

PERFECT
ISLAND
RESORTS

 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELER

BEST

TRIPS

WHERE TO GO

IN 2019

MEXICO CITY
TAHITI
DORDOGNE
OMAN



BEST LIST

ISLAND RESORTS



► Dine in a candlelit grotto, dive with manta rays, or lie back for a waterside massage



The sea in all its styles, from big-wave drama to lapping lagoon, sets the scene at the world's most spectacular island resorts. Whether guests arrive by boat or by plane, an island escape affords a remove that a mainland property can't mimic. Untethered and unbound, isles from the tropics to the Arctic compel adventurers and

sunseekers drawn by the dream of downtime. Where better to relax and write resolutions for the year ahead? Here are 21 of our favorite island resorts, from Caribbean idylls that have bounded back after the 2017 hurricane season to eco-retreats in Africa.

—Elaine Glusac

Time + Tide Miavana on Madagascar's Nosy Ankao island makes a luxe base for exploring—and lounging.

BEST LIST ISLAND RESORTS

The Americas

UNITED STATES

The Big Island, Hawaii

Soak in aquatic endeavors at the **Four Seasons Resort Hualalai** (●), which offers a snorkeling cove, outrigger canoes, and separate pools for families, adults, and lap swimmers. The water theme flows into the ground-floor rooms, all of which feature outdoor showers in a lush garden.

UNITED STATES

Puerto Rico

Travelers are once again heading to **Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve** (●), newly reopened after a year's refurbishment. A mile of scalloped beaches edge the 1,400-acre property, the former estate of Laurance S. Rockefeller, which has three golf courses, 11 miles of bike trails, and 114 oceanfront rooms. Take a dip in the beach club's vast pool or, if you're in a ground-floor room, a private plunge pool. Fronted by a nearly 100-year-old ficus tree, the five-acre Spa Botánico is a sanctuary within a sanctuary with treehouse treatment spaces, a water circuit of hot and cold temperatures, and an herb-filled apothecary for custom aromatherapy.

UNITED STATES

Nantucket, Massachusetts

From the 1875-vintage inn **The Wauwinet** (●), guests can explore Nantucket by land in a 1948 Fleetmaster station wagon or by sea in the 21-passenger *Wauwinet Lady*. The adults-only resort, neighboring tranquil Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge, offers entry to private beaches on the ocean and the calmer bay. After port-and-cheese hour, dine at Topper's restaurant, which serves oysters harvested 300 yards away.

UNITED STATES

St. Simons Island, Georgia

Just six cottages at the **Lodge on Little St. Simons Island** (●) share the 11,000-acre barrier island that's protected by the Nature Conservancy. Guests have access to seven miles of beaches and naturalist-led outings to birdwatch, canoe, and hike.

CHILE

Chiloé Island

With 24 rooms and a spirit of adventure, **Tierra Chiloé** (●), a National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, takes visitors on excursions to discover the Chiloé archipelago, from trekking coastal cliffs and kayaking around bays to cruising past *palafitos*, traditional stilt houses. Afterward, an infinity pool, massages, and local seafood await.

JAMAICA

Negril

Perched atop limestone cliffs at Negril's west end, 12 pastel cottages and suites lure privacy seekers to **The Caves** (●), owned by Island Records founder Chris Blackwell. It's a beginner-friendly jump into inviting waters to explore the chasms. Then tinkle in the cave-ensconced rum bar or dine in a candlelit grotto for two.

ST. LUCIA

Soufrière

With a marine reserve offshore and the Piton mountains as backdrop, **Anse Chastanet** (●) brings adventure to the beach. The former French plantation, which retains 18th-century ruins, now serves as a playground for outdoorsy types. Dive or snorkel directly from shore, or test your quads on a summit of Gros Piton.



Canada's Fogo Island Inn perches on stilts rising 50-plus feet.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Guana Island

Unplug the smartphones and play castaway crew on **Guana Island** (●), an 850-acre wildlife sanctuary with 19 cottages and villas and a 40-year history of entertaining families. Ways to spend quality time with the kids range from strolling seven beaches and snorkeling among some 170 species of fish to hiking, foraging in fruit orchards, and checking flamingos off the bird list.

CANADA

Fogo Island

Off the coast of Newfoundland, **Fogo Island Inn** (●) is both an Atlantic Ocean refuge and a portal to the local culture. The 29-room National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World engages islanders to make furniture, sew quilts, and lead berry-picking or hiking excursions. Newfoundland's "seven seasons" inform every stay, from the locavore restaurant dishes to the scenery that shifts from flowers to ice.

CANADA

Vancouver Island

Tucked in the rugged west coast of British Columbia's Vancouver Island, the **Wickaninnish Inn** (●) makes for a warm refuge even in storm-watching season (November-February) with 75 wood-paneled rooms on a stony peninsula between coastal temperate forest and the sea. Its Ancient Cedars Spa deploys nature—pedicures come with water views—and indigenous practices in its healing treatments.

Europe

ICELAND

Grindavík

The mineral-rich waters of this island nation's most famous attraction surround the 62 rooms of the new **Retreat at Blue Lagoon Iceland** (●). Beyond soaking in the steaming, milky basin and slathering on silica mud, seek additional therapy at the subterranean spa with volcanic rock walls and in-water massages. Modernist rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows channel a blissed-out vibe; windows overlook a moss-softened lava landscape. Dine on seasonal Icelandic specialties in Moss Restaurant, featuring a chef's table and wine cellar made of carved rock. Don't forget to arrange a wake-up call, should the northern lights start dancing.

ITALY

Isola delle Rose

The **JW Marriott Venice Resort & Spa** (●) provides the best of both worlds: the enchantment of the City of Canals, a 20-minute boat ride away, and the tranquility of a 40-acre private island. Stroll through the olive grove, take a dip in the pool, and dine at the Michelin-starred waterfront restaurant in view of the distant city lights.

MONTENEGRO

Sveti Stefan

The 15th-century fortified island of Sveti Stefan now links to Montenegro's mainland via an isthmus, but the **Aman Sveti Stefan** (●) that occupies the village, with 58 rooms arrayed in stone cottages, maintains a sense of remove. Maroon yourself in palm-shaded lanes or swim to pink beaches ashore. (Most of the resort is open only spring through fall.)

Asia

INDONESIA

Flores Island

At the newly opened **Ayana Komodo Resort**, **Waeiccu Beach** (●), dive in a marine sanctuary, strike a yoga pose on a paddleboard, and take a safari in Komodo National Park to see Earth's largest lizards. Sailings on the resort's nine-cabin *phinisi* yacht visit deserted beaches.

INDONESIA

Sumba Island

Twenty-seven bungalows dot the 560 acres at **Nihi Sumba** (●). Expert surfers try the legendary left break, while paddleboarders ply jungle rivers. A visit to NihiOka spa begins with a trek (or car ride) through rice paddies to your own *bale*, or pavilion, overlooking the sea.

MALDIVES

Kunfunadhoo Island

In the Indian Ocean's Baa Atoll, **Soneva Fushi** (●) combines kaleidoscopic reef life with on-land family fun such as a Lego room and an instrument-filled music room. In the evening, take a sunset jaunt to watch for dolphins or listen to the resident astronomer tell stories about the stars.

Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Kangaroo Island

With 21 suites strung above its namesake body of water, **Southern Ocean Lodge** (●) steeples guests in the wilds of the island. The National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World offers walks to the Remarkable Rocks, sea lion safaris, and evening sundowners with wild kangaroos (aka "kangas and kanapés").

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Bora Bora

Kiss the clock goodbye in one of 89 villas—most built over the pristine lagoon—at the **St. Regis Bora Bora** (●). Kayak, sail, or simply chaise-lounge with views of Mount Otemanu. Butler service, a restaurant menu by Jean-Georges Vongerichten, and traditional *taurumi* massages round out the relaxation.

FIJI

Kokomo Island

The Great Astrolabe Reef, one of the world's largest, encircles the Kadavu Island Group, home to 140-acre **Kokomo Private Island Fiji** (●), a 21-villa, five-residence resort well-suited to family reunions and weddings. Hike to a waterfall, learn to surf, or help the resident marine biologist propagate a coral garden.

Africa

MADAGASCAR

Nosy Ankao

Off northern Madagascar, the new 14-villa **Time + Tide Miavana** (●) is a jumping-off point for exploring the 37,000-acre marine preserve around it, where whales, sailfish, and manta rays swim. Land safaris, accessed by helicopter or boat, visit groups—or "conspiracies"—of lemurs.

SEYCHELLES

Fregate Island

More than a hundred bird species, thousands of giant tortoises, hundreds of nesting turtles, and just 16 villas—each with a pool and butler—occupy **Fregate Island Private** (●). The National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World supports the conservation of this so-called mini-Galápagos, also home to seven white sand beaches, a dive center, and a restored forest.



At Kokomo Private Island Fiji, residences frame the water.