

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT? HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD DO BALI ALL OVER AGAIN

“If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten”. Who knew self-help guru, Tony Robbins, could give a solid travel tip? Some of us might be guilty of getting caught up in the same old touristy humdrum on the tropical paradise of Bali, but fret not. With just a little planning and some spontaneity, a fresh new experience can be made each time and without the need to spend big bucks.

1. EAT YOUR WEIGHT

Food is such an integral part of the Balinese culture, so-much-so that a culinary adventure is abound here (we would kindly suggest packing some charcoal tablets, you know...just in case). From timeless classics to gastronomical delights worthy of the hipster cafes in Melbourne, the island of the gods has got you covered.

No planning necessary: What you eat. Being on a vacation is an excellent excuse to chow down whatever you want. The heavens will forgive you for it. Ask the waiter for the house-speciality or what they would personally recommend. Dip your toes in the 101 of Balinese cuisine at the Dulang Café in Kuta Square. The palate of newbies and seasoned foodies alike are bound to be tantalised here.

Plan instead: Where you eat. Doing some research beforehand ensures that you get the real deal locals would approve of, and not end up in some tourist-bait restaurants. A must-try is the original ‘warung’ styled Naughty Nuri’s in Ubud, featuring lip-smakingly good ribs and cocktails to match. Yes, the very same Naughty Nuri’s which has proven to be Bali’s greatest export to date.

2. DRINK LIKE A FISH

Pave some time out to just have a drink (Or a few- no one is judging). Pick your poison- be it a chilled mug of beer, a hot brew of the local coffee or something with a name that just tickles your fancy (How do you think yours truly discovered ‘Soda Gembira’?).

No planning necessary: What you drink. The world is your oyster. Or in this case, the menu is. Go nuts! Chat up the staff at your hotel and get them to suggest drinking holes they would go to. The narrower (but equally busy) streets of Poppies Lane 1 and 2 in Kuta have bars aplenty serving up their very own rendition of cocktails.

Plan instead: The scenery. The scenery has to do justice to the brew in hand. Watch the sun set over the green fields of Tegalalang Rice Terraces in Ubud or witness the serene Tanah Lot temple gradually immerses in total darkness. Alternatively, sit over Jimbaran’s towering limestone cliffs at ‘The Rock’ bar, and surround yourself with the sights and sounds of ocean waves crashing into the rocks below.

3. TAKE A HIKE!

As the saying goes “The best way to see the world is by foot”. There is absolutely no better way to get a ‘feel’ of the place than by just walking through it. Guided walking tours are getting increasingly trendy as of late. No longer limited to jungle trekking, tour companies now offer walks exploring

waterfalls, rice fields and villages. Be it the scenic route or the path of least resistance, the choice is yours.

No planning necessary: The directions you take. To quote J.R.R Tolkien, not all those who wander are lost. Explore the town you are staying in by walking around. Busier towns like Kuta and Ubud are definitely worth checking out on foot. And when the walking gets too much, well remember, there is always a tall, chilled glass of 'Bintang' waiting for you somewhere nearby.

Plan instead: An adventure. For those of you who don't like following the herd, forge your own path. Bali Jungle Trekking (www.balijungletrekking.com) offers a myriad of terrains to choose from, including the mystical protected jungles of Tamblingan. Unfortunately for those planning a trip to or around Kintamani, you'll first need to wait for Mount Agung to stop throwing a tantrum.

4. START CLICKING

Vacations give you ample opportunities to deploy your underutilised 'National Geographic' level photography skills. Bring out your inner shutterbug and start clicking away. Capture everyday locals living out their day, or some gorgeous landscape shots to gaze at until your next trip.

No planning necessary: Where you might get the perfect shot. Don't wait for the perfect moment, take a moment and make it perfect. Someone 'anonymous' said that but rings oh-so-true. While everyone and their mothers are clicking away at the clichéd touristy spots, take a chance with the unexpected. It could be a local going about their business or the orangey hues of sunset befalling a mundane building. That million dollar shot might just be around the corner.

Plan instead: Your Story. Be it for a blog, a journal or just a few snaps for your Instagram, be sure that your pictures tells a story: Your story. No one is judging you for taking pictures of your ticket stubs, the cuppa you had at the airport or your feet immersed in sand – we all have been guilty of doing that!

BIO- TRUSHNA PATEL

From giving stock tips on the telly, Trushna is now working on getting insider tips for travel junkies. When she is not plotting her next getaway, she enjoys the quintessentially British art of watching period dramas while sipping tea. She comes equipped with stealthy ninja level packing skills, thanks to years of flying on budget airlines.