



TASTY TRAVEL

Whether you're into sushi, street food, cinnamon or chocolate, you don't have to travel far to find a dedicated designer resort. *Kate Farr* reports



Photos courtesy of Kate Farr

While most of us are keen to explore the local cuisine when we're on holiday, for some, the food is the holiday. Whether you're a keen amateur chef or a fully-fledged gourmand, there's a culinary adventure out there to tickle your taste buds.

Nihiwatu, Sumba Island, Indonesia

Voted the World's Best Hotel 2016 by *Travel and Leisure Magazine*, operating ethically and sustainably to benefit its local environment and community, and with a jaw-droppingly beautiful island location, there are plenty

of great reasons to visit Nihiwatu. Another reason is the resort's recently launched Chris and Charly's Chocolate Factory, which takes all your kids' wildest Willy Wonka fantasies, relocates them to a stunning paradise island, and encourages them to get hands-on with everyone's favourite treat.



Every day between 12pm and 3pm, guests can join in with chocolate-making classes at the onsite factory, crafting delicious goodies from locally grown Sumbanese cacao and coconut palm sugar. If you're looking for ethical souvenirs, the factory has three bar varieties available for sale at its gift shop – 65% Milk Chocolate Almond & Raisin, 70% Dark Chocolate and 85% Dark Chocolate – with all profits channelled back into The Sumba Foundation, Nihiwatu's philanthropic arm.

The adjacent kids' club offers supervised activities, including traditional dancing, yoga, scavenger hunts and crafts, leaving parents with the time to enjoy their chocolate in blissful tranquillity.

The Lake House, Australia

Situated in the pretty spa town of Daylesford, Victoria, The Lake House is home to one of Australia's most respected residential cooking schools. Set in the sprawling rural

grounds of a stunning luxury hotel, the award-winning Lake House culinary team hosts cooking master classes that are regularly facilitated by some of the Aussie dining scene's leading lights, including producers, growers, winemakers and chefs.

Previous classes have focused on specialist topics such as fermenting, Italian cooking and even food photography, and the atmosphere here is relaxed and inclusive, allowing participants at every level to get involved and learn from the experts.

After a hard day in the kitchen, the hotel's multi-award-winning restaurant is the perfect place to debrief. The menu is seasonally led, using produce locally sourced from the surrounding area, and, as you might expect, it features an impressive Australian wine list. There's also plenty here for foodies on restricted diets, with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options available.

Beniya Mukayu, Kaga, Japan

If Japanese food makes you jump for joy, then add Beniya Mukayu to your foodie bucket list. This design hotel in the beautiful Ishikawa prefecture is both luxurious and understated, with a focus on subtle Japanese elegance, such as tatami mats, screened rooms and private onsen baths.

The real draw for committed foodies is the hotel's famed *kaiseki* (multi-course) breakfasts and dinners, included in your room rate. Consisting of up to 10 intricately prepared courses, served on delicate local pottery over the course of several hours, each dish is artfully arranged to look every bit as exquisite as it tastes. The focus on locally caught fish makes this a must for seafood lovers.

Those wishing to deepen their understanding of the country and its cuisine can enrol on the two-and-a-half hour Taste of Japan cooking course, where, guided by Beniya

Mukayu's expert chefs, students prepare classic Japanese dishes to enjoy over lunch in the hotel's tranquil garden.

Tri, Galle, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has long been a gourmet paradise – this lush and fertile island nation produces a staggering amount of fresh produce, from ripe tropical fruits to a colourful array of market-fresh vegetables that you'll find harvested and dished up in delicious recipes wherever you travel. But, as any chef will tell you, bringing out the best in your ingredients is all about the right seasoning, and that's where this jewel of the Indian Ocean really comes into its own.

Tri, an eco-friendly boutique property perched on the edge of Lake Koggala, is not only a wonderfully luxurious, yet environmentally conscious destination in which to relax, it's also perfectly placed for an excursion to nearby Cinnamon Island. Learn more about this ubiquitous spice and its journey from bark to bowl, before buying a few fragrant mementoes of your trip.

SO Sofitel, Singapore

Based right in the midst of Singapore's



Tri in Galle, Sri Lanka



SO Sofitel Singapore

bustling Central Business District, SO Sofitel Singapore is a great option for gourmet globetrotters, based just moments away from Chinatown's many restaurants and hawker centres, as well as classy bar district Club Street. The hotel's onsite dining is as good as you'd expect in this food-centric city, with diners invited to design their own meals, based around the themes crunchy, juicy, smoky, creamy, silky, spicy or zesty, at the hotel's flagship restaurant, Xperience.

Venturing out onto the streets brings its own delicious rewards,

and Singabites is a food tour with a difference. Staffed by eight culinary experts, many of whom are ex-chefs, your tour guides help you get under the skin of Singapore's street food culture, giving you the lowdown on what to eat and where to eat it, along with a little local history thrown into the mix.

Although the company launched in 2015, the Singabites tours have proven so popular that they won the Luxury Travel Award 2016 for Best Singaporean Cultural Experience, so do book well in advance to guarantee your spot. **B**

FIND IT

- Beniya Mukayu, www.mukayu.com
- Nihiwatu, www.nihiwatu.com
- SO Sofitel Singapore, www.sofitel-so-singapore.com
- The Lake House, www.lakehouse.com.au
- Tri, www.trilanka.com

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