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Top 10 most spectacular overwater villas (outside the Maldives & French Polynesia)

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Monday newsletters always feature top 10 travel lists to inspire.

Today (September 28, 2020): Top 10 world's most beautiful overwater bungalows (outside the Maldives and French Polynesia).

Last week, the Maldives' original barefoot luxury resort, **Soneva Fushi**, welcomed its first guests in the **world's largest overwater villas**. A stay inside an overwater villa nestled over a beautiful stretch of ocean or lagoon is high up the bucket list of most discerning travelers and honeymooners. Indeed, it is hard to top an island getaway

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experience, with bungalow style rooms perched above pristine water where a dip in the warm sea waters is literally outside your door. And while the [top resorts in the Maldives](#) and their [counterparts in French Polynesia](#) are the world's best destinations for luxurious overwater villas, there are some alternatives to be found outside these ultimate Bounty Islands. Here's my top 10 list of the best resorts with overwater villas, located outside the Maldives and French Polynesia.

There is more information (with trip reports) below the slide show. Think I missed one? Leave a **comment**, or take my **poll** below!



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10. HOTEL PALAFITTE, SWITZERLAND

Hotel Palafitte is located in the town of Neuchâtel-Monruz in the northwest corner of Switzerland, close to Bern and Lausanne and a bit farther from Basel and Zurich. The property is an architectural masterpiece that offers an uncommon experience – most of its bright, light-filled private suites, known as pavilions, stand on stilts in Lake Neuchâtel, affording stunning views of the Alps, the water below, and beyond. Ambiance is everything at this only overwater-bungalow resort in all of Europe. This unique boutique hotel is warm and inviting any time of the year, surrounded by blue water, picturesque mountains, and glorious silence for tranquility in a spectacular location.

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It is difficult to imagine getting any closer to nature than this. Each of the nine exclusive two-story cabins at Punta Caracol Acqua Lodge is built upon stilts perched atop the Caribbean Sea, and filled with bright, whimsical furnishings. The lush tropical sounds and scents of Panama's remarkable Bocas del Toro archipelago are all-encompassing, and waft freely through your room. Take a canoe tour, snorkel over the reef, hike the rainforest, or visit untouched beaches before you sit down for an early dinner of lobster and fresh, local veg under a palm leaf roof. After, step off your private veranda and immerse yourself in the warm, clear emerald waters that surround you.

- **Hotel website:** [Punta Caracol Acqua Lodge](#)



5. PANGKOR LAUT RESORT, MALAYSIA

Pangkor Laut is a privately owned island located off the West Coast of Malaysia along the Straits of Malacca. This piece of paradise has been 2 million years in the making, and here you will find one of the world's premier resorts nestling in the shade of forest giants as old as the land. You will find no other resorts – just secluded bays curled around pristine beaches, evening skies woven with color, and a deep sense of serenity reserved exclusively for our guests. A combination of luxury, natural beauty and age-old wilderness woven together to produce an environment where peace and magically memorable moments are the currency. The resort's 45 overwater villas stand elegantly on stilts above playful waves, while the garden and hill villas place you within a few steps of nature's abundance.

- **Hotel website:** [Pangkor Laut Resort](#)

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7. MISOOL ECO RESORT, INDONESIA

Misool Eco Resort is an exclusive dive resort and conservation center located in remote southern Raja Ampat, Indonesia. The private resort island is nestled deep in an archipelago of uninhabited islands, in the very epicentre of marine biodiversity. It was built entirely of driftwood and naturally fallen timbers milled on site in the presence of cockatoos, parrots, baby sharks, and sea turtles. Surrounding Misool are some of the richest reefs on earth, in the waters of the Coral Triangle region. When you're not diving, you can read a book on your verandah's hammock or soak in the tropical vibe while showering in a Balinese-style bathroom that opens up to the sky. The eight rustically luxurious water cottages are located just steps from the dive center and restaurant and are built on stilts over the water.

- **Hotel website:** [Misool Eco Resort](#)



6. PUNTA CARACOL ACQUA LODGE, PANAMA

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- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. upgrade on arrival, daily continental breakfast, realy check-in, late check-out, and \$100 USD spa credit).



4. CAYO ESPANTO, BELIZE

Located three miles from San Pedro in the calm waters of the Western Caribbean, off the coast of Belize, the private island resort Cayo Espanto is truly a spectacular and private vacation retreat. There are only 7 total villas and suites, including exactly one overwater bungalow (Casa Ventanas), and unusually, the overwater villa is the smallest and cheapest accommodation here, even at over US\$1,000 per night. Surrounded on all sides by the beautiful, turquoise blue Caribbean Sea, Casa Ventanas is a picture perfect window into the exotic water, with sea life swimming right past or under the bungalow. In addition, Cayo Espanto's master culinary artists prepare the most succulent dishes with the freshest tropical ingredients in the world.

- **Hotel website:** [Cayo Espanto](#)
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. upgrade on arrival, daily continental breakfast, realy check-in, late check-out, and \$100 USD spa credit).

Maldives & French Polynesia)

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- **Hotel website:** [Hotel Palafitte](#)



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9. CONSTANCE LE PRINCE MAURICE, MAURITIUS

One of the [finest and most luxurious resorts in Mauritius](#), the Constance Le Prince Maurice Resort consists of 89 rooms and suites, 11 of which could be considered overwater bungalows, though it's worth noting that they are located over a fish sanctuary so there is no swimming directly beneath the units. All rooms are luxurious, and there is a very long list of complimentary activities (including golf) so the heavy room rates reflect a better value than it might first seem. Even though there are facilities and activities for children and families, this is a remote 5-star resort, so it's best suited to honeymoons and other romantic couples getaways. The setting is beautiful and the service is 5-star standard, though with a French leaning, so Francophones will feel even more comfortable.

- **Hotel website:** [Constance Le Prince Maurice](#)
- **Other accolades:** Constance Le Prince Maurice also features in my top 10 list of [best luxury resorts in Mauritius](#).

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3. ROSEWOOD MAYAKOBA, MEXICO

Surrounded by emerald jungle, Rosewood Mayakoba is a Riviera Maya resort that defines a private world of rare luxury and refined beauty. Inspired by Mayan traditions, this ultra-luxurious enclave sits along a magnificent arc of white Caribbean sand, nestled just north of the picturesque waterfront town of Playa del Carmen. Designed to blend harmony with natural landscapes, Rosewood Mayakoba is an oasis of luxury offering 128 suites with private plunge pools, rooftop sun decks, garden showers, individual docks and the finest modern design and details. The 18 deluxe overwater suites are enormous and perched above a mangrove lagoon near the sea.

- **Hotel website:** [Rosewood Mayakoba](#)
- **Other accolades:** Rosewood Mayakoba also features in my top 10 lists of the [best resorts in Mexico](#) and the [world's best luxury resorts with private plunge pools](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, daily breakfast, early check-in, late check-out, and \$100 USD spa credit).



2. ELOUNDA BEACH HOTEL & VILLAS, GREECE

The first fully-fledged five-star resort in Greece, Elounda Beach Hotel & Villas put the sleepy fishing village of Elounda in northeast Crete on the map in 1971. Since then half a dozen pretenders have squeezed into Mirabello bay, jostling for a sea-view slot, but Elounda Beach will always have the prime position. Guests can enjoy the peace and quiet of two private beaches, a treatment at the acclaimed spa Espace Vitalité Chenot, or a delicious meal at one of nine world-class restaurants. The property includes several types of accommodations, including the phenomenal 'yachting villas'; although these villas are built along the water's edge and not over the sea itself, their teak floorings, polished steel columns and glass balustrades create the illusion of being on a luxury yacht floating on the Mediterranean Sea.

- **Hotel website:** [Elounda Beach Hotel & Villas](#)
- **Review:** coming soon



1. SONG SAA PRIVATE ISLAND, CAMBODIA

Created with sustainability in mind, Song Saa Private Island reflects the undiscovered beauty of Cambodia's Koh Rong Archipelago. It's a place that breathes in time with nature, built from local materials, by local hands, and infused with local art and soul. An evolved tropical getaway with a pristine private beach, stunning sunset views, heavenly spa sanctuaries, world-class cuisine, and a preserved coral reef, Song Saa Private Island lets you detach from the world and tune into simple luxuries. With 9 overwater villas in addition to 18 garden and beach villas, this resort represents 5-star-plus luxury and a level of romance that you might not expect in Cambodia.

- **Hotel website:** [Song Saa Private Island](#)
- **Other accolades:** Song Saa Private Island also features in my top 10 lists of the [best hotels in Cambodia](#), the [world's best honeymoon resorts](#) and the [most astonishing beach retreats in Asia](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. room upgrade, early check-in, late check-out, daily breakfast, and \$100 USD resort credit).



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What resort has the best overwater villas in (outside Maldives & French Polynesia)?



8. AMANYARA, TURKS & CAICOS

Set on the beautiful island of Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos Islands, Amanyara is a secluded, uber-exclusive haven embracing the best elements of the Caribbean. Bordering the pristine reefs of Northwest Point Marine National Park, acclaimed for some of the world's best wall and reef diving, the ultraluxurious resort is blessed with crystal clear turquoise water and a powder-white beach (with some rocky parts). Amanyara doesn't offer the traditional overwater bungalows like the ones you see in the South Pacific and the Maldives, but it does have some overwater pavilions that are perched over private ponds, plus the best of everything for those who can afford a resort in the super-luxury category (although the real stars here are the ocean front villas).

- **Hotel website:** [Amanyara](#)
- **Other accolades:** Amanyara also features in my top 10 lists of the [most luxurious resorts in the Caribbean](#), the [best Aman hotels in the world](#), the [most amazing beach resorts in the world](#) and the [world's most expensive hotels](#).
- **Tip:** get complimentary VIP perks when booking via [Virtuoso](#) (e.g. upgrade on arrival, daily continental breakfast, one a la carte lunch for 2 persons, early check-in and late check-out).
- **Review:** read my review of Amanyara [here](#).

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