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SIX OF THE BEST

FIJI EXPERIENCES

BY **SHERIDEN RHODES**

HIT THE WAVES

SURFING in Fiji continues to gain momentum with the opening up of formerly inaccessible breaks. The Surfing Decree, passed in 2010, means surfers can now access some of the best waves on the planet including Cloudbreak – a perfect and formidable left-hander – and Restaurants, formerly accessed exclusively by Tavarua Island Resort guests. An easy paddle from Hideaway Resort offers an excellent year-round right break suitable for beginners and more-experienced surfers, while Plantation Island and Castaway Island offer day trips to Wilkes Passage, Desperations, mini Cloudbreak, Namotu Left, Restaurants and Swimming Pools.

GET FLAT OUT

Fijian spas have come a long way in a short space of time. Sure you can still get a grassroots bobo massage in a rustic bure (which has its own charm) but today world-class spa treatments can be had across the islands. The Westin Denarau Island Resort's Heavenly Spa offers 10 open-air treatment rooms made of wood, thatch and river stones. Try the luscious anti-ageing guava wrap. Coconut milk baths, pineapple exfoliating facials and more are delivered in nine private treatment bures (all airconditioned) at Sofitel Fiji Resort's So Spa. MyFiji packages at the Sheraton Fiji Resort, Westin Denarau Island Resort and Sofitel Fiji Resort include two, 30-minute massages plus wine, dine and spa credits.

HEAD OFF-ROAD

Those wanting a glimpse into Fiji's past will find it and more on this thrilling off-road cave safari. Participants wade through knee-deep water by hurricane lantern through Naihehe Cave, Fiji's largest cave system. Deep inside the 170-metre cave remains a gruesome reminder of Fiji's cannibal past – a cannibal oven, a ritual platform and the sacred priest chamber. Run by the multi-award-winning Sigatoka River Safaris, the half-day tour includes crossing the mighty Sigatoka River via a push punt before heading deep inland by off-road vehicle.

See sigatokariver.com

FLOAT ON CLOUD NINE

Kick back in a hammock or deck chair, enjoy wood-fired pizza and sip on tropical cocktails at this incredible two-storey floating bar in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. My Fiji Cloud 9 transports guests for an exclusive afternoon at Fiji's floating pavilion in the middle of Ro Ro Reef in the Mamanuca Islands. The floating bar and watersport haven is equipped with an internationally stocked bar, DJs and an Italian wood-fired pizzeria (MyFiji packages include $FJ60 to spend on food and drink

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on board plus a welcome kit). Swim, snorkel or kayak the clear turquoise waters, relax on day beds and lap up the cool Pacific vibe.

PLAY CASTAWAY

Butler service, guided snorkelling, wreck diving, spa treatments and more are on offer as part of MyFiji Island's new adventure to Tivua Island, a dreamy coral atoll in the Mamanuca Islands. Guests sail to the idyllic island, surrounded by white sandy beach, coral gardens and pristine reef, aboard the white-sailed tall ship Ra Marama, or Fiji One, a sailing catamaran. Once there, enjoy butler service at private cabanas, Fijian singing, kava tasting, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, a barbecue dinner, water sports, as well as marine biologist-led snorkelling and glass-bottomed boat tours. MyFiji guests (numbers are limited) have exclusive use of kayaks, SUPs, can join a herbal medicine walk, while children are entertained in the Captain Kids Club. Robinson Crusoe never had it so good. Available as part of select MyFiji packages, or add to your holiday.

See myfiji.com

HELP FIJIAN KIDS

Wrench yourself away from the pool and you could find yourself wheeling barrels of concrete, laying building blocks, painting, sandpapering, or spending time in the classroom as part of Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort's community project at Conua District School. Sounds like hard work? Yes, however, the impact you have on the rural school behind the market town of Sigatoka on Fiji's Coral Coast is immensely gratifying. Run by resort activities manager Kini Sarai, the school visit is organised according to guests' interests. Donations of stationery, books or sporting equipment to the school are also welcome. A highlight of the day is hearing the songs of gratitude sung by the school's 155 students. Outrigger MyFiji guests can book the outreach program on Tuesdays or Thursdays ($FJ100 for adults; $FJ60 for children) including transport, lunch and a visit to the Tavuni Hill Fort.

Sheriden Rhodes was a guest of MyFiji. All of the featured experiences can be booked at MyFiji.com.

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CATCHING A BREAK: (Clockwise from main) Surfing newly available breaks; helping Fijian children; take a Heavenly Spa; off-road cave safari. Photos: iStock, Sheriden Rhodes