some of which are sacred
- The temple of Tanah Lot to the west of Bali.

See the weaving in the village of Tenganan

Tenganan is a village with pre-Hindu religion and culture, known to be the oldest village on the island. There is a small entrance fee. You'll find many artists who paint, sculpt or write. Calendars as well as the pictorial history of the Ramayana painted on bamboo are sold. Good creations by the artists on site, and bearing in mind the work, the prices are reasonable.
You can also see cocks that are trained for combat. Cockfights are now illegal in Bali, but still sometimes occur.

To have a Balinese massage

A Balinese massage, when done well, is quite...physical! The experience is very pleasant but you come out exhausted, but relaxed after an hour. Masseuses can be found everywhere and even on the beaches.
An hour massage on the beach or in the cabin runs between 5 and 10 €.

See the Hiller, the Chinese Physician

This is not an activity, of course, but if you suffer from back pain or certain conditions to which you believe that traditional medicine is relatively ineffective, you can always try to consult the Chinese doctor that our manager recommends.
We have done this and the consultation remains an unforgettable experience, strange; a cultural mix of religious rites associated with a real traditional knowledge, very different from our criteria.
However, as far as sciatica and back pain is concerned, we’re much better.
Thank you, certainly.
Driving in Bali? Car, scooter - Rent a car and go on an adventure alone...

It is always possible, but ... driving a vehicle with four wheels in Bali is not exactly the kind of activity we like to recommend.
Driving is on the left in Bali and Balinese style! This behavior is sometimes frightening and obstacles are many: gravel, chickens, and kids, dogs crossing or sleeping in the middle of the road. However, one gets used to everything and you will get used to this quickly enough.
Oh well! You’ve already seen worse?
Remember that an international driver’s license is required ... and police checks are always possible of course.
To obtain a license (free), please visit ServicePublic.
Car rentals are approximately 20 € per day plus 10 € with a driver.
Another thing to know: signs are quite rare. Only an experienced Balinese who is familiar with the roads will help to avoid losing too much time, even if you have brought your GPS. And in not driving, you relax and enjoy the views better. To avoid getting lost, you can buy a map on the internet. Bali Street Atlas is a good one (found on Amazon, for example). Otherwise, you can find them easily and much cheaper on arrival.
Driving a two-wheeler (scooter or bicycle) is much easier. But again, the experience is memorable, especially when you see that some transport up to five people: father, mother, two young children and the baby ... The ease of their driving is certainly surprising, to say the least

Going to Ubud for the day, visiting and shopping

It's obvious Ubud is one of those tourists places, that we nevertheless appreciated....
Take the time, on arrival, to admire the houses scattered amongst the greenery, then to discover the surrounding rice fields in a few of the crossing paths.
Ubud is best known for the grace and charm of its landscapes and its verdant valleys, which in the late nineteenth century so deeply appealed to the German
painter Walter Spies that he settled there. He has influenced many Balinese and Western painters.

Ubud is best known for its workshops and art galleries: thousands of shops display furniture, works of art, ornaments and all kinds of souvenirs. Please note the Lotus Cafe, an inevitable stop in Ubud, located in the main street. From the terrace of the cafe, you can admire the thousands of lotus in the pond of the royal temple.

Apart from the main street, Ubud is a quiet village of another time. It gives you the chance to discover the activities of Balinese villages, to watch artisans, including the sculptors of the Villa’s doors, work. These doors are extrememly popular amongst antique dealers in France. This is not a valid reason to take them with you!

You can take the time to linger in the Lukisan Puri museum, which contains a beautiful collection of Balinese paintings and sculptures.

If the tourist crowds aren’t your thing, it’s good to know that there are many villages in Bali which are also known by connoisseurs for their painting and crafts.

- For example, the village of Batubulan is famous for its sculptors of monsters and deities in stone. Each morning at 9 o’clock, there is a theatrical performance of the Barong, a major Balinese dance style. It depicts a battle between Barong, the good, and Rangda, the evil. Barong is a strange, gentle and playful creature, half-lion, half-dog, whereas Rangda is a frightening witch with sharp teeth and wild hair; like Alien, but in a more folkloric style. For Balinese, good and evil coexist and there is no winner between Barong and Rangda.

- The village of Celuk is devoted to silverware. Gold and silver are treated according to ancestral techniques. However, the watermarks are quite different from Western taste.

- The village of Mas, a few kilometers from Ubud, has a concentration of woodcarvers.

Relaxing at the pool

Reading books and sipping delicious fresh fruit juice cocktails…

Just for this reason a traditional Balinese gazebo was installed beside the pool, with several lounge chairs under umbrellas. Fruit juice is served to you…it’s paradise!

Children, young and old, enjoy the pool and its natural side, which is well integrated into the landscape.

The problem is that sometimes you don’t want to move anymore. Problem, you say?
Ce guide est la propriété de la Villa Pondok Jepun, son utilisation ne peut être que strictement personnelle.