


# Digital Nomads in Bali: The Interplay of Tourism Industry and Geographic Flexibility in the Digital Era

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**Keywords:** Digital Nomads, Bali, Remote Work, Tourism.

**Abstract:** Tourism in Indonesia has flourished in recent decades, propelled by its natural beauty and diverse cultural offerings. Bali, a long-standing tourist hotspot, has gained fame for its cultural allure and picturesque beaches, drawing surf enthusiasts and cultural aficionados alike. The advent of digital nomadism has further boosted Bali's appeal, attracting attention from tourism authorities worldwide. This study explores Bali's appeal as an ideal destination for digital nomads and its impacts. By analyzing Bali's geography, lifestyle, religious beliefs, visa policies, and cost of living, it illustrates how Bali offers an environment of freedom, inclusivity, and a return to nature, attracting digital nomads worldwide. The research shows that Bali not only provides an ideal work and living environment for digital nomads but also contributes to local economic development through tourism and cross-cultural exchanges. As the digital nomad community grows, Bali's position in the digital age is set to elevate further, becoming a preferred destination for global digital professionals.

## 1 INTRODUCTION


Digital nomads are individuals who use telecommunications technologies to earn a living and conduct their lives in a nomadic manner (Mancinelli, 2020; Reichenberger, 2018). They often work remotely, leveraging the internet to work from anywhere in the world, allowing them to travel and explore while maintaining their careers. According to Mouratidis (2018), the term "digital nomad" originates from "digital", which pertains to computer technology, and "nomad", signifying individuals who move from place to place freely. Moreover, he stressed that digital nomads typically have two or three primary motivations, such as blending holiday experiences with work assignments or working while traveling for leisure. According to Thalassa (2017), in an online publication, she elaborates on various offerings provided by nomadic destinations that can allure nomadic tourists, including: Flexibly; Nomads inspire, bring fresh ideas; Share global coworking insights; Satisfied nomads spread positive word; Set minimum stay for engagement. And about the destination, Bali, particularly certain areas, have garnered significant acclaim as destinations

welcoming to digital nomads. Bali is a paradise for digital nomads and stands out as a unique destination for digital nomads compared to other cities due to its blend of affordable living, stunning natural beauty, and rich cultural heritage. Unlike many urban hubs, Bali offers a tranquil yet vibrant environment with numerous coworking spaces, a strong expat community, and a conducive atmosphere for creativity and productivity. Additionally, the island's warm climate and welcoming local culture make it an ideal spot for digital nomads seeking both professional growth and a fulfilling lifestyle. This research will demonstrate why Bali can retain digital nomads and the creation of digital nomads in Bali by examining Bali's geography, people's lifestyle, religion, tourism, age of nomads, regulations and culture, cost of living and future of digital nomads.

## 2 GEOGRAPHIC POSITION

Bali is a widely known tropical holiday destination with vast areas of beach, jungle, and volcanic mountain ranges. Bali is part of Indonesia and is just one of the 13,677 islands that comprise the nation.

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Bali lies between neighboring islands Java and Lombok, and shares the same time zone as Singapore, Malaysia, and China. Despite not being a country itself Bali does have a capital city, Denpasar, and is home to around 4.8 million people. Bali has a capital located in the southern part of the island, although it is not an actual country. Denpasar, which is inhabited by about 4.3 million people (Mona Siahaan, 2024) and hosts Bali only international airport.

The vast majority of Bali's terrain is mountainous, with numerous volcano peaks, significantly impacting the island's climate and weather. The highest peak is Mount Agung, which towers 3,142m (10,308 feet) above sea level and is known locally as the "navel of the world" (Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024). Another famous volcano is Mount. Batur, about 30,000 years ago this volcano experienced a massive catastrophic eruption, one of the largest known volcanic events on Earth. The beautiful coral reefs encircle the island are perfect for scuba diving and snorkeling. It's interesting to note that beaches in the north and west typically have black sand, while those in the south typically have white. The beautiful coral reefs that encircle the island are perfect for scuba diving and snorkeling. It's interesting to note that beaches in the north and west typically have black sand, while those in the south typically have white. The black sand beaches are currently being developed for tourism, but apart from the seaside temples of Tanah Lot, they are not yet a significantly popular destination.

Bali's most visited location is Canggu which we called the central place for digital nomads. There are several complexes which called Co-Working Space containing accommodation, offices, meeting rooms, recreational facilities, public areas and fitness areas. And the price is not so high it is a good place for digital nomads to live. It's a perfect place for all kinds of tourists, from backpackers to partygoers to digital nomads and those who search for spiritual experiences. With just a 30-minute ride from Canggu, there is Seminyak, the most well-known for boutiques, beach clubs, luxury villas and resorts. Near the center of the island, there is Ubud, Bali's cultural center which hosts people from all over the world who come to Bali to attend seminars and activities that focus on taking care of their mind, body, and soul and finding a relaxing and spiritual mood while enjoying the beautiful natural landscapes of the city.

### 3 OTHER INFORMATION IN BALI

During the 16th Century, when Islam triumphed over

Hinduism in Java, Bali became a refuge for many Hindus on the Island. Today, it is the only remaining stronghold of Hinduism in the archipelago. The locals of Bali follow a form of Hinduism known as Agama Hindu Dharma. Balinese culture, traditions and religion impact almost every aspect of life on the island and draw people to Bali to see and experience it. An important belief of Balinese Hinduism is that elements of mother nature are influenced by spirit. For people practicing Hinduism, there is a strong belief in reincarnation and caste mechanism. Although Caste is observed, it is less strict than in India. A reason could be because the great majority of the population belongs to the Sudra, the lowest caste (Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2024).

Currently, there are over 20,000 Hindu temples in Bali, known by the locals as "pura" (Surya Nin, 2024). Some of these temples are a popular spot for tourists, photographers, or people who wish to learn more or embrace Hinduism during their stay in Bali. Further research shows that the digital nomad group has the highest proportion of digital marketing (11%), bloggers (10%), and photographers (11%) followed by social media influencers (8%) and social volunteers (6%).

## 4 ACCESSIBILITY

### 4.1 Visa

There are many destinations in the world available for people who work remotely, but for digital nomads seeking an idyllic destination with a straightforward immigration process, Bali stands out as an excellent choice. The Indonesian government offers several visa options tailored to remote workers, making the transition smooth and hassle-free. One of the most popular options is the Social and Cultural Visa (B-211) (Bali.com 2024). Ideal for digital nomads and long-term visitors, this visa permits an initial 60-day stay and can be extended four times, each for 30 days. This visa is often used by those engaging in cultural activities, social visits, or for those that despite having a job in their country don't engage in commercial activities during their stay in Indonesia. Another option for those wishing to move there longer is the KITAS (Temporary Stay Permit). The KITAS is a more permanent solution. It is available for various purposes, including work, retirement, and investment. The process for obtaining a KITAS is more complex and requires sponsorship by an Indonesian company or a retirement organization for retirees. Additionally, although still in development,

Indonesia has announced plans to introduce a Digital Nomad Visa, which aims to attract remote workers by allowing them to stay for extended periods without the need for regular renewals. This visa will cater specifically to digital nomads, providing a more stable and long-term option for those who wish to work remotely from Bali. For those wishing to stay in Bali only during certain periods of the year and have no plans in staying there for an extended period they could opt for a Tourist Visa. This visa is available for citizens of many countries and allows a stay of up to 30 days, with the possibility of a one-time extension for an additional 30 days. This welcoming approach to visa policies makes it an irresistible destination for digital nomads looking to balance work and leisure seamlessly.

The Athens Journal of Tourism survey shows that the most common nationality for digital nomads in Bali is Australia, with a notable difference in numbers compared to other nationalities living there. This is probably due to the proximity of Australia to Indonesia and due to the huge difference in Salaries which make it easier for Australians to move to Bali. After Australia, European countries take second place in the chart, with many Digital Nomads from all over the continent moving there. Another reason is because these groups of people can stay in Bali for 30 days, with no visa. It is most easy for them. The most common European nationalities are Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Among Asian countries, Malaysia and Singapore are the most moving there for the same reason as Australia, Proximity. Other Asian nationalities there, which make up a small percentage of the digital nomads are Chinese and South Koreans. The primary nationalities of digital nomads in Bali are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Digital nomad's nationality in Bali (Prabawa & Pertiwi, 2020).

Nationality	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Australia	31	21
New Zealand	7	5
Germany	17	11
France	15	10
United Kingdom	10	7
Netherland	5	3
Russia	3	2
Other Europe	11	7
United States	5	3
Other America	3	2
Singapore	8	5
Malaysia	11	7

China	5	3
South Korea	4	3
Japan	3	2
India	5	3
Other Asia	7	5
Total	150	100

## 4.2 Cost of Living

For digital nomads in Bali, the cost of living can be relatively affordable compared to many Western countries. Table 2 details that 35% of the population has a monthly per capita income of 1,000-2,999 (USD), which is a high proportion of the population living in Bali, proving once again that the cost of living in Bali is not high.

Table 2: Digital nomads' monthly income in Bali (Prabawa & Pertiwi, 2020).

Monthly Income (USD)	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Below 999	9	6
1000-2999	53	35
3000-4999	41	27
5000-6999	34	23
7000 and above	13	9
Total	150	100

The island offers a thriving community of remote workers and entrepreneurs, with co-working spaces, cafes with reliable internet, and accommodation options catering to their needs. For accommodation, rent for a one-bedroom apartment in popular areas like Seminyak or Canggu can range from \$300 to \$800 monthly. Shared housing options, hostel or co-living spaces may offer more affordable alternatives. For transportation, many digital nomads in Bali choose to rent motorbike for convenient and inexpensive transportation around the island. Motorbike rentals typically cost \$50 to \$70 per month. Alternatively, ride-hailing apps like Grab for short trips can be affordable, with fares from around \$1 to \$3. For Co-working spaces, Bali has a growing number of co-working spaces catering to digital nomads, offering high-speed internet, comfortable workspaces, networking events, and amenities like coffee and snacks. Monthly memberships can range from \$50 to \$200. Finally, for activities, Bali offers a wide range of leisure activities, from surfing, soul instrument class and forest yoga to exploring temples and waterfalls also they have full of night life. Costs vary depending on the activity, but many outdoor activities like beach visits and hiking are free or inexpensive. Overall, Bali's appeal to digital nomads lies in its combination of affordability, natural beauty,

vibrant culture, and opportunities for networking and collaboration within the digital nomad community.

### 4.3 Lifestyle

The lifestyle can be summed up in three words: freedom, inclusiveness, and a return to nature.

**Freedom:** One of the first things is that life here is free, grounded, but not boring. Big cities are lively and bustling, but they are irrelevant to most people. Bali may look like the countryside, but in addition to the beautiful scenery, there are nowadays a lot of fun and quality shops, countless coffee, brunch, bistro, bars and nightclubs, gyms, all kinds of Korean, Japanese, and Chinese food, all kinds of clothing shops, and buyers' shops. Bali has another name which is called the island of gods. Every day it becomes increasingly apparent that it really is a place favored by the heavens, a land of love. Freedom in Bali is freedom of body and mind. Boldly wearing favorite clothes without judgment is common. There is no need to be skinny or slim; the body is free to do as it wishes. Those who like wheat-colored skin can go for tanning without anyone saying that "fair skin covers three flaws". The freedom of Bali is simple. Riding a motorbike alone, facing the sun, feeling the breeze, or even the rain, is incredibly freeing. Walking barefoot on the beach, rushing to the sea, singing at the top of one's lungs during yoga chanting, sweating, and dancing favorite dances all embody freedom. The most important is everyone can be themselves in Bali.

**Inclusive:** All groups of people are accepted here with different workers of different religions. The culture here is multicultural. Bali's inclusivity stems from its rich cultural heritage that values harmony and acceptance. The Balinese Hindu philosophy, along with the island's history of diversity and openness to different cultures, plays a significant role in fostering an inclusive environment.

**Back to nature:** In Bali nomads can take a lot of nature classes such as forest yoga, world-class sound healing, manifestation cacao ceremony, soulify, healing with kundalini yoga and so on. Nomads can enjoy your training in the nature. There has a place in Ubud which is called Pyramid of Chi and committed to nurturing spiritual growth and inner exploration, they are a dedicated and caring community providing healing and spiritual awakening via all aspects of sound and frequency (Pyramid of Chi, 2024). There is even a class in Uluwatu where everyone is required to hand in their mobile phones in the hope that people will no longer be affected by the news from the outside world, and that everyone can meditate, dance

or shout in the forest to release their hearts and find themselves better.

In Bali nomads can have the ultimate relaxation and meditation. Unlike the hustle and bustle of the city, nomads can work and enjoy life here, releasing all the stress and planning themselves better, which is why Bali is attracting a lot of digital nomads.

Based on Table 3, it can be concluded that most digital nomads in Bali are aged 20-29 years old (46%), followed by those aged 30-39 years old (33%). This proves to some extent that these people are young people who are in a state of mental freedom and economic coexistence, however, Bali is the first choice for them to aspire to a life of freedom, and with the low-price level, it is a paradise for young people who are just starting out in the society.

Table 3: Digital nomad's age distribution in Bali (Prabawa & Pertiwi, 2020).

Age	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Under 20	9	6
20-29	69	46
30-39	50	33
40-49	15	10
50-59	7	5
Total	150	100

## 5 WHAT ABOUT FUTURE?

In this digital age, continuous learning and rebuilding social skills are crucial for professional development as well as innovation and economic growth. Digital nomads may stimulate economic activities due to increased knowledge spillovers. The influx of digital nomads has led to the development of tourism, boosting the local economy, and to a certain extent the retention of talent in Bali along with the influx of global talent. Most digital nomads are from developed countries, which has led to an exchange with locals and the importance of inclusive behaviors and thinking through the implementation of equality and diversity. at the same time contributing to the development of Bali.

### 5.1 Why Digital Nomads Become More and More in Bali?

Is it basically certain that soon digital nomads will keep increasing in number due to many reasons. Therefore, Indonesia is already keeping an eye on this phenomenon, and are already planning to introduce new regulations and new visas to accommodate the needs of the huge influx of digital nomads coming



into the country. The idea of implementing remote working into their companies have been around for ages but only now due to many factors, such as the current technology available now and due to COVID-19. First, let's analyze why remote working could positively impact the economy. During a survey conducted in 2020 by Dahik et al. (2020), 12000 individuals from different countries such as the US, Germany and India were observed about their productivity while remote working. The results were that A surprisingly large number of employees said they have been able to maintain or even improve their productivity during the pandemic. Remote working doesn't only have benefits for the workers but also for the company. Office costs are reduced, no commuting which has huge environmental benefits, a higher morale and lastly the possibility of employing highly skilled individuals from all over the country. Although remote working is not as popular as it should be these days, this is due to the stubbornness and fear of companies to change and renovate their system completely. In fact, during a survey, when asked what their biggest concern is in relation to the remote working model, 30% of business leaders replied that they were 'maintaining corporate culture'.

## 5.2 How Bali Become More Popular in Digital Nomads' Group?

As the digital nomad community in Bali continues to expand, there will be a parallel emphasis on sustainability initiatives, ensuring that growth is balanced with environmental responsibility. This burgeoning community will foster a vibrant ecosystem of networking opportunities, skill-sharing events, and entrepreneurial collaborations. With the increasing demand for remote work, Bali will likely invest in improving its infrastructure to accommodate the needs of digital nomads, including enhancing internet connectivity and developing amenities tailored to their lifestyle, such as coworking spaces and affordable accommodation options.

Moreover, sustainability will become a key focus for the digital nomad community in Bali. Expats will be encouraged to adopt eco-friendly practices and support local conservation efforts. Additionally, there may be an emphasis on reducing carbon footprints using renewable energy sources and sustainable transportation options. By integrating sustainability into the fabric of the digital nomad lifestyle in Bali, the community can contribute positively to the island's environment and culture. This holistic approach will not only preserve Bali's natural beauty

and cultural heritage but also enhance the overall experience for digital nomads, making it a more attractive destination for remote work and long-term living.

## 6 THE INTERPLAY OF TOURISM INDUSTRY AND GEOGRAPHIC FLEXIBILITY

In the digital era, the interplay between the tourism industry and geographic flexibility is exemplified by the phenomenon of digital nomads in Bali. With the rise of remote work and the normalization of flexible lifestyles, Bali has become a hotspot for individuals who work remotely while enjoying the island's natural beauty and vibrant culture. Online booking platforms and digital communication tools have facilitated this trend, allowing digital nomads to research, plan, and book their stays in Bali from anywhere in the world. Platforms like Airbnb, Couchsurfing, and Booking allow individuals to connect with hosts and fellow travelers, fostering authentic cultural exchanges and promoting geographic flexibility by offering alternative lodging and transportation options. Technology-driven advancements in data analytics and artificial intelligence enable travel companies to offer personalized recommendations and experiences tailored to individual preferences. This personalization extends to destination suggestions, accommodations, activities, and dining options, empowering travelers to curate their ideal itineraries based on their unique interests and geographic flexibility. The interplay between tourism and geographic flexibility in the digital era is characterized by increased choice, accessibility, and personalization. Digital nomads are enjoying their lives while working and travelling as a source of work, while Bali gets a win-win for both the talent and the tourism market.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the interplay between Bali's tourist industry and geographic flexibility has significantly contributed to its appeal as a hub for digital nomads. Bali has become a premier destination for digital nomads, thanks to its accommodating visa solutions, vibrant culture, rich social life, and unique religious traditions. The island's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for remote

workers has led to a significant annual increase in their numbers. The blend of Bali's serene landscapes, diverse community, and dynamic lifestyle offers a compelling backdrop for digital nomads seeking a balance between productivity and personal enrichment. As Bali continues to adapt and innovate in response to the needs of this growing demographic, it solidifies its reputation as a global hub for digital professionals. As Bali continues to evolve, it strengthens its position as a leading destination for digital professionals seeking an enriching and balanced lifestyle.

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