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BALI TODAY

Travel Today Feature P1

Accommodation Options

GO has reported increased Kiwi demand for accommodation in areas like Seminyak, Sanur and Nusa Dua, but says the majority of Bali-bound Kiwis still stay within the Kuta, South Kuta and Legian area.

"There are still a number of the original 'favourite' properties such as the Padma, Santika and Ramada Bintan which have undergone total refurbishments and continue to be big sellers," says GO's Liz Johnston. "Many properties in the South Kuta (which used to be called Tuban) cater really well for families offering facilities including kids clubs and family rooms."

The wholesaler says more Kiwis are now opting for a four-star stay than in the past, a trend it is attributing to the stronger New Zealand dollar.

For repeat travellers or family groups, demand for private villas continues to grow, says GO. "There has also been a huge increase in the number of upmarket properties in Bali that really do cater for the discerning traveller, such as the Alila, Karma, and W Hotels to name a few..."

*See this week's *Bali Today* for more on Bali's accommodation options.

Talk The Talk

Selamat datang – Welcome

Apa kabar? – How are you?

Selamat tinggal – Goodbye

Terima kasih – Thank you

Tidak terima kasih – No thanks

Bali's Coming of Age



Bali Garden Beach Resort

Beaches, bargaining, and Bintangs were once the key attractions of the so-called Island of the Gods—but Bali has come of age, now offering Kiwi travellers everything from a fly and flop holiday, right through to a five-star escape into the island's lush interior, says GO Holidays.

The planned launch of Air New Zealand's direct services between Auckland and Bali, from Jun, has reinvigorated Kiwi interest in the destination and the wholesaler says it has seen huge agent demand for Bali packages since they went on sale last Thu.

When To Visit

Bali's tropical climate mean it's a destination that's warm and humid year-round. Air New Zealand's new direct services will, initially, operate for the seasonal Jun-Oct peak—also avoiding the Nov-Apr rainy season. It traditionally rains more in the hilly interior of the island, and the less touristy northern coast get less rainfall. The average annual temperature is around 28°C.

"Bali is no longer just a cheap surfer hang out. The bars and great waves are still there for that market, but now there's a range of options right through to unique properties and gorgeous resorts in the likes of Uluwatu, Jimbaran Bay and north of Seminyak," says GO Holidays' Asia product manager Liz Johnston. "The whole eating, shopping, staying experience can be as cheap or as upmarket as clients want. While it might cost a little more to fly there compared to a Pacific Island, Bali's value for money offering in terms of service, hotels, the shopping and the dining is unbeatable."

More In Bali

To meet the spike in Bali demand GO Holidays now has a host of new Bali accommodation options and tours already available, for travel from 01 Apr.

"In a number of places we've doubled our land offering and we also now have access to larger allocations, increasing the inventory we can offer," says GO Holidays' Asia product manager Liz Johnston.

Value For Money

Bali continues to be a value for money destination, and with NZD1 buying around IDR7540 (Indonesia Rupiah) the Kiwi dollar still goes a long way. Clients can pick up 'good copy' t-shirts at the local markets for around \$6, with copy sunglasses from \$2.50 along with local handicrafts and jewellery for nominal prices. There's numerous choices for dining out, and a couple can dine out, with beers, for around \$30 at one of the local restaurants.



The Balinese People

The relaxed and friendly Balinese people are predominantly Hindu (albeit within the most populous Muslim nation) and are an integral piece in the destination's unique charm. You can't go far without seeing temples, small roadside offerings of rice and incense to the Gods, and the colourful traditional festivals and events.

"The typical Balinese attitude is to welcome you and make you feel like they are there to serve without being intrusive—and this certainly goes a long way to making clients' holidays an enjoyable one," says Johnston.

Ubud and Uluwatu are said to be among the best places to experience authentic Balinese culture.



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BALI TODAY

Travel Today Feature P2

Sightseeing Options

Although just a small island, Bali offers a plethora of activities and options for Kiwis looking to explore.

Watching the sun set at Tanah Lot is another quintessential Bali experience. Clients can watch the sun melt into the horizon behind a 16th century temple built on rocks 200m off-shore. There are hundreds of temples on Bali, but Tanah Lot is definitely one of the most picturesque.



"A cycle tour is a Bali must-do," says GO Holidays' Liz Johnston. "It's a great way to experience the local villages and scenery. It's a relatively easy ride through some amazing vistas, and literally through the paddy fields."

Bali Hai also offers ocean rafting day trips which are a great way to see Bali's southern coast and some nearby islands. "You do get wet, but hey, it's 36° and there's also a number of other boat trips and tours available." In addition to the cultural and geographical highlights of the island, GO offers tours including cooking lessons, arts and crafts and to the dramatic Mt Batur.

A sunset cocktail at The Breeze At Samaya in Seminyak is the perfect end to a day of shopping or touring in Bali.



The Options Are Now Endless

Famed for its sandy shores and legendary surf breaks, Bali's shopping and endless culinary options are now among the destination's key drawcards.

The traditional markets still sell cheap t-shirts, handicrafts, watches and DVDs, but shopping options in Bali are now much more sophisticated.

"The advent of clothing boutiques and high end homeware stores in areas like Seminyak means there's now liter-

ally something for all shopping budgets and tastes," says GO Holidays Asia product manager Liz Johnston.

Kuta remains the biggest shopping area, and for those fond of bartering the Kuta market and souvenir shops are still bursting with bargains. Kuta Square offers the biggest range of genuine brand stores including surf wear labels, generally at cheaper prices than New Zealand.

For genuine items at bargain prices, there's also an outlet store area enroute to/from the airport along Jalan Bypass with stores including the multi-level World Brand Factory.

And for clients with an aversion to the sport of bartering, or who prefer a one-stop shopping experience, suggest they head to Geneva Handicrafts. It's a wholesale outlet offering souvenirs and handicrafts often well below market prices. See genevahandicraft.com. Another top shopping tip is the Gudang Keramik outlet in Sanur which sells good quality seconds of the popular Jenggala Keramik ceramics at a fraction of the cost. While not widely publicised most locals will be able to direct clients in the right direction.

Art A-Plenty

The Kuta Art Market still boosts a wide range of arts and crafts. There are also artists in roadside stalls along Jalan Legian (the road between Kuta and Seminyak) which will paint family photos or popular art onto canvas. For those looking for something more authentic, Ubud is Bali's home of art. The region has a number of galleries featuring local artists, as well as more markets and art markets. (For more on Ubud, see Fri's *Bali Today*).

For stone carvings, direct clients to Batubulan; Celuk is known for its gold and silver smiths; and Tegelalang is a village of woodcarvers.

Dining Out A Highlight

Dining out by Bali's beaches is definitely a highlight, and clients can choose from traditional warungs right through to a sophisticated range of high end dining options.

Seminyak, just north of Kuta, boasts the best range of restaurants, including the popular Ku De Ta, La Lucciola, Gado Gado, Sarong and the romantic Living Room. Prices at these restaurants are not cheap, but they are stunning locations with a high level of service and food. The Breeze at Samaya (pictured above centre) is a stylish setting for a sunset cocktail or dinner, says GO's Liz Johnston.

For those looking for mid-range options, restaurants recommended along Jalan Oberoi include Trattoria, Rumours and Ultimo; while Jalan Pantai Atjuna (the end of Double Six) offers a great selection of cheap eats and bars, such as Zanzibar, where clients can watch the world go by along Legian Beach.

And speaking of beaches, the nightly seafood warungs set up on the sand, literally, at Jimbaran Bay are another quintessential Bali highlight. The tables and chairs are set up each evening, sometimes almost down to the waters' edge.

Sunday brunch at the Karma Kandara resort at Uluwatu, also comes highly recommended.





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BALI TODAY

Travel Today Feature P3

Exploring The Island

Along with numerous kids clubs, the beaches and organised day trips, Bali's dramatic geography, Hindu culture and tropical climate all offer a huge range of activities and sightseeing options for families.

... Bali Safari

Combining the wildlife of Africa, Asia, India and marine life, the Bali Safari & Marine Park in Gianyar, around 15km north east of Kuta offers elephant safari experiences, dolphin shows and education programmes.

Children, and their parents, can learn traditional Balinese dancing, and there's a cultural show Thu-Sun at 1430. Key attractions include Sumatran tigers and Komodo dragons—and clients staying at the park's hotel have close range views of zebra, oryx and wildebeest on the 'savannah'. See balisafarimarinepark.com

... Cooling Off In Kuta

The Waterbom Bali water park, in the heart of Kuta, still remains the perfect place for the family to cool off, says GO Holidays' Asia product manager Liz Johnston. With 17 hydro slides, private gazebos available for hire, a fish spa and sunken pool bar, there's something to keep the whole family entertained. The park was also EarthCheck certified silver in 2011. See waterbom-bali.com

Kiwi Demand For Family-Friendly Bali



Just some of the activities on offer at Club Med Bali

Bali demand from the family market is expected to be a key area of growth due to the combination of the wide variety of family-friendly experiences on offer, the destination's value for money appeal and the convenience of a direct service.

"I think it's fair to say there is a pent-up demand for Bali from the family sector," says GO Holiday's Asia product manager Liz Johnston. "The lack of a direct service deterred a lot of family traffic to Bali, and we are already seeing a spike in bookings from families, and larger family groups."

The wholesaler says many resorts and properties in Kuta and Legian offer a wide range of options and facilities for families, including kids pools and some with kids clubs.

"One trend we've also noted is increased demand from families for the quieter areas such as Nusa Dua and Seminyak, as they look to get away from the hustle and bustle of Kuta," says Johnston.

Pint-sized travellers are revered by the Balinese people, who are said to believe children (especially the very

young) are closer to the Gods. As such the gentle and welcoming Balinese make a fuss of younger travellers and go out of their way to interact with children, despite the language barrier—which adds another dimension to a family holiday.

... Villas

There has been a huge increase in the number of villa-style properties available in Bali, and Kiwi demand for the accommodation option. "These are especially popular with the returnee market and also for groups of families and friends travelling together—often they can book a private villa with a pool and still have access to hotel facilities such as restaurants and spas," says Johnston.

And on the topic of pools, it may be prudent to point out with clients travelling with young children that the villas often have open air living pavilions which lead directly on to an unfenced pool, adds GO. For clients looking for a work-around, some properties will install a fence for a fee or babysitters are generally available for around USD3.50 an hour.

Club Med For Families

Few Bali options will be more family-friendly than Club Med Bali. The property's all-inclusive offering, has already proved hugely popular with Kiwi families, says Club Med New Zealand manager Kaarin Gaukrodger. As well as offering agents a 10% commission on clients' stay, from transfers through to meals, packages include free kids club for travellers aged four-11, and kids under four years stay free. "Club Med offers a really strong value proposition for families," says Gaukrodger. "People can choose to do as much or as little as they choose."



Monkeying About

Taking the kids to Ubud's sacred monkey forest will give them a dose of wildlife, culture and nature with that distinct Balinese touch. Maintained and run by the village of Padangtegal, the forest and Hindu temple complex is teeming with four troupes of long-tailed macaques (around 340 in all).

The temple complex is an excellent example of Balinese Hinduism, which also incorporates aspects of animal and ancestor worship as well as Buddhism. Clients interested in seeing the mischievous monkeys can also walk among troupes at Uluwatu. See monkeyforestubud.com

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BALI TODAY

Travel Today Feature P4

Holistic Holiday

For clients with an interest in broadening their horizons, Bali truly is a feast for the senses, with the island offering a plethora of holistic experiences such as yoga, spa treatments and sumptuous cooking classes, says GO Holidays.

L'eau Down

While Bali is now a sophisticated destination, remind clients to stay vigilant when consuming water and food.

Not all eateries follow Western standards of hygiene, and instances of Bali belly are said to be on the rise. Always wash hands, carry hand sanitiser and keep kids' fingers away from their mouths. Urge clients to only drink bottled water (including when brushing teeth) and avoid ice in drinks.

Money Matters

These days Bali-bound Kiwi clients can take up New Zealand dollars and convert them into Rupiah once there—at decent rates, says GO Holidays' Asia product manager Liz Johnston.

"There's also ATMs everywhere, and while you still need cash for most stalls at the markets, credit cards are widely accepted," she adds. Most of the department stores and malls now have reputable money changers and/or banks.

An Indulgent Feast For The Senses



The Alilia Villa Soori, above is located on Bali's south west coast, just 20 mins drive from the famed Tanah Lot temple. The luxurious development offers one-bedroom villas right through to a 10-bedroom property. It also has a restaurant and bar and spa as well as in-villa dining and host service, says GO.

For clients looking for an indulgent escape, Bali offers a myriad of options, without necessarily blowing the budget.

The destination's now sophisticated travel offering can be tailored to meet the needs of the most discerning clients, as well as those looking for just a little luxury, says GO Holidays' Asia product manager Liz Johnston.

With open air pavilions, the heady scent of tropical flowers and the serenity of a private pool, Bali's villas are attracting an ever-growing number of Kiwi travellers.

Options range from smaller villas right through to large, impressive stand-alone properties capable of taking large groups of friends and families, says Johnston. "Villas are no longer the domain of the honeymooners and weddings market. There's now a wide selection and almost every hotel and resort in Bali has some form of villa offering."

While the often spacious and luxurious villas sound expensive, Johnson

says that they can actually work out as 'such great value' for friends and family travelling together.

Most villa operators offer the services of a butler and in-villa dining at nominal costs, and almost all come with a private pool or use of a villa pool.

"They're especially popular with the returnee market, and while the majority are located in Seminyak, there are also villa options in other areas, such as Ubud and Uluwatu."

... Discerning Travellers

Bali also has plenty to offer the discerning traveller, from those looking to escape to their own full-service, private oasis through to those in search of all the trappings of a world-class resort, says Johnston.

The island has become 'hot property' with a number of international hotel brands just opening or planning to open new resorts in Bali.

The Alila, Karma and W Hotel in Seminyak are among the more popular high end properties with Kiwis.

Spa-tacular Bali

From small salons offering a basic massage through to luxurious resort spas, the spa industry is now huge in Bali and there's a spa option to suit all tastes and budgets.

The Balinese ladies still stroll the beaches offering massages (around \$10 for an hour) and there's also a large number of cheap and cheerful day spa and foot massage places around almost every corner.

Nowadays just about every hotel has its own on-site spa facility. Some are beachside while others are set in lush gardens or in-land in Ubud overlooking mountains and streams.

Bodyworks, one of Bali's original day spas, is located in Seminyak and offers a wide variety of treatments.

A 50 min full-body massage is from around \$30 and a manicure from around \$15. The Ions Detox Foot Spa Treatment is a signature treatment. See bodyworksbali.com



The W Hotels' Away spa (pictured above), also in Bali, is worth a special mention, says Johnston. "It's an amazing retreat and open around the clock, daily—especially good if you're looking for a foot massage on your way back to the hotel or villa."

The Away spa boasts 70 treatments in seven treatment rooms and also has an oxygen room, chill bar and hot stone baths.

Bali in Luxury

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*Based on travel dates 01 July-31 Aug 2012, flying with Air New Zealand Seat + Bag fares, staying at Villa de Daun, Kuta. Sales until 31 May 2012

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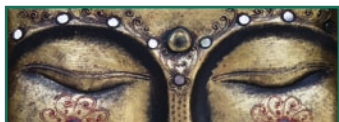


BALI TODAY

Travel Today Feature P5

Soul Searching

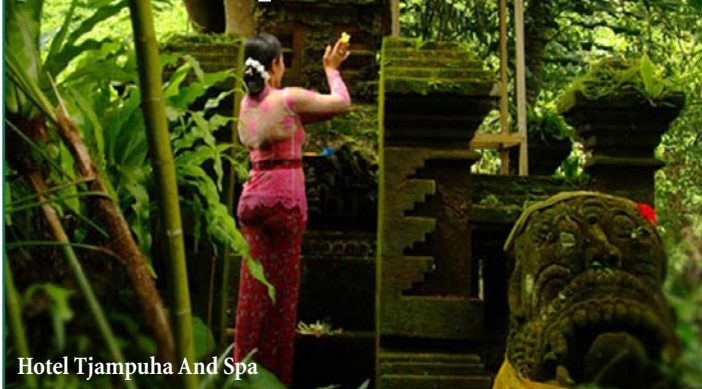
The elderly Balinese medicine man depicted in *Eat, Pray, Love* has reportedly resorted to a ticket machine to cater to the onslaught of visitors keen to follow in Julia Roberts' character's footsteps. Visitors to Ketut Liyer shouldn't expect anything too life-shattering—telling people they drive too fast, will live to be 100 and have lips as sweet as sugar are apparently common themes—but from a man well into his 90s that's probably to be expected. Clients keen to visit Ketut should ask in Ubud how to find him (pronounced Leeyer not Liar), get in early (by 0900) and be prepared to pay up to IDR250,000 (around \$30).



Spas Of Ubud

There are many day spas peppered around Ubud offering a variety of treatment options. Bali Botanica is one recommended spa option, says GO's Liz Johnston. Set off the beaten track clients can choose from treatments or full-day packages for affordable prices (75 min massage for around \$20) with free transfers to/from Ubud. Zen is also recommended, and its spice bath and milk baths are an indulgent treat. For something a little more hardcore, the Ubud Sari Health Resort offers some serious cleansing options.

Bali's Spiritual Heart



Hotel Tjampuha And Spa

Ubud was known as the cultural and spiritual hub of Bali long before the region starred alongside Julia Roberts in the blockbuster film *Eat, Pray, Love*—but it's fair to say as a result, the destination has now piqued the interest of travellers from around the globe.

Located in the heart of Bali, and about a 90min drive from the airport, Ubud has traditionally been popular with repeat travellers to Bali, who've been there, done that along the island's south coast, says GO Holidays' Liz Johnston. "But the area's now increasingly popular with those looking for a more of a holistic holiday—in the lush tropical surrounds they can take in art galleries, indulge in spas, learn to cook and discover Bali's cultural roots."

While there has been much development in Ubud over the years to accommodate the growing tourism demand for the region—some things still remain sacred. There's reportedly a decree stating that global fast food joints like McDonalds and Starbucks are not allowed to open within the Ubud area.

There are a number of local artists displaying their art works at a variety of galleries around Ubud—including some which are now exhibiting in New York, adds Johnston.

... Out And About

Set in the hills of Bali, in lush tropical surrounds there's a host of options for visitors to the region. Temples and sites of cultural significance are peppered around the area and even a simple walk down one of the road side paths can be an experience of its own, often leading to a local village or past terraced rice paddies.

There's also a vast array of day spas and dining options, a number of galleries and cooking schools—as well as the ubiquitous shops and stalls, says Johnston.

For those looking for a wildlife encounter, cheeky macaques run amok at the Sacred Monkey Forest (at end of Monkey Forest Road) and there's the nearby Desu Taro elephant sanctuary. Ubud is also the base for a number of adventure tours including cycling, white water rafting and to Lake Kintamani and Mt Batur, says GO.

Ubud Culinary Adventure

Dining out in Ubud is a culinary adventure, from authentic local food to some high end options. For those looking for some traditional fare, the four-level Murni's Warung is set over-looking a river and is said to be one of Ubud's first restaurants. It opened in 1974 and has earned a loyal following over the years. Another popular option with the local expats is Naughty Nuri's. The pork ribs and martinis are legendary.

Sari Organik is something a little different—located amid a rice paddy. Owned by locals, clients can enjoy an organic beer and fresh of produce, see sariorganik.com

And as well as running a cooking school, Australian Janet de Neefe runs popular restaurants in Ubud, including Casa Luna and Indus, both of which are along Jalan Raya.



Cooking Classes

While there are now a number of cooking school options available, a class at de Neefe's Casa Luna Cooking School is a must-do for those staying in Ubud, says GO Holiday's Liz Johnston. There's different classes on each day (e.g: Thu, market tour, Fri beginners and a new night market gourmet tour, Sun twilight smoked duck lesson). But it will pay for agents to pre-book for their clients, as it is very popular, she adds. See caslunabali.com



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