

Uluwatu – Suarga Padang Padang

Conscious travellers to Bali are seeking out smaller upscale sustainable resorts, such as Suarga Padang Padang, set along Bali's evocative southern peninsula.

The story of Suarga is one of a labour of love by a Flemish family, their inspired project stretching to near-on a decade. The environmentally committed boutique resort is situated on the clifftops overlooking Padang Padang and features 36 distinctive rooms, pavilions and villas. It offers all the needed luxuries, while promoting social-environmental awareness and minimal environmental impact. A registered applicant of the Forest Stewardship Council, Suarga Padang Padang is predominantly built using repurposed materials selected to endure as a living legacy, preserving the archipelago's cultural heritage. Teakwood dismantled from Borneo's Bank of Indonesia and East Java's colonial Dutch hospital has been masterly crafted into walls and shutters. The plastic-free resort applies renewable power in combination with low-energy consumption technology: solar panels produce more than enough power and many rooms feature a low energy, air-conditioned system alongside teak shutters allowing natural breezes. The heart of the resort can be found at Suarga's signature restaurant, Dugong, a semi-open bamboo structure. With its low-carbon footprint mindset and pared back bliss, this is sustainable luxury.

Final pose

Up the sparkly stretch of coast from Padang Padang, I'm at Mû Bungalows Boutique Resort for a morning class at the invitation of a new friend. Our helmets are waiting on the bikes we rode in on, and soon we'll be carving back along a sandy, bumpy road above beautiful Bingin Beach, where we find breakfast down some rocky stairs at a white-washed bungalow bar on the sand. It's a great chapter to end my time in Bali.

It's strong nature waking you up in Bali. You can understand the Balinese devotion to it – the intensity and peace it brings.

Maybe it's my upbringing in Cape Town and connection to contrast and possibility; or maybe it's the water blessings and fire ceremonies that have washed the old away. With all its splendour, this place has been an inward journey. It has reminded me to show mercy and to honour what binds me to the here and now, to what matters.

I had secretly been hoping not to have an 'eat, pray, love moment' returning to Bali. I thought I'd had enough time with Kali, Goddess slayer, bringer of radical rebirth, and was quite content at the moment, thank you. But you can't immerse yourself in yoga and Bali and not expect this Devi (mother) to flip you. For me, the takeaway was being back in love with the beating energy, ironies and beauty of this world, and my wild embodiment of it.

Bali blew the hinges off my soul. **g**

Thanks to the wonderful hosts at Samadi Bali, Fivelements and Suarga Padang Padang. To read more, see good.net.nz/travel.

The state of yoga

"To be in a state of yoga is to see the universe as alive and dancing with patterns of vibration that are ultimately the same vibrations as you. Bali amplifies that and coaxes you to know yourself through direct experience – with potent agility. There's nowhere to hide here, even when 'retreating' (really, advancing). Mama Bali reveals yourself through herself, starting with all the myriad of ways that seemingly assault your senses when you arrive – the noise of traffic paralleled with ceremonial chimes, the open sewers engulfed with sweet frangipani, and the juxtaposition of burning waste next to lush verdant rice fields. It's a place full of sense objects waiting for you to refine your own sensing of all the forms of yourself. And in that, find beauty and pristine clarity in exactly everything you are, all that you couldn't quite see until Bali revealed it."
Adele Kinghan, Rise Yoga.

Stay a while

Stays in Uluwatu on 'the Bukit' peninsula on Booking.com



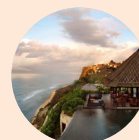
Dreamsea Bali

Beautifully styled villas and sun terrace in an unbeatable setting, near Uluwatu temple.



Gravity

Retreat to the hills for boutique thatched roof bungalows surrounded by tropical gardens.



Bulgari

Premier Med-style, with a private beach, reached via a spectacular inclinator.



Hidden Hills

Spacious themed villas and ocean views near Nusa Dua and Jimbaran areas.



Anantara

Oceanfront suites. Visit Hindu temple, Pura Luhur and Garuda Wisnu Kencana cultural park.

To find these places and more.



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