

FAMILY



AMILLA FUSHI, BAA ATOLL, MALDIVES

The Maldives is an awesome family destination. The excitement starts on a seaplane ride captained by barefoot pilots (in fact, shoes are redundant here). On arrival, it's hard to choose where to drop the bags: for teenage thrills there are cool white cabins over the lagoon or tree houses 40ft up among the giant banyans with plunge pools that appear to float in the jungle canopy. Best for younger children, though, are the two-bedroom beach villas, which have plenty of dash without any dangerous design: shady gardens, private pools and moments from the house reef (see the dolphins swimming by the jetty at tea time). Amilla has also recently opened its residences: magnificent, Miami-style beach houses with four to eight bedrooms, playrooms and huge kitchens. But there's no need to cook. The emphasis is on laidback eating. Dig your toes in the sand and let the kids run around at Baazaar: a cluster of rustic restaurants set beside the largest pool in the Maldives (policed by hawk-eyed lifeguards).

Fussy eaters love the Fish & Chip Shop (fish fingers or lobster tempura) and Joe's Pizza, which delivers to the villas. The kids' club is staffed by possibly the most amiable people on the planet, who will cheerily meet any request, from play-acting the *Frozen* soundtrack to administering complicated sun-cream regimes. In-house marine biologist Lauren Arthur wears a mermaid tail for guided snorkelling tours and takes trips to the blue hole on a Penguin submarine. There's something rather wonderful in the air here – go now before they grow up.

INSIDER TIP Stock up on kiddie essentials at the Emperor General Store, a juice bar and deli that sells Marmite, popcorn and cupcake mix.

JOURNEY TIME A 10-hour flight to Malé, then a 30-minute seaplane transfer **TIME DIFFERENCE** +5 hours

BOOK IT Cleveland Collection (+44 20 3111 0805; clevelandcollection.co.uk/condenast) offers seven nights from £7,559, based on two adults and one child sharing, half board, including flights, transfers and one complimentary spa treatment per adult.