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PLANNING AHEAD

Wish you were there?

The world's in lockdown, but we can still dream. From Fiji to the Seychelles, these are the spots we'll be rushing back to



Koh Yao Noi, Thailand
PEROWNE INTERNATIONAL

The Sunday Times | Sunday April 05 2020, 12.00am BST, The Sunday Times

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Bohemian luxury in Indonesia

Among the arc of islands south of Sulawesi, Sumba offers bohemian wildness with jungle luxury. The 2.5km curve of sand on the southwest coast, behind which the private estate Nihl Sumba stands, is pounded by surf and backed by forest. An infinity pool that seemingly melds into the ocean? Of course. Sea that's so emerald it's the envy of Instagram? Naturally. Horse riding on the shore at sunset? Go on then.

The estate's 21 villas are dotted about the hillside, so you're secluded. Mamole Tree House sits amid the leafy canopy; Marangga has an outdoor bed with views; Haweri is so close to the sea that you can almost roll out of bed into the water.

For surfers, the wave to catch is the coveted "God's Left"; the drink to order is the

mango bellini. The resort is also known for its philanthropic ethos, with the Sumba Foundation funding village-based projects to improve health, by providing access to clean water, for example.

Go for surf in June or July, and for turtle hatching in April to September.

► *Plan ahead: Seven nights' full board in March or April 2021 from £5,400pp, including flights (scottdunn.com)*



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Filmic Thailand

The King of Thailand is holed up in a four-star hotel in Germany with a 20-strong entourage for the lockdown. Why he didn't choose a remote island, such as Koh Yao Noi, in his home country is a mystery.

A speedboat ride from Phuket in the middle of the karst-studded Phang Nga Bay (you'll recognise it from the James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun*), Six Senses Yao Noi is one of the most photogenic resorts in Thailand. Wooden, multi-level villas embedded in the jungle hillside offer front-row seats for sunrise, with the toothy limestone needles silhouetted against the sky. Private infinity pools seemingly spill over the cliff edge and yellow-beaked hornbills fly overhead.

Cycle rides on dusty roads around the island take you past acid-green rice paddies and fishermen hauling their daily catch from painted longtail boats. It's the stuff of Alex Garland's dreams.

► *Plan ahead: Sixteen nights' B&B in February 2021, including three nights' B&B at Six Senses Yao Noi, from £5,995pp, including flights (audleytravel.com)*



Cool vibes in the Caribbean

Kick off your slippers and imagine that your feet are not on sisal, but sand — the pinky sort — on Bequia, the diminutive island (9km long and 2km wide) in St Vincent and the Grenadines. You're staying at the Bequia Beach Hotel behind the crescent-shaped Friendship Bay Beach.

New luxury villas are scheduled to open at the end of this year, but you would be equally happy in a beachfront suite, with plantation vibes, breezy balcony and Mustique on the horizon.

Popular among the yachting set, Port Elizabeth on Admiralty Bay, on the other side of the island, is lively. Explore it via the waterside Belmont Walkway. Head south on this path to Jack's Beach Bar on Princess Margaret Beach; you're having a soursop colada — cheers.

► *Plan ahead: Seven nights' B&B in January 2021 from £2,310pp, including flights (carrier.co.uk)*





A room at Bequia Beach Hotel



Lap of luxury in the Seychelles

Scattered like confetti across the Indian Ocean, some 2,000km east of Kenya, the Seychelles are the place for upmarket castaways — giant tortoises, sherbert-soft sand, jade-green jungles and enough privacy to guarantee that yours are the only footprints on the beach.

Constance Ephelia on Mahé is the largest resort in the Seychelles, with 313 villas and suites. Set either in the garden or beside the beach, they have been decked out with wicker and accessories in varying shades of sea glass.

The hillside villas are standouts, with private infinity pools overlooking the calm, aquamarine sea of Port Launay Marine Park. With a kids' club, countless pools and activities such as scuba diving, kayaking and zip-lining through the jungle, it is also perfect for families.

► *Plan ahead: Seven nights' half-board in June 2021 from £2,088pp, including flights (kuoni.co.uk)*



Culture on the riviera Maya

There's no denying the allure of a dozy beach day, lolling in the shade of a palm-leaf parasol, page-turner in one hand, pineapple juice in the other. But if lockdown has involved too much inactivity, the subsequent escape has to come with livelier options.

Step up, Tulum, on Mexico's Caribbean coast between the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve and the well-preserved remains of a cliff-top Mayan city. You can also snorkel with turtles, explore cenote sinkholes or the inland Mayan city of Coba. But leave time for your base — the eight-room, lushly planted Encantada.

The hotel name means "enchanted", and you will be, by the palm-thatched buildings, the balconies with their hammocks and plantation chairs, the huge net-draped beds facing the sea, and the food. Mayan and Mexican dishes come on handpainted ceramics (snack on the fish tacos), or book a table at Nü, run by celebrated chef Cesar Castañeda.

► *Plan ahead: Seven nights' B&B in January 2021 from £1,005pp (i-escape.com). Fly to Cancun with Tui or British Airways*





The Encantada hotel



Private island in Fiji

The South Pacific is calling — or, more specifically, Fiji, a republic comprising 333 tropical dots in the South Pacific with white-sand beaches, technicolour reefs and rainforests. Kokomo, on the doorstep of one of the world's largest barrier reefs, is a good place to start.

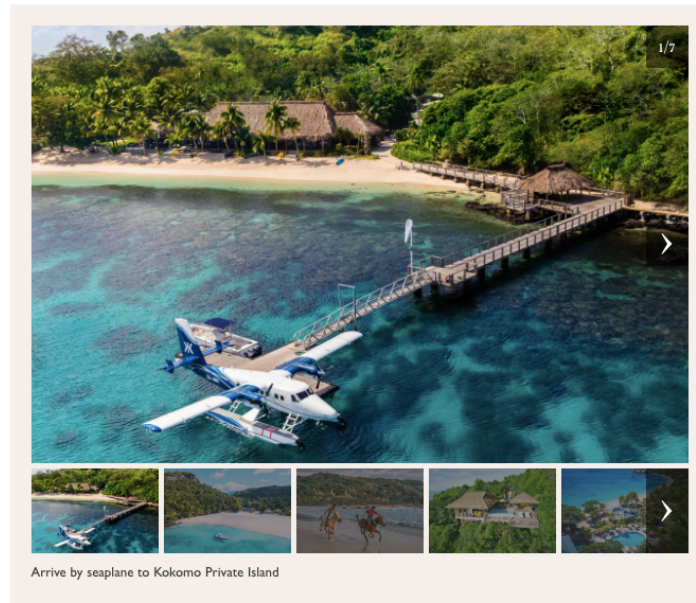
You get a sense of its scale from the seaplane that delivers you to this private island, the project of an Australian property magnate. But to truly appreciate its beauty, hurl yourself into its underwater world, into swirling schools of fish and patrolling turtles.

Ashore, 21 beachfront bures — plantation timbers and woven pandanus ceilings — open onto gardens with daybeds, hammocks and infinity pools.

Spend evenings at the Beach Shack restaurant, where the menu depends on the catch. The only downside? The whirr of the seaplane arriving to spirit you home.

► *Plan ahead: Seven nights' all-inclusive in January or February 2021 from £9,595pp, including flights (turquoiseholidays.co.uk)*

The best escapist stays



Arrive by seaplane to Kokomo Private Island

Where are you heading after the lockdown? Let us know in the comments below

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Newest



Sharis Rostamian

S

Add to the conversation...

R

RhinoN 4 HOURS AGO

You need to read about the visa problems in Thailand and the lack of care for people stuck there - never mind if they made the wrong choices in when to arrive or leave. Forcing people to attend immigration offices and cramming them together is crass to say the least. The feeling is that the government do not care about people, anyone even their own staff. Virtually every other Country is extending visas without all this hoo haa. It is all about the money.

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B

Barbara Dickens 9 HOURS AGO

Apart from the virus still hanging about people will have no money and maybe no jobs and huge debts. What a joke, forget the advertising revenue and don't publish rubbish like this

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R

Robert Michael 5 HOURS AGO | [Barbara Dickens](#)

My reaction too. I think it will be some time after the worst of Covid-19 is over that people will regain trust in the travel business. It will be both too risky and doubtless much more expensive than it has been.

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T

tardis68 15 HOURS AGO

Are the times living in a parallel universe? Who is seriously thinking ahead to their £10k summer holiday in 2021 at the moment?

Even if restrictions are lifted, until there is worldwide immunity, you're just risking getting caught up in an outbreak somewhere abroad.

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P

Peter Harrison 17 HOURS AGO

Instead of telling us places that we could go in the future, why don't you do an article on places that you can legally go now where there are minimal restrictions on going out. There are very few but the world is not in total lockdown and would be interesting to hear of the ongoing tourist experience of places that are still actively encouraging tourism eg Iceland.

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D

Duke Nukem 16 HOURS AGO | [Peter Harrison](#) | *Edited*

They do that too but the real issue is that the carbon smothering 24/7 travel attitude needs to stop unless we want to face a generation of Gretas...ah well look Ryanair has a sale on ;)

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