

**Interview with Chef Jesus Nino**  
**Chef de Cuisine**  
**Fresh in the Garden**  
**May 2016**

Chef Jesus Nino started his culinary career at a very young age in the countryside of Spain, where he learnt traditional recipes. Before joining Soneva Fushi, he worked at various Michelin-starred restaurants throughout Europe, including the Abac and Drolma Restaurants in Barcelona, the Hotel Majestic in Barcelona and the Barcelo Hotels in Morocco.

He was the Chef de Cuisine at Soneva Fushi from 2014 – 15, before leaving for a short period and returning in early 2016. He now heads up Soneva Fushi's iconic restaurant Fresh in the Garden.



**What are you bringing to the table, so to speak?**

I love food and I love eating healthy. I grew up in Spain where there are a lot of interesting influences in the cuisine, so I was always experimenting by fusing modern ingredients and techniques with old traditional recipes. I try to create food that is full flavoured and bodied but at the same time light and healthy. This is my passion.

**Tell us about the cuisine at Fresh in the Garden**

Everything is fresh, healthy and local. I prepare contemporary Mediterranean-inspired cuisine made using mostly organic ingredients, with some surprising flavours. We offer cuisine for all dietary requirements; raw diet, vegan, celiac, etc. Soneva Fushi's guests are generally quite health conscious. They like light food. They don't want fatty food with lots of oil; they want light but flavourful menu options. The food here is very different. It's not spicy as we use herbs instead of spices.

**Interview with Chef Jesus Nino**  
**Chef de Cuisine**  
**Fresh in the Garden**  
**May 2016**



**How often do you change the menu?**

I change the menu every week. But the dishes that the guests love will always stay on the menu (such as the chocolate cream mousse with olive oil and sea salt). Some weeks we change one dish, other weeks we change four dishes. It depends. But it is always changing. The menu is based on seasonality of products and guest profiles.

**If you could recommend one dish that guests should try, what would it be?**

The beetroot gazpacho with almond sorbet is very good.



**What is unusual about Fresh in the Garden as a dining destination?**

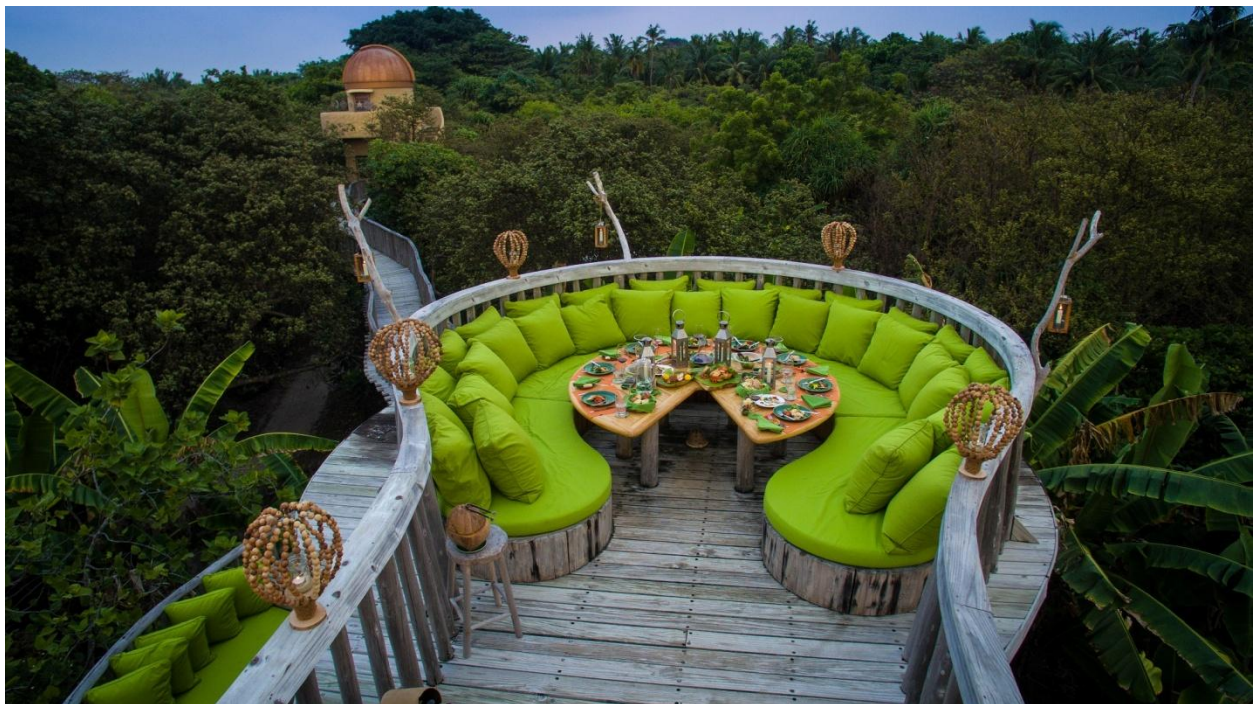
There are several things. First of all is the location. It's a beautiful restaurant built on wooden stilts over the vegetable garden. It's open air and without walls. You can see the ocean and the jungle canopy from many tables.

**Interview with Chef Jesus Nino**  
**Chef de Cuisine**  
**Fresh in the Garden**  
**May 2016**

Around 30% of what we serve is actually grown in our own vegetable garden, which is produced using organic principles. All the fish on the menu is local fish, except for the salmon which is Tasmanian. We grow our own tomatoes, pumpkin, bell peppers, zucchini, all types of aromatic herbs, lettuces, mushrooms, cucumber, eggplant, spring onions and more.

Our vinaigrettes are also very popular and we actually make these ourselves using the different herbs and flowers in our vegetable garden. Our oils are also made on-site. The rosemary oil at Soneva is the best I have ever tasted, anywhere in the world. Because it's so hot in the Maldives, the rosemary herb releases all of its flavour, so the oil becomes very strong.

We use modern cooking techniques such as smoking and molecular gastronomy, but I find that most guests are not really coming here to try this type of food – they eat at Fresh in the Garden to enjoy fresh, local and organic cuisine.



Fresh in the Garden can seat 70 covers however we only accept around 30 – 40 guests at a time so everyone can sit outdoors.

It's very special here. I like all the small touches.