



Maldives Cruising Guide

Maldives

Overview

Known as the pearls of the Indian Ocean, you could be mistaken for thinking the small chain of Islands that make up the Maldives are a luxury treasure just waiting to be discovered. Consisting of 26 atolls, these ancient coral islands of unbridled natural beauty provide the perfect indulgent break from reality.

There is no better way to truly explore and experience the natural splendour of the Maldives than to sail the islands at your own leisurely pace. Of the thousands of islands that make up the Maldives, only approximately 200 are inhabited, making them the perfect cruising ground to discover your very own private paradise.

Sea-life

In a country where the sea accounts for the majority of the territory, it's easy to understand how the ocean lies at the heart and soul of the Maldives. Dine on seafood just pulled from the ocean and cooked in front of your eyes, or indulge in a fresh fruit cocktail with ingredients from the very islands that surround you. Water sports can be found on any of the resort-laden islands where windsurfing and sailing opportunities abound.

Scuba Diving

The Maldives have some of the most amazing scuba diving spots in the world, the tranquil seas offering an amazing variety of sea life where divers can find themselves face-to-face with rays, turtles, lobsters, and schools of fish hundreds deep. It is even possible to find yourself swimming by a pod of dolphins or whale sharks, which is an experience beyond compare.

Fishing

Fishing is the life blood of this small country, and Big Game fishing in the azure waters is the experience of a lifetime. Due to the lie of the land, the coral atolls of the Maldives provide one of the biggest and most diverse homes to sea life in the world, creating the perfect opportunity to secure a mammoth and trophy-worthy catch using fishing methods unique to the experienced Maldives fisherman.

Spas

Hosting some of the most relaxing and unique spas in the world, a visit to one of the many luxury spa and health centres in the Maldives is a must. Centring their techniques around the water that shapes their home, Maldives spas are in a world of their own. Think swirling vitality pools, crystal steam rooms, volcanic hot stones and stimulating ice fountains.



Climate

The Maldives have a hot tropical climate but it differs dramatically between the Northern and Southern Atolls, with the north receiving higher temperatures and less rainfall.

Monsoons are a determining factor in the climate of the Maldives and the monsoon seasons run from November to April and June to August. Generally the southwest brings more wind and rain in June and July, but the temperature rarely falls below 25. These seasons are mild however and not as defined as those in nearby countries. Average temperature for the area varies only marginally throughout the seasons with an average maximum of just over 30C and a minimum of 26C. The best time to visit the Maldives is the dry season between December and April when the warm climate supports plenty of sunshine.

Malé

Overview

As an introduction to the Maldives, throbbing Malé is at odds with the rest of the ultra-peaceful remote Archipelago. Bustling and busy, Malé is the reality to the rest of the country's island fantasy. Tall bright buildings. Daily markets full of activity. Mosques and museums. Quirky bars and restaurants (No alcohol is served).



Vaavu Atoll

Overview

Only 2,100 inhabitants share the five islands that make up the Vaavu Atoll, a combination of Felidhoo Atoll and the uninhabited Vattaru Falhu Atoll.

Fishing and quietly building simple boats are how the locals spend their days here. The diving is excellent for both beginners and experienced scuba divers - A local guide can be brought onboard the yacht. Manta Rays, Whale Sharks, Grey and White-Tip Reef Sharks, and even Hammerheads are just a few of the species that can be spotted.

Meemu Atoll

Overview

A paradise for both surfing and diving, the 8 inhabited islands of Meemu are best visited by boat. You'll find great surf spots on the eastern side of the Atoll - The most adventurous surfers should head to Mulee Point, Veyvah Point or Boahuraa Point.



Thaa Atoll

Overview

66 paradise islands form the perfect circle of the Thaa Atoll. More than anywhere else in the Maldives, Thaa is a haven for sea and surf. The Laccadive sea meets the Arabian sea to enrich a festival of underwater life, all of which can be seen from the deck.

Giant Manta, Whale Sharks and Leatherback Turtles are best spotted with a mask and snorkel. The warm offshore surf is ideally witnessed on a short board - with no wetsuit required. Zeavola Resort.

Laamu Atoll

Overview

The Laamu Atoll boasts 82 islands, only 10 of which host any form of human life. Indeed, The Maldives chain contains 800 such desert island gems. Its coral reefs harbour 1,000 species of fish, 20 species of whales and dolphins, and more colour than you can ever imagine. It's like sitting in your own 90,000km² tropical bath.



Huvadhu Atholho

Overview

This Atoll is considered one of the richest in terms of places of interest and natural wonders. There is no end to the untouched islands and all you have to do is put your head underwater anywhere to admire intact coral reefs, teeming with fish and full of coral.

Rasdhoo Atoll

Overview

Rasdhoo Atoll is bursting with vibrant sea life and bucolic adventure on the sultry Indian Ocean. Located northeast of the Ari Atoll, the pristine waters surrounded by a thriving reef makes the Rasdhoo Atoll ideal for diving: Jump in and experience clown fish, turtles, eagle rays, morays and colorful parrotfish up close and in a kaleidoscopic range of vivid colours.



Ari Atoll

Overview

Ari Atoll with its immaculate reef beds, some of which are the most famous in the world for diving and underwater exploration. The natural beauty and gentle way of life that exists within the Ari Atoll have made it one of the most popular destinations for travellers to the area, outside of Male. Sail into the Ari Atoll for a dive off of Maya Thila whose coral reef is revered for its large black coral trees, sea turtles, and schools of vibrant midnight snappers.

Meerufenfushi

Overview

The romantic island of Meerufenfushi, known as Meeru to its beloved devotees. Popular with honeymooners and those seeking asylum from the bustle of the real world, Meeru is a prized jewel among the gems of the Maldives. Head next to Meerufenfushi for spectacular views of its beautiful palms surrounding an emerald green lagoon making it the ideal location for a day of sun-soaking. Enjoy a dinner of fresh, local seafood beneath a brilliant sunrise for the perfect end to a perfect day.



Dhangeti

Overview

The quaint island of Dhangeti, which is home to local craftsmen engaged in their traditional production of coir rope and woven mats. Sample some local cooking while on the island to experience a true taste of what the Maldives have to offer. Explore the untouched beauty of Dhangeti Island then head out for an unforgettable afternoon dive off of Kudarah Thila, one of the best sea beds in the Maldives. With an abundance of coral and reef fish in a rainbow of colors including moray eels, angelfish, coral groupers, soldier fish, triggerfish, and turtles, this is an underwater paradise.

Felidhoo

Overview

The remote paradise of Felidhoo. Part of the Vaavu Atoll and home to hammerhead sharks, Felidhoo is a glorious bastion of natural island beauty, that boasts just enough development to keep it luxurious. For remote pleasures head to the Felidhoo Atoll, a tiny uninhabited atoll boasting an impressive underwater mountain, rising from the depths of the sea. Diving enthusiasts will admire a multitude of gorgonians, silvery carangids and solitary sharks of immense proportions.



Explore the Maldives by day

The Pampering

Lime Spa, Huvaflen Fushi

As eco-friendly as it is breathtaking, the Huvaflen Fushi is a 21st century tropical paradise. Surrounded by rich coral reefs, this sandy islet is the ultimate in sun-soaked hideaways. It also includes a world-class spa and health and wellness centre. Conveniently located near the charming mass of bungalows, so as to cut out any unnecessary strain or toil, this underwater fairyland is designed by Richard Hywel Evans and serviced by the extraordinary Anastasia Achilleos. Lime Spa offers award-winning treatments and delicious rejuvenation.

Sights

Lonu Veyo

The Maldivian Islands are one of the only places in the world where you're guaranteed a 360° view of the sea from almost anywhere you may be and one of the premier views is experienced from Lonu Veyo. This diminutive saltwater pool, isolated in the lovely shallows near the glorious Huvaflen Fushi Island, is saltier than the Dead Sea and fabulous for the skin and incredibly buoyant.

Shopping

With all this feral beauty abounding, it should come as no surprise that the Maldivian Islands are not exactly equipped to cater to every shopping whim. Local crafts are in fine supply and one of the favourites is virgin coconut oil: anti-bacterial and supposedly having healing and anti-ageing properties it's a delightfully aromatic local product.

Activities

Scenic Flight

Hop aboard a sea plane from dazzling Cocoa Island in order to have a birds eye view of this scattering of beautiful islands, like so many pearls on a backdrop of the deepest turquoise.

Snorkelling & Diving

From Cocoa Island, enthusiasts can take a snorkelling trip out to the remote island of Fushifathi Finolhu which, like every other island in the Maldives, is teeming with a diverse array of colourful marine life. Cocoa Island's dive centre is particularly good and is situated right next to Cocoa Thila Island, which is touted as one of the Maldives top 10 dive spots.

Explore the Maldives by day

Overview

Snorkelling & Diving

The Maldivian Islands are a water-lovers paradise and no place caters to that love more than Huvaflen Fushi. Home to an incredible house reef, snorkelling and diving are at their peak here with its vibrant schools of bannerfish, fairy basslets and other vivid and wonderful sea creatures.

Bites

Raw

Located in the exclusive Huvaflen Fushi Resort, this blond wood and thatched-roof bungalow sits perched above the translucent lagoon which allows plenty of fresh air to accompany the inventive organic cuisine. Place your trust in the savvy staff, who will probably recommend island favorites like chilled beet soup with goat cheese while the waist-level kitchen allows diners to query the chef. Deceptively simple tastes rule the day here and make for a delicious mid-day repast.



Explore the Maldives by night

Dining

Al Barakat

This incredible over-water restaurant offers extraordinary views of the technicolor fish below and glorious sunsets on the horizon. The Middle Eastern antiques and sumptuous textiles of the dining room are accompanied by equally authentic fare prepared by an expert Egyptian chef who produces rich, delicious dishes for this indulgent Baa Atoll establishment.

Deep End

Little can distract from the exquisite menu served at this over-water South Male Atoll restaurant, not even the fish, sharks and stingrays that encircle it. Tables are set with Frette linens, the wine list includes international treasures and the desserts are appropriately seductive at this glorious up-scale haven.

Baan Huraa

Easily the most interesting establishment in the sultry Maldives, Baan Huraa is a free-standing building connected to Anantara Veli and Naladhu by narrow walking bridges. Authentic Thai dishes rule the roost and many diners choose to linger over their sweet desserts in the open-air, antique-filled dining room while watching for dolphins to swim past this South Male Atoll location.

Ithaa Undersea Restaurant

Rated “the most beautiful restaurant in the world” by the New York Daily News in 2014, Ithaa sits five metres below the surface, offering 180-degree panoramic views of the vibrant coral gardens surrounding it. Ithaa (meaning ‘mother of pearl’ in the Maldivian language of Dhivehi) serves contemporary European cuisine in a six-course set dinner menu. Expect indulgences such as caviar for dinner while the four-course lunch menu offers lighter fare. Also open for mid-morning cocktails and can be booked privately for breakfast, weddings or other special occasions.

Sea Fire Salt

Featuring an alfresco wooden deck over the turquoise lagoon, Sea. Fire. Salt. offers a crossroads of cuisines and cooking styles. Freshly caught Maldivian favourites such as reef fish, lobster and prawns, and prime aged imported cuts from Australia can be ordered flame grilled, wok sautéed or cooked to perfection in a wood-fired oven. The experience is accentuated by our salt selection from around the world, curated by our very own Salt Guru.

Explore the Maldives by night

Sundowners

Rah Bar

Adjacent to the main pool of the One & Only Reethi Reethi Resort, this vibrant cocktail bar boasts delicious concoctions and venerable liquors while jazz singers perform in the open-air as the sun sets over another glorious day in the tropics.

Clubbing

Fanditha

Situated at the farthest tip of the One & Only Reethi Reethi Resort, this exotic, boho-chic beachside spot boasts a luxurious lounge area where guests can sprawl on divan-style bolsters and Arabic carpets, bamboo loungers or in woven hammocks. On selected evenings, there are late-night parties hosted by a resident DJ under the stars, creating a casual-chic ambiance where glittering chandeliers dangle from the trees.





43 Berkeley Square
London
W1J 5FJ

E: uk@yachtmasters.com
T: +44 (0) 207 099 0941

www.yachtmasters.com