

An alternative Bali bucket list

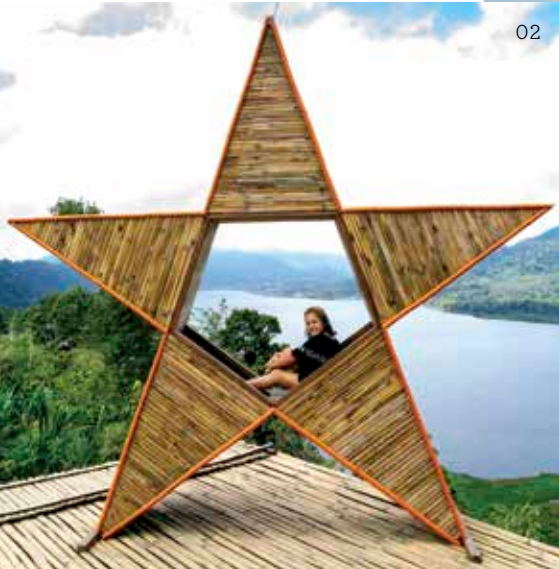
EVIE FARRELL and daughter get a little off the beaten track to explore even more of beautiful Bali.

Whenever we set off for Bali, my daughter Emmie and I know we are bound for a happy, spiritual and chilled-out holiday on the Island of the Gods. It's a thrill to push our trolley out of the airport, past the noisy throng of drivers hoping for a fare and into the Bali heat. We breathe the hot, sticky air, smell the distinctive scent of incense and smile back at the locals as we soak up all the good vibes the island sends our way.

In a way, it feels like coming home – and there's good reason for that. Like many of the 1.2 million Aussies who holidayed here in 2017, we feel connected to the island and return often to our beautiful neighbour. It is an affordable destination with friendly locals, lots of sunshine, beautiful beaches, breathtaking cliff-side bars and an abundance of family-focused resorts and private villas for every budget.

Wandering the streets devouring nasi goreng and beef rendang, spending afternoons at beach clubs, learning to surf, taking to water slides and dropping the kids into one

01 Evie and Emmie sail from Bali to Lombok 02 The lakeside mountains of Bedugul are dotted with fun photo ops 03 Ulun Danu Temple is on the shores of Lake Bratan 04 Kids love climbing the nests at Bali Swing 05 Exploring Bali's pristine beaches



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“Go where the water is blue, the sand white and the people scarce.”

of the awesome kids' clubs while mum and dad have a few Bintang's is standard operation for the Bali family holiday. As much as we like to do the same, relaxing and enjoying the good life in Bali, on our recent visit we decided to add further adventures to the itinerary and, heading a little further afield, fell even more in love with the island.

On the island

Just an hour from Sanur in Karangasem Regency lies Danau Yeh Malet, or Danau Malet Lake: nine hectares of lake and swamp that locals have lovingly curated into a natural art installation. Love hearts and pretty patterns have been shaped from the bright green leaves and purple flowers of the *teratai* (water lily), while bamboo jetties stretch out across the lake, surrounded by palm trees and the green mountainside. Locals will take you on bamboo raft rides around the lake for just a few dollars or charge a dollar for photos from the jetty. It's a lovely morning or afternoon outing, there are few tourists and it warmed my heart to support a local initiative. Blue Lagoon Beach is only 20 minutes away and is a little paradise of perfect blue water, easy kid-friendly snorkelling just off the beach and cheap eats, and if you forget your towel (as I did), someone will

be only too happy to sell you a sarong. It's a short walk down a cliff-side pathway to the beach and while you can find litter here brought in on the tide, the water is clear and it's a gorgeous swimming spot. If you have Ubud on your list, why not venture 90 minutes further to the lake and mountain area of Bedugul? The air is cool (if not chilly) and the views are spectacular. This is the home of the famous **Bali Swing** and an assortment of other sky-high selfie props that will have any Instagrammer or camera-toting parent itching to hashtag. You can pose your heart out with the kids in little nests and love hearts, or soar on swings over the valley and twin lakes below. Make sure to visit the **Ulun Danu Temple** on Lake Bratan, where the kids can run around in the fun gardens and play on the old-school park equipment. **Bali Botanic Garden** is Indonesia's largest and home to giant figs, wild orchids and medicinal plants as well as the **Bali Treetop Adventure Park**. After an induction session, Emmie and I clipped ourselves on and explored circuits of suspended bridges, flying foxes and rope ladders hanging just below the treetop canopy. Emmie loved the independence she had moving through the circuits alone and discovering that she



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could do more than she thought. It's a very empowering activity for kids (and parents, although I admit that I was slightly terrified). Back in south Bali, if you're into shopping for your home, step away from the Seminyak and Legian high streets and follow those in the know to Jalan Kunti Dua for larger shops selling all the homewares and dreamcatchers you will ever need. We stocked up on baskets, mirrors and a dreamcatcher for Emmie and wish we'd had more luggage space to fill. Make sure to mosey a few minutes up the

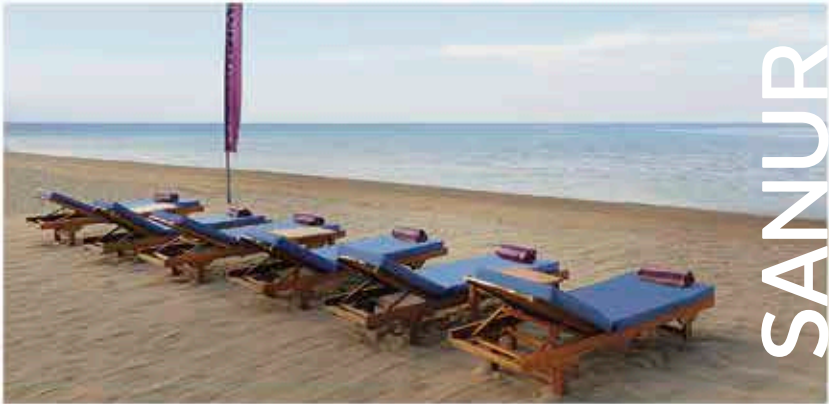
road and visit the gorgeous **Coco & Ginger** boutique on Jalan Batu Belig for ethical hand-made pieces for girls and mums.

On the water

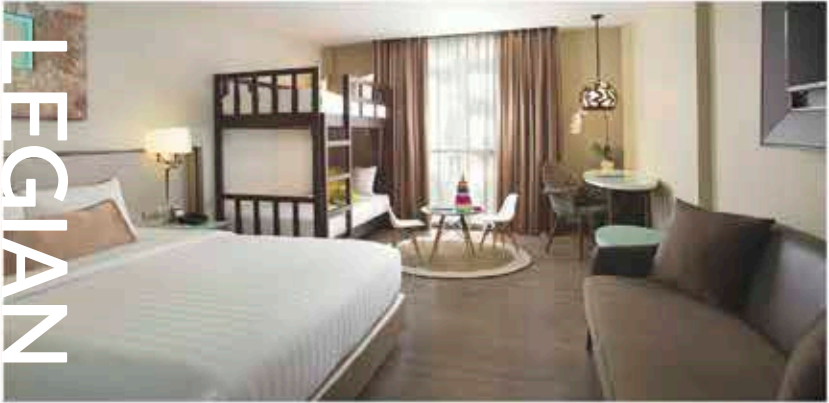
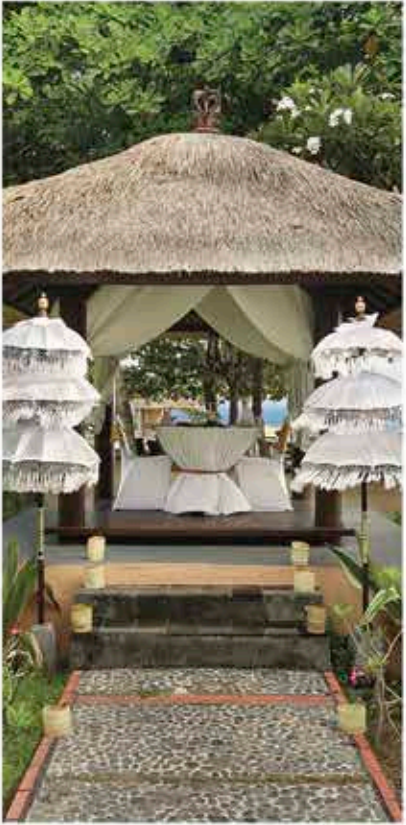
If you're feeling fancy why not set sail on your own private yacht for a three-day tour to the southern Gili Islands and Lombok? Everyone needs a little #yachtlife and it is a unique and luxurious way to explore Bali's surrounding islands. Emmie and I sailed with **Splendour Charters** and spent our days lazing, swimming, jumping off the deck into the ocean and eating delicious meals, plus there was cocktail hour for me! We slept on the deck listening to the waves as we were rocked gently to sleep, then woke up with the sun. Each morning we'd sit on the top deck as we sailed past deserted islands, white-sand beaches, waking villages and fishermen casting lines, neck-deep in the water.

The Nusa Island trio

If Bali is a little busy for you, then go where the water is blue, sand is white and people are scarce. The Nusa Islands of Lembongan, Ceningan and Penida are only a boat ride from Bali, but feel a world away. Nusa Lembongan is our favourite, with its beautiful



SANUR



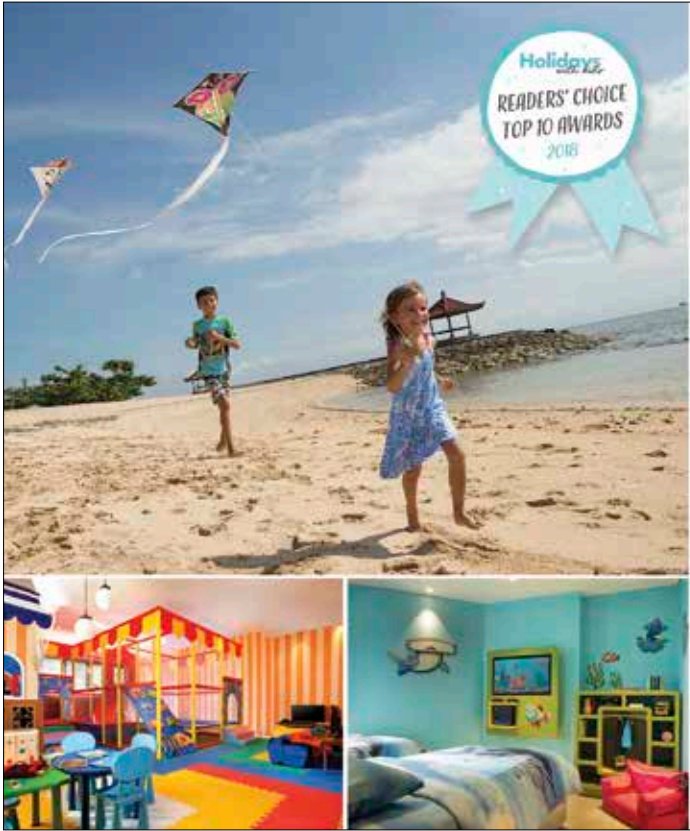
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beaches and crystal-clear water in thousands of shades of blue. The island is connected to Nusa Ceningan via the famous Yellow Bridge, and Nusa Penida is a short boat ride away. Transport is by scooter (BYO helmet) or shared jeep. Swim with mantas at Manta Bay and snorkel over some of the most amazing rock formations in water so clear you can see the tiny sea life in detail at Crystal Bay. Practise yoga, hire stand-up paddleboards, surf, relax and explore the magic coastline. We only sampled a tiny taste of what Bali has to offer families away from the main strip, and we will be back to discover and learn more about this beautiful, friendly island. ●

Bali Report Card

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TOP KID'S ACTIVITIES at AYANA Resort and Spa, BALI

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1 CULTURAL DAY: Canang Sari Making and Temple Visit

If you've been to Bali before, there's no doubt your family has seen those little palm leaf baskets filled with colorful flowers. Canang Sari, or traditional Balinese offerings, are a symbol of gratitude and are offered daily to thank Bali's Hindu Gods. Join us every Tuesday morning for 'Cultural Day', where your children can wear traditional ceremony clothes, visit our resort's temple and learn all about making canang sari.

2 BALINESE DRESS-UP & BALINESE DANCE LESSONS

This fun and informative activity begins with a fun demonstration on how to wear Balinese ceremonial clothes, followed by a unique traditional dance lesson, which also provides parents with priceless photo opportunities.

3 DECORATING CUPCAKES

Some people say that cupcakes make the world go round and we tend to agree! Children staying at the resort have the opportunity to choose from a colorful variety of cupcake decorations to create their very own delicious work of art.

4 CLAY PAINTING

Your little Picasso is invited to design his or her customized work of art in the form of a special clay plate or pot. Our friendly team is on hand to help children choose their favorite paint colors for the ultimate take-home souvenir.



5 WATER SLIDES

Our youngest guests are welcome to slide to their heart's content on two exciting water slides designed just for kids. After letting their energy flow freely, it's easy to replenish fuel levels with AYANA's delicious and nutritious kid's menus, conveniently available throughout the resort.

To find out more about holiday's at AYANA and RIMBA, visit AYANA.COM

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