

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



JOURNAL CONCIERGE / AN INSIDER'S GUIDE

Bali

In a place known for big tourist crowds, you can still break away from the pack. Just ask these locals.

FEW ISLANDS serve up as varied a grab bag of holiday pursuits as Bali. On a land-mass about the size of Delaware, you can seek out tranquility in the DayGlo-green rice paddies around the yogi haven of Ubud and adventure up the slopes of massive volcanoes. Along Bali's southern beaches, nightclubs attract big-name DJs and ever-more-ambitious restaurants are popping up like mushrooms after a down-pour. But the secret is out—and has been for a while. As tourist arrivals return to

prepandemic numbers and more transplants put down roots, Bali's ever-growing traffic and garbage woes have turned it into an overtourism poster child. Luckily there are as many dimensions to the Indonesian island as the number of gods worshiped in its Hindu temples. Know where to look, and you can still experience the island not only as it once was but also as it might be in a more sustainable future. Below, four locals point you in the right direction. —Chris Schalkx



BALI HIGH [1] Amed, a string of fishing villages, still offers peace and quiet. **[2]** Traditional performances happen daily at a temple in the Uluwatu region. **[3]** Murni's Warung, a restaurant that's been in business for 50 years. **[4]** The team at FED by Made, a restaurant in the beachside enclave of Seminyak. **[5]** Surfboards at Echo Beach. **[6]** A spread at Dapur Bali Mula.

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Chef-owner of HOME by Chef Wayan, a neo-Balinese restaurant in the village of Pererenan

SURF BREAK / Echo Beach [5] Echo Beach in the area of Canggu is one of my favorite beaches for surfing. The shacks lining the sand are great for watching the surf while sipping a coconut.

CLASS IN SESSION / Green School Even if you're not looking to enroll your kids, a tour of the Green School is worth it for the whimsical bamboo architecture and jungle surroundings. The nature-centric education program is just as fascinating.

STRESS BUSTER / Samadi This Canggu yoga studio is my go-to for classes. I often start the day with a green juice at its cafe and visit the organic farmers market in its garden every Sunday.

STYLISH SOUVENIRS / Escalier This boutique shop in Seminyak curates the best apparel and accessories. They mix international brands with homegrown labels like local womenswear brands Vacation and Riu.

LOCAL LIBATIONS / Kawi At this tiny cocktail bar in Ubud the drinks are simple but delicious and use local ingredients such as *arak* (palm wine), *pandan* (an aromatic plant) and tomato sambal.

LUSH LUNCH / Warung Rekreasi Bedugul The owner of this restaurant overlooking Lake Beratan has spent more than 10 years choosing the right plants for its landscape. I often stop by for strolls around its lush tropical gardens.

REFUEL PUMP / The Living Room I don't drink coffee, but I'm told the brews at this cozy cafe in Pererenan are top notch. I come for the beef noodles and to catch up on work. Their extensive vinyl collection is the cherry on top.

REAL DEAL / Murni's Warung [3] The *nasi campur* (rice with meat and vegetables) here is the best on the island. The owner opened this restaurant in 1974, and still occasionally pops in to meet guests and share fascinating stories.

SUN DAYS / Nyang Nyang Beach This white-sand beach on the southern edge of Uluwatu is one of my favorites. It's still relatively untouched, and the waves are excellent for experienced surfers.

TIME TRAVEL / Tenganan Pegriingsingan These days, Bali is inhabited by people from all over Indonesia, so it's easy to overlook the island's indigenous tribes. This village in east Bali is home to the Bali Aga tribe, who share their culture with visitors.

SEASIDE SOJOURN / Pondok Pisang When I want to get away from it all, I book a few nights in this laid-back retreat in the town of Candidasa. Don't miss the *pepes ikan*, fish wrapped in banana leaves, at dinner.

ART HISTORY / Neka Art Museum This small museum in Ubud offers a primer on Bali's art scene since the 1960s, including works by local and expatriate artists, alongside a collection of *keris* (traditional daggers).

CASUAL COOKOUT / Dapur Bali Mula [6] At this backyard restaurant in north Bali, chef and village priest Yudiawan revives traditional recipes with locally sourced ingredients. Don't leave without tasting his *arak*.

RURAL TONIC / Munduk Moding Plantation Nature Resort This hilltop retreat in Bali's north is where I go to unwind from the constant bustle of the south. They have an excellent Balinese restaurant on site, along with a coffee plantation and roastery.

PUPPET MASTER / Setia Darma House of Masks and Puppets This private museum in Sukawati hosts exhibitions with artifacts from around the archipelago. Incredibly, it's open to the public for free.

DANCE OFF / Kecak Uluwatu [2] The nightly performances at this beautiful temple feature stories from Hindu folklore. Instead of typical gamelan percussion instruments, performers use only their voices to create the soundtrack.

PLUS, DON'T MISS...

Bambu Indah Pitched up along the Ayung River in the depths of Ubud's jungle, this eco-conscious resort is a whimsical collection of tropical dwellings made from swirling bamboo and antique teak. / **FED by Made [4]** At this hip restaurant in Seminyak, a young troupe of Bali-born, Melbourne-trained chefs spin local ingredients into cross-cultural creations. / **Amed [1]** There's still a go-slow vibe to this string of sleepy fishing villages in Bali's east, a welcome escape from the tourist-thronged south. / **Astungkara Way** Whether you walk the 83-mile trail from coast to coast or opt for a shorter trek covering part of the route, this walking trail is the best way to experience the rural communities and remote temples few travelers get to see.

