

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

## I Visited Over 30 Luxury Hotels Last Year—and This All-inclusive Private Island Resort Is the One I Can't Stop Thinking About



Aerial view of Kokomo Private Island Fiji.  
Credit: Kokomo Private Island

We were a couple of yards off the shore of [Kokomo](#), an all-inclusive private island resort in Fiji, learning how to sail a small catamaran when it finally happened: a black, wing-like fin poked above the surface. Within seconds, we were surrounded by manta rays.

It was our final outing on the water, and I'd all but given up hope of seeing them. One day earlier, we'd been searching far and wide for the otherworldly creatures in our snorkel masks on a glorious day trip aboard *Twilight*, the resort's new 51-foot Leopard, when a call came in that they were seen swimming right in front of the resort. By the time we'd enjoyed our cave kayak and private beach picnic, they were gone.

Such is life at Kokomo, where guests' biggest worry is whether or not they'll find themselves on the right marine vessel at the right time—there are nine spectacular specimens in its fleet, and that doesn't include all of the non-motorized aquatic toys. Add the seaplane and floating trampoline, and looking out at the water from your private pool villa feels like getting a peek inside a billionaire's playground. And in a way, that's exactly what this is.



Scuba diving with Manta Rays.  
Credit: Kokomo Private Island

The late Lang Walker, a Sydney-based property developer who was at the time one of the [top 20 richest men in Australia](#), first spotted Yaukuba Levu Island off his superyacht and saw an opportunity to bring his dream world to life. What was originally slated to become an Aman resort turned into a Walker family-run affair and a passion project for the avid sailor, who had long been collecting ideas from his travels.



Lounge chairs sit on the floating pontoon.  
Credit: Maria Cruces/Kokomo Private Island

Well, it turns out I have more in common with an Australian tycoon than I would have guessed, because Walker created something straight out of my fantasies as well. (When I wandered off the beach around lunchtime and found a hidden oasis where a Neapolitan chef was serving poolside pizza, for a moment I actually wondered if he had magical mind-reading powers.) Of all the hotels I was lucky to visit last year—including seven island resorts in one summer alone—Kokomo is the one I still revisit regularly in my daydreams.

### WHAT WE LIKE

- Opportunities to explore the surrounding waters, including the Great Astrolabe Reef, abound. Kokomo has a fleet of nine boats, and guests can book diving, snorkeling, and fishing tours, along with private beach picnics. There are also non-motorized vessels like kayaks, mini-catamarans, and paddle boards, which can be taken out at any time—and incredible snorkeling right off the resort's shore.
- Cultural experiences include kava ceremonies, village tours, church visits, and weaving and jewelry-making classes.
- The resort manages to be at once a romantic oasis for couples and a fun-packed getaway for families, with complimentary on-site nannies, a kids and teens club, and activities for all ages.

## The Rooms



Aerial view of the Ocean Grand Residence.  
Credit: Mark Lane/Kokomo Private Island

Kokomo has 21 villas ranging from one to three bedrooms, along with five residences, which have three to six bedrooms. We stayed in the smallest option, a one-bedroom sunset villa—which, at 1,259 square feet, was not small at all. Our lush gardens and private pool felt secluded but looked directly out onto a quiet section of beach, and inside we had a living room and bar stocked with drinks and snacks (do not sleep on the island-made chocolate-dipped honeycomb), an outdoor rain shower, and views of the ocean from our bed and sunken bath tub. The decor uses natural materials to bring the outside in.

We preferred staying in a sunset villa, finding our side of the island to have calmer water for swimming and easy access by foot to the main restaurants and bars, but the sunrise villas would be perfect for those looking to truly get away from it all. The residences, ideal for multi-generational trips, sit up in the hills, offering a bird's-eye view you don't find at beach level.

## Food and Drink



The interior of the Beach Shack.  
Credit: James Vodicka/Kokomo Private Island

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There are three dining venues at Kokomo, each distinct in flavors and ambiance. At Beach Shack, expect Fijian specialties and fresh seafood, with an emphasis on farm-to-table dining using produce grown on the island. Much more than a shack, this well-designed space is open for three meals a day and effectively serves as the resort's living room. It also has a sunken cocktail bar on its beachfront deck. At Walker D'Plank, you'll feel like you're on an island in Thailand, thanks to colorful decor, tables set on a cove teeming with reef sharks at night, and a vibrant menu centered around Asian street food favorites. In the middle of the island at Kokocabana Pool Club, Italian chef Enzo serves up wood-fired Neapolitan-style pizzas and authentic Roman pastas. In-villa dining is also included, and residences come with a private chef barbecue experience.

## Spa and Fitness



Relax at the Yoga Shala.

Credit: Maria Cruces/Kokomo Private Island

The Yaukuve Spa Sanctuary occupies a serene slice of the island, where a thatched-roof pavilion draped in white linens is surrounded by tropical gardens. Guests can choose from facials, aromatherapy and hot stone massages, and body treatments, or opt for a "journey," including a jetlag recovery and Moroccan hammam experience. There's also a new gym, plus meditation and yoga classes—often held at the elevated yoga shala, with some of the island's best views.

# Sustainability and Accessibility



The farm at the resort.

Credit: Nina Ruggiero/Travel + Leisure

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Kokomo is a leader in working to improve Fiji's sustainability efforts, with its own 5.5-acre organic farm, hydroponics garden, seawater desalination plant, bee hives, and vanilla plantation, all producing items used on restaurant and spa menus. Much effort is put into recycling, waste-sorting, gray-water irrigation, and composting behind the scenes. Guests can request a guided tour of the farm and back-of-house operations to get a closer look.

General manager Karen Merrick told *Travel + Leisure*: "I often remind our teams of a guiding quote: 'Sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' You need to read that a few times to truly understand it. It's not just a principle for us, it's a way of life."

In addition to an ongoing coral restoration project and diver-led reef cleanups, the [Kokomo Manta Conservation Project](#) includes manta tagging and identification and an "adopt a manta" program to help support efforts that have contributed to a 30% growth in the local manta population since its start. Guests are also invited to take part in this initiative.

For travelers seeking accessibility, ramps can be added to any beachfront villa. Four of the five residences are wheelchair accessible, according to the resort team: Astrolabe, Namara, Ocean, and Sunset.

## How to Book



Boats from the Kokomo Fleet.  
Credit: Nina Ruggiero/Travel + Leisure

Inclusions differ between villas and residences, and all are listed [here](#). Villas at [Kokomo Private Island Fiji](#) start from \$2,500 per night, and residences start from \$7,900 per night.

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/kokomo-private-island-fiji-all-inclusive-resort-review-11964038>