



Bali: TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL, REDISCOVERING YOU

By Denise Baron

It's no secret that travel can change your perspective. For many, a simple vacation is all it takes to catch up on fun and rest. But when your main goal is to search "within," worldly discovery can lead to self-reflection.

Transformational travel embodies the ethos of not trying to change the world; instead, "let the world change you."

This year, I took those words to heart. After experiencing a stroke at the young age of 49 and burying a dear friend, I desperately needed some time away. Long before the literary arrival of "Eat Pray Love," I had traveled to Bali. And 27 years later, I found myself being called back.

RENEWED HOPE

When I arrived in Bali, I was greeted with a welcoming hug by one of Bali's best connectors, Wayan Elly, a connoisseur of food and gourmet coffee and the embodiment of the best concierge. A charismatic storyteller well versed in secret back roads, Wayan drove me to my first destination, Sanur.

Once a fishing village, Sanur is now internationally recognized for its historical charm. The laid-back coastal community features bespoke villas, eclectic cafes, artifact shops, and local entertainment. As I listen to limpid waves kiss the shores, my recent hardships recede from the spotlight in my mind.

Strategically located in the heart of Sanur, the Maya Sanur Resort & Spa is a synergistic atmosphere that merges nature

with contemporary design. Intimate spaces mixed with Balinese aesthetics offer a lush representation of the beauty and richness of Indonesian traditions designed by internationally recognized architect, Budiman Hendropurnomo.

New friends find you quickly in Bali and I pal around with my Kiwi and Aussie mates for a beer and local Indonesian bites. Here, I'm introduced to Bali's best-kept secret: Suana, the Healer from Sanur.

Suana is a humble man with a global clientele. Over the course of seven lymphatic massage and reflexology sessions, his hands have the power of the Divine. My body feels renewed from tired sensibilities, and I find myself eagerly hopeful and receptive.

A few sun-soaked days of bike riding, eating bowls of fresh mangosteen and dragon fruit, and devouring tasty tacos at Warung Sanur Segar, and I'm feeling rested enough to hit the road toward the holy hills of Ubud. There, I unwind at Tamarind Spa at Murni's Houses.

Secluded upon a hill along the Ayung River, Tamarind Spa at Murni's Houses is an award-winning spa. This center for healing is in the heart of the deepest spiritual hub on earth.

The famed spa is owned by local legend and "Mother of Ubud" who is known simply as Murni, a gracious businesswoman who hosts celebrities like Mick Jagger, Amy Tan, and Alice Walker in her bungalows and renowned restaurant Murni's Warung. With Murni's strong reputation for cultivating a great team of healers skilled in ancient healing techniques, I book four days and three nights in an old-world meets luxury spacious suite.



At Murni's, I am pampered with curated oils, and the massage therapist's hands work their magic with a two-and-a-half hour massage to sync my still-troubled body and mind. The massage was followed by a fresh yogurt body scrub and then an exquisite flower bath.

Later, I walk to the center of town in search of Siam Sally to experience the delicious summer rolls and papaya salad. After a day of local culture, I squeeze in a Full Moon Agnihotra Vedic Fire Ceremony at the Five Elements Retreat Center.

Committed to a social media detox, I enjoy my time joining walking tours and sipping fresh mixed juice. My mind and body absorb the natural elements and release the constant battle of stress. I notice my heart is in rhythm with Bali, and for the first time in a while, there isn't tightness behind my eyes. The pain of the past year begins to slowly fade away.



SAMPLING ANCIENT HEALING

The next day, my driver takes me on a 30-minute ride up the misty-cloaked mountains and ancient emerald-green rice paddies to a hidden sanctuary called OneWorld Ayurveda. At this authentic Panchakarma Ayurveda wellness retreat center, splendor meets serenity. My senses come alive with the lush bougainvillea, delicately scented hibiscus, and intoxicating aroma of frangipani as you enter the resort.

Upon my arrival, I'm greeted with fresh juice and a beautiful flower arrangement, and then escorted to a one-hour foot massage for my "Taste Of Ayurveda" package. Afterward, I dine under the stars in the warm evening breeze.

The next morning, a full initial consultation with an Ayurvedic physician is planned, along with a full-body treatment and Shirodhara, an ancient practice of gently pouring liquids over the third-eye to relieve anxiety, stress, fatigue, depression, and hypertension.

For the next three days, motherly professionals begin each treatment with a blessing and singing mantra. Being anointed with copious amounts of herbal oils helps me appreciate the connective power of human touch. I was placed gently



into a copper tub filled with medicinal herbs. Two holistic therapists pour warm water over my body. During this experience, tears rolled down my face as I felt my spirit come home to my body.

The environment is hypnotic to the senses. Singing birds, intoxicating smells from the frangipani flower, gamelan drums, and parades that pop out of out nowhere unify the five senses in their finest moments. I attend the holy Tirta Empul Temple traditional purification ceremony. Legend has it a magical king named Mayadenawa possessed the spiritual power to transform himself into any form he desired within the clean cool springs. There are some legends you really can feel the truth behind.

In addition to yoga, three delicious vegan meals per day, meditation, and guided rice field walks, I also signed up for healthy cooking and beauty classes to enhance my skills when I return home.

Bali was a spiritually orgasmic journey where one can embrace his or her authentic vulnerability. Rediscover your own brilliance with Bali and its people as your guide.

Fivelements.org
MayaResorts.com
Murnis.com
OneWorldAyurveda.com
QatarAirways.com
SiamSally.com

