

MALDIVES

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

We are pleased to offer you herewith some useful tips and practical information on traveling in the Maldives.



FAST FACTS

OFFICIAL NAME

Republic of the Maldives

CAPITAL CITY

Malé City

TOTAL AREA

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

CURRENCY

Maldivian Rufiyaa (Laari is the sub-denomination)

LANGUAGE

Maldivian (Dhivehi)

POPULATION

436,330

PEOPLE

Maldivians

RELIGION

Sunni Islam (mandated by law)

TIME ZONE

UTC +5 hours (Some Islands have different time zones)

INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODE

+960

ELECTRICITY

220-240V

DRIVING

Left hand side

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Genuine tourists are granted a 30-day visit visa on arrival. People visiting for any other reason, especially as journalists or photographers, should apply for a visa in advance. www.immigration.gov.mv

MONEY

The Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR) is a non-convertible currency only available in the Maldives. However, US dollars are acceptable legal currency anywhere in the country, based on the rate of US\$1.00 representing MVR15.42 (highly subjected to change). All major credit cards and currencies such as Euro and British Pounds are also accepted in tourist resorts.

Important: Be sure to advise your bank and credit card company that you will be using your cards overseas before you leave; otherwise they may report a fraud alert on your account.



INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS BY ATOLLS

Arriving passengers must fill in an immigration form with passport details, an address in the Maldives and a proposed length of stay. Velana (formerly Ibrahim Nasir) International Airport is located on its own island about 10 minutes by passenger ferry from Malé. Resort representatives meet all arriving passengers and some resorts have private lounges for their guests. In the public area there is a spa, a pharmacy, a post office, mobile telephone bureau, a bank, an ATM, a left luggage office and several coffee shops. Duty free purchases can only be made on departure. As well as a fast track immigration counter, there are VIP lounges for airlines' Business Class passengers.

DOMESTIC AIRPORTS CAN BE FOUND AT:

- Dharavandhoo, Baa Atoll
- Fuvahmulah, Gnaviyani Atoll
- Gan, Addu City, Addu Atoll
(with facilities for international flights)
- Hanimaadhoo, Haa Dhaalu Atoll
(with facilities for international flights)
- Ifuru, Raa Atoll
- Kaadeddhoo, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll
- Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll
- Kooddoo, Gaafu Alifu Atoll
- Maamigili, Alifu Dhaalu Atoll
(with facilities for international flights)
- Thimarafushi, Thaa Atoll



CLIMATE

Being on the equator where the sun is hottest, eight hours of brilliant sunshine are almost a daily occurrence in the Maldives, and the country experiences an average of 230 to 250 hours a month. Expect daytime temperatures to hover around 30 degrees Celsius, dropping to around 23 degrees at night.

Rain? Rarely, but when it happens it's warm and tropical, refreshing the vegetation while the sea develops waves to thrill surfers. The wettest months are May and November but even then, the average rainfall is relatively low compared to comparable countries and amounts to around 2,133mm annually. Humidity, with water vapour pervading the atmosphere, averages around 75 to 80% – although this is tempered by sea breezes wafting over the low-lying islands.

Sunrise is often around 6am, with sunset typically 6.30pm; the daily difference in tidal rise and fall is slight. The climate responds to two monsoon seasons, the Northeast (Iruvaa, meaning easterly winds) from December to April and the Southwest (Hulhangu, indicating stronger winds) from May to November. Hulhangu is dubbed the wet season, as that's the period when it might rain – but this is still a suitable time for travel.

So, when to have that holiday in the sun? As soon as you're ready. The Maldives has a year-round tropical climate and while the weather is unpredictable and squalls can strike suddenly, they are short. For more on climate, log on to: www.meteorology.gov.mv

COMMUNICATION

SIM cards are available at the airport from the two mobile network shops and pre-payment can be made to use them for local and international calls and data usage.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Kissing in public is not allowed in Male and the islands inhabited by locals due to local culture and practices related to the influence of Islam. Kissing is considered as more of a private way of showing affection to your beloved ones. However, there is no offence in hand holding and a simple hug is also a way of showing hospitality, affection and tenderness. Please note this social etiquette will not affect you while you are in the grounds of a private resort, hotel, or retreat in a private island.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Over centuries, the sea and religion molded the personality of Maldivians into devout islanders with a rugged self-assurance and the ability to survive on limited resources. Before tourism, people depended on fishing, not just for food but also for revenue and trade, with the export of fish, in sun-dried and smoked form, to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

Over the centuries Maldivians were exposed to different genetic and cultural influences. Traces of Africa, Arabia, Indonesia and India are to be seen in the features of the people and in the culture, especially in the traditional drumming dance of Bodu Beru (sometimes performed at resorts) with its echoes of Africa. The religion of Islam has added a respect for routine, custom and a trust in destiny. With the opportunities afforded by better income through

tourism and access to modern communications, Maldivians have embraced the chance of higher education overseas to contribute to the welfare of the country.

The 2008 constitution inspired political participation by ordinary Maldivians and has resulted in people taking a keen interest in government and world affairs. Prosperity triggered by tourism has changed the simple lifestyle of Maldivians with coral stone cottages being replaced by air-conditioned ten-story apartment blocks, elegantly designed by local architects. The corner teashops, where Maldivians pop in for tea and hedhikaa (snacks of pastry stuffed with spicy fish-filling), are in some cases being replaced by coffee houses serving fast food.

LANGUAGE

The main languages spoken are Maldivian (Dhivehi) and English.



USEFUL PHRASES AND THEIR ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

English	Maldivian (Dhivehi)	English	Maldivian (Dhivehi)
Beach	Gondu Dhoh	No	Noon
Coconut trees	Ruhh	Reef	Faru
Excuse me (sorry)	Maa-aafu kurey	Restaurant	Kaa Thahnn
Fish	Mahss	Room	Kotari
Good	Ran'galhu	Shop	Fihaara
Goodbye (informal)	Dhanee	Thank you	Shukriyya
Hello/greeting	Assalaam Alaikum	Toilet	Faahana
Hello (informal)	Kihineh	Water	Fen
How are you?	Haalu kihineh?	Welcome	Maruhabaa
How much does it cost?	Agu kihaa vareh?	What is your name?	Nama kee kobaitha?
How old are you?	Umurun kihaa varehtha?	Where do you live?	Dhiri ulhenee kon thaneh gai?
Island	Rahh	Where do you work?	Kon thaneggatha masai kai kuranee?
Lagoon	Falhu	Which island are you from?	Kon rasheh tha?
May I take your photo?	Photo eh negi dhaa netha?	Yes	Aan
My age is...	Aharen ge umurakee...		
My name is...	Aharen ge namakee...		

ALCOHOL

The consumption of alcohol is only permitted by foreigners in island resorts or on tourist LiveAboard vessels. It is not allowed on any inhabited island, even if you're staying in a registered guesthouse or hotel. Resort bars and restaurants, however, are well-stocked with premium spirits, traditional and tropical cocktails, and fine wines from around the world.

GRATUITIES

While a service charge of 10% is added to restaurant bills, an extra 5% in cash given to the main server is appreciated but not expected. Housekeeping staff could be rewarded with US\$5 per day per guest, and luggage carriers with US\$5 on arrival and departure.

CLOTHING AND PACKING FOR THE MALDIVES

Bring as little as possible to the Maldives; you'll only need beach wear, casual cotton clothes and sun lotion. Sandals are ideal, as you will often want to slip them off and go barefoot. Because of the hot climate, clothes of cotton material are recommended. Tourists should respect local culture and dress modestly, keeping from shoulders to knees covered when visiting, or staying on, an inhabited island.



FOOD & DRINKS

As well as exotic buffets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, many resorts feature fine dining of exquisite good taste in architecturally designed à la carte restaurants, even underwater ones. Thanks to modern communications, swift transportation and expert chefs, every delectable dish can be had in the Maldives.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Taxis can be flagged down in the streets of Malé and charge 25 rufiyaa per trip (subjected to change). They are also available in Hulhulmalé, Gan and other major inhabited islands.

MEDICAL ATTENTION

Some resorts have resident paramedics and there are private hospitals in Malé as well as pharmacies in Malé and on inhabited islands.

CUSTOMS

Tourists are prohibited from bringing in the following items: alcohol; chemicals; dogs; idols for worship; gun powder and explosives; live plants and live animals, medicines or steroids; materials contrary to Islam; narcotics and psychotropic substances; pork and pork products, pornographic materials; spear guns, firearms and ammunition.

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