

Deep dive

Upward Curve explores six of the best Asian diving resorts

BAWAH RESERVE, INDONESIA

Within the Anambas Archipelago, this reserve is made up of six separate private islands and three lagoons, with 13 beaches in total. The accommodations range from tented garden suites or treehouse lodges, to pool villas and overwater bungalows, with varying options for bedrooms.

In addition to the scuba diving opportunities, there are also snorkelling and sailing options, as well as boating and kayaking, and even paddle boarding. On land,

stargazing is easy and stunning with the low light pollution and forest hikes and beach games are also available.

Dining at Bawah could be at Tree Tops, where the focus is on fine cuisine and the canopy experience, or the Boat House, where the vibes are more relaxed and the outdoor cinema nights can be enjoyed. The Jules Verne Bar at the summit of the island pays tribute to the 19th Century author with a themed menu, and the beachside restaurant Grouper is available

for a lighter, more casual dining experience.
mrandmrsmith.com

NAPASAI RESORT KOH SAMUI, THAILAND

In the midst of tropical gardens of cashew and coconut groves, this self-described 'secluded island hideaway' offers more than just a great scuba experience. With flowery gardens and beautiful surroundings, this resort boasts a swimming pool and swim-up bar, a spa, a yoga deck, two tennis courts and an extensive fitness centre. In addition, May Thai boxing classes and language lessons are available, as well as Thai massage classes, photography classes and culinary demonstrations. There are options from one to five bedroom suites available, all with ensuite bathrooms and kitchens, living

and dining areas. These can be oceanfront, or have sea or ocean views. There is a Beach restaurant and a venue called Lau Thai, as well as an Infinity Bar at the pool and many local options around Koh Samui.

Other than diving, snorkelling and hidden cove explorations are available, as well as boating, countryside and bicycle tours, sunset cruises and other water sports. Elephant excursions are a popular attraction, and the diving experience in Ang Thong National Marine Park is memorable, with coral and tropical fish to see.

belmond.com

Below: Cabbage corals at the Coconut Groove dive site, in the Anambas, Kepulauan Riau in Indonesia Right: A spectacular lagoon in El Nido, Palawan, in the Philippines



ATMOSPHERE RESORTS & SPA, PHILIPPINES

The diving on offer at this resort includes a PADI diving course, technical diving and dives focused on viewing the marine life in the area. On top of that, the resort has a focus on wellness practices, including a Sanctuary spa, a yoga pavilion and fitness facilities, mountain biking trails and running tracks. In addition, there are local island tours on offer, opportunities for dolphins and bird watching, snorkelling and even swimming with whale sharks. Accommodations in the resort are luxurious, with deluxe suites, premium suites with pools and without, family suites, garden apartments and even options for duplexes or penthouse

apartments. Meal options at the resort are extensive, with two in-house restaurants, the Breeze restaurant and the Ocean restaurant. Breeze offers all day dining with a complimentary continental breakfast and food from Thailand, India, Malaysia and the Philippines. Ocean is a fine dining experience that overlooks the islands and is open from 6pm, with a wine tasting room adjoining the space. There is also a poolside bar, a bakery and coffee shop, and multiple options for private dining, such as a treehouse experience for up to 10 guests, beach BBQs or candlelit dinners. All of these options are overseen by the head chef Jun Tubog.
atmosphereresorts.com

SONG SAA PRIVATE ISLAND, CAMBODIA

This resort has accommodation options for every taste, with one or two bedroom villas embedded in the middle of the jungle, with a private pool, a shaded sundeck and a canopy daybed, as well as an outdoor shower. The Ocean View villas have private terraces, private pools and bedrooms that open right onto the beach. The Overwater Villas, which can be one or two bedrooms, have portholes, private pools, sun decks and daybeds, as well as direct access to the ocean, of course. Lastly, the large and luxurious Royal Villa has a terrace, a full kitchen, a huge private pool and a dining area. It is suited for a completely secluded getaway.

Of course there are scuba activities, but also snorkelling, sea kayaking and tailored movie experiences. Wellness activities include a yoga pavilion and the sala song saa practices of the resort, including Buddhist ceremonies and private meditation sessions. An island safari is available and a nature treasure hunt can be undertaken. The resort restaurant is called Vista and focuses on incorporating Khmer flavours and locally sourced ingredients, including fresh seafood and fresh baked bread. Private dining can also be arranged anywhere within the resort, and the Driftwood Abarth offers drinks, pizza and tapas.
songsaacollective.com ▶



OZEN LIFE MAADHOO MALDIVES

As the second resort on the list that's located in the Maldives, this place earns its reputation as a scuba diving paradise. The villas are themed, some categorised as wind and some as earth, and choices of residences with or without a private pool. Some of the villas dwell within the shelter of the palm trees while others back onto the beach or sit over the water, but most notable is the private Ozen Residence, which includes several bedrooms and full facilities, including activity rooms and a fitness centre. Dining at the resort is varied, with restaurants such as M6m, or Minus 6 Metres, focusing on a seafood degustation, paired with

Above: The spellbinding Maldives Right: Southeast Asian coral reefs have the highest levels of biodiversity for the world's marine ecosystems, with an abundance of reefs in Indonesia and the Philippines

wine. The Palms, Hudhu Bay and Lonu also provide other dining experiences for different vibes, in addition to other restaurants on site or close by as well.

In addition to the scuba activities, this resort offers snorkelling and other water sports, a full spa and wellness program, dolphin spotting and even a kids' club for the little visitors. The cinema under the stars completes the well rounded

roster of available experiences. theozencollection.com

FOUR SEASONS LANDAA GIRAVARUU, MALDIVES

The Maldives are a famously great place to go scuba diving, and this resort offers great diving packages. Located in the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, this resort offers a variety of different kinds of accommodations. There are two and three bedroom

water suites (think luxury stilted bungalows), a full family water villa with its own pool and a beach villa with a pool as well. Additionally, there is a three-bedroom estate on the island and a three-bedroom Land and Ocean suite which backs directly onto the beach.

In addition to the scuba packages, the resort also offers snorkelling tours, seaplane rides and the use of sea bobs for those important scuba trips. There are opportunities to help rehabilitate sea turtles at the Marine Discovery Centre and many wellness experiences at the Four Seasons AyurMa.

Food at the resort is crafted by Michelin-star chef Greta o Trovato, who built a menu inspired by Maldives cuisine mixed with his own Tuscany roots. While the chef himself is only in residence twice a year, the Blu Beach Club restaurant is manned by his personal protégés year-round. ■ fourseasons.com

