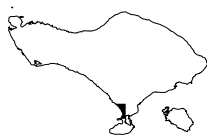


Kuta, Legian & Seminyak



The more things change... Kuta has always been a rebel. For centuries, it was where the Balinese nobility sent their black sheep. The farming and fishing were marginal, so people had to get by on their wiles. The community – such as it was – stretched from today's Kuta and Tuban north through Legian and Seminyak. It was the first part of Bali to make a profit from foreigners and the lesson stuck.

While little of the pastoral coconut-palm-shaded land remains, what does remain is the beach: it's the unifier of the communities and the great engine that drives life from Kuta to Seminyak. This seemingly endless, curving swath of golden sand is where tourism began in Bali in the 1930s and where it continues to thrive today. Washed by perfectly surfable waves that arrive with the regularity of streetcars, the beach is the ribbon of pleasure that easily makes one forget the area's ever-more-breathless lucre. From a surfer extending her stay for yet another week in a US\$10 Kuta room, to a lounge summoning yet more pleasure from his beachside repose at a Seminyak resort, the beach is ever democratic in its joys.

Renowned shopping, all-night clubs, fabulous restaurants, cheap beer and relentless hustle and bustle are all part of the experience. But just when you wonder what any of this has to do with Bali – the island supposedly all about spirituality and serenity – a religious procession appears and shuts everything down. And then you know the answer.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Losing your day on **Kuta Beach** (p106)
- Losing your night in **Seminyak** (p125)
- Losing your resolve shopping in **Seminyak** (p126)
- Losing your tension at a spa in **Legian** (p108) or **Seminyak** (p120)
- Losing the crowds at **Echo Beach** (p130), north of Seminyak



