

MALDIVES

Visitors Guide

ENG

2012 Issue

YOUR HANDY
TOUR GUIDE.

Travel well



Official Publication of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation
www.visitmaldives.com



Welcome to Maldives

Welcome, welcome traveller. Welcome to a land that has granted many a fatigued, stressed and over-worked souls inner bliss, solitude, peace and tranquillity. If this is your first time coming to the Maldives, then get ready to be enthralled by our lush white sandy beaches, the serene turquoise lagoons, the richly colourful coral reefs renowned the world over for their great bio-diversity, the radiant flora and fauna being host to the mother of all tropical trees - the Maldivian Coconut Palm and most importantly the friendly and hospitable Maldivian people. You'll love that rapturous feeling of swimming with dolphins, gazing at the majestic Mantarays underwater, catching a gnarly wave, dancing the night away at a beach party, indulging on the scrumptious tropical and multi-cultural food on offer or just plain lounging on the beach sipping on a refreshing cocktail,

Recurrent visitors would know exactly what we are talking about and to them we first wish a hearty welcome back and remind them of the fact that they'll always discover something new and wondrous about these pearl-like islands on each different visit. Sit back, relax and let our island and sea spirits give your mind, body and soul that heavenly high you've come seeking for once again.

In a more serious note, we would like to remind all visitors to become and function as environmentally conscious and aware tourists on your visit. Global warming, pollution and other man-made crimes against nature the world over are devastating the natural eco-systems of various countries including ours. We are a rather small island nation being host to a rather fragile and vulnerable environment and marine eco-system.

Help us protect our coral reefs and shores so that we can preserve them for future generations. Please keep our beaches clean and adhere to responsible diving and snorkelling practices such as refraining yourself from touching the corals and marine life or extracting them for personal use (more information will be presented to you by the relevant resort/liveaboard that you are staying in).

All in all, we wish you a pleasant and sunny stay in our beautiful country and look forward for more and more visits from you. As we locals say "I ajaa Kollah Chey" (Translation: I do have fun)

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Quick facts & figures

Local Time	+5 hrs T
Capital	Male'
Population	360,000
Languages	Dhivehi (Official), English
Currency	Rufiyaa (Rf, R or Rf)
Exchange Rates	US \$1 = Rf15.42, UK £1 = Rf24.65, Euro €1 = Rf21.85
Location	Indian Ocean, Southwest of Sri Lanka
Geographic Co-ordinates	3 15' N, 73 00 E
Area	90,000km ² (of which less than 1% is land - 298km ²)
Immediate Neighbours	North of Maldives: Lakshadweep Islands
North-east of Maldives	Sri Lanka and India
South of Maldives	Chagos Archipelago
Southwest of Maldives	Seychelles
Climate	Tropical Warm temperatures, lots of sunshine
Best Time to Visit	December to April (Dry-Season/ North-east Monsoon)
Clothing	Moderate, Light cotton
Religion	Islam
No. of Islands	1190
Inhabited Islands	201
Resorts	100
Liveaboards (Safaris)	60
Major Industries	Tourism and Fisheries
Electricity	240 Volts, 50 Hz
Working Hours: Government	0800 hrs to 1600 hrs (Sunday to Thursday)
Working Hours: Private Sector	0800 hrs to 1700 hrs (Sunday to Thursday) 0800 hrs to 1400 hrs (Saturday)
Working Hours: Banks	0800 hrs to 1330 hrs (Sunday to Thursday)
International Telephone Code	+960



ENVIRONMENT WEATHER & CLIMATE

Land wildlife and vegetation in the Maldives are limited in terms of bio-diversity. However, this aspect is overshadowed by the abundant marine flora and fauna to be found in the Maldives. The month of June 2011 even saw a Atoll of the Maldives being declared a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. The Maldives is home to over 2,000 species of fish ranging from reef fish to manta rays, Gray Eels, reef sharks and to the majestic whale shark. These marine eco-systems are both extremely vibrant and extremely fragile at the same time. Their vulnerability was made clearly evident by the nation-wide coral bleaching incident caused by the El Niño (An unusual warming of the surface water) of 1998. Furthermore, global warming and rampant pollution are becoming greater threats to the environment of the Maldives.

The Maldives enjoys a tropical climate and has two distinct seasons; the dry season, known as the "Iruvai" monsoon (Northwest monsoon) - April to December, and the wet season or "Ulhangu" monsoon (Southwest monsoon) - May to November. The dry season, as the name suggests, is a period of regular sunshine with little or no rain showers. This is also the best season for scuba diving. The wet season is a period in which the whole of Maldives experiences torrential rain showers which includes thunder storms. This is the best season for surfing due to good swells and wave generation. The wet season does offer periods of sunshine similar to balmy days you would experience during the dry season, as Maldives enjoys year long sunshine. The temperature normally ranges from 23°C - 31°C.

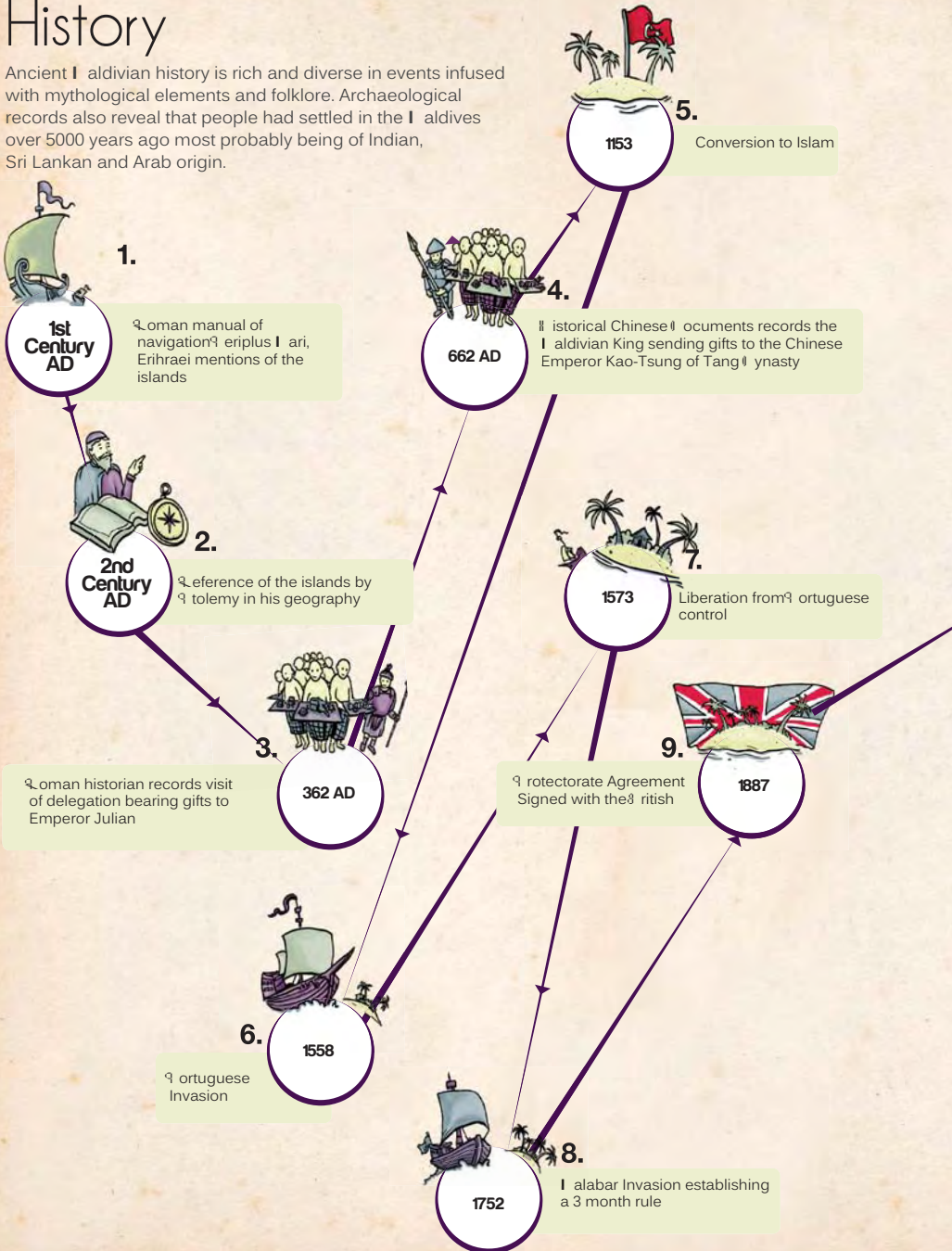


LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY

The Maldives consists approximately 1,190 coral islands clustered in a chain of 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean. The atolls are scattered along the north-south direction with an area covering roughly 90,000km². However, only 1% of this surface area consists of land. The nation lies between latitudes 07° 06'S and 08° 00'N, and longitudes 72° 32' and 73° 46'E.

Maldivian History

Ancient Maldivian history is rich and diverse in events infused with mythological elements and folklore. Archaeological records also reveal that people had settled in the Maldives over 5000 years ago most probably being of Indian, Sri Lankan and Arab origin.





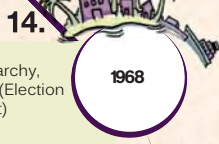
15.
 Inception of the Maldivian Tourism Industry, first island resorts developed, arrival of first tourists

1972



16.
 The third republic (Election of Yameen Abdul Gayoom as the resident)

1978



14.
 End of the 853 year old monarchy, start of the second republic (Election of Ibrahim Nasir as resident)

1968



The fourth republic (Election of Mohamed Nasheed as the resident)

2008



10.
 First Constitution Enacted

1932



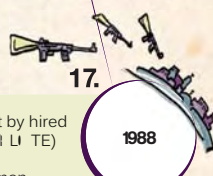
13.
 Gained Independence from the British

1965



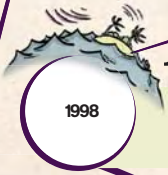
11.
 Establishment of the first republic (Election of Mohamed Amin Didi as the resident)

1953



17.
 Failed Coup attempt by hired Tamil mercenaries (led by 2 Maldivian businessmen)

1988



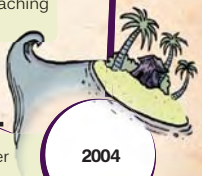
18.
 El Niño spread destructive coral bleaching

1998



12.
 Failure of the first republic, Sultanate resumed with Mohammad Faeed Didi taking the throne

1954



19.
 Tsunami disaster

2004



Culture



Photography | Ahmed Shauq

People & Local Culture

THE MALDIVIAN PEOPLE ARE A FRIENDLY FOLK THAT HAS ANCESTRAL ROOTS OF SRI LANKAN, AFRICAN, INDIAN, ARAB AND PORTUGUESE ORIGIN. THE MALDIVIAN CULTURE IS HEAVILY

INFLUENCED BY SRI LANKAN, INDIAN AND AFRICAN ELEMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE "BODU BERU" - A FORM OF MALDIVIAN FOLK MUSIC CONSISTING OF DRUMMING IS LINKED TO AFRICAN TRIBAL DRUMMING RITUALS. FOLK MUSIC, DANCE, ARTS AND CRAFTS THOUGH BEING SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS AND THE AFRICAN AND ARAB WORLD, HAS A UNIQUE MALDIVIAN TINGE AND TWIST TO IT.

LANGUAGE

The official language of the Maldives is Dhivehi, an Indo-Aryan language having some similarities with Sinhala. The first known script used to write Dhivehi is "Eveyla Akuru" script which is found in historical recording of kings. Later a script called "Thaana Akuru" was introduced and used for a long period. The present-day written script is called "Thaana" and is written from right to left.

Thaana is said to be introduced by the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Thakurfaanu. English is considered the second language and the Maldivian education system has been following the British Standard since the 1960's. It can be said that most Maldivians are quite fluent and adept at the English language.

Above from left to right:

- 1 Couple relaxing in their traditional Maldivian hut
- 2 'hvalhu gondi'. A game played by two people using a board carved from wood and cowrie shells

Opposite page from left to right:

- 1 Women in the islands get together outside their homes to prepare food while socializing with the neighbors
- 2 Men making coir rope from coconut husks. Children come to help and participate with the process



Photography | Ahmed Shuaib



Culture

LIFESTYLE

The traditional Maldivian family consisted of a patriarch who earned a living primarily by fishing. Carpentry, seamanship, tapping toddy and boat-building are also traditional professions some men pursued. The woman normally stayed at home and took care of the children and other household duties. She was also responsible for activities like drying the fish and smoking the fish for commercial use. Some women also engaged in activities like mat weaving and making coir rope. There was very much a close-knit communal atmosphere to the islands.

However after the 1970's which ushered in a new era of rapid modernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation and the growth of tourism had brought about significant changes to the lifestyle and professions of the locals. Most Maldivian people now pursue modern professions in both the private sector and public sector. Employment in the construction industry, tourism industry and the service sector has boomed with higher concentrations in Male' (capital), commercial and business centre of the nation.

CULTURAL MUSIC & DANCE

The Maldivian people are a friendly folk that has ancestral roots of Sri Lankan, African, Indian, Arab and Portuguese origin. The Maldivian culture is heavily influenced by Sri Lankan, Indian and African elements. For example "Bodu Beru" - a form of Maldivian folk music consisting of drumming is linked to African tribal drumming rituals. Folk music, dance, arts and crafts though being similar to those of our immediate neighbours and the African and Arab world has a unique Maldivian tinge and twist to it.

☉ **Dhandi Jehun** Similar to Langiri, in which each dancer holds a 90 cm long stick. The sticks are beaten against those of a partner while continuously dancing to the rhythm of the music. Performers commonly wear sarongs, t-shirts, white head cloths, a sash around their waist and white under-garments

☉ **Bandiyaa Jehun** This dance has roots in India and is performed exclusively by women. The dancers keep time to the rhythm of a metal pot with the metal rings on their fingers. Nowadays, drums, harmonicas and other instruments are utilised.



Photography | Mohamed Sifan

○ **Bodu Beru** is a form of folk music with roots stretching as far as East Africa. An ensemble consisting of 15 - 20 people perform *odu* *eru* which includes 3 - 4 drummers and a lead singer. Some members also play a bell and an "onugandu" (a small piece of bamboo with small grooves which produces sharp sounds). This is the most popular form of traditional Maldivian music with recent annual national competitions also being held in the month of Ramadan. Many resorts have weekly *odu* *eru* nights so that visitors can also take part in this tradition..

○ **Maafathi Neshun** This "Neshun" (translation: Dance) is similar to Langiri, but is performed by women wearing the national dress. This is a group dance in which women dance in two rows of ten. Each dancer has a 1 meter long semi-circular string decorated with artificial flowers. They hold these strings and dance in different style in small rows or groups of two or three.

TRADITIONAL FOOD

The traditional food of Maldivians not surprisingly is based around fish, tuna to be more specific and coconuts. White rice and "roshi" (a flour based flat-bread) are staple items. Fish is normally consumed smoked, fried, barbequed, roasted, etc. One of the most popular local dishes "Garudhiya" is also a soup made from tuna. Maldivian tuna is also consumed in the form of a curry along with the staple items. Other items include "rihaakuru" which is a fish paste made from cooking "garudhiya" over a long period of time and "mas huni" - diced smoked tuna mixed with lime, onions, pepper and coconut. for local consumption. Sweets range from "addu bondi" - think bounty without the chocolate, "dhiya hakuru", "karu hakuru", etc which are all coconut based sweets. Traditional beverages include "Toddy" - aged coconut sap and plain coconut sap. Maldivian snacks consist of fried breadfruit and a range of fried spicy and sweet items called "Edhi Kaa" - short-eats. Popular items include "gulha", "bajiyaa" and "boakibaa". So look forward to savouring and sampling some of these items at your selected resort or liveboard.



Photography | Zebra Cross Library



Culture

ARTS & CRAFTS

The Maldives is famous for its intricately designed and crafted lacquer works (The majority of these pieces are now produced in Maafaa Atoll, Thulhaadhoo. These pieces which include jewellery boxes, containers, and vases are crafted by moulding and hollowing out pieces of wood which is locally known as Liye Laa Jehun. Colours consist of strands of red, black and yellow resin and patterns are normally of a floral nature.

Additionally mat weaving (thundu kunaa), coir rope making, pyrography and calligraphy are well known traditional Maldivian arts. However, their prominence is at a decline in recent times due to rapid modernisation and urbanisation and simply a lack of demand.

FESTIVALS

○ **Ramadan** This is the holiest month of all for Muslims and normally falls on the ninth month of the lunar calendar. This is a month consisting of 29 or 30 days of fasting. The normal flow of life is altered with working hours altered being cut short significantly. Traditional games also take centre stage at night with an increase in camaraderie between neighbours and households.

○ Kuda Eid (Eid-UI-Fitr)

This day marks the end of Ramadan and begins with an early "Eid" morning prayer. Feasts are prepared at each household with neighbours, friends and family being invited. The eid lasts for 3 days with celebrations, dances, music and traditional and modern sports being played. This includes the national "Maafaa Maafaa" (a sport similar to Kabaddi) tournament being played in the capital

○ **Bodu Eid (Eid-UI-Ali' H'aa)** The longer of the Eids, this occasion falls on the holy month when Muslims are completing the Hajj prayers. This is a time for celebrations and feasting for those staying back. Traditional sports, music and dance go hand in hand with modern sports and music at this time.

Above from left to right:

- | Women performing the traditional dance 'Maafaa Maafaa'
- | Vases crafted and designed by using the method known locally as 'Liye Laa Jehun'
- | Cooking 'rihaakuru' in the old style kitchen



Culture

Photography | Mohamed Riyaz



Photography | Ahmed Shauq

○ **Independence day** The 26th of July 1966 marks the date in which Maldives was liberated (from protectorate status) from British rule. This day is now marked annually with floats (exclusive to the capital), parades and celebrations across the nation.

RELIGION

Maldives is a 100% Islamic nation. However, the country was a Buddhist state prior to mass conversion in 1153 AD. Archaeological evidence also confirms the existence of sun worshippers and other pagan practitioners in ancient times.

Conversion to Islam is linked to a mythical story which the locals refer to as the "Annaamaari" story. The tale speaks of a sea monster, which the locals refer to as "Annaamaari" that terrorised the capital every full moon. The people in order to appease the monster and to prevent rampant killings offered a sacrificial virgin maiden to feed on.

A travelling Moroccan Islamic scholar named Abu-al-ʿArakaath al-ʿArbary was responsible for slaying the "Annaamaari" through the recitation of verses from the Quran. The legend states that Abu-al-ʿArakaath made a stop-over in Maldives during a routine voyage and stayed with a local family. He was made aware of the "Annaamaari" and the sacrifices along with other local traditions by the family. He was also informed by the family that their daughter was chosen for the next upcoming

sacrifice which made Abu-al-ʿArakaath formulate a plan to save her. In the sacrificial day he disguised himself as a girl taking the place of his host's daughter and stayed at the altar near the beach built for the sacrifice. He started to recite the Quran upon seeing the monster surface from the ocean. The vibrations and spiritual power of his recitation killed the "Annaamaari" sending it back to the depths of the ocean. The King along with the locals arrived the next morning to the altar only to find the Moroccan still reciting the Quran. This miracle astonished and bewildered the King and after listening to Abu-al-ʿArakaath's story issued an official decree ordering all Maldivians to convert to Islam. Abu-al-ʿArakaath's body now rests in the tomb known as "Iddhu Ziyaari" which can be found in the capital Male'.

Sufic sects have also been known to have existed and operated after conversion and they have been linked to the construction of tombs next to mosques. However, no such sect exists in the modern day and the country comprises of solely Sunni Muslims.

Above from left to right:

Maldivians celebrating Eid al-Fitr mosque



Be an Environmentally Conscious Tourist

It is no secret that the Maldives has a significant chance of submerging in the future due to rising sea levels caused by global warming. Sadly, the need and mechanisms of industrial and technological development has contributed immensely to the great environmental catastrophes which have occurred and are currently taking place across the world. The Maldivian eco-system is no different with man-made activities such as over-fishing, pollution, coral mining, etc posing as great threats to its longevity and sustainability. With unavoidable destructive natural phenomena such as the El Niño of 1998 which lead to widespread nation-wide coral bleaching and the Tsunami of 2004 which internally displaced thousands of people, there is an ever greater need to minimise man's negative impact on the environment. Natural disasters cannot be avoided, but man-made ones can be.

Therefore we respectfully call upon all visitors to respect our natural eco-systems and to become environmentally pro-active and conscious tourists. Help us preserve this paradisiacal land for future generations.

We are only recommending that you follow simple guidelines during your stay. These include abstaining from throwing rubbish onto the beach, lagoons and the open sea (especially cigarette butts and plastic bags), following responsible diving and snorkelling practices such as not touching or removing the corals for personal use and refraining from chasing or touching the marine life as well (in essence being passive divers and snorkelers), conserving water and electricity, etc.

We would also wish for you to check with the resorts and liveboards whether they are following environmentally friendly practices such as proper waste management, sewage management, recycling, etc and if not to discuss it with them or at least bring to their attention that you would prefer such systems being put in place.

Conservation

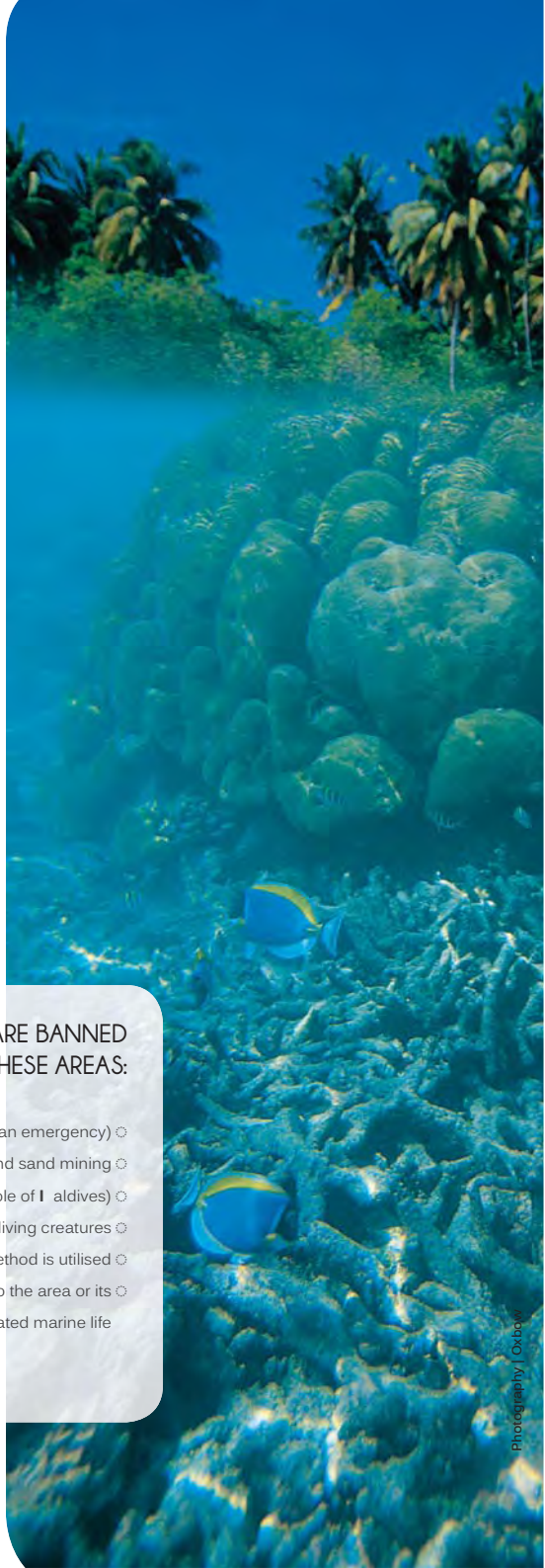
Protected Islands, Marine Areas, Dive Sites & Species

Environment

SUSTAINING AND CONSERVING THE FRAGILE ECO-SYSTEMS OF THE MALDIVES HAS BEEN BOOSTED BY OFFICIAL GOVERNMENTAL RECOGNITION WHICH HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO CLASSIFICATION OF CERTAIN ISLANDS, MARINE AREAS, DIVE SITES AND SPECIES AS BEING PROTECTED.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE BANNED AT THESE AREAS:

- Anchoring (except in an emergency)
- Coral and sand mining
- Dumping Trash (applicable to the whole of Maldives)
- Removal of any natural object or living creatures
- Fishing except if the traditional live bait fishing method is utilised
- Any other activity which may cause damage to the area or its associated marine life



Photography | Oxbow



PROTECTED ISLANDS:

- ☐ Il anifu (aa Atoll)
- ☐ Il ithadhoo (aaafu Alif Atoll)
- ☐ Il urashdoo (Alif Alif Atoll/Ari Atoll - North)



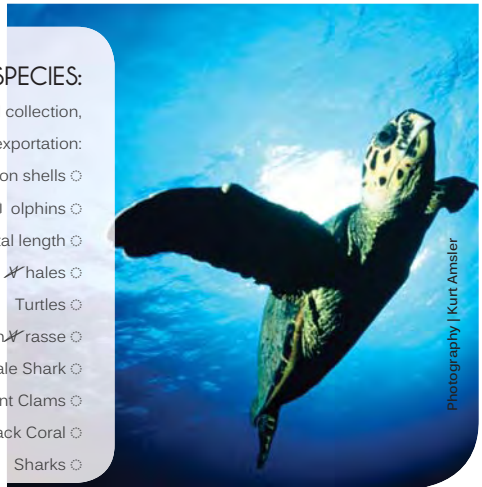
Photography | Kurt Anslar



PROTECTED MARINE SPECIES:

Prohibited from killing, catching and collection, extraction and exportation:

- ☐ Triton shells
- ☐ Dolphins
- ☐ Sterilized Female Lobsters and those less than 25cm in total length
- ☐ Whales
- ☐ Turtles
- ☐ Napoleon Wrasse
- ☐ Whale Shark
- ☐ Giant Clams
- ☐ Black Coral
- ☐ Sharks



Photography | Kurt Anslar



THE 35 PROTECTED MARINE AREAS (INCLUDES DIVE SITES):

ALIFU ALIFU ATOLL (ARI ATOLL - NORTH)

- Faruhuruvalhið eyru (I adivaru)
- Karibeyru Thila
- Kudarah Thila (I ink Shark Thila)
- I aaya Thila (I agau Thila)
- I ushimasmigili Thila (Fish I ead)
- I rimas Thila

ALIFU DHAAL ATOLL (ARI ATOLL - SOUTH)

- I aamigili

BAA ATOLL

- I higali I aa I orubadhoo Thila
- I anifaruð ay
- Anga Faru
- I endhoo (I ibiligaa Area)
- I oidhoo Koaru
- I aahuravalhi
- I athalaa
- I athufaru I uraa
- Corbin Ship I reck

DHAALU ATOLL

- Fushi Kandu

FAAFU ATOLL

- Filitheyo Kandu

KAAFU ATOLL (MALE' ATOLL)

- I hekunu Thilafalhuga I iyaruvani (Lion's I ead)
- Emboodhoo Kandu I Ihi (Emboodhoo Channel)
- I aathugiri/Ad'dhashugiri I anana I eef)
- I iravaru Kuda I aa
- I ulhifalhu/Kollavani (I an's I ass I lace, Kiki I eef, I ragon's I outh)
- I uraidhoo Kandu I Ihi (I uraidhoo Channel)
- Lankan Thila (I assimo Thila/ I paradise I ock I lue Caves/Virgin I eef/ I lue Shadow)
- I akunudhoo Kandu I Ihi (I akunudhoo Channel)
- I asfari Faru
- Thamburudhoo Thila (I I I eef)

LHAVIYANI ATOLL

- Fushifaru Kandu
- Kureddhoo Kandu I Ihi (Kuredu Express)

MEEMU ATOLL

- Lhazikuraadi (I akura Thila)

RAA ATOLL

- Vilingili Thila (Anemone City)

VAAVU ATOLL

- I iyaru Kandu (I hevana Kandu)
- Vattaru Kandu



BANNED FISHING METHODS:

- ⊗ Use of dynamite or explosives ⊗
- ⊗ Use of guns or any other such devices to catch fish ⊗
- ⊗ Use of chemicals to collect or catch fish ⊗
- ⊗ Use of scuba gear to collect sea cucumber and lobsters ⊗



BANNED FROM EXPORT:

- ⊗ Eels
- ⊗ Lobster | eat
- ⊗ Trochus shells
- ⊗ Igeye scad under 6"
- ⊗ Skates and rays
- ⊗ Pearl oysters
- ⊗ All types of corals (except organ pipe coral)
- ⊗ Parrot fish
- ⊗ All types of bait fish
- ⊗ Snapper fish



PROTECTED BIRDS:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| ⊗ White tern | ⊗ Black-Tailed odwit | ⊗ Black-headed eron | ⊗ Audubon's Shearwater |
| ⊗ Frigatebird | ⊗ Marsh Sandpiper | ⊗ Eurasian Spoonbill | ⊗ Flesh-footed Shearwater |
| ⊗ Glossy Ibis | ⊗ Jack Snipe | ⊗ Lesser olden lover | ⊗ Saunders's Tern |
| ⊗ Yellow agtail | ⊗ Black inged Stilt | ⊗ Spot-billed elican | ⊗ White-Tailed Tropicbird |
| ⊗ Tree ipit | ⊗ Crab lover | ⊗ Great Frigatebird | ⊗ Asian Koel |
| ⊗ Red-Throated ipit | ⊗ Western eef Egret | ⊗ Great Frigatebird | ⊗ Frigatebird |
| ⊗ Cattle Egret | ⊗ Black ittern | ⊗ Great Frigatebird | ⊗ Great Frigatebird |
| ⊗ Ruddy Turnstone | ⊗ Yellow ittern | ⊗ Great Frigatebird | ⊗ Black aped Tern |
| ⊗ Grey lover | ⊗ Black-crowned ight eron | ⊗ Great Frigatebird | ⊗ Lesser oddy |
| ⊗ Common inged lover | ⊗ aldian Little eron | ⊗ Caspian Tern | ⊗ Brown oddy |
| ⊗ Kentish lover | ⊗ Central aldian eron | ⊗ Common oornen | ⊗ Riddled Tern |
| ⊗ Lesser Sand lover | ⊗ asked ooby | ⊗ aldian ater en | ⊗ Roseate Tern |
| ⊗ Great Sand lover | ⊗ Brown ooby | ⊗ orthern ose artin | ⊗ Common Tern |
| ⊗ Pacific olden lover | ⊗ Red-footed ooby | ⊗ Common Coot | |
| ⊗ Black-headed ull | ⊗ arganey | ⊗ Whiskered Tern | |
| ⊗ Gull ull | ⊗ Ferruginous oard | ⊗ Lesser Crested Tern | |
| ⊗ Curlew Sandpiper | ⊗ orthern Shoveler | ⊗ Great Crested Tern | |
| ⊗ Common reenshank | ⊗ Purple eron | ⊗ Sooty Tern | |
| | | ⊗ Edge-Tailed Shearwater | |

Essential & Useful Info



ARRIVAL & IMMIGRATION

No prior visa arrangements are required but each visitor must have a passport valid for more than six months.

The airport of your arrival to the Maldives is Ibrahim Nasir International Airport. You will need to fill in a landing card, which should be distributed by the crew of your flight. Alternatively, you can find the cards immediately before immigration booths. To obtain immigration clearance, it is a requirement to indicate [in the landing card] an address or provide proof that you have a booking at a hotel/resort.

LOCAL CURRENCY

Maldives has a non-convertible currency; therefore, Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR/RF) cannot be purchased beforehand. Major international currencies can be changed at the airport on arrival or in the capital. The US Dollar is accepted as legal tender and its exchange rate fluctuates between 12.75 to 15.42 to a dollar. The exchange rates for other currencies vary daily (visit <http://www.bankofmaldives.com.mv/Information/Pages/rates.aspx> for latest updates on exchange rates).

The currency exists in the following bank notes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 500 and in the following coins: 1, 2, 5, as well as 25, 50 laaris.

CUSTOMS

In accordance with the Law of Customs of Maldives, the following items are:

PROHIBITED

- Religious materials offensive to Islam
- Idols (for worship)
- Pornographic material
- Drugs, narcotics and psychotropic substances
- Live pigs

RESTRICTED (FOR PERSONAL IMPORT)

- Arms and ammunition
- Alcohol and spirits
- Pork and its by-products
- Dogs
- Dangerous animals



MAIN CULTURAL CONSIDERATION

The prime advice is: listen and observe.

Many of the Western concepts lack reality once you are in the Maldives, and likewise many views held in the West need to be carefully considered before embarking on major discussions.

Maldivian government officials dress rather formally in the office, with men wearing long sleeve shirts and ties, and ladies wearing long sleeve blouses and trousers. Shorts that expose the leg above the knee are to be avoided by both men and women, as are revealing dresses, halter-tops, see-through gear, minis, etc. Although you will

see plenty of them in Male', worn by tourists, such attire is still not accepted by the older generation or island communities. Therefore, comfortable but not too revealing style of clothing is recommended.

The capital is long used to Western tourists passing through en-route to the luxurious resorts.

People in Male' show a lot of tolerance to the often scantily dressed foreigners who spill off tour boats, but as in any

Islamic country these displays are offensive and tend to attract a lot of unwanted attention from local men. The same tolerance cannot be assumed on

the islands, where more care must be taken, especially by female delegates and visitors, to avoid causing offence and unconsciously provoking unwanted attention from male islanders.

For women, a more conservative approach to clothes (blouses or t-shirts that cover the shoulders and skirts or shorts that cover the knees) attract far less attention on the streets than miniskirts and vest tops, and for this reason the latter should not be worn, apart from when visiting resort islands. Likewise, men should try and wear Bermuda type shorts and shirts that cover the shoulders on the islands and in the capital.

CLOTHING

Given the limited variation in temperature, only lightweight clothing should be brought to the Maldives.

We also recommend that you dress modestly and refrain from wearing bikini's and bathing suits while in the capital and other inhabited islands as the Maldives is a 100% Islamic nation.

BANKING

All major credit cards can be used (and are often preferred) at resorts, hotels, shops, travel agents, etc. The Maldives has maintained a fixed exchange rate against the dollar. Most restaurants and shops will accept US\$ in payment, providing change in local currency.

PERSONAL HEALTH

Sensible precautions should be taken to avoid sunburn and dehydration. On arrival and when travelling in the Maldives, stick to bottled mineral water.

Though infectious diseases are under control, dengue fever is common, especially on the islands. Most medicines are available in the Maldives, there are two hospitals on the main island, Male'. The hospitals can treat non-trauma injuries, but any severe injuries requiring specialist attention would need to be referred abroad. There are also dental facilities available and you can seek advice on the ones for specific needs.



IF MEDICAL ATTENTION IS REQUIRED ON REACHING MALDIVES, GO TO ADK HOSPITAL (+960-331-3553) OR IGMH (+960- 333-5335)



COMING HERE

With the recent opening and operation of an International Airport located in the southernmost atoll of the Maldives, visitors now have a choice of arriving either at this new airport or at Ibrahim Nasir International Airport located on the island of Hulhule. However, we recommend that you choose an International Airport only if your selected resort such as Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa (just minutes from the airport) is located in the Southernmost Atolls. We recommend that you choose Ibrahim Nasir International Airport as your flight destination if you're going to stay in a resort located in the central and northern atolls. Furthermore, this airport should also be your flight

destination if you've selected a liveaboard (safari) and opted to cruise instead as these vessels normally dock nearby.

European travellers can choose to arrive on frequent charter flights operating from major European cities or on scheduled flights which normally connect to Male' via Doha and Dubai.

Travellers from South-east Asia can catch daily flights from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Regular flights also operate from cities like Bangkok and Jakarta.

1 - 3 flights operate daily from our nearest neighbour Colombo. Frequent flights also operate from Trivandrum

and Bangalore if your place of origin is India.

GENERAL SECURITY

Male' is a relatively crime-free city. However, petty crime does exist though minimal as it may be – so it pays to be careful. Females may find themselves stared at very often: in the marketplace, tourism spots, etc. Avoid taking offence to this: in all likelihood (unless you are not observing the standard dress code), it may be out of curiosity.

TRANSFER

Getting to your selected resort or liveaboard is a pretty straightforward affair. Almost all of the resorts and liveaboards offer an airport welcome and collection service. You can either



take a sea plane or a speedboat to get to the resort (such arrangements will normally be taken care of by the resort). However, if you prefer to fly on a sea plane, you could request the resort to make such a booking. Liveboards are normally docked at Hulhumale' (a reclaimed island) north-east of Male' International Airport. It takes just 10-15 minutes by boat to get to your selected vessel.

COMMUNICATION

Maldives has a very efficient landline and mobile telephone system that operates effectively throughout the country. The office and hotel telephone lines have Subscribers Trunk Dialling (STD) / International Direct Dialling (IDD) facilities. There are two major private

telecommunications and internet providers in the Maldives named "Hiraagu" and "Wataniya". You can purchase a pre-paid SIM from either one on your visit to make cheap local calls. Pre-paid internet cards are also available, but most resorts and hotels facilitate broadband internet access to visitors.

RESORT OR LIVEBOARD?

Visitors can either choose to stay in a resort or cruise on a liveboard (safari) during their stay in the Maldives. Depending on your financial resources, you could even opt to spend half of your trip in a resort and the other half on a liveboard (safari).

Note that prices for resorts vary depending on their size, facilities,

luxury status, etc. Bookings can be made from travel operators and travel agents to capitalise on package deals. Direct bookings can also be made with the resort either through website or by communicating directly with them. Prices for cruising on liveboards also vary but are more uniform across the spectrum than resorts. Liveboards offer either surfing or diving packages that can be booked from a tour operator/travel agent or even direct from the liveboard operators.

Useful Numbers



119
Police



118
Fire



102
Ambulance



191
Coast Guard

DIVE RELATED EMERGENCIES HYPERBARIC CHAMBERS

3 andos Hyperbaric Chamber (I r. Ahmed Afir).....	7771392
Sun Island Hyperbaric Chamber.....	6680088
Kuramathi Island Resort.....	6660160
Kuredu Island Resort (I r. Ahmed).....	7901754/6620337
Kandoludhoo Island Resort.....	7773485
Shangri-la Villingili Resort and Spa.....	6897888

SEA PLANE SERVICE

TI A - Trans Indian Airways.....	3315201
I AT - Indian Air Taxi.....	3325708

SPEEDBOAT SERVICE

Sirius Speedboat Service.....	3315333
Souvenir Marine.....	3317449
I TCC.....	3322025
X-Speed Marine.....	7932534
Sun Travels and Tours.....	3325977
Sharu Launch.....	3318808

BANKING

Bank of Maldives.....	3322948
State Bank of India.....	3312111
SC.....	3330770
Abib Bank.....	3322948
Bank of Ceylon.....	3323045
Commercial Bank.....	3305656
Maldives Islamic Bank.....	3325555

MEDICAL (HOSPITALS)

Maldives.....	3336658
Maldives Hospital.....	3320436

Transportation

Taxi Service - (cost = R.f. 20 per trip, R.f. 5 extra for luggage carried and R.f. 25 per trip between the hours 12.00am - 6.00am)

Mal Cab.....	3323131
Mal Services.....	3313130
Fine Taxi.....	3321414
R Taxi.....	3321919
Kulee Huveli.....	3322122
Loyal Taxi.....	3325656
Leew Taxi.....	3325757
Qasal Taxi.....	3329292
Q Legal Taxi.....	3321313

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Yellow Pages.....	3336658
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Things to do in the Maldives



SNORKELING

Snorkelling in the Maldives does not require you to possess any specific qualification. Snorkelling is perfect for exploring the house reefs of resorts at a leisurely pace; however the dive centres also provide boat trips to different spots if you want to see and explore different sites. Liveboards, though mostly offering dive and surf packages also offer snorkelling trips, so check with your tour operator/ travel agent for rates, timings and other details.



WATER SPORTS

Parasailing, jet-skiing, wake-boarding, water-skiing, catamaran sailing, canoeing, wind-surfing, kite surfing, etc are all fun-filled water based activities to indulge in at your selected resorts. Many resorts have water sports centres with professional instructors and guides that also offer courses of different levels for water sports requiring skill and ability such as windsurfing and wake-boarding.



DIVING

The Maldives is renowned the world over as one of the top dive destinations in the world. The country is home to over a thousand beautiful reefs boasting of an abundant and diverse range of marine life and flora and fauna. Almost all of the resorts have certified dive centres housing experienced instructors and dive masters that will cater to all your scuba diving requirements. Famous dive spots include "Fish Head", "Lanka Victory", etc.



SURFING

Maldives boasts of a number of good surfing spots which includes the famous "Fish Head", "Lanka Victory", etc found in the Northernmost Atoll and "Shangri-la", "Zubair's", "Kottey", etc found in the Addu Atoll (Southernmost) as well as spots like "Tiger Stripes", "Love Charms", etc found in theuvadhu Atoll. Thaa and Laamu Atoll are also home to good surf spots. If you wish to explore a wide range of surf breaks, we suggest that you book a surf package from a liveboard (safari) as they will normally cruise to different spots per trip. However, if you wish to stay in a resort and want to catch a good wave, resorts such as "Chaaya Island Liveboard Resort" (home to "Fish Head") and "Lohi's" among others are perfect destinations. Surfing season begins in May and ends in December.



WHALE SUBMARINE

The whale submarine is capable of carrying a maximum of 50 passengers and reaching depths up to 150 metres though it normally goes and stays at depths between 10m - 40m as this is the range in which coral growth and fish life are abundant. The whale submarine operates from the capital Male' and is docked near to the capital. Bookings can be made directly from their office located in Male' or from your selected resort. Prices for adults range around M\$575 and M\$38 for children. Discounts may be available for group bookings.



PHOTO FLIGHTS

These are aerial flights presenting you the opportunity to gaze over the islands from above by sea plane. Some selected resorts organize group photo flights and private flights upon request. You could also book your own photo flight by contacting either offices of the two sea plane carriers "Trans Maldivian Airways" or "Maldivian Air Taxi"



BIG-GAME FISHING

Maldivian resorts as well as private charter operations offer big-game fishing trips. Adrenaline junkies can savour that feeling of hooking a large yellow-fin tuna, wahoo, marlin or a majestic sail-fish on such trips. There are no local laws that stipulate the mandatory release of big-game fish after catching and often the catch are taken back to the resort for a Maldivian style fish.



NIGHT FISHING

Night fishing is a much more leisurely affair than big-game fishing. Almost all of the resorts offer regular night-fishing trips or you could even book a trip from a private charter operation. Red snappers (locally known as the tastiest reef fish around), groupers, grunts, etc are worthy and formidable catches. Do remember to release endangered species such as sharks if caught.



EXCURSIONS (ISLAND HOPPING)

An island hopping excursion lets you visit a set number of inhabited islands, uninhabited islands or resorts in a day for general exploratory purposes. Mostly package combinations of visiting one inhabited island, one uninhabited island and one resort per day-trip are offered by resorts. However, you could request a change in the itinerary from the resort to customise the excursion to suit your preferences. Some excursions are also specific to visiting the capital Male' for spending the day. Excursion packages include lunches on the beach, fishing, etc. 107



Malé City Guide

MALE' IS THE CAPITAL OF THE MALDIVES. THE CITY IS HOME TO OVER A 100,000 INHABITANTS THAT INCLUDES BOTH MALDIVIANS AND EXPATRIATE WORKERS. IT HAS A LAND AREA OF APPROXIMATELY 4 SQ. KM. IT IS 1.7 KM IN LENGTH 1.0 KM IN TERMS OF WIDTH. THEREFORE GETTING AROUND IS A PRETTY EASY AND STRAIGHTFORWARD AFFAIR (PLAN WALKING), THOUGH YOU WILL FIND QUITE A NUMBER OF TAXI'S, BUSES AND MOTOR VEHICLES SUCH AS CARS AND MOTOR-CYCLES USED BY RESIDENTS OPERATING ON THE ROADS. THE ROADS ARE MADE UP OF BRICKS UNLIKE TAR WHICH YOU WILL FIND IN MOST URBAN CITIES.



Above:

| Malé City – the capital of Maldives



Photography / Ahmed Shuaib

Male' is the commercial hub of the nation and is home to the main governmental offices, private sector offices, multi-national corporations' branches, main branches of banks, the port, etc. It is a vibrant and busy city which perfectly captures the transition of traditional Maldivian lifestyles into the modern era while retaining traditional family values and traditional elements of folk music, dance and recreation, traditional food, etc.



WHERE TO STAY

Male' is home to quite a number of hotels, guest houses and inns. Budget conscious travellers can opt to stay at guest houses and inns such as the "Luckyhiya Hotel", "Athama Palace", "Champa Moon Guest House", etc while those looking for mid-ranged prices and mid-ranged class accommodation can look towards booking rooms from hotels like "Lookai Hotel", "Kam Hotel", "Relax Inn" and the government owned "Masandhura Palace Hotel" all located near the North-East corner of Male' close to the Hulhule Ferry terminal. If you're looking for a pricier higher-end accommodation we recommend that you check out "Trader's Hotel" and the "Hulhule Island Hotel" (located at the airport).



Photography / Ahmed Shuaib



GETTING AROUND

Getting around the capital is quite a straightforward affair considering the small size of it. You could completely encircle the island in an hour and thirty minutes time by walking at a brisk pace. However, if you're a bit too tired and hot to walk cheap public transportation is on offer in the form of taxis and buses.

Taxi

The common norm is to usually call a taxi, though you could flag down one on the road. Taxis can be identified by the yellow license plates as well as by the TAXI sign printed on the car doors or sometimes attached to the top of the car

Taxis cost Mf. 20 per trip, Mf. 5 extra for luggage carried and Mf. 25 per trip between the hours 12.00am - 6.00am

Buses have only recently been introduced (June of 2011) and costs just Mf. 15 for the entirety of the bus ride. A total of 18 bus stops have been scattered across the capital with a total of 4 routes on offer. The roads covered include the capital's outer road (Soduthakurufaanu I. Aguu), "Ameenee I. Aju", "I. Ajeedhee I. Aguu", "Fareedhee I. Aguu", "I. Rchid I. Aguu", "I. Edhuziyaraiy I. Aguu" "Sosun I. Aguu" and "Kan'ba Aisa. Anil. Ingun"

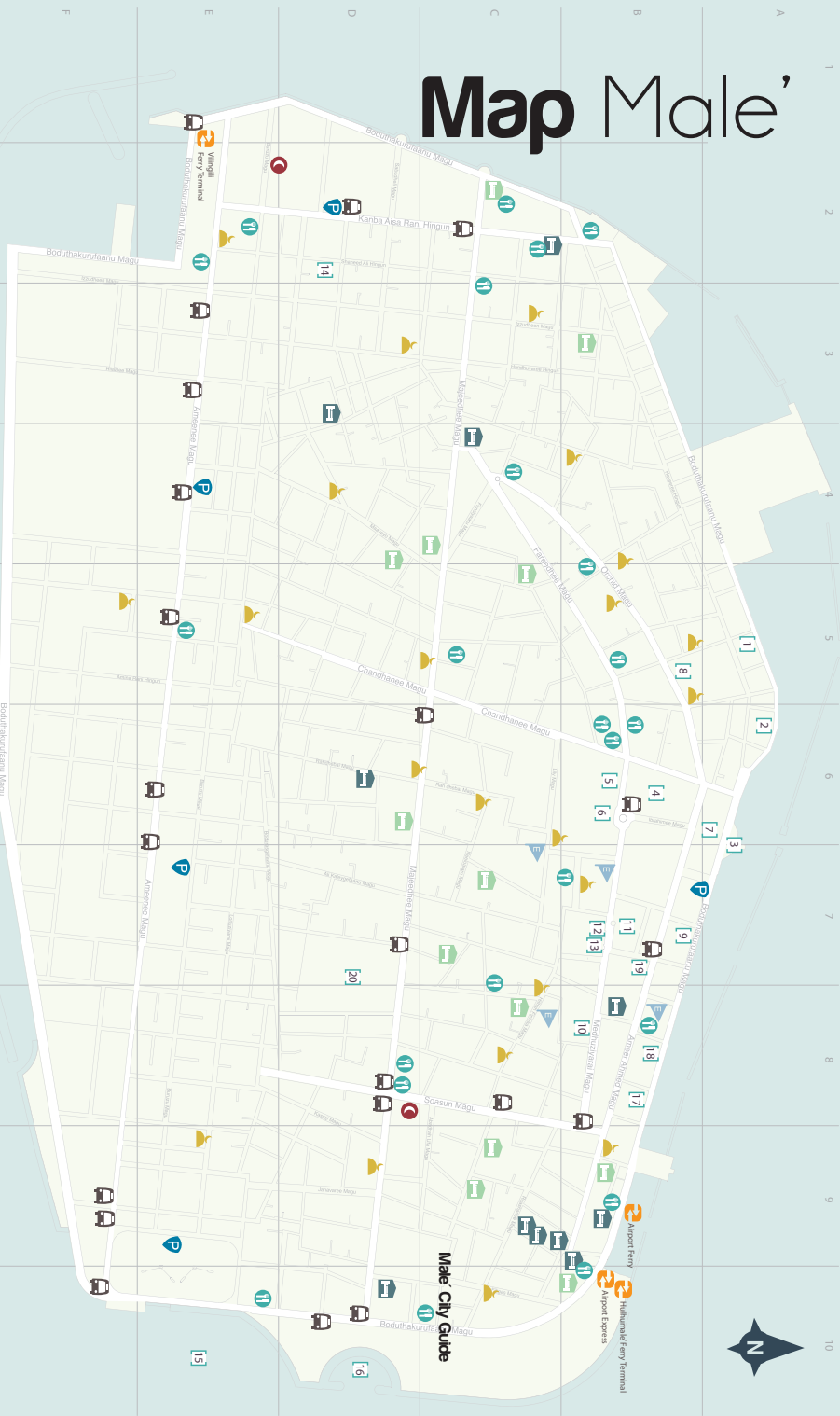
Airport Ferry Going to the airport costs just Mf. 10 per person per trip by ferry and takes about 15 - 20 minutes. However, the price is increased to Mf. 20 per person per trip after midnight. The jetty for taking such a ferry (dhoni) is located at Jetty 9, on Soduthakurufaanu I. Aguu (outermost road) close to "Masandhuraa. Alace Hotel". Ferries depart approximately every 10 - 15 minutes.

MTCC Airport Express is a speedboat operated service that costs Mf. 20 per person per trip and Mf. 30 per person per trip after midnight. It takes just 4 - 5 minutes to get to the airport. The terminal for taking such a speedboat is also located at the "M. Uluhemale' Ferry Terminal", Soduthakurufaanu I. Aguu (outermost road) close to "Masandhuraa. Alace Hotel". Speedboats depart every 15 minutes.

TAXI CENTRE NUMBERS:

Official Cab.....	3323131
Official Services.....	3313130
Fine Taxi.....	3321414
Local Taxi.....	3321919
Kulee (Kuveli).....	3322122
Loyal Taxi.....	3325656
Local Taxi.....	3325757
Local Taxi.....	3329292
Local Taxi.....	3321313

Map Male'



Legend

- 1 Level 1 hotel [5A]
- 2 1st floor hotel [5A]
- 3 1st floor hotel [7A]
- 4 Islamic Centre [8]
- 5 National Museum [8]
- 6 Sultan's ark [8]
- 7 Junior school garden [6A]
- 8 Former presidential palace [5A]
- 91 residents' flats [7A]
- 10 people's flats [8]
- 11 Friday mosque (Ukuru 1 isky)
- 12 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 13 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 14 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 15 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 16 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 17 Foreign Affairs building [8]
- 18 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 19 1st floor official residence [7A]
- 20 National Stadium [7A]

Legend

- Hotels
- Guest Houses
- Restaurants
- Bus Stops
- Ferry Terminal
- Police Station
- Hospital
- Mosque
- Embassy
- Main road

Places of Interest



INDEPENDENCE SQUARE (JUMHOOREE MAIDHAN)

This is a little park on the north coast of the capital and is marked by a flagpole with a giant Maldivian flag. It's also the central point of every political demonstration in the capital. The police station is located in Shaheed Hussain Adam building is right next door along with a premises used by the Maldivian National Defence Force (The army). The former presidential jetty is located in front of the park and the Islamic Centre is also nearby.



FRIDAY MOSQUE (HUKURU MISKIYI)

This ancient mosque was built in 1656 during the reign of sultan Ibrahim Iskandar I. The interiors and exteriors of this mosque are intricately carved with Arabic writings and ornamental patterns. Unfortunately non-Muslims are not allowed inside without prior permission. Ask your travel agent or tour operator to arrange this aspect. If you do not have one, call or go to the Ministry of Tourism for information call +960 3323224

MEDHUZIYAARAIY

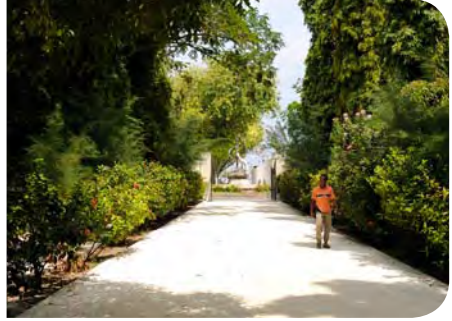
This is the tomb of the Moroccan traveller Abu-al-Hasan Ali Nadwi, the scholar responsible for the mass conversion of the Maldives to Islam. This tomb is located near the Friday Mosque (Hukuru Miskiyi).

☉ NATIONAL MUSEUM & SULTAN PARK

Opening hours are from Saturday-Thursday 9 am-5pm. The National Museum located inside the Sultan Park houses a collection of traditional antiques, artifacts, royal regalia and old photographs. The museum costs M\$3 or F\$38. Entrance to the adjoining Sultan Park is free.

☉ ISLAMIC CENTRE (MOSQUE)

Opened in 1984, this is Malé's largest and best-known architectural landmark. The complex contains the largest mosque in the Maldives, topped with a golden dome and capable of accommodating 5,000 people. Visitors are welcome inside outside prayer hours, but no interior photographs are allowed. Entrance is free.



☉ VELAANAAGE

The former residential address of the late president Ibrahim Nasir (The 2nd President of the Maldives), this premises is now a 15-storey office complex housing the administrative departments of major governmental ministries. This building is located in "Ameer Ahmed" Malé.



☉ THEEMUGE (THE FORMER PRESIDENTIAL PALACE & CURRENT SUPREME COURT)

Located in North Malé, Theemuge was the massive residence of the former president from 1998 onwards up until the year 2008. The current president Mohamed Nasheed transferred the Supreme Court of the Maldives and offices to Theemuge. This is a worthy sight with a design boasting of a magnificent mixed look of traditional and modern elements.

○ THE LOCAL MARKET

In the same area as the fish market, the local market boasts of indigenous fruits and vegetables grown in the Maldives. All vendors are locals stationed at small stalls. In addition to local fruits and vegetables you'll also find yams, packets of betel nuts, breadfruit chips (a traditional Maldivian snack), bottles of homemade pickles.



○ THE "RAALHUGANDU" (SURF BREAK)

Located in the south-east corner of the Male', the Raalhugandu is home to the capital's surf break. Frequented by local surfers, it is however not a locals only surf point. Expect minor scrapes and cuts if you're planning on surfing as it is a shallow reef break.



○ THE "ALIMAS CARNIVAL" AREA

Home to coffee shops and cafés frequented by the youth of Male', popular hang-outs include coffee shops such as the Marine Garden, Skippy, Lily's, Dolphin view café, etc. The area also boasts of a stage used for different music shows and events.

○ THE FISH MARKET

Just west of Independence square (Jumhooree Maidhan) and with a group of fishing boats docked just opposite, this is where fish which includes mainly Tuna varieties such as skip-jack tuna and yellow-fin tuna are brought, gutted and sold for consumption of the locals of Male'.

○ THE "ARTIFICIAL" BEACH

Adjoins the Raalhugandu and located near the south-east corner of Male'. This is a beach built due to the fact that Male' lost its natural beaches (due to land reclamation, rapid industrialization, etc), this is a popular swimming point and hang-out for local youth, families and children. In addition to a beach and "artificial" lagoon, the area boasts of volleyball courts, basketball courts and a Futsal pitch.



Photography | Miusam Mohamed (CK)

Food & Restaurant Guide



Photography | Miusam Mohamed (CK)

☉ COFFEE SHOPS & CAFÉS

Coffee shops and café are popular hang-outs for Maldivians. Some coffee shops also function as restaurants offering quality food. Popular coffee shops for tourists include “Seagull”, “Shell Beans”, “Jade Bistro”, the “Sea House” (a 24 hour café), “Course Café”, etc. They open around 8am and close at 1am except the “Sea House” which is open 24/7. Budget \$50 - \$100 per person.

☉ RESTAURANTS

There are quite a number of restaurants in Male' offering different types of cuisines. Closed air-conditioned restaurants as well as open-air concepts can also be found. Popular eateries with tourists include “Sala Thai” (Thai Food), “Thai Lok (Thai Food)”, “Sala Italiana” (Italian Food), “Aioli”, “Ocean Breeze”, “Salsaloyal”, “Live garden”. They open around 8am or 9am and close around 12am. Budget \$100 - 200 per person.

☉ MALDIVIAN STYLE TEA-SHOPS

These are traditional eateries serving “Edhikaa” (traditional Maldivian snacks/fast-food) along with the most popular drink - a “Kalhu” (black tea). Food and drinks are pretty cheap and these eateries are mostly frequented by Maldivian local men. These tea-shops are pretty loud inside with various simultaneous banter. Famous tea-shops include the “Aarukeytuota”, “Faseyhaoint”, etc. They open as early as 5am and close at 1am. Budget \$25 - 30 per person.



Shopping

Almost all of the shops open around 9am or 10 am except those small neighbourhood convenient stores which might open at 7am or even 6am.

All shops close at 11pm (except the "Fantasy" store located on "Fareedhee I agu" - a higher-end supermarket, which closes at 10pm) and two 24/7 convenient stores located on "Sosun I agu". It is also note that all shops close for about 15 - 20 minutes for prayer times.

Most shops, except smaller convenient stores do accept credit cards nowadays, though we recommend that you take some cash for your shopping trips.

Ijeedhee I agu is the main street for all of your shopping needs and requirements. This is the longest road stretching across the capital.

Chaandhanee I agu is the place to go if you're looking for souvenir items, local handi-craft items, scuba diving equipment, surfing equipment, tourist book guides, etc.

BEING THE CAPITAL AND THE MOST URBANISED, MODERNISED AND DEVELOPED ISLAND IN THE COUNTRY, THERE ARE A LOT OF SHOPPING OPTIONS ON OFFER. FROM UP-SCALE FASHION, JEWELLERY, HARDWARE, COMPUTER SOFTWARE, ACCESSORIES, MARINE EQUIPMENT, SPORTING EQUIPMENT, GROCERIES, SOUVENIRS, ELECTRONICS, SCUBA DIVING EQUIPMENT TO ITEMS FOR THE BUDGET CONSCIOUS SHOPPER, MALE' DEFINITELY HAS IT ALL ON OFFER.



Above:

| Vases crafted and designed by using the method known locally as 'Liye Laa jehun'

Left:

| Coco Tree - A world famous chocolate franchise in the Maldives



Local & Music Events

Fixed annual music events or festivals include the “Reak-out” Festival (an internationally recognised “battle of the bands” type competition) and the “Duberu Challenge” (a traditional drumming competition) held every year in the month of Ramadan.

Shows pop up from time to time, so check online, ask a local or check out wall posters near the “Artificial” beach area to get up-to-date information regarding up-coming shows and events.

MALE’ HAS A THRIVING LOCAL MUSIC SCENE WITH MANY UP AND COMING YOUNG LOCAL MUSICIANS. MOST MUSIC SHOWS ARE HELD AT THE STAGE LOCATED AT THE “ALIMAS CARNIVAL” AREA LOCATED IN THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE CAPITAL NEAR “NASANDHURA PALACE HOTEL”. SHOWS ARE ALSO HELD AT THE PARK NEAR THE “RAALHUGANDU” (SURF BREAK) AREA AND AT THE OPEN SPACE NEAR THE “ARTIFICIAL” BEACH.



Above:

| Local Maldivian rock show

Sports & Recreation

SURFING

There is just one surf break located in Male' called "Towns" and it is located at the ޤާލުހުޅުގަންދު area near the south-east corner of Male'. It is a reef break so be prepared for minor scrapes and cuts. Many local surfers can be found frequenting this site. However, this is not a locals only surf spot. If you don't have a board you could buy one from the "Sea Sports" shop located at "Chaandhane'e" or ask a local if you could borrow his board (entice him with some money if you really don't want to buy a board - hey it's a cheaper option eh?)

DIVING

There are a number of Male' affiliated dive centres offering Male' certified scuba diving courses and boat-trips. These centres are equipped with quality equipment and certified professional and experienced local instructors. Notable local dive centres include "Male' Divers" and "Sea Explorers".

BAIBALAA

Baibalaa is an annually held sporting competition held during the Male' L-FITL or Male' AEM. It is similar to "Kabaddi" and to put it in a nutshell involves the raiding of a group of players in a circular playing surface composed of white sand. The objective of the game is to touch opposing players inside the circle and get out before being tackled. The competition is held at the open area located near the "artificial" beach.

GYMS & FITNESS CENTRES

There are quite a number of gyms and fitness centres located in the capital such as "Total Fitness Group", "Male' Fitness Club", etc. There are even some ladies only fitness centres operating in Male' such as "Male' Fitness Club for Ladies".



FOOTBALL

Maldives is considered the "Brazil" of Asia due to its unabated love of football. Almost everybody plays it and locals can be found playing on the artificial turf pitches and hard-ground sand pitches can be found at the "Male' Aafannu Stadium". Locals can also be found playing at the artificial turf pitch and hard sandy area near the "artificial" beach. So grab a pair of boots and head over to these locations as the people are extremely friendly and will let you join in for a game or two if you just ask.

Football is the most watched spectator sport in Maldives. There is a national football league comprised of 3 divisions. First division matches can be seen at the "Male' Aafannu National Stadium" during season.

Football is the most watched spectator sport in Maldives. There is a national football league comprised of 3 divisions. First division matches can be seen at the "Male' Aafannu National Stadium" during season.

OTHER RECREATIONAL SPORTS

The "Artificial" beach and "Male' Aafannu Stadium" has volleyball courts, basketball courts and a cricket pitch for public use while the "Ekuveni sports complex" located next to the "Male' Aafannu Stadium" houses badminton courts, some basket-ball courts, table-tennis tables and a training area for cricket for public use.

Banks, ATMs & Money Changers

The capital is home to the main branch of the Bank of Maldives (the national bank), Maldives Bank of Ceylon, Mauritius Commercial Bank, State Bank of India, and SBI C. All of the banks except the Mauritius Commercial Bank located in "Mareechi Magu" are located in "Mudhakurufaanu Magu" along the north-east corner of Male'.

There are a number of ATMs of Maldives Bank and other banks located at key points of the capital (There is one State Bank of India ATM near the "artificial" beach and one near the Al-K hospital, there is also one Bank of Maldives ATM near Al-K hospital as well as one near "Mlympus" theatre located in "Majeedhee Magu").

These ATMs also provide credit and debit card services for major credit and debit cards (meaning you can withdraw money at these ATMs using your credit or debit card) Money can be changed at the banks while there are some shops on "Chaandhane" Magu offering this service as well.



Photography | Ahmed Shuaib

Right:

Bank of Maldives Plc. Ltd. Main Branch, Male' |



Photography | Mohamed Saif

Hulhumalé

the reclaimed island

HULHUMALÉ IS A RECLAIMED ISLAND APPROXIMATELY 1.3KM NORTH-WEST OF MALE'. THE CONCEPT FOR HULHUMALÉ AROSE OUT OF A NEED TO EASE THE HOUSING AND CONGESTION PROBLEMS OF MALE'. THE RECLAMATION PROJECT BEGAN ON OCTOBER 16, 1997 UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT MAUMOON ABDUL GAYYOON. A LOT OF MALDIVIANS ESPECIALLY THE PEOPLE OF MALE' HAVE NOW SHIFTED THEIR LIVELIHOODS TO HULHUMALÉ. ALL WORKS WHICH INCLUDE STRUCTURAL AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ARE SCHEDULED TO BE FULLY COMPLETED BY THE YEAR 2020.

Visiting Hulhumalé takes around 20 minutes costing just r5/- per trip and you'd have to visit the Hulhumalé ferry terminal located near the north-east corner of Male' to get to this island. The island is slightly bigger than the capital and due to the planned nature of development boasts thicker vegetation and plant life. The roads are much wider

than those of the capital and they are also constructed out of tar unlike the brick roads of Male'.

The expanded space of Hulhumalé had initially invited bike and car racers to hold illegal impromptu races. However, the government has now granted the Maldivian racing association the use of a track surrounding an industrial



area on Friday (afternoon - evening). You can head over to Hulhumalé on Fridays to catch a glimpse of local bikers train while pulling off the occasional stunt. If you're not a racing enthusiast, there is a lengthy beach, lagoon and a house reef on the eastern side of the island for your lounging, swimming, snorkelling and diving pleasure. Compared to Villingili this shore is huge and can accommodate a lot of people

(IMPORTANT: WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU WEAR T-SHIRTS AND SHORTS AS BIKINIS AND REVEALING SWIM-WEAR ARE NOT ALLOWED IN HULHUMALÉ).

There are a number of beach-front hotels and guest houses which you could book, if you plan to stay for longer periods. There are also one or two PADI affiliated scuba diving schools operating in Hulhumalé offering PADI courses, house-reef dives and boat dives. You could even

head over to the fishing spots to do some fishing (ask a local for directions to the best spots) and set up a table at one of the many pits located on the north-west corner to prepare your catch for consumption.

If you wish to explore the island by foot, we recommend that you do so in the evenings as it gets really hot (much more than Male) due to the roads being composed of tar. However, you could take the beach route even in the morning or afternoon as cooling off is just a dip away.

There are many restaurants, cafés and local tea-shops in-store if you wish to grab a bite or a cup of coffee. All in all, Hulhumalé is worth a visit if you get a chance to spend a few days in the capital before you head off to your chosen resort or liveaboard.



Villimale' / Villingili

the quieter 5th ward of Male'

VILLIMALE' OR MORE COMMONLY REFERRED BY THE LOCALS AS VILLINGILI IS A SMALL ISLAND COMMUNITY LYING 2KM WEST OF THE CAPITAL. YOU CAN TAKE AN 8 MINUTE FERRY RIDE COSTING JUST RF5/- PER TRIP FROM THE "VILLINGILI FERRY TERMINAL" LOCATED IN THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF MALE' TO GET TO THIS ISLAND. VILLIMALE' HAS UNIQUELY ADOPTED AN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY OF THE RESTRICTION OF PERSONAL USE OF MOTORISED VEHICLES, WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY HAS MADE THIS WARD QUIETER AND THE AIR CLEANER. THERE IS A TAXI SERVICE AVAILABLE, BUT MOST RESIDENTS PREFER TO TRAVEL ON FOOT OR ON BICYCLES. THIS ISLAND IS A REGULAR WEEKEND HAUNT OF MANY RESIDENTS OF MALE'. THE ISLAND IS HOME TO THICK VEGETATION, A WHITE SANDY BEACH AND A CRYSTAL CLEAR LAGOON.

The island has a beautiful house reef located on the north-east side which is frequently visited by scuba and snorkelling enthusiasts of Male'. There is also a scuba diving school called "Diver's lodge" in Villingili which offers PADI certified scuba courses and boat trips for locals, tourists and expatriates alike.

Villingili also has an excellent right-hand surf break, though the water is much shallower than the surf break found in Male'. Local surfers are regularly seen at this point, but it is recommended for experienced surfers only.

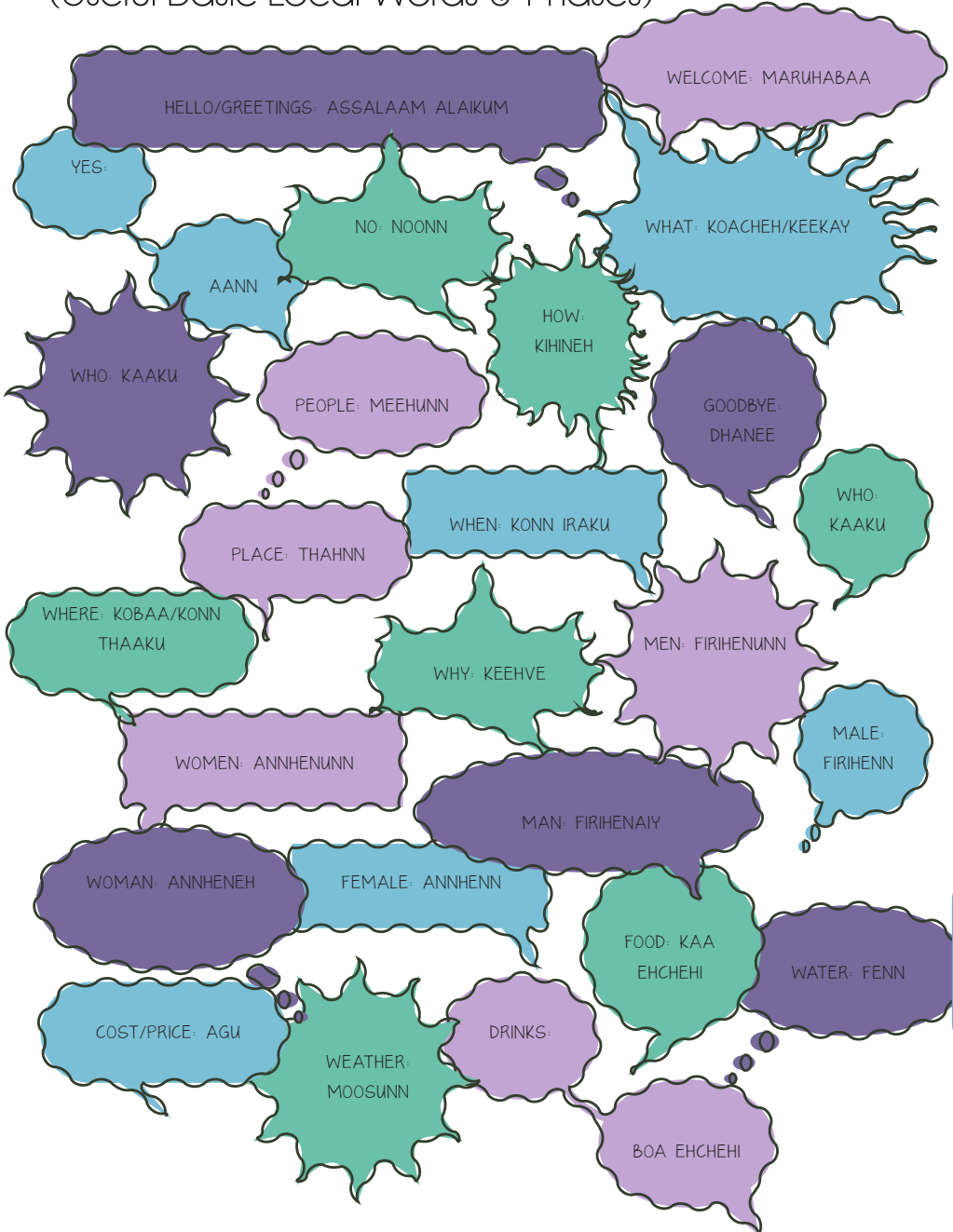
Aside from diving and surfing, you could even spend the day exploring the various facets of the island on foot or just plain lounge about on the beach.

(IMPORTANT; WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU WEAR T-SHIRTS AND SHORTS AS BIKINIS AND REVEALING SWIM-WEAR ARE NOT ALLOWED IN VILLINGILI.)

Food including traditional items are on offer at various café's for a much cheaper price than to be found in Male'. Fresh coconuts are also much cheaper and quite abundant throughout the island. Villingili, though being the 5th ward of the highly urbanised and modernised capital has managed to retain substantial elements of the Maldivian past.

Tune up your Dhivehi

(Useful Basic Local Words & Phrases)





COMPASS DIRECTIONS

NORTH - 0 0 0 0 0 0

SOUTH - 0 0 0 0 0 0

EAST - 0 0 0 0 0 0

WEST - 0 0 0 0 0 0



NUMBERS

ZERO - 0 0 0 0 0 0

ONE - 0 0 0 0 0 0

TWO - 0 0 0 0 0 0

THREE - 0 0 0 0 0 0

FOUR - 0 0 0 0 0 0

FIVE - 0 0 0 0 0 0

SIX - 0 0 0 0 0 0

SEVEN - 0 0 0 0 0 0

EIGHT - 0 0 0 0 0 0

NINE - 0 0 0 0 0 0

TEN - 0 0 0 0 0 0

HUNDRED - 0 0 0 0 0 0

THOUSAND - 0 0 0 0 0 0



TIME & DATE

WHAT TIME IS IT? - 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0 0 0

TIME - 0 0 0 0 0 0

TODAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

YESTERDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

TOMORROW - 0 0 0 0 0 0

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW - 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0 0 0

DAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

WEEK - 0 0 0 0 0 0

MORNING - 0 0 0 0 0 0

AFTERNOON - 0 0 0 0 0 0

EVENING - 0 0 0 0 0 0

NIGHT - 0 0 0 0 0 0

SUNDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

MONDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

TUESDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

WEDNESDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

THURSDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

FRIDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0

SATURDAY - 0 0 0 0 0 0



ENVIRONMENT

BEACH -> | | | | | | | | | | | |

LAGOON - FAU | |

REEF - FAU | |

TREES -> | | | | | | | |

COCONUT TREE -> | | | | | | | |

CHANNEL - KA | | | | | | | |

ATOLL - AT | | | | | | | |

ISLAND -> | | | | | | | |

SEA - KA | | | | | | | |

FISH - | | | | | | | | | |



USEFUL WORDS

TOILET - FAU | | | | | | | |

POST OFFICE -> | | | | | | | | | |

BANK -> | | | | | | | | | |

ATM - AT | |

ENTRANCE - VA | | | | | | | | | |

EXIT - | | | | | | | | | | | |

ROOM - KI | | | | | | | |

RESTAURANT - KAA | | | | | | | |

SHOP - FI | | | | | | | | | |

OFFICE - | | | | | | | | | |

RECEPTION -> | | | | | | | | | |



FOR DIVERS & SURFERS

HOWS THE SURF? -> | | | | | | | | | | | | ?

ARE THE WAVES BIG, SMALL? -> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ?

HOWS THE VISIBILITY? - VISI | | | | | | | | | | | | ?

IS THE FISH LIFE ABUNDANT? - VA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ?

CAN YOU TELL ME THE NAME OF A GOOD DIVE SITE? - EY SA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ?

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET TO THE DIVE SITE? - E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ?

Important numbers

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 Website: www.island.com.mv

MATAIYA AIR TAXI (MATAIYA) LTD

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 E-mail: sales@mat.com.mv
 Website: www.mataxi.com

TRANSMALDIVIAN AIRWAYS

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 E-mail: sales@tma.com.mv
 Website: www.transmaldivian.com

WATANIYA TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD

Fax: +960 9611001
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 E-mail: info@dam.org.mv
 Website: www.dam.org.mv

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