



Milaidhoo

MALDIVES

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Milaidhoo Maldives unveils reimagined Ba'theli by the Reef: a return to Maldivian family-style dining

World's only overwater fine-dining restaurant on traditional dhoni boats introduces communal menu celebrating island traditions

Milaidhoo Maldives, 2nd March 2026 - Milaidhoo Maldives, the renowned luxury boutique resort in the heart of the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, announces the evolution of Ba'theli by the Reef - the world's only Maldivian fine-dining restaurant set aboard traditional *dhoni* boats in a lagoon.

The reimagined concept honours the Maldivian tradition of gathering and sharing meals, introducing a family-style menu designed to be enjoyed communally, just as food is experienced in local island homes.

A new chapter: from individual to communal

Ba'theli has long been Milaidhoo's signature dining destination, celebrated for its unique setting on three traditional Maldivian *dhoni* boats and its cuisine inspired by the historic spice route. The new direction deepens this narrative, transforming the experience from individual plating to heartfelt communal celebration.

"At Milaidhoo Maldives, we've always believed the best way to truly experience the Maldives is through our flavours," says Paul van Frank, General Manager. "Ba'theli by the Reef is the heart of that story. By moving to a communal, family-style way of dining, we're inviting you to eat exactly as we do in our own island homes: passing plates, sharing seconds and letting the conversation flow as naturally as the tide."

The refreshed concept was guided by Nasreena "Natti" Ali, sous chef from our sister resort Dhigali Maldives, whose expertise in traditional Maldivian cuisine brings depth and authenticity to every dish. Working alongside Ba'theli's talented local chefs, Natti transformed existing signatures into elegant family-style presentations while introducing new dishes that honour island traditions.

Signature dishes that tell stories

Two dishes exemplify Ba'theli's dedication to Maldivian culture and sustainability:

- **Fhunu Bodu Ihi** - Grilled coral Maldivian lobster with curry sauce, featuring lobster caught by local fishermen and curry made from leaves grown in the resort's Chef's Garden, connecting the dish to both land and sea.
- **Dhivehi Raha** - A collection of traditional Maldivian mini dessert treats paired with screw pine ice cream. The ice cream is made from kashikeyo, a rare and exquisite fruit unique to the Maldives, allowing Ba'theli to showcase ingredients found nowhere else on earth.

The menu also features the **Malaayfaiy** - a traditional, large Maldivian wooden serving dish intricately decorated with lacquer work, historically used to serve elaborate feasts during special occasions like Eid. Culturally, it represents shared meals celebrating community, often featuring fish curry, rice and an array of accompaniments. At Ba'theli, this tradition is honoured and elevated.

The menu celebrates this heritage through:

- Rice dishes including Mas Bai (smoked tuna rice), Aafalu Bai (apple rice), Barabo Bai (pumpkin rice) and Falho Bai (papaya rice), alongside Sri Lankan Lamprais representing the broader spice route influence.





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- Traditional soups and breads such as Garudhiya (the beloved Maldivian tuna broth), Roast Paan and Mas Banas (fish buns) – staples of island hospitality.
- Satani (salads) featuring Kopi Fathu Satani (curry leaf salad), Fiyaa Satani (onion salad), Barabo with coconut roti (pumpkin) and Falho Satani (raw papaya) – vibrant accompaniments designed to be shared.

An experience to remember

Ba'theli's culinary narrative began over 5,000 years ago when the Maldives became a key port for traders sailing from Indonesia and India to Arabia with precious cargoes: cinnamon, cardamom, turmeric, cloves, ginger and pepper. That story continues as talented local chefs create dishes of finesse based on the epicurean delights of the spice route, bringing Maldivian cuisine to life, and supported by the resort's Chef's Garden where herbs, vegetables and curry leaves grow just steps from the kitchen.

Ba'theli by the Reef remains the only restaurant in the world set on boats in a lagoon, creating an authentic and unforgettable sense of place. Guests dine aboard three traditional dhoni boats with stunning sunset views over the lagoon, surrounded by the gentle sounds of water and the warmth of Maldivian hospitality.

This is Ba'theli's new chapter: more communal, proudly Maldivian and as refined as ever.

HOW

Milaidhoo can easily be reached by a 35-minute seaplane flight from the international airport in Male' or a 15-minute domestic flight to Dharavandhoo domestic airport in Baa Atoll, followed by a 15-minute speedboat ride to the private island resort.

ABOUT MILAIDHOO MALDIVES

Milaidhoo is a pristine island paradise proudly rooted in local island traditions. This boutique luxury resort features 50 contemporary Maldivian-style pool villas, custom-made and made for comfort designed by a renowned Maldivian architect. Each guest is assigned an Island Host to help create meaningful experiences and cater to the guest's every need. Activities include over-water spa treatments, sunrise yoga classes and snorkelling excursions to view the incredible house reef.

Dining is a highlight, with Milaidhoo being home to three world-class restaurants, including Ba'theli. This unique Maldivian restaurant reflects the islands' heritage and is built in the shape of three traditional boats on pillars over a lagoon. The restaurant's innovative and delicious meals are steeped in Maldivian tradition, with each dish inspired by favourites of the ancient maritime Spice Route.

Milaidhoo is the authentic Maldives, a resort of re-invented luxury, where guests feel they belong, experiencing bare-foot informality within this tropical island's natural, lush setting. As an adults-focused resort, Milaidhoo is child-free and tranquil where any dream can become a reality, from sunset dolphin cruises to sailing to a deserted sandbank for a private beach picnic.

ABOUT UNIVERSAL RESORTS: <https://www.universalresorts.com/>

For over half a century, Universal Resorts has curated unforgettable Maldivian stays, elevating the experiences of discerning travellers while championing the vibrant local community. As a family-owned enterprise with a deep-rooted passion for the Maldives, it aims to continually redefine the standards of travel in this extraordinary destination.

Universal Resorts' portfolio of eight distinctly natural-island resorts caters to every desire, from relaxed luxury to adventurous escapes.

The dedicated team ensures seamless service and flawless execution, so guests experience the Maldives as it should be.

For more information please contact:





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