



ASSALAMUALAIKUM

WELCOME TO MALDIVES!

According to some contemporary geologists, the Maldives was the backbone of an ancient continent that once linked the east coast of Africa to India – but has since disappeared. We will probably never know the truth, but the Maldives is without doubt one of the most beautiful archipelagoes of atolls in the world and a destination where your tropical dreams will become a reality. Beaches of white sand lined with coconut palms, lagoons of vivid turquoise and emerald waters, magnificent sea beds and a huge array of high-end resorts and cozy cabanas, are just some of the reasons why the Maldives is one of the best holiday destinations in the world. This is life stripped down to simplicity – bright blue skies and all-year sunshine with fantastic diving and snorkeling in the warm waters of both the Indian Ocean and distinctive lagoons. It's simply one of the finest resort destinations in the world that has to be experienced to be believed.





GEOGRAPHY

A geological eccentricity nestled in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the Maldives is a series of ancient coral reefs that grew up and around the sides of towering prehistoric volcanoes. Technically part of the Asian continent, it is situated approximately 1,000km to the southwest of Sri Lanka and India. Today, the Maldives consists of 1,190 islands, grouped into 26 atolls, and extends from Ihavandhippolhu Atoll in the north to the Addu City in the south. At an average of 1.5 meters elevation it's the world's lowest country, placing it at serious risk of rising sea levels.

PEOPLE

Maldivians are a very close-knit community, with a quarter living in the capital of Malé. The people are believed to be tolerant and respectful of each other and have a deep faith in Islam, which has given strength to the society. The Maldives was a Buddhist country until the mid-12th century after which the country converted to Islam, and as such there remains small populations of Hindus and Buddhists residing on the islands.

FAST FACTS

OFFICIAL NAME

Republic of Maldives

CAPITAL CITY

Malé

BOUNDARY

India (ocean boundary)

CURRENCY

Maldivian Rufiyaa (Laari is the sub-denomination)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Maldivian (Dhivehi)

POPULATION

436,330

TOTAL AREA

Approx. 298km² of land spread over 90,000 km² of ocean

MALDIVES DESTINATIONS

It would be our pleasure to provide you with information about the entire country, but that would require a whole book. Therefore, we have decided to stick to those destinations in the country we believe are most important and developed. If you wish to receive details on one of the other beautiful destinations in the Maldives, please do contact our office in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



THE GRAND FRIDAY MOSQUE

The Grand Friday Mosque is locally known as Masjid-al-Sultan (masjid is mosque). It lies on Malé and is one of the islands' finest sights. Constructed in the 17th century by Sultan Ibrahim Iskandhar, this magnificent edifice accommodates no less than 5,000 persons.

THE FINEST RESORTS IN THE WORLD

The islands' hotels and resorts are consistently recognized as being amongst the finest in the world; some of the eco-friendly beach side resorts with an emphasis on native design will take your breath away.



THE FRIDAY MOSQUE

The Friday Mosque is another fascinating place of worship, with its status as one of the most ancient mosques in the Maldives. This mosque can also be found on Malé and features exquisite wooden carvings as well as some superb examples of Islamic art. The drum-shaped minaret is a feature to be admired.

THE PRESIDENT'S PALACE

The President's Palace is a site of interest that should not be missed when on holiday in the Maldives. This magnificent building is the official residence of the President of the Maldives. Although it is not open to the public, visitors may photograph the splendid exterior. Sultan Shamsuddeen III constructed the building just prior to World War I.

NATIONAL MUSEUM

Malé's National Museum is another highlight in the Maldives. Located in a charming colonial edifice, the museum houses a mesmerizing range of artifacts. Among the featured items are royal antiquities, traditional costumes, and a hand-written miniature of the Koran and Buddhist relics in addition to other features.



REPUBLIC SQUARE

Republic Square is a proud focus for patriotic Maldivians, with a good proportion of the most significant government buildings situated here. A huge Maldivian flag flies proudly at the square's center.



THE FISH MARKET

Fishing has formed the basis of the Maldives' economy for a very long time. Not to be missed is a visit to the Maldives Fish Market that provides an authentic glimpse into the day-to-day lifestyle of ordinary Maldivians. Visitors to the market will see a spectacular assortment of sea creatures and will also be able to sample fresh fruits and vegetables.



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