

MUSINGS & OBSERVATIONS

BY TRISHA KOOB

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i Westpark fam! I'm writing to share my musings and observations as I bring my vacation to a close. This is a longer read so continue on if you're interested in hearing about my journey! TLDR: I had a great time and very grateful for it all

Last week, I spent 8 days with my family in Pampanga, Philippines back to the home where I grew up with Ma Nette, my 2nd mom (aunt) who raised me as her own, along with my cousins that I consider my siblings. The food was incredible and deliciously reminiscent of childhood memories. I relished every single meal. Spending time with family was the reconnection that my heart was seeking.

Then, I've spent 5 beautiful days in Bali, Indonesia. Before I left, I shared with students that I was going to Bali by myself and Melissa Walker offered a different perspective - that I was going with myself to enjoy time with me. I was already looking forward to a vacation and that shift in perspective changed the game for me and made me even more excited.



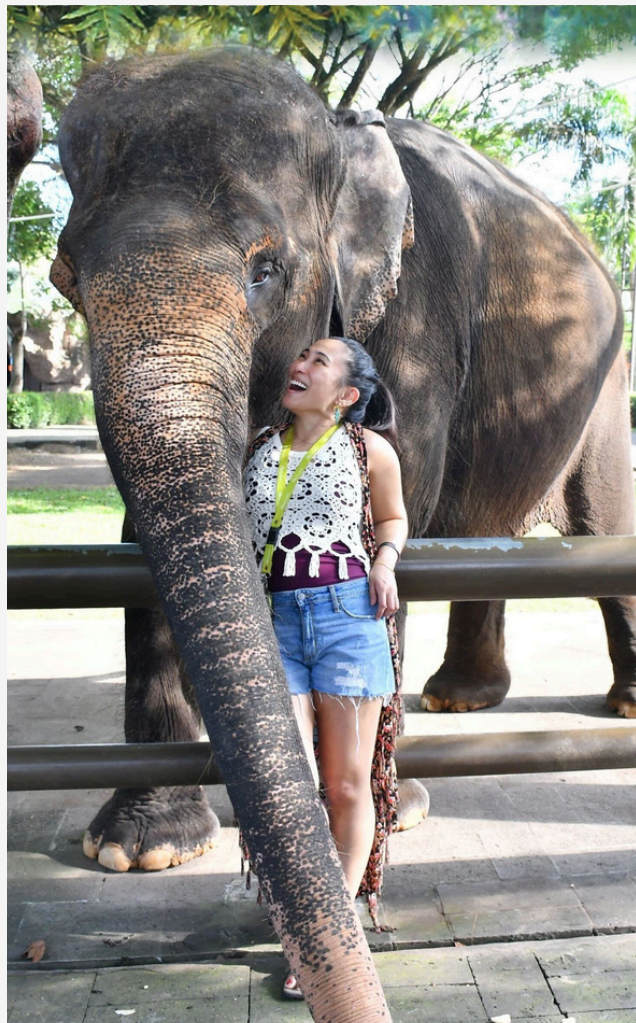
In Bali, I've experienced a traditional healing ceremony called water purification where a guide led me to multiple waterfalls that bring in clean spring water that you can drink. We made an offering to the gods and prayed at each small temple. We trekked down steep stairs alongside the hill and into a river. At the bottom, a Balinese priest blessed our final offering. My guide said you can pray to your faith and ask for good health and wealth. I prayed to the universe and asked for clarity, reconnection, and inner peace.

I submerged my head and body under the rush of high velocity waterfall to cleanse my body, mind, heart. It is welcomed to scream, cry, wail out to release all of the negative energy in the body. At the end, I came out refreshed and renewed.

I got to hug, kiss, feed, and wash elephants! Another dream come true! To look into the eyes of an elephant gave me pure joy!

I got to eat local food; shop and negotiate at the central Ubud markets where I found a beautiful Tibetan singing bowl that you will see soon; enjoyed a morning walk on a rice paddy; tasted avocado coffee, coconut coffee, even luwak coffee! (Google this if you want your mind to be blown!) I didn't plan to go on the Bali swing that you see all over instagram to avoid the crowds, but when I toured Tellegalang rice paddy, 3 swings just happened to be available and I went for it. The adrenaline rush of swinging at high heights over rice paddies was thrilling.

Time has been slow and enjoyable, I did not feel rushed in this vacation. I enjoyed some planned activities and left plenty of room for spontaneity that led to amazing experiences such as finding Yoga Barn. This place was recommended to me so I put it on my list but when I searched, Maps showed it would take a longer walk that I did not feel safe/comfortable to do on my own. By chance, I had changed my plans for the day to be more free time exploration - no plans! By chance, I took a left turn when the shuttle dropped me off at the market when I initially planned to turn right. By chance, I see a lady dressed in leggings. By chance, I'm already wearing a yoga outfit myself. So I took the courage to ask her if she was going to yoga. By chance, she said yes and that Yoga Barn is just down this little alley way. Ah, a short cut!!!



I walked in awe into this jungle paradise with multiple yoga shalas. Maybe I expected to see a typical one room studio, but this was a yoga playground!! By chance, there was a class starting when I walked in so I decided to take a Flying High class which is an aerial class that uses flying belts. They have classes all day from 7am- 9pm! I decided to stay for another class to try Iyengar for the first time.

All these series of steps and chances led me to an amazing 2 days here. This is the yoga heaven that my heart was searching for and the universe delivered! Endless classes, people casually doing acro yoga in the middle area. I had my lunch and juice as I enjoyed the view of the mountain trees. The tallest tree had orange flowers at the top that intrigued me.

Yoga is a universal language that can be understood by humans from all over the world. Yoga transcends cultures and continents over centuries of shared wisdom.

I got to experience a wide variety of classes both in Bali and Philippines, such as Iyengar Yoga, Rocket Yoga, Aerial Yoga, Myofascial Release, Yin, Sound Bath, Hatha, Vinyasa, and a powerful Shamanic Breathing session. It is fascinating to me how many of the cues are similar because we have this shared language, and how there are many variations of similar poses/movements. I am eager to share what I've learned with you all!

Perhaps more eye-opening than I expected was how different each teacher really is. Not only are there numerous yoga lineages and styles, teachers are as varied as their personality. While the asanas may be familiar, their approach, tone of voice, choice of words, all make them unique. I got to experience such a wide variety:

- a teacher with deep technical mastery of asana that can do handstands with eyes closed. I could've used more breakdown on how we go from boat pose to chaturanga or from seated wide straddle to EKP to chaturanga. Let's figure it out together in class, ok?!

- a teacher on her 2nd class ever where we had more freedom to laugh when she goofed on her cues and keep it light hearted. We all have our Day 1 and it takes immense courage to step into teaching.

- a teacher with guru energy who said to a student: "what are you doing? the whole class is waiting for you" and "don't drink water because you should've drank enough before coming here". When I giggled at how absurd that sounded, she softened and said "it's so you don't throw up". I learned a new technical drill to feel your Warrior 1 from her. Come to class to find out!



- a gentle and soft spoken teacher with singing bowls that felt were right in front of me

- a teacher that taught with eyes closed the whole time and spoke in language that was so accepting and non-judgmental. A reminder of non-attachment to expected sensations in poses since we each have our own experience in each pose

I'm not labeling these as good or bad, more of an observation of how unique we can be in a shared practice. There's something to be learned from each teacher and style when we are open minded. No matter the differences, we are all united by the ever powerful breath and the belief in the magic of yoga!

I'm grateful for this whole trip. So many times I said to myself: I can't believe I get to be here right now. If you've ever wanted to travel but couldn't find a travel buddy, I highly encourage you to consider solo travel and go with yourself! Embolden and inspire yourself to explore your curiosities, then impress yourself with the courage you took to follow through!

My heart is so full.
From my heart to yours,
trisha