

The Eleventh Annual Bali From Within

A Journey into Balinese Nature, Rhythm, and Spirit

With Trebbe Johnson, Wayan Suriada, Rucina Ballinger, and Nyoman “Mangkok” Sutarya

March 2-14, 2020



Attentive visitors to Bali are often struck by the mystery:

Each day, you see the Balinese people engaging what is obviously a vibrant, creative, spiritually intact culture in full view of outsiders—yet rarely including them. The traditional way of life is certainly not hidden and secretive on the island—yet nor is it exactly public. Visitors feel very welcome in Bali, and they are struck by the beauty, the obvious sense of community unfolding all around them... yet what does it all mean?

Where, for instance, are those women going as they walk down the street dressed in ceremonial clothes and balancing towering offerings of fruit and flowers on their heads? Where is that gamelan orchestra playing, off behind some wall in the darkness, and why? What is happening in the village, that the streets are suddenly abloom with festive decorations?

On this one-of-a-kind trip, you'll be one of only four people journeying with three Balinese guides and an American author and leader of journeys that combine the mythic quest and the search for meaning through nature. Together we'll penetrate the scrim of colorful but often mysterious impressions that greet visitors to the island...and we will discover **Bali from Within**.

Join Us....

When you journey to this beautiful island with **Bali from Within**, you'll have personal conversations with a master craftsman of sacred masks, a gamelan musician, and a visionary man who works with villagers to rebalance Bali's ecological practices. You'll visit Balinese homes and temple compounds and take part in family and village ceremonies in ways that most tourists never get the chance to do. You'll take guided hikes that meander off the beaten path and into the dense green heart of the island, where you'll discover immense waterfalls, emerald rice fields, and native fruits and flowers growing wild.

New for 2020: Giving Some Beauty Back to Bali

Unfortunately, Bali's immense beauty is increasingly under threat. Many farmers have sold their land to developers, who are turning rice fields into hotels. Hundreds of small rivers have dried up as spas claim more water. And climate change is causing havoc to the crops, as the rainy season drags on for months each year.

Ever since Radical Joy for Hard Times's first [Global Earth Exchange](#) in 2010, our friends in Bali have participated in this annual event of giving gifts of beauty back to ecologically challenged places. During Bali from Within 2020 we'll visit three of these "wounded places" and offer gifts of beauty to them. Two ceremonies will be led by our Balinese guides and one we'll enact on our own. These sites will likely include:

- a river that is drying up
- a clove forest that has been damaged by excessive rains
- Tanah Lot, one of Bali's most sacred and scenic temples, slated to be in view of a multi-million dollar hotel and golf course proposed by Donald Trump

Time to Find Your Bali

You'll also have ample time to yourself—to walk, visit museums, shop, get a massage, or simply sit on the balcony of your bungalow reading and looking out over the landscape. Each night you'll stay in superior lodging Balinese style: small, lovely bungalows with tiled roofs, private garden showers, beautiful views, furnishings made of local woods, and crisp white sheets on which fresh flower blossoms are sprinkled each morning.

We also make time to share how the experiences of the day have affected us personally.

Every night the members of our small group share in a “talking council,” in which we speak from the heart about what has touched us, disturbed us, perplexed and delighted us.

Bali From Within is not for those who wish to pack as many sights as they can into a few days. We seek depth—not only in the island and its people, but in our own responses to what we discover. This trip is an exchange—of interest, information, inspiration, and friendship between the Balinese people and ourselves. Come discover **Bali from Within** and experience anew how beauty and wonder can shape your own life.

Ten percent of the profits of the trip will be donated to **Tamblang Sacred Springs Conservation Project, Munduk, North Bali**.

The Itinerary...

MARCH 2-3—SANUR

Sanur is a seaside village that was established in the 10th century by a Buddhist man from Java. In recent decades it has become a beach community a short drive from the airport, but it's far quieter and greener than the party villages on the western side of south Bali. This is a good place to relax and recover from jet lag after your long flight. (In fact, you might want to arrive a day or two before we meet.) We'll stay at Puri Mesari, a small family-run hotel in a quiet neighborhood (and it has a great swimming pool). We'll meet in late afternoon on the 2nd, have dinner together in the village, then gather for our first talking council, during which we'll get to know one another and find out what's drawn each of us to this journey.

MARCH 3-6—SIDEMEN

Sidemen (pronounced SID-uh-men), in east central Bali, is an area of tiered emerald rice terraces and magnificent views of Gunung Agung, Bali's most sacred mountain. It is also the hub of *songket* weaving—exquisite ceremonial fabric made with gold and silver thread.

In the morning, we'll meet our driver for the trip, Eka Merta Sedana, who has been working with Trebbe and her groups since 2007. En route to Sidemen from Sanur, we'll stop at the big public market in Klungkung, where small stands offer all kinds of fabric, ceremonial items, spices, music, food, and clothes. Here you'll buy a set of ceremonial clothes that you will be able wear to the temple ceremonies we'll attend.

In Sidemen, we'll stay at Darmada, a small, lovely eco-retreat that was designed by our guide, Wayan Suriada, and his Dutch wife Barbara. Although it is currently trendy in Bali

for hotel owners to claim that their businesses are “sustainable”, Darmada truly exemplifies care for the planet and the community. Drinking water is pure and filtered, never from plastic bottles, as is the water in the swimming pool. The small restaurant serves outstanding meals. You will stay in your own small cottage surrounded by gardens.

Wayan grew up in Sidemen and is the head of the local tourism board, which is dedicated to promoting ecologically stable tourism. He has a deep knowledge of Balinese culture and history and a great sense of humor, and he speaks fluent English. With Wayan we’ll visit nearby temple compounds to learn about Bali’s sacred architecture, take a walk through the ricefields to the village, and meet a weaver of the beautiful *songket*.

MARCH 6-9—UBUD

Ubud is Bali’s center of art, crafts, dance, and culture. The architecture in a house compound is designed to exacting specifications according to the location of the island’s great mountain, Gunung Agung, and the sea. The dance, music, and shadow puppet theatre all have as their original purpose honoring the gods with beauty.

Although the main part of the town has, unfortunately become very crowded with tourists in recent years (really since the publication of *Eat, Pray, Love*), it is still a very good town for walking. The narrow streets are packed with galleries, great restaurants, and shops offering goods from unique clothes to musical instruments to kitschy souvenirs. Clustered around the central town are small satellite villages, many of which specialize in a particular craft. We’ll stay at Alam Indah, a beautiful, quiet retreat, surrounded by gardens, forest, and the songs of crickets and birds.

Our guide to the artistic life of Ubud is Rucina Ballinger, an American dancer who married a Balinese man and has lived in Bali for more than forty years. She is a perfect guide for westerners, for she is deeply immersed in the culture, speaks fluent Indonesian and Balinese, and yet recognizes the challenges of being a foreigner on the island. With Rucina, our activities will include:

- **Visit mask maker Ida Bagus Alit**—Mask-making in Bali is a demanding spiritual as well as artistic discipline. Instead of carving immediately, the artist lives with the wood for a while, letting the spirit of the mask emerge and make itself known. You’ll watch the master carver at work and, if we’re lucky, he might don a mask and instantly and magically transform into its mythical character.
- **Attend an Odalan**—A major kind of celebration all over the island is the *odalan*, a “temple birthday.” All the people in the village gather to bring offerings; pray; create beauty for the gods with gamelan, dance, and masked theatre; and simply

enjoy getting together. If the timing is right, we'll attend.

- See a performance of **Balinese dance**. Since Rucina continues to dance and teach dance, she can offer suggestions for how to watch these musical arts whose primary purpose is to please the gods—and we may be able to go backstage and watch the dancers prepare.
- Enjoy a Balinese feast in Rucina's home.

In Ubud, you'll also have a free day, during which you can book a spa treatment, visit the Threads of Life fabric museum, go shopping, walk, and explore other features of the artistic and cultural center of Bali.

MARCH 9-13—MUNDUK

Munduk is a mountainous village near the northern tip of the island, where the air is fragrant with the scents of coffee flowers and cloves drying on mats in the sun. The views are extraordinary, overlooking the mountains, terraced rice paddies, and sunset over the Java Sea. At night the temperature is cool, while days are warm.

Our lodging is at **Puri Lumbung**, founded in 1992 by Nyoman Bagiarta. Puri Lumbung not only offers distinctive bungalows modeled on the traditional rice barn (*lumbung*) and a good restaurant, but also works with the village to foster sustainable farming practices, education, employment opportunities for young people from the village, and sound economic development.

Our guide is Nyoman "Mangkok" Sutarya, an artist, community leader, and student of Balinese religion. His family has lived in Munduk for more than 400 years.

Here our schedule will unfold in a leisurely way, depending on the weather, the availability of local people to talk to us, and local ceremonies. Activities will likely include:

- A morning walk with Mangkok to buy breakfast treats in village stalls run by local women. We'll then leave the town and follow narrow paths down the hill into the network of rice paddies, where a sophisticated system of Balinese agriculture, operated entirely by members of the villages, has been thriving equitably for over a thousand years.
- A visit with Made Trip, a renowned musician who leads a traditional gamelan orchestra in Munduk, as well as one of Bali's few women's gamelan orchestras
- A conversation with Nyoman Bagiarta, the visionary man who started Puri Lumbung and is now working with local farmers to promote sustainable agriculture and protect the endangered mountain-fed springs, rivers and soils of Munduk.

- Time to relax on the balcony of your bungalow, to read and reflect as you look out over rice fields and distant ocean. You might choose to take a class in Balinese cooking, have a massage, or watch the local children learning traditional dances.
- Since March 9 is the night of the full moon, Puri Lumbung is likely to offer a special Balinese feast and a dance performance by the local children.

MARCH 13-14—JIMBARAN

We'll leave Munduk in the morning and stop for lunch in Canggu, near a beach that is much sought after by surfers for its dramatic waves. Then we'll drive on to Jimbaran.

Jimbaran is a village with a dual personality. On one hand, it is a fishing village that maintains an unhurried, casual way of life, even though it's just south of the island's international airport. On the other hand, the beaches and the proximity to the airport have meant that grand hotels line the coast. Our hotel, Puri Bambu, is a small, friendly, not grand hotel couple of blocks away from the white-sands beach.

In the afternoon, we'll drive to Uluwatu, one of Bali's most sacred temples, which is perched high on a cliff at the southern tip of the island above the Indian Ocean and surrounded by a monkey forest. Then we'll attend a performance of the incantatory, visually spectacular Kecak dance, performed on the temple grounds as the sun sinks into the sea. Back in Jimbaran, we'll have a dinner of fresh seafood at one of the small restaurants where the tables are set out on the sand, waves crash onto the shore, and in the distance jets take off for Singapore, Sidney, and Bangkok.

After breakfast on March 14th, we'll have our final talking council and say our goodbyes.

Schedule subject to change.

Cost: Cost: \$3,880 [Includes twelve nights lodging (single occupancy; if you can share a room, deduct \$250), dance performances, entrance fees, honoraria to speakers, transportation within Bali, guides, drivers, preparation materials, and all meals except three dinners and three lunches. Does not include international air travel, alcoholic beverages, personal tips, and fees for events not included in the group trip.] A \$750 deposit is required to hold your place. For more information or to register, contact Trebbe— trebbe@trebbejohnson.com.

*For more information about Wayan and our other guides, Rucina and Mankok, see my website: <https://trebbejohnson.com/events/my-wonderful-co-guides/>.