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We travel to Bali regularly to bring authenticity to [ikatan Day Spa](#) in Noosa, updating this information each time we visit. We hope this travel guide helps you enjoy your time in a place we love, full of beautiful people and wonderful experiences on the island of the gods.

## *Bali Travel Guide*

### On arrival at Denpasar Airport

**If you're getting a taxi** it's a set meter price which is safe and organised through a central ticket area.

**If your Resort is picking you up** and you can't find them ask anyone from another hotel (they all know each other) or stand still and they will find you.

### Money

**The Balinese currency is Rupiah.** ATMs are found at the baggage carousel area in Denpasar Airport and we always use ATM in preference to money changers. **Money changers are everywhere** but we don't recommend them. **The ATM offers the best currency rate and is safe.** Use any Bank to change money as a safe option if you are taking cash. **ATMs are readily available** but the ATMs in Bali are different to Australia in that they offer different denominations of cash in 50,000Rp or 100,000Rp notes. **MOST IMPORTANTLY WHEN YOUR TRANSACTION IS COMPLETED YOUR RECEIPT COMES OUT BEFORE YOUR CARD SO DON'T FORGET YOUR CARD!** Otherwise the ATM asks if you want another transaction and the next person can press yes and clean your account out! **Use the Commonwealth ATM if possible** as they carry large notes which means less bulk in your wallet and more money in one bank transaction for same bank fee. Don't use the ATM in 7/11 stores as they are not always safe and seem to be the ones where scammers are found.

### Water

**Only drink bottled water and only use bottled water for cleaning your teeth.** If ice is made with bottled water it's safe. **Tip:** Hang shower cap over your bathroom tap so you don't clean your teeth with Bali tap water and get sick.

### Alcohol

**Can be bought in a local shop** - Wine is expensive in Bali but the Two Island Chardonnay and Riesling are okay. Don't be put off by the grape style as it does not reflect these light unwooded wines that go well with Asian foods. Some local wines are made in Bali with Australia grapes from WA and SA (because there's no tax on imported fruit, but imported alcohol is heavily taxed). Try **Two Islands** or **Artisan**. You can also get Hatten or Plaga wine but we can't recommend them. Imported wines are very expensive apart from Chilean wines and are generally not well travelled or cellared – check dates and the colour of the wine before they open the bottle.

**The local beer is Bintang and there are a few new local beers coming on the scene now which are cheap and popular.** Spirits and cocktails are about the same price as in bars as Australia. **Do Not drink the local alcohols like Arak or Brem in bars.** You can take Duty Free alcohol in to Bali - it's cheaper and there's more choice when you buy it in Australia on the way to Bali and in Australia when you return. On your way back to Australia, most flights fly late at night, so eat up before you go to the airport or grab a takeaway. The Denpasar airport food is terrible and like all airports, expensive.

### Tipping

**It is customary to tip** - there is a 15 - 20% surcharge added automatically to your bill. For example, if you see the price of a meal is 10,000 Rupiah, then add the surcharge that will be listed on the bottom of the menu to work out the real price of the meal. This is a fee for tax and also includes a service fee (tip) which will be distributed amongst the staff. However, it is good to give a tip as Balinese believe in Karma – as you give so shall you receive – but only tip if the service is good.

## **Transport**

**Driver** at \$50 - \$100 a day - hotel drivers are usually good, charge about the same price and your hotel will organise it.

**Blue taxi** - reliable and set prices on the meter. After dark - if they offer to bargain with you say 'turn the meter on please' as they assume you don't know the cost and they can make more money. Or bargain and expect to pay just over half of the price they started with. Remember though that a 50,000Rp taxi ride is only about AU\$5.

**Personal drivers Ubud (known as TRANSPORT)** – will bargain as there are no taxis in the Ubud area and they all work together so the price will be the same no matter who you bargain with. Same bargaining rule and price applies, or use the hotel shuttle bus as it is easier.

## **Scooter or motorbike hire**

Your hotel will organise this but wear a helmet unless you want to get fined! It's usually \$7 a day to hire a scooter but make sure you have an international license (you can get one quickly and easily in Australia at the RACQ office) or better still a bike license. Carry about 300,000Rp in a separate wallet with your license and should you get pulled over by the police get out your 'local' wallet. We have been pulled up often and paid 150,000- 300,000Rp in fines. A separate spare wallet with small money is a good idea because if the police see a large amount of money in your wallet they put up the fine. Also make sure you wear a helmet as you will get pulled over by police if you don't wear a helmet and it gives them a reason to ask you for money. More importantly helmets are a really good way to stay alive. There's lots of crazy driving in Bali and unless you know what you are doing it isn't worth riding a scooter as the Taxis are cheap. Denpasar hospital is not a good holiday resort!

## **Laundry**

Local laundries can wash anything and you can collect it the next day or sometimes even the same day. Try them out first with some less important clothes. We have never had trouble with Laundry, however friends of mine have had a lot of clothes ruined. Test run the laundry first.

## **Fashion and shopping**

There is a big French and Italian community and both have local newspapers and magazines. The European influence has bought great bread, coffee and fashion to Bali and established the beautiful clothing, handbags, shoes and homewares stores which are found mostly in the Seminyak area. Leave room in your suitcase for shopping!

## **Some Restaurants allow people to smoke in Bali so make sure you ask for a non-smoking area**

Smoking is really hard for Australians to accept when we're not used to people smoking around us while eating food. Dogs are also a common sight in cheaper open-air restaurants. Air-conditioned restaurants do not allow smoking inside and some restaurants have no smoking areas. Now there are more and more no smoking restaurants each time we go to Bali.

## **Sickness**

**Bali Belly** - For any signs of an upset tummy go to an apotek (chemist) for some charcoal tablets (diatab). If you need to go to a doctor there are some apotek with doctors or good clinics like Bali Clinic, SOS or BMC. The local clinics are okay for general illness but if you need stitches or serious attention go to the expat clinics. Get onto any illness early – your hotel staff can help.

## **EAT – DRINK – Jimbaran Bay area**

**Taxis are hard to get back from Jimbaran** - Take a driver and have him wait for you. You'll pay about 200,000- 350,000Rp for a taxi from Kuta or Seminyak area to Jimbaran round trip. You can trust the driver to wait and meet you where you arrange. In fact they seem to just show up when you finish. Don't worry about them hanging around as they meet their driver friends and have dinner too.

**The Rock Bar at Ayana Resort** - Enjoy this amazing bar on a rock in the ocean! Expensive for Bali (AUD prices) but worth every Rupiah! Take your camera as it's the best location for sunset in Bali and allow a lot of time to get there and back in the traffic and a bit of time in line to get in the bar. We have not been since it became popular but others tell us it takes a lot of time.

**Seafood at sunset on the beach at Jimbaran Bay** - You choose your fish, prawns, lobster and it is barbecued for you over coconut husks. Pick a good sunset night. Get there early, no later than 5.30pm. Take some insect spray.

## **EAT – DRINK – SPA - Seminyak & Legian area**

**THE BARS ON THE BEACH** – This used to be the cheapest sunset but on our last visit we found it to be expensive for the quality of alcohol. Still, it's a great experience to sit on the beach so just drink Bintang beer which is still reasonably cheap. Wine and spirits are not good quality and not very cold.

**Ku de ta** - For sunset: Get there early around 4.30pm, find a lounge and order a cocktail then move on to tapas if you like Japanese food or pizza. Watch the sunset while people watching and listen to the DJ spin the latest release music through the garden. If you don't come to Bali often it's a must.

**Cocoon Bar and Restaurant** - At Double Six in Legian - Two for one drinks at sunset for really good quality cocktails and a nice bar.

**The W Resort** - Jl. Petitenget in Seminyak - You're welcome to visit if you are not staying in the hotel provided you are dressed appropriately (smart casual or evening elegant). The latest new resort that has to be seen to be believed for its style, opulence yet comfort and service is amazing. Get a cab as the driveway is hard to walk down. **Not good for kids.**

**Potato Head Beach Club** - Jl. Petitenget in Seminyak - This place is an architectural masterpiece using 10,000 antique Javanese Shutters as the exterior curved wall. We don't go often as we don't like to line up to get into a beach bar and restaurant with great cocktails but average food. *It's just the latest craze.*

**Sarong** - Jl. Petitenget in Seminyak - Cheap food and expensive wine. Three chefs (Indian, Indonesian and Australian) combine the most amazing flavours with an extensive menu. Food is on the spicy side so let them know if that's not your preference. Large meals, amazing décor, dress up, have a cocktail when you arrive and enjoy. This is a must eat at restaurant. Have a few drinks before you go as their wine list is pricey although the wine is good. You will have to book ahead as it is always booked out. **A bit spicy!**

**Mama San** - Restaurant in Seminyak - Indoor air-conditioned NO SMOKING except upstairs in the bar. Modern Asian food with traditional inspirations from Vietnam, China and India. Great food to share, amazing decor and good wine list. Open for lunch and dinner. **Not Suitable for little kids.**

**Tiger Palm** - Another new restaurant by the Sarong Group which should be great. It's opposite Sister Fields and open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Chandi Restaurant** - Jalan Laksmana (eat street) Seminyak - Fabulous food which has its origins in Bali with a modern style. Great hot stone meals served at the table. Leave room for the chocolate fondant – Indonesian chocolate is so good! **Not a great restaurant for little kids.**

**Ginger Moon** - Jalan Laksmana (eat street) Seminyak – A cross between tapas style and pizza all of which are fantastic as a great way to try a few dishes. We love this for casual dining. **Okay for kids.**

**Bamboo** - Jalan Pettigenet - Upmarket Balinese Food in a beautiful setting surrounded by water but with no fencing so **don't take kids here.** Adult only restaurant with no kids meals. They have a great bar area for pre-dinner drinks. Need to book.

**Biku book store and cafe** - Jl Petitenget - Great casual food, antiques and books. Specialising in teas and high teas. May need to book in busy season or eat early or come for a late lunch. Also open for dinner. **Kids like it here.**

**Sardine** - Kerobokan - Not far from the jail! A beautiful restaurant overlooking the rice paddies. Upmarket and close to Seminyak and Petitenget reasonably priced for excellent food. **Not Suitable for kids.**

**Champagne Bar** - Jalan Laksmana - Very small bar that plays old music clips which keep you guessing who's singing. This place is different and fun. **Quirky (big kids love it) but no good for little kids.**

**Lacalaca Mexican restaurant** - Jl Drupadi - Flavoursome, fresh and cheap food with a selection of margaritas. We suggest you work your way through the menu as tapas, like all good Mexicans and add your own spicy. **Good for kids**

**La Luciola** - Around the corner from Ku de Ta - Fantastic Breakfast from 8.30am. Two storey restaurants on the beach serving excellent western-style food and wines. They have a great bar surrounded by frangipani trees so arrive early for a drink first. You need to book. **OK for kids but better for a romantic dinner.**

**Merah Putih** - Seminyak near W hotel - Upmarket Indonesian and Balinese food with the most amazing decor. Good bar. They advertise no children but we've seen lots of tables with kids even though the food is **not kid friendly.** Baby sitters are so cheap in Bali so why would you take the kids to an exquisite restaurant like this? Mid to higher price.

**Sea Circus** - Jl Laksmana - Opposite Samaya Resort - the BEST COFFEE and GELATO. we love breakfast here and a late afternoon Gelato. Lunch and Dinner is good too for a casual cheap night out. **Good for big kids, too small for prams.**

**Barbacoa** - Opposite Sardine in Kerobokan - Brazilian BBQ with a great menu that's perfect for shared dishes. Leave room for the chocolate truffles! Air-con inside and a few tables outside for smokers. Book and go early before the fire roast of the day sells out, especially if its pork. Friday and Saturday is Lamb nights. The octopus salad, and pork sliders are also amazing. **Great for big kids**

**Hotel Mexicola** - Opposite Body Works Spa in Seminyak - Mexican restaurant with amazing crazy décor. Great drinks, average food but go for a drink to check it out. Big place and good for kids of any age, especially a group of adult ones!

## **Day Spas and Massage**

### **Seminyak Day Spas**

**Jari Menari** – **THE BEST MASSAGE** in Bali and the only place we get a massage in Seminyak. A **MUST HAVE!** Katrina used to teach massage at Jari Menari so we know the massage therapists are well trained and respected in this clean, relaxing massage centre. The therapists are all male so they can be strong. Try the favourite massage for a good stretch or the singing bowl massage for a different experience. Book online at [www.jarimenari.com](http://www.jarimenari.com).

### **Legian Day Spas**

**Spa Bali in Legian** - On Jalan Dhyana Pura or Drink Street. Hygienic, efficient and air-conditioned. We found them great for pedicures, manicures, crème head massage and hairdressing but not massage, facials or body treatments.

**Body Works** - Cheap but mass production. The pedicure and crème hair massage are okay but **we can't recommend the massage, facials or body treatments**. A lot of clients that come to ikatan say they go to Body Works but we have no idea why! It's cheap and that's exactly the type of treatment you receive from therapists who seem overworked, tired and not at all interested in you or what they are doing! **Body Works is like spa therapist slave labour** and I don't agree with it. Hygiene standards are not as high as other spas.

**Spring Spa** - Opposite the Potato Head drive way in Jl Pettigent - A contemporary day spa with a great vibe that offers all day spa services. I thought the massage was very good in a clean professional spa. Inexpensive treatments.

**The Shampoo Lounge** - Seminyak end of Jl Legian - Good hairdressers and beauty services such as pedicures and crème hair bath. Have a **cream hair bath** while in Bali - they are everywhere and a **MUST HAVE** treatment you'll find at day spas or hairdressing salons. It's a conditioning treatment for hair with massage of head, neck shoulders, arms and hands included.

## **EAT – DRINK – SPA – UBUD**

**Organic and health food cafes are everywhere in Ubud in and around the central shopping area** so just ask anyone in the area. The main street to find these cafes is Jl Hanonman and Dewi Sri.

**Café Lotus** - In the grounds of the temple on the main road in Ubud. Cheap food, popular location for a casual meal and pretty setting. **Kid friendly**

**The Bridge Restaurant and Wine Bar** – A beautifully restored art deco building overlooking the river. Excellent food and great wine cellar. Ideal for a romantic night with good food and wine. Higher price range. *Worth checking out this beautiful building.* **Great if you're on your own** as you can eat on the bar level where you walk in. **Not Suitable for little kids.**

**Chinta Grill** - Jl Monkey Forest - Half way down the on the left about 500m after the football oval. Love it here for a cheap, quality meal with good service and good size serve. Great for kids of all ages.

**Glow restaurant** - Como Shambala Health Retreat. About a 20-minute drive out of town. Exquisite food, totally healthy in a magical setting. Quiet and relaxing with excellent service. Upper price range. **Adult only resort, not suitable for kids.**

**Cucina at Uma** - Out of town at the top of the hill on the way to Sayan. Very good Italian food and quality wines. Mid to high price range.

**Hujan** - Another restaurant by the Sarong Group with Asian sharing food but different to Sarong and Mama San.

**Balinese Warungs and cafes** - Too many to mention, but you can tell how good they are by how busy they are.

## EAT - SPA UBUD

We have tried a lot of spas in Ubud and only go to the four mentioned below but spas are everywhere with new ones opening all the time. Ask to look at the spa treatment rooms and check if they are clean before you book.

**Bliss Spa** - One of our Balinese friends works at Bliss Spa. Will pick you up from your hotel. Set in the rice paddies with spacious treatment rooms. Try the Shirodara 90-minute massage. A cheap spa with well trained therapists that charges in Rupiah. **Excellent value and a very special location in a rice paddy!** Don't have a facial. Located past Naughty Nuri's on the way to Sayan or Kedewatan Ubud.

**Dala Spa** - Very different concept. Located in a resort but outside guests are welcome. Excellent treatments and experience. Reasonably priced and they will pick you up. The resort restaurant is also very good.

**Spa at Uma** by Como – This is where we like to have a massage in Ubud. Its more expensive than the spas on the streets but, as with most things, you get what you pay for!

**Taksu Spa, café and restaurant** - In the heart of Ubud. A great way to spend some time as they offer yoga, spa treatments, a big massage list and you can stay for an organic lunch after your treatment. You can also go just to eat or drink in their beautiful edible garden.

## ACTIVITIES

**Kuta** - Water Bom Water Park - A good day out that's fun and cheap. You put money on a wrist band and then you put everything in a locker and use your wrist band to charge everything then they give you all unspent cash back at the end. It's a weird thing but works well and you don't lose money out of your pockets. Don't wear jewellery.

**Bintang cycling tour** - No, this is not a drinking tour! Bintang means star so the word is used a lot in Bali. This is a downhill 40km ride through the villages and rice paddies of Bali leaving from the volcano village of Batur. Bring: bike, gloves, camera, long shorts and a sense of adventure. We had so much fun and a great lunch at the end of the ride. Seeing the real Bali can only be done this way.

**White water rafting** - There are a lot of companies to choose from. Sobek is a world wide adventure sports company that has good equipment and offers a trip down the Ayung river. The company pick you up from your hotel. Wear a t-shirt with long sleeves to prevent the life jacket rubbing. Bring your bike riding gloves to help with paddling, wear shoes that dry fast like light weight runners or backpacker sandals (the ones with the Velcro straps). You can take a camera as they have waterproof bags. This is a must do experience!

**Monkey Forest** - **Don't wear jewellery or anything glittery or shiny!!!** It's best to stand back and watch the tour groups. You'll be easily entertained by what happens when they feed the Monkeys!

**Snorkelling** - **Book a trip to Nusa Lembongan for the most amazing snorkelling trip.** Book the Rocky Fast boat. They pick up from your hotel and it's only a 30-minute boat trip to Nusa Lembongan. Go over early and organise a boat when you get to the island to take you to private snorkelling areas around the island. The boats have clean gear but we usually take our own mask and snorkel. Two hours of snorkelling costs \$70 for the boat and driver which can take from two to six people. Take water and have lunch at one of the restaurants when you get back to the island before you get the 3pm Rocky Fast boat back to Bali. It's like snorkelling in a fish tank of clear blue water and the best snorkelling we've ever done.

Have fun, be sensible and stay safe. Most of all be polite to the Balinese as you are on their Island and they take their traditions, culture, religion and customs seriously.

In Bali, you are on island time, which is slow, and can be frustrating at times so I recommend going with the flow.

Enjoy Bali!

*Katrina and Nicholas*

Owners, [Ikatan Spa Noosa](#)

Get more good tips at Katrina's Blog, [Day Spa Oracle](#) at [www.dayspaoracle.com](http://www.dayspaoracle.com)

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