



A Splash of Maldivian Magic

Mention the Maldives and the word "luxury" may well spring to mind. Aqua waters so clear you can see your own nail varnish chipping in the sand, and skies so blue, you can barely differentiate the water from the distant horizon. All inspire the ultimate, dream destination. We took a weekend away from the world and flew the four hours from Dubai to Malé, from which a luxury speed boat made waves for the three-year-old, super-luxe resort: Huvafen Fushi.

Get your zzz's

Located on its own lagoon on a tiny island in North Malé Atoll, Huvafen Fushi offers several types of accommodation. We could have made like Kate Moss and opted for the multi-bedroomed luxury lagoon villa, but we settled for life on land instead of over water on stilts, with a deluxe beach villa. And never again will a hotel room satisfy. This jam-packed beauty came equipped with enough gadgets to open our own branch of Jacky's. We especially loved the surround sound Bose indoor/outdoor music system, complete with an iPod pre-loaded with all sorts of sexy sounds. An outdoor tub with nifty backrests meant we could soak away our worries to the sounds of birdsong, or drop from the padded double-daybed with a glass of champers to our private plunge pool. If Frette linen and designer furniture (including specials from Frank Gehry) are your thing, such novelties won't escape your eyes – unless you've got them shut, lounging in a pile of cushions on the front deck, listening to the ocean.



Taste sensations

Every night's stay includes your breakfast, so your morning will undoubtedly begin at Huvafen's signature restaurant, Celsius. It's a laid-back dining room, complete with sandy floor, which branches out across the lagoon. Plan your day doing nothing as the smiling waiter blends for you fresh fruit smoothies, whips you up an incredible Eggs Benedict, or brings you scrumptious homemade yogurts and cereals. For lunch, Fogliani's on the beach serves pizza or tasty fresh fish specials, and at dinner time, you shouldn't miss Salt – a restaurant for gourmet cuisine that comes in twisty, twirly portions, which look more like art projects than items to be eaten and enjoyed.

Don't forget the camera

As one of the smallest resorts in the Maldives, you won't find any raucous nightclubs here, but the nightly wine-tasting in the cellar offers a great excuse to get chatting with other guests (i.e. people to take those loved-up pictures of you laughing, like the ones in the holiday brochures). We continued our talks with another couple in the Umbar upstairs for the nightly, half-price cocktail hour. Save a few minutes, or drinks, though and head to the shore to watch the sting-ray feeding. Every night at 6:30 without fail, these giant, wild creatures swim forward for their hand-fed fishy feast, clamoring on their feeder like eager puppy dogs. Amazing stuff. Take an extra memory card.

Spoil yourself rotten

If reading your book as the barman brings you bottles of Corona and unprompted "re-hydrating" smoothies isn't soothing enough, book yourself a session in the world's first underwater spa – featuring a window to the oceanic underworld. Treatments are more expensive in this room than in the other ones, but the staff all have magic fingers so a rub or scrub down here will be something to remember – even if you're face down to the floor. You can of course go snorkeling around the lagoon, too – not recommended if it's windy. The brightly colored fish are abundant around the many clusters of coral. We even saw baby black tip sharks swimming feet away from the shoreline.

Take me to paradise

Bungalows cost from US\$880 a night, not including the 10 percent service charge (this is added to absolutely everything – partly to save the hassle of tipping staff). Flights from Dubai to Malé at the time of printing cost from AED 3500 direct with Emirates. See resort info on: www.huvafenfushi.com

