

The Maldives, Far South

7 or 10 nights

- **Embarkation:** Gaafu Alifu (Northern Huvadho) Atoll*
- **Disembarkation:** Gaafu Alifu (Northern Huvadho) Atoll @ 08:00

*Embarkation times are dependent on domestic flight schedules.

Flights & Transfers

- **Domestic Arrival & Departure Airport:** Kooddoo Airport (GKK)

Domestic flights to and from Kooddoo are not included in the liveaboard price. There are several flights per day between Malé and Kooddoo. Our crew will meet you at Kooddoo Airport at one of the times noted below for transfer by dhoni to Blue Voyager.

We can not arrange pick-up and transfers from hotels. Guests who are staying in a resort in Huvadho before their liveaboard need to arrange transport to be at the airport in time for transfer to Blue Voyager at the time specified in your departure pack.

- We have two times for **pick-ups from Kooddoo Airport: 12:00 and 17:15 only.**
- For guests landing before or between the pick-up 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

Far South liveaboard itineraries are ***NOT suitable for entry-level divers***, or those who are not comfortable or used to diving in currents.

Diving in the southernmost atolls of the Maldives can be *challenging even for experienced divers*; the majority of dives are in and around deep channels with ***depths ranging from 25-30 metres and strong, often unpredictable currents and up-swells.***

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

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 have insufficient experience or fitness for the diving conditions, may be denied participation in some or all dives.

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

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 ADK Hospital in Malé, Kuredu Island Resort (Lhaviyani Atoll), Kuramathi Resort (North Ari Atoll) and Kandima Maldives Resort (Dhaalu Atoll) which is the closest to Huvadho.

IMPORTANT: Transfer from southern atolls 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 who are 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 liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions

Fees & Taxes:

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

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. On 10-night itineraries we will visit Tiger Harbour twice, meaning fees payable on board will be 60 USD per person for those who want to do both dives.

Please be aware that this itinerary involves long periods of overnight cruising between atolls. 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. Likewise when we travel between Fuvamulah and Addu Atoll, on 10-night itineraries.

Number of scheduled dives:

- 7 nights: Up to 17
- 10 nights: Up to 25

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

All safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or fully understand English, please contact us.

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

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

Days 2-6 / Days 2-9: We typically offer a maximum of **3 dives a day (no night dives)** on full diving days, scheduled as follows unless travelling distances or other circumstances dictate otherwise:

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

Day 7 / 10: For your last day of diving we usually organise **2 morning dives** (depending on domestic flight departure times) before the boat heads back to port after lunch. The dives are scheduled to ensure a minimum of 24 hours between the final dive and the flight to Malé.

Disembarkation Day: Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation and transfer to the domestic airport no later than 08:00.

While we wish to show you the best diving possible, various factors can determine which sites we visit. Weather, tides and currents are some of the considerations which influence the Cruise Director's and Captain's decision of which sites are selected for diving. The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at other locations should we be unable to visit any of the sites listed below:

Huvadhoo Atoll

Also known as Gaafu Atoll, Huvadhoo 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 Huvadhoo (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 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 the interior lagoon, making for some fantastic diving and marine life sightings.

Stunning topography, coupled with diverse and plentiful marine life make Huvadhoo a perfect location to experience some of the very best of what the Maldives has to offer. Vibrant reefs and walls, caves and tunnels, channels, thilas and outcrops provide a wide variety of dive options although, for many people, the kandus (channels) are the biggest appeal due to the quantity and variety of sharks that they attract. Not just white-tip and grey reef sharks which 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 blacktips patrolling the deep blue beyond the outer reefs.

Many of the **channels we dive are susceptible to strong currents** so we usually hook in at the channel entrance to observe the sharks and other marine life then drift with the current along the inside or outside wall. Following are some of the areas we usually dive when in Huvadhoo which may be dived more than once. Their inclusion is not guaranteed or necessarily in the sequence indicated below.

Kooddoo - Turtle Point

Our first dive in Huvadhoo is usually inside the atoll, not far from Kooddoo Airport which is a perfect location for the compulsory check-dive. This is an easy reef dive which, as the name implies, is known for encounters with Hawksbill and Green Sea Turtles. There are also plenty of colourful reef fish schooling around the corals, including large groups of oriental sweetlips and snappers and even the possibility of encountering spinner sharks.

Villingili Kandu

This is a very popular, and famous long channel situated between Kooddoo and Villingili Islands where strong currents are to be expected. The direction of the current determines where the dive starts and ends but, regardless of the orientation, there is always a big chance of encounters with large numbers of grey reef sharks, silver tips and turtles.

Kuredhdhoo Kandu - Coral Wall/Garden

The channel wall at Kuredhdhoo is covered with healthy hard corals interspersed with soft corals. Most of the dive is a relatively relaxed drift during which there is the possibility of seeing reef sharks, eagle rays and leopard sharks.

Nilhandhoo Kandu

Another popular channel dive where sharks and other pelagics can be observed around the outside opening. This is not a dive for the faint-hearted as currents are usually very strong, making for a fast-paced drift. As you fly through the channel you can expect to see lots of hard corals, reef sharks, barracuda, turtles, tuna and enormous schools of trevallies.

Maarehaa Kandu

Roughly halfway down the eastern side of the atoll, Maarehaa is a marine protected area where fishing is banned so marine life is abundant. We usually start the dive at the channel mouth where we hang out on the corner to observe the pelagic action before drifting into the channel. Here we continue along a beautiful seascape featuring shallow, sandy areas and clusters of hard corals. Turtles and eagle rays, as well as reef sharks, are just some of the delights that make this site worth diving more than once.

Mafzoo Thila

In the southern part of Huvadhoo, Mafzoo Thila is a submerged pinnacle located just inside the atoll. There is usually very little or no current so this is an opportunity for a relaxed, easy-paced dive where you can take time to look among the hard and soft corals for a variety of macro critters. A big Gorgonian sea fan garden at the deeper end of the thila is an added attraction, along with the array of colourful reef fish that swarm corals.

Gemanafushi Blue

Here we do a drift dive in the blue, away from Gemanafushi Island's outside reef. The area is well-known for scalloped hammerhead shark sightings so, we simply hang out in the blue water and hope that they will put in an appearance for us. Of course, there are never any guarantees but, there is also the possibility of seeing a whale shark, silver-tips or even silky sharks. *Divers must be competent and comfortable with diving in blue water with no visual reference other than their dive computer and gauges.*

Funadhoo Kanduu

This wide channel features a series of ridges along the inside southern wall which are covered with beautiful coral formations. As always, the start and end points of the dive are determined by the direction that the current is flowing and you can expect to see eagle rays, turtles and a variety of sharks as well as Napoleon wrasse, tuna, barracuda, trevallies and large schools of fusiliers.

Vodamulaa Kanduu

Another wide channel, one side of which forms the southeastern perimeter reef of Vodamulaa Island. The sandy bottom of the channel is around 28-30 metres deep and is often full of grey, white-tip and silver-tip reef sharks. Currents can be very strong so care needs to be taken around the channel opening to avoid being swept across the channel or away from the outer reef. Along the inside wall, we usually find turtles grazing among the corals and eagle rays flying along the shallower sections.

Kooddoo Kanduu

At the southern end of Kooddoo Island, the channel features coral blocks along the inside wall and spread across the sandy floor at a depth of 25 metres although currents usually mean the diving is concentrated around the corner area and inside wall. You can expect lots of sharky action around the channel mouth as well as turtles, eagle rays and a variety of reef fish.

Kooddoo - Shark Point

Located in front of Kooddoo Harbour, the dive site name is a giveaway of what to expect here. Spinner and grey reef sharks are common sightings and occasionally we even see bull sharks and guitar sharks.

Fuvamulah Atoll

This solitary island atoll, also commonly called Fomulac or Foammulah Atoll, lies within the Equatorial Channel between Huvadhoo Atoll to the north and Addu Atoll to the south. 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 towards the ocean floor.

Designated as a [UNESCO Biosphere Reserve](#), Fuvahmulah 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 Fuvahmulah 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 the limits of recreational diving. But, what sets this unique Maldivian atoll apart from others are its resident tiger sharks, as well as sightings of 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 Fuvahmulah is Tiger Harbour (previously called Tiger Zoo), so called for its large number of ever-present tiger sharks.

PLEASE NOTE: The local dive centre charges a **fee of 30 USD per diver** which needs to be **paid on board, in USD cash only**, and is subject to change without notice. The **fee is per dive** so, where more than one dive is offered at Tiger Harbour, the fee is payable multiple times for divers who wish to participate.

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

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 depths of 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@masterliveaboards.com who will be pleased to advise you.

10-night itineraries only

Addu Atoll

Just south of the Equator, Addu Atoll, previously known as Seenu, is the southernmost region of the Maldives Archipelago. This heart-shaped atoll is designated as a [UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Addu Atoll](#) and one of the few places in the Maldives where manta rays can be found throughout the year. Several shark species, hawksbill turtles, green turtles, Napoleon wrasse and large schools of fish also call the channels and reefs of this atoll home.

Addu is also the resting place of the largest shipwreck in the Maldives - the [British Loyalty](#) - a 140 metres long, 5,583 tonnes oil tanker that was scuttled in 1946, when the British Navy who were stationed on Gan Island withdrew from the Maldives.

We will usually only spend one day in Addu before returning to Huvadhoo via Fuvanulah. The sites we select for diving in Addu will be determined by currents, sea conditions, and marine life activity.

Maa Kanduu

Maa Kanduu is a wide channel which cuts through the middle of the northern perimeter of Addu Atoll. **Also known as Manta Point**, the corner on the eastern side of the channel is regularly visited by manta rays on an incoming current. The reef top on the outside starts at 5 metres and forms a sandy slope into the channel levelling out at around 25 metres. Coral blocks along the slope between 20 and 30 metres are where the cleaning activities mostly occur; as currents bring the mantas in, we simply hook in and watch the display as the graceful rays soar and swoop above and around the reef.

Bushy West

Located on the corner of Kuda Kanduu, to the west of Maa Kanduu, Bushy West offers a great drift dive over dense coral gardens where Napoleon wrasse and turtles are common sightings. Nurse sharks can often be found sheltering among the large coral heads along the slope which reaches down to 22 metres, then drops off steeply to 30+ metres. The corner of the channel mouth is where groups of sharks and eagle rays are usually spotted.

Meedhoo - Shark Point

Meedho Island is located on the northeastern corner of the atoll. The outside reef on the northern side features a long, deep wall leading to a narrow channel where a variety of sharks can usually be seen patrolling the waters. A sandy plateau at 30 metres is often frequented by large numbers of white-tip and grey sharks, earning it the name 'shark hotel'. Beyond the plateau's edge, the wall drops off to more than 60 metres where, if the visibility is clear enough, larger sharks may be spotted in the depths below.

British Loyalty Wreck

Lying with its port side on the sandy seabed inside the atoll at a depth of 33 metres, the starboard side of the wreck is at 16 metres and, with good visibility, can be seen from the surface. The wreck is remarkably intact and has a lot of coral growth with plenty of marine life, mostly consisting of large groups of reef fish, although turtles and sharks can also sometimes be seen. Holes in front of the engine room on the keel and the deck, which were probably caused when the vessel was scuttled, are large enough for divers to swim through from one side to the other.