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Welcome to Bali

Bali is so picturesque that you could be fooled into thinking it was an artistic masterpiece: rice paddies roll down hillsides, volcanoes soar through the clouds, the forests are lush and tropical, the beaches are lapped by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and in the villages you'll notice the quietness and wisdom in old people's faces. Over 20,000 temples and palaces, coupled together with colourful festivals, music and dance is testimony to the island's rich heritage.

Kuta Beach – first discovered in the 60's, and once a sleepy fishing village - has now transformed into the centre of Bali's nightlife and action. Legian is where the locals, tourists and expats all mingle. Bargaining, beach activities, indulging in massages, meditating or simply reading - you name it, it's available! For a holiday where the emphasis is on relaxation, visit Jimbaran or Sanur Beaches; whilst Nusa Dua caters for the more upmarket taste and is ideal for families and the watersport enthusiast. If beaches aren't your ideal, then visit Ubud, where the culture and lifestyle of the Balinese waits to be discovered.

▪ GETTING AROUND

You will find a range of chauffeur driven limousines, self-drive cars, taxis and hotel shuttles. Many taxis are not metered so it's wise to negotiate the fare beforehand. Bemos, or communal buses, are available in smaller villages - simply hail the driver and negotiate the fare that suits you both. Motorcycles can also be hired but road and traffic conditions can be busy and somewhat hazardous in certain locations.

▪ CLIMATE

Bali has a tropical climate with temperatures averaging 30°C year round. October to April can bring heavy showers and high humidity, but usually the days are sunny. From May to September the humidity is low, and it can be quite cool in the evenings.

▪ LANGUAGE

Indonesian is the official language known as Bahasa Indonesian but all the Balinese people also speak Bahasa Bali (Balinese). English is spoken in tourist areas.

▪ WHAT TO WEAR

Light, airy, casual clothes are the most practical and you'll find cottons or linens are the most comfortable in Bali's often humid conditions. Pashminas or shawls and waist sashes should be worn when visiting temples. A warm sweater or light jacket can be a good idea in the mountain interiors.

▪ ELECTRICITY

Most hotels use 220 volts, 50 cycles and a round, two-pronged slim plug.





▪ COMMON COURTESIES

Shorts or revealing clothing are not allowed in religious places. The head is considered sacred and should never be touched. Hand shaking is common practice but avoid using your left hand for handshakes or giving / receiving anything. Public displays of affections between men and women are deemed in-appropriate. Like anywhere in South East Asia calmness is admired so 'keep your cool' when bargaining or things are not running according to plan.

▪ HEALTH

Visitors do not require vaccinations unless coming from or passing through a designated contaminated area. Drink only bottled water and avoid ice unless you know is made from bottled or boiled water. Be cautious when eating from the food vendors on the street and proper care must be taken against sunburn.

▪ PASSPORT & VISA INFORMATION

Visitors to Bali require a valid passport (which must be valid for at least six months after one has RETURNED to South Africa and feature a minimum of four blank pages). South African passport holders do not require a visa for a maximum stay of 30 days but it is advisable to check with the relevant Embassy before departure.

▪ CURRENCY

The currency is the Rupiah which is better for bargaining and shopping in markets but US Dollars, Pounds and Euros are accepted at hotels.

▪ TIPPING

A service charge is already included in all prices. Tips, in general, are not mandatory, and you should only give them if you are really content with the service offered.

▪ TIME DIFFERENCE

Bali is 6 hours ahead of South Africa.