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Pampering without the pinch

THE best airfares to Bali are best secured months ahead, but do the opposite for accommodation. Wait till the last minute — anywhere from a week to 48 hours before you go — and you could end up in the posh Nusa Dua enclave or being spoilt silly at a beach-side villa, at up to 60 per cent off full rates.



Alam Kukul Boutique Resort

Pantai Kuta, Legian Street
Price: For two nights' stay, US\$100 (S\$165) for a standard Alam Room (full rate US\$125), US\$157 for a quad (US\$200) and US\$200 for Alam Villa (US\$250).

Why: An unobstructed sunset from its bistro, Papa's Cafe, and quality service worthy of a five-star player. Also worthy are its Jamu spa, sunken jacuzzis in its private villas and well-considered guest amenities.

Top features: Couples get privacy, while other travellers can get quads to fit their budget. Especially handy is its location — between one edge of Kuta beach (read: no crowds) and the Legian shopping district.

Bali Masari Villas And Spa

Pantai Purnama Jalan, Sukawati
Price: For two nights' stay, US\$79 for a one-bedroom villa (full rate US\$250), to US\$135 for a two-bedroom Chempaka Villa (US\$300).

Why: The serenity of Masari's setting — overlooking the valley of the Petanu River — is worth the climb of its many stairs. The charm of its riverside setting is second only to the resort's service staff, who readily

room (usual US\$210) and US\$135 for a junior suite (usual US\$350). A bestseller for its value for money.

Why: Access to the luxury of Bali's top-end enclave alone makes this great value — nothing like a private beach compared to Kuta's free-for-all.

Top features: Despite the high traffic volume, staff will even customise birthday cakes on last-minute requests.

Melia Benoa All-Inclusive Resort Bali

Tanjong Benoa, Denpasar
Price: For one night, US\$72 in a deluxe room (full rate US\$215), or US\$102 for a night in an executive suite (US\$315). For four nights, US\$150 in a deluxe "blue" room (US\$300), or US\$250 in an executive "gold" room (US\$500).

Why: Best for families and small groups which don't want to do much organising. Watersports include snorkelling, scuba diving, parasailing and jet skiing.

Top features: Spacious rooms and, of course, watersports offerings.

Patra Resort Bali

Jl. Ir. H. Juanda, South Kuta Beach

Price: For one night, US\$90 for a deluxe room (full rate US\$100), US\$110 for a deluxe suite (US\$120).

Why: Situated next to the airport, but surprisingly noise free, the Patra makes up for its lack of a beach with a top-end spa and deluxe pools. Ideal for business travellers with families, with plenty to keep youngsters busy.

Top features: Excellent corporate and convention facilities.

The Watergarden Hotel

Jalan Raya Candidasa, Candidasa

Price: Choices abound. A night's stay is US\$70 in a standard room (usual US\$100) and US\$170 for a family-sized suite (usual US\$212). For three nights in a Deluxe Frangipani room, US\$85 (US\$143). A three-day package in a deluxe bungalow is US\$252 (US\$845).