

## TRAVEL

# Welcome To The Nautilus Maldives: The Idyllic Island Getaway You've Been Waiting For

Named after a small seashell of perfect proportions, The Nautilus is a stunning resort that's a tiny drop in the tranquil turquoise waters of the Maldives.

**B** BY KENNETH GOH / MAY 7, 2023



It's really the little details that matter in life, from the attending VIP treatment when you step off the plane, with your limo on the tarmac waiting to whisk you off to a private lounge, to the in-villa check-in when you arrive at this island paradise by seaplane. Welcome to **The Nautilus** – a petite 26-villa island that's walkable from shore to shore within 20 minutes. It's a stunner of an island in the Baa Atoll, surrounded by turquoise waters and its own reef with a million fish, turtles, eagle rays, an octopus, a school of nurse sharks – you name it. A friendly sea master enthusiast – ours was named Soba – leads you by seabob to navigate the crystal waters and explore the reef. If a unique experience is what you're after, I would suggest a sunset cruise to a sandbank where a gorgeous little picnic can be laid out for you and your loved one, with parasol and wind chimes to complete the perfect **Instagram** picture. Here, you'll get





SUNDOWN.



Get a picture-perfect picnic at The Nautilus Maldives. Photo: Silver Blinks Photography



An aerial view of the resort and its crystal-clear surrounding waters. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives

But back to where it all started, which is the villa beach house that was home to me and my partner for the next five days. With our own private pool, immediate access to the beach and a separate living and sleeping space, it all adds up to 309 square metres across two thatched-roof villas. An outdoor shower is a perfect way to rinse off the day's snorkelling adventure before you're enveloped in aircon splendour when you step into the room. The design of the villa is best described as luxe boho – pastel shades clothe the sofas, cushions and carpet in pretty shades that Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* could only imagine. The massive king-size bed is all you need to laze the hot afternoons away; or you can pick one of three day loungers which are thoughtfully placed throughout the spaces – one in the living room, another at the foot of the bed and a large swing cabana by the pool for sunset drinks or a quick nap. Double basins are a must to keep couples happy, and the floor-to-ceiling glass windows allow





space for the toilet.

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Enjoy a poolside drink in one of The Nautilus' cabanas. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives

The one thing that stood out for me was the idea of unscripted dining – actually, make that unscripted anything. If breakfast and a massage was what your body needed at midnight, then your wish was their command. With a private house master assigned to each villa, it's all up to you to decide which meal strikes your fancy, where you want to have it, and when. Just call up your house master, and like a genie, your wish is magically fulfilled. The three restaurants which dot this tiny island served modern international fare at **Thyme**, Peruvian-Japanese at **Ocaso** and Mediterranean at **Zeytoun**. All options were excellent – I have the most peculiar diet, consisting of complex carbs, lots of clean protein *and* a shellfish allergy, yet none of the restaurants skipped a beat. Every meal was altered to suit my diet and I was free to pick from any restaurant at any time of the day. Few would exercise this enormous scheduling freedom that The Nautilus offers, but I was told that some guests just kept to their European time-zone throughout their stay at the resort.





Take a bite of the Mediterranean at Zeytoun. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives



Indulge in exquisite Peruvian-Japanese cuisine under the romantic lights of Ocaso. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives

To you and me, that might seem completely topsy-turvy, but to The Nautilus, it’s all in a day’s work. Being a small and intimate resort allows you to interact with the staff and within two days, I was calling everyone by their first name – and we all engaged in happy banter about the ferocious afternoon sun and lack of rain. Guests got a chance to mingle by the **Naiboli Poolside Bar** at cocktail hour for complimentary drinks, and watch as the brilliant red sun sets before the twinkling stars take over the night sky.

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Poolside sunset at The Nautilus Maldives. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives

We all visit the Maldives because of the incredible ocean and sea life. But the reality is the elements and the environment in the Maldives are disappearing fast. People forget just how powerful the currents and the weather can be in this Baa Atoll. Built in 2019, The Nautilus was initially completely unprotected from the seas, which lent itself a stunning uninterrupted vista of turquoise-blue waters as far as the eye could see. But during the Covid lockdown in 2020, when the resort was shut for four months, fierce winds and raging currents swept most of the beach away. Wave breakers were built to shelter the island and the over-lagoon villas, as well as to protect the reef. Naysayers might complain that they spoil the grand sweeping views – but this necessary evil was the only form of protection from rising sea levels, increasing water temperatures and billowing winds. As with many island resorts in the Maldives, sustainable activations are needed to protect their aquatic wildlife.

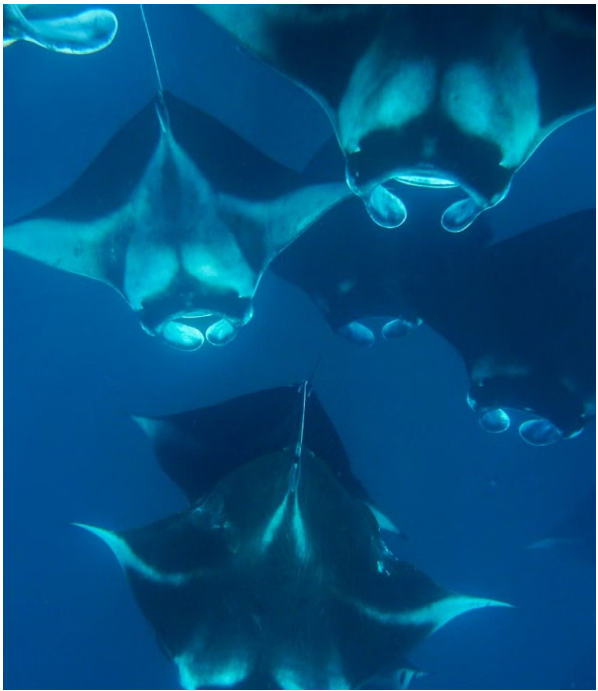






Take part in some stunning aquatic activities courtesy of the resort. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives

There’s also a private island a mere three minutes away by boat that’s being developed into an ecological playground. I visited this tiny 5.4-hectare island called Madhidrivaadhoo, and marvelled at its wildlife sanctuary where flocks of near-extinct birds grow and flourish. Greenhouses are being built to cater to a “farm-to-table” experience for guests, while the natural lake in the middle of the island is being developed into a picturesque landscape for honeymooners and weddings. Daytime sojourns can soon be spent here, but for now, you can play a game at the makeshift beach volleyball court, have a go at the couples swing, or just take a stroll through the natural jungle.



Swim with the manta rays near the resort reef. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives



Have a romantic dinner right on the water, with unbeaten panoramic views of the sunset. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives

No visit to the Maldives is complete without a spa experience. With my intense travel schedule and hectic lifestyle, sleep deprivation is a constant problem. Soso, the spa manager of **Solasta**, was quick to recommend a two-hour sleep inducing treatment that included products like a soft body scrub, a dip into lavender-scented bath water, and a relaxing massage which literally lulled me to sleep. Peering through the glass floors, I caught glimpses of the sea life below before my heavy eyelids got the best of me. And after two-and-a-half tranquil hours, I was gently awoken from my slumber before I hopped right back into bed for a blissful night’s sleep.







An aerial view of Zeytoun and the Solasta Spa. Photo: Courtesy of The Nautilus Maldives







Don't forget to sneak in that photo shoot on one of your boat rides around the Baa Atoll. Photo: Silver Blinks Photography







I could very well live this island life for another week and if time (and money!) permitted, I would have chosen to do so in a heartbeat. But alas, work beckons – and before I knew it, I was boarding the lavender hue Nautilus seaplane to Male for my flight back to Singapore. Will I be back? Absolutely, and hopefully next time I can visit Madhidrivaadhoo for a once-in-a-lifetime ceremony with my loved one. Dreams really do exist, and at The Nautilus, perhaps by wishing hard enough, those dreams may just come true.

Learn more about The Nautilus Maldives [here](#).

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