

# SPLENDID ISOLATION

*Offering a perfect balance of desert island remoteness and total luxury  
Jillian Bolger discovers paradise in a Maldives resort*



*Johara pool*

## Romantic highlights

♥ Head out at sunset for a **night snorkel**. Accompanied by a guide you'll be lead along the house reef to view the riches of the sea. As the sun dips below the nearby equator you'll flit about in the inky waters, witnessing a magical nocturnal scene. Many creatures move about at night and you may be lucky to spot a shark skulking beyond the reef, sleeping turtles or even a ray burying itself in wait for its prey. Individual UV lights allow you to view the coral's magnificent bioluminescence while regular torches help you focus on the dramatic sea life.



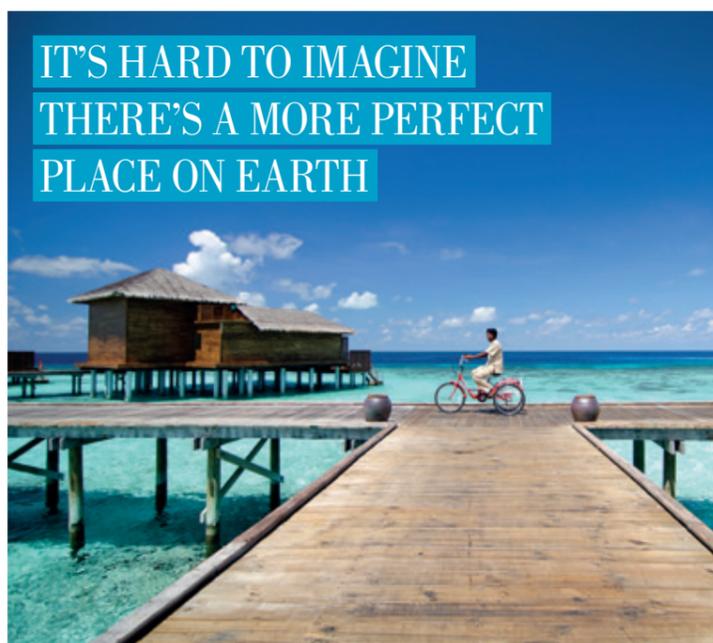
*Island Revive suite*

As our speedboat scuds through the waves the horizon is broken only by palm-tufted islands. Speeding towards the equator the dazzling light and cooling breeze offer welcome respite after 17 hours of flying. Cresting the waves we head from dark navy open water towards a lush green island encircled with aquamarine that glistens from within the coral atoll. Our destination? Jumeirah Dhevanafushi, two private islands in the southern reaches of the Maldives.

17 hours may seem like a monumental trek, especially when you can be on an island resort within minutes of landing on Malé, the capital and main island. It's worth asking why anyone would bypass dozens of resorts to head 400 remote kilometres away, and just a short hop from the equator. And therein lies the answer.

Created for those in search of a desert island vibe, far from light-pollution, away from flight paths and as off-the-beaten track as you can get in The Indian Ocean, Jumeirah Dhevanafushi on Meradhoo Island exists as the ultimate sanctuary.

In theory you could avoid people for the duration of your stay, dining privately in your villa, swimming in your own



IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE  
THERE'S A MORE PERFECT  
PLACE ON EARTH

pool, lounging on your own beach and never seeing another soul – bar your private 24-hour butler whose every wish is your command. Chances are you'll make the acquaintance of some busy fruit bats and a pensive heron or two, and most definitely the kaleidoscopic fish when you head off exploring the surrounding reef, but, for the most part, it will just be you, your lover and endless horizons.

Think you'd be bored on a small island? Think again, for this is no ordinary island. Sure, there's swaying palms, sugary sands and translucent waters to soothe away all that wedding stress, but there's plenty to do should you feel inclined to flex your muscles.

A loop of the island can be done in 15 minutes, strolling the shaded interior beneath tropical leaves, stopping for a fun bout of table tennis, or heading out onto the dazzling beach with the finest white sand between your toes. The views sure are pretty but nothing beats what lies beneath.

Take a guided snorkelling trip, or simply borrow masks and fins and head off, hand-in-hand, for your own adventure in the crystal clear waters. You won't have to venture out far before meeting the colourful neighbours. The house reef

is shallow and accessible, perfect for beginners or nervous swimmers (life jackets can be worn) but more experienced swimmers will want to head out further to where the coral wall falls away and the deep blue sea reaches dramatically beyond. From angelfish to butterfly fish, Oriental Sweetlips to manta ray, parrotfish to turtles, this submarine scenery will take your breath away, day after day.

The Maldives is famed for its diving too but kite surfing, wake boarding, water skiing, deep sea fishing, catamaran sailing – even banana tubes are on offer – should the mood take you.

Should the mood for relaxation overrule your best intentions make for Talise Spa. A couples' massage in the tranquil over-water spa is de rigeur for honeymooners and the perfect foil to long-haul stiffness. While the masseuses get to work on your backs you'll find yourselves lost in the floor show, as you gaze through the glass beneath you where kaleidoscopic fish scud through the pristine waters. (There's an over-water gym with floor-to-ceiling windows too: the mesmerising views are enough to break the most resolute of gym-phobes.)



**CREATED FOR THOSE  
IN SEARCH OF A DESERT  
ISLAND VIBE**



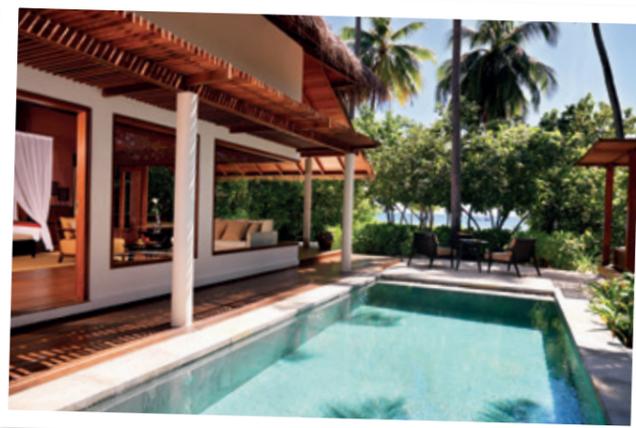
*The food of love*

♥ No desert island experience would be complete with good food and Jumeirah won't disappoint. Despite being far away from civilisation you'll find **three restaurants** serving everything from lobster to wagyu beef. Enjoy a **lobster and champagne buffet** at Mumayaz, sitting in a sunken dig gazing up at the night sky. Sample the local seafood, barbecued to perfection or indulge in sublime sushi and noodles. Whether you crave pizza or prawns you'll find all available.

Back in our villa, we swim, nibble fresh fruit, read books, sip espresso, loll in our cabana, bathe on our beach and wonder why we haven't been here before. Our land-based villa is sublime, one of just 38 luxurious hideaways (with a bathroom as big as our sitting room back home and four-poster bed big enough for a family to sleep in) but plenty of guests prefer the beauty and novelty of Jumeirah's lavish water bungalows, with many opting to spend some time on both islands.

A short boat ride away, these ocean pearls are decadent over-water hideaways connected by an elliptical boardwalk that seems to hover above the turquoise ocean. With individual infinity pools and private steps to the sea, the 16 luxurious boltholes make a perfect choice for privacy seekers and keen swimmers. Complete with a main swimming pool, bar and superb restaurant this manmade marvel is completely self-contained.

From vibrant sunsets to star-filled skies, creature comforts to personal touches, you'll feel like royalty on this island idyll. Forget your handbags and heels and surrender to the laidback charm of island life. It may have been my third trip to the island nation, but it easily rates as the most wonderful. With Mother Nature providing the setting and the folks at Jumeirah providing the luxury it's hard to imagine there's a more perfect place on earth.



*Your honeymoon planner*

- \* **Getting there** Fly with Emirates via Dubai or Etihad via Abu Dhabi.
- \* **A Beach Revive** Villa with private pool starts from €1089 per night. For bookings, visit [jumeirah.com](http://jumeirah.com)
- \* **When to go** The Maldives are popular year round, but winter or spring are best as the wet season runs from May to November. ■