



**ESCAPE**  
BRINGING SEA TRAVEL TO THE NEXT LEVEL

# MAAFUSHI

Kaafu Atoll • Maldives

*The Heart of Maldives — The Sunny Side of Life*

- 27 km from Male
- 300,000+ annual visitors
- 55+ guesthouses
- Best budget destination

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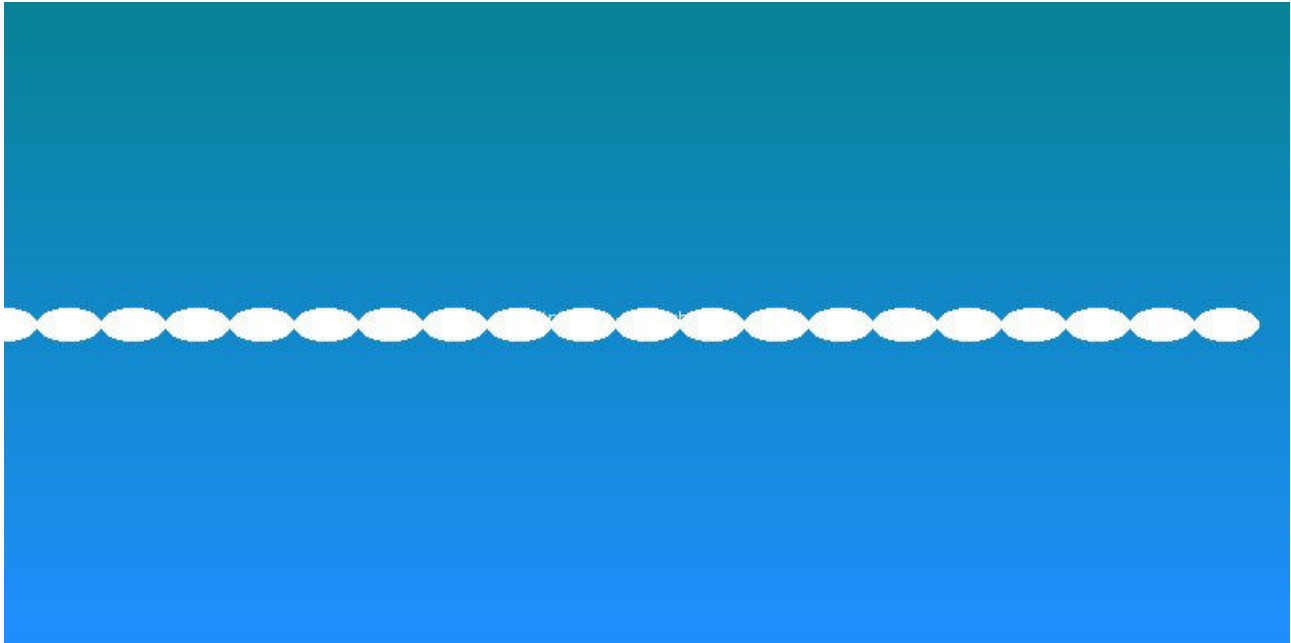
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# 1. WELCOME TO MAAFUSHI

*The Heart of Maldives — Budget Paradise & Cultural Gem*

Nestled in the southern reaches of Kaafu Atoll, just 27 kilometres south of the Maldivian capital Malé, Maafushi Island stands as the undisputed jewel of local island tourism in the Maldives. Unlike the secluded private resort islands that the archipelago is famous for, Maafushi offers travellers something far more authentic — a living, breathing Maldivian community where traditional fishing culture meets world-class tourism infrastructure.



*Crystal-clear turquoise waters and powder-white sand beaches — the signature beauty of Maafushi Island.*

Known affectionately as 'The Heart of Maldives,' Maafushi has successfully transformed from a traditional fishing community devastated by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami into a thriving tourism hub that welcomes over 300,000 visitors annually. This remarkable island stretches just 1.27 kilometres in length and 265 metres in width, yet packs an extraordinary range of experiences into its compact frame.

What makes Maafushi truly special is its ability to deliver the quintessential Maldivian experience — brilliant turquoise lagoons, pristine coral reefs, abundant marine life, and dazzling white sand beaches — while remaining accessible and affordable for every type of traveller. Whether you are a honeymooning couple seeking romance on a budget, a dive enthusiast chasing reef sharks, a family looking for safe beach activities, or a solo backpacker craving authentic cultural immersion, Maafushi has something uniquely special to offer you.

## ■ Pro Tip

Maafushi is ranked consistently in the Top 5 most-visited local islands in the Maldives. In 2024 alone, over 300,000 tourists chose Maafushi as their Maldivian base — a testament to its unbeatable combination of value, activities, and authentic island atmosphere.

## 2. ESSENTIAL FACTS & KEY STATISTICS

*Everything you need to know at a glance*

<b>27 km</b>	<b>4,471</b>	<b>55+</b>	<b>300K+</b>	<b>28°C</b>	<b>1.27 km</b>
From Malé Capital	Island Population (2022)	Guesthouses	Annual Visitors	Average Water Temp	Island Length

FACT	DETAIL
<b>Location</b>	Kaafu Atoll (South Malé Atoll), Republic of Maldives
<b>Coordinates</b>	3°56'N 73°28'E
<b>Distance from Malé</b>	Approximately 26–27 km south
<b>Island Dimensions</b>	1.27 km long × 0.265 km wide
<b>Population</b>	4,471 (2022 Census) — 3,195 Maldivians + 1,276 foreigners
<b>Language</b>	Dhivehi (official); English widely spoken in tourist areas
<b>Religion</b>	Islam (Sunni); Friday is the holy day
<b>Currency</b>	Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR); USD widely accepted
<b>Time Zone</b>	UTC+5 (Maldives Standard Time)
<b>Ferry to Malé</b>	~90 min, MVR 31 (~USD 2–3)
<b>Speedboat to Malé</b>	~30 min, ~USD 25–30 per person
<b>Best Visit Season</b>	November to April (dry season)
<b>Alcohol Policy</b>	No alcohol on island; floating bar offshore
<b>Bikini Beach</b>	Designated tourist swimwear area near Arena Hotel

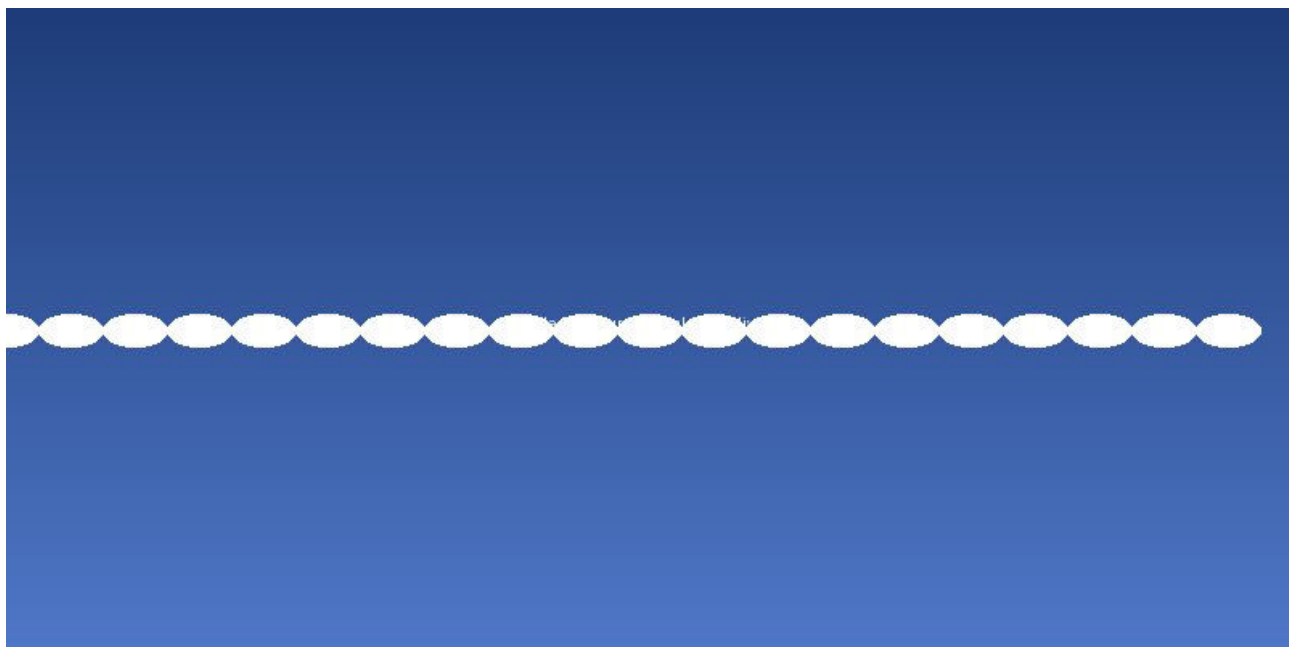
### 3. GETTING THERE

*How to reach Maafushi from Malé and the airport*

#### From Velana International Airport (MLE)

Maafushi is extremely well-connected to Velana International Airport, the main gateway to the Maldives. Upon arrival at the airport, you have three convenient options to reach the island:

Transport	Duration	Cost (approx.)	Notes
<b>Public Ferry</b>	~90 min	MVR 31 (~\$2–3)	Departs from Malé harbour (not airport directly). Sun–Thu except P
<b>Private Speedboat</b>	~30 min	\$25–30/person	Most convenient option. Departs from airport jetty or Malé harbour
<b>Seaplane</b>	~15 min	\$80–150/person	Scenic option. Operated by Maldivian Airways. Pre-booking essen



*The harbour of Malé — gateway to Maafushi and all of the Maldivian atolls.*

**■ Pro Tip**  
 Book your speedboat transfer in advance, especially during peak season (Dec–April). Many guesthouses on Maafushi offer free or discounted transfers when you book accommodation directly with them. The ferry is the most authentic and budget-friendly experience — just note it operates Sunday through Thursday only.

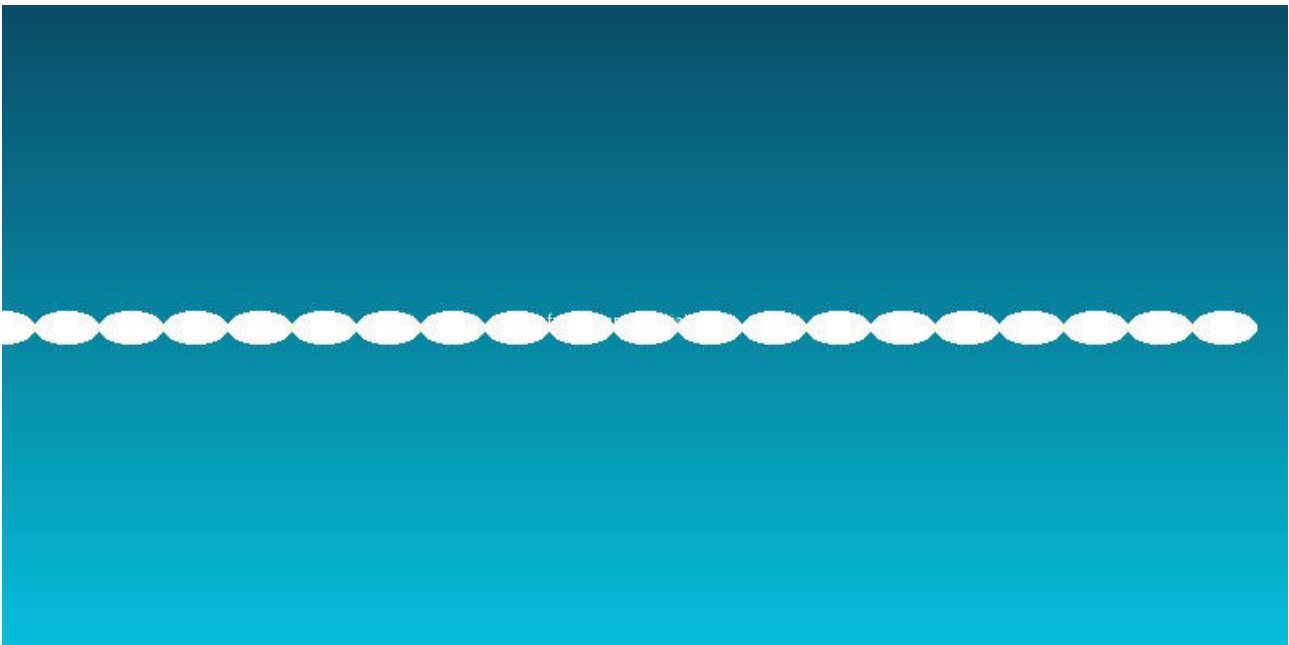
## 4. BEACHES OF MAAFUSHI

*Sun, sand, and sea — beach guide for every traveller*

### Bikini Beach (Tourist Beach)

The crown jewel of Maafushi, Bikini Beach is a designated tourist zone located in front of the Arena Beach Hotel on the eastern side of the island. This is the only beach on the island where tourists are permitted to wear swimwear, bikinis, and sunbathe freely. The beach boasts powdery white sand, crystal-clear shallow waters perfect for swimming, and swaying coconut palms that provide natural shade.

Sunbeds are available to rent for \$5 per day, and some beachside cafés offer them free with a drink purchase. The house reef is accessible directly from this beach — swim to the reef's edge to encounter eagle rays, baby blacktip reef sharks, schools of colourful tropical fish, and vibrant hard corals.



*Aerial view of a Maldivian island showing the classic lagoon, reef structure and white sand beaches surrounding Maafushi.*

### Public Beach

Located on the opposite side of the island, the Public Beach is used by local residents and tourists alike. Visitors are expected to dress modestly here — covering shoulders and thighs. It is a wonderful spot to observe everyday Maldivian life, watch local fishermen return with their catch, and enjoy the quieter, more authentic side of the island.

### Watersports Beach

Adjacent to Bikini Beach, the Watersports Beach is the lively hub of activity on Maafushi. This is where you'll find all the major water sports operators launching their boats, jet skis, and parasailing equipment. The beach has a festive atmosphere with music, activity, and the constant buzz of adventure seekers.

## Northern Sandbar

A short boat ride north of the island lies a pristine natural sandbar — a tiny strip of white sand rising just above the turquoise lagoon. This is a perfect spot for sunbathing, snorkelling in ultra-clear shallow water, and experiencing the quintessential Maldivian sandbank fantasy. Most tour operators offer half-day excursions to this magical spot.

### ■ Pro Tip

Snorkelling tip: To see the most vibrant corals and marine life at Bikini Beach, swim all the way to the edge of the house reef where the reef drops into deeper water. This is where you'll spot eagle rays, blacktip sharks, and huge schools of fusiliers.

## 5. WATER SPORTS & THRILLING ACTIVITIES

*Maafushi — the water sports capital of local island Maldives*

Maafushi has rightfully earned its reputation as the water sports capital of the Maldivian local islands. With multiple professional operators, modern equipment, and the spectacular backdrop of the Indian Ocean, the island offers an unmatched range of aquatic adventures suitable for all ages and skill levels.

Activity	Duration	Price (approx.)	Highlights
<b>Jet Skiing</b>	15 min	\$30–50	Solo or tandem; calm lagoon waters ideal for beginners
<b>Parasailing</b>	10–15 min	\$50–70	Breathtaking bird's-eye view of the atoll and ocean
<b>Banana Boat</b>	10 min	\$15–20/person	Fun group activity; great for families
<b>Kayaking</b>	60 min	\$10–15	Explore the lagoon at your own pace
<b>Catamaran Sailing</b>	60–90 min	\$40–60	Guided sailing adventure on traditional-style boat
<b>Windsurfing</b>	60 min	\$30–50	Best Nov–April; professional instruction available
<b>Fun Tube (Donut Ride)</b>	10 min	\$15–20/person	Thrilling tow ride; great for groups
<b>Stand-Up Paddleboard</b>	60 min	\$15–20	Peaceful way to explore the crystal lagoon
<b>Night Fishing</b>	2–3 hrs	\$35–50/person	Traditional Maldivian fishing technique after dark
<b>Dolphin Watching Cruise</b>	2 hrs	\$35–45/person	Spinner dolphins in their natural habitat at sunset
<b>Sandbank Excursion</b>	4–5 hrs	\$50–70/person	Boat trip to secluded sandbank; snorkelling included

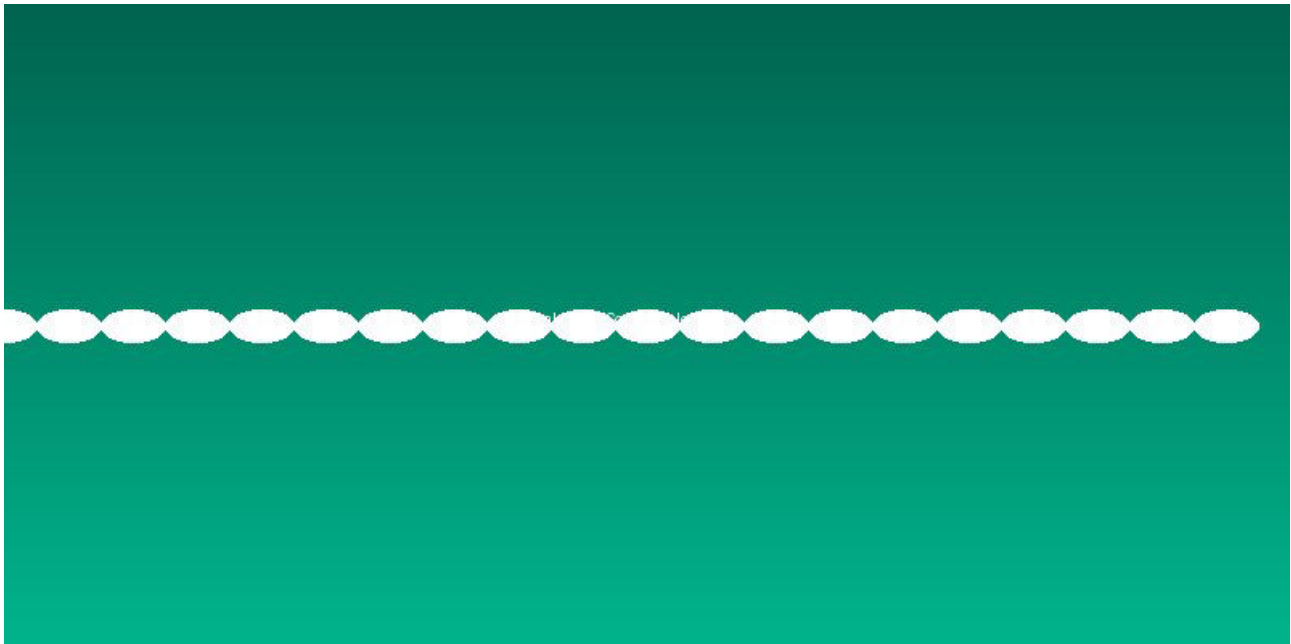
### ■ Pro Tip

The 'Go Fun Ride' package (parasailing + jet ski + fun tube + kayak) is the most popular combo package on the island and typically saves 20–30% compared to booking activities individually. Book through your guesthouse for the best rates.

## 6. DIVING & SNORKELLING

*Explore the underwater paradise of South Malé Atoll*

The waters surrounding Maafushi are home to some of the most spectacular dive sites in the entire Indian Ocean. With warm water temperatures of 28°C year-round, visibility reaching up to 30 metres during peak season, and an extraordinary diversity of marine habitats, Maafushi is a world-class diving destination accessible directly from the island.



*Vibrant coral reef formations — the underwater world awaiting divers and snorkellers around Maafushi.*

### World-Class Dive Sites Near Maafushi

#### ● **Maafushi Caves** | Depth: 5–22 m | Level: All levels

A spectacular cave system between Maafushi and Dhigufinolhu. The cave opening is on the top reef at 5m, dropping through the reef to 22m. Eagle rays, white-tip sharks, Napoleon wrasse, green sea turtles, and nurse sharks are commonly seen. A top spot for photographers.

#### ● **Guraidhoo Kandhu** | Depth: 15–35 m | Level: Intermediate–Advanced

Widely considered one of the most impressive fish-life dive sites in all of South Malé Atoll. Features 2 channels and a central reef spanning 300+ metres with vertical walls. Jacks, Napoleon wrasse, grey reef sharks, honeycomb moray eels, and giant groupers.

#### ● **Villivaru Giri** | Depth: 5–30 m | Level: Intermediate

A submerged pinnacle with vibrant coral formations. Blue-striped snappers, fusiliers, butterflyfish, hawksbill turtles, moray eels, and white-tip reef sharks frequent this site. Excellent for macro photography (nudibranchs, flatworms).

### ● **Cocoa Corner | Depth: 10–30 m | Level: Advanced**

Located in the Kandooma Channel, featuring steep walls filled with caves and overhangs. Home to clown triggerfish, Napoleon wrasse, sweetlips, angelfish, and numerous turtles, particularly green turtles.

### ● **Alimatha Jetty Night Dive | Depth: 5–20 m | Level: Certified divers**

One of the most famous night dives in the Maldives, located in Vaavu Atoll. The jetty at night becomes a gathering point for nurse sharks and stingrays — a completely unique and unforgettable nocturnal underwater spectacle.

### ● **House Reef | Depth: 3–20 m | Level: All levels**

Accessible directly from Bikini Beach shore — no boat required. Perfect for beginners and a convenient warm-up for experienced divers. Colourful corals, reef fish, occasional blacktip sharks, and hawksbill turtles found here.

## **PADI Certification Courses**

Maafushi is an excellent place to get PADI certified. Multiple dive centres on the island offer the full range of PADI courses from complete beginners to Divemaster level. The warm water (28°C), excellent visibility, and rich marine life make training here exceptionally enjoyable. The PADI Open Water Diver certification is a lifetime qualification recognised worldwide. A 2-day Open Water course including 5 dives, full equipment, and certification fee is typically priced between \$350–\$450 USD.

## 7. MARINE LIFE

*The extraordinary underwater world of Kaafu Atoll*

The waters surrounding Maafushi are teeming with an extraordinary diversity of marine life that makes every snorkelling and diving experience a wildlife encounter. The healthy coral reef system of South Malé Atoll supports over 1,000 species of fish and hundreds of invertebrate species, offering encounters that rival some of the best marine parks in the world.



*Hawksbill turtle — regularly spotted at Maafushi dive sites and house reef*



*Spinner dolphins — join a sunset cruise for near-guaranteed sightings*

### ■ Sharks

- Blacktip Reef Shark — the most commonly spotted species; often seen in shallow lagoon waters
- Whitetip Reef Shark — nocturnal; rests in caves during the day
- Grey Reef Shark — found at channel dive sites like Guraidhoo Kanduu
- Nurse Shark — docile bottom-dwellers; excellent for beginner divers
- Whale Shark — the largest fish on Earth; seasonal sightings (Nov–Apr particularly)

### ■ Sea Turtles

- Hawksbill Turtle — the most common species; regularly seen at all dive and snorkel sites
- Green Turtle — frequently spotted at cave sites and coral gardens

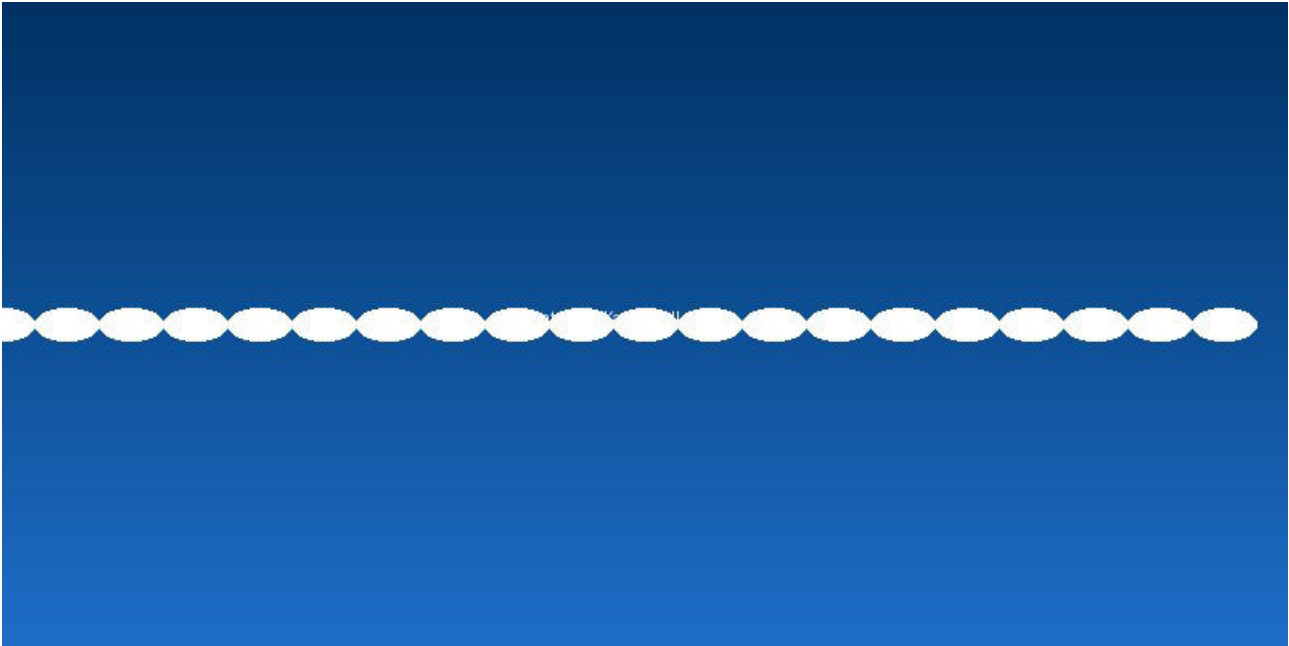
### ■ Dolphins & Rays

- Spinner Dolphin — pods of 20–100 commonly encountered on sunset cruises
- Manta Ray — majestic giants with 4–5m wingspans; best Nov–April
- Eagle Ray — graceful gliders; spotted at Bikini Beach house reef edge
- Stingray — abundant at sandy areas, especially at Alimatha night dive

### ■ Fish & Coral Life

- Parrotfish, Triggerfish, Angelfish, Butterflyfish — in abundance on all reefs
- Moray Eel — honeycomb morays resident in caves and overhangs
- Napoleon Wrasse — large, friendly fish found at deeper channel sites
- Lionfish, Scorpionfish, Pufferfish — fascinating but approach with care

- Clownfish (Nemo!) — found in anemones on shallow reefs
- Blue-striped Snapper, Fusiliers — schooling in their thousands at pinnacles



*Manta rays glide through the waters of South Malé Atoll — one of the most awe-inspiring marine encounters in the Maldives.*

## 8. EXCURSIONS & ISLAND HOPPING

*Discover the wonders of Kaafu Atoll beyond Maafushi*

### ◆ Sandbank & Snorkelling Excursion

**Duration:** Half day (~4 hrs) | **Price:** \$50–70/pp

Visit a pristine natural sandbank rising from the Indian Ocean. Includes snorkelling with nurse sharks, tropical fish, and colourful corals. Often combined with a stop at the nearby Furafathi sandbar, famous for large schools of fish.

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### ◆ Dolphin Watching Sunset Cruise

**Duration:** 2 hrs (evening) | **Price:** \$35–45/pp

Join a traditional dhow boat as the sun sets over the atoll. Spinner dolphins frequently play alongside the bow wave, and the golden sunset light over the ocean creates an unforgettable scene. One of the most popular activities on the island.

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### ◆ Whale Shark Snorkelling

**Duration:** Full day | **Price:** \$80–120/pp

Seasonal excursion (best Nov–April) to spots where whale sharks are known to congregate. Swimming alongside the world's largest fish — up to 12 metres long — is a bucket-list experience unlike any other. Certified snorkellers only.

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### ◆ Nearby Resort Day Trip

**Duration:** Full day | **Price:** \$100–180/pp

Visit one of the luxury resort islands near Maafushi for a day. Includes access to the resort beach, pool, and facilities. Some packages include lunch. Popular resorts nearby include Adaaran Prestige Vadoo and Anantara Dhigu.

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### ◆ Fulidhoo Island & Shipwreck

**Duration:** Full day | **Price:** \$70–90/pp

Visit the uninhabited Fulidhoo Island for snorkelling with nurse sharks, then explore a fascinating shipwreck that now serves as an artificial reef. Includes sandbank visit.

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### ◆ Traditional Night Fishing

**Duration:** 2–3 hrs (night) | **Price:** \$35–50/pp

Experience the ancient Maldivian tradition of fishing by moonlight. Using traditional hand lines just like the locals do, this surprisingly relaxing activity often results in a good catch — and a great story to tell back home.

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### ◆ Bioluminescent Plankton Tour

**Duration:** Night (2 hrs) | **Price:** \$40–60/pp

Witness one of nature's most magical phenomena: the water around your hands and feet glows an ethereal electric blue. Best seen on new moon nights between May and October when plankton concentrations are highest.

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### ◆ Kaashidhoo Day Trip

**Duration:** Full day | **Price:** \$60–80/pp

Visit the fascinating Kaashidhoo Island, known for its archaeological Buddhist ruins dating back to pre-Islamic times. A unique cultural and historical day trip that reveals the deep history of the Maldivian archipelago.

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## 9. LOCAL CULTURE & TRADITIONS

*Experience authentic Maldivian island life*

### A Living Cultural Heritage

Maafushi is not merely a beach destination — it is a living, breathing Maldivian community with a rich cultural heritage that stretches back centuries. The island's 4,000+ residents maintain a way of life deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, maritime heritage, and the rhythms of the Indian Ocean. Visitors who take the time to explore beyond the tourist beach are rewarded with genuine cultural encounters that no luxury resort can provide.

### Bodu Beru — Traditional Drumming & Dance

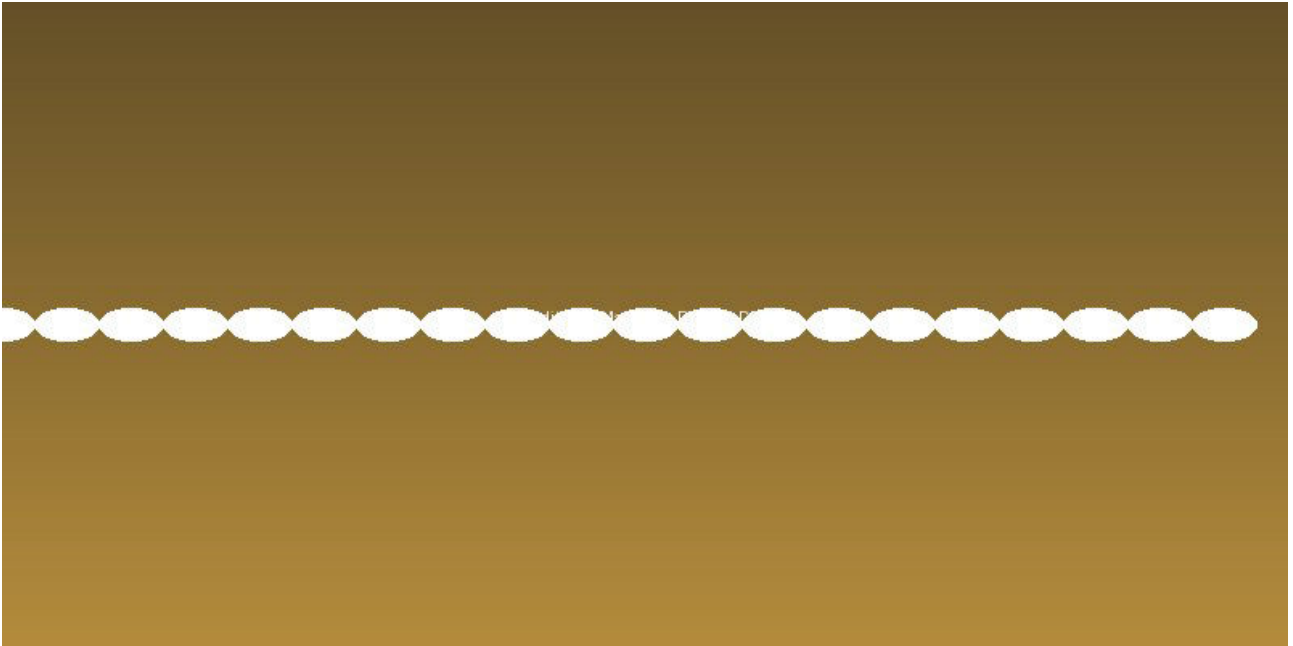
The most vibrant expression of Maldivian culture is Bodu Beru (meaning 'big drum'), a traditional music and dance form with origins in East Africa, brought to the islands centuries ago by sailors and traders. Performances feature large cylindrical drums beaten in increasing tempo, accompanied by hypnotic singing and ecstatic dancing that builds to a feverish climax. Many guesthouses and restaurants organise weekly Bodu Beru evenings for guests — an unforgettable cultural experience not to be missed.

### Islam & Daily Life

Islam is the cornerstone of Maldivian culture and daily life. The call to prayer echoes across the island five times daily, and Friday (the holy day) sees slower-paced mornings with many businesses closed until after midday prayers. Visitors are welcome to observe the beautiful rhythm of this devout island community, though mosques are generally not open to non-Muslim tourists. Respectful dress outside tourist areas is both expected and appreciated.

### Traditional Crafts

Weaving is a prominent Maldivian craft tradition, with intricate fabrics and mats (called 'thundu kunaa') hand-loomed using methods passed down through generations. You will find souvenirs made from these traditional textiles in the small shops along the island's main road. Lacquer work (liyelaajehun), wood carving, and handmade jewellery are also popular local crafts to look out for.



*Traditional Maldivian fishing boats (dhoni) — the backbone of the island's maritime heritage.*

## 10. FOOD & DINING GUIDE

*Savour the flavours of the Maldives*

The cuisine of Maafushi reflects the island's position at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean — a fragrant blend of South Asian, Arab, and East African influences, dominated by fresh seafood, coconut, and tropical fruits. Dining out on Maafushi is an adventure in itself, with everything from hole-in-the-wall local eateries serving traditional Maldivian breakfasts to modern international restaurants catering to all tastes.

### Traditional Maldivian Dishes to Try

#### Mas Huni

The quintessential Maldivian breakfast — shredded smoked tuna mixed with freshly grated coconut, chopped onion, chilli, and lime, served with roshi flatbread. Fragrant, refreshing, and utterly delicious.

#### Garudhiya

A clear, fragrant fish broth made from fresh tuna, served with rice, lime, chilli, and onion. This is the national dish of the Maldives and the soul of Maldivian home cooking.

#### Rihaakuru

A thick, intensely flavoured dark tuna paste used as a condiment and base ingredient in many dishes. Spread on roshi or mixed into curries.

#### Fried Reef Fish

Fresh-caught reef fish — often snapper, grouper, or parrotfish — fried to golden perfection and served with rice, salad, and local condiments.

#### Masroshi

Savoury tuna-filled flatbread pastries — the Maldivian equivalent of a packed lunch, sold at roadside stalls and local bakeries.

#### Saagu Bondibai

A creamy sago pudding dessert made with coconut milk, sugar, and cardamom — the perfect sweet ending to a Maldivian meal.

#### Fresh Coconut & Fruit Juices

Freshly cracked coconuts and juices made from mango, papaya, and watermelon are available everywhere and make for perfect refreshment in the tropical heat.

### Best Restaurants on Maafushi

**Salmonia Seafood:** Best seafood on the island. Grilled prawns and salmon steak are must-orders. Outdoor seating with sea breeze.

**Nero Café:** Popular spot for Italian-inspired food, good coffee, and fresh pastries. Great for breakfast and light lunches.

**Beach Club:** Best gelato on the island; also serves real coffee and snacks. Ideal for an afternoon treat on Bikini Beach.

**Kaalamaa Restaurant:** Classic Maldivian cuisine — try the fresh grilled fish with local condiments and coconut-based curries.

**Arena Beach Café:** Located on Bikini Beach; convenient for lunch and snacks between water sports activities.

■ **Pro Tip**

Note: Maafushi is a 'dry' island — no alcohol is sold in restaurants or guesthouses due to Islamic law. However, a licensed floating bar (a boat moored offshore) legally serves alcohol to tourists. Ask your guesthouse for details and boat timings.

# 11. WHERE TO STAY

*Accommodation guide from budget to boutique*

Maafushi leads all local islands in the Maldives with over 55 guesthouses — more than any other inhabited island. This healthy competition means excellent value for money, with accommodation ranging from simple budget rooms to stylish boutique beach hotels. Most guesthouses are situated within a short walk of Bikini Beach and the watersports area.

Category	Price Range/night	What to Expect
<b>Budget Guesthouses</b>	\$40–80 USD	Clean basic rooms, A/C, WiFi, breakfast sometimes included. Ideal for s
<b>Mid-Range Hotels</b>	\$80–150 USD	En-suite bathrooms, rooftop terraces, in-house restaurants, tour desks. C
<b>Boutique Beach Hotels</b>	\$150–300 USD	Beachfront locations, spa facilities, stylish decor, all-inclusive packages
<b>Premium Properties</b>	\$300–500 USD	Near-resort experience on a local island; private beach access, overwat

## Notable Guesthouses & Hotels

- Arena Beach Hotel — Most popular on the island; prime Bikini Beach location; rooftop bar.
- Kaani Grand Seaview — Panoramic ocean views; one of the best mid-range options.
- Shadow Palm Hotel — Boutique property with stylish rooms and excellent service.
- Kuredhi Beach Inn — Well-located, great value, tour packages available.
- 3 Palm Hotel — Budget-friendly with a warm family atmosphere.
- Zinnia Villa — A private villa option for groups and families seeking exclusivity.

### ■ Pro Tip

Book directly with guesthouses for the best prices and to support local business. Many properties include free speedboat transfers from Malé with a 3+ night booking. Peak season (Dec–April) sees rooms fill up months in advance — book early!

## 12. PRACTICAL TRAVEL TIPS

*Everything you need for a smooth and enjoyable visit*

### ■ Money & Budget

- Currency: Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR); USD widely accepted in tourist businesses.
- ATMs: There is a Bank of Maldives ATM on the island accepting international cards.
- Budget: A comfortable trip costs \$60–100/day including accommodation, meals, and 1 activity.
- Bargaining: Fixed prices in most establishments; mild negotiation acceptable for longer stays.
- Tipping: Not obligatory but appreciated. \$2–5 for guides and service staff is generous.

### ■ Connectivity

- WiFi: Free WiFi available in all guesthouses and most cafés.
- SIM Cards: Dhiraagu and Ooredoo SIM cards available at Male airport; good 4G coverage on island.
- Power: 230V / 50Hz; UK-style 3-pin plugs standard; bring a universal adapter.

### ■ Health & Safety

- Health Centre: Maafushi has a basic health centre for medical emergencies.
- Nearest Hospital: Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Malé (30 min speedboat).
- Sun Protection: Tropical sun is intense; SPF 50+ sunscreen and a hat are essential.
- Reef-Safe Sunscreen: Please use reef-safe mineral sunscreen to protect coral ecosystems.
- Mosquitoes: Bring repellent; mosquitoes active at dawn and dusk.
- Drinking Water: Tap water is not potable; buy bottled water or use a filter bottle.

### ■ Visa & Entry

- 30-day visa on arrival issued free of charge to all nationalities at Velana Airport.
- Valid passport required (minimum 6 months validity from date of entry).
- Proof of onward travel and sufficient funds may be requested.

# 13. BEST TIME TO VISIT

*Month-by-month weather & visitor guide*

The Maldives enjoys a tropical monsoon climate with two distinct seasons. For most tourists, the dry season (November–April) offers the ideal combination of sunshine, calm seas, and excellent underwater visibility. However, even the wet season has much to offer, with quieter beaches, lower prices, and spectacular marine life encounters.

Month	Weather	Sea Conditions	Diving	Crowds	Prices
<b>January</b>	Sunny & dry	Calm	Excellent (30m vis)	Peak	High
<b>February</b>	Sunny & dry	Calm	Excellent	Peak	High
<b>March</b>	Sunny & warm	Calm	Excellent	Peak	High
<b>April</b>	Warm, some clouds	Mostly calm	Very good	High	High
<b>May</b>	Transition	Building swells	Good	Low	Best deals
<b>June</b>	Wet season starts	Rougher	Moderate	Low	Low
<b>July</b>	Wet season	Rough periods	Fair	Low	Low
<b>August</b>	Mixed	Variable	Fair	Moderate	Low
<b>September</b>	Wet, stormy	Rough	Fair	Low	Lowest
<b>October</b>	Improving	Calming	Good	Low	Low
<b>November</b>	Dry season starts	Calming	Very good	Moderate	Moderate
<b>December</b>	Sunny & dry	Calm	Excellent	Peak	High

**■ Pro Tip**  
**BEST OVERALL:** January and February offer peak conditions for all activities — sunshine, flat seas, 30m underwater visibility, and the best whale shark spotting opportunities. Book accommodation 2–3 months ahead for these months. **BEST VALUE:** May and November offer 'shoulder season' savings of 20–40% with still-good weather.

## 14. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM & ETIQUETTE

*Be a respectful and responsible visitor*

Maafushi is both a tourism destination and a living, working community. Being a responsible visitor ensures that your presence benefits the local community, preserves the natural environment, and creates positive experiences for everyone — locals and tourists alike. Please follow these guidelines during your stay:

### ■ Dress Code

- Cover shoulders and knees when walking anywhere outside Bikini Beach and tourist zones.
- Swimwear (bikinis, boardshorts) is ONLY permitted on Bikini Beach — not on streets, in shops, or at the public beach.
- Carry a sarong or light cover-up whenever leaving the beach area.

### ■ Respecting Islamic Customs

- During Ramadan, eating, drinking, and smoking in public during daylight hours is prohibited.
- Avoid loud music and alcohol consumption in view of local residents.
- Friday mornings are important for the community — be extra respectful of quieter atmosphere.
- Do not enter mosques unless specifically invited by local residents.

### ■ Protecting the Marine Environment

- NEVER stand on, touch, or break coral — even dead-looking coral is alive.
- Do not chase, ride, or harass marine animals including turtles, sharks, and rays.
- Use only reef-safe mineral-based sunscreen (no oxybenzone or octinoxate).
- Take all rubbish back to shore — never leave litter on beaches or in the ocean.
- Do not collect shells, coral fragments, or any marine specimens as souvenirs.

### ■ Photography Etiquette

- Always ask permission before photographing local people, especially women and children.
- Do not photograph mosques, government buildings, or the prison area without permission.
- Underwater photography: maintain distance and never use flash near sea turtles or sharks.

### ■ Supporting the Local Economy

- Choose locally-owned guesthouses, restaurants, and tour operators over international chains.

- Buy handicrafts and souvenirs directly from local artisans.
- Hire local dive guides and boat captains — their knowledge and income matters.
- Eat at local 'short eats' teahouses to experience authentic cuisine and support families.

**Maafushi welcomes the world with open arms and warm Maldivian hospitality. Respect the island, protect the reef, and support the community — and Maafushi will reward you with memories that last a lifetime.**

**Safe travels — Maafushi awaits you! ■■■**