

# Welcome to Bali & Lombok

*The mere mention of Bali evokes thoughts of a paradise. It's more than a place; it's a mood, an aspiration, a tropical state of mind.*

## Island of the Gods

The rich and diverse culture of Bali plays out at all levels of life, from the exquisite flower-petal offerings placed everywhere, to the processions of joyfully garbed locals, shutting down major roads as they march to one of the myriad temple ceremonies, to the other-worldly traditional music and dance performed island-wide.

## One Island, Many Destinations

On Bali you can lose yourself in the chaos of Kuta or the sybaritic pleasures of Seminyak and Kerobokan, surf wild beaches in the south or just hang out on Nusa Lembongan. You can go family-friendly in Sanur or savour a lavish getaway on the Bukit Peninsula. Ubud is the heart of Bali, a place where the spirit and culture of the island are most accessible. It shares the island's most beautiful rice fields and ancient monuments with east and west Bali. The middle of Bali is dominated by the dramatic volcanoes of the central mountains and hillside temples such as Pura Luhur Batukau (one of the island's estimated 10,000 temples). North and west Bali are thinly populated but have the kind of diving and surfing that make any journey worthwhile.

## Bali's Essence

Yes, Bali has beaches, surfing, diving, and resorts great and small, but it's the essence of Bali – and the Balinese – that makes it so much more than just a fun-in-the-sun retreat. It is possible to take the cliché of the smiling Balinese too far but, in reality, the inhabitants of this small island are indeed a generous, genuinely warm people. There's also a fun, sly sense of humour behind the smiles. Upon seeing a bald tourist, many locals exclaim '*bung ujan*', which means today's rain is cancelled – it's their way of saying that the hairless head is like a clear sky.

## Lombok & the Gilis, Too

Almost as big as Bali, Lombok is the largely undiscovered island next door. From its volcanic centre to untrodden idyllic beaches such as Mawun, it rewards travellers who want to explore. Many are drawn to mighty Gunung Rinjani, Indonesia's second-highest volcano. Rivers and waterfalls gush down its fissured slopes, while its summit – complete with hot springs and a dazzling crater lake – is the ultimate trekker's prize. The fabled Gili Islands are three exquisite drop-lets of white sand sprinkled with coconut palms and surrounded by coral reefs teeming with marine life and, on Gili Trawangan, legendary nightlife.



## Why I Love Bali & Lombok

By Ryan Ver Berkmoes, Author

In 1993 I visited Bali and Lombok for the first time. When I went through immigration, the officer glanced at my passport and said in the sweetest voice possible: 'Have a wonderful birthday on Bali'. Who wouldn't fall in love? I spent a lot of that trip slack-jawed with wonderment. I remember dancers and musicians materialising from across the rice fields to perform in Ubud; I remember Gili Trawangan with just a couple of cement huts and some amazing snorkelling. Since then, these places – like me – have changed greatly, but their essence still evokes love.

**For more about our author, see page 400**

Above: Woman walking through rice terraces in Ubud (p137)