



USADA
food culture shala



Welcome to the mystical island of Bali

- known the world over for the diversity of its culture, its refined and intricate arts, and its rich spiritual traditions.

The Balinese way of living is centered around "tri hita karana", literally "the three causes of contentment", a philosophy of how to live deeply connected to and in harmony with nature, with the community, and with the divine - thus in harmony with oneself.

The term Usada is the Balinese equivalent of Ayurveda, traditional medicine for body, mind and spirit. In the Ubud area in particular, ancient wisdom continues to be handed down to this day, through mediums such as art, dance, music and ceremonial rituals, all of which carry great transformational power.



USADA BALI is dedicated to supporting indigenous wisdom traditions and Balinese culture by sharing its treasures with the wider world in the 21st century.

USADA BALI opens the doors to invaluable experiences and spiritual nourishment, with the aim of inspiring those seeking a path to personal transformation.

We at USADA BALI draw on our network of highly respected Balinese artists and masters of their disciplines, who share their creativity, their culture and their wisdom. They represent the great diversity of their respective spiritual communities and with their commitment help to keep their traditions alive.





USADA BALI Experience

USADA BALI has created a range of exclusive and individual packages that present unique opportunities to gain insights into the Real Bali Spirit.

Our programs invite you to discover an island of astonishing beauty, diversity and complexity. Immerse yourself in rituals handed down over generations, learn about indigenous customs and the traditional way of life, or be captivated by Bali's most accomplished performers in the traditional arts. Treat your mind, body and your senses to unforgettable moments in time, accompanied and guided by local Balinese experts in their field.

From uplifting ceremonies to in-depth learning and sharing with skilled locals, prominent artists, and spiritual elders, USADA BALI brings you bespoke cultural authenticity for your pleasure and fulfilment.

Water Temple Melukat: Purifying in Sacred Springs

Water temples with sacred springs are dotted all over the island of Bali and revered by local communities who visit them regularly throughout their lives. Their waters have restorative virtues and therapeutic benefits, on a physical, emotional and spiritual level.

As you enter the sacred Tampaksiring forest, you will arrive at Pura Mengening, an ancient Buddhist temple that stands in stunning natural scenery.

There you will be greeted by our Balinese priest, and receive blessings before proceeding to the melukat, or water purification rite. Under his guidance you will make offerings, pray, and take an invigorating bath in the gushing, sacred waters of the temple grounds.



The priest will explain basic tenets of Balinese traditional wisdom, the purpose behind the rituals and the significance of the offerings made to the temple and the Gods.

The ceremony will leave you feeling cleansed in body and spirit, in tune with your surroundings and nature, and a little more knowledgeable about Balinese beliefs and practices. You will emerge revitalized and with your skin tingling.

A special brunch after the ceremony will replenish body and soul as you continue to absorb the magic.

Unlike tourist visits to healing and holy springs, you will be taken through the entire traditional ritual, receive explanations from the priest and have the opportunity to ask questions.



Refresh your body and soul with a genuine Balinese water purification ceremony that will clear your mind and focus your senses.

Included in this experience

- Introduction to local spiritual traditions by Balinese priest
- Water purification ceremony and blessings by Balinese priest
- Balinese sarong for the ceremony and to take home as a souvenir
- Offerings to the temple & gods
- Balinese lunch



Balinese Priest

In the Balinese Hindu Dharma, Mangku, or priests, play an essential role in both community and family life.

Officiating at ceremonies throughout the island on a daily basis, these Mangku constitute a highly revered caste.

By acting as intermediaries between Bhuana Alit, the visible world, and Bhuana Agung, the unseen realms and rest of the universe, they are working to ensure the harmonious unfolding of the lives of the Balinese in all areas.

The Balinese priesthood comprises four positions: Nabe, Ida Pedanda, Pemangku, and Mangku.

Ida Pedanda and Nabe are considered to be among the most learned beings in the 'Baliverse'. Their presence is in great demand by higher caste families for marriages, births, deaths, cremations and tooth filing. In addition, they oversee large scale events of exceptional importance.

Pemangku are priests who are attached to a specific temple. They are responsible for all the activities that take place in their temple including giving blessings to each visitor.

All priests have communicable access to the ancestral spirits and can be called upon to exorcise demons, as such they are invaluable and highly esteemed members of Balinese society.



Balinese Indigenous Permaculture: Connecting to Mother Earth

Bali is an island of outstanding natural beauty, with vast swathes of jungle and extensive expanses of rice terraces covering the terrain in a patchwork of greenery. The connection of the Balinese with the land has been present throughout the island's history.

Nature's abundance supports rich and diverse wildlife, while fertile rice fields fed by pure mountain streams provide sustenance for humans, supporting farming communities, their agricultural rituals and their way of life.

As travelers visit Bali in ever greater numbers, drawn to the island's unrivalled scenery, so does the impact of the modern world encroach, affecting the fragile balance between man and environment, and changing the face of the earth-community connection.

Learn about indigenous sustainability and permaculture in Bali, and understand its principles and ethics, with I Made Chakra Widia, a genuine pioneer and true expert in this field. As a local permaculture farmer and innovator of international renown, Made will inspire you with his message of restoring the land to its original state of balance and plenty.





On your permaculture excursion, you will learn about the daily chores required to operate the farm, and the manifold efforts made to revive Balinese traditional agriculture and restore nature's balance.

When you arrive at Made's Permaculture house, you will be greeted with fresh coconut or a hot beverage. The content of your day will depend on the season, but may involve planting, harvesting, pruning, weeding, seed selecting, composting, sorting or beekeeping. A fresh organic lunch will be provided, at which time Made and his farm staff will be available for further questions, comments and interactive discussion.

This exclusive program explores the vital issue of returning Bali to a sustainable eco-system, through the introduction and encouragement of green tourism, and a conscious and responsible approach to development.

Included in this experience

- Permaculture excursion
- Introduction to indigenous sustainability and permaculture in Bali
- Organic lunch with fresh local produce



I Made Chakra Widia

I Made Chakra was raised in an era when harmony with nature was ubiquitous. His home village was surrounded by rice fields where edible plants, fish and birds all thrived together.

He was born into a rice farming family near Ubud, Bali, in 1973, the same year the so called "Green Revolution" introduced chemical farming to the island.

The Balinese's love of nature, and the faith they have in their traditions, initially slowed down the encroachment of this destructive form of agriculture.

Over time, however, chemical farming has come to replace much of the original symbiotic ecosystem.

Chakra's dearest wish is for his own children to be able to one day experience the diversity he was privileged to know in his childhood.

I Made continues to work diligently with rural agricultural cooperatives to restore harmony between nature and community.

In the rice fields of Bali, he has pioneered an effective organic Identification System for heirloom red rice, of which there were once 300 varieties.

Chakra's knowledge and practical skills range from green technology and permaculture design, training and project management, to consultancy for international NGOs, with his team at www.sawahbali.org.



Balinese Dance in Peliatan: Meeting a Master

Balinese dance is a vibrant and widely appreciated art, one of the most beautiful forms of ceremonial theatre and probably unlike anything you have seen before.

As a complex and refined form of traditional storytelling, this historical drama is a multisensory experience that invites the viewer into a world of mystery. Accompanied by lively music played on Balinese instruments, the dancers cast an almost trance-like spell upon their audience. Their magic leaves a profound and lasting impression.

This rare opportunity will treat you to an exclusive meeting and dinner with the internationally renowned dance legend AA Gede Mandera Erawan. Born into a family of dancers for generations, he has been a dancer, performer, musician and director for several decades.

"Gungaji", as he is affectionately known, will introduce you to the dance culture of Bali, speak about this traditional art, and share his personal journey as a dancer with his trademark humility.



This experience will begin with a visual presentation showcasing the history of Balinese dance. Over dinner you will have the opportunity for an intimate conversation with one of the foremost authorities alive on the subject, before moving on together to the Balerung Stage in Peliatan, where you will experience for yourself: The authentic Peliatan Legong & Barong Dance.

His lifetime of dedication and experience will allow you a rare insight into Balinese dance and an understanding of both dance and the significant place it occupies in the lives of the Balinese.

The performance comprises a variety of dances and acts, which will leave you marvelling at the carefully choreographed and intricate hand gestures and mudras, all performed with effortless grace.



Balinese dance performances have a timeless feel to them. As you sit back, watch and enjoy, you will be spirited away into the space of ancient tales and legends.

Included in this experience

- Introduction to Balinese dance and its history by AA Gede Mandera Erawan
- Special private dinner with AA Gede Mandera Erawan
- Beautiful dance performance at Balerung Theater in Peliatan (www.balerungbali.com)



AA Gede Bagus Mandera Erawan

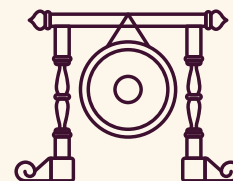
Maestro Anak Agung Gede Bagus Mandera Erawan is a founder of the Balerung Dance Ensemble of Peliatan and one of the driving artistic forces behind it.

As the creator and director of many traditional dance performances in Bali, his mission is to keep the lineage alive through Balinese performing arts. In this he is honouring the legacy of his family.

Indeed, in 1931, his father, a legendary performer, led the first Balinese troupes to visit Europe on a tour of Paris, where his mother sang the role of Ardja, the servant to the princess somewhat reminiscent of Cinderella.

A.A. Gede Bagus Mandera Erawan, dancer, musician, choreographer, and composer, has performed internationally and is still widely revered as the classical dancer in the BBC documentary "Miracle of Bali 1969".

Today, at the age of 70, he continues to perform weekly at the Balerung Stage in Peliatan, as well as teaching privately and embodying his Taksu - or powerful spiritual charisma - as a vital participant in temple ceremonies in and around Ubud.



Ancestral Bali: A Journey into Tradition

On the East Coast of Bali, a tiny village by the name of Tenganan Dauh Tukad sits just off the coast of the Lombok strait and west of the Wallace line.

A revered and valuable tree called the Palmyra Palm grows there, with branches from which fan-shaped leaves expand. These leaves are carefully harvested, then processed and left to dry for at least a year. The finest ones are chosen to become message-bearers of the past, to be inscribed with passages in Balinese Sanskrit.

The leaves are etched with a special knife and the inscriptions rendered visible using ink made from macadamia nut extract and other ingredients rubbed into the leaf. These manuscripts are called Lontar.

Another tradition involving skill of the highest order is Double Ikat weaving, for which both warp and weft threads are dyed before being woven into patterns. Genuine textiles of this variety are created only in the Bali Aga village of Tenganan. As the fruit of such exquisite and refined labor, Double Ikat fabric has great spiritual significance and value for ceremonial use.





There is a deep connection between the traditional Balinese rural lifestyle and the know-how involved in the creative pursuits and spiritual practices of the Balinese.

To gain a real insight into this connection you will learn about the ancient arts and forms of Lontar leaves and Ikat textile design through hands-on experience.

You will also explore the agro village, where you will learn about the growing of ancient Usada plants such as turmeric, ginger, tamarind, coffee, cinnamon, and vanilla, and discover beekeeping in Bali. After seeing how a variety of these herbs are used you will be able to sample some of the results, such as the renowned Indonesian tonic Jamu.

Your excursion will take you deep into Bali and back in time, to generations-old rituals and into the island's history, as you gain an understanding of how the Balinese have traditionally subsisted and thrived off the land.

Included in this experience

- Introduction to traditional arts and crafts, demonstrations and cultural talk
- Introduction to Balinese traditional farming, healing herbs, and beekeeping
- Balinese lunch



Kadek Ardita

Kadek Ardita originates from Tenganan Dauh Tukad, a traditional village in eastern Bali where ancient culture and customs are still being practiced today.

Among the many traditions that Tenganan preserves is Lontar, the skill of writing and drawing on palm leaves. These palm leaf manuscripts were used to transmit philosophy, history, poetry, grammar, and traditional medicine.

Kadek began his apprenticeship at the early age of 9 under the guidance of his grandfather, who made him a recipient of the Lontar lineage by transmitting to him the writing techniques in all their beauty and wisdom.

Now he shares this ancient knowledge throughout Bali and Indonesia by holding interactive workshops and teaching privately.

Ketut Karni

Ketut Karni is also from Tenganan Dauh Tukad, a village so steeped in indigenous traditions it is unlike almost any other. Here the art of weaving has been passed down from one generation to the next until the present day.

Tenganan is best known for the Double Ikat weaving - a rare art form in which both the vertical and the horizontal yarns are tied and dyed before being woven into a single piece of fabric. This intricate and magnificent technique is still practiced in the village of Tenganan in Indonesia, in Okinawa islands of Japan, and the villages of Puttapaka and Bhoodan Pochampally in Telangana in India.

Kadek Ardita and Ketut Karni are a husband and wife team who actively share their exquisite work, which continues to be displayed at world-renowned art galleries such as the ARMA Museum and the Puri-Lukisan Museum.



Balinese Art: Experience History and Tradition

In Bali, art and spirituality are intimately connected – art is both a form of spiritual practice and an impassioned expression of the spiritual life of the island.

The artistic landscape of Bali is one of abundant and prolific creative energy. Evidence of the vital role of art in the lives of the Balinese is ever present all over the island. From majestic statues and intricately carved temple facades, to vibrant paintings and colourful fabrics, daily life is permeated by a strong artistic undercurrent.

On a simple walk around Ubud, visitors to Bali will encounter brightly clad ladies weaving delicate palm leaf baskets, or find the locals adorning their hair and decorating streets and living spaces with flowers.

On our half-day tour, the renowned multi-talented artist Satya Cipta will invite you to take a closer look at Balinese art, and explore with you its real meaning and diversity.

Satya is not only a gifted painter, but also a singer, dancer, and linguist, currently pursuing her path as an artist under the guidance of her mentor, the reputed maestro Ketut Budiana.



Together you will visit the Puri Lukisan Art Museum, where Satya will give you an exclusive overview of art history. She will explain the different styles of Balinese art from different regions of the island. Under her knowledgeable guidance you will explore how the use of iconography has significance for each piece.

An intimate lunch time discussion with Satya will offer further opportunity to deepen your knowledge.

This in-depth visit of the museum will give you a more refined appreciation of the beauty you are witnessing, its nuances, meaning, and history.

Included in this experience

- Introduction to Balinese art and its history by Balinese artist Satya Cipta
- Visit to Art Museum in the company of
- Satya Cipta
- Tickets to the Art Museum
- Lunch



Satya Cipta

Satya Cipta is one of Bali's most promising artists, currently mentored by both, Ketut Budiana and Jean Couteau.

An outsider within her own culture, Satya's situation is different to that of most Balinese. Born in Lombok, she came to Bali at a young age, then later moved to South Sumatra and resided with her family in a small minority Balinese group within an Islam- and Christian dominated environment.

She went on to study theatre and performance in Jakarta before returning to Bali. Experience of life away from Bali, as well as in the nation's capital, has endowed her with an open and contemporary worldview.

Satya is a self-taught artist, who began by learning the renowned Batuan painting traditions which established her artistic foundations.

Eager to improve, Satya began her search for a teacher, which led to her introduction to Ketut Budiana, recognised as one of the greatest living Balinese artists.

Thus began the mentorship that has allowed Satya to flourish, as it has both nourished and deeply inspired her to express herself through her art.

Jean Couteau, the historian on Balinese art, is another influential person who continues to encourage and support Satya's evolving art.

Her first solo exhibition, held at Puri Lukisan Museum, Ubud's oldest and most recognized art museum, earned Satya immediate endorsement from the highest levels of the Balinese art establishment.

She has a thorough understanding of the Balinese and Indonesian art communities and their history, and is a wonderful and abundant source of creativity and knowledge.





Contact

All of the USADA BALI experiences can be individually modified to accommodate personal needs and preferences. We are also pleased to provide our expertise in creating unique, bespoke experiences on request.

USADA BALI continuously offers private classes and teachers for yoga, pranayama, meditation, martial arts (Pencak Silat, Wushu, Qi Gong), Balinese dance, painting, drawing and singing.

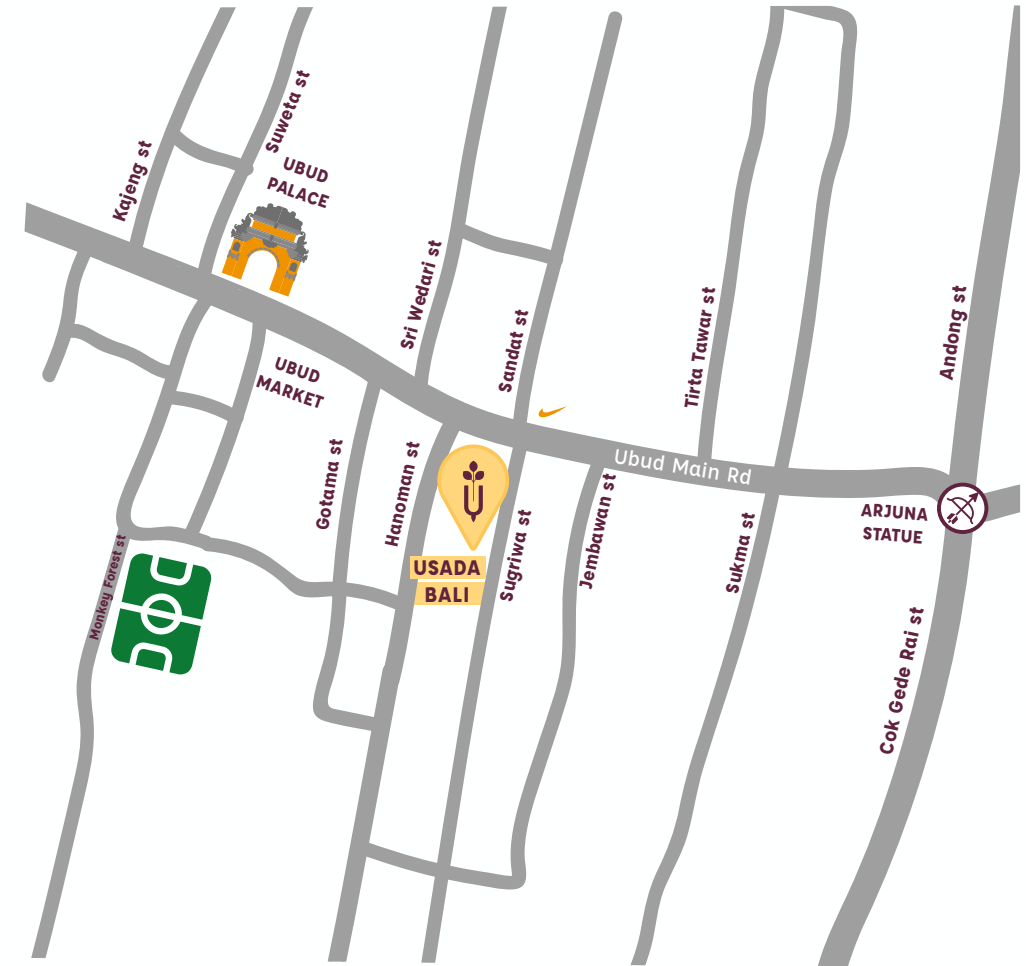
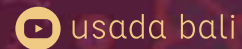
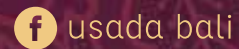
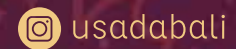
All USADA BALI offerings can be organized for your retreat, group or your private home.

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