



ON SHOW: You can take an elephant ride (left) at the Bali Safari and Marine Park, where rhinos roam the savannah.

The staff, from keepers to guides, undergo a continuing education program on all the tenants. Development of its facilities is also continuing. The water park is now open – which was welcomed by a heap of kids on the hot afternoon we were there. The adults' section, including slides, is also nearly ready. The aquarium at the front of the park is also a new feature. Now, I know that there is no record of any human deaths due to piranha attacks. However, I expected them to be a bit bigger than those on display. In saying that, I wouldn't take up any offer of dipping my finger in the tank, or swimming with them. You should see their teeth. The piranha was just one creature I wanted to see. Another was the impressive Komodo dragon. I read recently about a man who was nearly taken by one in another part of Indonesia not long ago. And on the island in the same area sharing a name with these lizards, people live side by side with them, – albeit in houses on stilts.

They are imposing – not quite the 2m-long creatures that can exist, but when I learnt they could run faster than me and weighed more, I was happy knowing they were behind thick glass. Behind thick glass is also where the tigers and lions are, right outside where you eat lunch at the Tsavo Lion Restaurant. Tsavo is one of two places where you can eat. The other is the less formal UMA Restaurant. Tsavo has a varied menu and a bar. It is also where the guests of the park's hotel – the Mara River Safari Lodge – dine when the rest of the park is closed. The lodge rooms are small, but stylish and you can lie in bed, open the big bay windows and watch the animals while they watch you from their African savannah area. Don't worry, they would have to be both a good climber and a strong swimmer to get to you. If you don't stay overnight, give yourself at least a full day to check out the park. It costs a bit more than you would pay at most Balinese tourist attractions, but there is a heap to do and the kids will love it.

Wish you were here

The Bali Safari and Marine Park is about an hour's drive east of Kuta, towards Gianyar.

Opening hours

The park is open on weekdays, 9am-5pm, and 8.30am-5pm on weekends. You can check with the park in regards to their special days.

Cost

There are several packages you can choose from, but the one that includes the Elephant Back Safari is \$US59 (\$A68) for adults and \$US39 (\$A45) for children. This price includes a trip on the safari bus.



Other information

You can view the show and shuttle-bus schedules, as well as the feeding times for the animals, on the Bali Safari and Marine Park website. www.balisafari-marinepark.com

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