Condé Nast Traveler

DESTINATIONS

The 28 Best Hotels in Bali, From Oceanview Villas to Jungle-Immersed Escapes

Epic bathtubs, frangipani-laden landscaping, and some of the warmest hospitality anywhere await.

There's quite simply no place like Bali. The jewel of Indonesia's immense archipelago is rich—in enthralling and elaborate, highly embellished cultural customs; in hyperlocal culinary traditions and memorable flavors, natural wonders not to mention world-class waves, indelible art and design, encyclopedic wellness practices. And that's just a bit of what the island offers. It's captivated travelers for a century, and a stream of expats continues to flow to Bali—myself included—to make it their paradisiacal home away from home, while scores of the millions of holiday visitors wish they could make it so.

For me, the archipelago's water temples, warm-hearted locals, rich artistic heritage, open-air yoga classes and fantastic warm-water surfing lured me in 2014, and I eagerly built my own villa. The island has changed dramatically the first time I landed on it. The dining scene continues to swell, with chefs coming from around the globe to open their dream restaurants, and local talent tantalizing tastebuds with their creative spins on homegrown ingredients and techniques. There are more sustainable businesses, greater accessibility to remote regions, and more and more hotels and resorts opening every year. Visitors can now find tented glamping in the mountains, bamboo treehouses above a river gorge, extravagant villas either brushing the sand or hovering over it on a clifftop, and quite literally everything in between. It's a place where creatives' wildest fantasies make them come true.

With each hospitality opening, whether an emerald-toned resort in the jungle or a boutique bolthole perched above a flawless beach, the challenge of choosing the perfect place to stay grows greater. I can hardly name a favorite after years of exploring, living and loving the people and practices that make it so singular. Still, I've narrowed down, from thousands, the 28 best hotels in Bali to book now, including the pioneering legends, innovating icons and newcomers doing things their own way.



Nirjhara

With its small, dripping-in-flowers footprint and thoughtful design blending Balinese touchpoints and contemporary luxuries, this intimate waterfall resort offers barefoot bliss in Tabanan Regency, hidden in a picturesque traditional village minutes from an off-the-beaten-path black-sand beach far from the tourist throngs. This tropical bolthole is in a lesser-known region, Tabanan Regency, northwest of the holidaying swarm and tucked into the little village of Kedungu, from which many of its staff hail.

Beside verdant rice fields and with its very own waterfall—the resort's name means "waterfall" in Sanskrit—it's on nearly five acres, and the room types are delightfully distinctive. Couples tend to enjoy one of the seven intimate Canopy Suites, which feel like timber treehouses and reveal panoramic views from the roof patio where a two-person tub is perched. Nirjhara delivers a lot for its approachable rate, and while the fabulous spa, vast saltwater pool, satisfying restaurant, and gratis programming entice you to stay and relax, the resort and its enthusiastic team expertly incite you to head out and explore a region of the island with blissfully far fewer tourists than is often the reality on this popular isle. —*K.R.*