

Switch to Fiji time in style

Kokomo Private Island has upped the ante for those looking to enjoy Fiji's tropical paradise, opening the first private aviation hangar at Nadi International Airport. The 2,266-square-metre hangar took a year to build and includes a luxury transfer lounge complete with entertainment, seating, refreshments and shower facilities, which can be enjoyed upon both arrival and departure. Staffed with 49 team members, the hangar provides guests with a seamless transfer from the airport to the private island, with complimentary helicopter and seaplane transfers from Nadi International Airport for all new bookings prior to 20 December 2019. kokomoislandfiji.com

La Compagnie gets an upgrade

While it can be tricky running an airline on only two routes, business is clearly booming for La Compagnie. The exclusively business-class air carrier has recently begun operating flights from Paris to New York with two additional Airbus A321neo aircraft, while the company's original Boeing 757-200 will now operate on the Nice-New York route. Each plane is outfitted with just 74 seats, which are configured as a personal work environment and include a built-in massage feature. And while the goal is to make the journey as comfy as possible, the new planes will also burn up to 30 per cent less fuel per passenger while producing nearly 50 per cent less noise. lacompagnie.com

Qantas overhauls Frequent Flyer program

Promising more seats, more rewards and fewer fees, Qantas's new Frequent Flyer program looks to be a step up for regular travellers. Over the next 12 months, a number of initiatives will be rolled out, including adding more than one million extra reward seats on Qantas and new partner airlines, reducing carrier charges by up to 50 per cent and introducing Lifetime Platinum status to recognise the most loyal Qantas flyers. While the number of points required for upgrades and Classic Reward seats will increase, Qantas says this reflects improvements in quality. qantas.com



Vietnamese hospitality

Flyer: Cathy Wagstaff
Class: Vietnam Airlines Business Class
Route: Sydney to Ho Chi Minh City
Code: VN772
Aircraft: Boeing 787-9
Flight time: 8.5 hours

The seat Vietnam Airlines' two-class Dreamliner has a one-two-one configuration in the Business cabin, with a fresh, modern look in tan and cream, complemented by mustard accessories: blankets, pillows, slippers and flight attendant uniforms. Although I'm not feeling well, the space wraps around me like a snug cocoon. A particularly nifty feature of the Dreamliner is the dimmable windows. There are five settings, ranging from a tint to minimise glare to blackout mode.

The service The cabin staff are extremely pleasant to deal with throughout the flight, offering a taste of Vietnamese hospitality at 40,000 feet.

The dining The menu has some great options, offering a choice of two starters and four mains. Australian-Vietnamese celebrity chef Luke Nguyen partnered with the airline in 2018 to create eight dishes for Business Class passengers, showcasing the flavours of Vietnam. If you're looking for an authentic breakfast, try the *pho bo*, Hanoi's hearty beef noodle soup.

The entertainment The screens are large – 39 centimetres – and the Lotusar system has a bevy of viewing options, including 94 movies.

The lounge Although there is no dedicated Lotus Lounge at Sydney Airport, Vietnam Airlines passengers have access to the SkyTeam Lounge, the joint endeavour for members of SkyTeam Alliance.

The glam factor The attractive navy amenities bag from Swiss maison Parfums Chariol holds everything you would expect: a moisturising lotion, lip balm, comb, eye mask, toothbrush, socks, ear plugs and a sticker to show whether you would like to be woken for meals. The kits and slippers are sitting on your footstool when you board, so there's no need to wait for these.

The checklist
 Pyjamas: No
 Designer amenities: Parfums Chariol
 Limousine transfers: No
 Celebrity chef: Luke Nguyen is a Global Cuisine Ambassador
 Signature champagne: Champagne Heidsieck & Co Monopole
vietnamairlines.com

A photograph taken from the deck of a white sailboat. In the foreground, a man and a woman are sitting on the white deck, looking out towards the sea. The man is on the left, shirtless, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white bikini. The sea is a deep, vibrant blue. In the background, there are rugged, brown mountains under a clear blue sky. The sailboat's mast and rigging are visible on the left side of the frame.

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FIVE-STAR FIJI

Untouched beaches, a blissful island vibe and a swathe of sophisticated tropical retreats have long made Fiji a five-star favourite. Here we walk you - barefoot, of course - through some of Fiji's hottest luxury properties.



The club on the hill

Although InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa is located on the main island of Viti Levu, it manages to retain a secluded island feel, fringed by the white sands of Natadola Bay. Part of this is thanks to the hillside Club InterContinental, Fiji's first 'resort within a resort' concept. Guests staying in the one- and two-bedroom suites of this sanctuary can take advantage of benefits such as the iTokani butler service and the Club Lounge. This space is the heart of the Club experience, complete with an infinity pool overlooking the bay, tropical high tea in the afternoon and sunset cocktails and canapés. Best of all, guests still have access to all of the amenities of a larger resort, from the multi-award-winning Spa InterContinental to the 18-hole championship golf course and a choice of four dining venues. When you're ready to venture beyond Natadola, the signature 'In the Know' cultural experiences will provide you with an authentic taste of Fiji, whether it's joining villagers for a Sunday church service or seeing the difference community work can make to the children at a local primary school.



Romantic sojourn

With its magical location in the Mamanuca Island group, Likuliku Lagoon Resort is an adults-only retreat that has been constructed in the style of an ancient Fijian village, using a clever mix of natural materials and luxurious modern comforts. Escape from reality in a dreamy choice of chic island-style beachfront or overwater burees. While both are breathtaking, those suspended over the lagoon's stunning reef edge have glass panels in the floor inviting the underwater world in. Guests can choose to laze by the resort's horizon-edge pool or in a mini-Jacuzzi, get to the know the locals on a village tour, explore the kaleidoscopic colours of the reef, end the day with the Twilight Tadra spa experience, or simply soak up a splendid Fijian sunset. And gastronomes will find themselves in epicurean heaven as they enjoy the clean and creative culinary masterpieces produced by Likuliku's kitchens, using only the freshest and finest local and international produce.

The barefoot family

A private island paradise of bone-white sand, swaying palms strung with hammocks and startlingly blue waters, Vomo has 28 sleek and stylish villas and four ultra-luxe residences that offer guests a modern take on Fijian design. Creative dining options include world-class feasts of superb Pan-Asian and European cuisine at the resort's two restaurants and private gourmet picnics on tiny Vomo Lailai. With its Kids' Village, where young explorers can get a hands-on experience of the local culture, the sublime Kui Spa, golf, paddleboarding and extraordinary diving and snorkelling off two private islands, the siren song of Vomo has long been luring discerning travellers to its pristine shores. The addition of the all-new Rocks Pool next to the secluded Rocks Bar and restaurant is a chic adults-only beach club. The island's finest sunset views can be soaked up while relaxing in partially submerged sun loungers at the edge of the pool.



01 Club InterContinental at InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa © Hamilton Lund 02 Kokomo Private Island 03 Likuliku Lagoon Resort © Hamilton Lund 04 Vomo Island Fiji 05 Kokomo Private Island







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06 Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort © Chris McLennan 07 Vatuvu Private Islands Resort 08 Dolphin Island

Underwater exploration

A warm welcome of melodious Fijian song will set the tone for your stay at Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort Fiji. With 25 sophisticated bures, including a Presidential Suite, this award-winning eco-resort has heart, catering as well for honeymooners as it does families, with young guests paired with a nanny or buddy. Its soul, however, is the ocean. Renowned for its dive centre – directed by the son of scuba-pioneer Jacques Cousteau – and its commitment to protecting the marine world, the

resort's location was chosen by Jean-Michel Cousteau for its rich marine life. For an incredible insight into Fiji's underwater realm, enjoy a snorkelling expedition with one of the two resident marine biologists. A beachside day spa offers a variety of signature treatments, and Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort's exquisite culinary offerings are created with produce grown in its own organic garden. Other resort activities include water sports, deep-sea fishing, tennis, volleyball and expeditions to the resort's pretty private island.

Style and sustainability

Laucala Island – owned by Red Bull's Dietrich Mateschitz – was built with no expense spared. And it shows. It is 80 per cent self-sustaining, producing the organic fruit, vegetables, honey and meat used in its irresistible cuisine, as well as providing flowers and spices for the spa. Sustainability also shines through in the natural fibres and woods used in the resort's 25 spacious villas, fresh from a FJ\$5-million makeover. Set amid coconut palms and perched atop the island's volcanic mountains, each offers extraordinary views and a seamless transition from modern indoor to outdoor living with a traditional Fijian feel. Activities include scuba diving, snorkelling, surfing, wakeboarding, a stable of horses, organic treatments at the garden-set Laucala Spa and an 18-hole golf course. There's also a fleet of boats offering every imaginable water sport, including the two-person DeepFlight Super Falcon submarine.

Escape the everyday

Kokomo is less like a private island resort and more like staying with a

family friend ... If that friend had a stunning 56-hectare island to call their own, that is. This intimate island hideaway is a place of relaxed elegance, where pristine reefs and an all-inclusive six-star experience await you. With just five luxury residences and 21 sprawling beachfront villas on the island – each featuring a private lounge, bar, deck and infinity pool – you'll rarely encounter another guest except at meals. Speaking of which, there's no menu here; simply tell the chef what you're in the mood for, and it will appear as if by magic.

A right royal retreat

Given the royal seal of approval by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, romance blossoms on the 324-hectare Kaibu Island and the three all-inclusive villas of Vatuvara Private Islands Resort. Each of the three exclusive seaside retreats is nestled in a fragrant garden with a beach, infinity-edge pool and

extensive decks to soak up vistas of the neighbouring islands. Each villa comes with a personal masseuse and either a massage burre on the deck or a dedicated massage room with an additional Jacuzzi bath. If you are able to tear yourself away from your opulent retreat, you'll enjoy gourmet meals prepared with ingredients direct from the island's organic farms or fished from the surrounding ocean waters, a four-hole golf course and putting green and a myriad of ocean activity, made possible by the three boats waiting at the marina.

Castaway luxury

Nestled like a jewel in retina-searing waters, on a petite island just north of Viti Levu, Dolphin Island offers an incomparable luxury castaway experience to a maximum of just eight guests, on an exclusive-use basis. What makes this property so special is Dawn Simpson, the resort manager, who –

together with her team – makes you feel as if your mum is looking after you. Nothing is too much trouble.

The four oversized bures feature interiors designed by Virginia Fisher, and each room references the colours, textures and patterns of the Pacific with large glass doors that open onto a wooden deck overlooking manicured lawns and the beach. But the island's pièce de résistance is a romantic hilltop sleep-out boudoir, lit only by lantern and candlelight. ✦

Travel file

Accommodation

fiji.intercontinental.com likulikulaqaon.com
vomofiji.com fijiresort.com laucala.com
kakomislandfiji.com vatuvara.com edgeretreats.com

Getting there

fiji Airways.com

Info

fiji.travel

