

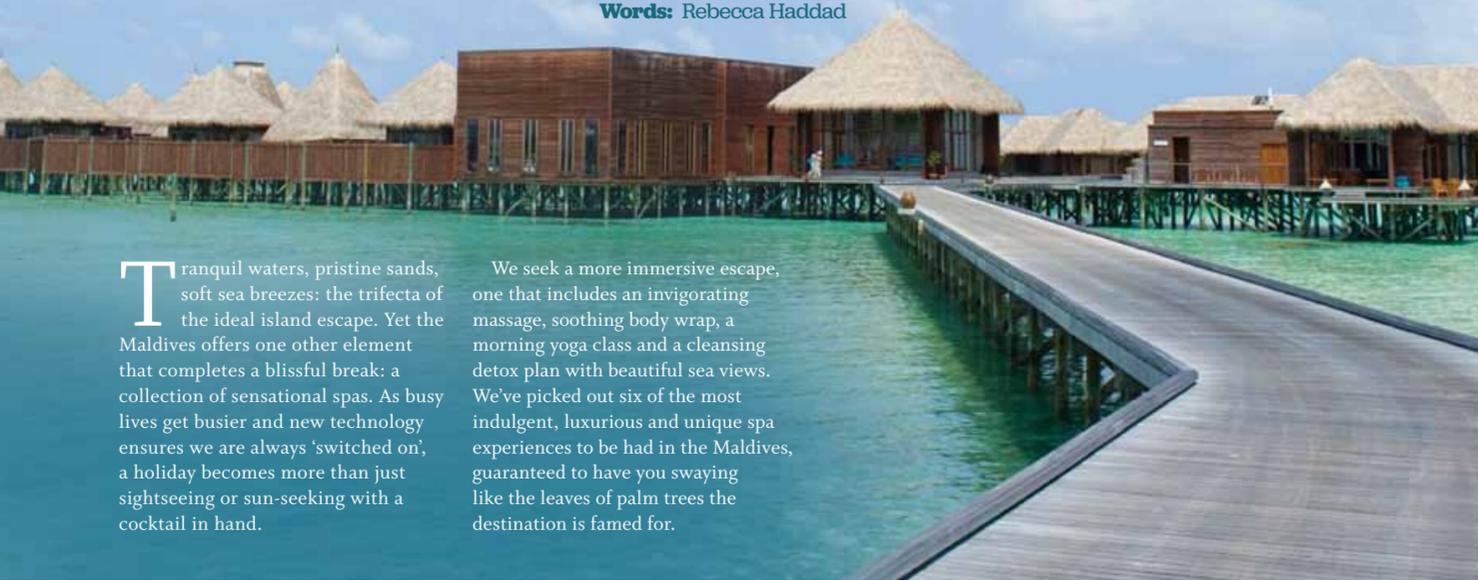
ISLAND HEALING

As if the Maldives isn't already relaxing enough, its beautiful spa experiences make it even harder to leave

Words: Rebecca Haddad

Tranquil waters, pristine sands, soft sea breezes: the trifecta of the ideal island escape. Yet the Maldives offers one other element that completes a blissful break: a collection of sensational spas. As busy lives get busier and new technology ensures we are always 'switched on', a holiday becomes more than just sightseeing or sun-seeking with a cocktail in hand.

We seek a more immersive escape, one that includes an invigorating massage, soothing body wrap, a morning yoga class and a cleansing detox plan with beautiful sea views. We've picked out six of the most indulgent, luxurious and unique spa experiences to be had in the Maldives, guaranteed to have you swaying like the leaves of palm trees the destination is famed for.



NATURE'S REMEDIES

Six Senses Laamu

The sustainability principles upheld by Six Senses extends to every aspect of the company's Maldives resort, including its spa facilities. Aside from the usual palm-thatched huts of so many other resorts in the island nation, the spa also has four quirky couple's treatment 'nests' (left), made from woven natural woods and surrounded by the island's natural vegetation. Six Senses spa therapists as use organic products throughout the range of signature therapies and treatments available, including coconut, ginger and basalt stones. For something truly indulgent, opt for the Asian Fusion Journey — four-and-a-half hours of body scrubbing, Balinese massage, Indian head massage and foot acupressure. There's also a Detoxifier Journey that lasts half an hour longer and includes a steam room, body polish and wrap, and a facial, detox massage and foot acupressure.

Asian Fusion Journey from \$576 and Detoxifier Journey from \$626

www.sixsenses.com



ESCAPE WITHIN AN ESCAPE

Conrad Maldives Rangali Island

Those looking for a getaway-within-a-getaway need look no further than Conrad's Spa Retreat. Located 50 metres off the northern tip of the island, the stilted Spa Retreat comprises nine couple's treatment rooms, five with private steam rooms, saunas and jacuzzis. There's also accommodation in the form of 12 Water Retreat Villas, should you want to stay marooned for the duration of your stay – opt for one with a private treatment room and you'll never have to leave your villa. Treatments are based on the five elements (fire, earth, wind, water and plant life), which each focus on different objectives, from relaxation to detoxification. You can choose to mix-and-match your treatments or focus on one 'element'. And if you're travelling with kids, they're taken care of too, with a range of age-appropriate ice-cream inspired treatments. The Spa Retreat is very popular with mainland guests, so it's best to book your treatments a minimum of 14 days in advance.

Water Retreat Villas from \$1,400 per night conradhotels3.hilton.com



Maldives



A TOUCH OF TRADITION

Dusit Thani Maldives

Set among the island's towering palm trees in the most densely vegetated area of Dusit Thani Maldives, Devarana Spa includes six treatment rooms which sit on elevated platforms among the palm trees. There's also two rooms back on land for those who want to keep their feet – and treatments – firmly on the ground. Therapies have a heavy focus on traditional Thai healing methods (a nod to the resort's Southeast Asian heritage), which can be experienced in the two-hour Harmony of Tad Si treatment, which is based on Buddhist teachings and uses Thai herbs and massage to relax muscles and rebalance the four elements ("Tad Si") of the human body (earth, water, wind and fire). The spa also offers three- to seven-day wellness programmes combining workouts, cleansing meal plans and Thai and Ayurvedic spa treatments to rebalance your body and mind. Post-treatment, chill out till the sun sets at the 750-square-metre infinity pool, the largest in the Maldives.

Harmony of Tad Si treatment from \$200 per person
www.devaranaspa.com



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Maldives



AFTER-DARK BLISS

Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa

Seeking spa tranquility requires a short (and beautifully serene) boat ride across the blue Kuda Huraa lagoon to The Spa's own tropical island. While a day treatment in an over-water pavilion is sure to put you into a state of suitable bliss, the resort's Night Spa offering is worth staying up for. Relax pre-treatment in the dim light of the spa's torch-lit lounge then opt for one of four luna rituals (Reflect, Nourish, Harmonise and Release), which combine massage with sounds, conditioning treatments and facials. The tropical evening breeze, gentle ocean sounds and soothing fragrant oils will make falling asleep on your massage bed all too tempting. The next day, keep those zen vibes lingering with a leisurely lunch from the Reef Club restaurant's Rejuvenation Menu, followed by an afternoon soak back at your suite. Your personal bath butler can prepare an aromatherapy bath of your favourite essential oils or can arrange a fragrant elixir to best suit your needs, be it to ease sunburn or provide your skin with an extra boost of moisture.

Night Spa treatments from \$600 for two and a half hours
www.fourseasons.com



ACTIVE WELLNESS

Viceroy Maldives

One of the most effective ways to get into better wellness habits is by opting to follow a health and wellbeing programme during your stay in paradise. Viceroy's spa journeys start from three to seven days, with a typical three-day journey including lifestyle consultation, two private yoga sessions, two hourlong spa treatments daily (opt for the ESPA Body Ritual with algae or mud wrap, scalp massage and aromatherapy massage), one light lunch and three vitamin-rich juices. For those days lunch and yoga isn't included, you can continue your wellness journey with fresh seafood and Arabic mezze at Treehouse restaurant and substitute yoga for equally calming activities such as a leisurely kayak over the clear waters or boat trip to nearby islands.

Vai Spa Journeys from \$860 per person for three days

(excluding service charges and taxes)

www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com



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Maldives



CREATIVE THERAPY

One&Only Reethi Rah

Art has long been considered an effective form of meditation – even if you aren't a creative type, there is something therapeutic about brushing paint on canvas. The Artist Studio at One&Only Reethi Rah offers guests a selection of classes covering everything from painting to pottery. Australian Christopher Hogan is the current artist-in-residence, and his classes involve an introduction to his contemporary abstract style, with a chance to create your own masterpieces based on Maldivian wildlife. Still craving a classic spa experience? The resort's ESPA has more than enough treatments to choose from, including a two-hour 'Unwind Signature Experience' with a massage using warmed volcanic stones, and a 'Sun Ritual' that nourishes your skin and prepares it for a safe, sun-kissed glow at the on-site Sun Spa, the only one of its kind in the Maldives.

Art classes from \$120 per person
www.oneandonly.com



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