



# Travel

## First Experience

### By Musafir

I love traveling despite my health restrictions. It gives me a heightened state of awareness. Travel is better than reading a book because “the world itself is a book and those who don’t travel read only one page.” (Saint Augustine). Yes, we get infatuated but, at the same time, we also form a lifelong bondage with fellow earthlings. At the moment I’ve met someone new, Southeast Asia.

My travels have taken me mostly to Europe, India, the North and Central Americas and the Caribbean isles. The Far East is new to me. I just traveled Bali (Indonesia) with stopovers in Tokyo and Singapore. I’d like to share with you some observations about my first impressions.

Travel in Asia has a good feeling. All those countries that I mentioned are much more welcoming than I expected. The airports are modern and beautiful, particularly the airport in Singapore. Signs are in English everywhere. It is straightforward to navigate; transfers and arrivals are easy. The toilets are always attended and clean. What a relief!

Tokyo made a great first impression. The airport was clean, well-organized and filled with polite people. I soon discovered that this was not due to the fear of losing employment, the traits are deeply entrenched in the Japanese psyche. It is a sincere and genuine sensibility, a core value of the society.

The Japanese don’t point; they direct you to whatever it is you want to see or where you need to go, whether to your seat in a restaurant, the way to the exit or the invitation to step first into an

elevator, with a graceful extension of the hand with palm facing up and fingers closed. It is a charming thing to see performed.

Singapore is a place that cannot be described that can only be experienced. The road to the airport is like a garden tour adorned with colorful plants and flowers.



Bali has a majority Hindu population. Everyone in Bali greet and say goodbye with a hand gesture, both hands together as if in prayer at the chest, which I found genteel and charming. I had a most polite and helpful taxi driver in Bali. We communicated on WhatsApp. I still

communicate with him. We are now lifelong friends. If you ever plan going to Bali, feel free to ask his WhatsApp number from me. You won’t regret that. I must mention my brother’s wonderful family who accompanied us in Bali. They treat us like their own without pretensions or one-upmanship. Its pure love and congeniality, a gift of my life.

The purpose of this writing is not to present a guide for tourists, it is only to express my sentiments. Southeast Asia is where the nice go to be nice, where the humans go to be human, and where everyone goes to experience human dignity and respect. Journeys can be wonderful. So seek out the frames that will capture the goodness and put a smile on your face. It’s priceless.