

THE
COMO *go* TO

COMO HOTELS AND RESORTS
RECENTLY LAUNCHED ITS NEW PLAY BY
COMO KIDS' PROGRAMME. **BENJAMIN
PARKER** LOOKS AT THE RANGE OF
ACTIVITIES ON OFFER, TO KEEP ALL THE
FAMILY BUSY, FROM BHUTAN TO THE
TURKS AND CAICOS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN MORRELL





A is for Archery

Archery, known as 'datse' in Bhutanese, is the national sport of Bhutan with 'bha cho', or archery fields, located at Uma Paro and Uma Punakha, where the kids can play Robin Hood. You will see tournaments taking place all over the country – colourful, high-spirited competitions featuring two teams in traditional dress shooting at small targets up to 140 metres away.

B is for Beach

At Metropolitan Miami Beach, you can access one of the world's most iconic beach strips, with the golden Miami sands lapped by the Atlantic Ocean. But it is Cocoa Island and Maalifushi in the Maldives that deliver the whitest of all COMO's beaches – with perfect calm lagoons for swimming.

E is for Eat 4 Less

Stay at a COMO resort, and children get to enjoy the same level of culinary excellence as adults from their own specially-created menus – and at a reduced price. At all COMO resorts (as well as the London, Miami and Bangkok Metropolitan hotels), kids under 12 years old eat for half the adult price (applies to half- and full-board dining supplements).

D is for Dolphins

Amongst the flying fish leaping from the water in the Maldives, you may spot pods of elusive dolphins – a common highlight on the dhoni sunset cruises at Cocoa Island and Maalifushi.

F is for Fishing

Fishing is a vital part of Indian Ocean life, and at Maalifushi and Cocoa Island you can experience the thrills and frustrations of a day's game fishing the deep blue seas. Alternatively, take a sunset cruise and catch your lunch for the following day.

H is for Horseriding

When staying at either The Halkin or Metropolitan by COMO, London, there's no better way to get out into nearby Hyde Park than on horseback. Concierge can arrange a lesson, or hack, on safe horses to be enjoyed by all the family.

I is for Ice Cream

Each day at Point Yamu you can enjoy a variety of flavours from the resort's ice cream cart – but with a twist. All the frozen treats are homemade with liquid nitrogen on the spot, which means you see the science of gastronomy at work in front of you. The hot-selling flavour: delicious fresh coconut.



Cocoa Island and Maalifushi in the Maldives deliver the whitest of all sands – with perfect calm lagoons for swimming



J

J is for James Bond Island

The signature rocky pinnacle of James Bond Island, also known as Khao Phing Kan, has been a major attraction of Phuket, where Point Yamu is located, since it featured in the 1974 Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun*. Now under national park protection, the best way to view the island is by boat or by landing on Koh Ping Ghan, a high leaning rock with small caves inside.

K is for Kite-Making

At Parrot Cay, children can make their own Caribbean-inspired kites with the help of friendly staff, then take their creations outside and let them soar high into the clear skies.

K

L

L is for Long-Tail Boat

From Point Yamu, sail to nearby uninhabited beaches or land at the COMO Beach Club in Phang Nga Bay on a long-tail boat, a narrow watercraft native to Southeast Asia often powered by a second-hand car or truck engine.

M is for Monkey Forest

Surrounded by dense jungle in Ubud, Bali, is the Monkey Forest nature reserve and temple complex – home to around 600 crab-eating macaque monkeys. Visit while you are staying at Uma Ubud, a five-minute drive away.

M

O if for Offering

In Bali, it is Hindu custom to offer palm leaf offerings, fashioned into small square or round-shaped trays filled with food, flowers and incense, to thank the Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (God) in praise and prayer. You'll see them in the Balinese temples (pura), on small shrines in houses, and on the ground. At Uma Ubud, children can learn to make these offerings, which are especially auspicious on a full moon.

N

N is for Nemo

The 2003 animated film *Finding Nemo* is a heartwarming tale of a young clownfish who gets separated from his father. During your stay at Parrot Cay, don your snorkels, swimming trunks and flippers and splash into the warm waters for the chance to catch a glimpse of a real-life clownfish, with striking orange and bright white stripes darting through the blue. At Maalifushi, the lagoon next to the Japanese restaurant 'Tai' is a favourite spot for Nemo.

O

Q is for Quest

COMO makes an art of the treasure hunt, be it a piratical adventure at Parrot Cay in the Turks and Caicos, or a search for precious shells on the sands of Maalifushi in The Maldives. These are quests that the Play by COMO team will organise, while tired parents hole up in the spa for a massage.

Q

P is for Passport

Wherever you stay with COMO, make sure your child brings their COMO Passport along. At each COMO location they will receive a stamp on the relevant page to mark their visit, as well as finding out some fun facts about the sights they've seen in the city or the sandy islands they've explored.

R

R is for River Rafting

The Ayung River overlooked by COMO Shambhala Estate in Bali offers exceptional year-round rafting conditions. It's an exhilarating experience, appropriate for children, allowing you to get close to the island's riverside communities – with waterfalls and exotic birdlife mixed up with the adrenaline rush that comes from riding rapids at speed.



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S is for Songkran

Of all the festivals in Thailand, Songkran is the most spectacular. It happens in mid-April and runs for a few days, starting with a grand spring clean: ritual baths, feasts, visits to the local Wat (monastery temple) and ceremonial offerings. The whole country joins in, throwing water over each other in the streets.

U is for Underwater

Take advantage of our marine life cards available to guests at Cocoa Island and Maalifushi in the Maldives. Armed with a list, you and your children can spot and tick-off all the crazy underwater species on kid-friendly snorkelling expeditions. The sessions are guided by the resort's resident marine biologist, who will take groups of children or families out into the water and explain what they will see as well as the importance of ocean conservation.

W is for Whale Shark

At Maalifushi, keep your eyes peeled for the speckled whale sharks that pass by Thaa Atoll. Depending on the season, older children can swim with them in open sea, these vast, soft-hearted fish making for harmless playfellows.

Y is for Yoga

COMO Shambhala Urban Escape in Singapore, offers special kid-friendly yoga designed to improve flexibility, strength, stamina, self-confidence and coordination. With poses named after flora and fauna, kids are kept amused while introducing them to the magic of what might just become a life-long discipline.

T is for Telescopes

In the wilderness, the stars take on a new dimension. With our telescopes at Parrot Cay, Cocoa Island and Maalifushi, children can get a little closer to that magic.

V is for Volcano Crater Lake Hike

Hike up Bali's second highest volcano at dawn, catching the sun rising from the peak, high above the crater lake of Danau Batur – which sits at 1,717 metres. The climb takes about three hours but the spectacular views, with the conical Mount Agung looming in the background, makes every step worthwhile. Older kids will love it.

X is for 'X Marks the Spot'

In its previous incarnation the private island resort of Parrot Cay was known as 'Pirate Cay' (legend has it that infamous pirate Anne Bonny, who sailed throughout the Caribbean in the 18th century, camped here). This buccaneering past comes to life with campfire-side pirate tales as the sun goes down – which your kids can enjoy while you have a cocktail in peace.

Z is for Zoo

Despite being a rare and endangered species, Bhutan is still home to many thriving herds of takin – a goat-antelope found in the eastern Himalayas, and the kingdom's national animal. The Takin Festival, in Gasa Dzongkhag in Jigme Dori National Park, allows you to view these agile creatures in their summer grazing grounds. If the three-hour bumpy ride from Uma Punakha is too much, then visit the takin at Thimphu Zoo.



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