



Central Mountains

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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.

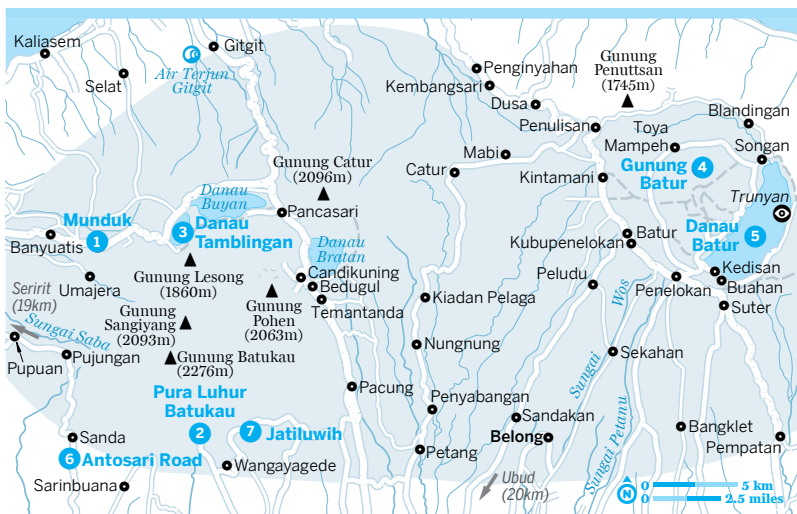
Gunung Batur (1717m) is constantly letting off steam; this place has an other-worldly beauty that may overwhelm the attendant hassles of a visit. At Danau Bratan there are sacred Hindu temples while the village of Candikuning has an engrossing botanic garden.

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 bedazzle.

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

When to Go

- 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.
- It rains most from October through April, but can pour at any time during the year.
- There's no peak tourist season, except when the group-tour hordes hit the Kintamani area during the peak visitor months of July and August. It's a good idea to book ahead for Munduk too at this time.



Central Mountains Highlights

- 1 Munduk** (p239)
Claiming your own waterfall while trekking around this mountain idyll.
- 2 Pura Luhur Batukau** (p241)
Hearing the chant of priests at one of Bali's holiest temples.
- 3 Danau Tamblingan** (p238)
Taking a guided hike above and around the natural beauty and ancient temples of this ancient volcanic lake.
- 4 Gunung Batur** (p229)
Beholding the other-worldly, lava-strewn side of a still-active volcano.
- 5 Danau Batur** (p233)
Discovering one stunning feature after another on the beautifully scenic road to Trunyan via Buahhan and Abang.
- 6 Antosari Road** (p242)
Exploring the region's maze of rural drives, such as this one that runs through jade-green rice terraces.
- 7 Jatiluwih** (p241)
Identifying each ancient variety of rice grown at these magnificent Unesco-recognised terraces.

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 geologic wonders worldwide and naming it the Batur Caldera Geopark (www.globalgeopark.org, www.baturglobalgeopark.com). Some interesting signs detailing the unique geology of the area are posted along roads in the region; the Batur Geopark Museum (p232) in Penelokan has full details.

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.

Tours

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