

The ultra-exclusive Thanda  
Island in Tanzania.

# CALL OF THE ISLANDS

WHETHER YOU PREFER STARGAZING OR  
SNORKELLING, WE'VE GOT THE ISLAND FOR YOU





## DISCONNECT

### Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Caribbean

Petit St Vincent Private Island Resort (petitstvincent.com)

No WiFi, telephones or television make Petit St Vincent Private Island Resort the ultimate digital detox. Located on the southernmost island of the Grenadines, the resort has just 22 villas on 115 acres, so it's not hard to see why it's dubbed one of the world's best hideaways. After a day relaxing, hit the hilltop restaurant for island-grown organic produce and a selection of more than 4,500 fine wines and exclusive champagnes.

### Qalito Island, Fiji

Castaway Island (castawayfiji.com)

Casual luxury is the calling card at Castaway Island (pictured below), where guests dine barefoot in the award-winning onsite restaurant on food sourced from local organic farms. There are 65 bures, all with traditional Fijian-style thatched roofs, set among 172 acres of tropical rainforest or at the water's edge, all without televisions, clocks, radios or WiFi, to ensure you connect with nature, not technology.

We are a nation obsessed with island experiences. Whether it's a secluded private island where you spend a week barefoot on the beach, or somewhere you can explore the sights and visit local villages, islands are high on the agenda when booking a holiday. But not all are equal, so we've searched the globe and come up with our top picks for a luxury island getaway.

## THE EXCLUSIVES

### Thanda Island, Tanzania

Thanda Island (thandaiisland.com)

This tiny island off the southern coast of Tanzania (pictured on the previous page) is just one kilometre in circumference and 350 metres wide, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in exclusivity. The resort is surrounded by its own coral reef, with a one-kilometre exclusive-use zone. For about AU\$20,800 a night, you have sole use of the island and its five-bedroom property.

### Pamalican Island, Philippines

Amanpulo (aman.com)

Pamalican is an A-listers go-to with guests reportedly including the likes of Madonna, Beyoncé and Brad Pitt. Accessible only by private plane, the island is one hour from Manila. Amanpulo is the only property on the island, with villas looking out onto kilometres of coral sand. A one-bedroom villa with private swimming pool and dedicated chef and butler will cost you roughly AU\$4,000 per night.

### Cayo Espanto, Belize

Cayo Espanto (aprivateisland.com)

This four acre island off the coast of Belize is part of the world's second-largest coral reef system. It has won multiple awards as a luxurious hideaway, where snorkelling and scuba diving are always high on the agenda and the weather is warm year-round, ranging from about 23 degrees in winter to 29 degrees in summer. To rent the entire island (in the off-season), including all seven ocean-front villas, expect to pay about AU\$20,000 per night.

Above: Exclusive private island resort, Cayo Espanto, off the coast of Belize. Right: The perfect spot to relax, a hammock on Pamalican Island, Philippines. Bottom right: Castaway Island in the heart of Fiji's Mamanuca Islands group.





## COMPLETE ISOLATION

### Faroe Islands, Denmark

 Hotel Havgrím ([hotelhavgrim.fo](http://hotelhavgrim.fo))

The Faroe Islands are a collection of 18 islands in the North Atlantic, halfway between Iceland and Norway, where sheep outnumber people by nearly two to one. Here, waterfalls tumble from hillsides and grass-roofed houses dot the vast green vistas. Despite being renowned for its sheep population, the Faroe Islands are one of the primary breeding grounds for Atlantic Puffins as well as 300 other bird species.

### Wayag Island, Indonesia


 SeaTrek Sailing Adventures ([seatrekballi.com](http://seatrekballi.com))

Wayag is a small archipelago in northern Raja Ampat, 10 kilometres north of the equator and only accessible by boat. It's well known for its craggy forest-covered limestone karsts, finger-shaped islands and sheltered bays. The island is uninhabited, so you often feel like the only person on the planet. Board a roomy cabin on a handcrafted wooden ship with bar, sun decks and outdoor dining areas with SeaTrek Sailing Adventures.

Above: Venturing up a peak on the Faroe Islands.  
Right: The exclusive private hideaway of Bedarra Island Resort.

## OCEAN BOUND

### Bedarra Island, Australia

 Bedarra Island Resort ([bedarra.com.au](http://bedarra.com.au))

Bedarra Island was bought by Sam and Kerri-Ann Charlton after it was completely devastated by Cyclone Yasi. Now the epitome of luxury, it has 10 private villas hidden among 247 acres of rainforest, with views out to the Great Barrier Reef. The reef is not only the world's largest coral reef system, but also the largest structure on earth made by living organisms. It is home to more than 1,500 species of fish, 411 types of coral, 134 species of sharks and rays, and six of the world's seven species of threatened marine turtles.








## OCEAN-BOUND

### Bora Bora, Tahiti

 Four Seasons ([fourseasons.com/borabora](https://fourseasons.com/borabora))

Bora Bora is home to hundreds of species of marine life. At Four Seasons Resort you can see more than 100 of them in its onsite Ruahatu Lagoon Sanctuary. As well as a snorkelling location, it's also a research project, where marine biologist Denis Schneider offers educational tours and the chance to be part of an initiative to expand the colony of coral helping repopulate the reef.

### Mirihi Island, Maldives

 Mirihi Island ([mirihi.com](https://mirihi.com))


Swimming with manta rays should be on any ocean lover's bucket list. At Mirihi Island, one of the smallest isles in the Maldives, a team of local experts takes guests sailing on a traditional Maldivian dhoni boat, or a 55-foot pine-wood yacht in search of the elusive ray. Once spotted, you can jump in and swim with these gentle giants.

Above: Bora Bora is as beautiful above the water as it is beneath. Right: The graceful manta ray at Mirihi Island.




## STARGAZERS

### Manshausen Island, Norway

 Manshausen ([manshausen.no/en](https://manshausen.no/en))

Surely there isn't a more luxurious way to see the northern lights (aurora borealis) than from a cabin with floor-to-ceiling glass windows overlooking the Barents Sea. Built on ancient jetties, the award-winning sea cabins at Manshausen (pictured above) are cantilevered over the water, providing a panoramic view. The island was once a thriving trading post, and its residents have embarked on a mission to be climate neutral in five years.

### Great Barrier Island, New Zealand


 Earthsong Lodge ([earthsong.co.nz](https://earthsong.co.nz))  
Mount St Paul Estate ([mountstpaulstate.co.nz](https://mountstpaulstate.co.nz))  
Princess Cruises ([princess.com](https://princess.com))

The Great Barrier Island, off the coast of New Zealand's largest city Auckland, is the only island in the world designated an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. Stay at five-star Earthsong Lodge where each suite has views of Tryphena Bay and the Hauraki Gulf and, of course, that incredible night sky. Mount St Paul Estate (pictured left), surrounded by private native bush with ocean views, is another option. Here you can lounge in the Stargazer Room, with a super-kind bed from which you can marvel at the night sky, or take part in a locally guided astro tour. For an adventure of a different kind, board a Princess Cruise and you'll be able to get a chartered flight from the liner to Great Barrier Island, where you'll be able to stargaze with a local expert and once you're done, fly back to join your cruise.



## THE ACTIVE


### Madeira, Portugal

 Belmond Reid's Palace  
(belmond.com/reidspalace)

Hiking options are endless in the Laurissilva Forest on Madeira Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site that takes you through a network of veredas and levadas (water channels) stretching more than 3,000km in length. The historic man-made channels were created to carry water for irrigation of agriculture fields. Unique to Madeira, there are more than 200 levada routes you can follow, which twist like snakes along the hillsides and out to the coast. Stay in the historic Belmond Reid's Palace, which opened in 1891 and has hosted many royal and political figures, including Sir Winston Churchill in the 1950s – his namesake suite still exists today.

## THE ACTIVE

### Dominica, Caribbean

 Secret Bay (secretbay.dm)

Dominica is known as 'nature island' due to its abundance of rivers, volcanoes, mountains, hot springs, waterfalls and beaches. It's also home to the Waitukubuli National Trail, a 183km track that runs the length of the island. Along the way, pass traditional Kalinago villages and ruins of 18th-century French settlements. Stay in one of the six luxury villas at award-winning boutique resort Secret Bay, which has recently adopted a segment of the Waitukubuli trail, meaning it's responsible for its maintenance and can arrange for guests to experience it by foot or sea.

## CONNECT

### Mauritius

 SALT of Palmar (saltresorts.com)

Mauritius's newest eco-resort SALT of Palmar has created an initiative called 'skill swap', which will see guests immersed into the heart of Mauritian life. SALT finds a local with your skill on their must-learn list, and you donate your time and talent. In return you'll be taught a local skill, whether that's cooking the local cuisine or mastering the *maravanne* rattle and *moutia* drum.

### New Caledonia

 Sheraton New Caledonia Deva Spa & Golf Resort  
(marriott.com)

Stay at the five-star Sheraton New Caledonia Deva Spa & Golf resort and take a private tour to visit the Kanak, the indigenous people of New Caledonia, who have inhabited the archipelago for thousands of years. New Cal Outdoors (newcaloutdoors.com) will take you to the southern province of Sarraméa to visit

local tribes and hike into pristine mountains, or visit the Loyalty Islands and the last tribal village in the Lössi district. Here you can hike through the forest to discover medicinal plants, then head to the village of Mu, to watch the local Tanukul tribe elders preparing traditional dishes.

Above: Secret Bay has six secluded villas set on wild forested cliffs. Below: The new 'skill swap' experience at SALT of Palmar.





FOR THE KIDS  
(AND KIDS AT HEART)

Koh Kood, Thailand

 Soneva Kiri (soneva.com)

For most kids, the best things about holidays are the games, and an abundance of dessert. Soneva Kiri ticks both these boxes, and some of its villas also have slides into private pools. There's an ice cream parlour with 65 flavours to choose from, a chocolate room, observatory, open-air cinema, and The Den, a giant bamboo playground shaped like a manta ray that takes the kids club to a whole new level.



Left: The six-bedroom villa at Soneva Kiri, Koh Kood. Below: Soneva Kiri's purpose-built playground featuring an art and music room. Bottom: At Grand Wailea you'll find nine pools on six levels and an 80-metre-long slide.



Maui, Hawaii

 Ho'olei at Grand Wailea (grandwailea.com)

Ho'olei at Grand Wailea are private villas within the Grand Wailea Resort. Its centrepiece is a tropical playground, featuring a large pool with a swim-in grotto, six-metre waterfall, children's pool and whirlpools. Just a few steps away in the main resort is the Wailea Canyon Activity Pool, with its rapids, a Tarzan swing, more grottoes and waterfalls, the world's first water elevator, a 'lazy' river and a three-storey lava tube slide. For the kids, or kids at heart, it doesn't get much better than this!

