Bali Magic for the Lux Travellers

I was putting of my trip to Bali for a years. Australian perception of Bali is budget holidays for the mass market. Cheap & cheerful. No real beaches.

Well, was I wrong! Luxury does exist in Bali and there are some sensational places and resorts that you, our Lux Travellers will definitely enjoy!

Bali is a fascinating place. It is beautiful, spiritual, has amazing restaurants, glamorous parties and myriads of luxury hotels to stay at.

Itinerary below will allow you to experience the best of Bali in one trip.

For Families

9 day trip: Nusa Dua (4 days) – Ubud (2 days) – Seminyak (3 days)

Hotels to stay:

Laguna Resort Nusa Dua (Luxury Collection Hotel)

Ubud – Alila Ubud

Seminyak – W Bali

Kids need ample room to run around, swim and play. For that reason I would suggest to start your holiday at a large resort with kids facilities, nice beach and a big pool. Nusa Dua is perfectly suited for that. It is about 30 min away from the airport and has one of the best beaches we saw in Bali. Flat, quite shallow and clean water. Bali is not known for its beaches so any swimmable beach is a big bonus.

My pick in Nusa Dua is Laguna Resort, a Luxury Collection hotel. See the review of this hotel here.

Tips for staying in the area – Nusa Dua doesn’t have a lot of action around and is quite far away from the action of Seminyak. So once you are here it is best to stay here.

However there is a nice street 10 min walk away from the hotel with lots of cute cafes & restaurant. It could be nice to stroll there one day for dinner to experience something different from the hotel’s restaurants.

There is also a new bar / club that has opened in the area last year - Sakala, another option for a night out.

Next adventure – Ubud.

Ubud is a spiritual capital of Bali. It has amazing atmosphere that so many people comment on. Many feel like their soul reconnects with the universe at this remote part of the world.

To get to Ubud you’ll need to hire a private driver (drive takes about 4 hrs due to traffic) and your driver will offer to take you past a few fascinating places along the way.

Like, mongoose coffee house or a beautiful secluded restaurant looking onto the rice paddies.

Once you arrive in Alila Ubud you feel instantly relaxed and at peace with the world and yourself. The views and the nature here is breathtaking.

A full story on Alila Ubud can be viewed here.

Things to do in Ubud

Alila has the best restaurant so dinner here is a must.

Apart from Alila, Ubud has one of the most famous (and expensive) restaurants in Bali -Mosaic , so it could be another option for a night out.

Ubud offeres a lot of great day trips – all as good as each other. Bike trips through the rice paddies; walking up to the top of the volcano at the early hours of the morning to watch the sunrise, white water rafting and others.

Monkey forest – is another exciting adventure but don’t go if you are a little scared of the creatures, as they are not scared of you. They will jump on your head and steal your glasses if you are not careful or pinch your wallet which you’ll have to buy back with some monkey food and bananas. Great fun for the bigger kids though.

Spa treatments are divine too (and not expensive) so if you want to just relax by the pool and have a couple of treatments while your family has an action packed day it is also an option.

Can’t recommend going to Ubud highly enough. It is off the beaten track but you’ll remember and cherish this experience for a long time.

Save the most fun for last – Seminyak is full of life. It is packed with hip hotels, restaurants and glamorous parties.

Our pick in Seminyak – W Hotel. It is just as good for families as it is for couples.

If you go in Australian school holidays do expect a lot of children at the resort and most of them Australian.

W puts on fantastic dance parties on the weekends (do check with them re the schedule) so if party scene is for you W is the cool place to stay.

Things to do in Seminyak is to see and be seen. Relax by the fancy pool during the day and go our to one of the glamorous (but still very well priced restaurants) around. Choose from Potato Head, Ku De Ta, Sarong, Metis, MamaSan, Slippery Stone. The crowd in these restaurants is very groomed & well dressed. The food is excellent and the atmosphere buzzy!

For the kids – don’t miss Waterbom Bali (20 min drive from Seminyak), excellent waterpark. There is also a really nice upmarket kids club right next to the W Bali, Cubby House. The entry fee is minimal and your kids will be looked after and entertained for as long as you like.

For everyone – Sunday Brunch at the W. Glamorous affair – excellent setting and food, free flowing bubbly all afternoon. A must do!

9 Lux Days in Bali would give you a real taste of everything Bali has to offer – glamour action, party time, relaxation, family adventures, spa experiences and spiritual time.

Please contact us if you would like to book this itinerary or have us design a customized Bali itinerary for your dream trip.

Other suggestions:

Here are a couple more option for the true Lux Travellers to have a look at.

Nusa Dua has another fabulous accommodation option – St Regis Bali. Upmarket Villa accommodation.

Or instead of Nusa Dua you could experience another sensational resort – Karma kandara. It is one of my favourites in Bali as it is perched on top of the cliff above Bali’s only beach club with a great beach.

For couples – another sensational resort to stay instead of Nusa Dua could be Alila Uluwatu. It is very close to Karma beach and the setting is truly magical. Wouldn’t recommend it for families though as it is a very quiet romantic resort designed mostly for couples and honeymooners.

**Alila Bali**

Alila Ubud is an absolute beauty!

It is situated on the bank of the mystical and magical Ayung River where artists and painters, writers and musicians from around the world find their inspiration.

Alila’s dramatic emerald-green swimming pool is perched on a terrace and appears to float above the plunging Ayung River valley.

**Accommodation** is a mix of rooms & villas.

For the Lux Travellers we would recommend to stay **only in the villas**.

The rooms are quite dated and don’t have a lux feel.

**Pool Villas** are beautiful and very spacious (120 sq m). Perfect for families or couples seeking privacy. Highly recommended. Each villa has a large private garden around it and a warm swimming pool. They are totally private but have no views.

A special touch in these villas is a two person bath tub sunken in the lily pond.

The sofa in the pool villas is also very big, can easily accommodate a child.

**Valley Villas** – 75 sq m, one room villas with beautiful views. Great for couples.

**Terrace Tree Villa** – is the best at the resort (120 sq m – separate bedroom / living room) & sensational views of the valley below.

If pool in the room is not important to you this villa would be our top choice.

**Dining**

**Alila’s restaurant** is one of the best in Bali.

Open terrace has stunning views of the natural surroundings. On most night you can hear a vatulele playing at the background from a near by temple.

Restaurant uses the best produce the season has to offer, so every meal here is a delight.

Breakfast is fantastic too – freshest selection of pastries, fruit, muesli, jams – all home made earlier that morning by Alila’s skillful chefs.

A real delight at breakfast are the monkeys – they come all the way to the table for a play and a treat. If you bring kids here it will be an experience they never forget. Being so close to nature in the middle of green valley with unparalleled views is an experience that will touch most hearts.

**The Spa** – I had a couple of treatments here (very well priced) and they were enjoyable. The spa doesn’t have any special facilities (pools / steam rooms / etc) but the treatments are excellent and highly recommended. The spa is quite small so do book your treatments a few days in advance.

**Activities** – I wish I stayed longer to experience more of them. All activities that hotel offers sound amazing. Walk or bike ride through the rice paddies, trip to the top of the volcano (you can even cook your eggs for breakfast in the volcano while watching the sunset), white water rafting – great fun for all!

Ubud town is only a few minutes away so you can experience local art galleries, souvenir shops, Monkey forest and various Balinese restaurants in the afternoons. Most galleries and shops close at night so best time to go out on town is after lunch.

**Would we come back to Ubud and Alila?**

Absolutely! I’d love to come back to Ubud and stay a little longer – there is so much to do here and it truly has magical atmosphere. Alila is a sensational hotel (and very well priced) – great option for any discerning Lux Traveller.

W Bali

Just as Ubud is for inspiration seekers – Seminyak is for those Luxers who want to go out, see and be seen.

W is very glamourous, sizzling resort. There is no space for seclusion here and no escape from the other fellow travellers unless you stay bottled up in your villa.

Put your best bikini on, Prada wedges, large black sunglasses and go enjoy the scene. If you like loud music, a lot of people around, trendy setting – this hotel is for you.

If you are searching for a romantic getaway location that can offer privacy and relaxation I would choose a different hotel.

**Location** – very central beachfront location in the heart of Seminyak. You don’t ever need to catch a taxi when staying here, most places you’d want to go to are a stroll away.

**Beach** – it is always nice to be on the beachside however this beach is not for swimming. The sand is brown, the water is very wavy and brown, not what you’d call inviting. Great to look at and perfect for long beach walks.

**Rooms & Suites**

This hotel is nearly brand new so all accommodation options are great. The only difference here is your budget. Here are the options for you to choose from.

**Sea view rooms** are luxurious and very spacious (64 sq m). Perfect for couples or a family with one small child.

**Marvelous suite** – My Favourite – Huge as far as standard suites go (127 sq m) and really luxurious. It features large balcony looking onto the sea, big marble bathroom with large rain shower and a great bath.

The sofa bed in this living room can easily accommodate 2 big kids if one wanted to share the suite with the little Lux Travellers.

Wow Suite (2 bedrooms) and Extreme Wow Suite (2 bedrooms over 2 levels) are the crème de la crème of the resort. They are truly beautiful and come at a price of course. If you can afford to stay here you’ll probably never leave the room!

**Villas**

I prefer the suites to the villas in this hotel as villas are very close to each other, far from the sea and have no views (feel a little boxy) while the suites are very spacious and have full frontal ocean view.

The only reason I would choose a villa over a suite is if you have a big family and would like to stay together (go for 2 bedroom or 3 bedroom Wow villa) or if you would like complete seclusion on a romantic break.

One bedroom villas are very enclosed and don’t feel roomy. The name suggests that villas would have a living room (they don’t, it is only the bedroom and the pool) so these villas are not a good option for families.

**Swimming Pool** – Pretty but packed with people. If you are hoping to do morning laps here – no chance.

**Breakfast** – there are 2 options, one for Villas & Suites – great breakfast and another one for the rooms – similar choice of food but feels more on a simple side with indoor tables only. Not my first choice.

**Sunday Brunch** - absolute must when staying here. It attracts a very glamorous crowd from around the island, great buzzy atmosphere and free flowing bubbles all afternoon. Heaven! Oh, forgot to mention – the food is excellent as well, but that is not surprising here in Bali. They do know how to tantalise your taste buds.

Splitting hairs – if you are not here to party and get a room or a suite facing the sea on a party night (DJ & dancing playing loud dance music into the early morning hours) chances are you won’t be able to sleep no matter how luxurious your surroundings are. The rooms are not sound proof and it can turn out to be a real disaster, like trying to fall asleep in a night club. So do check ahead if there are any parties planned for when you are there. Getting a villa or a garden view could be a better option for those nights.

If you are a romantic couple don’t stay here during Australian school holiday. W is very popular with Australians and their children. The pool and the resort will be packed with little ones making it a noisy family place rather than a romantic hideaway. The resort doesn’t offer any child activities or kids club which is a real shame. It would be a very welcome addition.

Would I stay here again? For the lack of better sea front options in Seminyak I probably would. It is a touch too noisy & busy to place it in my favourites category but it is still a solid option for your Seminyak stay.

Laguna Resort Bali

Excellent Family Choice!

This resort has huge territory and if there is not enough room for the little ones to run around here adjoining hotel Westin (sister property) has kids club and water slide for them to enjoy.

Resort’s Lagoon Pool – is one of the largest in Bali. 5,000 sqm unfold before you offering sun, cover, and a focus on tranquility. Waterfalls welcome you from the lobby as the lagoon lazily stretches to the beach offering many different experiences. Children delight in 2 sandy beaches and a dedicated pool area. There is ample space for every guest looking either for privacy or for company. Lagoon area is dotted with many Balinese cabanas offering complete seclusion for pampering & lounging by the pool in shade and comfort.

**Swim out rooms** is a special feature of the resort however wouldn’t recommend any category under Executive Suites.

Standard rooms smell old and don’t have anything Lux about them.

**Executive suites** are spacious but have OK views onto the resort (nothing special). Swim out suites are excellent – my favourite is suite category event hough they are older style they are a real treat especially for the little ones.

The water in the lagoon is very warm so even a night time swim is a pleasure.

If your budget can be stretched new **Pool Villas** are the Best! They feature private pools, are newer that the rooms so they offer higher standard of finishes and furnishings and feel luxurious. 2 bedroom villas are perfect for families. Top pick!

**The Spa** – excellent well priced treatments. Search for special offers before you arrive (sometimes you get an extra half hour or other treats when you book early).

**The Beach**

Laguna has a great location on a pretty white sand beach, the best in Nusa Dua. Bali beaches are not great for swimming but this beach was swimmable in the mornings (before the tide goes out), clean & blue. I managed to do a few laps and some kayaking.

**Breakfast & Other Restaurants**

Breakfast was excellent. Sitting on a shady patio with a glass of fresh orange juice and watching the kids play with local squirrels was a treat. Great service and good food selection. No complains!

**Beachside restaurant** was fantastic for lunch and quite nice for dinner. We didn’t feel any need to leave the resort for our meals. They are tasty, served with a smile and well priced.

**Tips for Starwood Platinum Guests** – if Executive Suite is not available at check in speak to the front desk manager (Mr Dwi or his replacement) regarding paying a small supplement for a higher category. For a small fee ($50-100 per night) you will be able to upgrade to a fantastic suite, million times better than staying in a room or junior suite.

**All in all** – excellent resort that provides value for money with Lux touches.

Will definitely return!