

THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION GUIDE

Maldives

Islands, resorts, experiences & insider tips

2026-27 EDITIONCURATED BY TRIPSTOR

START HERE

A thousand shades of blue



Picture water so clear that your shadow floats over the seabed. A sandbank at low tide. A table set for two. Nothing in sight but sea and sky. The Maldives brings those daydreams within reach.

Resort or local island? Speedboat or seaplane? Which season, which budget? This guide helps you dream, decide and prepare, with practical advice for travellers from India. Use the contents below to jump to what matters most.

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THE ESSENTIALS

Maldives at a glance

Indian Ocean

An island nation south-west of India and Sri Lanka.

Malé and MLE

Malé is the capital. Velana International Airport sits on neighbouring Hulhulé.

Dhivehi + English

Dhivehi is the national language. English is widely used in tourism.

UTC +5

Thirty minutes behind India. Ask whether your resort uses its own island time.

Money	Maldivian rufiyaa (MVR); USD is widely used at resorts.
Power	230V, 50Hz. A universal adapter is useful.
Entry	Tourist visa on arrival, subject to current requirements. See Entry and documents.
Island life	Resorts are relaxed; local communities follow more conservative norms.

“Your journey to the hotel may be part of the holiday: a boat across the lagoon or a seaplane above it.

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FIND YOUR REASON

Why the Maldives



Water like nowhere else

White sand and luminous lagoons invite long beach days. Conditions vary: follow local swimming advice.

Extraordinary marine life

Turtles, reef sharks, rays and seasonal encounters with mantas and whale sharks.

Space for two

Quiet beaches, private dinners and the freedom to slow down together.

Permission to relax

Spa time, sunset walks, books and mornings without an alarm.

More than luxury

Local-island guesthouses make room for different budgets and longer stays.

An easy island escape

Compare current flight options from India, then match your arrival to the island transfer.

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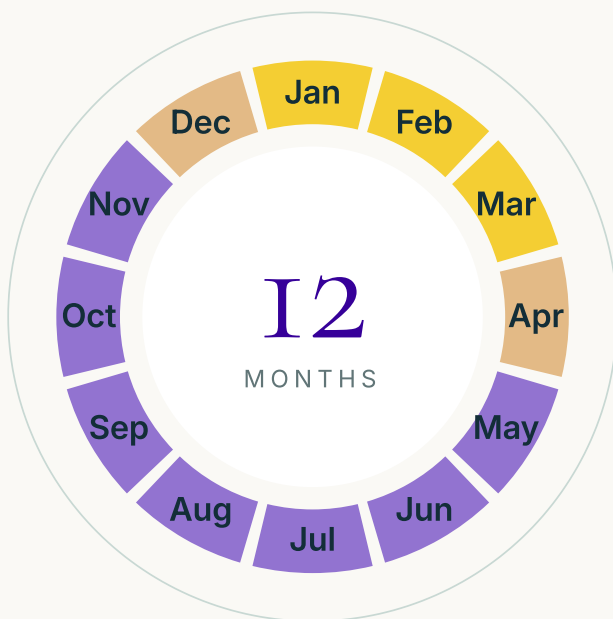
Explore Maldives stays and packages



SEASONS AND TIMING

Choose your season

January to March is the core dry-season window. The Maldives Meteorological Service places the wetter south-west monsoon from mid-May to November, with April and December as transition months. Conditions vary across the island chain and from year to year.



Jan

Beach days

Mar

Warm sunshine

May

Season changes

Jul

Surf season

Sep

Quiet escapes

Nov

Variable skies

Feb

Clearer seas

Apr

Hot, humid

Jun

Marine life

Aug

Family breaks

Oct

Value dates

Dec

Festive peak

● Dry season
 ● Transition
 ● Wetter season

Sunshine first

Start with January to March. A dry-season booking still cannot guarantee every day will be sunny.

Value first

Compare wetter-season dates. Expect showers, wind and possible changes to boat excursions.

The calendar is a broad planning guide, not a weather forecast. Check local conditions before water activities.

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MONTH BY MONTH

Time the experiences

TRAVEL WINDOW	TYPICAL CONDITIONS	PLAN AROUND
January–March	Core dry season; generally a stronger sunshine choice.	Beach time, snorkelling and diving.
April–May	Hot transition into the wetter monsoon.	Flexible plans and value comparisons.
June–August	Wetter, windier conditions; sunny spells still occur.	Surfing and seasonal marine-life trips.
September–November	Wetter monsoon; conditions vary by atoll.	Manta-focused travel and quieter stays.
December	Transition month and a busy festive period.	Book early and keep weather expectations flexible.

Mantas in Baa

Hanifaru gatherings are associated with the south-west monsoon. Ask a responsible operator about current sightings and access.

Whale sharks

South Ari is a well-known base for encounters; wildlife is never guaranteed.

Surfing

Reef breaks suit experienced surfers. Match your location, skill and dates with a qualified operator.

Christmas + New Year

Demand can be high. Compare availability well ahead and budget for festive supplements.

Marine encounters depend on plankton, currents and local conditions. Avoid building the whole trip around one guaranteed sighting.

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Plan your Maldives trip



FLIGHTS AND TRANSFERS

The journey is part of it

Most international arrivals use Velana International Airport (MLE). Compare current routes from your city and book the flight and island transfer together; airline schedules can change.



Your city

Choose a suitable flight.



Malé airport

Meet your transfer team.



Your island

Boat, seaplane or domestic flight.

TRANSFER

BEST SUITED TO

BEFORE YOU BOOK

Speedboat

Nearby resorts and local islands.

Confirm duration, sailing times and sea conditions.

Seaplane

Many more distant resorts.

Daylight operations; allow for check-in and waiting time.

Domestic flight + boat

Farther atolls and regional airports.

Allow extra connection time.

Public ferry

Some budget local-island stays.

Fixed schedules; confirm with your host.

Transfer timing matters

TMA operates from sunrise to sunset and advises arrivals by 15:30 local time for same-day resort transfer. Its standard allowance is 20 kg checked baggage plus 5 kg hand luggage; confirm your booked operator's rules. A late arrival may require an airport-area overnight stay.

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VISA AND DOCUMENTS

Arrive with everything ready

Tourist visas are granted on arrival, subject to admissibility and current entry conditions. Keep your documents together and check Maldives Immigration and your airline before departure.

Your arrival checklist

✓ Passport

A machine-readable passport with at least one month's validity under the published entry rules. Check onward destinations and airline requirements too.

✓ Bookings

Confirmed return travel, prepaid accommodation at a registered facility and sufficient funds, or approved sponsorship.

✓ Traveller Declaration

Submit the free IMUGA form within 96 hours before arrival. Each traveller, including children, needs an individual declaration.

✓ Conditional health documents

A yellow-fever certificate may be needed depending on recent travel history. Check the official requirement for your route.

“IMUGA is free. Use the official immigration portal.”

S12 Official IMUGA declaration portal

Open Traveller Declaration; submission is free.

[Plan your Maldives trip](#)

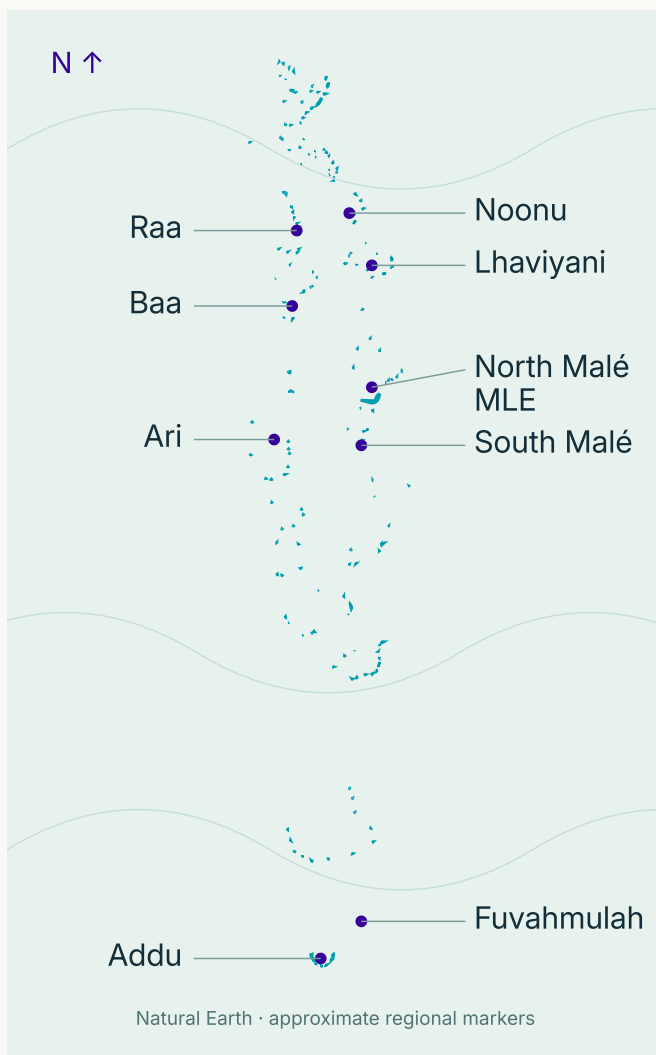


Save copies of your declaration, accommodation booking, return ticket and insurance offline on your phone. Children need their own passports.

FIND YOUR ISLAND

Atolls and regions

An atoll is a ring of coral islands around a lagoon. Choose your base by the experience you want and the transfer you are willing to make.



North / South Malé

A GOOD FIT FOR

Short trips and simpler connections.

TRANSFER TO CHECK

Usually speedboat.

Ari / Baa

A GOOD FIT FOR

Ari for diving; Baa for seasonal mantas.

TRANSFER TO CHECK

Seaplane, boat or domestic connection.

Raa / Noonu / Lhaviyani

A GOOD FIT FOR

Privacy, luxury and reef-focused stays.

TRANSFER TO CHECK

Varies by resort.

Addu / Fuvahmulah

A GOOD FIT FOR

Southern culture or experienced diving.

TRANSFER TO CHECK

Domestic flight connection.

The coastline comes from Natural Earth. Regional markers are approximate and intended for orientation; this is not a navigation map.

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TWO WAYS TO STAY

Resort or local island



Resort island



Local island

A resort island centres on hospitality and facilities. A local island puts you in a living community with guesthouses, cafés and everyday Maldivian life. Both can make an excellent holiday.

Consideration	Resort island	Local island
Budget	Higher; confirm taxes and transfers.	Often more affordable guesthouse stays.
Alcohol	Available at licensed resort venues.	Not sold on local islands.
Dress	Relaxed around resort beaches.	Modest in villages; swimwear at designated bikini beaches.
Privacy	More seclusion and dedicated facilities.	Community setting and shared spaces.
Experiences	House reefs, spas and organised excursions.	Local food, culture and independent boat trips.
Best fit	Couples, luxury seekers and families wanting facilities.	Value seekers, curious travellers and longer stays.

“A few nights of island life, followed by a resort stay, can give you the best of both worlds.”

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Explore Maldives stays and packages



FIND YOUR ADDRESS

A stay for every style

These indicative USD rates are per room per night, not current offers. Season, villa category and meal plan make a large difference; ask for an up-to-date quote.



VALUE

Guesthouse

USD 60–150. Simple rooms, local-island life and excursions arranged with your host.



COMFORT

Mid-range resort

USD 250–600. Beach or water villas, restaurants and organised water activities.



ELEVATED

Upscale resort

USD 600–1,200. Larger villas, pool options and more dining and spa choice.



EXCEPTIONAL

Ultra-luxury villa

USD 1,200–3,000+. Privacy, signature dining and highly personalised service.

Ask for comparable quotes with the same dates, travellers, meal plan, room type and transfer. A lower room rate can become a more expensive trip once extras are included.

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BEFORE YOU BOOK

Look beyond the room rate

Five things to compare

✓ Meal plan

Breakfast, half board, full board or all-inclusive. Check restaurants, drinks, supplements and child inclusions.

✓ Taxes and service

Tourism GST is 17%. A service charge is commonly added; ask for a fully itemised, tax-inclusive quote.

✓ Green tax

USD 12 per person per day at resorts and other qualifying establishments. USD 6 applies to hotels or guesthouses on inhabited islands with 50 or fewer registered rooms. Children under two at check-in are exempt.

✓ Transfers

Confirm operator, timing, baggage limits and whether return transfers are included.

✓ The house reef

If you love snorkelling, reef access from the beach may be worth paying more for.

Beach villa

Easy access to the sand and often a practical family choice.

Overwater villa

Lagoon views and deck access; check child restrictions, steps and water safety.

Green tax is separate from GST. Property policies and service charges vary, so compare the final payable amount rather than adding a single flat percentage.

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OUT ON THE WATER

Moments worth making



Snorkel and dive

Explore a house reef or join a guided trip. Choose sites and instruction suited to your ability.

Marine encounters

Mantas, turtles and whale sharks are unforgettable when nature cooperates. Never chase or feed wildlife.

Sandbank picnic

A small strip of white sand, a picnic and an uninterrupted horizon.

Sunset dolphin cruise

A classic evening boat trip. Sightings depend on conditions.

After-dark magic

A private beach dinner or, on some nights, bioluminescent plankton. Glow is never guaranteed.

Beyond the reef

Surfing, kayaking, paddleboarding, spa time or a short Malé city walk.

“Keep one afternoon free. The best moment is often the one you did not plan.”

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JUST THE TWO OF YOU

A little more romance



Choose the feeling first: toes in the sand, a private pool, or the lagoon beneath an overwater deck. The best honeymoon resort is the one that suits how you like to spend your time.

Make a moment

Arrange a private dinner, sandbank picnic or sunset cruise.

Slow down together

Book a couples' treatment, snorkel a house reef or leave a morning completely free.

Ask before arrival

Confirm honeymoon extras, celebration requirements and the privacy of your villa location.

Make it personal

Tell the resort about dietary needs, vegetarian or Jain meals and any special occasion.

Floating breakfasts, upgrades and welcome gifts are property-specific and subject to availability; check what your package actually includes.

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Explore Maldives honeymoon options



ROOM FOR EVERYONE

Maldives with children



Look for a resort designed for families: a calm lagoon, practical accommodation and activities that work for your children's ages.

A thoughtful kids' club

Ask about age bands, supervision, staff and included activities.

Space to settle in

Family villas or connecting rooms, with child-safety details confirmed.

Easy transfers

Nearby speedboat resorts may simplify the journey. Confirm infant and child arrangements.

Meals that work

Flexible dining times, child menus and clear meal-plan inclusions.

Pack UV swimwear and sun hats, plan quiet afternoons and check the pool and beach arrangements. Ask your clinician about age-appropriate travel remedies rather than sharing adult medication.

Child room rates vary by property. Check your transfer operator's baggage and seating policy for infants.

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Explore Maldives family options



TASTE THE ISLANDS

Tuna, coconut and a little lime



At resorts, expect international menus. Local-island cafés offer a closer taste of Maldivian food, with tuna, coconut, rice, chilli and lime at its heart.

TRY THIS

ON THE PLATE

Mas huni

Flaked tuna, coconut, onion and chilli, often served with roshi flatbread.

Garudhiya

A light tuna broth, traditionally paired with rice, lime and chilli.

Bis keemiya

A crisp filled pastry enjoyed at teatime.

Hedhikaa

Savoury short eats, often served with evening tea.

Seafood + fruit

Grilled catch, coconut water and tropical fruit when available.

Tell your accommodation about vegetarian, Jain or other dietary requirements before booking. Resorts with several restaurants may offer more choice. Drink safe bottled or filtered water.

Alcohol is available at resorts and some licensed vessels, not on local islands. Do not bring alcohol into the country; check customs rules before packing.

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TWO STARTING POINTS

Your first island escape



4 nights · Local-island value

1

Arrive and settle

Transfer to a guesthouse island; take a sunset walk.

2

Reef and sandbank

Join a guided snorkel trip and picnic excursion.

3

An optional adventure

Try a dive or dolphin cruise; keep the afternoon free.

4

Island life

Explore, shop for local souvenirs and enjoy a final sunset.

5

Journey home

Transfer back to MLE with a generous time buffer.

5 nights · Honeymoon

1

Arrive slowly

Check into your resort and share a sunset dinner.

2-3

Find your rhythm

House-reef snorkelling, spa time and a sandbank outing.

4-5

Leave space

Enjoy the villa, water sports or a private dinner.

6

Return home

Match your transfer to the flight departure.

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View a Maldives itinerary



SEVEN NIGHTS AWAY

A family week with breathing room



7 nights · Family resort

I

A gentle arrival

Speedboat to the resort; settle into the family villa and meet the kids' club team.

2-3

Beach days

Lagoon time, supervised activities and guided snorkelling where appropriate.

4

One shared adventure

Choose a dolphin cruise or sandbank outing that suits everyone.

5-6

Something for each of you

Water sports, crafts or cooking for children and spa time for parents.

7

One last slow day

Leave time for favourites and a farewell dinner.

8

Homeward bound

Transfer to MLE and fly home.

“A good family itinerary has as much room for rest as it does for adventure.”

These are starting points, not fixed programmes. Adjust for arrival times, ages, season and the resort's actual activities.

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Explore Maldives family options



TWO ADULTS · FIVE NIGHTS

Build a realistic budget

These indicative scenarios include green tax but exclude additional service charge or GST not already included in supplier rates. They are planning estimates, not quotes. Luxury upper estimates can be exceeded.

TRIP STYLE	TRIP STYLE	TRIP STYLE
Guesthouse	Mid-range	Luxury
TOTAL · USD	TOTAL · USD	TOTAL · USD
1,180–2,360	2,920–6,620	6,620–17,720
Return flights 450 – 800	Return flights 600 – 1,000	Return flights 700 – 1,100
Stay · 5 nights 400 – 750	Stay · 5 nights 1,250 – 3,000	Stay · 5 nights 3,500 – 10,000
Return transfers 20 – 100	Return transfers 150 – 500	Return transfers 600 – 1,500
Food and drinks 150 – 350	Food and drinks 500 – 1,200	Food and drinks 1,200 – 3,000
Activities 100 – 300	Activities 300 – 800	Activities 500 – 2,000
Green tax 60	Green tax 120	Green tax 120
APPROXIMATE INR	APPROXIMATE INR	APPROXIMATE INR
₹1,13,634 to ₹2,27,268	₹2,81,195 to ₹6,37,505	₹6,37,505 to ₹17,06,432

Return flights Stay · 5 nights Return transfers Food and drinks Activities Green tax

Bars show the lower-estimate cost mix. USD 1 = INR 96.30 · reference 2026-10-05 · estimates, not quotes.

Totals are the sum of the displayed cost buckets. The guesthouse tax example assumes an inhabited-island property with 50 or fewer registered rooms. Ask for a quote showing all inclusions.

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Plan your Maldives trip



 SPEND WHERE IT MATTERS

A better trip for your budget

Compare quieter dates

Wetter-season travel can bring lower accommodation rates; keep outdoor plans flexible.

Choose the transfer wisely

Nearby speedboat stays may avoid the higher cost of seaplane transfers.

Mix your islands

Combine local-island nights with a shorter resort stay.

Book busy periods early

December, New Year and school holidays deserve advance comparisons.

Understand the meal plan

Compare included meals, drinks and dining restrictions against your habits.

Keep a buffer

Allow for extras, card charges, tips and itinerary changes.

INR conversions use the published FBIL reference of USD 1 = INR 96.2998 dated 5 October 2026, checked on 13 October. Bank and card rates will differ; obtain an updated rate when paying.

“Spend on the experience you care about most, then make the rest of the trip work around it.”

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Explore Maldives stays and packages



TRAVEL WITH RESPECT

Life beyond the resort



The Maldives is a Muslim country. A little awareness makes time in local communities more comfortable for everyone.

Do	Avoid
Cover shoulders and knees in villages and Malé.	Swimwear away from resort beaches or designated bikini beaches.
Ask permission before photographing people.	Intrusive photographs or disturbing prayer.
Be mindful of Fridays and prayer times.	Assuming every shop or service will follow resort hours.
Keep affection discreet in local communities.	Strong public displays of affection.
Ask about drone permissions before flying.	Collecting coral, shells or sand as souvenirs.

Nude or topless sunbathing is not permitted. Local-island dress and alcohol rules differ from resort rules. Check current customs and local requirements.

Tipping

A service charge may already be on the bill. Extra tips for good service are appreciated but optional; check your package and local practice.

LEAVE A LIGHTER FOOTPRINT

Keep the islands beautiful



Small habits that matter

✓ Give coral space

Never stand on, touch or remove coral. Control fins and buoyancy around reefs.

✓ Let wildlife lead

Do not chase, feed or handle marine animals. Choose responsible guides.

✓ Protect yourself thoughtfully

Wear UPF clothing, seek shade and use effective sun protection. Follow local sunscreen guidance.

✓ Reduce waste

Carry a refillable bottle and ask about safe drinking-water refills.

✓ Choose informed operators

Ask about marine biologists, reef care, waste reduction and wildlife practices.

“Take only photographs; leave only footprints.”

Hanifaru Bay is protected and access is regulated. Use authorised operators and follow ranger instructions; scuba diving is not permitted inside the bay.

READY FOR THE ISLAND

Pack light, pack thoughtfully



Your packing checklist

☐ Documents

Passport, declaration, booking confirmations and insurance papers.

☐ Island clothes

Breathable clothing, swimwear, UV rash vest, sun hat and a light layer.

☐ Sun and insects

Sunscreen, SPF lip balm, sunglasses and mosquito repellent.

☐ Personal essentials

Prescribed medication and any travel remedies advised for you.

☐ Useful extras

Universal adapter, power bank, waterproof phone pouch and an optional snorkel mask.

☐ Local-island outfit

Trousers or a long skirt and a top covering the shoulders.

☐ For the transfer day

A dry bag with medication, sun protection, charger and a change of clothes.

Travel within your booked transfer's baggage limits. Keep documents and essential medication in hand luggage, not in bags that may arrive later.

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ENJOY THE OCEAN SAFELY

A little care goes a long way



Travel insurance

Check water-sport, diving and medical-evacuation cover against your planned activities.

Swimming

Currents can be strong in channels and outer reefs. Follow resort advice and use guides where needed.

After diving

DAN recommends at least 12 hours before flying after one no-decompression dive, and 18 hours after multiple dives or diving over several days. Longer intervals reduce risk.

Decompression dives require a substantially longer interval than 18 hours. Follow your dive computer and operator's advice and plan this before any seaplane or international flight.

Sun and hydration

Seek shade, use effective sun protection and drink safe water regularly.

Medical support

Ask your host about local care and emergency transfer arrangements before travelling.

Mosquito protection

Use suitable repellent and follow current travel-health advice for your route.

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Plan your Maldives trip



THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

Before you say yes

Do Indians need advance visa approval?

Tourist visas are granted on arrival when entry conditions are met. Complete IMUGA before arrival.

When is it cheaper?

Compare wetter-season dates outside major holidays; prices depend on the property and demand.

Can I drink alcohol?

At licensed resorts and some vessels, yes; not on local islands.

Will it rain?

Showers are possible in any season. Wetter-season trips need more flexible outdoor plans.

Do I need to tip?

Check whether service is included. Additional tips are optional.

How long should I stay?

Four or five nights is a useful first trip; a week gives more room for rest or a second island.

Is it only for couples?

Families, friends, divers and solo travellers can all find a suitable island style.

Which money should I carry?

USD is common at resorts; MVR can be useful locally. Check card acceptance and charges.

Can vegetarians eat well?

Ask before booking, especially on local islands. Larger resorts often offer more dining choice.

Is it safe?

Use normal travel precautions and take ocean conditions seriously. Check current official advice.

MAKE IT YOURS

Your island story starts here



You now have the shape of the Maldives: when to go, how to choose an island, what to budget and how to travel with care. Tell Tripstor your dates, budget and who is coming, and turn those ideas into a trip that fits you.

[Explore Maldives stays and packages ↗](#)
[Explore Maldives honeymoon options ↗](#)
[Explore Maldives family options ↗](#)
[Plan your Maldives trip ↗](#)

TALK TO THE TRIPSTOR TEAM

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Call

[+91 98253 43323](tel:+919825343323)

Message

[WhatsApp](#)
[facebook](#) [instagram](#) [linkedin](#) [x](#)

Share your preferred dates, departure city and trip style. The enquiry link starts with Maldives already selected.

EDITION NOTES

Useful sources, carefully checked

S1 Maldives Meteorological Service

Monsoon seasons and transition months.

S2 Maldives Immigration and IMUGA

Entry requirements and the free arrival declaration.

S3 MIRA green tax guidance

Rates, property qualifications and child exemption.

S4 Trans Maldivian Airways FAQ

Daylight operations, arrival timing and baggage.

S5 Maldives Manta Conservation Programme

Hanifaru ecology, seasonal context and access rules.

S6 MIRA tourism GST circular

17% tourism GST from 1 July 2025.

S7 Financial Benchmarks India

USD/INR reference dated 5 October 2026; bank rates differ.

S8 UK government Maldives travel advice

Local laws, customs and safety; check advice for your nationality.

S9 Natural Earth public-domain geography

1:10m coastline; approximate regional markers.

S10 NOAA sun protection and coral

Sun protection choices and marine-environment context.

S11 Divers Alert Network

Flying-after-diving intervals depend on the dive profile.

S12 Official IMUGA declaration portal

Open Traveller Declaration; submission is free.

Information checked on 13 October 2026. Confirm entry rules, taxes, transport, property policies and health advice again before travel. Cost ranges are indicative scenarios, not bookable offers.

All editorial photographs in this guide are AI-generated illustrative scenes and do not document named hotels, guaranteed wildlife sightings or specific excursions. Natural Earth coastline data is public domain; regional markers are approximate.

 THE NEXT CHAPTER

Your Maldives story starts here.

Dream a little. Plan thoughtfully. Travel beautifully.

Plan your Maldives trip



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