



**MASTER**  
LIVEBOARDS

---

# Maldives, Central Atolls & Baa

## 7 / 10 nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Malé International Airport\* at 12:30 or 16:00
- **Disembarkation:** Hulhumalé Harbour, Malé @ 07:30

### Embarkation & Disembarkation Transfers

\*Our meeting point for embarkation is in front of Burger King in the airport terminal where our representative will be waiting to collect you and holding a Master Liveboards sign.

- There are two transfer times for embarkation in Malé - **12:30 and 16:00 only**

At these two times only, the dhoni will dock at the pier in front of the airport and transfer guests directly to Maldives Master.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *We can not arrange pick-up and transfers from hotels.* Guests staying in a hotel or resort before their liveaboard need to arrange transport to be at the airport in time for the 12:30 transfer to Maldives Master.

Disembarkation day transfer is also by dhoni from Maldives Master to the airport only.

### Diving Information

Please be aware that most of the dive sites that may be included on this itinerary exceed Open Water certification depth limits and have strong and unpredictable currents making them **challenging or unsuitable for entry-level or inexperienced divers.**

#### Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers joining a Central Atolls & Baa liveaboard itinerary are required to have:

- **Mandatory** - minimum of 30 logged dives.
- **Mandatory** - Open Water certification, or equivalent with **Deep Dive\* (30 metres) training**
  - Advanced Open Water is **strongly recommended.**
- **Nitrox certification\*** is highly advantageous and **strongly recommended.**

\*We offer SSI Nitrox certification and SSI Deep Adventure Dive onboard for those who are not already certified.

***All divers should also have experience in medium-strong currents and be comfortable with drift dives, negative entries and deploying an SMB underwater.***

*For the safety and comfort of all divers, any guests who the crew feel lack the necessary experience, fitness or skills for the diving conditions may be denied participation in some or all dives.*

- It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.
- All divers must use a dive computer and carry an SMB and reel on every dive.
- Every diver is responsible for their own dive profiles and must remain well within the limits of their dive computer and depths dictated by their certification level.
- Guests are also asked to always listen to and follow the instructions of the cruise director and dive guides, and make a mandatory safety stop at the end of each dive.

## Diving Emergencies

The largest and longest operating recompression chamber is on Bandos Island (15 minutes by speedboat from Malé). The others are located at Kuredu Island Resort (Lhaviyani Atoll), Kuramathi Resort (North Ari Atoll), Kandima Maldives Resort (Dhaalu Atoll) and ADK Hospital in Malé.

**IMPORTANT:** Transfer to the nearest available chamber is likely to require emergency evacuation by speedboat, which needs to be paid for at the time it is required. *It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all evacuation costs as well as recompression chamber and/or hospital treatment.*

We strongly urge all guests to dive conservatively at all times, follow Dive Guides' advice and purchase specific dive insurance before their trips.

As outlined in our [Terms & Conditions](#) dive insurance and travel insurance are mandatory.

## Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

Water temperatures throughout the Maldives are fairly consistent at 26°-29°C (78°-84°F) throughout the year. Most guests are comfortable in a 3mm shorty or full-length wetsuit. However, those prone to feeling cold may be more comfortable in a 5mm wetsuit and are advised to bring additional thermal layers such as a vest, hood or skinsuit to wear under their wetsuit.

## Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: [www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions).

Our Central Atolls and Baa itineraries take you to some of the best dive sites around the central atolls of the Maldives and Baa Atoll. The diving locations depend largely on the itinerary duration and include North Malé, Baa and North Ari atolls. On 10-night itineraries, South Ari, Vaavu and South Malé Atolls will also usually be covered.

## Fees & Taxes:

Maldives Government Green Tax is mandatory and must be paid in advance as part of your liveaboard booking.

An **entrance fee of 30 USD per person** applies if it is possible to visit [Hanifaru Bay](#) during your trip. This is a government-controlled charge **which** is subject to change without notice and **payable on board in USD cash only**. All USD *banknotes must be in brand new, unblemished condition.*

Please note however that *inclusion of Hanifaru Bay is not guaranteed* and will depend on season, presence of mantas, and government-imposed visitor restrictions.

### Number of scheduled dives:

- 7 nights: Up to 16
- 10 nights: Up to 25

While we endeavour to ensure the number of scheduled dives is fulfilled, this is only indicative, and not guaranteed. Various factors can hinder the vessel's ability to reach or remain at a specific area and may affect the number of dives possible.

***Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or fully understand English, please let us know before you arrive.***

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

**Day 1:** Meet our crew at Malé Airport for embarkation, followed by introductions, boat orientation, safety briefings and dinner. There is no diving on embarkation day.

**Full diving days:** We typically offer a maximum of 3 dives on full diving days, scheduled as follows unless travelling distances or other circumstances dictate otherwise:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing and Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing and Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, briefing and Dive 3\*
- Snack, relaxation period
- Dinner

\* if [snorkelling at Hanifaru Bay](#) is possible there will only be 2 dives offered on that day.

If it is possible to offer a sunset or night dive, the scheduling of the preceding dives will be slightly amended. However, on 7 night itineraries, only one **sunset or night dive** may be offered and the possibility of either **is not guaranteed**.

**Last diving day:** For your last day of diving we usually schedule two morning dives\* before the boat heads back to port after lunch.

\*Guests are kindly asked to check their flight departure time to ensure a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and flying.

**Disembarkation day:** Early breakfast on board followed by disembarkation at 07:30 and transfer to the airport which takes approximately 30 minutes.

The following is a general overview of the areas covered on the Central Atolls and Baa itineraries and some of the dive sites that are usually included. However, various factors determine which sites we visit on each trip; Itinerary duration, weather, tides, currents and marine life activity are just some of the considerations that influence decisions regarding the exact route the boat takes and which sites are selected for diving each day.

***The inclusion of specifically named dive sites is not guaranteed*** and there may be dives at other locations along the itinerary route that are not listed below.

While we wish to show you the best diving possible, the safety of all on board remains paramount. We always do our best to offer diving at alternative locations if we are unable to visit or remain at a particular area, for any reason.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although some dive site descriptions indicate depths within Open Water certification limits, the majority of dives and points of interest are deeper than 18 metres. To fully participate in this itinerary, divers need to have deep dive (30 metres) training.

## North Malé Atoll

### [Hulhumale Beyru](#) (Shark Tank)

Not far from Malé Airport, this is an extraordinary dive site where you can see large numbers of spinner sharks and several different types of stingrays. It is also the only location in the Central Atolls where you have the opportunity to spot bull sharks, lemon sharks and guitar rays; there is always a small chance of a tiger shark or a great hammerhead putting in an appearance. This is an advanced dive and highly recommended to dive with nitrox as it is between 25 and 30 metres (82-98 feet).

### Lankan Manta Point

Starting at a depth of around 7 metres, a group of large coral rocks along the outside reef of Lankanfinolhu act as a cleaning station where mantas can be consistently observed throughout the year as they stop by to be serviced by the resident blue-stripe cleaner wrasse. As the mantas awaiting their turn to be cleaned circle above, those that are done fly away down the reef scooping up mouthfuls of zooplankton in the shallows as they go.

## Baa Atoll

Encompassing 54 islands of South Maalhasmaddu and Goidhoo Atoll, Baa is best known for [Hanifaru Bay](#) where large numbers of manta rays congregate to feed at certain times of the year when high tides and strong currents bring nutrient-rich waters into the bay around full and new moon phases. However, like the majority of Maldivian atolls, Baa features many channels, walls and reefs providing numerous dive sites offering steep drop-offs, overhangs, caves, abundant coral and fish life, sharks and eagle rays, as well as mantas. Sites we usually visit in Baa Atoll include the following:

### Dhigala Haa

This beautiful thila inside the atoll is easily circumnavigated in one dive and is a favourite for eagle rays and grey reef shark sightings. Once heavily fished, it is now a protected marine sanctuary; as a result, fish life is prolific and varied with blue fin jacks, fusiliers, blue-striped and humpback snapper, batfish and schools of barracuda.

### Dhonfanu Thila

A relatively small, oval-shaped pinnacle with an almost completely flat reef top covered with beautiful hard corals between 8 and 10 metres and steep, soft coral-covered walls reaching down to 30 metres. Topographically, there are numerous overhangs, drop-offs, caves and canyons dotted around the entire circumference and a delightful swim-through on the east side. All along the reef, you will see schools of blue-striped snappers, fusiliers, soldierfish and butterflyfish. Look out for stingrays in the sandy areas as well as grey reef sharks and eagle rays passing by. The reef is also full of cleaner wrasse, so mantas often visit during the southwest monsoon season.

## Dharavandhoo Thila

Starting as a narrow ledge from the corner of Dharavandhoo Island and extending almost 200 metres into the atoll, this dive site comprises many features with stunning topography offering underwater photographers the opportunity for some amazing aquatic landscape shots.

In the shallowest area, close to the middle of the thila, you can find octopus, scorpionfish, stonefish, different types of moray eels and a variety of macro delights. Along the entire length on both sides, there are coral blocks, crevices, overhangs, sea fan-filled caves and sandy patches which come to life with garden eels popping out of their burrows to feed on water-bourne nutrients while gobies, together with their resident partner shrimps, work tirelessly to clean and guard their homes.

A cleaning station at 20 metres attracts mantas during the Southwest monsoon, usually between June and October. Regular marine life encounters include eagle rays, stingrays, groupers, barracuda and Napoleon wrasse, to name just a few.

## Dhigu Thila

Approximately 500 metres in length, Dhigu Thila is another long, narrow reef. Resembling an underwater mountain range, distinct peaks and canyons form a chain that is little more than 6 metres wide. The flat 'mountain' tops range in depth from 6 to 11 metres and are separated by canyons roughly 15 metres deep.

The southern side drops steeply to around 25 metres and is dotted with large caves filled with sea fans and whip corals where groupers, squirrelfish and numerous smaller fish can be found hiding. The northern side descends more gradually in tiers down to the same depth and features vertically stacked caves at the eastern end and an isolated outcrop reef. Apart from the topography, the thila boasts some amazing marine life; look out for octopus, flatworms, nudibranchs, scorpionfish, and black-spotted stingrays.

## Hanifaru Bay (inclusion not guaranteed)

***Scuba diving is not permitted in Hanifaru Bay.*** Snorkelling is allowed, but visitors must be escorted by an official Hanifaru Bay guide.

Hanifaru is an uninhabited island located on the southeast side of Baa Atoll. The bay is a marine protected area, famed for the large number of manta rays that congregate there at certain times of the year. This seasonal gathering is due to plankton blooms in and around the bay, a phenomenon that normally occurs between June and October. When conditions are just right, there can be up to 200 manta rays feeding off the reefs in Hanifaru Bay.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The inclusion of Hanifaru Bay is dependent on the time of year, the number of mantas in the bay (or lack thereof) as well as the availability of government-licensed guides and restrictions imposed by the rangers.

There is a visitor **charge of 30 USD per person** which covers entry token and guide fees for approximately 45 minutes. Minimum 10 people. This **fee is payable on board in USD cash only**. All USD banknotes **MUST** be in **PRISTINE CONDITION**, otherwise they will not be accepted.

## North Ari Atoll

### Fish Head

Fish Head, also known as Shark Point or Mushimasmingili Thila, fits the classic definition of a thila; Roughly 80 metres wide, this isolated pinnacle rises steeply from a depth of 40+ metres to form a flat-topped reef, 10 metres below the surface. The underwater scenery, along with a wide variety of marine life and large numbers of grey reef sharks have earned it a reputation as one of the top ten dive sites in the Maldives. It features a series of caves and ledges at varying depths and a large undercut between 25-30 metres and can easily be circled in a single dive if the currents are favourable.

### Maaya Thila

Where Fish Head is known as one of the best locations for grey reef shark encounters, Maaya Thila boasts the same with white-tip reef sharks. Grey reef sharks are also present but are largely outnumbered by the white-tip population. Maaya is very similar in size and topography to Fish Head although slightly shallower. Apart from the sharks, there is plenty of fish activity to feast your eyes on; turtles, dog-toothed tuna, great barracuda, Moorish idols, batfish, parrotfish, butterflyfish, angelfish, clown triggerfish, lionfish, fusiliers, snappers, along with soft corals and sea fans add a rainbow of colour to the reef.

### Rasdhoo-Madivaru

The Rasdhoo region is a small atoll in its own right but is classified as part of Alifu Alifu Atoll with Rasdhoo Island being North Ari's administrative capital. Rasdhoo-Madivaru is a channel on the southeastern edge of the Rasdhoo region which is famed for the large groups of Scalloped hammerhead sharks that emerge from the depths just before sunrise. The reef formation in this area is possibly one of the most stunning and confusing in the whole of North Ari.

A narrow spur, peaking at around 12 metres, extends outwards from the reef into the channel between Madivaru and Rasdhoo Islands. On the open ocean-facing side, the reef drops off to more than 200 metres while the sandy bottom inside the channel is around 30 metres. There is a prolific amount of fish life around the spur ranging from pelagics such as barracuda, tuna and trevallies to colourful reef fish in all shapes and sizes.

### Fesdhoo Lagoon

Inside the atoll, Fesdhoo Lagoon is an area where manta rays often congregate in the late afternoon and evening to feed. To enable our guests to experience these magnificent creatures up close, the crew will attach lights to the stern of the boat which attracts plankton and, hopefully, mantas too. *If the mantas put in an appearance*, divers will have the opportunity to do *a stationary night dive* at the back of the boat to passively observe the rays while they are feeding.

---

## 10-night itineraries

The following areas will usually only be included on 10-night itineraries

### South Ari Atoll

South Ari boasts numerous superb thilas, most of which are located in the channels from the outside reefs, although there are several inside the atoll as well. You will have the opportunity to dive at several of these while we are in South Ari and some of the manta cleaning stations that the atoll is famed for. The locations that we visit depend on the time of year as this dictates where the best action is likely to be. These may include some or all of the following:

### **Kudarah Thila**

Located inside a large channel, Kudarah Thila is a small, isolated reef which is covered in beautiful soft and hard corals, teeming with fish and one of the most colourful dives in Ari Atoll. The top of the thila is 14-16 metres deep and drops off sharply to 27 metres all the way around. If the current is not too strong, it's possible to navigate the entire thila in one dive and explore the top of the reef for macro species. Around the eastern end, there is a swim-through and two large overhangs decorated with yellow daisy corals on the ceilings and giant gorgonians on the floors. Thousands of blue-lined snappers surround the reef, as well as large schools of humpback red snappers and bannerfish. Grey reef sharks are also regularly seen cruising the peripheries.

### **Kudima Wreck**

Also known as the Machchafushi Wreck, this former Japanese cargo ship was deliberately sunk in 1998. Sitting upright at a maximum depth of 30 metres, this 52-metre-long steel wreck has become an impressive artificial reef with plenty of soft and hard coral growth, sponges and ascidians covering the decks. It is a great dive site for macro lovers with many species of nudibranchs, shrimps and crabs, frogfish and ghost pipefish. Large holes purposely cut out of the hull before the vessel was scuttled allow easy penetration and exploration of some of the wreck's interior.

### **Angaga Thila**

Located in the middle of the atoll, this small seamount starts at a depth of 8-10 metres, dropping steeply on all sides to the sandy seabed at 35 metres. Measuring roughly 80 metres in diameter, the circumference of the thila is dotted with overhangs of varying size at a depth of between 15 and 25 metres where resting stingrays can often be found. Mantis shrimps, nudibranchs, octopuses and various types of moray eels are amongst the other occupants seeking shelter in these nooks, while white-tip reef sharks, trevallies and barracuda patrol the perimeters. Coral blocks on the shallow reef top provide hiding places for nurse sharks with colourful reef fish flitting above them.

### **Manta cleaning station**

While we are in South Ari, there are two locations we might visit to observe manta ray activity, both located in channels along the eastern side of the atoll.

#### **1) Mahibadhoo Rock**

Also known as Mahibadhoo Thila, on an outgoing current during the northeast monsoon, large numbers of mantas are drawn to this location by the plankton-rich waters flowing through the channel. Situated within the channel opening, the roughly L-shaped thila features a row of three rocks on an 8-10 metre deep plateau with a fourth formation off to the side. Along the slope of the channel and around the thila mantas swoop by to feed in the nutrient-rich water and visit the resident cleaner wrasse.

## 2) Lily Manta Point

South of Mahibadhoo, the topography of this dive site is typical of most manta-cleaning stations throughout the Maldives. A large coral block surrounded by sand at a depth of 19 metres is home to an abundance of cleaner wrasse which attract manta rays looking to rid themselves of parasites.

## Vaavu Atoll

### Miyaru Kandu

In Dhivehi, Miyaru means shark, indicating what to expect at this channel dive location, specifically grey and white-tip reef sharks in large numbers in the middle of the channel around the entrance. The channel opening slopes from 30-35 metres before dropping off into the deep, open ocean on the eastern side of the atoll; leading into the atoll, the channel floor is approximately 25 metres deep and mostly sand, with a small coral garden towards the end. Depending on the direction of the current, we hook in on one of the corners to watch the action before continuing the dive as a drift either into the channel, or along the outside reef.

### Alimathaa

On the southern side of Miyaru Kandu is the resort island of Alimathaa. Here we usually organise a sunset dive on the resort's house reef, close to their jetty, which is well known for its resident nurse sharks. There is no need to search for them, simply hook in, wait (not very long) and watch in awe as they circle around and above the reef and the divers. As if that wasn't exciting enough, you can also expect eagle rays to put in an appearance just to mix things up a bit.

## South Malé Atoll

### Cocoa Corner

Cocoa Corner consists of a gently sloping reef from 5-30 metres on the outer edge of the channel which transitions into a steep wall leading into the atoll. The wall section nearest to the corner features caves and overhangs adorned with soft and hard corals, sea fans and sponges. Inside the channel, there are coral blocks at 20-30 metres where octopuses can often be found. Other regular sightings include turtles, eagle rays, surgeonfish and of course, there are also reef sharks.

### Kandooma Thila

Located inside the channel from Cocoa Corner, this 300-metre long, teardrop-shaped thila boasts prolific fish life and beautiful underwater scenery and is considered by some to be one of the best dive sites in South Malé Atoll. The **reef is subject to strong currents** which carry a lot of nutrients, supporting an abundance of sea life. The site is renowned for its soft coral growth, turtles, diverse fish life and invertebrates on the reef top. Along the reef slope, you may also find black snapper, blue-fin jacks, sharks and eagle rays.

### Guraidhoo Kandu

Guraidhoo Kandu is part of a protected marine area that extends to Lhosfushi Kandu, with Medhu Faru separating the two channels. The area is renowned for sightings of sharks and schools of eagle rays, especially around the channel opening where the reef drops off into



the deep, open ocean. Occasionally, sailfish and hammerheads may also be seen although this is a rare treat rather than a guarantee.

The optimum conditions to dive here are on an incoming current, beginning on the outer reef and going with the flow into the channel. The reef along the inside of the channel features overhangs with plenty of soft coral growth and small fish.

### **Lhosfushi / Medhu Faru**

When the conditions are conducive to doing so, we usually combine Lhosfushi and Medhu Faru in one dive with the nature and direction of the dive dictated by currents, or lack thereof. On an incoming current, we start on the outside reef at Lhosfushi and cross the narrow channel opening, then drift with the current to finish the dive in the channel on the south side of Medhu Faru.

The outside reef at Lhosfushi is a steep slope where reef sharks, turtles, eagle rays and Napoleon wrasse can usually be found as well as a variety of eels, leaf fish, blue triggerfish and big schools of jacks hanging around the corner. Featuring a series of overhangs and blocks adorned with sea fans and soft corals playing host to groups of reef fish, shrimps and eels, Medhu Faru may be one of the most scenic dives in the Maldives.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team [dive@masterliveboards.com](mailto:dive@masterliveboards.com) who will be pleased to assist and advise you.