

STROKES OF GENIUS

Wellness and balance have long been integral to Balinese culture. For a spa experience with plenty of local flair, pamper yourself with these treatments the next time you visit.

BY JUDY CHAPMAN



SEMINYAK SOOTHER Don't miss an opportunity to try the signature massage at Alila Seminyak, a 90-minute infusion of deep-tissue muscle movement, acupressure, and lomi-lomi techniques that feels more therapeutic than your typical head to toe number. Be warned, the treatment is so relaxing it might even put you to sleep. All practitioners are trained by a native therapist from Seminyak who practiced his craft on this very spot for more than 12 years, long before the conception of the resort (62-361/302-1888; alilahotels.com).

Above: Preparing a post-treatment flower bath inside a spa pavilion at the Four Seasons near Ubud.

GOING DEEP Bali is the ideal destination for an outdoor spa experience, which is why the Royal Kirana Spa is a must-visit for a session of Balinese deep tissue therapy, held in a private herbal steam room overlooking virgin jungle. It's an apt location for some gentle kneading, acupressure, and yoga stretches. All are delivered with local organic coconut oils infused with fresh lemongrass, sandalwood, and hibiscus. Afterwards, relax in rock pools and soak up the surrounding views (62-361/976-333; royalkirana.com).

NO STONE UNTURNED Those in need of stress relief will find solace in the Balinese massage with hot stones at the Bulgari, delivered by ESPA-trained practitioners. It begins with body exfoliation and a facial cleanse, before warm aromatherapy oils of sandalwood and frankincense are massaged into the skin with long, sweeping movements. Hot stones release deep-seated tension where needed, and the entire sequence ends with a relaxing scalp massage. Suspended on a limestone cliff, some of the sea-view spa pavilions come with a private plunge pool and steam rooms (62-361/847-1000; bulgarihotels.com).

BLIND AMBITION You need to book well in advance to secure a blind reflexology session at Ubud's Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve. These are conducted daily by intuitive Balinese healer Ketut Mursi, who has an extraordinary ability to diagnose one's health through the feet. Not your typical foot massage, she presses, shakes, and even listens to your body before releasing its unwanted energy. It's a profound and deeply personal experience, with no two treatments being the same (62-361/479-2777; mandapareserve.com).

RIVERSIDE RECHARGE With movements designed to counter the body caving inwards, the eponymous massage at the COMO Shambhala Estate corrects bad posture from our high-tech sedentary lifestyles. Practitioners return to your back, neck, and shoulder area several times during the sequence to ensure you depart knot-free. The treatment also uses COMO's signature blended massage oil to calm the mind and rejuvenate the body. For an even more memorable experience, book a session in one of their riverside open-air spa huts at The Source (62-361/978-888; comohotels.com).

THAT'S A WRAP There's nothing like being cleansed, cocooned, and wrapped in natural salts and clays on the heated hammam table at The Mulia in Nusa Dua, where the warm ingredients are guaranteed to soothe tense muscles and leave you energized. The Hammam treatment takes place in the resort's state-of-the-art Wellness Suite, a contemporary take on traditional thermals that features a meditative steam room with personalized scent and color therapy, an ice fountain, and hot and cold pools—perfect for a full-day marathon (62-361/301-7777; themulia.com).

HEART AND SOUL Taking its cues from tradition, Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan has a menu of seven spiritual rituals aimed at restoring your inner balance. Here, the Anahata Chakra Ceremony clears negativity and leads you to “universal compassion” with a rose-based wellness ritual centered on the heart. Holistic therapists will treat you to a damask rose body scrub, a chest massage with a fragrant balm of rare rose and rose quartz crystal, and a sensual outdoor flower bath (62-361/977-577; fourseasons.com).



Above: Matters of the heart are the focus of the Four Seasons' Anahata Chakra Ceremony.

FLOWER POWER When it's a quintessential Bali experience you seek, try the Soothing Maya massage at Maya Ubud Resort, which combines long strokes with a lathering of indigenous herbal oils. The 75-minute treatment is paired with a sublime flower bath—using leaves and blossoms handpicked that morning—in semi-outdoor pavilions overlooking a jungly river (62-361/977-888; spaatmaya.com).

COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS

the kayon
truly ubud resort

WHERE NATURE MEETS ART
WITH ROMANTIC AMBIENCE

The Kayon Resort is perched on a hillside amid lush tropical forest in Ubud, embraced by the holy waters of the Petanu River. “Kayon” signifies a tree of life, and the motif is expressed throughout every detail across the property.

Just ten minutes' drive from the center of Ubud, this enchanting five-star boutique resort is designed in complete harmony with its natural surroundings. For added romance, the intricate reliefs of the Ramayana are sure to inspire.

At The Kayon Resort, love stories are created
and happiness is rediscovered against a backdrop of genuine Balinese hospitality.

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