

Savoring authentic Balinese food at Bumbu Bali

Bali can spoil the taste buds of foreign tourists visiting the island.

Italian, Chinese, German, Spanish and Japanese cuisines are among those available in restaurants and cafes across main tourist spots, not to mention the scores of restaurants in upmarket hotels offering international food prepared by reputable chefs.

Sadly, finding authentic Balinese food served in an elegant atmosphere is not easy. Most of the time, when wanting to taste Balinese food, one ends up in sidewalk cafes in traditional *pasar senggol* (night markets), most of them specializing in *babi guling* (suckling pig).

Bali boasts plenty of original cuisine, and Bumbu Bali restaurant is one of the few places to enjoy a wide selection of true Balinese dishes in an excellent atmosphere.

Location: Situated in Tanjung Benoa, the restaurant is far from the hustle and bustle of the tourist areas. It can be found on Jl. Pratama, Matahari Terbit Bungalow, Tanjung Benoa, Nusa Dua. Phone: 0361-774 502

Hours: 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Look: The restaurant has a real Balinese atmosphere. It is furnished just like a traditional Balinese house, down

to the two umbrellas standing on either side of the entrance.

The restaurant has four open pavilions, with pillars half covered in black and white-checked *poleng* cloth. It also has an outdoor section where diners can

and *jukut ares* (duck soup with banana stems).

Those who like spicy food might feel challenged by the restaurant's varied selection. There is *ayam betutu* (roast chicken in banana leaf), *satay lilit* (minced seafood satay on lemongrass), *kamb-*

ing mekuah (lamb stew in coconut milk), *hasil laut bumbu kuning* (assorted seafood in yellow coconut sauce) and much more.

The true Balinese dessert is fruit, such as seasonal Bali fruits. But at Bumbu Bali, the desserts are sweet dishes,

known among Balinese as *jaja*, like *bubuh injin* (black rice pudding), *jaja batun bedil* (sticky rice cake in palm sugar sauce) and *lak lak* (rice flour cakes with grated coconut and palm sugar syrup).

To drink, there is every-

thing from coffee to liqueur.

Taste factor: The dishes are stylishly presented in beautiful ceramic bowls or plates, and the chef does not try to change the authentic Balinese taste to satisfy Western taste buds. The taste remains genuine, similar to what you get with food cooked in a traditional Balinese kitchen. And all of food is spicy, without being too glaringly hot.

The tuna salad is made with fresh tuna, and if you want to taste banana stem, try *jukut ares*.

The aromatic *satay lilit* molded on lemongrass is delicate, and then there is the delightful *kambang mekuah*.

Though the desserts are similar to those found in a traditional market, beautiful presentation tempts the appetite. But those who like something sweet will not find the desserts as sweet as they should be.

Price points: The food is pricey but worth it for the taste, presentation and service. The appetizers cost from Rp 25,000 to Rp 29,000, while the most expensive soup is Rp 28,000. The main dishes are around Rp 40,000, with the most expensive one at Rp 90,000.

And there are the Balinese Risjttafel and Balinese Seafood Dinners, with set menus of appetizers, soup, various main dishes, several

desserts and coffee or tea. The Balinese Risjttafel and Balinese Seafood Dinner costs Rp 125,000. The price of the drinks depends on your selection.

Major credit cards are accepted and prices are subject to 10 percent service charge and tax.

Verdict: It's safe to say that Bumbu Bali is the right spot to taste authentic Balinese food. Dinner is the best time to enjoy the restaurant, as you can dine in an open atmosphere and, on certain days, be entertained by a cultural performance. The location, however, is a bit secluded for those coming from Denpasar.

Wahyuni Kamah

Contributor
Denpasar, Bali

watch chefs prepare their food in a traditional Balinese-style kitchen.

What's it got: All types of Balinese food, from appetizers, soups and main dishes to dessert.

The restaurant might be the best place to find genuine Balinese food, since the owner and chef, Heinz von Holzen, who is the author of the *Food of Bali*, seems to have an inventory of Balinese dishes so that no authentic cuisine of the island is overlooked on the menu.

On the appetizer list you have *sambal be tongkol* (tuna salad), *ayam pelalah* (shredded chicken with chilies and lime), *satay bebek* (minced duck satay with coconut and garlic). For the soups, you'll find *soto ayam* (chicken soup), *gedang mekuah* (green papaya soup with seafood)



J.P./Wahyuni Kamah

Balinese cuisine on offer at Bumbu Bali restaurant in Tanjung Benoa. The restaurant is one of the few locations one can find authentic Balinese food served in an elegant atmosphere.

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