



East Bali

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

Wandering the roads of east Bali is one of the island's great pleasures. Rice terraces spill down hillsides under swaying palms, wild volcanic beaches are washed by pounding surf, and age-old villages soldier on with barely a trace of modernity. Watching over it all is Gunung Agung, the 3142m volcano known as the 'navel of the world' and 'Mother Mountain', which has a perfect conical shape you might glimpse on hikes from lovely Tirta Gangga.

You can find Bali's past amid evocative ruins in the former royal city of Semarapura. Follow the rivers coursing down the slopes on the Sidemen road to find vistas and valleys that could have inspired Shangri-La. Down at the coast, Padangbai and Candidasa cater to the funky and frowsy respectively.

Resorts and hidden beaches dot the seashore and cluster on the Amed Coast. Just north of there, Tulamben is all about external exploration: the entire town is geared for diving.

When to Go

The best time to visit east Bali is during the dry season – April to September – although recent weather patterns have made the dry season wetter and the wet season drier. Hiking and trekking in the lush hills from Gunung Agung over to Tirta Gangga is much easier when it isn't muddy. Along the coast, however, there's little reason to pick one month over another; it's usually just tropical. Top-end resorts may book up in peak season (July, August and Christmas), but it's never jammed like south Bali.

East Bali Highlights

1 Counting the shades of green on the longest and best climb of your life at **Pura Lempuyang** (p205), one of many hikes around Tirta Gangga

2 Marvelling at the combination of the sacred and the sublime and lots of black sand at **Pantai Klotek** (p183)

3 Sensing Bali's violent past and proud traditions of sacrifice at Semarapura's **Kertha Gosa** (p186)

4 Trekking the picture-perfect valley at **Sidemen** (p188)

5 Chilling with new friends at the mellow cafes and laid-back beaches of **Padangbai** (p193)

6 Finding your perfect lotus position at an inn perched along the **Amed Coast** (p207)

7 Plunging into the blue waters at **Tulamben** (p212) to explore the famous shipwreck right off the beach



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