





well, well, well

Looking to transcend
your troubles and
bring your body, mind
and soul to a sense
of wellbeing? *Deviga
Doreraja* discovers the
healing side of Bali.

COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE
AT BEGAWAN GIRI

Getting away from it all no longer means getting back on track by simply being stagnant for a few days, and emerging with a renewed state of mind. The new concept of total rejuvenation is about giving your body, mind and spirit an upward lift with a little help from practices like yoga and spa treatments.

As holistic travel takes off, industry experts are beginning to outline new itineraries where a large part of the trip involves the pursuit of wellbeing. Think yoga holidays, meditation retreats, Pilates breaks or aligning your chakras on a massage table. Plus, with celebrities now seeing rehab as a good career move, being serious about living well is no longer just for freaks; it's the trend *du jour*. And why not?

Arguably the wellbeing destination of choice is Bali. The island has earned itself a long list of plaudits, and although it's undergone plenty of development, there's something soothing and intrinsically powerful about the place that keeps visitors returning. Perhaps it's the fact that the Balinese have retained their deep cultural roots despite the development – at least for now.

My feelings about the place were echoed by Ruth Zukerman of Conrad Bali Resort & Spa: "Bali nurtures your desire for mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. It nudges you towards a healthier path and a more balanced way of life".

Despite wellness being the new trend in travel, I was hardly prepared for the staggering number of options that Bali has to offer. When I googled 'Bali wellness' during the month of April alone there were close to 40 'discover wellness' options, and I hadn't even started on spa holidays.

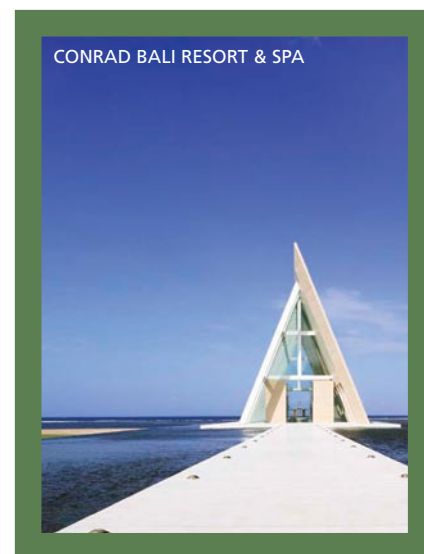
Bali is pretty well-developed in this particular field, and to no one's surprise, given that many holistic practices have roots in eastern culture.

COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE AT BEGAWAN GIRI





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Where's The Honey?

When peace and quiet is an important part of your agenda, waving goodbye to Kuta, Bali's party central, is a wise move. In fact, I'd even go the extra mile and suggest you develop an allergy to the carnival-like atmosphere of the tourist strip and retreat to the calmness of Nusa Dua, Tanjung Benoa or head to the hills, to Ubud and the highland rice paddies beyond it. There your senses will be more attuned to nature and will allow a few days quiet contemplation and reflection.

This doesn't mean foregoing life's little luxuries, of course. These areas are the pick for numerous high-end properties such as the COMO brand and Starwood Luxury Collection. In part, this is an unmistakable sign that Bali is recovering, but more so, the makeover of high-end gloss is also positioned to raise Bali's profile further.

Of the many holistic retreats available on this island, two types are the most popular and best developed: yoga and spa holidays at destination resorts. Although yoga came from India, Bali attracts a large number of yogis every year, possibly due to the common belief system; Hinduism. Although it has evolved differently in Bali, harmony and balance is an integral concept to both worldviews.

Throughout the island, yoga is thriving. At first glance, it might appear to be another tourist staple, but such notions are quickly dispelled by the many practising and visiting yoga masters in the Ubud area. One such person I spoke to was Eric Turner, a yoga practitioner and instructor of almost 20 years from Australia. He has been visiting Bali for the last six years and co-leads classes held annually on the island.

He says, "Personally, I believe that Bali is an outstanding location for yoga, especially meditation. The energy here is strong and I believe it is constant, as it is tended to by the rituals of the locals. And the seemingly endless greenery adds to the overall sense of peace and bliss as well."

There are various options available for the yoga-seeking traveller. Most destination hotels offer yoga as part of a package, making it a good introduction. If you are already a practicing student, there is also a good selection of retreats that range from seven days to one month, depending on your objectives. The best way to get a sense of what is being offered is to run a quick Internet search on a particular instructor or style. Most websites offer comprehensive details including options for accommodation and class schedules.

If rising at 5.00am to practice yoga doesn't sound like your ideal holiday, then you may be better off opting for a spa vacation. The spa culture is well developed in Bali and most places offer a variety of treatments. Stick to reputable hotels and spas though – there are some fly-by-night operators.

Spa cuisine is part and parcel of a proper spa break, and many hotels offer healthier cuisine. The best example I came across was at the COMO Shambhala Estate at Begawan Giri. Executive Chef Chris Miller uses fresh catches and locally grown organic produce. The green-clean juice is a must-try even though the list of ingredients doesn't sound entirely enticing. And apparently it's good for you too.



THE LAGUNA RESORT & SPA AT NUSA DUA

The Laguna Resort & Spa at Nusa Dua

Lowdown: Though the heavy security at the gates gives you a slight sense of uneasiness, the feeling quickly diminishes as you enter the unfussy space. Upon arrival you're greeted by two bellboys and the smell of the fresh breeze off the ocean.

Designed in the style of old Batavia, The Laguna Resort & Spa displays the charm of a colonial estate, though it has recently been upgraded to a Starwood Luxury Collection Hotel.

Since the hotel's beach is accessible to the rest of the properties that line the Nusa Dua area, there's a fair amount of activity and this is a good point to consider especially if you are not the type of guest who craves being too far removed from civilisation during their wellness retreat.

The 271 large guest rooms and suites feature all the facilities you could ask for; the latest addition being the 24-hour butler service throughout the hotel. The walls in each of the rooms have been hand-carved using locally-sourced Palimanan stone. A lagoon-style swimming pool is the hotel's main attraction, and the 5,000 square metres of water is accessible directly from the balconies of the 48 suites located on the ground floor.

The highlight here for me (apart from the choice of free morning yoga lessons or tai chi and spa), was the super-comfortable bed with high thread-count sheets, made specially for the hotel.

Path To Wellness: Without doubt the signature spa: Laguna Spa & Villa. Said to be the only spa of its type, this gorgeous ground-level spa is a place you'll never want to leave. Chromotherapy lights illuminate the rooms and treatments range from ancient Balinese techniques to Vichy showers.

Take the time to stroll around the courtyard as it features jet-stream waterfalls, a beautiful plunge pool and a special 'Kneipp Walk' – hydro-therapy that relieves jet lag with bursts of hot and cold water (there is a US\$10 per person per day charge for use of the courtyard facilities).

Insider Tip: Trust Laguna to make chocolate good for you. Apart from the benefits of its anti-oxidant qualities, it's fun to smell like chocolate. A must is indulging in the chocolate scrub and soak. The bath leaves your body tingling and after 10 minutes of immersing yourself in the mud-coloured liquid, it gets easier to convince yourself that it is cocoa scented water and not Hershey's syrup you're lying in.

Kawasan Pariwisata Nusa Dua
Lot N.2 PO Box 77, Nusa Dua, Bali.
Tel: +62 361 771-327
Website: www.starwoodhotels.com

Conrad Bali Resort & Spa

Lowdown: You want picture-perfect scenery? You'll get it at the Conrad Bali Resort & Spa. Combining natural beauty with clever architecture, the Conrad's focal point is water: the pools run a course around the main wing of the hotel's E-shaped building.

The perfect way to make the most of the atmosphere is to sign up for yoga lessons and follow them with a meditation session in one of the many sea-facing cabanas.

Most activities are chargeable, so get an instructor to design a course for maximum enjoyment and relaxation.

If you are travelling with children, don't worry about having to compromise time for yourself as the hotel has a special kids' club that keeps them occupied for hours. Nice.

The Path To Wellness: The vote is most definitely in for the Jiwa Spa. While the interior front feels a tad clinical, rather than cosy, the treatments here are reflective of its clean, understated lines.

The focus here is on healing, so treatments are varied and numerous. I especially liked the fact the therapist seemed to have a solid grasp of all the concepts on the menu. This is really useful when you are planning to have more than just one treatment during the course of your stay. A must after your massage is a quick session in the sauna room before finishing up with a relaxing swim in the pool.

Insider Tip: The yoga lesson here is worth a try, especially if the group for the day is small as you'll get personal attention from the instructor. The movements are fairly basic, such as sun salutations, but if you find yourself in a small circle, then talk to your teacher about doing something more challenging.

On the spa front, the Ocean Massage was perhaps the best massage I've had in months. Designed to mimic the ocean flow, the therapist has his hands on your body at all times. In turn, the rhythmical strokes combined with the gentle acupressure sensation resulted in sleep in my case. A good sign of relaxation, I'd say.

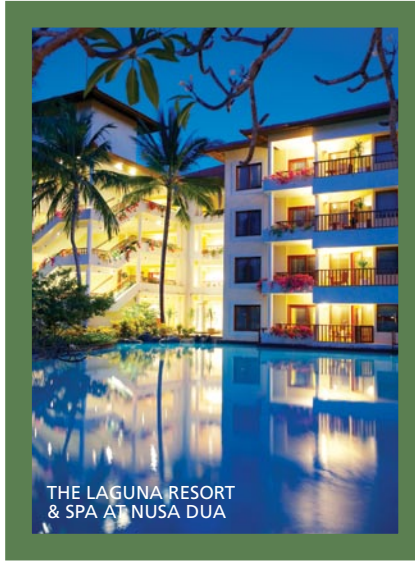
Jl Pratama 168, Tanjung Benoa
On the coast of Nusa Dua, Bali
Tel: +62 361 778-788
Website: www.conradhotels.com

Como Shambhala Estate at Begawan Giri

Lowdown: This isn't your usual hotel – the Estate has recently restyled itself as a residential health retreat. Owned by Singaporean hotelier Christina Ong, the central and unifying factor here is the Shambhala spa. The sleek facility occupies a prominent space in the eight-hectare grounds and for more personalised treatments you can request the water pavilion, which is down 250 moss-covered stone steps and close to the Ayung River.

As a health retreat, there is a host of complementary classes throughout the day including yoga, Pilates, tai chi and qigong. There are also visiting masters who lead retreats throughout the year. You are advised to check in for at least five days, during which you will be cared for by the retreat's specialist, Dr Deepak Deginal, an Ayurvedic doctor, and Carla, an American nutritionist and naturopath who heads up the wellbeing programme. The accommodation consists of five residences, five villas, and five retreat villas, some with private therapy rooms.

Path To Wellness: Whether it's the spa, or any of the other activities, the best part of this retreat is having a programme designed exclusively for you when you check in. Simply fill in a form outlining your needs and objectives and the rest of the work is done for you, including a special menu that complements your treatments during your stay. I opted for the Ayurvedic consultation



and experienced a sensational massage with sandalwood oil. My only complaint was the extended list of banned food, I really do need to eat healthier.

Insider Tips: There really isn't one treatment to recommend; all the programmes available are extremely good and impart great wellbeing benefits. There is a large variety to choose from, ranging from colonic irrigation for detox purposes to Ayurvedic inspired touches, and even state-of-the-art facials, which supposedly perform non-surgical facelifts. If there's anything that's not to be missed, I would suggest you start your mornings here walking the entire length of the estate before joining the aqua circuit session at the Vitality pool.

Apart from moving your limbs underwater, part of the exercise involves being massaged by the 13 underwater jets in the pool. The jets target different parts of your body including the legs, abs and lower back. As an added benefit, the pool is warm and uses special water from a purified source that is believed to have healing properties.

PO Box 54, Ubud 80571

Bali

Tel: +62 361 978-888

Website: cse.comoshambhala.bz



THE LAGUNA RESORT & SPA AT NUSA DUA

But Wait...

There is a multitude of options for wellness breaks in Bali; here's our selection.

Alila Ubud

Desa Melinggih Kelod
Payangan, Gianyar
Tel: +62 361 975-963
www.alilahotels.com
(links to Alila Manggis)

Amandari

Kedewatan, Ubud
Tel: +62 361 975-333
www.amanresorts.com
(links to Amanusa and Amankila)

The Balé

Jalan Raya Nusa Dua Selatan,
Nusa Dua
Tel: +62 361 775-111
www.thebale.com

Bali Hyatt

Tel: +62 361 281-234
Jalan Danau Tamblingan, Sanur
www.bali.resort.hyatt.com

Bulgari Hotels & Resorts

Jalan Goa Lempoh, Banjar Dinas Kangin
Tel: +62 361 84700
www.bulgarihotels.com

ClubMed

Lot No. 6 Nusa Dua, Bali
Tel: +62 361 771521
www.clubmed.com.sg

Como Shambhala Retreat, Uma Ubud

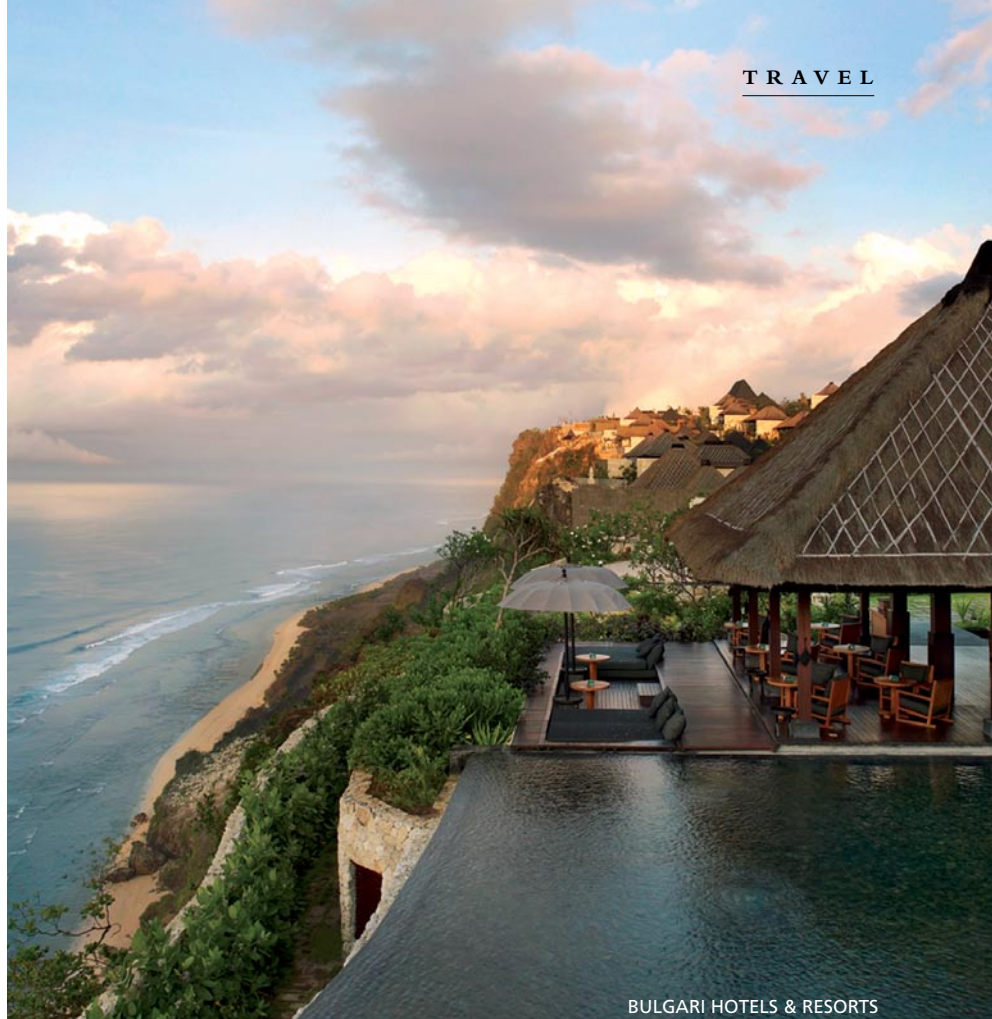
Jalan Raya Sanggingan
Banjar Lungsiakan,
Kedewatan Ubud Gianyar
Tel: +62 361 972-448
www.uma.com.bz/ubud

The Elysian

18 Jalan Sari Dewi,
Seminyak, Kuta
Tel: +62 361 730-999
www.theelysian.com

Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay and Four Seasons Private Estates Bali at Jimbaran Bay

Jimbaran
Tel: +62 361 701-010
www.fourseasons.com



BULGARI HOTELS & RESORTS

Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan

Sayan, Ubud, Gianyar
Tel: +62 361 977-577
www.fourseasons.com

The Gangsa

Jalan Tirta Akasa no 28, Sanur
Tel: +62 361 270-260
www.thegangsa.com

Grand Hyatt Bali

Nusa Dua
Tel: +62 36 177-1234
www.bali.grand.hyatt.com

InterContinental Resort Bali

Jalan Uluwatu 45, Jimbaran
Tel: +62 361 701-888
www.bali.intercontinental.com



THE BALÉ



UBUD HANGING GARDENS

Jimbaran Puri Bali

Jalan Uluwatu, Jimbaran

Tel: +62 361 701-605

www.pansea.com

Kayumanis Jimbaran

Jalan Yoga Perkanti, Jimbaran

Tel: +62 361 705-777

www.kayumanis.com

Kayumanis Nusa Dua

Tel: +62 361 770-777

www.kayumanis.com

Kayumanis Ubud

Sayan, Ubud

Tel: +62 361 972-777

www.kayumanis.com

**Legian Bali and
The Club at the Legian**

Jalan Laksmana,

Seminyak Beach

Tel: +62 361 730-622

www.ghmhotels.com

**Le Meridien Nirwana Golf
& Spa Resort**

Tabanan

Tel: +62 361 815-900

www.bali.lemeridien.com

Maya Ubud

Jalan Gunung Sari Peliatan Ubud

Tel: +62 361 977-888

www.mayaubud.com



LEGIAN BALI



COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE AT BEGAWAN GIRI

Melia Bali Resort

Nusa Dua

Tel: +62 361 771-510

www.meliabali.com

The Oberoi Bali

Jalan Laksmana, Seminyak Beach

Tel: +62 361 730-361

www.oberoihotels.com

Ramada Resort Benoa

Jalan Pratama 97A, Tanjung Benoa,

Nusa Dua

Tel: +62 361 773-730

www.ramadaresortbenoa.com

Ritz-Carlton Bali

Jalan Karang Mas Sejahtera

Tel: +62 361 702-222

www.ritzcarlton.com/resorts/bali

The Samaya

Jalan Laksmana, Seminyak Beach

Tel: +62 361 731-149

www.thesamayabali.com

Sofitel Seminyak Bali

Jalan Abimanyu, Seminyak Beach

Tel: +62 361 730-730

www.sofitelbali.com