



THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

BALI & LOMBOK



INSIDE THIS BOOK

INTRODUCTION What to see, what not to miss, itineraries and more

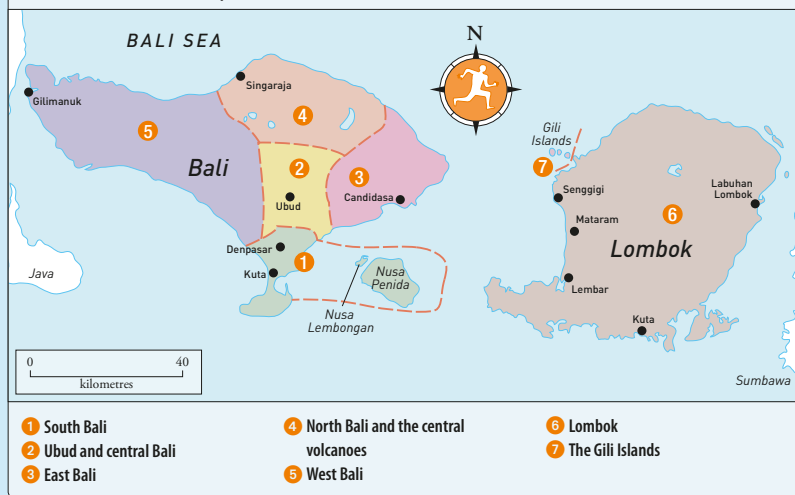
BASICS Pre-departure tips and practical information

THE GUIDE Comprehensive, in-depth guide to Bali and Lombok, with area highlights and full-colour maps throughout

CONTEXTS History, religion, traditional music and dance, village life and traditions, plus recommended books and a useful language section

We've flagged up our favourite places – a perfectly sited hotel, an atmospheric café, a special restaurant – throughout the Guide with the ★ symbol

Bali & Lombok chapters



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THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

BALI & LOMBOK

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Based on original text by
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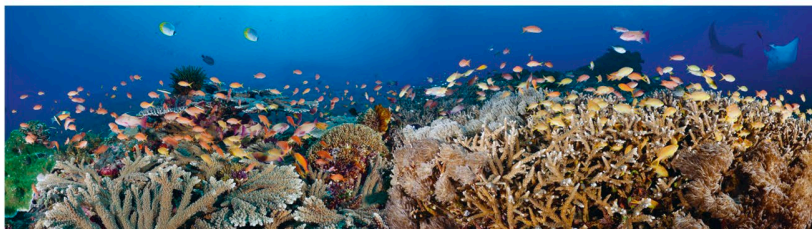
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Introduction to **Bali & Lombok**

Part of the Indonesian archipelago, Bali and Lombok boast dramatically rugged coastlines, gloriously sandy beaches and world-class surf. Both islands are small – Bali extends less than 150km at its widest point, Lombok a mere 80km – and dramatically volcanic, graced with swathes of extremely fertile land, much of it sculpted into elegantly terraced rice paddies.

Culturally, however, they could hardly be more different. Bali is Southeast Asia's only Hindu society, and religious observance permeates every aspect of life here; the Sasak people of Lombok, on the other hand, are Muslim, like the vast majority of Indonesians.

Bali landed on the tourist map over ninety years ago and is today an incredibly popular destination, drawing everyone from backpackers to high-end travellers, divers to sun-worshippers, package groups to people seeking spiritual healing. Visitor numbers plunged after the terrorist attacks of 2002 and 2005 but they have boomed in recent years, fuelled by a huge increase in Asian tourists, particularly from China. The island boasts stunning hotels, amazing restaurants and world-class spas but lacks the infrastructure to cope with this new influx, and traffic congestion and commercialization have affected swathes of Southern Bali.

That said, the island's original charm is still very much in evidence once you leave the densely populated southern strip, with evocative temples and vibrant festivals set off by the verdant landscapes of the interior. Just to the east of Bali, **Lombok** plays host to far fewer foreign travellers, but numbers are steadily increasing thanks to the island's many unspoilt beaches, terrific surf and forested mountain slopes. Blessed with such natural beauty, the island has a burgeoning reputation as a more adventurous destination than its illustrious neighbour.

Until the nineteenth century, both Bali and Lombok were divided into small **kingdoms**, each ruled by a succession of **rajas** whose territories fluctuated so much

that, at times, parts of eastern Bali and western Lombok were joined under a single ruler. More recently, both of the islands have endured years of colonial rule under the Dutch East Indies government, which only ended when hard-won **independence** was granted to Indonesia in 1949. The Jakarta-based government has since tried hard to foster a sense of national identity among its vast array of extraordinarily diverse islands and peoples, both by implementing a unifying five-point political philosophy, the Pancasila, and through the mandatory introduction of Bahasa Indonesia, now the lingua franca across the whole archipelago. Politically, Bali is administered as a province in its own right, while Lombok is the main island in West Nusa Tenggara.

TRADITIONAL DRESS

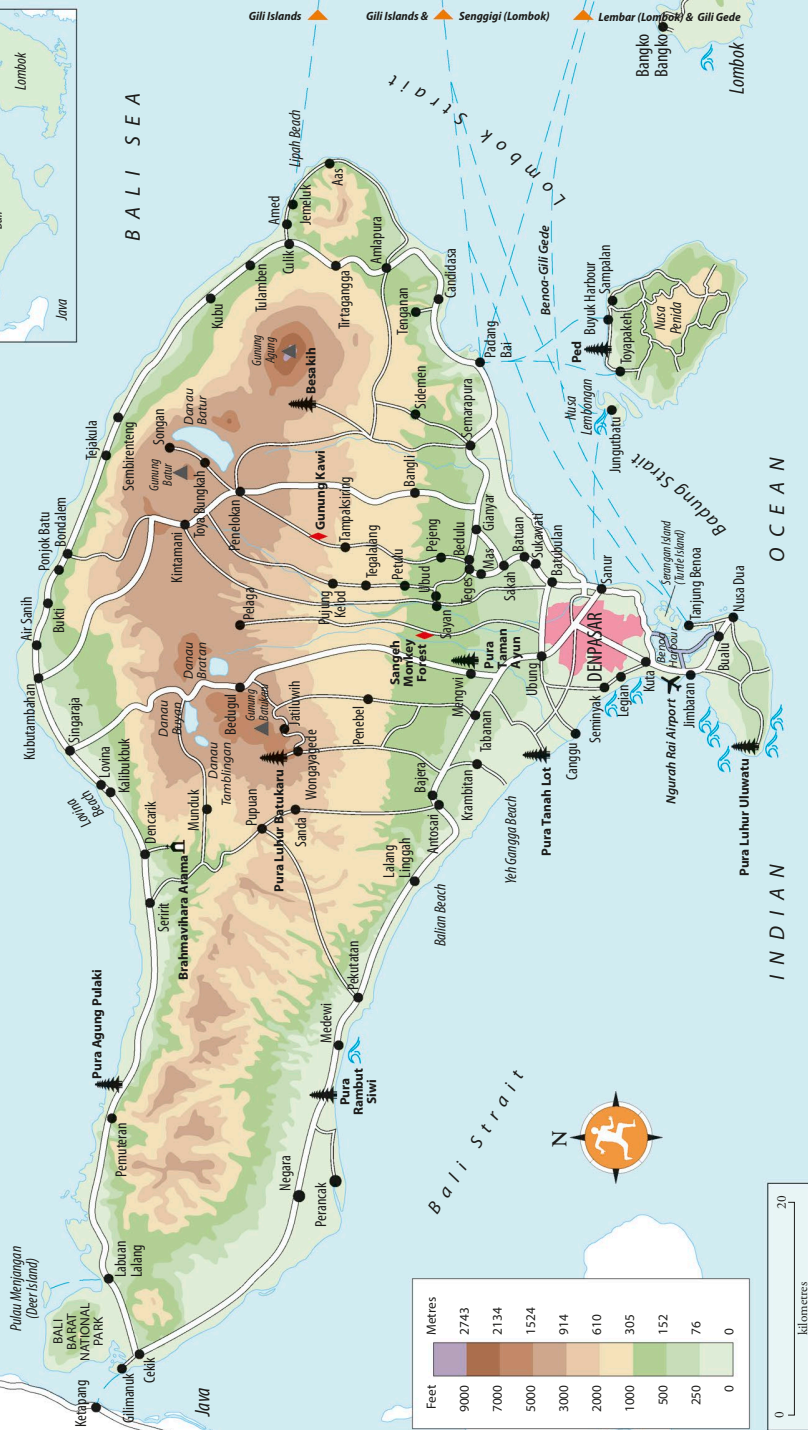
It is customary for Balinese men and women to wear **traditional dress** to attend temple festivals, cremations, weddings, birth rites and other important rituals; men also wear temple dress if playing in a gamelan orchestra and occasionally for *banjar* (neighbourhood) meetings too.

Many **women** wear a vividly coloured bustier under the *kebaya* (blouse), and some don flamboyant hair accessories as well. For big festivals, women from the same community will all wear the same-coloured *kebaya* to give their group a recognizable identity.

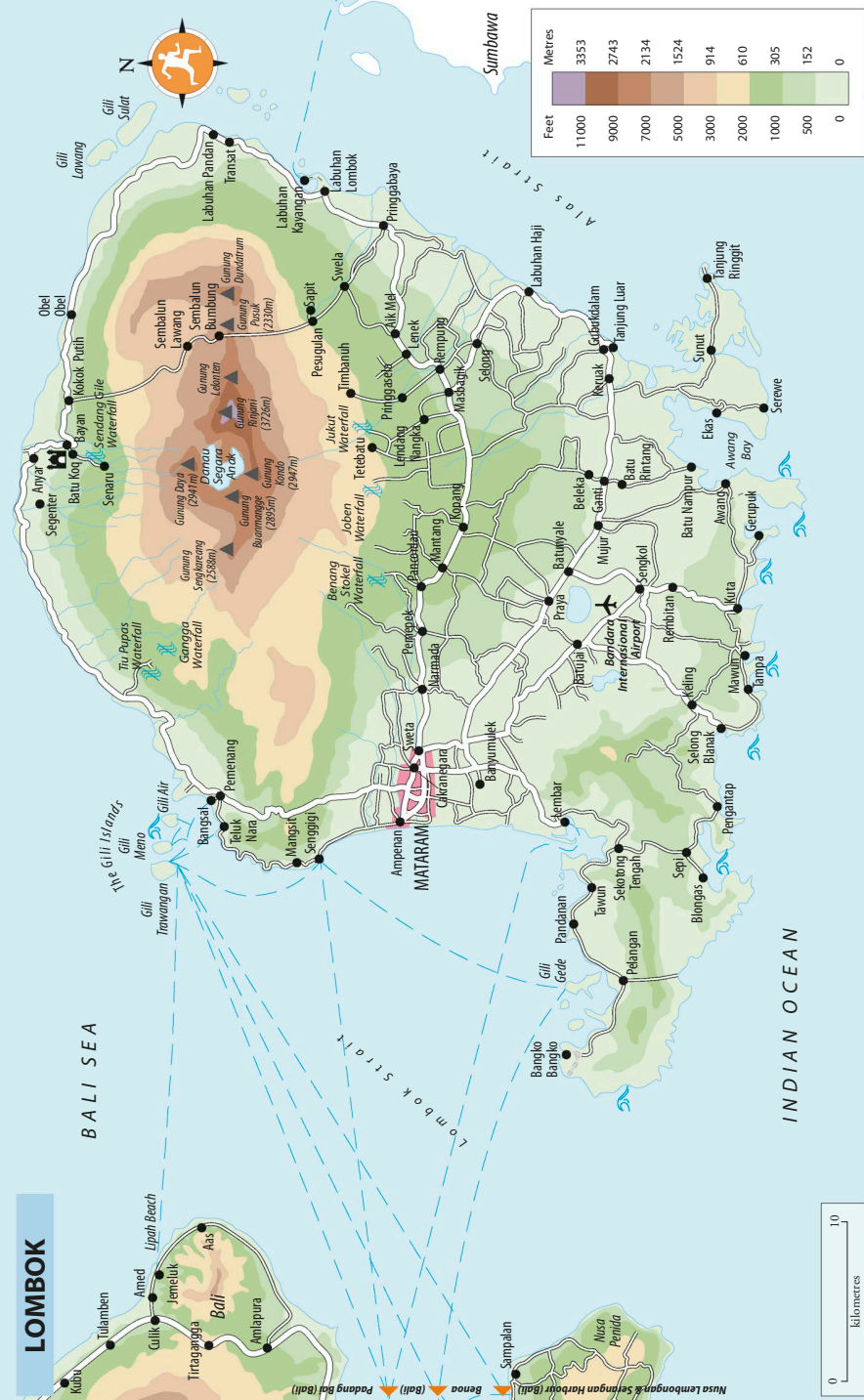
Men also wear a type of sarong (*kamben sarung*), a knee-length hip-cloth (*saput*) and a formal, collared shirt (generally white but sometimes batik) or a starched jacket-like shirt. The distinctive headcloth (*udeng*) can be tied according to personal taste, but generally with a triangular crest on top (shops sell ready-tied *udeng*). As with the sash, the *udeng* symbolically concentrates the mental energies and directs the thoughts heavenwards via the perky cockscomb at the front.



A map showing the islands of Bali and Lombok in Indonesia. Bali is the larger island on the left, and Lombok is the smaller island on the right. The word 'Bali' is written vertically on the island, and 'Lombok' is written vertically on the island. The surrounding water is light blue, and the land is light green.



LOMBOK



FACT FILE

- **Bali** (almost 5800 square kilometres in size with a population of over 4.4 million) and **Lombok** (just over 4700 square kilometres in size and with a population around 3.4 million) make up two of the 34 provinces of the Republic of Indonesia, an ethnically diverse democracy of around 260 million people.
- The Balinese traditionally celebrate their new year, known as **Nyepi** and generally falling in March/April, with a day of silence and meditation. By contrast, the night before features a deafening cacophony designed to scare away evil spirits.
- Every November/December, Muslim and Hindu communities on Lombok take part in the **Perang Topat**, or **Ketupat War**, a ceremonial mock-battle at Pura Lingsar featuring copious rice- and egg-throwing.
- The **Wallace Line** that runs through the 35km-wide Lombok Strait, which separates the two islands, was long thought to mark the boundary between the distribution of Asian and Australasian wildlife.
- Both Bali and Lombok are **volcanic**: large eruptions killed thousands in the twentieth century and occasionally close the islands' airports.

Where to go

Bali's best-known beach resort, the **Kuta–Legian–Seminyak** strip is an 8km sweep of golden sand that draws an incongruous mix of holidaying Australian families, weekendening Jakartans, backpackers, a loyal gay clientele and design-conscious visitors drawn by its fashionable restaurants and boutiques. Travellers seeking more relaxed alternatives generally head north to the beaches around and beyond Canggu, across the southern peninsula to **Sanur** or offshore to **Nusa Lembongan**; to sedate **Candidasa** or **Amed** further east; or to the black volcanic sands of **Lovina** on the north coast. Quieter, smarter seaside options can be found at **Jimbaran** in the south and **Pemuteran** in the northwest. On Lombok, the trio of white-sand **Gili Islands** draw the biggest crowds; there are quieter islands off the **Sekotong** peninsula, a wide range of resort accommodation around **Senggigi** and a series of extraordinarily beautiful beaches near **Kuta** in the south. All these resorts make comfortable bases for **divers** and **snorkellers** and are within easy reach of the islands' many reefs. **Surfers** have countless swells to choose from, including the famously challenging Uluwatu on Bali and Desert Point on Lombok, as well as many more novice-friendly breaks.

Most visitors also venture inland to experience more traditional island life. On Bali, the once-tiny village of **Ubud** has become a hugely popular cultural centre, still charming but undeniably commercialized, where traditional dances are staged every night and the streets are full of organic cafés, art galleries, yoga studios and myriad purveyors of alternative therapies. **Tetebatu** on Lombok occupies a similarly cool position in the foothills, although, like the island as a whole, it lacks Bali's artistic heritage. In general, the villages on both islands are far more appealing than the towns, but Bali's capital, **Denpasar**, the historic district capital of **Semarang**, and Lombok's **Mataram** conurbation are each worth a day-trip for their museums, markets and temples.

Bali's other big draw is its proliferation of elegant Hindu **temples**, particularly the island temple of **Tanah Lot**, the dramatically located **Uluwatu** and the extensive **Besakih** complex on the slopes of Gunung Agung. Temple **festivals**, most of which are open to tourists, are also well worth attending.



Both islands hold a number of **hiking** possibilities, many of them up **volcanoes**. The best is undoubtedly the climb to the summit of Lombok's **Gunung Rinjani**, which at 3726m is one of Indonesia's highest peaks. The ascent of Bali's **Gunung Agung** (3142m) is shorter and slightly less arduous. The climb up **Gunung Batur** (1717m) is much less taxing and therefore more popular. Bali's sole **national park**, Bali Barat, has relatively few interesting trails, but is good for **birdwatching**, as is the area around **Danau Bratan** in the centre of the island. Even if you don't want to go hiking, it's worth considering a trip to an inland village for the change of scenery, views and refreshing temperatures; the villages of **Sidemen**, **Tirtagangga**, **Sarinbuana** and **Munduk** are all good bases.

When to go

Just eight degrees south of the equator, **tropical** Bali and Lombok enjoy fairly constant year-round temperatures, averaging 27°C in Bali's coastal areas and the hills around Ubud and 22°C in the central volcanoes around Kintamani. Both islands are hit by an annual **monsoon**, which brings rain, wind and intense humidity from October through to March.

The **best time to visit** is outside the monsoon season, from May to September, though monsoons are, like many other events in Indonesia, notoriously unpunctual, and you should be prepared to get rained on in Ubud at any time of year. However, the prospect of a daily rainstorm shouldn't put you off: you're far more likely to get an hour-long downpour than day-long drizzle. Mountain-climbing, though, is both unrewarding and dangerous at monsoon time (the authorities close Rinjani for six months or so every year for safety reasons).

You should also be aware of the peak **tourist seasons**: resorts on both islands get packed out between mid-June and mid-September and again over the Christmas–New Year period, when prices rocket and rooms can be fully booked for weeks in advance.

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURES AND RAINFALL

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
KINTAMANI												
°C	22	22	22	22	22	21	21	21	22	22	22	22
mm	444	405	248	174	72	43	30	21	35	50	166	257
KUTA (BALI)												
°C	28	28	28	28	27	27	26	26	27	27	28	28
mm	394	311	208	115	79	67	57	31	43	95	176	268
MATARAM												
°C	27	27	26	26	26	25	25	25	26	27	27	27
mm	253	254	209	155	84	67	38	21	36	168	250	209
SINGARAJA												
°C	27	27	27	27	28	28	27	27	28	29	28	28
mm	318	318	201	123	57	36	31	7	21	54	115	180
UBUD												
°C	27	27	27	27	27	26	26	26	26	27	27	27
mm	412	489	274	224	101	172	128	132	142	350	374	398

Author picks

Our authors covered every corner of Bali and Lombok – from soaring volcanic peaks to underwater havens, bustling city markets to ancient temples – to research this new edition. Here are a few of their favourite experiences.

Beach bars The coastline between Seminyak and Canggu is loaded with fine places for a sundowner from the uber-luxe environs of *Potato Head* (p.72) to beach shack haven *Warung 707* (p.72)

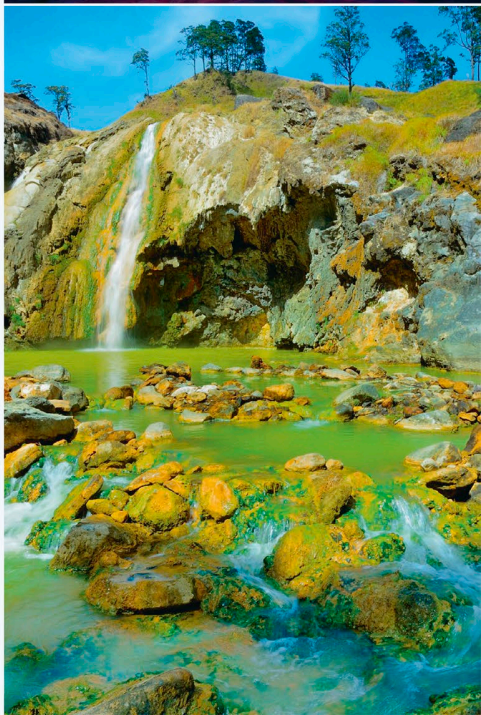
Stunning views On Bali, the jaw-dropping seascape from Pura Luhur Uluwatu is out of this world; views of impossibly green rice terraces don't get much better than around Ubud (p.116), Sidemen (p.166) and Tirtagangga (p.180). Lombok's rice-paddy scenery is impressive too, especially at Tetebatu (p.270).

Off the beaten track Lombok's southeast peninsula (p.274) may only be a bumpy ninety-minute drive from the airport, but it feels like the end of the world. The southwest peninsula (p.254) is better connected but also very remote. On Bali, get your explorer kicks at the narrow and winding Amed coastal road to Ujung (p.183).

Underwater vision The vibrant coral reefs around the Gili Islands (p.284) are perfect both for snorkelling right from the beach and for shallow scuba diving. For dramatic pelagic life including manta rays, Nusa Penida (p.105) excels, while Pulau Menjangan (p.235) has lots of reef sharks.

World-class waves Lombok is a sensational place to surf, whatever your skill level: learn the basics in Kuta's fabulous bays (p.275) or hit some of the world's best waves at nearby Gerupuk (p.280).

Our author recommendations don't end here. We've flagged up our favourite places – a perfectly sited hotel, an atmospheric café, a special restaurant – throughout the Guide, highlighted with the ★ symbol.

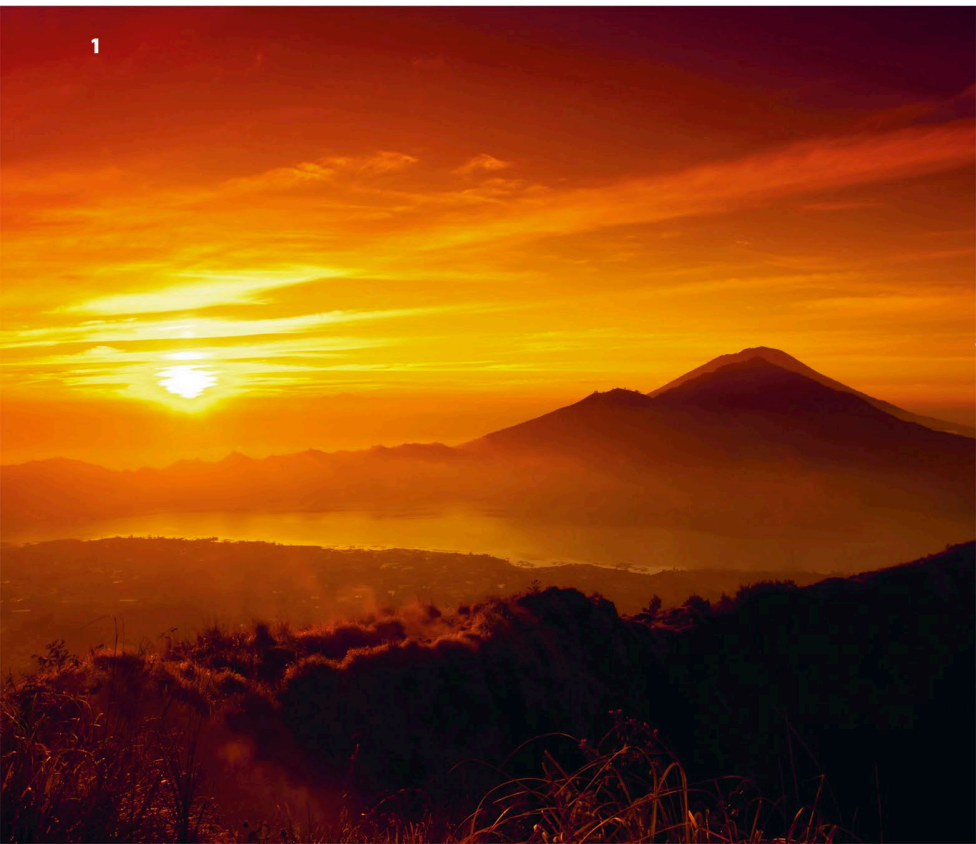


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things not to miss

It's not possible to see everything that Bali and Lombok have to offer in a single trip – and we don't suggest you try. What follows is a selective taste of the islands' highlights, including memorable places to stay, outstanding beaches and spectacular hikes. All highlights are colour-coded by chapter and have a page reference to take you straight into the Guide, where you can find out more.

1





1 SUNRISE FROM GUNUNG BATUR

Page 195

Climb this ancient volcano before dawn and you'll be rewarded with the most extraordinary panoramas on Bali.

2 TEMPLE FESTIVALS

Page 32

Every one of Bali's twenty thousand Hindu temples holds at least one annual festival to entertain the gods with processions and offerings.

3 THE AMED COAST

Page 183

Memorable diving and snorkelling close to Bali's shore and a breathtakingly dramatic coastline.

4 SOUTH LOMBOK BEACHES

Page 274

The wild and glorious Kuta coastline has some of the most beautiful white-sand bays on the islands.





5 DIVING AND SNORKELLING

Page 36

Wreck dives, submerged canyons, manta rays and oceanic sunfish are just a few of the islands' underwater attractions.

6 CLASSICAL KAMASAN ART

Pages 160 & 161

At its best on the ceiling of the historic Kerta Gosa in eastern Bali and in the exceptional Nyoman Gunarsa Museum nearby.

7 SURFING

Page 36

Awesome, challenging breaks at Bali's Uluwatu, Padang Padang and Lombok's Desert Point; beginners' waves at Kuta (Bali), Canggu and around Kuta (Lombok).

8 SPAS

Page 38

Pamper yourself with some of the local beauty treatments, including the famous *mandi lulur* turmeric scrub.

9 PURA LUHUR ULUWATU

Page 80

Wonder at the simply spellbinding oceanic vistas from this cliff-top temple in the Bukit.

10 THE FOOTHILLS OF GUNUNG BATUKARU

Page 228

Breathtaking mountain views, a garden temple and charming accommodation at Wongayagede, Jatiluwi and Sarinbuana.

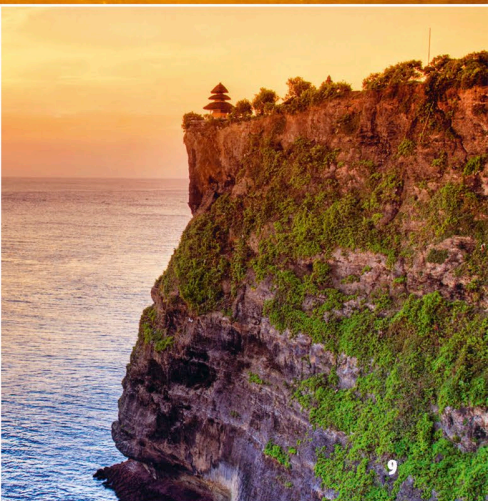




7



8



9



10

11 BALI MUSEUM, DENPASAR

Page 88

Traditional architecture and a good ethnological introduction to the island.

12 PURA TANAH LOT

Page 225

Bali's most photographed temple sits atop its own tiny island.

13 UBUD

Page 110

Bali's arty heart has it all: beautifully sited accommodation; great restaurants; shops and galleries; and ricefields in every direction.

14 GAMELAN MUSIC

Page 318

The frenetic syncopations of drums and gongs provide Bali's national soundtrack.

15 CANGGU

Page 63

An engaging mix of surf beaches, organic cafés and paddy field scenery make Canggu a mecca for Bali's creative, leisured crowd.

16 CRAFT SHOPPING

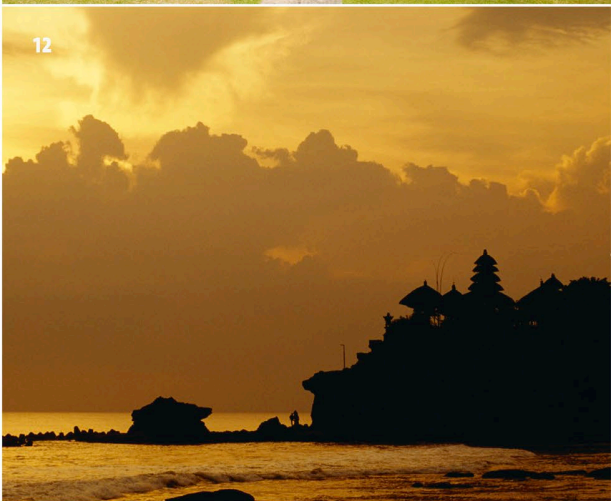
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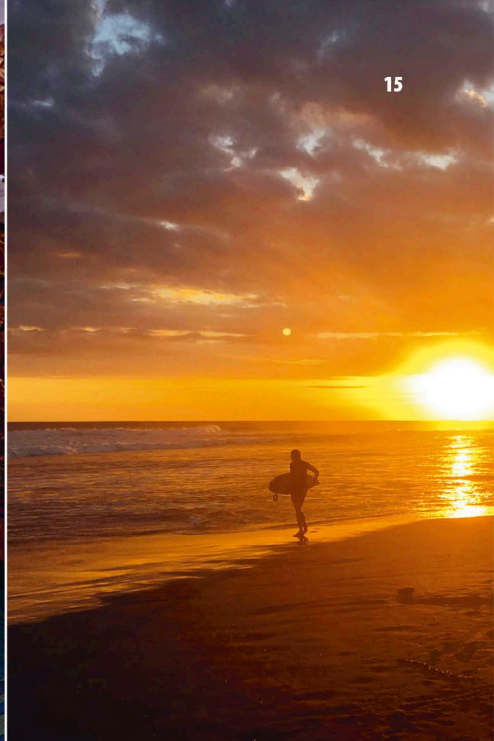
Bali's best craft shopping happens south of Ubud: from woodcarvings in Mas to silverwork in Celuk.

17 PURA MEDUWE KARANG

Page 215

A wonderfully exuberant example of north Bali's ornate temple architecture.







18



19



20

18 BALINESE DANCE

Page 319

From acutely choreographed solo dances to unforgettable choruses of more than fifty men in the Kecak, watching a Balinese dance performance never fails to enchant.

19 CLIMBING RINJANI

Page 266

The most challenging and rewarding climb on the islands takes in a dramatic crater lake with its own volcano rising from the waters.

20 NUSA LEMBONGAN

Page 98

Laidback island life, fine coastal scenery and exceptional diving and snorkelling are all just a short boat ride from Bali's mainland.

21 FINE DINING

Page 30

Splash out on creative gourmet cuisine at ultra-chic restaurants on Bali.

22 COCKTAILS AT SUNSET

Pages 72 & 294

On Bali, head to Seminyak or Canggu for DJ bars and sundowners on the beach, or to the west coast of Gili Trawangan.

23 GILI ISLANDS

Page 284

Dazzlingly white sand, turquoise waters and zero road traffic – the three Gilis are real desert islands.



21



22



23



Itineraries

The following itineraries feature a mix of popular and off-the-beaten-path attractions, taking you right across Bali and Lombok, from volcanic foothills to cultural hubs, from idyllic tropical islands to bustling cities. You may not have time to complete a full list, but even doing a partial itinerary – or mixing and matching elements from different ones – will give you a wonderful insight into the two islands.

THE GRAND TOUR

You'll need around three to four weeks to complete this comprehensive trip around Bali and Lombok, though there are numerous places that will tempt you to extend your stay.

1 Bukit Peninsula Expect spectacular views, world-class surf, the magnificent Pura Uluwatu temple and a fine choice of stylish homestays and hotels in this emerging region. **See p.75**

2 Kuta–Legian–Seminyak This busy south Bali conurbation has something for all tastes, with rowdy Kuta, chic Seminyak and the more family-friendly Legian. **See p.54**

3 Canggu Bali's most fashionable district is a semi-rural region replete with gorgeous bars, destination restaurants and surf beaches. **See p.63**

4 Pura Tanah Lot This spectacularly sited temple – perched on a rocky crag overlooking a black-sand, wave-lashed beach – is a favourite sunset spot for tourists. **See p.225**

5 Ubud Bali's artistic, musical and cultural hub, laidback Ubud has an array of tempting boutique hotels, restaurants, shops and spas that makes it an easy place to linger. **See p.110**

6 Gunung Batur There are stupendous views from the summit of this volcanic cone,

especially at sunrise – and after descending, you can sink into one of the hot springs beside the turquoise Danau Batur lake. **See p.192**

7 Gunung Agung and Besakih Bali's highest peak, the dramatic, 3142m Gunung Agung volcano, is home to a number of important religious sites, most notably Besakih, the Mother Temple. **See p.162 & p.164**

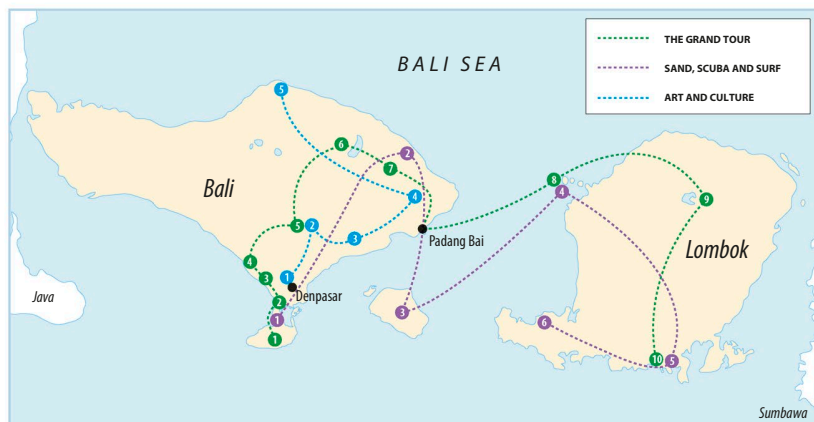
8 The Gili Islands From Padang Bai hop on a fast boat to the Gili Islands. This trio of blissfully traffic-free islands boasts beautiful beaches and reefs. Choose between pumping nightlife on Gili Trawangan, sheer tranquillity on Gili Meno, or the more local feel of Gili Air. **See p.284**

9 Gunung Rinjani The climb up the 3726m Gunung Rinjani is the most challenging and rewarding trek on either Bali or Lombok. **See p.266**

10 Kuta and south coast Lombok This stunning stretch of coastline, with its giant white-sand bays remains – for now – largely undeveloped. **See p.274**

SAND, SCUBA AND SURF

You'll need around three weeks to visit all of these destinations, though many people end up staying longer in the Gili Islands, in particular, than they originally planned.



1 South Bali Learn to surf on Kuta Beach or in Canggu. If you're more experienced head to the adrenaline-pumping breaks at Uluwatu, Dreamland, Bingin and Padang Padang. **See p.54**

2 Liberty wreck Just off the coast of Tulamben, the wreck of the *Liberty*, a US steamship torpedoed in 1942, is Bali's most popular dive site. **See p.189**

3 Nusa Lembongan and Nusa Penida These two relaxed islands have a very different feel to the mainland. Divers regularly encounter manta rays and sunfish. **See p.98 & p.105**

4 The Gili Islands From Lembongan, catch a boat to the Gilis. The dive sites surrounding these islands are some of the best in Lombok – turtles, sharks and moray eels are all common – and there are some great beaches too. **See p.284**

5 Kuta, Lombok This little town is fast emerging as a prime tourist centre, with some of Indonesia's most spectacular beaches and world-class surf close by. **See p.275**

6 Sekotong and the southwest peninsula An isolated region dotted with white-sand islets that's a haven for snorkellers, divers, surfers and sunseekers alike. **See p.254**

ART AND CULTURE

This itinerary can be completed in as little as a week and a half, if you have your own vehicle, though a more leisurely timescale allows for a more contemplative exploration and makes it easier to travel by public transport.

1 Bali Museum This museum in Bali's capital, Denpasar, provides an excellent introduction to the island's cultural heritage. **See p.88**

2 Ubud Watch a traditional dance or gamelan performance, admire paintings by Balinese and expat artists, or learn a new skill – from woodcarving to silversmithing. **See p.110**

3 Semarapura and the Nyoman Gunarsa Museum The town of Semarapura is a centre of classical Balinese art, while nearby is the enlightening Nyoman Gunarsa Museum. **See p.159 & p.161**

4 Taman Tirtagangga Water Palace Built in 1946 by the last raja of Karangasem, this palace has a riot of pools, moats and fountains. **See p.181**

5 Pura Meduwe Karang This grand temple on Bali's northern coast features exquisite carvings and reliefs. **See p.215**



TRADITIONAL FOOD MARKET, UBUD

Basics

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- 43 Charities and volunteer projects
- 43 Travel essentials

Getting there

There's no shortage of international and domestic flights to Bali's only airport, Ngurah Rai Airport (see p.64) – officially referred to as Denpasar (DPS), though it's actually 3km south of Kuta. Bandara Internasional Lombok (see p.248), in the south of the island, also has a range of domestic and a few international flights.

The most expensive times to fly to Bali and Lombok are during **high season**, which for most airlines runs from the beginning of July through to the middle or end of August and also includes most of December and the first half of January. During these peak periods flights should be reserved well in advance.

Flights from the UK and Ireland

There are no nonstop flights **from the UK or Ireland** to Bali or Lombok. Singapore Airlines, Emirates and Garuda offer some of the fastest London–Denpasar flights; all require a brief transfer, but can get you to Bali in as little as seventeen hours. They are often competitively priced against the other major airlines that serve Bali, most of which require longer transit times and can take up to 22 hours. From London and Manchester low-season return **fares** rarely cost less than £575 including tax, rising up to around £900 in high season. Flying from Ireland, you'll need to add on the return fare to London.

To Lombok

Lombok is served by a far smaller range of international flights operated by Singapore Airlines/Silk Air and Garuda; from the UK and Ireland, you can expect to pay around £100–250 more than to Bali. Alternatively, take the cheapest available flight to Bali or Jakarta, from where you can take an inexpensive domestic flight to Lombok (see p.248).

Flights from the US and Canada

There's a big choice of flights to Bali **from North America**, although none are direct. Flights leaving

from the **west coast** cross the Pacific to Asian hubs such as Taipei, Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore or Kuala Lumpur, with connections on to Bali. The best journey times are around 24 hours (crossing the Pacific in one hop), although considerably more than this is not unusual; slower journeys touch down midway, perhaps in Honolulu and/or Guam, while some schedules involve overnighting en route. From the **east coast**, airlines take a northern trajectory 'over the top'; for example, New York–Tokyo is typically fourteen hours' flying time, New York–Bangkok is seventeen hours. Typically you'll be looking at a **fare** of US\$1000-plus in low season and US\$1800 or more in high season from either starting point.

Round-the-world or Circle Asia multi-stop tickets put together by consolidators can cost little more than the return prices quoted above. Another possibility, which could also work out cheaper, is One World's **"Visit Asia Pass"**, which can offer very good value for flights from North America.

Flights from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa

Scores of flights operate every day **from Australia to Bali**, with the best deals on low-cost carriers such as Jetstar and Air Asia; Garuda also flies major routes. Return fares from Western Australia and the Northern Territory, including Perth (4hr) and Darwin (2hr 30min), start at around Aus\$275 including tax, or about Aus\$450–550 in high season. Flights from Sydney (5hr 30min), Melbourne (6hr), Adelaide (5hr), Brisbane (6hr) and Townsville (5hr 30min) start at Aus\$400.

Air New Zealand has (seasonal, May to October) direct flights to Bali from Auckland (9hr) from NZ\$1400. Virgin, Jetstar and Qantas offer good deals and fast connection times from Auckland and Christchurch via Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne all year round, prices start at around NZ\$800 inclusive in low season, NZ\$1300 in high season and flight time is around 11 hours. Alternatively, shop around for the cheapest Sydney flight then change onto one of the budget airlines listed above.

At the time of writing there were no direct flights to **Lombok**; travel via Bali.

A BETTER KIND OF TRAVEL

At Rough Guides we are passionately committed to travel. We believe it helps us understand the world we live in and the people we share it with – and of course tourism is vital to many developing economies. But the scale of modern tourism has also damaged some places irreparably, and climate change is accelerated by most forms of transport, especially flying. All Rough Guides' flights are carbon-offset, and every year we donate money to a variety of environmental charities.

There are no nonstop flights **from South Africa** to Bali or Lombok but it's possible to reach Bali in around 18 to 22 hours with Singapore Airlines via Singapore and Emirates via Dubai. Return fares start from ZAR9600.

TRAVEL AGENTS AND TOUR OPERATORS

For specialist diving and surfing tours it can work out cheaper to contact Bali- and Lombok-based operators direct.

Ampersand Travel UK ☎ 020 7819 9770 🌐 www.ampersandtravel.com. Specialises in off-beat luxury trips using boutique lodges in extraordinary locations and plenty of cultural interest.

Asian Pacific Adventures US ☎ 1 800 825 1680, 🌐 asianpacificadventures.com. Small-group tours including "Bali Through an Artist's Eye", fourteen days based mostly in Ubud concentrating on art, music and culture.

Audley Travel 🌐 www.audleytravel.com. Well-planned luxury tours around Bali and Lombok utilising choice accommodation.

Backroads US ☎ 1 800 462 2848, 🌐 backroads.com. Cycling tours including an eight-day "Bali Biking" tour that takes in cooking classes and snorkelling.

ebookers UK ☎ 020 3320 3320, 🌐 ebookers.com; Republic of Ireland ☎ 01 4311 311, 🌐 ebookers.ie. Low fares.

Flight Centre US ☎ 1 877 992 4732, Canada ☎ 1 877 967 5302, UK ☎ 0870 499 0040, Australia ☎ 13 31 33, New Zealand ☎ 0800 243 544, South Africa ☎ 0860 400 727; 🌐 flightcentre.com. Guarantees to offer the lowest airfares; also sells package holidays and adventure tours.

Hello World Travel Australia ☎ 1300 722 501, 🌐 helloworld.com.au. Sells flights and package tours with all the big operators.

Imaginative Traveller UK ☎ 0845 077 8802, 🌐 imaginative-traveller.com; Australia ☎ 1300 135 088, 🌐 imaginative-traveller.com.au. Small-group adventure tours to Bali and Lombok, including treks to the crater rim on Rinjani.

Intrepid Travel US ☎ 1 800 970 7299, Canada ☎ 1 866 915 1511, UK and Ireland ☎ 0203 147 7777, Australia ☎ 1300 364 512, New Zealand ☎ 0800 600 610; 🌐 intrepidtravel.com. Well-regarded, small-group adventure tour operator, their 12-day Bali & Lombok takes in rafting, hiking and snorkelling.

North South Travel UK ☎ 01245 608 291, 🌐 nouthsouthtravel.co.uk. Travel agency whose profits support projects in the developing world.

STA Travel UK ☎ 0871 2300 040, US ☎ 1 800 781 4040, Australia ☎ 134 782, New Zealand ☎ 0800 474 400, South Africa ☎ 0861 781 781; 🌐 statravel.com. Worldwide specialists in independent travel; good discounts for students and under-26s.

Sunda Trails Lombok, Indonesia ☎ +62 (0)370 647390, 🌐 sundatrails.com. Highly regarded tour operator based in Ampenan, Lombok with tours of Lombok, Bali and Nusa Tenggara on foot, by bicycle or motorbike as well as diving and trekking packages.

Surf Travel Company Australia ☎ 02 9222 8870, 🌐 surftravel.com.au. Flights and accommodation packages – resort-based or on yachts – to the best surf spots in Bali and Lombok.

Symbiosis Expedition Planning UK ☎ 0845 123 2844, 🌐 symbiosis-travel.com. Unusual tailor-made holidays plus small-group specialist trips to Bali focusing on diving and cycling.

Trailfinders UK ☎ 0845 058 5858, Ireland ☎ 01 677 7888,

Australia ☎ 1300 780 212; 🌐 trailfinders.com. One of the best-informed agents for independent travellers.

Travel CUTS US ☎ 1 800 592 2887, Canada ☎ 1 866 246 9762; 🌐 travelcuts.com. Budget travel specialist.

USIT Ireland ☎ 01 602 1906, Northern Ireland ☎ 028 9032 7111; 🌐 usit.ie. Discounted and student fares.

Visas

Indonesia **visa laws** change frequently so always check the latest situation before travelling. All visitors must have a passport that is valid for at least six months from the date of arrival, and have proof of onward or return passage.

Currently citizens from 169 countries qualify for 30-day **visa-free** entry. The list includes all European countries, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. This visa-free arrangement is *non-extendable*.

If you want to stay longer than 30 days you have two choices. You can apply in advance for a visa (30 or 60 days) from an Indonesian embassy (see above); fees vary per country. It's an (absurdly) complicated process in some countries and may require a recent bank statement showing a minimum balance (the UK specifies £1000), a recent letter from your employer, educational establishment, bank manager, accountant or solicitor certifying your obligation to return home/leave Indonesia by the designated date.

Alternatively, citizens of 61 countries (including most EU nations, UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) can pay for a 30-day visa on arrival (which are extendable for another 30 days) at one of the country's 44 **designated gateway ports**. Both Bali and Lombok's airports are visa-issuing gateways. The fee is \$35, payable in US dollars or other hard currencies.

Visa extensions can be arranged at **immigration offices** (*kantor imigrasi*) in Denpasar (see p.92), Kuta (see p.75) and in Mataram on Lombok (see p.252); you need to apply at least a week before your existing visa expires. The extension price is Rp250,000, with an extra charge levied locally if you want your paperwork fast-tracked. At the time of writing the fastest standard processing time was in Mataram (24hr, or less than 3hr for the fast-track option); other offices can take a week. You will need to fill out various forms, submit two passport photos and pay to have relevant passport pages photocopied. Travel agents in Bali and Lombok can do all this for you, for a fee of course.

Penalties for **overstaying your visa** are severe.

TYING THE KNOT

If you fancy the idea of getting married in Bali, the options are mind-boggling. Many hotels will organize the whole thing for you, as will any number of wedding planners. They will also advise on the paperwork and formalities, which are significant, so start planning early. Prices vary enormously and it is important to check exactly what is included. It's also a good idea to check out postings on travel forums for locations and planners. Attractive **boutique hotels** that host weddings include *Desa Seni* (see p.70) and *Puri Taman Sari* (see p.226). Using a villa as a setting can also be very cost-effective.

Indonesian embassies and consulates abroad

For comprehensive listings of **Indonesian embassies and consulates** around the world, see the "Mission" page of the website of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at kemlu.go.id.

FOREIGN EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

Most countries maintain an **embassy** in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, and some also have **consulates** in Bali; there are none on Lombok. Your first point of contact should always be the Bali consulate.

Australia Consulate Jl Letda Tantular 32, Renon, Denpasar
 ☎ 0361 2000100, 🌐 bali.indonesia.embassy.gov.au.

Australia Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 2550 5555, 🌐 indonesia.embassy.gov.au.

Canada Consulate Contact the Australian consulate in Denpasar first.

Canada Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 2550 7800, 🌐 canada.international.gc.ca.

Ireland Contact the UK consul in Sanur first.

Malaysia Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 522 4947, 🌐 www.kln.gov.my.

New Zealand Consulate Contact the Australian consulate in Denpasar first.

New Zealand Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 2995 5800, 🌐 nzembassy.com/indonesia.

Singapore Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 2995 0400, 🌐 mfa.gov.sg/jkt.

South Africa Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 574 0660, 🌐 www.dirco.gov.za/jakarta.

UK Consulate Jl Tirta Nadi 2 no. 20, Sanur ☎ 0361 270601.

UK Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 2356 5200, 🌐 www.gov.uk/government/world/indonesia.

US Consulate Jl Hayam Wuruk 188, Renon, Denpasar ☎ 0361 233605, 📧 amcobali@indosat.net.id.

US Embassy Jakarta ☎ 021 3435 9000, 🌐 id.usembassy.gov.

Customs regulations

Indonesia's **customs regulations** allow foreign nationals to import one litre of alcohol, two hundred cigarettes or 25 cigars or 100g of tobacco, and a reasonable amount of perfume. Laptops and video cameras are supposed to be declared on entry and re-exported on departure. Import restrictions cover the usual banned items, including narcotics, weapons and pornographic material, and foreigners are also forbidden to bring in amounts of Rp5,000,000 or more in Indonesian currency. Indonesia is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and so forbids import or export of products that are banned under this treaty, which includes anything made from turtle flesh or turtle shells (including tortoiseshell jewellery and ornaments), as well as anything made from ivory. Indonesian law also prohibits the export of antiquities and cultural relics, unless sanctioned by the customs department.

Getting around

Bali and Lombok are both small enough to traverse in a few hours by road (there's no rail transport on either island), although the lack of street names, traffic congestion (in Southern Bali) and route numbers can make things confusing if you are driving yourself. The major roads are good, carrying at least two-way traffic, and are fairly well maintained, although they see a lot of large trucks. On less-frequented routes, the roads are narrow and more likely to be potholed, while off the beaten track they may be no more than rough tracks.

The state of the road is a reasonable indication of the frequency of **public transport**, which is generally inexpensive, but offers little space or comfort and very few travellers bother with it. **Tourist shuttle buses** operate between major destinations on Bali and Lombok, and although these are more expensive, they are convenient. If you prefer to drive yourself, bicycles, motorbikes, cars and jeeps are available to rent throughout the islands, or you can rent cars or motorbikes with a driver. App-based taxi services, including Uber, are in Bali and inexpensive, but are not always available, see p.26.

Getting **between Bali and Lombok** is easy by plane or boat (see p.248).

Tourist shuttle buses

Most travellers use private shuttle buses to get around. The most established **operator** is Perama (peramatour.com), serving all major tourist destinations. Fares generally work out at least double that of public transport, but the service is usually direct and there's likely to be room for luggage, wheelchairs, buggies and surfboards. For example, fares from Kuta, Bali are Rp60,000 to Ubud and Rp125,000 to Lovina. It's best to book the day before.

There are several **rival companies** operating on both Bali and Lombok who advertise throughout tourist areas and offer a similar service, but are not as high profile. These are worth checking out if, for example, the Perama office is inconveniently far from the town centre (as in Lovina and Ubud).

Bemos and buses

On both Bali and Lombok, public transport predominantly consists of buses and bemos.

Bemos are minibuses of varying sizes. **Buses** operate long-distance routes such as Denpasar to Singaraja, Denpasar to Amlapura, and Mataram to Labuhan Lombok. Because of the rise in motorbike ownership, bemos are declining on the islands year on year making public transport ever more time-consuming. Bemos don't really have fixed timetables, generally leaving every hour or so (or when full).

You can pick up a bus or bemo from the **terminal** in bigger towns or flag one down on the road. Fares are paid to the driver or conductor, if there is one. You can't buy tickets in advance.

No local person negotiates a **fare**. When they want to get off they yell "Stoppa", hop out and pay the fixed fare. Note tourists can be charged several times the local fare, and you may be charged extra for a bulky rucksack.

Ferries and boats

Huge inter-island **ferries** connect Bali and Lombok with the islands on either side, from Gilimanuk to Java (see p.237), from Padang Bai to Lembar on Lombok (see p.170) and from Labuhan on Lombok to Sumbawa (see p.248). They run frequently and regularly, day and night.

Many small, expensive **fast boats** connect the Balinese mainland with the Gili Islands, Nusa Lembongan, Nusa Penida and Bangsal in Lombok. There are also smaller, slower boat services to

Nusa Lembongan from Bali and from mainland Lombok to all three Gili Islands. A regular ferry runs from Padang Bai on Bali to Nusa Penida.

Taxis

The taxi trade in Bali is notorious, and its workings very complicated. Essentially there are three kinds of taxi: local drivers who almost never use a meter; taxis like Blue Bird which always use a meter; and Uber/Grab app-taxis that you order on your smartphone (but you can pay for in cash). In some areas, like Kuta or Denpasar, you've a choice of all three kinds of taxi. In Ubud, the local taxi cartel attempts to block all others, while in other regions it's a grey area. In Lombok there's less hassle. There were no app-taxis here at the time of research and Blue Birds operated freely in the Senggigi and Mataram areas. Wherever you are, hotel and restaurant staff will know the score and be able to advise.

Local taxi drivers tout for business on street corners, and many villages and towns have an organised cartel of drivers who effectively monopolize the local taxi business (and intimidate cheaper rivals like Uber, and Bluebird). You'll see signs all over the island with "No Uber" or "No Grab". These local drivers set their own (high) tariffs, which you'll have to use. Some expats refer to them as 'taxi mafia'. They'll usually allow rival cabs to drop-off customers but not pick up from their patch.

Metered **taxis** have a "Taxi" sign on the roof. They cruise for business in Kuta, Sanur, Nusa Dua, Jimbaran and Denpasar on Bali, and around Mataram and Senggigi on Lombok. The best company is the highly efficient light-blue Blue Bird Bali/Lombok taxis (Bali ☎0361 701111, Lombok ☎0370 627000, bluebirdgroup.com). Blue Bird rates are reasonable and drivers courteous. A trip from Kuta to Denpasar is around Rp75,000 or Rp120,000 to Sanur.

App taxis are quite new in Bali (and not yet available in Lombok). Uber and Grab are the two main companies. Rates vary on demand, but are a lot cheaper than using local drivers, and usually quite a bit less than a Blue Bird. Note that local drivers try to ban Uber cabs in many areas of Bali to protect their own trade.

Cidomo

The traditional form of transport in Lombok was the horse and cart (cidomo). Today they survive in the Gili Islands (where all motorized vehicles are banned). Prices are fixed, and very expensive.

Rental vehicles

There's a big selection of vehicles available for rental on the islands; think about your itinerary before you decide what you need. In the mountains, you need power for the slopes and on rougher terrain clearance is vital.

Renters must produce an **International Driving Permit**. On major public holidays (like Galungan and Nyepi) vehicles are snapped up quickly, so make arrangements in advance. Rental vehicles need to have both Balinese and Lombok registration to travel on both islands, so you must tell the rental agency if you intend to take the vehicle between the islands, and check with them exactly what paperwork is required.

Local and international rental companies operate – see the Arrival and Departure and Getting Around sections for the major resorts in the Guide chapters, or enquire at your hotel. Typical daily **rates** are around Rp180,000–200,000 for a Suzuki Jimny or Toyota Avanza, a bit more for a Kijang. Discounts are available for longer rentals.

Some outfits offer partial **insurance** as part of the fee; typically, the maximum you'll end up paying in the event of any accident will usually be \$200–500. The conditions of insurance policies vary considerably and you should make certain you know what you're signing. Bear in mind that under this system, if there is minor damage – for example if you smash a light – you'll end up paying the whole cost of it.

Before you take a vehicle, **check** it thoroughly and record any damage that has already been done, or you may end up being blamed for it. Most vehicle rental agencies keep your passport as security, so you don't have a lot of bargaining power in the case of any dispute. Wherever you get the vehicle from, take an emergency telephone number to contact if your car breaks down.

On the road

Traffic in Indonesia drives **on the left**, and there's a maximum speed limit (except on tollways) of 70km/hr (though you'll be lucky to average 30km/hr in traffic-choked south and west Bali). Foreign drivers need to carry an **International Driving Permit** and the **registration documents** of the vehicle or are liable to a fine. Seatbelts must be used. The police carry out regular spot checks and you'll be fined for any infringements.

Occasionally police stop foreign drivers for supposed infringements and "fine" them on the spot in what is essentially an extortion racket. If it happens to you, the best advice is to keep calm and have

some easily accessible notes well away from your main stash of cash if you have to hand some over.

It's worth driving extremely defensively. **Accidents** are always unpleasant, disagreements over the insurance situation and any repairs can be lengthy, and many local people have a straightforward attitude to accidents involving tourists – the visitor must be to blame. Don't drive at **night** unless you absolutely have to, largely because pedestrians, cyclists, food carts and horse carts all use the roadway without any lights. There are also plenty of roadside ditches.

Note that many **petrol stations** are cash-only.

Hiring a driver

Hundreds of drivers in tourist areas offer **chartered transport** – this means you rent their vehicle (generally cars or jeeps) with them as the driver. Ojeks (single-passenger motorbike taxis) are also common. You're expected to pay for the driver's meals on all trips and accommodation if the trip takes more than a day, and you must be very clear about who is paying for fuel, where you want to go and stop, and how many people will be travelling. With somebody driving who knows the roads, you've got plenty of time to look around and fewer potential problems to worry about, but it's very difficult to guarantee the quality of the driving. If you're hiring a driver just for the day, you'll generally pay Rp500,000–600,000 for the vehicle, driver and fuel. Try to get a personal recommendation of reliable drivers – we've listed our recommendations in Senggigi (see p.260). Alternatively, check the Bali and Lombok Travel Forum (travelforum.org/bali).

Motorbike and bicycle rental

Motorbikes available for rent vary from scooters through small 100cc jobs to more robust trail-bikes. Prices start at around Rp50,000 per day without insurance, with discounts for longer rentals. Officially you're supposed to have an **international motor-cycle licence**, and if you're stopped by the police without one expect to pay a fine of Rp50,000 or more. Conditions on Bali and Lombok are not suitable for inexperienced drivers, with heavy traffic on major routes, steep hills and difficult driving off the beaten track. There are increasing numbers of accidents involving tourists, so don't take risks. All motorcyclists, both drivers and passengers, must wear a helmet; these will be provided by the rental outlet, but most aren't up to much.

In most tourist areas, it's possible to rent a **bicycle** for around Rp25,000 a day; check its condition before you set off and carry plenty of water.

Helmets, puncture repair kits and locks may or may not be provided so, if you intend to cycle a lot, it would be wise to take your own. There is occasional bag-snatching from bicycles in less populated areas, so attach your bag securely to yourself or the bike. Ubud is a popular area for cycling day-trips and guided rides (see p.126) and they are available in Lombok (see p.260); on the Gili Islands cycling is the only way to get around, other than walking or in a horse and cart.

Flights

Tickets for all domestic flights can be booked online, or there are ticket sales counters in airports. Typical fares between Bali and Lombok are from US\$25 and there are at least eight daily flights.

Accommodation

Whatever your budget, the overall standard of accommodation in Bali and Lombok is very high. Even basic lodgings are generally enticing, nearly always set in a tropical garden and with outdoor seating. Interiors can be a bit sparse – and dimly lit – but the verandas encourage you to do as local people do and spend your waking hours outdoors.

Most budget places to stay are classed as **losmen**, a term that literally means homestay but most commonly describes any small-scale and inexpensive accommodation. Some offer the option of hot water and air conditioning, and many include **breakfast** (*makan pagi*) in the price of the room. Very few losmen offer **single rooms** (*kamar untuk satu orang*), so solo travellers will normally be given a double room at 75–100 percent of the full price. Hostels, with dorm beds and a social vibe, are also becoming part of the accommodation

BALI AND LOMBOK'S TOP 5 PLACES TO STAY

Ubud's green haven: *Bambu Indah*.

See p.139

Stylish seaside resort: *Qunci Villas*.

See p.262

Fantasy island hotel: *Tugu*. See p.266

Home from home: *Yuli's Homestay*.

See p.278

Pererenan elegance: *FC Residence*.

See p.70

scene in key backpacker hangouts like Kuta Bali and Gili Trawangan.

Nearly all other accommodation falls into the **hotels** category, most of which offer air conditioning and a swimming pool. Rooms in both losmen and hotels are often in “**cottages**” (sometimes known as “**bungalows**”), which can be anything from terraced concrete cubes to detached rice-barn-style chalets (*lumbung*). Bali in particular does **boutique hotels** very well: small, intimate places, often with gorgeous rural views and tasteful Balinese furnishings. The islands’ **super-luxury hotels** tend to give you more for your money than similarly priced hotels in the West, especially when suites come with private plunge pools and living areas.

Villas are luxurious private holiday homes with pools and kitchens; they’re especially good for families. They can be rented by the day or week and often include the services of a housekeeper and cook. Be aware, though, that a growing number of villas operate illegally, without government licences, which means they could get closed down at any time; you may be able to check a villa’s licence online, and licences must be displayed prominently on the premises. Online villa-rental **agencies** include balion.com and balivillas.com. Airbnb (airbnb.com) also has a wide selection of villas and apartments.

ACCOMMODATION PRICES

Unless stated otherwise, all the accommodation prices in this Guide are based on the cost of the cheapest double room in high season, including tax; when a hotel offers both fan and a/c rooms, the former is the cheapest option and the price that’s quoted. Rates in low season may be up to fifty percent lower and booking via online agencies at any time may give you significant discounts. Many losmen and hotels quote their rates exclusive of government **tax** (ten or eleven percent); many of the more expensive hotels add an extra five or ten percent **service charge** (in hotel-speak, these supplements are usually referred to as “plus-plus”).

The smartest hotels quote their rates in **US dollars**, or sometimes in **euros**, and usually accept cash and credit cards, but will also convert to rupiah. In the Guide, we have quoted accommodation prices in the currency used by the establishment.

BATHROOMS

Most lodges and hotel rooms have en-suite **bathrooms** (*kamar mandi*). **Toilets** (*wc*, pronounced *way say*) are usually Western style, though flushing is sometimes done manually, with water scooped from an adjacent pail. The same pail and scoop are used by Indonesians to wash themselves after going to the toilet (using the left hand, never the right, which is for eating), but most tourist bathrooms also have toilet paper.

Many Balinese and Sasak people still **bathe** in rivers, but indoor bathing is traditionally done by means of the scoop and slosh method, or **mandi**, using water that's stored in a huge basin. This basin is not a bath, so never get in it; all washing is done outside it and the basin should not be contaminated by soap or shampoo. Many lodges and all hotels in the bigger resort areas provide showers as well as *mandi*. Outside the bigger resorts, the very cheapest rooms may not have hot water (*air panas*).

In the more stylish places, bathrooms can be delightful, particularly if they are designed to be open to the sky and bedecked with plants. These "**garden bathrooms**" often have showers and *mandi* fed by water piped through sculpted flues and floors covered in a carpet of smooth, rounded pebbles. However, they're not to everyone's taste, especially as they can also attract squadrons of bloodthirsty mosquitoes.

Camping is not popular in Bali: it's not easy to get permission to camp in Bali Barat National Park and it's considered inappropriate to camp on the slopes of Bali's most sacred mountains, although camping on Lombok's Gunung Rinjani is normal practice and tents and sleeping bags can be rented for the climb.

Room rates in all classes of accommodation can vary considerably according to demand. During **low season** (Feb–June and Sept–Nov) many moderate and expensive hotels also offer good discounts on walk-in rates. In **peak season** (July, Aug and the Christmas holidays), however, rates can rise dramatically, especially in Amed, Canggu and on the Gili Islands; rooms are at a premium during these months so it's advisable to **reserve** ahead. **Check-out time** is usually noon.

Food and drink

Bali and Lombok cuisine is spicy, sweet and incredibly varied with rich curries, fragrant soups, delicious noodle dishes, steamed vegetables and Chinese-style stir-fries all competing for your tummy's attention. The more local you go, the more authentic the meal. In the main tourist regions, most restaurants tend to serve more generic Indonesian food and a multitude of Western and Asian dishes. For really genuine Balinese and Sasak food, head to night markets and warung (simple local cafés).

At the inexpensive end of the scale, you can get a bowl of *bakso ayam* (chicken noodle soup) for

around Rp6000 from one of the **carts** (*kaki lima*) on the streets and at night markets after dark. Slightly smarter are **warung** and rumah makan (eating houses), ranging from a few tables and chairs in a kitchen to fully fledged **restaurants**. There's usually a menu, but in the simplest places it's just rice or noodle dishes on offer. Most places that call themselves restaurants cater for a broader range of tastes, offering Western, Indonesian and Chinese food, while others specialize in a particular cuisine such as Mexican, Japanese or Italian. The multi-national fast-food chains have also arrived in the tourist and city areas.

Vegetarians get a good deal, with tofu (*tahu*) and *tempeh*, a fermented soybean cake, alongside plenty of fresh vegetables.

Restaurant **etiquette** is pretty much the same as in the West, with waiter service the norm. If you're eating with friends, don't count on everyone's meal arriving together.

Prices vary dramatically depending on the location rather than the quality of the meals. In the humblest local warung, a simple dish such as *nasi campur* is about Rp12,000–22,000, while basic tourist restaurant prices start at around Rp30,000–40,000 for their version of the same dish with the sky the limit in the plushiest locations. If you choose non-Indonesian food such as pizza, pasta and steak, prices start at around Rp50,000 in tourist restaurants and again become stratospheric for imported steaks with all the trimmings in swanky locations. Bear in mind that restaurants with more expensive food also have pricier drinks and, in addition, most places add anything up to 21 percent to the bill for tax and service.

BALI AND LOMBOK'S TOP 5 RESTAURANTS

Mozaic Ubud. See p.131

One Eyed Jack Canggu. See p.72

Sardine Kerobokan. See p.71

Pituq Café Gili Trawangan. See p.294

Sage Ubud. See p.131

In the Language section of the Guide there is a menu reader of dishes and a list of common terms (see p.340).

Styles of cooking

Throughout Bali and Lombok **Indonesian** rice- and noodle-based meals are most widely available, followed closely by **Chinese** (essentially Cantonese) food, as well as a vast array of other Asian (Thai and Japanese especially) and **Western** food in the resorts. Native Balinese food on Bali, and Sasak food on Lombok, is something you'll need to seek out. Should you wish to learn more about local food, check out the cookery schools for visitors (see p.44).

Indonesian food

Based on rice (*nasi*) or noodles (*mie* or *bakmi*), with vegetables, fish or meat, **Indonesian food** is flavoured with chillies, soy sauce (*kecap*), garlic, ginger, cinnamon, turmeric and lemongrass. You'll also find chilli sauce (*sambal*) everywhere.

One dish available in even the simplest warung is **nasi campur**, which is boiled rice with small amounts of vegetables, meat and fish, often served with *krupuk* (huge prawn crackers) and a fried egg. The accompanying dishes vary from day to day, depending on what's available. Other staples are **nasi goreng** and **mie goreng**, fried rice or noodles with vegetables, meat or fish, often with fried egg and *krupuk*. The other mainstays of the Indonesian menu are **gado-gado**, steamed vegetables served with a spicy peanut sauce, and **sate**, small kebabs of beef, pork, chicken, tofu, goat or fish, barbecued on a bamboo stick and served with spicy peanut sauce.

Fish is widely available: grilled, kebabled, baked in banana leaves or in curries. However, although tasty, by Western standards a lot of it is overcooked.

Inexpensive, authentic and traditionally fiery **Padang** dishes are sold in rumah makan Padang in every sizeable town. Padang food is pre-cooked, served room temperature and displayed on platters. There are no menus; when you enter you either select your composite meal by pointing to the

dishes on display, or just sit down and let the staff bring you a selection – you pay by the number of plates you have eaten from at the end. Dishes include *kangkung* (water spinach), *tempeh*, fried aubergine, curried eggs, fried fish, meat curry, fish curry, potato cakes and fried cow's lung.

Balinese food

The everyday **Balinese** diet consists of a couple of rice-based meals, essentially *nasi campur*, eaten whenever people feel hungry, supplemented with snacks such as *krupuk*. The full magnificence of Balinese cooking is reserved for ceremonies. One of the best dishes is **babi guling**, spit-roasted pig, served with *lawar*, a spicy blood mash. Another speciality is **betutu bebek**, smoked duck, cooked very slowly – this has to be ordered in advance from restaurants.

The Balinese rarely eat desserts but **bubuh injin**, black rice pudding, named after the colour of the rice husk, is available in tourist spots. The rice is served with a sweet coconut-milk sauce, fruit and grated coconut. Rice cakes (*jaja*) play a major part in ceremonial offerings but are also a daily food.

Sasak food

According to some sources, the name "Lombok" translates as "chilli pepper" – highly appropriate considering the savage heat of traditional **Sasak food**. It's not easy to track down, however, and you'll find Indonesian and Chinese food far more widely available on Lombok. Traditional Sasak food uses rice as the staple, together with a wide variety of vegetables, a little meat (although no pork), and some fish, served in various sauces, often with a dish of **chilli sauce** on the side in case it isn't hot enough already. Anything with *pelecing* in the name is served with chilli sauce. Taliwang dishes, originally from Sumbawa, are also available on Lombok, consisting of grilled or fried food with, you've guessed it, a chilli sauce. All parts of the animals are eaten, and you'll find plenty of offal on the menu.

Fine dining

Just as it's possible to get by spending a dollar or less for a meal in Bali or Lombok, you can also enjoy some superb **fine dining** experiences on the islands. Plenty of innovative chefs, some Western, some Asian, have imported and adapted modern international gourmet cooking. They offer menus that are creative and imaginative and, best of all, taste great. Restaurants serving this food are invariably stylish, with excellent service, charging \$30 or more per head.

BETEL

One habit that you'll notice in villages, mainly among older people, is the chewing of **betel**. Small parcels, made up of three ingredients – areca nut wrapped in betel leaf that has been smeared with lime – are lodged inside the cheek. When mixed with saliva, these are a stimulant as well as producing an abundance of bright red saliva, which is regularly spat out on the ground and eventually stains the lips and teeth red. Other ingredients can be added according to taste, including tobacco, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, turmeric and nutmeg. You may also come across decorated boxes used to store the ingredients on display in museums.

Fresh fruit

The range of **fresh fruit** available on Bali and Lombok is startling. You'll see **bananas**, **coconuts** and **papaya** growing all year round, and **pineapples** and **watermelons** are always in the markets. Of the citrus fruits, the giant **pomelo** is the most unusual to visitors – larger than a grapefruit and sweeter. **Guavas**, **avocados** (served as a sweet fruit juice with condensed milk), **passion fruit**, **mangoes**, **soursops** and their close relative, the **custard apple**, are all common. Less familiar are seasonal **mangosteens** with a purple skin and sweet white flesh; hairy **rambutans**, closely related to the lychee; **salak** or **snakefruit**, named after its brown scaly skin; and **star fruit**, which is crunchy but rather flavourless. **Jackfruit**, which usually weighs 10–20kg, has firm yellow segments around a large stone inside its green bobbly skin. This is not to be confused with the **durian**, also large but with a spiky skin and a pungent, sometimes almost rotten, odour. Some airlines and hotels ban it because of the smell, but devoted fans travel large distances and pay high prices for good-quality durian fruit.

Drinks

Bottled water (see p.35) is widely available throughout the islands (Rp3000–5000 for 1.5 litres in supermarkets), as are international brands of **soft drinks**; you'll pay higher prices in restaurants. There are also delicious **fruit juices**, although many restaurants automatically add sugar to their juices so you'll need to specify *tampa gula* (without sugar) if you don't want that.

Indonesians are great **coffee** (*kopi*) and **tea** (*teh*) drinkers. Locally grown coffee (*kopi Bali* or *kopi Lombok*) is drunk black, sweet and strong. The coffee isn't filtered, so the grounds settle in the bottom of the glass. If you want milk added or you don't want sugar, you'll have to ask (see p.340). Increasing numbers of espresso machines have arrived in the swisher tourist restaurants along with imported

coffee, so lattes and flat whites are readily available if you want one. One coffee you could consider avoiding is *kopi luwak*, which is an expensive blend made from coffee beans that have been ingested by, and then secreted by civets. Most of these captive civets are kept in cramped, inhumane conditions.

Alcohol

Locally produced **beer** includes Bintang, a light, reasonably palatable lager. Expect to pay around Rp25,000 for a 620ml bottle from a supermarket or Rp32,000 and upwards in a restaurant or bar. Draught beer is available in some places. There are four varieties of locally brewed organic Storm beer from the palest (like a British bitter ale) to the darkest (a stout).

Many tourist restaurants and bars offer an extensive list of **cocktails** (generally Rp50,000 upwards) and imported spirits; the cheaper cocktails are invariably made with local alcohol.

Wine and spirit lovers should be aware that punitive taxes make drinking extremely expensive in Bali or Lombok: expect to pay at least Rp75,000 for a glass and upwards of Rp325,000 for a bottle of wine. Locally produced **wine** is available on Bali, made from grapes grown in the north of the island by Hatten Wines – their Aga White, rosé and sparkling wines are very drinkable. Other companies, including L'Artisan, Two Islands and Cape Discovery, use imported Australian grapes to produce wines. Imported spirits are available in major tourist areas, where wines from Australia and New Zealand, California, Europe and South America are also available.

Local liquor include *brem*, a type of rice wine, *tuak*, palm wine brewed from palm-tree sap, and

METHANOL WARNING

Be aware that **methanol-related deaths** occur most years in Bali and Lombok. Incidents are rare but have occurred in bars popular with backpackers, when cheap cocktail buckets have been tainted with methanol. Stick to beer if in any doubt.

powerful *arak*, a palm or rice spirit that is often incorporated into highly potent local cocktails.

Happy hours are common in tourist areas.

Festivals and events

Religious ceremonies and festivals remain central to Balinese life and anyone spending more than a few days on the island is likely to spot local people heading to or from temples. Visitors are welcome as long as they follow certain rules of etiquette (see p.38). Hindus on Lombok adhere to the same customs. On top of these, an array of non-religious festivals are equally appealing.

Balinese festivals

Bali has a complex timetable of religious ceremonies and festivals both local and island-wide, made even more complicated by Bali having two **traditional calendars**: the *saka* calendar, with 354–356 days, is divided into twelve months and runs eighty years behind the Gregorian year, while the *wuku* calendar is based on a 210-day lunar cycle. One of the biggest is **Galungan**, an annual event in the *wuku* calendar. This ten-day festival celebrates the victory of good over evil and the ancestral souls are thought to visit earth. Elaborate preparations take place: *penyor* – bamboo poles hung with offerings – arch over the road. Galungan day itself is spent with the family. The final and most important day is **Kuningan**, when families once again get together, pray and make offerings as the souls of the ancestors return to heaven.

The main festival of the *saka* year is New Year, **Nyepi**, generally in March or April, the major purification ritual of the year. The night before Nyepi the evil spirits are frightened away with drums, gongs, cymbals, firecrackers and huge **papier-mâché monsters** (*ogoh-ogoh*). On the day itself, everyone sits quietly at home to persuade any remaining evil spirits that Bali is completely deserted. Visitors are expected to stay quietly in their hotels.

Every temple has an annual **odalan**, an anniversary and purification ceremony. The majority of these are small, local affairs, but the celebrations at the large directional temples draw large crowds. There are also local temple festivals related to the moon, some associated with full moon and some with the night of complete darkness.

Another annual event, **Saraswati**, in honour of the goddess of knowledge (see p.313), takes place on the last day of the *wuku* year. Books are particularly venerated and the faithful are not supposed to read, while students attend special ceremonies to pray for academic success. Other annual festivals are **Tumpek Kandang**, when all animals are blessed, and **Tumpek Landep**, a day of devotion to all things made of metal, including tools, motorbikes, cars and buses.

Nonreligious anniversaries that are celebrated in Bali include April 21, **Kartini Day**, commemorating the birthday in 1879 of Raden Ajeng Kartini, an early Indonesian nationalist and the first female emancipationist. Parades, lectures and social events are attended by women, while the men and children take over their duties for the day. September 20, the anniversary of the **Badung puputan** in Denpasar in 1906 (see p.306), is commemorated each year by a fair in Alun-alun Puputan. November 20 is **Heroes Day** in Bali, in remembrance of the defeat of the nationalist forces led by Ngurah Rai at Marga in 1946 (see p.308).

The huge month-long **Arts Festival** (www.baliartsfestival.com) celebrates all Balinese arts including traditional music, gamelan recitals and film and documentary screenings. It's held annually at Denpasar's Taman Werdi Budaya Arts Centre from mid-June. Watersports competitions and parades are the highlights of the **Kuta Karnival**, which runs for a week, usually in October. In Ubud, there's the **Bali Spirit Festival** of world music, dance and yoga every March (www.balispiritfestival.com) and the **Ubud Writers and Readers Festival** (www.ubudwritersfestival.com), with over two hundred events, talks and workshops from an international cast of writers, every October.

Lombok's festivals

Lombok's festivals are a mixture of Hindu, Muslim and local folk events. **Ciwatrati** (in Jan) is celebrated by Hindus in West Lombok, where followers meditate without sleeping or eating for 24 hours to redeem their sins. A far more public occasion is **Nyale** (see box, p.275) which takes place every February or March near Kuta and along the south coast, attracting thousands of people to witness the first appearance of the sea worms. **The Anniversary of West Lombok**, a formal government event, takes place on April 17. **Harvest festival** is celebrated by Balinese Hindus in March/April at Gunung Pengsong, when they give thanks for the harvest by the ritual slaughter of a buffalo. **Lebaran Topat** occurs seven days after

Ramadan, when Sasak people visit family graves and the grave of Loang Baloq on the edge of Mataram.

In November or December comes **Perang Topat**, informally known as the **Ketupat War** (see p.253), a riotous and spectacular public rice-throwing battle between local Hindus and Wetu Telu followers that takes place at Pura Lingsar in Mataram. Also around this time, offerings are made at Gunung Rinjani's crater lake, Segara Anak, to ask for blessings, known as **Pekelem**, and the **Pujawali** celebration is held at Pura Kalasa temple at Narmada, at Pura Lingsar and at Pura Meru in Mataram. December 17 marks the anniversary of the political **founding of West Nusa Tenggara**. Finally, **Chinese New Year** (Imlek) sees many Chinese-run businesses closing for several days in January or February.

Health

Most travellers to Bali and Lombok experience no health issues. Traveller's diarrhoea ("Bali belly") will affect some. However, serious illness and accidents (including surfers' mishaps) can't be ruled out. All visitors should have travel insurance in case private health care and medical evacuation is needed (see p.46).

Discuss your trip with your **doctor** or a specialist travel clinic (see p.35) as early as possible to allow time to complete courses of **inoculations**. If you've come directly from a country with yellow fever, you'll need to be immunized and you should carry the immunization certificate. Apart from this no inoculations are legally required for Indonesia. However, inoculations against the following should be discussed with your medical adviser: diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, polio, rabies, tetanus, typhoid and tuberculosis.

If you have any medical conditions, are pregnant or are travelling with children, it is especially important to get advice. If you need regular medication, carry it in your hand baggage and carry a certificate/letter from your doctor detailing your condition and the drugs – it can be handy for overzealous customs officials.

Treatment in Bali and Lombok

You'll find **pharmacies** (*apotik*), village **health clinics** (*klinik*) and **doctors** across the islands and **public hospitals** in each district capital and in Denpasar, supplemented by **specialist tourist**

clinics in the main tourist areas. In local facilities the availability of English-speaking staff and their ability to tackle accidents and common tourist ailments varies from area to area. Most Balinese use local facilities together with traditional healers (*balian*) as they believe that physical symptoms are a sign of spiritual illness (see p.332).

If you need an **English-speaking doctor**, seek advice at your hotel (some of the luxury ones have in-house doctors). For more serious problems, you'll want to access private **clinics** in the main resorts. A couple of places on the outskirts of Kuta and Seminyak have good reputations for dealing with expat emergencies: Bali International Medical Centre (BIMC) and International SOS (see p.75) offer consultations at the clinic, doctor call-out and ambulance call-out; prices depend on the time of day or night and distance from the clinic. The only **recompression chamber** on Bali is located in Denpasar (see p.92) and there is another on Lombok (see p.287). Details of local medical facilities including **dentists** (*doctor gigi*) are given in the Directory section of each city account in the Guide.

Major diseases

Bali and Lombok are home to a range of diseases endemic to tropical Southeast Asia, most of which are not a threat in travellers' home countries. Inoculations are therefore strongly advised.

Most Western travellers will have had inoculations against **polio**, **tetanus**, **diphtheria** and **tuberculosis** during childhood. Travellers should check that they are still covered against them and have booster injections if necessary.

Typhoid can be lethal and is passed through contaminated food or water. It produces an extremely high fever, abdominal pains, headaches, diarrhoea and red spots on the body. Dehydration is the danger here as with all intestinal problems, so take rehydration salts and get medical help urgently. Inoculation and personal hygiene measures (see p.34) offer the best protection.

Avoid contact with all animals, no matter how cute, especially street dogs. Rabies is spread via the saliva of infected animals, most commonly cats, dogs or monkeys; it is endemic throughout Asia and all visitors to Bali should be aware of the disease. Bali was rabies-free for ten years until 2008 but since then the disease has re-established itself and it's now present throughout the island. If you see a suspicious dog you can contact the Bali Animal Welfare Association (@bawabali.com, ☎ 081 138 9004).

Hundreds of people have died in the last decade despite a major culling and vaccination programme. If you get bitten, wash the wound immediately with antiseptic and get medical help. Treatment involves a course of injections, but you won't need all of them if you have had a course of pre-departure jabs. Lombok was officially rabies-free in 2016, but given its proximity to Bali the same precautions should be taken.

Japanese encephalitis is a serious viral illness causing inflammation of the brain. It is endemic across Asia and is transmitted from infected birds and animals via mosquitoes. Inoculation is available for those planning extended periods in rural areas who are most at risk, although it is rare among travellers. The symptoms are variable but flu-like headache, fever and vomiting are common and the best advice is to seek medical help immediately if you develop these.

There are several strains of **hepatitis** (caused by viral infections) and vaccines can offer some protection against some strains. Symptoms in all of them are a yellow colouring of the skin and eyes, extreme exhaustion, fever and diarrhoea. It's one of the most common illnesses that afflicts travellers to Asia and can last for months and can also lead to chronic illness. Hepatitis A is transmitted via contaminated food and water or saliva. Hepatitis B is more serious and is transmitted via sexual contact or by contaminated blood, needles or syringes, which means that medical treatment itself can pose a risk if sterilization procedures are not up to scratch.

Malaria

Both Bali and Lombok are within **malarial zones**. Information regarding the prevalence, prevention and treatment of malaria is being constantly updated so you must seek medical advice at least a month before you travel. Current advice suggests that there is very little risk of malaria in Bali, but a low risk in Lombok. The latest information shows an increase in the most serious form of malaria across Asia and there are reports of resistance to certain drug treatments by some strains. Pregnant women and children need specialist advice.

Malaria, which can be fatal, is passed into humans in mosquito bites (one is all it takes). The appropriate prophylactic drug depends on your destination but all are taken to a strict timetable beginning before you enter the malarious area and continuing after leaving. If you don't follow instructions precisely, you're in danger of developing the illness. The symptoms are fever, headache and shivering, similar to a severe dose of flu and

often coming in cycles, but a lot of people have additional symptoms. Don't delay seeking help: malaria progresses quickly. If you develop flu-like symptoms at any time up to a year after returning home, you should inform a doctor of your travels and ask for a blood test.

However, none of the antimalarial drugs is a hundred percent effective and it is vital to try to stop the mosquitoes biting you: sleep under a **mosquito net** – preferably one impregnated with an insecticide especially suited to the task – burn mosquito coils, and use **repellent** on exposed skin. The most powerful repellents should be brought from home; DEET is effective but can be an irritant and natural alternatives are available containing citronella, eucalyptus oil or neem oil.

Dengue fever

Another reason to avoid mosquito bites is **dengue fever**, caused by a virus carried by a different species of mosquito, which bites during the day. There is no vaccine or tablet available to prevent the illness – which causes fever, headache and joint and muscle pains among the least serious symptoms, and internal bleeding and circulatory system failure among the most serious – and no specific drug to cure it. Outbreaks occur across Indonesia throughout the year, but particularly during the rainy season. It is vital to get an early medical diagnosis and obtain treatment to relieve symptoms.

AIDS/HIV

Bali has a high rate of HIV/AIDS cases; bear in mind, as well, that other travellers may be infected. Many people with HIV are also infected with hepatitis. **Condoms** can be bought on both islands, but it's advisable to bring your own too.

General precautions

Precautions while you are travelling can reduce your chances of getting ill. Personal hygiene is vital and it pays to use some discretion about choosing where to eat – if the bits you can see are filthy, imagine the state of the kitchen. Avoid **food** that has sat around in the heat in favour of freshly cooked meals; food prepared in fancy tourist places is just as likely to be suspect as that from simple street stalls. **Ice** is supposedly prepared under regulated conditions in Indonesia, but it's impossible to be sure how it has been transported or stored since leaving the factory. If you're being really careful, avoid ice in your drinks – a lot easier

said than done in the heat. Treat even small cuts or scrapes with antiseptic. Wear flip-flops or thongs in the bathroom rather than walk around barefoot.

Water hygiene

Do not drink untreated tap **water** on Bali or Lombok, as it is likely to contain disease-causing micro-organisms. **Bottled water** is available everywhere and refilling facilities are becoming more widespread (cutting down on plastic waste). Or you can buy **purifying tablets**, **water filters** and **water purifiers** from travel clinics (see below) and specialist outdoor-equipment retailers.

Heat and skin problems

Travellers are at risk of **sunburn** and **dehydration**. It's wise to bring your own sunscreen, which is available in Bali (less so in Lombok) but more expensive than in the West. Limit exposure to the sun in the hours around noon, use high-factor sunscreen and wear sunglasses and a hat. Make sure that you drink enough as you'll be sweating mightily in the heat. If you're urinating very little or your urine turns dark (this can also indicate hepatitis), increase your fluid intake. When you sweat you lose salt, so add some extra to your food or take oral rehydration salts (see below).

A more serious result of the heat is **heatstroke**, indicated by high temperature, dry skin and a fast, erratic pulse. As an emergency measure, try to cool the patient off by covering them in sheets or sarongs soaked in cold water and turn the fan on them; they may need to go to hospital, though.

Heat rashes, **prickly heat** and fungal infections are also common; wear loose cotton clothing, dry yourself carefully after bathing and use medicated talcum powder or antifungal powder if you fall victim.

Intestinal trouble

The priority with an **upset stomach** is to prevent dehydration. Start drinking **rehydration solution** as soon as the attack starts, even if you're vomiting as well, and worry about a diagnosis later. Rehydration salts (such as Oralit and Pharolit) are widely available in pharmacies but it makes sense to carry some with you. The home-made form of these consists of eight teaspoons of sugar and half a teaspoon of salt dissolved in a litre of clean water.

Stomach upsets can either be a reaction to a change of diet or can signal something more serious. You should seek medical advice if the attack is particularly severe, lasts more than a couple of days

or is accompanied by constant, severe abdominal pain or fever, blood or mucus in your diarrhoea or smelly farts and burps.

Drugs such as Lomotil and Imodium, which stop diarrhoea, should only be used if you get taken ill on a journey or must travel while ill; they are not a cure, and simply paralyse your gut, temporarily plugging you up, at a time when your insides need to get rid of the toxins causing the problem.

Many travellers find locally available charcoal remedies effective against diarrhoea.

Cuts, bites and stings

Divers should familiarize themselves with potential **underwater hazards** and the appropriate first aid, although you're more at risk from bad diving practices and coral scrapes than from tangling with sharks, sea snakes, stingrays or jellyfish. All cuts should be cleansed and disinfected immediately, covered and kept dry until healed.

On the land, there are poisonous **snakes** on both Bali and Lombok, although they're only likely to attack if you step on them – they are most often encountered in ricefields, so if you are exploring these look where you're stepping. In jungle areas wear long thick socks to protect your legs when trekking and walk noisily. If you're bitten, try to remember what the snake looked like, move as little as you can and send someone for medical help. Under no circumstances do anything heroic with a Swiss army knife. There are also a few poisonous **spiders** in Bali and Lombok, and if you're bitten by one you should also immobilize the limb and get medical help. If you get **leeches** attached to you while trekking in the jungle in the rainy season, use a dab of salt, suntan oil or a cigarette to persuade them to let go, rather than just pulling them off.

MEDICAL RESOURCES FOR TRAVELLERS

Canadian Society for International Health ☎ 613 241 5785, csih.org. Extensive list of travel health centres.

CDC ☎ 1800 232 4636, cdc.gov/travel. Official US government travel health site.

Hospital for Tropical Diseases Travel Clinic UK ☎ www.thehtd.org/TravelClinic.aspx

International Society for Travel Medicine US ☎ 1404 373 8282, istm.org. Has a full list of travel health clinics.

MASTA (Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad) UK ☎ masta-travel-health.com

Tropical Medical Bureau Ireland ☎ 01 2715 200, tmb.ie.

The Travel Doctor ☎ traveldoctor.com.au. Lists travel clinics in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.