

## **Plate With A View: Navutu Stars Resort Yaqeta Island, Fiji**

By Esther Shaw

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### **THE PLATE**

Navutu Stars pledges that "excellent dining is a priority", and it doesn't disappoint. The dining experience you enjoy here is in no small part down to the dynamic young Italian couple, who quit their high-powered jobs in London to set up the restaurant, which forms a central part of their new boutique resort.

Keen to make the most of the natural resources available on their desert island, the couple have created a menu offering a variety of dishes that are, unsurprisingly, rather more "surf" than "turf". But the meals that they serve at Navutu Stars go far beyond just seafood, blending the best of a wide range of local ingredients with more traditional Italian delicacies. The chef from the local village has been trained up to a high standard, enabling guests to enjoy lobster, tuna and fresh vegetables alongside focaccia, penne, and Tuscan white truffles.

For a starter, you could try snapper mousse or beef carpaccio with parmesan shavings, and follow this with grilled sea bass or Milanese-style pan-fried tuna fillets.

If this doesn't fill you up, you could round it all off with a platter of tropical fruit or tiramisu. There is also a fine selection of wines from Italy (of course) - as well as from France, Australia and New Zealand.

Once a week, the restaurant offers a traditional Fijian lovo - a feast of meat, fish and vegetables cooked slowly over hot stones in an underground oven.

### **THE VIEW**

With the dining area located on a veranda on the beachfront of the beautiful Yaqeta island, there is little chance of being disturbed while you are eating. All you might see is a fisherman spear-fishing for that evening's dinner - or the occasional crab scuttling across the sand. The only sound you will hear is the rustle of wind in the palm trees, or the lulling harmonies of the local villagers singing along to a ukulele.

As you dine, you can gaze out over a panorama of white beaches and blue lagoons, and watch the sun set over the green hills of Matacawalevu Island. Simple and spacious, the dining area is adorned with Asian objets d'art, and is lit, at night, by lanterns and candles. And once you've supped to your heart's content, you can slip into one of the hammocks rocking gently in the sea breeze under the stars.

### **THE BILL**

For those staying at the resort, breakfast is included in the tariff, and meal packages range from FJ\$90 (£30) to FJ\$150 (£50) per person, per day.

Alternatively, for those tourists visiting by boat, starters range from FJ\$10 (£3) to FJ\$25 (£8); main courses from FJ\$15 (£5) to FJ\$45 (£15), and desserts from FJ\$10 (£3) to FJ\$12 (£4). [www.navutustarsfiji.com](http://www.navutustarsfiji.com); 00 679 664 0553