



# SURFER'S SALUTATION

For **Laura Brown**, it's yoga on the shores of the surfers' Playgrounds in Mentawai Islands, Indonesia

As I love exploring new asanas, I am also one to wander around and opt for new things I haven't yet tried. Yoga brings Zen and calm in my hectic everyday life. And so, my travel destination needs to have just that: a bit of action – as I have to be able to unwind from my daily tasks slowly, tons of serenity, and if I could ask for one more holiday request – a beach would be the ultimate.

What makes it even better is when the beach is part of a luxury resort on a remote island, just off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. This is where Kandui Villas is located, in one of the world's prime surfing

meccas, also known as the 'Playgrounds' area of the Mentawai Islands. It attracts a loyal fan base of yogis too, who come here to find the ultimate relaxation.

After a 30-minute boat ride from Pandang, Kandui pops up in the middle of other littler islets. Waving palm trees along with the Umas, beautifully hand-crafted houses with thatched roofs and walls, spread a warm welcome along the coast. The island is isolated in the middle of the deep blue ocean, with a small inner lake for snorkelling and a stretch of beach as far as the eye can see. It is a surfer's haven, but I cannot stop to think everybody would do well with the secluded island feeling I inherit as soon as I arrive.



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IMAGES: SUPPLIED



### **THE CALM OF THE DAY**

This island feel is what makes me think back to my introduction to yoga. A family friend embarked on a trip to India, only to return eight years later, a good few kilos lighter and as flexible and content as you could possibly imagine. His trousers, which he started his trip off with and would just fit, were held up by a piece of string and his shirt was a few sizes too big. However, he looked radiant and was full of energy.

It was not long after this, I tried my first class and I remember leaving the yoga room in a different state of mind.

I have to admit I am not a yoga die-hard or a fanatic in any sort of way but I do love the complete awareness of the inner core and soul. Therefore, I could not

wait to find my inner deity on this island I had chosen.

Yoga classes at Kandui Villas are on offer every morning and afternoon, and private classes can also be booked. However, the yoga room is always unlocked for those who seek their practice during the day. I tend to find myself in there early dawn to wake up with the surfers who are in search of the best possible wave that day.

The yoga Uma is completely made of local hardwood from nearby islands and makes the room ooze comfort and calm, with which I need to start the day. With a view over the infinity pool, the beach with lush palm trees and the breakers in the distance, the yoga room creates a harmony which I am sure was envisioned but still comes as a surprise every time I set foot in the space. »





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Jessica, my teacher during my stay, is just as relaxed as the island feels and has practiced yoga for over a decade. She provides me with tips and poses I have not yet been able to possess. And with the sun rising from behind the smaller waves near the island, I can only imagine, this is what was intended when the Surya Namaskar (the Sun Salutation) was invented.

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#### **TIME TO RELAX**

Breakfast is served, like every meal, in the restaurant or on the wooden deck surrounding the pool. Groups of surfers crash down to enjoy their meals, which are prepared three times a day by the kitchen staff. Over the ten days that I am on the island I have eaten vegetable spring rolls, vegan tofu lasagna, chicken satay, freshly caught seafood and even the most delicious barbecued crab accompanied by a selection of salads.

Due to the island's location, a farm-to-table idea has been altered to an organic greenhouse-to-table concept with over three types of kale, plenty of lettuce, tomatoes and lots more fresh vegetables and fruits on offer.

Besides making great protein-laden meals for the avid surfers, the restaurant caters to vegetarians, vegans and raw foodies.

During the day, I focus on exploring the island. The white sandy beach draws the attention for a nice afternoon walk and the inner mangrove lagoon makes me curious about the underwater world in the midst of this island.

The Kandui Spa offers Indonesian massages with handmade raw coconut oil from the local palm trees and the eco resort has partnered with Waves4Water, implementing multiple clean water projects in the surrounding northern Mentawai Islands.

The surf lessons, I am somewhat relieved, start on the smaller waves near the island such as the Baby Kandui. Zach Keenan, the GM, is also a pro-surfer and has taken it upon himself





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to show me these baby waves – the beginner ones, which are challenging enough.

For the adventurers, the Mentawai Islands archipelago is known as the Playgrounds and is considered the ultimate destination for surfing. Over 20 high class waves are nearby – Kandui Villas being right in the middle – that are boundless for those seeking an energetic total body workout.

#### **CULTURAL VISIT**

Evenings are relaxing and friendly as families, groups of surfers and the Kandui crew sit around the fire on the beach or on the wooden decks, telling stories about their day, or the experiences of their travels. On one of the evenings, the nearby indigenous people stop by to pay a visit to explain their culture and traditions. With colourful ikats wrapped around their waists, and the beaded bracelets and headbands adding colour to their smiling faces – I am completely in awe of their appearance. My stay is made even more magical.

After 10 days, my surf journey ends. I intend to come back, mainly to catch up on more surf lessons and yoga in this natural creation of swells, waves and reefs. Namaste.

\* For more information on the resort, go to [kanduivillas.com](http://kanduivillas.com) \*