

Maldives, Central & Southern Atolls

10 nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Malé International Airport* at 12:30 or 16:00
- **Disembarkation:** Gaafu Alifu (Northern Huvadho) Atoll @ 07:30

OR

- **Embarkation:** Gaafu Alifu (Northern Huvadho) Atoll
- **Disembarkation:** Malé International Airport @ 07:30

Please check your booking details for embarkation and disembarkation locations for your departure dates.

Flights & Transfers

- **Domestic Airport:** Kooddoo Island Airport (GKK)

Domestic flights are not included in the liveboard price. There are several flights per day between Malé and Kooddoo.

Transfer from the embarkation location airport to Maldives Master and from the liveboard to the disembarkation location airport is by dhoni.

We can not arrange pick-up and transfers from hotels. Guests staying in a hotel or resort before their liveboard need to arrange transport to be at the embarkation airport in time for transfer to Maldives Master at the time specified in your departure pack.

*Malé Embarkation

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**

Koodoo Embarkation

Our crew will meet you at Kooddoo Airport at one of the times noted below for transfer by dhoni to Maldives Master.

- We have two times for pick-ups from Kooddoo Airport: **12:00 and 17:15 only.**
- For guests landing before or between these times, there is a small cafe* or they can explore the airport island. However, there is *no luggage storage at the airport.*

***PLEASE NOTE:**

- There are card payment facilities at the cafe, but it is not guaranteed to be working. Therefore, it is advisable to have MVR or USD cash available for cafe purchases.
- The cafe ***does not accept US coins or \$1 and \$5 bills***; they only accept USD notes in denominations of 10 Dollars or higher. Change will be given in MVR.

Diving Information

Central & Southern Atolls itineraries are ***not suitable for entry-level divers***, or those who are not comfortable or used to diving in currents

The majority of the dives on this itinerary are in and around ***deep channels with strong, often unpredictable currents and up-swells*** which can be challenging even for experienced divers.

All guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and, due to the nature of the dives, must be capable of diving as part of an independent buddy team without dive guide supervision or intervention.

All divers are required to use a dive computer and carry an SMB and reel on every dive. 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.

Minimum **MANDATORY** dive certification and experience

The following are requirements for all divers wishing to participate in this itinerary:

- PADI **Advanced Open Water** certification, or equivalent
- Minimum of **50 logged dives**.
- **Previous experience diving in currents**
- **Comfortable with drift dives, negative entries and deploying an SMB underwater.**
- **Nitrox certification*** is highly advantageous and **strongly recommended**.

**We offer SSI Nitrox certification onboard for those not already certified.*

Guests who do not fulfil the required minimum certification and number of dives, or 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.

Diving Emergencies

There are no hyperbaric chambers in the southern atolls or doctors who are qualified to deal with a diving incident. The largest and longest operating recompression chamber in the Maldives is on Bandos Island (15 minutes by speedboat from Malé); 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 any of the available chambers 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.*

Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

Water temperatures are fairly consistent at 26°-29°C (78°-84°F) all year, although in some locations covered by this itinerary, they can drop to 24°C (75°F). Most guests are comfortable in a 3mm or 5mm full wetsuit. Guests prone to feeling cold are advised to bring additional thermal layers such as a vest, hood or skinsuit to wear under their wetsuit.

Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions

Fees & Taxes:

Maldives Government Green Tax, currently 12 USD per person, per night, is mandatory and will be added to your bill to be paid on board.

For diving at Tiger Harbour in [Fuvamulah Atoll](#), there is a fee of 30 USD* per diver for each dive, which needs to be paid on board in USD cash only and is subject to change without notice. All USD banknotes *must be in brand-new, unblemished condition*.

***PLEASE NOTE:** If two dives are offered at Tiger Harbour, the fees payable on board will be 60 USD per person for those who want to do both dives.

Please be aware that, due to the distances covered on this itinerary, you can expect some long, overnight cruising between some locations, notably between Laamu and Huvadhoo, and Huvadhoo and Fuvamulah.

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 25

While we endeavour to ensure the number of dives is fulfilled, this is only indicative and not guaranteed. In addition to extended cruising times, various other factors can affect the ability to reach or remain at a specific location and may impact 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 the airport for embarkation, which is followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings and dinner. There is no diving on embarkation day.

Days 2-9: We typically offer *up to 3 dives a day* 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 we can offer a sunset or night dive, the diving schedule will be slightly amended.
PLEASE NOTE: *Night dives are not possible in the southern atolls* due to strong currents and depths in many of the locations. In the Central Atolls, a sunset or night dive might be offered but, the possibility of either is NOT guaranteed.

Day 10: For the last day of diving we usually schedule two dives* before lunch, after which the boat commences its cruise to the disembarkation port.

*The number of dives offered the day before disembarkation is dependent on flight departure times to ensure a minimum of 24 hours between the 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 & Southern Atolls 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. Dive sites we usually visit during the Central & Southern Atolls liveaboard itinerary include, but are not limited to:

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).

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. Depending on the season, mantas can also be seen here visiting the resident cleaner wrasse.

Vaavu Atoll

Fotteyo Kandu

Many scuba divers consider Fotteyo Kandu to be the best dive site in the Maldives. The mouth of the channel is exposed to the ocean and during the northeast monsoon, when the currents are incoming, a good variety of pelagic hunters gather at the entrance to the channel. Species commonly spotted here include grey reef sharks patrolling the channel mouth, jacks and tuna in the deeper water, schools of midnight snappers and red snappers in huge groups. The wall features caves, overhangs and swim-throughs at different depths which are filled with colourful soft corals and massive black coral bushes.

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.

Golden Wall

The dive site earned its name from the abundance of yellow and orange soft corals that cover the 40-metre deep, vertical wall inside the channel. If the current isn't too strong, you can explore the caves and overhangs along the wall, where you will likely find moray eels, small reef fish and nudibranchs. At the corner of the channel mouth, there are usually large congregations of fish. As with most channel dives in the Maldives, you can also expect to see sharks and other pelagics patrolling the blue of the outside reef and corner.

Rakeedhoo Corner

Rakeedhoo is located on the southernmost tip of Vaavu Atoll where we usually dive on and around the western corner of Rakeedhoo Kanduu. Starting at 5 metres, the reef extends outwards in steps to around 30 metres, then drops off almost vertically on the outside reef to the 50+ metre deep ocean floor. We go with the direction of the current along the edge of the channel and around the corner, where there are plenty of interesting features and marine life. There are lots of overhangs and caves to explore with colourful corals and anemones providing shelter for many different types of critters and plenty of fish activity too with groups of bluefin trevally, fusiliers and snappers hanging around the corner area, as well as turtles, sharks and rays.

Meemu Atoll

Gaa Huraa

Also on the northern edge of Meemu Atoll, Gaa Huraa is a deep, narrow channel, which is also known as Vanhuravalhi Kanduu. This is an amazingly colourful dive site with lots of soft corals and a varied abundance of reef fish. With crystal-clear water providing fantastic visibility, it can be likened to diving in an aquarium. Usually, we encounter large numbers of grey reef sharks here, as well as eagle rays and schools of barracuda. If we're really lucky, we might even see pods of spinner dolphins, but even if they are not seen, there is still plenty of other marine life to enjoy.

Muli Corner

Also known as Hakura Express, Muli Kanduu is a wide channel on the eastern side of the atoll. Here we focus our attention on and around the southern corner of the channel which consists of a large underwater plateau. As currents are often very strong, we usually 'hook in' at the corner to watch the action for a while before letting go to ride the current. Along the way, you can expect to see thousands of snappers, groups of sweetlips, surgeonfish, and much, much more.

Kurali Manta Point

On the southern tip of Meemu, Kurali Kanduu is a narrow, mostly sandy, shallow channel. The channel floor, which has a scattering of coral blocks, hides an array of marine life including octopus, morays and garden eels, mantis shrimps and resting sharks and stingrays. Located in the channel entrance is a large block that serves as a manta cleaning station, which is why the dive site is referred to as 'Manta Point'.

Thaa Atoll

Part of the appeal of Thaa Atoll is the lack of resorts meaning that most of the sites are only accessible to divers on a liveaboard. Thaa is well-known for its abundance of aquatic life and variety of fish, sharks, turtles, and rays. The best diving is on the outer reefs and around the channels where you can expect lots of thrills, not just from the ocean currents, but also from the marine life.

Olhugiri Kandufu

This is a great location to witness lots of pelagic action. Large schools of fish attract hunting white-tip reef sharks; with them come tuna, jacks and eagle rays waiting to snatch up some of the leftovers.

The site offers different aquatic terrains and ecosystems, including an outside reef, corner, channel and a sandbank. Garden eels can be found on the sandbank as well as goatfish, shrimps and gobies. As you get deeper the variety of species grows and you will find soldierfish, scorpionfish, lionfish, groupers and sweetlips. Fusiliers, unicornfish, groupers, snappers and red-toothed triggerfish are abundant on the reefs and occasionally large Napoleon wrasse can be seen nibbling on corals.

Dhiffushi Kandufu

Along the northern edge of Thaa Atoll, just west of Olhugiri Kandufu, you can expect more pelagic sightings and lots of reef fish. The nature of the dive is determined by the direction of the current; On an incoming tide, you are likely to see large numbers of sharks making their way through the large, rocky channel mouth at a depth of 20-25 metres. When there is an outgoing current, a bowl-shaped area in the channel is a hive of swirling fish activity.

Dhiyamigili Corner

On the east side of Thaa Atoll, Dhiyamigili Corner offers the potential for Hammerhead shark sightings. Along the outside reef leading to and from the corner large numbers of jacks, snapper, tuna, Napoleon wrasse, reef sharks and stingrays can be seen.

Laamu Atoll

Laamu has an amazing coral reef forming the majority of the circumference of the atoll; where the reef breaks, it allows for channels which offer some exhilarating dives with plenty of pelagic action. Strong currents are to be expected, making many of the dive sites best suited for advanced and experienced divers.

Isdhoo

Isdhoo Island forms the northern tip of Laamu Atoll. The reef surrounding the island on the open ocean side comprises two separate dive sites, namely Isdhoo East and Isdhoo West. Normally, we will dive on the west side, which is a long, continuous wall between 5 metres and 30 metres deep with overhangs at depths of between 15 and 25 metres. Lots of colourful corals adorned the length of the wall with plenty of fish life all around, and pelagics patrolling the blue.

Fushi Kandhu

On the eastern side of the atoll, directly south of Isdhoo, this is one of the most popular channel dives which starts on a shallow seabed at around 10-15 metres and descends to a plateau at 35 metres. The channel is roughly 250 metres long with several pinnacles across its width which attract large schools of reef fish. Nurse sharks and stingrays can often be spotted resting on the sandy bottom, and grey reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks and eagle rays are also regularly found here.

Vadinolhu Kandhu

Along the northwest side of Laamu Atoll, the opening of this relatively narrow channel starts as a 30-metre deep drop-off on the outside reef which is where most of the action takes place, and the majority of the dive is spent. Where the channel enters the atoll, the bottom and sides are roughly 18 metres deep, becoming deeper the further inwards it goes. The strong currents attract an abundance of pelagics including white-tip reef sharks, eagle rays, tuna, trevallies Napoleon wrasse and schools of snappers.

Guraidhoo Kandhu

This narrow channel cutting through the outer reef on the west side of the atoll is a superb dive offering a unique diving opportunity for viewing a wide range of fish life. The dive is dictated by whether the current is outgoing or ingoing but it is possible to observe schooling bannerfish, big schools of fusiliers, rainbow runners, tuna and trevally. Grey reef sharks and a school of eagle rays can also be seen.

Hithadoo Corner

At the bottom of Laamu is Hithadoo Island, which sits on the western corner of the very wide Gaadhoo Kandhu. The dive site is a large plateau extending from the corner of the island into the channel opening. Several big blocks at depths of 16 - 24 metres with a lot of fish activity around them are also known for being cleaning stations visited by mantas throughout the year. However, the highest numbers are usually during the mating seasons from October to November and April to May. Napoleon wrasse, turtles and reef sharks are also seen here along with schools of fusiliers, snappers, soldierfish and surgeonfish.

Huvadhu Atoll

Also known as Gaafu Atoll, Huvadhu is the deepest and second-largest atoll in the Maldives and one of the ten largest in the world. Administratively separated as Northern and Southern Huvadhu (Gaafu Alifu and Gaafu Dhaalu respectively), it consists of a circular-shaped ring of reefs enclosing a vast, deep central lagoon (65 kilometres wide and up to 85 metres in depth) with a small, thumb-like extension at the north.

The outermost reefs of Huvadhu form a discontinuous barrier to the open ocean, made up of 40 reef segments separated from each other by deep channels connecting the open waters of the Indian Ocean with those of the interior lagoon, making for some fantastic diving and marine life sightings.

Crystal clear waters and stunning topography, coupled with diverse and plentiful marine life make this atoll a perfect location to experience some of the very best the Maldives has to offer. Vibrant reefs and walls, caves and tunnels, channels, thilas and outcrops provide a wide variety of dive options from exhilarating drift dives to relaxed reef dives while observing a variety of sharks, rays, barracuda, tuna and turtles, or searching for more elusive macro photo opportunities amongst the colourful corals.

For many people, the kandus (channels) are Huvadhoo's biggest appeal due to the variety of sharks which they attract. Not just white-tip and grey reef sharks that are commonly seen throughout most of the Maldives, but also silver-tips, silkies, nurse and leopard sharks, and even very occasional hammerhead, tiger, bull and oceanic blacktip sightings patrolling the deep blue beyond the outer reefs.

Many of the **channels are susceptible to much stronger currents than other atolls** so when diving these, we usually hook in at the entrance at a depth of 30m to observe the sharks and other marine life. If possible, we end the dives along the wall inside the channel where we can often find big hawksbill and green turtles, nurse sharks and marbled rays.

Following are just a few of the channels that we often dive when we are in Huvadhoo:

- **Villingili Kandu**
- **Nilandhoo Kandu**
- **Kooddoo Kandu**
- **Mareeha Kandu**

Fuvamulah Atoll

We cross from Huvadhoo to Fuvamulah in the early hours of the morning, departing around 01:30 and returning to Huvadhoo in the late afternoon.

This solitary island atoll, also commonly called Fomulac or Foammulah Atoll, lies within the Equatorial Channel between Huvadhoo Atoll and Addu Atoll, the Maldives' southernmost atoll. Unlike other atolls, there are no thilas, giris or kandus; It consists of a continuous, low-lying coral formation that spans 4.5 km in length, is 1.2 km wide and extends deep to the ocean floor. Designated as a [UNESCO Biosphere Reserve](#), Fuvamulah boasts the most diverse coral ecosystems in the country, and also has the reputation of being 'the most beautiful island in the Maldives'.

Its location and underwater topography make Fuvamulah and the surrounding waters home to a rare combination of pelagic marine life. Pristine, colourful hard corals entirely cover the top reef and the walls that drop off to the well beyond recreational diving depth limits. But, what sets this unique Maldivian atoll apart from others are its resident tiger sharks, as well as frequent sightings of black oceanic mantas, whale sharks, thresher sharks, silver tip and white tip sharks and even scalloped hammerheads, resulting in it also being known as Maldives Shark Island.

Tiger Harbour

Undoubtedly one of the highlights of diving at Fuvamulah is Tiger Harbour (previously called Tiger Zoo), so called for its large number of ever-present tiger sharks.

The diving at Tiger Harbour is stationary and led by an experienced guide from a local dive centre. Before the dive, a detailed safety briefing will be given by the guide outlining shark behaviour, group conduct, and emergency procedures. The shark encounters are very close and there can be up to 10 tiger sharks swimming around, making this an exhilarating, must-do dive for adventurous thrill seekers.

The dive centre charges **a fee of 30 USD per diver** for each dive, which is subject to change without notice and needs **to be paid on board, in USD cash only**. All USD banknotes **MUST** be in PRISTINE CONDITION, otherwise they can not be accepted.

North Side

There are several potential dive locations around the northern tip of the island which features an abundance of healthy corals and reef fish. The reef top starts at around 6 metres and slopes down and outwards to 30 metres. Large coral blocks at 20-30 metres are gathering points for groups of triggerfish, snappers, groupers, trevallies, surgeonfish and reef sharks. When the conditions are right, there is also the possibility of spotting thresher sharks.

South plateau

The plateau located on the southern side of the island is at a depth of 35 metres to over 60 metres. Here we do a 'Bluewater dive' above the plateau to observe the pelagic actions. Depending on the season and currents, it is possible to see up to 7 different types of sharks going about their sharky business. While white-tips, silver-tips and grey reef sharks are regular sightings, others that are seen here include tiger sharks, threshers, and scalloped hammerheads. Also depending on the time of year, and if you're really lucky, Mola Mola or whale sharks might even put in an appearance.

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