

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Literature in the heart of Bali

Small but excellent: the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival is one of the world's most intimate literature festivals with a very special atmosphere → p. 111

INSIDER TIP Cocktails on the rocks

360-degree panorama, 14m (46ft) above the sea: Bali experts feel that the design and music in the Rock Bar of the Ayana Resort make it one of the best locations on the island → p. 38

INSIDER TIP Village idyll in the highlands of Bali

Enjoy the fresh mountain air, lush nature and a great deal of tranquility in the Puri Lumbung Cottages in the small village of Munduk on Lake Tamblingan → p. 51

INSIDER TIP Private villa in the fishing village

The Kampung resort has holiday cottages in traditional Javanese style right on the beach at Amed: relax

and watch the colourful outriggers → p. 36

INSIDER TIP Jungle and mangroves

The national park jungle and Bali's best diving region are right on the doorstep of The Menjangan lifestyle resort → p. 56

INSIDER TIP Wallow in nostalgia

The Biku Tea Lounge in Seminyak serves traditional colonial style afternoon tea – classically English or with tasty delicacies from all over Asia → p. 62

INSIDER TIP Far Eastern wellness temple

Indulge at Seminyak's Private Spa Wellness Center: Asian massages, a dip in the bio-thermal pool or a session in the herbal steam bath decorated in oriental style → p. 63

INSIDER TIP Meditation and lifestyle

Not only for yogis: yoga and meditation are not the only highlights at the Bali Spirit Festival in Ubud; you

will find dance and music from around the world on every corner → p. 66

INSIDER TIP Fairytale beach between the cliffs

Overnight in Selong Belanak: the cliffs are bathed in bewitching light at dawn and dusk → p. 78

INSIDER TIP Sunset beneath the palms

Genuine island feeling on the beach of the unspoilt Exile Resort: you will have Trawangan's best view of the sunset from here → p. 97

INSIDER TIP Chill out at a coral reef

Go snorkelling straight from the beach and then enjoy delicious cocktails and tapas in the Adeng-Adeng Beach Bar on Gili Meno (photo left) → p. 94

INSIDER TIP Underwater adventure

Explore the spectacular underwater world off the coast of Lombok's little-visited Sekotong Peninsula with diving instructors from Divezone → p. 83

INSIDER TIP Between the volcano and the sea

Stressed tourists can relax and recharge their batteries surrounded by pristine nature: the Rinjani Mountain Garden offers idyllic highland surroundings, a natural swimming pool and panoramic views that stretch from the Rinjani Volcano to the Pacific Ocean → p. 84

INSIDER TIP Through the rice fields on a bicycle

Authentic village life, verdant rice fields, jungle and plantations full of tropical fruit will accompany you on the novel tours organised by Mountain Bike Lombok and they are also not too strenuous for average cyclists → p. 106

INSIDER TIP Dance and play music like the Balinese

Professional gamelan and dance courses for children and adults are held in the studio of the Mekar Bhuana Conservatory in Denpasar (photo below) → p. 109



BEST OF ...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● **Free cocktails in the nightclub**

Some nightclubs in the south of Bali serve free cocktails at certain times: such as the *Sky Garden Lounge* that offers gratis cocktails and snacks for one hour starting at 11pm → p. 47

● **Free art in galleries**

Not interested in museums? You can admire Balinese painting and sculptures on your foray into *Ubud's art galleries* – there is no charge for admission and you will often even be served coffee → p. 67

● **Turtles on the beach**

Turtle stations, such as the one on Gili Trawangan, are open for all and the people working there will be happy to tell you about the rescue of these marine creatures threatened by extinction → p. 95

● **No visit to a temple without a sarong**

Wear your own wrap-around sarong, which you can buy inexpensively at the market or in a souvenir shop, when you *visit a temple*. That way you save the money spent hiring a sash and sarong → p. 71

● **Sasak handicraft villages**

In Banyumulek and Sukarara, you will be able to go into the workshops of the *potters and weavers* and watch the craftspeople at work. It is then left up to you to decide if you want to buy something in the shop → p. 89

● **Dance in the museum**

Children from various villages practice their dance every Saturday at 4pm in the inner courtyards of the *Bali Museum* in Denpasar – and you will be able to watch them for free → p. 43

● **Performances at the temple festival**

Gamelan, dance and shadow theatre are part of every temple anniversary. Instead of buying tickets for a tourist show, just ask where the next *Odalan festival* is being held (photo) – tourists are welcome if they behave properly → p. 110



● ● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

ONLY IN BALI

Unique experiences

● **World Cultural Heritage in the rice field**

The Subak system – the irrigation concept of Bali's rice terraces – is characterised by democratic and egalitarian principles, as well as harmony between the spiritual world and man and nature. This cultural heritage is clearly explained in the *Subak Museum* in Tabanan → p. 101

● **Giant lizards and dwarf deer**

The dividing line between the Asian and Austronesian primeval continents runs between Bali and Lombok and the flora and fauna of both continents mix here. You will get a particularly good impression of the unique animal and plant world in the *Rinjani National Park* (photo) – also possible on easy day tours; you don't have to climb the peak straight away! → p. 85



● **Colourful processions**

Women dressed in brightly-coloured clothes balance fruit pyramids on their heads; the men beat heavy gongs: on Bali, you never know when you are going to come across a procession. The most impressive are the parades celebrating the *Galungan Festival* → p. 110

● **Between volcanoes and coral reefs**

Something you can only experience on the Gilis – and best of all, on the small hill on *Gili Trawangan*: the Gunung Rijani rises up in the east at dawn and the Gunung Agung shows just how big it is in the west at sunset. In the hours in between, you can explore the fantastic underwater mountains of the coral islands → p. 95

● **Spicy poultry**

The way the locals like it: the simple *Lesehan Taliwang Irama Restaurant* in Mataram, which is very popular with the Indonesians, serves a no frills, tasty chilli chicken → p. 80

● **The battle of the packets of rice**

During *Perang Topat* – which always takes place at the beginning of the rainy season in Pura Lingsar – Hindus and Muslim Sasak pelt each other with rice wrapped in palm leaves. The so-called 'Rice Cake War' is a celebration for all those involved, no matter which religion they belong to → pp. 82, 111

ONLY IN

THE PERFECT ROUTE

Experience all of the many facets of the island from Bali's south and eastern centre, via the Gilis to Lombok's west and south coasts

NIGHTLIFE, SHOPPING, SURFING

1 **Seminyak** → p. 61 is the ideal place to arrive in Bali. Get over your jetlag with a stroll through the chic boutiques and cafés and enjoy your first sunset drink in the legendary Ku Dé Ta beach club. On the next day, make a moped excursion to the Bukit Peninsula and visit the 2 **Pura Luhur Uluwatu Temple** → p. 38 at its spectacular location. A small road leads from there to Suluban and Padang-Padang bays where you will be able to watch the best surfers on the island in action. On your way back, you should make a stop in 3 **Kuta's** → p. 44 souvenir quarter and later try out the nightclub scene at the Double Six Beach in Legian.

CULTURE AND WELLNESS

On the third day, take the Perama shuttle bus (www.peramatour.com) to 4 **Ubud** → p. 66, Bali's cultural and wellness centre. A walk to the Sari Organik (a farm where you will be able to taste delicious organic dishes surrounded by rice fields) continues on a circular route until you reach the Ubud Sari Health Resort that offers massages. In the evening, watch a dance performance after you have visited the Puri Lukisan (photo left). Next morning, get on your bicycle and head towards the holy cave Goa Gajah and then on to the old royal city

5 **Pejeng** → p. 73 and further to Tampaksiring with the Gunung Kawi burial site and the sacred springs 6 **Tirta Empul** → p. 73.

VOLCANOES AND RICE TERRACES

On the next day, hire a car with a driver for your excursion to Penelokan. From there, you will have the best views of the active volcano, the 7 **Gunung Batur** → p. 72. You should schedule an extra day if you want to hike to its summit. Next you drive over mountain roads until you reach 8 **Pura Besakih** → p. 41, the most sacred temple on Bali, high up on the slopes of the Gunung Agung, and continue on to Sidemen with fantastic views over the verdant rice terraces. You should take a look at the old court hall Kerta Gosa in 9 **Klungkung** → p. 54 before treating yourself to a night in the elegant Alila Manggis Hotel.

OFF TO THE ISLANDS

Take a taxi to 10 **Padang Bai** → p. 53 (photo right) the next morning;



the speedboats for the Gilis depart from there (book in good time!). 11 **Gili Meno** → p. 94 is the most unspoiled of the three islands and a wonderful place to relax. Hire a boat complete with snorkelling or diving equipment: the skippers know where the most beautiful corals and sea turtles are to be found. After sunset, set sail for the party island 12 **Gili Trawangan** → p. 95 and dive into the exuberant nightlife.

HANDICRAFT AND TRADITION

The route continues by boat to Teluk Nare where you can visit the 13 **Autore Pearl Farm** → p. 87. Hop on to one of the minibuses (*bemo*) that drive along the picturesque coastal road from Bangsal to 14 **Senggigi** → p. 86. Here you can enjoy the relaxed atmosphere on the beach and an excellent dinner. On the following day, have your driver take you to the 15 **Pura Lingsar** → p. 81 temple complex and 16 **Taman Narmada** → p. 82. Then head to 17 **Banyuwulek and Sukarara** → p. 89 on your way to the 18 **Sasak villages of Rambitan and Sade** → p. 79.

BEAUTIFUL BEACHES ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

Spend the night in the Sempiak Villas on the stunning beach at 19 **Selong Belanak** → p. 78 and then explore the other hidden coves and secluded beaches around 20 **Kuta** → p. 76 by boat or moped before allowing yourself one last ride surf, snorkel or dive in Mawun, Gerupuk or 21 **Ekas Bay** → p. 79 before heading back to the airport.



450km (280mi). Travel time: 17 hours

Recommended duration: 12 days

A detailed map of the route can be found on the back cover, in the road atlas and on the pull-out map