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Bali: Old favourites and new stars for your next holiday

by Fiona Harper



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Bali is a perennial favourite with Aussie travellers. It's no wonder with ridiculously cheap airfares being offered recently and favourable exchange rates.

Bali remains a bargain despite the Aussie dollar's value being reduced in other international holiday hotspots.

Where to stay

If there's one thing that Bali has in abundance, it's beds. They come in all shapes, sizes and comfort levels. Few come with more feel-good factor than the aptly named Comfy Bed at [Four Points Bali Kuta](#). A King-sized raft of starched-linen plushness topped with a 23cm high shock absorber, this is one bed you'll have to drag yourself away from. Even more so if you've checked into a deluxe lagoon access room, which are perfect for water babies! Slip out of bed and straight into the lagoon swimming pool.

The first foray by Starwood Hotel's Four Points brand into Bali, the central lagoon (one of four pools) forms the main focus for all rooms. Located in the Poppies Lane precinct in the heart of Kuta, the chaos, noise and business of Kuta is easily ignored within this funky designer hotel. Live acoustic guitar duets in alfresco Best Brew Bar are a perfect antidote to the doof-doof scene found elsewhere in Kuta. Or pop upstairs to rooftop Vertigo Bar for sophisticated cocktails and sunset colours that light up the early evening sky.

Where to play

Another (relatively) new kid on the Bali block is La Laguna on the beach north of Seminyak at Canggu. A beguiling clash of eccentricity, you could be forgiven for spending hours here wandering around gawking at everything. From charismatic brightly painted wagons along the entrance path to imaginative seat arrangements designed for intimate couples or big groups, the place is hot. It's also an Instagrammer's dream. The food is good and the cocktails scrumptious. Go there for brunch, lunch or sundowners. It's colourful, quirky and super fun!

La Laguna will suit those who have 'done' the famous Seminyak beachfront spots like [Potato Head Beach Club](#) or [Ku De Ta](#). Don't get me wrong Potato Head is as fabulous as it's always been, especially when the tide's in and salt-laden air hovers over the place like a cooling cloak of freshness. From the outside the towering Colosseum-like façade made up of mismatched 18th century teak shutters conceal the haven within. The beachfront pool surrounded by sun lounges is popular with sun-worshippers during the day. As dusk settles and Bali's famous sunset dominates, the atmosphere switches to a funky nightspot for dinner, drinks or lounging on plump sofas cocktail in hand.

Bali's restaurant scene continues to impress. [Republik45](#) opened its greenery-draped glass doors to polite applause last year in Kerobokan. Praise has since built to a crescendo, winning fans with an Indonesian menu that kicks gastronomic goals. A vast lofty space softened with artworks and greenery, book a table here for your fix of authentic, fine Indonesian food. Staff are switched on, happily enthusiastic and knowledgeable. A comprehensive wine list covers Australia, NZ, South America and South Africa.

[Mama San](#) in Seminyak is the latest brainwave of Chef Wil Meyrick. Known for his Scottish heritage, Aussie accent (formerly from Sydney's Longrain and Jimmy Liks restaurants) and Indonesian home, Meyrick has created a winner at Mama San. Flushed with success at fine dining restaurant Sarong, he's created a charming modern eatery that requires bookings to be made weeks in advance. Sundays are devoted Dim Sums – yum!

Fashionistas take note

Aussie travellers have been flocking to Balinese tailors for eons, having copies made of favourite skirts, trousers, dresses and shirts. Nothing has changed: Balinese tailors are still whipping up a textile storm. At [Alta Moda](#) in Kuta you'll find a fabric store bursting at the seams across five floors of fabric follies. Go here first to purchase your fabric before dropping it off at the tailor. They can be found everywhere, just ask your hotel concierge or get a recommendation from a friend. Either way, it's a terrific, inexpensive way to show off your unique tailor-made style.

Fiona Harper is a travel writer specialising in cruising, active and soft adventures. Follow her at [Travel Boating Lifestyle](#)

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