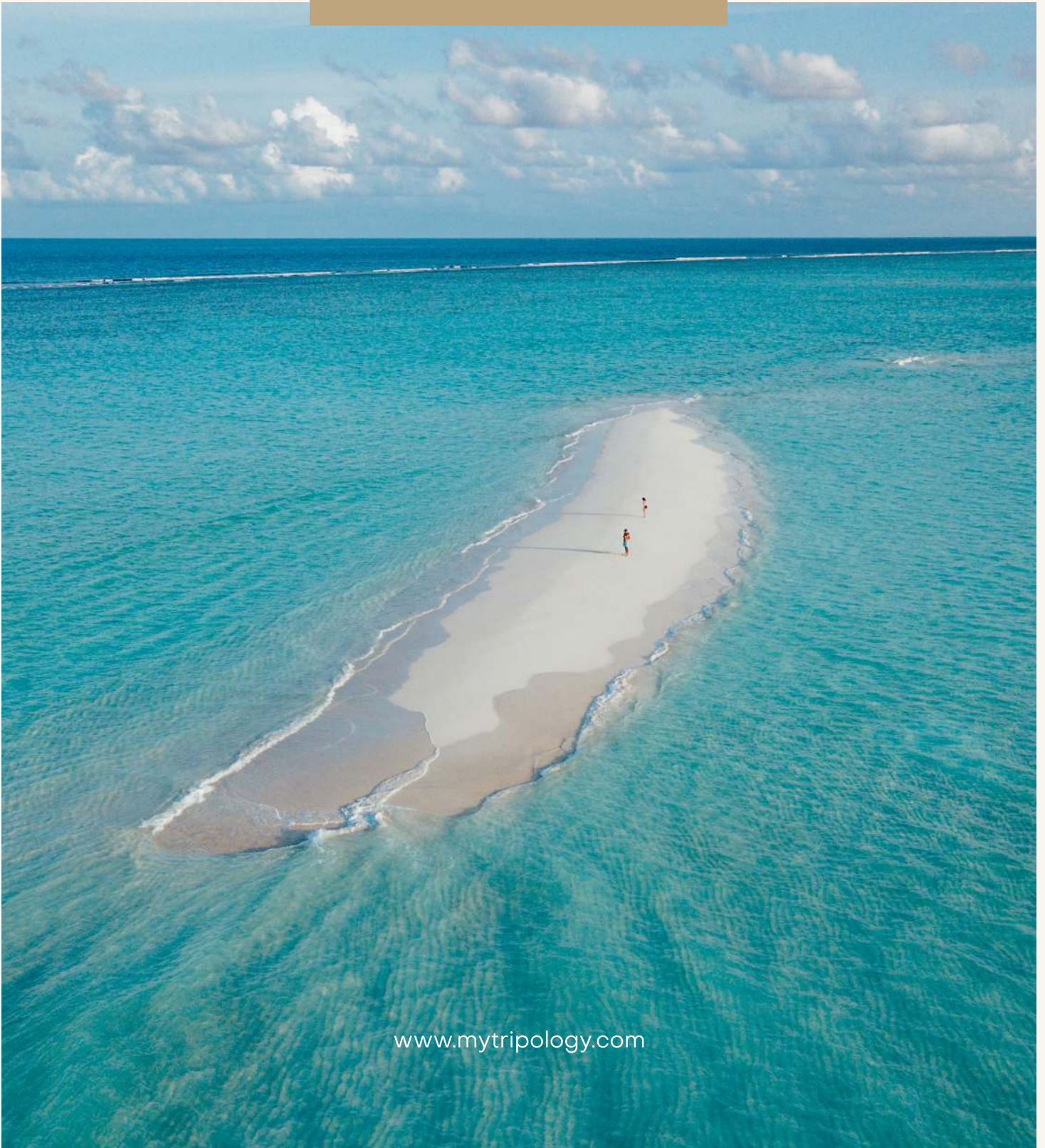


# MALDIVES

Traveler's Handbook





01

An aerial photograph of a small motorboat moving through clear, turquoise water. The boat is positioned in the center of the frame, leaving a white wake behind it. Several people are visible on the boat. The water's color transitions from a deep teal to a lighter, almost white foam near the boat's wake.

# About Maldives

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The **Maldives** is located in the Indian subcontinent of Asia, situated in the Indian Ocean. It consists of 1,190 coral islands grouped in a double chain of twenty-seven atolls. Each island is surrounded by a lagoon of crystal clear shallow water with an abundance of tropical fish, marine life, and iconic overwater bungalows. Roughly 200 of these islands are inhabited, and nearly 100 have been developed as luxury tourist resorts. The Maldives is an ideal holiday destination for all water-lovers.

The capital city is Male, the commercial and economic center of the Maldives. The primary investments are here, and most of the profit is generated here. Male has the main harbor and port of the country, which makes the city the epicenter of trading.



## Time Zone

Maldives standard time is UTC +5.

## Language

The official language is Dhivehi, an Indo-Aryan language derived from the Sinhalese language of Sri Lanka. English is the second most popular language in the Maldives, widely used in education, commerce, and tourism. Maldivians also speak and understand French, German, Russian, Italian, and Chinese and are usually used at the resorts.

## Weather/Temperature

The Maldives has a tropical monsoon climate and two seasons: the rainy season from May to November and the dry one from November to April. The latter is considered a more favorable climate for a trip to the Maldives since it is not so stuffy. Besides, from January to April, azure water reaches its peak of transparency, and the bright underwater world of the Indian Ocean is visible in full.

## Culture

Historically, the Maldives was an important crossroad in the Indian Ocean; hence Maldivian culture is a melting pot of various influences gathered from visitors who set foot there over the centuries. Effects of India, Sri Lanka, Arabia, Persia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Africa are evident in the unique culture of the Maldives. Maldivians are incredibly warm, welcoming, and friendly people who will go above and beyond to make your holiday truly unforgettable.

Islam is the official and only allowed religion in the Maldives. To be a citizen or own land, one must be a Sunni Muslim. Religion is an integral part of life here, and the culture of the Maldives itself is based on Islamic Sharia law.

Some of the etiquette practices in the Maldives are :

- Shake hands with men when you meet them. Local women do not generally shake hands.
- Eat with your right hand only when dining on an inhabited island. The left hand is considered unclean. While you can use it to cut food, you should not use it to move food to the mouth.
- Remember how conservative the islands are outside resorts. Men should not walk bare-chested, and women should wear long skirts and avoid low-cut tops.
- Non-muslims are generally not allowed to enter mosques anywhere in the Maldives, except by specific invite.



## Public Transportation

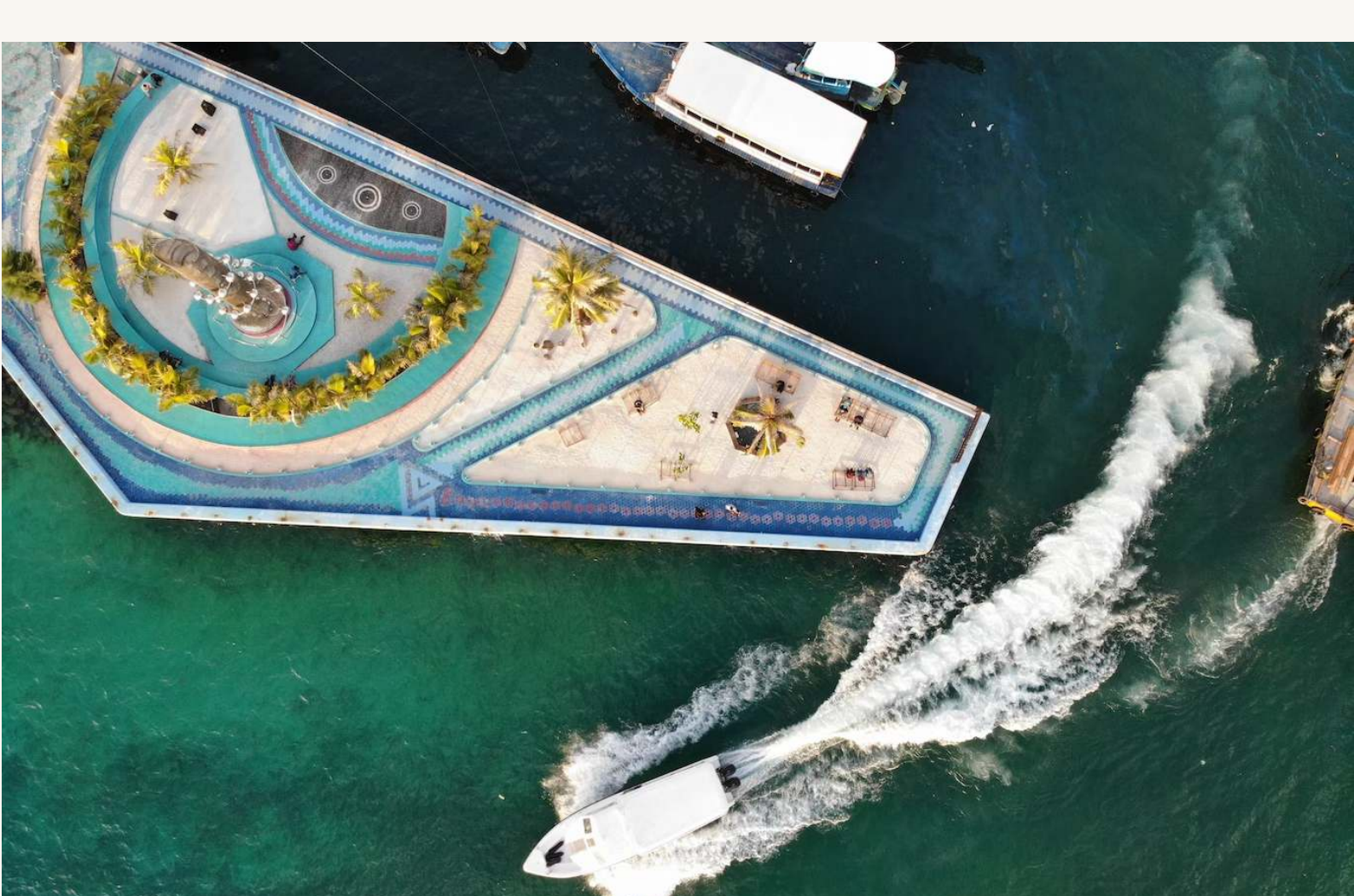
The most convenient and cheapest way to explore an island in the Maldives is by walking or renting a bike available at many resorts in the Maldives. All the islands of Maldives, be it private resort islands or public, are small and manageable enough to be covered by foot.

Like Male and Addu, big cities have an efficient taxi service and charge around MVR 20. If you have luggage, they will charge an extra MVR 10. Since the place is small, a shared taxi is common, so don't get concerned if a cab that already has passengers stops by to pick you up. Bus service in the Maldives is cheaper but limited to specific routes only. The fare starts from MVR 3. The bus schedule is every half an hour, though it's a rough estimate time depending on the traffic density. Buses usually get crowded during rainy seasons, and it's better to avoid boarding the bus if you have a lot of luggage.

# Public Transportation

Ferries are the cheapest option with fares between MVR 30 – 60 for over five hours long journey to move between islands. Also, note that the ferry does not stop at the resort islands and does not operate on Fridays. You can book either speedboat transportation independently or ask your resort to do it. Fares are quite expensive depending upon the resort and distance to be covered. Or one of the oldest known sea vessels of the Maldives, called Dhoni, will make your island-hopping experience way more exciting. You can find many Dhonis waiting in the harbor, and the fares are around MVR 1,000 – MVR 1,500 a day.

Seaplanes are the best option when you're in a hurry, as they can drop you to the most far-flung resorts from Male or vice versa in 90 minutes at max. And you will also get great views of those untouched, uninhabited islands.



## Local Currency

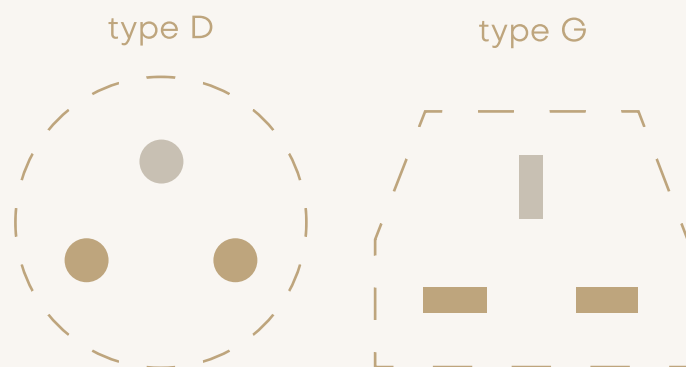
The local currency is Rufiyaa. The current exchange rate is approximately MVR 1 = USD 0,065, and usually, US Dollars can also be used in the capital city. You can exchange foreign currency at banks, tourist resort islands, hotels, and leading shops. ATMs are at the airport, and in Male, ATM access on the islands is much more limited and sometimes non-existent. And visitors should be aware that there are restrictions on changing Rufiyaa into foreign currency, so you should withdraw a small amount at a time. If you take out Rufiyaa, you will not exchange it back to US dollars or any other currency.

Most international credit card networks are acceptable at most significant islands in the Maldives. The most commonly used credit cards in the Maldives are American Express (Amex), Visa, Master Card, Diners Club, JCB, and Euro Card. There will be instances where stores may not display the symbols of the cards they accept, be sure to check with the salesperson in the store before using your card if your card is acceptable or not. Traveler's Check (T/C) is not widely accepted anymore in the Maldives.



# Electricity

For the Maldives, there are two associated plug types: D and G. Plug D is the plug that has three large round pins in a triangular configuration, and plug type G is the plug that has three rectangular blades in a triangular pattern and has an incorporated fuse. They operate on a 230 V supply voltage and 50hz, and we recommend you bring along a travel adapter.



# Value Added Tax (VAT)

To qualify to request a VAT refund in the Maldives, you must make qualifying purchases :

- Make Tax-Free Qualifying Purchases

When you make a qualifying purchase in the Maldives, you will receive a Tax-Free Form from the vendor that records the purchases you made and the amount you paid. You will receive a separate Tax-Free Form for each purchase.

- Validate Your Tax-Free Forms

Your Tax-Free Forms must be export validated to be accepted for a tax refund. Validation confirms that the products have been exported from the Maldives and will often be done in the airport as you leave the country. You may be required to show your foreign passport, a plane ticket, or other proof that you are buying VAT-free goods exported to a qualifying country.

- Receive Your VAT Tax Refund

Once you have validated your Tax-Free Forms, you're ready to receive your VAT refund. If you used a refund processing company, you would be able to receive your refund by submitting the validated forms to a company refund desk at the airport or via mail (most companies make pre-paid envelopes available for this purpose). If you didn't use a processing company, follow the instructions on your tax-free form to receive your refund.

In the Maldives, export validation for VAT-free purchases is not carried out by customs but may be managed by the Maldives Tax department or private companies.

Note that processing companies will collect a percentage of your VAT refund as a fee. The Maldives do not require you to save the original purchase receipt, so the Tax-Free Form is sufficient to apply for a VAT refund.

# Basic 'Good to Know' Words

**Hello** | Assalaamu alaikum

**Use this when you want to say hello to a person.**

**Good morning / evening**

Baajjaveri hendhuneh / Baajjaveri reygande

**Use this when you want to greet a person.**

**Excuse me** | Ma-aaf kurey.

**Use this to say excuse me for attention.**

**Thank you** | Shukuriyaa

**Use this to thank someone.**

**Sorry** | Ma-aafu kurey

**Use this to apologize.**

**Yes/No** | Aan / Noon

**Use this when you like or dislike or agree and disagree.**

02



# Travel Requirements

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## VISA Information

Your responsibility is to ensure that you have the correct documentation for your holiday and onward travel. mytripology cannot accept responsibility for anyone who is refused entry to the country because of a lack the proper documentation. We encourage you to check the latest information with the nearest Maldives embassy in your country.

## Vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) highly recommend the COVID-19, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, typhoid, and Rabies vaccine and encourage all travelers to be current on routine immunizations. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged nine months or over arriving from countries with a risk of yellow fever transmission and travelers having transited for more than 12 hours through an airport of a country with a chance of yellow fever transmission. Don't hesitate to get in touch with your physician for detailed information.

## Insurance

Travel insurance for the Maldives is not mandatory. However, we recommend getting travel insurance to prevent any inconvenience during your trip. Travel insurance costs depend primarily on the type of plan and coverages offered. The COVID-19 insurance may be provided by an international insurance provider or by Maldives-based insurance providers.

03

# Travel Tips

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## Travel SIM Cards

There are some SIM cards to choose from, but we suggest buying **Dhiraagu** because it has better coverage in the Maldives, though you have to check first on remote islands. You can purchase it at the airport once you arrive. Prepaid SIM Card commonly available with a package of data based on your needs. Please note that you must show your passport to buy SIM Card in the Maldives.

## What to wear

As the sun shines year-round and in high temperatures, you can wear lightweight clothes, bikinis, and your favorite summer dresses and clothes. While bathing suits and summer clothing are tolerated on the major resort islands, you need to cover up if you're staying at a local-owned guesthouse or resort. The Maldives is a Muslim country, so you should wear conservative clothing when visiting the Male where the locals live during your trip.

## What to bring

- **Universal charger / Travel adapter**
- **Water bottle**
- **Sun protection** (during summer)
- **Insect repellent** (during summer)
- **First-aid kit**
- **International driver's** (only if you're driving)
- **Zip-lock bags/reusable bags**
- **A Key/combination lock**







## What to Eat and Drink

Cuisine in the Maldives is a fusion of neighboring countries like Sri Lanka and India. It relies heavily on the region's available ingredients, which means seafood, coconut, and starched features prominently in many dishes. Here is a list of our top 10 best Maldives dishes that you have to try:



### Garudhiya

A traditional Maldivian fish soup spiked with spices and citrus. Fresh tuna is the primary component, providing that all-important umami flavor to the soup. It is usually served with lime, rice, chili, and onions.



### Mas Huni

A must-try typical Maldivian breakfast made from shredded smoked tuna, served with grated coconuts, lemon and onions. It is usually eaten with chapati bread called roshi.



### **Masroshi**

A traditional Maldivian snack consisting of stuffed and fried dough. The filling usually includes smoked tuna, grated coconut, hot peppers, onions, garlic, ginger, minced curry leaves, and lime.



### **Boshi Mashuni**

The most unique and flavorful salad in the Maldives with a crunchy and savory taste. A combination of crunchy shredded banana flowers with sweet and fresh coconut. It also includes some spices with lime juice, and then Maldivian chilies are added to give a unique taste.



### **Bis Keemiya**

A delicious pastry similar to spring rolls and samosa. A pastry filled with tuna/hard-boiled egg, sliced onions, and gently sauteed, shredded cabbage.



### **Saagu Bondibai**

A pudding made of sago, warmed with coconut milk, and laced with condensed milk.



### **Kulhi Boakibaa**

A fish cake made of smoked tuna, scraped coconut, onions, and ground rice. This goes very well with sweet tea because the cake has a savory taste, and the tea is sweet.



### **Fihunu Mas**

A Maldivian grilled fish that is basted with chili.



### **Aluvi Boakibaa**

A sweet cassava and coconut cake that melts in the mouth.



### **Fish Curry**

A creamy, flavored, and spicy curry usually served with rice, roshi, papadhu, and Maldivian poppadoms.



## Shopping Guidelines

The Maldives is not known for its shopping opportunities. Being an island nation in the middle of the Indian Ocean, there are obvious limitations to its sellable merchandise. Furthermore, since several everyday commodities are imports, they tend to be more expensive here. Although the Maldives does not have many large or luxurious malls, you still can find a few world-famous brands in Male and at the resorts.

If you want to practice your bargain skills, you can go to the local souvenir shop in Male and buy the local handmade souvenirs. The ideal way to help Maldives economy is to buy products from artisans directly. Some resorts offer tours to nearby workshops where you can watch local artists make beautiful paintings, wooden goods, and lacquered items.

While most resort islands accept some significant currencies, including US dollars, not all local islands do, so make sure you have some Maldivian Rufiyaa on you when visiting the local islands.

Shops across the Maldives open till late. However, shopkeepers close for 15 to 30 minutes multiple times a day for prayers. So, if you find a particular shop closed during the day, wait around, and the shopkeeper will come back soon.

## Safety Tips

- Crime rates are meager in the Maldives, and there is very little reason to feel unsafe while you travel here. Unlike other destinations, most visitors generally stay in the resorts spread across various islands, connected only by water. However, we recommend a few precautions to keep you safe on your travels:
- Be aware of your safety and security at all times.
- Keep your valuables out of sight, close to you, and zipped up.
- Never accept any item from a stranger.
- Never leave any personal belongings unattended in public places.
- Never go swimming unattended, especially avoid the water when the red flag is hoisted on the beach. It would help if you always took local advice before entering the sea.



04

# F.A.Q

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# F.A.Q

## **How much standard Baggage Allowance/Excess Baggage policy?**

The standard baggage allowance for a Domestic flight is 25 Kg. If you take a Seaplane for transfer to the resort, the average permissible weight is 25 Kg, including 20 Kg of checked-in luggage and 5 Kg of hand luggage per person. For Private speed boats and Ferry, the ship is a free luggage allowance. If your journey involves multiple airline partners, please know that baggage rules may vary. Please get in touch with your airline for further details. You may purchase at the airport ticket desk and charge based on airline regulations for any excess baggage.

## **Drugs Policy**

Drug enforcement in the Maldives is strict and severe, including mandatory prison time for anyone caught with drugs. Possessing even minor amounts can be considered trafficking, which comes with a life sentence penalty.

## **Can I bring my e-cigarettes and vape liquid?**

E-cigarette or vaping (only for nicotine-containing cartridges) is permitted wherever smoking is allowed in the Maldives. It is prohibited for people under 18 years old.

## **Are there temporary baggage storage services?**

There are public luggage storage services at Male airport—the cost of storing one suitcase or bag is approximately MVR 5 – MVR 75 per 24 hours.

# F.A.Q

## **Tipping/Gratuities**

Tipping in the Maldives is not mandatory, but if you decide to do so, it is a nice gesture that you appreciate the service provided. At All-Inclusive Resorts, room staff's standard tipping is at USD 2 per day. However, service charges are already added for any additional items you buy in the resort. Also, many hotels and resorts in the Maldives have "unseen" staff members who work behind the scenes, possibly cooking your meal or arranging romantic dinners or excursions. It is recommended to tip USD 10 – 20 a week. At restaurants/cafes, a 10% service charge is usually added, but if you'd like to thank your waiter, leaving cash is a good idea. For spas/salons, if you feel the service is extraordinary, leaving a cash tip of USD 5 – USD 10 is an adequate and comely expression of gratitude. The standard tipping for a tour guide (if you're traveling on local islands with a guide), a good tipping suggestion, is USD 10 per day. You can adjust this depending on the level of service. A helpful tip, be sure to give any tips to the staff personally and be aware US Dollars are the most widely accepted currency, and many people would actively prefer to receive tips in USD.