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# great places

## Serene Bali

The exotic Indonesian island embodies transformative travel

By Becca Hensley



The Spa on the Rocks  
at Ayana Resort

As an island province of Indonesia infused with the spirit of Indian and Arab traders, marked by lava cliffs, tumultuous cobalt seas, dense jungles and refined rice paddies, Bali beckons. Abundant with mysticism, ancient curative ways and open, affable people, it embodies transformative travel. We've collected diverse ways for you to experience Bali's infinite charms. →

## AYANA RESORT AND SPA

A 290-room resort with 78 free-standing villas, Ayana's tropical complex sits above Jimbaran Bay, just 15 minutes from the airport. Ayana keeps its footprint Lilliputian with two water recycling plants, a compost program and the use of eco-friendly detergent. But that's all behind the scenes. What's sensed by visitors is an atmosphere of understated lavishness, a whispered opulence that's as elegant as a wedge of moon glimpsed in the starry Balinese sky.

An outpost of the resort's larger, award-winning Thermes Marins Bali Spa (which boasts the world's biggest Aquatonic pool and a wide range of indigenous treatments), the Spa on the Rocks consists of two "alang alang"-topped huts, each capping its own, immense volcanic rock—and accessible from the shore only by way of a narrow bridge.

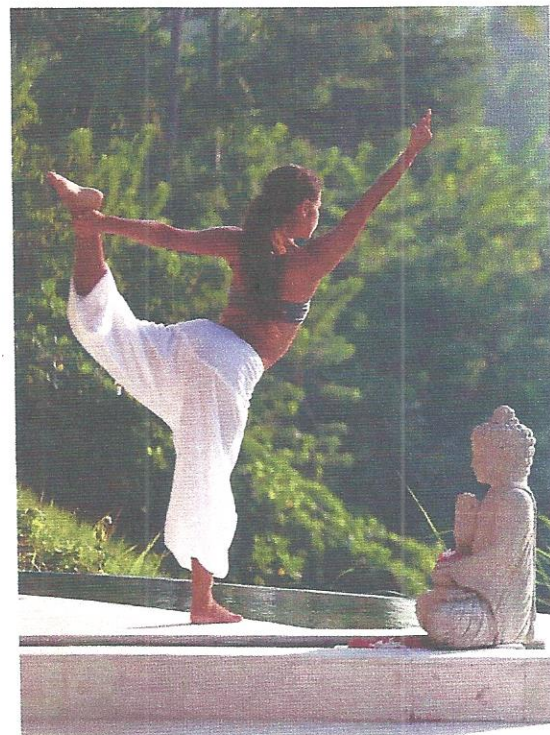
The Spa on the Rocks' exclusive spa menu spoils with two-hour rituals—such as the Diamond Miracle, which

includes a bath afloat with the petals from 500 red roses grown in the hotel owner's personal organic farm. I choose the energy balancing Amazing Jade ritual instead: a hot-and-cold treatment that utilizes the gem for everything—even the facial.

Surrounded by the Indian Ocean, I feel transported to a place that's nothing short of celestial. The waves whip around the rock and shudder the spa villa just enough to send a surge of empowering energy straight through my body. The winds waft the scent of mimosa and gardenia into the air, and the view of 1,000 hues of blue from the window speaks to eternity—Bali-style.

*ayanaresort.com*

**Making Scents** For rituals and ceremonies, to celebrate daily life, for healing and worship, flowers and their sweet scents define Bali as much as the sea. At Ayana Resort, guests can dabble in the floral realm in the L'Atelier Parfums & Creations when they make their own perfume in the French process from a cache of more than 45 local essences—from jasmine to coffee to lavender. The 45-minute workshop can be extended to include a massage using your personally created fragrance. *ayanaresort.com*





## VICEROY BALI

The Viceroy Bali is a family-owned retreat just minutes from the cultural and artistic hotbed of Ubud—a place so palpably mystic and energetic that spontaneous spiritual rebirth seems more likely than not. The hotel itself hastens the mood of infinite possibility. With villas that cascade down a hill, each equipped with plunge pools and raised bales (the Balinese answer to a poolside gazebo), the hotel roots deeply into centuries-old traditions.

Though coddling, Viceroy Bali is, nevertheless, not about gratuitous luxury. Here, the open air spa looks to the valley vistas; the pool rolls like a blue carpet into the trees; and the restaurant serves both Indonesian specialties and French-infused cuisine. You'll stop and admire the frangipani petals that cap the Buddhist and Hindu deities that dot the thatched-roofed expanse. But the hotel's offered activities will most likely take you beneath the layers of standard tourism.

During your curative stay, study yoga or Balinese dance, take part in a traditional blessing at the property's own temple, learn to make prayer baskets, hike the rice paddies, commune with local artists and ascend the volcano. Intimate and personable, romantic and friendly, Viceroy Bali's many facets include an eco-management philosophy that's as green as its encompassing tropical forest. [viceroybali.com](http://viceroybali.com)

## The Essence of Bali

Local highlights to keep in mind as you plan your trip

### When To Go

Before planning a trip, check out these standout celebrations:

#### Ubud Writers & Readers Festival:

Celebrating its 11th year in October, this well-respected annual fest takes over the area around Ubud with readings, screenings, art exhibits, literary lunches, author Q&As, workshops and more. Global names on the 2014 roster include Amitav Ghosh and V.S. Naipaul. [ubudwritersfestival.com](http://ubudwritersfestival.com)

#### Nyepi:

Taking place the day before Balinese Lunar New Year (typically occurring in February or March), this moving "Day of Silence" is just that—the whole island (including the airport) shuts down, and locals stay home with family to reflect, meditate and fast. Hotels and resorts remain open for tourists, but guests are asked to stay on property—making it a day of relaxation for them, too. In the days leading up to the holiday, each village builds giant, colorful paper mache ogoh-ogohs (effigies of demons and monsters), then burns them as a symbol of banishing evil spirits for the new year.

#### Bali Spirit Yoga Festival:

Billed as a "global celebration of yoga, dance and music," this lively fest—in its eighth year March 31 to April 5, 2015—features a concert by international acts, healing and meditation sessions, martial arts, family-friendly activities and, of course, plenty of yoga. [balispiritfestival.com](http://balispiritfestival.com)

### Bali Beauty

#### THE TREATMENTS

**Balinese Massage** Increasing in popularity around the world, the traditional Balinese massage features a mix of acupressure, percussion, kneading and rolling techniques to help increase the flow of blood and oxygen in the body—and puts you in a deep state of relaxation. The service typically starts with the feet.

**Javanese Lulur** Once performed daily on royal brides-to-be for the 40 days leading up to their wedding, the Lulur ("to coat the skin") is still a regional pre-wedding favorite—though most modern brides opt for just seven sessions, instead of 40. The glow-inducing

ritual includes a body scrub with rice, turmeric and spices; a nourishing honey-yogurt body mask; a soak in a flower-filled bath; and a vigorous massage with healing oils. Most Balinese spas offer the components of the Lulur separately, as well.

#### THE INGREDIENTS

Some key island-grown ingredients include:

**Turmeric:** Found in Balinese health drinks, skin care products and spa services, turmeric is known for its anti-inflammatory, immune-boosting and skin-clearing properties.

**Coconut Oil:** Enjoy the skin nourishing benefits of virgin coconut oil during your Balinese massage—and its health benefits during your traditional local meals.

**Coffee:** Grown primarily in northern Bali, coffee is used in body scrubs and wraps to stimulate circulation, fight cellulite and smooth the skin.

**Rice:** A staple in Balinese cuisine, and grown on the picturesque rice terraces that dot the island, rice pops up in spas as a gentle base for body scrubs like the one used in the Javanese Lulur.

#### THE PRODUCTS

##### JAMU Organic Spa Rituals

Found in spas, yoga studios, and wellness centers (primarily in the U.S.), this collection of organic body and



hair oils, lotions and scrubs is available in six Bali-inspired scents, including warming Ginger Spice, delicious Jasmine Frangipani and Bali Flowers, featuring sandat blossom, a relative of ylang-ylang. [jamuspa.com](http://jamuspa.com)

**JUARA Bali's** healing ingredients and traditional formulas are the stars of this skin and body care line, a favorite of celebs like Keri Russell. Star products include the Sweet Black Tea & Rice Facial Moisturizer, Tamarind Tea Hydrating Toner and Clove Flower & Turmeric Anti-Aging Serum. [juaraskincare.com](http://juaraskincare.com) —Sandra Ramani



## RIMBA JIMBARAN RESORT

From a distance, RIMBA Jimbaran Bali looks like a boat floating on the sea. But rather than water, what surrounds it are multi-tiered pools, manicured gardens and a tropical forest. The horizon's vista of Jimbaran Bay glitters in the sun.

If Ayana Resort exudes Balinese soul, then RIMBA, its sister property, delivers with sexy, Indonesian-style chic. Newer and more contemporary, the 282-room getaway occupies 20 inland acres bordering Ayana. Together, the properties comprise Bali's first integrated resort: Guests can go back and forth between hotels by tram, bicycle or on foot to enjoy a bevy of restaurants, pools and activities.

Deeply committed to sustainability, RIMBA incorporates eco-conscious undertones in all aspects of the hotel. In common rooms, the walls

are sheathed with bits and pieces of once-used fishing boats—the iconic, colorful ones that pepper Bali's beaches. Found driftwood and recycled glass, much of it gem-hued, has a presence—especially at UNIQUE, RIMBA's trendy, rooftop bar and restaurant—along with edgy furniture molded from recycled packing crates.

RIMBA harvests rainwater and has a recycling plant, on-site greenhouse and organic fruit garden. Its new Rooftop Spa is kitted out with bamboo and leaf-textured walls. With pacifying views and the same signature treatments as Ayana's Thermes Marins Bali Spa, it ensures relaxation. Au courant and clever, RIMBA manages to be glamorous and welcoming at once, drawing savvy families, homevmonners and business people from across the globe. [rimbajimbaran.com](http://rimbajimbaran.com)

