



A SLICE OF PARADISE

Exclusive private island resorts in Asia

WORDS / Isabel Putinja



Privacy is the ultimate luxury - particularly when taking some time out from a demanding business schedule. Who wouldn't dream of having their own private island retreat for those moments? Some of the most exclusive Asian luxury resorts do offer a whole island as a playground, while others are designed to offer as much seclusion and privacy as possible.



Photos c/o Aman Resorts

With secluded locations, deserted white sand beaches, and stunning surroundings, following is a review of some of the most luxurious Asian private island resorts. Some have their own private airstrips to land your private or chartered airplane, whilst others offer facilities for seaplanes or yachts from the mainland.

Amanpulo Resort, Philippines

The Philippines is perhaps not the first destination which comes to mind when planning an Asian getaway, but this spectacular Southeast Asian archipelago has over 7,000 islands and exquisite beaches which easily rival those of Mauritius and the Maldives.

Part of the Aman Resorts luxury chain, the Amanpulo is the only property on

Just 300 metres offshore are colourful coral reefs in sparkling turquoise waters.

picturesque Pamalican Island, nestled in the Sulu Sea. The pristine beaches here are made of powder-fine white sand and the backdrop of tiny islands dotting the shoreline provides a stunning seascape. Just 300 metres offshore are colourful coral reefs in sparkling turquoise waters.

The 40 twin-roofed casitas, inspired by traditional Philippine architecture, are set in the tropical hillside, along the sandy beach or perched among the treetops. The hilltop casitas have dazzling views of the

seascape and offer complete privacy while the beach-side casitas are just steps away from the sand along a private pathway.

Guests who want to indulge should choose one of the 2-, 3- or 4-bedroom holiday villas complete with a private pool, living and dining pavilions, an outdoor terrace, and the exclusive services of a cook and housekeeper: Everything that is needed for a relaxing and rejuvenating escape!

Best time to go:
November to May.

Nearest airport:
Amanpulo has its own private airstrip on Pamalican Island. Flight time from Manila International Airport is 1 hour.

Yacht mooring:
Private yachts can moor at the island with prior approval from the management.

More information from
www.amanresorts.com/amanpulo



Photos c/o Song Saa

Song Saa Private Island, Cambodia

Cambodia's untouched islands of tropical rainforests and white sand beaches are reminiscent of Thailand before the days of mass tourism. Less than a year old, Song Saa is a stylish and elegant 27-villa resort which has been generating enthusiastic reviews.

Set in the Gulf of Thailand among tropical reefs and a spectacular, unspoilt habitat, this is the perfect romantic getaway. Everything here is steeped in 5-star luxury, from the lavish outdoor bathrooms to the huge infinity pool. This eco-friendly resort has been built with sustainable materials and with utmost respect for the natural surroundings. The sloped, thatched roofs and natural wood furnishings blend seamlessly into the tropical rainforest setting.

The overwater villas are for those who like to be as close to the sea as possible - the ocean is just feet away from the private balcony, while guests who want complete

privacy can opt for a jungle villa facing east or west, providing perfect vantage points for stunning sunrise or sunset views. Ocean view villas have private beaches facing east to the sunrise.

All villas have private outdoor plunge pools and sun decks where guests can unwind and relax in seclusion. ▷



Best time to go:
November to May.

Nearest airport:
Sihanouk International Airport (flight time is 45 minutes from Phnom Penh and 75 minutes from Siem Reap). Song Saa is 40 minutes from Sihanouk on the resort's luxury speedboat. There are also four weekly services by helicopter to Song Saa from Phnom Penh (70 minutes).

Yacht mooring:
Yachts can moor close to the island.

More information from
www.songsaa.com



Pulau Jaya, Indonesia

For those who dream of a private tropical hideaway, Pulau Jaya in the Indonesian Riau Archipelago is a picture-perfect destination.

Originally the private residence of a prosperous shipping family, today the whole six-villa island can be booked for groups of 10 to 16 guests.


Alternatively, the villas can also be booked out individually for a minimum of two nights' stay.


These beautiful luxury villas built of driftwood in traditional Javanese-style are perched on raised stilts with high thatched roofs, and are tastefully decorated with elegant wooden furniture, creating a cosy atmosphere of rustic charm.


The wrap-around verandas, sea-view terraces, open and spacious lounges and high ceilings provide ample opportunities for outdoor living with the sea breeze naturally cooling the interiors.


This is the perfect place to relax, recuperate and truly feel as though you have a tropical island to yourself. There's a 25-metre swimming pool to splash around in and a white sand beach to stretch-out on, while the island's 140-foot yacht *The Hang Tuah* is available to guests who want to explore the surrounding islands.

Dolphin sightings are common!

 **Best time to go:**
March to November.

 **Nearest airport:**
Fly to Hang Nadim International Airport in Batam. The island is easily accessible by boat from Batam, or Singapore to Tanjung Pinang ferry terminal on Bintan island. From there, the resort arranges land transfers to its private jetty (45 minutes) and by speedboat to the island (20 minutes).

 **Yacht mooring:**
Yachts can moor at one of four moorings set off the island.

 **More information from**
www.pulau-joya.com

Photos c/o Dedy Goh

Taprobane Island, Sri Lanka

Perched on a two-acre rocky island jutting into the sea just off the south-west shore of Sri Lanka sits an eccentric octagon-shaped luxury villa. Built in the 1920s by an English Count, Taprobane Island is the only privately-owned island in Sri Lanka. It offers a slice of old-world charm and a unique holiday experience to guests who come here to leave the rest of the world behind them.


This has been a favourite retreat for writers, including Robin Maugham, Arthur C. Clarke and Paul Bowles, who wrote *The Spider's House* here.


The adventure starts on arrival: Guests have to wade 180 metres through shallow waters to access the island. The staff are happy to carry luggage, and sometimes an elephant is on hand to help provide a truly majestic arrival.


The romantic villa has four comfortable bedrooms with 4-poster beds and colonial-style furniture, each with an ensuite bathroom and a balcony or patio. Book the four rooms with a few friends and you can have the whole island to yourself. Six staff members will take care of guests, including a resident chef who will prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner to order.

The only things to do are relax in the infinity pool overlooking the sea, stroll through the tropical gardens, or lounge on the large veranda which offers views over the bay of Welligama. On the mainland, meanwhile, the nearby World Heritage city of Galle, famous for its Dutch fort, is definitely worth a day-trip. ▷

2 **Best times to go:**
August and September;
December to March.

 **Nearest airport:**
The closest airport is Koggala airport,
a 15-minute drive away.

 **Yacht mooring:**
Yachts can moor close to the island.

 **More information from**
www.taprobaneisland.com

Photos c/o Taprobane Island





Photos c/o Anantara Kihavah Villas

Anantara Kihavah Villas, Maldives

The Maldives is one of the most luxurious destinations, and is famed for picture-postcard beaches which are often voted the best in the world. Chic resorts are aplenty here, but Anantara Kihavah Villas, located on Kihavah Huravalhi Island – which opened in 2011 – is definitely one of the most exclusive.

It boasts the country's longest swimming pool at 49 metres, six distinctive restaurants and bars, a six-suite overwater spa and an underwater wine cellar. The atmosphere here is one of sophisticated elegance and elaborate luxury.


All the 74 villas and four residences have elegantly furnished interiors and


many irresistible extravagances such as private infinity pools, outdoor showers, oversized bathtubs, sundecks, and swinging daybeds. The overwater villas and residences are literally in the lap of nature, with direct access to the sea and a glass-bottomed bathtub through which fish and other sea life can be seen.


The ultimate luxury is, perhaps, the 24-hour personal host assigned to each villa and residence who will attentively, but discreetly attend to guests' needs and requirements.


With coral reefs so abundant, diving is one of the most popular activities in this island paradise. Guests are assigned their own personal boat and diving guide. Nearby Hanafaru Bay is one of the most spectacular diving destinations in the

world, and a hotspot for underwater photographers. Here divers can enjoy the unique experience of seeing hundreds of manta rays and even swim with whale sharks. [BJA](#)

 **Best time to go:**
January to April

 **Nearest airport:**
Male International Airport. The island is a 35-minute flight away by seaplane.

 **Yacht mooring:**
Yachts up to 35 metres can moor off the island while super yachts can drop anchor. The waters are too shallow for yachts to sail up to the resort's jetties, however.

 **More information from**
<http://kihavah-maldives.anantara.com>