

# Central Mountains



Volcanoes are the spine of Bali and for many they are the soul. As you climb up any of the many roads that traverse Bali's mountains, at a certain point you'll notice that palm trees have been replaced by pines and you'll realise that yes, you are entering another world. They divide the broad plains of the south from the narrower strip of the north. Starting as an outcrop in the east near Amlapura, the volcanoes march west. The island's 'Mother Mountain' Gunung Agung (3142m) is in the east and northwest is Gunung Batur (Mt Batur; 1717m), with its lunarlike double caldera, lake and numerous smaller craters.

In the Danau Bratan (Lake Bratan) area, vegetation covers a complex of long dormant volcanic craters, interspersed with several lakes. After Gunung Batukau, the second-highest mountain (2276m), a string of smaller mountains stretch off into the sparsely inhabited western region.

Opportunities for visitors abound. Amid too many hassles, there are stunning geologic spectacles around Gunung Batur, especially at sunrise. Much more relaxed hikes exist aplenty in the lakes and hills around Danau Bratan.

At Munduk in the west, a dense landscape of waterfalls, jungle and coffee plantations draws ever-more visitors for hikes and stays at some beautiful and culturally aware hotels.

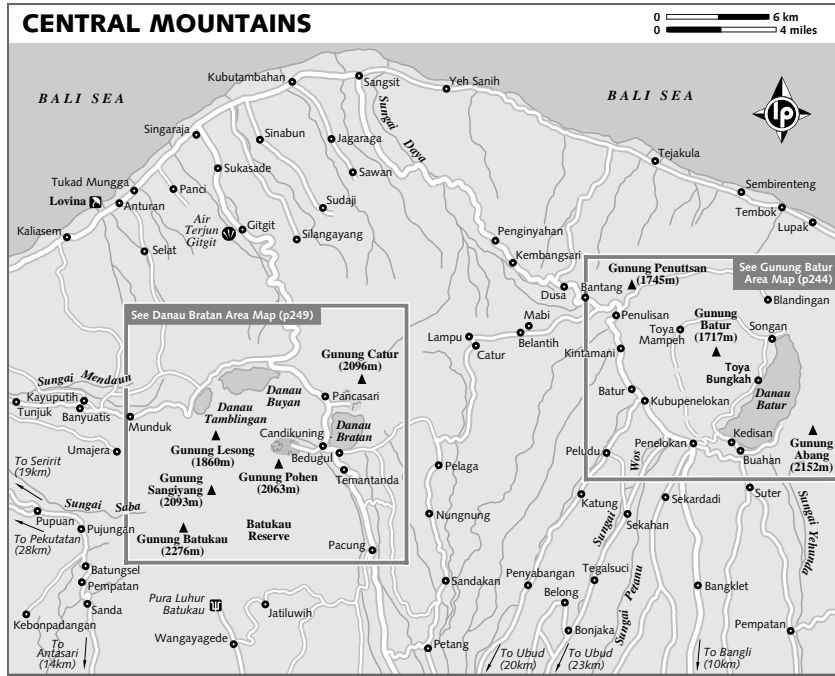
To the south, Gunung Batukau shelters a beautiful and important temple while some of the island's most stunning ancient rice terraces grow their stuff around Jatiluwih.

You can visit the mountains as part of day trips or on longer, circular itineraries. One look at the trees tells you, it's like no place else in Bali.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoying the superb views and lush waterfall-filled landscape in and around **Munduk** (p252)
- Finding your favourite rice terrace at **Jatiluwih** (p254)
- Feeling the energy at one of Bali's holiest temples, **Pura Luhur Batukau** (p253)
- Hiking around **Danau Buyan** (p252) and **Danau Tamblingan** (p252)
- Surviving the vast double caldera, crater lake, lava flows, smoking cones and touts of **Gunung Batur** (p242)





# GUNUNG BATUR AREA

٪ 0366  
This area is like a giant dish, with the bottom half covered with water and a set of volcanic cones growing in the middle. Sounds a bit spectacular? It is. The road around the south-western rim of the Gunung Batur crater is one of Bali’s most important north-south routes and has one of Bali’s most popular vistas. Most people intending to do some trekking stay in the pleasant villages around the shores of Danau Batur, and plan an early start to climb the volcano.

## Orientation

The villages around the Gunung Batur crater rim have grown together over the years in a continuous, untidy strip. The main village is Kintamani, although the whole area is often referred to by that name. Coming up from the south, the first village is Penelokan, where tour-group busloads stop to gasp at the view, eat a buffet lunch and are hassled by the ever-present souvenir sellers.

Penelokan is also where you can take a short road down into the crater. From here, a road loosely follows the shore of Danau Batur, linking the villages of Kedisan dan Toya Bungkah.

## Entry Tickets

If you arrive by private vehicle, you will be stopped at ticket offices at Penelokan or Kubupenelokan; to save any hassle, you should stop and buy a ticket. Entry is 4000/2000Rp per adult/child. Bicycles are free (and should be, given the climb needed to get here). This ticket is for the whole Gunung Batur area; you shouldn’t be charged any more down at the lakeside.

## Information

Services are few in the Gunung Batur area. There is an international ATM in the car parking area for the Lakeview Hotel. In Kubupenelokan there is a post office and in Kintamani there is a Bank BPD. There are no services in the villages around Danau Batur. The moral here is: bring lots of cash from the lowlands.

## Getting There & Around

From Batubulan terminal in Denpasar, *bemo* (small minibus) travel regularly to Kintamani (15,000Rp). You can also get a bus on the busy Denpasar (Batabulan)-Singaraja route which will stop in Penelokan and Kintamani (about 15,000Rp). Alternatively, you can just hire a car or use a driver. From South Bali expect to pay at least 400,000Rp.

Orange *bemo* regularly shuttle back and forth around the crater rim, between Penelokan and Kintamani (7000Rp for tourists). Public *bemo* from Penelokan down to the lakeside villages go mostly in the morning (tourist price is about 6000Rp to Toya Bungkah). Later in the day, you may have to charter transport (40,000Rp or more).

## TREKKING GUNUNG BATUR

Vulcanologists describe Gunung Batur as a ‘double caldera’, ie one crater inside another. The outer crater is an oval about 14km long, with its western rim about 1500m above sea level. The inner crater is a classic volcano-shaped peak that reaches 1717m. Activity over the last decade has spawned several smaller cones on its western flank, unimaginatively named Batur I, II, III and IV. More than 20 minor eruptions were recorded between 1824 and 1994, and there were major eruptions in 1917, 1926 and 1963. Geological activity and tremors have continued to occur regularly.

Statistics aside, you really have to see it to believe it. One look at this otherworldly spectacle and you’ll understand why people want to go through the many hassles and expenses of taking a trek. But is it worthwhile? You’ll

### WARNING

The Gunung Batur area has a reputation as a money-grubbing place. Keep an eye on your gear and don’t leave any valuables in your car, especially at the start of any trail up the volcano. Break-ins are common.

Also be wary of touts on motorcycles who will attempt to steer you to a hotel of their choice as you descend into the Danau Batur area from the village of Penelokan. Finally, some of the vendors in the area can be highly aggressive and irritating. Guide services are controlled by the HPPGB (Mt Batur Tour Guides Association; see right).

get some amazing pictures and come close to volcanic action not easily seen anywhere. But the flip side is that it’s costly, you have to deal with various characters and at some point you may just say, ‘I could have enjoyed all this from the parking lot viewpoint in Penelokan’.

## HPPGB

The notorious HPPGB (Mt Batur Tour Guides Association; ٪ 52362; Toya Bungkah office Map p247; 11 5am-9pm; Pura Jati office Map p244; 11 3am-noon) has a monopoly on guided climbs up Gunung Batur. The HPPGB requires that all trekking agencies that operate on the mountain hire at least one of its guides for trips up the mountain. In addition, it has developed an unsavoury reputation for intimidation in requiring climbers to use its guides and during negotiations for its services.

Reported tactics have ranged from dire warnings given to people who inquired at its offices to outright physical threats against people attempting to climb without a guide. There have also been reports of guides stationing themselves outside of hotels to intercept climbers.

Pinning these guys down on rates can be enough to send you back to South Bali, but expect to pay the following:

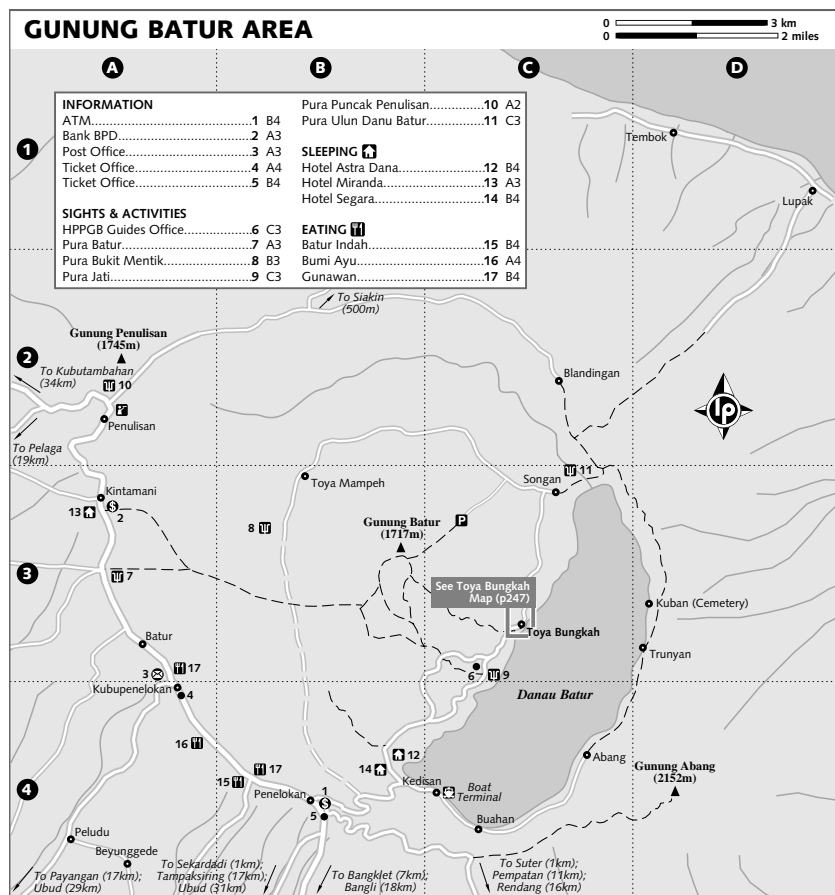
Trek	Duration	Cost
Batur Sunrise	4-8am	200,000-300,000Rp
Gunung Batur Main Crater	4-10am	200,000-300,000Rp

## Trekking Agencies

Even reputable and highly competent adventure tour operators from elsewhere in Bali cannot take their customers up Gunung Batur without paying the HPPGB (see above) and using one of its guides, so these tours are relatively expensive.

Pretty much all the accommodation in the area can help you put a trek together. They can recommend alternatives to the classic Batur climb such as the outer rim of the crater, or treks to other mountains such as Gunung Agung.

Trekking agencies can also arrange other treks in the area, to Gunung Abang or the outer rim of the crater, or to other mountains such as Gunung Agung. All of the agencies listed here can get you up Gunung Batur



for rates from about US\$20 (not including HPPGB fees); everything is negotiable.

**Arlina's Trekking Agency** (Map p247; ☎ 51165; Arlina's Bungalows, Toya Bungkah) Offers a range of treks.

**Hotel Astra Dana** (Map p244; ☎ 52091; Kedisan) Another recommended place.

**Hotel Miranda** (Map p244; ☎ 52022; Jl Raya Kintamani, Kintamani) One of the few agencies that will take solo climbers.

**Hotel Segara** (Map p244; ☎ 51136; hotelsegara@plasa.com; Kedisan) Popular with larger groups.

**Jero Wijaya Tourist Service** (Map p247; ☎ 51249; jero\_wijaya@hotmail.com; Lakeside Cottages, Toya Bungkah) Well-regarded, offers treks up Gunung Agung (US\$75) and in Taman Nasional Bali Barat (US\$90).

**Volcano Breeze** (Map p247; ☎ 51824; Toya Bungkah) Located in the café of the same name, offers many treks.

## Equipment

If you're climbing before sunrise, take a torch (flashlight) or be absolutely sure that your guide provides you with one. You'll need good strong footwear, a hat, a jumper (sweater) and drinking water.

## Trekking Routes

The climb to see the sunrise from Gunung Batur is still the most popular trek, even with the high fees charged by, not to mention the dodgy reputation of, the HPPGB; see p243.

Ideally, trekkers should get to the top for sunrise (about 6am), before mist and cloud obscure the view. It is a magnificent sight, although hardly a wilderness experience – as it's not uncommon to have 100 people on

## WHEN TO TREK

The volcanically active area west of the main peak can be deadly, with explosions of steam and hot lava, unstable ground and sulphurous gases. To find out about current conditions, ask at the trekking agencies (see p243), or alternatively look at the website of the **Directorate of Volcanology & Geographical Hazard Mitigation** ([www.vsi.esdm.go.id](http://www.vsi.esdm.go.id)).

The active areas are sometimes closed to visitors for safety reasons – if this is the case, don't try it alone, and don't pay extra for an extended main crater trek that you won't be able to do.

Think twice about trekking in the wet season (October to March), because the trails can be muddy and slippery, and clouds often block the views. Note that monsoonal rains often cause landslides in some mountain areas.

top for sunrise in the tourist season. Neither is it necessary to be at the top for sunrise – a halfway point is fine. If you start at 5am, you'll avoid the crowds.

Guides will provide breakfast on the summit for a fee (50,000Rp), and this often includes the novelty of cooking an egg or banana in the steaming holes at the top of the volcano. There are several refreshment stops along the way, but bottled beverages can be pricey. Water sources may be dubious.

## FROM TOYA BUNGKAH

The basic trek is to start climbing from Toya Bungkah at about 3am, reach the summit for sunrise, and possibly walk right around the main cone, then return to Toya Bungkah. The route is pretty straightforward – walk out of the village towards Kedisan and turn right just after the car park. After about 30 minutes you'll be on a ridge with a well-defined track; keep going up. It gets pretty steep towards the top and it can be hard walking over the loose volcanic sand. Allow about two hours to reach the top, which is at the northern edge of the inner crater.

Climbers have reported that they've easily made the journey without a HPPGB guide, though it shouldn't be tried while dark. The major obstacle is actually avoiding any hassle from the guides themselves.

You can follow the rim to the western side, with a view of the area of the most recent volcanic activity, continue to the southern edge, and then return to Toya Bungkah by the route you climbed up.

Longer trips go around the recent volcanic cones southwest of the summit. This has the most exciting volcanic activity, with smoking craters, bright-yellow sulphur deposits, and steep slopes of fine black sand. If the activity is *too* exciting, the area may be closed for

trekking, although the summit can still be OK (see the boxed text, above).

Climbing up Gunung Batur, spending a reasonable time on the top and then strolling back down takes four or five hours; for the longer treks around the newer cones, allow around eight hours.

## FROM PURA JATI

A huge parking lot near Pura Jati makes this the main entrance for groups and day-trippers. The shortest trek is basically across the lava fields, then straight up (allow about two hours to the top). If you want to see the newer cones west of the peak (assuming the area is safe to visit), go to the summit first – do not go walking around the active area before sunrise.

## FROM THE NORTHEAST

The easiest route is from the northeast – that's if you can get transport to the trailhead at 4am. From Toya Bungkah take the road northeast towards Songan and take the left fork after about 3.5km. Follow this small road for another 1.7km to a badly signposted track on the left – this climbs another kilometre or so to a parking area. From here, the walking track is easy to follow to the top, and should take less than an hour.

## FROM KINTAMANI

From the western edge of the outer crater, trails go from Batur and Kintamani down into the main crater, then up Gunung Batur from the west side. This route passes close to the rather exciting volcanically active area and may be closed for safety reasons. Check the current status with the guide at Hotel Miranda (p246).

## THE OUTER CRATER

A popular place to see the sunrise is on the outer crater rim northeast of Songan. You'll

need transport to Pura Ulun Danu Batur, near the northern end of the lake. From there you can climb to the top of the outer crater rim in under 30 minutes, and see Bali's northeast coast, about 5km away. At sunrise, the silhouette of Lombok looms across the water, and the first rays strike the great volcanoes of Batur and Agung. If you can reconnoitre this route in daylight, you'll be able to do it without a guide.

## VILLAGES AROUND GUNUNG BATUR CRATER

☎ 0366

There are several small villages on the ridge around Gunung Batur crater. The Penelokan area is filled with bus-tour restaurants, although some are good. Generally places on the west side of the road enjoy views down to South Bali while those on the east side look into the double caldera.

### Penelokan

Penelokan means 'Place to Look' – and you will be stunned by the view across to Gunung Batur and down to the lake at the bottom of the crater. Apart from the vista (check out the large lava flow on Gunung Batur), there's not much here – a large bus-tour hotel, several ugly monolithic restaurants peering over the crater and numerous desperate souvenir sellers.

The road around the rim has several huge, overpriced buffet-style restaurants geared to busloads of tour groups. They all have fine views, and provide lunches from 60,000Rp to 80,000Rp or more.

But amid this there are some decent choices, including many humble places where you can sit on a plastic chair and have a simple meal while enjoying a priceless view. **Batur Indah** (☎ 51020; meals 30,000-60,000Rp; 11am-5pm) has South Bali views as does **Bumi Ayu** (☎ 52345; meals 30,000-70,000Rp; 11am-5pm). For views into the crater, consider **Gunawan** (☎ 51404; meals 30,000-80,000Rp; 11am-5pm).

### Batur & Kintamani

The villages of Batur and Kintamani now virtually run together. Kintamani is famed for its large and colourful market held every three days. It starts early and by 11am it's all over. If you don't want to go on a trek, the sunrise view from the road here is pretty good.

The original village of Batur was in the crater, but was wiped out by a violent eruption in 1917. It killed thousands of people before

the lava flow stopped at the entrance to the village's main temple.

Taking this as a good omen, the village was rebuilt, but Gunung Batur erupted again in 1926. This time, the lava flow covered everything except for the loftiest temple shrine. Fortunately, there were evacuations and few lives were lost. The village was relocated up on the crater rim, and the surviving shrine was also moved up there and placed in the new temple, **Pura Batur** (sarong & sash rental 1000Rp, admission donation 4100Rp).

Spiritually, Gunung Batur is the second most important mountain in Bali (only Gunung Agung outranks it) so this temple is of considerable importance. It's a great stop as there are always a few colourful mountain characters hanging around. Within the complex is a Taoist shrine.

The **Hotel Miranda** (☎ 52022; Jl Raya Kintamani, Kintamani; s/d 25,000/50,000Rp) is the only accommodation here. The six rooms are clean and very basic with squat toilets. It has good food and a congenial open fire at night. The informative owner can also act as a trekking guide (see p243).

### Penulisan

The road gradually climbs along the crater rim beyond Kintamani, and is often shrouded in clouds, mist or rain. Penulisan is where the road bends sharply and heads down towards the north coast. A viewpoint about 400m south from here offers an amazing panorama over three mountains: Gunung Batur, Gunung Abang and Gunung Agung. If you're coming from the north, this is where you'll first see what all the tourism fuss is about.

Near the road junction, several steep flights of steps lead to Bali's highest temple, **Pura Puncak Penulisan** (1745m). Inside the highest courtyard are rows of old statues and fragments of sculptures in the open *bale* (pavilions). Some of the sculptures date back to the 11th century. The temple views are superb: facing north you can see over the rice terraces clear to the Singaraja coast (weather permitting).

## VILLAGES AROUND DANAU BATUR

☎ 0366

The little villages around Danau Batur have a crisp lakeside setting and views up to the surrounding peaks. There's a lot of fish-farming here and the air is redolent with the smell of

onions from the many farms. You'll also see chillies, cabbage and garlic growing. Yum!

A hairpin-bend road winds its way down from Penelokan to the shore of Danau Batur. At the lakeside you can go left along the good road that winds its way through lava fields to Toya Bungkah, the usual base for climbing Gunung Batur.

### Kedisan & Buah

The villages around the southern end of the lake have a few places available to stay in a fairly isolated setting. Buah is a pleasant 15-minute stroll from Kedisan, and has market gardens going right down to the lakeshore.

Beware of the motorcycle touts who will follow you down the hill from Penelokan, trying out the various guide and hotel scams. Local hotels ask that you try to call ahead and reserve so that they can have your name on record and thus avoid paying a bounty to the touts.

### SLEEPING & EATING

Both of these places have basic cafés.

**Hotel Astra Dana** (☎ 52091; r 50,000-100,000Rp) The more expensive of the 12 rooms have hot water and views to the lake across onion and cabbage fields. This is the home of the always delightful Dizzy, local guide extraordinaire. See p243 for details on the trekking agency based here.

**Hotel Segara** (☎ 51136; hotelsegara@plasa.com; r 60,000-100,000Rp; j ) Next door to Hotel Surya, the Segara has bungalows set around a courtyard. The more expensive rooms have hot water. It's clean and comfortable enough for a night. The restaurant is a good place to sample the local fish. See p243 for details on the trekking agency based here.

### Trunyan & Kuban

The village of Trunyan is squeezed between the lake and the outer crater rim. It is inhabited by Bali Aga people. But unlike Tenganan (see p225) it is not a welcoming place.

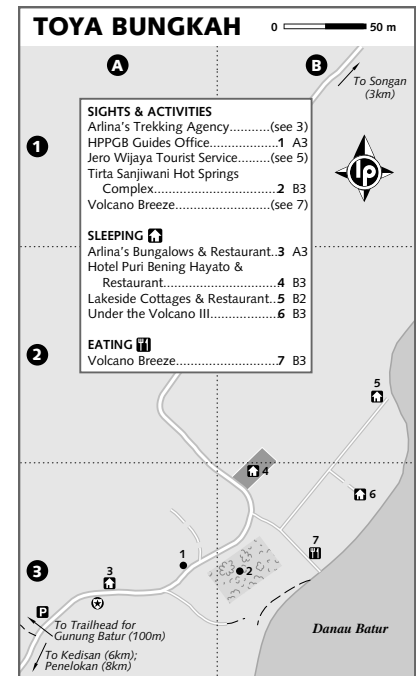
Trunyan is known for the **Pura Pancering Jagat**, with its 4m-high statue of the village's guardian spirit, but tourists are not allowed to go inside. There are also several traditional Bali Aga-style dwellings, and a large banyan tree, said to be more than 1100 years old. Touts and guides, however, hang about soliciting tips. Don't.

A little beyond Trunyan, and accessible only by boat is the cemetery at Kuban. The people of Trunyan do not cremate or bury their dead – they lie them out in bamboo cages to decompose. A collection of skulls and bones lies on a stone platform. This is a tourist trap for those with macabre tastes.

Boats leave from a jetty near the middle of Kedisan, where there is a ticket office and a car park (1000Rp) with a few pushy vendors. Tourists are not allowed to catch the public boat. The price for a four-hour return trip – Kedisan–Trunyan–Kuban–Toya Bungkah–Kedisan – depends on the number of passengers, with a maximum of seven (200,000Rp to 220,000Rp).

### Toya Bungkah

The main tourist centre is Toya Bungkah (also known as Tirta), with its hot springs (*tirta* and *toya* both mean water). Toya Bungkah is a simple village, but travellers stay here so they can climb Gunung Batur early in the morning. And if you take a moment to smell the onions (and take in the view of the placid lake) you may just decide





## DETOUR

A turn-off in Songan takes you on a rough but passable road around the crater floor. Much of the area is very fertile, with bright patches of market garden and quite strange landforms. On the north-western side of the volcano, **Toya Mampeh** village (Yeh Mampeh) is surrounded by a vast field of chunky black lava – a legacy of the 1974 eruption. Further on, **Pura Bukit Mentik** was completely surrounded by molten lava from this eruption, but the temple itself, and its impressive banyan tree, were quite untouched – it's called the 'Lucky Temple'.

you want to stay for a while, even if you don't go up the mountain.

## ACTIVITIES

Hot springs bubble in a couple of spots, and have long been used for bathing pools. Beside the lake, with a wonderful mountain backdrop, **Tirta Sanjiwani Hot Springs Complex** (% 51204; adult/child US\$5/2.50; h 8am-8pm) has lovely gardens near the lake. Entry includes use of the cold-water pool (20°C) and hot spa (40°C).

## SLEEPING & EATING

The main road through town can be noisy, so try to get rooms at the back of hotels. Better still, get one with a lake view. Unless noted, hotels only have cold water, which can be a boon for waking up for a sunset climb.

Small, sweet lake fish known as *ikan mujair* are the delicious local speciality. They are barbecued to a crisp with onion, garlic and bamboo sprouts.

**Under the Volcano III** (% 081 3386 0081; r 70,000Rp) With a lovely, quiet lakeside location opposite vegetable plots, this inn has six clean and pretty rooms; go for room one right on the water. There are two other nearby inns in the Volcano empire, all run by the same cheery family.

**Arlina's Bungalows & Restaurant** (% 51165; s/d 50,000/80,000Rp, with hot water 70,000/100,000Rp) Has 11 rooms that are clean, comfortable, friendly and above the average standard. See p243 for details on the trekking agency based here.

**Lakeside Cottages & Restaurant** (% 51249; jero\_wijaya@hotmail.com; r US\$10-35; s ) At the end of the track on the water's edge, this is definitely one of the better places. The top-end rooms

have hot water and satellite TV. The restaurant (dishes 12,000-25,000Rp) serves home-style Japanese dishes, such as *oyako-don* (rice topped with egg and chicken). See p243 for details on the trekking agency based here.

**Hotel Puri Bening Hayato & Restaurant** (% 51234; www.indo.com/hotels/puribeninghayato; bungalow US\$14-20, r US\$42-50; s ) An incongruously modern place, it has a few quaint water-view bungalows and oversized 'deluxe' rooms all with hot water and lake views. The pool is small but there's also a hot-spring-fed whirlpool. The restaurant (dishes 12,000-30,000Rp) is slightly formal.

**Volcano Breeze** (% 51824; dishes 15,000-25,000Rp) A delightful and sociable travellers' café. Fresh lake fish in many forms is the speciality here. It's also a good place to just hang out. See p243 for details on the trekking agency based here.

## Songan

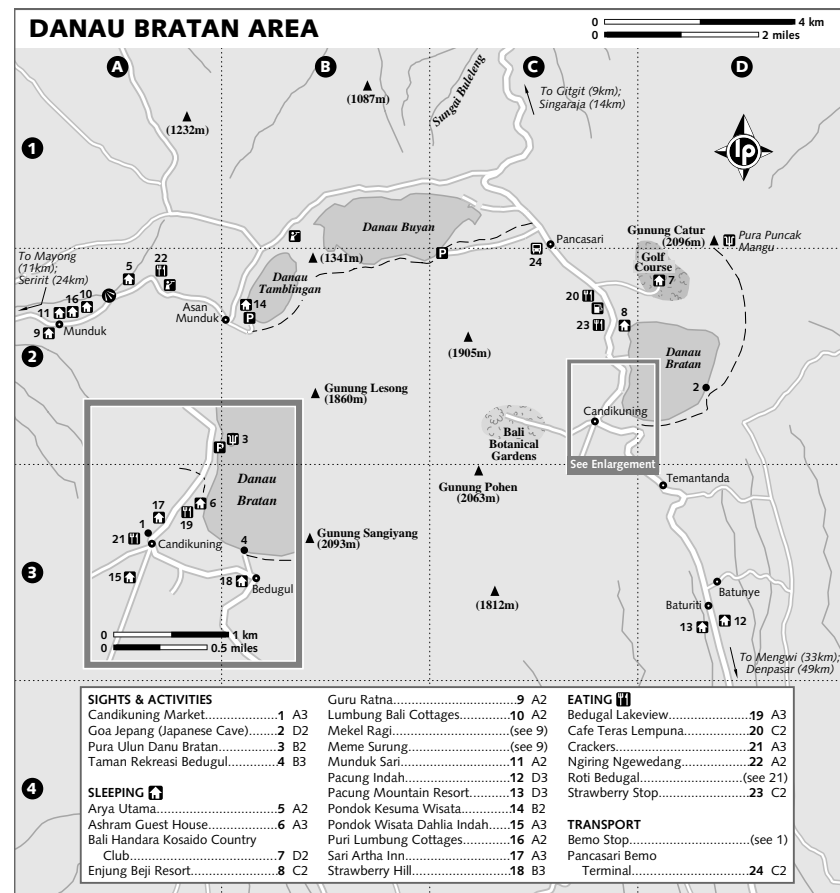
Two kilometres around the lake from Toya Bungkah, Songan is a large and interesting village with market gardens extending to the lake's edge. At the lakeside road end is the temple **Pura Ulun Danu Batur**, under the edge of the crater rim.

## DANAU BRATAN AREA

Approaching from the south, you gradually leave the rice terraces behind and ascend into the cool, often misty mountain country around Danau Bratan. Candikuning is the main village in the area, and has an important and picturesque temple. Bedugul is at the south end of the lake, with the most touristy attractions. About 4km north of the lake, Pancasari has the local market, the main bemo terminal and a golf course. Danau Buyan and Danau Tamblingan are pristine lakes northwest of Danau Bratan which offer good trekking possibilities. Beyond this are some interesting villages. To the south and west there are other beautiful highland areas, little visited by tourists.

While the choice of accommodation near the lake is limited, much of the area is geared towards domestic, not foreign, tourists. On Sundays and public holidays, the lakeside can be crowded with courting couples and Kijangs bursting with day-tripping families.

Wherever you go, you are likely to see the blissfully sweet local strawberries on offer. Note that it is often misty and can get chilly up here.



## BEDUGUL

% 0368

'Bedugul' is sometimes used to refer to the whole lakeside area, but strictly speaking, it's just the first place you reach at the top of the hill when coming from South Bali. At the large billboard, take a right to the southern edge of the lake for the harmless tourist trap.

## Activities

### TAMAN REKREASI BEDUGUL

Lakeside eateries, a souvenir market and a selection of water sports – parasailing, water-and jet-skiing plus speedboats – are the features at this tacky and noisy recreation park (% 21197; admission 5000Rp, parking 1500Rp), which attracts many tour buses filled with locals.

## TREKKING

From the water sports area, a trail around the south side of the lake goes to the mundane **Goa Jepang** (Japanese Cave), which was dug during WWII. From there, a difficult path ascends to the top of Gunung Catur (2096m), where the old **Pura Puncak Mangu** temple is popular with monkeys. Allow about four hours to go up and back from Taman Rekreasi Bedugul.

## Sleeping & Eating

Upmarket hotels on the slope 9km south of Bedugul offer outstanding views to the south. And they are good choices for a snack or a refreshment if you're just passing by. Beware of a string of run-down places up at the ridge around Bedugul.

**DETOUR**

At Bedugul, you can turn east and take a small and lovely road down the hillside into some lush ravines cut by rivers. After about 6km you'll come to a T-junction, turn south and after about 2km you'll come to the pretty village of **Pelaga**. This area is known for its organic coffee and cinnamon plantations. You'll both see and smell them.

Pelaga can also be reached by road from Penulisan at the northwestern edge of Gunung Batur's crater. And from the south, there's a little-used and very rewarding road from Ubud, via Sangeh and Petang.

It's best to do this with your own transport. With some directions, you could hike the 8km from Bedugul to Pelaga.

To really appreciate Pelaga, consider a tour and homestay organised by **JED** (Village Ecotourism Network; ☎ 0361-735320; www.jed.or.id; tours US\$25-100), the nonprofit group that organises rural tourism (see p348).

**Pacung Mountain Resort** (☎ 21038; r US\$40-70; Ⓢ ) This 39-room resort is built on a steep terraced slope over-looking an exquisite valley carved with rice fields and early morning views of Gunung Batukau. Buffet lunch is 65,000Rp, and à la carte is 20,000Rp to 80,000Rp

**Pacung Indah** (☎ 21020; www.pacungbali.com; r 200,000-500,000Rp; Ⓢ ) Across the street from the Pacung Mountain Resort, this hotel has views almost as good and the rooms are a cut above the average – all include a private courtyard. Treks are offered in the rich, emerald countryside.

**Strawberry Hill** (Bukit Stroberi; ☎ 21265; dishes 10,000-25,000Rp) Opposite the Taman Rekreasi turn-off, this good restaurant has polished floorboards and on a clear day you can see Kuta. The menu includes burgers and soul-healing *soto ayam* (chicken soup). There's a good bar.

**Getting There & Away**

Any minibus or bemo between South Bali and Singaraja will stop at Bedugul on request (see opposite for details).

**CANDIKUNING**

☎ 0368

Spread out along the western side of the lake, Candikuning is the horticultural focus of central Bali. Its daily market was once the main supplier of vegetables, fruit and flowers for the southern hotels, but now its patrons are mostly tourists, with a smattering of locals shopping for herbs, spices and potted plants.

Several places to stay and eat can be found around the market. Down a gentle hill you'll find Pura Ulun Danu Bratan, an important local holy site.

**Sights & Activities****BALI BOTANICAL GARDENS**

This **garden** (Kebun Raya Eka Karya Bali; ☎ 21273; admission 3500Rp, car parking 1500Rp; ⌚ 7am-6pm) is a showplace. Established in 1959 as a branch of the national botanical gardens at Bogor, near Jakarta, it covers more than 154 hectares on the lower slopes of Gunung Pohen. The garden boasts an extensive collection of trees and flowers, including wild orchids. Some plants are labelled with their botanical names, and the booklet *Six Self Guided Walks in the Bali Botanical Gardens*, sold at the ticket office for 20,000Rp, is helpful. The gorgeous orchid area is often locked to foil flower filchers; ask that it be unlocked.

Within the park there's a new attraction sure to delight anyone who wants to do more than just walk around and look at pretty flowers: the **Bali Treetop Adventure Park** (adult/child US\$18/11) lets you play like a bird – or a squirrel. Winches, ropes, nets and more let you explore the forest well above the ground. And it's not passive, you hoist, jump, balance and otherwise circumnavigate the ark. Special programmes are geared to different ages.

Coming north from Bedugul, at a junction conspicuously marked with a large, phallic cornucopia sculpture, a small side road goes 600m west to the garden. Although normally cool, shady, scenic and uncrowded, on Sunday and public holidays it's very popular with Balinese families.

**PURA ULUN DANU BRATAN**

This very important Hindu–Buddhist **temple** (adult/child 3300/1800Rp, parking 2000Rp; ⌚ tickets 7am-5pm, site 24hr) was founded in the 17th century. It is dedicated to Dewi Danu, the goddess of the

waters, and is actually built on small islands, which means it is completely surrounded by the lake. Both pilgrimages and ceremonies are held here to ensure that there is a supply of water for farmers all over Bali.

It is truly beautiful, with a classical Hindu thatch-roofed *meru* (multi-roofed shrines) reflected in the water and silhouetted against the often cloudy mountain backdrop – one of the most common photographic images of Bali. A large banyan tree shades the entrance, and you walk through manicured gardens and past an impressive Buddhist stupa to reach the lakeside.

An unfortunate aspect is the small animal zoo, left of the main entrance, where tourists are encouraged to be photographed alongside snakes, bats and iguanas, all of which appear to be kept in less than humane conditions.

**WATER SPORTS**

At the temple gardens, you can hire a four-passenger speedboat with a driver (125,000Rp per 30 minutes), a five-person boat with boatman (80,000Rp per 30 minutes), or, a two-person pedal boat (35,000Rp per 30 minutes).

For an almost surreal experience, take a quiet paddle across the lake and see Pura Ulun Danu Bratan at sunrise – arrange it with a boatman the night before.

**Sleeping**

**Sari Artha Inn** (☎ 21011; r 60,000Rp) Although close to the market and lacking views, this basic place does have hot-water rooms.

**Pondok Wisata Dahlia Indah** (☎ 21233; r 50,000Rp, with hot water 80,000-125,000Rp) In the village along a lane near the road to the botanical garden, this is a decent budget option with 17 comfortable, clean rooms.

**Ashram Guest House** (☎ 21450; fax 21101; r 60,000-175,000Rp) Overlooking the lake, Ashram has a range of rooms. Prices start with shared bathroom and no hot water, then increase for a private bathroom, more still for hot water (much welcome on a chilly, misty day) and top price for everything, plus a view of the lake.

**Enjung Beji Resort** (☎ 21490; fax 21022; cottages 250,000-500,000Rp) Just north of the temple and overlooking the lake, this 23-room place is a peaceful, pleasant option. The superior cottages are excellent quality and have outdoor showers and sunken baths. All have hot water, good on cool misty days.

**Eating**

Food stalls at Candikuning's market offer cheap eats. Also in this part of the market is a very worthwhile T-shirt shop Smile For Life run by widows of the 2002 Kuta bombings.

**Roti Bedugal** (☎ 0815 5857 5355; snacks 5000Rp; ⌚ 8am-6pm) Follow your nose to this place in a far corner of the market which has a continuous stream of fragrant freshly baked treats emerging all day. Nearby, you can feel like a grand potentate at the 'Deluxe Western Toilets' (5000Rp), the cleanest facility on the island.

**Crackers** (☎ 08-1138 8697; snacks 5000Rp) Back from Roti Bedugal, Crackers serves baked treats from roti and has a long drinks list (possibly to drive business to the toilets).

At the entrance to Pura Ulun Danu Bratan are several Padang warung (food stalls), and there's a café with a view on the grounds.

**Bedugul Lakeview** (dishes 8000-20,000Rp) Between the temple and the market, this place is big, clean and fresh (and we're not talking about the tasty chicken) and has a fine Indo menu.

**Strawberry Stop** (☎ 21060; dishes 7000-20,000Rp; ⌚ 8am-6pm) North of Candikuning, they make good use of locally grown strawberries in milk shakes, juices and a myriad of different pancakes. Bananas sub when berries are out of season (which might drive you to drink the strawberry wine, 80,000Rp).

**Cafe Teras Lempuna** (☎ 0362-29312; dishes 15,000-40,000Rp) A welcome new addition to the dining scene, this café is modern, with a good menu ranging from burgers to Japanese. The coffees and teas are just the thing on cool days. When it's sunny, enjoy the inviting covered patio.

**Getting There & Away**

Danau Bratan is beside the main north–south road, so it's easy to reach from South Bali or Singaraja.

Although the main terminal is in Pancasari, most minibuses and bemo will stop along the road in Bedugul and Candikuning. There are frequent connections from Denpasar's Ubung terminal (15,000Rp) and Singaraja's Sukasada terminal (15,000Rp). For Gunung Batur, you have to connect through Singaraja or hire transport.

**PANCASARI**

The broad, green valley northwest of Danau Bratan is actually the crater of an extinct volcano. In the middle of the valley, on the main road, Pancasari is a nontourist town with a

bustling market and the main terminal for public bemo.

Just south of Pancasari, you will see the entrance to **Bali Handara Kosaido Country Club** (% 22646; www.indo.com/hotels/balihandara; r from US\$70), a well-situated (there's plenty of water here for the grass!), top-flight 18-hole golf course which offers comfortable accommodation in the sterile atmosphere of a 1970s resort, that somehow seems like the villain's grand lair in an old James Bond movie.

## DANAU BUYAN & DANAU TAMBLINGAN

Also northwest of Danau Bratan are two more lakes, Danau Buyan and Danau Tamblingan – neither has been heavily developed for tourism, which is an advantage. There are several tiny villages and abandoned temples along the shores of both lakes, and although the frequently swampy ground makes it unpleasant in parts to explore, this is still a good place for a walk.

### Sights & Activities

**Danau Buyan** (admission 2000Rp, parking 1000Rp) has parking right at the lake, a delightful 1.5km drive off the main road. The entire area is home to market gardens growing produce such as strawberries.

A 4km **hiking** trail goes around the southern side of Danau Buyan from the car park, then over the saddle to Danau Tamblingan, and on to Asan Munduk. It combines forest and lake views.

**Danau Tamblingan** (adult/child 3000/1500Rp, parking 1000Rp) also has a parking lot at the end of the road from the village of Asan Munduk. The lake is a 400m walk and this is where you can catch the trail to Danau Buyan. If you have a driver, you could always walk this path in one direction and be met at the other end. There are usually a couple of guides hanging around the car park (you don't need them for the lake path) who will gladly take you up and around **Gunung Lesong** (per 6hr 320,000Rp).

### Sleeping & Eating

**Pondok Kesuma Wisata** (% 0817-472 8826; r 200,000Rp) This cute little guesthouse featuring rooms with hot water has a nice café (dishes 8000Rp to 20,000Rp) and is just up from the Danau Tamblingan parking lot – you will get a surprise or two: you may be greeted by a monkey.

## MUNDUK & AROUND

% 0362

The simple mountain village of Munduk may be one of Bali's most interesting places right now. It has a cool mountain ambience set among lush hillsides covered with jungle, rice, fruit trees and pretty much anything else that grows on the island. Waterfalls tumble off the precipices by the dozen. There are hikes and treks galore and a number of really nice places to stay, from old Dutch summer homes to retreats where you can plunge full on into local culture. Many people come for a day and stay for week.

Archaeological evidence suggests there was a developed community in the Munduk region between the 10th and 14th centuries. When the Dutch took control of North Bali in the 1890s, they experimented with commercial crops, establishing plantations for coffee, vanilla, cloves and cocoa. Quite a few Dutch buildings are still intact along the road in Munduk and further west.

### Sights & Activities

Heading to Munduk from Pancasari, the main road climbs steeply up the rim of the old volcanic crater. It's worth stopping to enjoy the **views** back over the valley and lakes – watch out for monkey business from the simians on the road. Turning right (east) at the top will take you on a scenic descent to the coastal town of Singaraja, via the Gitgit waterfalls (p261). Taking a sharp left turn (west), you follow a ridge-top road with Danau Buyan on one side and a slope to the sea on the other; coffee is a big crop in the area.

If you turn left at this junction, a trail leads to near Danau Tamblingan, among forest and market gardens. Turning right takes you along beautiful winding roads to the main village of Munduk. Watch for superb panoramas of North Bali and the ocean and consider a stop at **Ngiring Ngewedang** (% 0828 365 146; dishes 15,000-40,000Rp; h 10am-4pm), a coffee house 5km east of Munduk that has views of the ocean. You can buy coffee grown on the surrounding slopes and staff are happy to show you the coffee-production process.

About 2km east of Munduk look for signs indicating parking for a 15m **waterfall** near the road. This is the most accessible of many in the immediate area.

Almost everything in the Munduk area is at an elevation of at least 1000m. Numerous trails are suitable for two-hour or much longer

treks to coffee plantations, rice paddies, waterfalls, villages, and around both Danau Tamblingan and Danau Buyan. You will be able to arrange a guide through your lodgings.

### Sleeping & Eating

There's a range of sleeping choices around Munduk. Enjoy simple old Dutch houses in the village or more naturalistic places in the countryside. Your accommodation will have a café, usually serving food from the region. There's a couple of cute warung along the road down to Seririt and North Bali.

**Arya Utama** (bungalow 100,000Rp) There are two simple cold-water bungalows here in the middle of coffee trees. The big activity: sit on your porch, gaze out and just listen. There's no food, says the young couple who own it, 'just sleep'. It's 2.8km east of Munduk.

**Guru Ratna** (% 92182; r 100,000-200,000Rp) The cheapest place in the village, it has five comfortable cold-water rooms in an old Dutch house. The best rooms have some style and nice porches.

**Meme Surung & Mekel Ragi** (% 92811; r 200,000Rp) These atmospheric old Dutch houses adjoin each other in the village and are run by the same owner. The former – Meme Surung – has excellent views down the valleys.

**Munduk Sari** (% 0361-297123; munduksari@yahoo.com; s/d 300,000/400,000Rp) Five gleaming rooms at this mainstream-feeling new place have the classic views of the area and big tubs with hot water. It's just east of the village.

**Lumbung Bali Cottages** (% 92818; r from US\$40) About 800m east of Munduk, this place has villas overlooking the lush local terrain. The open-air bathrooms are as refreshing as the porches are relaxing. Like all local places, there is a wide range of hikes on offer here.

**Puri Lumbung Cottages** (% 92810; www.purilumbung.com; cottage s/d US\$67/75, cottage US\$95-149; i ) Founded by Nyoman Bagiarta to develop sustainable tourism, this great hotel has bright two-storey cottages with stunning views (units three, eight, 10 and 11 have the best) right down to the coast from their upstairs balconies. Rice grows outside each unit. Dozens of trekking options and courses, including dance and cooking, are offered. The hotel's restaurant (dishes 15,000Rp to 30,000Rp), Warung Kopi Bali, has a great outlook onto the lush valleys and also serves excellent food, including the local dish *timbangan bi siap* (chicken soup with sliced cassava and fried shallots).

The hotel is on the right-hand side of the road 700m before Munduk from Bedugul.

### Getting There & Away

Bemo leave Ubung terminal in Denpasar for Munduk frequently (20,000Rp). Morning bemo from Candikuning also stop in Munduk (12,000Rp). If you're driving to or from the north coast, a decent road west of Munduk goes through a number of picturesque villages to Mayong, then down to the sea at Seririt.

## GUNUNG BATUKAU AREA

Often over-looked – probably a good thing given what the rapacious hordes have done to Gunung Agung – Gunung Batukau is Bali's second-highest mountain (2276m), the third of Bali's three major mountains and the holy peak of the island's western end.

You can climb its slippery slopes from one of the island's most holy and most underrated temples, Pura Luhur Batukau, or just revel in the ancient rice terrace greenery around Jatiliweh that could be a fantasy if it wasn't real.

### ORIENTATION

There are two main approaches to the Gunung Batur area, the easiest is to go via Tabanan (see p275) and take the Pura Luhur Batukau road north 9km to a fork in the road. Take the one on the left (towards the temple) and go a further 5km to a junction near a school in Wangayagede village. Here you can continue straight to the temple or turn right (east) for the rice fields of Jatiliweh.

The other way is to approach from the east. On the main Denpasar–Singaraja road, look for a small road to the west, just south of the Pacung Mountain Resort (p250). Here you follow a series of small, paved roads west until you reach the Jatiliweh rice fields. You'll get lost, but locals will quickly set you right and the scenery is superb anyway.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

#### Pura Luhur Batukau

On the slopes of Gunung Batukau, **Pura Luhur Batukau** (donation 5000Rp) was the state temple when Tabanan was an independent kingdom. It has a seven-roofed *meru* dedicated to Maha



## GROWING MONEY

The rich volcanic soil, regular rain mixed with sun and temperate nights mean that large swathes of the slopes leading up the central mountains of Bali are extremely fertile. Driving any of the roads, you'll certainly see this.

The produce and goods grown can be found in all of Bali's markets – from diet staples such as tomatoes and carrots to cash crops including coffee and vanilla. But until recently, there's been no added value, as a marketer would say. Enter a bunch of American hippies, old- and post-. John Hardy came to Bali in 1975 and in three decades has created an international jewellery empire (www.johnhardy.com). But still remembering his hippy roots even as the millions rolled in and his pony tail got cut off, Hardy wanted an organic farm to supply wholesome food to his workers at his jewellery factory north of Denpasar.

Enter Ben and Blair Ripple. Fleeing a rainy and muddy organic farm near Seattle, these post-hippy hippies found themselves warming up and warming to Bali. One thing led to another, they met Hardy, he hired them for his dream farm, and the rest is, well, history.

The Ripples proved to have a talent for more than just growing pesticide-free foods, it turns out they are genius marketers who don't just sell food, but rather an entire cuisine concept. From their farm near Jatiluwih (see below) they have cornered the market for the kinds of unusual, boutique produce craved by Bali's best chefs. French Chantenay carrots, Italian Chiogga beets and more flow forth. And now it's not just produce, but products. Under the brand **Big Tree Farms Bali** (www.bigtreebali.com), the Ripples are selling Balinese sea salt (see the boxed text, p237), Balinese long peppers and other boutique flavourings in gourmet markets in the USA with plans to extend to Britain and Australia.

And who benefits? Well the Ripples obviously, but also the many farmers who grow crops for them at much more than commodity prices, the families making salt in the east and the dozens of people working behind the scenes. 'We called it Big Tree because we like the idea of it dropping seeds in a big sustainable forest,' says Ben.

Meanwhile, the Ripples are trying to stay close to what bought them to Bali. On several nights during the dry season (April to September), they host dinners at the torch-lit tables of **Big Tree Farm** (☎ 0361-461978; farm@bigtreebali.com). If you can elbow aside a celebrity or two, you might be able to join them. The cost is about US\$70 for a multicourse tasting of their amazing cooking – which takes lots of inspiration from Balinese foods.

Dewa, the mountain's guardian spirit, as well as shrines for Bratan, Buyan and Tamblingan lakes. Surrounded by forest, it's often damp and misty. Sarongs can be rented and a donation to the temple is requested.

This is certainly the most spiritual temple you can easily visit on Bali. The main pagoda-like structures have little doors shielding small ceremonial items. There's a general lack of touts and other characters – including hordes of tourists. The atmosphere is cool and misty. Facing the temple, take a short walk around to the left to see a small white-water stream. The air vibrates with the tumbling water.

## Gunung Batukau

At Pura Luhur Batukau you are fairly well up the side of **Gunung Batukau**, and you may wish to go for a climb. But to **trek** to the top of the 2276m peak, you'll need a guide which can be arranged at the temple ticket booth. Expect to

pay at least 800,000Rp for a muddy and arduous journey that will take at least seven hours in one direction. The rewards are amazing views alternating with thick, dripping jungle and the knowledge that you've taken the trail that is much less travelled compared with the peaks in the east.

## Rice Fields

At **Jatiluwih** you will be rewarded with vistas of centuries-old rice terraces that exhaust your ability to describe green. The locals will also be rewarded with your 'green', as there's a road toll (per person 3300Rp, plus 1500Rp per car). This is a good place for a **rice field walk**. After all, Jatiluwih means 'Truly Marvellous', and the view truly is – it takes in a huge chunk of South Bali.

Any road heading south will eventually take you back to the main Tabanan–Denpasar road.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Prana Dewi Mountain Resort** (☎ 732032; www.balipranaresort.com; bungalows from US\$40) Just past the village of Wangayagede and signposted to the left off the main Pura Luhur Batukau road, this resort is set among rice paddies and coursing waterways. The eight rustic, beautifully furnished bungalows have thick slab timber floors and hot water. The restaurant (dishes 15,000Rp to 35,000Rp), surrounded by low, terraced red-rice fields and a bamboo

forest, has a lush vista. Most of the vegetables used in the creative dishes are grown organically in the surrounding fields.

There are a couple of simple cafés around Jatiluwih.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

The only realistic way to explore the Gunung Batukau area is with a car. Either rent one for a day or get a driver; see p359 for details on costs.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'