Ricefield treks

Ubud's surroundings offer many rewarding walks and excursions up hill and over dale, with breathtaking vistas and many surprising glimpses of rural, unspoilt Bali. What follows is but a short list of suggested itineraries. Many more could easily be added.

Hike 1: The 'high road' to Payangan

This is an easy, half-day hike west of Ubud up along the road through Campuhan and over to Payangan. Get an early start at the Campuhan bridge and stop in to see the Pura Gunung Lebah temple that nests in the gorge. Rsi Markendya founded it at the confluence of these rivers in the 8th century.

Follow the main road up a steep hill past the Neka Museum—a long the way you have delightful views and a chance to stop in at the studios of famous artists like Antonio Blanco, Tembles and Negurah KK, to name but a few. Be sure to stop in at the museum, too, to see the works of a veritable Who's Who of Balinese painters, past and present.

After Neka, the road takes a sharp turn to the left and you'll find Ulun Ubud Cottages on your right.

Inside, there is a small gallery belonging to Ida Bagus Tilem, Bali's best-known woodcarver.

Continuing up the main road, you'll eventually reach the Payangan-Kedewatan T-junction. Turn right, and after a few hundred meters you come to Payangan Village on the left, with its extraordinary rice terraces stepping down to the Ayung River below.

Look for Pura Telaga Waja - a temple with multi-tiered merus. Afterwards, travel by bemo back to Ubud.

Hike 2: West to Sayan

This is an exhilarating half or full-day hike through the ricefields west of Ubud, but be prepared for a bit of climbing and bring along your swimsuit.

From the Campuhan bridge, early in the morning, follow the road up the hill and turn left up a long flight of steps 150 meters after the Hotel Tjampuhan. At the top, follow the path south and west to Penestanan Village, where the "Young Artists" -Tagen, Londo, Pugur and Tatra - have their studios. Though each has his own distinctive style, the influence of the surrounding landscapes can be seen in all their works.

Continue on, through ricefields offering spectacular views of distant volcanoes. The path then dips into a small valley and comes up through a dense bamboo forest, passing through several small villages as rural and unspoilt as any in Bali. You finally emerge on the main north-south Payangan road just past a wantilan community hall.

Cross the road next to the primary school and find a smaller, unpaved track between rows of family compounds. Here, you will be able to cut across to the Sayan Ridge where many foreigners have built villas commanding a dramatic view of the Ayung River.

From here, hail a bemo north in the direction of the Payangan and get off at the Amandari Hotel on your left. Take the long winding path down to the river to bathe in its refreshing waters. Afterwards, climb up and catch the next bemo back to Ubud.

Hike 3: To Petulu - place of herons

This is a fairly easy, half-day hike north and east of Ubud.

Start around lunchtime at the main Ubud crossroads in front of the Puri Saren palace, and go north along Jl. Suweta past MM, a snack-bar popular with expats for its arak. Next to it is a highly-recommended jamu bar serving herbal tonics. The road is paved all the way past the Pura Puseh (Ubud's temple of origin, with carvings by Lempad), but the potholes get worse with distance from Ubud.
Continuing straight ahead, the road climbs up to the village of Bentuyung, which can be reached in about an hour. On a clear day, you can enjoy spectacular views of Mt Agung. From here, either take a road back south to Tegallantang and Taman (banjars of Ubud), with their important temples nestling in the midst of family compounds at the crossroads, or turn to the right (east) through Jujungan to Petulu to witness white herons hovering over the village as they alight in lofty trees at sunset. Mention any of the above names, and villagers will point you the way. From Petulu, take a bemo or walk back to Ubud.

**Hike 4: 'Sculpted' terraces of Sebatu**

This is another spectacular half-day hike to the northeast of Ubud, which can be done all or in parts by car or bemo.

From the Kutuh T-junction at the eastern end of Ubud, head north past the new telephone office along a narrow, paved road that passes through the villages of Petulu and Tegallalang to Pujung, a distance of some 15 km.

The road rises gradually, reaching cooler air and passing through verdant ricefields and coconut groves. You will not fail to notice the many assembly-line woodcarvings being produced in small workshops along this road—all sorts of colorful fruit trees and animals.

At Pujung, turn right to reach a holy spring at Sebatu, 1 km to the east, where you can cool off in deliciously fresh pools.

From Pujung, a small but good road to the north continues on up to Kintamani past some of Bali's most dramatic rice terraces.

**Hike 5: To the Moon (of Pejeng)**

This half-day hike for the hardy takes you east from Ubud across spectacularly hilly country to Pejeng, site of many famous antiquities.

Begin at the Kutuh T-junction at Ubud's eastern end, and follow a path beside the pharmacy (apotik) due east for a distance of about 5 km, across two lush, steep gorges. The first is formed by the famed Petanu River, which runs south from here to the Goa Gajah hermitage.

In Pejeng visit the museum and a temple containing a prehistoric bronze drum known as the "Moon of Pejeng".
**WALKS AROUND UBUD**

There are lots of awe-inspiring walks to surrounding villages or through the rice paddies. It's good to start walks at daybreak, before it gets too hot. In the walks below, distances are approximate and are measured with the Ubud Palace as the start and end point.

**Monkey Forest & Penestanan**

This 5 km walk features a good range of rice paddies and rural Ubud scenery.

Take your time strolling through the Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary. Continue south on the lane to the village of Nyuhkuning, and turn west along the south end of the football field, then turn south down the narrow road. At the southern end of the village, turn right and follow the paved road across the bridge over Sungai Wos to Dangin Lebak. Take the track to the right just after the large Bale Banjar Dangin Lebak (Dangin Lebak Community Hall). From here follow paths due north through the rice paddies, and veer left, westwards through the rice paddies to a paved road to reach Katik Lantang, where you join a paved road that continues north to Penestanan, where many artists live. Follow the paved road through the village, veering east, and go down through a deep cutting and back to Ubud.

**Campuhan Ridge**

This 8.5 km walk passes over the lush river valley of Sungai Wos, offering views of Gunung Agung and glimpses of small village communities and rice fields.

The walk leaves Jl Raya Campuhan at the Warwick Ibah Luxury Villas. Enter the hotel driveway and take the path to the left, where a walkway crosses the river to Pura Gunung Lebah. From there follow the concrete path north, climbing up onto the ridge between the two rivers.

Continuing north along the Campuhan ridge, the road improves as it passes through rice paddies and the small village of Bangkiang Sidem. On the outskirts of the village, an unsigned road heads west, which winds down to Sungai Cerik (the west branch of Sungai Wos), then climbs steeply up to Payogan. From here you can walk south to the main road and on to the centre of Ubud.

**Penestanan & Sayan**

The wonders of Sungai Ayung are the focus of this 6.5 km walk, where you will jaunt below the luxury hotels built to take advantage of this lush, tropical river valley.

Just west of the Campuhan bridge, a steep uphill road, Jl Raya Penestanan, bends away to the left and winds across the forested gully of Sungai Blangsuh to the artists' village of Penestanan. West of Penestanan, take a small road north that curves around to Sayan and the Sayan Terrace Resort. The best place to get down to the riverside is just north of Sayan Terrace - follow the narrow tracks down.

Head north along the eastern side of Sungai Ayung, traversing steep slopes and rice paddies.

After about 1.5 km you'll reach the finishing point for many of the white-water rafting trips - a good but steep trail goes from there up to the main road at Kedewatan, where you can walk back to Ubud.