



Photo: Ahmed Rasheed
Courtesy: Maldives
Marketing & PR Corporation

Maldives at a Glance

Area : 90,000 sq kms (1,190 islands).
Archipelago : Length : 823 kms, Width : 130 kms.
Total Number of Administrative Atolls : 19.
Largest Atoll : Huvadhu (Area 6486 sq miles).
Smallest Atoll : Gnaviyani (Area 4.81 sq miles).
Geographical Location : Indian Ocean.
Immediate Neighbours : India and Sri Lanka (both located northeast of Maldives), Lakshadweep Islands (India) to the north, Chagos Archipelago to the south, and the Seychelles to the southwest.
Latitude : 07°06'30" N to 00°41'48" S.
Longitude : 72°32'30" E to 73°45'54" E.
Status : Republic.
Population : 3,94,999 (July 2011 estimate).
Capital : Malé (Area : 1.77 sq kms)
Airport : Velana International Airport on Hululé Island, two kilometers east of Malé.
Maldives Standard Time : +5 hrs GMT.
International Relations: UN and most of its specialised agencies, Commonwealth, OIC, the Non-Aligned Movement, and SAARC.
Religion : 100% Sunni Muslim.
Languages : Dhivehi is the national language. English is widely spoken in business sectors.
Literacy Rate : 98.2% (Age 10-45 yrs)
Temperature : 31.1° C (Mean Max),



Tips & Facts

SEASON: November through April being the peak season, reservations for stay must be made well in advance. From May to October the demand and costs for accommodation are comparatively lower. In June and July, the Maldives experiences regular showers with monsoons bringing in more wind and rain.

PEOPLE: People from different parts of the world came across this island nation as it lay in the sea routes to Malacca and China. Speculations indicate that the earliest settlers could have been Dravidians from southern India and the Yakka and Naga people from Sri Lanka. Aryans from the Indus Valley probably followed them. But with the coming of the Arabs, the influence of Islam gradually replaced Hinduism and Buddhism practised by the early settlers. Being on the main seaway around the Indian subcontinent, the islands have long been a meeting point for Arab, African, Malay, and Indonesian mariners. The faces that we see today reflect all these influences contributing to a racial and cultural melting pot.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS: Handshaking is the most common form of greeting. Dress is informal. Light cotton clothes are recommended. Nudity is forbidden. Swimsuits and beachwear are to be confined to resort islands. When visiting an inhabited island or the capital, shorts and T-shirts for men, and blouse or T-shirts with skirts or shorts that cover the thighs, made of non-diaphanous material, for women, are a minimum requirement. Maldivians traditionally eat with their fingers. It is also considered unhygienic to touch food with the left hand. Use a spoon, if in doubt.

CURRENCY: The basic monetary unit in the Maldives is the Maldivian Rufiyaa (Mrf). They

马尔代夫一览

面积: 90,000 平方公里 (1,190 座岛屿)。
群岛: 长度: 823 公里, 宽度: 130 公里。
行政环礁总数: 19
最大环礁: 苏瓦迪瓦 (面积 6486 平方英里)。
最小环礁: Gnaviyani (面积 4.81 平方英里)。
地理位置: 印度洋。
邻邦: 印度和斯里兰卡 (都位于马尔代夫东北部), 北方为拉克沙群岛 (印度), 南方为查戈斯群岛, 西南部为塞舌尔。
纬度 : 07° 06' 30" N to 00° 41' 48" S.
经度 : 72° 32' 30" E to 73° 45' 54" E.
状态 : 共和国
人口 : 3,94,999 (2011 年 7 月估测)。
首都: 马累 (面积: 1.77 平方公里)
机场: Hululé 岛 Velana 国际机场, 位于马累以东两公里。
马尔代夫标准时间: 格林尼治标准时间+ 5 小时。
国际关系: 联合国及其大多数专职机构, 联邦, 独立组织, 不结盟运动, 及南亚区域合作联盟。
宗教 : 100% 穆斯林逊尼派。
语言 : 官方语言为迪维希语。商业领域普遍使用英语。
文化水平 : 98.2% (10-45 岁人群)
温度 : 31.1° C (平均最高温), 25.5° C (平均最低温)。
季候风 : 西南风: 五月-十月 东北风: 十一月-四月

平均日照时间 : 8 小时
平均年降雨量 : 1796.3 毫米
湿度: 79%
货币 : 马尔代夫拉菲亚 (1 美元 = 15.42 拉菲亚元)
电源 : 240V 交流电源
工作时间: 银行: 上午 8.30 - 下午 2 点 (周日至周四), 政府办公时间: 上午 8 点 - 下午 4 点 (周日至周四), 周五和周六休息。私营办公时间: 上午 8 点至下午 5 点营业, 中间有午餐时间。
信用卡 : 美国运通、大来卡、欧洲信用卡、JCB、万事达卡、Visa
主要产业: 旅游、渔业、服装、造船及手工业
国树 : 椰子树 (Cocos nucifera)
国花: 粉玫瑰 (Rosa pdyantha)
着装 : 轻便棉、麻织物
购物: 首都马累是主要的商业中心和购物中心。商店开门时间为上午 7.30 至 9.30, 闭店时间为晚 11 点。周五开门时间为下午 1.30, 闭店时间照常。每次祷告时间, 所有商店闭店暂停营业 15 分钟。
入境: 免签证入境。持旅游签证者可在有效期内滞留境内 30 天。游客在马尔代夫停留期间每天应至少携带 25 美元。对于来自黄热病流行地区的游客, 需提供国际预防接种证书。

come in denominations of 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 (notes), and 1 and 2 (coins only). A Rufiyaa is 100 Laari, coming in coins of 50, 25, 10, 5, 2 and 1.

In the early days cowry shells were used instead of money. Coins, minted in silver, were introduced for the first time in the late 16th century under the rule of Sultan Al-Ghazee Mohammed Thakurufaanu. The present currency was introduced in 1983.

There are no major restrictions on import or export of currencies. Major foreign currencies are converted to Rufiyaa at banks, resort islands, hotels and many shops.

Hotel bills can be paid in cash, travellers' cheques or credit cards. Credit cards most commonly used are American Express, Diners Club, Eurocard, JCB, MasterCard & Visa.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS: It is prohibited by law to import the following items into the Maldives: Alcoholic beverages; pornographic



The gleaming white minaret of Munnaaru, built in 1675. Photo: Mohamed Fayaz

literature or pictures; narcotics; firearms; idols of worship; dogs; live pigs, pork or any porcine product; dangerous animals and exobiological material; dangerous chemicals; fog signals and fireworks; and spear/dart guns. With the government imposing a ban on the killing of turtles, export of tortoise shell and coral is forbidden.

SHOPPING: Malé is the ideal place for shopping considering the choice of items available. With minimum duty on most of the items, prices in Malé have become competitive. Best buys include handicrafts like reed mats and lacquered wooden boxes, electronic items and souvenirs like coral rings and sea shells. Goods ranging from hi-fi stereo systems and cameras to watches and cosmetics can be purchased from well-stocked duty free shops at the Departure Terminal of Velana International Airport. In the capital, the STO Trade Centre with its many shops is one place where you can find a variety of items. Shops pull down their shutters for about 10 to 15 minutes, five times every day, for prayers. Most shops on resort islands are open throughout the day and close at dusk. Maldives is a very safe place to be in for tourists.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: The telecom, internet and broadband services are provided by Dhiraagu, the Maldives telecom company, Raajjé Online (ROL) and Doredo.

LANGUAGE: The language of the Maldives is Dhivehi, an Indo-Aryan language with influences of Sinhala, Arabic, Hindi, and Bengali. It is written from right to left in Thaana, a script unique to the Maldives.

Over the years however Dhivehi medium syllabuses have gradually made way to English medium teaching. English is therefore understood and widely used by the locals.

Places of Tourist Interest - Malé

ARTIFICIAL BEACH: Located on the eastern side of Malé, this is an increasingly popular place for a relaxing swim, or for meeting up with friends. Other recommended pastimes in and around the area include eating at the nearby cafes, watching youngsters play basketball, football, or glide on roller skates, or just relaxing on the beaches around the seafront. A great place to take your camera along.

CHILDREN'S PARK: Located in the south-eastern tip of Malé, this well planned recreation space is an ideal place for an evening stroll, a family outing, or to take your children out for some fun and frolic. Besides the colourful play area, there's also a skating rink for kids. Entrance is free.

FISH MARKET: Sightseeing of Malé would



Embudu Village Maldives
Tel: +960 664 4776
Fax: +960 664 2673
sales@embuduvillage.com
www.embuduvillage.com



Summer Island Maldives
Tel: +960 664 1949
Fax: +960 664 1910
reservations@summerislandmaldives.com
www.summerislandmaldives.com



Equator Village Maldives
Tel: +960 689 9000
Fax: +960 689 8020
reservations@equatorvillage.com
www.equatorvillage.com

Kaimoo Resorts & Hotels
H. Maagala, Malé, 20012, Maldives,
Tel: +960 332 2212 Fax: +960 331 8057
kaimoo@dhivehinet.net.mv www.kaimoo.com

Friday Mosque, was built in 1656 during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Iskandhar I. The interior and exterior walls of this historic mosque, built with coral stones, are intricately carved with Arabic writings and ornamental patterns. The roof, window frames, and doors are made of different types of wood including teak, red sandalwood, and redwood. There is an abundance of beautiful coral carvings and expert lacquer work inside the mosque, the latter being most conspicuous in the laage, or domes, built as part of the ceiling. The compound of the mosque also encloses a number of ancient tombstones erected in memory of past sultans, heroes, and nobles.

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE: Malé's most famous architectural landmark is the three-storey Islamic Centre, opened in November 1984. The Centre's Grand Friday Mosque, Masjid-al-Sultan Mohammed Thakurufaanu-al-A'z'am, is the biggest in the Maldives, accommodating more than 5,000 worshippers. The shining golden dome of the mosque is a standout as are also the interior walls decorated with beautiful wood carvings and Arabic calligraphy. The Centre also houses a library and a conference hall.

JUMHOOREE MAIDAN: Beautifully laid out with carpet green grass and lush vegetation, this public square, constructed along the northern waterfront in 1989, is Malé's most popular place for social gatherings and relaxation. It is also one of the favourite evening hangouts for children. On the eastern end of the square stands the official flag post on which is hoisted a permanent flag, the largest in the country.

MEDHU ZIYAARATH: Opposite the Hukuru Miskiiy is the Medhu Ziyaarath, the shrine of Abu al Barakaath Yusuf al Barbari, a North African, believed to be responsible for converting the Maldives to Islam in AD 1153.

MULEE-AAGE: Mulee-aage was originally built by Sultan Shamsuddeen III for his son just before the First World War. After the sultan and his son were banished in May 1936,

the house was declared a government property. The Mulee-aage was officially declared and used as an office complex by subsequent governments.

After the country became a Republic in 1953, the Mulee-aage became the 'President's Official Residence'. In 1986, the house was renamed the 'Presidential Palace' and was upgraded to hold official functions and to accommodate visiting Heads of States and other foreign dignitaries.

MUNNAARU: Close to the Friday Mosque is this gleaming white minaret also built by Sultan Ibrahim Iskandhar in 1675. The chief muezzin of Malé called the faithful to prayer from this minaret before the Islamic Centre was built.

SULTAN PARK & THE NATIONAL MUSEUM: Maldives changed from a Republic to a Sultanate and back to a Republic in a span of just 16 years (1953 to 1968). The Sultan's Palace however was demolished except for a three-storey building and the palace grounds were turned into a public park, known as the Sultan Park.

The surviving palace building within the park is today the National Museum. Opened on

November 19, 1952, the museum displays a large and varied collection of a glorious bygone era including stone objects from the pre-Islamic period; royal antiquities like thrones, palanquins, royal sunshades, costumes and shoes, coins, and ornaments, arms and armour. Coral stone sculptures, lacquered wooden containers, miniature hand-written Quran, hookahs, sunshades, traditional log drums from the Royal Palace used in the popular music of Bodu Beru, and the very interiors of the museum - retained from the days of the Sultanate - are the added attractions. Two of the most significant items on display are the coral stone head of Lord Buddha, a 11th century piece from Alifu Thoddu and a 13th century engraved wooden panel from Hukuru Miskiiy. Timings: 9AM - 3PM. Closed on Fridays and public holidays.

TOMB OF MOHAMMED THAKURUFAANU: This tomb is erected in the compound of the Bihuroazu Kamanaa Miskiiy, in memory of Sultan Ghaazee Mohammed Thakurufaanu, regarded as the greatest of national heroes. He liberated the country from Portuguese rule, who had been occupying the land for 15 years after defeating Sultan Ali VI in 1558.



Maldivian archipelago located 300 miles southwest of the southern tip of India and 450 miles west of Sri Lanka is a beautiful string of 1,190 low-lying coral islands scattered across the equator in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, giving us a rare glimpse of what is aptly described as a tropical paradise. Just consider this - sparkling white sun kissed beaches; crystal-clear lagoons studded with profusely coloured corals; azure warm seas with an undisturbed, exotic marine life; palm-fringed islands; the pervading serenity; all of it summarised by the famous Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta on describing Maldives as One of the wonders of the world.

The Sun, the Sand and the Sea. These are just the three simple realities beckoning tourists from far and wide to these little islets, giving as a result, a glorious sense of happiness and proving to be a heavenly getaway from the world and its worries. The Maldives teaches the visitors the pleasurable art of doing nothing, simply lazing around and enjoying some of the most spectacular and colourful vistas offered by Nature.

No wonder then that tourists flock in large numbers to the 150 odd self-contained island resorts provided with all the comforts and warmth exuded by traditional Maldivian hospitality, which is why Maldives is considered to be the ultimate destination, the future world for holiday-makers.

Photo: GertJan van Weert





Tel: +960 333 8811
Fax: +960 333 8822
reservations@kaimoohotels.com
www.mookaihotel.com

KAIMOO
RESORTS & HOTELS
H. Maagala, Malé, 20012, Maldives
Tel: +960 332 2212 Fax: +960 331 8057
kaimoo@dhivehinet.net.mv www.kaimoo.com

DIVING in the Maldives

The brilliantly colourful coral reefs, making the Maldivian seascapes amongst the most enchanting in the world, is a nature's treasure house, an El Dorado for diving enthusiasts, providing opportunities to experience the unique and beautiful underwater scenery which is a realm of a great variety of fish, corals, and other marine denizens.

The several years of experience of the diving centers, has guaranteed high standards in the selection of resort islands as well as the quality of equipments used and the expertise of the diving staff.

Couple of diving programs are on the offer. Guided dives under the supervision of diving instructors are for novices and those who still haven't gained the necessary confidence. The non-limit, or unguided dives, documents the confidence one feels in his or her dive. However it is the diving instructor who decides as to how confident and how experienced one is in their diving skills.

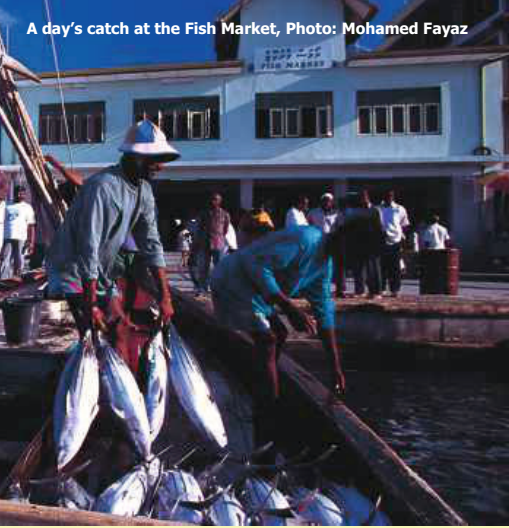
All the dive operations are affiliated with PADI, NAUI, and CMAS and/or employs PADI or NAUI diving instructors. You can also be assured of finding highly trained professionals qualified to conduct courses by meeting diving's highest instructor training standards. The PADI Open Water Diver course, where you can practice and master real skills, offers tremendous flexibility depending upon class requirements. It also features state-of-the art education that makes learning simple and fun.

Though diving is considered to be one of the easiest of water sports, carelessness can prove to be dangerous. The beginner not only tends to overestimate himself, being presumptuous, but the problem clearly lies in underestimating the dangers of the ocean and not understanding its ways carefully.

As a rule, one must always remember that they're diving at their own risk. For this reason one should definitely comply with the diving regulations issued by the concerned authorities.

Generally these are :

- 1.Decompression



dives are prohibited, even if a dive computer is in use which measures the levels of nitrogen vis-a-vis the respective depth over dive time, 2. diving below depths of 90 feet is prohibited, and 3. wearing a BC is mandatory.

Besides these, there are other diving safety rules to be followed. One must never dive alone, despite the numerous shallow diving sites. One must also get acquainted with the site's special features, such as the location of the reef's edge, opening in reef channel, direction, strength and direction of currents, the sun's position, and so on.

Special care must be taken during current diving. Here one must make sure of not venturing faraway from one's boat. Further one must also dive against the current for in case of an emergency the current will bring one back to the boat.

Thus training by qualified hands coupled with one's enthusiasm, and a little bit of cautious approach takes one to another world.

The mysteries of the ocean beckons one and all, and diving provides an excellent and thrilling opportunity to unravel some of these, the fascinating world of corals being one of them.

Going Places

Air Transport: International flights are operated to Bangladesh (Dhaka), India (Bangalore, Cochin, and Trivandrum), Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), Qatar (Doha), Singapore, Sri Lanka (Colombo), Thailand (Bangkok and Don Muang), the U.A.E. (Abu Dhabi and Dubai), and a number of European countries from and to Velana International Airport (Tel: 3322073). Maldivian, the national carrier, operates international flights to Bangladesh (Dhaka), India (Cochin and Trivandrum), and Thailand (Don Muang). Domestic inter-island flights are operated by Maldivian and Fly Me. Destinations



Photo:KarlAmsler. Courtesy: Maldives Marketing & PR Corpn

include Dharavandhoo, Fua Mulaku, Gan, Hanimaadhoo, Kaadhedhdhoo, Kadhdhoo, Kooddoo, Maamigili, Raafufuru, and Thimarafushi. Seaplane services are operated by Maldivian and Trans Maldivian Airways, the latter having the largest fleet. Sight-seeing trips, flights to uninhabited islands, photoshooting trips, executive charters, and medevac operations are also carried out by them.

Water Transport: Local boats, or dhoanis (average speed 7 knots), are the most common means of water transport. One can make use of the regular ferry service (Rf 10 per person / Rf 20 per person between midnight and 6am) between Malé and the International Airport. Modern speedboats are also available for hire. Safari vessels are an ideal way to explore atolls.

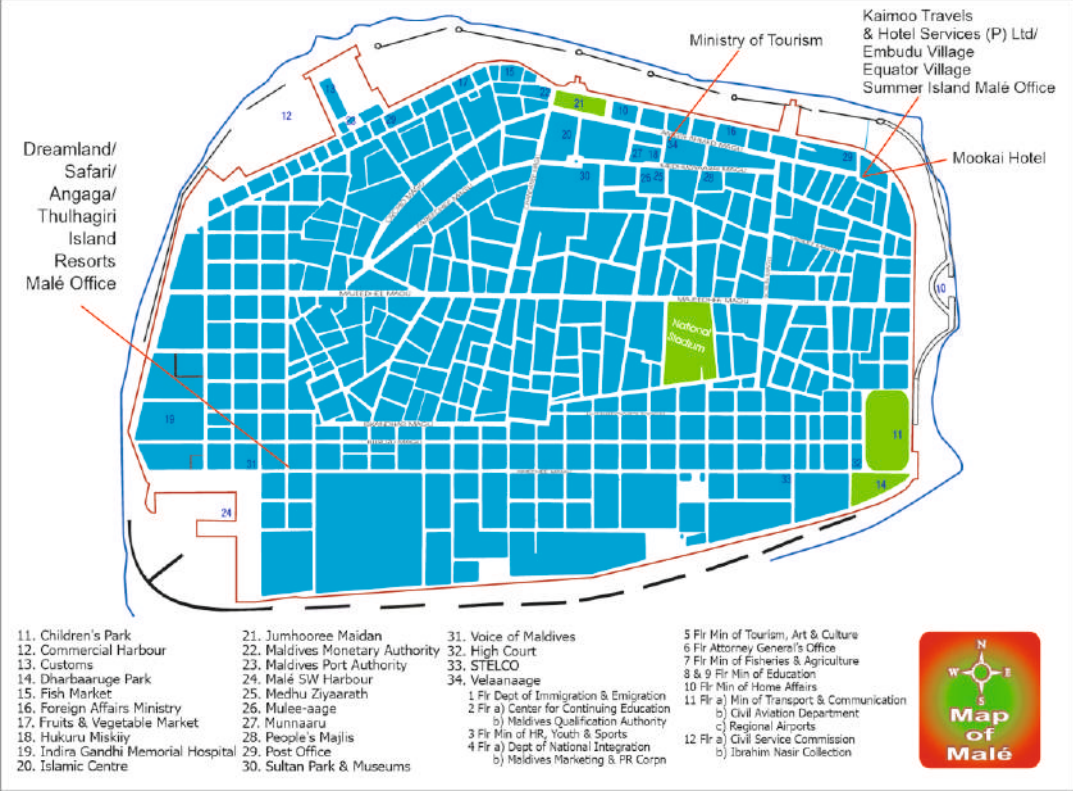
Road Transport: Travel on most islands takes no more than half-an-hour on foot. Bicycles, scooters, mopeds, and motorbikes are popular modes of transport. Taxis in Malé are unmetered, charging Rf25 per stop, with an extra Rf5 for luggage carried. Taxis can be hailed on the road or called through taxi services (Tel: 3325656, 3323132, 3321414, etc.). Taxis are also available at Velana International Airport(Hulhule), and in Gan.

Airborne over Atolls

You have just arrived at the Malé international airport and realizing that there is ample time at your disposal you begin to ponder as to what is to be done with it. Grab this opportunity to treat yourself to some of the most spectacular aerial views of the Maldives, courtesy of the seaplane services operated by Maldivian and Trans Maldivian Airways.

Their service flights range from airport-to-island shuttles to island-hopping for the adventurous to short sight-seeing flips which provide breathtaking views of coral reefs, islands, and surrounding lagoons. With a little bit of luck, one may also have the chance to see schools of dolphins or manta rays as the flight deliberately skims over the ocean surface. Incoming passengers are met at the Malé airport, their baggage handled, and are then conveyed to their respective destinations. Similarly outgoing tourists are retrieved at their resorts and transported back to the airport.

These companies also offer their



seaplanes for aerial photography giving one a chance to capture the natural beauty of these tropical islands, resembling tiny pieces of gems studding a vast aquamarine canvas painted by the ocean, frame-by-frame. A perfect souvenir of a Maldivian vacation. What's more, they also perform government charter services and medevac operations.

If you want to top the icing of your holiday with a cherry, go for the airborne experience, for the Maldives is beautiful not only from beneath the sea but most of all from above it. Make flying a truly memorable and exhilarating experience, an opportunity of a lifetime !

Favourite Pastimes

Apart from shopping in the capital city or lazing on a resort beach, there are several exciting pastimes you could choose from.

AMATEUR RADIO: If you are a licenced radio amateur, operating Amateur Radio during your visit to the Maldives could be a



thrilling experience. Reciprocal licensing arrangements are available for amateur radio operation in the Maldives. The fee for such temporary licence, valid for a maximum of three months, is only MRF 200 (approx US\$13). The prefix is 8Q7. Currently, only two letter suffixes are issued.

The prescribed application form from Communications Authority of Maldives (https://www.cam.gov.mv/amateur_radio.htm) together with a covering letter and photocopy of your passport and original licence should be submitted sufficiently in advance to facilitate processing of your application. The fee will have to be paid after your application is accepted.

Since it may be difficult to organize all these if you are not in the Maldives, the best way to handle is through your Tour Operator or Travel Agent or a friend in the capital, Male. You may also contact Maldives Amateur Radio Society (MARS) early, for assistance (<https://www.marismv.org/licence-maldives-amateur/>).

DIVING: The 150-odd resort islands surrounded by clear turquoise waters introduces you to a fascinating world of coral gardens. To have a tete-a-tete with such underwater treasures, diving is indeed the recommended pastime. The corals offer some of the most spectacular vistas of underwater life-turtles, seaweed, shells, crustaceans and schools-and-schools of brilliantly-coloured fish.

Apart from a few, most of the resorts are equipped with diving schools headed by a fully-qualified diving instructor. The waist-deep waters of a lagoon offers a perfect start for beginners. Some of the schools also offer training up to the level of a professional diver. Live-aboards and resorts in the Maldives provide all the latest high quality dive equipments including compressors, tanks, regulators with octopus, BCDs, masks, snorkels, fins, dive computers, wetsuits, weights and weight belts. Protected dive sites popular throughout the world include Manta Point, Shark Point, Lion's Head, Hammerhead Point, and Banana Reef. Wind-surfing and water-skiing facilities are also available.

FISHING: Fishing is another major sport in the Maldives. With water constituting over 99% of the total area, it comes as no surprise that the country flaunts some of the best fishing grounds in the world. Night fishing is a popular tourist sport with the catch - be it groupers, snappers, squirrel fish, skipjacks or barracuda - making a perfect evening barbecue on the beach. Fishing also begins at dawn with dhoanis seeking tuna, dolphin fish,

代夫潜水

五彩缤纷的珊瑚礁使马尔代夫的海洋成为世界上最迷人的海洋之一，这是大自然的宝库，是潜水爱好者的天堂，在这里您有机会欣赏独一无二的水下风景，这里栖息着种类繁多的鱼类、珊瑚和其他海洋生物。

潜水中心经营多年，拥有丰富经验，能够为您提供最精致的度假岛屿，并配以优质设备和高水平潜水教练。

提供两种潜水项目。新手和那些仍没有自信的人可在潜水教练的指导下潜水。无限制或无引导潜水可展示自己对自己潜水能力的信心。然而，最终决定是否有信心以及有多少潜水技能的还是潜水教练。

所有潜水活动都由PADI、NAUI和CMAS经营，和/或雇佣PADI或NAUI潜水教练。您也可以寻找训练有素的专业人士，只要其达到潜水的最高教练训练标准即可开展训练。PADI的开放水域潜水员课程使您可以练习和掌握真正的技能，课程灵活多样，可根据教学需求随时调整。它还提供先进教育，使学习变得简单和有趣。

尽管潜水被认为是最容易的水上运动之一，但粗心大意是很危险的。初学者不仅容易高估自己，也会自以为是，但问题显然在于他们低估了海洋的危险，而不是仔细理解它的方式。

必须谨记的一条规则是，自己正在冒着风险潜水。出于这个原因，我们应该严格遵守有关当局发布的潜水规定。

一般来说，规定包括：1）禁止减压潜水，即使使用了潜水计算机，因为它测量的是相对于随时间增加的潜水深度的氮含量。2）潜水深度禁止超过90英尺。3）必须穿戴此。

除此以外，还有其他多项安全规则需要遵守。决不能独自潜水，尽管有很多潜水地点深度较浅。必须熟悉该海域的特征，例如礁石边缘的位置、礁石通道的开口、方向、水流强度和方向、太阳位置等等。

激浪潜水时必须特别注意。必须确保不要冒险远离自己的船。此外，当激浪将某人带离船只时，必须逆着浪流潜水。

因此，只要由合格的人员进行训练，和自己付出的激情，再加上一点谨慎的态度，就会把自己带向另一个世界。

海洋的奥秘在向人们召唤，潜水就是要探索这些奥秘的一个极好的、令人激动的机会，其中珊瑚的迷人世界就是其中之一。

rainbow runners and barracuda.

Reef Casting is a type of fishing done on speedboats or motorized dhoanis involving a fly fishing or a modern spinning tackle used to bait some of the strongest fighters of the reefs. Groupers, snappers, trevally, and barracuda can really put your tackle to test.

The seas outside the atoll enclosure reef are meant for big game fishing. Leaping dorados, darting wahoos, speedy marlins, and the magnificent sailfish are all trolled from dhoanis, yachts, or powerful fishing boats. An engaging sport, many of the resort islands also have speedboats for hire equipped for western-style game fishing.

If you've a generous amount of time at your disposal, take off on large sailing live-aboard dhoanis for a two-or-three day trip to remote pastures where the reef offers lesser-seen baits.

However since the Maldives follows a strict conservation policy, the use of harpoons and hunting of marine mammals such as whales, porpoises and dolphins and huge fish like the whale shark are prohibited.



Colourful denizens of the ocean. Photo: Kyoko Uno

CRUISING: Cruising along the aquamarine waters from atoll to atoll is an unforgettable holiday experience. Boats with bunk-beds or private cabins can accommodate anywhere between eight to twenty passengers for such island-hopping trips, normally lasting ten to fifteen days. The central atolls of North and South Malé, Vaavu and Alifu are usually the most frequented since services are readily available for tourists. These atolls also have some of the best surfing and diving spots in the Maldives.

Aboard the yacht, the crew is highly professional. The resident cook dishes out for you excellent seafood recipes. Dining under a clear, star-studded night sky in the Maldives is indeed an experience in itself. An excursion to a fishing village or an uninhabited island should make your holiday cruise more worthwhile. Some resorts also have glass-bottomed boats and catamarans for hire.

Parasailing on multi-coloured parachutes over the warm waters of the Indian Ocean is an incredible experience. Water sausages and water scooters also make interesting rides.

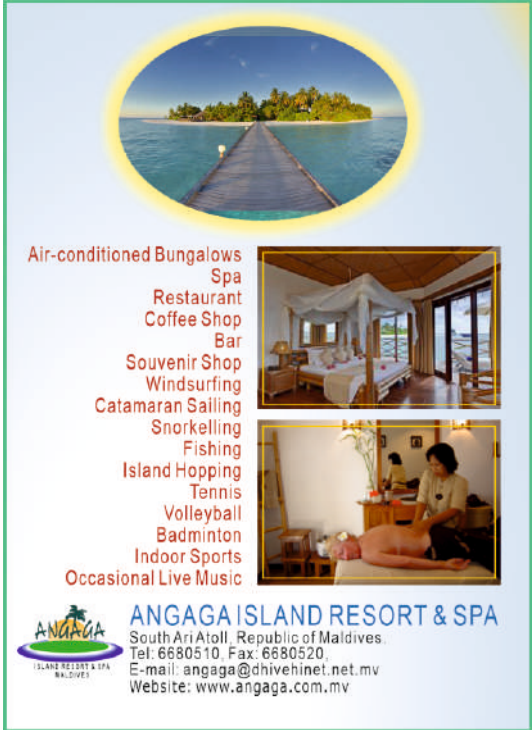
Besides these, equipments for beach volleyball, football, lawn tennis and indoor games such as badminton, table tennis, billiards and chess are usually available free of charge in many of the resort islands.

PHOTOGRAPHY: With tropical beauty abounding in the region, photography is another rewarding pastime. If the thrills of aerial photography is your cup of tea, seaplanes can be hired for taking you on breathtaking photo flights. Normal restrictions with regards to photographing military and security buildings and installations exist.

Good Food

The capital Malé has a select number of modest eateries. Local and South Asian food are on the main menu. Chinese and Continental fares are also available in some restaurants.

Teashops in Malé serve a variety of savouries and sweets. Savouries are mostly fish based. Some of the popular snacks include fihunu mas (fish basted with chilli paste and barbecued) - a real winner, several varieties of gulha (ball-shaped snacks with smoked fish stuffings), bajiya (a pastry stuffed with fish, coconut, and onions), keemia (deep-fried fish rolls), kulhi borkibaa (mildly spiced fishcake), theluli kavaabu (deep-fried fish rissole), and the succulent theluli mas (fish chunks brushed with a chilli-garlic paste and fried). And if you wish to



end on a high, go for sweets such as bondi (white, finger-long coconut sticks), or zileybee (batter coils in syrup). They are simply delicious.

A traditional island meal includes garudiya (a clear fish broth) served with rice, and piquant side-dishes made of lime, chilli, and small onions. Another popular dish is roshi (unleavened bread) which goes well with mas huni (a mixture of smoked fish in shreds, grated coconuts, and finely chopped onions seasoned with lime and chilli). Breadfruit is used commonly, served either as curry, the bambukeylu hiti, or is fried. Similarly taro makes a good crispy snack when fried. Sweet dishes like custard accompanied by locally grown pomegranates, bananas, papaya, and mangoes, topped by a hot cup of sweet black tea lends a perfect finish to an authentic repast.

Most of the resort islands have more than one restaurant where you can enjoy a wide range of cuisines catering to the different tastes of a large international clientele. Continental, Middle Eastern, Indian, and Oriental buffets are widely available.

Though Maldivians do not consume alcoholic beverages, drinks are available in bars confined to the island resorts. The Maldivian toddy raa is sweet and delicious despite its pungent odour. Ice creams, sundaes, fresh fruit juices, and the local suji (a sweet drink made with semolina, coconut milk, nuts, sultanas, and a dash of spices) also add to the refreshing list.

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