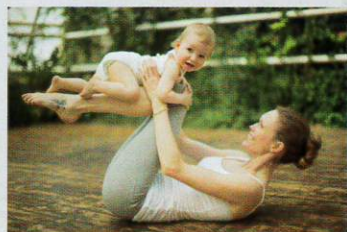


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TRAVEL



ALL FOR YOU

Fiji's high-end offering continues to grow, with its numerous private islands embodying the concept of 'barefoot luxury'. Relaxed, no-fuss indulgence is the mood at the Kokomo Private Island resort (pictured), where guests arrive via seaplane to white sandy beaches and picture-perfect sunset views. Turn the page for more from two of Fiji's best private islands...



KOKOMO ISLAND

The pilot on our seaplane is barefoot and dancing on our flight out of Kokomo, a fitting embodiment of the fun and laidback spirit of this sprawling resort. Owned by Australian billionaire Lang Walker – there with family when we visit; a charming host of sunset drinks on the dock – the 56-hectare private island opened to guests in 2017 after he had developed it as his own personal getaway. Now, it's one of the most luxurious retreats in Fiji, with the aim of being one of the best in the world.

It all begins at the private hangar, opened at Nadi's airport in May last year and reportedly shared with Google. On arrival at the island you're greeted by singing staff

before heading to your room; 21 beachfront villas are on offer as well as premium 3–6 bedroom hillside homes with soaring views. Our villa was huge, with a nature-inspired interior and a lap pool overlooking the white sandy beach. You'd be forgiven for wanting to stay in, but if you're more of an active relaxer there are activities galore: fishing is popular, as well as snorkelling and scuba diving on the Great Astrolabe Reef.

Eating and relaxing are well catered for too. There are three restaurants to choose from (we loved the seaside Beach Shack and Walker D'Plank), with much of the food grown on the island with a 'dock to dish' focus, while the dreamy Yaukuve Spa Sanctuary is a discreet and calming escape in the middle of the island.

HOW TO GET THERE

Leaving from Kokomo's new luxury private lounge and hangar at Nadi International Airport (which reportedly cost \$45 million), the scenic 45-minute flight on the resort's private Twin Otter seaplane or helicopter has gorgeous ocean and reef views. Visit kokomoislandfiji.com.



PACKING ESSENTIALS

1. Faithfull the Brand sarong, \$109. 2. Oribe Imperméable Anti-Humidity Spray, \$76. 3. Lonely bikini top, \$140, and bottoms, \$120. 4. Faithfull the Brand hat, \$99.

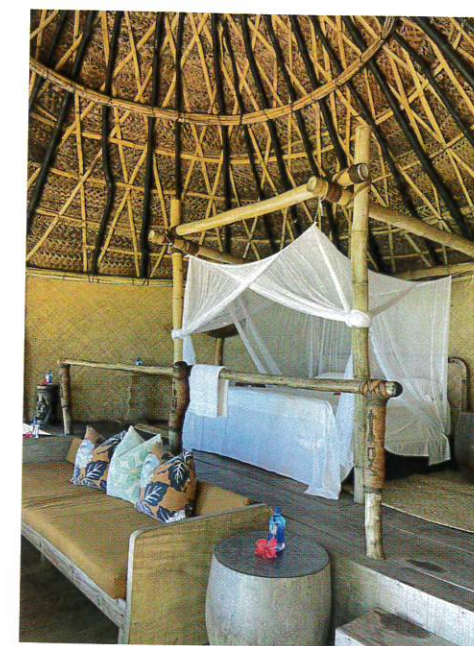


DOLPHIN ISLAND

As soon as you step onto the jetty into the welcoming arms of charming host and manager Dawn Simpson, it's as if time stops. On this small exclusive hire island – only 14 acres, and able to host a maximum of eight guests – your natural body clock and desires take over. You're the only guest, and the timetable is up to you – whether you want to head into the surrounding clear blue waters for some snorkelling, explore beyond on the island's Catamaran or do nothing and relax on the sand.

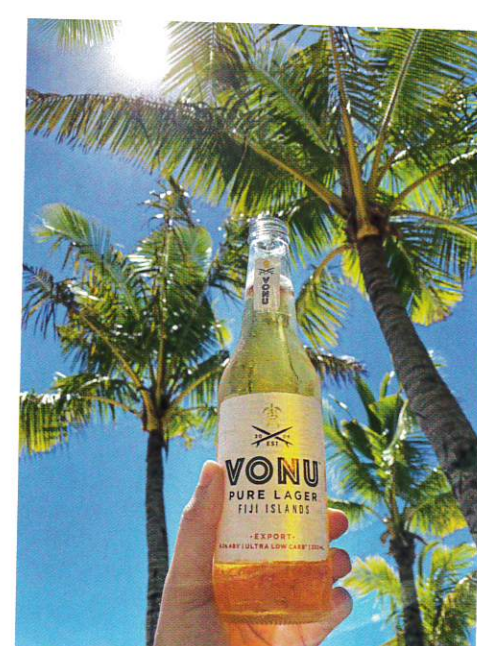
If you want even more privacy, there's a charming open-air hilltop hut where you can stay the night and wake up to the sunrise, looking out onto the reef and crystal-clear water (mosquito nets provided). We enjoyed a blissful afternoon here, reading and napping in the cool ocean breeze.

We spent most of our time at the island's main bure, with its laidback luxury interiors by New Zealand-born interior designer Virginia Fisher: think oversized conch shells, plush couches and traditional Fijian



artwork. This is the heart of Dolphin Island, where you're encouraged to while away hours beside the nearby infinity pool, and where Dawn and her team cook meals for their guests.

The food here is truly special – Dawn is famous for her cooking, and absolutely spoilt us with lobster, crab, *kokoda* (raw fish) and a traditional Fijian *lovo* (underground oven). She likes to host a farewell feast on guests' final night, with a beach bonfire and cultural performance from locals under the stars.



Though there are other islands nearby (one uninhabited; the other with a few small holiday homes), this feels like a genuine private island hideaway; the ideal spot to unplug, unwind and indulge.

HOW TO GET THERE

An easy 15–20 minute private boat ride from the mainland, following a roughly two-hour car ride from Nadi International Airport. In a rush to relax? You can also transfer via a 40-minute helicopter or seaplane. Visit dolphinislandfiji.com.



Clockwise from top left: Kokomo Private Island's seaplane at the jetty; Dolphin Island's open-air hut; locally brewed Vonu beer and other drinks are available in chilly bins kept beach and poolside; Dolphin Island's main bure; sunset walks on white sandy beaches.

The writer was a guest of Tourism Fiji.

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