

# MALDIVES MAGIC

IS THIS INDIAN OCEAN RETREAT THE *ULTIMATE* IN LUXURY HONEYMOONING? PW'S RACHEL FINDS OUT...



WE EVEN GOT TO NAME A BABY TURTLE! YES, REALLY!



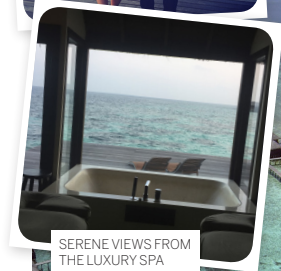
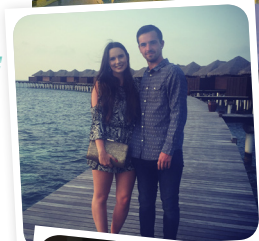
TURTLE IMAGE: © JARA FUMAGALLI

**Y**ou'll be hard pushed to find a place as breathtaking as the Maldives. The turquoise blue sea and the unspoilt white sands are just the beginning when it comes to this island's enchanting beauty. The chance to see for ourselves? No need to ask us twice...

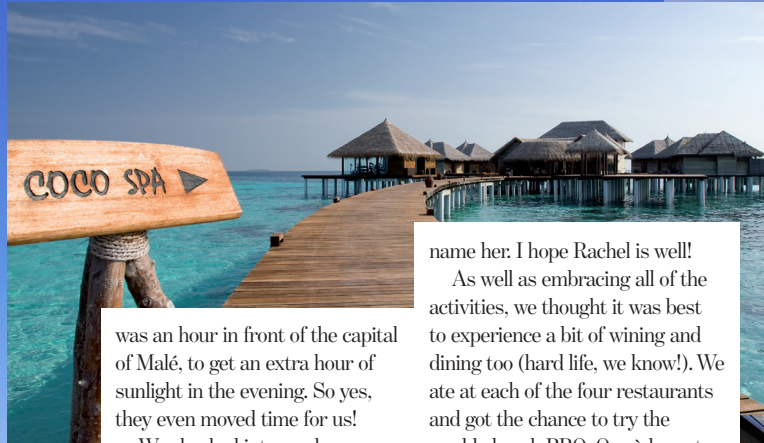
### DESTINATION PARADISE

Nothing can really prepare you for a 13-hour journey (unless you're one of those unworldly long haul enthusiasts), but we were totally delighted with our Emirates flights. With the best plane food we've ever tasted and a stopover without a hitch, we couldn't have asked for more.

Being greeted at the airport for our speedboat transfer with a refreshing drink and a cold towel was just a glimpse of the luxury and hospitality to come at Coco Bodu Hithi. Arriving on the hotel's private island, it was clear that the brochures involved no Photoshop trickery and the place really was as incredible as the glossy pictures had suggested! We were told that the island time



SERENE VIEWS FROM THE LUXURY SPA



was an hour in front of the capital of Malé, to get an extra hour of sunlight in the evening. So yes, they even moved time for us!

We checked into our luxury Island Villa with its own free-standing bath, private pool and the beach as its back garden. Sinking my feet into the gorgeously warm sand is when reality kicked in – we had a week in paradise ahead.

### MAKING A SPLASH

If there's one thing I learnt from the trip it's that you can never trust the weather. My phone app forecasted thunderstorms, but we actually had blissful sunshine. Plus, when the rain did pour, the clouds were soon blown away.

The beauty of the Maldives gets even more spectacular below sea level, so we made sure we took full advantage of our complimentary snorkels. The amazing reefs around the island are vibrant and teeming with wildlife – you'll see everything from beautiful tropical fish to baby sharks (the friendly sort!).

We were thrown in at the deep end (literally) with our private snorkelling trip as we headed into the vast Indian Ocean. We were very lucky to see a three-metre manta ray and a few turtles. One of the baby turtles was yet to be identified, so we were allowed to

name her. I hope Rachel is well!

As well as embracing all of the activities, we thought it was best to experience a bit of wining and dining too (hard life, we know!). We ate at each of the four restaurants and got the chance to try the weekly beach BBQ. Our à la carte meals were out of this world and the chefs were even on hand at the daily buffet to cook the meat and fish exactly to our liking. The locally caught jack fish soon became one of our go-to options.

### ANOTHER LEVEL

Just when we were sure we had experienced the pinnacle of the high life, we moved over to the Coco Residences – an exclusive part of the hotel with ultra-luxurious overwater villas. After soaking up the sun on our terrace, we climbed down straight into the waters below. But just wait... there's more! At the Coco Residences you get your very own butler *and* a pillow menu. Fancy, huh?

Everything at this resort made us feel like five-star royalty – from having a relaxing Thai massage in the spa to sipping cocktails in a hammock on the beach. Unforgettable experiences with a picture-perfect backdrop – this truly was the trip of a lifetime.

For more details, head to [cocoboduhithi.com](http://cocoboduhithi.com)



WHERE THE SEA IS AS BLUE AS YOUR SWIMMING POOL



### BOOK IT NOW!

Stay for seven nights B&B in an Island Villa at Coco Bodu Hithi from £1,748pp (including international flights and speedboat transfers). Honeymooners will also receive complimentary welcome gifts, a romantic three-course candlelit dinner and 10% discount on all spa treatments. Call 01494 678400 or visit [turquoiseholidays.co.uk](http://turquoiseholidays.co.uk) to enquire.

