



# Central Mountains

## Includes ➔

Gunung Batur . . . . .	215
Danau Bratan Area. .	220
Bedugul . . . . .	220
Candikuning . . . . .	220
Pancasari. . . . .	222
Danau Buyan & Danau Tamblingan . . . . .	222
Munduk & Around . .	223
The Antosari Road . .	227

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Pulu Mujung Warung (p217)
- ➔ Strawberry Hill (p220)
- ➔ Ada Babi Guleng (p225)
- ➔ Puri Lumbung Cottages (p224)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Puri Lumbung Cottages (p224)
- ➔ Sarinbuana Eco Lodge (p226)
- ➔ Lakeview Eco Lodge (p217)
- ➔ Bali Mountain Retreat (p227)
- ➔ Sanda Boutique Villas (p227)

## Why Go?

Bali has a hot soul. The volcanoes stretching along the island's spine are seemingly cones of silence but their active spirits are just below the surface, eager for expression.

Gunung Batur (1717m) is constantly letting off steam; this place has an other-worldly beauty that may overwhelm the attendant hassles of a visit. At Danau Bratan there are sacred Hindu temples while the village of Candikuning has an engrossing botanic garden.

The old colonial village of Munduk, a hiking centre, has views down the hills to the coast of north Bali, which match the beauty of the many nearby waterfalls, and Danaus Tamblingan and Buyan. In the shadow of Gunung Batukau (2276m) you'll find one of Bali's most mystic temples. And, just south, the Unesco-listed ancient rice terraces around Jatiluwih dazzle.

Amid it all, little roads lead to untouched villages. Start driving north from Antosari for one surprise after another.

## When to Go

➔ **Year-round** Bali's central mountains can be cool and misty throughout the year. They also get a lot of rain, and this is the starting point for the water that courses through rice terraces and fields all the way south. Temperatures show few seasonal variations but can drop to 10°C at night at high elevations.

➔ **Oct-Apr** It rains most in these months, but can pour any time throughout the year.

➔ **Jul-Aug** There's no peak tourist season, except for the hordes that hit the Kintamani area in these months.

## GUNUNG BATUR AREA

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The Gunung Batur area is like a giant bowl, with its bottom half covered by water and a set of volcanic cones jutting out of the middle. Sound a bit spectacular? It is. On clear days – vital to appreciating the spectacle – the turquoise waters wrap around the newer volcanoes, which have old lava flows oozing down their sides.

In 2012 Unesco honoured the area by adding it to a list of more than 90 geological wonders worldwide and naming it the **Batur Caldera Geopark** ([www.globalgeopark.org](http://www.globalgeopark.org)). So far this has meant little on the ground, although some interesting signs detailing the unique geology of the area have started to appear along roads in the region.

The road around the southwestern rim of the Gunung Batur crater is one of Bali's most important north-south routes and has one of its most stunning vistas.

Day trippers should bring some sort of wrap in case the mist closes in and the temperature drops (it can get to 16°C).

The villages around the Gunung Batur crater rim have grown into one continuous untidy strip. Kintamani is the main village, though the whole area is often referred to by that name. Coming from the south, the first village is Penelokan, where tour groups first stop to gasp at the view.

### i Information

Services are few in the Gunung Batur area. Bring anything you might need, including cash, from the lowlands.

The Gunung Batur area has a reputation as a place of greed and many visitors leave vowing never to return.

Be wary of touts on motorcycles, who will attempt to steer you to a tour or hotel of *their* choice as you descend into the Danau Batur area from the village of Penelokan. These young



### Central Mountains Highlights

- 1 Claiming your own waterfall while trekking around **Munduk** (p223).
- 2 Identifying each ancient variety of rice grown at the magnificent Unesco-recognised ancient terraces of **Jatiluwih** (p225).
- 3 Hearing the chant of priests at one of Bali's

holiest temples, **Pura Luhur Batukau** (p226).

- 4 Taking a guided hike above and around the natural beauty and ancient temples of **Danau Tamblingan** (p222).
- 5 Beholding the other-worldly, lava-strewn side of **Gunung Batur** (p215).

- 6 Discovering one stunning feature after another on the beautifully scenic **road to Trunyan** (p218) via Buahan and Abang.

- 7 Exploring the region's maze of back roads, such as the one north from **Antosari** (p227).