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36 Hours in Bali



Justin Mott for The New York Times

Meditation area at Fivlements wellness center, near Ubud. [More Photos >](#)

By NAOMI LINDT
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MAYBE it was the topless women that the German painter Walter Spies captured in his lush landscapes of Bali during the 1930s. But ever since, foreigners have come to undress. Shirtless Australians, surfboards strapped to the side of their motorbikes, [cruise](#) around for the best waves. At five-star resorts, bronzed Italian women in tiny bikinis while away the days with wine. Farther inland, spiritual seekers wrapped in body-skimming sarongs commune in temples. The natives don't go topless anymore, but that doesn't stop the throngs of sunbathers who let it all hang out on Bali's busiest [beaches](#).

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Bali, Indonesia

Friday

5 p.m.

1) MODERN-DAY ARTIFACTS

Punctuated by temples hidden behind ornately carved archways and petal-filled lanes, Ubud is Bali's artistic hub. And beyond the painted masks and shadow puppets that spill out of countless storefronts are a string of new galleries that offer one-of-a-kind treasures. Jean-François Fichot (Jalan Raya Pengosekan 6, Ubud; 62-361-974-652; [jf-f.com](#)) carries striking gem- and stone-encrusted gold jewelry and objets d'art. Next door is the Nusantara Gallery (Jalan Raya Pengosekan 7, Ubud; 62-81-797-97804), which sells rare primitive art, including wooden statues and fine weavings gathered from all over the Indonesian archipelago. And at Rio Helmi Photography (Jalan Suweta 24A, Ubud; 62-361-978-773; [riohelmi.com](#)), Mr. Helmi, who displays his own photos of Bali and elsewhere, has a new book out, "Memories of the Sacred," that chronicles 30 years spent witnessing Bali's enduring traditions.

7 p.m.

2) INSPIRATIONAL EATING

Culinary karma seems to emanate from Jalan Raya Sanggingan, a winding road about 15 minutes northwest of Ubud's center. Joining [Mozatic's](#) famed French-Asian fare and Naughty Nuri's legendary ribs is [Minami](#) (Jalan Raya Sanggingan, Ubud; 62-361-970-013; [minami-bali.com](#)), a stylish Japanese restaurant opened in 2009 by Miho Oshiro from Osaka. You can sip a yuzu-infused sake-tini (85,000 rupiah, or about \$9.75 at 8,703 rupiah to the dollar) as you settle into the baby blue, jasmine-scented dining room, which overlooks a lantern-lit [garden](#). The six-course tasting menu (210,000 rupiah) includes melt-in-the-mouth Tasmanian salmon sashimi and tissue-papery zucchini leaf tempura. Even the flavored salt (the recipe is a secret), imported from Japan and served in a tiny bowl, is exquisite.

9:30 p.m.

3) HINT OF HAVANA

You'll most likely have Ubud's streets to yourself soon after dinner, but cute cocktail spots are on the rise. At Cafe Havana (Jalan Dewi Sita, Ubud; 62-361-972-973; [cafehavanabali.com](#)), salsa bands and dance classes take place among mismatched hand-painted chairs and framed photos of Che and Fidel. Drinks at artsy [Lamak](#) (Jalan Monkey Forest, Ubud; 62-361-974-668; [lamakball.com](#)) are mixed at an open-air bar; go for the sweet yet punchy El Diablo, made of tequila, crème de cassis, lemon juice and ginger ale.

Saturday

7:45 a.m.

4) TWO-WHEELED BLISS

It's hard not to fall for Bali while cycling its quiet back roads, which are lined with stepped rice fields, blooms in every shade of the rainbow and women in bright sarongs balancing temple offerings on their heads. Half-day tours with [Bali Eco-Cycling](#) (Jalan Pengosekan, Ubud; 62-361-975-557; [baliyecocycling.com](#); 300,000 rupiah) start with breakfast overlooking the 5,600-foot-high volcanic Mount Batur and its crater lake,

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