

How to Participate in Balinese Temple Festivals

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BALINESE BELIEF SYSTEM

The Hindu Dharma, the religious belief system of Bali, governs all activities of Balinese daily life. Working, sleeping, eating, praying, dancing, and all other activities are part of, and governed by, the Dharma.

This short introduction will hopefully serve as a guide to visitors in understanding the essence of Balinese life and customs and to help those who wish to witness and participate in some of our religious ceremonies, large or small.

Some visitors seem to forget that (as in their own societies), religious ceremonies are not commercial performances staged for the pleasure of the tourist, but are a very important part of the daily life of the community.

As the ceremonies in Bali display spectacular and colorful scenes, they have become a great attraction for visitors who, when they do not understand the procedures, may unwittingly become intrusive, leading to misunderstandings for the Balinese and visitors alike.

At times, outsiders are not permitted to attend ceremonies. Visitors are asked to respect these occasions where the presence of outsiders may disturb the ritual activities. A warm welcome will be extended to those who wish to participate.

This leaflet contains short outlines of the different kinds of ceremonies performed in Bali, and some information outlining the basic tenets of the Hindu Dharma. It contains suggestions as to where to go, how to dress and behave, and how to experience ceremonial activities in Bali

PROHIBITIONS AGAINST ENTERING A HOLY PLACE

- Anyone who has wounds or is bleeding. This includes menstruating women.
- Anyone who has recently lost a relative is traditionally forbidden from entering the Kahyangan until three days after the burial or cremation has been performed.
- Parents of children less than 4 days old.

DO REMEMBER that we are only too pleased to welcome you to our ceremonies and celebrations and there are always people willing to assist whenever you have doubts, problems or questions. The people in your hotel, homestay or lodges will be very pleased to advise you about the proper clothes to wear. They will often lend you theirs if necessary and if they feel that you are really interested they may well invite you to attend as their guest. If you wish to attend on your own, there are always community members on duty at the ceremonies who will be able to help with any questions that you may have.



FULL ADAT CLOTHES

It is imperative that correct traditional Balinese dress be worn when attending ceremonies. This is not a quirk of the Balinese to make you look foolish, but rather, the various elements of dress have specific meaning, and desire for you to conform to customs maintains harmony.

FOR MEN

- Wastra: Kain Batik / sarong, a single oblong piece of cloth.
Kampuh/Saput: Worn over the wastra. Single oblong piece of cloth, shorter than the kampuh to secure wastra and kampuh.
Baju: Shirt, long or short-sleeved, definitely not singlet
Bestar/Udeng: Headdress, a square piece of white material or batik folded and tied around your head in any style you wish. Ask someone to help you !

FOR WOMEN

- Wastra: Batik / sarong, a single oblong piece of cloth
Petet/Sabuk: A belt worn under the baju (shirt) to secure the Wastra
Baju/Kebaya: Long-sleeved ladies shirt, definitely not a singlet
Selendang: *Oblong* sash worn over the kebaya

Hair to be neat and clean. Part of the ritual of going to the temples is to be freshly bathed, so please take a bath before dressing.

Sample temple festival schedule (2009):

Temple Anniversary PURA DESA UBUD

A temple anniversary occurs every 210 days (6 Balinese months of 35 days each), alternating between a 'big' ceremony of 4 days and a small ceremony of 1 or 2 days duration, although the preparations for the ceremony usually start weeks earlier.

The *Pura Desa* is one of the "*Kahyangan Tiga*" in the Village of Ubud (Three Major Temple in every village in Bali)

1. Pura Puseh-Temple for the God Wisnu, the preserver.
2. Pura Desa-Temple for the God Brahma, the Creator.
3. Pura Dalem-Temple for the God Shiva, the Destroyer, and his consort, Durga.

The significance of this special ceremony is to harmonize the three worlds in accordance with Bali Hindu belief. These worlds are :

1. Bhur - Level of the lower beings
2. Bwah- Level of the humans
3. Swah - Level on the Gods

Although it is the village community of *Desa Adat Ubud* that cares for and worships at the *Pura Desa Ubud*, the ceremonies are open to all who wish to attend and who are prepared to follow the rules of dress and behaviour of the established tradition. (*Adat*)

It might be useful for visitors to know that what they generally call Ubud is in fact a collection of 13 villages (*Desa Adat*), *Ubud Kelod*, *Ubud Tengah*, *Ubud Kaja*, *Sambahan*, *Bentuyung*, *Junjungan*, *Tegalantang*, *Taman Kaja*, *Taman Kelod*, *Padang Tegal Kaja*, *Padang Tegal Tengah*, *Padangtegal Kelod*, *Padangtegal Mekar Sari*, each of which have three major temples.

1. *Saturday, 28 november 2009, Time : 2.00 PM.*

Procession from the temple grounds of Pura Desa Ubud, Pura ' Batur Sari, Pura Puseh, (see the Map) carrying the seats of the Gods, and the holy Barong accompanied by gamelan, to *PURNAMA BEACH* by trucks. To symbolically discard what is spiritually unclean and *Tirta* (Holy Water) will be collected by the *Pedanda Siwa* (Siwa High Priest) to be carried back to the temple.

2. *Sunday 29 November 2009 Time 5.30 PM*

Procession from the temple grounds Pura Desa Kutuh (see the map) carrying the seats of the Gods, and accompanied by gamelan to the Pura Desa Ubud to join the main ceremony which will be presided over by a *Pedanda Siwa*, culminating in the communal praying session attended by all the members of Desa Adat Ubud and Desa Adat Kutuh later.

After the communal prayer, sacred dances will be performed in the Community Hall (*Bale Wantilan*)

(visitors are welcome)

- Rejang Dewa
- Baris Gede
- Topeng Wali (Mask Dance)
- Wayang Lemah (Shadow Puppet)
- Tari Lepas (Binaremaja Group)

3. Monday, 30 November 2009

In the evening, blessing of the offerings by the Pemangku (Temple priest) and general praying. *Visitors who wish to join the praying are welcome.* After prayers, the following will be performed original temple dances at Bale Wantilan (Community Hall)

For details about evening Temple entertainment ask at the tourist office or in front of the Temple.

4. Tuesday, 1 December 2009

On the last evening of the ceremony the symbols of the Gods will be taken down and carried in procession around the temple by the members of the Pura Dalem Ubud followed by communal prayer once the symbols have been replaced in their shrines.

Later, the following will be performed :

original temple dances at Bale Wantilan (Community Hall)

For details about evening Temple entertainment ask at the tourist office or in front of the Temple.

5. Wednesday, 2 December 2009

After early morning communal prayer and blessing of the offerings the symbols of the Gods will be carried back in procession to their home temples. (Pura Desa, Pura Batur Sari, Pura Puseh. Pura Desa Kutuh)