



TRAVEL

# This tranquil Maldives resort taught me how to *really* slow down

This place offers disconnection the way no other destination can.

BY CLAIRE SINGER

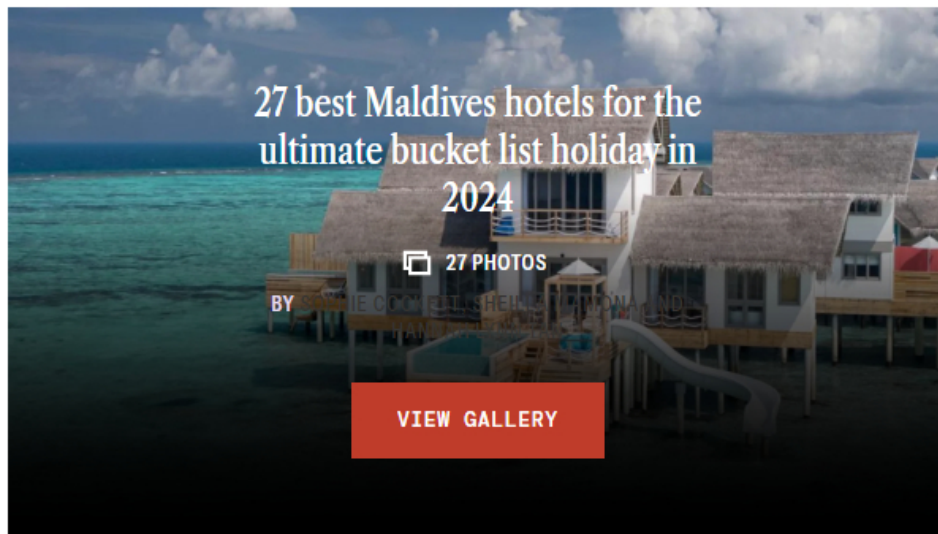
20 April 2024

The idea of ‘doing nothing’ has always been far more challenging for me than my usual hectic schedule, so the prospect of a switched-off week in the Maldives did at first make me wonder: what am I going to *do* all day? And no, I’m not expecting any sympathy here.

The concept of true relaxation has always pulled me in two directions. I want to disconnect, yet I keep scrolling TikTok. Dressing up for dinner feels like a chore – but a backless dress, bought years ago for an imaginary beach sunset, demands to be worn.

It doesn’t help that smartphones have made us dopamine junkies – with each swipe and like feeding the habit. There’s always something demanding my attention, which lead me to realise: I can’t remember the last time I really embraced the power of doing nothing.

Consequently, I was still feeling preoccupied even while stepping off the seaplane onto the Maldives’ famous white sand. What will I do all day? Does the WiFi actually work? What on earth will my husband and I talk about when we’re not caught up in the whirlwind of family life?



I shouldn't have worried. From my first swim in that turquoise, balmy water, I realised that this place offers disconnection the way no other destination can.

## Where to stay: Kandima Maldives

Our resort of choice was Kandima, a new kid on the block and huge by Maldivian standards – intertwined with two miles of natural jungle in the Dhaalu Atoll.

But lush landscape aside, Kandima excels at unwinding its guests. Among the vast choice of wellness activities are art classes, glass-bottomed kayaks and live music at sunset. My husband, a seasoned scuba diver, did a dive trip he described as “the best of his life” spotting leopard sharks, manta rays and turtles amongst the coral. And while I toyed with the idea of joining him for watersports, afternoons sprawled on the huge day beds at the spa with jasmine tea and a book ultimately felt more my vibe.







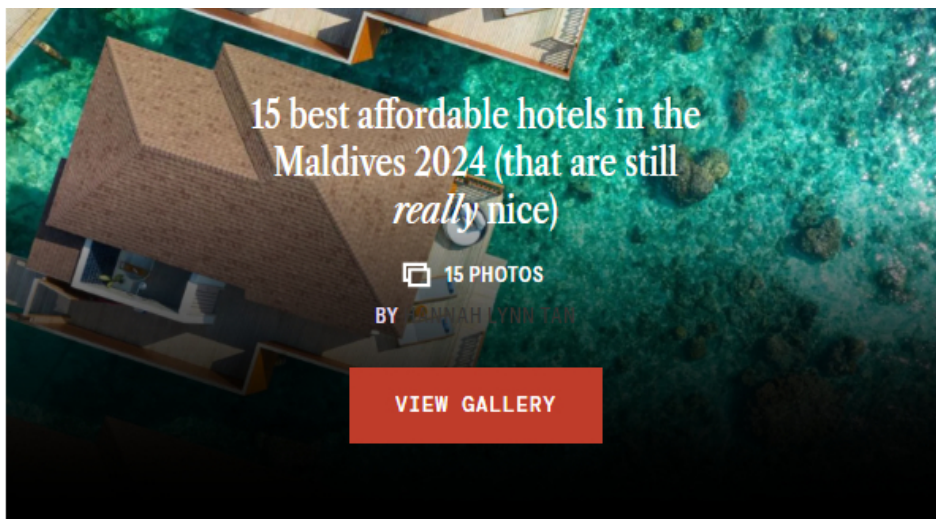


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I can't mention the spa without noting my deep-tissue massage, which was nothing short of transformative – with sandalwood oil melting away knots of tension I didn't realise were there, while listening to the hypnotic sound of the waves.

But for all the luxury and in-the-moment tranquility of these islands, it's bound to prey on your mind that the Maldives are at the front line of climate change. During my stay, I talked this through with the resort's marketing director, Pratyush Mohapatra, over iced coffee at Kandima's lakeside café – as he told me that the islands' delicate coral reefs are being bleached by higher sea surface temperatures, causing them to lose the algae that give them their vibrant colours. Kandima is making inroads here – protecting the rare mangroves (which in turn reduce soil erosion with their intertwined roots), educating guests and staff on coral reef protection and being mindful of food miles, with its with a farm-to-fork approach.





Rising sea levels are the longer term challenge, but extreme weather is already a regular occurrence. Yes, it's worth noting that Maldivian storms are *a thing* – but somehow they only add to the islands' charm. Plus, Kandima takes this in its stride; ferrying guests in covered buggies to the sleek glass walled restaurants where you can take in the lightning show with your glass of wine, safe from the gales.

We had far more sunshine than rain, but either way, rain never stole our joy. One night, spent watching the storms with a feast of aged steaks, truffle fries and red wine at resort restaurant 'Smoked' was not your standard Maldives sunset and sushi evening – but we both agreed it was our favourite.





The storm raged all night, putting the next day's flight to the airport by fragile seaplane in question – but by the next morning's sunrise, tranquility had been restored, and with a coffee and sandwich parcel we were on our way.

There's something about letting nature run the show that feels profoundly peaceful. The Maldives taught me that it's okay to slow down and be in the



moment – whether that’s under a stormy sky or radiant sun. And that’s a lesson I’m taking home with me.

*Find out more about **Kandima Maldives** [here](#).*

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