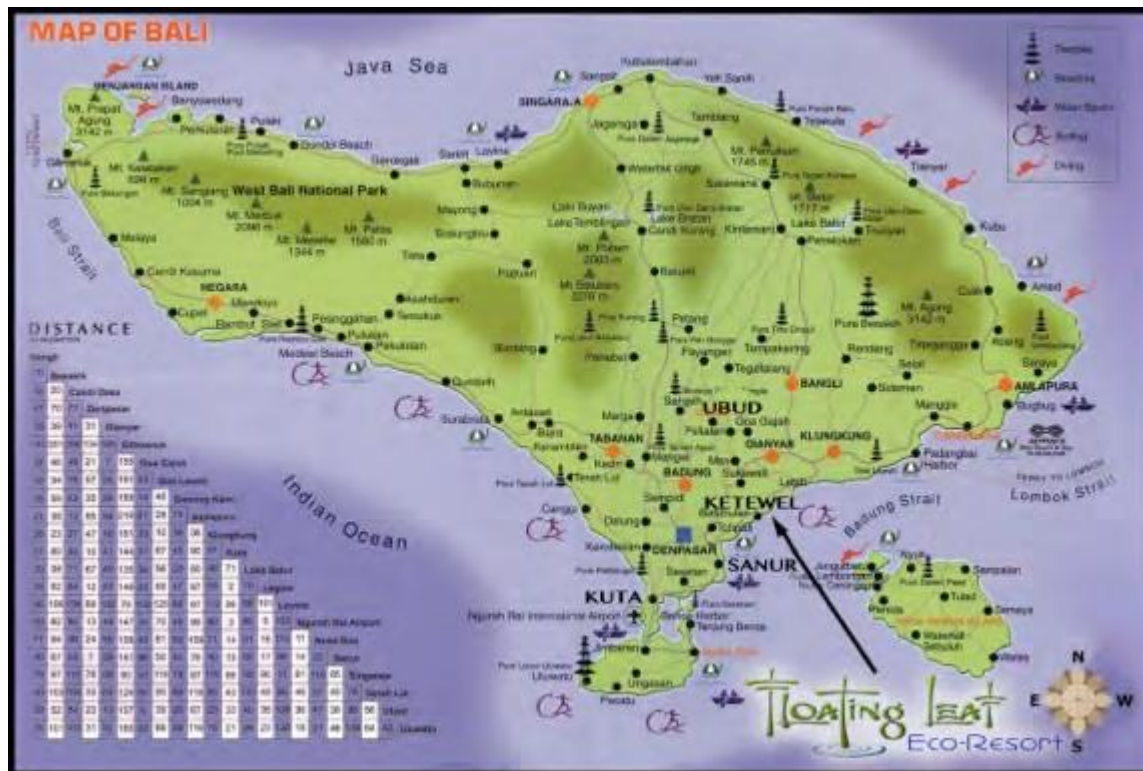


SUKAWATI – BALI – INDONESIA
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Om Swastiastu! Welcome!

We are thrilled to have made the decision to come to Bali. Following the information and tips in this guide, you are sure to have a rewarding and memorable trip to paradise. In addition, our website contains a wealth of helpful information, photos and much more <http://bali-floatingleaf.com/>

We are here to help every step along the way so should you have any questions or need some extra assistance, please just let us know. Have a pleasant journey and we look forward to meeting you in beautiful Bali.

Best Regards,
Putu Maryam and the entire Floating Leaf Team

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Please note, while in Indonesia, replace the +62 with 0



Before You Leave

Balinese merchants, banks, and moneychangers can be finicky when receiving US **currency**. Be sure to go to your bank before to leave for Bali and ask for crisp \$100 bills 2006 or newer. Inspect the bills for tears, markings or anything else that may render the bill in a state less than pristine.



You may want to exchange \$100 into Indonesian Rupiah. This will tide you over until we can get you to a reputable moneychanger in Bali.

The Indonesian Rupiah offers very favorable rates of exchange and buying power against most foreign currencies. Hotels, moneychangers, and banks provide foreign exchange services. We strongly recommend the use of banks, whenever possible, when exchanging currency. Always insist on an official receipt at the time of the transaction and take your time to make sure the money received matches the total shown on the receipt. **MOST IMPORTANTLY-** Count your money **BEFORE** you leave the counter. Don't feel rushed or pressured. Take your time and make sure you have received the right amount, the right bills (the large numbers can be tricky) because once you leave the counter you cannot reverse the process.

Those bringing foreign currency to Indonesia should note that many banks and moneychangers refuse to accept foreign bank notes that are soiled, torn or generally poor condition.

Many shops, large and small, accept credit cards with an extra charge of 3% to 5%. Cash advances can be obtained in all major tourist resorts --- Denpasar, Kuta, Sanur and Ubud. Automatic Teller Machines can be found all over Bali, especially at shopping centers and bank branches. Most of them are connected to international banking networks. Visa, Mastercard, and American Express are accepted by most businesses.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not required for travel to Bali, but please consult your physician to learn what might be best for you.

Purchase travel Insurance

Bali has several well-equipped international hospitals providing emergency and out-patient services to cater to the needs of foreign visitors. However, it is essential to have a **travel insurance policy** to cover theft, loss and medical problems. Some companies offer a range of medical expense options, but the small print must be scrutinized. Check that the policy covers ambulances and emergency flights home. Numerous policies also specify exclusion of dangerous activities such as scuba diving, renting a local motorbike on Bali and even trekking. Take note that locally acquired motorbikes are not valid under certain policies.

We HIGHLY recommend purchasing travel insurance.

What to Bring

After traveling for the last few decades and leading tours to **Bali and Indonesia**, I have added and deleted perhaps hundreds of items from my “**Ultimate Packing List**”. This list may be a bit more than what the standard visitor may need. Those who are coming to experience the eco-luxury of Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat may not need all of these items as we provide some of it for you. This list is geared a bit more towards an adventure traveler. The **advanced adventure traveler** and the **travel photographer** will find many of these items helpful, but I have compiled a special list for them. For those seeking that information, please see [“The Best Tips, Tricks and Gear for Travel Photographers”](#)

How about we start with what to pack in?

Luggage- I won't cover this much as it's fairly obvious. If your staying in hotels the four wheel suitcase is the way to go and if you need to be more mobile on rugged terrain, a backpack maybe the answer. I will say I just purchased my first hard cover four-wheel suitcase from TJ Max for \$35 for this trip and I'm loving it. Four wheels is much better than two.

Plastic Bags- Loads of 'em. You say, "Hey, I thought you were the eco-dude with sustainable villas and all?" Yes, busted, but that doesn't mean they can't be upcycled and reused. They are super handy for laundry bags, triple bagging your toiletries to prevent leaking, bagging up your wet surf trunks that didn't get to fully dry, carrying fruit or *nasi bungkus*, etc. Grab a grip of them and then grab a dozen more. They compress down to nothing and you will use them all. Also include a box or ziplocks but ditch the box and just put them all inside a single bag. Assorted sizes can come in handy but the big ones are best.

Transparent thicker plastic zippered bags from comforters and bed sets-

These are great as you can put your clothes in one and your travel mates clothes in another and easily see exactly what is in it and prevents you from foraging through every item of clothing.



The Melati Spa at Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat

Synch Sacks/Compression Bags- Save valuable space but unless you are really trekking probably not worth the hassle of undoing, the wrinkles, etc. However multiple quick closing sacks are great for organizing. Old pillow cases or even nylons (see below) can also work in a pinch.

Daypack- a backpack or messenger bag work well for this. Just something that you can stuff into your luggage that doesn't take up much room and can hold a day's supply of items like your camera, book, water, etc. If you don't have one, the bags

they give you at The Apple Stores are great and convert to a backpack- plus they take up no space and weigh close to nothing. [HERE](#) is a good photo bag/daypack. Or you can go with a full Camelbak pack along with the bladder discussed below.

Duffle Bag- stuff one into your luggage to use as an extra bag to bring home your new purchases.

[Small Locks](#)- Combination locks are preferred, as you don't want to lose the keys. Even if they are not the TSA approved ones and you don't use them on your international flight, you still want to use them when your luggage is left in the room and I even lock pockets on my backpack as I carry it around with me. Equally practical is a **[cable or wire lock](#)** that can be looped through your bag to secure it to a bed or railing when sleeping on a boat or train and even when left in your hotel room. Sure a hardcore criminal can cut through it but it's enough to dissuade most theft that may occur in Bali and Indonesia. Some friends have used plastic one-use cable ties but I prefer the above. [HERE](#) is a nice cable lock and [HERE](#) is a handy combination lock that is TSA approved.



3 ways to enjoy Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat

Clothing

[Moisture Wicking Clothing](#)- Lightweight, light colored, breathable items similar to work out gear is perfect. No jeans; too heavy, hot and bulky. After you pack all your clothes, unpack, take half of it out and pack again. [HERE](#) is a great pair of traveling pants and [HERE](#) is an excellent shirt.

[Zippered Pockets](#)- As many as you can get. In your shorts, pants, shirts, bags and whatever else. Pockets without secure closures are a potential way to separate you from your valued goods via a number of means. Velcro is not effective enough in my

opinion, but you may be able to get away with a good button (snaps may fail you as well). Devise a memorable scheme to remember where you keep each item to prevent you from looking like you have a family of rabid squirrels in your clothing each time you reach for your phone or cash.

Sarong and Bandana- The swiss army knife of clothing. 100s of uses and small and light too. I use an elastic buff as its even more handy than a bandana. [HERE](#) is a link to a great buff that not only has UV protection but it's bug repellent as well.

Good Walking Shoes- Perhaps no item is more important as you want to be on your feet exploring as much as possible. Break your shoes in well before you leave. Sidewalks, I use that term exceptionally loosely, in Bali and much of South East Asia can be quite dangerous. The story I tell our tour participants is that of one of my idols, **Lorne Blair** from the seminal [Ring Of Fire documentaries](#). Lorne and his brother Lawrence were one of the first modern day explorers of Indonesia back in the 70's. Their harrowing [expeditions](#) brought them face to face with death on numerous occasions and it is miraculous that they made it through alive. Despite the unrivaled bravery and determination of the brothers for over a decade of deep, dangerous adventure, Lorne was brought to a sad and tragic end by none other than the sidewalks of Legian only a few kilometers from where I write this. The terrible excuse for a sidewalk is actually a piece of concrete, wood, old sign, rock or any other semi-suitable item that will bridge the gap over the drainage ditch running alongside the road. They are notoriously unstable and care must be used when walking on them especially at night (hence the flashlight mentioned below). I don't want to scare you off, but I don't want to understate the importance of comfortable, stable footwear. Flip-flops or thongs (for your feet) are also de rigueur.



USA TODAY calls Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat "The Healthiest Destination"

A note on how to pack clothes efficiently

The traditional method of folding clothes individually into squares is actually a poor way to pack – it's space inefficient and creases clothes. I prefer to **roll clothes like a cigar** instead and place them side by side with like articles. If you are really crazy about avoiding wrinkles, the 'packing experts' will tell you to, "roll clothes together. Lay jackets, shirts, trousers and T-shirts on top of each – in that order – alternating the thickest parts of the garment as you layer so you don't get an uneven bulge." --- www.onebag.com. But I think that makes it hard to find each item. I do know that if you have a special item that you don't want wrinkled is to put it inside a **dry cleaning bag and roll it** inside. I suppose plastics bags might work well to but I am not such a neat freak so I have not tried. Actually, what I do is **use my clothes to wrap fragile objects** (like booze, electronics) and it does double duty-- to protect and to avoid 'unsightly wrinkles'.

Hat- Unless you have a special one, buy here cheaply and keep it as a souvenir or better yet, donate it on your way out.

Watch- leave it at home. Your phone tells time as do people you will meet. Not only does this give you a great opportunity to interact with locals, you don't advertise that you are a rich tourist. This goes for **jewelry** as well. Don't become a target. Buy something here and support the local craftspeople.



The Extras

Money Belt- I know, I know, it makes you look like an uber-tourist with an unsightly belly bulge, but its your safest bet and you only need to wear it on certain occasions. The rest of the time I keep it locked up. [HERE](#) is a nice one.

Sucker Wallet- Actually I don't travel with my wallet at all. I just wrap money around my credit cards and secure it with a fat rubberband. The 'sucker wallet' is a small wallet or dummy money holder with only a few dollars in it. If you are stopped by police looking for a bribe or want to get that hawker to sell you that Bintang tank for a low price, just pull out your sucker stash and tell them its all you got. This is

why I list lots of zippered pockets above. But be careful, the more pockets, the more you have to search to find what the hell you are looking for, so have a system and stick to it. Remember to leave all wallet contents that are not going to be used on your trip at home. That's right, the Vons Super Coupon card is not going to do you any good in Ubud.

Snack bars- Inevitably you will be stuck in traffic, on a lay-over or just need a little something to tide you over until you get to your favorite warung and grind down another mie goreng.

Pens- I stash them everywhere. When I see companies giving them away, I gladly take one (sometime two, I won't lie) and put it in my pack, pocket or wherever currently does not have one. I always seem to need one, but then I need something to write on as well so...

Small Notebook- Actually I use this less and less as my iPhone serves this and many other purposes. Get a note transfer app so it will sync with your laptop as well. I mention some options [HERE](#) but a full iPhone app list for the traveler is coming soon. [Email](#) me to get put on the list for updates.



Trek Towel- the ones that claim to absorb several times their own weight and are fast-drying. A good material is called viscose and feels like soft, plush leather. There are many options these days from "Sham-wow" type stuff to various Microfibers, some of which are anti-bacterial. I don't use them as much as I used to, but it's better than packing a bunch of beach towels. I recommend [THIS](#) one.

Wet-Wipes- Yep, those disposable moist cleaning tissues that are usually used to clean up baby business. Get a small soft sided package as they are great for cleaning your hands after Bali style meals, freshening up on hot dirty adventures, or when the toilet is not as modern as you have become accustomed (but don't flush them). [HERE](#) is a 12 pack plus they are anti-bacterial.

Toiletries- The bare minimum. It's easy to pick up just about whatever you need here, but if you need hair gel or whatever it is people use these days and you **MUST** have it, bring as small of a container as you can find. Soap, shampoo, conditioner... it's all here and inexpensive. Your hair will not fall out if you use another conditioner for a couple weeks.

Anti-bacterial Hand Sanitizer- After that toilet visit or before meals, this is a handy item.

Books- Just one or two, as you can always trade or buy more. [The Ring of Fire](#) is a must read for anyone coming to Indonesia. It will enrich your trip ten-fold. [Sekala and Niskala](#) is a close second and a great insight into the sacred and magical aspects of Balinese culture. And [HERE](#) is one last great suggestion.

Nail Clippers- Hard to find in Bali (especially if your not a “mani/pedi” kinda guy). Just put them in your checked bag because you know how easy it would be to hijack a plane with them. Don’t get me started on TSA’s ‘Security Theater’.

Water Bottle- I just bring a [Camelbak bladder](#) as it takes up no space when its empty. I have read about some [bamboo bottles](#) that are environmentally sound and insulate very well also. Let’s really try to cut down on plastic one-use water bottles. When I started traveling there was no such thing and we made it through just fine. (man, I sound old... and grumpy)

Duct Tape- Next to the multi-tool, it’s an adventure travelers best friend. Literally 1001 uses if not more. I ditch the cardboard tube in the middle and just roll it on itself to save room. A must on all my trips and you can get a good roll [HERE](#). [Gaffer’s tape](#) is great as well. Drapes wont stay shut? Now they will. Other uses: fix broken luggage, luggage ID helper, blister covering, hem pants, lint remover, chip clip, book binder, screen mender, shoe repair, and on and on...



Medicine- Be sure to bring enough medication and your prescription as well.
Aspirin/Tylenol/Pain Killers- Many uses from legit injury pain management to hangover remedy. Hard to find quality brands here so BYO as they are small. Tip: stuff tissue into the bottle to avoid rattling. But, one of the great things about Asia is you can go to an apothecary and get antibiotics and other medication at a fraction of the prices in the West.

Travelers' First Aid Kit- Yes. [HERE](#)

Mosquito Spray/Lotion- I used to think this was a must bring from The States, but they have some great (and cheap) ones here. I don't use DEET on my skin but if I am going deep into Borneo I will bring it to spray on my clothes and on a possible entry way to my sleeping quarters.

Sunscreen- No brainer and this one is really the must bring from home as here it is crazy expensive. I have seen it for as much as \$25 US in Bali- no joke. But to be honest, I hardly ever use it here, but don't tell my mom or my wife.

Portable Water Filter- It depends where you are going. Bali-no; Borneo-yes.

Gadgets

Adapter for electronics but no need for a converter- you want the 2 round prong adapter. The Power supply is usually 220 volts, 50 hertz. Normal outlets are European style sockets, accepting plugs with two rounded pins that look like



this. As for surge protectors, [THIS](#) one rocks and its a USB charger too. Do not trust the electricity in South East Asia and protect your valuable devices. [THIS](#) one is cheap and small and there is no excuse not to take it along.

Cell Phone- If you have an old cheap phone that has a removable SIM card, you are all set. You don't want anything expensive, just something functional enough to make local calls and texts. You can buy a SIM card in any town and you are ready to go. I also travel with my iPhone but I don't use it to make calls or text message.

Mesh Bags- For holding cables, adapters, chargers, odds and ends etc. as you can see through it which makes it much easier to find what you are looking for.

Swiss Army Knife/Multi Tool- Any traveler's best friend. I prefer a [Leatherman](#). Remember to pack it in your checked-in luggage so it won't be confiscated at the airport.

Flashlight- My iPhone serves this purpose but I also carry a [headlamp](#) for hands free use. I also put reflective tape on my backpack and carry a [rear red blinking bike light](#) for when I am walking on the road at night. [HERE](#) is a tiny inexpensive LED lite that you can clip onto anything.

iPhone- Perhaps my most used item. So many uses from a compass to alarm clock and hundreds more. The iPhone has replaced almost a dozen of my must have items.

Legal Stuff

Passport- with minimum 6-month validity left. You won't get through immigration without it. Also, if you don't have a departure ticket you may not get in either.

Documents- Color photocopy all your essential travel documents (passport, airline ticket confirmations, medical records, credit card numbers, insurance info, etc.) four times each. Staple each set together and put one in each bag you bring and give one to a friend. Also scan all documents and store them online where you can retrieve them from anywhere like in Gmail or Dropbox.

Travel Insurance- I used to never even consider it. Now I advise all our tour participants to get it. [SEE HERE](#) for much more detail and information so you can make the right choice for yourself and your family.



Blood Donor/Type Card- Why not?

International Drivers License- I am not going to tell you not to get it, but here in Bali less than half of all drivers have a license and less than one third of motor bike drivers have a permit. The bottom line is, at the random traffic stops you see here in Bali, they will find a way to fine you if you have a license or not.

Immunizations- Please consult your physician and the CDC for more information.



Extra Traveling Tips

Toys and Clothes for Kids- Great to bring over and disperse along the way. A wonderful way to spend time with local people and its really needed as well.

Tampons-Tampons are not my strong suit but quality brand names are very hard to find. Bring all you will need. But, believe it or not, tampons can be a very useful travel item for both sexes. Tampons are sterile and come in waterproof packaging. They make for a perfect wound dressing and are actually used by medics for gun shot wounds. Lets hope this is not a need for you while traveling. Some other uses that will be much more likely include water filtration, blow tub or straw, fire starter, fishing bobber and more.

Nylons- This one is not just for the ladies. You can put them around your entire suitcase for added safety on inter-Asian flights, trains, boats, etc. they also help

identify bags. You can stuff things into them to keep them together. Use them as a laundry line, (but I always bring some paracord- see below), exfoliating soap scrubber, wash delicates inside of them, bank robbery mask (jokes people).

Paracord- Lightweight nylon rope that is used in parachutes. It's as strong as it is handy. Aside from securing items and tying things together you can make a laundry line, secure doors, replace zipper pull, belt, dental floss (separate strands unless you have 'Summer Teeth' = some'r over here and some'r over there), pulley system, shoe laces, splint, and much more for the outdoors person but that's another post. [HERE](#) is a link for some good cordage and [HERE](#) is a brilliant bracelet that unravels into paracord and even has a compass for the latch. Want to make your own? Click [HERE](#) for instructions.

And here is a great companion list to this for all types of travel gear and tips.

The Best Tips, Tricks and Gear for Travel Photographers

<http://www.balifornian.com/blog/2012/2/10/the-best-tips-tricks-and-gear-for-travel-photographers.html>

Pre-Flight Checklist Tips

One or two days before you are due to fly out, you should do a check before heading for the airport where it will be too late to do anything about it if you have forgotten any of the following items.

- Lets start with your airline tickets.
- **Passport with more than 6 months before expiry.**
- US\$35 per person (VOA) visa on arrival. (Please check current cost)
- Do you have travel insurance (a must have)?
- How are you taking your money? Cash, cash card and ATM? For the best exchange rate, take a reasonable amount of good quality bank notes. Notes will not be accepted if they are torn or well worn. Only use a genuine authorised money changer as described below. Make sure your accommodation choice provides an in room safe or deposit box for your cash and documents (Floating Leaf does provide these in each room).
- Perhaps bring a credit card or cash card. It is good advice to ring your credit provider to advise them of the dates you intend being in Bali.
- Have you got house and car keys with you for your return?
- Have you included the following numbers in your phone contacts? Your credit card providers phone number and also your travel insurance number.
- Take a note book and pen with you to complete forms on the plane and also for taking notes about your own personal experiences during your first Bali trip.

For extra security you should photo copy your passport, airline tickets, credit card, insurance cover, and accommodation documents. You should leave copies at home with a relative or close friend and you will also require copies for your own records,

which should be placed within your check-in luggage preferably or hand luggage and closely guarded. **Also it's a great idea to email them to yourself so you can access them from any computer.**

Another piece of advise, which you should be aware of is the number of opportunist lurking nearby who would dearly love to relieve you of your wallet if you are careless enough during transit. A travel pack to wear around your neck is a good investment. We do not advise leaving passports, wallets, and such in your back pocket or any pocket without a zipper.



Tips On What To Pack

Remember you are going to the tropics where it is warm and humid most of the time be it day or night. With that in mind it suggests light clothing is the order of the day. The first things to pack are your bathers, swimmers, trunks or whatever you call them but don't worry about pool or beach towels because they are mostly supplied wherever you go.

Essential Items

There is no need to pack too much in the way of toiletries because you can buy as much as you like in Bali from Pharmacies, Supermarkets or Circle K essential shops. Most of these items are well priced when compared to foreign prices. Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat provides the highest quality organic toiletries free of charge.

Bring all of your own **medications** and proof of prescription with you. The apothecaries in Bali are quite good but they may not have your exact medication.

Shoes

Shoes of all shapes and sizes for both sexes are plentiful in Bali so you don't need to overpack in this regard because the temptation to buy shoes at crazy prices, will be too great. However, having said that the ladies could consider including thongs, joggers, sandals and a pair of dress shoes. Gents mainly require thongs, joggers and one pair of smart casual shoes. It is crucial to have stable comfortable shoes. The sidewalks can be difficult to navigate at times so sacrifice a bit of high style for safety and practicality.

Luggage

It is a good idea to know the weight of your luggage before you arrive at the airport. Your bathroom scales should suffice. Luggage allowance for economy passengers can vary from 15kg/20kg(optional) with Air Asia, 20kg with Garuda, Virgin, 20kg Jet Star. Other airlines travelling to Bali via Bangkok, Hong Kong and Singapore will have similar allowances. Airlines are strict on this issue and will charge you accordingly for excess weight.

Remember, the benefit of travelling light to Bali if you can discipline yourself to this, is obviously more room for all of your shopping on your return home. By the way, carry on luggage is also watched carefully so be aware.

Travel Tip: Please consider making a photocopy of your airline tickets and the identifying pages of your passport. Also make a list of all travelers' checks and your credit card details. Store all of this data separately from your wallet. Having these details at hand will speed replacement in the event of loss. Also, email them to yourself so you can access them from any computer.

Donations

Floating Leaf is deeply committed to helping the people of Bali whenever possible. We try to include a Day of Service in all of our retreats. Your retreat or stay with us may or may not include this. Regardless if you can find some extra space in your luggage to bring donations for impoverished villages, your gift will go a long way to make life better and happier for those in need. **Items in demand include baby clothes, toys, medical supplies, used clothing, art supplies, kitchen utensils, tarps, tools, etc.** You will likely be bringing home treasures from Bali so there may be extra space in your outbound luggage. Why not put it to good use. We work with village leaders directly to be sure your donations make it into the hands of the most in need. If you would like to join us on a Day of Service and see who will benefit from your kind gift, please just let us know. For more on **Floating Leaf's Community**



A donation event for the local village held at Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat

Arrival

Bali Time Zone is GMT + 8 hours or WITA (Indonesian Central Time)
GMT + 8 in Bali and Lombok. GMT + 7 in Java.

You usually cannot enter Indonesia without proof of a return ticket or a ticket showing you will be leaving the country.

The new Bali Ngurah Rai Airport (DPS) in Denpasar is just south of Kuta. It is named after a hero of the struggle for independence from the Dutch. The airport is spacious and modern and is well served with international flights. It has a hotel-booking counter, a left-luggage room, several moneychangers, an expensive duty-free shop and many souvenir shops, ATMs and lots of familiar fast-food places.

If you have airport transfers with Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat included in your package, please forward over the flight information for all guests including the airline, departing city, flight number and arrival time.

Our staff will be there to pick you up once you clear customs. He will have a green sign shaped like a leaf with our logo on it. The airport is designed to make travelers navigate through a variety of shops before they can exit the airport. It's a bit ridiculous, but once you are all the way through, our staff will meet you there. As soon as you exit customs you will begin to see many people holding signs but our staff is usually at the very end of this path after you pass through all the shops. It's easier than I make it out to be here, but we just want to give you an idea.

The domestic terminal (0361-751011) and international terminal (0361-751011) are a few hundred meters apart.

International airlines flying to and from Bali include the following:

- Air Asia (airline code AK; 0361-760116; www.airasia.com) Hub Kuala Lumpur.
- Cathay Pacific Airways (airline code CX; 0361-766931; www.cathaypacific.com) Hub Hong Kong.
- Continental Airlines (airline code CO; 0361-768358; www.continental.com) Hubs Newark and Houston.
- Eva Air (airline code BR; 0361-751011; www.evaair.com) Hub Taipei.
- Japan Airlines (airline code JL; 0361-757077; www.jal.co.jp) Hub Tokyo.
- Korean Air (airline code KE; 0361-768377; www.koreanair.com) Hub Seoul.
- Malaysia Airlines (airline code MH; 0361-764995; www.mas.com.my) Hub Kuala Lumpur.
- Qantas Airways (airline code QF; 0361-288331; www.qantas.com.au) Hubs Sydney and Melbourne. Plans to rebrand its service as Jetstar.
- Singapore Airlines (airline code SQ; 0361-768388; www.singaporeair.com) Hub Singapore.
- Thai Airways International (airline code TG; 0361-288141; www.thaiair.com) Hub Bangkok.

Weather

The island of Bali sits between 5 and 10 degrees south latitude below the equator. The weather is generally calm most of the year. Daytime temperatures are in the 80's (Fahrenheit) throughout the year with the rains traditionally falling between November and April (but in the last several years this has moved back a bit). Bali is

spared a monsoonal season and rains, when they do come, generally last only an hour or so, lowering the temperatures slightly and making for greener scenery all around.



The award winning healthy spa cuisine at Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat

E lectricity

Most hotels use 220 volts, 50 cycles and a round, two-pronged slim plug. Bathroom shaver plugs usually have a transformer switch. We suggest taking an adaptor for your appliances (an example is pictured below). A converter is rarely needed.



Telecommunications

Indonesian telecommunications are of a high standard and generally available. Hotels offer international direct dialing, facsimile and, often, Internet connections.

The government has also established a nationwide network of small business people operating "WARTEL" or telecommunication kiosks offering international and domestic telephone communications at competitive rates.

Bali has several mobile telephone servers that, depending on agreements in place with your home service supplier, should provide roaming support for your hand phone brought from home.

Be sure to check with your carrier to avoid enormous roaming fees.

Travel Tip: We suggest setting your cell phone to "Airplane mode", then turning on WiFi. This will enable you to access the Internet but not receive costly texts (SMS) or calls. Skype is highly recommended and generally works very well and is a great way to get in touch. You can set up an account so you can make very inexpensive calls to all phones including landlines and 800 numbers.

Arrival in Bali

Please note: Bali's airport is brand new and policies and locations within the airport are still in flux. Some of the information provided here might not be entirely accurate at the time of your arrival.

During the flight and well before reaching your destination, be sure to fill out the **immigration card and customs declaration forms** correctly and completely.

Travel Tip: Prior to landing in Bali try to have everyone in your party use the restroom on the plane. You will want to **deplane and head to immigration quickly**. You do not need to run, but unnecessary stops or delays will allow others to get in line before you. On average there are 3 lines to go through immigration, each person takes approximately 4 minutes, once the officer calls them. So, every third person that gets in line in front of you adds another 3-5 minutes to your wait. Multiply that by the dozens that may pass ahead of you and this could add up to an additional hour or more waiting in line.

Visas & Departure Tax

To enter Bali your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months from your date of arrival. Travellers holding passports from some countries (including

Australia and New Zealand) may be granted a seven day visa on arrival for a fee of USD\$10 or a 30 day visa on arrival for a fee of USD\$35. Payment must be made in USD on arrival. Both visas are non-extendable and non-transferable. The period of stay for visas is calculated from the day of arrival. For example, if a tourist with a seven day visa arrived on a Sunday, they must depart Indonesia the following Saturday. If the tourist departed on the following Sunday, they would be considered to have overstayed their visa. This principle also applies to 30 day visas. Fines are imposed for each additional day in Indonesia. **Effective January 1, 2015, Indonesia will grant free visas upon arrival to tourist visitors from Australia. On leaving, travellers will need to pay a Departure Tax. Currently the tax is Rupiah 200,000. Please note that variations can occur with little or no notice.

As you come into the **immigration hall** in Bali you'll see the immigration counters around to your right. It is probably best for the rest of your party to continue to the queues there and save a space in the sometimes-long lines.

The **VOA (Visa on arrival)** counter is straight ahead on the left or runway side as you enter the immigration hall and is surprisingly easy to miss. Just go to any window with multiples of US\$25 (other currencies may be possible but US\$ are the least hassle) and get the required VOA's and join your friends in the immigration line. These are 30 day tourist visas and do not need to be arraigned ahead of time.

Politely decline assistance from baggage handlers wanting to assist you with your bags unless you need the help as they will expect a tip and can occasionally confuse you with the currency, as it may be new to you. It is possible to pay for VIP handling of your visas and go through customs more quickly. The fee is around \$40-60 per person and if the airport is crowded, this can save you 30-60 minutes or more. If you are interested in VIP services, please let us know.

IMPORTANT: You will receive back part of your incoming passenger card, which is white in color. This outgoing section of the original card **MUST** be kept in a secure place along with your passport and other documents and handed in on your return flight. If you lose this card you will be delayed upon your attempt to leave the country and you may be required to pay a fine.

Once you have collected all your bags and gone through one last X-ray station you will exit a hallway with shopkeepers shouting at you to exchange money, buy trinkets, sign up for tours, offer free services, etc. Smile and say "Tidak" (no) and continue to the receiving area where you will be met by our representative with Floating Leaf on a placard shaped like a green leaf. Please do not leave this area until you are greeted by our representative. The area will look something like this.



Where to go in Bali?

How do I get the most out of my trip to Bali?

What are the things not to miss in Bali?

A big part of my job is to create **custom itineraries** for our **guests** and **retreat leaders**, so I get asked these questions quite a bit.

What to see in Bali

While I absolutely suggest **visitors to Bali** experience the **great temples**, **stunning landscapes** and **beautiful beaches** that Bali has to offer; it is often times

the things you can't plan for that prove to be the **most rewarding and enriching**. Luckily, there are ways of vastly improving your chances of experiencing one of these potential **life-altering moments**.

Allow me to share my best tip for Bali travel with you.

Granted, this is not for everyone, it's simply my personal preference. Bali offers something for everyone and this is why I am so passionate about this small island. Your mileage may vary, as they say.

From the moment I first arrived in Bali almost a quarter century ago, I knew the areas of **Kuta, Legian and Seminyak** were not for me. I wanted to discover the Bali I had read and dreamed about; the **archetypal adventure and the mystical culture**, not to be surrounded by other white people getting drunk on the beach while being hounded by hawkers (nothing against white people, 'some of my best friends are white people', some of my best friends are even drunk white people- but I digress).

We used to call **Ubud** our second home, but in the last few years, the sheer number of tourists, dreadful traffic, and high prices stimulated us to relocate. Next we tried **Sanur**, which does not suffer from the same traffic gridlock, but has just as many tourists and every four steps a taxi honks at you. Not that we have anything against travelers, we run a tour company and realize the irony of the concept, we simply have an **affinity for the profound Balinese culture and prefer to be rooted within it**. We never quite understood why people travel hundreds or thousands of miles/kilometers to be surrounded by the same people that are back home, especially when this **unique Balinese culture cannot be found anywhere else on the planet**. Once Starbucks moved into Ubud and Sanur, we knew it was time to move out.

Why travel to Bali?

We realize and respect that folks have many reasons for travel, and we are not trying to assert that our preferences are more correct, PC or anything else. Our clientele desires an **authentic experience** and that is what we aim to deliver. Certainly, we visit some of these towns on our **tours and retreats**, but we prefer to reside in what has come to be known as **"Old Bali"**.

The Balinese are such kind, gentle and friendly people. Occasionally, I will ask a Western traveler what was the most rewarding interaction they had with a Balinese person. Those that have stayed in the aforementioned tourist areas, unfortunately, have little opportunity to spend time with the Balinese aside from a cab driver or

waitress. Almost all of our retreats include excursions of **cultural exchange**, **community outreach**, **a day of service**, and the like. These tend to be among the most memorable and meaningful events of the trip, and rarely is there a dry eye at the end of the experience. For more on our work with local communities, please click **here**.

Where to stay in Bali

Sorry to get off on a bit of a rant here, but I do it to illustrate a couple points. First, to respond to the people who travel to Bali and report that its over-run with tourists, its dirty, there is no culture left, or even that's its **dangerous**. Inevitably, they never left Kuta, Seminyak, or the other tourist filled locations. I will say that Ubud and Sanur are certainly a step up from Kuta and Legian in terms of culture and beauty, but there is 80% of the rest of the island that is free from this congestion, pollution, fast food, hawkers, and such. **I want to encourage people to experience the true Bali.**

Bali can be a transformational journey, if you give it the opportunity

And secondly, by and large, the people that I speak with that have visited Bali and had a **profound, life changing experience**, all say the same thing. Their transformative experience was not something that was planned, on their itinerary, or because they visited the "must see" places they read about in guidebooks. It was because they chose to spend time in "**Old Bali**" and improve their chances exponentially of happening upon a cremation ritual, a temple celebration, and old man who shared some wisdom, being invited into a traditional Balinese compound and seeing first hand how they lived, what was important to them, and deeply experiencing a new and exciting culture.

So, what is my advice for getting the most out of your Bali vacation?

- Seek something outside of your comfort zone
- See the countryside
- Don't try to apply your Western logic to life in Bali. They have been doing this for much longer than we have
- Go to the beach that is not where all the other travelers go
- Spend sometime outside of your resort
- Rent a bike and ride down the small roads and see what you discover

- Stop and try to speak with the locals (even if you can't speak Bahasa Indonesia and they can't speak English, you might be surprised at how much you can communicate)
- Better yet, learn a few phrases before you leave so you can communicate a bit more
- Bring photos of your life back home to share with new friends
- Add a few small items into your luggage that will mean a lot to someone in need (and perhaps be the catalyst for a new friendship). Items like used clothing, art supplies, medical supplies, children's toys, etc.
- Learn some of the local customs so you don't accidentally offend anyone
- Smile, show respect and remember you are on vacation and here to grow and enjoy
- Consult with someone who specializes in authentic cultural experiences so you can make the most of everyday you have in Bali

The number one tip for what to do in Bali?

Don't fall for the tourist traps. Choose to stay in an area with actual culture so you can spend quality time where the real Bali happens. You can always go into the main tourist areas whenever you like, but you will want to get out of the pollution, traffic, noise and mobs of tourists to find your piece of paradise.

Why don't you come and experience the special parts of Bali for yourself?

Individuals and groups can take part in our **soft opening specials** and experience Bali's rich heritage and profound culture, its majestic volcanoes and lush tropical landscapes. **Bring a group and stay for free!**

Floating Leaf offers... (click any of the green links for more information)

- Authentic Balinese experiences
- [A traditional Balinese spa](#)
- [World-class surfing](#)
- [Cultural and adventure tours](#)
- [Eco-luxury accommodations](#)
- [Delicious healthy food, elixirs and juices](#)
- [Yoga, Meditation, Wellness and Art retreats](#)

And so much more, all in a [traditional Balinese village](#).

Balinese Culture and Customs

Generally, Balinese are used to meeting and greeting foreigners and non-Balinese, so you will find that most people will greet you with a handshake, as many people do in western countries. You may have noticed, however, that they have a special style of handshake, which for men seems almost effeminate. It's certainly not of the knuckle-cracking variety you'll receive in many of the more macho of the western countries. After the light handshake the person may touch their chest, as part of the ritual – this is in fact a Javanese tradition that has crept into Balinese society and not everyone does it. The European and Mediterranean tradition of kissing each other on the cheeks is foreign to Bali. The traditional Balinese greeting is, naturally, a Hindu one – the hands are clasped in front the chest in a relaxed prayer position and the person says, “Om Swasti Astu”, meaning ‘peace and greetings from God’. People even answer the phone in this way too.



10 DOs & DON'Ts WHEN VISITING



WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS
WHEN IN BALI, DO AS THE BALINESE

DRINKING WATER



DO drink bottled water - Bali is hot all year around and you don't want to dehydrate.



DON'T drink tap water - it does not taste good and will almost certainly give you stomach problems.

SHOPPING



DO haggle in markets and street shops. Humor and a smile can get you a long way, that goes for bargaining too.



DON'T haggle too hard or for the fun of it - be polite. 5,000 rupiah probably won't make much of a difference to you, but it might do to the seller.

MIND THE HEAD



DO wear a helmet when driving a scooter - both for protection and to avoid getting stopped by the police.

Insider tip: Wearing an “udeng” (The traditional Balinese headwear) exempts you from wearing a helmet.



DON'T touch people's heads - that goes for kids too, even if they are really cute. The head is considered the most sacred part of the human body.

ENTERING A TEMPLE



DO wear a sarong or long clothing when entering a temple. The

Balinese are very serious about their spirituality, so please be respectful and cover up.



DON'T enter a temple whilst menstruating - also if you have an open wound you shouldn't enter.

WHEN GIVING AND RECEIVING



DO use both hands when giving or receiving. It is a compliment to use both hands when you give or things like money or a business card.



DON'T hand over something with your left hand - it is considered impolite. Using both hands is ok.

WHEN DRIVING



DO honk the horn briefly when overtaking. It is a common way to let other people know you are passing.



DON'T hold the horn down. Being aggressive in traffic is frowned upon everywhere, even more so in Bali.

GETTING SOMEONE'S ATTENTION



DO wave with your palm facing down. When asking someone to come by, stretch your hand out, palm down and move your fingers toward yourself.



DON'T point with your index finger - that is considered offensive. Use your entire hand if you want to point out something.

WHEN INVITED TO DINNER



DO make room for a second serving - you will most likely be asked for one and it will be impolite to reject.



DON'T empty your plate. Leave a little food as an offering to the gods and to let the host know you had enough to eat.

PARTYING



DO enjoy an ice cold Bintang - Balis' number one beer which comes in large bottles!



DON'T do drugs! Indonesian drug laws are extremely strict.

WATCH YOUR FEET



DO take off your shoes when entering - When entering a home or temple take your shoes off.

Helpful tip: Whenever you see a row of flip flops outside a building, you should take off yours too before entering.



DON'T touch or point at someone with your feet - It is considered very offensive.

What to try to Avoid

Balinese life is well known for its hospitality with charming smiles and graceful generous mannerisms. However, there are unwritten custom rules called Awig-awig that are adhered to by the Balinese. Please note, while this is a general list of actions to avoid, most Balinese understand that you are a foreigner and generally will not become accept for all but the most egregious of offenses.



- Raising your leg on the table or pointing your feet toward someone
- Touching someone's head
- Wearing immodest clothing at a formal event or religious ceremony
- Deliberately kicking the offerings that are placed by the Balinese on the ground
- Roughly speaking or cursing in a public area
- Pointing with the index finger
- Showing anger or frustration
- Touch someone or hand something to someone, money for example, with your left hand.

Bargaining

Bargaining is not only encouraged in most shops, it is a fun way to engage in local culture. Almost all of your bargaining adventures will result in laughs and new friends if you abide by one simple rule. It's acceptable to engage the seller in discussion and ask how much an item is. But if you begin to bargain and you set a price, you are obligated to purchase the item if the seller agrees to the price you set. Not honoring this agreement is an insult and may be met with hostility.



Where to go

Perhaps the most famous (but most crowded and most devoid of culture) is **Kuta**, a long stretch of sand that arches into **Legian** and **Seminyak** beaches, was the original beach of choice for surfers who first started visiting Bali in the 1960s. These days Kuta still attracts beginner surfers, with its gentle breaks but the hordes of drunk partiers dissuades the traveler in search of real Bali. Those seeking big nights out tend to gravitate to the **Kuta/Legian** area, with the style of parties tending to get more sophisticated and exclusive (generally speaking) as one heads north toward **Seminyak** and then to a lesser extent the much quieter **Canggu** area. Canggu is quickly becoming a crowded hipster hangout. The tiny windy roads struggle to handle the traffic, but **Tanah Lot Temple** is worth the journey.

Sanur, on the east side of the island, is another of the island's original beach resort

areas. What it lacks these days in terms of trendiness it more than makes up for in terms of easygoing-ness. The beach is fringed by a reef meaning the shore is safe for kids' swimming, and a boardwalk along the beach makes pram pushing a pleasant rather than fraught experience. Great for windsurfing, SUP and most watersports.

From either coast, head up north through patchwork rice paddies to the hills of **Ubud**. The guidebooks will tell you it is the island's cultural and artistic center. This maybe true if they mean the current tourist cultural center. Historically and still to this day the true artistic center is around Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat and Sukawati where the stone carvers, painters, wood workers, mask makers and many more traditional artists live and work. Still people flock to Ubud as its ultra trendy, has some great restaurants, and offers tourists a taste of culture albeit staged for their consumption. Check out the Monkey Forest, a revered temple sanctuary where primates who can be a bit naughty are king.

Further North is Bali's central highlands and the town of **Bedugal**. Wander around the Bedugal Botanical Gardens, vegetable and spice markets (beware of the watch sellers, but try the corn and strawberries), and the iconic Pura Ulun Danu Temple.



Pura Ulun Danu Temple seems to float upon Bedugal Lake

Across the northern and eastern coast are plenty of opportunities for diving or snorkeling. **Padang Bai, Candidasa and Amed** are not the "sleepy fishing villages" the guidebooks will sell you, but they are worthwhile, especially Amed. The guidebooks will lead you to believe Amed is a sleepy fishing village. Amed is a quick

and easy escape from the tourist-laden traps of South Bali and also has some extraordinary **scuba diving and snorkeling**. There are a couple spectacular **shipwrecks** just off the coast of Amed and can even be experienced by snorkeling.

I never really understand why **Lovina** is on some traveler's itinerary as it is a small city with an eroded beach. A supposed draw is the opportunity to swim with dolphins but the barbaric treatment of these poor animals is abhorrent.

Pemuteran on the other hand is wonderful and boasts some of the best snorkeling in the world. Hire a boat and head to **Menjangan Island** for epic scuba and snorkeling adventures.



Menjangan is part of **Bali Barat National Park** and has some of the best snorkeling on the island, boasting schools of colorful tame fish that will come right up to you. If you know where to look you can swim with turtles as well. It also is home to one of the best-protected coral reefs in the area. The colorful reefs are sadly becoming harder and harder to find in South East Asia due to dynamite fishing and myopic dive operators anchoring to the reef, but you can still enjoy the one here via **snorkeling or scuba diving**. The reef has taken its share hard knocks and is recovering well but the real attraction here is the wall diving. The island gets its name (Menjangan means deer) because each spring at low tide herds of deer make

their way out to the island. You can dive year round and the water visibility is the best in Bali. You can stay in one of the resorts nearby, kayak the turquoise waters, get pampered, and simply enjoy this peaceful and rejuvenating secret of Bali.

To the far south of the island lies **Tanjung Bukit**, home to plush **Nusa Dua** and an array of exclusive resorts nestled into cliffs with breathtaking views of the **Indian Ocean**.



Surfing near Tanah Lot Temple

Nusa Dua was deliberately developed as a high-end wealth traveller's ghetto. It mostly is, but the beach is publicly accessible and often you may eat a meal at a resort and use their pool and other facilities ----- check ahead of time. Other beaches around the Bukit are also publicly accessible and are some of the most stunning spots on the island: **Padang Padang, Balangan and Nyang Nyang** are all breathtaking. The former two have a few warungs to keep you fed and watered, but Nyang Nyang is a bring-your-own picnic affair with somewhat tricky access. **Uluwatu**, a true surfers mecca is a good stop for both the temple and the surf breaks.

Consider a sunset seafood feast on the beaches of **Jimbaran**, where warung after warung sets up candlelit tables on the sand and serve barbecued seafood freshly plucked from the waters lapping nearby. Select your own fish, prawns and mussels which are served with rice, vegetables and an array of tempting *sambal*, light or heavy on the heat scale.

Admittedly, this is a very brief overview. For more details and images search <http://bali-floatingleaf.com>.

Most of the areas mentioned above are long established tourist areas.

The Real Bali

Are you traveling hundreds or even thousands of miles to Bali to sit in traffic, breathe polluted air and be surrounded by hordes of tourists? Areas such as **Kuta**, **Seminyak** and even **Ubud** have sadly become so choked with traffic, American fast food chains, and so many Westerners, there is little **original Balinese culture** left.



The Bali you picture when you think of a tranquil paradise is what Floating Leaf Eco-Resort offers

This is exactly why we chose to create **Floating Leaf** in a **small local village amongst verdant rice fields**. We work closely with the local community and subsidize farmers to help them grow **organic, nutrient-rich crops** free from pesticides. We offer classes in English, permaculture, arts and yoga at no charge to the warm and friendly people of our village and all Balinese. It is important to us to be a contributing member to our **banjar** (local community) and Bali as a whole. Without trying to sound too corny, this magical island has been so good to us, we want to give back where we can. We work with [Balifornian](#) for our custom made excursions and all of their trips involve a **charitable** component.

The True "Old Bali"

We enjoy living in **Sukawati** as it is a peaceful oasis free from the noise and air pollution found in much of South Bali. We want our guests to be able to fully **relax and focus on the moment** whether that is a **deep yoga practice, a serene spa treatment** or just enjoying time with friends and family at our **ultimate relaxation pool**.

It is important to note that we are not way out in the middle of nowhere either. We are 40 minutes from **Bali Ngurah Rai Airport** in **Denpasar**. Just a 10 minute drive from our Bali retreat and you are in the heart of **Sanur**, our favorite of the tourist towns. Sanur features a **lively nightlife, tons of shops and some of the best restaurants in all of Bali**. The Balinese food is amazing from the famous crispy duck at Warung Pregina to a \$1 excellent meal at Warung Jawa. It also has fantastic international food, including Japanese delights at Riyoshi (best sushi on the island) to Italian from The Village Restaurant in Sanur (most say Massimo's is the Italian in Sanur but we disagree). And the best part of Sanur is you get all the comforts, nightlife, shopping, etc. that you would find in other heavily touristed areas but not the traffic and hassles. Oh, and I almost forgot to mention, **Sanur** has one of the nicer **white sand beaches in Bali** (but we have even better secluded **secret beaches** that you will have to come with us to see for yourself).



Balinese Symbolism

Introduction

Balinese culture is very rich in symbolism. It seems that everything is symbolic and that even the symbols are symbolic. There are numerous examples.

Sounds

These tend to represent different names for God. The most famous is OM, which represents Brahma or Sanghyang Widi Wasa or God. You will often hear priests intone this sound. The sound is made up of the letters which symbolize the Trinity, which is Brahma, the Creator, who is symbolized by the letter A, Wisnu, the Preserver of Life, who is symbolized by the letter U and Siwa the Destroyer, who is symbolized by the letter M. This spells AUM or OM. OM is the most important sound in Bali and starts every stanza of every mantra and prayer.



Writing

Writing can be just as sacred as the message it conveys. One story says that [Saraswati](#), the goddess of poetry, brought humans into existence by the use of writing. Written symbols represent different aspects of God and are often joined together. Powerful symbolic writing on pieces of white cloth, Ulap-ulap, hang above doorways in Balinese homes.

Written symbols are written on the teeth of a person about to have his or her teeth

filed. Written symbols are also placed on offerings and on the shroud of a deceased person.

The Mandala

The Balinese universe is organized according to fundamental principles of classification. It includes directions, colors and numbers. There are 11 directions. These are the eight compass points, plus the center and up and down.

Each direction has a sound, a color, a written symbol and a weapon. They are linked to the nine gods, their consorts and organs of the body. Iswara is white and east; Brahma red and south; Mahadewa yellow and west; [Wisnu](#) black and north. Brahma's consort or wife is Laksmi, Wishnu's is Saraswati and Siwa's is Durga. The goddesses are regarded as their husbands' sakti (spiritual power). All the gods merge into Siwa, who constitutes a higher unity, at the center, with mixed colors.

They are also linked to days of the five day week and numbers. East with Umaris and number 5. South with Paing and number 9. West with Pon and number 7. North with Wage and number 4. The center with Klion and number 8.

There are many non-representational symbols. The gods have their own weapons, such as the Cakra, the magical discus of Wisnu, a circle with eight radii, with powerful energy. Iswara's weapon is Badjira, Brahma's weapon is Gada. Mahadewa's weapon is Naga, the snake and Siwa's weapon is Padma.

Similarly the *swastika* represents the energy of the universe in the form of rotation. The four ends of the swastika plus the center represent the nine manifestations of God, as symbolized in the compass. The Nazi swastika rotates counter-clockwise, whilst the Hindu swastika rotates clockwise.

Representational symbols

There are also many representational symbols. The Cili, in the shape of [Dewi Sri](#), with an hourglass figure, formed by two triangles, represents the Rice goddess. The rice farmers make a Cili out of rice stalks just before harvesting. Every god is male and female, so there are the male and female aspects of Dewi Sri. For the story of Dewi Sri's birth, see the [article entitled Balinese Rice](#). The same goes for Siwa and Durga, who are a single force having two opposite forces. Cili are often used for decoration. She is symbolic of food and, of course, rice is food. The Cili symbol is frequently woven into long palm leaf offerings called lamaks. They hang from shrines and traditionally temporary shrines, erected outside homes in the street at Galungan and other ceremonies. They are placed next to another symbolic offering called a penjor.

Places

Mountains symbolize the dwelling places of the gods. They also climb towards the

sky.

Temples, in their three divisions, symbolize the underworld of evil spirits, man and God, each courtyard being reached by a flight of steps and higher than the previous one.

Animals

Many animals are symbolic.

The goose is the only animal in Bali that can live in the sea, on the land and in the air. As a result it represents the three levels of the universe. If one is killed, a purification ceremony is required.

Ducks and chickens are frequently used in ceremonies. A girl may have to kiss a live chicken or duck at her first menstruation ceremony to symbolize her identification and oneness with nature.

The turtle, surrounded by two snakes, looking like dragons, supports the earth on its back. They are often carved supporting the empty seat shrines, Padmasana.

Elephants have never lived in Bali, but appear as the popular God, [Ganesha](#), who can get things done. The curved dagger, called a kris, sometimes has an elephant to symbolize the strength and magic power of the weapon.

Dogs, especially those that have a reddish skin with black spots on their mouths and tips of their tails, are believed to be able to cleanse the universe. They are used in mecaru purification ceremonies. There are two kinds of dogs in Bali, village or peanut dogs, and Kintamani dogs. The peanut dogs, the anjing kacang, are so called because their bodies are small and tiny. The Kintamani dogs come from Kintamani, a village in Tabanan regency.

The gods have their animals that carry them. These animals have become symbols of the gods who ride them. The eagle-like bird, Garuda, is Wisnu's carrier and Siwa rides a bull, called Nandi. There are several [Garudas](#) above the doors of [Murni's Villas](#). It happens that the eagle has 17 flight feathers on each wing, 8 tail feathers and 45 neck feathers. The Indonesian Declaration of Independence was proclaimed on 17 August 1945. The Garuda is on the Indonesian coat of arms and is the name of the national airline.

“In a world in which luxury is defined by sealing you off as much as possible from any hint of local people and environment, Floating Leaf is the integrated, classy, quiet and thoughtful counterpoint for travelers who don't see themselves as clichéd tourists.

A perfect soft-landing for the weary soul who's just traveled 20+ hours to arrive in the fascinating, lovely island destination that is Bali.”

- Paul von Zielbauer. Staff correspondent for The New York Times



**The New York
Times**
@nytimes

Plants

[Betel](#) chewing is a habit these days mostly of the older generation. The chew consists of three ingredients, the green betel leaf, the betel or areca nut and white lime. The colors are symbolic. Green is Wisnu's color. Red saliva caused by the chewing is Brahma's color and white is Siwa's color. These three gods comprise the Trinity.

Nearly all offerings have these three colors. As mentioned in the article entitled Balinese Offerings, the gods actually sit on their colors while they enjoy the offering.

Rice is symbolic of life. After praying in the temple, the priest gives the worshippers some grains of wet rice to press against their foreheads, temples and throats and to eat.

Flowers carry prayers and make them effective. The banyan tree, with its aerial roots, is a very sacred symbol. The leaves are used in some ceremonies. [Coconut trees](#) are also important.

Colors

As mentioned, certain colors symbolize certain gods. Colors also symbolize characters in plays; for example, Rama always has a green mask, because he is an avatar of Wisnu, whose color is green (or black). A white mask symbolizes a refined person, red or black a coarse, rough person. This color symbolism is carried into the faces of [shadow puppets](#) for the Wayang performances. It also appears in the early Kamasan paintings. It is carried into facial make-up in dance-dramas.

The Balinese feast, Ebat has dishes placed in the direction of the color of the food, so that green dishes are in Wisnu's north direction, red, bloody lawar is placed in Brahma's south direction, yellow turmeric is in Mahadewa's west direction and white coconut is in Iswara's east direction. To continue, saffron is in Maheswara's southeast, green in Sangkara's northwest, pink in Rudra's southwest and blue in Cambu's northeast. In the center is Siwa with a mixture of white, red, yellow and black.

[Umbrellas](#), flags and fabrics used in ceremonies have a similar correspondence with the names of deities and directions of the compass.



Water

Water cleans symbolically. [Holy water](#) is sprinkled on everything. It purifies. Holy water is used so extensively that Bali-Hinduism is called the holy water religion. Water has always been significant in Hindu culture. The king's association with water and rainfall is a manifestation of both his power and his purity. The worst drought in living memory in Bali broke out the day that Sukarno flew in for a visit.

Inanimate objects

Penjors are long bamboo poles placed outside temples or houses having a ceremony and especially at Galungan. A long string is attached, at the end of which is the offering. The arched peak represents Mount Agung, the body symbolizes the earth and the dangling head represents man's earthly needs.

Babies wear a necklace containing the dried umbilical cord to ward off evil. The cord symbolizes their four invisible brothers and sisters, the Kanda Empat, who accompany them throughout life.



Gestures

Pedandas, Brahman high priests, and pemangkus, ordinary temple priests, use elaborate hand movements called mudras, during ceremonies, which have symbolic meanings. Zoete and Spies said that a dancer's hand movements were faint relics of a sign language. Wayang puppets have similar hand gestures.

Elaborate hand movements accompany even everyday offerings.

Ceremonies

Some ceremonies are themselves symbolic, such as a tooth-filing, which eliminates animal-like behavior, such as lust, greed, anger, drunkenness, arrogance and jealousy.

The cremation ceremony uses fire as a symbol of purification and cleansing, so that the deceased's spirit can be released and join the spirit of God.

Numbers

3,5,7,9 and 11 are extremely important in determining activities. Each god has his (or her) own numbers.



Balinese Ceremonies

Introduction

There are numerous ceremonies in Bali, some of which are private, some public. To attend you must wear Balinese dress. It is unnecessary for tourists to be formally dressed: a sarong, sash and covered arms are sufficient.

“Evil” spirits (bhuta yadnya)

Bhuta means element; kala, another word for demon, means time or energy. Demons are personifications of forces derived from the five elements and bring misfortune to man. The purpose of these ceremonies is to placate the demons and

bring harmony to the world. One such purification sacrifice, taur kasanga, takes place on the last day of the lunar year at Besakih and elsewhere on the island.

Private ceremonies

All Balinese rituals are preceded by a purification ceremony to banish the evil spirits before the divine powers are addressed. This is done by offerings, holy water and hand gestures.

There follows brief details of some of the private family ceremonies.

During pregnancy

This is performed for the welfare of mother and child to anchor the embryo firmly in the womb.

Immediately after birth

The father collects the baby's placenta, the ari-ari, which is the most important element of the Kanda Empat, takes it home, washes it, places it in a coconut with flowers and money, wraps it in a white cloth and buries it outside the door of his home. As you look out, girls' placentas are buried on the left and boys' on the right. The grave is covered with a black stone and spiky pandanus leaves to protect it. Finally a symbolic cremation fire is lit on the grave.

12 days- The baby can now be given a name. In some parts a grandparent may visit a clairvoyant priest, balian tenung, or he may be called to carry out a purification ceremony. The priest has the ability to communicate with the ancestors to identify whom the baby is a reincarnation of.

42 days- Mother and child are impure for 42 days after the birth. She cannot enter sacred places like temples and the child must be protected from witches. For the first three months the child is very vulnerable to witches and sorcerers. At the end of the period the mother and child cease to be impure and a small purification ceremony is held.



105 days or 3 months (tigang odalan) This is the first big ceremony and takes place in the family compound. It is the day that a child attains a normal state and may enter temples. The baby ceases to be a divine creature.

It is the day that the baby first touches the ground --- described as a return to the earth. The ceremony takes place in the morning. Up to this point the baby will always have been carried. In some parts of Bali the baby is put into a cage, like those used for roosters, after touching the ground. The priest gives the child its real name. A similar ceremony takes place in the palaces in Java, which may throw light on its origins.

The Kanda Empat have 108 helpers and an exorcism is needed for them, so that they do not harm the child. There is often a Wayang Kulit performance.

210 days or First Oton. This is the baby's first Balinese birthday, which takes place one Balinese year (six months) after birth.

The baby has its first haircut, a symbolic release of energies. The hair is cut from the five cardinal directions symbolically to remove impurities and is either buried or thrown in the river. There is a further exorcism ceremony to expel the 108 helpers.

All these rites of passage ceremonies are intended to remove impurities caused by the birth and the sins of previous lives.

Menstruation

A small ceremony is carried out at a girl's first menstruation. From this age young people come under the influence of Semara and Ratih, the gods of love.



Tooth-filing

The shape of teeth separates the gods and humans from animals, birds and ogres. The former have flat teeth and the latter have pointed ones.

The purpose of a tooth-filing or *matatah* is to remove impurity by eliminating or reducing the *Sad Ripu*, the Balinese six deadly sins, lust, greed, anger, intoxication (through drink or passion), sadness, arrogance and jealousy. Raffles in his *History of Java* noted that the Balinese are "strangers to the vices of drunkenness, libertinism and conjugal infidelity..."

The *Sad Ripu* are eliminated symbolically by flattening the two upper teeth that most resemble an animal's teeth, the canines, and the four incisors. The lower teeth are left alone, as desire and passion should not be killed completely. The Balinese believe in balance.

It is impossible to fulfill one's duties, one's karma, with these teeth present, so every Balinese will have his teeth filed, usually at around 16 to 18 years, but it can be at any age, and if the person dies first, the ceremony will be performed on the corpse. It is also beautifies the person. It often takes place at the same time as marriage as the offerings are the same.

It is an important ceremony and very expensive. Much help is needed to prepare the offerings. The family gods and ancestors are invited, the family compound is decorated lavishly, guests are accommodated and fed, musicians and gamelan orchestras are hired, fine Balinese clothes and jewelry are worn and beautiful textiles are used. A high caste Brahman priest, a pedanda, and his attendants may perform the ceremony.

The ceremony takes place on an auspicious day and, as mentioned, it is likely to be combined with other ceremonies. Further, a number of people in the same family are likely to have their teeth filed at the same time. The ceremony takes place in the Bale Daging, the ceremonial pavilion, in the family compound. The platform acts as a bed and is covered with a mattress, protective ritual cloths, big pillows and a woven bamboo mat on which is drawn Semara and Ratih, male and female figures, the sun and the moon, the sky and the land. Usually two people lie down for the teeth-filing at a time, the eldest first. Maybe 20 would be done at one session. The family crowds around and the gamelan orchestra plays throughout.

The pedanda "kills" the teeth by hitting them with a metal rod and draws symbolic letters on them. The person who does the filing is the Sangging. He chants some mantras and pours holy water over the filees, who lie down and work begins. A small cylinder of sugar cane is put into their mouths and the six upper teeth are filed. The extent of the filing depends on the wishes of the person. It may only be a few symbolic strokes if desired.

The filings are spat into a silver bowl and transferred to a yellow coconut, which is buried in the family temple behind a shrine. As the filing continues the filees check progress with a mirror and when it is over the Sangging brings the teeth back to life again with a mantra. Then there are prayers in the family temple and photographs. There is often a [Wayang Kulit](#) performance.

Sometimes there is a mass village-wide tooth-filing. This occurred in Ubud in July 2000. At that time over 100 men and women had their teeth filed in public.

Marriages

Unmarried motherhood is not an acceptable concept in Balinese culture, although premarital pregnancy is common and probably the norm. Pregnancy usually provokes the wedding. After marriage the woman moves to her husband's household and performs her religious duties at his family temple. Without a father

and his family temple, both child and mother would be rootless and homeless. Balinese social events are also religious. An unmarried mother and child would be unable to enter any temple and would effectively be banished by their community.

Weddings cannot occur during or immediately after the 10 day holiday between Galungan and Kuningan.

Forms of marriage

There are three traditional forms of marriage:

Kidnapping a girl- This is now against the law.

Pre-arranged "kidnapping"- Everyone goes along with it but pretends not to know about it, is common and the least expensive.

Arranged marriage- This is a wedding agreed upon by the families. Right up to the 1950s arranged marriages were common. Conservative communities and social elites favored it.



Wedding Ceremony

The ceremony takes place in the boy's family compound and can be as elaborate as the family wish. The girl leaves her family temple and, unless she already is a relation, joins the boy's family and ancestral group and will thereafter tend his ancestors. There are separate ceremonies to deal with her farewells as she says

goodbye to her family ancestors --- the mepahit ritual --- and joins her husband's family temple. Her children belong to her new family temple.

The wedding ceremony is fun; the couple wears their best clothes, gold thread and headdresses. Both wear make-up. They look like a prince and princess. Both wear make-up. She will have real gold flowers in her hair and he will have a kris in the back of his sarong. A priest will perform the rituals. Many symbolic actions take place, like rolling an egg over the couple's bodies and allowing a duck to touch their faces with its bill. Nowadays there is sometimes a Western style reception. There is often a Wayang Kulit performance.

Marriage allows the husband to join the banjar. At marriage he becomes an adult. See the article for details on the banjar.

Honorary male

As mentioned above, the bride joins her husband's family temple and leaves her own. If it happens that a couple has only daughters, they will be left with no women in the family. Such a situation cannot be allowed to happen, as it would mean that ceremonies could not be carried out properly. There would be no one to look after the family temple and the cycle of reincarnation would be broken.

To remedy this situation a male may have to be adopted. Another remedy is for the bride to take the role of the male heir in her own family and the husband becomes a nominal female. This is called a nyentana marriage. He inherits the family house and temple. These marriages can be difficult and the husbands can become the subject of derision in the village. It helps if he is a member of the same descent group or dadia as his wife and her parents.

Polygamy

It is possible for a man to have more than one wife, but only a few do nowadays. It is usually only among the higher castes and the wealthy. Men do not usually take more than three wives.

Women

Although women are regarded honorably in the ancient Hindu scriptures, like the Manawa Drama Castro, which implies that when a woman is respected, the gods are delighted, they tend to be second class citizens. They do not have a vote at village banjar meetings, especially on matters of customary law. The village chiefs are invariably men. Many aristocratic women are expected to take care of domestic chores, such as preparing offerings, which prevents them from being able to pursue higher education.



Children

All Balinese have a duty to marry. It is vital to have children, as only they can perform the rituals for the dead and purification of souls, which are indispensable for reincarnation. Childlessness and impotence are grounds for divorce and in myths, ogres in the afterlife punish those without children. Often they are hung upside down from a tree and beaten. Being upside down is particularly degrading for a Balinese, as the head would be in touch with the ground.

Twins

The birth of twins of the opposite sex to a Sudra family is regarded as a form of incest. The village is regarded as spiritually impure for 42 days after their birth. In the old days, until Sukarno abolished the custom in 1962, the whole family had to move to a house specially built for them outside the village. The parents had to pay for purification ceremonies and may have had to go begging. Three days before the 42nd day the gods of the three main village temples were taken to the river or sea for purification. On the 42nd day they were brought back to their temples. The family were brought from their house outside the village to the crossroads. Offerings to the gods and evil spirits were presented. There was music and the Wayang Kulit ceremony is performed. When it was over, the family could return to their home and live normally.

Even today twins born to a commoner result in postponement of major ceremonies. In the days of the Balinese kings the twins were taken as slaves by the king.

This does, not, however apply to twins born of a high-caste mother. Quite the reverse. It is auspicious. They are supposed to bring good luck. In fact they are deemed to have been married in another world and can therefore marry in this world. Cokorda Gede Agung Sukawati of Ubud, born in 1910, was a twin, but he did not marry his sister.

The idea that twins bring bad luck may date from pre-history. In the days of hunter-gatherers a woman could never nurse and carry two children. Statistically every 100 or so births are twins.

Divorce

Traditionally divorce is living apart. A wife, who returns to her descent group, can bring only her own possessions. Her rights are so limited that most women do not dare leave their husbands. Since ancestry is traced through the father's side, children are considered to belong more to their father than their mother and she loses any rights in respect of them.

It is regarded so badly amongst aristocratic women that if she returns to her family compound, she will be treated like a servant and has to speak in the highest form of Balinese to her parents, brothers and sisters.

Caste

A high-caste woman should not marry a commoner. In the days of the Balinese kings both could be killed. These days the existence of the rule is rather controversial.

Inheritance

Marriage is largely about inheritance and responsibility for the family temple. Customarily daughters do not inherit. Male offspring take over responsibilities and authority, both within the family and the community. Farmlands are normally divided amongst the sons equally. One son, usually the youngest, inherits the family house and temple and is responsible for maintaining the family temple and carrying out the ceremonies associated with it. If there are no sons or the children are all daughters who marry out, then the village, the banjar, acquires the land. Discrimination against women is more noticeable among aristocrats and high caste families as they are more cut off from modern outside life.

Death

Marriage denotes a break in the life cycle. Up to and including marriage, parents are responsible for their children's purification and ritual protection; once married, the younger generation becomes responsible for their parents' protection, primarily to carry out the death rites properly.

As soon as someone dies the hollow slit drum, the *kulkul*, is beaten to summon help from the *banjar*, which comprises men from the neighborhood. They come to the deceased's house and wash the body.

The body has to be purified with holy water to wash away totally the pollution of death. The soul of the deceased hovers above the body bewildered. Wounds are covered with tamarind paste, so that they heal in the afterlife. Ornaments are placed on the corpse. Colored string is tied around the wrists. Mirrors are put on the eyes to give clear sight and beauty. The corpse is then wrapped in a white shroud inscribed with symbols and letters.

The body has now been prepared for burial or cremation. Bodies are frequently prepared and buried within hours of death. If they are not buried the same day, the family will stay up all night to guard the body against bad spirits. This is a time when gamblers play cards all night.



Cremation

It is not known when cremation was introduced to Bali. A Balinese cremation is very different from a Western one. It is the grandest and the most important of all Balinese ceremonies. The most important ceremony as its success, that is to say the correct carrying out of the ceremony, determines whether or not the deceased will be reincarnated.

Cremations are exceedingly expensive, so it is not uncommon for families to share the expense. Sometimes collective cremations are organized, like the one in Ubud in July 2000, when all 72 bodies in the village graveyard were cremated in one day or in December 2001 when 830 remains from 37 villages joined in the cremation of Ida Tjokorda Mengwi, a descendant from the 13th generation of the King of Mengwi, who reigned in the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries. Unless the family is rich or a priest or a member of a royal family is the deceased, they are first buried to allow the family time to save up.

It should not be put off too long as uncremated spirits are restless and can cause the family and the village trouble. Burial places the soul under the protection of Durga, goddess of death, who reigns over cemeteries until cremation. Uncremated dead require frequent pacification by means of offerings placed on their graves, where they dwell, unfreed from their corpse. Galungan (see below) is one such time that the dead need pacification.

As mentioned priests and members of a royal family are not allowed to be buried, as they are too elevated to be laid in impure ground, so instead they lie in state until preparations can be made for a cremation.

The ceremony takes place on an auspicious day. The family compound will be roofed in coconut leaves and temporary shrines erected. Many women will visit and make the various types of offerings required for the large number of ceremonies involved. They culminate in the cremation itself.

Chickens and ducks will be sacrificed. For a medium sized cremation two or three dozen women are required to make the offerings. It takes several weeks and they will be fed throughout. This adds to the cost. High caste priests, pedandas, carry out several of the preliminary ceremonies and officiate at the cremation.

Women make the offerings. Men from the banjar make the sarcophagus. It is in the shape of an animal. Status determines what kind. A bull is made for priests and high caste men and a cow for women. The bull is Siwa's mount. Siwa is the God of death and destruction. High lords have a winged lion and lesser lords a deer. Sudras have a mythological animal, which has the head of an elephant with tusks and the tail of a fish. Sudras may also be permitted to have a bull or cow if a member of the family has carried out a valuable service for a high caste ruler or patron.

The men also build the cremation tower, the bade, which symbolizes the universe. At the base is the world-turtle, Bedawang Nala, surrounded by snakes; in the middle, the world of man is shown by leafy forests and mountains, where the corpse is placed and at the top, there are meru roofs, like those of a pagoda, always an uneven number.



The meru roofs represent the tier of heaven to which the deceased aspires. Royal families have eleven tiers, an ordinary lord seven or nine, lesser gentry three or five and Sudras one. At the top a king may have a sculptured lingga and a priest may have a padmasana. Below the top section is the shelf for the body (if it has not been buried) or an effigy of the body (if it has been buried). If the body has been buried, it is dug up, wrapped in a white cloth and waits in the cemetery. A big Bhoma face to scare away evil spirits is carved on the back of the tower.

The tower can be 60 or 70 feet high. The height indicates status. Nowadays telegraph poles have to be lowered to let the tower pass. Men who are of lesser rank than the deceased carry the tower.

On the main day guests and men from the banjar arrive at the house. If the body is in the house, it will have been prepared, with a Brahman priest in attendance, and will be placed in the cremation tower and tied to the shelf and covered by a white cloth.

There are three main phases. In the case of a large royal cremation, these would take place on separate days. The first is the Purification, which is dedicated to washing the body and decorating it with various things, like mirrors on the eyelids, flowers in the nostrils, wax in the ears, a ruby in the mouth and iron on the arms. The high priest will sprinkle holy water on it. The second day is the Obeisance, when friends and family view the body. The third day is the final Annihilation.

If the deceased is a king, a Naga or dragon may be carried in a procession and placed to the west side of the remains. The Naga is a symbol of life. Two high priests will shoot arrows at it, which are intended to release the deceased's soul from the world.



The procession to the cemetery will then start. The empty sarcophagus, tied to bamboo poles, will be carried by the banjar men, who intentionally turn it round roughly to confuse the deceased's spirit, so that it will not return home. At crossroads it is turned round three times in an anti-clockwise direction. A member of the family rides on the sarcophagus. Then there will be a long procession with a very long white cloth attached to the tower at one end. This allows those in the procession to have contact with the tower, which brings up the rear.

At the cemetery the sarcophagus is opened and the body --- or the effigy --- put inside and covered with offerings and pieces of cloth. The pedanda will pour in lots of holy water. Then the sarcophagus will be closed and firewood underneath set ablaze. Grief should not be displayed, as mourning would be an impediment to the soul's passage to the next world. The soul of the deceased may become doubtful about moving on.

After the body is burnt, the family collect the ashes and bits of bone. They wrap some in a white cloth and put the rest in a yellow coconut. The pedanda will ring his bell and recite mantras to help the soul's release.

Family members will pray and throw the ashes in the sea or a river, which leads to the sea. In Ubud, River Campuan is used. Thereby the body's elements will be purified and returned to the universe.

The grandness of a cremation does not guarantee a good afterlife. It is karma, good deeds, that does that.

Suttee, the practice dating from at least the 1400s, whereby wives of Balinese rajas sacrificed themselves by jumping into the flames, sometimes stabbing themselves at the same time, was outlawed by the Dutch in 1895. Apparently secret ones occurred until well into the 1920s. Balinese women still sacrifice their hair at their husband's or indeed a close relative's cremation.

The Bali Aga people carry out death rites differently. The Trunyan people expose the corpse to the elements and the Tenganan people bury their dead.

Nyekah

A number of hours, days or weeks later, a second ceremony, sometimes called the second "cremation", takes place to complete the matter. It is called Nyekah and it releases the soul, which still has some links to the body, from earth to heaven.

Many of the activities are similar. There are no bones, but there is an effigy of the spirit of the deceased, offerings, a tower (this time in white and gold), a procession to the sea or river and a disposal of ashes and everything else into the water. The final ritual allows the soul to join God and become a divine ancestor, taking its place and being worshipped in the family temple, and protecting its family's destiny on earth.

At this point the cremated dead are no longer individuals. They are good-natured ancestor gods.

Public ceremonies

Anniversaries: Odalans

All temples, public and private, have an odalan, usually every Balinese year of 210 days, which is the anniversary of their founding and dedication.

Two of the three main village temples have odalans every Balinese year. Pura Desa has one every lunar year of 355 days. This means that the Balinese are devoting one day in twenty to the village temple rituals alone. At least a week of preparation is required for each ceremony, often much more. So village temples take up at least one day in every seven.

The work is shared, but it is still quite considerable, especially when other public and private ceremonies are taken into account.



Balinese New Year's Eve, **Ngerupuk**

For weeks before New Year's Eve a great din is made, banging tins and letting off firecrackers to frighten away the evil spirits from Bali. The purpose is to cast them out totally. It is an exorcism to purify the villages and towns. Large-scale cockfights are held.

On New Year's Eve the Balinese carry out a ritual called Tawur, the aim of which is to give something back to nature. If you take, you should return, otherwise the balance is lost. The ritual also takes place at a village, district, regency and provincial level. In Ubud it takes place at the crossroads. Crossroads are places considered

tenget, highly charged in a supernatural way. The ceremony also takes place where there are Hindu communities in other parts of Indonesia, such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Sumatra and Jakarta.

In the evening there are great processions around the villages of huge statues in grotesque shapes accompanied by loud gamelan music. They are symbols of demonic spirits, called Ogoh-Ogoh. They are made from wood and bamboo, covered with papier-mâché and Styrofoam. They are then painted with garish colors. Some reach three meters in height. The tradition became popular in the 1980s.

The youths of the villages work to raise money to make and create them. They can be very inventive and frightening. There are usually some dragon-like figures and other mythical creatures. In the early days the artists took inspiration from Balinese folklore but latterly Hollywood characters have been a source of inspiration. Some even have Mohawk hairstyles. There is always the black, hooded, faceless angel of death

A ceremony to cleanse the Ogoh-Ogoh is held before the parade takes place and after the parade they are usually burned at the village crossroads, but recently some have been kept and sold.



Preparing for Nyepi with Ogoh-Ogoh keeping watch

Balinese New Year's Day: **Nyepi**

New Year's Day usually takes place in March or April. It is calculated according to the Saka calendar.

On New Year's Day total silence prevails. In 2000 the airport was closed for the first time. This was repeated in 2001 and 2002. The ports shut down. Shops close. Cars are forbidden. Nobody leaves his or her compound. It is forbidden to turn on electricity, cook or light fires. Balinese radio ceases. The Balinese people fast for 24 hours. There are four basic restrictions, the four brata: no fire, no working, no travelling, and no leisure activities.

The idea is that Bali looks deserted and the evil spirits will leave the island. Men from the banjar, the traditional village guards, the pecalang, wearing black or red shirts with chequered black and white poleng sarongs, patrol the streets to ensure compliance and levy fines on transgressors.

On a personal level the silence, serenity and emptiness should lead to a revitalization of inner creative energy and enlightenment.

Although difficult to put into words the "feeling" one experiences once in the gentle hands of Michael and Putu, I'll simply say, I felt embraced by the kindest, most gracious hosts ever known to weary travelers. The Bali experience at Floating Leaf needs to be on everyone's bucket list. Their knowledge of the land and culture made each day's adventure much more fascinating, then if you were to travel to Bali on your own. So much thought went into each detail of the resort, it is stunning! You want for nothing...except possibly an extended stay. In gratitude

Pati M



Galungan

Often described as the Balinese Christmas, this is the most important day of the 210 day Balinese year, the start of the period during which the deified ancestors descend to the family temple and are entertained and presented with offerings and prayers. Actually, strictly, they come down five days before Galungan. Those still in the cemetery will be given offerings as well. The villages are beautifully decorated with penjors. The roads are particularly beautiful, especially when the penjors are fresh. Each village has its own style of penjor. Business stops. Schools close.

For the three days before, preparations are at their most intensive and disruptive spirits abound. It is a time to guard against arguments. On the first of these days bananas are bought or picked so that they will be ripe for Galungan. Tapé, a mildly alcoholic fermented rice pudding, is also prepared. The next day is spent making the

cakes. The day before Galungan is called Pemampahan, which means to slaughter the animals, namely pigs. The meat is finely minced and either wrapped around thick skewers and barbecued as saté or mixed into a fiery assortment called lawar. It is also the last day to erect the penjors.

On the day itself, always a Wednesday, in the eleventh week of the 210 day Balinese calendar, prayers are said, offerings made and families visited. There are barongs on the street, with crashing cymbals and gongs. It will dance outside each house for a few coins to banish the evil spirits. Families continue to visit each other the next day. The holiday ends ten days later on the day called Kuningan.

Galungan also commemorates an historic battle, which symbolizes good over evil. In 8 AD a bad giant king called Sang Mayadenawa forbade the Bali Aga Balinese people from carrying out their religious ceremonies. With the help of many Aryas from East Bali, a fierce battle took place and the king was killed. Peace was restored.

The Galungan kind of offerings are only made three times a year: Galungan, Kuningan and for family temple ceremonies.

Kuningan

Kuningan is also a day of prayers and visiting. Special offerings are made of yellow rice, rice made yellow by turmeric. The word for yellow is kuning. This marks the day the ancestors return to heaven. Actually, strictly they returned five days earlier.

It commemorates the spirits of the heroes who were killed during the battle against Sang Mayadenawa.

In Klungkung in the temple Paksa Bali, a Perang Dewa ceremony takes place --- a symbolic fight between deified ancestors. It is very sensational. Many of the participants go into trance.



Saraswati

Saraswati Day takes place on the last day of the Pawukon calendar and is devoted to the goddess of learning, [Saraswati](#), the wife of Brahma, the god of creation. She lives on the tip of the human tongue, and in written letters inscribed in poems on lontars and on the petals of lotus blossoms.

Her day is a public holiday in Bali. Offerings are made to books, which may be covered with an ornate piece of cloth. There are no classes but there are special ceremonies in the schools. Students pray at the shrines in the school. No letters may be crossed out or any writing deleted on that day.

According to a religious text, Purwagama, our ancestors used to live like animals. Brahma sent Saraswati to change them into humans. She created poetry by attaching letters to the inner and outer worlds. By this means humans were brought into existence, giving them an inner self. Letters are a key to the inner and outer worlds.

Banyu Pinaruh

The day after Saraswati Day the Balinese clean themselves with water that has been blessed. Many people go to the beach in the morning to pray and bathe themselves with sea water (melukat). In the evening they eat a smoked duck feast.



Dewi Sri (right) is honored in the grand entry of Floating Leaf

Coma Ribek or Somaribek

The following day the Balinese pray to Dewi Sri, the rice Goddess, for wealth. No money is supposed to pass hands on this day.

Siwa Ratri

The same evening the Balinese fast and stay awake and meditate for 36 hours. On this day Siwa carried out his most important meditation. Those who do the same will be blessed and rewarded.

Pagerwesi

The following day offerings are made to Pramesti Guru for his blessing. This is to achieve balance in the world and its creatures.

Major ceremonies

There are many, but two stand out in importance:

Panca Wali Krama

This is a large purification ceremony, which takes place once a decade. The Balinese call it a year that ends in a zero.

Eka Dasa Rudra

This is the greatest of all Balinese festivals, an enormous purification ceremony, which takes place once a century. The Balinese call it a year that ends in two zeros. The last one took place on 28 March 1979, Saka year 1900. The aim is to strengthen the spiritual life of those taking part, leading to harmony, justice and prosperity. It is not clear when the ceremony had been performed in previous centuries. It seems to have been performed during the reign of Dalem Waturenggong towards the middle of the 16th century, when the kingdom of Gelgel was at its height, under the direction of Nirartha, the priest.

Eka Dasa Rudra means the eleven Rudras. Rudra is a god associated with wildness and danger, the Vedic antecedent of Siwa, with whom he later became linked. Eleven expresses the idea that he is everywhere in all directions.

It was planned to have the ceremony in 1963, but that was Saka year 1984, which did not end in two zeros. Texts do allow it to be held on special occasions, if there is severe disharmony, like earthquakes, eruptions, plagues and wars. It was felt by some that such a time existed. The festival began on 10 October 1962 and continued until 20 April 1962. The focal point of the whole ceremony, the great sacrifice, taur eka dasa rudra, was due on 8 March 1963, the last day of the Saka year.

During the ceremony the Balinese were asked not to cremate their dead and not even to announce publicly, by beating the slit-drum kulkul that a death had occurred. Bodies were carried quietly to the graveyard and buried. Post-cremation rites that purify the soul of a body already cremated were, however, allowed.

The offerings were mind-boggling - more than 50 buffaloes, scores of other animals, thousands of ducks and chickens, tens of thousands of bananas, eggs and coconuts, tons of rice.



Tanah Lot Temple

Balinese Temples

At the beginning of the 16th century, when the [Majapahit](#) empire had moved further east, a period of independent cultural development began on [Bali](#). Nowhere else on earth are there as many temples as in Bali. The number is estimated at around 20,000. There are family temples, temples serving several families, temples for individual territories, temples for all Bali, and three obligatory temples for each village.

Balinese temple design is a fascinating subject in its own right. Everything from the layout, to the structures to the decoration has a specific function. Locally geography often determines the actual shape of a temple and no 2 temples are exactly the same. There are however certain key elements that you will find in most temples. The diagram shows how a temple is often split into **3 sections**, the **outer**, **middle** and **inner courtyards**. Inside these courtyards are shrines and other structures to enable people to worship.



Bali Temple Etiquette

Do wear a scarf or sarong.

Sarongs can usually be rented or are included in the ticket price at most temples in Bali.

Cover your upper body.

Wear modest clothing and wear a top that as a minimum cover your shoulders.

Take off your shoes before entering a temple.

Leave your flip-flops or shoes among the other left behind shoes that you are likely to find near the entrance of any temple in Bali.

Don't enter a temple if you are bleeding.

You shouldn't enter a temple if you have cut yourself or whilst menstruating.

Bali Temple Etiquette

✓ Don't point your feet toward the shrines.

Feet are considered unclean, so don't point them toward the shrines or other holy objects. When praying men should sit with their legs crossed while women kneel.

✓ Don't enter a temple if you are pregnant

Pregnant or women who have given birth within 6 weeks shouldn't enter a temple.

✓ Don't stand higher than the priest.

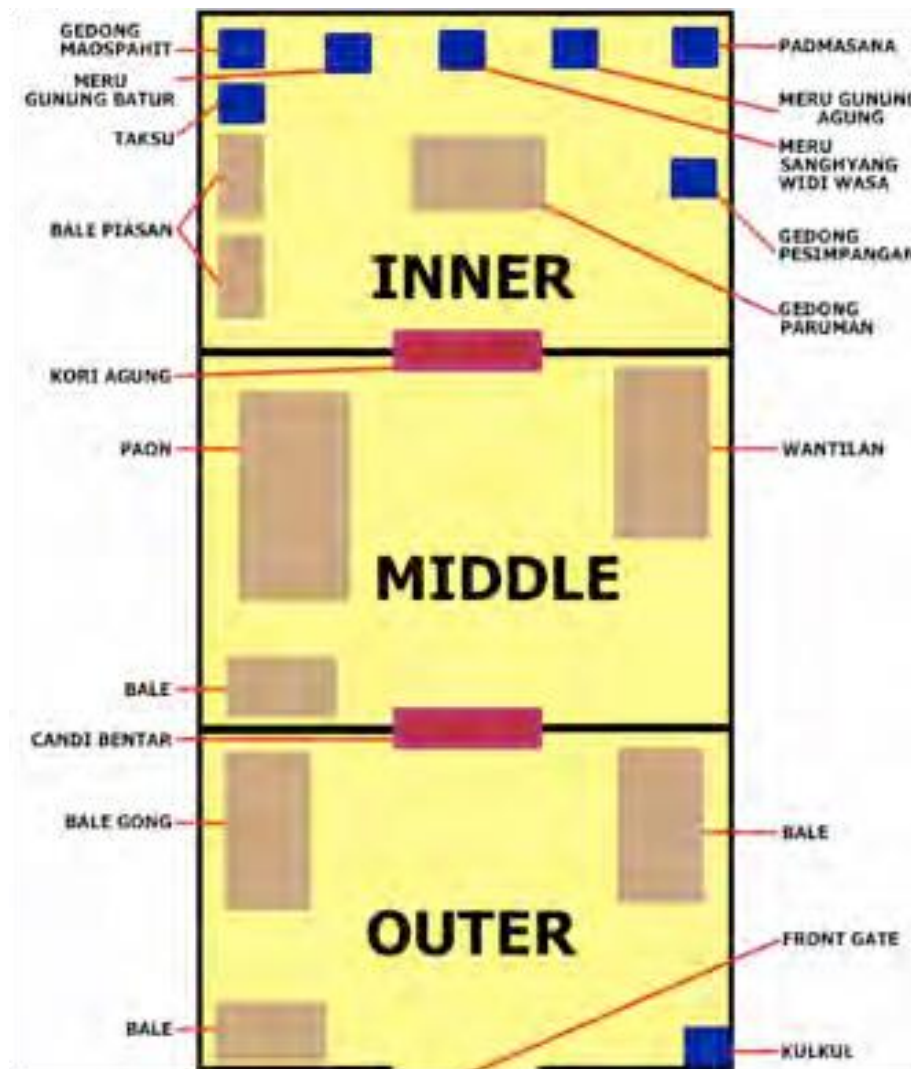
It's considered lack of respect to have your head higher than the head of the priest.

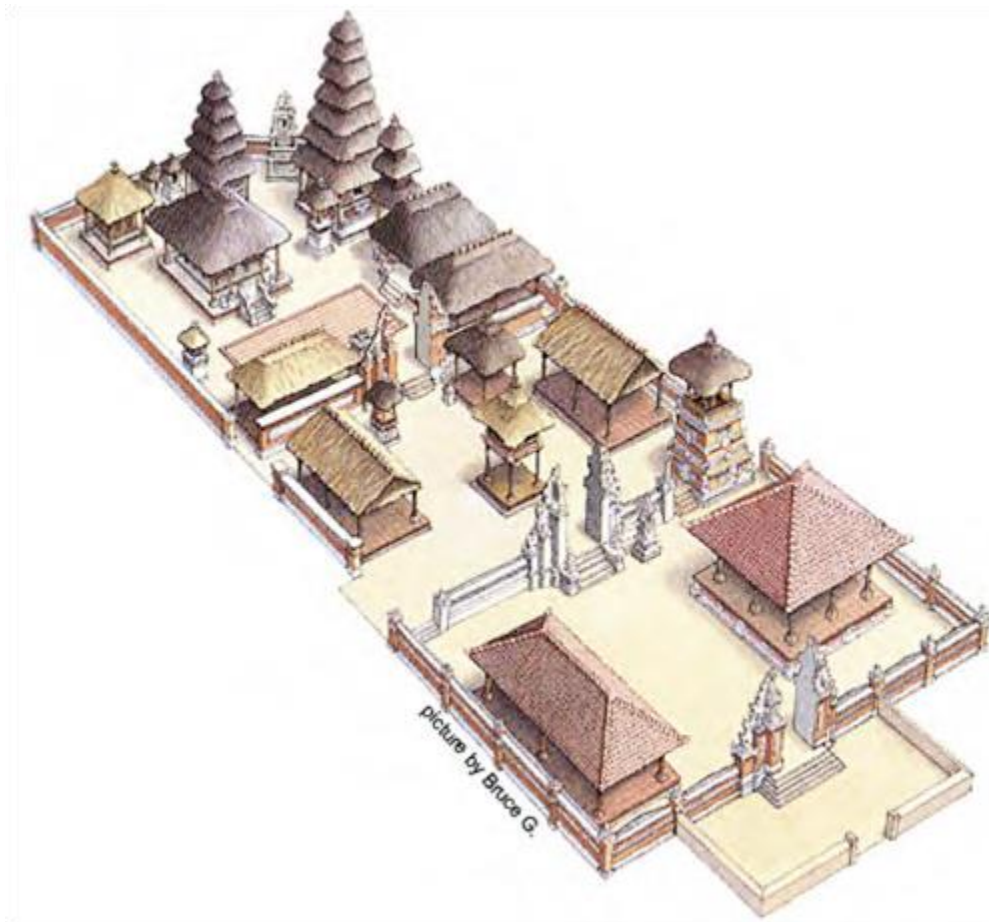
✓ Pay due respect.

Remember that you are in a holy place and use common sense. Don't get in the way of processions and ceremonies and use common courtesy when taking photos.

Just as a [Balinese family compound](#) will be built on the kaja-kelod axis, so too are Balinese temples. Larger temples have 3 courtyards, smaller ones just 2. The entrance to a Balinese temple at the *kelod* (pointing away from Gunung Agung) end of the compound, is often a simple gate. The first courtyard is the **outer courtyard**, which is the **realm of humans**. Here **temple dances** will often occur and tourists will be allowed to visit this part of the temple. During ceremonies food stalls may be set up here and cockfighting may take place. The outer courtyard is called the *jaba*.

The *jaba tengah*, or **middle courtyard** is a **halfway step** between the **realm of humans** and the **realm of the Gods**. This area is used for **preparing offerings**. The *jeroan*, or inner courtyard is sacred and is where all the **important shrines** are located. Some temples will allow properly dressed tourists into the inner courtyard, sometimes not. **Offerings** are brought to the inner courtyard, the most **important dances** are performed there and all temple **rituals and prayers** are performed there.





Outer Courtyard (jaba) structures:

- **Bale** – An all purpose pavilion used for meetings.
- **Bale Gong** – This is the gamelan pavilion where the orchestra plays and instruments are stored.
- **Kulkul** – A bell tower with a split-log hanging in the center. Used to summon people.
- **Candi Bentar** – Split gate which separate the outer courtyard (*jaba*) from the middle courtyard (*jaba tengah*).

Middle Courtyard (jaba tengah) structures:

- **Paon** – kitchen located in a open-sided pavilion. Used for preparing offerings.
- **Wantilan** – A large pavilion used for dance performances.
- **Kori Agung** – Stone capped gate separating the middle courtyard (*jaba tengah*) from the inner courtyard (*jeroan*).

Inner Courtyard (jeroan) structures:

- **Bale Piasan** – Pavilion where offerings are placed.
- **Taksu** – A stone pillar which is the seat of the interpreter to the gods. During certain trance dances this interpreter will occupy the body of the dancer.
- **Meru Gunung Batur** – A shrine dedicated to Mt. Batur. Has from 1-9 thatched roofs.
- **Gedong Maospahit** – Shrine honoring the ancient Majapahit people from Java, the ancestors of the modern day Balinese Hindus. Identifiable by the deer head sculpture.
- **Padmasana** – The **Lotus Throne**, seat of **Sanghyang Widi Wasa**, the Supreme Deity. Always located in the *kaja-kangin* corner of the courtyard, which is the closest point to Gunung Agung. Also identifiable because the whole structure sits on the back of a giant cosmic turtle, the **Bedawang**.
- **Meru Gunung Agung** – Shrine dedicated to Mt. Agung. From 3-11 roofs.
- **Meru Sanghyang Widi Wasa** – Shrine dedicated to the supreme deity. Has 11 thatched roofs.

- **Gedong Pesimpangan** – Shrine in honor of the founder of the village.
- **Gedong Paruman** – A pavilion structure in the center of the inner courtyard, left empty so the gods can assemble for ceremonies.

Passing through the different sections of a temple, the portals get more impressive. Starting with the plain outside gate, a person can pass into the middle courtyard via a *candi bentar*, the impressive Balinese split-gate. From there to the inner courtyard one has to pass through a *kori agung*, which is a stone-capped gate. Often there will be a flat block of cement (*aling aling*) directly inside the *kori agung*, blocking the way, forcing those entering to walk around either side. This is to keep evil spirits out of the jeroan, as spirits can only walk in straight lines.

Common features found inside a temple are *bales*, the open sided pavilions with raised seating section and thatched roof. These have a variety of uses including a place for the *gamelan* orchestra to sit, village meeting and a resting place for worshipers. Another common feature are *gedong*, or square shaped brick shrines capped with a thatched roof. These have specific names and are in honor of a particular ancestor, such as the village founder, or a specific deity, such as **meru Sanghyang Widi Wasa**, the supreme deity.



Balinese Religion

Introduction

Bali's wonderful volcanoes, rice terraces and temples, dramatic ceremonies, cremations and dances, processions, offerings, [carvings](#), [paintings](#), [masks](#), [puppets](#) and [gamelan music](#) are spectacular and colorful but pretty much devoid of meaning without an appreciation of Balinese religion. The vital thing to appreciate is that there is hardly any division between the religious and the secular world. God is everywhere and in all things.

Origin

The Balinese had a religion before Hinduism arrived on her shores. Many aspects of the old religion are still practiced today. The Balinese share a common ancestry with the Malayo-Polynesians, who settled the islands of the Pacific several thousands of years ago. They worshipped many nature gods and ancestors. Their temples were open rectangular spaces with shrines. The gods were invited to visit the shrines during ceremonies. Fruit offerings were presented to the gods. All these are common to the Balinese practice of religion and suggest its origin.

Binary opposites

The Balinese believe that the world is divided into opposites, ruwa-bineda. This philosophical principle is also found in Java: good and bad, day and night, mountain and sea, the Pandawas and the Korawas in the Mahabarata stories, right and left, young and old, male and female, sun and moon and so on.

The Balinese view of the world is somewhat reminiscent of Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, (c540-c480 BC), who taught that everything is in a state of flux, strife and turmoil. He also said that conflict between opposites constituted the universe. These opposites were somehow the same and were one.

Balance

Many influences have been involved in the Balinese religion, which is known as Bali Hindu Dharma. The cardinal belief is that the world lies between two opposing and antagonistic poles. Left to itself, everything would fall into disorder. It takes an outside influence, namely man, by proper ritual behavior, to bring order into the world and counter-act the natural tendency towards disorder.

The aim is to achieve a state where the two forces of good and evil are in balance. This is the purpose of ceremonies, prayers and offerings: to achieve equilibrium, not only for the person, but also for the village, Bali and the world. The equilibrium will be a temporary, however, so the ceremonies must be constantly repeated.

Conflict

Hildred Geertz in *Images of Power* takes a more radical slant and says that conflict is the fundamental characteristic of life in the Balinese view of the world. Those that have spiritual power, *sakti*, possessed by humans and non-humans, royal and divine, are engaged in constant competitive combat with one another. The universe is thus comprised of fluctuating, flowing, shifting forces, which can sometimes be temporarily commanded by masters of *sakti*.

On this view, temple ceremonies are best understood as procedures for accessing *sakti* in order to persuade spiritual beings not to destroy the vitality and fertility of the congregation and its lands, to hold off those that cannot be persuaded and to bless the congregation with the strength to continue to oppose them.

The Soul

Soul comes from the word for blowing; it is the breath of life. There are three main beliefs about the soul:

Vedic and Balinese view

This is that the soul migrates through bodies by means of reincarnation, like a game of snakes and ladders. The soul slowly progresses on its journey. Even Buddha went through countless lives. According to this view, the soul is separate from the body.

Abrahamic view

The Abrahamic view of Judaism, Christianity and Islam that this life is where you are tested. If you pass the test, you go to Paradise or Heaven, but if you fail, you go to Hell. Originally Judaism did not have much of an idea about the afterlife.



A full Moon Purification Ceremony held at Floating Leaf Eco-Retreat

Reincarnation

There is a strong belief in reincarnation. Man's body is the receptacle for the spirit, Atman. Birth and death are merely the creation and destruction of the perishable body. Reincarnation, samsara, occurs when the spirit is reborn in a different body and to achieve this old body must be completely destroyed. This can only be achieved through cremation.

When someone dies their spirit or soul hovers around their body. Capable of bothering its old family, the family will want to treat it right. Ceremonies are required to detach it from the body. There are pre-cremation ceremonies, then the cremation ceremony, followed by another ceremony, called Nyekah, by which the released soul is returned to God.

Before reincarnation, according to one view, there are periods in heaven and hell, the lengths of which depend on the person's karma. A person can return as a higher or lower caste person or as an animal, even as a one-celled creature. All depends on the person's karma.

When the spirit is eventually freed from all desire, it reaches moksa. The individual soul (atma) merges with the all-loving, all-forgiving universal soul of the Creator (Peramatma). Having fused with God, it loses its identity in Nirvana, the highest state of enlightenment. Those that attain moksa are said to be able to take their bodies with them when they die. It is possible to attain moksa during your life. That is called Jiwa Mukti. Even animals participate in reincarnation, until they eventually reach Nirvana.

One's actions, karma, determine whether one will be rewarded or punished. Doing good works; making offerings, performing sacred dances and playing music all create good karma.

A central theme of Hinduism, which was brought to India by Indo-European migrants, is that God is everywhere at all times. God is part of all things. It follows that the essence of a person, his Atman, and God are one. If this were not so, reincarnation could not take place. Everything has a soul. A human being could be reborn as an insect or animal. These beliefs lead to respect for all things.

Reincarnation is seen today as essentially Indian, being a major part of Hinduism and Buddhism, but it is also found in the Western tradition. Pythagoras, who flourished around 532 BC, founded a religion, whose main tenet was the transmigration of souls. His followers, including Plato, believed in reincarnation.

Pythagoras believed that after death souls could be reincarnated as plants or animals. He himself had "already been once a boy and a girl, a bush and a bird and a leaping journeying fish".

Plato believed, although he could not prove it, that the soul had three parts, one part was reason and two emotional parts, one domineering and the other dealing with lower desires and appetites. Only the part that reasons was immortal. It existed before birth and would continue to exist after death. What the good man can hope to enjoy after death is reunification, or at least, communion, with those incorporeal higher forms of existence that are conventionally called "the divine."

Animals evolved out of humans. Animals were humans in a previous life who could not reason well. Also, plants have souls, but they can only feel, not reason.

Aristotle also believed that plants and flowers have souls, but not consciousness. Animals do not have rational souls. He thought that the soul was part of the biological body and died with the body. He did not believe in reincarnation.

Monotheism

The concept of the Trinity arose early in the history of Hinduism, namely Brahma, Siwa and [Wisnu](#): Brahma, the Creator, Wisnu, the Preserver, and Siwa, the god of destruction and rebirth. Some say they are three manifestations of the one God and that the name for the one God is Sanghyang Widi Wasa. There are no statues of "Him". "He" is defined as the essence common to all the gods. Sang and hyang indicate the divine, the more than human, while widi, from the Sanskrit widhi, means order. "He" is neither male nor female, but in "his" more earthly manifestations is portrayed as Lingayoni, a unity of masculine and feminine elements.

There are other manifestations. [Dewi Sri](#), the Rice goddess, is very popular and her image is seen everywhere. Also popular is Saraswati, the goddess of learning, whose day is a public holiday.

The State

After Indonesian independence, there was a debate over whether Indonesia should become an Islamic or secular state. Domination by an Islamic majority had long been a concern in Bali. The debate continues, but, for the time being, has been settled. Indonesia is a secular state.

To placate Islam, it became politically important for the Balinese to be clearly monotheistic. In the early 1950s it looked like Bali-Hinduism might not gain official recognition as a "religion" from the central state because it did not easily meet the Government criteria: a "holy book", a belief in one God and a prophet, and international recognition.

With the assistance of President Sukarno, Balinese leaders gained recognition and obtained a separate Bali-Hindu section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1958. Bali-Hinduism was acknowledged as an official religion in 1962. Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, created in 1986, is the religion's central body.

There are five officially sanctioned religions in Indonesia and all Indonesians have to profess one of them. They are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and the two Christian religions, Catholicism and Protestantism.

World religions

According to The Vatican Handbook 2000 and The World Christian Encyclopedia there are 1.9 billion professed Christians around the world, 1.45 billion baptized Catholics and 1.2 billion Moslems. There are 811 million Hindus, 360 million Buddhists, 23 million Sikhs and 14 million Jews. There are 768 million non-religious people.

By contrast Bali-Hindus number 3 million.

Max Weber, the German sociologist, distinguishes traditional religions from rationalized religions and said that the world religions evolved from traditional ones, folk cults and folk mythologies. Traditional religions, of which Bali-Hinduism is one, are closer to the gods, more concerned with ritual and less concerned with philosophy. Rationalized religions, and the world religions are in this category, are more distant and compartmentalized.

Traditional religions infuse everyday life. The gods are present everywhere: rocks, trees, graveyards, road crossings and so on. The rationalized ones have a more distant concept of the divine, such as Yahweh. To get closer to the divine Weber identified two methods in the rationalized religions; obeying commands from holy books, the prophets, and indications miracles. The other way contact through mysticism.

Traditional religions deal with the problems of life in a piecemeal fashion --- a ceremony will put the disaster right. Rationalized religions deal with abstract matters in a more or less coherent way.



Gods and Demons

Supernatural power in Bali is easily converted to good or bad.

The evil spirits, which live on the ground, and receive their offerings there, are called the Bhutas and Kalas. There are also witches, Leyaks. They study black magic, are usually married women initiated by a sorcerer, and get their power through secret rituals in the graveyard. They have the ability to change shapes. They can appear as monkeys, goats, pigs, snails, balls of fire and other shapes. Naturally most Balinese are scared of them. Sometimes they have a burning desire to eat fetuses, newborn babies and small children. This becomes the subject matter of paintings. Miscarriages and stillbirths are routinely blamed on them.

Anything, animate or inanimate, can be possessed by a spirit, good and/or bad, and is worthy of an offering to keep things in balance. So trees, rocks, practically anything may be presented with offerings. Invisible spirits or beings are very much alive and part and parcel of everyday life. Belief in the invisible is, of course, known in other religions. The Christian Creed begins "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible..."

Although in the English language, we describe Balinese spirits as gods or demons and thereby imply that they are either consistently benevolent or malevolent, this falsifies Balinese belief. Every Balinese god or demon is capable of being helpful and/or harmful. They are just opposite ends of the same stick.

God of Thieves

One of the more curious Balinese gods is the God of Thieves, Pelinggih Sang Hyang Maling. Two temples are dedicated to him: Besikalung Temple near the Hoo River and Petali Temple in Jatiluwih village. There are few visitors and no priests. Nobody knows how the god fits into the Bali Hindu religion or the reason the temples were built. According to Nengah Bawa Atmaja, a local scholar, the Balinese, along with many other societies, have the concept of a "social bandit", a Robin Hood character, and the god may represent this idea.

Ancestors

The Bali Hindu belief in ancestors is different in nature from Indian Hinduism's belief. Reincarnation takes place more quickly than in Indian Hinduism, occurring within a generation or two after cremation.

When someone dies, they are usually buried, and their spirit resides in Pura Dalem, the Temple of Death. It can, of course, move from there if it wishes. It is not until cremation, properly carried out, that the spirit goes to heaven. It is the most important duty of the deceased's children to ensure that the cremation ceremony is indeed carried out and carried out properly.

In heaven the spirit will be rewarded or punished according to its karma, its actions on earth. Reincarnation can then take place and usually the spirit returns to the same family in the fourth generation. A female can come back as a male and vice

versa. There are no constraints. Two people may even be reincarnated as one person.

After numerous reincarnations, when it has become pure, the spirit achieves moksa and fuses with the spirit of and becomes one with God and reincarnation ceases. The deified family ancestors (leluhur) are part of God and can help the family if they are accorded due respect. The reverse is also true: they can cause trouble to the family if they are not treated properly. The Balinese therefore take care to invite them to ceremonies, make regular offerings to them and maintain their shrines. Ceremonies are conducted in the best and most pleasing ways possible to entertain the spirits.

Ancestors more than four generations back begin to lose their identities. That is because they may already have been reincarnated. Geertz calls this "genealogical amnesia". Relations five generations apart call each other by the same kinship term, kumpi, and are classified as belonging to the same generation. Children that are five generations apart from their deceased great-grandparents do not pray to them in the family temple because they have the same generational rank.

Attendance

Most people belong to half a dozen or more temples and will attend them when there is a ceremony. They pay homage to the gods that are relevant to them. If a person does not belong to a particular temple, he will have no real interest in entering.

There are no sermons --- only a blessing with holy water and simple prayers and entertainment for the gods and ancestors.

The physical and the spiritual

Like the ancient Greeks, the Balinese do not draw a sharp distinction between the physical and the spiritual, so a deformed person is regarded as ritually unclean, mala. The inner life of a person is reflected in his appearance. Therefore, during important ceremonies, people who are badly handicapped, for example, by being blind, lame, or hare-lipped, are not allowed to enter the temple. Menstruating women are never allowed in temples.



Processions

Processions are a feature of many religions and a frequent occurrence in Bali. Sometimes gods or [Barongs](#) (Balinese mythical spirits that protect villages) visit other temples whereupon there will be a procession involving many people, [umbrellas](#) and a [gamelan orchestra](#). These visits link temples and draw communities together.

Most temple anniversaries start their celebrations by taking the gods, their spirits residing in wooden images called Pratimas, to a holy river or the sea for symbolic cleaning and purification.

Holy Water

Bali-Hinduism is called the holy water religion, Agama Tirta, which indicates how important holy water is. It is used in every ceremony, in every ritual. It is poured over every offering, every sacrifice, every building, every rice paddy and every person. It blesses and purifies.

There are ornate [holy water dispensers](#).

Each temple creates its own holy water. It signifies that temple, its god and congregation. It is sacred and the more upstream the spring from which it comes the more potent it is. The most sacred variety is so imbued with the essence of the god that it can represent the god at temples outside his own temple. So, holy water does not represent the sacred in general but a specific god or social unit.

Water from the spring is made holy by presenting offerings to the particular god, who is asked to sanctify it. High priests can also make holy water and as they do they are infused with and become Siwa.

Holy waters are often mingled, which symbolically tie communities together. For example, a water temple downstream may have its holy water augmented by holy water from a more important, upstream water temple. Or there may be a mingling of holy water between a local water temple and a village temple. This symbolically connects communities and demonstrates the hierarchy.

Holy water is collected from upstream temples and brought back, never the other way round --- never does an upstream temple collect water from a downstream source. The further upstream the source, the more sacred the water, so major rituals would have local holy water augmented by distant upstream holy water.



A Women's Spirituality Retreat makes a pilgrimage to Bali's holiest water temple

Prayers

Prayers are an act of homage to God and form part of every ceremony. There are no formal prayers. In the temple prayers are said sitting on the ground. Men sit cross-legged; women kneel, facing the gods and the offerings, which will have already been placed in front of the gods.

The priest sprinkles everyone with holy water three times. Each person has a little basket in which there are placed flowers and a stick of burning [incense](#). The incense carries the prayers to God. Prayers are said privately by holding a flower between the fingers, pressing the palms together and raising them so that the thumbs touch the forehead. At the end of each prayer the flower is flicked forward to carry the

prayer. This is repeated three times. This homage to God is called the act of muspa from puspa meaning flower.

At the end of prayers an attendant or priest sprinkles holy water on the hands of those who have prayed. This is sipped. This is done three times. The fourth pouring of holy water is rubbed on the face and hair. Then a few grains of sticky rice are handed to the people. A few grains are eaten and the rest are pressed to their Cakra points on the forehead, temples and chest. The rice serves as a magical protection. People collect their offerings and take them home to eat. Their essence has already been taken by the gods and enjoyed.

Entertainment

Music, dance and shadow puppet performances, staged to entertain the gods, who have been invited to the ceremony, usually take place in the evening.

Program of a typical temple ceremony

These vary from village to village, but the basic scheme is the same. Normally a temple anniversary, odalan, takes three days. The main purpose is to invite the gods to the temple. The program is as follows:

2 or 3 days before

A woman and man go to the temple from each household, she prepares rice flour and containers, or fries offering cakes in oil and he cleans the temple grounds and builds offering stands, or guards the temple at night.

1 day before

The women cook glutinous rice, make it into pyramids or cylinders and pack it into woven palm-leaves, wrap the uprights of pavilions and the friezes with coloured cloth, hang flat, carved, hour-glass figures (salangs), made of punched Chinese coins on either side of altars and place woven palm lamaks in front of the altars.

Day 1

Early morning of the first day, the men slaughter a pig, whose meat will be used for offerings for the demons; the priest takes out the small Pratimas, figures, which he dresses like small dolls and adorns with flowers, which are temporary homes for the gods during the festival, and places them in the place where the gods assemble. The priest will purify the area with an offering for the demons, hold up an incense container, and invite the gods to come down along the ladder made by the incense smoke, whilst the kulkul drum beats to announce their arrival.

Day 2

During the day, women will bring tall offerings on their heads. The priest fans the essence of the offerings to the gods. The worshippers are purified with holy water from the priest and then they pray. The offerings are taken home and eaten.

Shortly before sunset, the gods are taken to the river to bathe. They are accompanied by processional music and singing. They are then taken back to the temple.

In the evening, ritual dances, music and entertainments follow.

Day 3

During the night of the third and last day, the gods are asked to return to Mount Agung. The cloths are taken away and the shrines and temple doors locked.

Everyone's Four Invisible Brothers or Sisters: Kanda Empat

Males have four brothers; females have four sisters. They are conceived and born at the same time. At birth they take up positions inside the baby's body.

They are the amniotic fluid, the uterine blood, the vernix caseosa (the yellowish waxy substance covering a baby) and the placenta. Immediately after birth the baby's placenta and umbilical cord are placed in a coconut and buried outside the door of the baby's home: as you stand at the door looking out, they are buried on the right for a boy and on the left for a girl, a large black rock placed on top and a thorny pandanus bush placed on top for protection. If the family moves house, the remains are dug up and reburied at the new house.

The four children stay with the child throughout his or her life, protect the child and adult, and accompany the spirit to heaven and testify to his or her good karma. But this is conditional on the Kanda Empat being treated with respect.

When the mother feeds the baby, a few drops of milk should be spilt on the placenta for the four children. The same ceremonies for a person should be carried out for the four children. If not, great harm can result. The Kanda Empat can do good or evil, so they need to be considered and treated well. The theory is that they represent man's potential.



Adat

Adat is knowledge as to how to behave properly, imparted by the founders of the village, who have since become deified ancestors. It is from a word of Arabic origin meaning custom, but it means more than that. It is inextricably connected to religion. These customary rules are part of the divine order. They evolve and vary from village to village in minor ways. Every creature or thing, animal, plant and river, has its own adat.

Adat governs ceremonies of marriage, birth and death, etiquette, inheritance, methods of agriculture, styles of art, times to plant rice, build a house and many other things. In short, adat is order, an entire framework of social action.

Indian Hinduism

The foundations of Indian Hinduism and Balinese Hinduism are the same, but they have evolved and are practiced in very different ways. For example:

Balinese temples are architecturally quite different, open with no roofs, so that the gods can descend and visit.

Balinese offerings are very different, often extremely elaborate.

Balinese reincarnation takes place more quickly, often within a generation or two of cremation.

The Balinese emphasize deification of ancestors.

There are four Balinese castes; in India there are 7,000 recognized castes and sub-castes.

The Balinese caste system operates differently: there are no Untouchables; employment is not restricted to particular castes with certain exceptions (high priests, the pedandas, must be Brahmans and blacksmiths must be members of the Pande title group).

Balinese Brahmans cannot be rulers.

In Bali there is no idol worship and there are no statues of gods in the temples.

In Bali the gods are present in the temples only during ceremonies.

The Balinese eat beef (except the high caste priests, the pedandas, who do not).

Balinese dead do not have to be cremated immediately (except for priests and members of the royal family).

Balinese cremations are totally different.

The variations do not mean that the Balinese religion is not Hindu, although it does incorporate a large amount of pre-Hindu animism. In India there are many, many Hindu sects, which practice Hinduism in different ways. One way of looking at it is that Bali-Hinduism is a Hindu sect.

There is very little contact nowadays with India and there has been no significant contact for more than a thousand years. There is a revival of interest amongst Indonesian Hindus living outside Bali, for example, in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan. There are numerous contacts between Bali and them. Bali provides them with a lot of help. Pura Mandara Giri Semeru Agung, the new Balinese Hindu temple honoring Mount Semeru in Java, was built at the foot of the mountain with much help from the Royal family and people of Ubud.

Kawi

Kawi is Old Javanese, the language of the Hindu kingdoms of Java from the 8th to the 14th centuries. It became the language of the courts of Bali, but has not been spoken since the 16th century. Nearly half the vocabulary derives from Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hindu philosophy in India. Kawi is used for the epic stories, shadow puppet performances and poetry.

Sanskrit is regarded as the language of the gods, very powerful, and never translated. It is only studied by the pedandas, the high priests, and is the language of prayer.

Summary

The traditional versus modern debate is an argument of the elite. The ordinary person is not much concerned with it. For them to cease to be a Balinese Hindu is to cease to be Balinese. Their lives are full of ceremonies. During a ceremony, the place of ritual activity is a stage. The believers are actors, the priests are directors, their helpers are assistant directors, and the gods and demons are the invisible but critical audience.

A pious Balinese leads a busy and crowded life full of rites and ceremonies, whose purpose is to cleanse the unclean, reconcile the irreconcilable, worship, appease, avert danger, obtain nourishment and secure a happy life after death and a good reincarnation. It is a full life and very difficult to maintain these days in cases where a business is being run at the same time.



Bahasa Indonesia

Bahasa means language, and Bahasa Indonesia is the lingua franca of the archipelago. With over 350 native languages currently in use throughout the country, a good lingua franca is clearly necessary...

Ya	Yes
Tidak	No
Apa kabar?	How are you? What's new?
Baik	Good, Fine
Terima kasih	Thank you
Kembali	You're welcome
Da-da / Bye	Bye

<i>Selamat datang</i>	Welcome
<i>Apa kabar?</i>	How are you?
<i>Selamat pagi</i>	Good morning
<i>Selamat siang</i>	Good early afternoon
<i>Selamat sore</i>	Good afternoon
<i>Selamat malam</i>	Good evening

<i>Selamat makan</i>	Have a nice meal
<i>Selamat bertamasya</i>	Have a nice trip / holiday
<i>Selamat jalan</i>	Have a nice trip / goodbye (if someone is leaving)
<i>Selamat tinggal</i>	Goodbye (if you are leaving)

<i>Terima kasih</i>	Thank you
<i>Sama sama</i>	Don't mention it
<i>Tidak terimah kasih</i>	No thank you

<i>Berapa harganya?</i>	How much does it cost / what's the price?
<i>Mahal!</i>	Expensive!
<i>Murah!</i>	Cheap
<i>Boleh tawar?</i>	Can I bargain?
<i>Harga pas</i>	Fixed price

one : satu
two : dua
three : tiga
four : empat
five : lima
six : enam
seven : tujuh

eight : delapan
nine : sembilan
ten : sepuluh

eleven : sebelas
twelve : dua belas
thirteen : tiga belas

fourteen : empat belas
fifteen : lima belas
sixteen : enam belas
17 : tujuh belas
18 : delapan belas
19 : sembilan belas

twenty : dua puluh
thirty : tiga puluh
fourty : empat puluh

fifty : lima puluh
sixty : enam puluh
seventy : tujuh puluh

eighty : delapan puluh
ninety : sembilan
puluh

Sources: <http://www.balifornian.com> , <http://www.murnis.com>, <http://www.baliblog.com/>,
<http://bali-floatingleaf.com/>

We hope you enjoyed our Bali Travel Guide. Safe sojourns and enjoy the mystical and beautiful culture that exists in only one place in the world.

Have a fantastic and inspiring trip and if we can be of help in anyway, please let us know.

Matur Suksema and thank you!

Putu Maryam, Bodhi and the entire Floating Leaf staff.



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