Turquoise waters, white sandy beaches, magical sunsets...

Valerie Roe finds her perfect slice of heaven in the Maldives

If you leave the Maldives with any regret, it will only be that you didn’t get to stay longer. This was my first Proper holiday in three years and as is always the case, it passed too quickly.

That said, they say you should never be sad that it’s over, but glad that it happened. Running my own PR company and being responsible for and actively involved in every aspect of the business, there’s almost never a good time to take a step back. Even if I give myself the odd weekend away, it’s never enough time to fully switch off and come back to zero. But something I’ve learned over the years is that if you are to work to the best of your ability, adequate time to rest is key, and there’s no better place in the world for that than the Maldives. I was lucky enough to visit the Kuramathi Maldives, situated in the extensive Maldivian archipelago of Thandoo Atoll, and it’s just 1.5 films in length. The first few days were dedicated to work; we chose this tropical heaven as the location photoshoot for Bellmans’s new 2013 campaign shoot with top UK model Chloe Lloyd. But here it didn’t feel like work at all. We certainly didn’t have to worry about rainy seasons days – it was blissful sunshine from sunrise to sunset. When you find yourself looking out a gpy rainy window in the middle of winter dreaming of a break in paradise, this is it, doesn’t take time, and for me, this part of the world has long been on my bucket list. Once the shoot was wrapped, my partner Denis joined me and the rest of the team flew home. It was finally time to switch off and step away from the laptop and mobile (which doesn’t come easy for me) and take in those breathtaking scenes. We had seven full days here to do whatever we pleased, and I would recommend the seven days as a minimum. If you’re anything like me, it always takes a few days to get into the holiday groove. Once you smell along the white beaches with sand in your toes and you meet with the friendly locals, who live and work on the island, any post-travel stress just wash away. Your need for timekeeping goes out the window. There’s no rushing, there’s no sense of urgency, it’s utter relaxation. Each islander stops to say hello and welcome you, they’re genuinely delighted to have you there and there are no complaints.

The thing is, with such a tropical, unspoilt destination, you’d expect it to be overrun, as can happen with lots of destinations like this around the world, but here it never felt busy as the whole island is a resort. While we were there, there were 500 people also holidaying, along with the 1,000 staff living on the island, yet it only ever felt as though there were about 50. It was totally peaceful and the island itself is so well protected and spaced. There are no cars, only little golf buggies sliding up and down the island. There are several beaches and they’re all secluded, as well as plenty of exotic gardens that you can while away a few hours. The spectacular accommodation consists of villas scattered throughout the island (some water villas just out into the sea with their own steps down into the turquoise water) and integrated into the natural habitat. No high-rise towers here. Most people think of Maldives as just a honeymoon destination. Kuramathi Maldives on the other hand caters for everyone. There’s even a kick club tucked away in the centre of the island. Those new to scuba don’t have to worry as you’ll hardly even know it’s there and for families, the facilities are fabulous. There’s even two-bedroom duplex villas that sleep up to six people, and their prices are not bad either! We stayed in the most beautiful water villa surrounded by lush vegetation where the bedrooms look out seaward to the Indian Ocean. If you dream of being at one with nature and

huddled in tranquility, this is it. What really appealed to me, being a busy PR woman who always has to look professional and presentable, was the fact that there is absolutely no need for high shoes here or formal dressing. There is pure white sand everywhere and a very minimal dress code. Maxi dresses were my go-to attire, and sandals at a stretch.

We spent our time here exploring the island walking among the coral reefs for which the island was famous, and visiting the Great Barrier Reef which was an incredible highlight.

Although there’s lots to do if you want to get active, the sunsets on this island were the pièce de résistance for me. In fact, they were the best I’ve seen in the world. Oh, and don’t forget the food – from the herbs and vegetables grown right on the island, to the fresh fish caught and served on your plate on the same day – all of which you can enjoy with an oceanic views. I double if an Irish Sunday roast will ever compete.

We opted for the Select All-Inclusive option with surcharges which offers dining at the two A La Carte restaurants at the resort – the Italian, Tindol Malaidh, and the Thai, Sami Garden, were firm favourites.

INFORMATION
For more resort information, see www.kuramathi.com.
For bookings, please contact brandislandmarketing.com.

Beach villas from £2,100pp.
Overwater Villa from £2,500pp

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Non-refundable deposit package, £59 per day. Free upgrade Select Villa at no extra.

£99 per day.

May-October inclusively.

Water Villa category and additional meal plan upgrades.

A choc-beach villa, above right

Valerie with her partner Denis Flannery, left and right

The restaurant daily up fresh fish for every meal.

The sunsets in the Maldives are amongst the best in the world, below.