



## COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE

BALI, INDONESIA

WEIGHT  
LOSS

CLEAN-LIVING PIONEER WITH A REFINED, FOCUSED PERSPECTIVE

Bali's spiritual capital of Ubud is overrun by Eat, Pray, Lovers and yoga bunnies on teacher-training courses. But away from the hubbub, high in the hills above the Ayung River, is the island's bar-raising wellness retreat. A winding track leads from Begawan village up to the nine-hectare estate, overrun by greenery and with the cacophony of rushing water, hiccupping geckos and chattering monkeys. Get your bearings with a vigorous morning walk alongside Mudra, the wise, all-rounder activity guide who helped the original owners design the lay of land. Steep stone stairways sweep past temples, the jungle gym and meditation hut, and down to muslin-draped day beds next to natural spring pools. Of course, once down, you have to climb up again, and after a round trip of 45 minutes in the rising tropical heat, you've earned your breakfast at Kudus House, a 100-year-old, Javanese-carved treetop cabin with a bird's-eye view of thrill-seeking rafters whizzing down the Ayung at various intervals. A surprisingly light turmeric, mung bean, tofu and moringa leaf dal might be followed by a refreshing mango, chia and coconut bircher muesli, and sprouted-grain toast with creamy burrata and guava jam. Food neuroses, allergies and all permutations from vegan to gluten-free are taken care of. And if a specialist diet is required, a separate menu will be handed out at each meal so you don't get sidetracked. This is the real secret of COMO Shambhala: the bespoke approach is seamlessly managed behind the scenes by a crack team of experts, headed up by British spa manager

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and qualified nurse Sally Halstead. As of April this year, programmes will be streamlined to four choices: Ayurveda, Be Active, Bespoke or Cleanse, and you'll be assigned one of three expert consultants – Oriental-medicine specialist Nancy Kim, Ayurvedic guru Dr Prasanth and naturopath Dr Vinod Nair – who collaborate to ensure a wraparound experience. An Ayurvedic oil massage may be recommended to deal with stress-related weight gain; Japanese acupuncture to get subtle energies working as part of a fitness regime. Then there's yoga and qigong, balanced with Asian-based therapies and bodywork. It's busy but you won't be overwhelmed by your timetable as a personal assistant keeps track of all your appointments. The 30 bedrooms are set in traditional Indonesian residences, lovingly restored and maintained by owner Christina Ong, and decorated to otherworldly levels of cocooning. Best are the two Retreat Pool Villas, just steps from the spa, yoga shala and restaurants, each with its own infinity pool, deck with swinging day bed and, for meditators, fab Sixties-style low-lying seats perfect for sitting in the lotus position. Having opened in 2005, just ahead of the green-juice curve, COMO Shambhala has quietly innovated without resorting to fads. Its magical setting and great food combined with intelligent care and supreme service makes it the place to go for individualised holistic health. **INSIDER TIP** Don't miss one-to-one yoga classes with Budi. He'll bring the fun back into your practice (or get any beginners started), and his gentle yet assured adjustments will ease stress-strung hamstrings. **BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk/](http://healingholidays.co.uk/) / [condenast](http://condenast)) offers seven nights from £2,060 per person, including flights, transfers, breakfast, daily wellness activities and use of spa facilities.

