



INSIDER'S GUIDE!

EAT, PRAY, STAY!

Bali is set to hit the big time thanks to new flick *Eat, Pray, Love*. Jo Upcraft reveals its best bits...



Last call for Jo Upcraft, your flight's boarding now!



PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAMY PHOTO LIBRARY
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Back in 1990, when I was 13 and an avid fan of *Neighbours*, Scott and Brad were always nipping to Bali to go surfing. Bali! It sounded so glamorous, so exotic, so far away from my grey Midlands bedroom that I couldn't help wonder – what was this mystical place?! Now Bali is about to become immortalised in the film *Eat, Pray, Love*, based on author Elizabeth Gilbert's real life experience. Following a messy divorce, Elizabeth (played by Julia Roberts) packs her bags to eat in Italy, pray in India and – you've guessed it – find love in Bali. I set off to see if it lived up to my expectations. Reader, you're lucky I returned...

HEAD FOR THE HEART

Bali is a twinkle in the Indian ocean and a full day's travel from the UK as you can't fly there direct. You can drive around its powder-white coast in a day, while inland the landscape turns gorgeously green with



Eye up the pretty rice fields of Bali



Julia Roberts and Javier Bardem in Bali for *Eat, Pray, Love*

rice-paddy terraces, rushing rivers and luscious rainforest. In the heart of Bali lies the village of Ubud, where *Eat, Pray, Love* is based. This lovely little nugget is nestled in rolling fields where you can explore the surrounding Monkey Forest (beware, the monkeys may try to steal your clothes off your back), or stretch through a yoga class (Theyogabarn.com). A visit to Ubud Palace to see the Balinese Legong dances (from £13) is nothing short of magical. There's restaurants galore – Café Lotus on Jalan Raya Ubud (Lotus-restaurants.com), rumoured to be a haunt of Julia Roberts, serves reasonably-priced traditional Bali cuisine – and shops, art galleries and spas aplenty. The treatments at Kajane (Kajane.com) cost from £15 for a facial, and take place in wooden stilted huts in the rice fields. I almost cried when my feet were pulled from their heavenly rose-petal-packed-water at the end of my foot massage. Amazing.

GET SPIRITUAL

One thing you *have* to do in Bali is see a spiritual healer – they claim to offer a cure for every ailment. I made a beeline for the stars of the original book. First up was Ni Wayan Nuriasih who owns the Balinese Traditional Healing Center

SPECIAL OFFER!
The Ubud Hanging Gardens (Ubudhanginggardens.com) are running a special *Eat, Pray, Love* package including airport transfers, accommodation, a romantic dinner for two at a Hindu temple and use of mountain bikes, all from £355. Log on to Fabulousmag.co.uk for details.

at Jalan Jembawan 5, a tiny room packed with lotions 'n' potions for anything from dandruff to 'having a baby boy'. During a 25-minute cleansing session Wayan read my palm ("You not so smart, Jo!" – charming!), fiddled with my knees to read my 'health aura' ("Eat more protein, Jo!") and ended by dousing me in Holy Water ("Now you have no more problem, Jo!"). I did actually. I was £25 out of pocket and my hair looked rubbish... The other star legendary healer, Ketut Liyer, was more accommodating. Locals will take you to his porch of wisdom and his palm readings (£25) are spot on.

SEEK OUT THE SURF

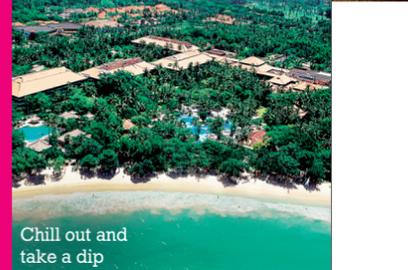
The south coast resort of Nusa Dua is unbeatable for white sands and surf-friendly waters, and the resort's Bali Collection shopping centre (Bali-collection.com) is a must. Explore the many family-run restaurants in the back streets. Nyoman's Beer Garden in Bualu village serves typical Balinese fare like babi guling (suckling pig, from £6), washed down with arak madu – a blend of Balinese liquor arak, lime and honey. Southern Bali is also the perfect base for an Indonesian adventure. In two hours, BlueWater Express speedboats whizz you to the Gili islands (Bluewater-express.com, returns from £95) – pitch up at Hotel Vila Ombak (Hotelombak.com) for sunbathing, horse riding, surfing, snorkelling and partying.

WHERE TO STAY

There's nowhere better than the paradise that is Nusa Dua's Melia Bali Villas And Spa resort. Palm trees, tropical gardens and ponds dot the pool area, the Balinese stone sculptures are dressed every day in different sarongs, there are goodwill messages written in the sand displays and come evening, hundreds of tiny candles light your path. It's pretty, sparkly and smells of summer barbecues and sea salt – which is due to the fresh fish caught daily for your dinner overlooking the sea (one of four restaurants to choose from). Rooms are equally as dreamy, with plasma TVs and beds I'd never have left if there wasn't Bali to explore! Especially fantastic are the 43 new lagoon access suites – open your patio door, walk three steps and jump into the cool water that's tickling your toes. Talking of toe tickling, the hotel's Yhi Spa, which pampers you outdoors on private secluded platforms (one-hour full body massage, £60) is unBali-avoidable. Fall in love? Impossible not to...



Yep, our entire flat fits in this room, too

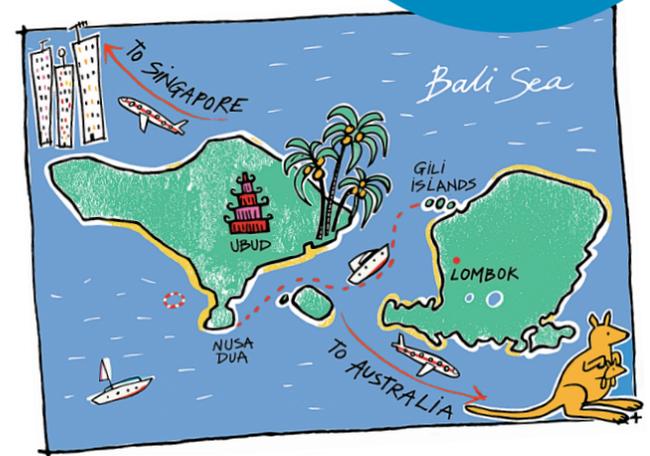


Chill out and take a dip



Could the view get any more perfect?!

EXCLUSIVE FABULOUS OFFER
Save £235pp! Thomson Tailormade (Thomsontailormade.com, 0871 664 0273) is offering seven nights at the four-star Melia Bali Villas and Spa in Bali from £999 per person. Price includes flights from London Heathrow to Bali with Thai Airways (Thaiairways.com), transfer and room-only accommodation. Valid for departures from October 4-14, 2010.



For a more in-depth guide to Bali, log on to Fabulousmag.co.uk