

REVIEW: The Conrad Rangali Hotel – Maldives

When people think of the Maldives, what usually comes to mind is clear turquoise water, undisturbed coral reefs, white sand beaches, and the ultimate in relaxation. Well, that's pretty much what I experienced while staying at the Conrad on Rangali island.



White sand beaches and beautiful sunsets abound

For those of you who have not experienced the Maldives, it's quite a unique destination in that it's hundreds of miles from the nearest continent, and is composed of over 1000+ islands that span 115 square miles which makes it kind of a trek to get there. Most flights into the country will originate from the Middle East or Southeast Asia. Once you've arrived in

Male, where the main airport resides on a small strip of land that resembles an island aircraft carrier, you are then bussed to one of dozens of local hotel lounges where you'll await your next ride (on a seaplane) to your resort.

Luckily, the Conrad has perfected most of this journey and made it as simple and luxurious as possible. The minute you exit the baggage claim area of Male, a greeter picks you up and takes you in a wifi equipped van to the Conrad lounge. Here they offer you a variety of hot and cold beverages along with some simple snacks and even a shower (should you need to refresh from a long flight).

The seaplane ride to Rangali is a bit longer than to some of the other island resorts, but at only 5000 feet the view from the Seaplane of the clear ocean below is mostly serene and breathtaking.

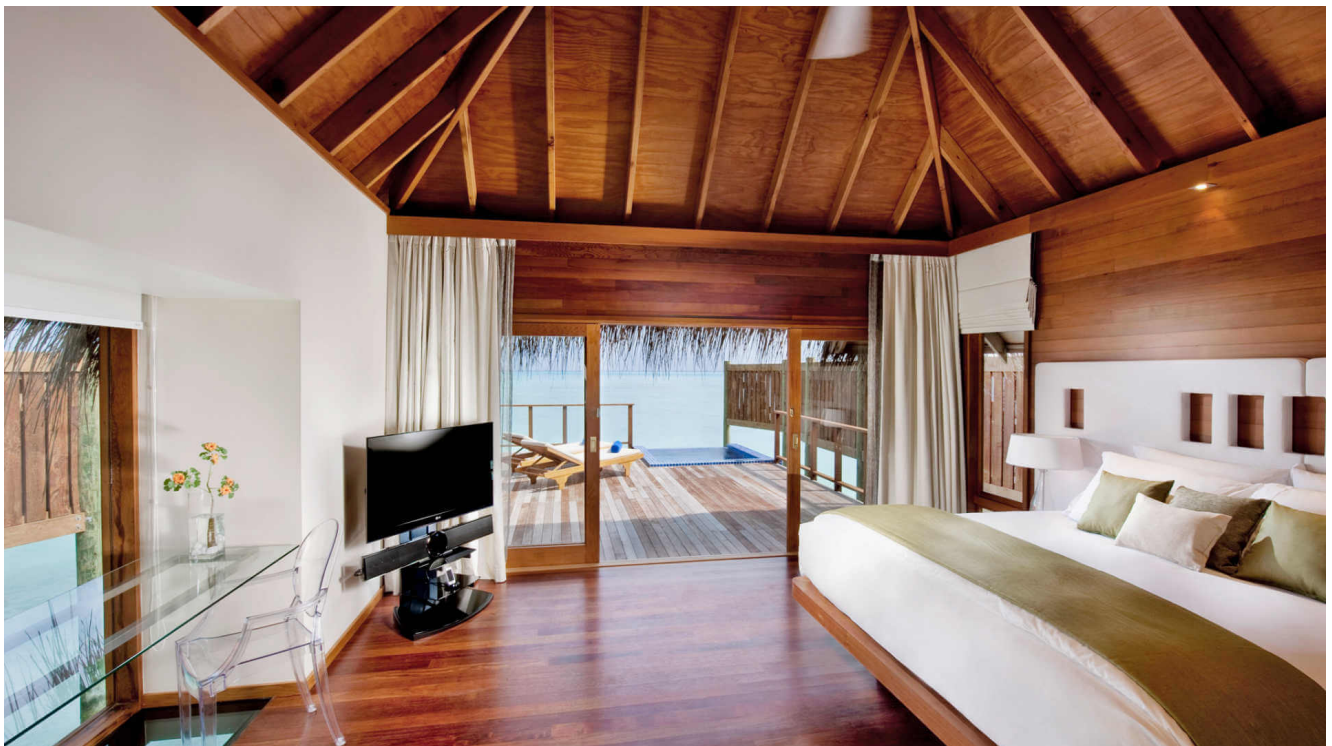


The quick plane flight to the resort offers tremendous views

Once you arrive at the Resort, you pull up to a dock where

your luggage is quickly ushered to your room and you are checked in. The resort itself is set on two islands, each about a mile long. Both of the islands have their own pools, restaurants, and even spas, but the main one has a few more facilities and also the gym. Although this was one of my only Maldives experiences, after speaking to the staff I was told that Rangali was one of the larger resorts with more space. This proved to be a blessing as it gave me more to do and explore during my stay at the Conrad.

For my particular stay, I was given an overwater bungalow, complete with a clear bottom floor and my own private infinity pool overlooking an endless ocean vista. The rooms themselves are immaculately kept, and for the most part the theme of the room was tropical. The balcony was probably my favorite feature, with a large window open to the ocean. Each villa has a set of walls that surround the residence beyond the balcony in order to facilitate an extra layer of privacy and this was welcome as I noticed many other resorts in the Maldives did not have this feature.



The room is bright, modern, and comfortable



Here you can see how they've built walls for privacy between villas

I mentioned it previously, but I have to mention it again, this is a VERY large resort. To get from one island to another you can take the ferry which runs every few minutes and takes about 10 minutes in total, or you can call a "buggy", which is essentially a golf cart. Of course you could walk the length of either island and over the bridge but at 2 miles in total it's definitely a stroll. The beauty of all of this, though, is that along the way all you have are palm trees and secluded beaches, and it isn't hard to find your own little private stretch at this resort. I've heard stories of other resorts being smaller and as a result much more crowded and that's never an issue here.

My favorite part of the property was the spa. The spa itself is a massive complex, with its own health-conscious restaurant, and each treatment room is overwater with its own outdoor bathtub, adding to the overall experience of relaxation and serenity.



Each room is set in its own overwater bungalow



Beautiful architecture at the spa restaurant

Another incredibly unique feature at this hotel is the undersea restaurant. There's only one other Maldives resort that has something similar, and it is the Hurawalhi (also a nice resort but much smaller). Although a few of the restaurants at this hotel are not part of the "all-inclusive" resort price, they are worth spending the money to discover because the experience is so unique. I had the chance to eat at each of the restaurants and the inclusive buffet, and I must say that the cuisine at a few of the restaurants was particularly exquisite, while a few experiences did lack in food quality. This is something that apparently is under constant change so your experience may differ once you visit Rangali. My recommendation is to try the Tepan-Yaki experience at Koko Grill, and the Chinese dining experience at UFAA. Both of those were top notch and I would gladly pay to eat at either again.



The Underwater Restaurant is built right into the coral reef and worth visiting for cocktails

After my entire experience at Rangali, I can wholeheartedly recommend a visit. With just a few things lacking, such as the cuisine at a couple of the restaurants, there isn't much to spoil a vacation in paradise. Between the stunning views, secluded beaches, incredibly attentive service, and white glove treatment from arrival to departure – a visit to Conrad Rangali will leave you in smiles wanting to visit again!



The smaller of the two islands at the Conrad Maldives