



head in the clouds?
travel with Tambo

Mobile: 072 264 4966

23 Shingara Sands,
20 Petroy Drive,
Fourways,
Sandton,
2191

VAT# info@travelwithtambo.co.za

Reg: 2022/219531/07

travelwithtambo.co.za

Maldives – The Sunny Side of Life

Geography

The Maldives is a nation of islands in the Indian Ocean, that spans across the equator. The country is comprised of 1192 islands that stretch along a length of 871 kilometres. While the country covers an area of approximately 90,000 square kilometres, only 298 square kilometres of that is dry land. The islands are grouped into a double chain of 26 atolls.

The country's unique geography mesmerizes the visitor. Reefs that offer bands of color, tiny jewel-like islands rimmed with the whitest of soft sand surrounded by the clearest shallow waters that one can imagine. Only 200 of the islands are inhabited, and a select few on each of the atolls are resorts and some of the islands are used for industry and agriculture.

The beauty of the Maldives is not only above the water. The Maldives is home to about five percent of the planet's reefs that comes with an explosion of colour contributed by soft and hard corals that form them. The reefs are home to a thousand species of fish. Lured by the rich nutrients that flow in with the currents, large pelagic fishes such as manta rays and whale sharks also make the Maldives their home.

People

While very little is known about the ancient history of the Maldives scholars and historians believe that the Maldives is an old nation populated well over 2500 years ago. The Maldivian race is the result of several waves of settlement from various parts of the Indian subcontinent and thousands of years of interactions of people of different races and ethnicities that crisscrossed the Indian Ocean over several centuries. The country's culture and traditions and the diverse physical traits of the people bear witness to the fact that the country was, due to its geographical location, a melting pot of people and cultures. The Maldivian language is Dhivehi, an Indo-Aryan language with its origins in Sanskrit.

The most recent census in 2014 enumerated the population at 407,660 people. A third of the population lives in Male', while the rest live in 200 islands scattered across the length of the country.

The livelihood of Maldivians traditionally depended on the seas, fishery being the main source of sustenance. While fishery still contributes significantly to the economy in terms of employment and income, tourism is the main source of income for the Maldivian economy today.

Culture

Although home to just over half a million people the Maldives has its own unique culture and traditions. While heavily influenced by various cultures around the rim of the Indian Ocean, the Maldivian culture, craft and traditions have been shaped by the island environment and the seas that surround us.

Dhivehi is the language of the Maldivian people. Our current script, Thaana is unique and was developed from Arabic numerals around the 16th century. Maldivians are master boat builders. The traditional Maldivian boat, dhoni has been shaped over centuries, resulting in a craft that perfectly suits the various conditions of the seas. The traditional cuisine is heavily based on fish and coconut, with several dishes that have no parallels anywhere in the region.

The Environment

The Maldives has one of the most delicate environments anywhere on the planet. Coral reefs are the foundation of the islands. They offer protection to the tiny islands as its natural defence system, and the country's economy depends heavily on the health of its reefs and ecosystems.

Several conservation efforts are underway to protect the valuable marine environment of Maldives. While several marine species and birds are protected by law, protected areas have been designated to ensure the conservation of specific ecosystems and the rich biodiversity of the country. This includes designated nature reserves in islands of various atolls to protect wetlands and mangroves and the protection of marine areas and the designation of biosphere reserves that covers coral reefs, islands, sea grass beds and mangroves.

Several resorts too conduct their own programs. While some programs conducted by resorts focus on the protection and rehabilitation of sea turtles, others are engaged in cutting edge research on regeneration of coral reefs. Several community education programs are also conducted by resorts for school children and the community at large. Non-governmental organizations also play an important role through their voluntary programs and conduct regular beach and reef clean-up programs.

Visitors to Maldives are advised to carry back their own non-biodegradable waste and to take care not to stand on, touch or remove coral structures while snorkelling or diving.

DIVING IN ADDU ATOLL

Addu Atoll offers a choice of stunning dives in a range of diverse dive locations. The reefs of the atoll were not affected by the coral bleaching event of 1998 which affected the rest of the count...

Addu City

Addu Atoll offers a choice of stunning dives in a range of diverse dive locations. The reefs of the atoll were not affected by the coral bleaching event of 1998 which affected the rest of the country and therefore you can expect to see healthier coral growth wherever you dive. The atoll is also suitable for less advanced divers as the currents are weaker than at most other dive sites around the country.

The atoll offers the opportunity to dive with mantas throughout the year. One of the most exciting dives in the atoll is the British Loyalty wreck, a British naval vessel that was torpedoed by German U-boats during World War II. Other highlights include the Shark Point where you can see grey reef sharks in what has become known as the 'Shark Hotel', the Turtle Point where Hawksbill and

Green Sea Turtles are seen regularly and the Kandu Huraa Region, with four different dive points and home to a plethora of marine life including mantas, nurse sharks, turtles and rays. Gan Inside is perfect for beginners where it is shallower yet offers a variety of marine life round the year.

Why you should visit this beautiful location -

Maldives is a slice of heaven in the Indian Ocean, most resorts take up a whole island giving you an intimate away from the crowd's beach escape.

What to do to fill up your days:

SURFING IN THE MALDIVES

The Maldives is located right in the middle of the Indian Ocean and benefits from full exposure to southern swells and to excellent surfing conditions on the outer reefs of atolls. With an average...

The Maldives is located right in the middle of the Indian Ocean and benefits from full exposure to southern swells and to excellent surfing conditions on the outer reefs of atolls. With an average water temperature of around 28-degree Celsius, surfing conditions are good throughout the surfing season from in mid-February to November, however you can experience the best conditions from March to May and September to end of November.

North Male' Atoll was the first to be discovered for its waves and hence it is the most popular with surfers and the most accessible as well due to the large number of resorts and its close proximity to the international airport. The consistent waves at various surf points in the atoll offer some of the longest rides in the country. Some famous surf locations in the atoll include Cokes at Thulusdhoo, Lhohis, at Lhohifushi island, Jailbreaks, Honky's, Male' Island Point, Sultans and Ninjas, all along the eastern rim of the atoll.

For many surfers, Huvadho Atoll, in the southern group of the atoll chain offers the coolest waves in the Maldives, most of them located on the southern rim of the atoll. Beacons, Tiger Stripes, Castaways, Blue Bowls, Airports, Five Islands, Two Ways, Love Charms and Antiques are some of the well-known surf points in the atoll.

DIVING IN NORTH MALÉ ATOLL

Male' Atoll offers a large number of varied and well-established dive sites for the avid diver. Being the first atoll to have established tourism, the dive sites in the atoll are among the most pop...

Male' Atoll offers a large number of varied and well-established dive sites for the avid diver. Being the first atoll to have established tourism, the dive sites in the atoll are among the most popular in the country. Amazing underwater scenery, marine species ranging from colourful reef fishes to large species such as manta and sharks are all on offer in the atoll.

The Maldives Victory Wreck is perhaps the most popular wreck dive in the atoll. The wreck sits at a depth of about 35 meters and since it sank in 1981, it has been encrusted with an amazing array of colourful corals. Groupers, fusiliers and batfish are among its residents.

Although Ari Atoll is famous for its pelagics, North Male' Atoll offers some parallels. Located in the southeast of the atoll, Manta Point is famous for its mantas which gather at the site to feed during

the southwest monsoon from May to October. The reef offers a colourful array of corals and a variety of marine life.

Nassimo Thila with its beautiful caves and coral formations, HP Reef with its caves and crevices, and Banana Reef with its wealth of fish and sea life are also some of the most popular dive sites in North Male' Atoll.

Visas, Safety Measures, and Health Precautions

TRAVEL INFORMATION

TIME

5 hours ahead of GMT

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE CODE

+960

ELECTRICITY

240 volts

MOBILE SERVICES

Prepaid SIM cards are available from two mobile service providers at the airport. The SIM cards can be used for local and international call and for data.

CURRENCY

The Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR) is the local currency. All major credit cards are accepted in the country.

VISA

All nationalities receive a 30-day visa on arrival, provided that you have a valid passport, an onward ticket to continue your journey and a reservation at a tourist facility or enough funds to cover your stay in the country.

TAXES

A Tourism Goods and Service Tax (TGST) of 16% is levied on all goods and services at tourist establishments. A Green Tax of US\$ 6.00 per person per day is payable for guests staying at integrated tourist resorts, resort hotels and other tourist establishments. Tourists who stay in local island guesthouses and hotels with more than 50 registered rooms are similarly subject to a Green Tax of US\$ 6.00 per person per day. The Green Tax for tourists who stay in local island guesthouses and hotels with 50 or less rooms is US\$ 3.00 per person per day.

TRAVEL AND TRANSFER

Speedboat transfer is the norm to resorts close to the International Airport. The rest is covered by seaplane or domestic flight. If you are travelling to Male' you can take a taxi from the airport. Several daily flights operate from Velana International Airport to the 12 domestic and international airports in the country. Scheduled ferries also operate from Male' to many of the atolls.

ALCOHOL

Import of alcohol by individuals is not permitted. However, alcohol is available at all the resorts.

WEATHER

Year-round temperature hot tropical climate. The average high temperature is 31.5 degree Celsius, and the average low temperature is 26.4 degree Celsius. The Southwest monsoon from May to October brings rain and the Northeast monsoon from November to April is generally sunny.

CLOTHING

Cotton clothes suits well with the hot tropical climate of the Maldives. Tourist are expected to respect local culture and dress modestly when visiting or staying on inhabited islands. Sandals are ideal, as you may often want to slip them off and go barefoot.

MEDICAL SERVICES

The main public hospital Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) and private hospitals ADK and Treetop are located in Male'. Each Atoll has at least one hospital and most resorts have their own clinics and in-house doctors.

Recommended Hotel Brands:

- **Anantara Hotels**
- **Constance Hotels**
- **Cinnamon Hotels**
- **Centara Hotels**
- **Lux Hotels**
- **Adaraan Resorts**
- **Como Hotels**
- **Outrigger Resorts**
- **Sun Siyam resorts**
- **Kuredu Hotel**

- **And many more....**