

# I-S

No sweat

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## 7 Days New Workouts

Indoor surfing! Electro-therapy! Trampolining!  
How we survived a week of wacky fitness routines

**ALL NEW DINING GUIDE — FREE INSIDE!**

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US\$400 (\$505) return. Villa rates start at US\$940 (\$1,188) per night.

Falhumafushi, Gaafu Alifu Atoll, 96 0682-0088, [www.theresidence.com/maldives](http://www.theresidence.com/maldives).

### Best combo of local and luxe

## The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi

**Stay:** If you want a taste of true Maldivian life while still experiencing the total luxury that the archipelago is known for, this could be the one for you. The resort encourages guests to gain a more memorable experience of the islands by exploring what the local community has to offer, from visiting the farms and villages to Maldivian cooking classes. The resort is huge, with as many as 221 villas, but each guest still receives the attentive service of a boutique stay. You're sure to leave here with some stories to tell.

**Eat:** There's plenty to choose from with 11 eating and drinking venues scattered across the island, including poolside bites, an overwater eatery, beachfront grilled seafood and specialist spots for vintage wines and Champagne. Each night has a dining event, such as Champagne and lobster BBQs.



Aerial view of Niyama



Niyama beach studio with pool

**Do:** This is another resort for those that don't like to sit still—finding time to relax is almost a challenge with a daily schedule packed with activities like sunset fishing and wine academy. The spa is huge—a maze of tranquil pathways through tropical flora, leading you to private villas that are each inspired by a different flower.

**Need to Know:** The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi is reached by seaplane with Trans Maldivian Airlines for US\$1,300 (\$1,644) return. Rates range from US\$520 (\$657) for a beach villa to US\$4,270 (\$5,396) for the celebrity retreat, per night.

Noonu Atoll, 96 0656-0591, [www.thesunsiyam.com/irufushi](http://www.thesunsiyam.com/irufushi).

### New!

## Atmosphere Kanifushi

**Stay:** This brand new resort prides itself on being one of the very few five-star all-inclusive resorts in the Maldives. The setting is jaw-droppingly gorgeous, with a huge beach that you almost always have to yourself. The island is pretty big compared to others so guests can borrow bicycles to cycle along the wide sandy avenues that are lined with soaring palms. Plus, it's almost liberating to be able to eat and drink top rate cuisine and cocktails without having to pay a cent. The resort doesn't have the boutique, personalized service that the others offer, but you do have a huge amount of privacy.

**Eat:** Most guests dine at The Spice, a spacious beach-front restaurant with a buffet and live cooking stations. For light bites and drinks head to The Liquid and The Sunset pool bars, or try out Just Veg, the Maldives' first purely vegetarian restaurant and Teppanyaki Grill for Japanese cuisine.

**Do:** The all-inclusive package includes non-motorized watersports and snorkelling trips out to the incredibly pristine reef. You also get to join an additional excursion, such as a sunset boat trip or fishing. Treatments at the Akiri Spa by Mandara are an optional extra.

**Need to Know:** Travel to Kanifushi by seaplane for US\$459 (\$580) return. Villa rates range between US\$900 (\$1,137) and US\$1,680 (\$2,123) per night based on two sharing.

Kanifushi Island, Lhaviyani Atoll, 96 0662-0066, [www.atmosphere-kanifushi.com](http://www.atmosphere-kanifushi.com).

## Essentials



Tigerair

### GETTING THERE

In late January **Tigerair** ([www.tigerair.com](http://www.tigerair.com)) became the first low-cost airline to launch direct flights to the Maldivian capital Male, making the archipelago more accessible than ever (at least you can save money on the journey!). Flights leave Singapore on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday each week, departing at 9.50am and arriving just after 11am. The return flight runs Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, departing Male at 12.15pm. Fares vary depending on the season but expect to pay around \$400.

Once you're there, most resorts will arrange transfer to and from Male. To travel between resorts you'll typically need to go back through Male.

### VISA AND CURRENCY

Free visa permits are issued on arrival. US dollars and credit cards are used at all resorts.

### WHEN TO GO

Temperatures are usually 26-30°C, with the high season from January to March. Mid-May to November is monsoon season, so you can expect some rain.

### IS IT SAFE?

The last decade has seen a considerable amount of political unrest in the Maldives, though currently it appears more stable than it has for some time. Since you're in and out of Male before you know it, it's not something to get too worried about.

## ESCAPE ROUTES with Lauren Jade Hill



Next Wave Festival

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

## Fresh Off the Boat

This September you'll be able to cruise down the Mekong in five-star style with **Aqua Expeditions'** ([www.aquaexpeditions.com](http://www.aquaexpeditions.com)) new river-boat Aqua Mekong, which will transport passengers between Cambodia and Vietnam. The intimate yet spacious (and ultra luxe!) boat will feature Design Suites, with or without balconies, all with panoramic views of the river. The space will incorporate everything you'd expect of a five-star hotel, including indoor and outdoor bars and dining spaces, a screening room, library, plunge pool and spa. You definitely won't be roughing it. Three, four and seven night itineraries are on offer, with rates from US\$3,000 (\$3,812).



Aqua Expeditions

culture, **Next Wave Festival** ([www.nextwave.org.au](http://www.nextwave.org.au)), is back in April for its 30th anniversary, this year named the New Grand Narrative. Over 28 days, 40 world premieres and 239 artists will be showcased, among the curated collection of ambitious, risky and surprising new art, including performance, dance, visual and sound art. The festival will take place from April 16 to May 11 at various venues, with tickets available online.

## WORLDWIDE Making Room

Global travel site **Hotels.com** is looking to make mobile hotel booking even quicker and easier by redesigning its iPhone and iPad app for iOS 7. Notable features include an easy to use map, now at the center of the hotel selection process, and the choice to pay when booking or at the hotel. With 260,000 hotels in 25,000 destinations worldwide, users are spoiled for choice, and with more than 10 million user reviews it's well worth a look if you're planning a trip.

### STAYCATION

## Brush Strokes

New art-themed boutique hotel in Chinatown **Hotel Clover The Arts** ([www.hotelclover.com](http://www.hotelclover.com)) is slated to open in March, aiming to give guests a unique art experience in each of the individual, creatively designed rooms. Styles span retro kitsch and urban street art to pop art vibrance and line art minimalism, featuring the artwork of local professional artists, alongside students from art and design schools in Singapore. Double rooms will start at \$235 per night. Find out more online.

### CHINA

## Top of the Lake

In the foot of the Yanshan Mountains in Beijing, **Yanqi Lake Kempinski Hotel** ([www.kempinski.com](http://www.kempinski.com)) is set to open in May. The property covers a 14 sq km area around the scenic Yanqi Lake, with views of Mutianyu Great Wall and the mountains. The huge space features 595 rooms, spread across the main land, State Guest House and a private island. In addition to plush accommodation, there's a marina, an 18-hole golf course, a spa and fitness facilities, as well as 14 restaurants and bars. Rates have not yet been released—find out more on their website.

### AUSTRALIA

## Looking Swell

Melbourne's month-long biennale celebration of cutting edge arts and



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