



FOUR SEASONS RESORT AT LANDAA GIRAAVARU BAA ATOLL, MALDIVES

WEIGHT
LOSS

IN BRIEF Otherworldly treatments in a stunning natural setting

THE LOWDOWN On the last evening of a 10-night stay here, you will be led to a platform over a gently lapping turquoise sea to lie down in shavasana wearing a soothing eye mask. It is instantly calming. More people arrive and sit in a circle focusing their attention inward. A huge swell of voices rise up and sing together, chanting melodically and harmoniously. The entire spa team are sending you on your way, sealing their good work with one final, all-powerful blessing. They sing for at least 10 minutes and each of them lays a hand on the body in unison. It is impossible not to laugh or cry – it could go either way. The palpable love of the staff is what guests remember. The Maldives may be awash with decent spa-hotels, but this one is something special. While it might feel geared to revved-up designer couples with matching Louis Vuitton luggage, it's rare to find such a holistically centred and spiritual place. You know it's going to be good as soon as you begin to absorb the clever design of the place – half the treatment rooms are located in villas on stilts over the sea where a warm breeze ripples through. The rest are dotted among fragrant herb gardens and earthy paths where Tibetan prayer flags flutter. Meditation takes place on the jetty overlooking the pancake-flat ocean and anti-gravity yoga in a pavilion surrounded by lush vegetation. There's also a little shop with beautiful handmade paper, bathroom goodies and remedies. If you want to experience Ayurveda within the safety net of an accomplished outfit, nowhere delivers better than this retreat. The skilful doctors are plucked straight from Kerala

(Dr Shylesh and Dr Sooraj are utterly charming and knowledgeable) and treatments are delivered with the utmost care and attention, most of which involve two therapists working together. Foot scrubs and head massages are a standard beginning to at least an hour and a half of escapism. You can eat according to your dosha (as determined in a consultation), in any one of the numerous restaurants, or you can even embark on the new panchakarma detox: a two-week cleanse that will leave you feeling grounded and restored (the real deal is a 21-night life-changing commitment). Other programmes are equally intense and effective, including the seven-day Chakra Blessings ritual, conceived by British brand Ila. Expect a journey as sensitive and sensory as its divine products: marma-point stimulation; soaks in hot tubs filled with basil and hibiscus; rose oil rubbed into your heart chakra. Take in the surroundings on bike, happily negotiating sandy paths and palms. As for spots to drink in the view, there are strategically positioned swinging chairs facing the sunset. The service is seamless, the food spot-on, the location exactly what you want in the Maldives.

INSIDER TIP The treatments are grounding, but don't forget the nearby ocean for amazing diving and snorkelling (it's like being dropped in an aquarium), swimming with dolphins and boat rides.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers seven nights from £3,199 per person half board, including flights and transfers.

HEALING HOLIDAYS EXCLUSIVE Complimentary half board for stays between 11 May and 20 December 2016 if booked by 31 March.