



MASTER
LIVEBOARDS

Maldives, Central Atolls

7 / 10 nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Malé Airport at 12:30* and 16:00*
- **Disembarkation:** Hulhumalé Harbour, Malé @ 08:00

Our meeting point for embarkation in Malé is outside Burger King in the airport terminal.

*We provide two embarkation transfers at set times; The earliest transfer is at 12:30, with a second transfer at 16:00. At these two times only, the dhoni will dock at the pier in front of the airport and transfer guests directly to the boat.

Please refer to the [Central Atolls Trip Information](#) document for further details relating to embarkation and disembarkation arrangements and transfers.

Marine & Port Fees:

There are no marine park or port fees in the Maldives. However, there is a Government Green Tax, which is 6 USD per person, per night and must be paid in advance as part of your liveaboard booking.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers joining a Central Atolls liveboards itinerary are required to have PADI **Open Water certification**, or equivalent, with a **minimum of 30 logged dives** and ideally should also have experience diving in currents.

Please be aware that currents around some of the dive sites that may be included on this itinerary can be very strong and sometimes unpredictable, making them challenging or unsuitable for novice or inexperienced divers.

We strongly recommend that you have previous experience and are comfortable with drift dives, negative entries and deploying an SMB.

Guests who the crew feel have insufficient experience or skills to dive in certain 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.

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

Itinerary Details

The Central Atolls scuba diving itinerary takes you to some of the best dive sites around the central Maldives atolls. While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, a number of factors determine which locations we visit on each trip.

During your liveboard cruise, you will have the opportunity to dive a variety of locations around North and South Malé, North and South Ari, Rasdhoo and Vaavu Atolls. Dive sites that we visit can change from one trip to the next depending on itinerary duration, environmental conditions and other factors.

Number of scheduled dives:

- **7 nights:** Up to 17
- **10 nights:** Up to 26

Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, this is only indicative, and not guaranteed. Many factors can hinder the vessel's ability to reach, or remain at a specific area and may therefore 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 understand English, please contact us.

Please note: this itinerary will involve diving in currents, some of which can be very strong.

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

Day 1: Meet our crew at Malé Airport at 12:30 or 16:00 for embarkation. Once all guests are on board, the crew will conduct boat orientation and safety briefings followed by dinner. There is no diving on embarkation day.

Full diving days: We typically offer 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 & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 3*
- Snack, relaxation period
- Dinner

* if we offer a sunset or night dive, the schedule will be slightly amended

Guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and for ensuring they have suitable dive insurance to cover all diving activities.

Day before disembarkation: 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 times to ensure a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and flying.

Disembarkation Day: Breakfast on board, followed by disembarkation and transfer to the airport at 08:00.

The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit sites that are listed below.

Season, weather, tides and currents are just some of the considerations which determine the Cruise Director's and Captain's decision of which route the boat takes and which areas are selected for diving. Some of the dive sites we visit during the Maldives Central Atolls liveaboard itinerary include, but are not limited to:

North Malé Atoll

H.P. Reef

Also known as Rainbow Reef, this is a marine protected area and a truly exceptional dive site with an abundance of soft corals and interesting features. Along the southwest section of the thila, there are numerous coral outcrops, caves and crevices; On the northwest side, a large rock formation is separated from the reef by a narrow, sandy channel. Starting from 15 metres, the side of the rock drops steeply to a depth of 24 metres where there is a large cave featuring a chimney swimthrough back up to the top of the rock.

As the thila is located in the middle of a channel, currents are to be expected and are often strong. Marine life includes sharks, eagle rays, stingrays as well as large schools of pelagic and reef fish.

Lankan Manta Point

Starting at a depth of around 7 metres, a number 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.

Lankan Caves

Roughly 200 metres from Manta Point, on the southern tip of Lankanfinolhu Reef, a series of caves and overhangs ranging in depth from 5 metres down to 30 metres along a steep wall provide a lot of interesting nooks and crannies to investigate. Large table corals cover the top of the reef where schools of damselfish and sweetlips gather. Sharks, turtles, stingrays and Napoleon wrasse are just a few of the other creatures that often frequent the area.

Rasfari North Corner

At Rasfari on the western side of North Malé Atoll, we dive along the outside reef and around the corner into the channel. Depths range from 8 to 30 metres with overhangs, coral blocks and white sandy patches adding to the points of interest. In the blue and along the reef we often see white-tip, black-tip and grey reef sharks, barracuda, rays and large numbers of sweetlips. Turtles and Napoleon wrasse are also common sightings.

South Malé Atoll

Dhigu Thila

Located in a channel on the eastern side of the atoll, the reef top is between 10-12 metres deep with walls on the south and north sides reaching down to a sandy bottom at around 25 metres. An abundance of seafans, soft corals and hard corals as well as the flow of nutrients through the channel support a prolific amount of marine life. Large schools of basslets and snappers can be seen on the reef top, while groups of bannerfish and

sweetlips hang out along the walls. The wall on the southern side is dotted with caves and overhangs between 15-20 metres which are worth investigating, and a variety of sharks including grey reef sharks, white-tips and nurse sharks are often seen here, as well as barracuda, tuna, jacks, eagle rays and Napoleon wrasse.

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 near the corner features many caves and overhangs which are adorned with a variety of soft and hard corals, sea fans and sponges. Further along, inside the channel itself, you will find some coral blocks at a depth of 20-30 metres where octopuses can often be found. Other regular sightings here include turtles, eagle rays, surgeonfish and of course, there are also reef sharks.

Kandooma Thila

Located inside the channel from Cocoa Corner, the reef is subject to strong currents at times. The ocean currents carry a lot of nutrients, supporting an abundance of sea life. The 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 Male Atoll. It is renowned for its soft coral growth, turtles, diverse fish life and invertebrates found 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 also encompasses Lhosfushi Kandu and Medhu Faru, which separates the two channels.

As the eastern side of the Guraidhoo Kandu faces the open ocean, large predatory fish can regularly be spotted here and the area is renowned for sightings of sharks and schools of eagle rays. Occasionally, sailfish and hammerheads may also be seen although this is a rare treat rather than a guarantee. Most of the pelagic species can be observed around the channel opening where the reef drops off into the deep ocean. The best conditions to dive here are on an incoming current, beginning on the outer reef and going with the flow into the channel. Along the reef inside the channel, you can find 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, although the nature and direction of the dive are dependent on currents, or lack thereof.

Normally we will dive here on an incoming current, starting on the outside reef at Lhosfushi and crossing the narrow channel opening to the northern corner of Guraidhoo Kandu, 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. Medhu Faru separates Lhosfushi Kandu from Guraidhoo Kandu and is likely to be one of the most scenic dives you will experience in the Maldives. Around the corner area of Medhu Faru at the channel entrance, a series of overhangs and blocks adorned with sea fans and soft corals play host to groups of reef

fish, shrimps and eels; Depending on the season, mantas can also be seen here visiting the resident cleaner wrasse.

Vaavu Atoll

Fotteyo Kandhu

Many scuba divers consider Fotteyo Kandhu to be the best dive site in the Maldives and it is also rated among the top 5 dive sites in the world. The mouth of the channel is exposed to the ocean and during 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 Kandhu

In Dhivehi, Miyaru means shark, which gives an indication of 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 site can be dived on both an incoming and outgoing current with plenty to see in either case.

The eastern end of the channel slopes from 30-35 metres before dropping off into deep, open ocean and the channel floor is mostly sand at a depth of approximately 25 metres, with a small coral garden towards the western end. Depending on which way the current is flowing, we hook in on one of the corners to watch the action before continuing the dive as a drift either into the channel, or out and along the outside reef.

Alimathaa

On the southern side of Miyaru Kandhu is the resort island of Alimathaa. Here we usually do a sunset dive on the resort's house reef, close to their jetty, which is well known for the large number of resident nurse sharks. There is no need to go searching 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 some 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 of the channel. If the current isn't too strong, you can spend time exploring the caves and overhangs along the wall where you are likely to find moray eels, small reef fish and nudibranchs. At the corner of the channel mouth, there are usually large groups of fish hanging around. 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. as well as the corner of the outside reef.

Rakeedhoo Corner

Rakeedhoo is located on the southernmost tip of Vaavu Atoll where we usually dive on and around the western corner of Rakeedhoo Kandhu. The reef starts from a depth of just 5 metres and extends outwards in steps to around 30 metres then drops off almost vertically on the outside reef to the 50+ metre deep ocean floor. The channel itself is wide and over 40 metres deep so it's not possible to cross from one side to the other during a

dive and there's very little to see in the middle. Therefore, we go with the direction of the current along the edge of the channel and around the corner where there are lots of interesting features and marine life. There are a lot of overhangs and caves to explore with colourful corals and anemones providing shelter for many different types of critters. There is plenty of fish activity too with groups of blue-fin trevally, fusiliers and snappers hanging around the corner area, as well as turtles, sharks and rays.

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 a number of these while we are in South Ari as well as 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:

Rangali Madivaru

Madi means "ray" in Dhivehi. Between December and April, this is a superb manta ray cleaning station. As with many good manta points, the reef slopes down gently from its top at 8m (25ft) to the atoll floor at 30m (100ft). Although there are many cleaning stations along this 1km reef, the area where the mantas are most active is midway along the northern side. A deep basin, almost 100m (328ft) across has formed in the coral and as the currents flow out of the atoll, the waters eddy in the basin. This attracts the mantas, which hover gracefully in the current.

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 at 20- 22 metres which are decorated with yellow daisy corals on the ceilings and giant gorgonians on the floors. Hundreds of 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.

Maamigili Beru

On the southern tip of South Ari, Maamigili is best known for whale sharks which can be seen in this area throughout most of the year. Maamigili Beru is the long, open-ocean facing outer reef which slopes steadily downwards from 5 metres to a sandy bottom at 30 metres. The top of the reef features large hard coral formations which are surrounded by hundreds of colourful, small reef fish as well as providing homes for a variety of moray eels, shrimps and hunting grounds for lionfish. As well as whale sharks, mobula rays and turtles are also common sightings here. Along the outer edges of the reef, you will find lots of schooling fish and occasionally, eagle rays and reef sharks.

North Ari Atoll

Fish Head

Fish Head, also known as Shark Point or Mushimasmingili Thila, fits the classic definition of a Thila - a large isolated rising steeply from a depth of 40-50m to form a large, flat-topped

reef around 10m below the surface. The underwater scenery, along with a wide variety of marine life and the presence of large numbers of grey reef sharks have earned it a reputation as one of the top ten dive sites in the Maldives, or some might argue in the world. The reef is roughly 80 metres wide and can easily be circled in a single dive if the currents are favourable. It features a series of caves and ledges at different depths and a large undercut from 25-30 metres from where the reef slopes downwards to the seabed.

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 the top of the reef starts at 6 metres forming a ledge at 12 metres, then dropping off to 30+ metres. 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 actually 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 between the islands of the same names located on the southeastern edge of the Rasdhoo region and is famed for the Scalloped hammerhead sharks that emerge from the depths in large groups 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 which peaks 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 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 make a stationery night dive at the back of the boat to passively observe the rays while they are feeding.

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