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travel news

VOL 93 | April 2024 | www.islandchief.com

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# Culinary Chronicles

with **Mohamed Shujau**  
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Crossroads Marina

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Dear Readers,

As we stride into the spring of 2024, it's imperative to dissect the vibrant tapestry of MICE and travel events that unfolded last month. March witnessed a resurgence in the global events industry, with diverse destinations and organizations orchestrating impactful gatherings, conferences, and exhibitions. Of particular note was the resounding success of ITB Berlin 2024, the preeminent travel trade show that not only upheld its esteemed reputation but exceeded expectations, cementing its pivotal role in shaping the future of the travel industry. Despite the backdrop of global crises and widespread strikes, the show boasted a remarkable turnout, with nearly 100,000 attendees converging at the Berlin Exhibition Grounds.

In this edition, we unveil an exclusive interview with Chef Mohamed Shujau, currently at the helm of the culinary team at Kalhu Odi Restaurant at the Crossroads Maldives. Originating from Addu City, Maldives, Chef Shujau embarked on his culinary odyssey in 2001 through the esteemed Four Seasons Culinary Apprenticeship Programme. His culinary prowess flourished in the cold kitchen of Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa for the initial three years, followed by four years dedicated to honing the art of sushi at Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaagiraavaru. Join us as we delve into the narrative of this exceptional individual, his achievements, and his vision for the future.

In the Bon Appétit section on page 22, we have Chef Aminath Wafa, the passionate founder of Wafa's Creations, whose culinary journey embodies the spirit of creativity and tradition. Since her childhood, Wafa's love for cooking has been an integral part of her life, where she found joy in sharing flavorful meals with her loved ones. Her kitchen is a vibrant hub of experimentation and tradition, where old classics meet innovative creations. In this edition, we are delighted to feature one of her signature creations: the enticing Rose Saagu Vermicelli.

As you peruse the pages, anticipate profound insights from industry experts on how significant it is to incorporate traditional island culture into festivities such as Eid celebrations at Maldives' resorts, in order to cultivate an authentic representation of Maldivian culture (page 23).

As we embark on another month teeming with exciting developments and opportunities across the tourism and hospitality sector, we reaffirm our commitment to furnishing our readers with enlightening content, expert viewpoints, and invaluable resources to navigate the ever-evolving terrain of events and destinations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, and we trust you will relish this edition of the Islandchief.

Until next time,

**The Islandchief Team**



## **THAARA JEHUN: Perfect Harmony of Drums and Dance**

Thaara Jehun can be described as the Maldivian version of tambourines. The Thaara Jehun musical performance seen in Maldives is said to have originated from the Middle East. The performance includes about 22 men arranged in two rows, singing and beating drums, while others dance in time to the music. Thaara songs start at a slow tempo and then gradually pick up to reach a crescendo. The performing team wears white sarongs and white shirts with a green/red scarf wrapped around their necks. It is a very special form of entertainment, reserved for national events and celebratory occasions.

Photo Credit: Hihcha Boduberu



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# Maldivian Launches Exciting New Route from Male' to Colombo

Maldivian, the national airline of the Maldives, has announced the launch of its new service to Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Starting April 25, 2024, Maldivian will operate two weekly flights between Malé and Colombo, on Thursdays and Saturdays. This new route offers convenient travel options for business and leisure travelers seeking seamless connectivity between the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

"We have long awaited the opportunity to serve Colombo and connect the Maldives and Sri Lanka more closely," said Mr. Ibrahim Iyas, Managing Director of Maldivian. "This expansion strengthens our international network and commitment to connecting the Maldives to the world."

Colombo, with its rich history, diverse culture, and thriving business scene, is a valuable addition to Maldivian's growing network. The new route is expected to promote cultural and economic exchange between the two nations.

Ticket bookings for the new Colombo route are now open on Maldivian's website, mobile app, and ticketing office, allowing travelers to plan their journeys well in advance.



The flights will be operated by A320 aircraft, departing Malé on Thursdays and Saturdays at 19:35 and arriving in Colombo at 21:35. The return flights will depart Colombo on the same days at 22:35 and arrive in Malé at 23:25 (all times local).

This convenient schedule caters to both leisure and

business travelers, offering the possibility of weekend trips. Passengers can also connect to Maldivian's extensive domestic network of 16 destinations.

Maldivian invites travelers to experience their exciting new route to Colombo. Visit the website (<https://maldivian.aero/>) for more information.

# Manta Air Appoints Villa Travels as Passenger Sales Agent



Manta Air, the Maldivian airline known for its reliable domestic flights and recent foray into international travel, has appointed Villa Travels as its official Passenger Sales Agent. This exciting partnership promises smoother connections and wider accessibility for travelers seeking to explore the Maldives' stunning destinations.

Manta Air offers travelers not only convenient connections between Maldivian airports but also the unique experience of seaplane travel. This allows for breathtaking aerial views of the archipelago's countless idyllic islands and hidden gems. Additionally, their recent launch of international flights from Dhaalu Airport to

Bangalore, India, marks a significant step towards expanding their reach.

Through this strategic partnership, Villa Travels, with its extensive network and expertise in Maldivian tourism, will play a key role in promoting Manta Air's diverse services to a broader global audience.

### Seamless Journeys, Unforgettable Escapes

This collaboration promises a seamless travel experience for visitors seeking to discover the magic of the Maldives. Villa Travels' in-depth knowledge of the islands, combined with Manta Air's comprehensive network of seaplane and domestic flights, ensures a smooth journey from arrival to final destination.

### A Paradise Within Reach

With Manta Air's reliable connections and Villa Travels' expert planning, exploring the unparalleled beauty of the Maldives is now easier than ever. Whether it's a luxurious retreat on a secluded island, an adventure diving amidst vibrant coral reefs, or a cultural immersion in the rich heritage of the islands, the Maldives offers experiences for every traveler.

ACROSS THE SKIES

# SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air Announce New Codeshare Partnership

SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air have officially activated a new codeshare partnership effective March 15, 2024, presenting enhanced travel options and connections for customers of both airlines traveling between Colombo and Seoul.

Richard Nuttall, Chief Executive Officer of SriLankan Airlines stated: "We are delighted to launch our first-ever codeshare partnership with Korean Air, and boost the connectivity between Colombo and Seoul. The passenger traffic between the two cities continues to exceed our expectations, and the partnership will only help us grow our presence in this route in a manner that is fast and economical for the airline, and give more reasons for customers to choose SriLankan Airlines."

The new partnership enables SriLankan Airlines to codeshare on flights operated

between Singapore and Seoul Incheon by Korean Air, making it possible for passengers to travel on a single, SriLankan Airlines' ticket between Colombo and Incheon via Singapore. At the same time, Korean Air will codeshare on flights operated by SriLankan Airlines between Colombo and the cities of Seoul Incheon; Singapore; Chennai in India; and Male in the Maldives.

SriLankan Airlines currently operates a twice-weekly direct service between Colombo and Incheon. With SriLankan Airlines tapping into Korean Air's extensive Far Eastern network through codeshare collaboration, passengers of SriLankan now have the choice of daily flights between Colombo and Seoul via Singapore.

Passengers of Korean Air also gain access to SriLankan Airlines' high-powered network in the Indian Subcontinent.



SriLankan Airlines has India and the Maldives covered coast-to-coast. The airline operates nearly 100 flights a week across nine Indian cities and 23 flights a week to the Maldives. This includes triple daily plus flights between Colombo and Chennai and triple daily flights between Colombo and Male.

The codeshare flights are available for sale

through the online reservation systems and sales offices of SriLankan Airlines and Korean Air, and external online and offline travel agencies. Customers of both airlines can take advantage of the multiple flight options as well as seamless connections afforded by the convenience of a single ticket on multi-sector journeys, which includes through check-in and baggage transfer.

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IN A NUTSHELL

# Crafting Unforgettable Moments: Jawakara Islands Maldives' Bespoke Wedding Experiences



Tucked amidst the enchanting waters and pristine beaches of the Maldives lies Jawakara Islands, a haven of romance and luxury. For couples seeking the perfect backdrop for their special day, Jawakara Islands Maldives presents an array of exquisite wedding packages designed to create unforgettable memories.

**Unique Proposal Experiences:**  
For those planning to pop the question amidst the breathtaking beauty of the

Jawakara Islands, the resort offers bespoke services to make your proposal truly memorable. Upon request, the dedicated team will arrange special setups at the dining venues, creating an enchanting atmosphere for this unforgettable moment. Whether it's a private dinner under the stars or a secluded spot overlooking the ocean, the resort ensures that every detail is tailored to your vision, ensuring a proposal that will be cherished for a lifetime.

**The Perfect Setting for Love:**  
Imagine exchanging vows on the stunning Jawakara beach, with soft sands and crystal-clear waters as your witnesses. Or perhaps, the allure of a sandbank wedding, where turquoise waters surround you, creating a picture-perfect backdrop for your union. For those seeking an extra touch of luxury, the dreamy yacht wedding offers a unique experience, sailing into eternity surrounded by breathtaking views.

**Unparalleled Inclusions:**  
Each Jawakara wedding package comes with a host of inclusions to ensure your day is nothing short of magical. From elegant floral bouquets and romantic villa turndowns to commemorative certificates and exquisite wedding plaques, every detail is attentively crafted to create a truly unforgettable experience.

**Tailored Experiences:**  
Jawakara Islands Maldives understands that every couple is unique. That's why the resort's dedicated wedding

coordinators work closely with you to tailor your wedding experience to your preferences. From intimate candlelight dinners on the beach to adventurous sandbank cruises, the possibilities are endless.

**Capture Every Moment:**  
Preserve the magic of your special day with the resort's photography packages. Choose from the Love Package, capturing candid moments during the ceremony, to the Dream Package, including a one-hour photo shoot and a beautifully curated album to cherish for years to come.

**Honeymooners' Special Welcome:**  
For honeymooners, a special welcome awaits as they step into their luxurious accommodations. A well-decorated bed adorned with fragrant flowers and soft linens awaits, setting the stage for a romantic retreat like no other. From the moment you arrive, indulge in the serenity and seclusion of your private sanctuary, where every detail is designed to enhance your love story.



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## IN A NUTSHELL

## Experience the Ultimate Buddymoon at Milaidhoo Maldives' Ocean Residence



Milaidhoo Maldives invites couples to a dreamlike Buddymoon retreat in the acclaimed Ocean Residence, recently awarded the prestigious Elite Traveler award. Nestled amidst the turquoise waters of the Milaidhoo lagoon, the Ocean Residence offers an exquisite setting where newlyweds and their closest friends can share joy and excitement amidst ultimate privacy and serene splendor.

### Discover the Essence of Luxury in The Ocean Residence

The Ocean Residence stands for luxurious comfort, breathtaking vistas of the shimmering ocean and vibrant marine life below. Across an expansive 3,500 square feet, this majestic haven

boasts two elegantly designed bedrooms, generous living spaces, and a private infinity pool overlooking the azure waters. Each bedroom offers a haven of comfort and serenity, adorned with plush linens, handcrafted decor, and panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows that invite the awe-inspiring ocean panorama inside.

### Experience the height of Maldivian hospitality with exceptional amenities:

**Exquisite Living Spaces:** Revel in the vast living and dining spaces, gracefully appointed with sophisticated décor, creating a sublime setting for cherished

companionship and moments of relaxation.

**Captivating Oceanic Panoramas:** Boundless views through grand windows merge the horizon with this private abode, bringing the magnificence of the Maldives to your doorstep.

**Secluded Infinity Pool:** Escape to your personal sundeck with sun loungers and your enchanting infinity pool of 60 square meters – a serene spot for sunbathing and indulging in moments of tranquil relaxation.

**Opulent Bath Enclaves:** Indulge in spa-like bathrooms equipped with soothing rainfall showers, luxurious tubs, and high-end amenities for a restorative and lavish experience.

**Personalized Butler Service:** Experience the pinnacle of personalized attention with a dedicated butler service, ensuring every whim is met with meticulous care, from arranging bespoke experiences to tending to all your personal preferences.

### Memorable Experiences Await

Elevate your Buddymoon with bespoke activities designed to forge

unforgettable memories:

**Gourmet Cooking alongside Your Personal Chef:** Enjoy a hands-on gastronomic adventure with your personal chef, crafting delectable dishes and pairing them with exquisite wines co-selected by our resident sommelier.

**Bespoke Cocktail Mixology Workshop:** Unleash your inner mixologist with a hands-on cocktail mixing workshop led by our expert mixologist, where you'll explore an array of spirits and liquors to create signature cocktails that capture the essence of the islands.

**Private Starlit Cinema:** Delight in the magic of a movie under the stars, complete with plush seating and gourmet popcorn.

**Serenity Yoga and Meditation:** Realign body and mind with a private yoga and meditation session on the pool deck, enveloped by the soothing symphony of the surrounding nature.

**Sunset Aperitif with Live Melodies:** Savor the golden hour with an aperitif at sunset in the privacy of your residence, accompanied by live music that sets the perfect ambience for an unforgettable evening.

## Canareef Resort Maldives Embraces Sustainable Energy with Significant Solar Panel Installation

In a bold move towards sustainability, Canareef Resort Maldives announces the installation of 720 solar panels, marking a significant step in reducing the resort's carbon footprint. This initiative underscores the resort's commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible tourism practices.

Scheduled for completion within one month, this extensive installation is poised to revolutionize the resort's energy landscape. Upon completion, these solar panels are projected to generate an impressive 400 KW of power, significantly contributing to the resort's energy needs.

Covering both staff and guest areas, the solar panels will provide a renewable energy source for various operations throughout the resort. This holistic approach ensures that sustainability is integrated into every

aspect of the guest experience, from accommodation to recreational facilities.

Furthermore, the implementation of these solar panels is expected to yield substantial fuel savings. With an estimated reduction of 10% in fuel consumption, Canareef Resort Maldives is taking decisive steps towards energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This reduction not only benefits the environment but also translates into tangible savings for the resort.

Looking ahead, Canareef Resort Maldives remains committed to expanding its renewable energy infrastructure. Plans are already underway to install two additional units, further solidifying the resort's position as a leader in sustainable tourism practices.

Beyond the environmental benefits,



the adoption of solar energy will also lead to a reduction in generator maintenance, offering long-term cost savings and operational efficiency. By embracing solar power, Canareef Resort Maldives is not only reducing its environmental impact but also enhancing the overall guest experience through sustainable

practices.

As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, Canareef Resort Maldives sets a shining example of how the tourism industry can embrace renewable energy solutions to create a brighter, more sustainable future.

# Turning Waste into Fashion - Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Maldives Leads the Way with Eco-Friendly Shopping Bags Made from Upcycled Umbrella Fabric

Sun Siyam Iru Fushi takes a bold step towards sustainability by transforming damaged umbrella fabric into fashionable shopping bags, marking a significant stride in environmental stewardship. Since launching this pioneering initiative in September 2023, the resort has repurposed fabric from 35 umbrellas, yielding 97 stylish beach bags. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these bags serve as tangible symbols of the resort's commitment to eco-conscious practices.

Each bag tells a story of innovative sustainability, showcasing Sun Siyam Iru Fushi's dedication to minimizing its environmental impact while upholding luxury standards. By repurposing materials, the resort not only reduces waste but also fosters a deeper connection between sustainability and opulence.

These meticulously crafted beach

bags, distributed among new team members, epitomize Sun Siyam Iru Fushi's holistic approach to sustainability. They embody the resort's ethos of integrating eco-friendly initiatives into every facet of its operations, reflecting a shared sense of responsibility and care for the environment.

Haanif Abdullah, Training, Health & Safety Manager at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, expressed his enthusiasm for the project, stating, "We are thrilled to integrate sustainability into our daily practices and extend our commitment to environmental responsibility. The upcycled beach bags not only showcase our dedication to minimizing waste but also reflect our belief in the importance of small yet impactful initiatives in creating a positive change in our community."

Sun Siyam Resorts is dedicated to



operating sustainably and responsibly in the Maldives and Sri Lanka while offering authentic guest experiences. The group-wide Sun Siyam Cares program prioritizes sustainability through initiatives such as reducing energy and water use, managing waste to reduce plastic use, supporting community development, and investing in renewable energy. It also focuses on conservation efforts and

works to preserve local heritage and cultural practices. By following these sustainability practices, the resorts aim to minimize the environmental impact, and carbon footprint and contribute to the socio-economic well-being of the communities in which they operate.

For more information visit: [www.sunsiyam.com/sun-siyam-cares/](http://www.sunsiyam.com/sun-siyam-cares/).



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## MOVERS &amp; SHAKERS

## Constance Moofushi Maldives Celebrates Inaas Achievement in the Comet Program



Constance Moofushi, located in the serene South Ari Atoll of the Maldives, announces the remarkable accomplishment of Mohamed Inaas, team member whose dedication and passion have recently culminated in a significant achievement. Inaas, at 29 years old and with five years of service

at Constance Moofushi Maldives, has not only completed the rigorous Constance Management Experience Training (COMET) program but has also excelled, earning 'The BEST COMET Project of the Year' award.

The COMET program, initiated by

Constance Hotels & Resorts, is a comprehensive 9-month Management Training Program designed to prepare young graduates for leadership roles within the Constance Group. It offers hands-on hotel operation experience and knowledge in Corporate Governance, Sustainability, Marketing Strategy, Communication Skills, People Management, and Digital Efficiency.

Inaas, who has chosen to pursue a career in the Food & Beverage department, demonstrated exceptional dedication, professionalism, and analytical skills, leading him to the prestigious 'BEST COMET Project of the Year' award. The program significantly boosted his self-confidence and self-awareness, improved his decision-making, and enhanced his communication skills, positively influencing his role and performance in the department.

Throughout his COMET journey, Inaas

maintained a resilient attitude, always eager to learn and seek advice from mentors. He considers the award as recognition of his overall growth and the valuable learning experience the program has provided.

"We are immensely proud of Inaas's and all our COMET participants. His dedication and passion set a benchmark for others to follow," said Mevin Ramasamy, General Manager of Constance Moofushi. "Our commitment to developing local talent is at the core of our values, and the COMET program is a testament to this, offering a solid foundation for young professionals to excel in the hospitality industry."

Constance Moofushi continues to be at the forefront of excellence in hospitality, supporting and celebrating its team members' achievements. Inaas' accomplishment in the COMET program is a shining example of dedication, hard work, and supportive teamwork.

## Baglioni Maldives Welcomes Swadha Kuthiala as Food & Beverage Manager

Baglioni Maldives has announced the appointment of Swadha Kuthiala as their new Food & Beverage Manager. With an illustrious career spanning across renowned luxury hotels and resorts in The Maldives, Doha, and India, Swadha brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise in the realm of hospitality.

A graduate from Indira Gandhi National Open University, Swadha holds a Bachelor's degree in Hospitality and Hotel Operations. Her journey in the hospitality industry commenced as a management trainee at Starwood Hotels & Resorts, where she honed her skills and passion for delivering exceptional guest experiences.

Swadha's career trajectory saw her ascending through various roles in esteemed establishments. She contributed her expertise to The St. Regis Mumbai before venturing into

international territories, joining Centara Hotel Doha. Her journey then led her to the captivating shores of the Maldives, where she served as the Restaurant Operations Manager at Soneva Resorts. Most recently, Swadha held the position of F&B Operations Manager at Soneva Resorts, where she made significant strides in enhancing guest satisfaction and operational efficiency.

At Baglioni Maldives, Swadha Kuthiala is poised to continue her legacy of excellence, driven by her unwavering dedication and passion for hospitality. Her appointment heralds a new era of elevated guest experiences, characterized by impeccable service and culinary delights. The management of Baglioni Maldives expresses utmost confidence in Swadha's ability to further enhance the resort's reputation as a premier destination for luxury and indulgence.





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## MOVERS &amp; SHAKERS

## Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas Welcomes Award-Winning Joachim Textor as New Executive Chef

Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas has announced the appointment of Joachim Textor as the luxury resort's new executive chef. With over 40 years of experience in delivering premium culinary services around the world, Chef Joachim is now ready to bring his exciting new variety of innovative dining experiences to the resort's discerning guests.

A native of Germany, Chef Joachim Textor began his illustrious career as a cook at various world-class hotels in Switzerland. After honing his skills at the Hilton in Basel, the Park Hotel in Vitznau and the Hyatt Hotel in Montreux, he decided to expand his culinary repertoire by exploring the tastes and cuisines of the world. Across 42 years of traveling, his amazing culinary journey has taken him to 93 countries and countless five-star kitchens across the planet.

Chef Joachim's incredible journey of gastronomic discovery has led him to gain invaluable experience as an executive chef in some of the world's most prestigious hotel chains, including The Peninsula Hotels,

InterContinental, Hilton, Mandarin Oriental, Shangri-La, and Hyatt. He has received critically acclaimed awards and was also the Opening Executive Chef of Anantara Dubai Palm where he spearheaded the opening of the resort's signature restaurants and dining experiences back in 2013.

Regarded as one of the most pioneering chefs in the industry, Chef Joachim has also opened multiple award-winning hotels and dozens of restaurants in both the Middle East and the Far East, while he has also cooked for a number of famous politicians, Hollywood celebrities, and royalty all over the world. His past assignments include the G12 Asian Summit Conference in Busan, where he cooked for such prestigious world leaders as George W. Bush, Angela Merkel and Li Peng.

A positive and cheerful personality with an energetic passion for innovation in his creations, Chef Joachim is now set for the next adventure in his culinary journey. Still as hungry to learn and explore as ever, Chef Joachim will bring phenomenal



dining experiences for gastronomes at Anantara Kihavah with a number of new innovations already planned. Sharing the knowledge he has accumulated through his travels across six continents, Chef Joachim will also act as a mentor for budding young

cooks, introducing his repertoire of world cuisines to the next generation of aspiring gastronomic innovators. In Chef Joachim's own words, "The best is yet to come. Life is a journey and not a destination; travel it safe and well."

## Saddam Hussain Appointed as Resort Operations Manager at Amilla Maldives



Amilla Maldives has announced the promotion of Saddam 'Saddi' Hussain to Resort Operations Manager overseeing the day-to-day operations of the resort.

Spirited and goal driven, Saddi has worked in Amilla Maldives for the past 10 years in a variety of guest experience roles, most recently as Residence Operations Manager.

An optimistic young man fresh out of school, in 2001, Saddam started his career at Dhoni Mighili as a 'Thakuru' – Maldivian Butler making him one of the first five butlers in the Maldives. He then moved to Dubai in 2006 as personal butler for the CEO of Barclays Middle East. Returning to the Maldives in 2008 as Butler for Naladhu Maldives then Six Senses Laamu in 2011 and finally to Amilla Maldives in 2014.

Besides being a world class butler, Saddam is creative with an eye for

detail and a flair for landscaping.

"I find inspiration in those who consistently believe in me, fostering a sense of acceptance and worthiness within me. It's this support that fuels my passion for my work, pushing me to strive harder each day. Having positive and supportive people around, makes a huge difference. Success isn't immediate; it's a journey of growth, filled with ups and downs that shape who we become. Keep your feet on the ground and turn your dreams into reality," Saddi says.

Amilla Maldives is a haven with a well-loved reputation for its commitment to heartfelt service. Rooted in environmental sustainability Amilla offers a memorable experience that uniquely resonates with each guest. Amilla excels in design, nature and wellbeing, alongside innovative initiatives in well-being, sustainability, and inclusivity.

# Bringing the aviation world to the Maldives!

Velana International Airport is hosting **Air Services World Congress** – gathering of aviation leaders fostering collaboration on future route development and air service initiatives

July 9-11, 2024 | Maldives





# Culinary Chronicles

*In this Islandchief edition, we spoke with Mohamed Shujau, Chef de Cuisine at Kalhu Odi Maldivian Restaurant. His culinary journey began surrounded by the scents of fish prepared by his mother and grandmother, sparking a lifelong passion. Shujau eschewed traditional academics for a path of culinary exploration, honing his skills in prestigious kitchens worldwide. From Bangkok to Singapore, Texas to Egypt, his 15-year odyssey has shaped his vision for the future of gastronomy. Chef Shujau now shares his inspiring story and tantalizing culinary vision with Islandchief readers.*

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

## Mohamed Shujau

Chef De Cuisine  
Kalhu Odi Maldivian Restaurant,  
Crossroads Marina

### **What inspired you to pursue a career in culinary arts?**

Initially, my aspirations leaned towards becoming an electronic technician. However, what truly reshaped my path was the apprenticeship program orchestrated by Four Seasons. Through this experience, I realized that the culinary world offers not just a profession, but a platform for garnering respect and humility from patrons, consumers, or clients. As one progresses and accumulates experience, there's a parallel ascent in income and the fortification of leadership skills to helm teams. My inspiration stemmed from luminaries like Chef Kjell Kollin from Sweden and Chef Frank from France during my apprenticeship journey. Recognizing the scarcity of culinary professionals, I saw an enticing opportunity not only to immerse myself in this domain but also to pave the way for future recruits to meet burgeoning demands.

### **Reflecting on your upbringing surrounded by food in Addu, how did your family's culinary tradition influence your approach to cooking professionally?**

Growing up in the vibrant culinary landscape of Addu in the Maldives, I was immersed in a tapestry of flavors curated by my grandmothers' palates. Their culinary artistry instilled in me a deep appreciation for authenticity, a sentiment seamlessly carried forward by my mother, who masterfully reproduced those flavors without compromise. Each dish she crafted exuded richness and an irresistible allure, be it during intimate family gatherings, lively parties, or solemn religious ceremonies.

However, as I ventured beyond the confines of familial kitchens, I observed a dearth of these locally-inspired delicacies in the surrounding restaurants, a realization that fueled my ambition. Determined to

share the essence of our culinary heritage with a wider audience, I embarked on a mission to elevate these traditional dishes, imbuing them with innovative presentations and irresistible appeal, thereby bridging the gap between cherished tradition and contemporary gastronomy.

### **Could you share a pivotal moment or experience during your apprenticeship at Four Seasons that significantly helped shape your journey?**

During my apprenticeship at Four Seasons, I was fortunate to work closely with the Executive Sous Chef, who became my mentor. I shadowed him diligently, observing his daily routines from the crack of dawn till dusk. One aspect that particularly caught my attention was the meticulousness with which he conducted supply receiving. Every item was scrutinized without exception, leaving no stone unturned.

Curiosity got the better of me, and I couldn't help but ask, "Why?" The chef, rather than brushing off my inquiries, commended my inquisitiveness. He remarked that for every question I posed, he would offer three answers—a philosophy that struck a chord with me.

From that pivotal moment onward, I made it my mission to pose a hundred questions daily, aiming to garner three hundred answers. This thirst for knowledge became my driving force throughout my training, propelling me forward on my culinary odyssey.

***You mention excellence in Japanese cuisine during your training. What aspects of Japanese culinary artistry resonate with you the most?***

My fascination with Japanese cuisine stemmed from a convergence of factors. Firstly, the scarcity of proficient chefs in the region at that time piqued my interest in diversifying my culinary repertoire. Concurrently, Japanese cuisine enjoys global acclaim for its precision and emphasis on health-conscious preparation techniques.

Recognizing the potential for Maldives to cultivate a cadre of skilled chefs to meet burgeoning opportunities, I was drawn to the meticulousness and nutritional benefits inherent in Japanese culinary practices.

Moreover, I encountered a prevailing misconception in our community that sushi equates to raw food, a fallacy I endeavored to rectify. By elucidating the distinction between sashimi, the raw sliced delicacy, and sushi, which involves rice and various ingredients, I aimed to broaden culinary horizons and dispel culinary myths.

Given our abundant marine resources teeming with seafood treasures, mastering Japanese cuisine seemed not only logical but also strategically advantageous for my culinary journey.

***Throughout your career spanning various locations and cuisines, which culinary style or technique challenged you the most and how did you overcome it?***

One culinary technique that presented a formidable challenge was mastering the art of Tamagoyaki. Achieving the perfect temperature, delicately folding the egg in thin layers, and meticulously avoiding scorching over an open flame in a square copper pan—all while ensuring the final product emerges in a pristine rectangle shape—demanded precision and finesse. To conquer this culinary feat, I dedicated countless hours to practice, refining my technique through relentless repetition until I could execute it with unwavering confidence.

Another culinary frontier that proved daunting was the intricate world of BBQ and smoking. The nuances of managing long cooking times, experimenting with various woods, navigating between direct and indirect heat, exploring different regions' barbecue traditions, and discerning between coals, wood, and fossilized wood presented an ongoing learning curve that spans a lifetime. Despite the challenges, each endeavor into the realm of BBQ and smoking enriched my culinary repertoire, underscoring the

notion that mastery is an ever-evolving journey marked by perpetual discovery.

Early in my career, I grappled with the daunting task of conceptualizing and presenting new dishes on the menu. However, through experience and perseverance, I've cultivated the confidence to structure menus and craft dishes tailored to the unique concept of each restaurant. Whether it's a cozy eatery emphasizing simplicity and heartwarming flavors or a sophisticated establishment catering to discerning palates, I've learned to adapt, ensuring that each presentation embodies a balance of culinary artistry and rustic charm. This evolution reflects the dynamic expectations of guests, who seek not only culinary excellence but also an immersive dining experience characterized by thoughtful presentation and genuine hospitality.

***As Chef De Cuisine, what strategies did you implement to ensure consistency and excellence in the dishes served at Kalhu Odi?***

At Kalhu Odi, my foremost objective was to ensure that every dish encapsulated the essence of local hospitality and flavor, leaving a lasting impression on our patrons with every single bite. Central to this vision was the meticulous sourcing of ingredients from local producers, guaranteeing the authenticity and distinctiveness of each flavor profile.

To uphold consistency in both presentation and taste, I implemented standardized recipes, meticulously calibrated to ensure uniform portion sizes and a consistently impeccable culinary aesthetic. In streamlining our menu offerings, I prioritized dishes that showcased the richness of flavor without unnecessary complexity, facilitating swift service without compromising on quality.

Equally crucial was fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among my team. Through comprehensive cross-training across all kitchen stations, we mitigated operational bottlenecks and empowered each member to contribute to the creative process. This not only bolstered team morale but also nurtured a spirit of innovation, enabling us to seamlessly adapt to the diverse culinary preferences of our discerning clientele.

***How do you balance preserving traditional Maldivian flavors while also incorporating modern culinary trends into your menu offerings?***

Maldivian cuisine, a fusion of Indian, Sri Lankan, Arab, and Asian influences, boasts a vibrant tapestry of flavors that tantalize the taste buds. My approach revolves around honoring this rich culinary heritage while incorporating contemporary elements to offer a fresh perspective without veering into ostentation. It's gratifying to hear feedback from customers who remark that my cooking evokes memories of their grandmothers' flavors—an affirmation of my commitment to preserving authenticity while embracing innovation.

To cater to diverse palates, I've seamlessly integrated local flavors into my recipes, adding an exciting dimension to the dining experience. By juxtaposing traditional ingredients with modern presentation techniques, I strive to create dishes that resonate with both Maldivian tradition and

international culinary sensibilities.

***From your insight of extensive international experience, how do you navigate cultural differences in taste preferences and dining expectations when developing menus?***

When developing menus, my primary focus is on showcasing locally sourced ingredients abundant in Maldivian islands while imbuing each dish with a contemporary Western aesthetic and service standard. It's about striking a delicate balance where flavors remain authentic yet presentation undergoes a subtle transformation. Key to this approach is the judicious use of aromatic herbs to elevate taste profiles and ensure a memorable dining experience.

For instance, Garudhiya, a traditional fish broth, is reimagined as a sophisticated soup brimming with authentic flavors, offering a nuanced interpretation that appeals to discerning palates. By marrying traditional recipes with modern culinary techniques, I aim to bridge cultural divides and foster a deeper appreciation for Maldivian gastronomy on a global scale.

***Could you elaborate on your biggest challenge while working in the industry and achievements that have helped in your personnel career trajectory?***

One of the greatest challenges I faced was enduring grueling twelve-hour shifts without a weekly off for nine consecutive months, owing to a shortage of replacement chefs and the absence of labor laws at the time. This experience underscored the urgent need for talent development and recruitment within the industry, motivating me to cultivate the next generation of culinary professionals.

On a brighter note, my proudest achievement lies in being recognized as a brand ambassador by every company I've worked for. This acknowledgment has opened doors to numerous opportunities for growth, including participation in task forces and exposure to diverse culinary environments, facilitating my career advancement.



***Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for the future of Maldivian cuisine and how do you envision contributing to its evolution?***

My vision for the future of Maldivian cuisine revolves around nurturing a cadre of skilled chefs who will continue to innovate and elevate our culinary offerings. By empowering the chefs I've trained to develop compelling menus and create locally inspired dishes, I aim to catalyze a culinary renaissance that garners widespread recognition, perhaps even attaining Michelin star status. Ultimately, my goal is to propel Maldivian cuisine onto the global stage, where it can rightfully claim its place among the world's culinary elite.

## NEW OPENINGS

# Villa Resorts to Unveil New Luxury Flagship Resort, Villa Haven Later this Year



Villa Resorts has announced that its luxury flagship resort, Villa Haven, is slated to open later this year. Nestled in the picturesque South Ari Atoll, this 73-villa sanctuary signifies a significant milestone for the locally owned Villa Resorts, marking its inaugural venture into the realm of luxury accommodations.

Drawing inspiration from the breathtaking tropical landscape characterized by expansive beaches and verdant foliage, Villa Haven is meticulously crafted to cater to a discerning group of travelers known as the Simple Sybarites. Embracing a philosophy that prioritizes sufficiency over excess, these individuals seek indulgence in the elegance of simplicity.

At Villa Haven, understated luxury

intertwines seamlessly with its pristine surroundings, fostering an ambiance of serenity and tranquility. Designed as a haven for those yearning to reconnect with nature, the resort blurs the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces, providing a holistic retreat for guests seeking rejuvenation.

Boasting 73 exquisite sea-facing villas and residences, each adorned with private pools, Villa Haven offers an intimate and secluded island experience unparalleled in its intimacy. Embracing a design ethos that celebrates the raw beauty of the Maldivian landscape, the resort showcases indigenous craftsmanship through its extensive use of sustainable materials.

Nestled within a sprawling expanse of



2,500 square meters, Haven Reserve emerges as the quintessence of opulence on the island. Boasting three bedrooms and three pools, including a main pool that stands as one of the largest private pools in the Maldives, stretching an impressive 40 meters in length, this haven sets a new standard for lavish retreats.

Step inside, and you're greeted by interiors bathed in the soft glow of chandeliers, complemented by the rustic charm of raw furnishings. It's a harmonious blend that redefines luxury, offering a sanctuary where indulgence meets tranquility. Here, guests are invited to uncover the essence of reserved yet serene living, where every detail speaks of refined elegance. Perfectly suited for families and friends seeking an unforgettable escape, Haven Reserve promises an

unparalleled experience in paradise. Amidst the luxurious setting of Villa Haven, culinary enthusiasts are in for a treat with the resort's array of dining venues, each offering a unique culinary experience. Leading the gastronomic journey is Husk, the resort's signature restaurant, which celebrates simplicity and authenticity. Here, dishes are meticulously prepared over the open flame of coconut husks, paying homage to traditional cooking methods while tantalizing the taste buds.

For those seeking a more casual dining experience, The Olive presents a main restaurant concept, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner in a modern market-style setting. Meanwhile, Yuzu offers a taste of Japan, with its elevated perch above the crystalline azure waters providing a stunning backdrop for an unforgettable dining experience.

## Debuting in 2027: Baccarat Hotel & Residences Maldives



The Baccarat Hotel & Residences Maldives is set to open its doors in 2027, situated among five interconnected islands in the breathtaking South Malé Atoll. Owned by Madevco Holdings Limited (ADGM),

known for creating exceptional living spaces, the resort will provide a luxurious experience like no other. Just a short 30-minute boat ride from Malé's Velana International Airport, it will boast over 50 hotel villas and 53

private residences. Designed by HKS and featuring interiors by 1508 London, known for their bespoke and innovative designs, the resort promises to seamlessly blend contemporary elegance with tropical charm.

Guests can anticipate world-class dining experiences, with specialty restaurants helmed by renowned chefs. Beyond dining, the resort will offer curated retail spaces, a Baccarat-themed crystal garden, outdoor cinema, art gallery, and event space showcasing works from renowned artists. Sports enthusiasts will enjoy amenities such as a nine-hole golf course, tennis courts, fishing excursions, and snorkeling.

For those seeking relaxation, the resort

will feature a meticulously crafted wellness spa offering signature treatments, yoga pavilions, and a state-of-the-art gym. Sustainability and conservation efforts, including a turtle rehabilitation center, will underscore the resort's commitment to responsible tourism.

Spanning more than 111 acres, the Baccarat Hotel & Residences Maldives aims to set a new standard for luxury in one of the world's most sought-after destinations. Managed by SH Hotels & Resorts, founded by Barry Sternlicht, the resort will offer lavish accommodations including six- and seven-bedroom mansions and private islands for the ultimate in exclusivity and luxury.

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## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

# Maldives Participates in ITB Berlin 2024 With 214 Tourism Industry Representatives



Maldives Marketing & PR Corporation (MMPRC/Visit Maldives) is participating in ITB Berlin 2024 alongside a delegation of 214 representatives from 107 Maldivian tourism companies.

Taking place from March 5-7, 2024, in Berlin, Germany, the Visit Maldives team is joining hands with the Minister of Tourism, delegates from the Ministry of Tourism, industry partners and other government tourism bodies in a powerful demonstration of the country's commitment to advancing the travel and tourism industry.

Visit Maldives aims to foster strong connections with travel trade partners from Germany and across the globe at ITB Berlin 2024. Sharing the latest updates on the evolving Maldivian tourism landscape and its diverse offerings will be a key focus, while conducting productive one-on-one

meetings in-person remains a crucial part of this activity. We are seeking to solidify the Maldives' position as a top-tier holiday destination for German travelers and provide a platform for participating stakeholders to showcase their individual tourism products and properties.

Visitors to the spacious 504 sqm double-decker Maldives stand were shown the diverse experiences, rich culture, and heritage that await travelers in the Maldives. Additionally, the stand featured 104 co-exhibitor counters, 60 B2B meeting tables, and captivating LED screens displaying mesmerizing experiences that will urge visitors to explore the World's Leading Destination firsthand.

Maldives also showcased cultural performances bringing the vibrant Maldivian culture to Germany. Gastronomic experiences showcase the



culinary delights of the Maldives, featuring food preparation, presentations and tastings.

Displays of authentic Maldivian creations showcase the country's rich heritage and craftsmanship, while 360-degree camera experiences will offer a truly immersive glimpse into the beauty of the Sunny Side of Life. Beyond the stand, Visit Maldives has meticulously planned several events on the sidelines of ITB Berlin 2024 to further enhance the Maldives' presence at the fair. The Maldives Media Meet connected with leading media representatives from Germany and around the globe, providing them with the latest destination updates and generating excitement. This media meet highlighted the government pledges and country's commitment to diversification, sustainability, commitment and new initiatives. In addition to the Chief

Executive Officer and Managing Director of Visit Maldives, Ms Fathmath Thaufeeq, speakers at the event were Minister of Tourism Honourable Ibrahim Faisal, the President's Advisor on Tourism Development Mr Mohamed Khaleel, and the Chairperson of the MMPRC Board Ms Ayesha Nurain Janah.

Germany has been reliably in the top 10 markets for the Maldives for decades, currently ranked at the 5th spot with 27,563 visitors till March 3, 2024. In the remainder of this year, collaborative efforts with the German Travel Association (IMM Germany) will strengthen industry partnerships, while targeted airline campaigns will encourage travel from Germany to the Maldives. Familiarization trips for travel professionals will offer firsthand experience, and advertising in high-end print media will reach a targeted audience of potential travelers.

## Angsana Velavaru Achieves Booking.com's Travel Sustainable Level 3+: A Milestone in Responsible Tourism



In a remarkable achievement, Angsana Velavaru, an all-inclusive premium resort in the virtually untouched South Nilandhe Atoll, proudly attains Booking.com's Travel

Sustainable Level 3+, placing it among the top-tier resorts in the Maldives committed to sustainability. Out of 175+ resorts in the region, Angsana Velavaru stands tall as one of the 25 resorts at this prestigious

level, showcasing a strong dedication to responsible and mindful travel practices.

This accomplishment reflects the growing

trend among conscious travellers who seek destinations aligned with sustainable values. Guests choosing Angsana Velavaru are making a conscious decision to support responsible tourism, underlining their commitment to environmental conservation and ethical travel choices.

Mindful Holiday Rooted in Sustainability Angsana Velavaru's commitment to sustainability is deeply ingrained in the resort's ethos. A mindful holiday at Angsana Velavaru is synonymous with a commitment to environmental stewardship. The resort meticulously employs eco-friendly practices, ensuring that guests enjoy an immersive experience while respecting and preserving the pristine natural surroundings of the Maldives.

The resort's steadfast dedication to sustainable practices is further exemplified by its EarthCheck Gold Certification, a recognition maintained for an impressive eight consecutive years. This certification underscores the resort's adherence to the highest global standards of environmental responsibility and sustainable tourism.

As part of Banyan Group, sustainability is not just a buzzword for Angsana Velavaru but an integral part of the broader philosophy of Banyan Group. The group's overarching ethos, "Embracing the Environment, Empowering People," signifies a profound commitment to caring for associates, protecting the environment, and uplifting local communities.

Banyan Group's three core pillars of sustainability – "Our Environment, Our Community, Our Responsibility" guide its initiatives. The group actively raises awareness, advocates responsible travel and tourism, and drives positive change within the hospitality industry.



EVENTS & AWARDS

# Soneva Fushi to Host 2024 Edition of SOUL Festival in October 2024



activist Richard Williams, also known as Prince EA; author, peak performance expert and founder of the Flow Genome Project Jamie Wheal; and health and wellness cultivator and media personality Irina Sharma, among others.

"Magic healing powers and soul connection conversations. It has left a really big imprint on my heart and on my soul, and I've had some wonderful, deep healing. It's been the best trip I've ever had because it was 100 times more than just a holiday and just education," said Oli, SOUL Festival Guest.

The SOUL Festival returns to Soneva Fushi in the Maldives from October 9 to 13, 2024, for an enriching, immersive exploration of health and wellness. Following its successful debut last year, the second edition will be a platform for discussion and discovery into the 'Future of Wellness' with wellbeing visionaries, thought leaders and pioneers.

presenting conscious, transformative experiences for guests with insightful panel discussions, keynote addresses, engaging workshops as well as curated activities such as meditation, yoga, fitness boot camps, qi gong, breathwork and cacao ceremonies. Incorporating a rich tapestry of inspiration, the festival also presents artistic expressions of music, art and culture alongside an array of wholesome, nourishing dining that focuses on plant-based and adaptogenic

foods to promote balance and restoration.

This year, the festival's distinguished lineup includes internal medicine and endocrine physician Zach Bush; professor of Clinical Stem Cell Research at Karolinska Institutet, Katarina Le Blanc; physician, bestselling author and speaker Jeffrey Rediger; philosopher, writer and founder of The Emergence Network, Bayo Akomolafe; spoken word artist, speaker and rights

Taking place over five days at the idyllic Soneva Fushi in the Maldives' Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, festival guests will be able to reconnect with themselves and nature across miles of pristine sandy beaches and tranquil turquoise waters, complemented by 24/7 Barefoot Guardian butler service, exceptional dining journeys and rare experiences that delight.

Soneva's SOUL Festival redefines wellbeing,



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## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

## High Commission of India Holds India Maldives Developers Conclave

The first ever India Maldives Developers Conclave was organized by the High Commission of India in Male' on March 5, 2024. More than 100 heads and representatives of Maldivian and Indian companies from the construction industry, SOEs and banks attended the event. The aim of the event was to further boost linkages between Indian and the Maldivian companies in the construction sector. The construction sector is a growing sector in Maldives and the need for new housing, warehousing and resort development is ever increasing. Indian companies- suppliers, contractors as well as developers have been present in Maldives for a long time and have the requisite experience to execute contracts in a time bound and efficient manner.

The High Commissioner in his welcoming remarks said that India's growth presents a huge opportunity for the world, particularly for its neighbors and that the Government of Maldives has announced a very ambitious infrastructure development programme and that he hoped that Indian businesses and their partners in Maldives will make full use of these opportunities.



The Conclave included three panel discussions ranging from challenges faced in sourcing and supplies, the competitive advantage of Indian companies in Maldives; how the new and latest technology owned by Indian companies can lead to environment friendly and fast execution of projects in Maldives; as well as on the logistical challenges and way to address them. A useful presentation by the Shipping Corporation of India delved into the advantages of the direct shipping service between India and Maldives and also spoke about the need for diversification of trade for creating more such linkages.

The panelists also spoke about the need for a convenient direct payment settlement mechanism between the two countries so that the dependence on dollars can be avoided. The conclave concluded with useful business-to-business discussions between Indian and Maldivian companies.



## Atmosphere Core Receives Six World Travel Awards Nominations



International hospitality company, Atmosphere Core earns coveted recognition in the World Travel Awards (WTA) 2024 with nominations for six resorts within the three brands, THE

OZEN COLLECTION, COLOURS OF OBLU, and Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts. These acknowledgments underscore Atmosphere Core's dedication to setting industry standards and

delivering exceptional experiences to travelers worldwide.

Within THE OZEN COLLECTION, OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI vies for the title of Maldives' Leading Luxury Hotel Villa in 2024, while OZEN LIFE MAADHOO competes for Maldives' Leading Luxury Island Resort in 2024. Notably, OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI secured the Maldives' Leading Luxury Hotel Villa 2023 in the previous year's World Travel Awards, while OZEN LIFE MAADHOO claimed 2nd Place for Maldives' Leading Luxury Island Resort.

COLOURS OF OBLU proudly presents two nominations: OBLU SELECT Sangeli is nominated for Maldives' Leading Beach Resort 2024, and OBLU SELECT Lobigili is nominated for Maldives'

Leading Honeymoon Resort 2024, building on its 2nd Place win in 2023.

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts sees both its properties in contention for prestigious awards. The five-star, 'Naturally Maldivian' VARU by Atmosphere is nominated for the title of Maldives' Leading Resort 2024, following its 2023 victory in the same category. Atmosphere Kanifushi competes for the Maldives' Leading Family Resort 2024, having clinched this accolade for four consecutive years from 2020 to 2023.

World Travel Awards, widely recognized as the hallmark of excellence in the travel sector, celebrates organizations that consistently raise the bar and provide unparalleled services to discerning travelers worldwide.



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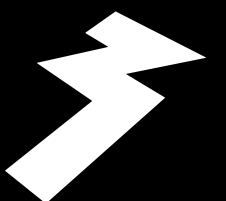
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## IN THE NEWS

## MACL Partners with RDC for Development of Velana International Airport Road Services



Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Road Development Corporation (RDC) to undertake the management and development of Velana International Airport Road services.

The agreement was signed by the Managing Director, Brigadier General (Retd) Ali Zuhair, representing the RDC, while MACL CEO and Managing Director Ibrahim Sharif Mohammed signed on behalf of the company.

Under the terms of the agreement, the RDC will oversee the construction, maintenance, and resurfacing of the airport roads, including regular upkeep, pothole repair, building crack restoration,

and road marking. Additionally, it encompasses the cleaning of roadside areas, drainage systems, and associated infrastructure, as well as public spaces, walkways, and specified zones following MACL directives, along with the responsible disposal of collected waste.

MACL, the leading airport operator in the Maldives manages the nation's largest international airport in Male' and is overseen by a President-appointed Board of Directors. Its Corporate Office on Hulhule' Island governs operations. The opening of Male' International Airport (MIA) in 1981 led to the formation of the Maldives Airports Authority. Recognizing MIA's growth, the government converted

the authority into a separate commercial entity on January 1, 1994, which later merged with Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) on August 1, 2000, becoming a limited liability company.

Established by presidential decree in June 2019, the Road Development Corporation (RDC) is a fully state-owned entity tasked with advancing road construction, bridge repair and maintenance, and the development of highways and causeways using both rigid and flexible materials, alongside reinforced landscaping efforts. Within its second year of operation, RDC managed projects exceeding a value of 1 billion.

## Maldivian Unveils Special Promotional Fares for its Domestic Routes

Maldivian, the national carrier of the Maldives, has unveiled enticing promotional fares for all domestic routes, effective March 17, 2024. These exclusive offers provide exceptional value and convenience for travelers exploring the picturesque Maldives. Booking directly through the Maldivian website ([www.maldivian.aero](http://www.maldivian.aero)) or mobile app enables passengers to secure unbeatable fares effortlessly, encouraging them to embark on their adventures swiftly. Promotional fares for routes such as Dharavandhoo and Madivaru are already available, urging travelers to seize the opportunity to book their preferred flights at special rates promptly. With 16 destinations within the Maldives, Maldivian connects travelers to stunning atolls, turquoise lagoons, and idyllic resorts, maintaining a steadfast commitment to safety and reliability for valued customers.

In a significant step towards enhancing emergency medical care in the Maldives, Maldivian Airlines has inaugurated its Air Ambulance Service. This collaborative effort with the Ministry of Health and



the National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) has led to the establishment of the country's first air ambulance service, ensuring swift and secure critical care delivery to patients. To bolster this vital service, Maldivian Airlines has introduced a dedicated De Havilland Dash 8-200 aircraft capable of operating to all domestic airports within the Maldives, with the flexibility to extend services internationally to India and Sri Lanka.

Maldivian Airlines is now set to expand its fleet



further by converting a second aircraft, a DHC6 Seaplane Twin Otter, exclusively for Air Ambulance Services. This amphibious marvel's unique capabilities allow it to reach local islands, including those distant from traditional airports, facilitating direct flights to remote locations for timely and efficient medical assistance. The addition of the DHC6 Seaplane Twin Otter promises to significantly enhance the reach and effectiveness of air ambulance operations in the country, benefitting both residents and visitors alike.

IN THE NEWS

# Innovations in Tableware: Astrabon Offers Functionality and Artistry in Dining Experiences



Modern restaurants understand that success goes beyond just delicious food. Creating an immersive dining experience, where guests can craft beautiful memories, is just as crucial. Tableware plays an important role in setting this moment. Astrabon recognizes this, offering modern restaurants functional and stylish tableware that aligns perfectly with modern cuisine.

Beyond function, tableware becomes an extension of the chef's artistic vision. Colors add a playful touch, sparking joy and resolving the challenge of translating imagination onto the plate. Textured pieces invite interaction and sharing, adding a perceptible element to the dining experience. The unexpected shapes and material combinations, with generous rims and asymmetry, create a sense of surprise. The thoughtful combination of color, shape, and material in the tableware complements the food, enriching the entire dining experience.

The tableware market's significant growth presents a good opportunity for businesses. As customer lifestyles and trends evolve, the demand for stylish and functional tableware rise up. This trend is particularly pronounced in developing countries with thriving business sectors, offering HoReCA businesses a chance to elevate their dining experiences and stand out from the competition.

Sustainability is no longer a trend, it's a necessity. By choosing Astrabon, consumers can enjoy beautiful and functional tableware with confidence, knowing their purchase supports environmentally responsible practices. The sustainable tableware empowers businesses to elevate dining experiences and attract eco-conscious clientele.

Today's tables are getting a personal touch. Artisanal tableware is hot, with plates and cutlery that mix modern styles with a handmade feel. These unique pieces show off the skills of real craftspeople. It's like modern design meets old-school techniques, creating dishes and silverware that feel special and one-of-a-kind. This trend is perfect for today's customers who want something stylish but also appreciate the work of real artisans.

Modern restaurants are all about flexibility. This means the plates, bowls, and serving dishes can be mixed and matched to fit any type of dining occasion, from a casual lunch to a fancy dinner.

Diners are craving a more expressive dining experience, and tableware is taking center stage. Bold colors, natural shapes, and unconventional designs are replacing traditional styles. Astrabon offers a curated collection of tableware that embraces this movement, allowing you to set the scene for unforgettable meals.

Astrabon is extending a special offer to elevate your restaurant's atmosphere, enjoy a delightful 10% discount on our entire tableware collection. This Ramadan Offer allows you to create a more sophisticated and stylish dining experience for your guests, all within your means.

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BON APPÉTIT

# Rose Saagu Vermicilli



Wafa has had a passion for cooking since she was a young girl. Some of her fondest childhood memories involve preparing and sharing food with her loved ones. Sharing her cooking with family and friends brings her great joy, and she can often be found experimenting in the kitchen, creating new and delightful dishes while recreating old classics. Her home is always filled with warmth and delicious food at any given moment of the day. Wafa started Wafa's Creations in 2018 by selling homemade pickles and rihaakuru, which remain some of her best-selling dishes. However, her thriving business now offers a variety of other yummy local dishes.

This dish was inspired by wafas huband and kids and their love for all things sweet especially with local Maldivian flavours. The dish is a firm favourite in their home and was created by wafa through experimenting with a variety of tastes and flavours.

## INGRIDENTS :

- 4 tablespoon saagu (cooked)
- 4 tablespoons vermicelli
- 1 packet full cream milk
- 2 tin condensed milk (double peach or cowbell)
- 2 tablespoons roasted and small cut mixed nuts
- 1 bottle of rose syrup

## METHOD :

1. In a cooking pot, put the cooked saagu vermicilli and rose syrup (to your taste)
2. Pour half of the milk, 11/2 tin condensed milk & cook till it thickens a little.
3. Pour in a bowl, put the nuts on top, keep it calm, and refrigerate.

## Note:

This dish can be made as a drink too; put more milk and cook.

Serves 6

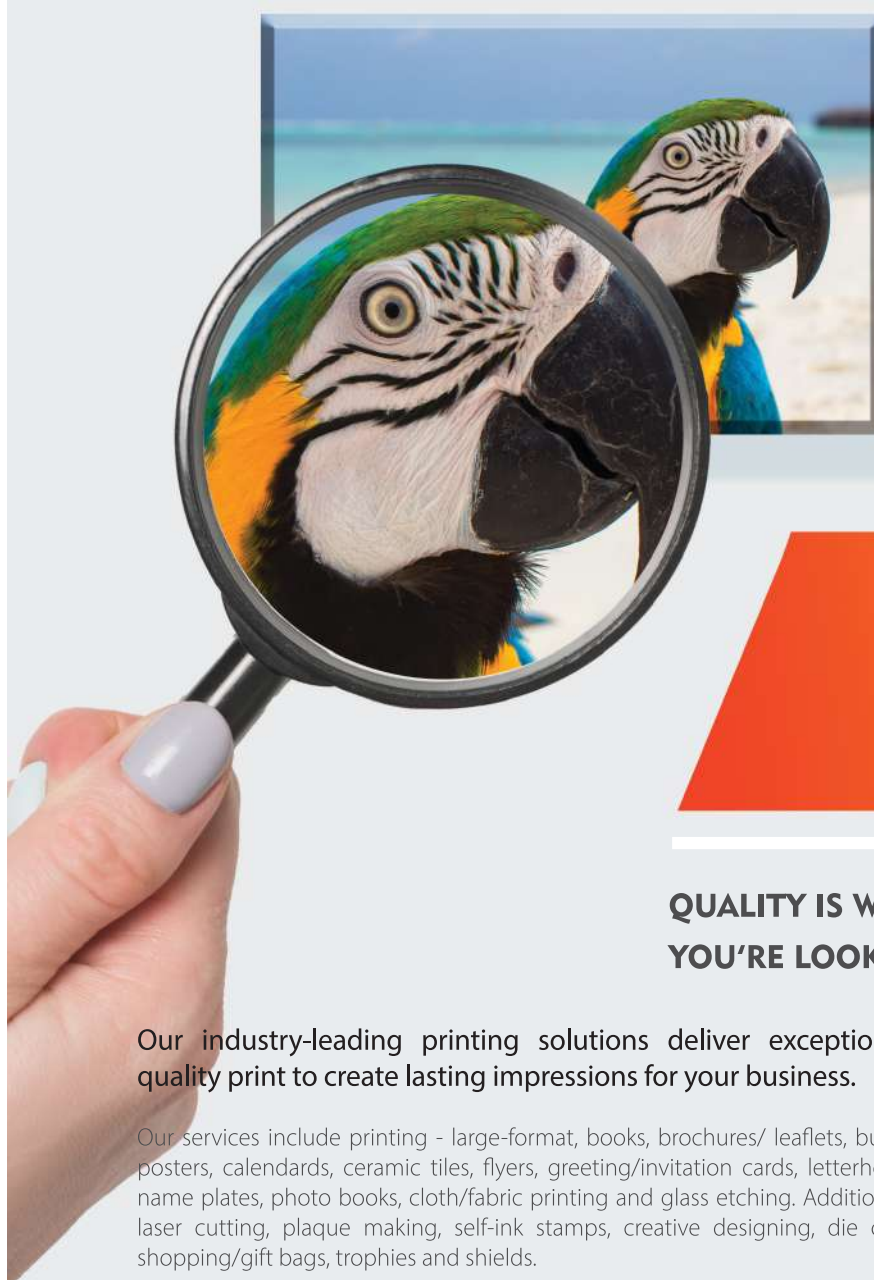


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# Frankly Speaking

**How significant is the incorporation of traditional island culture into festivities such as Eid celebrations at Maldives' resorts, in order to cultivate an authentic representation of Maldivian culture? Is it necessary to modify the traditional practices to cater to the demands of the sophisticated modern market?**



**Shalinee Ahmed**  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
Sheraton Maldives Resort & Spa

Showcasing our cultural Eid experiences to guests at the resort would greatly enhance their stay. Traditional activities and dances such as Bodu Mas, Thaara, Bandiya, and Dhandi Jehun would offer our guests a unique and authentic insight into our culture. These performances do not only entertain but also educate guests about the traditions and customs of our community.

I do not think we should modify the traditional practices, and I do not believe the guests are also particularly asking for a modernized experience. They would appreciate an activity that is more interactive.



**Mohamed Ali**  
Executive Chairman  
FALIM Group Pvt Ltd

It's imperative to infuse traditional island culture into events such as Eid celebrations hosted at Maldives' resorts. By doing so, we not only honor our rich heritage but also provide visitors with a genuine experience of Maldivian culture. Rather than altering these time-honored practices to cater to modern preferences, embracing them wholeheartedly adds a unique charm and authenticity to our festivities. This approach not only enriches the cultural experience for tourists but also fosters a deeper appreciation for our traditions among locals and visitors alike.



**Aminath Suzan**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Maldives Association of Travel Agents & Tour Operators (MATATO)

We're currently discussing the implementation of Eco Tourism, with a particular emphasis on promoting our local culture. However, I feel that our cultural heritage is not receiving adequate attention in our marketing efforts. While we do mention it, cultural promotion seems to be lacking in our overall marketing strategies.

In my view, it's crucial to integrate our local cultures into our festivities, especially during occasions like Eid. We have plenty of engaging activities and traditions associated with Eid celebrations, which could greatly enrich the experiences of our guests. Importantly, we must ensure that any promotion of our culture remains authentic and true to our heritage. Altering our culture to fit certain narratives would only dilute its essence and authenticity. Other festivities which are not part of the local public's traditions need not incorporate our cultural elements. Our focus should be on highlighting the unique aspects of our culture that resonate with our visitors and enhance their overall experience.



**Ibrahim Nizam**  
Brand Strategist  
Hospitality Consultant

Incorporating traditional island culture into festivities like Eid celebrations at Maldives' resorts serves as a way to promote and preserve the unique heritage of the Maldivian people. By embracing and showcasing traditional practices, visitors can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture, fostering a sense of authenticity and connection during their stay.

While there may be pressure to modify traditional practices to align with the expectations of the modern market, it's essential to approach any modifications thoughtfully and conscientiously. Balancing tradition with modernity can enhance the guest experience, making it more engaging and culturally immersive without losing the essence of Maldivian heritage.

Ultimately, the incorporation of traditional island culture into celebrations like Eid at resorts can be a powerful tool for cultural preservation and education, creating meaningful and memorable experiences for guests while respecting and honoring the traditions of the Maldives.



**Zihuny Rasheed**  
Deputy Managing Director  
Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC)

Although we are known for our white sandy beaches and spectacular marine life, our culture and heritage has long been what made the Maldives truly unique. It is these very practices that have been passed down through generations that form the very identity of the Maldives. So it is imperative for our industry to incorporate such culture and traditions in celebrating festivities at resorts to showcase a truly authentic Maldivian experience to guests. This not only helps to educate visitors on our traditions but also fosters a deeper connection with the destination and its people paving the way for a respectful and enriching tourism experience.

Celebrating festivities in an authentic manner are also not only important for guest experiences but also assist in preserving these practices and ensure that they are maintained for future generations along with providing sustainable support to surrounding local artisans and cultural performers which in turn supports the local economies of the islands.

When considering the necessity of modifying traditional practices, it is important to maintain and find the right balance between authenticity, cultural sensitivities and catering for an international market. All adaptations should be maintained within certain respectable boundaries and guests should be provided ample educational information that highlights the significance of the traditions and the values it upholds. By finding a middle ground, resorts can cater for the required demand of the market while ensuring that the essence of these traditions are maintained. Collaboration with local island communities can ensure cultural practices are presented accurately and respectfully.



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