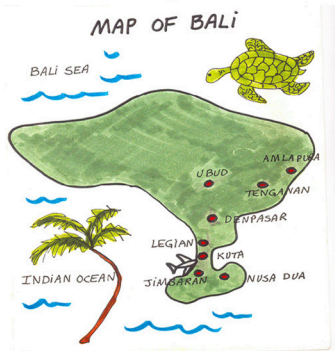


# Where to go in Bali



My map of Bali

## Top Spots to Visit

**Kuta, Legian, Seminyak, Nusa Dua** and **Ubud** are the areas on the island where I mostly found myself. I stayed with a friend in Seminyak, the upscale neighborhood where the ex-pats have lovely indoor-outdoor homes. I shopped in Legian, the hip boutique district. Went to nightclubs in the touristy beach town of Kuta. Splashed in the Indian Ocean of the posh area Nusa Dua. And took a road trip to the artsy mountain town of Ubud. It's a small island but there is so much to see and do.

### ANITA'S FAVORITE PLACES:

- Legian** - shopping and dining
- Seminyak** - hot neighborhood of ex-patriots
- Kuta Bay** - touristy area, discos, surf shops
- Ubud** - arty mountain town
- Nusa Dua** - fancy beach area

# Nyepi Festival



*Ogoh-Ogoh statue on the beach*

## *Island Blackout*

My plane touched down at the height of the sacred Hindu Balinese *Nyepi Festival*, when the entire island went dark to make evil spirits believe that the island was uninhabited. The end of March celebrates one year ending and a new one beginning. For 24 hours, no one (including foreigners) can leave their homes or hotels and no electricity can be used. Everything shuts down; road, air and sea transportation ceases. Shops, bars and restaurants bolt their doors and police patrols are out to strictly enforce. When the black out ends, the Balinese emerge attired in their brightest colors to begin a new year with energy and vibrancy. They offer gifts and food to giant paper mache monster dolls called **Ogoh-Ogoh** and then burn them on the beach.

**ANITA'S TIP:** don't arrive during Nyepi.

# Meaning of Good Karma



Me with BaBa - owner of Good Karma

## Talking & Joking with BaBa

After a restless night at the **Good Karma Bungalows** (because of the gecko attacks) it was time for Robert and I to get back on the road. After a customary hug and handshake from our host, the jovial and friendly, pot-smoking owner, **BaBa** and passing on his kind invitation for a pot-smoking fest on his front porch, we opted to pose for pictures and grab a yummy breakfast instead. The Good Karma restaurant was a thatched stage where we sat on cushions while Hindu banners fluttered and Yi Ching coins chimed softly in the air. With bellies full, we set out with better directions and much better karma.

### BACK OF HIS BUSINESS CARD:

*“Unique bamboo Bungalows, Beautiful Coral Reef, Quiet beach far away from the crowds of Bali. The meaning of GOOD KARMA, talking and joking with BaBa.”*

# Room With A View



View from my room at Melati Cottages

## *Melati Cottages*

“Skanky Cottages” is the nickname I gave the **Melati Cottages** where I stayed in **Ubud**. This place was so rundown and funky that a bubbling brook outside my room was actually a mosquito infested swamp. The netting over my bed was so brown I was afraid to touch it, paint peeled off the walls and tiles were missing in the bathroom. An old band-aide held together a light switch and their idea of a lock on the door was a chain and padlock, which can only be locked from the outside when you leave. Despite it all, I totally dug this place and took some of my most inspired photographs like the view of the rain outside my window.

### **WHERE TO GO:**

***Melati Cottages*** - Penestanan in Ubud

# Balance



Lotus blossom

## Lotus Blossoms

*Did you know that the lotus blossom grows in murky swamps?* It's true. With roots buried deep in the mud, the lotus flower rises to the surface. It's not easy pushing through that muck, which is why the lotus symbolizes that beauty is born from hardship. Bali was the first place I saw entire ponds filled with beautiful lotus blossoms. In Sanskrit and Tibetan it is called *padma* and it represents purity, joy and perfection.

**BALINESE LOTUS:** scriptures state that Bali is the *Padma Bhuwana* or "lotus flower" of this planet. One of the important structures in Balinese temples is the *Padmasana* or Lotus Throne, a stone sculpture reserved for *Sanghyang Widi Wasa* aka the Supreme God.

# Guardians & Demons



*Kumba Karna demon guardians*

## *Island of the Gods*

Balinese are superstitious. They fear ghosts and spirits and things that go bump in the night. Statues of demons and guardians are everywhere. Some are winged, some have animal faces, most are slightly grotesque and all are activated with offerings of banana leaves and burning incense.

**Kumba Karna** is a *rakshasa* (demon of noble character) who protects and wards off evil. His toothy grin guards temple portals and the steps leading to main gateways and his hands reach out to catch any evil spirits foolish enough to try to sneak past him. I also think he carries a club to knock out evil.

**ANITA'S OBSERVATION:** Balinese are master sculptors, all temples and courtyards are filled with statues of gods and goddesses as well as guardians and protector demons.