

• H O S P I T A L I T Y •

MOSAIC

MALDIVES

FHAM 2026

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY ASIA MALDIVES
GLOBAL CULINARY CHALLENGE & EXHIBITION

SPECIAL
EDITION
FEATURING

01 FHAM 2026: Connecting Global Suppliers with the Maldivian Hospitality Market

04 The Partners Behind FHAM 2026: Supporting a Celebration of Hospitality

06 The World Comes to the Maldives: FHAM 2026 Sets the Stage for Culinary Excellence



THE STAGE IS BEING SET FOR THE LARGEST
HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY SHOWCASE IN THE MALDIVES.

THE FOOD & HOSPITALITY ASIA MALDIVES 2026



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Welcome to the eleventh edition of Hospitality Mosaic Maldives, your window into the dynamic and ever-evolving world of Maldivian hospitality. More than just a magazine, this publication is a platform for collaboration, inspiration and storytelling, bringing together hoteliers, restaurateurs, suppliers and hospitality enthusiasts who share a passion for excellence, innovation and the experiences that shape our industry.

As the official publication of FHAM, Hospitality Mosaic Maldives continues to bring you exclusive insights and updates on this premier industry event, including the highly anticipated Culinary Challenge. This issue once again highlights the visionaries, chefs, suppliers, and industry professionals whose dedication and innovation continue to elevate Maldivian hospitality on the global stage.

Beyond event highlights, we explore into the culture, artistry, and unique lifestyle that define the Maldives. From luxury resorts and fine dining to the rich heritage of Maldivian cuisine, our content is designed to inspire, inform, and connect industry leaders and enthusiasts alike.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, let's continue shaping the Maldives as a world-class destination for hospitality and culinary excellence.

Editor-in-Chief

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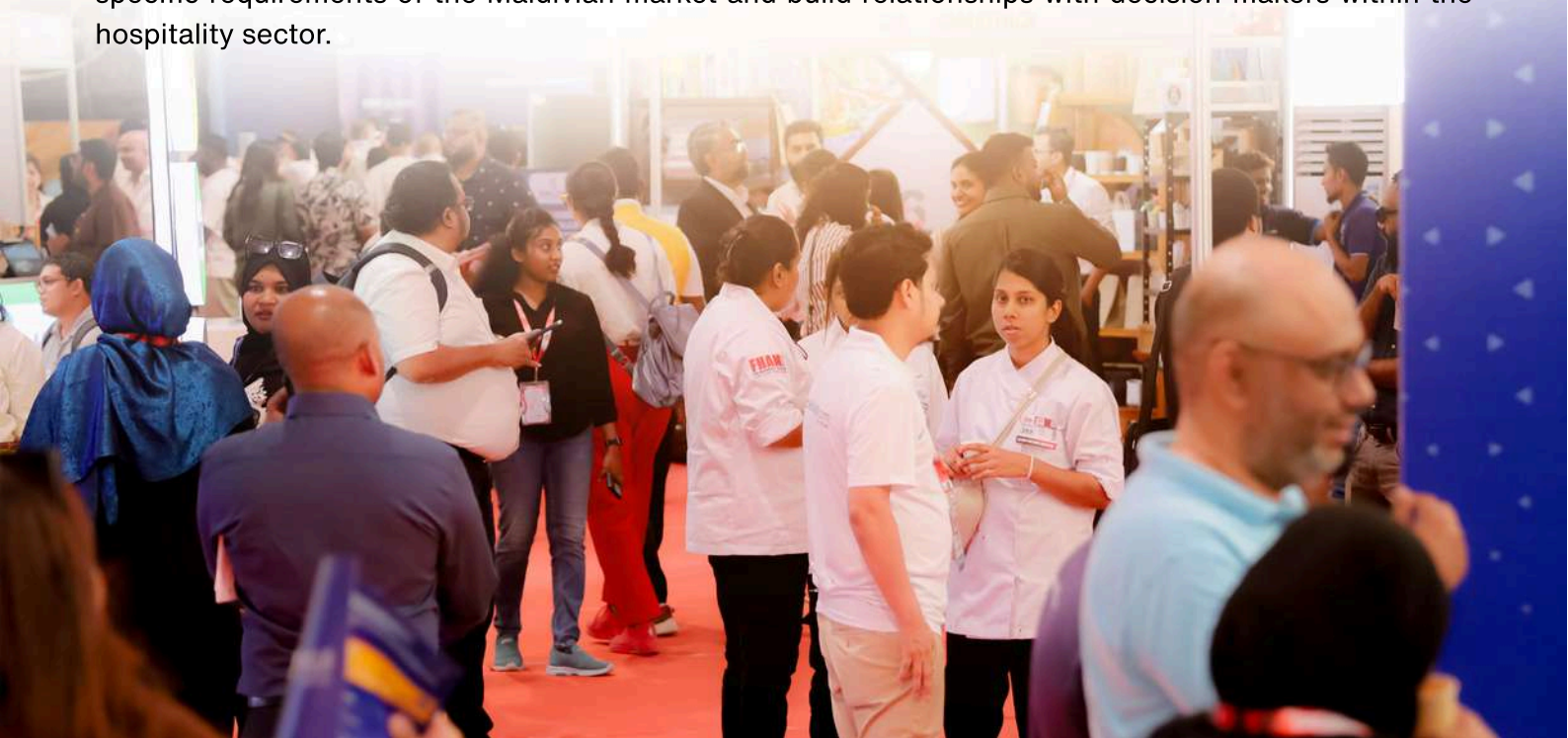
01 Connecting Global Suppliers with the Maldivian Hospitality Market

The Food & Hospitality Asia Maldives (FHAM) 2026, taking place from 7th to 9th September 2026, is set to bring a strong international presence to the Maldives, creating a focused platform for businesses looking to connect with one of the region's most dynamic hospitality markets.

With over 60 companies occupying over 100 stalls including four pavilions, the exhibition will bring together suppliers and industry professionals from across the hospitality and food sectors. From food and beverages to hospitality supplies, kitchen equipment, bakery and confectionery solutions, the exhibition will showcase products and services relevant to the day-to-day operations and future development of the Maldivian tourism industry.

For the Maldives, an exhibition of this scale offers more than an opportunity to discover new products. The country's tourism industry relies heavily on international suppliers and imports, making access to reliable global brands and new solutions particularly important for resorts, hotels, restaurants and other hospitality businesses.

FHAM 2026 provides a space where Maldivian buyers can meet suppliers directly, compare solutions and explore new business partnerships. For exhibitors, it offers an opportunity to understand the specific requirements of the Maldivian market and build relationships with decision-makers within the hospitality sector.



The exhibition also reflects the changing needs of Maldives' tourism industry. As resorts and hospitality businesses continue to focus on quality, efficiency, sustainability and guest experience, suppliers are increasingly expected to offer solutions that go beyond conventional products.

By bringing international expertise closer to Maldivian businesses, FHAM 2026 can help strengthen supply networks, introduce new technologies and products, and encourage greater collaboration across the hospitality sector.

Ultimately, the exhibition is positioned not simply as a showcase of products, but as a meeting point between global suppliers and the Maldivian hospitality industry, supporting new commercial opportunities and contributing to the continued growth of the market.



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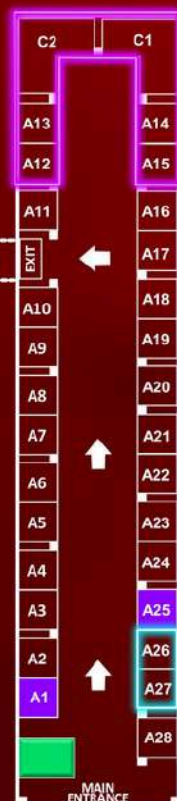


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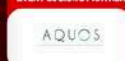
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FHAM 2026: Connecting the Maldives to the **Global** **Hospitality Supply Chain**

The Food & Hospitality Asia Maldives (FHAM) 2026 is positioning the Maldives as a meeting point for international suppliers and the country's rapidly evolving hospitality industry, creating opportunities that extend beyond the exhibition floor.

With four international pavilions, FHAM 2026 brings together businesses from different markets to engage directly with Maldivian buyers, distributors, hospitality groups and industry professionals. The international participation gives the exhibition a distinctly global character while placing the Maldivian trade market at the centre of new business connections.

For international exhibitors, the Maldives represents a specialised and attractive market. With tourism at the heart of the national economy, resorts, hotels, restaurants and other hospitality businesses require a continuous supply of food products, equipment, amenities and operational solutions. FHAM provides overseas companies with an opportunity to better understand these requirements and establish relationships with businesses operating within the country.

For Maldivian trade, the benefits are equally significant. Bringing international suppliers into the local market allows buyers to explore new products, compare solutions and establish direct commercial relationships without relying solely on overseas sourcing.



The exhibition can also encourage stronger links between international manufacturers, local importers and distributors, potentially creating opportunities for new brands to enter the Maldivian market and for existing businesses to expand their supply networks.

Beyond immediate business transactions, FHAM 2026 highlights the Maldives' growing role within the regional hospitality trade. As international exhibitors and Maldivian businesses meet under one platform, the exhibition creates a channel for knowledge exchange, market access and long-term partnerships.

In this sense, FHAM is more than an international exhibition in the Maldives. It is a platform connecting the country's trade community with the wider global hospitality supply chain.



03 Three Nominations, One Island: Grand Park Kodhipparu Earns Global Luxury Recognition



In a destination where luxury hospitality is constantly evolving, Grand Park Kodhipparu Maldives is gaining international attention with three nominations at the 2026 World Luxury Awards, recognising the resort, its overwater spa and its signature restaurant.

The resort has been nominated in three distinct categories: Luxury Boutique Resort, Luxury Boutique Spa for The Spa at Grand Park Kodhipparu, and Luxury Boutique Resort Restaurant for FireDoor. Together, the nominations highlight the resort's approach to luxury as a complete island experience rather than simply a stay.

Located just 20 minutes by speedboat from Velana International Airport, the resort features 120 villas on a private island in North Malé Atoll. Its offering combines overwater accommodation with an accessible house reef, wellness experiences and distinctive dining, creating a setting where nature and hospitality remain closely connected.

The recognition also reflects the resort's focus on personalisation and meaningful experiences. Its overwater spa has become an important part of its wellness offering, while FireDoor brings together an open show kitchen, Josper charcoal grilling and a dramatic lagoon setting to create a dining experience that extends beyond the plate.

For Grand Park Kodhipparu, the three nominations represent different elements of one broader philosophy: boutique luxury shaped by place, people and experience.

In an increasingly competitive Maldivian luxury market, such recognition provides another opportunity to showcase the depth and diversity of the country's hospitality offering on the global stage.

Voting is currently open across all three World Luxury Awards categories, giving guests and supporters an opportunity to recognise the resort, spa and restaurant.

Source: Visit Maldives Corporation — "Grand Park Kodhipparu Maldives celebrates triple World Luxury Awards nominations across resort, spa and dining", 26 August 2026.

The Partners Behind FHAM 2026: 04

Supporting a Celebration of Hospitality

An event of the scale and ambition of Food & Hospitality Asia Maldives (FHAM) 2026 is built on more than exhibitors and competitors. Behind the three-day celebration is a network of partners whose support helps bring together the people, products, experiences and ideas shaping the Maldivian hospitality industry.

At the forefront is Lily International (Pvt) Ltd, the Title Sponsor, alongside Nestlé Professional, the Main Sponsor of the Culinary Challenge, and SIMDI Company (Pvt) Ltd, the Co-Sponsor. Their support forms an important part of the foundation behind this year's event.



The Culinary Challenge, one of FHAM's major attractions, receives particularly strong support from Nestlé Professional, with NESCAFÉ and MAGGI also represented among the category sponsors. The competition is further supported by DUNAR Basmati Rice, MIFCO, Equics Private Limited, US Meat, DICL, Lakrasa and CBL, bringing together a wide range of industry partners behind the culinary showcase.



FHAM's concurrent competitions are supported by dedicated partners as well. Euro Marketing (Pvt) Ltd serves as the Official Barista and Mocktail Sponsor, with Lavazza as the Barista Sponsor. The Housekeeping & Bed Decorating Competition is supported by ESTEE (Pvt) Ltd as its Official Sponsor and Pestex Maldives as the Official Detergent & Cleaning Partner.

The event is further supported by Essity Hygiene as the Official Hygiene Partner, Sun Media, the Digital Printing Partner; Coca-Cola, the Official Beverage Partner; Le Souq, the Event Set Up Partner; Aquos Logistics (Pvt.) Ltd., the Event Logistic Partner; and Dhiraagu, the Digital Partner. Mosaic Maldives proudly partners with FHAM once again as its Official Digital Magazine Partner, contributing to the event's digital presence and coverage.

Together, these partnerships demonstrate the collaborative spirit behind FHAM 2026—bringing businesses and industry specialists together to support talent, showcase innovation and strengthen the hospitality community in the Maldives.

05

A Decade of Connections: TTM 2026 Brings the World to the Maldives



For a destination built around international travel, some of the most important conversations about the future of Maldivian tourism happen when the world comes together in Malé.

The 10th edition of Travel Trade Maldives (TTM) 2026 is doing exactly that, bringing together leading tourism businesses and international travel professionals for two days of meetings, networking and business development at Barceló Nasandhura Malé.

Marking a decade of TTM, the 2026 edition brings together more than 130 resorts and hotels alongside over 250 travel operators and agents representing the Maldives' top 30 source markets. The scale of participation reflects the importance of direct engagement in an industry where relationships can shape everything from new partnerships to future visitor demand.

At its heart, TTM is about putting the Maldivian tourism industry in the same room as the people who connect the destination with travellers around the world. Through business meetings and networking, local tourism companies have an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, develop new connections and understand the trends influencing international travel.

As TTM reaches its tenth edition, its significance extends beyond two days of meetings. It represents a continuing effort to connect Maldivian tourism with global opportunity, strengthen international partnerships and create long-term value for the destination.

Source: Visit Maldives Corporation — “10th TTM Opens with Global Travel Trade Converging in Maldives”, 26 August 2026.

06

The World Comes to the Maldives: FHAM 2026 Sets the Stage for Culinary Excellence

The Maldives is preparing to trade its familiar postcard image for something equally captivating—the spectacle of culinary excellence on a global stage. From 7 to 9 September 2026, the FHAM Culinary Challenge will transform the Manhattan Grand Hotel in Hulhumalé into a meeting point for some of the finest culinary talent from the Maldives and around the world.

As a Worldchefs-endorsed National culinary competition in the Maldives, the FHAM Culinary Challenge has grown into a prestigious international platform, bringing together chefs to test their creativity, technical precision and artistic skill. This year, the competition is set to welcome more than 700 chefs, representing resorts and hotels across the Maldives as well as international participants.



The hot kitchen will bring its own set of challenges, with Appetizers, Lamb, Seafood, Poultry, Beef, Yellow-Fin Tuna Steak, White Fish Fillet, Creative Rice Dish and Traditional and Modern Maldivian Main Course categories. The programme also includes The Young Chef, testing main course and dessert skills; Nescafé Creative Coffee; Vegetarian/Vegan Appetizer & Main Course; Potato Innovation; Creative Dessert; and the demanding Team Challenge, combining butchery with hot cooking.

Adding to the significance of the event is an elite panel of Worldchefs-qualified judges, led by Chef Thomas Gugler, Immediate Past President of Worldchefs. Their expertise will ensure competitors are evaluated against high international standards while receiving feedback that could help shape their professional journeys. Guiding the competition as Culinary Director, Chef Ishag Solih, Vice President of the Chefs Guild of Maldives, brings together local knowledge and international experience.

Competitors will battle across 23 categories, including five new challenges introduced for this edition. The new categories are designed to encourage greater ingenuity, technical precision and artistic expression, keeping the competition aligned with evolving culinary trends.

Yet the challenge represents more than medals and recognition. It creates opportunities for knowledge exchange, professional development and connections between chefs, industry leaders and suppliers, while helping prepare Maldivian culinary teams for international competition.

As the countdown begins, FHAM 2026 promises to showcase another side of the Maldives one where culinary ambition, international talent and professional excellence take centre stage.



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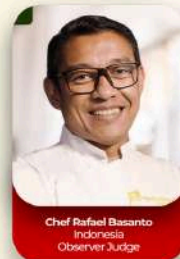
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Three Islands, One Celebration: Sun Siyam Olhuveli Sets the Stage for a Festive Escape

This festive season, Sun Siyam Olhuveli Maldives is inviting guests to experience the holidays across three islands, with the return of its “Carnival of the Isles” celebration bringing together entertainment, dining, culture and family experiences in one vibrant programme.

Running from 21 December 2026 to 7 January 2027, the festive programme will span Olhuveli, Dreamland and Siyam World, offering guests staying across the three Sun Siyam properties a shared celebration designed around the spirit of the Maldives. The programme is built to appeal to both families and couples, with activities ranging from festive dining and live entertainment to cultural experiences and island adventures. Visit [Maldives source article](#) At the heart of the programme is a distinctly island-inspired approach to the festive season. Rather than confining celebrations to a single venue, Carnival of the Isles encourages guests to explore the character of each resort while enjoying a broader programme of shared experiences.

07



Guests can expect a mix of festive dinners, themed celebrations, music and entertainment, alongside activities created for younger guests. The programme also incorporates elements of Maldivian culture, giving international visitors an opportunity to experience the destination beyond its beaches and overwater villas.

The three-island format adds another dimension to the holiday experience, turning the festive period into an opportunity to discover different settings and experiences within the Sun Siyam collection.

For the Maldivian resort industry, programmes such as this demonstrate how properties are increasingly using experiential programming and destination storytelling to create memorable stays, particularly during the highly competitive festive travel period.

With three islands, a packed calendar and the Maldivian setting as its backdrop, Carnival of the Isles offers a festive celebration that is as much about discovering the destination as it is about celebrating the season.

Source: Visit Maldives Corporation — “Three Islands, One Celebration: Carnival of the Isles returns to Sun Siyam Olhuveli Maldives this festive season”, 26 August 2026.



Where Surfing Legends Meet the Maldivian Waves: The Surfing Champions Trophy Returns 08

The Maldives is once again preparing to welcome some of the biggest names in surfing as the Surfing Champions Trophy returns to Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa from 4 to 11 September 2026.

Now entering its 14th edition, the invitation-only competition has become a distinctive fixture on the international surfing calendar. Set against the private island surroundings of Kuda Huraa, the event brings together celebrated surfers for a week of competition at Sultans, one of the Maldives' recognised surf breaks.

What makes the competition particularly unique is its three-board format. Rather than competing on a single type of board, surfers must demonstrate their versatility across single fin, twin fin and thruster boards. The format places equal emphasis on adaptability, technique and style, while bringing together different generations and traditions of the sport.

The competition was first introduced by Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa in 2011. Since then, its champions have included some of surfing's most recognised names, including Mark Occhilupo, Taj Burrow, Josh Kerr, Kelly Slater and Joel Parkinson. The event has also welcomed global surfing icons such as Carissa Moore, Maya Gabeira, Tom Curren and Rob Machado.





Beyond the competition, the Surfing Champions Trophy highlights another side of the Maldivian tourism experience—its connection to the ocean and surf culture. By bringing international sporting talent to Maldivian waters, the event adds global visibility to the country's surf destinations while creating an experience that combines elite sport with island hospitality.

As another chapter begins, Kuda Huraa is set to become a meeting point for surfing heritage, international talent and the unmistakable character of the Maldivian ocean.

Source: Visit Maldives Corporation — “The Surfing Champions Trophy returns to Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa”, 26 August 2026.

09

The Art of the Perfect Stay: Housekeeping Takes Centre Stage A T F H A M 2 0 2 6

Behind every memorable resort stay is a team whose work often goes unnoticed. At FHAM 2026, the spotlight turns to these professionals through the Housekeeping and Bed Decorating Competition, taking place on 9 September 2026, where 18 competitor teams will put their creativity, attention to detail and presentation skills to the test.

Sponsored by ESTEE (Pvt) Ltd as the Official Sponsor, with PestEx Maldives as the Official Detergent and Cleaning Sponsor, the competition celebrates the craft behind creating welcoming and beautifully presented guest spaces.





Rather than focusing solely on housekeeping skills, the competition challenges teams to transform the hotel bed into a carefully designed expression of a special occasion. Competitors will compete across three themed categories: Happy Birthday, Happy Honeymoon and Just Married.

Each theme provides an opportunity for teams to demonstrate how thoughtful presentation can contribute to the overall guest experience. From the arrangement of decorative elements to the finishing touches, competitors will need to combine creativity, precision and an understanding of hospitality presentation.

For the Maldivian resort industry, where guest experience is central to the success of a property, housekeeping plays an important role in creating the sense of care and attention that visitors remember. The competition offers a platform to recognise the professionals responsible for maintaining those standards every day.

With over 20 teams competing, the event also creates an opportunity for housekeeping professionals from different properties to share ideas, demonstrate their skills and learn from one another.

At FHAM 2026, the competition reminds visitors that luxury is not created only through spectacular surroundings. Sometimes, it begins with the smallest details—and a perfectly prepared room waiting for a guest.

10 **SUSHISAMBA Brings Dubai's Electric Dining Spirit to the Maldives**

The energy of Dubai's celebrated dining scene is heading to the Indian Ocean this September, as SUSHISAMBA Dubai brings its distinctive blend of cuisine, cocktails and entertainment to The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands for an exclusive three-night pop-up.



From 25 to 27 September 2026, EAU Bar will host the celebrated Dubai dining destination, offering guests an immersive evening that combines Japanese, Brazilian and Peruvian flavours with the vibrant atmosphere that has made SUSHISAMBA one of Dubai's sought-after culinary destinations.

The experience will be led by Brand Chef Kitak Lee, with a bespoke menu featuring signature dishes crafted with a focus on culinary artistry. Complementing the food will be craft cocktails created by the SUSHISAMBA bar team, incorporating exotic ingredients.

But this takeover is about more than what is on the plate. SUSHISAMBA's iconic samba dancers will bring live performances to the oceanfront setting, adding the theatrical energy that has become a signature part of the brand. Guests can expect an evening shaped by elevated dining, dynamic entertainment and inventive mixology against the Maldivian ocean.

The collaboration also brings together two luxury hospitality destinations, connecting SUSHISAMBA Dubai—located 51 floors above The Palm Jumeirah—with the island setting of The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands.



The three-night experience will run each evening with two dinner seatings, giving guests the opportunity to enjoy SUSHISAMBA's signature flavours and energy in an entirely different setting.

As Dubai's culinary identity meets the natural beauty of the Maldives, this exclusive takeover promises three nights where international dining, island luxury and live entertainment come together by the sea.

A high-angle photograph of a tropical resort. In the center is a large, rectangular swimming pool with clear turquoise water. A person is swimming in the pool. To the left of the pool, there are several red lounge chairs and a small wooden deck. In the background, a large white building with a thatched roof and many windows is visible. The pool is surrounded by lush greenery, including palm trees and other tropical plants. The overall atmosphere is relaxed and luxurious.

11

Festive Elegance, Reimagined Across Two Maldivian Islands

As the festive season approaches, THE OZEN COLLECTION is transforming two of its Maldivian island resorts into distinctive celebrations of togetherness, tradition and tropical luxury.

From 22 December 2026 to 7 January 2027, OZEN LIFE MAADHOO and OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI will offer carefully curated festive programmes designed to bring different generations together while adding a distinctly Maldivian character to the holiday season.

At OZEN LIFE MAADHOO, the celebrations combine wellness, family activities and culinary experiences. Guests can begin their days with wellness rituals before joining activities such as gingerbread house-making, interactive cooking classes and festive games. An underwater tree planting ceremony adds an environmental dimension to the celebrations, reflecting the resort's connection to the surrounding ocean. The season culminates in a "Glitz & Glam" New Year's Eve celebration featuring fireworks and live entertainment.

Across the water at OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI, the festive atmosphere takes a more sophisticated turn. The resort will become a “Winter Wonderland”, with wine journeys, mixology classes, culinary experiences, themed evenings and a pool party. New Year’s Eve will culminate in “A Night of Refined Elegance”, combining gourmet dining, champagne and live entertainment.

What distinguishes the programme is its ability to blend international festive traditions with the character of a Maldivian island escape. From Christmas celebrations to Orthodox Christmas observances, the programme creates space for different cultures while keeping family and shared experiences at its centre.

With the festivities incorporated into the resorts’ INDULGENCE™ and RESERVE™ plans, guests can enjoy the season as part of a seamless island experience.

Source: Visit Maldives Corporation — “Festive elegance, refined for every generation with THE OZEN COLLECTION”, 23 August 2026.



Behind Every Great Cup: 12 Baristas Take the Stage at FHAM 2026

Coffee takes centre stage at FHAM 2026 on 9 September 2026, as 20 participants come together for the Barista Championship, putting their knowledge, technique and consistency to the test.

With Euro Marketing (Pvt) Ltd as the Main Sponsor and Lavazza as the Barista Sponsor, the championship will be evaluated according to international barista standards, providing a professional platform for coffee talent within the Maldivian hospitality industry.

For a barista, preparing coffee is about far more than simply operating an espresso machine. It requires an understanding of the product, attention to detail, precision and the ability to consistently deliver quality under pressure. The championship brings these skills into a competitive setting, allowing participants to demonstrate their capabilities before an audience of hospitality professionals.

The event also reflects the importance of coffee within the modern hospitality experience. Across resorts, cafés and restaurants, the quality of a beverage can become an important part of a guest's overall impression, placing skilled baristas at the heart of beverage service.



For the 20 competitors, FHAM provides an opportunity to test their abilities against international standards, gain exposure and showcase their craft alongside fellow professionals. But for the eventual winner, the opportunity extends well beyond the FHAM stage.

The winner of the FHAM Barista Championship 2026 will be selected to represent the Maldives at the International Lavazza Barista Championship in Italy, taking the competition from the local hospitality stage to an international platform.

Beyond finding a champion, the competition creates a pathway for Maldivian baristas to gain international exposure and experience, while encouraging higher standards across the country's growing coffee and hospitality sector.

At FHAM 2026, the Barista Championship will therefore be about more than the final cup. It is a chance for Maldivian coffee talent to earn its place on the international stage.



Mixing Creativity with Craft: The Mocktail Competition at FHAM 2026

13



A great mocktail is more than a colourful drink. It is a combination of flavour, presentation, creativity and technique—and on 8 September 2026, 30 participants will put these qualities to the test at the FHAM 2026 Mocktail Competition.

With Euro Marketing (Pvt) Ltd as the Main Sponsor, the competition brings together hospitality professionals for a showcase of inventive non-alcoholic beverages and the skills required to create them.

For competitors, the challenge lies in turning familiar ingredients into something memorable. From balancing flavours and textures to selecting the right presentation, each creation provides an opportunity to demonstrate originality, precision and an understanding of the guest experience. The growing popularity of sophisticated non-alcoholic beverages has created new opportunities within hospitality. Resorts, restaurants and cafés are increasingly expected to offer beverage experiences that appeal to a wider range of guests, making creativity behind the bar an important part of modern food and beverage service.

The FHAM Mocktail Competition provides a platform for participants to step beyond everyday service and experiment with their craft in a competitive environment. With 30 competitors taking part, the event is set to bring a wide range of ideas and approaches to the competition floor.

It also offers an opportunity for professionals to exchange techniques, discover new approaches and learn from their peers, contributing to the continued development of beverage service within the Maldivian hospitality industry.

Ultimately, the championship celebrates the idea that an exceptional drink does not need alcohol to make an impression. At FHAM 2026, the glass becomes a canvas, giving competitors the opportunity to show just how far creativity and craftsmanship can take a mocktail.

Soneva Resorts Earn a Place on Forbes Travel Guide's 'The Edge List' 2026 14

Two Maldivian resorts from Soneva have received international recognition after being named to Forbes Travel Guide's The Edge List 2026, a selection highlighting properties that are considered to be shaping the future of luxury travel.

Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani were both included in the 2026 list, placing the Maldivian resorts among a global collection of luxury properties recognised for distinctive approaches to hospitality and guest experiences.

The recognition adds another international spotlight to Soneva's presence in the Maldives. According to the announcement, the inclusion reflects the resorts' ability to combine innovative experiences, thoughtful design and a strong connection with their surroundings, offering a different interpretation of contemporary luxury.

Soneva Fushi, located in the Baa Atoll, is described through its nature-focused island setting and approach to creating experiences that allow guests to engage closely with the environment. Soneva Jani, meanwhile, is recognised for its distinctive architecture and experiences centred around its lagoon setting.



A full-page background image showing a diver in blue swim trunks and a mask swimming horizontally in clear, turquoise water. Below the diver, a large manta ray is swimming, its dark, patterned body and long, thin tail visible. The scene is captured from an underwater perspective, looking up towards the surface where light rays are visible.

Forbes Travel Guide's The Edge List focuses on properties that demonstrate forward-thinking approaches to luxury hospitality. Being included therefore places Soneva's Maldivian resorts within a wider international conversation about how luxury travel is evolving.

The recognition is particularly notable as both resorts are presented not simply as places to stay, but as destinations where design, nature and personalised experiences come together.

For the Maldives, international recognition of this kind also provides a wider platform for showcasing the country's ability to deliver varied and innovative luxury hospitality experiences.

With both Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani appearing on the 2026 list, the recognition reinforces the continued global visibility of Maldivian luxury resorts and their role in influencing the future direction of high-end travel.

Source: Visit Maldives Corporation — "Soneva Resorts Named to Forbes Travel Guide's The Edge List 2026".

Luxury or Diversification? The Maldives Is Learning to Do Both

Vipula Wanigasekera

15

For decades, the Maldives has occupied a distinctive position in global tourism. Its brand has been built around exclusivity, privacy and exceptional hospitality—reinforced by its famous one-island-one-resort model, overwater villas and highly personalised service.

That formula has worked remarkably well. But in 2026, the question facing the Maldives is no longer whether it should remain a luxury destination. The more important question is how it can diversify without diluting the proposition that made it successful in the first place.

The evidence increasingly points towards a clear answer: the Maldives is not choosing between luxury and diversification. It is building a more diversified tourism economy around a premium core.



Luxury remains the foundation

The resort sector continues to be the backbone of Maldivian tourism. By June 2026, operational resort capacity stood at approximately 45,000 beds, while resorts continued to accommodate the overwhelming majority of international visitors.

This demonstrates that diversification has not replaced the luxury resort model. Rather, the resort remains the economic and brand anchor of Maldivian tourism.

However, 2026 has also demonstrated the vulnerability of depending heavily on particular markets and travel corridors. Disruptions to aviation through the Middle East contributed to a significant slowdown in arrivals during March and April, highlighting how external shocks can quickly affect an island destination dependent on international air connectivity. Diversification, therefore, is becoming not only a growth strategy, but also a risk-management strategy.

Diversifying the markets

The Maldives is increasingly broadening its source markets. China emerged as the largest market during 2026, while Russia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and India remained important contributors. This represents a significant evolution from the traditional dependence on Western European luxury travellers.

Importantly, this is not necessarily a move down-market. Different markets can consume the Maldivian premium proposition in different ways. The objective is to create a more resilient demand base while maintaining the destination's high-value positioning.

From honeymoon destination to multi-purpose destination

Perhaps the most interesting transformation is occurring in the tourism product itself.

The traditional international image of the Maldives is overwhelmingly associated with romance—honeymooners, couples, private villas and secluded beaches. But the destination is increasingly positioning itself around a broader range of experiences, including family travel, wellness, adventure, culture, sustainability and MICE, alongside its established luxury and romance propositions.

This direction has now been formalised through “Islands Are Us,” the theme announced for Visit Maldives Year 2027. The campaign identifies eight segments—adventure, romance, family, culture, luxury, MICE, sustainability and wellness. The message is clear: the Maldives wants to offer more reasons to visit without becoming another mass-market beach destination.

Bringing the islands into the tourism story

Another important dimension is the growth of guesthouses and local-island tourism. Guesthouses provide visitors with opportunities to experience Maldivian culture, communities, food and everyday island life—experiences that complement rather than necessarily compete with the luxury resort proposition. This also allows tourism benefits to reach more communities and creates a broader tourism ecosystem beyond the traditional resort island.

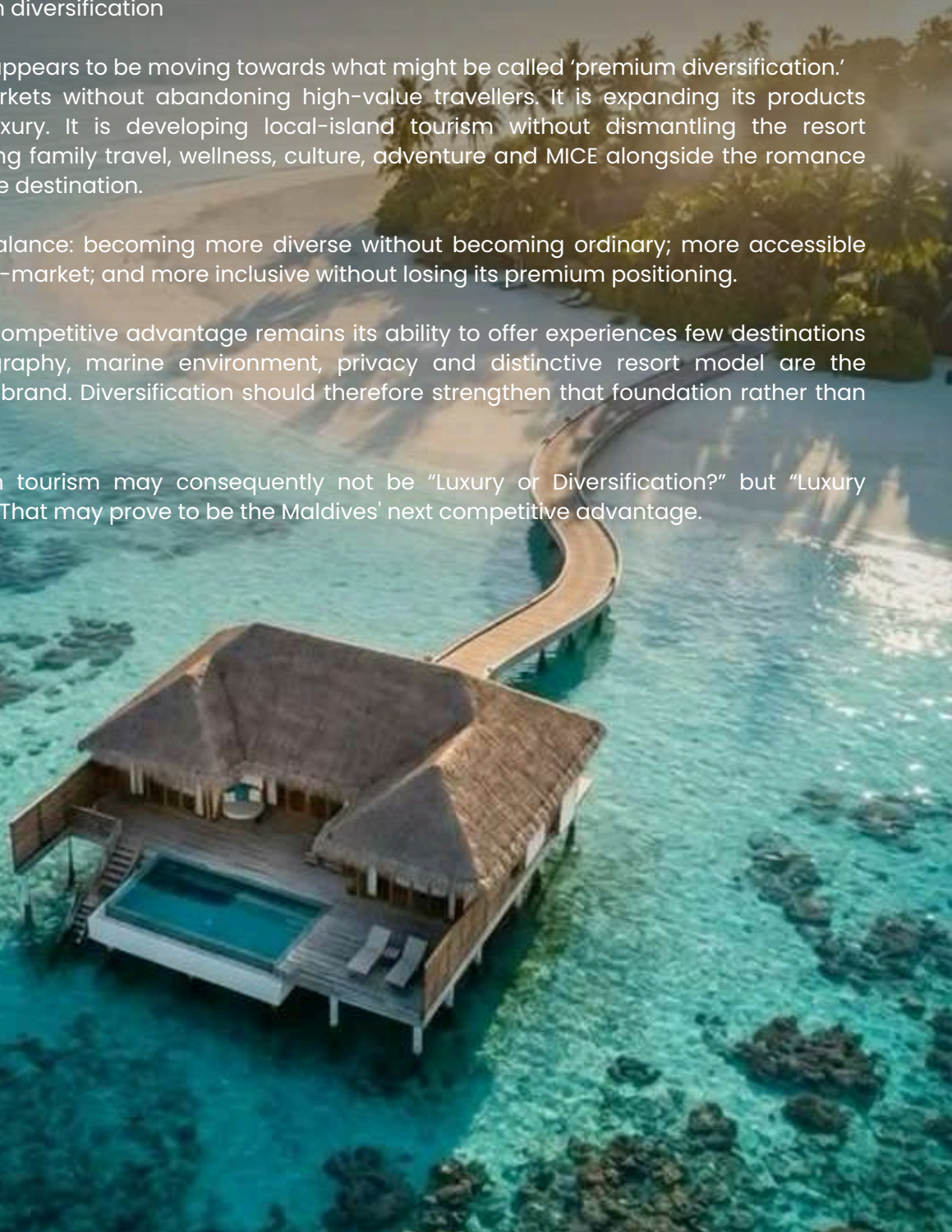
The next stage: premium diversification

The Maldives therefore appears to be moving towards what might be called ‘premium diversification.’ It is broadening its markets without abandoning high-value travellers. It is expanding its products without abandoning luxury. It is developing local-island tourism without dismantling the resort model. And it is promoting family travel, wellness, culture, adventure and MICE alongside the romance that has long defined the destination.

The real challenge is balance: becoming more diverse without becoming ordinary; more accessible without becoming mass-market; and more inclusive without losing its premium positioning.

The Maldives’ greatest competitive advantage remains its ability to offer experiences few destinations can replicate. Its geography, marine environment, privacy and distinctive resort model are the foundation of its global brand. Diversification should therefore strengthen that foundation rather than undermine it.

The future of Maldivian tourism may consequently not be “Luxury or Diversification?” but “Luxury through Diversification.” That may prove to be the Maldives’ next competitive advantage.



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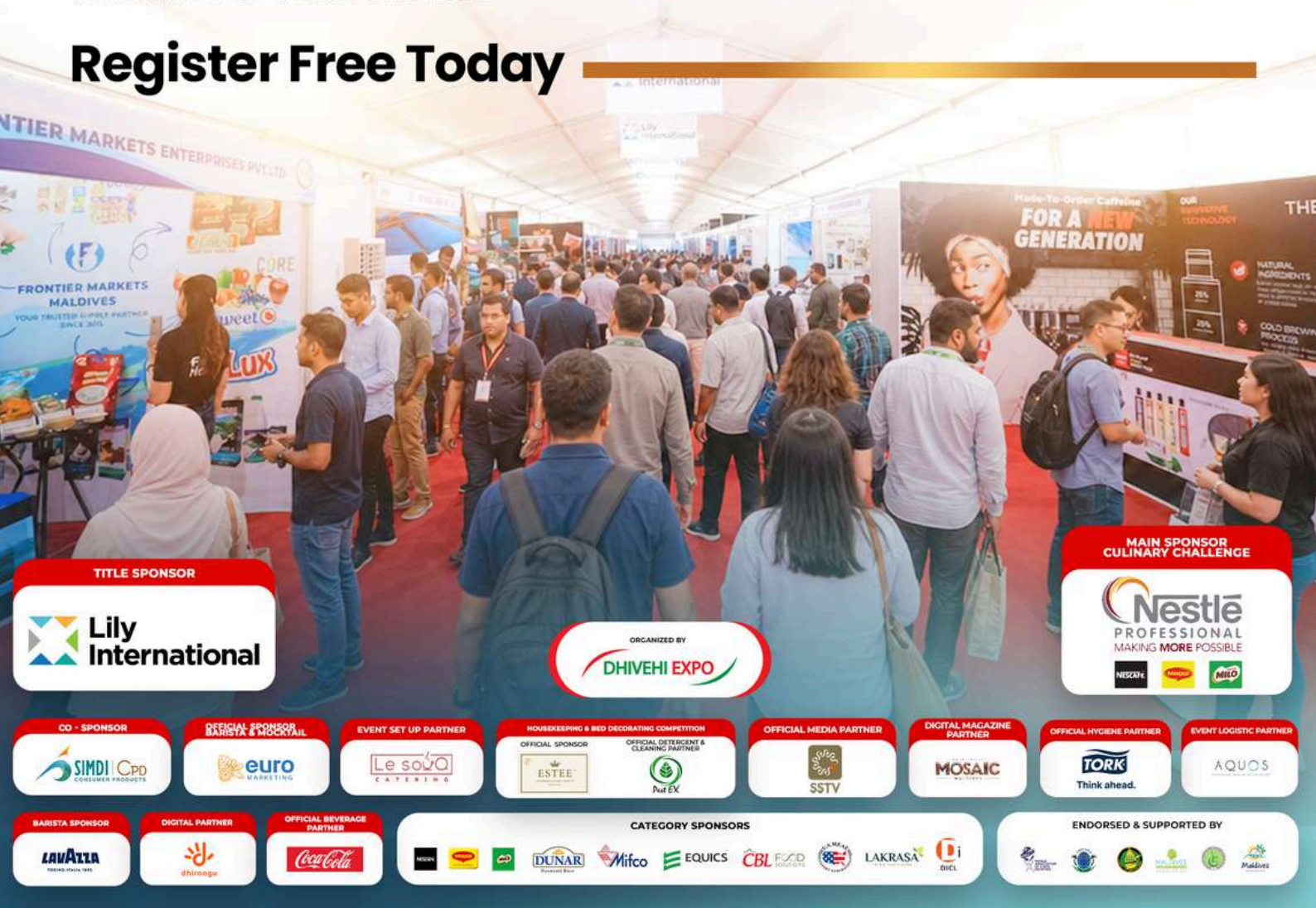
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