



Clockwise from left: Poolside at the Majlis Resort in Kenya's Lamu archipelago; the new Raffles Udaipur; inside a suite at the Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort



For someone who often proclaims she's not "an island person," I seem to spend a lot of time on them. Far-flung isles, tropical or otherwise, have formed the backdrop to some of my most memorable adventures: three nights aboard a Mozambican dhow, blissfully offline and hopping off only to camp on secluded beaches in the Quirimbas; road-tripping Sri Lanka's mist-draped tea estates and coastal forts; perusing antique papal mementoes and vintage lace at the home of a Maltese aristocrat in Valletta; sampling dhol puri and gâteaux piments at colourful Mauritian markets; stumbling onto a lively folk concert in Estonia's sleepy Muhu; fishing for yellowfin tuna in India's Andaman Islands; and taking the ferry to the farthest reaches of New York City. As I write this, I'm newly bronzed from five action-packed days in Kenya's Lamu archipelago – without actually having spent any time on a lounge at the beach.

So it's not that I'm not an island person – clearly, considering my track record – but more that I don't see them as merely places to fly and flop: I'm drawn instead to the history, the flavours and the cultures that collide so spectacularly on these ancient crossroads that dot the seas. Then there are the simple sensory pleasures of an island getaway that will forever endure: the calming sight of blue water, the soothing soundtrack of

lapping waves, the tangy bite of salty air, the heady caress of the late afternoon haze on your skin and the succulence of fresh seafood plucked from the water

mere metres from where it's enjoyed on land. It's remarkable the effect that even the briefest boat ride can have on the disposition: in the 15 minutes it took for me to sail from the Palm Jumeirah to the new Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort, I was transported to a serene state of mind.

This issue is a love letter to the islands we adore, the havens we escape to when we seek a salve for the senses and want to understand the ways in which the world intersects. These pages are brimming with some of our favourite tropical getaways – dreamy destinations like the Maldives and Seychelles that have given so many of us respite from the challenges of the last two years – as well as dispatches from Kenya's Lamu archipelago, the remote Atlantic Ocean outpost of St Helena, new island hideaways in Dubai and Mozambique, and "the Galápagos of the Middle East," the Yemeni archipelago of Socotra. I hope these tales ignite your senses much as your favourite island retreats do.

See you on the water!

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PHOTOGRAPHS: INGRID RASMUSSEN (ANANTARA WORLD ISLANDS); FRANCESCO SCOTTI (RAFFLES UDAIPUR)

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