



The St Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort is located on a private island.

GUIDELINES

We flew from Singapore to Male on SilkAir.

If your accommodation is far from Male, the resort can arrange a seaplane transfer by Trans Maldivian Airways. For shorter distances, the resort can arrange a boat transfer.

We chose The St Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort because it has a full-day Kids Club programme and full babysitting services.
 Not all resorts welcome families and young children, so it is best to check beforehand.
 Some resorts offer full-board meals and drinks.

The Maldives is an Islamic country, so it is important to be mindful of the culture and avoid nudity or skimpy dressing in public spaces.
 When snorkelling, help to protect the marine ecosystem by not standing on the corals, which are fragile.

To Maldives, with kids

Raymond Liu jets off on a pseudo-honeymoon with his wife to the Maldives, along with their three young children

TEN years ago, on a sandbank in the Maldives encircled by the Indian Ocean, I proposed to my wife.

During our idyllic stay in the country, we came across hardly any families, not to mention babies. The Maldives was very much a glamorous, beguiling and seductive lover's paradise.

So, it was with some trepidation that we headed back with our three boisterous children — aged from seven months to five years — in tow.

But our fear that our kids would vanquish the romance and tranquil bliss of honeymooners dissipated as soon as we boarded the Male-bound flight — almost a quarter of the passengers were families with young children and babies!

Island paradise

Fond memories of our previous visit came flooding back as our seaplane from Male began its gentle descent into a wonderland of azure waters and white sandy beaches. We were greeted by our personal butler, bearing

freshly plucked and chilled coconuts, when we arrived at The St Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort, a luxury hotel located on a 9ha private island

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught sight of three resident eagle rays elegantly gliding by in the waters next to the reception area, as though to welcome us to the country.

My normally restless two-year-old son stood still several times, closed his eyes and inhaled the fresh, crisp scent of the sea — an experience quite out-of-the-norm for a city boy like him.

Swaddled in the sunshine and lapped by turquoise waters, the resort has 77 garden, beach and overwater villas with their own pools.

Activities for everyone

In the heart of the resort, hidden deep within the jungle, is a communal space for families, spanning the size of two tennis courts.

Here at the Vommuli House, there is a gym, hair

and nail salon, yoga studio and Children's Club for kids aged four to 12.

Parents can leave their children at the club from 9am to 6pm, where they can take part in activities such as yoga, cooking, and art and craft classes.

In the five days we spent there, my five-year-old daughter folded origami dolls from coconut leaves, painted pirate hats and even learnt how to make pizza.

One evening, she walked us to the water in front of our beachfront villa, pointed at the sand and taught us how to spot hermit crabs. No prizes for guessing where she had learnt that skill.

We spent our mornings on the beach with our children, building sandcastles that were washed away as the high tide rolled in in the afternoon.

But thanks to the Children's Club, we could have a relaxing couples holiday, knowing that our eldest child was being kept busy and our younger children were being looked after by the babysitters.

My wife and I had the luxury to soak in the sun on our private sun-deck or, for once, simply do nothing but lie in bed and enjoy the symphony of the ocean waves.

Jewellery and dolphins

One day, we cycled by the glistening sandy beaches and to the overwater spa.

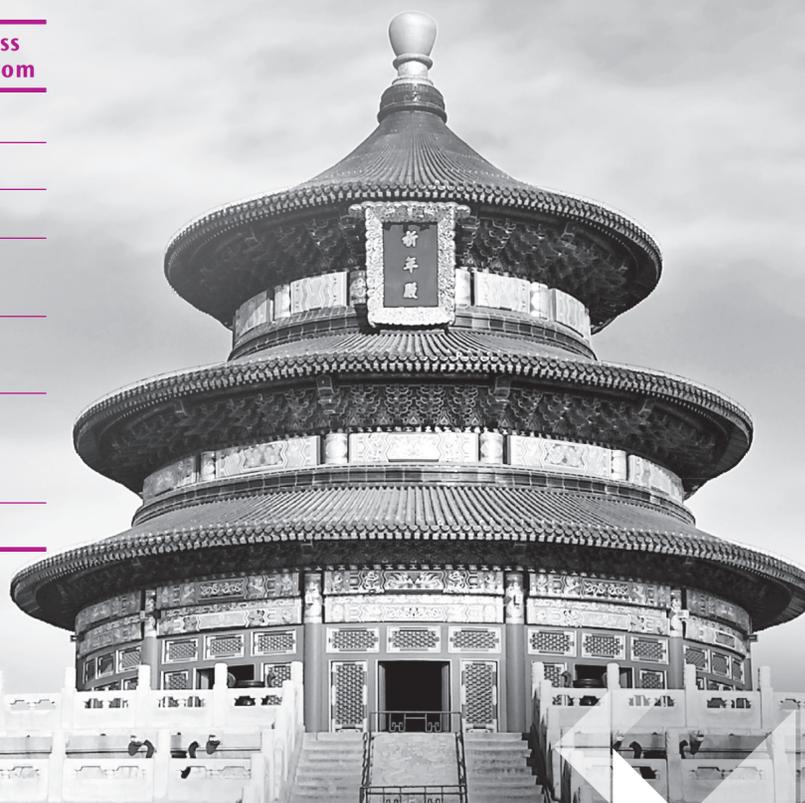
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CONTINUED FROM D11

To Maldives, with kids



The writer's children playing in front of the villas. PHOTOS: RAYMOND LIU

On another day, we took a 15-minute boat ride to Rinbudhoo island, home to some of the Maldives' most talented silver and goldsmiths.

The jewellery-making and stone-carving heritage dates back more than eight centuries.

Legend has it that after being exiled to Rinbudhoo for stealing the king's gold, the monarch's chief jeweller taught the villagers how to make jewellery.

My wife was more than happy to bring home some Maldivian handcrafted jewellery, and I found it challenging to disappoint the warm and friendly villagers.

During a dolphin-spotting cruise one evening, our family spotted some of the mammals just off the resort island.

We squealed excitedly as they flirted about underwater and leapt out of the seas, but my son was unimpressed.

What interested him more was commandeering the boat's wheel, something the captain was gracious enough to entertain.

What a life!

The Maldives allowed my wife and I to have a family vacation while still luxuriating in the tranquillity of being away from our kids for a few hours every day and spending quality time as a couple.

It was with reluctance that we left the heavenly sanctuary and readied ourselves for a return to our city lives, where kids and work take centre stage.

But we comforted ourselves with the thought that the Maldives would welcome us back — with or without kids.

travelDEALS



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