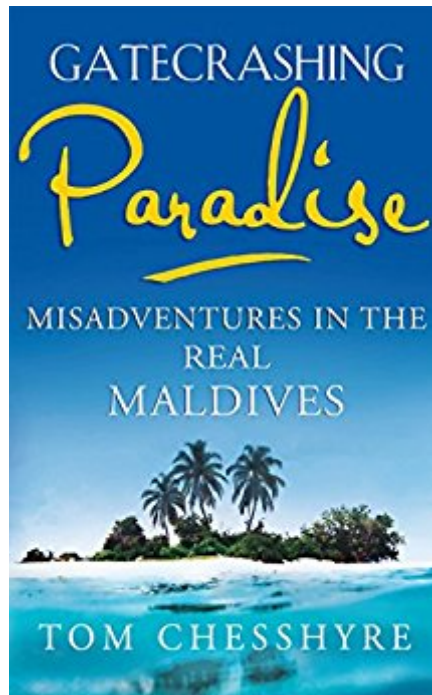




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Gatecrashing Paradise: Misadventure In The Real Maldives



Synopsis

Away from the five-star hotels and beyond luxury hideaways, Tom Chesshyre travels to see the real, unexplored Maldives, skirting around the archipelago's periphery, staying at simple guesthouses, and using cargo ships and ferries. He discovers that beyond the glossy brochures lies an almost undiscovered country that is brimming with life, yet also a paradise teetering on the brink of trouble. In the Maldives outsiders used to be banned from islands not officially endorsed as tourist resorts, but now a thousand sandy shores can be visited in this remote nation deep in the Indian Ocean the flattest on Earth. This is island-hopping for the twenty-first century, sailing around 600 miles of the most beautiful islands and atolls on Earth, often to communities that have not seen an outsider for decades, ...and gatecrashing the odd posh hotel.

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Customer Reviews

I really enjoy travelogues and this did not disappoint. Loved reading about the author's experience and the Maldivian culture.

I've never visited the Maldives and have always had a vague impression of beautiful beaches and

luxurious hotels - I'd gladly go if I won a ticket but maybe there's not enough to see and do to put it on my 'must visit' list. In this account, Tom Chesshyre takes advantage of the recent relaxation in rules that now permits tourists to travel anywhere in the nation, rather than just confining them to designated resort islands. This seems to have been an attempt to keep western ways from tainting an Islamic nation, plus perhaps a business tactic - the resorts are owned by a handful of wealthy and powerful individuals. Staying predominantly in guest-houses and with locals, Chesshyre investigates Maldivian life. He learns of political corruption and human rights issues; the aftermath of the tsunami; the fears that this, the world's flattest nation, may in the near future be deluged as water levels rise. He meets Bangladeshi immigrants, lured with the promise of good jobs but now trapped earning a pittance and unable to afford the trip home. Crime, increasing Islamization ... but also beautiful scenery and friendly locals. Perhaps not enough going on to make a terribly gripping narrative, but certainly the author has investigated all aspects of life and produced an informative work on a little-known nation.

What a great book! I loved it. Ever since reading this book, I've been dying to go on a non-resort trip to the Maldives. Tom Chesshyre's book really makes you want to do the same journey he does - travel on boats between islands with long and unpronounceable names, stay in local guesthouses, eat authentic Maldivian food, and learn about this country - the real country, not just the resorts. I read the book first a year or two ago. I'm now buying it for my Kindle and trying to work out how to escape my life for a month so I can travel independently around the Maldives!

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