

MALDIVES **Cruising Guide**

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Edizioni il Frangente



Courtesy of Luisa Bresciani

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Symbol	Key
	Airport
	Airport opening soon
	Anchorage point
	Anchorage point with wind from South-West
	Anchorage point with wind from North-East
	Navigate with caution
	Hospital
	Point of historical or cultural interest
	Deserted island or sandstrip
	Point of interest for snorkelling
	Scuba diving point
	Wave surfing point
	Restaurant/Resort
	Massage centre/Spa
	Deep-sea fishing area with seasonal current from South-West
	Deep-sea fishing area with seasonal current from North-East
	Point of entry to the Maldives by sea. Customs and passport control
	Local harbour
	Dry docking service for boats
	Submerged or surfacing wreck
Coco Palm	Resort
Himmafushi	Local or deserted island

Itineraries

When planning a cruise through the Maldivian atolls it is advisable to start by defining the aim of the cruise, the number of days available and the season. The table opposite suggests a few itineraries through the various atolls in the archipelago (expressed with the regional prefix) based on the above considerations.

The indications provided on the next pages on navigation, areas of interest, places for anchoring and mooring on each atoll come from various sources: cruising notes, publications on the Maldives, Ministry of Transport data and invaluable suggestions from some of the best Maldivian navigators, including Mohamed Hassan Manik, captain since the 40's on local boats and international cargo ships, as well as the presidential yachts *Arumaz* and *Funamah*. In 2002 Manik published a small book of notes in the *Dhivehi* language in which he provides important indications on navigation and anchoring throughout the archipelago. We recommend consulting and using the information given in this guide, together with the British Admiralty charts and the other publications for navigation in the Maldives (see: *Nautical charts and other publications for navigation*). 'Dry' monsoon means the season from December to April with predominant winds from North-East and 'wet' monsoon means the season from May to November with winds from South-West. For more detailed reports on the diving sites mentioned, consult the specialised publications or the diving centres in the nearby resorts (see *Scuba Diving*).



Courtesy of Luisa Bresciani

Monsoon period	Dry-wind from NE Dec-Apr	Wet-wind from SW May-Nov
Diving cruise 7-10 days	AA+ADh or V+M	AA+ADh or K
Diving cruise 10-21 days	AA+ADh+V+M or K+LH+B or S+GA	AA+ADh+B
Surfing cruise 7-10 days	K (only from Feb to Apr)	K
Surfing cruise 10-21 days	K+M+TH+L or S+GDh (only from Feb to Apr)	K+M+TH+L or S+GDh
Fishing cruise 7-10 days	V+M	AA+ADh
Fishing cruise 10-21 days	V+M+TH+L or S+GDh	AA+ADh+F+DH
Touring cruise 7-10 days	HA+HDh+R	HA+HDh+R
Touring cruise 10-21 days	HA+HDh+R+B	HA+HDh+SH+N+LH+K

Haa Alifu (HA) - Ihavandhippolhu Atoll

Charts

British Admiralty 1014, 2068.

Approach

The Ihavandhippolhu Atoll is the most northerly of the archipelago. The inhabitants use some expressions of the dialect spoken on the island of Minicoy, at the extreme South of the Laccadives archipelago.

Minicoy lies about 70 nautical miles from the atoll. Coming from the North Thiladhunmathi Atoll, during the dry monsoon, it is preferable to cross the Gallandhoo Kandu starting from Maarandhoo to reach Ihavandhoo skirting West of Dhigu Faru. Vice versa, during the wet monsoon, from Maarandhoo it is better to aim for Dhigufaruhuraa, to enjoy some following sea.

Navigation

A feature of the atoll to the West is a long coral reef dotted with a few islands, interrupted only by the Huvahandhoo pass. The barrier provides excellent protection from the ocean waves during the wet monsoon,

while for the rest of the year the atoll is rather exposed to the sea, having few internal islands and coral reefs to shelter behind.

Anchorage

During the wet monsoon protection can be obtained to the North-West of the atoll near the deserted island of Innafinolhu, while during the dry monsoon the West side of the island of Uligan offers ideal anchorage for passing yachts.

Local harbours

For quayside mooring you can opt for the well-sized *bandharu* of Huvarafushi, preferably during the wet monsoon, or for the equally spacious port of Ihavandhoo, which is easier to enter during the dry monsoon.

Services

Uligan is one of the five ocean approaches to the archipelago. There is an Immigration office to help you deal with the bureaucratic formalities of your entry to the Maldives (see *Customs formalities and cruising permits*).



Uligan customs boat

Places of interest

The atoll has several deserted islands. The most accessible are Innafinolhu and Vagaaru, both reachable with a tender from the East. One single and elegant resort *The Beach House* on the island of Maanafaru which has an excellent restaurant and a spa centre. The island of Uligan has been selected as the site for a wind energy pilot project, which could in the future provide a substitute for the energy supplied by the diesel generators on the archipelago. The island will soon have a hotel as well.



Uligan pilot project



Maanafaru Resort

Haa Alifu and Haa Dhaalu (HA, HDh) - North and South Thiladhunmathee Atoll

Charts

British Admiralty 1014.

Approach

Coming from Ihavandhippolhu Atoll local boats usually enter Thiladhunmathee Atoll from the Mulidhoo or Dhonakulhi Kandus, while from the South entry is to the West of the island of Maavaidhoo.

Navigation

In conditions of strong wind in the atoll navigation can prove to be rather difficult. In fact the atoll has very wide passes on both sides, with no *farus* or *falhus* in its interior to withstand and lessen the force of the ocean waves.

Anchorage

The atoll offers three ideal *falhus* for safe anchoring in all seasons: with a wide entrance to the North, the Filadhoo *falhu* is an excellent point of anchorage, also providing the chance for an evening visit to the local village of the same name. Near the small deserted island of Huraa is the entrance to the *falhu* of Nolvivaramfaru. The lagoon is enchanting, and well sheltered, above all from winds coming from the North-East. This island provided refuge for the inhabitants of the other three islands in the atoll when severely struck during the Tsunami in 2004. A city hotel is also planned in the near future. The other good anchorage point is the bay to the West of the Rasfushi sandstrip: a corner of paradise not far away from the resort of Kudanaagoashi, soon to be opened. Smaller yachts can also find shelter in the shallow *falhu* on the island of Baarah.

Local harbours

The two larger harbours are the commercial port of Kulhuduffushi, the main centre of the atoll and about 150 miles from Male and the *bandharu* on the island of Dhidhdhoo. The first has a 170m quay which is 5m deep. Refuelling is an easy matter and your stop is subject to a parking fee. The quayside offers good protection during the dry monsoon, but waves on the beam may occur during the wet monsoon. It is certainly not one of the calmest of moorings when loading or unloading provisions and with an easterly wind the harbour area is reached by nauseating smells coming from the dumping ground nearby. The *bandharu* of



Nolhivaramfaru

Courtesy of Maldivian Air Taxi



Kulhuduffushi harbour entrance

reach the harbour in the early hours of the afternoon, because of the many fishing boats. The harbour waters are calmer during the wet monsoon, as the port and its entrance both face East.

Services

Thiladhunmathee Atoll is serviced by the regional airport of Hanimaadhoo, with a calm lagoon where anchoring is possible during the dry monsoon. Kulhuduffushi is one of the five ocean approaches to the Maldives (see: *Customs formalities and cruising permits*), and also boasts a well-equipped hospital.



Dhidhdhoo harbour

Dhidhdhoo is certainly more suitable for shelter at night, one of the largest in the archipelago, covering an area of approximately 28,500 square metres. Be sure to



Hanimaadhoo Airport

Places of interest

The Alidhuffarufinolhu sandstrip is an extraordinary place for a good swim and a bit of snorkelling. Just over a mile South of the strip is the island of Utheem, a symbol-island, in the true sense of the word, in the history of the Maldives. Utheem is in fact the birthplace of the greatest national hero, Mohamed Thakurufaanu, and his two brothers, who headed the Maldivian revolt against Portuguese occupation at the middle of the sixteenth century.

On the island you can visit *Utheem Palace*, that is the former home of the hero and his family, where several treasured exhibits of the period are carefully preserved. Anchoring near Utheem is not easy: travellers will need to calculate the time needed to return for the night to nearby Dhidhdhoo or to the *falhus* of Filadhoo or Hanimaadhoo. Several resorts are soon to open on the atoll (Naridhoo, Hodaafushi, Kudanaagoashi and Kudamudaidhoo) while two are already operational: the *Cinnamon Island Alidhoo* and the *Island Hideaway* on the island of Dhonakulhi, both having spa centres. The second has the pretence of being a marina as well, but mooring on the jetties is seldom allowed and even then at high prices (see: *Harbours and marinas*). At the North-Western tip of the atoll lies the island of Kelaa, where fruit and vegetables are grown and sold.



Utheem Palace

Shaviyani (SH) - North Miladhunmadulu Atoll

Charts

British Admiralty 1014.

Approach

The North Miladhunmadulu Atoll, also known as Shaviyani, has enormous passes on the Eastern side and forms the central part of the macro-region comprising the Thiladhunmathee and Miladhunmadulu Atolls. If you come from the North, you will most likely enter North-West of the deserted island of Neyo. If you are approaching from the South you will leave the island of



Dholhiyadhoo

Dholhiyadhoo to the East, where a resort is under construction and soon to open. About 12 miles East of the island of Goidhoo lies the North tip of the Maamakunudhoo Atoll. This atoll has an easy entry in the centre of the Eastern side, a well-sheltered lagoon, an island inhabited by the locals and two deserted islands.

Navigation

As with Thiladhunmathee Atoll, navigation is governed by the conditions of the weather and the sea. With a strong wind from the North-East, the wave which forms inside the atoll is equivalent to an ocean wave, due to the complete absence of coral reefs along the atoll's eastern perimeter. So to cross the atoll longitudinally, with a strong wind from the North-East, it is advisable to sail outside the barriers on the western side. Vice versa, with wind and sea from the South-West, it is preferable to follow the inner side. Pay attention in the area situat-

ed approximately 3 miles East of the Hurasfaru sandstrip for the presence of a few shoals.

Anchorage

During the dry monsoon it is possible to anchor sheltered behind the island of Feevah. Feevah is a very green island, where fruit and vegetables are grown and exported. If on the other hand you want to anchor near a tourist complex, you could choose between the *falhus* of Kabaalifaru or Dholhiyadhoo, requesting in advance through your agent an entry permit to their corresponding resorts, which are scheduled to open soon. Lastly, if you are looking for an isolated spot, you might enter the extensive *falhu* South of Komadhoo and enjoy the deserted islands of Dhigurah, Medhurah and Dhiguvelidhoo, which are connected to each other by long strips of sand: an enchanting place.

Local harbours

Komadhoo has a small *bandharu* which is entered by the pass of the same name. The island's village is overpopulated and very hot, owing to the lack of vegetation. On the island of Farukolhufunadhoo an airport will be constructed.

Places of interest

As well as the deserted islands just mentioned, the islets around Kuda Faru are worth a visit for a good swim and some excellent snorkelling. Kuda Kandu is a narrow pass whose outer corners might hold some pleasant surprises for diving enthusiasts. Besides Kabaalifaru and Dholhiyadhoo, a resort is planned on each of the islands of Gaakoshinbi and Vagaru.

Noonu (N) – South Miladhunmadulu Atoll

Charts

British Admiralty 1014.

Approach

When coming from Faadhippolhu Atoll, crossing the Baraveli Kandu, entry to South Miladhunmadulu Atoll, also known as Noonu, will be in the vicinity of the island of Dhonaerikadoodhoo. In conditions of moderate sea, passing from one atoll to the next might not be entirely comfortable, as you would have the monsoon winds on the beam. The crossing may be short, but it is advisable for this reason to tackle it when the sea is favourable. On the other hand, you could navigate eas-

ily in any season if you come from the Raa Atoll (North Maalhosmadulu). With a following or head sea, according to the monsoon at the time, you should not find any great difficulty in crossing from the island of Hulhudhoo, on the eastern side of the Raa Atoll, to the island of Kuramandhoo, an enchanting islet on the western perimeter of the Noonu Atoll. To the North, you enter the atoll as soon as you leave the island of Dholhiyadhoo behind you.

Navigation

The entire macro-region which includes the Thiladhunmathee and Miladhunmadulu Atolls is characterised by very wide passes and the almost complete absence of long coral reefs to protect the inside of the atolls from the intensity of the ocean waves during stiff winds. Although dotted with a very large number of deserted islands, the atoll has few knolls. One in particular is situated right on the route followed by the boats coming from Male and heading North. This knoll is called *Vavathi Kuroolhi*, has a diameter of about 250m and lies 2 miles from the islet of Vavathi to the North-East. The knoll is well marked by a flashing signal with a range of 2 miles.

Anchorage

Noonu Atoll does not provide many alternatives for anchoring at night. The *falhu* on the island of Randheli is one of these, once the resort gives its consent. During the dry season boats can find shelter behind the long island of Kedhikulhudhoo.

Local harbours

Maalendhoo is one of the very few harbours in the Maldives with an entrance on the outer reef of the atoll.



Manadhoo harbour

Courtesy of Abdulla Zuhair,
Precious Maldives (www.preciousmaldives.com)