

# Why the Maldives should be at the top of your bucket list

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

20 Sep 2022

"Many a trip continues long after movement in time and space have ceased," wrote Nobel Prize laureate John Steinbeck in his 1962 travelogue, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*. He was reminiscing about a man who'd travelled to Honolulu and back, but the memories he'd held onto meant the journey continued endlessly in his mind.



Image: The Standard Huruvalhi

When travelling, we may not connect so deeply with every destination and some may even disappoint. But there are a few rare places on Earth that once visited, are guaranteed to stay with you for a lifetime. One such place is the Maldives, an Indian Ocean nation of 1,192 islands that stretch 871km along the equator.

It's not just that the Maldives' unique geography makes it a visually captivating escape - we all have its turquoise waters, soft, white sands, and its exquisite marine life etched in our mind's eye. The country has a warm, embracing aura, inviting its visitors to really experience all it has to offer - and there's a lot.

Travelling with [Priority Escapes](#) founder, Francois Swart, I was lucky enough to experience the Maldives up close and personal.



Image: Oblu Select Sangeli

## Anything but boring

According to Swart, one of the biggest misconceptions among South African travellers about the destination is that it's boring. And I can certainly attest that it's anything but. Every day spent in the Maldives heralds something new. It's an ocean-lover's paradise - from dolphin cruises to snorkelling excursions, kayaking, jet-skiing, and night fishing - the sea is your playground.

And there's plenty to enjoy if you're a landlubber too - long walks on the beach, heavenly massages, picturesque sunsets, and the food is five-star. But it's also the ideal setting to do absolutely nothing, which in today's warp-speed world can be an absolute treat in itself.



Image: The Standard Huruvallhi



## Matchmaking the right resort with the right traveller

Whether you're a couple looking to celebrate your love, a family or group of friends in search of some fun in the sun, or a solo traveller keen on experiencing the world at your own pace, there's a resort in the Maldives that caters to everyone. Priority Escapes works with several properties across the atolls, with the goal of matchmaking the right resort with the right traveller.



Image: Obalu Select Lobigili

An expert on the Maldives, Swart says each resort is special for a different reason, offering wholly unique experiences. "I will say, though, that amongst my favourite memories would be the bubble room at 5\* Finolhu, the amazing entertainment at 5\* Kandima, the underwater glow party at 5\* Niyama, the sultry sounds of Haali Bar at Dhigali at sunset and then, who would've thought, but ice skating at 5\* Ozen Bollifushi!"

Having experienced Kuramathi, The Standard Huruvalhi, Dhigali, Obalu Select Lobigili and Sangeli myself\*, I can understand how it might be hard to choose a favourite.



Image: Dhigali

[Kuramathi](#) and [ObLu Select Sangeli](#) are sure to be firm favourites with families with plenty to keep the kids occupied. While [ObLu Select Lobigili](#) is your go-to if you're looking to spend quality time with and spoil your significant other. [The Standard Huruvalhi](#) seems to attract a more youthful crowd, playing hard by day and partying hard at night - there's even a disco ball in the bathroom of each villa!

For me, though, [Dhigali](#) edged in as the winner - the abundant nature, glorious sunsets at Haali Bar, delectable food, and the overall tranquillity of the resort hit all the right spots.



Are you ready for an island adventure in the magical Maldives?

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## Affordable yet exotic

The Maldives is a great escape for South Africans who want to travel somewhere that's affordable but still very exotic. If you can swing it, an all-inclusive package is definitely the way to go so you're not having to anxiously do mental exchange-rate conversions while living your best life.



Image: Obalu Select Sangeli

Another must is experiencing the resorts' water villas. Waking up every morning and taking in the warm ocean breeze from your balcony while the sea life swims by is worth every cent. And because only one hotel is located on each island, there are no crowded beaches – the Maldives promises peace and privacy throughout your stay. Another big win for South Africans, especially for families, is the direct, eight-hour flights - the sooner you arrive, the sooner you can get into holiday mode.

It's surprising to note it was only 50 years ago that the Maldives opened its first hotel - it's certainly come a long way since then. "What makes it special is that the destination continually evolves, and there's always something new – from slides into the water to a retracting bedroom roof to view the stars," says Swart.



Image: The Standard Huruvalli

That was my experience of the Maldives as well - each resort we visited had something special about it. From its spectacular natural beauty to its wide array of activities, it's more than your run-of-the-mill island getaway - the Maldives is a bucket list adventure for every kind of traveller.



## A year-round destination

When asked when is the best time to experience the islands, Swart says his sentiments are similar to that of Audrey Hepburn's when it comes to Paris - it's always a good idea. "Despite some months being wetter than others, the country has become a year-round destination, and I'd never recommend turning down an opportunity to see this magical destination."



Image: Kuramathi

And neither would I. The Maldives is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will stay with you long after you've journeyed back home.

*\*Sindy Peters was a guest of Priority Escapes and its partner resorts.*

## ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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