

Kandima review: A five-star slice of heaven in the middle of the Maldives



By HELEN KELLY
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Kandima review. A five-star slice of heaven in the middle of the Maldives (image: KANDIMA)

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Pictures of Kandima don't do it justice as it's even more beautiful in real-life

Highlights

- + A five-star resort
- + 264 stylish villas and studios
- + Impeccable attention to detail
- + Longest swimming pool in Maldives
- + Complimentary snorkelling at house reef
- + Lush, tropical location



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Kandima Hotel Review

Kandima is set on a stunning island in Dhaalu Atoll with a natural lagoon and lush tropical surroundings. The resort is set across a 3km island catering to everyone from young families to newlyweds.

Whether you crave some much-needed time to relax on the beach or are looking for an adrenaline boost, there really is something for everyone at Kandima.

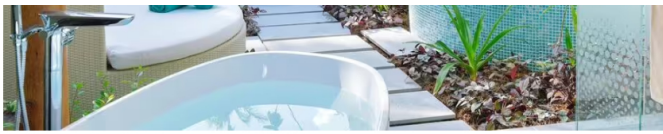
Expectations for the holiday were high after it was voted [Travellers' Choice 2023](#) by [TripAdvisor](#). Pictures of the resort don't do it justice as it's even more beautiful in real life.

The best way to get to the island is by seaplane, which gives you the chance to view the whole island from above. When you arrive, staff welcome you with a cool towel and a refreshing fruit drink before checking you in and taking your cases to your room.

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Beach Villas come with a private outdoor bathroom (Image: KANDIMA)

Rooms

Rating: 5/5

There's a wide variety of rooms to choose from with 264 villas and studios set across the island. Beach and Sky Studios offer incredible views across the lagoon and are super stylish. But if you want something a little more private, opt for a villa.

At the top end of the island are Aqua Villas which are perched over the water, meaning you can jump into the sea from your own terrace.

Some also come with their own pool if you'd like the ultimate overwater experience. At the opposite end of the island are Beach Villas, which is where we stayed.

Each villa is just a few steps away from the beach and several come with their own pool if you don't fancy a dip in the sea. They are open plan with a comfortable sitting area and the softest kingsize bed you'll struggle to get out of each morning.

The villas also come with a TV, desk and plenty of storage space. The highlight though, has to be the semi-outdoor bathroom - which, it's worth noting, is extremely private. The outdoor shower is a blessing on those hot days when you want to cool down quickly or simply want to wash the salt out of your hair. And, if having your own pool on the beach wasn't enough, you can lie back in your private jacuzzi as the sun sets.

There's plenty of sea life to take your breath away

While it will be hard to pull yourself away from your room, there's plenty on offer at Kandima to keep you busy.

The Eskape Spa is a calming, tranquil part of the island where you can enjoy a massage as you listen to the sound of the waves or enjoy one of their healing therapies.

There's also an onsite plunge pool and sauna. Staff are attentive and instantly make you feel at ease. If you want to explore off the island, then try the Turtle Quest, which caters for all abilities.

Staff at Aquaholics will take you out on a boat so you can snorkel along the island's very own house reef. Even if you don't spot a turtle, there's plenty of sea life to take your breath away and you might even be fortunate enough to spot an Eagle Ray or Reef Shark.

Staying closer to the shore, you can rent a glass-bottom kayak to explore the coastline or hop on a jet ski to whizz around the island. Other activities on offer include wakeboarding, parasailing and scuba diving.

Or, you can unleash your creativity at the Kula Art Studio where resident artist Zima will be on hand to help you paint your own artwork to take home. You can book a private class or join one of the group tutorials.

If you're wanting some time away from the kids, then drop them off at Kandiland run by dedicated, multilingual child carers. There's no chance the kids will get bored with so much for them to do, including an outdoor water park, trampolining and crafts.



There's plenty to do at Kandima including kayaking around the island (Image: KANDIMA)

Dining

Rating: 5/5

There are four meal plans to choose from at Kandima but if you don't want to worry about a single detail on holiday then Dine Around All Inclusive is the best option for you.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are all included at the all-you-can-eat buffet but you can also dine at the à la carte restaurants Smoked, Sea Dragon or Azure, which are highly recommended. Non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks are also included with your mini-bar restocked daily.

Azure was a particular highlight with its Mediterranean-themed menu, with plenty of fish, meat and vegetarian options.

Dishes are light and fresh, meaning you can sample more of the menu. To start, the Trio of Fritters and Caprese Burrata are highly recommended while the Grilled Seabass Fillet with eggplant and tomato tarte tatin is not to be missed.

Staff recommendations include the Tiramisu which does not disappoint. Meanwhile, at Smoked, everything is cooked on a custom-made grill and homemade giant smoker.

While you may expect the menu to be meat-heavy, Kandima has ensured there are vegan and vegetarian options

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on offer at every eatery on the island. For couples, you must try the Destination Dining option.

Staff set up a private table on the beach for a romantic meal watching the sunset across the bay - perfect for anniversaries, proposals or just a special evening with the one you love.

For an adults-only option then Sea Dragon is the ideal choice as it offers authentic Asian cuisine with a modern touch.

Guests can choose from freshly caught fish from the waters of Dhaalu Atoll for dinner before heading through to the Forbidden Bar. The Chicken Xioa Long Bao Dimsum and Pan Fried Chicken Shanghai Dumplings are so good you won't want to share. And for dessert, you can't leave without trying the Kaho Neeo Mumuag (Fresh Mango with Sweet Sticky Rice).



Kandima guests can enjoy destination dining at Smoked restaurant (Image: KANDIMA)

Amenities

- + Free Wifi
- + In-room entertainment system with 40-inch LED TV
- + Mini bar / Hair Dryer / Safe
- + Family Friendly
- + Coffe Machine
- + Access to 24 hour medical clinic
- + Two boutiques
- + Shuttle bus

Location

Rating: 4/5

You will struggle to find anywhere as beautiful as Kandima. You're surrounded by a clear blue sea and white sandy beaches.

While the island itself is perfect - and currently being extended to offer even more for guests - it isn't the easiest place to get to.

Guests need to be prepared to take either a speed boat and domestic flight to the island or pay for a seaplane. The seaplane is a more expensive choice but for a once-in-a-lifetime trip, it's highly recommended as the views upon arrival are unrivalled.

In terms of the resort as a whole, care has certainly been taken to ensure that wherever you're based, you aren't far from amenities with the main HQ located in the centre while the restaurants are dotted along the island.

There's also a beach bar at the tip of the island for those staying in the Aqua Villas and Studios, while those in Beach Villas are close to Breeze where there are nightly events including the White Party and Full Moon Party.



Guests at Kandima can enjoy a massage while listening to the waves at the Escape Spa (Image: KANDIMA)

Value for Money

Rating: 5/5

While **Kandima** is certainly on the more expensive side, it's well worth every penny. Accommodation is of the highest standard with housekeeping checking in daily while the restaurants strive to cater for every guest. Staff go above and beyond to ensure your stay is the most memorable and you are able to sit back, chill and enjoy yourself.

High season is of course more expensive and often busier on the island so if you are looking for a more relaxed vibe, opt for dates in low season.

Find rooms and book direct on the [Kandima website](#) or, compare deals and prices on [booking.com](#) or [Hotels.com](#).

Final Verdict

Overall, if you're heading to the maldives then Kandima should be at the top of your list of places to visit. From the moment you arrive to the moment you leave, you feel at home.

Staff are attentive, friendly and always on hand to help. The food is impeccable with something for everyone with plenty of restaurants to choose from.


You might think it would be easy to get bored on an island but at Kandima there's a new activity to try every day.

From snorkelling to the spa and parasailing to painting, it's hard not to find something to do. If you do feel like getting off the island though, you can take a trip out to go scuba diving or hire a boat for the day.

Highlights include seeing eagle rays and sharks at the house reef, jet skiing around the island and enjoying a romantic dinner on the beach.

Kandima really does cater for everyone, from couples who want to enjoy their honeymoon in the privacy of their beachfront villa to families taking over a sky studio.

Kandima truly does go that extra mile to ensure your trip is one you won't forget and you'll never want to leave.



Dhaalu Atoll 20212
Maldives
Telephone: +960 676 0077
Website: www.kandima.com



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